



Solidarity for the Algerian struggle in exile: the IFJ always at my side

"In certain countries, like mine, Algeria, around 100 journalists have paid for press freedom with their lives. For many others, exile has been the only way of avoiding death. The IFJ has contributed greatly to improving the fate of those who have left the country. The IFJ Safety Fund, which provided assistance, has been a precious instrument in safeguarding the dignity of the journalist. It must be maintained. As for myself, as the former President of the Algerian journalists' association, I would like to thank the IFJ which has always been at my side during the hard times."

Aziouz Mokhtari former president of the Algerian Journalists' Association.

Where INTERNATIONAL **safety** FUND

has helped **Latin America...**



Venezuela...

Journalist imprisoned for writing a book on the judiciary.

Guatemala...

Journalist beaten and burnt.

Peru...

Journalists imprisoned by faceless tribunals. Threatened by the MRTA.

Colombia...

Helping journalists flee FARC rebels.

ALGERIA

On 26 May

1993, Tahar Djaout was gunned down in the street. He was the first Algerian journalist to be killed in a series of assassinations which took the lives of more than 70 journalists and mediaworkers during a period of 6 years.

This campaign of targeting journalists led to the exile of over 150 Algerian colleagues, who left the country rather than face death or mutilation.

Many Algerian journalists went into exile in France, Morocco and Tunisia. A handful came to Belgium.

The IFJ Safety Fund helped some of them. Those arriving in Belgium were given emergency assistance on arrival, and lent money to pay deposits for leases and other matters. This financial assistance was spread over many years. Some in other countries also received help, including, in one case, paying for an artificial limb for one journalist. As journalists were fleeing and the death toll continued to rise, it was clear that it was not enough to provide occasional aid to those lucky enough to get away from the reign of terror. The IFJ pledged to provide direct help to journalists on the ground.

The IFJ was on the spot following a car bomb outrage at the press house in Algiers in which three journalists died and it was agreed to establish a help centre for Algerian journalists. The IFJ pledged not to allow Algeria "to become a no-go area for journalism". The IFJ opened the solidarity centre in Algiers in 1996.

The IFJ Algeria Centre has today become the home for the National Union of Journalists of Algeria. The services provided include a documentation area, facilities for journalists from inside and outside the country to contact each other, and a meeting room for journalists and their organisations. Requests for assistance from the Safety Fund are channelled through the Centre. The Safety Fund was the starting point for assistance given to Algerian colleagues and today, although problems remain, journalists in Algeria continue to work and to resist intimidation. Algeria is not a totally safe country for journalists, but for Algerian journalists it is safer than before, and the work of the IFJ Safety Fund has helped to make it so.