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**Algeria**

# **Lyes sentenced to six months in prison in Algeria**

- IV Online magazine - 2025 - IVP609 - October 2025 -

Publication date: Thursday 9 October 2025

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The case involves a double accusation. The first is introduced by the report of the Aokas police station (Béjaia) carried out on May 1st, where he was questioned about a Facebook post dating back more than five months, in which he recommended listening to and debating with the striking high school students.

The second accusation relates to his Facebook cover photo (which is several years old), accompanied by a quote from Étienne de la Boétie: "They are only great because we are on our knees, let us stand up. Support for all prisoners of conscience."

According to the accused's testimony after his appearance before the judge, there was a significant contradiction between the judge's summing-up, where he seemed to have accepted the deconstruction of all the accusations, and the verdict; which suggests that this is more of a political trial against the person of Lyes Touati than a real judgment. Lyes Touati's ordeal lasted more than six months. He was unjustly accused in several cases.

It should be noted that at the same time, Fathi Gherras, member and leader of the MDS - the MDS remains among the rare oppositionists still identifying with the Hirak - is under judicial supervision for having "affected the image and dignity" of President Tebboune on his Facebook page.

To understand this escalation of repression against activists demanding democratic freedoms and the lifting of the sword of Damocles hanging over them, it is perhaps worth noting that at the same time, Chengriha Tebboune's regime is facing a tense situation this autumn. Social media is abuzz with speculation about the flight of a general, a former head of the security services.

Here is a text written by Ali Ben Saad, professor emeritus at the French Institute of Geopolitics (University of Paris VIII), to understand the security context in which Algeria finds itself in the present moment of social tension:

In the large-scale dismissals that continue to destabilize and weaken the state and its army, I will only mention two, the most important and the most recent: that of the head of the DGSI (security services), Nasser El Djen , and that of the head of government, Larbaoui .

I will not return to their political underpinnings, which I tried to develop in my *Médiapart* column and my previous Facebook post entitled 'Algeria, ten years of brutalization of institutions and destabilization of the state.'

I will only focus on one 'small' detail common to both dismissals.

If Nasser El Djen chose to flee to Alicante, it was because he already had a property there as a residence, a wealthy one at that, other real estate assets and solid means of subsistence. Means with which he had, moreover, lived well for five years in Alicante, as a resident, before responding to the regime's requests and returning to Algeria.

Beyond the question of how this officer, who was not even a general at the time, was able to build up such a fortune with his military pay, the fact is that before obtaining the strategic position of head of the DGSI, which was also supposed to deal with the very sensitive issue of corruption, he already possessed this wealth. A wealth that was well known to the 'decision-makers' who invited him to return.

Which means that this practice of a civil servant building up a large fortune, which is, moreover, abroad, and impossible other than through corruption, is a norm endorsed by the decision-makers of the 'new Algeria' and practised by themselves. What is true and incontestable at the level of responsibility as sensitive as that of Nasser El Djen , is necessarily trivialized and widespread at all levels of decision-making.

The fight against corruption is merely a 'weapon of deterrence' between factions of the regime. Otherwise, it would have been applied to Nasser El Djen in advance instead of promoting him as the main instrument of this fight. He was only promoted to this position to use it for Tebboune's benefit.

Larbaoui was dismissed because at the time of the tragedy of the dilapidated bus falling into the El Harrach wadi, he was not in Algeria where he was supposed to be to act as interim for Tebboune, who was receiving treatment in Germany. This absence was a serious administrative error, which also gave the image of a country in disarray, abandoned by its leaders. It was therefore difficult not to punish this absence.

But why was Larbaoui absent? It was because he was with his family, who had accompanied him to the United States when he was ambassador there but, instead of joining him in Algeria when he was appointed prime minister, chose to settle permanently in the United States with resident status. And he therefore went there regularly in the name of 'family balance,' his travelling expenses being paid with state funds.

Beyond the source of subsistence for a family in such an expensive country, governing Algeria as head of government while having one's family living abroad did not pose a problem for decision-makers. This is because it is a model widely used among these decision-makers, some of whom even envied him for having had the chance to choose Trump's America instead of the 'eternal enemy', France, where the winds have turned sour.

The regime keeps decrying 'foreign influence.' But in practice, it rules us from abroad.

*Ali Bensaad 28 September 2025*

Algeria is experiencing a situation where the regime has entered, since the Hirak, a repressive and authoritarian spiral that is intended to be “transitional”, hence the “suspension” of the parties that are considered as trouble-makers (notably the PST) and not the banning of them. But the regime does not emerge from its internal contractions: each negation opens onto another negation. It reacts with intermittent repression, like a sword of Damocles.

And the trial of comrade Lyes Touati came at the “wrong” time. It serves as an example and a warning for any action critical of the regime's policies.

*1 October 2025*

*Translated by **International Viewpoint**.*

*PS:*

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