

ADVOCACY DOSSIER

ZAKARIA HANNACHE

زكريا حناش

At liberty **Algeria**

Zaki Hannache documented arrests of protesters after Algeria's 2019 Hirak uprising. He was arrested in 2022, charged with terrorism-related offences, and held for six weeks before provisional release on bail. He left for Tunisia, was sentenced in absentia to three years in prison in 2023, and was resettled in Canada as a refugee in December 2023.

HuMENA.

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Case reference HM-DZ-2026-007

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THE CASE AT A GLANCE

Zaki Hannache documented arrests of protesters after Algeria's 2019 Hirak uprising. He was arrested in 2022, charged with terrorism-related offences, and held for six weeks before provisional release on bail. He left for Tunisia, was sentenced in absentia to three years in prison in 2023, and was resettled in Canada as a refugee in December 2023.

STATUS	**At liberty**
ARRESTED	**18 Feb 2022**
COUNTRY	**Algeria**
SENTENCE	**Three years in prison, in absentia (Sidi M'hamed court, Algiers).**
CHARGES	**Praising terrorism** **Receiving funds from an institution inside or outside the country** **Undermining state security**

WE CALL ON THE AUTHORITIES TO:

WHAT WE ASK

01 Immediately end all transnational targeting of Zaki Hannache, including surveillance, defamation campaigns, Interpol misuse, and consular harassment.

02 Withdraw any in-absentia convictions or politically motivated charges tied to peaceful human rights work.

03 Comply with the UN Declaration on Human Rights Defenders and OHCHR guidance on transnational repression.

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

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DOCUMENTED VIOLATIONS

	INTERNATIONAL STANDARD
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)
Forced exile	International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights, Article 12(4)
Judicial harassment	UN Declaration on Human Rights Defenders, Articles 9, 12
Prolonged pretrial detention	International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights, Article 9(3)
Transnational repression	UN Declaration on Human Rights Defenders, Article 12
Unfair trial	International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights, Article 14

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HOW THE CASE UNFOLDED

18 February 2022

ARREST

Arrested at home by plain-clothes officers

Four plain-clothes officers arrested Hannache at his home in Cherarba, Algiers, around 4 PM. They searched the premises and confiscated his mobile phone before taking him into custody.

24 February 2022

HEARING

Charged with terrorism-related offences

Hannache appeared before an investigative judge and was formally charged with praising terrorism, receiving foreign funds, and undermining state security. The combined charges carry penalties ranging from thirty-five years to life imprisonment or death.

7 March 2022

CONTEXT

Begins hunger strike in detention

Hannache began a hunger strike to protest his detention.

30 March 2022

CONDITIONAL RELEASE

Provisionally released on bail

After six weeks in pre-trial detention, Hannache was provisionally released and ended the hunger strike he had begun on 7 March. The release was conditional and the case continued.

August 2022

DEPARTURE INTO EXILE

Leaves Algeria for Tunisia on medical grounds

Hannache left Algeria for Tunisia in August 2022 on medical grounds. He continued reporting on human rights abuses in Algeria while living in hiding in Tunis, moving an estimated 11 times to avoid detection.

15 September 2022

CONTEXT

UN experts raise concern about his case

UN Special Rapporteurs expressed serious concern about his arrest and the charges against him.

14 November 2022

CONTEXT

Tunisian police search for him in Tunis

Tunisian police looked for Hannache at two places in Tunis on 14 and 15 November 2022.

16 November 2022

CONTEXT

Investigating judge drops the terrorism charge

The investigating judge dropped the terrorism charge against Hannache. The prosecutor challenged the decision, and he remained prosecuted on a lesser charge.

18 November 2022

CONTEXT

Recognised as a refugee by UNHCR in Tunis

UNHCR in Tunis granted Hannache refugee status.

5 December 2022

CONTEXT

UN Committee against Torture asks Tunisia not to expel him

The UN Committee against Torture asked Tunisia not to expel Hannache while it examined a request for interim measures.

March 2023

RULING IN ABSENTIA

Convicted in absentia, sentenced to 3 years

On 2 March 2023, Hannache and his lawyers learned that the Sidi M'hamed court in Algiers had convicted him in absentia and sentenced him to three years' imprisonment; the exact date of the verdict has not been published. Algeria then sought his extradition from Tunisia.

21 September 2023

DEPARTURE INTO EXILE

Leaves Tunisia for a safe third country

Hannache left Tunisia and later reached a safe third country.

19 December 2023

CONTEXT

Resettled in Canada

On 19 December 2023, Hannache moved to Canada, which had agreed to resettle him after UNHCR formally recognised him as a refugee. He continues human rights documentation work from exile.

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THE FULL STORY

Background and Work

Zaki Hannache worked as a human rights monitor in Algeria during a period of escalating repression. After the Hirak protest movement emerged in February 2019, calling for political reform and an end to entrenched power structures, Hannache focused his efforts on documenting the state's response to demonstrators. He collected information on arrests, verified accounts of detention, and maintained records of who had been taken into custody for participating in protests.

Hannache also documented the cases of human rights defenders who had been sentenced to prison terms. He advocated publicly for their release and worked to ensure that their cases remained visible. His documentation work took place during a period when Algerian authorities intensified prosecutions of activists, journalists, and monitors associated with the Hirak movement or critical of the government.

The Arrest

On 18 February 2022, around 4 PM, four plain-clothes officers arrived at Hannache's home in Cherarba, a district in the Algiers governorate. The officers searched the premises and confiscated his mobile phone. Hannache was placed in custody and held without access to legal counsel during the initial days of his detention.

On 24 February 2022, Hannache was brought before an investigative judge. He was formally charged with "praising terrorism," "receiving funds from an institution inside or outside the country," and "undermining state security." The charges stemmed from his human rights documentation work. Under Algerian law, the combined maximum penalties for these charges range from thirty-five years' imprisonment to life imprisonment or the death penalty.

Detention and Provisional Release

Hannache remained in pre-trial detention for six weeks. He was held without trial while the investigation proceeded. On 30 March 2022, he was released provisionally on bail. The release was conditional. Under the terms, he could be re-arrested at any time pending the outcome of the judicial proceedings.

The provisional release does not close the case. Hannache remained subject to the charges filed in February 2022. On 16 November 2022 the investigating judge dropped the terrorism charge; the prosecutor challenged that decision. The documentation work he carried out, the collection and verification of arrest records, has been recharacterized by the prosecution as evidence of criminal activity.

Legal Context

The charges brought against Hannache reflect a broader pattern of judicial harassment targeting monitors and defenders in Algeria. The invocation of terrorism-related statutes against individuals engaged in documentation and advocacy has been documented in multiple cases since 2019. The charges of "praising terrorism" and "undermining state security" are frequently applied to defenders whose work involves documenting state conduct or expressing criticism of government policy.

The charge of "receiving funds from an institution inside or outside the country" is commonly used in cases where defenders have received grants or support from international organizations or foreign donors. Algerian law criminalizes certain categories of foreign funding for civil society organizations and individuals, and prosecutors have used these provisions to target human rights work that relies on external financial support.

International and Domestic Context

Hannache's arrest took place during a wave of prosecutions targeting defenders and monitors associated with the Hirak movement. In the same week, human rights defender Faleh Hammoudi, head of the Tlemcen office of the Algerian League for the Defense of Human Rights, was arrested, tried, and sentenced to three years' imprisonment within the space of forty-eight hours. Hammoudi's case and Hannache's arrest were part of a coordinated escalation in February 2022.

The provisional release of Hannache in March 2022 did not signal an end to the legal proceedings or a withdrawal of charges. The conditional nature of the release leaves him in a state of juridical uncertainty. In August 2022 he left Algeria for Tunisia. On 2 March 2023 he learned that the Sidi M'hamed court in Algiers had sentenced him in absentia to three years in prison. On 19 December 2023 he was resettled in Canada after UNHCR recognised him as a refugee, and he continues his documentation work from exile.

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SAMPLE LETTER

Copy it, adapt it and send it from your own address.

Your Excellency,

I am writing to express grave concern about the ongoing transnational repression targeting human rights defender Zaki Hannache, human rights monitor documenting arrests and due-process violations in the context of the Hirak protests. The reach of state intimidation across borders, including against family members in Algeria, must end.

In brief: Zaki Hannache documented arrests of protesters after Algeria's 2019 Hirak uprising. He was arrested in 2022, charged with terrorism-related offences, and held for six weeks before provisional release on bail. He left for Tunisia, was sentenced in absentia to three years in prison in 2023, and was resettled in Canada as a refugee in December 2023.

I respectfully urge your authorities to:
1. Immediately end all transnational targeting of Zaki Hannache, including surveillance, defamation campaigns, Interpol misuse, and consular harassment;
2. Withdraw any in-absentia convictions or politically motivated charges tied to peaceful human rights work;
3. Comply with the UN Declaration on Human Rights Defenders and OHCHR guidance on transnational repression.

I will continue to monitor this case until Zaki Hannache's family and contacts in Algeria can live free from state reprisal.

Respectfully,

[Your name]
[Your city, country]
8 November 2026