



EURO-MEDITERRANEAN HUMAN RIGHTS NETWORK
RÉSEAU EURO-MÉDITERRANÉEN DES DROITS DE L'HOMME
الشبكة الأوروبية - المتوسطية لحقوق الإنسان

Collectif
des
familles
de
disparu(e)s
en
Algérie

المفقودون DISPARUS
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des Droits de l'Homme



ALGERIA: Stop the Harassment Campaign against Union Activists!

Copenhagen, Paris, Geneva, Algiers, September 30, 2011 – On the eve of the first meeting of the European Union-Algeria Subcommittee on 'political dialogue, security, and human rights', to be held in Algiers on October 3, the Euro-Mediterranean Human Rights Network (EMHRN), the Observatory for the Protection of Human Rights Defenders, a joint programme of the International Federation for Human Rights (FIDH) and the World Organisation Against Torture (OMCT), the Action Group of Families of the Disappeared in Algeria (Collectif des Familles de Disparus en Algérie, CFDA), and the Algerian Human Rights League (Ligue Algérienne pour la défense des droits de l'Homme, LADDH) strongly condemn the intensifying harassment campaign against trade unionists and human rights defenders in Algeria.

On the evening of September 25, a police officer from the General Intelligence Service (Renseignements généraux) came to the residence of the owners of the building, housing the Maison des Syndicats also national headquarters of the National Independent Union of Civil Servants (Syndicat national autonome des personnels de l'administration publique, SNAPAP), located in Dar El Beida (east of Algiers), in an attempt to convince them to evict the union from the premises.

Several people, including SNAPAP Secretary General, **Nacera Ghozlane**, witnessed this incident and identified the police officer as Akroune Belgacem. Eye witnesses also reported that the officer made slanderous statements against the main leaders of SNAPAP, characterising them as 'depraved' and 'hoodlums'. The officer also accused SNAPAP with maintaining relations with foreign entities providing it with illegal funding. He added that the police had been given instructions 'from the office of the President of the Republic' to put an end to SNAPAP's activities and ransack its offices in search of important documents.

The officer openly uttered a death threat against SNAPAP President, **Rachid Malaoui**. Already, on 15 July of this year, an attempt was made to sabotage Rachid Malaoui's car. A complaint was made at the time and our organisations call upon the Algerian judicial authorities to follow up on that complaint without delay.

The same day, **Mourad Tchiko**, also a SNAPAP member, was summoned to the Hadjout police station (in Tipaza, west of Algiers), where he was questioned about his trade union activities. Mr Tchiko has been the target of uninterrupted judicial harassment since 2004 and has been deprived of his passport since August 2010, a measure intended to punish him for his union activities.

In addition, on September 20, **Malika Fallil**, Chair of the National Workers' Committee on Precarious and Pre-employment (Comité national des travailleurs du pré-emploi et filet social – travail précaire), was arrested at a sit-in held in front of the Labour Ministry building. Ms Fallil was the target of intimidation attempts by the police, aimed at ending her activities as a union militant, and in particular her relationship with SNAPAP. She was released a few hours later.

Our organisations call upon the Algerian Government to:

- Put an end to all harassment directed against human rights defenders, including union leaders and to suspend all judicial procedures launched against them;
- Allow the judicial authorities to conduct exhaustive, independent, and impartial investigations into the attempt to sabotage of Rachid Malaoui's car and on the litigations involving the associations' centre (Maison des Associations) and the independent unions' centre (Maison des Syndicats autonomes) in Dar El Beida;
- Guarantee the physical and psychological integrity of all human rights defenders including union members in Algeria at all times, along with the security of headquarters and offices of unions and organisations of human rights defenders;
- Implement the provisions of the United Nations' Declaration on human rights defenders (1998).

Our organisations also request that, at the first meeting of the Subcommittee on 'political dialogue, security, and human rights', the European Union firmly call upon the Algerian government to implement its human rights commitments, and in particular to stop harassing human rights defenders, in particular union leaders. Our organisations also call upon the European Union effectively to implement the EU's Guidelines on human rights defenders.

For more information:

Despite the emergency rule was lifted on 24 February 2011, freedom of association and assembly, in Algeria are constantly violated. Union Activists and Human Rights Defenders are the target of harassment, intimidation and even death threats.

Attacks against union freedoms have multiplied since the beginning of 2011. The SNAPAP offices were broken into during the night of May 8, 2011. Computers were stolen, but valuable objects were left on the scene. There has been no police follow-up of the complaint filed in the wake of this break-in.

As to the litigations surrounding the closure by administrative order of the Maison des Associations (Oran, 2002) and the Maison des Syndicats (Algiers, 2010), they are still pending. In the case of the Maison des Associations, the matter has been lying with the State Council for several years.¹

As part of the Association Agreement in effect since 2005, Algeria and the EU have recently established a Subcommittee on 'political dialogue, security, and human rights'. Its members meet at least once a year, alternating between Algeria and the European Union. Senior officials from the two parties alternatively chair the meetings.

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¹ See joint Press Release (in French) by EMHRN-OBS (joint programme of FIDH-OMCT) on May 14, 2010 : <http://www.euromedrights.org/fr/dernieres-nouvelles/emhrn-releases/communiqués-du-remdh-2010/5855.html>