

AMNESTY INTERNATIONAL CONDEMNS KILLING OF ADBELBAKI SAHRAOUI

Amnesty International condemns the deliberate and arbitrary killing on 11 July of Abdelbaki Sahraoui, a founding member of the now banned Algerian *Front Islamique du Salut*, FIS (Islamic Salvation Front) and Imam of a Paris mosque. Abdelbaki Sahraoui, 85-years' old, was shot dead by a group of unidentified armed men in the prayer room of the mosque after the evening prayer; another civilian who reportedly tried to stop the gunmen was also killed in the attack.

The killing of this leading figure of the FIS happened hours after the Algerian authorities announced the failure of the dialogue with the FIS leaders in Algeria, aimed at resolving the ongoing political crisis which has resulted in the killing of tens of thousands of people by security forces and armed groups defining themselves as "Islamic groups" since 1992.

This is the first time that a leading FIS figure has been killed outside Algeria since the beginning of the current political crisis.

Amnesty International is aware that an investigation has been opened by the French authorities into the killing, and calls for the perpetrators to be brought to justice.

To date it has not been established who carried out the killings, and no group has claimed responsibility. FIS leaders inside and outside Algeria have recently been threatened with death if they continued to negotiate with the authorities, in communiques reported to have been issued by the Groupe Islamique Armé (Armed Islamic Group), GIA. This group, whose components and structure remain unclear, claims to act in opposition to the Algerian authorities and in opposition to any negotiation between the FIS and the authorities to solve the current political crisis.

Amnesty International also renews its call on all armed groups claiming to act on political grounds to put an immediate end to the killing of civilians.

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