

Annual meeting of the Federal Council

- World Amazigh Congress -

December 18 and 19, 2010 - Marrakech, Morocco

The International Federal Council (CF) of the World Amazigh Congress(CMA) held its annual meeting on November 18th and 19th in Marrakech, Morocco. Among those who attended this important gathering were delegations representing the Kel Tamashek (Tuareg people) and the Amazigh Diaspora.

Members of the CMA dedicated their meeting to their colleagues M'Hamed Hamrani who passed away in 2009 in Tripoli. Libya, and to Chakib El-Kheyari, who has been arbitrarily imprisoned in Morocco since February 2009.

The Federal Counselors of CMA examined the situation of Amazigh rights in different countries. They concurred that if some official pronouncements in international venues may appear to be favorable to human rights, they do not in fact reflect a reality which negates and obscures the Amazigh identity, as well as serious violations of elementary human rights or fundamental liberties of Imazighen, individual and collective.

MOROCCO

In Morocco, the Federal Council denounced the abusive incarceration of Chakib El-Kheyari, a member of CF/CMA. It is a flagrant injustice, for Chakib simply acted as a lawful citizen and defender of human rights when he uncovered the drug traffic and the corruption in which are implicated high ranked officers of the army, the police and Moroccan authorities. It is abnormal to condemn an innocent man while letting outlaws live in freedom. Also, members of CMA condemned the imprisonment of young members of the Amazigh cultural movement, who were subjected to a highly unfair trial. It is time for Morocco to abandon its repressive measures

of the black years and to free political prisoners Chakib El-Kheyari, Mustapha Oussaya and Hamid Ouadouch.

Concerning the cultural and linguistic rights of Imazighen, the CF also established a notable regress in the area of language teaching and the obstinate position of the State which persists in refusing the Amazigh language the status of official language. Once again, CMA requests that the recent recommendations of the United Nations Committee for the elimination of racism and racist practices be observed.

ALGERIA

In Algeria, CF has denounced serious violations of fundamental liberties and the abrogation of rights, as evident in the treatment of individuals who did not fast during the period of Ramadan 2010, the condemnation of citizens of Christian faith, the refusal on the part of the authorities to come forth with agreements for the Amazigh League for Human Rights and the Women's Association of Kabylia, the acts prohibiting the activities of associations – in particular those organized by CMA in 2008, 2009 and 2010 -, as well as police and court harassment of activists of the Movement for the autonomy of Kabylia (MAK.) The region of Kabylia is particularly targeted by the Algerian authorities which attempt to squash all independent civic activity while fostering insecurity, militarization and impoverishment of the region. The present situation in Kabylia is fraught with danger, because ultimately it does not leave any alternative means of ways of expression other than revolution.

CANARY ISLANDS

The autochthonous people of the Canary Islands continue to be subjected to Spanish colonization which deprives them of the wealth of their natural resources and of its socio-cultural identity. Therefore, CMA repeats its support of the Canarian claim to auto-determination.

TUAREG PEOPLE

In Tuareg territory, notably in Niger and Mali, promises outlined in the several accords signed between Tuareg representatives and governments , since the beginning of the 1990's, have been essentially ignored. Tuareg people are surviving between the anvil of drought and the hammers of states and multinational corporations which occupy their territories and ruthlessly exploit their natural resources. When Tuaregs attempt to organize in order to warn of danger, State authorities are always prompt to suppress these efforts violently, as it happened last October in the north of Mali when Tuareg youth attempted to gather in Timbuktu. Police intervened to bring an end to their gathering and two of them, Moussa Ag Acharatoumam and Boubeker Ag Fadil, were arrested and detained in police custody in Bamako for seventeen days during which they were subjected to brutal treatment, insults and threats. CMA denounces such abuse of power and calls upon the international community to come forth with concrete support of the Tuareg people of the desert, who are under threat of extinction.

TUNISIA

Politics of denial of Amazigh identity and forced assimilation have considerably reduced the spaces of expression of Amazigh culture and the number of Tamazight speakers in Tunisia. CF expresses its utmost solidarity and encourages Tunisian Imazighen to organize in order to resist such practices, and join the ranks of CMA, say, at the occasion of its next Congress.

LIBYA

The Khadafi regime of Libya continues to follow its apartheid politics towards Imazighen , depriving them of their language and culture, and threatening them with death when they claim their Amazigh identity. Three Libyan citizens have particularly been targeted by this racist state of Libya:

the Amazigh singer Abdellah Ashini, unjustly accused of advocating illegal immigration to Europe, who was arbitrarily condemned to five years of prison, and Mazigh and Madghis Bouzakhar, both arrested in their Tripoli home, for having , it seems, had a scholarly conversation with an Italian citizen. To this day, the location where the two brothers are being held prisoners remains secret.

In Libya, thousands of Tuaregs who originally came from the north of Mali and Niger and live in the south of Libya (Ubari, Sebha, Murzuq) have not been granted Libyan citizenship and are seriously discriminated against: they do not have any right to decent lodging, or to access to higher education, (reserved for Libyan citizens), or to open a bank account, or get a passport. They constitute a marginalized illegal population which is kept hidden from foreign visitors, as citizens of a third category.

Moreover, the Libyan regime uses both corruption and terror to push certain Tuaregs to publicly renounce their Amazigh identities and declare themselves “Arabs.” Thus, the Libyan State pretends to be the leader of African unity, but dangerously manipulates ethnic factors to sow division and conflict between peoples . CMA is outraged by such practices of another era, and emphatically condemns the marginalization and repression burdening all Imazighen in Libya. CMA demands the immediate freeing of political prisoners and the end of anti-Amazigh racism in Libya.

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