

From Valletta to London

Solidarity with three Human Rights Defenders

Coalition for the El Hiblu 3

On Tuesday, 16 December 2025, another El Hiblu 3 hearing took place in Valletta, Malta in front of the Court of Criminal Appeal with three senior judges including the Chief Justice. In a powerful argumentation, Abdalla and Amara's lawyers demonstrated that charges in the Bill of Indictment were not backed by facts. They explained why three counts, including terrorism, are null and void.

We wait for the outcome on the 21 January 2026 and another hearing in front of the Criminal Court is scheduled for the 29th of January.

Simultaneously, from December 15th to 18th of 2025, a four-day hearing occurred in London at Westminster Magistrates' Court, which has been reported in the media in the UK and in Malta. Kader, one of the El Hiblu 3 who escaped from Malta in August 2023, was arrested in London in February 2025 and has been imprisoned since this date. Following an international arrest warrant, UK authorities are attempting to extradite Kader back to Malta, where he would face imprisonment during the ongoing court case, and the threat of a life sentence. With the support of his legal team, Kader is fighting against his extradition to stay in UK.

On Monday the 15th of December, the first day of his hearing, two expert opinions - requested by Kader's lawyer - were presented. One expert explained why the Maltese accusation of terrorism against the El Hiblu 3 does not match core elements of its international definition. The second expert, a doctor, reported on her medical examinations, which proved that Kader was repeatedly tortured in Libya. She also stated clearly that ongoing detention and imprisonment could lead to cumulative trauma.

On Tuesday, Kader himself took the floor. He could leave the glass walled cabin and entered the courtroom. He delivered a clear and powerful response not only to the friendly questions from his lawyer but also to the interrogation of the prosecutor. In his response, he recalled his suffering in Libya, the perilous sea crossing and rescue on the *El Hiblu* ship, the imprisonment in Malta and his route via Italy and France to the UK. He emphasised that he had always searched for a place of safety and that he escaped first the physical torture in Libya and then - as he was criminalized and threatened with accusations of terrorism - the mental torture in Malta.

On Wednesday and Thursday, Kader's lawyer summed up his 800-page submission, arguing there was no public interest in the UK approving the extradition. He contextualized Kader's story as flight from crimes against humanity and from Libya as an unsafe country. As quoted in the media, to carry out the extradition would make the UK "complicit in the punishment of a

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child for seeking to prevent him and 100 others being subjected to mistreatment". The prosecutor still insisted on the extradition to Malta.

We now await the judge's written pronouncement which we hope will be delivered by February 2026.

Be it in Valletta or in London, we continue to stand in solidarity with Abdalla, Amara and Kader and we will continue to fight for their freedom. We condemn the ongoing criminalisation of three human rights defenders, who helped to prevent an illegal push back of more than 100 people into torture camps.

For more on the extradition hearing in London, see this [article](#) in the *Time of Malta*.

For more information on the El Hiblu 3, see [here](#).