



Algeria's review by the Human Rights Committee: a successful advocacy mission

This semester of 2018 was marked by the examination of Algeria by the Human Rights Committee (hereinafter the Committee). During each session, the Committee examines the reports of countries that have ratified the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights (hereinafter ICCPR), in order to ensure that they respect their international obligations towards it. Algeria's review took place during the 123rd session of the Committee from the 4th to 5th July 2018 in Geneva.

On this occasion, the *Collectif des Familles de disparus en Algérie* (CFDA) organized an advocacy mission from the 2nd to 5th July jointly with the *Fédération Euro-méditerranéenne contre les Disparitions Forcées* (FEMED) and EuroMed Rights where activists and human rights defenders came especially from Algeria including mothers of

missing persons. On the 2nd July, before the Committee's examination of Algeria, the delegations met during a formal briefing with the members of the Committee and on 4 July during an informal briefing.

The members of the Committee asked several questions to the representatives of civil society on the points to be clarified. Questions were asked about the independence of the judiciary, the prohibition of demonstrations, the repression of demonstrators, conditions of detention, respect for the rights of prisoners (pre-trial detention, time to visit, presence of lawyer), on prosecution on the basis of the Charter for Peace and National Reconciliation, on discrimination against women and on freedom of movement.

The mothers of the disappeared had time to expose their fight directly before the expert of the Committee and to express their grievances and their worries. They also met with the

members of the official Algerian delegation who came to answer the Committee's questions.



Other meetings were organized with members of various United Nations bodies to discuss about situation in Algeria regarding human rights.

During meetings several points were raised such as: the difficulty for families to go to court for answers, the obligation to recognize the death of the missing person to be compensated, and the conflicts that may emerge between members of a same family who do not all agree about compensation and opening of mass graves.

The delegation members also testified about their daily struggle for truth and justice. They spoke about the difficulty of being a human rights activist in Algeria. They also spoke about the difficulty of obtaining approval for being a legal association, and the consequences that this illegality has on their daily work.

On July 20, the Committee made publically its final observations. The Committee condemns Algeria to respect its international obligations. Algeria has one year to implement and respond to the observations made by the Committee. We invite you to read the concluding observations of the Committee which you will find on the United Nations website and on our website under the heading "home". This advocacy mission in Geneva was succesful for the CFDA and other Algerian organizations.

International Day of the Victims of Enforced Disappearances

A commemorative and International Day of the Victims of Enforced Disappearances is celebrated each year on August 30th. CFDA and Sos Disparus participated each of their side in Paris and Algiers to this day to protest and to struggle against this phenomenon.



In France, a conference and a whole day were dedicated to this international day. The Fédération Euro-méditerranéenne contre les Disparitions Forcées (FEMED) in partnership with the Collectif des Familles de disparus en Algérie (CFDA) and the association des parents et amis des disparus au Maroc (APADM) organized at the headquarters of Amnesty International France a conference-debate: "Fight against impunity".



During an evening, this conference gathered different associations, victims and militants fighting against this phenomenon in Mexico, Algeria, Iraq, Argentina, Morocco, Libya, and Bangladesh. This conference was an opportunity to bring together different nationalities fighting against a single crime, the one of enforced disappearances.

After having expressed themselves on the situation of their country, all the collectives/associations present had the desire to advance and to struggle together by creating a common collective.

On August 30, Place de la Republique in Paris, an awareness day on enforced disappearances was held to ensure a space for discussion and exchange. Each association present had the opportunity to express itself during different speeches. Finally, during this day of memory for those who disappeared, a short film and portraits were made. These achievements have brought a living and unique side to this event.



In Algeria, on the same day, a meeting also took place in the Place du 1er mai in Algiers, for this International Day of the Victims of Enforced Disappearances which coincides with the 20th

anniversary of the beginning of meetings as parents and families of disappeared in Algeria. Around 20 people met to shout their anger and their claims. However, the meeting lasted only one and a half hours because the police restricted and limited the event by preventing the demonstrators from walking and by blocking the access to the event to other people wishing to join it. Nevertheless, the families have resisted and they will not give up. This event allows families to tell and show the Algerian authorities that they are still present and that they continue their fight.



Coordination meeting of associations concerning the situation in Algeria

On September 23 and 24, two days of coordination meeting of associations operating in Algeria took place in Tunis. This meeting was organized by the International Federation of Human Rights (FIDH) and brought together various human rights associations working in Algeria including the Syndicat National Autonome des Personnels de l'Administration publique (SNAPAP), le Rassemblement Action Jeunesse (RAJ), as well as the Collectif des Familles de disparus en Algérie (CFDA).

The theme of this briefing was about the impact of the narrowing space of the Algerian civil society and the difficulties of operating in the country. Indeed, in Algeria the associations face

many obstacles including difficulties of access to financing and registration, which has the effect of preventing many Algerian associations from operating.

The purpose of this meeting was to better understand the context in which human rights defenders operate in Algeria, to obtain a better vision of the needs of Algerian human rights defenders and finally to strengthen the links between Algerian human rights defenders and representatives of the various organizations of Algerian independent civil society as well as between Algerian human rights defenders and international NGOs.

The meeting thus made it possible to discuss these themes and to better understand and identify the needs and situation of human rights defenders in Algeria, more specifically in terms of security and protection, in a context where the space of civil society is increasingly restricted and fundamental freedoms are threatened.

THE BRIEFS

Algeria: public protest against the charter for peace and national reconciliation



The charter for peace and national reconciliation was submitted by President Bouteflika and adopted by the parliament in 1999. This amnesty

law includes articles that are not in favor of the families of the disappeared. In particular, the law proposes compensation to families for the silence of them on the disappearance of their loved ones. On September 29, the families of the disappeared met at the Grand Post Office in Algiers to protest against this charter. Families were there to show to Algerian authorities that their fight for truth and justice continues despite the adoption of the Charter. Meetings organized by the offices of SOS Disparus in Algiers are often repressed. Indeed, this public protest was quickly dispersed by the police who had previously squared the entire neighborhood before the arrival of the demonstrators. Families did not enjoy their right to protest because of the intervention of the police, thus censoring their right to freedom of expression and demonstration.

Meeting of families of disappeared with the Socialist Forces Front



On July 15, the political party of the Socialist Forces Front (FFS) received in its offices, at the National People's Assembly (APN), families of the disappeared. The families reiterated their demands and claims, including that of having access to the truth about the fate of their missing loved ones. The families want that the Algerian state assumes its responsibility by opening the disappeared file to all the deputies in front of the National People's Assembly. This file must be treated before all the deputies so, that the fight led by the families is heard before all.

**Expansion of the Research Center for the
Preservation of Memory and the Study of
Human Rights**



The Research Center for the Preservation of Memory and the Study of Human Rights (hereinafter CPMDH) is an information, research and meeting space created in 2014 by the CFDA. Its attendance has increased considerably thanks to the organization of many meetings of various local associations, such as the association AISEC, the association of students of the University of Senia, the youth group of Amnesty International, or meetings of professors who train their students to write articles on Wikipedia. Some academics also organize youth training on project management with the CPMDH support.

This semester was marked by new initiatives settled up, such as the creation of a database to identify all books, journals, reports or various studies. This future database will facilitate the organization and facilitate access to students or professors who are looking for specific resources. The CFDA teams in Algiers, Oran and Paris have done a lot of research on the documentation that could strengthen the CPMDH documentary fund, improve its functioning and facilitate access to the center's resources. The teams visited various documentation centers and libraries such as the National Library of Algiers, the CNES Documentation Center in Algiers, the CRASC

Research Center in Oran, the RETIMO Network Documentation Centers and the United Nations Library in Geneva. The research also focused on books in Arabic because there was a strong demand from students.

**Some numbers around the CFDA and its work
with international bodies**



The CFDA continues to struggle by filing cases before the Working Group on Enforced or Involuntary Disappearances (hereinafter WGEID). Indeed, during the mission in Geneva from the 2 to 5 July 2018 concerning the examination of Algeria by the Committee, 16 individual reports of cases of enforced disappearances were transmitted to the WGEID. The CFDA has also sent three individual communications to the Human Rights Committee in 2018 and hopes to see a favorable review of them. The CFDA always follows up the communications submitted on its behalf to the Committee and responds to the observations of the Algerian State.

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