

To : Mr. Gerald Darmanin, French Home Affairs Minister

Copies to EU, Swedish Government

Brussels, 8.04.2021

Mr. Minister,

The International Federation of Journalists and its affiliates from Afghanistan (AIJA), France (SNJ, SNJ-CGT) and Sweden (SUJ) call on you and all European decision-making bodies and other authorities involved to stop the deportation of an Afghan journalist Elyaas Ehsas from France to Sweden then to Afghanistan under the terms of the Dublin agreement.

Mr. Ehsas, 27, is a war correspondent with a TV channel based in Kabul. Taliban groups accused him of betraying his country as he refused to follow their orders. He was threatened with death as a journalist as well as a member of the Hazara minority.

In 2015, our colleague fled his war-torn country and escaped walking from Afghanistan through Pakistan, Iran and Turkey to Europe. He finally reached Stockholm. Sweden refused to grant him asylum following an international agreement with the Kabul regime in order to prevent flows of refugees onto its soil.

Therefore Mr. Ehsas arrived in France to seek protection. The French authorities denied his request because of the Dublin regulations. According to this agreement, asylum could only be claimed in the first country of arrival in the EU.

Elyaas Ehsas is currently under house arrest in Rennes (west of France) and could, at any moment, be sent back by force to Sweden by French police according to the Dublin regulation. French justice rejected his claim to seek asylum in France due to the situation in Afghanistan, despite the fact that it is one of the most dangerous countries in the world for journalists.

The IFJ and its Afghan affiliate regularly report the many deadly attacks on our Afghan colleagues across the country.

In these circumstances the IFJ and all unions involved in this humanitarian case urgently ask

the French minister of Interior to stop all deportation procedures to Sweden concerning our colleague Ehsas.

We all wish strongly that France, well-known as the birthplace of human rights, gives a chance for our Afghan colleague to escape death by ensuring he is not sent back to his country.

Our request is clear and simple Mr Minister : The French authorities must give him a chance to apply in France for asylum in order to stop the Dublin procedure.

Yours sincerely.

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IFJ General Secretary

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