

10 March 2017

### **Algeria – Ongoing detention of human rights defender Rafik Belamrania**

As of 10 March 2017, human rights defender **Rafik Belamrania** has been held in detention for 12 days by Algerian authorities under fabricated charges. On 22 February 2017, the court of Jijel in Algeria ruled to detain Rafik Belamrania under false charges stating that he “excused terrorism on Facebook.” The decision to imprison him came only a few days after the UN Human Rights Committee found the Algerian government responsible for the summary execution of the human rights defender’s father in 1995.

[Rafik Belamrania](#) is a founding member of **Mish'al (torch) Association for the Children of the Enforced Disappeared in Algeria**, created in 2009 with the aim of supporting the parents of victims in their ongoing struggle for truth and justice concerning twenty thousand enforced disappearances committed by the Algerian security forces during the “black decade” 1992-1999. As part of his work, Rafik Belamrania monitors and documents cases of enforced disappearances and shares reports about serious violations of human rights with UN mechanisms and international organisations. He also works on organising peaceful protests and networking with political parties and prominent figures in society. Rafik Belamrania is active on social media where he spreads advocacy material related to his work.

No evidence has been presented to suggest that Rafik Belamrania is guilty of the charge presented against him. The charge of “excusing terrorism” is considered a criminal offense in Algeria and would be prosecuted in the Judicial Council of Jijel. As he is facing criminal charges, the human rights defender will remain in detention until a date for his hearing has been set. On 17 February 2017, Algerian police arrested Rafik Belamrania at his home and held him in the police station for three days. On 21 February 2017, the police returned to the home of Rafik Belamrania with an arrest warrant and searched his home before taking him back to the police station. Reports associated to his work on enforced disappearances were confiscated during the search of his home. Algerian police brought the human rights defender to court on 22 February 2017 and ordered for him to be detained in relation to a Facebook post that they claimed “excused terrorism.” The human rights defender denied that he had a Facebook account and his lawyer explained that no evidence had been presented against him. Rafik Belamrania has been detained in Jijel prison since 22 February 2017 and a court date has yet to be set for an appeal of the decision.

According to Algerian sources, the regime in Algeria has been using the charge of “terrorism apology” as a means to target peaceful activists in the past few months. Front Line Defenders condemns the detention of Rafik Belamrania and believes it to be 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. Immediately and unconditionally release Rafik Belamrania, and drop all charges against him;
2. Ensure that the treatment of Rafik Belamrania, while in detention, 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. 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.