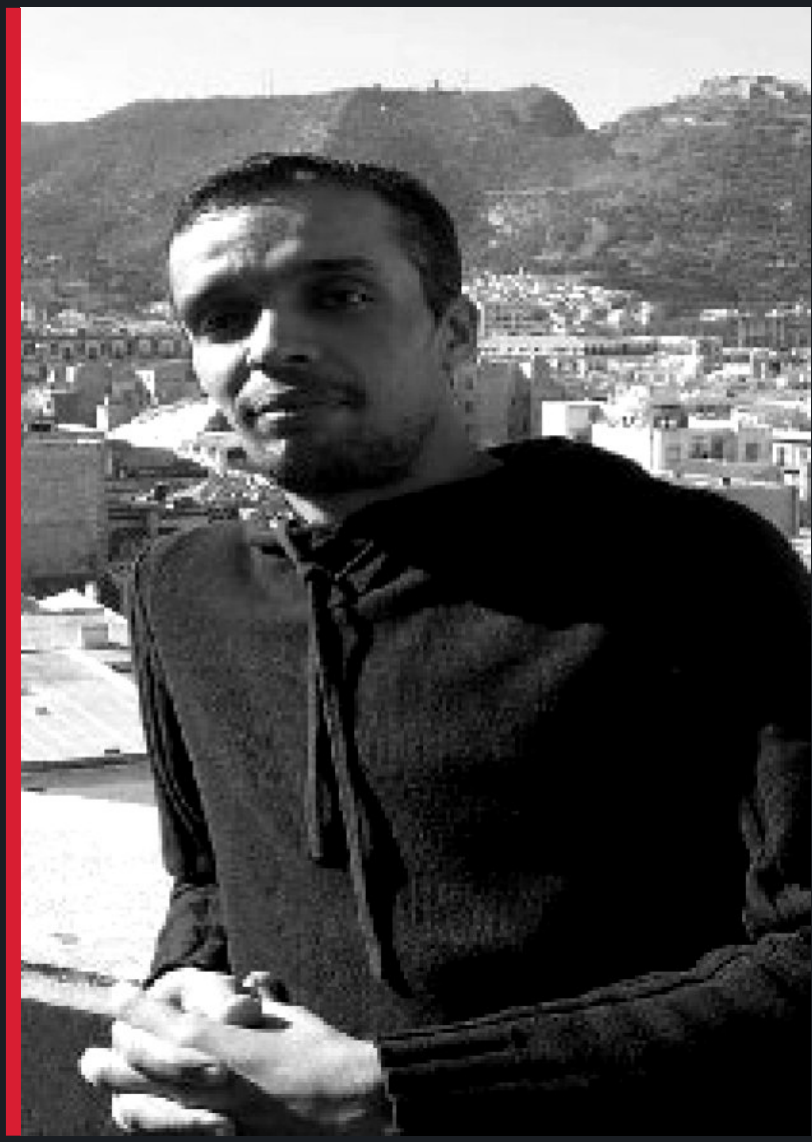


Advocacy dossier

Abd Al Hamid Goura

عبد الحميد قورة

At liberty **Algeria**

Former head of the Laghouat section of the Algerian League for the Defence of Human Rights, Abd Al Hamid Goura was arrested at a peaceful demonstration, interrogated in violation of criminal procedure law, and sentenced for insulting state institutions.

01

The case at a glance

Former head of the Laghouat section of the Algerian League for the Defence of Human Rights, Abd Al Hamid Goura was arrested at a peaceful demonstration, interrogated in violation of criminal procedure law, and sentenced for insulting state institutions.

Status	Arrested	Country
At liberty	**18 Jun 2021**	**Algeria**

Sentence Three months' imprisonment, suspended, and a fine of 20,000 Algerian dinars (approximately 125 euros).

Charges Inciting an illegal gathering
Participating in an unarmed gathering
Insulting the president
Insulting a constituted body

What we ask

We call on the authorities to:

01 Quash the conviction and drop any charges that remain on record against Abd Al Hamid Goura in connection with peaceful human rights work.

02 Confirm publicly that Abd Al Hamid Goura faces no residual travel, financial, or professional restriction arising from this case.

03 Guarantee that Abd Al Hamid Goura can resume that work without surveillance, summons, or further reprisal.

04 Provide effective remedy for the period of deprivation of liberty already served.

02

Documented violations

Each violation and the international standard it breaks.

Arbitrary detention International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights, Article 9

Denial of legal counsel International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights, Article 14(3)

Judicial harassment UN Declaration on Human Rights Defenders, Articles 9, 12

Physical assault International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights, Articles 7, 9

Threats and intimidation UN Declaration on Human Rights Defenders, Article 12

Unfair trial International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights, Article 14

03

How the case unfolded

5 December 2018

Interrogation

Questioned after League statement on police violence

Police came to his home with a summons and took him for questioning hours after the League's Laghouat section denounced police violence in the city. He was interrogated for about six hours over a statement he had published on Facebook and was released pending trial on charges of defamation and insulting institutions and bodies corporate, with a warning that he could be arrested again.

18 June 2021

Arrest

Arrested at Hirak demonstration

Goura was arrested during a peaceful Hirak demonstration in Laghouat. Approximately twenty officers, some in plain clothes, attacked protesters with electric shocks and batons.

18 June 2021

Interrogation

Interrogated by police in violation of procedure law

Held at a police station and interrogated by officers rather than a judge, in violation of Algerian criminal procedure law. He was physically abused, sustaining injuries to both shoulders and his knee, and denied access to family or lawyer.

20 June 2021

Conviction

Convicted of assembly and insult charges

The Court of First Instance in Laghouat convicted Goura of inciting an illegal gathering, participating in an unarmed gathering, insulting the president and insulting a constituted body. He received a three-month suspended prison sentence and a fine of 20,000 Algerian dinars (about 125 euros). His lawyer was allowed to attend the hearing.

20 June 2021

Release

Remains free under a suspended sentence

The three-month prison term imposed by the Laghouat court was suspended and no custody was ordered.

04

The full story

Update, 12 November 2026: this record was checked again against current sources in English, Arabic and French. No new arrest, prosecution or travel ban against Abd Al Hamid Goura has been reported since the Laghouat court gave him a three-month suspended sentence on 20 June 2021; the outcome of the defamation case opened against him in December 2018 has not been published. The Algerian League for the Defence of Human Rights, whose Laghouat section he headed, was dissolved by the Algiers Administrative Court on 29 June 2022.

Background and Work

Abd Al Hamid Goura headed the Laghouat section of the Ligue Algérienne pour la Défense des Droits de l'Homme (Algerian League for the Defence of Human Rights), an independent association founded to document human rights violations committed by both state security services and armed groups in Algeria. The organization has built its work around two core areas: the investigation of enforced disappearances and the defence of activists imprisoned for their political views or expression. An Algiers administrative court dissolved the League on 29 June 2022, a ruling made public in January 2023.

Laghouat, a city in central Algeria, has been a focal point for tensions between civil society and security forces. Goura's section has issued public statements condemning police violence and has provided legal and documentary support to families of the disappeared. This work placed him under sustained scrutiny by local and national authorities.

Harassment and Prior Interrogation

Goura has faced repeated harassment. On 5 December 2018, only hours after the Laghouat section released a statement denouncing the use of police violence against citizens in the city, police came to his home with a summons and questioned him for about six hours over a statement he had published on Facebook. He was released pending trial on charges of defamation and insulting institutions and bodies corporate, with a warning that he could be arrested again. The timing was explicit: the authorities wanted to make clear that public criticism would be met with immediate consequences.

The Arrest

On 18 June 2021, Goura attended a peaceful demonstration organized as part of the Hirak movement in Laghouat. The Hirak protests, which began in February 2019, called for political reform and an end to authoritarian governance. By mid-2021, authorities had intensified their crackdown on demonstrators.

During the protest, approximately twenty police officers, including several in plain clothes, attacked Goura and other peaceful protesters. The officers used electric shock devices and batons. Goura was arrested and taken to a police station, where he was interrogated by police officers rather than a judge. Algerian criminal procedure law requires that interrogations be conducted by a judge, with police officers present only to assist. The interrogation at the station violated this legal requirement.

During the interrogation, Goura was subjected to

physical abuse. He sustained injuries to both shoulders and his knee. He was not permitted to contact his family or his lawyer during his detention. His lawyer was allowed only to observe the interrogation and was denied the opportunity to provide a meaningful defence until the court hearing.

Legal Proceedings and Conviction

On 20 June 2021, the Court of First Instance in Laghouat convicted Goura of inciting an illegal gathering, participating in an unarmed gathering, insulting the president, and insulting a constituted body. The court sentenced him to three months' imprisonment, suspended, and imposed a fine of 20,000 Algerian dinars (approximately 125 euros at the time).

The charges relied on provisions of the Algerian Penal Code that criminalize peaceful assembly and expression critical of state institutions. The offences of "insulting the president" and "insulting a constituted body" are routinely used to silence dissent. The conviction was based entirely on Goura's participation in a non-violent demonstration and his public human rights advocacy.

Detention Conditions and Treatment

During his detention between 18 and 20 June 2021, Goura was held without access to legal counsel or family contact. The injuries he sustained during the arrest and interrogation were not treated. The denial of access to a lawyer during the interrogation and the physical abuse he endured constitute serious violations of his rights under both Algerian law and international human rights standards.

International and Domestic Response

The conviction drew condemnation from human rights organizations, which noted that the charges and sentence were directly linked to Goura's peaceful work documenting state abuses. The case is part of a broader pattern of judicial harassment against members of the Algerian League for the Defence of Human Rights and other civil society actors in Algeria. The suspended sentence remains in effect, meaning that any further charges could trigger its activation and result in Goura's imprisonment.

Latest updates on this case Scan the code or visit: https://humena.org/defenders/abd-al-hamid-goura/

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