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## Algeria: Human rights defender Abdullah Benaoum sentenced for peacefully protesting

On 27 January 2020, the Criminal Court of Ghilizan sentenced human rights defender **Abdullah Benaoum** to two months' imprisonment and a fine of 20,000 dinars, following his participation in a peaceful demonstration held in Ghilizan in early December 2019.

[Abdullah Benaoum](#) is a human rights defender and social media activist who has written on labor rights, prisoners' rights, and the rights of persons with disabilities in Algeria. The human rights defender has attended demonstrations to monitor and document, via social media, violations to the freedom of assembly and association caused by the excessive use of police force.

On 10 December 2019, Abdullah Benaoum was arrested after being summoned to a local police station in Ghilizan. His arrest came after his participation in a peaceful demonstration in Ghilizan in early December 2019. Abdullah Benaoum was interrogated for several hours, during which he was denied access to his lawyer.

On 8 January 2020, the human rights defender was formally charged with several offences, including 'contributing to the weakening of the army's morale', 'insulting the regime' and 'incitement against the state'. On 27 January 2020, the Criminal Court of Ghilizan sentenced him to two months' imprisonment and a fine of 20,000 dinars (approx. 150 euros). He is currently being held in Bel Hacel Prison in Ghilizan.

The human rights defender has been frequently detained and subjected to judicial harassment by the authorities in relation to his work defending human rights in Algeria. In March 2018, he was [arrested and sentenced](#) to two years' imprisonment on a number of charges relating to his Facebook posts. In June 2019, following a request made by his defence, he was conditionally released.

Front Line Defenders is seriously concerned about the sentencing of human rights defender Abdullah Benaoum, as it is believed to be solely motivated by his peaceful and legitimate work defending human rights in Algeria.

### Front Line Defenders urges the Algerian authorities to:

1. Immediately release Abdullah Benaoum 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. Ensure that the treatment of Abdullah Benaoum, 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, including judicial harassment.