



Newsletter no. 52 – July, August, September 2014

[CFDA strengthens its training with the help of experts from Intermediation](#)

In keeping with the workshop from 7 and 8 April 2014, the instructors in charge of the training in international human rights law, the director of the CFDA and the programme officer met in Zurich for a new working meeting with the experts at Intermediation.

The first day was spent discussing CFDA's internal workings and its organisation, during which the role of each person was analysed. The director and programme officer then made suggestions to make the training more efficient. A long discussion followed with the instructors and suggestions were made to strengthen the results of the training sessions.

The second day was spent planning future training programmes, selecting the topics and measures to take so that the training is more effective. It was decided that it would be very beneficial to strengthen these training programmes in international human rights law by adding training in communication and in monitoring human rights violations.

[Algerian authorities refuse to respect their international commitments](#)

The Working Group on Enforced or Involuntary Disappearances (WGEID) has informed the CFDA that it has sent over a dozen files to the Algerian government so that the latter could carry out appropriate investigations into the fate and location of the disappeared and so that their rights can be protected.

Furthermore, the WGEID sent CFDA the responses from the Algerian government for eleven missing persons' cases. Considering that this information was not enough to determine the fate of these people, the WGEID informed CFDA that these cases have not been resolved.

CFDA therefore replied to WGEID that, once again, the replies given by the Algerian government were the same for each case, showing that no individual inquiry had been effectively launched and that the Algerian State was unwilling to cooperate with the UN bodies to shed light on the fate of the missing.

As part of a project by the Euro-Mediterranean Federation against Enforced Disappearances (FEMED) held in September in Geneva coinciding with the 104th session of the WGEID, the CFDA filed a large number of new cases of enforced disappearances from the 1990s.

[The report on Millis](#)

The secretary of the United Nations Human Rights Council has sent a letter to the CFDA to pass on the observations of the Algerian State with regards to the admissibility of the report of missing person Mohamed Millis.

Whereas Algeria is already used to presenting the same observations for each case of enforced disappearance to the Committee, the Algerian State does not seem to recall this and resends its previous observations.

CFDA has therefore contacted the Committee's secretary to obtain the missing documents; the Algerian State has yet to reply.

This attitude once again proves the Algerian State's unwillingness to collaborate with the UN bodies and families of the missing, and shirks its international duties.

CFDA regrets this lack of cooperation on behalf of the Algerian State which happens to also hold the **seat of the Human Rights Council**.

["Iraq, Libya, Syria: a surge in enforced disappearances"](#)

The conference called "Iraq, Libya, Syria: a surge in enforced disappearances" was organised for 29 August by the FEMED and CFDA in collaboration with the ACAT and supported by the Ile-de-France Regional Council to remember the missing.

Nassera Dutour, president of the FEMED and spokesperson for the CFDA, opened this conference and welcomed the approximate forty people in attendance with a summary of the situation of enforced disappearance in these countries.

Emmanuel Decaux, professor of law and president of the UN Committee against Enforced Disappearance, presented the Convention against Enforced Disappearance and how the Committee operates.

Geneviève Garrigos, president of Amnesty International France, illustrated how enforced disappearance is used as a weapon of war and terror against its people across the whole world.

Nahed Badawia, Syrian journalist and human rights activist, who went missing herself for three years, provided her own account of the situation of the missing in Syria.

Syrian poet Khaled Roumo broached the issue of enforced disappearance from a political point of view.

The conference was followed by a debate which ended with a friendly buffet.

[Place de la République in Paris: a day dedicated to remembering all of our missing](#)

30 August is the International Day of the Disappeared in which they are remembered. Tents were set up to commemorate this day with a photo exhibition, a stand with documentation, a

stand showing films and documentaries as well as a friendly stand with mint tea and oriental pastries.

Ahmed Hanifi, author of «La folle d'Algiers» [*The craziness of Algiers*], a novel which follows the fight and struggle of a mother to find her missing son in Algeria during the 1990s, was invited and signed copies of his book.

Volunteer musicians played throughout this commemorative afternoon to attract passers-by.

The afternoon of this event was marked by speeches which were made to invite more rallying and actions for this just cause. Midhat Bourequat, a Moroccan who disappeared for eighteen years before being released, provided a deeply moving personal account. He spoke of the ten years he was missing, most of which was spent in slavery in Tazmamert, before returning to the horrors of his cell and incarceration.

Over the period of these two days, a petition to assign a place to the missing circulated to collect signatures. CFDA and FEMED have already collected 200 signatures and are currently looking for politicians or people working for human rights to support this initiative in front of an online audience and to present it to the Paris municipality.

[9 years after the Charter for Peace and National Reconciliation, the families of the disappeared are still demanding Truth and Justice](#)

A round table conference in Oran and Algiers entitled “9 years after the adoption of the Charter, victims of the ‘90s are still awaiting the truth” included human rights activists, academics and journalists.

Nassera Dutour, in introducing this conference, called on the fight of families of the missing, an ongoing and determined battle to wrestle the truth from the authorities, before then returning to the adoption process of the Charter, presented by the Algerian authorities as being the only solution to resolve the missing persons’ files and to establish peace in the country.

Madjid Benchikh, dean of the law faculty in Algiers and former president of Amnesty International Algeria, developed the legal aspects of Ordinance no. 06-01 relating to the implementation of the Charter. He especially insisted on article 46 of the Ordinance which threatens a prison sentence of three to five years and a fine of 250,000 DA to 500,000 DA: “*to whomever who, through statements or written work or by any other way (...) tarnishes the image of his country at an international level*”.

The State officially recognises 8,000 missing persons, but this number is to be taken with a pinch of salt as many families have never filed complaints for fear of repercussions. The families of the missing who were present gave their personal accounts and stressed the prevailing climate of terror in the country at the time. They also recounted the difficulties they faced on a daily basis from both a practical and legal point of view. They all declared that the procedure for compensation implemented by the Ordinance violates their most basic rights to truth and justice, to freedom of expression and assembly. The families shared how this compensation procedure forced them into an unjust and highly dangerous situation.

A dozen articles have been published on these two events in French-speaking and Arab-speaking press in Algeria, signalling their success in bringing awareness.

News in brief

Gathering to remember impunity

In the afternoon of Saturday 30 August, CFDA and FEMED were present at the Place de la République and made public the phenomenon of enforced disappearance. A management company took care of all of the event's logistics, contributing to the day's success.

Conference on transitional justice

Amine Sidhoum, lawyer and coordinator of the Network of Lawyers for the Defence of Human Rights (RADDH), active alongside CFDA for many years now, took part in a conference on transitional justice in Tunis at the end of September. The aim of this conference, organised by the Center International Peace Operations and the United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights and other partners, was to be a platform for discussions between experts, practitioners and academics on the role and potential of the mechanisms of transitional justice for social translation and reconciliation in countries in transition in the Middle Eastern and North African region.

Strengthening the network of the Algerian civil society with the Tunisian civil society

The legal practitioner for SOS Disappeared took part in a project in Tunisia called "Meetings and discussions on active citizenship" organised by the Euro-Mediterranean Human Rights Network (EMHRN) for the end of September in the Hammamet Cultural Centre. The aim of this meeting was to allow the Algerian and Tunisian civil society to share their experiences in different subject matters (culture, human rights, etc.). The participants were able to meet the players in the Tunisian civil society and took part in various workshops in order to strengthen their links and acquaintances (creating and performing a play on the street harassment of women, writing a poem on the situation of human rights in Algeria, etc.).

Strengthening the network of the Algerian civil society with the Tunisian civil society

SOS Disappeared was invited to participate in the Youth Action Movement (RAJ) at the university at Béjaïa under the topic of "Effective and efficient participation of young people in the management of public affairs". This university reunited a hundred young Algerians, people from the volunteer sector and union organisations who debated current topics (education, employment, culture, migration, gender, human rights, etc.). The participants worked on different topics to examine the public politics on these questions and to discuss the suggestions in-depth. The aim of the summer university was to encourage political interest among young Algerians by offering the opportunity to prepare suggestions which would then be presented to the public authorities and social partners.

CFDA called on for its work by a student researcher

For the past year, Nassera Dutour has been in regular contact with a PhD student at a university in the US. This latter would like to write her thesis on the victims of enforced disappearance. After much correspondence by email and telephone, the PhD student came to Algeria for a few months to continue her research and meet families of the missing at SOS Disappeared.

First files put together in Constantine

The Constantine office is now ready to welcome families of the missing and to bring them administrative and legal assistance. A friendly space essentially aimed at families has been created. A large meeting room is ready to welcome them. A new file has been put together.