

His Excellency  
Abdelmadjid Tebboune  
President of the People's Democratic Republic of Algeria  
Via Botschaft der Demokratischen Volksrepublik Algerien  
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Your Excellency;

Please forgive me for approaching you on behalf of the Algerian Christian, 42-year-old Hamid Soudad. He has been held in custody since January 20<sup>th</sup>, 2021. On the very day of his arrest, a court sentenced him to five years in prison for violating blasphemy laws. The judgment was upheld by the next court on March 22<sup>nd</sup> in Oran. This maximum sentence, meted out to the father of a family with small children, appears disproportionately harsh.

As early as April 22<sup>nd</sup>, 2009, three UN special rapporteurs stated in a joint declaration that blasphemy laws are often counterproductive with regard to promoting mutual respect. They lead to *de-facto-censorship* of any internal or interreligious differences and ultimately to the persecution of minorities and those who think differently.

Therefore, dear Mr. President, I humbly beseech you to do everything in your power to advocate at least the conditional release of Mr. Hamid Soudad. Please also consider advocating the elimination of the blasphemy law in question. I am sure that tolerance between people of different religious persuasions is possible with less drastic means.

Most respectfully