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Algeria: Attempted killing of human rights defender Salah Dabouz

On 9 September 2019, human rights defender Salah Dabouz was attacked and stabbed by several masked men in the Chouahin neighbourhood of Ghardaïa in an attempted killing.

[Salah Dabouz](#) is a prominent Algerian human rights defender and a defence attorney representing several activists across Algeria. Salah Dabouz previously served as 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. LADDH works on documentation of human rights violations in Algeria committed by security services and armed groups. 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 9 September 2019, during Salah Dabouz’s visit to the city of Ghardaïa, several masked men attempted to kill the human rights defender when they attacked and stabbed him. Previously, Salah Dabouz received several death threats; he submitted a complaint to the Prosecutor’s Office of Ghardaïa on 27 June 2019, but the Algerian Authorities did not respond to these death threats as no investigation was carried out.

Human rights defender Salah Dabouz has frequently been harassed by the authorities for his human rights work. On 8 April 2019, the security forces arbitrarily detained him for one day regarding a Facebook post that criticized the judicial authority in Ghardaïa, after which he was placed under judicial observation for almost four months. The judicial observation obliged him to travel 600 kilometres twice a week from Algiers (the city where he lives) to Ghardaïa. The human rights defender went on a hunger strike for one month protesting these judicial observations before they were lifted.

The level of violence against human rights defenders has been increasing in Algeria, and several human rights defenders have been under arbitrary detention. This attempted killing of Salah Dabouz is a severe escalation of the vulnerability human rights defenders face in Algeria.

Front Line Defenders is extremely concerned about this continuous harassment, and the apparent Algerian governmental policy of ignoring the death threats that Salah Dabouz has received. Front Line Defenders believes that the attempted killing is solely motivated by Salah Dabouz’s peaceful and legitimate work in the defence of human rights in Algeria, and the exercise of the right to freedom of expression to denounce corruption, injustice and human rights violations.

Front Line Defenders urge the authorities in Algeria to:

1. Carry out an immediate, thorough and impartial investigation into the attack and death threats against human rights defender Salah Dabouz, with a view to publishing the results and bringing those responsible to justice in accordance with international standards.

2. Take all necessary measures to guarantee the physical and psychological integrity and security of Salah Dabouz.
3. Cease 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.