

Collectif
des
familles
de
disparu(e)s
en
Algérie

المفقودون DISPARUS
ون DISPARU المفقودون
المفقودون DISPARU المنة
DISPARUES المفقودون
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TRUTH AND JUSTICE

FOR THE DISAPPEARED

IN ALGERIA

Number 3 – April/June 2002

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EURO-MEDITERRANEAN UNION

On the eve of the French presidency of European Union, on February 2000, the FIDH, in partnership with the CFDA (Collectif des familles de disparus en Algérie), the APADM (Association des parents et amis des disparus du Maroc), SOLIDA (solidarité avec les détenus Libanais) held in Paris the first meeting of the missing persons families. It appeared necessary to call on the European Union about the great number of violent disappearances in the Mediterranean area. The meeting took place on 7th till 11th February and included associations and representatives of missing persons as well as families of the missing persons from Algeria, Lybia, Lebanon, Egypt, Morocco, Turkey and Syria. A silent gathering at the Pantheon had preceded a 2-day seminar during which the families had been able to exchange and confront their experiences. At the end of these 2 days, a declaration was issued headed "the right to know". The proceedings ended with the creation of the 'Coalition Euro-Méditerranéenne des familles de disparus'.

BARCELONA/VALENCIA - 20TH TO 23RD APRIL 2002 HUMAN RIGHTS AND ASSOCIATION AGREEMENTS

Within the framework of the 'Coalition Euro-Méditerranéenne', at themoment when association agreements were about to take place, on April 2002 between the European Union and Algeria and Lebanon (postponed as concerns Lebanon), the Collectif des Familles de Disparus and SOLIDA arranged a series of meetings and activities in Barcelona and Valencia from 20th to 22nd April 2002 in Spain, thanks to the help of several organizations. The issue was to decide on ways of obtaining the respect of the clause of Human Rights in the Association Agreements.

These arrangements necessitated a long preparation work during which jurists, barristers and families of missing persons were joined and invited. It took 2 months to

set up this project: first, it was necessary to find financial resources, then, to contact Associations in Algeria, Lebanon, Morocco and Spain, also ensure the communication and the red tape (visas, appointments, LOGISTICS, etc...)

BARCELONA - 20TH APRIL 2002

The meeting started with a conference in Barcelone about "Pouvoirs Publics et disparitions forcées". This took place in the Collegio Legi de Avocados and included the Commission of Human Rights of the Bar of Barcelona, representatives of the families and their legal advisers, Amnesty International, FIDH and SODEPAU (Solidarité, Développement et Paix) as well as the 'Association Catalane des Droits de l'Homme'. The international and legal instruments were at the centre of the debate. The proceedings have been full of information as to the need and interest of these exchanges. The participants separated after planning to meet again in the future.

VALENCIA - 22ND APRIL 2002

On the day of opening of the Interministerial Conference of the European Union, the families went to Valencia where they were received by two Spanish Deputies, Mr André Perello and Mr. Ramon Cardona as well as the Cabinet Director of the Counsellor for Social Affairs of the region, Mr. Pedro Martinez Aparicio. These gentlemen were very preoccupied and committed themselves to intervene personally near the European Union.

A press conference organized with SEDOPAU Valencia took place in Parliament after which the families and the Human Rights militants, joined by anti-mondialisation militants met the Plaça de la Virgen. This ended with a public meeting in the quarters of a Communist Party section. The Spanish newspapers have widely commented on this event.

These meetings were made possible thanks to the support of CCFD (Comité Catholique contre la Faim et pour le Développement), REMDH (Réseau euro-méditerranéen des droits de l'homme), Amnesty International, SODEPAU (Solidarité développement et paix) Association Catalane de défense des droits humains, Commission des Droits de l'Homme, the Bar of Barcelona and MRG (mouvement anti-mondialisation)

DATA PROCESSING

BALANCE AND PROSPECTS

The Collectif des familles de disparus in Algeria's main target is to constitute individual files of missing persons destined to UNO units working on forced or involuntary disappearances. The first information has been gathered as far as 1997 near Human Rights fighters and barristers. After a european check-up of missing persons families, on August 1998, the families got settled in Algeria. First in Algiers, on August 1998, then in Constantine, Oran and Rélizabe as soon as 1999. It is during the weekly meetints that, little by little, the families provided more accurate testimonies and documents which enabled the drawing-up of precise lists which added up to the basic information (identity, place of residence, profession, etc...) indications as to the circumstances of the rapt and their authors....

The records sent to UNO in 1998 amounted to a few dozens but reach today several thousands. They are handled by the Secretariat of the UNO group on forced rapt (GTDF) which register them, checks on them and asks for further information then passes them on to the processing group when they hold their work sessions, five times a year : three times in Geneva and twice in New-York. The records considered acceptable are transmitted to the Algerian government who sometimes answers that the person is "wanted for terrorist activities or "on account of his implication in criminal actions". Often, that the person "has not, to this day, been located", "has been imprisoned then released", "has not

been found since his release", "has never been summoned or arrested"...

As an echo to such "answers", further information is provided to the UNO group of processing after consultation of the missing persons' relations. Each information is verified near families coming from the Algerian territory, as a rule by mail. At the present time, more than 3000 files are on hand. Five hundred files are as of now entered in a (base de données ?) and include all the information provided by the families with the specific details of each situation. This minute work gives a particular view on each case and will allow in time to clear it up. Right now, this task falls on two persons one of whom works half-time. The number of files increases daily. In Algiers first where, each day and especially on the day of the weekly meeting, from 10 to 20 files are created, brought or sent by families. All the files completed are verified again in Paris, duplicated and sent to UNO.

The subsidies obtained have allowed to run the Paris office created in 1998 and to create an office in Algiers in 2001. Both offices are in permanent contact, which enable a better processing of the files. **To this day, 7000 persons are reported missing in Algeria.**

Today, the COLLECTIF has spread all over the world the news of the forced disappearances through interventions in Turkey, Spain, Denmark, Italy, Great-Britain, Belgium, Holland, Switzerland, U.S.A., Canada, Morocco; through permanent contacts with the great international organizations for human rights : Amnesty International, FIDH and several of their human rights leagues, Human Rights Watch, Reporters sans Frontières ; with institutions : France Libertés, Fondation Canadienne des Droits de l'Homme, among others.

REPRESSION AND MEETINGS

The families of the missing persons meet every Thursday since August 1998 before the seat of the Commission Nationale Consultative pour la Promotion et la Protection des Droits de l'Homme

(CNCPPDH), formerly ONDH (Observatoire National des Droits de l'Homme) claiming for the truth as regards their relatives' lot. The authorities, who have decided to keep this problem secret have forbidden on the 26th June the following meeting due on 3rd July. The police said the orders came "from above".

During the meeting held on 26th June, the authorities had shown their determination to prevent the search for the truth, and did not hesitate to attack roughly the missing persons' mothers. Important police forces had been displayed before the Palais du Peuple to prevent this inopportune presence.

As a reminder : women of all ages have been violently beaten by the police. The tenacious indifference of the authorities that the families consider as a means to ignore the truth encourage said families to go on with this weekly action. It behoves to the Government to search for the truth and the one of the claims of the families of SOS DISPARUS assembled before the Press Office Tahar Djaout in Algiers on 4th May 2002. The Algiers, Constantine, Oran and Relizane committees had called for a national meeting asking the authorities to deal with the missing persons problem. This was a follow-up of a declaration of Farouk Ksentini, President of CNCPPDH of Human Rights calling for indemnities for the families of missing persons. The families know for sure that this problem can only be solved if processed in view of serving truth and justice. Farouk Ksentini's claim for indemnities for the families can only be receivable after justice decisions.

ARREST OF ABDERRAHMANE KHELIL AND SID AHMED MOURAD

On Sunday 26th May 2002, Abderrahmane Khelil and Sid Ahmed Mourad appeared before the Court of Justice of Bir Mourad Raïs and were sentenced to 6 months of prison with remission. On 19th May Abderrahmane Khelil, member of the Ligue Algérienne des Droits de l'Homme and of SOS Disparus, accompanied by his friend,

symbolic meetings before the CNCPPDH as well as the wilayats of Relizane, Oran and Constantine are meant as a reminder. The families face with determination the vulnerability the Government has brought on them and demand from the authorities that they assume their responsibilities as to the search for the truth.

The families say that they will fight to the end and will go on meeting before the CNCPPDH and before the wilayats of Constantine, Oran and Relizane. The CFDA is certain that the missing persons problem will only be solved if met with the determination to serve truth and justice.

Farouk Ksentini's answer to the real situation : indemnities

"If they have perpetrated crimes, let them be judged; if they are dead, let us know ; and if they are alive, let them be shown". Such is

?????Sid Ahmed Mourad, had applied for information about the numerous arrests of students who had taken part in a hostile demonstration against President Bouteflika that had taken place on 18th May. Both were placed under warrant in El Harrach prison before their appearance under the charge of "caught in the act of incitement to unarmed mob". This, although Abderrahmane Khelil and Sid Ahmed Mourad had not been present at the demonstration. Previously, on 14th and 18th March, Abderrahmane Khelil had been summoned to the Police for examination. On 18th March, he was in company with families of victims who were about to be received by Mr Lambo, UNO representative.

This shows the relentless pursuit in Algeria, of the Human Rights militants. Mohamed Smaïn, in charge of LADDH for the western area, had been sentenced to one year of prison on 24th February 2002 for having spoken the truth about the Relizane CHARNIER. Larbi Tahar, member of LADDH has been sentenced to 7 months of prison on 30th April 2002 under the charge of "incitement to unlawful assembly". Said assembly was not violent. Larbi Tahar has served his sentence.

It appears evident that the pursuits against the representatives for Human Rights are aimed at the families of missing persons.

BRUSSELS 6TH JUNE 2002

FIDH and Réseau Euro-méditerranéen have invited the Collectif and the Ligue des Droits de l'Homme to meetings on the subject of associations' agreements. They were enabled to speak with Raimon Obiols, European deputy chairman of Associations' agreements about a resolution **QUI ACCOMPAGNERAIT L'AVIS CONFORME A LA RATIFICATION**; Nassera Dutour and Yahia Assam have also met reporters from "Libération" and "Le Monde".

STRASBURG 11TH JUNE 2002

Thanks to the involvement of Andréa Subhan, working in the Parliament at the Human Rights unit, Nassera Dutour, spokesman of the Collectif, and Yahia Assam, in charge of the relations with the ONG for the Ligue Algérienne des Droits de l'Homme have met two members of Parliament : Olga Zrihen (PSE) and Johann Van Hecke (PPE) on 11th June 2002. After hearing Algerians from Algeria and Nassera Dutour, Olga Zrihen expressed her indignation about the approval of the ACCORDS when it seems evident, according to her that the situation in Algeria with regard to human rights is dramatic.

She proposed to contact her group in order to promote a hearing so that this problem be minutely examined "to avoid making the same error as with Tunisia". Johann Van Hecke, in charge of the Human Rights in his group, considers that it is essential, as a proof of their sincerity, Algeria accept the visits of ONG and special reporters. He suggests that this be explicitly asked of the government. Johann Van Hecke has pledged to submit the proposal to the group President.

EURO-MEDITERRANEAN NET IN ALGIERS

Jacob Gammelgaard, legal adviser of the Danish Foundation for Human Rights and Khemais Chammari, experts near the Réseau Euro-méditerranéen, have visited the office of SOS Disparus on 25th June 2002. They have discussed about the projects and the needs for their realization. Benoît Forget, expert of the Commission Générale des Réfugiés et des Demandeurs d'Asile, connected with the Justice Ministry of Belgium, has attended a press conference on the opening of the International Penal Court, on 27th June, ANIMEE by Ali Yahia Abdenour, President of the LADDH. He asked information from the members of SOS Disparus about the legal help tendered to the families.

EUROPEAN DELEGATION IN ALGIERS FROM 27TH TO 31ST MAY 2002

Being apprised that an european mission was going to Algiers from 27th to 31st May 2002, Nassera Dutour wrote a letter on 24th May begged the european delegation to plan a meeting with the associations of missing persons' families. The Collectif hoped that, within the scope of its program, the dellegation would be able to grant this. But, probably due to the lateness of the request, the meeting could not take place and the collectif regrets that SOS Disparus could not be heard as the other organizations for human rights are.

SOS DISPARUS RECEIVES ARTE

On Wednesday 26th June, the franco-german channel was welcomed by SOS Disparus on occasion of a report on the celebration of the 40th anniversary of Algeria's independence. The families were interviewed during their meeting before the Palais du Peuple, then the reporters completed their work at the association's place. The subject was broadcasted on 4th July 2002 during the ARTE Journal Télévisé.

NORD PAS-DE-CALAIS

Nassera Dutour, in her capacity as Presidente d'Honneur, has attended the general meeting of the Association de Soutien au Collectif des Familles de Disparus en Algérie in Bully-les-Mines, on 16th May 2002. After informing the assistance on her action, Nassera Dutour took part in the setting-up of a programm of action for 2003 of this first offspring in France of the Collectif created by Gérard Marlier, President of the Bethune section of the League for the Human Rights.

DEBATE MEETING IN TOULOUSE

"Algeria today" : such was the theme of the "film-debate" organized by the Association Egalité Toulouse Mirail on 6th May 2002 at the Utopia Cinéma in Toulouse. After watching the film "l'autre monde" written and produced by Merzak Allouache, a debate took place between Nassera Dutour, from the Collectif des Familles de Disparus en Algérie and Kamel Yessar, Algerian reporter in "Libre Algérie". The various reactions of the public about the film and considerations about the possible issues of the Algerian crisis were at the very heart of the debate.

THE ABDELKRIM GRIG N'SIN CASE

Abdelkrim Grig N'sin was first arrested in 1994 with his whole family. They were incarcerated in the Châteauneuf prison. His wife was tortured then relaxed one week after. Grig N'sin was sent to El-Harrach prison. After a first judgement, at the end of his punishment, Grig N'sin was set free. His son, the only one remaining to him (two are dead, the other three have disappeared) came for him and saw his father arrested once again by the police. The family remained without news for 10 days.

During that time, he was transfered successively from the police stations of Blida

to Boumerdes, Bouira, Bordj Bou Arreridj, Mila, Batna and Constantine. He was finally sent to the Tazoult convict-prison in Batna where he was kept untill June 2002. During these 8 years, Grig N'sin has known the cells of Tazoult, El-Harrach, Berouaghia and those of the Ben Aknoun barracks in Algiers.

MOHAMED YAHY, 28 YEARS OLD

Mohamed Yahy, employed in a butchery in Dellys was arrested on 25th June 2002 in his home, by the army security forces. Fateh Ladada, his employer, had been arrested on 23rd March 2002, kept in solitary confinement and tortured in the military base of Ben Aknoun. His brother, Azzedine, was also arrested on 2nd July and kept also in solitary confinement and was supposed to be right now in the El-Harrach prison. As for Mohamed Yahy, he could not be located. No charge was brought against them during the arrests whose authors were formally identified as mmembers of the local Army Security.



(Portraits of missing persons. Poster issued by Amnesty International for the demonstration in London)