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Algeria

Algerian feminists at the frontiers of solidarity

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11 June 2025, Algiers airport. Four suitcases lined up on the control belt. Inside, there are no flags or banners: just neutral clothing, swimsuits and portable batteries. Sarah Lalou, Yakouta Benrouguibi, Doha A. and Amel Hadjadj play the tourists. Their real goal? To join the Global March to Gaza, an international mobilization to break the blockade of Gaza.

In Algeria, where demonstrations are tightly controlled, our participation is a gamble. However, in 48 hours, the Algerian feminist movement has self-organized to make this mission possible: securing visas according to strategic options, buying tickets, contacting comrades in Egypt, and developing a secure communication plan.

June 6 - Preparing for the impossible

Taking the decision to participate on behalf of the feminist movement was made in a hurry, after a phone call in early June with Algerian director and actress Adila Bendimerad, who told me: “The strength of the masses can exert pressure, and we have no right to be absent in the face of the atrocity that Palestinians are experiencing.”

I asked myself: is this an action that makes sense, or just agitation? What can this bring to these thousands of people under the bombs? I had a hard time deciding. Then I consulted my feminist comrades to find out who would agree to accompany me on this three-day march in the Egyptian desert to Rafah.

Louisa Aït Hamou, Soumia Salhi, Fatma Oussedik – all enthusiastically welcomed this new form of mass action, a renewed internationalism that is not limited to Westernism. They all wanted to participate, but backed down due to the physical conditions, given their age. I multiplied the calls to my comrades of my generation. Some were reluctant, others were willing but held back by their situations – motherhood, immediate responsibilities.

My decision was crystallised by hearing the Franco-Palestinian European Parliament deputy Rima Hassan, speaking from the Madleen boat of the Freedom Flotilla: “We are trying to bring a minimum. This will not be enough to meet the needs of Gazans, but symbolically, it will open a breach and put pressure on states that do not take concrete action.”

At the beginning, I joined the group of the artists’ delegation formed by Adila Bendimerad: sharing information, relaying messages from the organizers of the Global March, monitoring and analysing the trajectory of the *Soumoud* caravan and the flotilla. Meanwhile, messages continued to circulate among feminist friends.

9 June – building a team

Three days after I bought my plane ticket, on the day the Freedom Flotilla was kidnapped in international waters by the Zionist entity, two feminist comrades, Yakouta and Sarah, contacted me to inform me that they had made themselves available for the Global March. I then decided, with the other members of the Algerian Feminist Journal, to centralize the information, to get out of bilateral telephone communications and to write an email to all our partners in the feminist movement, specifying the need for help to carry out this action.

The answers were not long in coming: from the first minutes, many explained that they were thinking about it, but had difficulty accessing concrete information. Not a single negative answer. Each one tries to bring what she can: a contact, the payment of a ticket, a portable battery, a message of support, advice...

It was a moment that reminded us that this movement is not the reproduction of a white or bourgeois feminism: it is a profoundly anti-colonialist and decolonial movement. In all our diversity, we shared the same anger and the same energy, active, ready for any risk for oppressed peoples.

June 10

In the morning, a feminist comrade, Lyna TBD, tells us that another young feminist, Doha, is trying to leave and would like to join this mini-delegation. The rest of the comrades are informed, and a new race begins to integrate the young Doha into the group.

June 11 in the evening - embarking on an act of solidarity

As we were preparing to fly, the news came: pushbacks and excessive checks were multiplying in Egypt. It's like love at first sight. Panic in the two delegations that leave together (artists and feminists). Then, we pull ourselves together.

The instructions are clear: don't back down, stay vigilant, pretend to be tourists, as planned. Between 12 and 15 June, the organisers had to negotiate permits to go to Rafah. We also had to change our luggage, given the expected searches at Cairo airport: no more flags, remove tents and sleeping bags, prepare suitcases with tourist belongings.

On that day, the communiqué that we were supposed to issue once we arrived in Rafah resulted in a final text that was submitted for signature and translation.

The information about the controls and the risk of deportation prompted the Egyptian comrades to offer us accommodation in their homes. Imane, my Egyptian friend, contacted me and insisted that I had explained to her and repeated that we might be held up for hours at Cairo airport: "When you are at my house, we will all sleep to recover."

Arrival in Cairo: control, visas, search

At Cairo airport, the tension is immediate. Obtaining visas and going through the border police takes hours. Controls were reinforced, luggage searched down to the smallest detail: chargers, personal belongings. Every object is scrutinized, every gesture monitored. We stand firm, repeating tirelessly: "We are here for tourism."

While we are waiting for our turn, we witness a chilling scene: a group of Algerians is being expelled. They chant loud and clear slogans of resistance in the middle of a corridor guarded by heavily armed police, equipped as if they were ready for war. Their imposing presence and martial posture are reminiscent of the militarization of border control in so-called authoritarian states, where the repression of dissenting voices is carried out through systematic physical

and psychological violence. However, this militarization and increased surveillance is not the prerogative of authoritarian regimes alone: in these democracies, border control may be more subtle, but remains just as violent, in particular through the imposition of racist and discriminatory migration policies that restrict the fundamental right to free movement.

This scene of expulsion brutally illustrates the political dimension of our trip. State control is not limited to the simple management of visitor flows, but is part of a security logic aimed at stifling any form of protest or international solidarity likely to challenge the imperialist and colonial order.

June 12 - Imane's welcome

It is only around 6 am that we finally leave the airport, exhausted but relieved. Outside, the taxi to go to Imane's is waiting for us. She insisted: we must not go to the hotel, too dangerous because of the controls and surveillance. Her house becomes our first refuge. We sleep for a few hours to regain our strength.

Organize, declare, remain cautious

The day is first devoted to rest and the necessary procedures. The Global March to Gaza asks us to declare our names, which we do. We also contacted the Algerian embassy in Egypt, which listened to us and ensured careful follow-up, without promising direct protection in the event of arrest.

The sit-in at the journalists' union: a first collective act

At the end of the afternoon, around 7 p.m., we discreetly joined the sit-in in front of the Egyptian journalists' union, guided by our Egyptian comrades. Around us: activists of the Egyptian left, journalists, former prisoners of conscience. The slogans demand the authorization of the Global March, the lifting of the blockade, the end of the complicity of states.

We try to blend in with the crowd, to pass for Egyptians, but caution is required, tension is constant.

The organisers' instructions: waiting for the starting point

Late in the evening, the organizers announced that the starting point would be announced the next day at 10:30 a.m. We remain on the lookout, ready to act, aware of the risks.

June 13 - The day everything changes

A meaningful breakfast. Before receiving instructions for our departure, we share a suspended moment: a Palestinian breakfast with the mother of Bissan Aouda, the storyteller, content creator and journalist from Gaza, known for her line that has crossed screens and borders: “I’m Bissan, I’m still alive.”

Bissan’s mother, who has been a refugee in Cairo for a few months, is there with her four sisters and two brothers, all uprooted by the violence of the war. Together, they try to rebuild a semblance of daily life, far from Gaza but still with their hearts turned to their land.

Around this simple and strong meal – fresh bread, olive oil, za’atar, olives, labneh – the exchanges are intense. Bissan’s mother tells us about the living conditions of Palestinian refugees in Cairo, the daily hardships, the exile that drags on without an answer.

The conversation shifts to the political vision of Palestinian women, the pain of recent losses, but also the incredible strength of women in the continuity of the struggle. She evokes what resistance means today: “We resist through life, through reproduction, through the refusal of extermination. Every child who is born is a no to erasure.”

This moment overwhelms us. It reminds us that our march, our actions, our slogans are only one thread among others in this immense tapestry of struggles, carried daily by these women.

10:30 a.m. - instructions for departure to Ismailia

The instructions come: impossible to leave for Al Arish from Cairo, we have to get as close as possible, Ismailia becomes our next destination. We have to leave in small groups, by taxi, under the guise of tourism.

Yakouta Benrouguibi, a lawyer and feminist activist, rereads Egyptian laws and reminds us of the seriousness of the risks incurred in the event of arrest: “Attempting to cross a military zone, undermining state security” can lead to imprisonment for decades. We decide to go anyway.

1:30 p.m. - A tense ride

A VTC agrees to take us, attempting a route through Port Said, which is longer but would put us out of suspicion in the event of arrest and police control. Each checkpoint is a chasm in the stomach, with warning messages about arrests and confiscations of passports.

In the vehicle, the silence is heavy, and the radio is turned up at each checkpoint to convince people that we are tourists carried away by the vibrations of the music.

The blockade in Ismailia

Finally, we reach the outskirts of Ismailia. But then, everything comes to a halt. The police blocked the entrance: no one was passing anymore. Our passports are confiscated without a word. “We felt that it was getting tighter, that the

room for manoeuvre was disappearing,” one of us says.

We were ordered to turn back, escorted out of the city. At the exit of the latter, at the nearest checkpoint, we were made to get off. The driver, worried, cannot wait. We retrieve our belongings, exhausted but determined.

Passports are returned nationality by nationality. For Algerians, the wait is longer, the uncertainty heavier. We see the flags, the faces, the looks of those who, like us, have not given up.

The birth of an international sit-in

It is there, at the checkpoint, that solidarity materializes. A Palestinian flag is raised. Then another. Then an Algerian flag, a Swiss, Moroccan, Tunisian flag. Slogans are flying: “Free Palestine!” “End the blockade!” “Stop bombing Gaza!”

There are dozens, then hundreds of us, sitting on the hot asphalt. A moment of shared revolt, a common cry born of despair and dignity. Comrades in Algeria are in charge of communication. The press release is being relayed beyond the borders.

This press release was at the heart of our commitment. The result of collective writing, reflections, re-readings, shared emotions and anchored convictions. Entitled “We, Algerian feminist activists and organizations, march towards Gaza,” this text carried the voice of a profoundly anti-imperialist and decolonial Algerian feminism, faithful to the heritage of our people's struggles against colonization. In it, we affirmed that our fight for women's rights is inseparable from the fight against the oppression of peoples, against colonialism and against imperialism that crush lives, in Palestine as elsewhere.

The press release was not intended to be a mere text of intent: it was a political act in itself, a cry shared with more than 3,000 participants from 80 countries who had joined the Global March for Gaza – and the *Soumoud* ground convoy. It recalled that the march was not a miracle solution, but a refusal of inaction, a way of breaking the complicit silence in the face of the ongoing genocide in Gaza, perpetrated by the Zionist occupation and its allies. Every word carried the pain of the thousands of deaths, the starving children, the women murdered by the bombs, but also the dignity of a people standing up and the responsibility of states and peoples to stand by them.

In it, we unambiguously denounced the complicity of the powers that arm the oppressor, we called on states to break their silence, to act for an immediate ceasefire, the lifting of the blockade, the end of the occupation. We called on the people to march, everywhere, because to remain immobile would be to betray. And we said, “We will not betray.”

This text, signed by our organizations, by our names, was also a moral shield in the face of possible accusations, a way of explaining, of assuming our choices, while reminding us that our action remained peaceful, respectful of local laws, but firm in its demands. It carried the very essence of our presence: to say that Palestine will be free, and that as long as injustice reigns, we will march.

Evening - The trap closes and the repression is brutal

The day waned, the negotiations came to a standstill, and the police arrived in large numbers: buses, trucks, armoured vehicles. The message came: "You got your message across. Now go." We refuse: how can we leave when comrades have not recovered their passports? While Gaza is bleeding? Threats mounted: "Either you leave, or it's immediate expulsion."

Night falls. Men in civilian clothes, masked, appear. They hit, tear, humiliate. "It was cold, methodical violence. Nothing wild, but everything effective." Protesters are dragged, loaded onto buses to random destinations: airports, police stations, abandoned highways.

We, by chance or misfortune, are on the bus not affected by the immediate evictions. We are, by physical force and violence, on the bus, our bodies aching, our nerves raw. Inside, the silence is heavy, interspersed with sighs, muffled tears, and glances exchanged in an attempt to reassure each other. Everyone is trying to understand: where are we going? What will be the next humiliation?

And it was in this suffocating situation that information surfaced on Facebook: Iran had responded to Israel's attack. A demonstrator, his phone still shaking in his hand, whispers: "Iran... Iran has just bombed Tel Aviv." A shiver runs through the bus. We look at each other, flabbergasted. It is not fear, nor simple joy: it is the awareness of an unexpected shift.

A protester next to me blurts out, almost in a faint voice: "This must be the only positive point in the history of the mullahs' regime." Another, younger, immediately qualifies: "You have to go slowly... Iran or not, it's still Palestinian land."

The words float, suspended, as the bus bumps into the night. Each and every one of us weighs what this means: a legitimate response, yes, but a war that spreads, a greater risk, peoples caught in a vice.

This moment, in this cramped bus, with fear in our bellies and low voices analysing, testifies to the spirit of this Global March: its radicalism. A conscious, critical, collective radicalism.

And looking around us, we see it clearly: the dominant groups in this march, those who stay until the end, are anarchists, far-left activists, anti-colonialist feminists. Those who have no state flag, only that of the peoples.

Finally, we are dropped off 20 minutes from the centre of Cairo, by a miraculous coincidence. We have experienced fear, anger, but also the beauty of solidarity without borders. What do I remember? The extraordinary courage of the people who helped us: the Egyptian people, the anonymous comrades, those who took risks to shelter, protect, feed us.

We have seen the limits of diplomacy, the brutality of states, but also the strength of peoples. No feminist struggle is complete if it ignores the global colonial order. On that day, we saw what it means: to resist, together, without a state flag, but with the flags of the peoples.

As a precaution, we decided not to go back to Imane's house right away, for fear of exposing her if we were followed. Almost three hours later, on the way to our host's house, our VTC is stopped, our passports confiscated again. The driver, in solidarity, improvises a story: we are his customers, tourists. He negotiates, we get our passports back. At Imane's, the welcome is comfortingly warm, an extension of international solidarity.

June 14 - assessment and caution

The Algerian embassy in Cairo contacted us unexpectedly. The interlocutor praised our commitment by describing us as “heirs of the mujahidates,” but recalled the limits of diplomacy: in the event of arrest, little could be done. He offers material help that we refuse, not wanting to expose Imane.

We remain confined, as a precaution, in contact with our comrades and organizers. There is no point in risking arrests in a context of radical refusal by the Egyptian authorities.

June 16 - last hours in Cairo

After a quiet day, we pack our bags. In the afternoon, we participate in a meeting at the headquarters of the *El Karama* party, with left-wing parties, to talk about the march, the *Soumoud* caravan, the regional context and the Iranian response. Later that night, we leave for the airport. Our checks are going well, others are being searched and arrested. On the plane, the slogans rise, a last collective cry.

We then witness an unexpected act of solidarity: a pilot refuses to take off until the 15 Algerians arrested are released. After two hours, the plane finally takes off. It was only symbolic: but it was important.

This experience is a concrete illustration of the intersectional and decolonial feminism that marks the contemporary Algerian feminist movement. We are not just women marching for Gaza; we carry a global critique of the global system of oppression, a legacy of Algerian anti-colonial struggles that is reflected today in an internationalist commitment to solidarity.

The repression experienced demonstrates how the capitalist and imperialist world order, consolidated by complicit states, works to muzzle any dissenting voice, especially those that defend the oppressed and colonized peoples. Our feminist approach rejects the fragmentation of struggles: women's rights are intrinsically linked to the struggle against racism, colonialism, capitalism and militarism.

By joining the Global March to Gaza, we wanted to materialize this political feminism that takes into account the interconnection of dominations. This collective action, even if limited by repression, is an act of feminist political resistance that refuses to leave Palestinian women, children and men isolated, rendered invisible or reduced to passive victims. They are actors in their struggle, and our solidarity is intended to support their power of life, resistance and social transformation.

The ordeal of the journey, the tensions, the refusal of entry, the police brutality have also highlighted the political precariousness of internationalist activism, subject to the security logics of states, but also the strength of the collective and of transnational sisterhood.

This journey also shows that feminist political action is not limited to a symbolic space: it involves bodies, risks, strategies, and requires solid and active support networks.

This journey, marked by solidarity, state violence, and determination, is a vivid testimony to the need for a decolonial, anti-racist, and internationalist feminism. We, Algerian feminist activists, have embodied the continuity of a historic struggle against all forms of oppression, from Algerian women in the Mujahidate to Palestinian women under

blockade.

Our march was not a simple walk, but a radical political act, a clear rejection of injustice and the silent complicity of states. In a world where borders are hardening, where solidarity is often prevented, our action has drawn a space of transnational resistance, carried by the collective strength of women and peoples in struggle.

On that day, in the midst of repression, we learned that international feminist solidarity is a bulwark against barbarism, a source of hope and a weapon against oppression.

Because as long as Gaza bleeds, as long as Palestine is under occupation, as long as women, political minorities and all the oppressed remain far from their rights, as long as imperialism and capitalism prioritize militarization, armaments and war: our feminist and decolonial struggle cannot stop.

31 August 2025

*Translated by **International Viewpoint** from [Inprecor](#).*

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