

Algeria: Environmental alert is not a crime! It's a duty

Sunday 3 December 2023, by [MINETO Luc](#) (Date first published: 30 November 2023).

Professor and environmental activist Kamel Aissat is being prosecuted for recent publications.

Following the Hirak demonstrations that shook Algeria in 2019, the government of current president Abdelmadjid Tebboune has been stepping up its authoritarianism and cracking down hard on journalists, political activists, environmentalists and trade unionists.

On Sunday 3 December, Kamel Aissat will appear in court in Bejaia to answer the charges of "publication detrimental to national unity" and "publication detrimental to the national interest".

It is his position as a scientist in relation to the Tala-Hamza-Amizour zinc and lead mining project (in the Bejaïa region) that is being prosecuted. On several occasions, Kamel has warned public opinion and the authorities about the possible consequences for the health of the population and the environment.

For him, this mine is not like an iron mine, because lead is a heavy metal that is potentially neurotoxic. He says that lead has many effects on human health and can cause neurological diseases, congenital malformations, lead poisoning (excessive presence of lead in the body with harmful effects, especially in children and pregnant women). Lead, he adds, is transmitted through the air, grass and water.

Panama recently showed the way: there, the strength of the social movements defeated the presidency, parliament and the courts, forcing the Supreme Court to declare unconstitutional Law 406, which authorised silver mining (another heavy metal, as Professor Aissat would say!) in the Penonomé region.

On Sunday, all the accusations against Kamel Aissat must be dropped!

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P.S.

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<https://internationalviewpoint.org/spip.php?article8333>

- Translated by *International Viewpoint* from *Revista movimento*:
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