



FÉDÉRATION EURO-MÉDITERRANÉENNE CONTRE LES DISPARITIONS FORCÉES
EURO-MEDITERRANEAN FEDERATION AGAINST ENFORCED DISAPPEARANCES

International Day for the victims of Enforced Disappearances: a tool of terror

Paris, 30th August 2015: In December 2010, the United Nations, deeply concerned by the increase of cases of Enforced Disappearances across the world, declared August 30th as the “International Day against Enforced and/or Involuntary Disappearances.” On this occasion, the Euro – Mediterranean Federation against Enforced Disappearances (FEMED) reiterates its appeal to put an end to this particularly cruel human rights violation.

To date, thousands of persons are estimated to have been victims of enforced disappearances not only in the Mediterranean region (Syria, Libya, Algeria, Morocco, Turkey) but also in Iraq, in Iran, in Sri Lanka, etc. In 2014, the United Nations Working Group on Enforced or Involuntary Disappearances (UN WGEID) reported around 54.000 confirmed cases in more than 104 States. In the 70s, this crime was a practice used by military dictatorships in South America (i.e. Chile, Argentina, Paraguay). Nowadays, even the so-called “democracies”, facing the challenges of insecurity and terrorism, are concerned by this phenomenon.

Enforced disappearance has a disastrous effect not only on direct victims, the missing persons, but also on families and close friends. Even worse, it creates a climate of deep anxiety, a feeling of permanent insecurity prevailing in society in general. Enforced disappearance is a tool of terror.

In this climate of fear, the families of the persons disappeared and the Non-Governmental Organizations, like FEMED, become the voice of the “voiceless”, in a permanent quest for truth, for justice and full compensation of victims. FEMED member- associations and activists are subject to judicial harassment, arbitrary detention and police violence.

However, these barriers do not have any impact on the engagement of civil society and the fight against impunity. FEMED has received the support of many personalities, including the 1976 Nobel Peace Prize Laureate from Northern Ireland, Ms. Mairead Maguire who signed the appeal of FEMED aiming to alert the international community and the public opinion on the persistence of enforced and/or involuntary disappearances. “*We firmly believe that raising awareness on the seriousness and the urgency of the problem will allow us in the future to collectively achieve a world where no one shall be placed outside the protection of law*” wrote Maguire. The initiative called “*Missing persons: the ghosts of humanity*” underlines that despite the widespread and systematic use by Mediterranean States of enforced disappearances, this crime does not receive the necessary attention in order to be prevented or even repressed.

“*The world shall not forget that enforced disappearance is being used by various regimes like a war weapon, a tool of terror against their own population. In addition, the International Convention for the protection of all persons from Enforced Disappearance, in the article 5, qualifies clearly as crime against humanity the widespread and systematic practice of enforced disappearances*” stated Nassera Dutour, FEMED President.

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FEMED members

The FEMED is now composed of 26 member associations from 12 countries of the Euro-Mediterranean region:



- **Algeria:** Collective of Families of Disappeared in Algeria (CFDA), SOS Disappeared, Djazaïrouna and Somoud;
- **Bosnia-Herzegovina:** Mothers of Srebrenica, Women of Srebrenica, Association of the Disappeared and Killed from Vrbanja;
- **Cyprus:** Organisation of Relatives of Undeclared Prisoners and Missing Persons of Cyprus and Truth Now;
- **Spain:** Catalan Association for the Recovery of the Historical Memory;
- **Iraq:** Al Ata'a for Human Rights;
- **Kosovo:** "Shpresimi / Hope" Suhareka;
- **Lebanon:** Lebanese Centre for Human Rights (CLDH), Support of Lebanese In Detention and Exile (SOLIDE) and Committee of Relatives of the Disappeared;
- **Libya:** Human Rights Solidarity;
- **Morocco:** Association of Parents and Friends of Disappeared in Morocco (APADM), Coordinating Committee of Relatives of the Disappeared, Moroccan Association for Human Rights (AMDH) and Moroccan Organization for Human Rights (OMDH);
- **Serbia:** Association of Families of Kidnapped and Missing Persons from Kosovo and Metohija;
- **Syria:** Committee for the Defence of Democracy Freedoms and Human Rights in Syria;
- **Turkey:** YAKAY-Der, Human Rights Association (IHD), Mothers for peace and MEYA-Der;