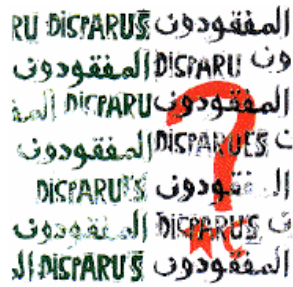


Collectif
des
familles
de
disparu(e)s
en
Algérie



TRUTH AND JUSTICE

FOR THE DISAPPEARED

IN ALGERIA

NEWSLETTER

Number 1 – October /December 2001

MEMBERSHIP

Name:

Address:

Zip/ Post Code:..... **City:**.....

Telephone :.....

Fax:

Email Address:.....

- I wish to join the Families of the Disappeared in Algeria Collective and am sending my dues for 2001 (30 €).
- I wish to support your activities with a donation

Please make chèques out to “Collectif des familles de disparu(e)s en Algérie” and send your membership form to : Collectif des familles de disparu(e)s en Algérie –148 rue Faubourg Saint Denis 75010 - Paris - France

A CONDENSED HISTORY OF THE "COLLECTIF"

After the interruption of the election in 1992 in Algeria, thousands of people have been "disappeared".

The "Collective of the families of the disappeared in Algeria" ("Collectif des familles de disparu(e)s en Algérie"), was created in 1998 by some families of disappeared resident in France with the help of Amnesty International, the League for Human Rights and the International Federation of Leagues for Human Rights. Moreover, the "Collectif" has also benefitted from the support of NOVIB, the Catholic Committee against hunger and for development, "France Libertés" and EMMAÜS, "Hourya/liberté", the F.S.U., ACAT.

Since its creation, the "Collectif" has worked to make international public opinion aware of the magnitude of the human rights Crisis in Algeria that has caused the disappearance of thousands of men and women. This has involved numerous meetings with various personalities, participation in conferences, contacts with the media.

In July 1998 a tour of five European capitals (Amsterdam, Brussels, London, Paris and Geneva) was organised with the support of the local national sections of Amnesty International and of the National League for Human Rights. A delegation of the "Collectif", composed of families of the disappeared coming from France and Algeria, met members of parliament, personalities and the Working Group on forced disappearances at the United Nations in Geneva.

Since then, the families, determined to continue the struggle until the end, have engaged themselves in a fight for truth and justice.

Thanks to their perseverance, the question of forced disappearances is no longer a taboo subject in Algeria and the wall of silence has been shattered. However, since the first disappearances ten years ago, the Algerian authorities have not made any advance in the search for a solution to this tragedy.

In order to continue our work, it has been thought necessary to provide a space in Algeria to meet and where the families could gather together. A suitable office was found in July 2001 in Algiers and a rental contract has been signed in the name of the Algerian League for the defence of human rights (LADDH), since the association "SOS Disparu (e)s" has no legal status in Algeria.

Thanks to the support of the National Endowment for Democracy (NED,USA) and of the Catalan fund for cooperation and development (Spain) the office was officially opened on September 15th, 2001, in the presence of official representatives from four countries: France, Switzerland, Denmark and Italy. A representative for the National Democratic Institute for International Affairs, a non-governmental organisation based in the USA, was also present. Some of the Algerian organisations present were the "Rassemblement action jeunesse", the Front of Socialist Forces M. Taleb Ibrahim, an ex-minister, some representatives of the families of the disappeared in the cities of Oran, Constantine and Relizane, some lawyers from Algiers and the president of the Algerian League for the Defence of Human Rights (LADDH), Maitre Ali Yahia Abdenour.

"SOS Disparus" has now been working for some months in Algiers with the support and the partnership of the "Collectif" and it is now developing its own set of activities

We have the right to know



Testimony

Relizane 4th June 2000

SUMMARY OF THE REST OF THE NEWSLETTER

1) Copy of a very moving letter that a mother whose son has disappeared has sent to the Federal Delegation for Human Rights.

2) Conferences and meeting attended by the Collectif

a) Meeting in Barcelona organised by the Spanish association "Solidarity and development for peace".

b) Nassera Dutour has participated at a conference for peace organised in Lille by the association "Mothers for peace".

c) Meeting with representatives of various bodies of the European Union (MEPs, European Commission, European Council), the Belgian foreign ministry and the association "Voice of women".

Nassera Dutour raised the issue of disappearances a few days before the European Union was due to sign an association agreement with Algeria.

3) Security forces repeatedly disperse rallies of families of disappeared in Constantine.

4) General meeting of the "Collectif". The following main objectives have been defined and approved:

a) Creation of a mailing list;

b) Increasing the information stored in the database of the disappeared.

c) Publication of a collection of testimonies of families of disappeared.

d) Provision of regular responses to the Working Group on forced disappearances of the United Nations.

8) A new disappearance The mother of a man who was "disappeared" in 1994 has reported that another of her sons is also missing since January 26th, 2002 (this is

5) A human rights defender, Mohamed Hadj Smaïn, representative of the Algerian League for Human Rights (LADDH) in the province of Relizan has been condemned to two months of prison for libel. He has decided to appeal against this judgement.

6) A representative of the USA embassy in Algeria has been received by SOS Disparus and informed of its activity.

7) The activities of SOS Disparus:

a) These are increasing by the day since the opening of the Algiers office. A rota of volunteers receives families of disappeared, collects testimonies and participates in various activities that range from schooling support to psychological help to families of disappeared.

b) In Algiers the families gather twice weekly, on Sundays in front of the National Consultative Commission for the Protection of Human Rights (the new official body replacing the ONDH) and on Wednesdays in May 1st Square. In other large towns the gatherings happen once a week.

c) Contacts have been established with local committees of families of the disappeared in various towns and the idea of organising a National March has been suggested.

d) Meetings with families of disappeared are being organised to collect witness statements. These will be published in a collection of testimonies.

Omar Toumi, about whom AI issued an Urgent Action on 14 February).