

URGENT ACTION

JOURNALIST RELEASED AFTER PRESIDENTIAL PARDON

On 1 November, the Algerian authorities released journalist Ihsane El Kadi from El Harrach prison following a presidential pardon to over 4,000 prisoners. Ihsane El Kadi is well-known for being a critical voice against the Algerian authorities throughout his decades-long career as a prominent journalist, media editor-in-chief and founding director of the independent media company Interface Media. Ihsane El Kadi had been arbitrarily detained since 24 December 2022 and was serving an unjust five-year prison sentence for exercising his right to freedom of the press. Interface Media remains arbitrarily dissolved.

NO FURTHER ACTION IS REQUESTED. MANY THANKS TO ALL WHO SENT APPEALS.

The Algerian authorities released 65-year-old journalist Ihsane El Kadi from El Harrach prison at 1am on 1 November 2024, after he spent nearly two years in arbitrary detention solely for exercising his right to freedom of the press. This occurred a day after President Abdelmadjid Tebboune signed [a decree](#) pardoning over 4,000 prisoners. Since his release, the authorities have continued to withhold his and his wife's passports, violating his right to freedom of movement.

Ihsane El Kadi, who is well-known for his independent and often critical publications, had been detained in El Harrach prison since 24 December 2022. He is the founding director of Interface Media, a media group which includes the online independent outlets Radio M and Maghreb Emergent. Ihsane El Kadi wrote several articles criticising the Algerian authorities, including for their human rights violations, who responded by targeting him and his media outlets. On 2 April 2023, the Sidi M'hamed first instance tribunal in Algiers convicted him of trumped up charges including receiving funds "that could harm the security of the state" and receiving foreign funds "for political propaganda", and sentenced him to five years in prison, solely in relation to his exercise of his right to freedom of the press. On 18 June 2023, the Algiers appeals court increased his prison sentence to seven years, which was reduced by two years on 5 July 2024 as part of President Abdelmadjid Tebboune's decree. The authorities confirmed the dissolution of Interface Media in July 2024 forcing Radio M to cease operations, in a heavy blow to the right to freedom of expression and media freedoms in Algeria, as Radio M was among the last independent media outlets in the country.

Following his release, Ihsane El Kadi shared with Amnesty International his "infinite gratitude" to those who took action in calling for his release. He said that he had no doubt that the international campaign for his release influenced the authorities' decision to pardon him. Furthermore, due to the visibility granted by global activism, Ihsane El Kadi believes the authorities improved his conditions of detention and were deterred from subjecting him to ill-treatment. As a testament to the importance of global activism and solidarity, Ihsane El Kadi stated that international campaigning is critical in offering hope and reassurance to detainees, stuck in their cells, that the world has not forgotten their plight. In a message to those still in detention for exercising their right to freedom of expression, he said that his pardon serves as evidence of the impact of global calls on the Algerian authorities. He stressed the need to accept "our shared humanity", because expressing solidarity and protecting rights and freedoms extends beyond borders. On 4 November, Ihsane El Kadi released a [video](#) expressing his gratitude to everyone who took action globally and supported him and his family.

Among the 4,000 pardoned prisoners, authorities freed at least 23 other arbitrarily detained journalists and activists alongside Ihsane El Kadi, including prominent activist Mohamed Tadjadit, known as the "poet of the Hirak" - a protest movement which began on 22 February 2019 and opposed a fifth term of then-President Abdelaziz Bouteflika - as well as human rights defender Mohad Gasmi, imprisoned since June 2020.

NAME AND PREFERRED PRONOUN: Ihsane El Kadi (he/him).

THIS IS THE FOURTH AND FINAL OUTPUT FOR UA 37/23.

LINK TO PREVIOUS UA: <https://www.amnesty.org/en/documents/mde28/7591/2024/en/>.

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