



Newsletter no. 49 October, November, December 2013

[54th session of the African Commission on Human and People's Rights \(ACHPR\), from 21 till 26 October 2013 in Banjul, Gambia](#)

The 54th session of the African Commission on Human and People's Rights (ACHPR) took place from 21 till 26 October 2013 in Gambia.

The delegation of CFDA presented the CFDA report *"Human Rights put Algeria Regime to the Test: The illusion of change"* and made every possible effort to denounce the **serious violations of human rights in Algeria**. They also reminded us that Algeria has not yet ratified the 2006 International Convention for the Protection of All Persons from Enforced Disappearance, signed in 2007. In addition, the Working Group on Enforced or Involuntary Disappearances has been urging the Algerian authorities for many years to go out and meet the families. But the conditions imposed by the authorities are too strict and greatly limit the WGEID's mandate.

The CFDA delegation concluded its intervention in front of the ACHPR by asking them to send a special mission to Algeria in order to investigate the issue of enforced disappearance. The President of the ACHPR declared having attentively listened to the CFDA's requests.

CFDA has also **made a statement to the Special Rapporteur on the Rights of Women** to denounce the discrimination and violence towards women in Algeria. Following their intervention, the Special Rapporteur on the Rights of Women has made several recommendations to Algeria during this public session. She recommended that Algeria modify the provisions of the family code under the influence of Sharia law, to ratify the Maputo Protocol to the African Charter on the Rights of Women in Africa, and to make an effort to ensure equality within couples and reduce domestic violence against women.

[Training in communication from 7 till 10 November 2013 in Algiers](#)

CFDA has begun a new cycle of training in communication and advocacy techniques which will be made up of six training sessions of two days over a period of three years. For the first training cycle, CFDA has grouped two training sessions into one training session of four days which took place from 7 till 10 November in Algiers.

The training, facilitated by an advocacy officer and an expert in communication, was centred on the basic principles of internal and external communications as well as advocacy techniques and strategies.

After having presented the aims of the training, the trainers explained the distinction between internal communication and external communication, and suggested very practical exercises to train and discuss the law relating to associations. The participants were able to familiarise themselves with the European institutions via a quiz and role-play; they simulated either a campaign against Bouteflika's fourth mandate or a campaign for Berber first names.

These four days of training enabled relationships to form between participants. A Facebook group was created through which the participants will be able to interact and publish relevant information.

[Meeting for the launch of the project for collecting witness accounts and DNA samples](#)

CFDA has kept in contact with Argentinean and Peruvian anthropologists for many years and has developed a large project for collecting witness accounts and DNA samples. The long-term goal is to gather as much information as possible on the families and the missing to establish the Truth.

A meeting was therefore organised for 13 November at the SOS office in Algiers during which medicine professionals close to CFDA took part. Several organisations also signed up to the project.

The first presenter revealed the missions and activities of the EPAF (Peruvian Forensic Anthropology Team) to the participants. The EPAF leads criminal investigations in cases of abusive violence on behalf of the authorities and work more specifically on looking for missing persons following armed and internally psycho-social conflicts. For this purpose, EPAF intervenes into medico-legal investigations, memory, legal training, and human development as well as in the fight against impunity.

The second presenter presented the Argentine Forensic Anthropology Team (EAAF) and explained that the association applies medico-legal science to on-going investigations to document violations of human rights. The proof obtained in this way is presented to tribunals, special commissions and international tribunals.

The presenters recommended forming a team of volunteers for long-term collaboration. The volunteers will benefit from training provided by the EAAF and EPAF on collecting witness accounts and DNA samples which will create local teams at their end who will conduct interviews with the victims and families.

[The seminar "The Fight against Impunity in the Authoritarian Political Systems: The Algerian Experience"](#)

CFDA leads many activities to inform and bring awareness to Algerians on the issue of the missing. It is with this in mind that the CFDA organised, in collaboration with SOS

Disappeared, Djazaïrouna and Somoud, the seminar “*The Fight against Impunity in the Authoritarian Political Systems: The Algerian Experience*”. More than fifty people took part in this meeting held on 14 December 2013 in Algiers, among who were activists, human rights defenders, lawyers and legal practitioners, journalists and families of the missing.

The presenters focused on the fight against impunity, one of the most problematic issues of international human rights law.

Madjid Benchikh, former head of the law faculty in Algiers, has defined the notion of transitional justice and the issues of certain laws which organise and sanction impunity. He explained that, with regards to Algeria, impunity is institutionalised thanks to the Charter for Peace and National Reconciliation and its implementing legislation.

Adnane Nouchaib, lawyer and President of Somoud, then demonstrated that the Charter is far from being the tool of transitional justice that the Algerian authorities present it to be. In fact, by granting total impunity to terrorists and agents of the State, the Charter prevents lasting reconciliation and peace. Cherifa Kheddar, President of Djazairouna, highlighted the particular role of women in the fight against impunity in Algeria. Nassera Dutour, spokesperson for CFDA, then stressed the importance of cooperation within the associative movement for fighting against impunity.

The seminar was very interactive and encouraged participants to comment on these issues. The afternoon ended with the broadcast of the film “Y’a plus d’Amine” (Amine is no more) and a video by Hacène Ferhati, “*Algérie: l’indignation en action*” (*Algeria: Indignation in Action*).

The event was reported in a very positive light by the Algerian press. El Watan, for example, dedicated an article to the seminar, leading with the fight against impunity led by the Coalition of Associations for Victims of the 1990s.

[CFDA meets with French Prime Minister Jean-Marc Ayrault during his visit to Algeria on 16 and 17 December](#)

CFDA spokesperson, Nassera Dutour, was invited to meet the French Prime Minister Mr Jean-Marc Ayrault in the French cultural centre during his visit to Algeria on 16 and 17 December.

An open letter addressed to the Prime Minister was written for this occasion by the following associations asking that he address the protection of human rights and freedom of unions during his discussions with his Algerian counterparts: the CFDA, the French Human Rights League (LDH), the International Federation for Human Rights (FIDH), the Euro-Mediterranean Human Rights Network (EMHRN), the Association for Change and Democracy in Algeria (ACDA), the International Support Committee for Autonomous Algerian Trade Unions (CISA).

The meeting with the civil society went very well and, following CFDA’s request, the Prime Minister’s cabinet received representatives of CFDA in January 2014. The technical adviser

in charge of foreign affairs and the diplomatic adviser to the Prime Minister's cabinet welcomed the CFDA representatives and were very attentive to the issues and claims made. As is very nearly always the case, they declared that their margin for manoeuvre was very limited due to the recent past between France and Algeria and they do not want to interfere with Algeria's internal affairs. Nevertheless, they assured the delegation that they would address the issue of enforced disappearance in Algeria and the families' claims each time they would meet with their Algerian counterparts.

News in brief

13th EU-Algeria interparliamentary meeting

From 28 till 31 October, a delegation of six deputies from the European Parliament, presided over by Pier Antonio Panzeri, met in Algiers as part of the 13th interparliamentary meeting of the EU and Algeria. The objective of this visit was to meet the key spokespeople, such as the members of the People's National Assembly (PNA), the Prime Minister, the Ministry of Foreign Affairs and the President of the National Economic and Social Council (CNES).

The parliamentary delegation also organised a meeting with the civil society and a working lunch for 29 October at the El Aurassi hotel. Nadia Bendjael, sister of a missing person and board member at SOS Disappeared, was present and put forward the following three matters: enforced disappearance in Algeria during the black decade, the new law no. 12-06 on associations and women's rights in the Algerian family code.

Algeria was elected to the UN Human Rights Council

On 12 November, Algeria was elected to sit on the UN Human Rights Council. The candidacy was heavily criticised by the NGOs for the protection of human rights. CFDA led a campaign against the candidacy and in a press report recalled how Algeria had been condemned by the Human Rights Committee in nineteen cases of enforced disappearances. The CFDA has also condemned the increase in human rights violations in its report "Human Rights put Algerian Regime to the Test: The illusion of change". The NGO Human Rights Watch declared that they were concerned about the serious violations of human rights being committed in Algeria. The organisation states that no effort has been made to improve the situation and that the government continues to grant impunity to those responsible for the atrocities committed during the conflict of the 1990s. In its global report, the organisation has called on President Bouteflika to improve the human rights situation in Algeria in light of the state election of the UN Human Rights Council.

Gathering on the occasion of the 65th anniversary of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights on 10 December 2013, Algiers

For the highly symbolic day for human rights defenders, CFDA and SOS Disappeared organised a **gathering** in Algiers to call on the Algerian authorities to conform to international commitments, to respect the fundamental rights and freedoms of each person and

to shed light on the fate of the thousands of people who disappeared in the 1990s. Numerous activists joined the families in the peaceful demonstration in front of the National Advisory Commission for the Promotion and Protection of Human Rights' headquarters (CNCPPDH).

Press release links

October

<http://www.algerie-disparus.org/images/rp-oct2013.pdf>

November

<http://www.algerie-disparus.org/images/rp-nov2013.pdf>

December

<http://www.algerie-disparus.org/images/rp-dec2013>

“Human Rights put Algerian Regime to the Test: The illusion of change”

<http://www.algerie-disparus.org/images/stories/communiquis/Rapport%20CFDA.pdf>

Serious violations of human rights in Algeria

http://www.algerie-disparus.org/images/declaration_gen_capdh54.pdf

Statement to the Special Rapporteur on the Rights of Women

http://www.algerie-disparus.org/images/declaration_femmes_cadhp54.pdf

Gathering

<http://www.algerie-disparus.org/images/cp-rassemb101213.pdf>