



Newsletter no. 50: January, February, March 2014

[Appeal campaign against law no. 12-06 on the freedom of association](#)

Algerian associations had until 12 January 2014 to conform to the new provisions of the law on freedom of association adopted in 2012. Long before this came into effect, CFDA had raised the alarm on this new law which considerably tightens the conditions around the creation of an association and its field of action.

The CFDA has led numerous plea missions in Algeria and at international level to condemn these new provisions. The CFDA has dedicated a chapter to this in its report “[Human Rights put Algerian Regime to the Test: The illusion of change](#)”.

The Collective of Associations Appealing Against Law No. 12-06 (according to the collective), created after the law’s implementation and made up of seventeen associations including the CFDA and SOS Disappeared, has published a petition online to repeal the law and call on authorities to these associations’ situation. Following this petition, a large gathering was held in front of the National People’s Assembly (NPA) on 12 January.

A delegation of the Collective was received by the President of the Committee on Youth, Sports and Associative Activity. After a long discussion on the Collective’s preoccupations with regards to this new law, the President of the Committee has committed to transferring the request for an audience with the NPA delegation and the President of the Commission on Legal Affairs and to obtain a meeting with the latter.

[Training in communication and advocacy techniques in Algiers](#)

This new training course was held on 14 and 15 February and was led by two specialists in communication and advocacy. More than a dozen participants, made up of activists, volunteers or paid employees of the associations, followed this with seriousness and enthusiasm.

Throughout the training, groups were formed to work on the interactive exercises to allow participants to concretely put into practice the advice given during the theoretical sessions.

The first day was focused on verbal and non-verbal communication and emphasis was placed on the importance of gestures and attitude. The selection of images and slogans during a

campaign was also essential for more efficiency. The participants also studied the rules of argumentation.

On the second day, the participants studied texts from the European Union, on which they then commented and analysed, and were invited to list constructive criticism with regards to the communication rules they had previously looked at. The day ended with an oral and written evaluation by the participants.

Training in monitoring the violations of human rights in Blida, Oran, Algiers and Laghouat

For the past four years, CFDA has organised training in the methods for protecting human rights and communication techniques. CFDA has stated that activists, despite being very motivated, lacked methodology and organisation to identify a violation and act quickly and effectively. In its strategy to reinforce the competences of the human rights defenders, CFDA has spent several months working on preparing new training sessions in the documentation of violations of human rights. CFDA had initially contacted an Egyptian trainer but his visa was rejected without justification. Thanks to its large network, CFDA was able to quickly find a new trainer, a lawyer who works for the Independent International Commission of Inquiry on the Syrian Arab Republic.

At the end of March, two training sessions which brought together a dozen participants (representatives of associations, activists, from universities, students) were held over two days in Blida and Oran. After recapping the definition of human rights, its origins and main norms, the methodology to be followed for documenting violations and how to use the different sources of information were at the heart of this training. In order to better assimilate the explanations given, the participants were divided into several groups and acted as the victim or the investigator using role-play.

The first objective was to know how to lead an interview. The participants were therefore able to implement the interview techniques by answering the following questions: Who? When? What? Where? How? Why? The second objective was to teach the participants how to collate the information gathered and to only retain what is consistent to deliver verified information. The participants therefore learnt the methodology to be followed when documenting violations by corroborating the information gathered to deliver reliable and precise information.

The next training sessions will be held on 1 and 2 April in Algiers and 4 and 5 April in Laghouat.

Launching the presidential campaign: the associations are preparing themselves

To reinforce their visibility and have the families' claims heard during this electoral campaign, members of SOS Disappeared decided to organise gatherings every Saturday in different places to show that the families are always there and that they will never give up as long as they have not uncovered the truth about their relatives. The CFDA therefore organised

a gathering on 22 March in front of the El Alia cemetery and a gathering on 26 March in front of the National Consultative Commission for the Promotion and Protection of Human Rights' headquarters (CNCPPDH).

CFDA equally wrote an open letter in light of the presidential campaign in April to the attention of all Algerians in order to remind them of the families' claims for the truth and the end of impunity.

CFDA then organised a gathering on 16 March in front of the Press House in Algiers during which the families distributed this letter in Arabic to journalists. The letter was also broadcast to all contacts of the CFDA. Many families took part in this activity. Nonetheless, despite the families rallying together, very few newspapers printed the different CFDA releases and open letter, providing little visibility to these events.

International Day of Women's Rights

For the International Day of Women's Rights, CFDA organised a gathering which was held on the 1er Mai square in Algiers and a gathering was held in front of the Court of Justice and Oran Cathedral. On this symbolic day and through the means of a report, CFDA wished to remember the mothers, wives, sisters and daughters of the missing who, for many long years, have been fighting to know the fate of their loved ones and to gain justice. These traumatised women have found themselves in precarious conditions and have had to provide for the needs of their families alone.

Despite the adoption of the Charter for Peace and National Reconciliation and its provisions, the mothers, wives and daughters of the disappeared remain active by CFDA's side and continue to file complaints before the national authorities and national bodies. They all confirm that they will never give up for the truth for as long as they shall live and many refuse to accept the compensation offered in its stead.

Inadequate responses from the Algerian authorities

The United Nations' Working Group on Enforced or Involuntary Disappearance (WGEID) has passed on the responses from the Algerian authorities on five cases of enforced disappearance in Algeria to the CFDA. Once again, the authorities have simply given the exact same reply without any form of clarification on the fate of the missing. In fact, for each case, the Algerian government referred to the table in which the missing has been marked as deceased by the beneficiaries who have been compensated. However, we must remember that the families understood that this compensation would be subjected to the prior grant of a certified report of disappearance and a deceased ruling. In practice, no inquest has been conducted and the numerous complaints by families to the authorities remain unanswered. These responses therefore remain largely inadequate for the families.

The WGEID has also given three files to the Algerian authorities asking them to carry out an investigation to find out the fate of these people. CFDA has filed its 14th individual

communication before the United Nations Human Rights Committee for the benefit of the family of Mohamed Millis. CFDA is working on two new communications which will be filed in the next few days.

News in brief

HRW report on the freedom of association and gathering

In its annual report published in January 2014, Human Rights Watch draws a sombre portrait of the freedom of association and gathering in Algeria. The NGO makes large criticisms about the law on associations no. 12-06 which constitutes a severe setback in comparison to the previous law in that it considerably restricts the conditions that constitute an association. HRW notably calls on Algeria to respect its international commitments, especially the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights which is ratified by Algeria.

EMHRN debate-meeting in Algiers and Oran

At the presentation of the *Regional Study on Freedom of Assembly in the Euro-Mediterranean Region* published by the Euro-Mediterranean Human Rights Network of which the CFDA is a member, a debate-meeting was organised with the organisations of the civil society in the SOS Disappeared offices in Algiers and Oran. A dozen representatives from associations (Amnesty International, SNAPAP, Doctors of the World, RAJ, etc.), from universities and journalists were present. The difficulties of exercising the right to assemble, to demonstrate and to gather were discussed in order to attempt to organise and find solutions to circumvent the authorities' bad practices and the legal restrictive provisions. In light of the essay in the second half of this study which will be more focused on the practice, questionnaires were handed out to those present to collect written information on the associations' situations under the new law and the obstacles faced by the citizens to assemble and organise public events.

New intimidation towards a member of SOS Disappeared

Hacène Ferhati, brother of a missing person, was awoken at 5 a.m. by five police officers in their official outfits whilst he was sleeping in his hotel. The police officers were forced to follow him and interviewed him for an hour on his activist activities before releasing him. This is not the first time that Hacène Ferhati has been subjected to such intimidation. During a World Social Forum in Tunisia, he was prevented from leaving the country. In their report, the CFDA denounces these practices and requests that these schemes regarding sympathisers of families of the disappeared be put to a stop.

Presidential elections under a lot of pressure

In the 2014 ranking of the freedom of the press established by Reporters Without Borders (RWB), Algeria is in 121st place out of 180 countries. Private channel Al Atlas, which was created in June 2013 and did not hesitate to cover the demonstrations of the Barakat movement, spontaneously born in response to the fourth mandate by Abdelaziz Bouteflika,

was searched and had its equipment confiscated. The channel was closed down and forbidden from broadcasting. This new act of intimidation from the authorities once again proves that freedom of expression has yet to be gained and confirms Algeria's place in the world ranking established by RWB.