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*Federica Mogherini*  
*High Representative of the European Union for Foreign Affairs and Security Policy and*  
*Vice-President of the European Commission*

Brussels, 9 July 2018

Dear High Representative/Vice-President Federica Mogherini,

We, Members of the European Parliament, are writing to you with regards to the European Union's role in promoting human rights and democracy in Algeria and extending protection and support to Human Rights Defenders in the country.

Upholding human rights standards and promoting democracy must be at the core of the European Union's approach towards its partner neighbourhood countries, as a crucial element in providing long-term peace and stability, tackling the root causes of migration and radicalisation.

Hence, we call on you and the EU Member States to take a robust line in support of human rights in Algeria, ensuring that Human Rights Defenders can fully exercise, in all circumstances, their rights to freedom of expression, association and peaceful assembly without fear of harassment or interference.

We insist that the EU Guidelines on Human Rights Defenders must be fully implemented and the EU and its Member States should take a firm and assertive stance in raising the situation of HRDs and providing support to them. The EU and Member States must, therefore, insist on trial observation and visits to detained defenders and civil society activists who are detained for their human rights work, in accordance with the EU Guidelines on Human Rights Defenders as well as with the resolution adopted by the European Parliament on the Imprisonment of Workers and Human Rights Activists in Algeria. This Resolution, adopted on April 2015, called on the “*EEAS and the Member States to monitor closely all trials and judicial proceedings against human rights defenders and labour rights activists through the presence of representatives of the EU delegation and the embassies of the Member States in Algiers and to report on the matter to [European] Parliament*”<sup>1</sup>.

Three years later since the adoption of that resolution and one year after the adoption of the EU-Algeria Partnership Priorities, we regret that serious breaches and violations to human rights continue to threaten the lives and human dignity of Human Rights Defenders in Algeria whose situation we are deeply concerned about, namely:

**Abdullah Benaoum** is a Human Rights Defender and social media activist who has written on labour rights, prisoners' rights, and the rights of persons with disabilities in Algeria. Recently, on 6 June 2018, Ghilizan's Criminal Court of Appeal upheld a two-year sentence against him on a number of charges relating to Facebook posts in which he criticised the government.

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<sup>1</sup> European Parliament, *Joint Motion for a Resolution on the imprisonment of workers and human rights activists in Algeria* (2015/2665(RSP)).



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**Ameen Fiddah** is a Human Rights Defender held in arbitrary detention since 13 January 2018. He faces charges in relation to Facebook posts criticising mass killings by the Algerian military. He is facing accusations of “attacking the army’s morale” and “inciting against national unity”, and being held as investigation is pending. Despite constitutional amendments passed in 2016, Algerian authorities continue to resort to criminal prosecutions for peaceful speech, using articles in the penal code criminalizing “offending the president” or “insulting state officials”.

**Al-Taher Belabbas** is the national coordinator of the National Committee to Defend the Rights of the Unemployed in Algeria. He has advocated for the rights to housing, labour movements and the rights to organise in union activism and student groups. On 5 March 2018, he was banned from traveling while en route to the World Social Forum 2018 in Brazil at Algiers international airport. Later on 15 April, Warqala Court in eastern Algeria sentenced Taher Belabbas to two months in prison.

Another prominent Human Rights Defender who has faced harassment, **Ahmine Noureddine**, is lawyer who represents individuals in Ghardaïa Province, Algeria, including members of the Amazigh Ibadi religious minority community. He has faced charges of “false communication” and “insulting a regulatory body” after filing a torture complaint against the police. He was acquitted on 28 May.

We would be grateful to hear back from you with regards to recent actions taken in support of these and other Human Rights Defenders, as well as upcoming measures you will take together with EU Member States, and engagement with the Algerian authorities to that effect.

Sincerely,

Ana Gomes (S&D)  
Elmar Brok (EPP)  
Petras Auštrevičius (ALDE)  
Mark Demesmaeker (ECR)  
Barbara Lochbihler (Greens/EFA)  
Helmut Scholz (GUE/NGL)  
Liliana Rodrigues (S&D)  
Bart Staes (Greens/EFA)  
Julie Ward (S&D)  
Jordi Solé (Greens/EFA)  
Pascal Durand (Greens/EFA)  
Nessa Childers (S&D)  
António Marinho e Pinto (ALDE)  
Bodil Valero (Greens/EFA)  
Theresa Griffin (S&D)  
Tunne Kelam (EPP)  
Magrete Auken (Greens/EFA)  
Martina Anderson (GUE/NGL)  
Dietmar Köster (S&D)  
Jude Kirton-Darling (S&D)  
Soraya Post (S&D)  
Hilde Vautmans (ALDE)  
Ana Miranda (Greens/EFA)