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Algeria: Correction on the scandalous piece of disinformation about Amnesty International in *Liberté* newspaper

Amnesty International was shocked to read the front page and the editorial of the Algerian daily *Liberté* of 26 October 1999.

On page one of the newspaper, in an article entitled "Scandal! Amnesty International dealing in arms" the journalist Nacer Belhadjoudja writes that, according to the French satirical weekly *Canard Enchaîné* of 20 October 1999, Amnesty International and the NGO *Agir Ici* "... are directly implicated in the genocide in Rwanda. They played a role in the delivery of arms with the complicity of official bodies". The editorial, signed by Outoudert Abrous, makes the same points as the article.

However, in the article "Worrying arms trade" the *Canard Enchaîné* made no such allegation. On the contrary, the *Canard Enchaîné* writes that "tons of French guns, pistols, machine-guns and ammunition arrived in Rwanda between 1988 and 1994, in circumstances closer to arms trafficking than to official trade. With the help of two NGOs, Amnesty International and *Agir Ici*, the *Observatoire des transferts d'armements* (watchdog on arms transfers), published, at the end of September, a very interesting report which nobody, it seems, bothered to read. It should make people grind their teeth in anger".

It is impossible that the front page article and the editorial of the French-language Algerian newspaper *Liberté* could have resulted from a misreading of the article in *Canard Enchaîné*, the content of which could not have been clearer. This exercise in deliberate manipulation and disinformation is aimed at undermining the credibility of Amnesty International's work at a time when the organization has obtained the agreement of the Algerian authorities to resume its visits to Algeria after a having been denied access to the country for three and a half years.

Amnesty International has asked *Liberté* to rectify this serious professional and ethical error by publishing, in an equally prominent position as the article and editorial quoted above, this public statement as well as to the article from *Canard Enchaîné* in its entirety. Amnesty International reserves the right to take legal action if necessary.
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For further information, please call the Amnesty International Press Office in London on +44 171 413 5566. You can also visit our website: <http://www.amnesty.org>