

Four Christians who were tried at the Larbaâ Nath Irathen Tribunal (near Tizi Ouzou) on 28 November will know their fate 12 December. The verdict has been delayed until that date.

The four men Abdenour, Idir, Mahmoud and Nacer are accused of having opened a non-Muslim place of worship without the autorisation from the national comission for worship services. One of these men is also being sued for having housed a foreigner without first informing the appropriate authorities.

The affair goes back to the month of August when these four Christians set up a place of worship in the Aït Atelli village (formerly called Fort National) in Kabylia. The villagers sent a petition to complain about the Christian presence and the mayor signed an order to close the place of worship, afterwards the four men were handed over to the justice to appear before the procurator.

At the tribunal the accused completely rejected the accusations against them, maintaining the right to Christian faith according to the country's high laws. The representative of the public ministry had demanded one year's prison for each of the accused. This is the minimum sentence detailed in article 13 of the 03-06 law from February 2006 relating to the exercice of worship services.

The court case has already been delayed three times, in August, in September and then again in October.

On 28 November before the Palace of Justice, a demonstration brought together representatives from human rights organisations, militant politicians, and members from the Protestant Church of Algeria (EPA). EPA's president Mustapha Krim present during the demonstrations was confident, "The four men are being accused of organising a non-Muslim worship service without authorisation, but we are operating legally and our organisation has been approved by the authorities of this country." "We will come back on 12 December" added the president of EPA.