

# NEWSLETTER N°94

January-February-March 2025

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Collectif des  
Familles de  
Disparus en  
Algérie

## MAKING THE INVISIBLE VISIBLE

### January

#### SUPPORT FOR VICTIMS OF ENFORCED DISAPPEARANCES IN BALOCHISTAN: A FIGHT FOR TRUTH AND JUSTICE

As 2025 began, the Center for the Preservation of Memory and the Study of Human Rights (CPMDH) reaffirmed its commitment to supporting victims of enforced disappearances in Balochistan, a region in Pakistan. Since 2011, the families of the disappeared—often activists, journalists, or civilians accused of supporting local separatist movements—have been demanding justice in the face of a troubling international silence.

In Balochistan, enforced disappearances are a widespread and systematic practice by Pakistani security forces, who abduct and detain individuals without charge or trial, often under harrowing conditions. Victims are typically targeted for their political activism or for their ties to Baloch separatist communities. For more than a decade, these grave human rights violations have increased, while the pleas of affected families are met with indifference. Pakistani authorities remain largely unaccountable, and the global community has remained alarmingly silent in the face of this humanitarian crisis.

In a desperate plea for answers, families regularly organize sit-ins and protests. Yet, they are met with official indifference and inaction. No concrete measures have been taken to stop the tragedy or bring justice to the victims. Their fight—though courageous—often seems hopeless. Nonetheless, it is a powerful testament to resilience in the face of impunity.

CFDA stands firm in its belief that the pursuit of Truth and Justice must transcend borders. The struggle of Baloch families to uncover the fate of their loved ones is part of a broader, universal fight for human rights. As with the families of the disappeared in Algeria, it is essential that the international community awakens to the scale of these violations and holds perpetrators accountable.

CFDA will continue to support all families and communities confronting impunity, and it will honor the memory of the victims until Truth and Justice prevail.

#### THE FIRST GLOBAL CONGRESS AGAINST ENFORCED DISAPPEARANCES: A HISTORIC MILESTONE FOR JUSTICE AND HUMAN RIGHTS

On January 15 and 16, 2025, Geneva hosted the first-ever Global Congress on Enforced Disappearances—a landmark event for the families of the disappeared. Co-organized by the Initiative for the Convention Against Enforced Disappearances (CEDI), the Committee on Enforced Disappearances (CED), the Working Group on Enforced or Involuntary Disappearances (WGEID), and the United Nations Human Rights Council (UNHRC), the congress brought together more than 720 participants from 120 countries.

This historic gathering marked a turning point by shining a spotlight on the global scale of the crime of enforced disappearance. It gave families of the disappeared a vital platform to share their experiences, stories, and knowledge. These powerful and deeply moving testimonies

emphasized the need for a collective path toward Truth, Justice, and prevention. The exchanges also underscored the urgent necessity of addressing this global phenomenon.

A standout feature of the event was the strong presence and leadership of women, who play a key role in the struggle for recognition of enforced disappearances and the defense of human rights. Their courage—often demonstrated at great personal risk—was recognized as a cornerstone of resistance against impunity. Nassera Dutour, President of CFDA and the Euro-Mediterranean Federation Against Enforced Disappearances (FEMED), participated in the opening session alongside five other women, sharing her personal journey and commitment to the fight against enforced disappearances.

Over two days, the congress hosted a series of panels discussing a range of topics, including the fight against impunity, international accountability for perpetrators, support for victims, and the use of universal jurisdiction in holding offenders responsible.

A key objective of the Congress was to develop concrete strategies to strengthen international mechanisms to combat enforced disappearances—highlighting the importance of international cooperation, strengthening national legislation, and engaging civil society in the processes of remembrance and justice.

This event marks a significant step forward in the global mobilization against enforced disappearances, reinforcing the urgency of continued efforts to eradicate this crime and ensure that every victim receives the justice they deserve.



© Initiative pour la Convention internationale contre les disparitions forcées / Caroline Amar

## 35 YEARS OF HUMAN RIGHTS ADVOCACY IN ALGERIA: A MOMENT OF CELEBRATION AND SOLIDARITY

On January 25, 2025, members of SOS Disparus had the honor of attending the ceremony marking the 35th anniversary of Amnesty International Algeria. This deeply symbolic event paid tribute to the countless human rights activists and defenders who have worked tirelessly for decades to uphold justice, fundamental freedoms, and human dignity.

During the ceremony, SOS Disparus expressed heartfelt gratitude to Amnesty International Algeria for its unwavering commitment and tireless work in protecting human rights. Operating in often-hostile environments, their continued efforts stand as a model of resilience and steadfast determination in the face of injustice.

This celebration served as a reminder of the strong bond between the two organizations, which share common values and a joint commitment to the pursuit of Truth, Justice, and dignity for victims. SOS Disparus specifically highlighted Amnesty International Algeria's lasting impact in raising awareness and mobilizing action around critical issues such as enforced disappearances, political violence, and the suppression of civil liberties.

### Février

## SPEAKING OUT ON THE HUMAN RIGHTS SITUATION IN ALGERIA – FROM LONDON

On February 22, Nassera Dutour traveled to London to speak at a gathering marking the sixth anniversary of the Hirak movement. The event shed light on Algeria's current political and social challenges and the increasing pressure faced by human rights defenders in the region. In her address, Dutour emphasized the ongoing repression and violations of civil liberties affecting Algerian citizens—particularly since the re-election of Abdelmadjid Tebboune in 2024.

During the first panel, titled "*Political Stakes and Human Rights Demands – Six Years After the Hirak*," Nassera Dutour delivered an in-depth analysis of Algeria's post-Hirak

reality. She underscored the troubling escalation of authoritarian practices, despite the Hirak movement's clear demand for radical change. She particularly stressed the misuse of anti-terrorism laws to criminalize activists and journalists, as well as the sharp curtailment of civic space.

In the second panel, "*The Human Rights Situation in Algeria*", Nassera Dutour addressed several key issues: the shrinking of civic space, the crackdown on press freedom, and the instrumentalization of the judicial system. She highlighted the plight of political prisoners and human rights defenders jailed simply for exercising their right to free expression. Currently, more than 215 individuals—including journalists and activists—remain behind bars.

As President of the CFDA, Nassera Dutour called for the immediate release of all prisoners of conscience and urged for the urgent repeal of repressive laws to restore fundamental freedoms in Algeria. She also addressed the challenges faced by women and minorities in a political context where gender equality remains a major unresolved issue.

On the sidelines of the event, recommendations were issued to increase international pressure on Algeria regarding its human rights record. The need to strengthen ties between international and local organizations was emphasized, in order to create concrete mechanisms of support for Algerian civil society. The immediate priorities remain: the release of political detainees, the rehabilitation of imprisoned activists, and the implementation of a truly independent judicial reform.

### **UNWAVERING COMMITMENT TO TRUTH AND JUSTICE: GATHERING OF FAMILIES OF THE DISAPPEARED**

The CFDA and its local branch, SOS Disparus, remain steadfast in their support for families of the disappeared—accompanying them through both legal and emotional processes. More than a partner, the CFDA acts as a vital ally in the fight for Truth and Justice—not only for the victims, but also for their families, who carry the daily burden of

absence and the pain of silence.

As part of this commitment, CFDA regularly organizes meetings bringing together the many families of the disappeared, with the goal of strengthening mutual bonds and collaboratively defining the strategic actions for 2025. The latest gathering took place on February 26, 2025, in an atmosphere filled with solidarity, compassion, and shared resolve. Each participant was invited to share their story, expectations, and hopes for the future.

These meetings are typically held on Wednesdays, the weekly day of protest adopted by the families since August 1998. Over time, these gatherings have become a crucial touchstone—a space for collective support and strategic planning. This longstanding ritual reflects the resilience of the families, united in their common struggle for recognition and justice.

The most recent gathering once again reaffirmed the collective commitment of families and the CFDA. Their determination to obtain Truth and Justice remains unshakable. As with every meeting, it was a powerful reminder that as long as truth and justice remain out of reach, the fight will continue—with perseverance, without compromise, and with the unyielding belief that their voices will one day be heard.



**Mars**

### **REPORT ON THE SITUATION OF HUMAN RIGHTS DEFENDERS IN ALGERIA**

On March 5, Mary Lawlor, the United Nations Special Rapporteur on the situation of human rights defenders, presented her long-awaited report to the Human Rights

Council. The report, focused specifically on Algeria, sheds light on the many challenges faced by human rights defenders in the country.

Mary Lawlor emphasized that, despite promises made by the Algerian government in the aftermath of the Hirak movement, actual progress has been minimal. Human rights defenders continue to face threats, intimidation, and persecution. She voiced serious concerns over the ongoing repression of dissenting voices, the criminalization of peaceful activism, and the persistent curtailment of freedom of expression.

The Special Rapporteur urged the Algerian authorities to take concrete steps to ensure a safe and enabling environment for activists. She stressed the importance of transparency and genuine commitment from the state in protecting fundamental freedoms and in honoring the promises of reform that emerged during the popular movement.

For the CFDA, this report underscores the urgent need for constant vigilance and sustained international pressure to protect human rights defenders in Algeria.

### INTERNATIONAL WOMEN'S RIGHTS DAY CELEBRATION

On March 8, as every year, CFDA marked International Women's Rights Day by reaffirming the critical importance of this day in the ongoing struggle for equality, freedom, and justice. It is a time to pay tribute to women around the world for their strength, courage, and resilience—and a powerful reminder that, despite progress, gender inequality remains a persistent and daily battle.

True to its values, CFDA dedicated this year's celebration to women—especially the mothers of the disappeared. These courageous women stand at the heart of the fight for Truth and Justice. They carry an enormous burden—the pain of absence, the weight of unanswered questions, and the enduring injustice of silence—but remain unshaken in their determination to uncover

the truth.

CFDA renews its unwavering commitment to supporting these mothers, defending their rights, and demanding that light be shed on the tragic fate of their children.



©Terre de femmes

### SIDE EVENT IN GENEVA

From March 5 to 7, 2025, a delegation of Algerian civil society representatives—including Nassera Dutour—traveled to Geneva for a series of high-level meetings with key human rights actors. This advocacy mission was coordinated by several organizations, including EuroMed Rights, the Cairo Institute for Human Rights Studies, and MENA Rights Group. A central aim of the mission was to call for collective action in support of Algerian civil society, which is facing intensifying repression. The delegation also sought to raise international awareness about the deteriorating human rights situation in Algeria, with a particular focus on the alarming erosion of civic space in the country.

These meetings carried particular weight as they coincided with the presentation of the report by Mary Lawlor, the UN Special Rapporteur on the situation of human rights defenders, following her recent visit to Algeria.

In parallel with these diplomatic engagements—including meetings with state representatives and UN Special Rapporteurs—the organizers held a side event where Nassera Dutour was invited to speak. In her address, she issued a stark warning to the international community about the systematic repression of human rights defenders in Algeria. At the heart of this repression, she highlighted Article 87 bis of the Algerian Penal Code—a law increasingly misused to target activists, political dissidents, and journalists.



Originally intended to combat terrorism, Article 87 bis is now being weaponized by Algerian authorities to brand anyone opposing the regime or speaking out against human rights abuses as a “terrorist.” This sweeping legal tool has been routinely used to jail individuals on flimsy or non-existent evidence, simply for exercising their right to freedom of expression.

Nassera Dutour called for stronger international pressure on the Algerian government to repeal or significantly reform this repressive legislation, which not only distorts the concept of justice but also worsens the human rights crisis in the country.

This advocacy mission in Geneva marks a crucial step in the broader struggle for freedom, justice, and equality in Algeria. Thanks to the unwavering dedication of leaders like Nassera Dutour, CFDA continues to stand firm in defense of those who risk everything to uphold their rights and those of others.



© « WOKE BAN Woke UN agency bans the word ‘Englishman’ — because it is too gendered », The Sun

## AMPLIFYING THE VOICES OF THE DISAPPEARED

March was marked by a strong media presence from Nassera Dutour, whose tireless commitment to preserving memory and defending the rights of families of the disappeared continues to resonate widely. Through a series of powerful interventions, she brought attention to the voices of victims and denounced the ongoing mechanisms of repression in Algeria.

In addition to her participation in the side event at the United Nations Palais des Nations, where she exposed persistent human rights violations, Nassera Dutour

took part in two significant media engagements that further amplified her message.

She first gave an interview to Cannelle Tomasoni and Clémence Bouchart for Prison Insider, as part of a feature exploring the global criminalization of activism. In her testimony, Nassera Dutour examined enforced disappearances and the detention of conscience as tools of political repression—using the Algerian context as a telling example.

She was also invited to speak on the Macahu podcast, where she revisited the issue of enforced disappearances during Algeria’s “Black Decade” of civil conflict. Nassera Dutour reflected on the legal and political deadlock that continues to face families of the disappeared, particularly since the Civil Concord Law, enacted on July 8, 1999, which still denies them truth and justice.

This vital work of memory and advocacy will continue into April. Nassera Dutour is scheduled to meet with a PhD student from the Autonomous University of Madrid, who is conducting a sociopolitical analysis of the mothers’ movement in Algeria—from its origins to its resonance in the Hirak uprising. She will also speak with a student writing a dissertation titled “The Violence of Silence: The Algerian Civil War and the Struggle for Reconciliation, Memory, and Historical Truth.” These in-depth conversations aim to explore how Algerian civil society continues to resist imposed silence and works to safeguard collective memory.

Through her public voice and unwavering dedication, Nassera Dutour continues her mission to make the invisible visible, and to give voice to those who are still being silenced.

## PRESS REVIEWS

Revue de Presse - Janvier 2025

Revue de Presse - Février 2025

Revue de Presse - Mars 2025

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