



Speaker: **Almoustapha Alhacen**
/ Aghirin'man (Protection of the Soul), Niger

In 1978, Almoustapha Alhacen was employed by the Areva nuclear company as a worker in a uranium mill near Arlit. Because there were strange illnesses among colleagues and their wives and mysterious deaths of relatively young people, he founded a local NGO called Aghirin'man in 2002, in Tuareg language "Protection of the Soul", dedicated to research into uranium dangers.

Dear friends. My name is Almoustapha Alhacen, I coordinate the civil society of Arlit and founded NGO Aghirin'man, a Niger rights organization, which aims to protect the environment and wellbeing, that is to say, human rights.

We have addressed a number of questions to Orano, the company formerly known as Areva, with its subsidiaries in Niger, Somair and Cominak. Cominak stopped operating in 2021. They're trying to, in their words, repurpose the site.

It's a very worrying situation for us. It's something they've already done in Mounana in Gabon and 50 years later they're doing the same thing in Niger, abandoning the local population and leaving them with radiation. We are calling upon the state to respect the environmental regulations and for the site repurposing to be done in accordance with the standards.

Niger has been producing uranium for 50 years, but it's the poorest country in the world. We're left with long-lasting contamination and unimaginable diseases. Unfortunately, that is the reality of our situation. And that is what our NGO is fighting against - to call them out on these kinds of practices.

That's what I wanted to share with you, my dear friends. We are with you, and our voice needs to be as strong as possible against the dangers of uranium. The best way to deal with uranium is to leave it underground. I'm convinced humanity needs electricity, but we cannot manage the dangers of radioactivity connected to uranium.

Wishing you a successful gathering and wish that you think about us during the Forum.
See you soon!

Disclaimer

This transcript is at the responsibility of Peace Boat and may not be completely the same as the original testimony. The original testimony was presented online at the World Nuclear Survivors Forum 2021 on December 2-3, where over 30 nuclear survivors from five continents around the world shared their voices with more than 1000 people. The Forum was hosted by Peace Boat in partnership with the International Campaign to Abolish Nuclear Weapons (ICAN). The stories and panel discussions are all available for viewing on demand via Youtube or on our website here: <https://nuclearsurvivors.org>