

RO KHANNA
17TH DISTRICT, CALIFORNIA

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Congress of the United States
House of Representatives
Washington, DC 20515-0517

221 CANNON HOUSE OFFICE BUILDING
WASHINGTON, DC 20515
(202) 225-2631
(202) 225-2699 (F)
DISTRICT OFFICE:
3150 DE LA CRUZ BLVD, SUITE 240
SANTA CLARA, CA 95054
(408) 436-2720
(408) 436-2721 (F)
khanna.house.gov

February 13, 2021

His Excellency Yousef Al Otaiba, Ambassador
Embassy of the United Arab Emirates
Washington, D.C.

Dear Ambassador Otaiba,

Thank you for your letter, and for extending an invitation to host me on Podbridge to discuss building bridges between the Middle East and the US. I appreciate the invitation and would like to take you up on it under the appropriate circumstances.

Right now, it would not be appropriate for me to appear on your podcast while a well-known journalist is detained with the support of your government - apparently because of his work building bridges with US and other foreign journalists as a fixer. As you know, the Committee to Protect Journalists featured a report that the Southern Transitional Council (STC) is unable to release Adel Al-Hasani due to political pressure from the UAE. Given the widespread reporting of the UAE's involvement in Al-Hasani's continued detention, I will not be able to join your podcast until he is released.

I'm gravely concerned about Al-Hasani's rapidly deteriorating health after five months of detention, separating him from his family and preventing him from meeting his one-month-old daughter. As a local contributor to award-winning coverage for major news outlets like PBS, CNN, BBC, and Vice, Al-Hasani has brought on-the-ground human stories from the streets of Aden to millions of Americans' living rooms, and to policymakers like myself.

Al-Hasani's prompt release would greatly improve UAE's reputation in Washington and help strengthen our countries' important relationship. Upon the release of Al-Hasani, I would welcome the opportunity to join your podcast and publicly thank you for weighing in with the STC to ensure that one of the most well-known journalists covering the conflict in Yemen is no longer behind bars.

I would also like to discuss how Al-Hasani's release highlights the pivotal role the UAE can play in building bridges between disparate groups in the Middle East and the US, and how both of our nations can help bring an end to the war in Yemen.

Thank you for your kind wishes, and I hope you and your family are staying healthy as well.

Sincerely,



Ro Khanna
Member of Congress