Official Journal
of the European Union

EN
C series

C/2023/1068

15.12.2023

P9_TA(2023)0198

Media freedom and freedom of expression in Algeria, the case of journalist Ihsane El-Kadi

European Parliament resolution of 11 May 2023 on media freedom and freedom of expression in Algeria — the case of journalist Ihsane El-Kadi (2023/2661(RSP))

(C/2023/1068)

The European Parliament,

— having regard to Rules 144(5) and 132(4) of its Rules of Procedure,

A. whereas Ihsane El-Kadi, a prominent Algerian journalist and manager of Interface Médias, one of the last independent media enterprises in Algeria, with the online outlets Radio M and Maghreb Emergent, was arrested without a warrant the night of 23-24 December 2022;

B. whereas on 2 April 2023 an Algerian court sentenced El-Kadi to five years' imprisonment, of which two suspended, a fine of 700 million Algerian dinars, the dissolution of his media company and the confiscation of its assets following his conviction on unfounded charges of 'receiving funds for political propaganda' and 'harming the security of the state' under Articles 95 and 95*bis* of Algeria's Penal Code; whereas the hearing on his appeal will take place in the second half of May 2023;

C. whereas since the 2019 Hirak protests, Algeria's authorities have substantially clamped down on media freedom and freedom of expression; whereas Algeria ranks 136th out of 180 in Reporters Without Borders' 2023 World Press Freedom Index, having ranked 146th in 2020; whereas since 2019 at least 11 other journalists and media workers have been prosecuted and detained, including Mustapha Bendjama; whereas Algeria's authorities have increased the blocking of news sites and publications critical of the government;

1. Calls on Algeria's authorities to immediately and unconditionally release Ihsane El-Kadi and all those arbitrarily detained and charged for exercising their right to freedom of expression;

2. Calls on Algeria's authorities to respect and uphold fundamental freedoms, particularly media freedom, as enshrined in Article 54 of Algeria's Constitution, to reopen shuttered media outlets and to halt the arrest and detention of political activists, journalists, human rights defenders and trade unionists; expresses solidarity with Algerian citizens protesting peacefully since 2019;

3. Urges Algeria's authorities to amend the Penal Code's security-related clauses that are used to criminalise freedom of expression, including Articles 95bis and 196bis, and to align laws limiting freedom of expression with international human rights standards, particularly the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights, which Algeria has ratified;

4. Recalls, as jointly agreed in the EU-Algeria Partnership Priorities, the importance of a pluralist press to consolidate the rule of law and fundamental freedoms, including media freedom and freedom of expression;

5. Calls for the EU's institutions and Member States to raise El-Kadi's case with Algeria's authorities and openly condemn the crackdown on media freedom; calls for the EU's institutions and Member States to urge Algeria's authorities to guarantee that foreign journalists will be granted visas and accreditation without undue delay and will be free to operate;

6. Calls on the EU delegation and Member State embassies in Algeria to request access to imprisoned journalists and observe their trials;

7. Instructs its President to forward this resolution to the Council, the Commission, the Vice-President of the Commission / High Representative of the Union for Foreign Affairs and Security Policy, the governments and parliaments of the Member States and the Government and Parliament of Algeria, and asks that it be translated into Arabic.