

TRUTH AND JUSTICE FOR DISAPPEARED IN ALGERIA

NEWSLETTER

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Families of the disappeared in Algeria still pestered by the authorities

The procedure for compensation foreseen in the Charter for Peace and National Reconciliation requires families of disappeared people to ask at the police or gendarmerie for an official report of disappearance. Following this, the judge for family affairs provides a death certificate and, provided with these two documents, the family presents a demand for compensation at the wilaya (préfecture).

During the months of July and August 2011, both Hacène Ferhati, an active member of SOS Disparus, and Nassera Dutour, Spokesperson for the CFDA, received - several times - summonses and visits from police who tried, by all means they could, to make them sign documents requiring them to take steps to obtain compensation.

The experiences of Hacène Ferhati and Nassera Dutour are far from being isolated cases. Requirements to attend the wilaya or the gendarmerie, police visits to family homes, the delivering of death certificates which the family did not request, are the continual lot of families who have refused compensation. Having sent an [open letter in July 2010 to the UN Working Group on Enforced Disappearances](#) following a previous campaign by the authorities the CFDA reacted this time by sending out [an urgent press release](#) which was widely diffused at both national and international levels.

30th August 2011 declared First International Day for Victims of Enforced Disappearance

Families of disappeared in Algeria, just like families of disappeared on all continents, take seriously the International Day of the Disappeared on 30 August every year. This year they were called by the CFDA and SOS Disparus to assemble on the Place 30 Mai in Algiers in order to reaffirm their refusal to forget what has happened and to reaffirm their claims for Truth and Justice; families of disappeared assembled at the same time in Oran and Constantine. All recalled that the fate of more than 8 000 officially recognized disappearances have never been clarified. [Several articles in the Algerian press reported the rally](#) (link in French).

Following the coming into force, in December 2010, of the International Convention for the Protection of all Persons from Enforced Disappearance, this 28th international day of the disappeared was proclaimed 'First UN International Day of the Victims of Enforced Disappearance'. The United Nations Working Group on Enforced and Involuntary Disappearances chose this day to affirm, [in a declaration](#), its complete solidarity with the struggle of the families of disappeared, thus demonstrating to all that the families are not alone.

The UN CIC delegation to Algiers successfully questioned by families of the disappeared

A delegation of the UN International Coordinating Committee of National Institutions for the Promotion and Protection of Human Rights visited Algiers on 14, 15 and 16 September 2011 at the invitation of the Algerian CNCPPDH - National Consultative Commission for the Promotion and Protection of Human Rights. There is no doubt that the CIC delegation was visiting Algiers to try and get its Status A, withdrawn in March 2009 by the Accreditation Sub-Committee, reinstated. Only those national institutions that clearly respect criteria of independence defined in the 'Paris Principles' may be accorded Status A at the UN.

On Wednesday 14 September the CIC delegation was due to go to the CNCPPDH office; this is a few hundred metres from the place where families of the disappeared have been meeting each Wednesday since they were prohibited from meeting in the small Place Addis Abeba. Seeing the procession of cars that was bringing the delegation to the CNCPPDH the families tried to bar the road [in order to speak with members of the CIC about the treatment of the CNCPPDH of the question that was so important - that of the disappeared](#). The CIC delegation was most concerned about what the families, who happened to be just at the right place at the right time, had to say about the CNCPPDH's position on human rights.

The CFDA and SOS Disparus invited to Buenos Aires by the Argentinian Forensic Anthropology team (EEAF)

The Argentinian Forensic Anthropology team (Equipo Argentino de Antropología Forense EEAF), with offices in Buenos Aires and Cordoba, invited Nassera Dutour, together with a young medical supporter of SOS Disparus, for a week - in September 2011 - to look at documentation on enforced disappearances and the work to be done in identifying disappeared persons.

The EEAF is a scientific NGO created in 1984 to look into the circumstances of at least 9000 disappearances in Argentina during the military 1976-1983 dictatorship. Today, it works around the world and provides teaching courses and a place to exchange experiences.

During her visit to Argentina Nassera Dutour was able to see the work done by the EEAF on the identification and recreation of bodies. She visited secret camps where torture had been practiced, including the notorious ESMA. The spokesperson of the CFDA also had the possibility of meeting representatives of the human rights department at the Ministry of Foreign Affairs in Buenos Aires and to meet a journalist from one of Argentina's most read newspapers, Pagina 12. The journalist wrote [an article on the situation of families of the disappeared in Algeria](#) (link in Spanish), emphasizing the policy of impunity advocated by the Algerian authorities.

Advocacy of the human rights situation in Algeria

Following the visits of the UN Special Rapporteur on violence against women and the Special Rapporteur on the promotion and protection of the freedom of opinion and expression, the Special Rapporteur on adequate housing visited Algeria from 9 to 19 July 2011. The CFDA and SOS Disparus actively cooperated with the Special Rapporteur, indicating places to visit, people to consult who could provide information on the consequences of the displacement of people during the 1990s, and about present-day violations of the right to lodging for families of the disappeared in Algeria.

In addition to this the first meeting of the Sub-Committee 'Political dialogue, security and human rights' brought into being through the European Union / Algeria Association Agreement at their last Council Association meeting in June 2011, was held in Algiers on 3 October 2011. The CFDA, in partnership with the Euro-Mediterranean Human Rights Network and other member organisations, the Algerian League for the defence of human rights LADDH and the Syndicat autonome de l'Administration publique (SNAPAP), addressed [a memorandum about human rights violations in Algeria to European Union ambassadors in Algiers](#) (link in French). The signatory organisations of the memorandum particularly emphasised the need to raise the points mentioned at the sub-committee meeting but also the necessity to organise a consultation with upstream civil society. The memorandum was well received by the EU ambassadors and a consultation with civil society took place during the last week of September.

Invitations to seminars and conferences

SOS Disparus participated at [the Université d'été de la Fondation Ebert](#) (link in French) in Oran from 14 to 18 September. The SOS Disparus representative took part, on the afternoon of the 15th, on the theme of freedom of association in Algeria; she told of the history and experience of SOS Disparus as an association of families of the disappeared and the obstacles imposed on it by Algeria's legal constitution.

The CFDA was represented at the 'Children and women of the planet, actors in the future of humanity' organised by the Centre Badulcci in Italy from 29 September to 2 October. She spoke of her experience as a mother of a disappeared person and of her activity as an activist working for the rights of families of the disappeared and for the respect of human rights in Algeria.

Visits to the SOS Disparus office

Throughout the summer the office of SOS Disparus received numerous visits from journalists working for national and foreign media (BBC, Arte). Sociology researchers also asked to visit in order to learn about the work of the Association within the framework of social movements in Algeria. In addition, NGOs and foreign associations visiting Algiers were also received at the SOS Disparus office; it is becoming more and more a place of reference concerning the human rights situation in Algeria.

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TV Report on Arte about the families of disappeared in Algeria - September 16, 2011

PRESS RELEASES

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[All against impunity in algeria – the CFDA encourages all peaceful protest initiatives against the charter](#)

PRESS CLIPPING

[Press clipping July 2011](#)

[Amine disappeared during the month of Ramadan 1997... Interview with Mme Yous Fatima, President of SOS Disparus](#)

[Press clipping September 2011](#)

[Families of the disappeared in Algeria - Arte report - 16 September 2011](#)

CFDA CONTACTS

148 rue du Fbg Saint Denis
75010 Paris

T: 00 33 (0)1 43 44 87 82

F: 00 33 (0)1 43 44 87 82

M: cfda@disparus-algerie.org

www.algerie-disparus.org

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