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France

17 October 1961 - 17 October 2021

- News from around the world -

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Joint appeal for the demonstration commemorating the repression of a peaceful protest demonstration by Algerians protesting against a curfew for them at 8.30pm. Police brutality was extreme and hundreds were killed and thrown in the Seine. [1]

On 17 October 1961, tens of thousands of Algerians demonstrated peacefully in Paris against the discriminatory curfew imposed on them by the government of the time whose Prime Minister, Michel Debré, was hostile to Algerian independence, and the Prefect of Police Maurice Papon under his command. They defended their right to equality, their right to independence and the right of peoples to self-determination. On that day, and in the days that followed, thousands of these demonstrators were arrested, imprisoned, tortured - notably by the "auxiliary police force" - or, for many of them, deported back to Algeria. Hundreds lost their lives, victims of extreme violence and brutality by the Parisian police forces.

60 years later, the Truth is partially on the march. However, France has still not acknowledged its responsibility in the colonial wars it waged - in particular the Algerian War - and the tragedies and horrors they brought, such as the the state crime of 17 October 1961. On 17 October 2012, the President of the Republic (François Hollande) had certainly taken an important first step, by declaring: "On 17 October 1961, Algerians demonstrating for the right to independence were killed during a bloody repression. The Republic recognises these facts with lucidity. Fifty-one years after this tragedy, I pay tribute to the memory of the victims.

But the term "crime" is not used, and the responsibility, which is implied, is not clearly defined. We are asking for a clear statement from the authorities of the Republic, at a time when some people still dare to continue to speak of the "benefits of colonization", to celebrate the putsch of the generals in Algiers against the Republic, to "honour" the criminals of the OAS.

In this area, it is therefore necessary that significant measures be taken:

☺ That light be shed on the so-called "returns to their douars of origin" of the surviving Algerians of 17 October sent to death camps in colonial Algeria.

☺ That the creation of a memorial place dedicated to this event, called for in the resolution voted by the Senate in October 2012 which also recognized this massacre, be rapidly implemented by the authorities of the State, the City of Paris and the Île-de-France Region.

France.

☺ In order to be faithful to their scientific mission, historians need to be able to access archives freely, to be free from the controls of the authorities or pressure groups and to work together with their Algerian colleagues.

☺ The truth must be told about the criminal organization of the OAS, which some on the political right and extreme right want to rehabilitate.

☺ In the absence of such recognition, the system of this type of police violence is reproduced.

This is the only way to eliminate the most serious legacy of the Algerian War, namely racism, Islamophobia and the discrimination to which many citizens of North African origin or former colonies are subjected today, including in the form of recurrent, and sometimes murderous, police violence.

Democracy cannot be built on lies and cover-ups. After more than half a century, it is time:

That the President of the Republic, in the name of France, confirms, by a strong gesture, the recognition and condemnation of this state crime. As he did in September 2018 for the assassination of Maurice Audin, and in March 2021 for that of lawyer Ali Boumendjel by the French army and for the existence of a widespread system of torture. This recognition must be extended to the thousands of Algerians who were victims (see www.1000autres.org)

That the French state recognizes its responsibility for the arbitrary internment, during the Algerian War, of Algerians in camps;

That freedom of access to archives be effective for all, historians and citizens alike;

That historical research on these issues be encouraged, in a Franco-Algerian, international and independent

framework.

That a law of reparation be implemented.

Campaigns and Associations:

17 octobre contre l'oubli, ACDA, APCV (Agence de Promotion des Cultures et du Voyage), Association de Jumelage Rennes-Sétif, ATMF (Association des Travailleurs Maghrébins de France), Au nom de la mémoire, CCAF PACS (Comité de Citoyens Algériens en France pour une Assemblée Constituante Souveraine), CEDETIM (Centre d'études et d'initiatives de solidarité internationale), collectif du 17 octobre 1961 Marseille, Comité Adama, Collectif Faty KOUMBA (Association des Libertés, Droits de l'Homme et non violence), CRLDHT (Comité pour le Respect des Libertés et des Droits de l'Homme en Tunisie), CVPR PO (Comité de Vigilance pour une Paix Réelle au Proche-Orient), D'ailleurs Nous Sommes d'Ici 67, Debout l'Algérie, Femmes Plurielles, FTCT (Fédération des Tunisiens pour une citoyenneté des deux rives), Graines Pop Des Luttes, Institut Mehdi Ben Barka - Mémoire Vivante, Inter réseau - Mémoires Histoires, ITS (Institut Tribune Socialiste - histoire et actualité des idées du PSU), LDH (Ligue des Droits de l'Homme), Le Mouvement de la Paix, Les Oranges, les Oranges Épinay, Les Oranges Montreuil, MRAP (Mouvement contre le Racisme et pour l'Amitié entre les Peuples), Per a Pace (Association corse), Réseaux d'Entraide Vérité et Justice, SOS Racisme, Vies Volées

Trade unions:

FSU (Fédération Syndicale Unitaire), MNL (Mouvement National Lycéen), SNES (Syndicat National des Enseignements Secondaires), Solidaires (Union Syndicale Solidaires)

Political parties:

EELV (Europe Écologie Les Verts), ENSEMBLE !, Génération·S, La Jeune Garde (Lyon Marseille Paris), LFI (La France Insoumise), NPA (Nouveau Parti Anticapitaliste), PG (Parti de Gauche), PEPS (Pour une Écologie Populaire et Sociale), UCL (Union communiste libertaire)

PS:

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[1] In a statement issued on 16 October 2021 the Elysée stated that President Macron "acknowledged the facts: the crimes committed that night under the authority of Maurice Papon are inexcusable for the Republic." Elysée "[Cérémonie de commémoration des 60 ans du 17 octobre 1961](#)".