

9 March 2017

Algeria – Intensified harassment of human rights lawyer Salah Dabouz

On 6 March 2017, human rights defender **Salah Dabouz** was informed that two intelligence officers were asking about him in Ghardaïa. This development is part of ongoing harassment that Salah Dabouz has experienced since he began legally representing human rights defender [Kamal Eddin Fekhar](#) who has, as of 9 March 2017, been on hunger strike for 66 days against his arbitrary detention.

[Salah Dabouz](#) is an Algerian lawyer and prominent human rights defender. He is the President of the **Ligue Algérienne pour la Défense des Droits de l'Homme (Algerian League for the Defence of Human Rights, LADDH)**, an independent association founded in 1985 and working on the documentation of human rights violations in Algeria committed by security services and armed groups. The organisation mainly focuses on cases of prisoners of conscience and enforced disappearance. Salah Dabouz is also a member of the Commission on Human Rights of the International Union of Lawyers, and a founding member of the Autonomous Union of Lawyers in Algeria.

On 6 March 2017, Salah Dabouz was informed that two intelligence officers were questioning people about him in Ghardaïa. Salah Dabouz has, for the past few months, faced ongoing harassment as a result of his involvement, as lead lawyer, in the legal defense of Kamal Eddin Fekhar and his colleagues who were arrested on 9 July 2016.

The human rights defender has received threatening calls from people identifying themselves as police officers who proceeded to ask him to turn himself in to the police despite him receiving no official summons for interrogation. Salah Dabouz has also faced a media campaign against him headed by Al-Nahaar newspaper, that accused him of causing trouble in Ghardaïa. When he tried to challenge the campaign in court, the court refused to accept his complaint. The human rights defender has been called for investigation on multiple occasions. On 13 July 2016, Salah Dabouz was placed under judicial review as a direct result of his representation of Kamal Eddin Fekhar, who was detained on [9 July 2015](#) under fabricated charges that include inciting violence through peaceful and armed protests, spreading hate and jeopardising national unity. On 1 March 2017, the investigative judge in the review case against Salah Dabouz refused to terminate the review process despite his full compliance and cooperation. The process has been costly for the human rights defender as the review takes place 600 Kilometres away from his home and place of work. This obstructs his work as the legal counsel are therefore required to travel 1200 Kilometres every week for review. On 31 July 2016, the Ghardaïa governor publicly insulted and demeaned Salah Dabouz in front of media and other guests during a speech at a conference.

On 15 June 2016, Salah Dabouz was issued an arrest warrant by an investigating judge of Ghardaïa Court. The human rights defender received no summons prior to this and was charged with insulting a state constituent body and smuggling a computer with a camera into prison.

Front Line Defenders expresses concern at the ongoing harassment against the human rights defender and believes that the on-going proceedings against him, including the judicial review, are solely motivated by the human rights defender's peaceful and legitimate work in the defence of human rights in Algeria.

Front Line Defenders urges the authorities in Algeria to:

1. Ensure the personal safety and security of Salah Dabouz, especially in light of recent information of intelligence officers questioning people about him;
2. Terminate the judicial review against Salah Dabouz and cease all forms of harassment against him;
3. Guarantee in all circumstances that all human rights defenders in Algeria are able to carry out their legitimate human rights activities without fear of reprisals and free of all restrictions.