

URGENT ACTION

HEALTH CONCERN FOR BRITISH-ALGERIAN JOURNALIST
British-Algerian freelance journalist Mohamed Tamalt is currently in intensive care. He fell into a coma over a week ago. His family says he has been on hunger strike since 27 June in protest at his arrest and imprisonment.

Mohamed Tamalt has been on hunger strike since 27 June in protest at his arrest and detention. His family told Amnesty International that he fell into a coma over a week ago. He is currently in intensive care in Bab El Oued University Hospital in the capital, Algiers.

Mohamed Tamalt was sentenced to two-years in prison and a fine of 200,000 Algerian dinars (about US\$ 1,800) on 11 July by the Court of Sidi Mhamed in Algiers for “offending” the President and public institutions under Articles 144, 144 bis and 146 of the Penal Code in connection with recent Facebook posts he had made. The court’s Appeals Chamber upheld his sentence on 9 August. His lawyers appealed against his conviction before the Court of Cassation, Algeria’s highest court, which could quash or uphold his conviction, or send his case for retrial.

Please write immediately in Arabic, French or your own language:

- Urging the Algerian authorities to release Mohamed Tamalt from detention immediately and unconditionally and ensure that his conviction is quashed;
- Calling on the Algerian authorities to ensure that in regard to his hunger strike, undertaken in protest at his arbitrary detention, and his current coma, he receives continuing medical care by qualified health professionals in compliance with medical ethics and his right to health;
- Urging them to amend legislation that criminalizes freedom of expression, including Article 144 on “offending public officials”, Article 144 bis on “offending the President” and Article 146 on “offending public bodies”.

PLEASE SEND APPEALS BEFORE 12 OCTOBER 2016 TO:

President

Abdelaziz Bouteflika
 Presidency of the Republic
 El Mouradia, Algiers
 Algeria
 Fax: +213 21 6915 95 / +213 21 6096 18
 Email: president@el-mouradia.dz

Salutation: Your Excellency

Justice Minister

Tayeb Louh
 Ministry of Justice
 8 Place Bir Hakem
 16030 El Biar, Algiers
 Algeria
 Fax: +213 21 9217 01
 Email: contact@mjustice.dz

Salutation: Your Excellency

And copies to:

President, National human rights institution

M. Mustapha Farouk Ksentini
 Commission nationale consultative de promotion et de protection des droits de l’Homme
 Palais du Peuple, Avenue Franklin Roosevelt,
 Algiers, Algeria
 Fax: +213 21 2399 58
 Email: contact@cncppdh-algerie.org

Also send copies to diplomatic representatives accredited to your country. Please insert local diplomatic addresses below:

Name Address 1 Address 2 Address 3 Fax Fax number Email Email address Salutation Salutation

Please check with your section office if sending appeals after the above date. This is the first update on UA: 155/16. Further information: <https://www.amnesty.org/en/documents/MDE28/4379/2016/en/>

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ADDITIONAL INFORMATION

British-Algerian journalist Mohamed Tamalt is a freelance journalist. He also publishes an online magazine called *Arab Context* and has a significant following on social media. He frequently comments on alleged corruption and nepotism of government officials and the lifestyle and sources of income of their relatives.

He had previously obtained asylum in the UK in 2007 after fleeing Algeria due to reported threats, linked to his publications, from members of the military establishment and intelligence apparatus. Such threats had reportedly decreased recently, allowing him to return to Algeria.

His arrest on 27 June takes place in a context of growing restrictions on independent Algerian journalists and media outlets in recent months.

With regard to the penal code offences of which he has been convicted, Amnesty International takes the view that legal action to protect reputations, whether of public figures or private individuals should be treated as a matter for civil litigation, not the criminal law. Any laws providing special protection for the reputations of public institutions, government officials, or national flags or symbols should be repealed.

See also the public statement, "Algeria: End media restrictions", published on 1 July 2016:
<https://www.amnesty.org/en/documents/mde28/4369/2016/en/>

Name: Mohamed Tamalt
Gender m/f: m

Further information on UA: 155/16 Index: MDE 28/4738/2016 Issue Date: 31 August 2016