

# AMNESTY INTERNATIONAL

## Public Statement

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### **Algeria: UN rights body criticizes Algeria's pervasive climate of impunity for continuing human rights violations**

Amnesty International urges the Algerian authorities to promptly and fully implement the UN Human Rights Committee's recommendations adopted today (available at: [http://www.ohchr.org/english/bodies/hrc/docs/AdvanceDocs/CCPR.C.DZA.CO.3.CRP.1\\_fr.pdf](http://www.ohchr.org/english/bodies/hrc/docs/AdvanceDocs/CCPR.C.DZA.CO.3.CRP.1_fr.pdf) ).

Despite improvements in women's rights and towards the abolition of the death penalty, the UN Human Rights Committee criticized the widespread impunity for killings, "disappearances," rape, torture and secret detentions, which have been committed in Algeria.

The Algerian authorities must:

- Immediately and fully investigate the killings, "disappearances," torture and rape which have been committed in the context of the internal conflict of the 1990s, including by state agents, and bring the perpetrators to justice.

In particular, the Algerian authorities must open full investigations into each case of enforced disappearance, as initiatives taken so far to address the question have been woefully inadequate and do not constitute a substitute for a commission of inquiry demanded by families of the "disappeared."

The lack of proper investigations is further exacerbated by Articles 45 and 46 of the 2006 Decree Implementing the Charter for Peace and Reconciliation, which the Algerian authorities must amend to ensure that those responsible for such crimes do not benefit from impunity and that victims of human rights violations can obtain an effective remedy. They must abolish the provisions of the same law which oblige families of the "disappeared" to obtain death certificates for their "disappeared" relatives in order to claim compensation payments.

- Immediately address the widely reported practice of secret detentions and torture of persons held by the Military Security (the *Département pour le Renseignement et la Sécurité*, DRS).

In particular, the Algerian authorities must immediately amend laws to limit the lengthy 12-day-period of *garde-à-vue* and allow detainees access to a lawyer from the time of arrest; set up a national register of all those arrested, including by the DRS, which families and lawyers can access; fully investigate all allegations of torture and ill-treatment and bring to justice the perpetrators; and prohibit the use of confessions extracted under torture or other ill-treatment in courts.

Amnesty International also urges the Algerian authorities to ensure the respect and protection of the rights of detainees to visits by a doctor and relatives under Algerian law.

- Repeal the remaining provisions in the Family Code which still discriminate against women in matters of marriage, divorce, housing and inheritance and introduce legislation to criminalize marital rape and violence. While the Algerian authorities introduced important amendments in the Family Code in 2005 to improve the situation of women, these measures still fall short of ensuring equality between women and men.

The Human Rights Committee invited the Algerian authorities to report within a year on measures taken to investigate allegations of torture, resolve cases of enforced disappearances and to exercise control over secret detention centres. Amnesty International will continue to monitor Algeria's compliance with its obligations under international human rights law.

**Background**

Amnesty International submitted a briefing to the Human Rights Committee, which raised among several concerns, the prevailing impunity for gross human rights violations committed in the context of the conflict in the 1990s, including the killing of tens of thousands of civilians and the enforced disappearance of thousands; a persistent pattern of secret detentions and torture of persons suspected of links with terrorism by the Military Security; and discrimination of women in law and in practice (*Algeria: Briefing to the Human Rights Committee*, AI index: MDE 28/017/2007, available at: <http://web.amnesty.org/library/Index/ENGMDE280172007>).