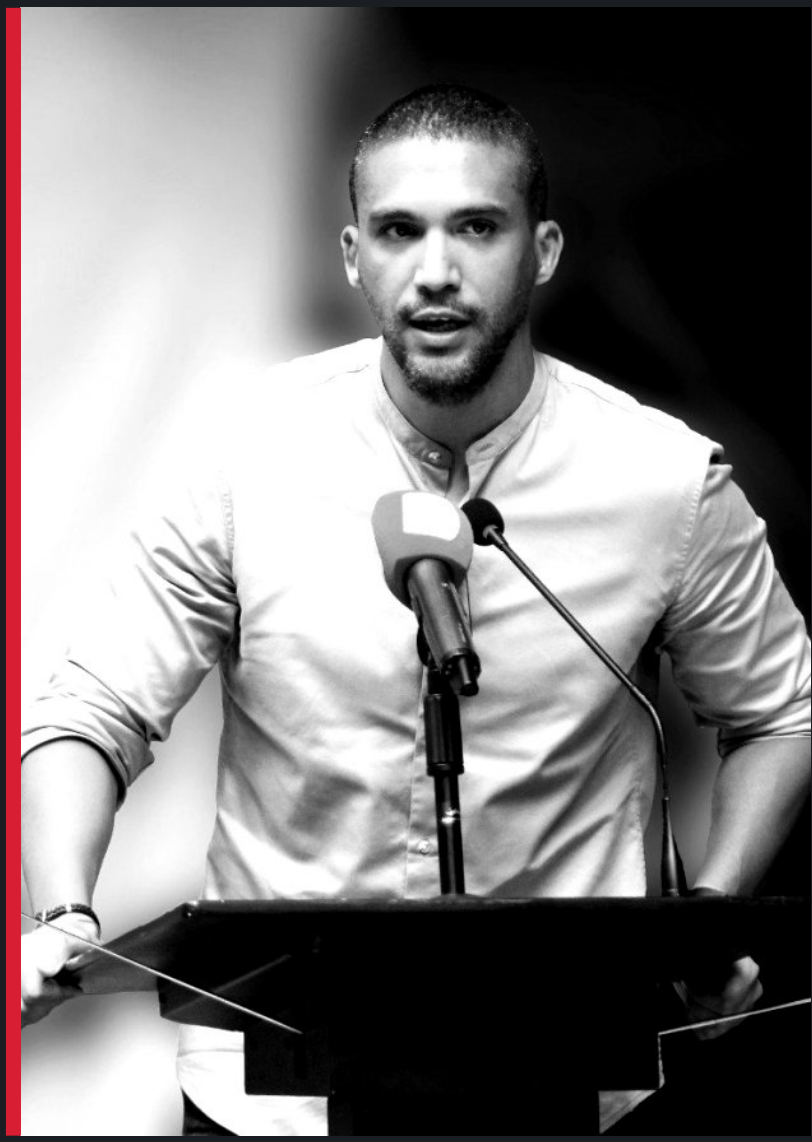
HuMENA.

HM-DZ-2026-048



Advocacy dossier

Khaled Drareni

خالد درارني

At liberty **Algeria**

Algerian journalist arrested in 2020 while covering Hirak protests; released by pardon February 2021. On retrial in March 2022 his sentence was reduced to six months suspended.

01

The case at a glance

Algerian journalist arrested in 2020 while covering Hirak protests; released by pardon February 2021. On retrial in March 2022 his sentence was reduced to six months suspended.

Status	Arrested	Country
At liberty	**10 Jun 2021**	**Algeria**

Sentence Six months suspended and a fine of 50,000 Algerian dinars (retrial, Algiers appeal court, 3 March 2022); the earlier two-year term was quashed. Freed by presidential pardon on 19 February 2021.

Charges Incitement of an unarmed gathering
Harming national unity

What we ask

We call on the authorities to:

01 Immediately lift the travel ban imposed on Khaled Drareni and on any family members affected by the same order.

02 Restore valid travel documents and remove any border-watch flags placed in connection with peaceful human rights work.

03 Comply with the ICCPR Article 12 guarantee of freedom of movement.

02

Documented violations

Each violation and the international standard it breaks.

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

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

Press freedom violation International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights, Article 19

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

03

How the case unfolded

14 May 2019

Context

Questioned by intelligence officers at a student march

Khaled Drareni was stopped and questioned by the intelligence services while covering a student demonstration in Algiers.

9 August 2019

Context

Held and questioned by police at a protest

Police stopped him during a demonstration, seized his phone, searched and questioned him, and told him to stop covering the Friday marches before letting him go.

30 December 2019

Context

Taken to Antar barracks for questioning

A domestic security officer took him to the Antar barracks, where senior officers questioned him.

9 January 2020

Context

Arrested at home and taken to an army barracks

Plain-clothes agents arrested him at home and took him to an army barracks in Algiers, where he was warned over his publications.

7 March 2020

Arrest

Arrested while covering a Hirak march

Khaled Drareni was arrested while covering a Hirak march in Algiers. He was held for three days and then placed under judicial control.

27 March 2020

Arrest

Arrested again at home after court revokes his release

Two days after the Algiers court ordered him back into custody, police arrested him at his home. The Sidi M'Hamed court then ordered his detention in El Harrach prison, and on 30 March 2020 he was moved to Koléa prison.

10 August 2020

Conviction

Sentenced to 3 years in prison

Convicted by an Algiers court of incitement and harming national unity.

15 September 2020

Appeal: sentence reduced

Appeal reduces sentence to 2 years

Appellate court reduced the term to two years' imprisonment.

18 February 2021

Pardon

Presidential pardon announced

President Tebboune announced a pardon for Drareni among other political prisoners on the eve of the second Hirak anniversary.

19 February 2021

Release

Released from Koléa prison

Drareni left prison after 11 months of detention.

25 March 2021

Context

Supreme Court orders a retrial

The Supreme Court accepted his cassation appeal and sent the case back to the Algiers appeal court for a new trial.

10 June 2021

Arrest

Detained by military internal security with Ihsane El Kadi

Drareni and the journalist Ihsane El Kadi were arrested at their homes in the afternoon of 10 June 2021 by agents of military internal security and held at the Antar barracks, two days before the legislative elections. Both were released during the night of 11 to 12 June.

12 June 2021

Release

Released

He was released during the night of 11 to 12 June 2021.

3 March 2022

Appeal: sentence reduced

Retrial reduces sentence to six months suspended

On retrial, the Algiers appeal court reduced his two-year prison term to a six-month suspended sentence with a 50,000 dinar fine.

28 April 2022

Context

Appointed RSF representative for North Africa

Reporters Without Borders appointed Khaled Drareni as its representative for North Africa.

2023

Travel ban imposed

Prevented from leaving Algeria under a 2020 exit ban

In 2023 Drareni announced that he had not been allowed to leave Algeria to receive a press freedom award from the Spanish organisation behind the Committed Optimists awards, and that he had learned on that day he was still subject to an exit ban issued against him in 2020.

04

The full story

Update, 12 November 2026: this record was checked again against current sources in English, Arabic and French. Khaled Drareni is free and has represented Reporters Without Borders in North Africa since April 2022; according to MENA Rights Group, he learned in 2023 that an exit ban issued against him in 2020 was still in force when he was stopped from travelling to Spain to receive an award. No new prosecution against him has been reported. As RSF's representative he has spoken publicly on other press freedom cases in Algeria, including the prosecution of the columnist Saad Bouakba in 2023.

Background and work

Khaled Drareni is one of Algeria's most prominent independent journalists. He covers the Hirak movement, the post-Bouteflika political transition, and the consolidation of judicial restrictions on the press. He founded Casbah Tribune, was a correspondent for Reporters Without Borders (RSF) and the French-language broadcaster TV5 Monde, and in April 2022 became RSF's representative for North Africa.

Arrest and conviction

On 7 March 2020 Drareni was arrested while covering a Hirak march in Algiers, held for three days and placed under judicial control. On 27 March 2020, two days after the Algiers court ordered him back into custody, police arrested him at his home; he was placed in El Harrach prison and moved to Koléa prison on 30 March. He was charged with "incitement of an unarmed gathering" and "harming national unity". In August 2020 a court sentenced him to three years; an appeal reduced the sentence to two years. On 25 March 2021 the Supreme Court accepted his cassation appeal and ordered a retrial, and on 3 March 2022 the Algiers appeal court reduced the sentence to six months suspended with a fine of 50,000 dinars.

Release

Drareni was released from Koléa prison on 19 February 2021 under a pardon announced by President Abdelmadjid Tebboune. His release came three days before the second anniversary of the start of the Hirak protest wave and was seen as a partial concession to mounting international pressure from press-freedom groups, including a "We Are Khaled" campaign and a Paris ring-road billboard of his portrait.

After prison

Since his release Drareni has continued to work on press freedom in Algeria. In April 2022 Reporters Without Borders appointed him its representative for North Africa. On 10 June 2021 he and the journalist Ihsane El Kadi had been detained by military internal security at the Antar barracks and released during the night of 11 to 12 June. In 2023 he was prevented from leaving Algeria to receive a press freedom award in Spain and learned that he was still under an exit ban issued in 2020. His case remains the most internationally visible symbol of Algeria's post-Hirak media crackdown.

Latest updates on this case Scan the code or visit:https://humena.org/defenders/khaled-drareni/

HuMENA for Human Rights and Civic Engagement is a non-governmental organisation documenting the situation of human rights defenders in the Middle East and North Africa. This file is based on the public record of the case in the defenders archive.Status as recorded on 2021-06-12. To report an error: archive@humena.org