

NEWSLETTER N°93

October–November–D cembre 2024

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Collectif des
Familles de
Disparus en
Alg rie

MEETING OF CFDA MEMBER FAMILIES



This moment of exchange and sharing between CFDA members and families enabled everyone to express their ideas and expectations and to discuss their situation with other people concerned, in an atmosphere of solidarity, commitment and benevolence.

The main mission of the Collectif des Familles des Disparu.e.s en Alg rie (CFDA) is to support the families of the disappeared, both in their administrative and legal actions and in their psychological distress caused by the silence imposed by the Algerian state. While the CFDA sees itself as an unfailing supporter of these families, it believes it is essential not to confine them to the role of victims. Instead, the association strives to actively include them in the definition and organisation of actions, events and initiatives, recognising that the fight for truth and justice is also theirs.



On 23 October 2024, the CFDA organised a meeting at its office in Algiers for the families of the disappeared. The aim was to offer them a space to express their views on the events they would like to see organised over the coming year. This meeting was an ideal opportunity to discuss the organisation of events scheduled for 1 November and 10 December 2024. These dates correspond respectively to the anniversary of the wave of attacks on 1 November 1954, which marked the start of the Algerian nationalist, and the start of the demonstrations in favour of Algerian independence in December 1960. These events and their anniversaries are markers of the emergence of a fully-fledged Algerian identity, an identity that the CFDA feels it is necessary to celebrate.

THE ONGOING STRUGGLE OF MOTHERS OF THE MISSING



Every week, they are there, come wind, rain, snow or shine. They remain standing, proud and resilient, these women shattered by the disappearance of a child, a brother, a sister, a husband or a parent. Neither dead nor alive, suspended between the two banks of the River Styx, the memory of the disappeared lives on in them, while they must continue their lives, and above all, continue their struggle.

Their weekly presence is a reminder, an appeal to Algerian society, a challenge to those in power, a cry to the whole world. These families will continue to pound the pavement, unarmed, in the silence of an unshakeable struggle, always demanding truth and justice.

LTHE EXPRESSION OF INEQUALITY BETWEEN MEN AND WOMEN THROUGH EVERYDAY GESTURES, STORIES AND ADAGES

Since its creation, the CFDA has been concerned about and actively committed to combating all forms of violence that undermine our world.

As such, the CFDA, whose members include a majority of women - mothers, wives, sisters and/or committed activists - is resolutely committed to the fight against discrimination and violence based on gender. It was for this cause that, on 16 November 2024, the CFDA organised a conference-debate at the Centre de recherche pour la préservation de la Mémoire et l'étude des droits de l'Homme (CPMDH) in Oran on the theme: "*The expression of inequality between men and women through everyday gestures, tales and adages*". Hosted by Djamila Hamitou, an activist, university lecturer in marine sciences and storyteller, the aim of the conference was to highlight the importance of deconstructing gender stereotypes, which manifest themselves from an early age.

The aim of this initiative was to raise public awareness of the need to change mentalities in order to work towards a world where rape culture, male gaze and discrimination are no longer the norm.



TRAINING ON INTERNATIONAL HUMANITARIAN LAW

The quest for truth and justice that the CFDA has been pursuing since 1998 is intrinsically linked to the understanding and application of the principles of international humanitarian law (IHL). This connection fully justifies the CFDA's approach to legal issues in its advocacy work, as well as in the training it provides in its various offices.

In this context, the CFDA, in partnership with the Riposte Internationale association, organised a training on international humanitarian law on 15 and 16 November 2024.

The lawyers M.Badi Abdelghani, M.Bouchachi Mostafa and M.Ahmine Nourreddine introduced the 15 young Algerian lawyers who taking part in the session to the fundamental principles of IHL, a law which governs situations of armed conflict, whether national or international, and whose aim is to limit violence and guarantee humanitarian assistance to the populations affected by confrontation. The training, which took place over two days in two separate sessions at the CFDA offices, covered a number of topics, including the types of violations concerned, the defence of human rights and ways of increasing the visibility of these violations.

This training has taken on great importance and significance a time when humanity too often seems to be losing its bearings and fundamental values.



STUDY AND REFLECTION DAY FOR THE ELIMINATION OF VIOLENCE AGAINST WOMEN

As part of its action against all forms of discrimination, the CFDA is taking advantage of its offices on both sides of the Mediterranean to wage its battle simultaneously in two different countries. To this end, the CFDA, in partnership with the Riposte Internationale association, organised a day of study and reflection on violence against women on Saturday 23 November, in the run-up to the International Day for the Elimination of Violence against Women, celebrated each year on 25 November.

With a focus on listening to and empathising with victims of violence, the day gave participants the opportunity to meet and exchange views with a number of renowned speakers, including Ms Nassera Dutour, President of the FEMED and the CFDA, Ms Bochra Bel Haj Hmida, lawyer at the Tunisian Court of Cassation, former President of the Tunisian Association of Democratic Women and President of the Commission for Individual Freedoms and Equality, Souad Frikech-Chaouih, General Delegate of the Association of Moroccans in France, and Nadine Mezens, former Deputy Mayor of the 18th arrondissement of Paris.

The morning was devoted to sharing expertise on violence against women, with a particular focus on the Maghreb. These rich and varied presentations were followed by a fruitful dialogue with a committed audience, who were able to highlight the different forms that gender-based violence can take, whether economic, family or social.

In the afternoon, there was a lively exchange of recommendations and concrete proposals (some of which are worth mentioning) to improve care for victims of gender-based violence and to work towards the eradication of all forms of discrimination and aggression against women.

Far from placing women in a victim position, this day of exchange and reflection was a way of giving back to women some of the voice and strength that patriarchal society, still very much present, is trying to take away from them.



FREEING SPEECH

The repercussions of enforced disappearance are as violent as those of losing a loved one in total uncertainty. The anguish of being the next victim, the fear of even imagining what has become of your loved one, the loneliness of feeling abandoned by those who are afraid, or those who look at you with the disdain symptomatic of the certainty of having acted correctly, of being on the right side. A multitude of feelings that insidiously creep in: being ashamed of fearing for yourself, being ashamed - sometimes - of not being on the "right side", on the side of those who have nothing to fear, before becoming aware of your own thoughts and feeling ashamed again.

To deal with these feelings, to bring the trauma out into the open and prevent it from becoming a poisoned legacy for whole generations, the CFDA has decided to work alongside the families of the missing to help them maintain, or even improve, their psychological health. To this end, the CFDA regularly organises discussion groups led by a psychologist, as was the case on 5 December 2024.

This discussion group brought together many families of the 'disappeared', who were able to share their experiences and their feelings, all under the watchful eye of Mrs Nassera Dutour, President of the CFDA, and supervised by a psychologist, who was able to invite them and accompany them in expressing their pain and their solitude, in an atmosphere marked by kindness. The event was full of emotion and resilience.



CFDA MEETING WITH THE PRESIDENT OF THE NATIONAL COUNCIL FOR HUMAN RIGHTS

It is clear today that the political climate in Algeria becoming increasingly tense, and even more so for an association such as the CFDA, which has been fighting for so long for truth and justice that are still being obstructed by the machinery of state. Despite the pressure and threats it faces, the CFDA refuses to let itself be destabilised. On 8 December 2024, Mrs Nassera Dutour, President of the CFDA, accompanied by several members of the association, met the President of the National Human Rights Council (CNDH) in Algiers to make a plea to him on the general allegations made by the working group against enforced disappearances, made public by the UN body in May 2023.

This meeting, and the courage it demonstrated, shows that the quest for truth and justice by the families of the disappeared is not over, and that it will continue to be supported by the CFDA until its mission is accomplished.



PSCREENING AND DEBATE TO MARK THE 75TH ANNIVERSARY OF THE UDHR

The Universal Declaration of Human Rights (UDHR) was adopted by the United Nations General Assembly on 10 December 1948 in Paris. Embodying fundamental principles such as universality, equality and non-discrimination, the UDHR celebrated its 75th anniversary in a world increasingly subject to violence. Every time we open a newspaper, we read about the devastation caused by a bomb or the stories of people forced to flee their countries because of war. The UDHR has never sounded so loud in the face of the world's lamentations.

To highlight the importance of this text and its values, the CFDA in Oran has chosen to screen the feature film *Une histoire d'engagement*, directed by Christine Seghezzi, on 14 December 2024. Produced in 2008, the film talk about the life of Stéphane Hessel, one of the main drafters of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights and author of the bestseller *Indignez-vous!* The screening was followed by a debate on the film, Stéphane Hessel's life, and the state of the world and its impact on human rights.

OWHAT IS THE CURRENT STATE OF HUMAN RIGHTS IN ALGERIA?

On 14 December 2024, to mark the 75th anniversary of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights, the CFDA worked closely with the Riposte Internationale association to organise the presentation of its annual report on the worrying human rights situation in Algeria. The presentation brought together a large number of people, including journalists and human rights activists from several countries in the Maghreb and the Middle East, including Algeria, Syria and Egypt. The presentation highlighted the scale of human rights violations and the importance of the fight for justice. During the presentation of the report, the two associations discussed Algeria's increasingly repressive and violent policies, particularly with regard to press freedom, but also to collective and individual freedoms.

Ms Nassera Dutour underline in an interview with *La Radio des Sans Voix*, that the Algerian president has sufficient power to put an end to the pain of the victims, but by refusing to do so he is condemning several hundred of his fellow citizens to live in uncertainty and pain.



BRÈVES

SAÏD BOUDOUR, KADOUR CHOUICHA AND DJAMILA LOUKIL CHARGED WITH SABOTAGE AND TERRORISM

On 20 November 2024, the appeal trial of human rights defenders Saïd Boudour, Kadour Chouicha and Djamila Loukil, charged with sabotage and terrorism under Article 87bis of the penal code was held.

The CFDA demands an immediate and definitive end to the prosecution and judicial harassment of which they are victims. Their actions fall within the framework of freedom of expression, information and assembly, which are fundamental rights.

PRESS REVIEWS

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