

Algeria: Stop the repression! Solidarity with Dr Kamel Aissat!

Tuesday 18 July 2023, by [PST \(Algeria\)](#) (Date first published: 10 July 2023).

After learning early on the morning of 15 July at Béjaïa airport that he was the subject of an ISTN (ban on leaving the country), our comrade Dr Kamel Aissat, a university professor and member of the PST leadership - which has been administratively suspended since April 2022 - was summoned and questioned on the same day by the Béjaïa gendarmerie from 1pm before returning home at around 7pm.

He was informed that he would have to appear before the public prosecutor on Sunday morning. His mobile phone, which he had just lost in this unexpectedly chaotic situation, was demanded by the gendarmes.

Our comrade was told that this harassment by the police and the judiciary was the result of his public scientific and political stance, in particular his videos posted on social networks, against the Tala Hamza/Amizour zinc and lead mine project, and his involvement in mobilising the local population against this dangerous project.

The project, which has been approved by the Council of Ministers and awarded to Australian and Chinese multinationals, has been rejected by several villages in Tala Hamza and Amizour in the wilaya of Béjaïa, especially as no prior environmental or public health impact assessment has been carried out, as required by the laws in force.

The harmful and disastrous effects of this type of mine on the environment and public health are well known throughout the world and in Algeria (similar case of the Tlemcen mine).

Several weeks ago, a petition was even launched demanding that the public authorities comply with the law by consulting the population and carrying out an impact study on the environment and public health.

Everything points to the fact that, if the Tala Hamza mine is developed, not only could several villages and their entire agricultural economy be wiped out, but also the huge water table in the soumame valley (estimated at over 1,600 billion m³), which would be contaminated. The serious consequences of such a scenario, if it were to occur, could even affect the sea and a number of economic activities in the wilaya of Béjaïa, particularly the agri-food sector.

The repressive action taken against our comrade Kamel Aissat in order to intimidate and silence him, and consequently against the entire population of the region, seems to reflect once again the determination of the government in power to continue with the authoritarian logic of force majeure that has been rife since 2019. This repressive attitude, which is contrary to the laws of the regime itself, has already filled the prisons with hundreds of political prisoners and prisoners of conscience, and has muzzled democratic freedoms in our country.

A campaign of solidarity with our comrade Dr Kamal Aissat and the people of Tala Hamza and

Amizour has been launched to denounce the repression and demand respect for democratic freedoms, in particular freedom of expression and opinion on all economic, social and political issues and projects in our country.

The silence of environmental officials, members of parliament, local elected representatives and civil society in the wilaya of Béjaïa on this serious issue is simply unacceptable!

Stop the repression and intimidation!

For the respect of democratic freedoms and expression!

Let us express loud and clear our solidarity with Dr Kamel Aissat and the people of Tala Hamza, Amizour and Béjaïa!

15 July 2023

PST - SOCIALIST WORKERS PARTY OF ALGERIA

P.S.

• IVP. SATURDAY 15 JULY 2023:
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