

Statement by Algerians, survivors, family or friends of victims of fundamentalist violence on the affair Gita Sahgal vs Amnesty International / Moazzam Begg

Tuesday 16 November 2010, by [Collective / Multiple signers](#) (Date first published: 14 February 2010).

On February 7 an interview of Gita Sahgal, Head of the Gender Unit in Amnesty International was published in the *Sunday Times*. She talked about the support given by her organization to Moazzam Begg, a former Guantanamo prisoner, supporter of the Taliban's societal project, allegedly involved with Al Qaeda.

Gita Sahgal sent several memos to the highest instances in her organization regarding the status and legitimization that A.I.'s close links with Begg granted him

G.S. was suspended immediately after her interview was released.

STATEMENT

We, Algerians, survivors, family or friends of victims of fundamentalist violence and violations in Algeria,

Informed of the stand publicly taken by a senior officer of an international human rights organization in a desperate attempt to demand answers to her questions regarding the relationship between her organization and a former Guantanamo prisoner, supporter of the Taliban's societal project, going far beyond the defense of his basic human rights which, the senior officer condones and considers legitimate.

Thank and praise this officer for keeping up with the ideal and mission of human rights and for daring to challenge the ideological confusion between defending the rights of fundamentalists and giving them the legitimacy and status of defenders of rights and offering them a political platform,

Testify to the fact

That, for the past two decades at the very least, we repeatedly drew the attention of major human rights organizations to this burning issue, questioned their policies and had major confrontations with them - in vain,

That violations committed in our country by fundamentalists armed groups were grossly under reported (despite documentation and testimonies made available to mainstream human rights

organizations) and their victims mostly left without defense, while State violations committed against fundamentalists were highlighted and the defense of their human rights taken up,

That we repeatedly denounced this hierarchy among victims of human rights violations – in vain,

And that, on several occasions, sanctions (ranging from official blame to plain expulsion from the organization) were taken against members of human rights organizations that attempted to raise this issue internally.

We do hope that the courageous and selfless action of this senior officer will be the occasion for all human rights organizations to reconsider their policies vis a vis fundamentalists who, as perpetrators of violations, cannot be considered defenders of rights, as well as vis a vis victims of fundamentalist violence and violations who should not be considered a lesser brand of victims.

First Signatories

Marieme Helie Lucas, fondatrice du réseau international de solidarité WLUML 'Women Living Under Muslim Laws/Femmes Sous Lois Musulmanes', coordinatrice de 'Secularism Is A Women's Issue'

Lalia Ducos, présidente de WICUR/IFCDU 'Initiative de Femmes pour la Citoyenneté et les Droits Universels

Zazi Sadou co-fondatrice du RAFD (Rassemblement Algérien des Femmes Démocrates)

Malika Zouba, journaliste

Samia Allalou, journaliste

Soad BABA AISSA, militante féministe

Jean paul salim Ducos, militant associatif

Said Nemsy : Journaliste

Soheib Bencheikh, chercheur en sciences religieuses

Asma Guenifi Tougne , présidente de l'AFEMCI (Association Femmes Euro- Méditerranéennes Contre les Intégrismes), sœur de Hicham Guenifi assassiné par le GIA en 1994

Louisa Ait Hamou, universitaire, militante des droits des femmes

Mohammed Sifaoui, journaliste

Cherifa Kheddar, présidente de l'association « Djazairouna » des victimes du terrorisme

P.S.

* Source: Secularism is a Womens Issue | siawi.org => <http://www.siawi.org/article1670.html>

* For the original document in French see: [Déclaration par les Algériennes et Algériens sur l'affaire](#)

[Gita Sahgal contre Amnesty International et Moazzam Begg](#)