

Thursday 24 January, 2019

The Hon Scott Morrison MP
Prime Minister of Australia
Parliament House
CANBERRA ACT 2600

Dear Prime Minister,

We write to raise the urgent case of Mr Hakeem Al-Araibi, and ask for your support in speaking directly to the Prime Minister of Thailand Prayut Chan-o-ocha, to secure his immediate release and safe return to Australia.

Hakeem has been held in a Bangkok jail for the past 60 days, awaiting possible extradition to Bahrain, and the tragic consequences to his young life that would eventuate.

He is a torture survivor, former international athlete and brave young man who spoke out on behalf of the people of Bahrain for freedom and democracy. His rights as a refugee under international law are being contravened and we stand in solidarity with him as Champions and Captains of Australian sport. It is our duty as leaders to protect all athletes in our sporting communities.

No athlete should ever be sanctioned, much less imprisoned and tortured, for expressing their right to free speech and their support for the rule of law and democracy. Hakeem is also a recognised refugee and, having been put in this extremely vulnerable situation, now needs our help, and your voice.

We welcome the advocacy of Foreign Minister, Marise Payne who raised Hakeem's case publicly and directly with the Minister for Foreign Affairs of Thailand, Mr Don Pramudwinai and Deputy Prime Minister, Mr Prajin Juntong. Nevertheless, Hakeem remains imprisoned. Despite progress made on the issue by Minister Payne, Hakeem's physical and psychological wellbeing is of very serious concern to us, as fellow athletes. We cannot stress the gravity, and urgency of this matter to the sporting community enough.

Your escalation of the issue, not just as Prime Minister of Australia, but as a recognised and self-avowed lover of sport, would signal to the Government of Thailand that the human rights of Hakeem al-Araibi, one of our fellow internationals, are to be protected to the maximum degree.

It would also confirm that Australia takes this contravention of the friendship between our two nations with the utmost urgency and gravity.

Yours Sincerely,

The undersigned.

James Maloney	Rugby League World Cup Champion, two time NRL Champion, Panthers' Captain and NRL Players Assn	Rugby League
Alex Wilkinson	President, Professional Footballers Australia	Football

Natalie Medhurst	Three time World Champion, Commonwealth Champion, President AUS Netball Players Association	Netball
Greg Dyer	President Australian Cricketers' Association, World Cup Champion	Cricket
Lisa Sthalekar	Fmr AUS Cricket Captain, World Cup Champion, World Twenty20 Champion	Cricket
Kim Brennan, AM	Olympic Gold, Silver and Bronze Medalist, World Champion	Rowing
Steve Hooker, OAM	Olympic Gold Medalist, World Champion, Commonwealth Champion	Athletics
Daniel Kowalski, OAM	Olympic Gold, Silver and Double Bronze Medalist, World Champion, Commonwealth Champion	Swimming
Laura Hodges	Double Olympic Silver and Bronze Medalist, Commonwealth Champion	Basketball
Jess Fox	Olympic Silver and Bronze Medalist, nine time World Champion	Canoe
Lydia Lassila, OAM	Olympic Gold and Bronze Medalist	Freestyle Skiing
Alex Tobin	Olympian, Fmr AUS Football Captain	Football
Frank Farina, OAM	Olympian, Fmr AUS National Team Coach	Football
Paul Wade	Olympian, Fmr AUS Football Captain	Football
Craig Foster	Fmr AUS Football Captain	Football
Natalie Galea	Olympian, International Judo Federation Athletes Commission	Judo
Nikki Dryden	Olympian, Commonwealth Bronze Medalist	Swimming
Matt White	Olympian	Cycling
Caroline Anderson, nee Bartasek	Olympian	Taekwondo
Katie Kelly, OAM	Paralympic Gold Medalist, World Champion	Triathlon

Cate Campbell, OAM	Olympic Gold and Bronze Medalist, World Champion	Swimming
Jamie Dwyer, OAM	Olympic Gold and Bronze Medalist	Hockey
Maria Pekli	Olympic Bronze Medalist	Judo
Margot Foster	Olympic Bronze Medalist	Rowing
Shelley Watts	Olympian, Commonwealth Champion	Boxing
Scott Kneller	Olympian	Alpine Skiing
Michelle Engelsman	Olympian, World Championship Silver Medalist	Swimming
Melissa Mitchell-Gumley	Olympian, World Champion and Silver Medalist	Swimming
Jane Saville	Olympic Bronze Medalist, three time Commonwealth Champion	Athletics
Natalie Saville	Olympian, Commonwealth Silver Medalist	Athletics