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RESPONSES OF ISLAMIC POLITICAL PARTIES AND INSURGENT GROUPS

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1. Introduction

Knowing the views of the Algerian Islamic movements concerning the massacres is a crucial element in trying to understand these crimes. Unlike the statements and assertions of the Algerian government, these views have hardly made it into the Western media and are not known to wider audiences in the world. If balanced opinions about these massacres are to be formed, the responses of the Islamic movements need to be known.

A fair survey of these movements should include the reactions of the 'legal' Islamic parties. It may be even more important to listen to the responses of the 'banned' Islamic movements. Not only do these groups represent one of the most (if not the most) important parameters in the Algerian conflict, but they are also constantly portrayed as the perpetrators of the massacres.

Hence, the aim of this report is to contribute towards a just and fair investigation into the massacres. This is achieved by compiling and reviewing the statements about the reactions of the Algerian Islamic movements to these massacres. These statements are organised in the form of referenced historical testimonies, and then summarised.

The statements are collected in section 2 and 3. Section 2 deals with the Islamic political parties: the Society's Movement for Peace (HMS), the Renaissance Movement (Nahda) and the Islamic Salvation Front (FIS). Section 3 is devoted to the Islamic insurgent groups in general: the Islamic Salvation Army (AIS), the Islamic League for Preaching and Jihad (LIDD) and other armed groups who split from the Armed Islamic Group (GIA), previously led by Djamel Zitouni and currently under the command of Antar Zouabri.

A couple of observations are worth noting. First, although the French and Algerian media present it as an Islamic insurgent group, the GIA is widely believed, by the Algerian population and by observers, to be a counter-guerrilla organisation used by the Algerian regime as a tool in their military strategy against the Islamic groups.¹ Also, all the armed opposition groups which dissociated themselves from the GIA confirm the infiltration and control of this group by the regime's secret services.² Therefore, Zouabri's GIA is not considered among the Islamic insurgent groups in this study. Second, although this report is based on a comprehensive list of citations, it is far from complete.³ However, we believe that it is a reasonable reflection of the reactions of the Algerian Islamic movements to the massacres.

The general trend of this testimonial account indicates that, except for the Society's Movement for Peace (HMS), reactions to the massacres by the Islamic parties and insurgent groups are similar in principle, although with dif-

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ferent degrees of ‘openness’ and clarity. Whereas these groups, in general, accuse directly or indirectly the regime and its security apparatus (including the GIA and the militias) and appeal for a national and/or international inquiry to investigate these crimes, the HMS party firmly rejects the theory that the Algerian authorities might be involved in the killings and clearly accuses the GIA of committing these crimes. It refuses to consider any form of investigation into these massacres.

2. Responses of the Islamic Political Parties

2.1. Movement for the Society of Peace (HMS)

2.1.1. The Party

The Movement for the Society of Peace – *Harakat Mujtama' Silm* (HMS) – was founded in 1990 and has been led by Sheikh Mahfoud Nahnah since then. It is ideologically close to the Muslim Brotherhood movement. This party is known for its support for the present Algerian regime and its strong opposition to the FIS. Although the HMS won no seats in the interrupted 1991 parliamentary elections, it has become the second largest party in Algeria after the banning of the FIS. Nahnah's party was given 25 per cent of the votes in the presidential elections of 1995, 69 parliamentary seats (out of the 380) in the legislative elections of 1997, and is now participating in government with two ministers. It condemned the Rome Platform (Sant' Egidio Accord for Peace), although it attended some of the negotiation meetings leading to that accord.

The HMS sees itself as ‘a moderate Algerian Islamist political party which believes in pluralist democracy’ and aims at ‘pursuing the edification of a modern Algerian state within the framework of the principles of Islam, democracy and the republican system’.⁴ It claims to offer a less radical alternative to the FIS, and had in fact justified the need for its creation soon after the first pluralist municipal elections when ‘alarming signals of the radicalisation of the FIS became prominent’ and ‘it became clear that the intolerant coercive line adopted by the FIS could not be accepted’.⁵ The HMS believes this because it sees itself as ‘a grassroots organisation which enjoys support throughout the whole spectrum of the Algerian society’.⁶

The HMS stated in their founding principles that they consider Islam as the religion of the State and the people; believe in the values of liberty and democracy, and the respect of the will and choice of the people, as well as the change of government by peaceful means. They also stated that they reject all forms of violence whatever their source, and respect human rights and justice as the basis of government and power.

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*National Responses**2.1.2. Party Reactions*

The HMS leader, Mahfoud Nahnah, believes that the militias (or patriots) 'have not been prepared to face terrorism' and that is the reason why 'they have been at the origin of serious excesses'.⁷ However, he confirms that they are also 'victims of horrible assassinations' and that 'self-defence is [therefore] a necessity'. As for the 'deadly madness of the fundamentalists', he thinks that it is because 'the villagers have stopped supporting the armed groups, which has made these groups resort to 'punishment actions'.⁸ Nevertheless, he also thinks that many people, notably the 'politico-financial Mafia', have taken advantage of the situation as well by 'indulging in racketeering and rape'.⁹

For Nahnah, the formation of 'self-defence groups' (following massacres of civilian populations) reflected 'an act of belief and patriotism [...] even if this initiative might lead to some out-of-control situations, with arms being distributed selectively for protection against possible attacks from armed groups'.¹⁰

The HMS expressed its concern about the massacres and condemned 'the collective extermination' as well as 'the political logic' adopted by the authorities in dealing with this 'phenomenon of savage violence'.¹¹ It also questioned the 'persistence of some official authorities in dealing with the massacres in an absurd and careless manner, with boastful declarations of victory, which added to the doubts of the citizens about the desire and devotion of those authorities to protect them'.¹² The HMS asked the authorities to 'move away from provocative declarations, to act practically to activate the political class and announce a day of national solidarity with the victims of the tragedy'.¹³

The HMS leader pressed for the urgent creation of a large national coalition of all the political tendencies to fight terrorism:

The idea of such a national wall, where there will be people from the left, the right, seculars, patriots and Islamists, as well as the overall political class who are aware of the gravity of the Algerian crisis, has inspired me because of what happened recently [anti ETA campaign] in Spain to fight terrorism.¹⁴

He also encouraged the creation of 'self-defence groups' in rural and remote areas, confirmed his refusal to allow any form of 'foreign intervention' in the Algerian crisis, and described the letter sent by the FIS leader, Dr Abassi Madani, to the UN secretary-general as 'a waste of time'.¹⁵ Nahnah said that it was not possible for the HMS to 'accuse the authority or the army of indulgence and complicity'. However, he confirmed that 'the politico-economic Mafia' took advantage of 'the climate of insecurity and the barbaric massacres that nothing can justify [sic]'.¹⁶ Referring to the necessity

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for Algeria to have democratic institutions, Nahnah insisted on holding local elections, 'even if the fire should light up from all sides'.¹⁷

The HMS president renewed his rejection of the issue of internationalisation, 'be it in the form of Sant' Egidio and those who were misled into signing the Rome document, or in the form of those who were released from prison [referring to Abassi's letter to the UN secretary-general]'.¹⁸

When the European parliamentary delegation was on a visit to Algeria, the HMS secretariat of political affairs warned against 'the persuasion of the episode of concessions which could well be avoided if the national institutions were made useful within the frame of strategic interests and not within the frame of narrow calculations'.¹⁹ It also expressed the HMS's fear about 'excesses which might occur' concerning the issue of 'national sovereignty which remains dependent on the national unity targeted by the different parties'.²⁰

The HMS mentioned the 'very painful circumstances' resulting from the 'massacres in which hundreds of citizens were victimised', and renewed its call to the 'political class' and the 'state institutions' to 'stop the spreading of these massacres which indicate the absence of the state or the failure of the authorities to shoulder their responsibilities either by keeping silent or by using provocative statements'.²¹ The HMS also condemned 'the deteriorating situation' and 'the creation of circumstances which allow foreign intervention with known incentives'.²² It recommended 'considering the areas of the latest massacres as disaster areas, in which urgent measures to promote solidarity for the benefit of the citizens needed to be taken to prevent further backsliding in society and security skidding'.²³

The HMS rejected both the accusation of the government security forces' involvement in the massacres and the explanation given for the passivity of the army and security forces (which attributed this passivity to misunderstandings and conflicts between the presidency and some of the military leaders):

This reading of the events is not correct, and it does not refute the fact that the security forces failed in fulfilling their responsibilities because

- a) based on what we know from the areas where the massacres were committed, the survivors confirm that the perpetrators are members of the armed groups, some of them from the inhabitants of the area as was the case in Bentalha, and that there are families closely related to the terrorists, who escaped on the night of the massacre, in addition to the fact that the GIA communiqué clearly claims responsibility for the latest massacres and judges all the Algerian people as disbelievers; and
- b) what was described as a disagreement within the regime cannot reach such a level of poisoning which portends foreign intervention. We should know the effect of massacres on the international public opinion and the major powers. We should also know the reactions resulting from these massacres, which, after the last one [Bentalha], led to consultations between America and France. In these circum-

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stances, it is inconceivable how the misunderstanding could reach such a level as to lead the country into this very grave situation.²⁴

The HMS explained, however, that ‘the clarity about the identity of the perpetrators of these criminal acts does not contradict the fact that beneficiaries are numerous’.²⁵ According to the HMS those taking advantage of the massacres are

the callers for conflict and poisoning, warmongers and arms dealers, the minority which will be rejected by the people when the electoral process is completed, the eradicators, the callers for internationalisation of the conflict and the callers for partitioning of the country.²⁶

During an interview²⁷ the HMS leader Mahfoud Nahnah discussed the Algerian tragedy in general and the issue of the massacres in particular. Some of his answers are detailed below; all of them are in response to questions relating to the massacres.

About the perpetrators:

In truth, the blood that is being spilled in some parts of Algeria reflects cruelty the like of which Algerians never witnessed except in the days of French colonialism. One can never describe it as an ‘Islamic massacre’, ‘Islamic killing’ or ‘Islamic jihad’. It cannot be national for it is a desire to gain power with skulls, tears and suffering. However, it is a cruelty that is committed by a bunch of people that have called themselves in bygone days the Armed Islamic Group. The truth is that this is not an Islamic group. Instead, it is a group that chose by itself to attack the whole Algerian people on every level by following a scorched-earth policy to achieve an international strategy that has a strong vested interest in and a clear perception of the geopolitical position of Algeria. It is either a victim of the ignorance that was once widespread in the country during a certain period, or it is an aggressor and its crime is very clearly against those innocent citizens who are under attack daily with no one to defend them.

We say very clearly that the killers have been witnessed by the remaining survivors in isolated villages and homelands. Certain families still recognise one another through kinship (*ansab*), branches of the extended family (*ʿarash*) and lineage (*Sulālah*). They know their villages inch by inch, house by house, hut by hut, and a survivor would say, ‘I know the killer was so and so, son of so and so,’ so there is no doubt about who the killer is. I therefore hope that this misunderstanding will be eliminated from politics and from the media, which have opened the door for [a European] Troika. This is the first point. Second, it should be clear that the stupidity of those killers has benefited some people: members of the special services, a smart Mafia that makes good use of the stupidity of others to carry out its plans. Third, there is an economic, political, and separatist Mafia that wants to keep the status quo in preparation for partitioning projects that are very well known and have very well-defined objectives. Fourth, these armed groups were from the beginning, before the electoral process was halted in 1991, or you might say the military coup, planning and preparing for these armed operations. Fifth, there are the westernised elements who are fighting against the identity of Algeria. Therefore, the identity of the killers is clear to all. The stupidity of the killers is also clear when it is being used by political or separatist Mafia inside or outside Algeria or the Mafia that wants to launder

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Responses of the Islamic Movements

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money and take over what is left of the reserves and resources of the country for future generations. This is so that the Algerians will not be able to build their future. Of course, what is left is 'jihad in the Name of God'. We say that jihad in the name of God has been decreed, but terror in the name of God, and violence in the name of God can only be approved by one who envies Algeria or a traitor to the country or an agent for a foreigner, whoever he may be, so as to destroy the reserves of the country. So now we have corrected the concept of 'who is the terrorist'. There is one thing left, which is that the terrorist first admits, from a secret radio station that is being operated inside the capital Algiers, that he is doing this killing and secondly publishes leaflets in which he claims responsibility for the killing operations.

About the victims:

The presence of militias and the armed resistance of mujahidīn²⁸ are aimed at protecting the citizens from those murderers and terrorists who have been described by everybody as savage terrorists because they are resisting a whole people and paving the way for foreign intervention and destruction of the resources of the country. That is why we support the presence of militias or the assistance of the security forces, both of whom are here to protect citizens despite their weaknesses and some of their transgressions; and the presence of the town guards who commit mistakes sometimes; and the combined operations of these groups. However, that does not relieve the Algerian government of the responsibility of protecting the citizens in the way it sees fit.

About the government and the army:

The truth is that the general situation towards which Algeria has headed the decades over the decades of independence has been one of confusion... This leads us to conclude that the security situation which the forces of law and order are facing today – that of not being able to protect people – is about insecurity in public choices and cracks in the system's choices. Security requires good choices on the political front and the adoption of sound economic and educational programmes. [These choices] have created a shaky policy on all fronts. These contradictions have led to the decapitating of citizens and a scorch-earth strategy.

In our opinion, national unity can be preserved, in our country as well as other countries first, only by the army, secondly, by the unity of the army and thirdly, by the unity of the decision-makers of the army.²⁹ The parties are now manoeuvring to make the army a target of accusation or mistrust... We fully admit that the humiliation of and trespassing on people's dignity and mistakes perpetrated against Algerian citizens were continuously present, whether yesterday or today and perhaps tomorrow unless the army returns to what the constitution has made it for.

About the Islamic Salvation Front (FIS)

When the GIA was conceived, it was wholeheartedly adopted by the FIS. The latter's members (supporters) adopted its ideas and ways and they raised the banner, which was called in Algeria, at that time, the 'Jihād Banner for Algerian Resistance'. It started out with some of the educated imams, ʿulamā and researchers, soldiers, policemen, and security people. When popular support diminished for this group, it started to wage a war against the people who refused to surrender to these armed groups. Therefore, in the end we found these progenitors distancing themselves from the GIA. Afterwards, however, it was given a political cover (FIS) and then a

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religious cover in the name of Islam to carry guns against Algerians or some of the Algerians. When chaos became the norm and these armed groups realised that military resistance was doomed to reach a dead-end, some of the GIA members began to abandon it and accuse it of being a criminal group. In fact we have witnessed others who have come out of the skin of the GIA and from under its garments to fight it with arms. So now these massacres are happening left and right and reflect the in-fighting of a group which saw its inner structure explode.

About the armed opposition groups

In my opinion, and I take full responsibility for this, the consequences of assassinations, murder and inciting people to jihad (armed struggle) are much worse than cancelling the elections. Then the groups that adopted the armed struggle declared a 'holy trinity' of 'No dialogue, No reconciliation, No truce' and were faced by another group which declared a truce. So whoever says 'No discussion, No reconciliation, No truce' has adopted armed struggle and those who have declared the truce adopted armed struggle for a long period. Therefore, if we are to provide a historical account, let us not fall under misconceptions. Why announce a truce if we are within the Algerian context and have truthful intentions about jihad? Why announce a truce? And if we are not like this, then let us say frankly that we have wronged the Algerian people. Finally, those who have carried out armed operations (group or individual massacres) against all Algerian citizens are known. Their names are known to the ordinary Algerian citizen.

About foreign intervention and the commission of inquiry

To put it simply, we reject mediation, we welcome well-intentioned action and we like the interest that the world, the Arabs and the Muslims have shown in the Algerian crisis. This means that we do not accept that any party should meddle in the internal affairs of Algeria. And I said it once in the media: whoever wants his mother to miss him (that is, to be killed), let him come to the valleys of Algeria, its mountains, countryside and urban areas, and there he will know who will make his wife a widow and his children orphans.

The arrival of the Troika or the parliamentarians and media people from Europe is a normal consequence of fragile and weak Algerian diplomacy. Also it is a natural consequence of the way the Algerian media treated a very bad security situation. If the treatment has been fair at the level of Algerian diplomacy and the Algerian media, Algeria would not have been targeted with concealed threats under the banner of assistance or offering help to the victims of terrorism and those who suffered in the massacres.

We pose a question: Why do massacres happen here and there? Why are there assassinations near the security areas? Clearly, there is a fact-finding commission formed in the Assembly (parliament) to search and investigate, which has the full authority to do whatever it takes to find those who were lax in performing their national duty of protecting citizens. Therefore, we have asked the President to use his powers to punish those who, at any level of the power hierarchy, do not do their jobs, and people holding office while lagging in performing their duties. This is something that will raise doubts. Otherwise, Algerian citizens will then feel that there is no government protecting them, no security protecting them, which is something we totally reject.

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These quotations sum up the HMS attitude towards the massacres in general, their perpetrators, their victims, the regime's position as well as that of its army. They also convey the HMS views on the Islamic Salvation Front and on foreign intervention to determine the responsibility of the massacres. Basically, for HMS neither the government nor the army is to blame for the massacres. The massacres are therefore blamed on the Armed Islamic Group (GIA) whose ignorance – and its corollary of extremism and bigotry – or connivance with shadowy sides served, according to the HMS leader, various anti-national Mafia.

2.2. Renaissance Movement (Nahda)

2.2.1. The Party

The Renaissance Movement – *Harakat Annahda* (Nahda) – created in 1988 in December 1990 and led by Sheikh Abdallah Djaballah up to December 1998, is currently presided by Lahbib Adami. The party is based mainly in the east of Algeria and known for supporting the line of the Algerian (local) Muslim Brotherhood movement. It aims at establishing an Islamic state, albeit within the frame of democracy and political pluralism. It is considered to be the third Islamic party after the FIS and the HMS. The Nahda party signed the Rome Peace Accord (Sant' Egidio Platform, January 1995) and has always favoured the re-legalisation of the FIS. The movement did not win any seats in the cancelled 1991 parliamentary elections but won 0.8 per cent of the votes and gained 34 seats in the June 1997 legislative elections.

2.2.2. Party Reactions

The Nahda Movement has condemned 'the criminal acts [massacres], which are not authorised by Islamic law [*Shari'a*] or accepted by reason, and is opposed to the logic of force in the treatment of the security aspect of the crisis'.³⁰

Nahda's leader, Abdallah Djaballah, ruled out any involvement by the authorities or the Islamic Salvation Front (FIS) in the atrocities, but said that 'Algeria's crisis had been complicated by the unsound policies' of the authorities:

I do not think that the authorities who safeguard the public interest, the rights and the freedom of the citizens are the authors of the massacres. I do not think either that a movement, which presents itself as an alternative to the authorities, has committed these massacres.³¹

He also acknowledged that the killings left a big question mark:

Are we facing an unknown faction that wants, for example, to complicate the situation further by driving people to despair and making them lose hope from reaching

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a solution? Or are we facing despairing armed groups that are driven to carry out such inhumane actions?³²

Djaballah backed the government's rejection of an international investigation, but called for a parliamentary inquiry into the massacres, saying: 'This [situation] calls upon the people's representatives in the Assembly to shoulder their full responsibilities and set up a committee to investigate the massacres [...] and present the required and appropriate solutions'.³³ Djaballah blamed the authorities for the 'worsening of the conflict', accusing them of trying to 'root out the Islamic movement and isolate all forces that had another point of view'.³⁴ He believed that the crisis could be solved by the Algerians themselves and that 'resuming dialogue with the FIS and other opposition parties was the best way to bring the country out of the impasse'.³⁵ According to Djaballah, the European mission (EU Troika) will only serve 'to support the government's political line of fighting terrorism'.³⁶ He considered that the West, horrified by the massacres, 'does not have a precise idea or a clear proposal of how to end the violence as long as its interests were not threatened in Algeria'.³⁷ He also considers that the West 'has nothing to propose for it was not being subjected to any pressure to find a solution'.³⁸

When the FFS party called for a national march on 11 September 1997 in Algiers to protest against the massacres, a member of the Nahda movement revealed that 'contacts had taken place between his party and the FFS about the subject of the march' and that it 'approved any initiative which could help, directly or indirectly, to stop these atrocious massacres'.³⁹ The Nahda party said that 'it was high time for the parties to play their role with the hope of finding a solution to the crisis which the country was undergoing', and hoped that 'the Algerian authorities would involve the political parties in the search for a solution to the security question which affected all the Algerians without any exception'.⁴⁰

2.3. Islamic Salvation Front (FIS)

2.3.1. The Party

The Islamic Salvation Front – Front Islamique du Salut (FIS), (*Al-Jabha Al-Islamiya lil Inqath*) – was founded and officially recognised in the summer of 1989. The following year, the municipal elections gave the FIS its first, and resounding electoral victory. In December 1991, the party participated in the legislative elections winning overwhelmingly the first round and was expected to win the second round with a large majority. This did not happen because the army intervened to halt the electoral process and impose a state of emergency. The FIS leaders are Dr Abbassi Madani (currently under house arrest), Sheikh Ali Benhadj (still in prison since June 1991), Engineer Abdelkader Hachani (released in 1997 after spending five and a half years in prison) and Sheikh Mohamed Said (assassinated in 1995 by the GIA faction

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of Djamel Zitouni). The FIS was then banned in March 1992. This led to the creation of a representation abroad in the form of several bodies:

- The FIS Executive Body: created in September 1993 and led by Rabah Kebir who is based in Germany. Its spokesman Abdelkrim Ouldadda is based in Belgium.
- The FIS Parliamentary Delegation: founded in 1992 and headed by Anwar Haddam who is in prison in the United States.
- The FIS Preparatory Committee: established in April 1997 and Led by Kamaredine Kharaban who lives in London. It is supported by the Algerian Community in Britain (ACB of London), a core of activists who further the cause of the FIS and denounce the Algerian junta through publications, but otherwise hold no significant grassroots following.
- The FIS Co-ordination Council (CCFIS): set up in October 1997 and headed by Ahmed Zaoui who was forcibly deported to Ougadougou (Burkina Fasso) by the Swiss authorities in November 1998.
- Algerian Fraternity in France (Fraternité Algérienne de France, FAF): is led by Moussa Kraouche who is also a member of the CCFIS temporary bureau and is currently under house arrest in France.

Thousands of FIS members and supporters have been subjected to detention in the Sahara desert, imprisonment, torture and eradication by the Algerian regime. The party leaders and sympathisers have also been the targets of GIA assassinations.

The FIS participated in the Sant' Egidio negotiations and is a signatory of the Rome Peace Accord of 1995. It describes itself as 'a non-violent political party that has emerged from the people of Algeria as an expression of their identity and aspirations',⁴¹ a party adopting 'a moderate, balanced and broad line'⁴² and one which believes that:

Political Islam in Algeria aims at re-establishing Islam as a comprehensive way of life by the institutionalisation of a stable governing system which should represent Algerian society in its plurality: a multi-party system that bears no resemblance to the theocratic system experienced in the West for centuries. The intention of Algerian political Islam is not to replace the present with a mystical past, but to re-structure the modern social order so that it conforms to Islamic principles and values. This does not mean, however, that under Islamic reforms everything Western is to be discarded. A selective interactive approach to western political, economic and social expression is to be undertaken so long as there is no violation of Islamic moral principles.⁴³

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*National Responses**2.3.2. Party Reactions**2.3.2a. FIS inside Algeria*

While Abassi Madani, the FIS leader, was under house arrest, he sent a short letter to the UN secretary-general, Mr Kofi Annan, in which he expressed his willingness to help put an end to the conflict, and proposed to launch an appeal to stop the violence as the first move towards opening a serious dialogue:

In appreciation of what came in your appeal to the Algerians for dialogue and reconciliation, for stopping violence and solving the conflict, and in view of the desire of the wounded Algerian people, all the wise and sincere people, and the national and international public opinion, and in view of the miserable situation the Algerian cause has reached today and the mass killings being inflicted on the Algerian people, in view of all that, I am ready to launch an appeal to bring an immediate end to the bloodshed as a preliminary step towards opening a serious dialogue. A serious dialogue which will finally bring the conflict to a happy ending and rescue the country, with the help of God and the backing of all those who support and respect human rights and the right of peoples in self-determination. Finally, please accept my utmost respect for your courage and your faithfulness to the United Nations Charter.⁴⁴

Abdelkader Hachani confirmed that the FIS ‘condemns the massacres unreservedly’.⁴⁵ He said that ‘Algeria has experienced a “crescendo” of violence since the suspension of the polls,’ and explained that ‘killings were limited at first to the central Mitidja region but have now spread westwards, notably into the region of Relizane where the FIS won all the town councils in 1990’.⁴⁶ He clearly blamed the authorities for this violence because of its ‘stubbornness’ and ‘by rejecting any political solution’, but avoided accusing them directly of the massacres:

In this climate of generalised terror, it is difficult to answer [the question of who is behind these massacres]. What is certain, however, is that by refusing a political solution and by renouncing their role of protecting the population, the authorities themselves bear a major part of the responsibility [...] The crisis has taken on a horrible dimension. Had the authorities taken account of our propositions, we would not have been in this situation. Having said that, in any movement there are forms of extremism which emerge when any political option is blocked. Only a political dynamic which opens perspectives to the Islamic movement could marginalise these extremists [...] Clearly, these massacres are veritable crimes against humanity. Once the identity of these killers is known, they should be pursued inside as well as outside Algeria... Only when peace and security are re-established will ‘tongues be loosened’ and the identity of the murderers disclosed.⁴⁷

Hachani declared that ‘all the victims of the massacres had voted for the FIS’ and that the military-backed government of Liamine Zeroul ‘has done everything to fuel this violence’.⁴⁸ He also denied that his party could have taken part in the massacres, stating that ‘the FIS has always declared itself to

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be a political party intending to achieve its programme by normal means such as the ballot box,' and that 'the foundation of its programme is and will remain Islam'.⁴⁹ Hachani again blamed the Algerian authorities for the violence and discarded the view that the massacres were carried out by Islamists:

All along the time it was legal, the FIS had proved that it perfectly respected its initial choice and that it knew how to channel all the tendencies. The emergence of forms of extremism stems from the blind responsibility of the authorities and from cunning manipulation, some realities of which have started to appear, as well as from the policies of the international media aimed at tarnishing Islam. In the GIA acronym, what hurts me is the 'I' of Islamic. These massacres cannot be the work of individuals who invoke Islam's authority.⁵⁰

The FIS leader, however, judged that it was not the time for a commission of inquiry to investigate into the massacres. He saw, rather, the necessity now for discussions between Algerians, inside Algeria. To help initiate this, he asked the West to put pressure on the Algerian authorities but he expressed some doubts though with respect to France in that it 'remains the only country that opposes a dialogue between the Algerian authorities and the FIS'⁵¹ :

For six years, the Algerian people have lived martyrdom. For example, in February 1995, when inmates were massacred in their cells in the Serkadji prison in Algiers, the culprits were nevertheless known. We are to hope that the awakening of the conscience of the West does not conceal any hidden political, economic or other motives. For us, there is a difference between 'internationalisation' and 'interference'. The West has the means to bring the authorities to negotiate with all the representative political forces in the country. These negotiations would be conducted in Algeria, between Algerians, in order to result into conference of national reconciliation. We exclude any initiative which would threaten the sovereignty of the Algerian state. A commission of inquiry, however, cannot be envisaged except after the return of peace and security.⁵²

A letter from the national leadership of the FIS was conveyed by Mr Ali-Yahia Abdennour, President of the Algerian league for the Defence of Human Rights (LADDH) and one of the FIS lawyers, to members of the EU parliamentary delegation, but was torn to pieces by the head of the delegation, the Frenchman André Soulier. In the letter, which was later published in the London *El Hayat*, the FIS leadership questioned the role of Europe in helping the Algerian people by asking:

[...] and now, what justice can you possibly achieve for our oppressed people whose hopes lie with those who are in charge of civilisation and the salvation of humanity? Are you going to stop the collective massacres which started in Serkadji prison in 1995, which then recurred, spread, escalated and increased in ugliness until it has become clear to all observers that most of the victims, if not from those hated for their allegiance to the FIS, are then from those hated because of their refusal to take up arms to protect the regime? [...] or are you going to unveil the faces and the 'in-

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cubators' who have brought out these criminal gangs, shedders of blood and transgressors of honour, from whose evil no one is safe except those who are allowed to be part of 'the useful Algeria' which pumps oil and gas, or those who protect the heads of the regime and its institutions?⁵³

The letter also reminded the EU delegation of the FIS stand which 'condemns':

the horrible collective massacres inflicted on the Algerian people as well as the rejection by the authorities of any independent inquiry into these massacres, the situation of political prisoners, those missing, those evicted from their home or those dismissed from their jobs.⁵⁴

2.3.2b. FIS Executive Body Abroad

The FIS Executive Body Abroad reported that the central region of Algeria, especially the *wilayas* (counties) of Blida and Médéa had been witnessing 'a real extermination of its population since the autumn of 1996', and that about a thousand citizens 'had been eliminated by various barbaric means since the start of the year, most of whom were children, women and elderly people'.⁵⁵ The FIS condemned 'very strongly these criminal and cowardly acts which are contrary to the teachings of Islam', and totally denounced 'their plotters, their perpetrators and those who keep silent about them'.⁵⁶ The FIS appealed to the international community, including states, humanitarian organisations, regional and international political bodies for 'the set-up of an urgent, independent internal inquiry to reveal the truth and find out about those responsible for the crimes which are exterminating individual Algerians daily'.⁵⁷

The FIS blamed 'the military regime' for the massacres and explained: 'these massacres are being carried out daily on the innocent citizens by its repressive forces, the militias and the groups which this regime manipulates against the people who refuse its thesis of eradication'.⁵⁸ The FIS backed this claim by pointing out to the following:

The targeted regions are inhabited by the most deprived sections of the population and those most attached to the Islamic project. The Mitidja region known for its fertile land is an object of desire for those dreaming of owning it with the symbolic dinar [penny]. The political stance of the citizens in the central *wilayas* and their rallying around the FIS and its project were, and still are, a source of permanent worry to the authors of the coup d'état and to those who call for the eradication of Islam from its land. The militarisation of Algeria, by encouraging and supporting the militias and by infiltrating and manipulating the criminal organisations, can only lead to the 'poisoning' of the situation, the exacerbation of the anarchy and the increasing insecurity and crime. The massacres that have been committed are part of the extermination policy followed by the military wing of the authorities who is using it today for their electoral objectives.⁵⁹

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Rabah Kebir, president of the Executive Body Abroad, issued a call to 'all the sons of the people in the armed Islamic opposition' to declare 'a truce even from one side'.⁶⁰ The appeal explained that this stance had become necessary in order to

separate the violent and wicked criminals who are carrying out the collective butchery [massacres] and the ugly atrocities against innocent and isolated people, so that their case is uncovered, their conspiracies are disclosed and the whole world knows who is standing behind them.⁶¹

Kebir also justified the truce by the necessity:

to leave the way wide open to anyone who wants to make an effort to stop the bloodbath and the destruction of the country, to guarantee the future of later generations and to protect Algeria as a state, a nation and a civilisation.⁶²

The FIS Executive Body Abroad declared that 'the Islamic Salvation Front sees the necessity for a serious inquiry so that misfortunes do not happen again'.⁶³ In addition, it stated that

the FIS has the conviction that the one behind these attacks is the same, and what is worst is that these horrible crimes have not incited, in any case, the regime to proceed for a serious inquiry or to allow for an independent inquiry, be it national or international.⁶⁴

The FIS expressed serious concern about the escalation of violence in the country which began in January 1992: executions committed by 'the death squads created by the regime', disappearances and 'summary executions of innocent people in regions where the majority of the population had voted for the FIS during the December 1991 elections'.⁶⁵ For a way out of the 'dark tunnel', the FIS advocated 'the immediate adoption of a just and global political solution by opting for a national reconciliation' and demanded 'the immediate release of Sheikh Ali Benhadj and the removal of the restrictions imposed on Sheikh Abbassi'.⁶⁶

The FIS accused the Algerian regime of being implicated in the massacres either directly or by manipulation of the perpetrators: 'Either these criminal groups are protected by the regime or these people are part of the regime, of the army... They are in army khaki during the day and in Afghan garb and false beards by night,' declared Abdelkrim Ouldadda, spokesman of the FIS Executive Body Abroad.⁶⁷ He also made the claim that:

Based on confirmed sources of information, the recent massacres in the west of Algeria, in which large numbers of men were transported in daylight, could not have been carried out without the knowledge of the authorities or without their assistance [...] The fact that the perpetrators had made enormous efforts to take away their dead during the latest massacres makes one think that they did not want us to know that these perpetrators were military men.⁶⁸

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Ouldadda said that the decision of the Algerian government to reject the visit by the EU Troika was ‘incomprehensible’ and that this was ‘another proof against the regime’. He believed that ‘from the beginning, the Algerian regime wanted to shut the door in the face of any initiative aimed at finding the perpetrators and instigators of these crimes’.⁶⁹ Ouldadda explained that ‘in Algeria, there are mass graves like those which existed in Bosnia’ and that the FIS ‘could give the exact positions of these mass graves when an independent commission of inquiry, with freedom of movement, is set up’.⁷⁰ For him, the authorities ‘provoke the “Afghanisation” of Algeria by distributing arms to the civilian population and seemed to shut the door in the face of any possibility of dialogue’.⁷¹

Following the massacre of Relizane, the FIS Executive Body published an article entitled *What is happening in Relizane, and why Relizane itself?* which suggested the following explanation:

Because Relizane had voted for the FIS and had been supporting the AIS, it suffered the oppression of the regime as well as the GIA’s ‘terror battalion’, loyal to Zitouni and Zouabri. This had pushed the AIS to confront this group and force it out of the region. After a while, the ‘terror battalion’ came back to the region and took revenge on the population of remote villages by completely exterminating whole families.⁷²

The FIS said that they were taking a risk by revealing this preliminary information which came to them from ‘confirmed sources inside Algeria’, although they knew that ‘many people would not believe that a Muslim could commit such inhuman crimes’.⁷³ They also said that because they were ‘people of principles’, they oppose the regime and fight it, but that they make a difference between ‘opposing the regime and defending crime’.⁷⁴ For them, ‘the Muslim should know that Allah does not fix the work of the corrupters, and the way to power should not be built on the skulls of babies and the blood of the innocent people’.⁷⁵ They stated that:

A Muslim should not deny the responsibility of the criminal armed group [GIA] in killing women and children using *fatwas* from inside [the country] and justifications from outside. An international commission is therefore needed to inquire into the tragedy as a whole, starting with the torture of thousands of victims, the death squads responsible for killing thousands of citizens, the massacres in Serkadji and Berouaguia prisons and ending with the massacres being committed against innocent people as a result of the infiltration of these deviant groups by the regime. We are firmly convinced that top figures in the regime such as Redha Malek and Salim Saadi and others who have a hand in the crimes and torture should one day be tried by an international court for committing crimes against humanity. This also will be the fate of all those who have taken part in this criminal organisation (GIA) in any way, directly or indirectly. After this tragedy is over, the Algerian people will certainly ask to know the truth about this unknown group [GIA] so that they can confirm whether this group originated from Islamists themselves, or was just the product of some international intelligence institutions who tested their theories on the

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orphan Algerian people and destroyed their hopes of establishing an Islamic state in which security and stability would prevail.⁷⁶

The FIS, however, stressed that ‘the regime is responsible for the tragedy since the January 1992 coup’ and that ‘it [the regime] is strongly refusing the setting up of an international commission of inquiry because it knows that it will be blamed for many of the crimes it has committed’.⁷⁷

2.3.2c. FIS Parliamentary Delegation Abroad

The information bureau of the FIS Parliamentary Delegation Abroad called for a commission of inquiry to investigate the massacres and other human rights abuses:

In view of the recent upsurge of massacres and mass killings of civilians in Algeria, under the watchful eye and the passivity of the regime, the Islamic Salvation Front, the party of the majority in Algeria, and the sole holder of constitutional legitimacy in the country, demands on behalf of the [Algerian] people, and specifically the families of the victims, the prisoners, the tortured, and those who have disappeared, urgent intervention by the United Nation in order to stop the bloodbath by shedding light on and breaking down the walls of silence around the events in Algeria. We demand the setting-up of an international commission to investigate the crimes which have been taking place and the following up of its findings so as to bring the perpetrators and those who commanded them to justice. The FIS is ready to cooperate fully with such a UN commission, and also to play a constructing role in mediating with the mujahidīn organisations who are faithful to its political line, in order to establish the full facts of the crimes attributed to them and determine who are responsible. This position is taken despite our strong conviction that the mujahidīn have no connection with the crimes being perpetrated against civilians. The FIS looks forward to seeing the international commission of inquiry urgently demanding that the ruling regime remove the political cover from the generals and other military and intelligence officers who, in the view of the FIS, are behind the crimes being committed. The Islamic Salvation Front calls for an investigation of these crimes [...] while safeguarding the security and safety of the witnesses. The FIS insists on a full prosecution of the culprits, that is, those who gave the orders as well as those who executed them.⁷⁸

The FIS strongly condemned ‘all the crimes being perpetrated against civilians, especially those crimes witnessed by Algeria and Egypt’.⁷⁹ It also insisted on calling upon the international media ‘not to put the blame for these horrible crimes on Islam and Muslims’.⁸⁰ The FIS considered it to be ‘an Islamic obligation to avoid jihad operations against general and humanitarian institutions which serve the interests of the people’ and that ‘it follows the divine obligation of not harming civilians, women, children, the elderly and non-combatant foreigners’.⁸¹ Anwar Haddam’s party renewed ‘its strong condemnation of those crimes against civilians’ and called upon the world media ‘not to hurt Islam and Muslims and not to consider the criminals who are committing those criminal acts in the name of Islam to be the representatives of Islam and Muslims’.⁸²

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Addressing members of the European Parliament, Anwar Haddam, head of the FIS Parliamentary Delegation Abroad, said:

You have been successful in organising an official debate on the current tragedy of the Algerian people who are living in an ever-increasing human rights catastrophe and who are facing a genocide which the Algiers military dictatorship wants to keep behind closed doors so that its involvement is not made known to the international public opinion. The uncovering of this involvement would certainly bring to an end the unconditional support of the accomplice governments.⁸³

In a letter to the UK foreign secretary, Mr Robin Cook, the FIS declared that it was ‘still a non-violent political party believing in peaceful political process despite all the crimes committed by the regime against the people’.⁸⁴ At the moment, however, among the main concerns of the FIS is that of ‘the horrible massacres perpetrated by the regime against civilians’, which were ‘driving the Algerian society to the brink of destruction’.⁸⁵ In the same letter, the FIS underlined

the current regime’s objection to the idea of setting up an independent investigation – be it national or international – is a testimony to its desire to prolong the vicious cycle of violence it started after the coup d’état of 11 January 1992.⁸⁶

The Islamic Party pressed for the setting up of ‘a balanced, fair, competent, independent, forward-looking commission of investigation concerning all of the massacres and crimes committed against the Algerian people since the military coup’.⁸⁷ It believed that ‘only such investigation [would] bring the perpetrators as well as those who commanded them to justice, [would] break the walls of silence built by the military regime around the horrible events in Algeria, and [would] stop the ongoing bloodshed in the country’.⁸⁸ The FIS Parliamentary Delegation expressed its hopes thus:

It is our sincere hope and urgent demand to the European countries to put an immediate end to the activities of those who claimed responsibility for these horrible massacres and crimes committed against civilians in Algeria, and bring them to justice. It is our hope to see the European Union taking seriously the testimonies given by former agents of the Algerian military regime, concerning its involvement in those horrible massacres as well as other terrorist acts in Algeria and abroad. It is also our hope to see the EU monitor different Algerian embassies and their suspicious activities. Finally, we hope to see an end to any military or financial aid to the regime in power.⁸⁹

In a written address to the Rally for the support of the Algerian people, organised by the London-based Algerian Community in Britain (ACB), Anwar Haddam said:

I do thank you for your support for the cause of Algerian people at a time when many people around the world have let it down or rather there are those who are helping the oppressors financially, politically, militarily and by covering up the horrible crimes which they are committing against the people [...] The FIS project is civi-

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lisational and aims at freedom, and it is the only way which leads to the full independence of Algeria and to the self-determination of the Algerian people who are suffering under foreign domination. This project is the one which was the target of the 11 January 1992 coup d'état. That coup plunged the country in a sea of blood and tears and resulted in more than 200,000 victims [...] The FIS, based on its understanding of the teachings of Islam, renews its strong condemnation of the criminal acts and the savage massacres, and puts the absolute responsibility on the military dictatorship and its allies, inside and outside, for these horrible crimes and atrocious massacres.⁹⁰

2.3.2d. FIS Preparatory Committee Abroad

The FIS Preparatory Committee, a group founded and headed in London by Kamaredine Kharabane, said that 'the generals of the junta have impoverished the country, humiliated the people and spread corruption,' and that 'they have created militias from the mercenaries to spill blood, plunder properties, and violate honour.'⁹¹ The 'Committee' believed that 'the secret agents of the junta and members of the armed group (GIA) who are involved with them' carried out 'killing operations and collective massacres targeting women, children and elderly people', especially in the Médéa and Blida regions 'known for their support for the Islamic project'. According to the 'FIS Committee', this is done 'in an attempt to distort the image of Islam and to push people away from the religion of Allah'.⁹²

For the FIS Preparatory Committee abroad, there is no doubt that 'the cursed junta is behind the horrible crimes' and that these massacres are planned and executed to fulfil various 'interests of this junta':

We have been stricken by the recent loss of a huge number of women, children and elderly people in the struggling and bleeding Algeria who have been killed by some mad criminal gangs, mercenaries of the oppressive and obscene junta. These innocent unarmed people were slaughtered like sheep in what looked like a bloodbath. We condemn and disapprove putting the blame for the killing innocent women, children and elderly people on the mujahidīn or the Islamists in general. This can only be believed by stupid people [...] It has been well known for quite a long time now that the junta uses and hires former criminals and released prisoners to form its own special forces (Ninja) and other similar para-military gangs to carry out these horrible acts. It is also well known that the aim of committing such crimes and showing them in the media at this moment is to terrorise people and force them to participate in the referendum of the 28 November 1996, just as they did for the so-called presidential election in November last year, which was held under the threat of force of arms and the supervision of 400,000 military personnel.⁹³

The criminal operations in the form of mass killings and bombing among concentrations of innocent people are the work of the military regime, the dictator, against unarmed people who have chosen Islam as a religion and a state and have been denied the choice. We have been informed from our own sources inside Algeria that the junta is killing innocent unarmed citizens. This criminal policy has been adopted since the time of Redha Malek and these criminal operations of revenge are carried out in areas known for their sympathy and support for the Islamic solution, such as Médéa, Blida and the central areas. As mentioned by one of the farmers in

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Blida, some of these targeted areas consist of fertile agricultural lands, and there are those who want to terrorise their inhabitants and force them to migrate so that they take over the lands later on. The military regime has armed militias and used them against the people. They have carried out horrible murders and robberies, terrorised people and raped young girls. These criminals carry out their crimes wearing Islamic clothing to distort the image of jihad in Algeria. We say, as Sheikh Abbassi Madani said, that the Algerian massacres cannot be the work of humans and these cannot be linked to Islam in any way.⁹⁴

Hence, the FIS Preparatory Committee denounced the truce declared by the Islamic Salvation Army (AIS) and stated that the FIS wanted ‘peace and not surrender’:

It has undoubtedly become clear to public opinion inside and outside that the military junta in Algeria is the one who masterminds and executes the campaign of organised mass murders to exterminate the weak, poor and oppressed among the Algerian people, supporters of the Islamic project. At this time of horror when the people are in greatest need of those who will expose the real criminals and fight them with words and arrowheads, there has appeared a communiqué of surrender in which Madani Mezrag, the emir of the AIS, declared a unilateral and unconditional cease-fire. What is strange, questionable and appalling is the justification given. This justification claims to unveil to the whole world the enemy who is behind the horrible crimes and to isolate the criminals of the devious section of the GIA and the enemies of Algeria and [of our] religion who are behind them. This rhymed statement is nothing but an acquittal of the real criminals who are the generals of the military junta, a party of whom have negotiated with the AIS to publish that communiqué, even if the infiltrated armed group (GIA) claims responsibility for the massacres. This has happened according to a well-studied plan aiming at absolving the camp of the military junta⁹⁵.

The junta generals brokered this ‘truce’ by dubious secret negotiations. Yet, everyone knows that they are the instigators and perpetrators of these massacres. They managed to get Madani Mezrag to sign such a document acquitting them, the well-known criminals and mass-murderers. Millions of Algerians are ready to vouch and testify against these war criminals [...] According to this enemy, the Islamists are a bunch of drug-users, throat-cutters who enjoy disembowelling pregnant women, beheading babies and burning them, and committing all sorts of mutilation and horrors! [...] and yet, all the victims are Islamists’ families among the poor and powerless.⁹⁶

Kamaredine Kharabane, the London-based FIS Preparatory Committee president, also showed his opposition to the AIS truce when he said:

Honestly, in a few words, this truce is a coup d’état against the sheikhs (Abbassi and Benhadj) and it is surrender to the regime. It is so because it has given a chance to the Algerian regime’s army to count freely the number of the mujahidīn and their haunts and then besiege them with militias. In villages where the population refuses to carry out the plan, massacres are committed, people are armed and militias are formed.⁹⁷

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Kharabane also denied that the declaration of a truce by the AIS was in response to Abbassi's request in a letter he sent to the AIS. In the letter he accused the latter of not telling the truth:

Had the Islamic Army (AIS) avoided announcing the truce, the regime would have been forced to free the sheikhs and to conclude a real agreement with the front (FIS). Unfortunately, however, what prolongs the stay of the sheikhs in prison and prolongs the life of the conflict is this truce, to which the leadership of the secret services has gradually brought the AIS. The side which acquits the regime from committing the massacres [he meant the AIS] is the same side which sent a video tape showing the regime's massacres of the people. It is also the same side which says that the solution is to go back to the document of 1 November [1954] after it was calling for the establishment of the Islamic state. The side which can do all that can of course say that the letter of Sheikh Abbassi agrees with this truce.⁹⁸

The ACB repeatedly supported and published articles of human rights organisations, journalists and political figures calling for an independent inquiry into the massacres.⁹⁹

2.3.2e. FIS Co-ordination Council Abroad (CCFIS)

The CCFIS declared the massacres against civilians in Relizane, Algiers, Médéa and other regions 'are committed by the hands of the military junta and its henchmen militias, communal guards and other Mafia gangs, all armed and organised by the junta'.¹⁰⁰ The statement explained that 'the military junta hit in the most savage manner innocent people so as to gain the sympathy of those who gave their votes to the FIS'.¹⁰¹ According to the CCFIS, 'the responsibility of the military regime in the massacres is obvious after part of the mujahidīn troops in line with the FIS had decided on a unilateral truce more than four months ago'.¹⁰² And the goal of this truce was 'to show the Algerian people and world opinion the responsibility of the military regime as the perpetrator and instigator of these intolerable massacres'.¹⁰³

Based on their 'information from Algeria' about a massacre committed in a village in the Médéa region, the FIS in France confirmed, 'the militias of the junta (self-defence groups) are the perpetrators of this odious crime'.¹⁰⁴ It explained that 'the victims paid the price for their decision to boycott the masquerade of the referendum on the constitution, as it was the case of other regions affected by explosions or massacres, regions known for their support for the mujahidīn'.¹⁰⁵ The FIS denounced 'with utmost firmness this kind of cowardly aggression targeting innocent people', and defied 'the fascist regime' to authorise an 'independent commission of inquiry to go out there so as to shed full light on these crimes'.¹⁰⁶ To support its allegations that the Algerian authorities were responsible for the massacres, the FIS asked:

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If it is not the junta and its accomplices, who else then can be behind the attempts at the genocide of the Algerian people? Why are these attacks carried out in districts or villages known for their moral support for the resistance? Who has the means to carry out attacks with extremely large quantities of explosives? Who kills innocent people in the darkness of the prisons and in the villages far from all surveillance?¹⁰⁷

According to the FIS: 'The reality is that the militias of the junta were the ones who committed the butchery of Ktiten (Médéa). Thirty-one victims of two large families (Boukhatem and Hilali) known for their piety and their sympathy for the Islamic project, were savagely executed without sparing even the babies.'¹⁰⁸ It noted 'the helplessness of the junta in dominating the security situation and controlling the militias who impose their own laws and commit with impunity massacres of innocent villagers'; 'it is a state within a state', the FIS declared.¹⁰⁹ It also stated:

We denounce very firmly the collective massacres inflicted on innocent people. We also confirm that the regime and its repressive machine (army, police forces, militias and their allies composed of organised gangs and the *Hijra wa Takfir* group) are behind these criminal acts. These massacres are committed just before a new electoral masquerade and represent an 'electoral cleaning' in the regions which have not bowed down to the junta and have refused to integrate the militias.¹¹⁰

Abdelwahed Boughanem, the FIS representative in Denmark and one of the members of the CCFIS executive bureau said that 'the tragedy in Algeria is not internal' and that the international community 'should stir itself and send a commission of inquiry to uncover the real culprits behind the massacres, the blame for which is being unjustly and continuously put on the Islamic groups'.¹¹¹ Boughanem explained that 'almost all the car bombs and massacres were committed in poor neighbourhoods sympathising with the FIS', which makes it 'really strange to believe that the accused Islamists would commit such acts and block the road to their own selves'.¹¹² The FIS representative expressed his willingness to 'present information to the Scandinavian members of parliaments, showing that the security forces were the ones who committed these massacres'.¹¹³

For his part, CCFIS President Ahmed Zaoui said 'the Algerian regime wants surrender rather than peace, and wants the so-called Clemency law. But the FIS rejects that'.¹¹⁴ Zaoui stated that the Algerian state was 'an emergency authority that has lost control', and that it was 'responsible for the tragedy'.¹¹⁵ The CCFIS leader said that the FIS reminds the world opinion of their 'call for allowing an international committee to investigate the massacres being perpetrated in the regions of Algeria which voted for the FIS'.¹¹⁶ In a communiqué published about a month before the parliamentary elections of June 1997, the CCFIS declared:

Whenever the date of an electoral masquerade draws near in Algeria, terror gains the field. The most shocking aspect of this phenomenon is that the victims of this institutionalised terrorism are women and children... We put the responsibility for these

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Responses of the Islamic Movements

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massacres on the shoulders of the putchists, those who support them as well as those who remain silent. We ask the international humanitarian organisations to send urgently a commission of inquiry in order to establish and publicise those responsible for these crimes. We express our condemnation of these inhuman acts which affect innocent civilians exclusively.¹¹⁷

Following the appeal of Kofi Annan for violence to cease in Algeria, and Abbassi Madani's supportive response to it, the leader was summoned by the interior ministry to stop all public statements. The FAF then declared:

We challenge the regime, since it is certain of its version of the events, to authorise independent commissions to inquire into the massacres. Yesterday, this same regime asked for a UN technical mission to legitimise the joke of the legislative elections (he did not shout about the interference then!). Today, however, the regime panics at the least rational declaration from the UN secretary-general.¹¹⁸

The CCFIS stated that the massacres 'are irrefutable evidence of the murderous and destructive nature of the gang constituting the criminal junta' and that the Algerian regime 'has attempted to subdue the so-called outlaws, including women and babies', using 'the same policy since independence, but only with a tendency to aggravation'.

These massacres are part of the serial mass slaughters, like those of Serkadji and Berouaghia prisons and other areas. They aim at eliminating citizens from the masses as well as from the elite. Otherwise, how can one admit that others than the generals or their agents – militias, the communal guards and the remnants of the mercenary 'Armed Islamic Groups' affiliated with the intelligence services – can be behind massacres of such atrocity and occurring in areas full of military barracks of various army units without their intervention to protect the unarmed people who live near these barracks. These massacres constitute another conspiracy to eradicate families from working-class districts who voted for the FIS, and to spread terror in the ranks of undecided people in preparation for the next electoral masquerade.¹¹⁹

The CCFIS also said that the FIS had not stopped 'campaigning for a peaceful solution to the crisis since the January 1992 coup d'état', and that it would continue 'to advocate a peaceful solution that will restore authority to the people and end dictatorship', despite 'the killing-machine of the blood-thirsty military regime that has done everything to plunge the country into this war'.¹²⁰ However, the CCFIS believes that there are minimal conditions for an effective solution to the crisis which shakes Algeria. These are:

The release of Sheikhs Abassi Madani and Ali Benhadj without any condition or constraint, with the possibility that they can meet the political members of the FIS and its operational leadership. Possibility for the FIS to carry out its political activity freely and for the Algerian people to determine their future freely. Permission for an independent international commission to inquire into the massacres. Permission for the non-governmental organisations to investigate the human rights abuses. The bringing to trial of those responsible for the military coup d'état and the massacres with the payment of compensation to the victims of oppression.¹²¹

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The CCFIS reiterated its demand to send an international commission of inquiry and informed world public opinion that it would ‘file a complaint on behalf of the families of the victims to the International Court of Justice in the Hague against the perpetrators and instigators of these massacres’.¹²² The CCFIS asked the combat troops who were engaged in discussions with Algiers’ generals ‘to freeze their contacts and negotiations now until three vital and fundamental conditions are fulfilled’.¹²³ One of these conditions was that the Algerian regime ‘should allow an international commission of inquiry, as well as an independent national commission of inquiry known world-wide to shed all possible light on the massacres being committed for so many long months’.¹²⁴

3. Responses of the Islamic Insurgent Organisations

3.1. Islamic Salvation Army (AIS)

3.1.1. The Organisation

The Islamic Salvation Army, *Al Jaysb Al Islami lil Inqath* (in French *Armée Islamique du Salut – AIS*) was founded in 1994 in the east of Algeria under the command of Madani Mezrag who was later appointed as the interim national leader of the AIS in March 1995. Its regional commander in the west of Algeria is Ahmed Benaïcha. The movement is considered to be the armed wing of the FIS; it is known for its declarations attacking only security and military targets, denouncing the killing of innocent civilians, and following the line of the FIS under the leadership of Abbassi Madani and Ali Benhadj. The movement has been attacked by the GIA and it is said by the media that clashes often occur between the two groups. During 1997, talks between generals in the Algerian army and leaders of the AIS resulted later in the year (October) in the announcement by the AIS of a unilateral truce.

3.1.2. Group Reactions

The AIS leader, Madani Mezrag, in an appeal to the ‘Algerian Muslim people’ and to the ‘whole world’, declared:

the innocence of the AIS in all the suspicious operations targeting innocent unarmed men, women and children [and that the AIS would] continue the fight with all its strength according to the teachings of jihad and the good manners of an honourable war until Islam’s place in the country, Algeria’s peace and stability and the people’s rights and choice are all re-established.¹²⁵

In the same call, he reaffirmed the loyalty of the AIS ‘to the Sheikhs of the FIS and to the decisions they make’, and expressed the willingness of the AIS ‘to back any chance or effort to support the religion [of Islam], salvage

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the country and eliminate oppression of the people'. Mezrag also called upon the mujahidīn who had left the GIA to join the ranks of his troops, and clearly accused the state of being behind the crimes against the people:

Mujahidīn, after you have realised the soundness of our concept, the accuracy of our views and the validity of our ideas from the traumas and deviations the jihad movement has witnessed, [you must remember that] behind these shocks and deviations was a small band of contemptuous youths controlled by suspicious intelligence circles, [namely] the eradicator movement of mercenaries and the group of opportunistic interests. The aim of all these groups is to bury jihad, give a bad image about the religion, divide the nation and destroy the country. When all this has become clear to you... you should hold fast to the teachings of Islam and carry on the struggle united under the banner of truth, the banner of the AIS within the frame of the FIS under the leadership of the Sheikhs Abbassi Madani and Ali Benhadj.

As for you, eradicators, murderers, criminals, traitors and deceivers, you who entertain your sick selves with the illusion of eradicating terrorism, of which you make the most with your hands, and the remainder of it with the hands of your mercenaries in the strayed armed groups, we tell you: We are honourable enough not to tarnish our jihad with those dubious terrorist operations which target the religion, the people and the country. We are also smart enough not to be pushed into following irresponsible policies which plunge the nation into a conflict that the enemies of Islam and Algeria await patiently.¹²⁶

Ahmed Benaicha, the AIS Regional Commander, western Algeria, also issued an open letter to 'all mujahidīn units' advising them to walk away from the 'Islamic Armed Group (GIA)':

Praise be to Allah. Today, and after your long journey in the organisation of the GIA, you have come to know what we have always been afraid of in terms of uncertainties. You have come to attest to yourselves and to us the well-founded reason why we have insisted on preserving the historical leadership of the Islamic Salvation Front and its concept of the right methods for change in Algeria. Your position today is a historical stand for correcting the path of jihad in Algeria – A jihad which will be witnessed by all Muslims as that of honesty, uprightness and courage. We hope you will become a good example to all those sincere and faithful mujahidīn who may still be in the GIA, so that the power of jihad will be strengthened and all obstacles and difficulties eliminated. All that [is necessary] for jihad in Algeria to stand firm against the ruling dictatorship and to achieve for our people [the project of] what they have chosen [Islam].¹²⁷

The AIS claimed that, contrary to what was said in the media, the massacres of civilians in the Médéa region were not 'internal settlements within the Islamic ranks among the supporters of the Islamic Salvation Army (AIS) and the Armed Islamic Group (GIA)'.¹²⁸ It supported this by declaring 'its innocence of these criminal acts which target innocent people' and explaining that 'the massacres targeting citizens in the Médéa region were not operations between the Islamists but were rather the work of militias which the regime armed under the claim of self-defence'.¹²⁹ The AIS condemned 'these massacres which target civilians', reiterated that it had 'no relation with what is happening in that region', and put 'full responsibility on the terrorist mili-

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tary authority for the crimes of those it had armed under the cover of self-defence or under other names'.¹³⁰ The AIS also asked the Algerian people to be careful about 'these misguiding claims and flagrant lies'.¹³¹

In spite of the horrendous crimes they commit, the renegades of the military institution keep pointing the finger at the jihād organisations which they label as terrorists. It is known that terrorist organisations use all means, even illicit ones, to achieve their political aims, according to the Machiavellian pretext of the end justifying the means. This justification contradicts Islamic law which states that a legitimate objective can be reached only by legitimate means, according to the principle 'That which has been built on a wrong basis is still wrong.' As a consequence, the Army of Islamic Salvation (AIS) disapproves of all terrorists acts, which affect innocent citizens who do not take part in the war against the mujahidīn. Allah says in the Qurān (53:38-39): 'That no laden one shall bear another one's load, and that man only has that for which he makes effort'. Caliph Abu Bakr Seddiq had ordered the Muslim army: 'Do not kill any woman, child or elderly person. Do not cut down fruit trees nor burn palm trees. Do not destroy buildings. Do not slaughter sheep or cut the shins of camels unless you need the food.' Some Western states receive threats from armed groups, instigated by the intelligence services, to secure more political, financial and military support for the junta. Consequently, the AIS disapproves of any terrorist act against the security of the people who have nothing to do with the crimes committed by the regime of the Putsch.¹³²

The FIS armed wing believes that 'the regime and its militias from the wretched bandits carry out massacres of unarmed innocent people and accuse the mujahidīn'. According to them, 'the dogs of the regime (the municipal guards)' use the cover of 'presenting the mujahidīn as fierce criminals and enemies of the people to commit their daily horrible crimes'.¹³³

Late in 1997, the Islamic Salvation Army (AIS) declared a unilateral truce.¹³⁴ In his declaration, AIS national commander Madani Mezrag stated that 'the Algerian authorities had taken the first steps towards the solution by releasing the FIS leader, Abbassi Madani'.

This *détente* prompted the enemies of yesterday and today to manipulate their pawns scattered here and there in order to fan the flames of discord among the sons of the Algerian people and foil any plan that could bolster the country and motivate the citizens. These pawns resorted to a blind and fierce revenge against the people by killing unarmed men, women, children and babies in an abominable carnage of extreme barbarity, rarely seen in modern human history, which reminds us of the terror witnessed by the country in the wake of independence.¹³⁵

Mezrag ordered 'all chiefs of the jihad groups fighting under his command to stop combat operations from 1 October 1997'.¹³⁶ He explained that the reason for this move was 'to foil the plans of those who are waiting for the opportunity to harm Algeria' and to 'give a chance to the honest sons of this beloved country (Algeria) to find a just solution'.¹³⁷ The AIS emir also called upon other groups 'caring about the interests of the religion and the nation' to rally to his appeal 'in order to expose to the whole world the en-

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emy hiding behind the horrible massacres, and to isolate the criminal remnants of the perverse GIA extremists and those who hide behind them'.¹³⁸

Ahmed Benaïcha considered that the unilateral truce declared by the AIS in October 1997 'has brought back hope to the people because of the near return of peace to the country, and has shown that the Algerians are capable of finding themselves solutions to their problems'.¹³⁹ He also considered that the truce 'has deepened the credibility of the AIS and its ability to defend sincerely the choices of the nation, and has unveiled the real criminals in the country since the 1991 coup'.¹⁴⁰ The AIS emir believed that those who were behind the massacres [committed in Relizane], 'regardless of names and titles, [were] the enemies of the victories which the Algerian Muslim people achieved in the 1991 parliamentary elections'.¹⁴¹ Further in the emir's opinion, they were also 'the enemies of peace which has become the demand of all the good people inside and outside Algeria'.¹⁴² However, he declined to accuse the Algerian army directly, and said that 'through this truce', the AIS aimed at 'reaching the unknown truth in this conflict which would be uncovered by time'.¹⁴³ Benaïcha explained that the negotiations between the AIS and the authorities were related to security matters and that 'this was only a step within a general strategy to solve the conflict, starting with stopping the bloodshed first and then following it up with other aspects at later stages'.¹⁴⁴ As for solving the conflict in the future, the AIS foresaw the solution in 'referring back to the first November [1954] document which united the Algerians in similar circumstances'.¹⁴⁵

3.2. Islamic League for Preaching and Jihad (LIDD)

3.2.1. The Organisation

The Islamic League for Preaching and Jihad (known by its French acronym Ligue Islamique de la Da'wa et du Jihād (LIDD) or, in its original Arabic, *ar-Rabīta Al Islamiya li Da'wa wal Jihād*, was officially created in February 1997. It represents a union of some of the guerrilla factions which left the GIA, mainly the *Wafa'* battalion of Médéa and the Islamic Front of the Armed Jihād (FIDA) of Algiers. Both groups were the first to denounce the GIA and to announce their withdrawal from it late in 1995. The LIDD chief is Ali Benhjar, one of the elected FIS members in the [cancelled] 1991 general elections. The LIDD seems to be close to the AIS and has joined the truce declared by the latter in September 1997. The League describes itself as being 'the fruit of the struggle of the Algerian nation in all its forms (preaching, political work and armed jihād)', and says that it is 'loyal to the honest FIS and its leaders Abbassi, Benhadj and Mohammed Said'.¹⁴⁶

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3.2.2. Group Reactions

The LIDD appealed to the youth who were still within the ranks of the Islamic Armed Group (GIA) to ‘repent to their Lord and keep off the wrong path they are following’ because ‘the massacres of the people, which they are perpetrating are far from the teachings of Islam’.¹⁴⁷ The LIDD explained, ‘These acts are but the work of secret agents and “the *kbawarij*” (the GIA) who kill the believers and spare the unbelievers.’

We show to the free men in the world that our struggle (jihād) is a right, not a terrorism as propagandised by the arrogant world powers and their puppets – the tyrants – who are governing our land. The military regime in Algeria, who carried out the coup in 1991, is today exterminating, crushing and terrorising the entire population. This regime is also making people hungry, ignorant and poor. You the wise and sensible people of the world, how can people who stand up to fight this oppression be described as terrorists?¹⁴⁸

The LIDD claimed that by using the media, ‘the eradicators in the army and the administration (the Franco-communists)’ do their best to ‘distort the image of Islam and make it appear as a religion of violence and blood, and portray Muslims as bloodthirsty people’.¹⁴⁹ To ‘remind the people about the work of these eradicators’, the Islamic League asked the questions:

Who killed the innocent people in October 1988? Who gave the orders to kill peaceful citizens who were occupying different squares of the capital in June 1991? Who carried out the coup against the free will of the people when it chose Islam on 11 January 1992? Who put the best of the nation’s children in the Sahara concentration camps and in the darkness of the prisons? Who was behind the kidnapping and the killing of thousands of peaceful citizens in early 1994? Who engineered the massacres in the Berouaguia and Serkadji prisons?

Whoever committed all those crimes is today perpetrating these massacres of the unarmed people. The innocent victims are paying the price of conflicts between different wings within the generals’ army.¹⁵⁰

To support its claim that these ‘eradicators’ are behind the massacres, the League stated further:

The massacres being perpetrated by the eradicators are occurring in poor and oppressed popular districts known for their backing of the FIS and jihad. These crimes are also committed in hamlets, villages and districts where inhabitants refused to take up arms, in surroundings where families of sincere mujahidīn live and in lands and regions which they desire – maybe for being the useful Algeria as is the case of the Sahara, the land of oil fields – [...] We call upon the Islamic nation, the free people of the world and the international community to support the Algerian people in its tragedy because it is facing a real genocide.¹⁵¹

The LIDD Commander, Ali Benhjar, said that their declared truce was not ‘a surrender’ but was rather ‘a cease-fire to allow “worthwhile efforts” to be made to look for a just and global solution to the conflict’, a solution

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which ‘does not contradict the religion’.¹⁵² The truce was also meant to ‘unveil those who are perpetrating crimes against unarmed people, either in the name of Islam or under banners of evil, those who want this situation to persist so as to protect and keep their interests and privileges’.¹⁵³ For the ‘Islamic League’, however, the identity of the perpetrators was unambiguous:

The nation knows who the criminal are, who killed peaceful and unarmed people in the avenues and squares of the cities, and knows who the bloodthirsty culprits are, who attack homes at night and kidnap innocent people to kill them and dump their bodies on the roads. The nation also knows who are committing the massacres: on one occasion it is the traitors (communal guards) and militias, and on another occasion it is the secret apparatus of the junta, known by the name of ‘GIA’ who have killed hundreds of the best children of this nation. Also well known to our people is the party which is eager to cling to power. Could they be traitors – the generals – who were behind the sinister coup of 1991 and who repudiated the people’s will? Or could they be the elected children and the faithful men whom the nation trusted and to whom it gave the responsibility of running the country?¹⁵⁴

The LIDD believed that it was the Algerian authorities who ‘internationalised the Algerian case’ by ‘seeking support all over the world’ and not Abbassi Madani who declared to the UN secretary-general that he was ready to announce a truce if ‘the authorities agreed to UN supervision to avoid a betrayal as was the case in June 1991’.¹⁵⁵ For the LIDD, the ‘panic of the Algerian authorities as a result of Abbassi’s letter to Kofi Annan was obvious because they feared that the secrecy imposed on their criminal acts would go out of the usual control. These crimes against which the whole world, young and old, shouted could not be accepted by anyone with an atom of belief in his heart’.¹⁵⁶ Hence, the League pointed the finger of accusation at ‘many of the eradicators in the regime who should be tried internationally as war criminals, as were the Nazi criminals and the Serb leaders, for their barbaric massacres and savage crimes’.¹⁵⁷ It also declared that they, the AIS and the other groups who broke away from ‘the deviant group (GIA)’, ‘do not oppose the coming of the international media and the national and an international commission of inquiry’, and asked: ‘Why, then, do these oppressors (in power) fear the coming of those organisations and why do they fear them knowing the truth?’¹⁵⁸

To understand the ‘truth about the massacres in Algeria’, the LIDD holds the view that one should go back to the early years of the crisis when

the junta secret services adopted a terrible bloodthirsty strategy (which they learned from the Egyptian and Syrian intelligent services) in which they kidnap peaceful citizens from their homes during the night, from the streets and their workplaces or even from the police stations, take them to secret detention camps and torture them to death. The bloodthirsty agents of the secret services have also turned the city squares into exhibition places where the products on show are the dead bodies of the groups of innocent people whom they have killed.¹⁵⁹

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At a later stage, ‘when this psychological strategy of terror failed,’ the secret services changed, according to the LIDD, to new methods based on ‘controlling and using the leadership of the GIA (already infiltrated by them from its creation)’.¹⁶⁰ For the LIDD, the aim of this new strategy was ‘uncovered in some of their declarations, for example that they “would push the terrorists to commit the most ugly crimes” and that “the mountains would become graveyards”’.¹⁶¹ The account goes on to say that this ‘criminal plan indeed started to be implemented by the security services’ agents after they took control of the GIA leadership [...] [They] killed the sincere jihad leaders and innocent people’.¹⁶² The LIDD claims that, in response, ‘the sincere and faithful mujahidīn (especially in Algiers, Médéa, Kasr-El-Boukhari, Khemis Meliana, Larbaa, Tablat and El-Afroun)’ tried unsuccessfully to contain the ‘effects of this infiltration’.¹⁶³ Hence, according to the LIDD, these ‘mujahidīn had no choice but to dissociate themselves from the GIA of the secret services’.¹⁶⁴ The *Wafa*’ battalion (Médéa) and the FIDA (Algiers) then created the LIDD and called upon all the other battalions to join them, according to the insurgent group’s account of its own genesis. The LIDD is of the view that this reorganisation provided the reason for further atrocities.

the GIA of the secret services found a new excuse for a cowardly revenge by committing these horrible massacres which target mainly families of the mujahidīn who had left the GIA as well as the people who sympathise with those mujahidīn, in addition to the FIS members. These massacres then spread to hit the population as a whole, and the excuses for such killings are numerous and versatile as far as the GIA of the secret services is concerned. Hence, the most horrible crimes have been committed against the people, and the declared terrorist plan has been executed as promised.¹⁶⁵

The LIDD further added that there was ‘another way in which the junta oppressors contribute to committing these massacres. It is by complicity with the GIA of the secret services at the highest level’:

They prepare the way and make the work easy for them by preventing the soldiers from going out during the time of the massacre – as in Blida where massacres are being perpetrated in the heart of areas surrounded by a large number of military barracks –, or by moving the soldiers from the targeted area one or two days before the massacre – as was the case of the Ktitan district of Médéa.¹⁶⁶

The Islamic League listed a series of ‘crimes instigated by the junta and executed by the army, the communal guards and the militias’:

The militias survive by creating bloodbaths and by robbing homes and shops at night. They do not differ at all from the GIA for they are two faces of the same coin, and two heads of the same beast, which is the junta. By creating these militias, the junta oppressors are plunging the nation into a ruinous civil war which is destroying the country and eliminating the people. They are exterminating the nation with these savage massacres and are fighting Allah by distorting Islam and presenting it as a religion of massacres and butchery, a religion of rape, cowardliness and

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oppression and a religion of darkness and decline! [...] History will not forgive the Algerian junta for the crimes it is committing against Islam and Muslims.¹⁶⁷

3.3. Other Insurgent Organisations

At the beginning of 1996, after the murder of Sheikh Mohammed Said and many other FIS leaders by the GIA, the battalions of Médéa and FIDA (Algiers) issued statements denouncing the GIA leadership headed by Djamel Zitouni and announcing their separation from that group. Soon afterwards, many other insurgent groups (also under the command of Zitouni at that time) followed suit and issued similar communiqués of renunciation, in which they all denounced the crimes being committed in Algeria, including the massacres. They, too, distanced themselves from the GIA, which they regarded as a criminal gang controlled by the regime's secret services. Unlike the LIDD, the positions of these groups vis-a-vis the FIS and its leaders is not fully clear.

Of these groups we mention only a few, based on the available communiqués and declarations, including some of their relevant statements. What follows are translated extracts from their declarations.

3.3.1. *The Armed Islamic Group of the Second Region*

The nation has lately been subjected to many massacres in which old and young, man and woman, have equally been executed [...] We believe that it is from being honest with Allah and with people we recognise that a faction of the mujahidīn who have gone astray [in their methods] bear part of the responsibility for what has happened to the nation [...] We declare to all the mujahidīn and to the children of the nation our innocence of all the unlawful and irresponsible acts and of any killing or harm (be it moral or physical) which has hit the children of this nation without a reason.¹⁶⁸

I am really amazed at the world's recent attention to this, knowing that the phenomenon is quite old. The one who started these despicable deeds is the regime, which is willing to sacrifice the majority of the Algerian people for the sake of staying in power. It is this regime which has committed the massacres in Cherarba in 1994, in which 70 people were killed in a single night, and killed many other people in the Eucalyptus and Ben Zerga districts and other regions of the country, let alone the murders this regime committed in October 1988 and July 1991. This does not mean that we exempt the group of Antar Zouabri from these crimes which are being committed now. He himself claimed responsibility for these criminal acts in a communiqué he issued under the title *Preventing Evil from Possessing Islam*.¹⁶⁹

3.3.2. *The Faithful to the Covenant Movement (Al-Baqūn 'ala-l-'Abd)*

It has been brought to the attention of the mujahidīn that successive criminal acts have been aimed at sections of the population known to be supporting them. Hence, within a month, more than two hundred innocent people, mostly women and children, were killed. The movement never hesitated to declare before Allah

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their innocence from these crimes [...] We again, and emphatically, renew our oath to fight those factions who are committing these crimes and claiming these atrocities are supported by *fatwas* in their newsletters to justify maliciously the killing of women and children [...] It is now well known to the people, in general, and to the mujahidīn in particular, that the schismatic *khawarij* and excommunication groups are infiltrated by the junta secret services who are manipulating these groups according to plans they have devised to hit the mujahidīn's noble combat (jihad) from within, and this is by disgracing them in the eyes of the public, the scholars and the callers for this religion [...] Incidentally, these massacres occur in the regions of Blida and Médéa known for the heavy concentration of the junta troops. While the areas of the real mujahidīn are subjected to the unceasing air raids of the junta, the *Khawarij* (GIA) regions have not been targeted by the junta raids for over a year [since early 1995]. This is substantial proof of the existing relationship between the GIA and the junta secret services that maintain them and use them according to their plan to hit the jihad at the roots.¹⁷⁰

After the successive defeats inflicted on the soldiers of the military government and the increasing desertions by members of the army and police, the secret services changed to using the old colonial methods by putting pressure on the unarmed people who are still backing their brothers. Their strategy is meant to force people to take up arms to face the mujahidīn and plunge the country into a civil war. This is done in co-operation with the militias led by Mohamed Cherif Abbas and the special squad of the military intelligent services led by general Ismail Lamari. When the people refused this thesis, the renegade junta started these barbaric massacres with the aim of terrorising people to limit their support for the mujahidīn and force them to take up arms. Their terror is designed to ultimately distort the image of the Islamic movement by causing unrest within the jihad movement [...] We want, therefore, to show to world public opinion that most of the victims of these barbaric crimes are families of the mujahidīn in either the centre or the west of the country. Whereas the criminal military government fears any international inquiry, our movement welcomes an investigation into these massacres including the butchery of Benzerga (Bordj-El-Kifan), Médéa, Larbaa, Chebli, Rais, Ben Aknoun, Sidi Kebir (Blida), Bainem, Tiaret, Saida, and recently the Relizane massacres. We also welcome an inquiry into the mass murders in the prisons of Serkadji and Berouaguia, and the various torture techniques. Finally, we remind all the states who believe in freedom and the principles of human rights, that any support for the military regime will be considered to be an encouragement and assistance to this regime to carry on with the massacres it is committing today.¹⁷¹

3.3.3. *Al-Muhajirūn – Central Region*

The group of hypocrites and regime's agents who could infiltrate the GIA and control its leadership justified the killing of Muslims for the committing misdemeanours such as smoking etc. They kill voters, women, children, students and the families of the mujahidīn who broke away from them. They also commit crimes which target a whole Muslim people by resorting to slaughter and indiscriminate bomb attacks. These acts are but clear proof that they are the work of the secret services, the enemies of Islam and sons of the crusaders, who managed to plan a strategy, implement it very efficiently and hence take revenge on this Muslim nation which does not accept any religion other than Islam. What helped them execute their plan is the ignorance of the mujahidīn and their blind trust in this cunning leadership. We renounce these criminal acts which are against Islam and Muslims and are committed by the

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group of the ignorant Antar Zouabri. We reassure the people of this region that we do our best to protect them and their properties.¹⁷²

We denounce the crimes perpetrated by the enemies of Allah, Islam and Muslims, who kill innocent women, children and the elderly. Their aim behind these crimes is to mislead people, distort the image of Islam and bring down the banner of jihad by attributing these satanic acts to the mujahidīn.¹⁷³

3.3.4. Ar-Rahmān Battalion (Larbaa)

Not long ago, the freedom, the will and the choice by the Algerian Muslim people of its Islamic project were repudiated by means of violence, force and betrayal. Today, as the Algerian people wants to reclaim its repudiated rights by the lawful means of jihad, the renegades of the junta, who have declared war against the religion of the Lord of the worlds, attempt to distort the image of the people's jihad and principles, using various methods, such as the barbaric and horrific massacres of the people never before witnessed in history, and their unjust, aggressive raping and robbing by an evil gang controlled by criminal elements fearing for their interests and privileges.¹⁷⁴

3.3.5. Movement for the Islamic State

Our movement is today convinced that the GIA leadership is infiltrated by the evil secret services, and we have clear evidence that their commander Abu Abderrahman Amine (Djamel Zitouni) collaborates with the vicious secret agents. Copies of the documents obtained by the movement have been given to some of the commanders of the GIA from those who have declared their revolt against this corrupt leadership which has permitted adultery and the murder of the nursing and pregnant mothers.¹⁷⁵

3.3.6. Al-Furqān (Cblef) and Al-Itissam (Relizane) Battalions

We declare to Allah our innocence of the unlawful acts which have been committed against the Muslim nation and which have been used by the renegade junta in a media campaign to plunge the people into a war against Allah and his messenger by taking arms against the mujahidīn. Of these crimes we mention: putting car bombs in public places, indiscriminate murder of young travellers, firemen and workers of the oil industry, and issuing unlawful fatwas such as those calling for the killing of those who do not perform the ritual prayers.¹⁷⁶

3.3.7. Protectors of the Salafī Call Group

The GIA's methodology has deviated from the right path, its banner has become blind and its leadership has been taken over by children, fools and people out for punishment and trouble [...] We were the first group to refuse injustice and submission and leave this devious gang, the nest of the secret agents and 'innovators'. We declare to Allah our innocence of all that has been committed and is being commit-

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ted by the GIA: the killing of mujahidīn, the oppression of believers and the indiscriminate murder of people without rhyme or reason.¹⁷⁷

3.3.8. *Other Insurgent Groups*

During 1996, the battalions of Al-Afroun, *Ar-Rabaniya* (Djabal Al-Louh), *Al-Khadra* (Kasr-El-Boukhari), *Al-Fat'h* (Al-Djelfa), *Al-Wafa'* (Bousaada), 'The Signatories with Blood' (Blida), Revenge (El-Amaria) and Tablat, have all issued similar communiqués of renunciation,¹⁷⁸ the general meaning of which can be summarised in the following three points:

- The GIA leadership has been taken over by a small unknown group holding the belief of *Hijra and Takfir* (belonging to the *khawarij* group) known for their deviation from the right path and for their excesses in religion. This group is controlled by the Algerian regime's secret services, who helped them to take over the GIA leadership by infiltration.
- This corrupt GIA leadership began by 'cleansing' the jihad by killing a large number of its members and then moving on to killing and robbing innocent people and burning their possessions. They call for those crimes by issuing criminal communiqués such as those calling for the killing of AIS members, other groups who separated from them, workers in the oil companies and young people travelling between cities (for military service). They also issue *fatwas* in which they permit murder of women and children, and carry out indiscriminate bomb attacks in public places.
- All of these groups have declared their innocence of the above crimes and have announced their departure from and revolt against this corrupt GIA.

4. Summary and Observations

The reactions of the Algerian Islamic political parties are summarised in Tables 4.1 to 4.7. Summaries of the Islamic Insurgent Organisations are given in Tables 4.8 to 4.10. These recapitulate the speeches of the political parties and fighting groups about the massacres, the victims, the perpetrators and the commission of inquiry. The following observations can be made from these reports:

Society's Movement for Peace - HMS (Table 4.1)

The discourse of this Islamic party comes out as nationalistic rather than Islamic per se. It is clear that for Mahfoud Nahnah's party the massacres are indeed a phenomenon of savage and barbaric criminal acts caused by in-

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fighting within the armed groups who have resorted to such behaviour to punish and exterminate the Algerian population. Moreover, according to the HMS, the killers committing these massacres are well known. They are the GIA terrorists and not the authorities or the security forces. The involvement of what the HMS calls the 'Mafia' is regarded simply as a side effect of the main crimes. As for the victims of the massacres, the HMS seldom refers to them in its statements. Meanwhile, the HMS categorically rejects any form of inquiry, a position which sits well with the patriotic line followed by his party.

To sum up, the HMS reaction to the massacres is no more than a discourse aiming to secure some political gains, while showing no pressing concern with the very dangerous phenomena of the massacres and empathy with the victims. In fact, in contrast with its attitude towards the massacres, this party seems rather more concerned about the elections and their results:

In a very horrible criminal way, the hand of forgery has been extended to carry out a horrendous massacre of thousands of the electoral votes, especially in Greater Algiers, where excessive and barbaric rigging in terrifying forms was witnessed [...] We therefore request the opening of an inquiry into this rigging which strengthens administrative terrorism.¹⁷⁹

At the time, in the October 1997 local elections, Mr Nahnah called on the 'international' community to 'support the HMS initiative for setting up of an independent commission to examine the irregularities in the elections'.¹⁸⁰

This reaction suggests the existence of a flaw or a double standard in the HMS leader's discourse. He is quoted in the previous pages as opposing an 'international' commission of inquiry into the massacres of innocent citizens, but now it seems that, in his view, a commonplace electoral fraud does warrant international interference. Mr Nahnah's attitude clearly suggests that a poll rigging exercise by the authorities is more worthy of international attention than the large-scale murders of innocent civilians. Moreover, whilst Nahnah reacted strongly against the fiddling with the polls, history recorded that not only did he not oppose the illegal cancelling of the December 1991 legislative elections the FIS was poised to win, but he also went along with the generals who led the military coup, the same generals he now indirectly accused of rigging the polls.

Renaissance Movement - Nahda (Table 4.2)

Only limited material was available with regard to this movement. Based on these, it may be said that the party's position towards the massacres is balanced compared with that of the other legal party, the HMS. While rejecting the thesis that the Algerian regime or the FIS is behind the massacres, it contends that an unknown side has a role in the Algerian conflict, within the opposition armed groups or elsewhere. This uncommitted view of the per-

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petrators is consistent with the movement's position with respect to the issue of an independent inquiry. The party rejects an international inquiry, preferring to call for a national parliamentary one instead.

FIS Inside Algeria (Table 4.3)

The FIS regards the massacres as horrible crimes against humanity, targeting the Algerian people, the FIS supporters and those refusing to take up arms. The party categorically denies both its own involvement and that of Islamists in general, in the massacres. Although it blames the GIA and some extremist factions within the military regime for the massacres, it believes that an inquiry is not possible as long as violence is a potential option. The FIS inside Algeria, however, condemns the authorities' rejection of an independent investigation and calls on the West to put pressure on them for dialogue and negotiations.

FIS Abroad (Tables 4.4 to 4.7)

The FIS abroad, which obviously has more freedom to express its views than its leaders inside Algeria, describes the massacres as horrible and barbaric crimes, organised mass butchery, or as the work of institutionalised terrorism. The identities of both the killers and the targets appear to be clear in the mind of the FIS representatives abroad. They have no doubt that the victims of the massacres are innocent, isolated and unarmed people, in particular women, children and the elderly. The majority of these people are supporters of the FIS and sympathisers of the Islamic project. They are also related to the Islamists and those close to the genuine insurgents – as opposed to those controlled by the secret services – according to the latter. These respondents also all agree that the perpetrators of the massacres are the regime's security forces and secret services, its militias and the infiltrated GIA of Djamel Zitouni and Antar Zouabri. However, the FIS executive body places a little more emphasis on the latter group especially after the AIS declaration of a truce. FIS organisations abroad have all demanded the setting up of an independent commission of inquiry into the massacres, be it national or international. The reaction of the FIS-Abroad, therefore, is in general unambiguous and its reactions to the mass killings indicate that the FIS believes that the massacres are but a tool in the regime's war-strategy against the Islamic project in general, and the FIS in particular.

The Islamic Insurgent Organisations (Tables 4.8 to 4.10)

These tables summarise the responses of the Islamic insurgent groups to the massacres. It appears from these accounts that the insurgents see the massacres as abominable criminal acts of extreme barbarity. They regard these crimes as terrorist acts and genocide, in that they target innocent unarmed people (including women, children and babies), those refusing to take

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up arms, FIS members and their supporters, and families and sympathisers of the genuine guerrillas.

Regarding the identity of the perpetrators, these groups clearly indicate that the eradicators in the military regime were behind the massacres, using their secret agents, militias, municipal guards and the infiltrated and manipulated Zouabri's gang the GIA. After the AIS had declared a unilateral truce, however, its stand has been less clear. This leads to the conclusion that the change in the AIS reaction may be connected with what the truce conceals in the way of agreements with the generals of the same military regime that the AIS had blamed for the massacres before the truce.

As far as the investigation into the massacres is concerned, the Islamic opposition groups do not reject or oppose it; indeed they welcome a national/international commission of inquiry. With regard to the AIS, however, perhaps 'welcome' is too strong a word as no call for such a commission could be found in its reactions.

5. General Conclusions

The reactions of the Algerian political and armed Islamic movements to the massacres can be divided into four different types:

- Those of 'legal' movements, ostensibly in opposition but who actually participate in government and speak the language of the authorities in power, which claim that the perpetrators of the massacres are known, and that consequently there is no need for an internal investigation. Furthermore, these are of the opinion that the sovereignty of the state should be protected and, therefore, considering an international commission of inquiry is inconceivable. This is the case of the HMS.
- Those 'legal' movements which are in opposition and openly appear as such yet do not directly accuse the authorities of perpetrating the massacres but pose questions which beg for answers. They do not call for an external commission of inquiry, but they do request an internal investigation (Nahda party).
- The 'banned' political movement under severe repression inside Algeria which was denied its electoral victory. Most of its leaders and members are in jail and many of its supporters are prosecuted or have been killed. It does not publicly accuse the authorities of the massacres or call for the opening of an investigation, but in reality it believes the authorities to be the instigators of the massacres and strongly supports an international investigation. Action in this respect is, however, left to its representatives abroad (FIS-inside Algeria).
- The political movement in exile is free to express its real views. The same can be said of the armed movement fighting inside Algeria. For

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both of these groups there is no fear or restriction. These movements clearly accuse the military regime and its security apparatus (secret services, militias, municipal guards, Zouabri's GIA gang etc.) of committing the massacres. They demand an independent national and/or international inquiry (FIS-abroad and the armed opposition groups inside Algeria).

Given that the vast majority of the Algerian Islamic political parties and insurgent organisations support some sort of independent inquiry into the massacres, and given the fact that neither those who accuse the GIA and/or other guerrilla groups nor those who accuse the military regime have conclusive or substantial evidence of their claims (however strong and logical these may be), then surely, setting up an independent commission of inquiry is a logical step. Such a commission will formally investigate the massacres and establish the facts. The establishment of a commission of inquiry has become a necessity to determine responsibility in an important human rights issue for the Algerian people as a whole and for the victims and their families in particular.

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Appendix: Reactions Summary Tables

Table 4.1: Society's Movement for Peace (HMS)

Events and People	Responses/Opinions
Massacres	Punishment actions Barbaric and criminal acts that cannot be justified
Victims	Innocent Algerian citizens
Perpetrators	Armed groups in general, savage terrorists GIA, bunch of ignorant people
Commission of Inquiry	No foreign intervention in any form No meddling into the Algerian internal affairs

Table 4.2: Renaissance Movement (NAHDA)

Events and People	Responses/Opinions
Massacres	Criminal acts not allowed by Islamic law or reason
Victims	Innocent people
Perpetrators	Neither the authorities nor the Islamic Salvation Front Unknown faction
Commission of Inquiry	Rejects international investigation Calls for a national parliamentary inquiry

Table 4.3: Islamic Salvation Front (FIS inside Algeria)

Events and People	Responses/Opinions
Massacres	Horrible mass murders and crimes against humanity
Victims	Innocent people who refused to take up arms FIS voters and sympathisers
Perpetrators	Extremists including the GIA Criminal gangs and blood shedders
Commission of Inquiry	Not possible until peace and security are re-established Condemns the refusal of the Algerian authorities to allow any independent inquiry

Table 4.4: FIS Executive Body Abroad

Events and People	Responses/Opinions
Massacres	Extermination operations and inhuman crimes Cowardly acts contrary to teachings of Islam
Victims	Innocent isolated and most deprived citizens Supporters of the FIS and those attached to the Islamic project Population of fertile lands
Perpetrators	Faction of army repressive forces and their militias Devious groups infiltrated by criminals in the regime Criminal armed group (GIA of Zitouni and Zouabri)
Commission of Inquiry	Called for an independent commission of inquiry, be it national or international

Table 4.5: FIS Parliamentary Delegation Abroad

Events and People	Responses/Opinions
Massacres	Horrible and atrocious crimes
Victims	The Algerian civilian people
Perpetrators	The generals, military and intelligence officers Gangs committing crimes in the name of Islam
Commission of Inquiry	Calls for urgent intervention of the United Nations Presses for a fair and competent, independent commission of inquiry—be it national or international

Table 4.6: FIS Preparatory Committee Abroad

Events and People	Responses/Opinions
Massacres	Horrible and criminal slaughter operations of revenge Organised mass extermination
Victims	Unarmed and poor innocent people. Oppressed supporters of the Islamic project who voted for Islam. Inhabitants of fertile agricultural lands
Perpetrators	Junta's mercenaries, secret agents and GIA members Army's special forces and militias
Commission of Inquiry	Supports calls for an independent inquiry

Table 4.7: FIS Co-ordination Council Abroad (CCFIS)

Events and People	Responses/Opinions
Massacres	Odious, savage and inhuman crimes, genocide, serial mass slaughter Institutionalised terrorism
Victims	Innocent and unarmed people who have sympathy for the Islamic project or who are close to the mujahidin FIS supporters and working class families which voted for the FIS
Perpetrators	The generals' killing machine: army, police, militias, organised gangs and the GIA remnants—mercenaries affiliated with the secret services
Commission of Inquiry	Calls for urgent establishment of an international committee for investigation and an independent national commission Would forward a complaint to the International Court of Justice to put on trial the perpetrators and the instigators of the massacres

Table 4.8: The Islamic Salvation Army (AIS)

Events and People	Responses/Opinions
Massacres	Horrendous and horrible crimes, abominable carnage of extreme barbarity, blind and fierce revenge against the people
Victims	Innocent unarmed men, women, children and babies Innocent people / citizens / civilians
Perpetrators	The eradicators of the terrorist military authorities and their militias Mercenaries of the eradicators in the deviant GIA, manipulated by intelligent circles The enemies of the People's victory achieved in the 1991 elections
Commission of Inquiry	Aims at reaching the unknown truth which will be uncovered with time

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Table 4.9: The Islamic League for Preaching and Jihad (LIDD)

Events and People	Responses/Opinions
Massacres	Extermination of the nation, savage genocide Crushing of the people, bloodbaths, butcheries Cowardly and terrible revenge
Victims	Innocent peaceful and unarmed people Poor and oppressed people known for their backing to the FIS and jihad, families of the sincere mujahidīn (who left the GIA) and those sympathising with them, FIS members Hamlets and villages refusing to take up arms Inhabitants of useful lands
Perpetrators	Eradicators of the military regime (the Franco-communists) The army, communal guards and militias Secret agents and its GIA apparatus
Commission of Inquiry	Does not oppose the coming of the international media and the national and international commission of inquiry

Table 4.10: Other Islamic Insurgent Organisations

Events and People	Responses/Opinions
Massacres	Barbaric and despicable crimes, satanic executions Unlawful and irresponsible criminal acts
Victims	Innocent people, mostly women, children and elderly people Families of mujahidīn who broke away from the GIA Sections of the population known for their support for the mujahidīn and their families People who refused to take up arms
Perpetrators	Co-ordination militias-special team of secret services Gang controlled by criminal elements fearing for their interests and privileges Schismatic <i>khawarij</i> and excommunication groups (GIA) infiltrated and manipulated by the junta secret services
Commission of Inquiry	Welcome an international inquiry

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NOTES

- ¹ See B. Izel, J.S. Wafa, and W. Isaac, *What is the GLA?*, paper No. 6, in part II of this book.
- ² ACB, 'The Jihad battalions confirm the GIA infiltration by secret services', *ACB*, London, 1997.
- ³ This note applies particularly to the Nahda movement, for which relatively very few citations were collected.
- ⁴ Memo on the HMS movement, URL: <http://www.hms-algeria.net>
- ⁵ Ibid.
- ⁶ Ibid.
- ⁷ *Le Figaro*, interview with Mahfoud Nahnah, 19 July 1997.
- ⁸ Ibid.
- ⁹ Ibid.
- ¹⁰ *El-Watan*, 22 September 1997.
- ¹¹ Announcement by the HMS National Executive Bureau, 29 August 1997.
- ¹² Ibid.
- ¹³ Ibid.
- ¹⁴ AFP, 15 September 1997.
- ¹⁵ Ibid.
- ¹⁶ Ibid.
- ¹⁷ Ibid.
- ¹⁸ *El-Khabar*, 22 September 1997.
- ¹⁹ *Liberté*, 11 January 1998.
- ²⁰ Ibid.
- ²¹ HMS National Executive Bureau, 24 September 1997.
- ²² Ibid.
- ²³ Ibid.
- ²⁴ News Analysis N° 1, HMS National Elections Body, Media Committee, 27 September 1997.
- ²⁵ Ibid.
- ²⁶ Ibid.
- ²⁷ Beirut LCBI Station, *Dialogue of the Age*, URL: <http://www.lbcSAT.com.lb>, 8 February 1998.
- ²⁸ The author means the veterans of the Algerian war of liberation (1954-1962).
- ²⁹ When the author mentions the army here, he refers to it as the 'military institution'.
- ³⁰ *El-Watan*, 31 August 1997.
- ³¹ Nadim Ladki, *Reuters*, 11 January 1998.
- ³² Ibid.
- ³³ Ibid.

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³⁴ Ibid.

³⁵ Ibid.

³⁶ Ibid.

³⁷ Ibid.

³⁸ Ibid.

³⁹ *El-Watan*, 31 August 1997.

⁴⁰ Ibid.

⁴¹ URL: <http://www.fisalgeria.org>

⁴² "The Islamic Revolution in Algeria", Yafa Institution for Studies and Research (Arabic), 1991.

⁴³ URL: <http://www.fisalgeria.org>

⁴⁴ Letter signed by Abbassi Madani's son, Selmane, on his behalf, 30 August 1997.

⁴⁵ *Le Figaro*, Interview, 12 January 1998.

⁴⁶ Ibid.

⁴⁷ Ibid.

⁴⁸ *La Libre Belgique*, 12 January 1998

⁴⁹ Ibid.

⁵⁰ *Le Monde*, Interview, 13 January 1998.

⁵¹ Ibid.

⁵² *Le Figaro*, 12 January 1998.

⁵³ *Al-Hayat*, 13 February 1998.

⁵⁴ *Ibid.*

⁵⁵ FIS Executive Body Abroad, Communiqué, 24 April 1997.

⁵⁶ Ibid.

⁵⁷ Ibid.

⁵⁸ Ibid.

⁵⁹ Ibid.

⁶⁰ Ibid.

⁶¹ Ibid.

⁶² Ibid.

⁶³ Ibid.

⁶⁴ Ibid.

⁶⁵ *Reuters*, Paris, 11 January 1998.

⁶⁶ Ibid.

⁶⁷ Interview given to Reuters TV, Brussels, 14 January 1998.

⁶⁸ Ibid.

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⁶⁹ Ibid.

⁷⁰ Ibid.

⁷¹ Ibid.

⁷² *Al-Ribat*, Newsletter, N° 191, 9 September 1998.

⁷³ Ibid.

⁷⁴ Ibid.

⁷⁵ Ibid.

⁷⁶ Ibid.

⁷⁷ Ibid.

⁷⁸ Open letter to the secretary-general of the United Nations, 1 November 1997.

⁷⁹ FIS Parliamentary Delegation Abroad, Communiqué, 19 November 1997.

⁸⁰ Ibid.

⁸¹ Ibid.

⁸² Ibid.

⁸³ Open Letter from the prison of Manassas, Virginia, USA, 27 November 1997.

⁸⁴ Letter of FIS Parliamentary Delegation Abroad to Robin Cook, signed by Anwar Haddam, 25 January 1998.

⁸⁵ Ibid.

⁸⁶ Ibid.

⁸⁷ Ibid.

⁸⁸ Ibid.

⁸⁹ Ibid.

⁹⁰ Letter published in the newsletter *Sawt-Al-Jabba*, N° 22, 13 March 1998.

⁹¹ FIS Preparatory Committee, Communiqué, 21 May 1997.

⁹² FIS Preparatory Committee, Women's Division Communiqué, 22 May 1997.

⁹³ Communiqué, The Algerian Community in Britain (ACB), 13 November 1996.

⁹⁴ Communiqué, ACB, 2 August 1997.

⁹⁵ FIS Preparatory Committee, Communiqué, 30 September 1997.

⁹⁶ *The Enlightenment*, "The truce to hide the truth", 10 October 1997

⁹⁷ *Al-Hayat*, Interview, 30 March 1998.

⁹⁸ Ibid.

⁹⁹ See their URL: <http://website.lineone.net/~ilaf>.

¹⁰⁰ CCFIS Communiqué, N° 2, 7 January 1998.

¹⁰¹ Ibid.

¹⁰² Ibid.

¹⁰³ Ibid.

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¹⁰⁴ Fraternité Algérienne in France (FAF), Communiqué N° 4, 24 January 1997.

¹⁰⁵ Ibid.

¹⁰⁶ Ibid.

¹⁰⁷ Ibid.

¹⁰⁸ FAF, Communiqué N° 5, 4 February 1997.

¹⁰⁹ FAF, Communiqué N° 7, 13 June 1997.

¹¹⁰ FAF, Communiqué N° 11, 2 September 1997.

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¹¹² Ibid.

¹¹³ Ibid.

¹¹⁴ *Ashark Al-Ansat*, 9 September 1997.

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¹¹⁷ Ahmed Zaoui, Moussa Kraouche and Said Lahlali (CCFIS), 25 April -1997.

¹¹⁸ FAF, Communiqué N° 11, 02 September -1997.

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¹²⁰ Ibid.

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¹²² CCFIS, Communiqué N° 2, 7 January 1998.

¹²³ Ibid.

¹²⁴ Ibid.

¹²⁵ AIS Call, 9 December 1996.

¹²⁶ Ibid.

¹²⁷ AIS (Western Region), Communiqué, 15 March 1996.

¹²⁸ AIS (Western Region), Communiqué of Clarification, 18 February 1997.

¹²⁹ Ibid.

¹³⁰ Ibid.

¹³¹ Ibid.

¹³² AIS (Western Region), Communiqué, 1 January 1997.

¹³³ *Al-Inqad*, Newsletter, N° 22, p. 5, 1 January 1997.

¹³⁴ AIS, Communiqué, Declaration of Truce, 21 September 1997.

¹³⁵ Ibid.

¹³⁶ Ibid.

¹³⁷ Ibid.

¹³⁸ Ibid.

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¹³⁹ *Al-Hayat*, Interview, 10 March 1998.

¹⁴⁰ Ibid.

¹⁴¹ Ibid.

¹⁴² Ibid.

¹⁴³ Ibid.

¹⁴⁴ Ibid.

¹⁴⁵ Ibid.

¹⁴⁶ LIDD, Communiqué N° 1, 5 February 1997.

¹⁴⁷ Ibid.

¹⁴⁸ Ibid.

¹⁴⁹ LIDD, Communiqué N° 3, 15 September 1997.

¹⁵⁰ Ibid.

¹⁵¹ Ibid.

¹⁵² LIDD, Communiqué, Declaration of Truce, 9 October 1997.

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¹⁵⁴ *Ar-Rabita*, LIDD monthly publication, N° 1, September 1997.

¹⁵⁵ *Ar-Rabita*, N° 2, October 1997, pp. 1-7.

¹⁵⁶ Ibid.

¹⁵⁷ Ibid.

¹⁵⁸ Ibid.

¹⁵⁹ *Ar-Rabita*, N° 2, October 1997, pp 8-18.

¹⁶⁰ Ibid.

¹⁶¹ Ibid.

¹⁶² Ibid.

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¹⁶⁷ Ibid.

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¹⁶⁹ *Al-Hayat*, Interview with Hassan Hattab, GIA's second region Emir, 5 April 1998.

¹⁷⁰ Communiqué on the massacres in Blida and Médéa regions, Abdurrahman Abu Jameel, 2 May 1996.

¹⁷¹ Communiqué, Signed by Mustafa Al-Arbaoui, 9 January 1998.

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¹⁷² Communiqué N° 2, Signed by Abu Suhaib Khalid (Commander), 18 February 1997.

¹⁷³ Al-Muhajiroun, *A call to the inhabitants of the central region*, 19 September 1997.

¹⁷⁴ Communiqué, Signed by Abu Abdel Ghafour Yahia and Mustafa Kertali, 7 November 1997.

¹⁷⁵ Communiqué N° 2, Signed by Said Mekhloufi (Commander), 14 March 1996.

¹⁷⁶ Communiqué, *Acquittal of Conscience and Guidance for the Nation*, 1 December 1996.

¹⁷⁷ Communiqué N° 1, Signed by Commander Abu Djaafar Mohamed, Illegible date.

¹⁷⁸ See Note 2.

¹⁷⁹ HMS Executive Bureau of Greater Algiers, Communiqué N° 1, 25 October 1997.

¹⁸⁰ Arabic News, URL: <http://www.arabicnews.com>, 30 October 1997.

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