

CASAMANCE WOMEN SPEAK OUT

“If my husband has been killed then show me his grave, I need to know.”¹

(1) INTRODUCTION

When her husband “disappeared” in August 1999 after being arrested by the Senegalese security forces in Casamance, Khady Bassène was refused the right to her husband’s retirement pension because she could not produce his death certificate. Since then, her financial situation and that of her children has steadily deteriorated. Roukhyatou Ba’s husband was abducted in July 2002 by the *Mouvement des forces démocratiques de Casamance* (Casamance Movement of Democratic Forces - MFDC), an armed opposition group demanding independence for this southern Senegalese region. He has not been found since and his wife has not dared to tell the truth to her two little girls, merely saying that their father went away on a trip. These two examples show the extent to which the phenomenon of “disappearances” and abductions of civilians by both parties to the conflict in Casamance has critical repercussions on the financial situation and psychological state of the relatives of this conflict’s victims².

Women have paid a particularly heavy price throughout the conflict in Casamance between the Senegalese security forces and the MFDC, which has been ongoing since 1982. During this conflict, in which any civilian may be suspected of supporting the other side at any moment, some women have been taken hostage, others have been kidnapped, raped or threatened with rape. The security forces have often accused women of feeding and sheltering the MFDC “rebels” and some of them have been taken hostage in an effort to force their husbands to turn themselves in. Armed elements claiming to represent the MFDC, for their part, have shown no hesitation in attacking women in order to dissuade them from venturing to gather fruit in the orchards, which they consider to be their preserve.

¹ These are the words of Antoinette Diatta, whose husband “disappeared” after being arrested by security forces, in April 2000.

² Amnesty International understands by “disappearances” those people who have been placed in detention by State officials refusing to recognise this, and whose whereabouts and fate is unknown. When people are arrested by armed opposition groups such as the MFDC, the organization talks of abductions.

In addition, dozens of wives of “disappeared” civilians or others abducted during this conflict have, with no psychological support and often no material aid, had to face the brutal reality of the uncertain fate of their husbands, the economic difficulties created by his absence, and the questioning of their children with regard to their father’s whereabouts.

Casamance women have, however, refused to play the part of passive victims. They have, on many occasions, mobilised around peace demonstrations in Casamance. But beyond these calls for negotiations, there has been little response to the often silent suffering of these women who struggle - day in day out - to come to terms with the trauma of a sexual attack or the fact that they find themselves alone, unaware of what has become of their husband and without the financial resources for family survival. The aim of this document is to give a voice to some of these women, whom nobody has wanted to listen to.

For two years, Amnesty International has been following the daily struggle of seven such women: two are victims of sexual violence, committed by armed elements claiming to represent the MFDC, four more are the wives of civilians who “disappeared” after being arrested by the security forces, and the seventh has had no news of her husband since he was abducted a year ago by elements of the MFDC, simply because he did not have a Casamance surname.

An Amnesty International delegation first met most of these women in Ziguinchor, the commercial capital of Casamance, in June 2001. Then, with the help of a Senegalese organization, *Rencontre africaine pour la défense des droits de l’homme* (RADDHO - the African Conference for the Defence of Human Rights), a meeting was organised in November 2001 between Senegalese lawyers and these women in order to explain to them their rights to justice and redress. Finally, Amnesty International spoke with each of these women in January and October 2003 in order to monitor changes in their economic and psychological situation and to ascertain their position in terms of their struggle to obtain justice and redress.

In fact, international texts recognise the right of the “disappeared” and their families to obtain redress and to be compensated. They also recognise the damage and suffering experienced by families of the “disappeared”. In a report published in 1990, the United Nations Working Group on Enforced or Voluntary Disappearances stated: *“Family members and other relatives or dependants suffer the immediate consequences of a disappearance. Not only are they subjected to agonizing uncertainty about what happened to their parent, child or spouse, but in*

many cases also economic hardship and social alienation may be part of their sorry lot. The psychological effects on children are found to be severe, even devastating at times.”³

In terms of the sexual violence suffered by Casamance women, most recent developments in international law, and in particular the Rome Statute of the International Criminal Court of 17 July 1998, clearly state that “rape...or any other form of sexual violence also constituting a grave breach of the Geneva Conventions” is defined as a “war crime” and these texts provide a set of rules aiming at bringing to justice the persons responsible for such acts and procedures for the redress of victims and their families.

Through the cases of the seven women examined in this document, Amnesty International wishes to draw the attention of the two parties to the conflict, along with that of Senegalese and international public opinion, to the extent of the suffering and denial of justice inflicted on dozens of Casamance women, who are direct or indirect victims of this conflict. It is, in particular, the responsibility of the Senegalese state to respect its international obligation to clarify cases of “disappearances” and to recognise a right of redress to the families of the “disappeared”, in order to enable them to enjoy certain essential rights provided by the 1966 International Covenant on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights. These rights include, in particular, the right of everyone to an adequate standard of living for themselves and their families, including adequate food, clothing and housing (provided in article 11), the right of everyone to the enjoyment of the highest attainable standard of physical and mental health (article 12) and the right of everyone to education (article 13).

The courage and dignity of these women is inversely proportional to the silence and apathy of the politicians on both sides, who have done nothing to relieve the suffering of these victims. Those responsible for these abuses have not been identified and continue to benefit from complete impunity; the truth has not been acknowledged, particularly with regard to the cases of the “disappeared”, making it impossible for the families to mourn; and no redress has been granted. By enabling these seven women to speak out, Amnesty International hopes their voices will reach the political leaders of the two parties to the conflict and break through the apathy and indifference that form the invisible enemy against which these women have to struggle, in almost total isolation, every day.

³ 1990 Report of the UN Working Group on Enforced or Involuntary Disappearances, paragraph 339.

(2) TWO WOMEN WHO WERE VICTIMS OF ILL-TREATMENT AND SEXUAL VIOLENCE

For years, armed elements claiming to represent the MFDC have driven hundreds of peasant farmers from their villages in order to confiscate and exploit their orchards and fields. These elements of the MFDC devote themselves, in particular, to harvesting cashew nuts, a much sought after commodity with a high retail price.

On 1 July 1999, a group of civilians, including six women from the Mankagne ethnic group, went to gather cashew nuts in an orchard in Saint-Louis Mankagne (around 10 km to the south-east of Ziguinchor). They were attacked by armed elements claiming to represent the MFDC and speaking Diola⁴ (while Mankagne women speak Wolof and Creole).

During the attack, some women were sexually assaulted and raped. Apart from the cases of Anna Malack and Diminga Ndecky, which are detailed below, Amnesty International has obtained information concerning another woman who fainted under the attack. A young man had to carry her on his back to the village. There, the gendarmes (paramilitary police) took her to the regional hospital. All the victims of this attack, whom Amnesty International met, believe that these armed elements attacked them and beat them up to intimidate them and dissuade them from returning to the fields. Indeed, none of them has dared return since.



Picture of Diminga Ndecky (left) and Anna Malack (right)
©AI

⁴ Diola is the language spoken by the main indigenous population of Casamance.

Anna Malack (born in 1961) recounted her attack to the Amnesty International delegation:

“I used to live in Saint-Louis Mankagne, where my father had a cashew nut orchard but everyone was driven away from there because of the rebels (armed elements claiming to represent the MFDC). I had to move to Tylène (a neighbourhood in Ziguinchor) but, from time to time, I used to go back to the countryside to gather cashew nuts from my father’s field. The rebels had driven everyone out of the area and it was very heavily mined but I sometimes went back to find things to sell at the market as it is a region very rich in oranges, mandarins, lemons, papaws, there are many orchards. We went in a group, there were more than ten of us, including my daughter Rachel, who is 20 years old. I saw the rebels first. I began to run but they caught all of us. They asked us why we had come into the forest. We said it was in order to live. They said, “The forest doesn’t belong to the population any more, it belongs to us.” And they told us to stay in the town and put up with it. They told me to open my legs and they put sand in my intimate parts. I thought they were going to kill me because it was me who had encouraged the other women to go to the forest and because it was my field. I spent three months in hospital. My children visited me there and they all cried a lot.”

Another woman, Diminga Ndécky (born in 1965) described the acts of violence she and another of her friends were victims of:

“On seeing the men arrive, one of us shouted and they beat her hard, her skin was ripped to shreds, she needed a graft. They said they were MFDC rebels and they told us: ‘We told you not to come into the bush any more. The bush belongs to the rebels and soldiers’. The rebels did not rape us because relations with women spoil their ‘gris-gris’⁵. Because I was rather plump, they accused me of ‘performing’ sexual perversions with the soldiers. They took off my knickers with a knife, they spread my legs and put sand and a piece of wood up my genitals with their four fingers. I bled, I fainted, I thought I was going to die. I couldn’t walk for five days.”

⁵ ‘Gris-gris’ are good luck charms or talismen – trans. note.

Four years on from these events, these two women still complain of the physical and psychological after-effects of these attacks.

After the attack, Anna Malack, who is a widow with six children, was in hospital for three months and, since then, her menstrual cycle has been totally disrupted. During a meeting with Amnesty International delegates in June 2001, this young woman also told them that she was suffering from psychological trauma as a result of the attack. *“I don’t sleep well, I have nightmares in which I constantly relive what happened to me.”* In January 2003, she told Amnesty International that her physical condition had deteriorated yet further:

“I have headaches all the time, my body feels bad because of the blows I received and I still don’t “see” my periods. Since December (2002), I have been in bed. I went to see a doctor and he told me to take some syrup and tablets. I also have to have injections but these medicines are expensive, 15,000 francs CFA (around 23 euros) and I have to borrow money from my neighbours.”

As for Diminga Ndecky, following the attack, she was taken by the Boutoute police to the hospital of Ziguinchor, in which she stayed for five months. A medical certificate produced by the hospital indicates that she was *“raped, beaten on the buttocks, thighs and back and burnt.”* (See Appendix I)

During an interview in January 2003, Diminga Ndecky confirmed to Amnesty International that she continued to suffer from health problems. *“I always have headaches because they trampled over my head with their shoes. Since the attack, I have had problems with my sight, sometimes I can’t see well but I have no money to go to the doctor or buy medicines. My periods have returned but I often have pain in my lower abdomen.”*

The attacks these two Mankagne women were the victims of threw them into a very serious situation of financial dependence. In fact, they no longer dared go and gather cashew nuts from the field, and were thus deprived of their main source of income.

In November 2001, Anna Malack told the Amnesty International delegation:

“Since the attack, I no longer dare venture into the countryside, I stay in the town where I try to survive. Before, I lived very well on what I gathered from my field and I could survive until the next harvest. One kilo of cashew

nuts sells for 500 francs CFA (75 euro cents), two bags sell for 30,000 francs CFA (around 46 euros) and I also sold cashew juice (which, after fermentation, turns to alcohol). Now, I do a little business but I have a lot of trouble feeding my family.”

The situation has progressively worsened over time. In October 2003, Anna Malack told Amnesty International:

“I sell a few vegetables at the market but I don’t always have enough to eat. I have lost a lot of weight and I feel dizzy when I walk. For the moment, I live with my children in rented accommodation. I can’t always pay the rent, but the owner is patient and, for the moment, he is waiting.”

For Diminga Ndecky, economic survival has also become much more difficult. In January 2003, she told Amnesty International:

“Selling cashew nuts was my only source of income. Now, I have to borrow money from my family, then I buy vegetables wholesale and sell them at the market in Ziguinchor. I also go and collect the shrimps the fishermen throw away because they are too small, I dry them and sell them. Then I pay back the money I’ve borrowed and I try to live on the little money that is left.”

Diminga Ndecky has also had housing problems. In August 2003, she had to leave her home in Tylène because the owner wanted her to pay her rental arrears, which she could not. She moved in with a woman who lets her stay for free but, as she told Amnesty International in October 2003: *“I am living in this woman’s daughter’s room, who is in Dakar. If she returns to Ziguinchor, I will have to leave.”*

(3) FIVE WOMEN WHOSE HUSBANDS HAVE “DISAPPEARED” OR BEEN ABDUCTED.

In a document published in April 2002 entitled, *Senegal. Putting an end to impunity: a unique opportunity not to be missed*, Amnesty International listed the names of more than 100 people who had “disappeared” after being arrested by the Senegalese security forces. The organization also listed the names of almost 80 people

killed deliberately and arbitrarily by the MFDC or abducted by this armed opposition group, with no news of them since. This is not a comprehensive list and only gives cases that have occurred since 1992 and that Amnesty International has been able to investigate. These cases were presented to both parties to the conflict but they have done nothing to put an end to the impunity of those responsible for these acts. The Senegalese government, in particular, has not respected its international obligations as outlined in the 1992 Declaration on the Protection of All Persons from Enforced Disappearance, which enjoins all states to initiate independent and impartial enquiries into cases of “disappearances” and provides for redress of the victims and their families.⁶

Each of these “disappearances” or abductions of civilians affects a large number of people: spouses, children and other relatives of the “disappeared” or abducted person. The wives of “disappeared” or abducted persons are suddenly forced into a difficult situation in which they have not only to try to find out about their husband and explain the situation to their children, but also to survive financially. We have chosen, by way of example, the cases of five women that illustrate, each in their own way, the difficulties that dozens of Casamance women have had to face over the course of the last decade.

Most of these women first tried to retrace the paths of their husbands, by contacting soldiers and police officers, in spite of the difficulty and risks such an approach entailed for them. Thus in April 2000, when her husband failed to return home, Eugénie Sambou, wife of Ephrème Diatta, went to the Kabrousse police station (approximately 70 km south-east of Ziguinchor) where a witness had seen her husband in detention:

“When my husband did not return home, I went to Kabrousse and I met one of his friends, a primary school teacher, Dominique Diatta, whom he had visited. Dominique Diatta told me he had seen Ephrème at the police station, but that he thought he had been released. We both went back to the police station but the police told us they had never arrested him. So we both went to see the military, who confirmed that they arrested someone on Thursday 20 April and took him to the police station. We have had no news of him since but I ‘know’ he is dead.”

⁶ Declaration on the Protection of All Persons from Enforced Disappearance, adopted by the United Nations on 18 December 1992.

Eugénie Sambou and Ephrème Diatta were living with their children in Diakène Diola (approximately 45 km south of Ziguinchor). Ephrème Diatta harvested palm wine during the dry season and, during the rainy season, he cultivated his fields and made bricks. On Wednesday 19 April 2000, he went to Kabrousse to repair the instrument he used to extract the palm wine, which was broken. In Kabrousse he visited a primary school teacher, Dominique Diatta, a representative of the AFP,⁷ a party in which Ephrème Diatta was also an active member. Ephrème Diatta was arrested by soldiers of the Senegalese army as he was boarding a public transport vehicle.



Picture of Eugénie Sambou
©AI

The soldiers took him to the police station and asked him if he knew anyone in Kabrousse. He gave Dominique Diatta's name, stating that he was the AFP representative. Dominique Diatta was called to the police station where he caught a glimpse of his friend with his hands tied up, but was not allowed to speak to him. When he asked the police why they had arrested Ephrème Diatta, they replied: "We've been told he's a rebel." Dominique Diatta explained to the police that his friend was not a rebel but a palm wine harvester. The next day the teacher returned to the police station, where he was told that Ephrème had been released. Having no reason to doubt this version of the events, the teacher thought no more of it. Ephrème Diatta has not been seen since.

In a similar case in April 2000, despite her fears, another woman - Antoinette Diatta, wife of Moïse Ndoye Diatta - dared get in touch directly with the soldiers she suspected of having arrested her husband:

"I went with the village chief to see the soldiers and I told them: 'I know we are in a time of war, if it was you who picked up my husband then tell me.' The soldiers told me they had not arrested my husband, but that they would look into the matter."

The soldiers' version was in contradiction with other information Antoinette Diatta had received. She was not at home at the time of her husband's arrest but,

⁷ *L'Alliance des Forces de Progrès*, the party of Moustapha Niassé, the former prime minister of president Abdoulaye Wade, now in opposition.

when she returned, her husband's brother, Célestin Diatta, told her that Moïse had gone out with one of his children to Holy Week service, having finished work at around 15.00 hours, on Friday (7 April 2000). On returning home, the soldiers arrived, they beat him and forced him into a car. Célestin Diatta said he was present at this arrest, as were two other children.

In June 2001, more than a year after the "disappearance" of her husband, Antoinette Diatta was called before the Ziguinchor investigating judge. She recounted this audience to Amnesty International:

"The judge asked me if my husband was a rebel. I told him 'No' and then he asked me: 'Your husband works six months a year in the Hotel Savannah (a hotel in the resort of Cap Skirring), what does he do the rest of the time?' I told him he worked in his fields. The judge spoke very kindly to me and he promised me he would do what was necessary."

The investigating judge heard the three witnesses to the arrest, the brother of the "disappeared" and the two children who witnessed the arrival of the soldiers, but Moïse Ndoye Diatta's family has had no news as to the progress of the inquiry since. When Amnesty International delegates met Antoinette Diatta for the first time in Ziguinchor in June 2001, she seemed certain that her husband had been killed by the Senegalese security forces. Since her husband's arrest, Antoinette Diatta has not ceased in her efforts to find out what happened to him. She went to the Kabrousse police station and told the police: *"If my husband has been killed then show me his grave, I need to know."*

Picture of Moïse Ndoye Diatta

©Private

In their search for the truth, these women also have to deal with some witnesses' fear of reprisals on the part of the security forces. Thus in March 2000, Antoinette Sagna, whose husband, Antoine Nyafouna, "disappeared" after having apparently been arrested by the security forces, begged a neighbour to go and make a statement to the police. However, the fear of reprisals seems to have prompted this witness to retract his statement.

Here is Antoinette Sagna's account:

“My husband and I both had to attend funerals. My husband returned home on the Wednesday (29 March 2000) and I on the Thursday. My children told me that their father had not come home and I began to worry. The next day, early in the morning, a neighbour came to ask if my husband had come back. He was worried because the previous night he had heard someone whose voice sounded like Antoine's shouting at the military quarters in Djoher (around 40 km south-west of Ziguinchor). This man was shouting that he lived in Kaléane (around 45 km south-west of Ziguinchor) and that he was not a member of the MFDC. I made a statement at the police station and I begged the neighbour who had heard my husband's cries to come and talk to the police. First of all he refused and then he came anyway but, in front of the police, he went back on what he had said. I think he was afraid of reprisals on the part of the soldiers. The police promised me they would open an inquiry to find Antoine but they have never contacted me and I have had no more news of my husband.”

This neighbour's testimony was, however, crucial as it confirmed other indications that Antoine Nyafouna could have been arrested by soldiers as he was returning home, on Wednesday 29 March 2000, after attending the funeral ceremony. Following investigations on the ground, Amnesty International has managed to obtain confirmation of some elements of this account. Arriving in the outskirts of Djoher (2 km from Kaléane), Antoine Nyafouna found that soldiers had put up a roadblock because, a little earlier, there had been an MFDC attack. Antoine Nyafouna waited until the soldiers let him pass and then he went on his way to his nearby home. People saw him pass a few hundred metres from the Djoher military control post by bike. He has not been seen since.

Picture of Antoine Nyafana

©Private

Another case clearly illustrates the reticence of the Senegalese justice system to investigate known acts committed by the security forces and, consequently,

clearly confirms the total impunity enjoyed by members of the security forces sent to Casamance. Such was the “disappearance” of Jean Diandy, arrested by soldiers at his home on 4 August 1999 and of whom there has been no news since. This case is a significant one, among the one hundred cases of “disappearances” of Casamance civilians identified by Amnesty International since 1992, for two reasons:

- It is one of the very rare examples where another person was arrested at the same time as the “disappeared” person and released shortly after, and is thus able to confirm his arrest.
- His wife, Khady Bassène, and family are, to Amnesty International’s knowledge, one of only two families to have dared lodge a formal complaint ‘*avec constitution de partie civile*’⁸. Despite the existence of a witness who confirmed his statement to the judge, and despite the complaint being filed with the support of an association, the *Collectif des cadres casamançais*, who paid for the legal costs, the case has been dismissed. Quite apart from the legitimacy of this decision, it must be noted that, contrary to current international and national law, the Senegalese justice system did not notify this decision to the family and lawyers, effectively preventing them from lodging a possible appeal.

Khady Bassène was not present at the time of her husband’s arrest by the soldiers but she was able to gather several testimonies. “*I was not at home when Jean was arrested. Witnesses told me that a group of soldiers found my husband at home, stripped to the waist, and took him away.*”

Khady Bassène also met Gaston Sagna, the man who was arrested at the same time as her husband and he told her the circumstances of their arrest. The two men were eating mangos at Jean Diandy’s home when soldiers arrested them at around 17.00 hours without any explanation. They were taken by military vehicle to a detention centre in Boutoute (around 3 km south-east of Ziguinchor). Shortly after, Gaston Sagna was released without knowing

Picture of Jean Diandy ©Private

why he had been freed and Jean Diandy had not.

⁸ This is an action instituted by a private person for damages, parallel to prosecution in a criminal case – trans. note.

Other people gave Khady Bassène information when she went to look for her husband: *“They told me that Jean was at the military command camp in the southern zone, the army HQ in Ziguinchor (COMZONE). I went there but the soldiers told me he wasn’t there. I went to make a statement at the police station, and they were very polite. But since then I have received no news of my husband.”*

Khady Bassène was not put off, however, and on 31 August 1999, she filed a ‘*plainte contre X*’ ‘*avec constitution de partie civile*’ “for the illegal arrest and detention of her husband.” Obligated by law to consider this case, the Senegalese justice system initiated an inquiry and the Ziguinchor investigating judge heard the main witness to the arrest, Gaston Sagna, who was arrested at the same time as Jean Diandy. Gaston Sagna clearly confirmed the events to the judge, but the truth of this crucial account does not seem to have been verified in any way. In particular, there has been no comparison between the accounts of the witness, Gaston Sagna, and the soldiers who arrested him.



Picture of Khady Bassène ©AI

It is important to note that Khady Bassène has not been informed of the fact that the case was dismissed on 7 August 2000. This constitutes a violation of one of the most essential rules of law, since it has deprived the family’s lawyers of the right to appeal against this decision. It also demonstrates the Senegalese justice system’s lack of respect for the suffering of a “disappeared” person’s family.

Despite the attitude of the Senegalese justice system, which, yet again, demonstrated no desire to break with the impunity protecting the security forces in Casamance, Khady Bassène has never regretted filing her complaint, even if her approach aroused criticism from her family and friends. In November 2001 she thus confided to Amnesty International: *“People have criticised me for filing a complaint against the military. Many people are afraid, I said no, I filed a complaint to find out where my husband is.”*

Amnesty International has also obtained information on cases of people abducted by armed elements claiming to represent the MFDC and whose wives are still trying to ascertain their fate. These are particularly sensitive cases as these

⁹ This a complaint lodged against a person or persons unknown – trans. note.

civilians have often been abducted because of their non-Casamance origin. These ethnically motivated abuses raise concerns for other family members as to whether they can safely stay in a region in which armed elements, who represent a minority but are very determined, challenge the legitimacy of their presence. These elements, who claim to represent the MFDC, indeed attack civilians living in Casamance, but bearing non-Casamance names, in order to terrorise them and force some of them to leave the region. The apparent aim is to make Casamance a region primarily, if not exclusively, inhabited by the indigenous Diola population. In February and March 2001, some twenty people were killed by armed elements claiming to represent the MFDC, purely because of their non-Diola names.

The ethnic nature of these abuses is clearly illustrated by the abduction of a fisherman, Abdoul Karim Ba, on 15 July 2002. He was out fishing with five other people on a small boat when they were attacked by armed elements near Brin on the river Casamance (around 10 km south-west of Ziguinchor). They abducted the five fishermen who did not have Casamance names and released the sixth, who had a Diola name. They took the fishermen's boat, which was bigger than their own and told the Diola fisherman to take care of theirs or bear the consequences. The freed fisherman returned to Ziguinchor where he informed the families of his abducted colleagues. To date, none of them has been found.

Pictures of Roukhyatou Ba
and Abdoul Karim Ba ©Private

Roukhyatou Ba, wife of Abdoul Karim Ba, told Amnesty International in January 2003:

“My husband had a business but it was not going well. He took up fishing four months before he was abducted. I found out about his abduction from a relative contacted by the Diola fisherman who was released. I don't understand why they took him. If my husband had been Diola, he wouldn't have been taken. I don't know whether he's alive or not so I'm just waiting.”

Roukhyatou Ba did not go to the police about her husband's abduction but the boat owner filed a complaint and the police opened an inquiry. To this day, she has heard no more and has had no further news of her husband.

3.1 Impact of these "disappearances" and abductions on their families

At the same time as trying to discover the whereabouts of their husbands, these five women have had to face questioning from their children regarding their father, along with the financial problems created by this sudden absence.

All of these five women found themselves alone, with no psychological support structure, and they therefore reacted in whatever way seemed most appropriate to them, or in whatever way they felt most able to. In order to avoid passing on their worries, two of these women hid the truth from their youngest children, whilst a third, Roukhyatou Ba, simply told her children that their father had gone fishing on his boat as usual. However, the two other women decided to tell their children that their father had been arrested.

Khady Bassène and her husband Jean Diandy had seven children, among which four were still living with their parents at the time of their father's "disappearance." Khady Bassène felt that her eldest children could cope with the reality of this situation but she preferred to hide the truth from the youngest ones:

"I told the oldest ones that their father had been arrested by the soldiers and that I was looking for him but I did not tell the youngest ones the truth. Whenever they asked me where their father was I told them he was in the fields."

Antoinette Sagna, mother of eight children, five girls and three boys (aged between four and eighteen at the time of the "disappearance" of their father, Antoine Nyafouna, also chose to "protect" her youngest children, by hiding the truth from them. This was all the more difficult, as her two youngest daughters had been waiting all evening for their father to return and it was they who told their mother the news of his "disappearance."

In November 2001, one and a half years afterwards, Antoinette Sagna told an Amnesty International delegation:

“I told the oldest ones that their father had been arrested and that we had no news of him. But I didn’t dare tell the three youngest the truth, the two little girls, Bichette and Cocotte (aged 8 and 6 respectively at the time of the disappearance) and Job, the youngest (only 4 years old). Cocotte and Bichette were the first to tell me that their daddy hadn’t returned from Etomé. I haven’t spoken about him to them since and, as they don’t ask any questions, I don’t say anything, so as not to stir things up.”

Picture of Antoinette Sagna ©Private

But this silence has not prevented Job, her youngest child, from asking questions, to which she has given a response that she hoped would reassure him. In 2001, she told Amnesty International: *“When he returns from playing with his friends and he asks me where his daddy is, I tell him he’s gone on a trip.”*

Roukhyatou Ba, whose husband was abducted by armed elements of the MFDC in July 2002, simply chose to tell her two daughters, Fatoumata and Mariam - aged five and three respectively at the time of their father’s abduction - that he had gone to work on his fishing boat. One year later, in October 2003, Roukhyatou Ba told Amnesty International: *“I continue to tell my girls that their father has gone on a trip and they seem satisfied with this response.”*

The two other wives of “disappeared” persons whose cases are presented in this document decided differently and chose to tell their children immediately that their father had been arrested. In June 2001, Antoinette Diatta, wife of Moïse Ndoye Diatta, told the Amnesty International delegation: *“I told my children that their daddy had been arrested and they all cried because he was a good father who spoilt his children a lot.”*

Whatever decision each of these women took, Amnesty International observed, through repeated contact with them in January and October 2003, that several of the children continued to suffer because of this trauma.

Some children fell ill or showed behavioural problems. In January 2003, Khady Bassène told Amnesty International that her children continued to think about their father:

“In class, my children often cry and when I see them crying, I cry too. The little ones have grown up now and they want to know what has happened to their father. I tell them he was arrested but I cannot tell them whether he is alive or not. The youngest, Marianne, has taken it the hardest. She was very fond of her father, they went everywhere together and she never stops talking about him. When he disappeared, she fell ill. It was malaria but she said, ‘If I can’t see my daddy, I don’t want to go on living.’ She’s better now but she’s always sad.”

Similarly, Antoinette Sagna’s youngest son, Job, to whom his mother has, to this day, not told the truth about his father, has been so perturbed by this unexplained absence that his mother no longer has the strength to look after him herself. She told Amnesty International in January 2003:

“He was always talking about his father, and crying all the time. I couldn’t look after him any more. I wanted to put him in the Ziguinchor orphanage, S.O.S. enfants, so that he would forget, but they wouldn’t accept him because I could not prove his father was dead. Now he lives in Ziguinchor with my two sisters and things are better, he has ‘forgotten’.”

The sudden absence of their husband plunged the wives of the “disappeared” into serious material difficulty. In fact, four of the families mentioned in this document lived from the land, and women in Casamance cannot do such physically hard work in the fields alone.

Antoinette Sagna cultivated a rice field with her husband, Antoine Nyafouna. He ploughed the land and she weeded. Before being arrested in March 2000, Antoine Nyafouna had planted some young mango trees. His “disappearance” shattered and considerably impoverished the family. In November 2001, Antoinette Sagna told the Amnesty International delegation:

“Rice cultivation is the hardest, I can’t do it alone, and so my two boys aged 17 and 16 help me during the rainy season (period of cultivation between June and September). Luckily, this is also the holidays, and so they can continue to go to school. I also harvest the mangoes planted by

my husband and I sell them at the Ziguinchor port market. But we often don't have enough money."

This situation became even more difficult because of the low rainfall in Senegal, in 2002. Antoinette Sagna had to adapt. In January 2003, she told Amnesty International:

"Because there hasn't been much rain, I only planted a part of my field with cassava. The harvest is in August and I hope there will be something. I also sell the brooms that I make. I give the young people tobacco to climb the palm trees to gather branches and with these, I make brooms that I sell in the Ziguinchor market."

Eugénie Sambou has experienced the same difficulties. She lived with her husband Ephrème Diatta in Diakène Diola and they cultivated three fields together. In November 2001, Eugénie Sambou told Amnesty International that, on her own, she could only look after one field and had to employ labourers, whom she had to feed and pay:

"Life has become much harder, I am all alone and I have to find labourers to help me. Sometimes they are available, but I have to pay them. If I can't find anyone, I have to wait and leave the fields bare. There is a better solution, self-help associations that group together young people, the elderly or women from a village. They ask for less money but you have to give them three meals a day and, in the case of the elderly, they want tobacco and alcohol. I also know how to make baskets with 'manier'¹⁰ fibres. I used to do it from time to time. This year I am doing it a lot to pay for the school registration fees and supplies for my children."

Eugénie Sambou, too, suffered from the bad rainfall that affected the region in 2002. In addition, her health has deteriorated. She told Amnesty International in January 2003:

"This year I sent young people to cultivate one rice field only. I asked the young people from a village association to plough the land, so that I could plant it. I had to give them 15,000 francs CFA (around 23 euros) and food

¹⁰ A local tree – trans. note.

to eat. But because it didn't rain, there was no harvest. And I couldn't make baskets any more because I was ill, my whole body was ill."

In October 2003, Eugénie Sambou told Amnesty International that her state of health was deteriorating because of how hard she had to work to provide for her family: *"I have bad pains in my back and chest because I carry very heavy loads. I go to Guinea Bissau to buy bananas and cassava and I bring them back to the Senegalese border on foot to sell in Cap Skirring."*

It has been the same for Khady Bassène, who has had to ask young people to plough the land but, not having enough money, she has had to ask her family for help: *"I had to borrow money from my cousins to pay the young people who came to plough my field. After the harvest, I will repay them and sell the produce at the market."* Khady Bassène has also had great difficulties paying her rent. She told Amnesty International in November 2001:

"I live with my family in Belfort, a neighbourhood of Ziguinchor. I have three rooms in a concession. The owner of the concession told me at the start: 'I understand your situation, you can stay here but it is not free. When you have money, you must pay, I won't be too demanding but I can't let you stay for free.' I paid 12,500 francs CFA (around 19 euros) per month until January 2001, but now I owe ten months in arrears and the owner has said: 'It's beginning to drag on, if you can't pay in a few months time you'll have to leave and I'll give the house to someone else'."

Khady Bassène was finally evicted from her home in March 2002. In January 2003, she told Amnesty International: *"This year, there has been no rain and the rice fields are dry. So I wasn't able to pay my rent. The owner lost patience and we had to leave for Djibock (outlying neighbourhood of Ziguinchor) where a cousin has lent me a house."*

Khady Bassène was able to find a small job in a school canteen set up by Unicef, but she earns little and cannot provide for all her family's needs. In addition to this, one of her daughters is a trained seamstress, but the family does not have enough money to buy her a sewing machine, so she has to work for someone else. Even so, the salaries the mother and daughter bring home are not enough to cover for the family's needs.

Khady Bassène's financial problems, in particular, are the result of one of the more perverse effects of the Senegalese authorities' refusal to recognise the

“disappearances” of Casamance civilians. Her husband, Jean Diandy, was a retired gardener, who received a quarterly pension of 53,000 francs CFA (around 80 euros). Shortly after his arrest, his wife, Khady Bassène, went to the pension fund to collect her husband’s pension.

“They told me they couldn’t give me the pension money unless I showed them my husband’s death certificate. I told them my husband had been arrested by the military and that they wouldn’t tell me what had happened to him. As my husband’s “disappearance” coincided with the new school term and I needed money to pay for school supplies for the children, a kind person at the pension fund gave me one month’s pension. But I’ve had nothing since, as I can’t get a death certificate.”

Khady Bassène tried to obtain a death certificate for her husband. She went to the regional hospital in Ziguinchor, but they told her they could do nothing for her, as they had not seen the body of her husband. In October 2003, Khady Bassène told Amnesty International that she still wanted to obtain a death certificate for her husband, but that all her efforts had been in vain as the authorities merely stated that they could not provide such a document without official proof of her husband’s death.

The absence of a death certificate has also prevented some children of those who have “disappeared” from being admitted to orphanages or from benefiting from grants. This was, in particular, the case for the children of Antoinette Diatta, who, along with her husband Moïse Ndoye Diatta, had always believed that their children should receive a good education. Before the “disappearance” of Moïse Ndoye Diatta, the couple both worked six months during the tourist season in the Hotel Savannah in Cap Skirring. During the rest of the year they cultivated their rice fields, which enabled them to send their children to religious schools to receive an education in line with their Catholic faith. Whilst the eldest son, Ambroise, aged 21, was studying at a mechanics school in Dakar, the two younger children, Colette (aged 16 at the time of her father’s “disappearance”) and Jérôme (aged 15) were, respectively, attending a school run by the Catholic sisters in Sédhiou and a boy’s school run by monks in Oussouye. The costs of their schooling were very high. Indeed, for Colette, the family had to pay 10,000 francs CFA (around 15 euros) for registration fees, 45,000 francs CFA (around 69 euros) per year for accommodation (she was a boarder) and 4,500 francs CFA (around 7 euros) per month for food.

The lack of income meant that Antoinette Diatta could not continue to pay all of these fees for her children, despite what she and her husband had so wanted. In

November 2001, Antoinette Diatta explained to Amnesty International, *“This year I could only pay a part of the registration fees and supplies. Luckily, the monks are ‘easy going and patient’. A private lay school would already have sent us away.”*

When asked if she had told the schools’ directors the reason for her financial difficulties, Antoinette Diatta stated: *“No, I haven’t said that my husband was arrested, because the directors would think I was asking for favours.”*

In November 2001, the Amnesty International delegation was able to meet Ambroise, eldest son of Antoinette Diatta, in Dakar. He had just passed his BFEM (brevet de fin d’études moyennes - certificate of intermediate studies) and wanted to go on to do a BT (baccalauréat technique - technical baccalaureate) in mechanics but, given the situation, he was thinking of ending his studies in order to work and help his mother, brothers and sisters. Antoinette Diatta was against this and was insisting that he should continue with his studies.



Picture of Antoinette Diatta ©AI

During a meeting in January 2003, Antoinette Diatta admitted that her financial problems were getting worse. She continued to work as a laundry woman in the hotel in Cap Skirring but, because of the continuing tensions in Casamance, there were fewer tourists. Because of the bad rainfall, she had had no harvest and her son, Jérôme, who should have taken his BFEM this year at the school in Oussouye, has had to give up school because she could no longer pay the registration and school fees. *“Now”,* said Antoinette Diatta, *“he’s at home, he does nothing, and he’s sad because he’s had to give up school.”*

Colette will sit her BFEM this year but Antoinette Diatta has no money to enable her to continue her studies with the sisters in Sédhiou the following year. *“If she passes her BFEM, I am going to try to get her into a state school and she can come and live at home to save money.”* The only consolation for this women who, like her husband, placed all her hopes on educating her children to give them the best chance in life, is that Ambroise is continuing his studies at the mechanics school in Dakar and *“he’s top of his class”* says his mother proudly.

3.1.1) The case of Roukhyatou Ba: challenging the presence of non-Casamance people in this region.

Apart from the psychological and economic problems caused by this abduction, the case of Roukhyatou Ba, wife of the fisherman abducted by armed elements claiming to represent the MFDC, raises the crucial issue of the security in this region for people not originally from Casamance. In fact, over the past two years, more than thirty people have been attacked and some of them killed in cold blood merely because they did not have a Casamance surname. These attacks have taken place particularly along Casamance roads, where elements claiming to represent the MFDC have attacked transport vehicles and, having separated people on an ethnic basis, have deliberately targeted the people whose names indicated they were originally from the north of Senegal.

These attacks have led some people with non-Casamance surnames to leave the region. This was the case of the wives of the other fishermen abducted at the same time as Roukhyatou Ba's husband, who have returned to the north of Senegal.

Amnesty International could see how aware Roukhyatou Ba was of the fact that having a non-Casamance surname could expose anyone to abduction or deliberate murder on the roads of Casamance. However, she has not once thought of leaving the region in which she was born, and explained the reasons for her choice to Amnesty International in January 2003: *"It's true that I only speak Wolof and that I don't understand Diola but I was born here, in Ziguinchor, my parents are originally from Fouta but they've lived here a long time, this is the only place I know and I want to live here."*

This has also been her family's choice, and they have helped her a lot since her husband was abducted. Roukhyatou Ba has thus been able to move in with her parents. *"Everyone's clubbing together to help us »*, she told Amnesty International in January 2003. *"My husband had a small shop in the market but he had closed it down because it wasn't doing well. I now go back there and buy onions, pepper, spices wholesale from a trader and then sell them on. Sometimes I make a profit and sometimes I don't but as my husband had borrowed money I have to pay it back."*

(4) JUSTICE AND REDRESS FOR THE WOMEN VICTIMS OF THE CONFLICT IN CASAMANCE

The cases of the seven women described above are but examples of the situation of dozens of other women, victims of sexual violence or whose relatives have “disappeared” or been abducted. All the women met by Amnesty International have, above all, expressed a desire to see their fundamental rights recognised. This requires putting an end to the impunity enjoyed by those responsible for these acts. Through this need for justice, the women who are victims of sexual violence want to see their suffering recognised, the perpetrators of these acts brought to justice and have financial reparation and medical care provided for. The women whose husbands have “disappeared” or were abducted want to know the truth regarding the fate of their husbands so that, where appropriate, they can begin a period of mourning with their families, in order to move on and rebuild their lives and they claim the right to redress.

Justice and redress for the victims of rape and sexual violence

In relation, more particularly, to the women who have been the victims of rape or sexual violence, the two parties to the conflict must, in order to avoid a repetition of such acts, make known to their combatants that torture (particularly rape and other forms of sexual violence) will no longer be tolerated. They must, in addition, publicly recognise that rape committed in an armed conflict constitutes a war crime and may, under certain circumstances, be considered a crime against humanity. In this regard article 3, common to the four Geneva Conventions of 1949, which applies to all parties in an armed conflict of a non-international nature and protects all people not taking an active part in hostilities, particularly prohibits “*violence to life and person, in particular murder of all kinds, mutilation, cruel treatment and torture.*”

In the two cases where the responsibility of armed elements claiming to represent the MFDC is invoked, it is essential that all combatants who are members of this armed opposition group and are suspected of sexual violence be removed from all positions of responsibility in which they could be led to repeat this kind of atrocity. The MFDC leaders must also firmly remind their troops that they must respect article 3 common to the Geneva Conventions and refrain from committing any violence against civilians, particularly deliberate and arbitrary assassination, torture and inhuman treatment of any kind, including rape and other forms of sexual violence.

It should be noted that the information published by Amnesty International on the atrocities committed by armed elements claiming to represent the MFDC has not, for the most part, been challenged by the leaders of this armed opposition group. The historic leader of this movement, Father Augustin Diamacoune Senghor, has, in particular, denounced the perpetrators of these crimes. But internal dissent within the independence movement and the atomisation of this movement into small armed groups, apparently acting uncontrollably, has considerably weakened the impact of this position in practice.

In cases where soldiers from the Senegalese army have been responsible for similar acts, the Senegalese government must take urgent measures to initiate independent and impartial inquiries into the allegations of rape and sexual violence and ensure that those responsible for these abuses are brought to justice. The Senegalese authorities must respect and encourage respect for the provisions of the international and regional human rights instruments they have ratified – particularly the African Charter on Human and Peoples' Rights and the Convention on the Elimination of all Forms of Discrimination against Women.

Justice and redress for the wives of the “disappeared” or persons abducted by the MFDC

When, in January 2003, Antoinette Diatta explained to Amnesty International the difficulties she was facing, she concluded by saying: *“More than money, I want to know the truth, I want to find my husband’s grave, I want something.”* This need to know the truth was apparent in the cases of all five women described above. As Antoinette Diatta repeated during another interview with Amnesty International: *“if my husband is dead, then they should tell me and give me a death certificate. That would help me turn the page. And then, if my children were recognised as orphans, they’d have more chance of obtaining grants.”*

The Senegalese authorities’ refusal to shed light on the dozens of cases of people arrested by their security forces over the last decade, and of whom there has been no news since, is a source of continual suffering for these women. This suffering on the part of the families of the “disappeared” is clearly highlighted in the first article of the 1992 Declaration on the Protection of All Persons from Enforced Disappearance (hereafter 1992 Declaration): *“Any act of enforced*

*disappearance places the persons subjected thereto outside the protection of the law and inflicts severe suffering on them and their families.*¹¹

It is important to note that the two parties to the conflict, having long denied the truth of the human rights violations denounced by Amnesty International, have finally recognised that the abuses have been committed by their combatants. However, this vague recognition has not had, for the moment, any impact on identifying those responsible, putting an end to impunity or granting redress for the victims' families.

This apathy is particularly visible in the case of the four women whose husbands "disappeared" after apparently being arrested by the security forces. These cases were officially presented to the Senegalese government by Amnesty International in 2001, and there was no denial of the content of any of the precise events mentioned by the organization. With regard to the issue of "disappearances", the authorities contented themselves, in an official response sent to Amnesty International in July 2001, with taking note of the fact that Amnesty International had "*listed a hundred or so cases of unsolved disappearances or executions.*"

The Senegalese authorities are also formally committed to shedding light on all cases of human rights violations and punishing their authors. This was clearly stated in the official response sent in July 2001 by the Senegalese authorities to Amnesty International following a confidential memorandum sent to the two parties in conflict. In this text, the Senegalese government stated "*the firm desire of the Head of State and Government to combat the impunity from which, at certain times, those responsible for abuses have been able to benefit.*" The text added that: "*if human rights violations have been committed, those responsible must be identified, sought out and brought to justice. Senegal wishes all those responsible for crimes or offences, whether they belong to public authority bodies or not, to be accountable for their actions.*"

Unfortunately, two years after this formal commitment, it can be seen that, to Amnesty International's knowledge, no measures have been taken by the Senegalese authorities. No inquiry seems to have been instigated by the Senegalese justice system and impunity is thus still commonplace.

¹¹ This text was adopted by the General Assembly of the United Nations in its resolution 47/133 of 18 December 1992.

And yet international standards clearly state States' obligation to redress and compensate those who have "disappeared" and their families. Article 19 of the 1992 Declaration thus stipulates: "*The victims of acts of enforced disappearance and their family shall obtain redress and shall have the right to adequate compensation, including the means for as complete a rehabilitation as possible. In the event of the death of the victim as a result of an act of enforced disappearance, their dependents shall also be entitled to compensation.*"

The Working Group on Enforced or Involuntary Disappearances has, for its part, specified in several of its reports what the "right to redress" noted in article 19 of this Declaration means. In its 1998 report¹² it specifies firstly that: "*The right to obtain redress ...is broader than the right to an effective legal or judicial remedy...*" (§ 70). Beyond the obligation to initiate an independent and impartial inquiry and to pursue the perpetrators of these acts, it enjoins the states not to hinder clarification of cases by promulgating amnesty laws and to put an end to the vicious circle of impunity.

In terms of the right of victims and their families "*to adequate compensation*", the Working Group specifies in the same report that: "*In addition to the victims who survived the disappearance, their families are also entitled to compensation for the suffering during the time of disappearance and in the event of the death of the victim, his or her dependants are entitled to compensation. Compensation shall be "adequate", i.e. proportionate to the gravity of the human rights violation (e.g. the period of disappearance, the conditions of detention, etc.) and to the suffering of the victim and the family. Monetary compensation shall be granted for any damage resulting from an enforced disappearance such as physical or mental harm, lost opportunities, material damages and loss of earnings, harm to reputation and costs required for legal or expert assistance*" (§72 and §73).

Finally, article 19 of the 1992 Declaration specifies that the families of the "disappeared" have the right to benefit from "*the means for as complete a rehabilitation as possible.*" In its 1998 report, the Working Group specifies that this rehabilitation "*refers to medical and psychological care and rehabilitation for any form of physical or mental damage as well as to legal and social rehabilitation, guarantees of non-repetition, restoration of personal liberty, family life, citizenship, employment or property, return to one's place of residence and similar forms of*

¹² Working Group on Enforced or Involuntary Disappearances (E/CN.4/1998/43)

restitution, satisfaction and reparation which may remove the consequences of the enforced disappearance” (§75).

It is thus clear that it is because Senegal has not respected its obligations that the wives of the “disappeared” and their families continue to suffer both psychologically and economically. The Senegalese authorities must comply with international prescriptions without delay. The government must clarify the cases of the “disappeared” and bring those responsible for these acts to justice and apply the right to redress for victims and their families in all its aspects, including the right to financial compensation and rehabilitation.¹³

Through the examples of these seven women, this document seeks to draw the attention of the Senegalese authorities and the MFDC to the need to comply with their international obligations and to provide a response to the suffering of these families by recognising their right to redress. It is insufficient to abstain from challenging the facts, as it is to issue public condemnations. There is an urgent need to give the justice system the means to bring an end to impunity and grant moral and material redress to the hundreds of people affected by the conflict. Beyond demands for justice and redress, there is a need for official recognition of the suffering experienced. The names of dozens of civilian victims of the conflict appear in Amnesty International’s documents. Other cases should be examined and clarified by the justice system. This document has shown the urgency to act and it has emphasised the determination of these women to overcome their ordeal and continue to survive, for their own benefit and that of their children. It is time the two parties to the conflict showed the same level of courage.

¹³ In its 14-Point Programme for the Prevention of “Disappearances”, published in 1993, Amnesty International states: “Victims of 'disappearance' and their dependants should be entitled to obtain fair and adequate redress from the state, including financial compensation. Victims who reappear should be provided with appropriate medical care or rehabilitation.”

(5) RECOMMENDATIONS

Over the course of the last decade, Amnesty International has made numerous recommendations to the Senegalese government and the MFDC, with the aim of encouraging the two parties to respect human rights. As this document shows, neither party has taken the necessary measures to comply with international law. The recommendations below indicate certain immediate measures that the two parties must take for the women victims of the conflict in Casamance to obtain justice and redress.

I. RECOMMENDATIONS TO THE SENEGALESE GOVERNMENT

(A) COMBAT IMPUNITY IN THE AREA OF “DISAPPEARANCES”

Amnesty International demands of the Senegalese authorities that:

- Rapid and impartial inquiries be opened into all allegations of “disappearances” that may be the responsibility of the Senegalese security forces in the context of the conflict in Casamance so that those responsible can be brought to justice.
- State employees suspected of being involved in the “disappearances” be immediately relieved of their duties for the duration of the inquiry. The victims’ families must have access to all information relating to the inquiry and be authorised to produce elements of proof. Plaintiffs, witnesses, lawyers and all other people involved in the inquiry must be protected against all acts of intimidation or reprisals.
- The inquiry be continued until the fate of the “disappeared” victim has been officially clarified.

(B) REDRESS FOR THE VICTIMS OF “DISAPPEARANCES” AND THEIR FAMILIES

Amnesty International demands of the Senegalese authorities that:

- The Senegalese authorities recognise the “suffering” of the “disappeared” and their families as noted in the first article of the Declaration on the Protection of all Persons from Enforced Disappearance, adopted by the United Nations on 18 December 1992, and ensure they benefit from the

right to redress, including the right to compensation and rehabilitation.

II. RECOMMENDATIONS TO THE MFDC

PUT AN END TO SEXUAL VIOLENCE AND CIVILIAN ABDUCTIONS

Amnesty International demands that the leaders of the MFDC:

- Clearly condemn the atrocities committed by elements claiming to represent their movement, particularly sexual violence and the abduction of civilians, and immediately take all possible measures, in line with international humanitarian law, to put an end to these acts and prevent them from being repeated.
- Do everything to exert strict hierarchical control over their troops and to hold all members having committed human rights violations, or having allowed them to be committed, responsible for their actions. In addition, the MFDC leaders must ensure that all persons suspected of such activities are removed from any command post and from any position that might offer them the opportunity of repeating these human rights violations.

III. RECOMMENDATIONS TO BOTH PARTIES

Amnesty International calls upon both parties to the conflict to respect the basic humanitarian principles as stated in article 3 common to the four Geneva Conventions of 1949, namely: to treat civilians and all persons taking no active part in the hostilities humanely and to prevent all recourse to illegal executions and torture.