



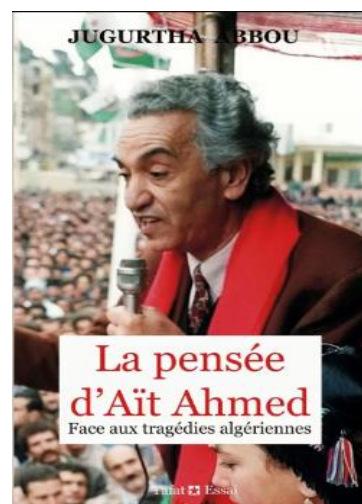
LITERARY CAFE IN ALGIERS : LA PENSEE D'AÏT AHMED FACE AUX TRAGEDIES ALGERIENNES



On the 14th of January 2023, SOS Disparus launched its first café/debate in its premises in Algiers with the presentation of Jugurtha Abbou's book: *La pensée d'Aït Ahmed face aux tragédies algériennes*, published in December 2022. Jugurtha Abbou is an Algerian novelist, poet, essayist, specialized in social psychology and a political activist.

The inauguration of this café/debate was intended as a tribute to Hocine Aït Ahmed, president of the Socialist Forces Front party.

This essay retraces the path and thought of Hocine Aït Ahmed (1926-2015), a fervent militant against French colonialism and for independence, then a politician against dictatorship and for the establishment of democracy in Algeria.



HUMAN RIGHTS IN ALGERIA: AN UNPRECEDENTED REPRESSION SINCE THE HIRAK

Press freedom at risk

Ihsane El Kadi, journalist and director of Radio M and Maghreb Emergent, was arrested during the night of the 22nd to the 23rd of December 2022. The public prosecutor at the Sidi M'hamed court requested, on the 26th of March, a five-year prison sentence against him. A fine of 10 million dinars was also imposed on Ihsane El Kadi's company "Interface Media", publisher of the "Radio M" and "Maghreb Emergent" news websites.

A gathering in support of Ihsane El Kadi was organized in Paris on the call of Algerian collectives and associations in France. The gathering was held on the 7th of January 2023 at the Place du Trocadéro to demand the immediate and unconditional release of Ihsane El Kadi, of all political prisoners and prisoners of conscience in Algeria and to demand a free press.



On the 15th of January, the indictment division of the Algiers court arbitrarily renewed the provisional detention of journalist Ihsane el Kadi. None of his defense team's lawyers were present at the time to challenge the legality of his imprisonment, as the court had not informed them that the appeal hearing, initially scheduled for the 18th of January, had been moved up for a few days.

The Algiers court had indicated that Mr El-Kadi is accused of *"having received sums of money and privileges from persons and organizations in the country and abroad in order to engage in activities*

likely to undermine the security of the State and its stability".

Furthermore, Ihsane El Kadi was directly targeted by Algerian President Abdelmadjid Tebboune. The latter accused him on public television of being a *"khabardji"*, i.e. an "informer" or a "snitch". This accusation is an unacceptable attack by the head of state on the presumption of innocence and the impartiality of judges. The whole course of Ihsane El Kadi's case highlights serious violations of the right to a fair trial.

In March 2023, a letter from the UN Special Rapporteurs to the Algerian government regarding Ihsane El Kadi was made public. The Special Rapporteurs were *"alarmed by the de facto silencing of a critical journalist and the search of two independent media outlets, which have a negative impact on press freedom in Algeria"* and expressed their *"concern about the possible violation of fair trial standards in the arrest and detention of Mr. El Kadi, including his right of access to a lawyer and his right to be informed of the charges against him and of the reasons for his arrest"*.

Dissolution of the Algerian League for the Defense of Human Rights

In this particularly repressive context, the Algerian government attacked an emblem of human rights defense. On the 22nd of January 2023, the Algerian League for the Defence of Human Rights (LADDH) announced that it had been dissolved by the Algerian authorities in a trial held in its absence. The Algerian League learned of its own dissolution through a message posted on social networks.



The Algerian League believes that, like other organizations, it is "paying" for its "commitment to democracy, freedoms and human rights" (Le Monde, the 23rd of January 2023).

This repressive strategy of the Algerian government against human rights defenders also affected the CFDA. **On Wednesday 25th of January 2023 at 6pm, two police officers, one in combat gear and another in civilian clothes, in an official police car, rang the doorbell of the offices of SOS Disparus in Algiers.** They were looking for the owner of the premises to leave a summons. The A4 document in the hands of the officer did not look like a summons and had the stamp of the public prosecutor's office on it. This strategy of intimidation against our association and our staff is unacceptable.

This harassment of SOS Disparus is not new. Let us recall that we still do not have legal recognition in Algeria, as the procedures are constantly blocked by the institutions. This non-recognition is an obstacle to the right of association.

In this context, the CFDA reacted by writing an urgent appeal on February the 1st 2023 to the attention of the UN Special Rapporteur on the rights to freedom of peaceful assembly and freedom of association, Clément Nyaletsossi Voule, in order to draw attention to the alarming situation concerning the respect of human rights in Algeria, particularly the freedom of association.

The CFDA also drafted a press release entitled: **The era of the single party is back in Algeria**, which was widely distributed on social networks.

[Find our press release online](#)

The CFDA has also been able to raise awareness of these issues within the French national authorities. On February the 2nd 2023, Nassera Dutour, spokesperson for the association, met with Mr Raphaël Justine, in charge of the Sub-Directorate for North Africa at the Ministry of Foreign Affairs. On February the 3rd, Nassera Dutour also had a meeting with Anne Charlotte Dommartin, Delegate for relations with civil society and partnerships at the Ministry of Foreign Affairs.

Confirmation of the dissolution of the association Rassemblement Action Jeunesse (RAJ)

On the 23rd of February 2023, the State Council confirmed the definitive dissolution of the association Rassemblement-Action-Jeunesse (RAJ).

RAJ, a leading NGO in the pro-democracy movement, has been in action for over 30 years in Algeria and was a prominent actor in the Hirak. Several of its members have been prosecuted for their involvement in the Hirak. On the 6th of April 2020, RAJ's president, Abdelwahab Fersaoui was sentenced to one year in prison for "*attacking the integrity of the national territory and inciting violence*".

This new dissolution is an alarming indicator of the authoritarianism of the Algerian state and its will to repress any voice of opposition.

Amira Bouraoui: the activists-drain from Algeria

The French-Algerian activist Amira Bouraoui fled Algeria illegally and arrived in Tunisia on the 3rd of February 2023. She was placed in pre-trial detention by the Tunisian authorities and finally released on the 6th after appearing before a judge. However, as soon as she was released by the Tunisian authorities, officers in civilian clothes orchestrated her abduction in the streets of the capital. She was then kept in detention at Tunis airport.

The Tunisian authorities were then in contact with the Algerian government to organize her extradition. However, after hours of negotiations between the French and Tunisian authorities, Amira Bouraoui, who owns a French passport, was able to board a flight to Lyon.

Following this affair, President Tebboune ordered the recall of the Algerian ambassador to France, Saïd Moussi, for consultation with immediate effect.

This incident also highlighted a now common practice of Algerian authoritarianism: the harassment of activists' families. On two occasions, police officers went to the homes of Amira Bouraoui's mother and sister to intimidate them. On the 11th of February, they were both arrested by the gendarmerie in El Achour, Algiers. After being detained, Amira Bouraoui's mother was finally released, but was subjected to a ban on leaving the national territory. The Algerian government is thus taking repression to a new level by targeting the families of activists.

Relations between France and Algeria are now calmer following a call between Emmanuel Macron and Abdelmadjid Tebboune on the 24th of March. The presidents referred to a "misunderstanding" over the Amira Bouraoui case, and the French president said it would not happen again.

This exchange is particularly worrying with regards to the situation of Algerian rights defender Zaki Hannache, a political refugee in Tunisia, who is now facing threats of extradition to Algeria where he could face 35 years in prison or even the death penalty.

This extradition would be illegal and completely contrary to the principles of international law. It is very worrying that the French President does not criticize the Algerian President for the flagrant human rights violations perpetrated against Algerians.

CELEBRATION OF THE FOURTH ANNIVERSARY OF THE ALGERIAN *HIRAK*

On February 18th, 2023, at the Bourse du Travail in Paris, the CFDA co-organized a popular meeting with the association Riposte Internationale. This meeting was held at a critical time when Algerian civil society is repressed and is the victim of increasing human rights violations.



Numerous personalities from associations such as the president of the French League of Human Rights, the vice-president of Amnesty International, political figures such as the vice-president of the French Senate, etc. came to express their support for Algerian civil society through very powerful testimonies.

Nassera Dutour, spokesperson for the CFDA, took the floor to recall the hopes raised by the outbreak of the Hirak four years earlier and the importance

of this peaceful and democratic movement for the future of Algeria.

MEETING WITH THE INSTITUTE FOR FOREIGN CULTURAL RELATIONS BASED IN STUTTGART (GERMANY)

On the 27th of February 2023, our team had the chance to meet Mr Simon Ant from the Institute for Foreign Cultural Relations based in Stuttgart, Germany, at the headquarters of SOS Disparus in Algiers. Simon Ant is in charge of the Cross Culture Programme (CCP) at the Institute. This programme finances scholarships for professionals and volunteers working in 40 countries, including Algeria.

This meeting was an opportunity to present the work of the CFDA, to learn more about the Cross Culture program, and to provide support and experience to the Institute so that it can adapt its programs to the needs of organizations on the field in Algeria.

VISIT IN ALGERIA OF TOBIAS BACHERLE, GERMAN PARLIAMENTARY OF THE PARTY THE GREENS

On February the 3rd, Tobias Bacherle, a German parliamentarian on a mission in Algeria, met our teams at the headquarters of SOS Disparus in Algiers. The CFDA team in Paris had already had an exchange with Tobias Bacherle in order to present the human rights situation in Algeria and the obstacles faced by Algerians in a context of total repression at the national level. This exchange was fruitful insofar as Tobias Bacherle showed himself to be a good listener and was eager to meet our teams in Algeria during his mission as well as other associations.

CONFERENCE: WOMEN AND ENFORCED DISAPPEARANCES: A DOUBLE PUNISHMENT



On International Women's Rights Day, the FEMED and the CFDA dedicated a conference to the interactions between the crime of enforced disappearance and gender issues. This conference was held on the 17th of March 2023 in the premises of Amnesty International in Paris. Indeed, at the intersection of different power relations, women suffer from multiple forms of violence, especially when they are victims of enforced disappearance.

This conference was also an opportunity to study the psychological, social, and economic consequences of the crime of enforced disappearance on the families of the disappeared, who are often and mainly women, as it is mainly men who disappear.

Almost systematically, it is the women who become responsible for taking care of the remaining family members financially, educationally, administratively etc. Furthermore, for the mothers, wives, or sisters of disappeared persons, being deprived of the right to the Truth is a limitless punishment, increasing with time, and preventing any return to a normal life.

The meeting was organized with four speakers who allowed the participants to address different aspects of enforced disappearance from a gender and legal perspective.

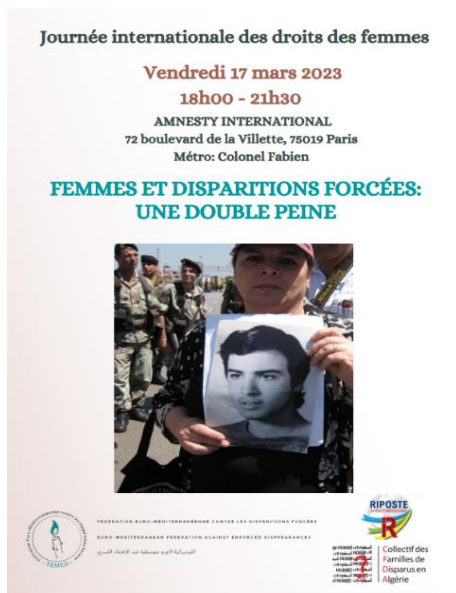
of March. As women first and foremost as mothers, sisters, wives, daughters of the disappeared, the families of the disappeared recognize themselves particularly in this day and SOS Disparus commemorates each year the struggle of women for their rights and for their right to truth and justice.



CONFERENCE: *THE RIGHT TO TRUTH : PUNISHING OR FREEING CONSCIENCES ?*

The United Nations declared the 24th of March "International Day for the Right to the Truth about Gross Violations of Human Rights and for the Dignity of Victims". To commemorate this central day in our struggle, the CFDA and the FEMED organized a conference on the 24th of March in "Les Amarres" in Paris entitled *The right to truth: punishing or freeing consciences?*

The quest for truth is a perpetual struggle for the families of the disappeared. In the context of enforced disappearance and, in extenso, of serious human rights violations, the Truth is a right. Truth is a right for the victims, for their families, but also for the society. Truth is a prerequisite for justice, for the fight against impunity and for rebuilding a society and guaranteeing all its citizens guarantees of non-repetition of crimes. It can play an essential role in liberating individual and collective consciences.



International Women's Day

In Algiers, in the continuity of traditional gatherings of mothers in front of the Human Rights Council, the SOS Disparus team organized a gathering of families of the disappeared on the 8th



psychological shock that would add to their great distress.

The CFDA and SOS Disparus remain rallied around the families to accompany them as well as possible and to follow this eminently sensitive case.

23 FAMILIES OF MISSING PERSONS SUMMONED IN ALGERIA FOR DNA TESTING

This is a first in the history of Algeria since the conflict of the 1990s: the gendarmerie brigade of Béni Amrane (Boumerdes) summoned 23 families of disappeared to carry out DNA tests.

On March the 16th, after the discovery of six bodies (bones) in the region of Djerrah, commune of Ammal, whose death is judged to date from the 1990s, 23 families of the disappeared were summoned by a simple telephone call from the gendarmerie of Beni-Amrane to go to the forensic medicine department of Thenia Hospital in order to take a DNA sample.

The CFDA deplores the way in which this procedure was carried out and expressed its concerns to the prosecutor in a letter.

Indeed, no psychologist was present to accompany the families in this process which necessarily awakens multiple traumas. Furthermore, no official document was given to the families, despite the insistence of Dalel Aïdoun, lawyer of SOS Disparus, and no explanation was given concerning the procedure.

For decades, these families have been suffering and waiting for their loved ones to have a proper burial. The hope given today is immeasurable. This hope must never turn into a nightmare and yet another

Briefs

Advocacy mission in Brussels with Riposte Internationale

Nassera Dutour, as president of the CFDA, was invited by the association Riposte Internationale to lead an advocacy mission in Brussels.

This mission took place from the 20th to the 22nd of March 2023. The delegation met with several political figures such as Raphaël Glucksmann, Jordi Solé, Miguel Martin Zumalacareregui, etc. to raise awareness of the dramatic human rights situation in Algeria today. The delegation also pointed out the necessity for the European Union to denounce the authoritarianism of one of their partner countries.



The main objective of this training was to acquire the tools and techniques essential to the success of an advocacy strategy. It focused mainly on the knowledge needed to distinguish the different phases of an advocacy cycle: analysis, planning, implementation and evaluation. Various workshops dealt with negotiation, message formulation and network management.



Participation of the CFDA to the training on advocacy techniques organised by the FEMED in Erbil

From the 26th of February to the 1st of March 2023, FEMED held a training session in Erbil in Iraqi Kurdistan on advocacy and political influence.

This training brought together 17 participants from associations working in the fight against enforced disappearances from various cities (Erbil, Kirkuk, Mosul, Ninawa), as well as from Lebanon.

Press release

January

[Revue de presse – Janvier 2023](#)

February

[Revue de presse – Février 2023](#)

March

[Revue de presse – Mars 2023](#)

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