

# Newsletter n°80

July, August, September 2021

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Collectif des  
Familles de  
Disparus en  
Algérie



## Online Civil Society Forum MAJALAT

The third edition of the Civil Society Forum, regrouping members from the two sides of the Mediterranean, was held this summer at Brussels by MAJALAT, the culmination of a three-year long project.

MAJALAT is a consortium, composed of EuroMed Rights, the REF – Euromed Network France, and SOLIDAR. Designed by and for civil society, it is an inclusive and participative initiative, offering a space for multidimensional and permanent dialogue between the EU and its southern Mediterranean neighbors.

The 2021 edition was the result of three years of consultations, during which sectorial workshops and national debates gathered civil society organisations, syndicates, experts, and many others from the two sides of the Mediterranean, in order to develop a common vision and to influence regional politics.

This forum's goal was to examine the new agenda for the Mediterranean by building upon consultations and research in six key areas: governance and rule of law, economic and social dialogue, migration, social and climate justice, security and the fight against violence, and youth.

CFDA members took part in the project, and gave significant contributions to the field of governance and human rights.



**In the light of the repression of peaceful demonstrators, France has to review its arms exports towards Algeria**

Following the Algerian authorities' repression of peaceful demonstrators, the CFDA and its partners organized a collective meeting to write a letter for the President of the French Republic, Mr. Macron, the French Prime Minister, the Minister of the Armies, and the Minister for European and Foreign Affairs, regarding French arms exports towards Algeria.

France is the third biggest arms exporter worldwide, and many French and international organizations work towards installing parliamentary oversight on French arms sales, as well as added transparency for a true public debate regarding the question, which remains an omerta. Through this letter, the signatories demand the review of licenses allowing military exports towards Algeria through the article 7 of the Treaty on arms trade. There is a legitimate risk that these weapons are being used against peaceful demonstrations in the wake of the opposition movement that started in February 2019 with the "Hirak" marches.

In fact, the "Hirak", a popular movement, organizes marches towards Alger and other Algerian cities each Friday afternoon. However, since the start of the movement, there has been blind repression, with many demonstrators thrown into jail, sometimes with heavy penalties. This repression targeted Amazigh flag bearers at first, however it soon extended to Hirak activists and journalists, among others.

On May 5th 2001, the High Commission for Human Rights at the United Nations demanded from Algerian authorities to put an immediate end to violence and arbitrary detentions. On the 18th of June 2021, the Special Rapporteur for the Right to Peaceful Gathering and Association at the United Nations, Mr. Clement Nyaletsossi Voule, denounced the use of abusive and disproportionate force by Algerian authorities, which includes the use of tear gas. Amnesty International recently described the charges held again opponents to the regime as "smokescreens aiming at silencing human rights defenders and suffocating their actions".

We thank our campaign partners for their unwavering support and engagement in defense of human rights in Algeria and all around the world.

<http://www.algerie-disparus.org/app/uploads/2021/07/Lettre-Premier-ministre-1.pdf>



**"Réseau Radios Maghreb" Project**

The "Réseau Radios Maghreb" project aims at enhancing support for associative radios in Algeria, Morocco, and Tunisia, in order to build a durable regional network of associative radios. This project is organized by the consortium ERIM, UTMA, and AIC, and consists of various mentoring seminars given par Mohamed al Hani.

Twelve radio stations took part in the project, of which the Radio of the Voiceless (Radio des Sans Voix). The two main pillars of the project are to:

- Support the transnational production, diffusion, and sharing of educational content on media and information through associative radios, with a particular emphasis on the fight against fake news and hate speech.
- Enhance the institutional and financial viability of associative radios on the national level, and favoring the sharing of good practices on the regional level.

As part of the project, the Radio of the Voiceless produced, diffused, and shared seven programs on media and information education and human rights.

The Radio of the Voiceless aims at promoting freedom of speech in Algeria through its programs, which educate its public on human rights violations in Algeria. A monthly press review on the state of human rights in the country

is also broadcast. Through the “Let us not forget” program, the radio works on the memory of the victims of forced disappearances through the civil war.

<http://www.radiodessansvoix.org/>

## R A D I O DES SANS VOIX

### **The CFDA sends individual communications to international entities**

Throughout this trimester, the CFDA teams restarted their work in updating the files for the disappeared in order to send them to international entities, notably the Working Group for Enforced Disappearances at the United Nations.

The CFDA teams worked relentlessly throughout August to complete and follow-up on files that were never sent, or those that were deemed non-receivable. An intensive updating process made possible the sending of more than 80 individual communications. These requests have a very high value for the families in their fight for the disappeared and the recognition of their cause. It also sheds the light on the impossibility of initiating judicial proceeding against Algerian authorities due to the supposed chart “for peace and national reconciliation”, adopted by referendum on the 29th of September 2005.



### **“Por Esos Ojos” with Maria Esther Gatti de Islas**

The 30th of August is the International Day for the Victims of Forced Disappearances. The Collective of associations fighting against forced disappearances, the association of families of the disappeared, the families and friends of disappeared persons are organizing themselves on an international level to increase the visibility of victims, and to make their voices heard.

Like every year, the CFDA commemorated this international day by organizing public events with its partners, such as a screening-debate at the International Center for Popular Culture in Paris (CICP) on the 3rd of September 2021, and a gathering on the 4th of September.

Participants discovered the “Por Esos Ojos” (For these eyes) documentary. Filmed in 1997, this movie shows the searches of Maria Esther Gatti de Islas to find her granddaughter, born in captivity and adopted by a military man. The documentary exposes ten years of fight to find the child, whose pregnant mother was arrested and disappeared during the military regime in Uruguay (1976 – 1983). One of the producers, Gonzalo Arijon, was present at the screening.

This documentary was followed by an intervention from Emmanuelle Decaux, former president of the Committee for Disappeared Persons at the United Nations, and the testimonies of Nedjma Benaziza, granddaughter of Daouia Gat Benaziza, who disappeared in Algeria, and Genevieve Garrigos, elected official at the Paris Municipality, and former president of Amnesty International France.





## Gathering at Stalingrad in memory of the disappeared

As part of the International Day for the Victims of Forced Disappearances, the Collective of associations fighting against disappearances in their respective countries, of which the CFDA and FEMED are the main initiators, organized many commemoration events.

The collective was born in 2019 and gathers many associations based in France: Collective of Families of the Disappeared in Algeria (CFDA), Euro-Mediterranean Federation against Enforced Disappearances (FEMED), Collectif Paris Ayotzinapa, the Argentine Collective for Memory, the Association of Parents and Friends of the Disappeared in Morocco (APADM), the French Association of Friendship and Solidarity with the Peoples of Africa (AFASPA), Committee Justice for Djibouti (CJD), Moroccan Truth Forum, and Land and Freedom for Arauco.

Tents were installed on Stalingrad square at Paris, inside of which there were photo expositions depicting the struggle of the families of the disappeared in Algeria, Latin America, Africa, Egypt, Libya, Morocco, and others. These expositions were followed by documentaries on enforced disappearances, and testimonials of families of disappeared and political prisoners. Between each documentary, there were interventions by human rights militants, relatives of disappeared persons, and politicians that attended in solidarity with the families. There were debates on how to establish justice and truth for the families of the victims.



## The case of the disappeared is still not closed

In 2005, President Abdelaziz Bouteflika submitted the chart supposedly “for peace and national reconciliation” to a referendum, which it passed and entered in force in February 2006. Since then, the families of the disappeared are unable to seek justice, as the article 45 states that “no lawsuit can be held, individually or collectively, against elements of national defense and security forces and all of their components, for actions done towards the protection of persons and property, the safeguarding of the Nation and the upholding of the institutions of the Democratic People’s Republic of Algeria. Any denunciation or claim has to be deemed non-receivable by judicial authorities”.

It was yet another attempt at closing the case of the disappeared. Ever since September 1999, just before the announcement of the Civic Concord, the President of the Republic told the families to “turn the page”.

Through the constitutional amendment of the 30th of December 2020, the chart was integrated into the preamble of the constitution, which solidifies the negation of truth and justice for all victims.

Sixteen years after its adoption, the families of the disappeared, still determined to fight for their rights, reiterated their demand of repealing this chart, which denies the right of victims to truth and legalizes impunity and oblivion.

In fact, despite the chart being framed by the authorities as an example of transitional justice, it is far from being one.

On this occasion, and to reaffirm their unconditional opposition to the chart, the CFDA and SOS Disparus organized a press conference with Maitre Abdelghani Badi, Maitre Abdelrahmane Salah, president of the association “Soumoud”, and Maitre Sid Ali Boudiaf, as well as families of disappeared persons, of which Ms. Bouabdallah and Ms. Boucherf.

<http://www.algerie-disparus.org/app/uploads/2021/09/Communique%CC%81-contre-la-charte-2021.pdf>

## The CFDA trains young militants at project planning and searching for funding

A training on “Project Planning and Financing” was held at Algiers, presented by Sami Loucif and proposed by the CFDA. This training was held for three days, with the objective being to give participants key points to understanding the mechanisms of searching for funds, and to elaborating project ideas based on human rights and adapting the proposition to the templates of donors. From a methodological viewpoint, the workshop gave an overview of both theoretical backgrounds and group work. Following this three day workshop, participants have strengthened knowledge on project planning and funding, and thus can start defining the problems to tackle in order to create well thought projects with activities that address the donors’ instructions.



## Weekly gatherings stopped due to the third COVID wave in Algeria

Every Wednesday since August 1998, the families of the disappeared gather in front of the National Council for Human Rights (CNDH) to reaffirm their right to truth and justice. Unfortunately, they were deprived of this weekly gathering due to the third COVID wave and the sanitary measures. However, still determined to fight for the recognition of the disappeared and their rights, the families are going back to weekly gatherings, which are always essential to the fight of the CFDA.



## Press reviews

### July

<https://bit.ly/3nfygIp>

### August

<https://bit.ly/3C5e2qR>

### September

<https://bit.ly/3nhgMeP>

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