

AMNESTY INTERNATIONAL

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France must not extradite Mourad Dhina to Algeria

Amnesty International urges the French authorities to reject the Algerian authorities' request to extradite Mourad Dhina, an Algerian national resident in Switzerland, to Algeria where he risks being exposed to torture and other ill-treatment.

Mourad Dhina was arrested on 16 January 2012 at Paris-Orly Airport while preparing to board a plane to Geneva, where he lives. His arrest followed an extradition request from the Algerian authorities, based on his alleged membership of an armed terrorist group thought to have been active in Switzerland in the 1990s.

Mourad Dhina is the director of the Swiss NGO *Alkarama*, which works on human rights issues in the Arab world. He is also a founder member of *Rachad*, an association registered in France and working for democratic change in Algeria. According to information received by Amnesty International, Mourad Dhina has visited France on several occasions in the past few years without being disturbed.

Since his arrest, Mourad Dhina has been held at the Santé Prison in Paris. On 21 March, an extradition hearing will take place in the Investigating Chamber of the Paris Court of Appeal. If this Court rules in favour of his extradition, the decision to extradite Mourad Dhina will rest with the Prime Minister. Amnesty International believes that, if extradited to Algeria, Mourad Dhina faces a real risk of being subjected to torture and other ill-treatment. In fact, according to Amnesty International's research on Algeria, people suspected of terrorism-related activities have been exposed to treatment that constitutes torture or other ill-treatment, and to unfair trials.

In December 2009, the European Court of Human Rights ruled in the case of *Daoudi v. France* that the expulsion to Algeria of an Algerian national convicted in France for terrorism-related offences would expose him to the risk of treatment contrary to Article 3 of the European Convention of Human Rights. The Court based its decision on information, including Amnesty International reports, indicating that people suspected of being involved in international terrorism could be subjected to ill-treatment, including torture, in Algeria.

According to research conducted by Amnesty International on Algeria in recent years:

- Agents from the Intelligence and Security Department (DRS), the military intelligence service, continue to arrest people suspected of security-related offences and hold them on remand in unknown centres where they run the risk of being tortured or subjected to other ill-treatment.
- Impunity is still deeply ingrained with regard to acts of torture and other ill-treatment inflicted on people suspected of security-related offences.
- People suspected of acts of terrorism have been tried in proceedings that do not meet the fair trial standards.
- Some, including those sentenced to death by military courts, have been declared guilty on the basis of "confessions" obtained, according to their statements, under torture or duress.
- Detainees have not been authorized to consult a lawyer of their choice.
- Other suspects detained for security-related offences are regularly held for long periods before being brought before a judge.

Amnesty International calls on the French authorities to act in accordance with France's obligations under Article 3 of the European Convention on Human Rights, Article 3 of the

Convention against Torture and other Cruel, Inhuman or Degrading Treatment, and Article 7 of the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights, and not to extradite Mourad Dhina to Algeria where he risks being subjected to acts of torture or other ill-treatment.

For more information

Algeria: A legacy of impunity: A threat to Algeria's future (AI Index: MDE 28/001/2009), April 2009,

<http://www.amnesty.org/en/library/info/MDE28/001/2009>

Field Code Ch

Algeria: Unrestrained powers: Torture by Algeria's Military Security, (AI Index: MDE 28/004/2006), July 2006,

<http://www.amnesty.org/en/library/info/MDE28/004/2006>

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