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Newsletter no. 53: October, November, December 2014

Meeting with families of the missing in southern Algeria



A series of interviews with families of the missing currently living in the South took place at the end of November and beginning of December in the towns of Biskra, El Oued, Ouargla and Ghardaïa. These were led by two participants who were trained in interview techniques last May by an expert who is part of the Peruvian Forensic Anthropology Team (EPAF, Equipo Peruano de Antropología Forense).

The interviewers met up with the families in the selected towns and thanks to these interviews, were able to obtain the names of other families living in the area who also have missing loved ones for whom the CFDA had no file. The CFDA was able to put together more than a dozen new files.

The families generally warmly welcomed the interviewers and were touched to learn that the CFDA was still supporting them in their fight. This mission also allowed the CFDA to reinforce their relationships with the families of the disappeared living in the South who are relatively far from the Algiers, Oran and Constantine offices where the majority of the association's activities take place. Other missions will take place over the next few months.

The Algerians' dream of independence, freedom and democracy has still yet to be realised



As part of the 60th anniversary of the start of the Algerian revolution, CFDA has called on the Algerians to protest alongside the families of the missing who, for many years now, have been demanding Truth and Justice for their missing loved ones.

Many organisations of the civil society called for peaceful gatherings in the capital and elsewhere in the country to remind the authorities of their duties to respect the human rights protected in the ratified treaties. The CFDA organised a gathering in front of the National Consultative Commission for the Promotion and Protection of Human Rights (CNCPPDH). Although the CFDA's gathering took place without any issues, many protestors from other organisations were arrested and taken to the police station. Journalists were checked, their material confiscated and their photos deleted.

CFDA finds this excess violence on behalf of the authorities deplorable as well as the censor to which the reporters were subjected. The authorities' attitude once again shows that, despite official discussion, freedom of assembly and speech are still being violated in the country and that the Algerians' dream of freedom and democracy has yet to be realised.

66th anniversary of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights: Algeria does not respect its international commitments



Families of the missing gathered in front of the seat of the National Consultative Commission for the Promotion and Protection of Human Rights (CNCPPDH) to celebrate the 66th anniversary of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights. CFDA took this opportunity to call on the fact that, although Algeria has been the headquarters of the Human Rights Committee for many months now, individual and collective freedoms are still being crushed on their own doorstep. Around fifty families replied to CFDA’s call and young activists and sympathisers came to support them. A gathering of families of the disappeared also took place in Oran in front of the Oran court.

Six articles were published in the Algerian press, following on from CDFA’s own published press release.

Algeria condemned for the 28th time for a case of enforced disappearance: this time the disappearance of Toufik Ammari



Two days after this symbolic anniversary, CFDA was informed by the Secretary of the Human Rights Committee that Algeria has been condemned once again, this time for the disappearance of Toufik Ammari.

Toufik Ammari, a husband and father, was a secondary school teacher. On 27 August 1995, he left his home around 8.30 am to go to work. A few hours later, uniformed judicial police entered his family home; they rummaged through the entire house and confiscated official documents (family record book etc.) and photos. The family never saw Toufik again and have since taken many steps, but to no avail.

The Committee has again declared that: *“The State Party cannot agree with the provisions of the Charter for Peace and National Reconciliation with the persons who invoke the Pact’s provisions [...]. The Pact demands that the State Party show concern for each person and treat each person with respect for the inherent dignity of the human person. In the absence of any change recommended by the Committee, ordinance no. 06-01 will contribute to the present case of impunity and, as such, can therefore not be judged as compatible with the provisions of the Pact.”*

CFDA trains Algerian activists on communication and internal advocacy techniques



This new training course was led by a Tunisian expert in communication and had eighteen participants who work in the Algerian civil society or are human rights activists.

The trainer presented different oral communication techniques and showed videos of politicians to back up his teaching and for the participants to analyse their speeches and gestures. Thanks to this presentation, the participants were able to take note of techniques which are used to convince an auditorium.

The following day, the participants put the advice learnt the day before into practice in a role play. Using a simulation exercise where the trainer played the role of a vicious reporter, the participants chose a case to defend and were instructed to not to give in. Each interview was

filmed and viewed by the participants who were then able to provide their opinions as well as feedback and criticism.

The trainer suggested the participants read reports so as to increase their knowledge and so that they do not forget the skills they have gained until the next training session.

This session allowed the participants to better understand communication techniques used to deliver their message effectively.

CFDA completes its 2nd cycle of training sessions in International Law of Human Rights



Over the course of this training session, 16 lawyers and jurists worked on writing a legal argument on the non-conformity of the Charter of Peace and National Reconciliation with regards to the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights.

The professor explained that the objective of this exercise was to see if the participants were able to bring together their knowledge from previous training sessions and know how to use the international law and case law of the Human Rights Committee before Algerian and UN bodies.

The participants were divided into three groups to work on the articles of ordinance no. 06-01 relating to the implementation of the Charter for Peace and National Reconciliation. As a reminder, this ordinance forbids any recourse to justice for the families of the missing and therefore consecrates the impunity of those responsible.

The exercise continued into the second day during which the groups presented their work to draw up a final version of the legal argument. The trainer suggested that the lawyers sign the legal argument and publish it on the CFDA website to give weight and visibility to this text.

The training session ended with everyone sat in a circle and each taking a turn to give their opinion on the training cycle and what they learnt.

The Charter for Peace and National Reconciliation: denying justice



Families of the missing once again heavily protested to denounce the provisions of ordinance no. 06-01 from 27 February 2006 relating to the implementation of the Charter for Peace and National Reconciliation adopted in 29 September 2005. These texts consecrate the impunity of those responsible for the enforced disappearances and add to the denial of the right to truth and justice for the families. Requests for investigations and exhumations are systematically refused or remain unanswered by the authorities. Despite the condemnations of the Human Rights Committee in the cases of enforced disappearance, Algeria has not followed the recommendations made by the former: to revise and abridge ordinance no. 06-02 and to initiate impartial and in-depth inquests.

The families gathered at the Place du 1^{er} Mai in Algiers and in front of the Oran court in Oran where they chanted slogans and brandished photos of their loved ones, showing the authorities that they will never abandon them.

News in brief

HRW in Algeria

The NGO Human Rights Watch presented its report on Saharan refugees in Algeria during a press conference to which CFDA had been invited. The NGO also addressed the issue of families of the missing, publicly stating its support for the CFDA. HRW denounced the provisions for compensation put into place by the Charter of Peace and National Reconciliation and its implementing provisions. HRW also requests the creation of an independent investigation commission to shed light on the crimes committed in Algeria in the 1990s.

Advocacy mission in Switzerland

Together with the Network of Lawyers for the Defence of Human Rights (RADDH) and at the Euro-Mediterranean Human Rights Network (EMHRN) initiative who accompanied this mission, the CFDA was in Geneva and Bern to meet a number of politicians: the Social Democratic Party of Switzerland, the Green Party of Switzerland, the Christian Democratic People's Party of Switzerland and members of the Human Rights Commission in Geneva. At this meeting, the President of the RADDH revealed the situation of human rights defenders in Algeria and the difficulties they face in fighting for their cause. The delegation was also interviewed by a journalist for *La Tribune de Genève* (Geneva Tribune). The mission ended with a meeting with the assistants of the Special Rapporteur on the freedom of assembly and associations as well as human rights defenders from the UN High Commissioner for Human Rights.

Nassera Dutour made the closing speech at the World Forum of Human Rights

From 27 until 30 November 2014, a delegation of the Euro-Mediterranean Federation against Enforced Disappearances (FEMED) met in Marrakech on the occasion of the second edition of the World Forum of Human Rights. Nassera Dutour, President of the FEMED, was invited to speak during the closing ceremony. During her speech, she called on the fact that enforced disappearance is a crime that remains widely used in the whole world. She also mentioned the suffering of the families of the missing who continue to courageously fight every day to uncover the truth of the fate of the missing loved ones.

Press reviews

October

http://www.algerie-disparus.org/images/rp_oct14.pdf

November

http://www.algerie-disparus.org/images/rp_nov14.pdf

December

http://www.algerie-disparus.org/images/rp_dec14.pdf

Press releases

In the name of the promise of freedom from 1 November 1994, we demand Truth and Justice

http://www.algerie-disparus.org/images/cp_rass1ernov14.pdf

International Day of Human Rights: Families of the missing call on the Algerian authorities to respect their international commitments

http://www.algerie-disparus.org/images/cp_dudh14_ar.pdf