

29 November 2016

### **Algeria – Hassan Bouras detained and sentenced to one year imprisonment**

On 28 November, the El-Bayadh court of first instance sentenced Mr **Hassan Bouras** to one year in prison following charges that include 'insulting state institutions' on social media.

Hassan Bouras is a leading member of the **Algerian League of Human Rights - LADDH (*Ligue Algérienne pour la Défense des Droits de l'Homme*)**. He is also a journalist and blogger who has reported extensively on corruption and the practice of torture in Algeria. The human rights defender is known for documenting the involvement of leading generals in the Algerian army in severe human rights abuses committed in Algeria in the 1990s, during the armed conflict between the state and militant Islamists.

On 28 November, the human rights defender was sentenced to one year imprisonment for 'insulting state institutions' on social media. He was taken into custody following his trial and is currently being held in a detention facility in El-Bayadh. Hassan Bouras was accused inter alia of posting a video on Facebook that featured youth voicing their criticism of the Algerian government. The human rights defender suffers from severe rheumatism that makes it difficult for him to stand, and which causes inflammation in the joints and can result in painful deformity and in immobility if not properly treated.

Hassan Bouras has repeatedly been subjected to judicial harassment for his work. On [18 January 2016](#), the human rights defender was released from El-Bayadh prison, where he had been detained since October 2015. It was never clear whether charges against the human rights defender were dropped following his release. The human rights defender was arrested at his home on 2 October 2015. The Prosecutor of the municipality of El-Bayadh accused him of 'incitement to violence and revolt against the state' and 'insulting state institutions'. The investigative judge then ordered his detention pending further investigation.

In 2008, he was sentenced to two months in prison and fined a sum of 40,000 Algerian Dinar (3373 EUR) for publishing articles in the press about corruption and poverty. In 2003, Hassan Bouras was charged with insulting state institutions, sentenced to two years in prison and banned from practising journalism for five years.

Front Line Defenders expresses its concern at the sentencing and continued judicial harassment of Hassan Bouras which it believes to be directly related to his legitimate work in exposing human rights abuses.

### **Front Line Defenders urges the authorities in Algeria to:**

1. Immediately and unconditionally quash the sentence against Hassan Bouras, as Front Line Defenders believes that he is being held solely as a result of his legitimate and

peaceful work promoting human rights;

2. Ensure that the treatment of Hassan Bouras, while in detention, takes into consideration his specific medical requirements, and adheres to the conditions set out in the '*Body of Principles for the Protection of All Persons under Any Form of Detention or Imprisonment*', adopted by UN General Assembly resolution 43/173 of 9 December 1988;

3. Cease the targeting all human rights defenders in Algeria and guarantee in all circumstances that they are able to carry out their legitimate human rights activities without fear of reprisals and free of all restrictions.