

Algerian blogger jailed over Facebook poem dies

ALGIERS - A British-Algerian journalist died Sunday after having staged a hunger strike to protest a two-year jail term for offending Algeria's president in a poem posted online, his lawyer said.



Image by 123RF

"I can confirm the death of the journalist Mohamed Tamalt in Bab el-Oued hospital after a hunger strike of more than three months and a three-month coma" that followed, Amine Sidhoum said on Facebook.

The prison service, in a statement said Tamalt had died of a lung infection for which he was receiving treatment since it was detected on December 4. Tamalt, a dual national, launched the hunger strike in protest after his arrest near his parents' house in the capital Algiers on June 27.

The 42-year-old blogger and freelance journalist who ran a website from London where he lived was charged with "offending" President Abdelaziz Bouteflika and "defaming a public authority" in the poem which he shared on Facebook.

A court in Algiers sentenced him two years in prison on July 11 and fined him 200,000 dinars (\$1,800), and an appeals court upheld the ruling a month later.

Human Rights Watch had urged Algerian authorities to release him in August when he was reportedly in critical condition. "The Algerian authorities should quash the case against Tamalt and send the message that free speech will be respected in

Algeria," it said at the time.

Source: [AFP](#).

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