

Algeria: Bouteflika's Regime Continues to Fight the Press .. Anhari - a Continuous Imprisonment of Journalists and the Regime Is a Liar
By Arabic Network for Human Rights
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Cairo July 15, 2012 — The Arabic Network for Human Rights Information (ANHRI) denounced the judgment of June 25, 2012 against the Algerian female journalist "Fatma Zahra Emarah,". She sentenced to two months imprisonment, a fine of 20 thousand dinars and a compensation of 100 thousand dinars, due to libel and slender claim, although she exercised her job, in the framework of the constitution, international covenants and published a report on mental health hospital in Annaba.

ANHRI said: "This judgment joins the series of unfair judgments issued, recently, against the journalists and the activists. Such judgments, affirm that the Algerian authorities continue to suppress the press freedoms and emphasizes that the regime is completely liar, regarding the cessation of the imprisonment of journalists."

On Monday, June 25, Annaba court found, the journalist newspaper "Akhar Sa'ah", "Fatma Zahra Emarah" guilty. She was sentenced of two months imprisonment, a fine of 20 thousand dinars (247 dollars) and compensation of 100 thousand dinars (equivalent to U.S. \$ 1240).

Such harsh judgment because of a claim brought by "Razi" former director of the mental health hospital in Annaba, accusing "Fatma" of slender, because of a newspaper article published on the trial of the hospital director who is accused of sexual harassment of female employee in the same hospital. He accused her as not accurately transferred the course of that trial.

ANHRI said: "The judgment is unacceptable in principle because it still asserts that the journalist is still could faces the confinement and restriction of his liberty for exercising his profession."

ANHRI added that the judgment "represents a clear threat to the freedom of the press, media, and asserts that the press law which was amended in November 2011 is considered an ink on a paper."

It is supposed that, according to the recent amendments, the journalists will not be punished by imprisonment for publishing crimes and misdemeanors of the press. But the state still use other articles of the Penal Code and others to imprison the journalists.

Earlier in the month of June, a correspondent of the newspaper "La nouvelle république" "Mansour Si Mohammed" in the city (Moasker) for a similar judgment of imprisonment for a period of two months and a fine of 50 thousand dinars (about \$ 625) due to slender brought against him by the director of the Tax Office in the region, because of an article discusses the in-compliance of the tax office to the judgment of the judiciary.

ANHRI stressed that : "The Algerian government appears unwilling to reform and exercise all the legal tricks and games for the continued intimidation of journalists, and siege the press and ensure their loyalty to the authority."

ANHRI said : "Such trials of journalists, lead to the fail of the purpose of the profession of journalist and the breakdowns its function as a fourth authority to the monitoring and the accountability the officials ."

According to press reports, "Fatma", and "Mansour Si Mohammed," appealed against the sentences issued against them.

ANHRI demanded the Algerian authorities to quickly revoke and amend all the articles of law that imprison the journalists, which make the practice of their profession within the framework of the constitution and international conventions, is a process fraught with danger.

ANHRI confirmed that "the demands of reformation in Algeria, no longer afford delay and that press freedom will never be the subject of bargaining, although there are many brave journalists are willing to pay the price for their integrity."

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