



6 December 2018

Sheikh Salman Bin Ibrahim Al-Khalifa
AFC House
Jalan 1/155B, Bukit Jalil
57000 Kuala Lumpur
Malaysia

Dear Sheikh Salman,

I write to you in your capacity as Vice President of the Fédération Internationale de Football Association (FIFA) and President of the Asian Football Confederation (AFC). FIFA has a strong obligation to promote and protect human rights. Paragraph 5 of FIFA's own [human rights commitment](#), in particular, details FIFA's willingness to go "beyond its responsibility to respect human rights...by taking measures to promote the protection of human rights and positively contribute to their enjoyment especially where it is able to apply effective leverage to help increase said enjoyment or where this relates to strengthening human rights in or through football."

Hakeem AlAraibi, a former soccer player for Bahrain's national team, is currently detained in Thailand facing extradition to Bahrain, where he will likely be subjected to imprisonment and torture. Hakeem has been [critical](#) of you in the past, and believes you failed to stand up for him. In 2012, Hakeem was arrested for allegedly vandalizing a police station, despite playing in a televised football match at the time of the incident. According to Hakeem, Bahrain's soccer association, led by you at the time, did not engage with requests from his sister and lawyers to confirm his alibi and exonerate him. Because of this, Hakeem remained in jail for three months and was later sentenced to 10 years in prison. Your lawyers claimed that you did not personally receive a request for help from Mr. AlAraibi.

FIFA has been made aware of Hakeem's current situation and has written to the Australian Football Association requesting that they take the matter up with their government, as a matter of urgency. In a [statement](#), FIFA also declared, "FIFA supports the calls for the Thai authorities to allow Mr. al-Araibi to return to Australia where he currently enjoys refugee status at the earliest possible moment." FIFA maintains they are committed to the respect of internationally recognized human rights, in particular, as these rights relate to the safety and wellbeing of all individuals involved in football.

As Vice President of FIFA, do you support and endorse FIFA's call to allow Hakeem to return home to Australia rather than have him sent to Bahrain where he will most certainly be tortured? Will you, Sheikh Salman, publicly call for Hakeem's safe return to Australia? If you fail to stand up at this crucial time we will take your silence as your agreement that the Thai authorities should extradite Hakeem back to Bahrain where his safety will be seriously at risk.

Sincerely,

Husain Abdulla
Executive Director
Americans for Democracy & Human Rights in Bahrain