

24 January 2012

**M. François Fillon**

Prime Minister  
Hôtel de Matignon  
57, rue de Varenne  
75700 Paris  
FRANCE

**Re: Arrest and detention of Alkarama executive director, Dr Mourad Dhina**

Mr Prime Minister,

We, the undersigned international and national human rights organizations, call on you not to extradite Dr Mourad Dhina, executive director of Alkarama – a Swiss foundation working on human rights in the Arab world. French police arrested Dr Dhina on Monday 16 January 2012, at the request of the Algerian authorities.

In addition to being Alkarama's executive director, Dr Dhina is also a founding member of *Rachad*, a peaceful political association that is legally registered in France and that seeks democratic change in Algeria.

Dr Dhina had been attending a meeting of Rachad in Paris when police arrested him at Paris-Orly airport as he was about to fly back to Geneva, where he resides. Since then, French authorities have stated that they are detaining Dr Dhina at the request of the Algerian authorities, who are seeking his extradition to Algeria for prosecution on charges that he belonged to an armed terrorist group in Switzerland in the 1990s.

On Tuesday 17 January, the President of the Paris Court of Appeal confirmed Dr Dhina's detention in view of his potential extradition to Algeria, and that Algerian authorities would have 30 days to present the case for his extradition.

Dr Dhina has played a key role in exposing human rights violations in the Arab world through his work at Alkarama. In addition, his political activities have been carried out in lawful exercise of his freedom of expression and association, as guaranteed under international law. Dr Dhina had travelled freely to France on numerous past occasions. We therefore fear that the request by the Algerian authorities may be motivated by a desire to muzzle him because of his political activities with Rachad and his activities as a human rights defender with Alkarama.

We further fear that Dr Dhina would be at risk of torture and ill-treatment if he were sent back to Algeria, given the documented use of torture by the Algerian authorities – most recently referred to by the Committee against Torture during its review of Algeria in 2008. This would be contrary to France's obligations under articles 3 of the European Convention on Human Rights and the United Nations Convention against Torture. We also are concerned that Algeria's record of convicting suspects in manifestly unfair trials in cases involving allegations of terrorism would put Dr Dhina at risk of a



EURO-MEDITERRANEAN HUMAN RIGHTS NETWORK  
RESEAU EURO-MEDITERRANÉEN DES DROITS DE L'HOMME  
الشبكة الأوروبية - المتوسطية لحقوق الإنسان

conviction and a prison term on the basis of a trial that falls far short of international norms for a fair trial violating the prohibition of non-refoulement.

Given the key role France has played in the establishment of an international system for the promotion and protection of human rights, and the emphasis it places on the respect of human rights domestically, we hope that you will be able to assist us in protecting Dr Dhina's rights by ensuring that he is not extradited. Furthermore, if there is no credible evidence that he has committed any crimes that are recognized as such under international standards, we urge French authorities to release him immediately. France must uphold its international obligations with respect to human rights and avoid possible complicity in efforts by Algerian authorities to stifle opposition and human rights activities by Algerians in exile.

Yours sincerely,

ACAT-France  
Alkarama  
Algeria Watch  
Cairo Institute for Human Rights Studies (CIHRS)  
Centre Libanais pour les Droits de l'Homme (CLDH)  
Euro-Mediterranean Human Rights Network (EUROMED)  
International Federation for Human Rights (FIDH)  
Front Line Defenders  
International Commission of Jurists (ICJ)  
Ligue des droits de l'Homme  
World Organisation Against Torture (OMCT)

**fidh**

