

10 March 2020

Greece: Migrant rights defender Salam Kamal-Aldeen banned from entering Greece

On 28 February 2020, the lawyer of migrant rights defender Salam Kamal-Aldeen submitted an appeal against his deportation order to the Mytilini district court of Lesbos. Following his arrest on 11 December 2019, Salam Kamal-Aldeen learnt that he had been registered on the National List of Undesired Aliens, and banned from entering Greece. He was notified that he had to leave the territory within 30 days, which forced him to leave the country on 31 December 2019.

[Salam Kamal-Aldeen](#) is a Danish human rights defender and co-founder of the NGO Team Humanity operating in Lesbos, Greece. Team Humanity was founded in September 2015 in response to the ongoing refugee crisis in Europe. The volunteer organisation is involved in rescue operations at sea and provides humanitarian aid to refugees in Lesbos. It also runs a day centre frequented by approximately 1500 women and children living in a local refugee camp.

On 11 December 2019, Salam Kamal-Aldeen was arrested by representatives of the Department of Immigration of Lesbos and threatened with deportation on the grounds of being considered a threat to national and public security. He was held at Mytilini police station until 27 December 2019. Upon his arrest, the human rights defender discovered that he had been registered on the National List of Undesired Aliens in August 2019 and had been banned from entering Greece until 8 October 2022, despite being a legal resident in the country. He was also informed that he had to leave the Greek territory within 30 days. He left the country on 31 December 2019.

The human rights defender had not been notified of these decisions before his arrest despite having travelled abroad and back on several occasions between August and December 2019. He was not provided with the reasons for the imposition of these measures, despite the requests for information repeatedly made to the police by his lawyers. The Hellenic Police also refused to provide one of his lawyers with copies of the case file, arguing that it was classified due to national security and public interest.

Salam Kamal-Aldeen has been targeted for his peaceful human rights activities in the past. In January 2016, he was taken into custody by Greek port authorities together with his crew and charged with attempted smuggling for rescuing 64 refugees at sea. Their rescue vessel was confiscated together with personal belongings of the volunteers. Salam Kamal-Aldeen was kept in custody for 48 hours, during which he was offered to sign a document in Greek confessing to being a smuggler. In May 2018, after a two-and-a-half-year long legal battle, the human rights defender was cleared of all charges by a court in Lesbos.

Front Line Defenders is seriously concerned about the arbitrary arrest of Salam Kamal-Aldeen, as well as the order to leave Greece and the ban from entering the country issued against him. It believes that these measures are the latest in a series of reprisals for his peaceful and legitimate work in defence of the rights of refugees.

Front Line Defenders urges the Greek authorities to:

1. Immediately lift the ban from entering Greece issued against Salam Kamal-Aldeen, as it is believed to be solely motivated by his legitimate and peaceful work in defence of human rights in Lesbos;
2. Guarantee in all circumstances that all human rights defenders and organisations, in particular those working on the rights of refugees and migrants in Greece, are able to carry out their legitimate human rights activities without fear of reprisals and free of all restrictions including judicial harassment.