

11 February 2019

### **Algeria: Human rights defender, Hadj Ghermoul, sentenced to six months imprisonment**

On 6 February 2019, human rights defender **Hadj Ghermoul** was sentenced to six months in prison and handed down a 30,000 Algerian dinar fine in relation to a Facebook post, in which he is pictured holding a sign denouncing the Algerian president's intention to run for a fifth consecutive term.

[Hadj Ghermoul](#) is an Algerian human rights defender, member of the Algerian League for the Defence of Human Rights (LADDH), and the National Coordination for the Defence of the Rights of the Unemployed (CNDDC).

On 21 January 2019, a picture was posted on Facebook of Hadj Ghermoul in which he is holding a sign with the slogan 'No to a fifth mandate'. The slogan was created by Algerian activists to call on President Abdelaziz Bouteflika to refrain from running for a fifth presidential term. President Bouteflika has been governing the country for 20 years.

On 27 January 2019, police officers followed the human rights defender in the street and verbally harassed him. Hadj Ghermoul requested that they either arrest him or leave him alone. The police brought him to the police station and accused him of assaulting them. He remained in custody for two days.

On 6 February 2019, the court of Mascara charged Hadj Ghermoul under article 145 of the Algerian Criminal law for insulting a government body. The human rights defender was sentenced to six months in prison and given a fine of 30,000 Algerian dinar (225 Euro). His lawyer intends to submit an appeal within 10 days. He continues to be detained in Sidi Mhammed Prison in the city of Mascara.

Front Line Defenders expresses concern at the sentence of imposed on Hadj Ghermoul and believes that it is solely motivated by the human rights defender's peaceful and legitimate work in defence of human rights in Algeria.

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

1. Immediately and unconditionally release Hadj Ghermoul and quash his conviction as Front Line Defenders believes that he has been targeted solely as a result of his legitimate human rights work;
2. 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.