



**Algeria – Researched and compiled by the Refugee Documentation Centre of Ireland on 9 February 2015**

**Have Algerian government forces carried out attacks on people suspected of links to, or membership of, FIS in more recent years (circa 2006)?**

A 2006 report published by Amnesty International states:

“The level of violence has decreased continuously in recent years, although some 400 killings were reported in 2005 as a result of continuing violence. Fewer arrests have been reported, and there has been some progress on strengthening safeguards to protect detainees in custody. Although ill-treatment continues to be common, torture in the custody of police and gendarmerie has been reported less frequently. Despite these improvements, torture and other ill-treatment remain both systematic and widespread in cases of arrests linked to alleged terrorist activity. Many of these arrests are carried out by the DRS and, while fewer than during the height of the violence of former years, the DRS remains formidably powerful. People detained by the DRS are systematically held in secret detention and denied any contact with the outside world, often for prolonged periods – in conditions which facilitate torture and other ill-treatment.” (Amnesty International (17 April 2006) *Algeria: Torture in the "War on Terror" : A memorandum to the Algerian President*, p.2)

See also Amnesty International report which, in a section titled “Terrorism and counter-terrorism in Algeria”, states:

“Torture and other ill-treatment of detainees suspected of terrorist activities in Algeria are being committed in the wake of more than a decade of violence in which safeguards for human rights protection were grievously eroded. Human rights violations in the name of counter-terrorism became entrenched as security forces ruthlessly combated armed groups who were committing grave and widespread abuses against civilians. The DRS, the force most associated with torture and other ill-treatment today, played a key role in the escalation of violence against civilians during the 1990s. Impunity for past violations has been further entrenched with amnesty laws introduced in 2006 with the stated intention of bringing closure to the years of violence.” (Amnesty International (9 July 2006) *Algeria: Unrestrained powers: Torture by Algeria's Military Security*, p.4)

In a section titled “Violations of procedures for arrests” this report states:

“In most cases, arrests are reportedly carried out by plain-clothes officers of the DRS who do not identify themselves and use vehicles not marked as belonging to the security forces. They do not inform the suspects or their families of the reasons for their arrest. Once taken into custody, detainees are not informed of their right to communicate immediately with their families, or

to a medical examination at the end of garde à vue. The families of those arrested are generally not informed of detentions by the DRS, or transfers to DRS custody, or of the place of detention. As long as detainees are held by the DRS, families are not able to communicate with them or to visit them.” (ibid, p.14)

A report published by the Swiss-based human rights NGO Al Karama, in a section titled “A Permanent Practice (section 3.1.2), refers to the treatment of a number of individuals arrested on suspicion of involvement in terrorist activities as follows:

“Kamel Driki, aged 22 years, residing in the Shatt (wilaya of El Tarf), arrested by gendarmes during the protest demonstrations which occurred in this city on 14 January 2003. He was tortured on the premises of the gendarmerie. He was forced to strip naked and tied to a metal table, with his fists and feet handcuffed. He was forced to drink urine until he fainted. The torturers repeatedly said to him, ‘Nobody can rebel against us, even God!’ After 2 days he was released but was threatened he would be killed the next time.

Abdelkader Addi, residing in the town of Ayn Benkhelil, दौरa of Mcherrah was questioned on 17 July 2004 when summoned by the gendarmerie brigade in the city of Naâma. He was immediately arrested without being notified of any charges. He was locked in a cell, and at nightfall, three policemen threw themselves on him and he was stripped, handcuffed and beaten. He was then subjected to torture by electricity through electrodes placed on the lobes, until he lost consciousness. At around 11pm, he was released.

Amar Saker, a farmer of 33 years, residing in Tamalous (Wilaya of Skikda) was kidnapped on 19 February 2005 near his home by three officers of the DRS and was forced to get into a car and taken to a DRS barracks in Skikda . Arriving at the destination, he was stripped, beaten and his hands handcuffed behind his back and locked naked in a cell. The next day, he was flown to Algiers and taken to the Antar barracks. Accused of terrorist activities, which he denied, he was beaten, hung from the ceiling, hanging by his hands handcuffed. Finally, after five days of beatings and torture using electricity and in the light of his wounds which caused him to for his life, he finally signed a record interrogation containing a false confession. He was forced to sign a statement attesting to have been well treated. The magistrate before whom he was brought did not take into account his complaint of torture despite the obvious marks and opened a criminal investigation against him for terrorist activities.

Kamal Akkache, 36 years old, residing in El Mouradia, married with 3 children, an employee of the municipal market in the neighbourhood was kidnapped on 11 September 2007 to at 2pm at the Hamid Didouche place in El Mouradia (Algiers) by civilians came who came in an unmarked vehicle. People trying to intervene have learned that they were elements of DRS. His father went to the police the day after to the 15th arrondissement to report his disappearance. Four days later, six men presenting themselves as agents of DRS, raided the home. They told the father not to worry and that his son was with them for investigation but without specifying the place of detention. They took with them a computer, a video camera, books and a CD. The father gave them medication because his son is epileptic. So far, Kamal has not

reappeared and the worst is feared because of his epilepsy and the fact that his medication was not available to him during the first days of his detention.

H'mida Allalou was arrested in 2003 and was detained for four months in solitary confinement in a DRS barracks in Hydra (Algiers) He was brutally tortured and his teeth were broken. He was imprisoned in Serkadji prison and due to a hunger strike he began he was transferred to the prison of El-Harrach and placed in a cell in solitary confinement in the area of those sentenced to death. He was repeatedly visited by officers of the DRS who had inflicted torture. They demanded that he testify against an activist for human rights for involvement in a case of terrorism, stating that he was the head of a network of illegal arms trafficking.

Mahmoud Selia was arrested on 4 June 2007 at 8 pm in its premises in Hai Al Badr, Kouba, Algiers by eight agents of DGSN (police) in civilian clothes who arrived in two vehicles. He was handcuffed and taken to the Bab Ezzouar, where he received blows from fists and feet. Enclosed in a bathroom, he had to lie down on a bench, with his hands handcuffed behind his back, and he was subjected to electric shocks and the chiffon. The session lasted between 20 and 25 minutes. Officers interrogated him about people he did not know. On June 9, he was transferred to Antar DRS centre. He suffered daily torture, beatings with bats, or the chiffon. The torturers threatened to rape his mother. On 19 June, he signed a confession that he could not read and 20 June, it was presented to the public prosecutor of the court of El Harrach under threat: 'Here, even Bouteflika could not save you...'" (Al Karama for Human Rights (4 April 2008) *Algeria: Torture remains a common practice*, pp.8-9)

An alert from the World Organisation Against Torture (OMCT) states:

"According to the information received, Mr. Mohamed Boucekkine, age 34, was arrested on Friday, 15 June 2007 at 6:30 pm in his residence in Fouka. Two individuals in civilian have reportedly entered his house without identifying themselves, asked for his papers and have proceeded to a search of the house. His arrest has reportedly taken place in front of his wife and children as well as a cousin. It is reported that, when asking where her husband was being taken to, his wife got the answer that he was only being interrogated. According to this information, Mr. Mohamed Boucekkine was not able to contact his family nor to consult a lawyer. Since his arrest, his place of detention as well as the charges against him remain unknown." (World Organisation Against Torture (OMCT) (19 June 2007) *Arbitrary arrest and secret detention of Mr. Mohamed Boucekkine*)

This response was prepared after researching publicly accessible information currently available to the Research and Information Unit within time constraints. This response is not and does not purport to be conclusive as to the merit of any particular claim to refugee status or asylum. Please read in full all documents referred to.

## References:

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