

JOINT OPEN LETTER – AMNESTY INTERNATIONAL

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ALGERIA: JOINT OPEN LETTER TO MEMBER AND OBSERVER STATES OF THE UN HUMAN RIGHTS COUNCIL CALLING ON THEM TO ADDRESS ONGOING REPRESSION OF CIVIC SPACE IN ALGERIA DURING THE 58TH SESSION OF THE COUNCIL

New country visit report provides opportunity for states to address the crackdown

3 March 2025

Dear Permanent Representatives of member and observer states of the UN Human Rights Council,

The human rights situation in Algeria remains bleak. The Algerian authorities have maintained their repression of civic space through a brutal crackdown on the rights to freedom of expression, association and peaceful assembly, leading to a steady erosion of human rights. They have continued to clamp down on peaceful dissent through arbitrary arrests and detentions, unfair prosecutions of peaceful activists, human rights defenders and journalists, and arbitrary restrictions on their right to freedom of movement. This has contributed to a climate of fear and censorship in the country.

In this concerning context, on 6 March, the United Nations Human Rights Council will examine the report of the Special Rapporteur on the situation of human rights defenders, Ms. Mary Lawlor, on her visit to Algeria from 25 November to 5 December 2023. This report represents a crucial opportunity for states to remind the Algerian authorities of their human rights obligations. On 30 January 2025, the Special Rapporteur [expressed](#) her dismay at the “continued criminalization of human rights defenders” more than a year after her visit.

In that regard, the Algerian authorities are currently reviewing a draft law on associations. While the initiative is welcome as the current law [stifles](#) the right to freedom of association, the draft is neither consistent with Algeria’s international human rights obligations nor with Algerian constitutional provisions on freedom of association. The text maintains a cumbersome prior authorization system for registering non-governmental organizations (NGOs) and numerous undue restrictions, particularly on access to funding and foreign cooperation. The draft also gives executive authorities overly broad powers over the registration, suspension and dissolution of associations on vague grounds.

States at the Human Rights Council have a responsibility to take a stand against these human rights violations. We therefore call on you to seize the opportunity of the Special Rapporteur’s report review to:

- Condemn the criminalization of human rights defenders and the wider crackdown on civic space and demand an end to arbitrary arrests and detentions, and unfair prosecutions;
- Call for the immediate and unconditional release of human rights defenders, activists and others detained solely for having peacefully exercised their human rights;
- Remind the Algerian authorities of their international human rights obligations under the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights, urge them to adopt a new law on associations fully in line with these obligations and ensure genuine consultation with civil society.

The Council’s commitment to human rights defenders should translate into concrete action and sustained engagement to push Algerian authorities to respect their international obligations. As a member of the UN Human Rights Council, Algeria is expected to uphold the highest standards in the promotion and protection of human rights, and to fully cooperate with the Council and its mechanisms. We urge you to use your position within the Council to demand accountability and to protect those who risk their freedom in the defense of human rights.

Please accept the expression of our highest consideration.

- Amnesty International
- Cairo Institute for Human Rights Studies (CIHRS)
- Euromed Rights
- Human Rights Watch

- International Federation for Human Rights (FIDH), within the framework of the Observatory for the Protection of Human Rights Defenders
- MENA Rights Group
- World Organisation Against Torture (OMCT), within the framework of the Observatory for the Protection of Human Rights Defenders
- Article 19