

Sunday 20 January 2019

Inquiry needed into Aussie role in Hakeem's jailing

The peak body for working people has called for an inquiry into the role of Australian authorities in the jailing of Australian union member, footballer, and permanent resident Hakeem al-Araibi.

Mr al-Araibi was on his honeymoon in Thailand when he was detained by Thai authorities under an Interpol "red notice" issued by his birth country of Bahrain.

Australian authorities notified their Thai counterparts of the notice, which breached Interpol regulations that forbid the issuing of red notices against refugees by countries they have fled. The notice has since been lifted.

Mr al-Araibi, a former Bahraini national team representative, has been granted refugee status in Australia after being imprisoned and tortured in Bahrain in 2012.

He is wanted by the country's authorities for allegedly vandalising a police station. The crime is alleged to have occurred at the same time as Mr al-Araibi was playing a live televised football match.

The ACTU is calling for an inquiry into the process that resulted in the Australian Federal Police alerting their Thai counterparts to the existence of the red notice; despite the fact the notice clearly breached Interpol regulations.

ACTU President Michele O'Neil has written to Foreign Minister Marise Payne encouraging her to advocate for Mr al-Araibi's release and calling for the establishment of the inquiry.

Quotes attributable to ACTU President Michele O'Neil:

"Hakeem is an Australian permanent resident and an Australian union member. Our movement will not accept this kind of treatment of any of our members.

"It's deeply disturbing that our own authorities would help a country to extradite an Australian resident when they are accused of torturing that person.

"We are calling for his immediate release, so he can return to his wife, his football club, and his home in Australia.

"We are also calling for a parliamentary inquiry into the circumstances around his detention, and the role Australian authorities played in this awful situation.

"It's not acceptable for Australian government authorities to help repressive regimes get their hands on people they wish to torture and unfairly detain, and we need to make sure it never happens again."

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