

## UPDATE: Algeria: Samia Smets acquitted

Thursday 30 October 2008, by [El Watan](#) (Date first published: 29 October 2008).

30/10/2008: Samia S., accused of having damaged a Quran and sentenced last September to 10 years imprisonment [1], was acquitted on 28 October 2008 by the judge of the criminal division of the Court of Biskra. (El Watan)

This 30 year old woman was detained in a prison in Biskra, southern Algeria, for a civil case; she had inadvertently dropped a copy of the Quran in a water container during an argument with her fellow prisoners. She has been sentenced without any legal assistance by the Court of first instance of Biskra on the basis of her fellow prisoners' testimonies saying they had seen her tearing up the Holy Book.

During the appeal trial held last week, the lawyer Talha Houda defended her client basing her defence on the inadmissibility of the testimonies/evidences and the absence of the *corpus delicti*. After one week, this verdict has widely satisfied the accused and her lawyer. The latter declared: *"The tribunal has restored the image of Biskra and the whole of Algeria, in proclaiming this acquittal. This also demonstrates that the Criminal court is a court of evidences and not of conviction since no tangible evidence has been presented by the accusers, who are the fellow prisoners and their testimonies were misleading. I thank the judges who have considered the mitigating circumstances for my warrant ».*

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**P.S.**

\* Source: El Watan. Posted in English on WLUML website. Translated by: Chiara Maurilio.

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### Footnotes

[1] See [URGENT: Algeria: Support for Samia Smets, sentenced to 10 years for allegedly damaging a Quran](#)