

# AMNESTY INTERNATIONAL

## Public Statement

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### **Algeria: Anti-corruption activist to face trial**

Algerian authorities should ensure that judicial proceedings against Djilali Hadjadj, a well known anti-corruption activist, are in line with international standards for fair trial, said Amnesty International today.

Djilali Hadjadj, head of the Algerian Association to Combat Corruption (Association algérienne de lutte contre la corruption, AACC), was arrested at the airport in Constantine, in north-eastern Algeria on 5 September as he was about to travel to Marseilles. At the time, he was not informed of the reasons for his arrest.

According to the information available to Amnesty International, Djilali Hadjadj's arrest relates to his conviction in May 2010 on counts of forgery and other criminal offences in his capacity as a medical professional. He was reportedly sentenced to three years' imprisonment and a fine by the Sidi Mohamed Court in Algiers.

According to Djilali Hadjadj's relatives, he has neither been summoned to appear in court nor has he been aware of his conviction prior to his arrest on 5 September.

After spending two nights at a police station in Constantine, Djilali Hadjadj was transferred to the Sidi Mohamed Court in Algiers by Algerian law enforcement officials. Djilali Hadjadj is expected to oppose the ruling as permissible in the Algerian Code of Criminal Procedure for decisions taken in the absence of defendants. The case will then be retried.

Amnesty International is concerned that Djilali Hadjadj was convicted without being given the possibility to defend himself in contravention to Algeria's obligations under the International Covenant for Civil and Political Rights, including the right to adequate defence and the right to be informed of the nature and cause of the exact charges brought against him.

Amnesty International calls on the Algerian authorities to promptly try Djilali Hadjadj in proceeding meetings international standards for fair trial if he is charged with recognizably criminal offences; or else release him to allow him to spend the Eid el-Fitr celebrations marking the end of Ramadan on 10 September with his family.

#### **Background**

Djilali Hadjadj's arrest was met with considerable media interest in Algeria given his outspoken stances against corruption, including as a regular contributor to the newspaper *Soir d'Algerie* on stories dedicated to the issue of corruption.

On 29 August, just a week prior to his arrest, the daily newspaper *El-Watan* published an interview with Djilali Hadjadj responding to announcements by the Council of Ministers on 25 August that the body has approved a Decree amending Law 06-01 of 20 February 2006 relating to the Prevention and Combating of Corruption. In the interview, under the title: "Government Cacophony without Precedent", Djilali Hadjadj criticized the absence of political will at the highest levels of the state to tackle corruption.

Public Document

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