



**CAIRO INSTITUTE
FOR HUMAN RIGHTS STUDIES**
 Institut du Caire pour les études des droits de l'homme
 مركز القاهرة لدراسات حقوق الإنسان

**UN Human Rights Council: 21st Session
 Oral Intervention: Item 6 – Algeria UPR
 Cairo Institute for Human Rights Studies (CIHRS)
 20 September 2012
 Delivered by: Paola Salwan Daher**

Thank you, Madame President,

Despite the lifting of the state of emergency in Algeria last year, repression of fundamental freedoms and rights continues, with the army assuming additional powers and new legislation threatening to bring peaceful protestors, human rights defenders, union activists, the media, and civil society further under permanent state control. Indeed, many recommendations from the oral review session of Algeria's UPR address these ongoing violations.

The new Associations Law no. 12-06 of January 2012 is one of the laws introduces further limitations on public liberties. This law increases restrictions on civil society and blatantly contradicts international standards, requiring approval of the authorities to establish associations and receive funding and making participation in informal organizations punishable by high fines and prison terms. Furthermore, organizations may be dissolved by a mere administrative order, rather than by judicial decision.

The most recent example of legal and judicial harassment of activists in Algeria involves four human rights defenders who are currently being tried simply for exercising these rights to freedom of assembly, association and expression. Yacine Said, Abdo Bendjoudi, Lakhdar Bouziani, and Athmane Aouameur, all of whom are prominent members of Algerian human rights organizations and trade unions, were arrested for holding a peaceful sit-in protesting the judicial harassment of a fellow rights defender. They will be tried five days from today on charges of inciting to an unarmed gathering.

In light of these repressive laws and practices, we call upon the government of Algeria to accept and immediately and fully implement all recommendations, particularly those related to ending torture and impunity, releasing all prisoners held for exercising their basic rights, ensuring freedoms of expression, assembly, and association, and bringing all legislation into conformity with international standards, including to lift the restrictions imposed by the new laws governing the work of civil society and the media.

Thank you.