

The war raging in Algeria between government troops and armed bands from the FIS (Front for Islamic Salvation) is claiming many victims among the Algerian population. While the non-francophone Western media has primarily focused on attacks on policemen, foreigners and journalists, there is yet another group in Algeria who are menaced by the Islamic gangs: women. Even in the best of times women were not admitted in this country as equal citizens but now they are being raped, decapitated, and shot while in their homes, schools, streets and places of work. No matter what their age, origins or manner of dress. The FIS has declared that women must disappear from public life. Even on TV, female announcers must be banned to make way for their male colleagues. Since many women in Algeria (as everywhere else in the world) are the sole breadwinners for their children, parents and other relatives, the leader of the party, Abasi Madani, proposed that women who were working out of necessity should be paid a

as well. Girls and women are deemed unworthy of the slightest respect and treated as though they were the worst villains on earth. Raped, brutalized and forced into slavery, their lives frequently come to violent ends at the hands of their tormentors. Beheading is a popular technique among the FIS gangs. The victims are primarily young women, aged nine to twenty, and those who survive their experiences often can't count on any help or sympathy at home. According to an Algerian tradition, the very fact that they were raped brings dishonor on their families. It is not the terrorists who bear the responsibility for such an atrocity but the girl, whose family's reputation has been tarnished by what happened to her.

Take the case of Khaira, a young girl who lived with her parents in a remote village. She was kidnapped from her parent's house before the eyes of her family. Five men armed with Kalashnikovs came to requisition her "in the

# WOMEN In Algeria LIVE IN TERROR

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gratuity for staying at home. Their jobs would be taken by men, thus solving the enormous unemployment problem in Algeria in a single blow. Simultaneously, the level of public safety and morals would rise dramatically as soon as women disappeared from the street, making the police force superfluous.

Even before the first elections in 1991, FIS supporters began using strong-arm tactics to implement this ideal. Young girls and women who are deemed to be living too independently were intimidated by musclemen posing as preservers of "law and order." In one case, a student, properly attired in Islamic dress, who wished to attend an evening lecture on the university campus, was stopped at the door of her hostel by an Islamic brother, who whipped her brutally with a leather belt.

Increasingly, real brothers also began forbidding their sisters and mothers to wear Western clothing, leave the house or even watch TV and listen to music. Fathers who disagreed with this policy were threatened with violence.

As the struggle between fundamentalist bands and Algerian government forces becomes more violent, hatred against women increases

name of God" to keep house for them in their hide-out in the mountains. When the father resisted, he was informed that it was an "order from the emir." The girl was abducted with violence and kept prisoner in a cave far from her home. Along with another prisoner, an old woman, she was forced to wash clothes and cook food for the gang members, who raped her every night. Although she is one of the "lucky" ones who came back alive, her father has sent her to live with an aunt in the city rather than take her back into his home.

In the countryside, whole villages are being terrorized. The gangs come down from their mountain hide-outs to attack and plunder the villages and rape and kidnap the women. In one case, a girl of fifteen from a poor peasant family, who had been taken from school to help out on the land, was waylaid one morning by three men who knocked her out and took her in a car to their hide-out. She was kept prisoner for two months and subjected to gang rape. Finally, when one of the gang members noticed she was pregnant, he removed her handcuffs and let her go. Sometime later, totally disoriented by her experience, she was discovered by policemen in a deserted area.

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Women in Algeria... (from p.30)

## WOMEN ARE RESTRICTED IN ALL SPHERES OF PUBLIC LIFE

The Kedyai family who live in the region of Reghaia, were woken one morning by the violent knocks on their door. Before they were able to get to the door to see who it was, they heard gun shots and the door came down with a loud thud. The terrorized family saw a group of men enter their home and force the family members to lay face down. The father heard footsteps next to him and felt a person come very close to him. After a few seconds there were the sounds of two gun shots. He closed his eyes waiting for his turn but after a few quiet seconds they left the house. Upon rising he found his two daughters Karima 21 and Amal, 18 shot dead, one had been shot in the heart and the other in the temple. It appears that one of the young girls had accepted a date from a young man who was a policeman. The other girl was killed simply because she was a girl. She too was "punished" for the "crime" of her sister.

After women risked their lives to demonstrate against this reign of terror on March 8 in Algiers, the religious terrorists have taken up the task of murdering women with renewed diligence. Now it is the wives, fiances and sisters of policemen who have become the targets of vicious assassinations committed before the eyes of children and family members. The objective of these attacks is to force the release of imprisoned female FIS members.

Many Algerian women who had the opportunity to flee the country have done so, usually to France. For most of the threatened Algerian population, however, this is not

possible. Besides, there are a number of Algerian women and men who, despite everything, refuse to abandon their country to Muslim extremists. Schoolgirls and students continue their education, some of them camouflaged in Islamic costume, others with uncovered heads and the clothes they have always worn. Women journalists and intellectuals are courageously resisting the FIS by means of articles and even demonstrations in Algiers.

In the Algerian press, the Agony Aunt columns are full of letters from women complaining about what they have to put up with from their hierarchical superior or their male colleagues. Female job seekers also complain about the conditions that are laid down when they apply for a job in the private or public sector.

Naima, Zahia, Nassima, Djamila and Amal are aged between 20 and 28. They all possess a university diploma or a professional certificate. They are unemployed or have quite simply been thrown out of their jobs because they refused to cooperate with the sexual advances of their employers. Naima, aged 26, completed her studies two years ago and has not been able to find a job because, as she says, she repeatedly refused to acquiesce to the "amorous" desires of her various potential employers. Nassima, 25, a divorcee with no children, encountered the same problem but, as she stressed, it was even worse in her case because, "in our society, a divorced woman is considered to be an easy touch."

All of these women need our support in their daily struggle against the physical and moral threats to their existence.▲

Source: Women's Global Network for Reproductive Rights Newsletter 49, Jan-Mar 1995, NZ Voorburwal 32, 1012 RZ Amsterdam, The Netherlands, with additions from a news report in The Sunday Chronicle, Cronica de Manila, June, 11, 1995.

## WOMEN USED AS WEAPONS OF WAR

Source: Today (Asahi\NYT) July 19, 1995

In front of hundreds of people, former Imperial Army surgeon, Ken Yuasa admitted conducting biological experiments on Chinese prisoners during World War II and having intercourse with sex slaves stationed at Japanese military brothels.

Yuasa, who practices at his clinic in Tokyo's Sugunami Ward attended a seminar July 2-4 on "Sexual Slavery and Slavery-like Practices in World War II." organized by the International Commission of Jurists.

He said he had sex with comfort women-euphemism for sex slaves-four or five times while serving at a military hospital in China.

In an interview with the Asahi Evening News, Yuasa 78, said sex slaves were an integral part of the Imperial Army. "They (the sex slaves) were like weapons, without which Japan could not have carried out war," said Yuasa, who was assigned to a city then called Luan in China's Shanxi Province in 1942.

Oppressed by the military brass, soldiers turned to the comfort women because they had no other way to unleash their pent-up frustration. The women kept them going, he said.

About 100 comfort women-most of them Chinese and Koreans-were in the entire province. He checked some of them for venereal diseases.

About 1000 Japanese soldiers and military police were stationed in Luan and the neighboring area. Up to 90 percent of the troops made use of the brothels, he said.

Sex slaves were placed under strict military control so they could not escape. They were beaten if they were disobedient, he added.

Since the late 1950's, Yuasa has urged Japan to own up to its wartime atrocities.