

perish by the sword," GIA, January 1996), writers, artists, educators, unionists, lawyers, veterans of the War of Independence, and human rights activists for their perceived support of the government. Foreigners, especially members of religious orders, are also targeted by armed Islamists. Armed Islamists have used car bombs in public places to sabotage government agencies (government corporations, schools -- education being too modern and insufficiently 'Islamic') and infrastructure (telephone systems, bridges, trains and rail lines). These attacks have been intentionally bloody to attract media attention and create a climate of terror. Women are often victims of human rights abuse (kidnapping, rape, enforced servitude and murder) because of their dress, occupation or family ties to security force officers. Some laws and traditions also discriminate against women. Children and the elderly have been the victims of fundamentalist revenge for their parents or relatives fight for the opposing side.

Despite constitutional protection of civil rights and freedoms, security forces have committed extrajudicial execution, detention without charge and torture (in January 1996, the President ordered the prosecution of officers accused of torture, but did not publicly condemn the use of torture nor demonstrate that allegations of torture were being seriously investigated). The Algerian Human Rights League has received hundreds of complaints concerning disappearances blamed on security forces, to which the government has provided no response. Prisons are overcrowded, but there is no reliable information on conditions of detention. The appointment of judges by the Ministry of Justice since 1992 has called into question the independence of the judiciary, which is nonetheless guaranteed under the constitution. Village communities granted permission to take up arms against radical Islamists have in fact committed cruel acts of revenge thereby perpetuating the violence.

The grave human rights situation in Algeria has been the subject of a number of reports prepared by UN Special Rapporteurs for freedom of expression, extrajudicial executions, violence against women and torture.

CANADIAN POSITION

Canada condemns those responsible for violence and terrorism in Algeria, and is concerned by the numerous cases of human rights abuse. Canada remains convinced that a message of support for human rights in Algeria will resonate among the moderates on all sides. Canada realizes, however, that its actions in support of human rights in Algeria will not have a lasting impact while political extremism remains the rule. Canada has clearly expressed its hope that a political solution to the crisis can be found.

Canada has funded twelve human rights projects by Algerian NGOs. These projects, carried out as 'women in development' initiatives, focussed on the training and education of women and young girls forced to leave school. Canada provided \$20,000 to three independent newspapers whose offices were destroyed by the car bombing of the Maison de la presse. Canada financed the travel costs and expenses for the President of the Algerian journalists' Association to attend the convention of the International Organization of Journalists. Other projects to provide assistance to the independent press in Algeria are under consideration.