

HUMAN RIGHTS WATCH

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October 30, 2014

Mrs. Taous Feroukhi
Director-General for Political Affairs and International
Security
Ministry of Foreign Affairs
Plateau des Annassers
Kouba, Algiers, Algeria

Dear Madam,

First of all, I would like to thank you for receiving a delegation from Human Rights Watch, in October 2014, to discuss various topics of common interest. During this meeting, we expressed our desire to continue working with the Algerian authorities on the main human rights issues in your country. We are writing to you to detail the priority research areas we intend to work on next year.

As you know, HRW seeks to promote greater respect for human rights by publishing balanced reports based on credible sources, and sending specific recommendations to governments and other responsible authorities.

In 2015, we are going to continue our research into the exercise of freedom of expression, association and assembly in Algeria. To this end, we intend to continue working with Algerian civil society organisations on the conditions for implementing these rights in Algeria, communicate our first impressions and request comments and clarifications from the relevant authorities. Based on our conclusions, we will then make specific recommendations to the Algerian authorities regarding practical ways of addressing any issues, problems or impediments observed.

We have also followed with interest the progress achieved in the area of enhancing women's rights. In 2012, Algeria introduced a system of quotas for female representation in the legislative elections, enabling 147 women to take up seats in parliament. We are also delighted about the forthcoming introduction of amendments to the criminal code, including articles that will clamp down on violence against women. We would like further information about these amendments so that we can analyse them and determine their practical effect on the situation of women in Algeria. We would also

like to explore the flaws in the legislation, which still contains discriminatory articles regarding marriage, divorce, child custody, and guardianship as well as inheritance.

We would also like your agreement to carry out inspections of prisons and detention centres in Algeria. The purpose of these inspections would be to investigate the treatment of prisoners and the overall conditions in which they are held. We are happy to discuss the terms and conditions of these inspections with you. As an example, we would like to draw your attention to the fact that we have entered into a similar agreement with the Tunisian authorities, which granted us the right to inspect detention facilities in 2013, and that we have published our conclusions in a report entitled "Cracks in the System," available here:
<http://www.hrw.org/ar/reports/2013/12/05>.

As indicated during our meeting on 13 October 2014, we are enclosing herewith a copy of a letter sent to the Ministries of the Interior and Justice regarding the abuses alleged to have taken place in the Governorate of Ghardaia in November 2013. We shall refrain from publishing this information in any way until we have received your response, within the reasonable period indicated in the enclosed letter.

Thank you for your cooperation, and we look forward to receiving confirmation that our future official requests for inspections in Algeria will be given a favourable response.

Yours faithfully,

[Signature]

Sarah Leah Whitson
Executive Director
Middle East and North Africa Division
Human Rights Watch