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## Algeria: Court of appeal confirms the three-year prison sentence of human rights defenders Slimane Bouhafis and Kamira Nait Sid

On 4 July 2023, a court of appeal in Algiers confirmed the three-year prison sentence of human rights defenders **Slimane Bouhafis** and **Kamira Nait Sid**, in addition to confirming the fine of DZD 100,000 (approx. EUR 660). The charges against both human rights defenders include “belonging to a terrorist organisation”; “receiving funds from abroad for the purpose of political propaganda”; “hate speech and discrimination”; “use of technology to spread false information”; and “conspiracy”, among others.

[Slimane Bouhafis](#) is a human rights defender advocating for freedom of expression and democracy in Algeria through social media. He is the Chairman of the St. Augustine Coordination of Christians in Algeria which defends minority rights and freedom of religion in the country. [Kamira Nait Sid](#) is a woman human rights defender and co-president of the World Amazigh Congress (WAC), an international NGO defending the rights of the Amazigh people. The mission of the WAC is to ensure the defence and promotion of political, economic, social, cultural, historical and civil rights of the Amazigh people.

The human rights defender Slimane Bouhafis, who was granted refugee status in Tunisia before being illegally transferred back to Algeria, received the same three-year prison sentence as the one previously handed down at the first instance. Meanwhile, the woman human rights defender Kamira Nait Sid received a three-year prison sentence, which was a two-year reduction of the original sentence handed down by the court of first instance.

Both Slimane Bouhafis and Kamira Nait Sid reject and deny all the charges against them and maintain that they have been targeted because of their peaceful human rights work and advocacy for freedom of expression and belief. The defence counsel, which represented both human rights defenders, reportedly emphasised the lack of due process and fair trial guarantees during the trial and the appeal processes, including a lack of evidence supporting the charges.

In December 2022, Slimane Bouhafis and Kamira Nait Sid were sentenced to three and five years respectively by the court of first instance mainly on the basis of an alleged association with the Movement for the Autonomy of Kabylie (MAK), classified as a terrorist group by the Algerian authorities. The human rights defenders continue to deny any involvement with the MAK group.

The two human rights defenders have been [arbitrarily detained](#) since the summer of 2021. On 25 August 2021, the human rights defender Slimane Bouhafis was [abducted](#), subjected to ill-treatment and forcibly returned to Algeria from Tunisia, where he had been granted refugee status, in a gross violation of international law. On 24 August 2021, the woman human rights defender Kamira Nait Sid was also [abducted](#) by Algerian security forces from her home in Draa-Ben-Kheddaas in northern Algeria and detained at an unknown location. On 1 September 2021, the two human rights defenders appeared before an investigating judge in an Algerian court to be charged with several terrorism-related accusations based on an alleged connection with the MAK.

Front Line Defenders condemns the confirmation of the sentence of human rights defenders Slimane Bouhafis and Kamira Nait Sid and calls on the authorities of Algeria to immediately release

them and quash their conviction as it believes that it is solely motivated by their legitimate and peaceful work in the defence of human rights. It urges the authorities to guarantee the physical and psychological security and integrity of the human rights defenders while in detention.

Front Line Defenders also calls on the authorities to 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 including judicial harassment.