

25 October 2018

Algeria - Judicial harassment of Ahmed Manseri

Human rights defender **Ahmed Manseri** has been repeatedly summoned to the Court of Kasr Chalalah in Tiaret, where he is facing several criminal charges, including “slandering denunciation against police or justice officials”. These charges were brought against him after he filed an official complaint accusing a police officer of torturing him in June 2018, and are only the latest actions in a series of harassment against the human rights defender.

[Ahmed Manseri](#) is a human rights defender, blogger and trade unionist in Algeria. He is the head of the Tiaret city section of the **Ligue Algérienne pour la Défense des Droits de l’Homme** (Algerian League for the Defense of Human Rights) an independent association working on the documentation of human rights violations in Algeria committed by security services and armed groups. The organization mainly focuses on cases of prisoners of conscience and enforced disappearance.

On 14 October 2018, the human rights defender was summoned to the Court of Kasr Chalalah in Tiaret, where he was charged with “assaulting a public official while on duty by words, gestures or threats” on the basis of article 144 of the Algerian Penal Code. On 15 October 2018, Ahmed Manseri was charged with “slandering denunciation against police or justice officials” (article 300). He was furthermore summoned to appear before the Court on 22 October 2018, facing charges of “offending a state institution” (article 144 bis), and on 29 October 2018 for “contravening the decrees and ordinances legally taken by the administrative authority” (article 459) and “calling for unarmed gathering” and “assaulting a public official while on duty by words, gestures or threats” (article 100).

These charges are directly linked to a complaint that Ahmed Manseri filed against the police officer who assaulted him on at the police station of Kasr Chalalah in Tiaret: On 12 June 2018, the human rights defender had to attend a hearing at the police station in relation to other cases that were opened against him in 2012. Ahmed Manseri reports that he was exposed to physical and psychological ill-treatment from 9 a.m. until 8 p.m. that day: he was beaten in the courtyard of the police station and afterwards dragged to an unknown place where he was left bleeding without receiving any medical care. Later that night, a friend brought him to the city hospital, where he was treated for two days. The hospital issued a medical report documenting the violence he experienced at the police station.

Following Ahmed Manseri’s complaint, the Sougueur Court in Tiaret issued a suspended six-month prison sentence against the police officer in question. However, the Court of Justice of Tiaret acquitted the officer in an appeal, after the medical testimony had been changed.

It is not the first time that a human rights defender associated with the [Ligue Algérienne pour la Défense des Droits de l’Homme](#) is being targeted and Ahmed Manseri himself has been facing continuous judicial harassment from the Algerian authorities since 2012.

Front Line Defenders expresses its concern at the ongoing judicial harassment against the human rights defender as it believes that the charges against him are solely motivated by his peaceful and legitimate work in the defense of human rights in Algeria.

Front Line Defenders urges the authorities in Algeria to:

1. Immediately drop all charges against Ahmed Manseri as it is believed that they are solely motivated by his legitimate and peaceful work in defence of human rights and cease all forms of harassment against him;
2. Take all necessary measures to guarantee the physical and psychological integrity and security of Ahmed Manseri
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.

Front Line Defenders respectfully reminds you that the United Nations Declaration on the Right and Responsibility of Individuals, Groups and Organs of Society to Promote and Protect Universally Recognized Human Rights and Fundamental Freedoms, adopted by consensus by the UN General Assembly on 9 December 1998, recognises the legitimacy of the activities of human rights defenders, their right to freedom of association and to carry out their activities without fear of reprisals. We would particularly draw attention to Article 12 (2): *“The State shall take all necessary measures to ensure the protection by the competent authorities of everyone, individually and in association with others, against any violence, threats, retaliation, de facto or de jure adverse discrimination, pressure or any other arbitrary action as a consequence of his or her legitimate exercise of the rights referred to in the present declaration.”*