

Rape of Women During French Colonialism ... A Crime of Honor that Escaped Punishment

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Abstract

Rape has been widely used as a weapon of war throughout history, with women often becoming the easiest targets during conflicts. In such circumstances, they are turned into primary objectives, employed to humiliate and demoralize the enemy. The bodies of women from the opposing side are thus transformed into vulnerable and easily attainable war targets. This was precisely the case during the colonial period in Algeria, from 1830 to 1962. However, despite being routinely practiced by French forces for over a century against virtuous Algerian women, rape remained a silenced crime. While rape is now recognized internationally as a war crime and a crime against humanity, Algeria's chances of prosecuting the perpetrators remain slim. The long-standing silence surrounding this crime has changed its narrative and obscured crucial evidence. Furthermore, international legal protections for women from rape in times of war came too late.

Keywords: Rape – French colonialism – International law – International courts.

اغتصاب النساء إبان الاستعمار الفرنسي... جريمة شرف تفلت من العقاب

ملخص

الاغتصاب هو أحد أسلحة الحرب الشائع استعمالها في العالم منذ القدم، ذلك أن المرأة دائما هي الضحية السهلة في الحروب، وهدفا أساسيا لإذلال العدو وتقويض معنوياته وإهانته، فتتحول أجساد نساء الطرف الآخر إلى هدف حربي سهل المنال، وهو ما حصل إبان الفترة الاستعمارية بالجزائر من 1830 حتى 1962. لكنها ظلت جريمة مسكوت عنها رغم أنها كانت جريمة روتينية مارسها القوات الفرنسية على مر أكثر من مائة سنة ضد الجزائريات العفيفات. وإن أصبحت اليوم تحظى باهتمام دولي كبير لترقى إلى مصاف جرائم الحرب و الجرائم ضد الإنسانية، إلا إن حظوظ الجزائر في معاقبة مجرميها تبقى ضئيلة لأن جريمة السكوت عنها غيرت معالمها و غيّبت أدلتها و لان حماية القانون الدولي للمرأة من الاغتصاب في زمن الحرب جاءت متأخرة .
الكلمات المفتاحية : جريمة الاغتصاب- الاستعمار الفرنسي -القانون الدولي – المحاكم الدولية .

Introduction

Not all of the crimes committed by French colonialism have been fully told, as many chapters remain unknown and forgotten, just like its wounds that have yet to heal. One of the most secretive of these crimes is rape, which remained a hidden taboo in the history of the Algerian revolution and French colonialism, under the pretext of preserving family honor. This silence encouraged French soldiers to continue committing further acts of rape, taking advantage from the victims' silence on the one hand, and from the concealment of evidence and the secrecy surrounding these crimes on the other.

Despite more than half a century passing since the restoration of national sovereignty, efforts to highlight this crime and hold France accountable for the honor of our grandmothers remain timid. Much work still awaits the victims to document the crimes of their oppressors. What deepened the wound was the provocative French film *Pour Djamila*¹, which acknowledges the crime of rape committed against Algerian women by the French colonizer. Released on the 50th anniversary of the Evian Accords, the film reopened old wounds and reignited the thirst for justice in restoring our collective honor. France continues to haunt our emotions, reviving pain and suffering by releasing from its tainted archives images that expose both itself and its dark past. This is what motivated me to shed light on this crime and delve into its details in an attempt to answer a fundamental problem statement: To what extent can France be held accountable for the rapes committed in Algeria during the occupation?

The nature of the subject required us to combine a historical approach to recalling the facts and circumstances of the rape crime with descriptive and analytical methods to describe and analyze several legal texts addressing it. To address the raise problem statement, we divided the study into two main sections:

Section One: The Circumstances of the Rape Crime During French Colonialism and Evidence of Its Commission

Section Two: Algeria's Chances of Holding Rape Perpetrators Accountable

Section One: The Circumstances of the Rape Crime During French Colonialism and Evidence of Its Commission

The crimes committed by French colonialism in Algeria were numerous and cannot be fully cataloged. Among the most egregious violations of human dignity was the rape of women, which was not only intended to insult, belittle, and humiliate Algerians by violating their honor, but also served as a deliberate attack on their values and beliefs rooted in a great religion that upholds modesty and chastity. This policy was pursued by the colonizers from the moment they desecrated Algerian soil, achieving various objectives.

Firstly: The Circumstances of the Rape Crime During French Colonialism

The crime of rape was perpetrated by the French army against Algerian women of virtue throughout 132 years of colonial presence. It served to fulfill various key objectives, including:

A. Rape of Women as a Means of Humiliation and Coercion of Men

French military searches and security apparatus initially targeted those suspected of belonging to the popular resistance initially, and later with the National Liberation Front and

The movie *Pour Djamila*, produced by Laurence Bachman with contributions from *France 3* and *Arte*, and aired ¹ on *France 3* in March 2012, is a bold step in breaking one of the taboos of French cinema and media, which had labeled Djamila and her companions as "bomb planters." The film depicts key moments, such as the arrest of the 12-year-old resistance fighter Djamila Boupacha, one of the beautiful Algerian women who fought bravely in 1957. It also highlights the trial led by the French lawyer Gisèle Halimi and, for the first time, features graphic scenes of the rape that Djamila was subjected to, as well as the torture she endured during most of the interrogation process. The film is based on the book by French lawyer Gisèle Halimi, *Djamila Boupacha*. For more details, refer to:

- Mustapha Massouda, "The First French Film to Depict the Rape of Bomb Planters: *Pour Djamila* Reveals the French Judiciary's Involvement in the Torture of Algerian Women," *El Khabar* newspaper, March 22, 2012.
- Gisèle Halimi, Simone de Beauvoir, *Djamila Boupacha*, Collection Blanche, Gallimard, Paris, 1962.

Army. They would search homes, and when they did not find the men, the soldiers would take the virgin daughter, wife, or mother as hostages to military centers. This tactic was used either to pressure the brother, husband, or father to surrender himself to the French forces² or to obtain a confession, even if false or incorrect. Women were subjected to torture and rape just like men.

B. Rape as a Means of Torture and Coercion

French soldiers used the public rape of Algerian women, often in front of the victims' families, as a means to crush the Algerians' spirits and subjugate them. Rape was also prevalent as a method of torture and interrogation of women captured from among the freedom fighters, activists, especially those known at the time as "bombers" during the period from 1954 to 1962. During interrogations, 9 out of 10 detained women experienced brutal rape³.

C. Systematic Collective Rape

Few are aware that the first crime committed by the French colonizers upon setting foot on Algerian soil in 1830 was the rape of the women of the Dey's palace. The soldiers then began roaming the streets of the capital, searching homes to gather young girls, aged between nine and fifteen, as war spoils for the enjoyment of the colonizer's soldiers. This drove the men of the capital to flee with their women and daughters to the villages and hamlets, leaving behind their wealth, trade, and properties, as nothing was worth more than honor⁴.

Similarly, official documents include one from 1948 by General "Bugeaud" instructing French military personnel to capture women under 15 years old and transport them to remote islands near the Atlantic Ocean to cohabit with them to strengthen the French army. Testimonies also recount the involvement of African participants in the rape of Algerian women, including accounts from freedom fighters who resisted torture in prisons and refused to speak. Some French generals ordered their rape by French recruits from African countries to force them to speak under the pain of brutal rape⁵.

Historical records demonstrate that African recruits would call out "à nous les blanches," while French soldiers would call out "à nous les orientales."

Furthermore, the "harkis" (Algerians who fought on the side of the French) participated in rape operations out of revenge and jealousy towards the masculinity of the freedom fighters. This shows that rape and violations of honor during French colonialism and the liberation war were used by the French army as a strategy rather than being incidental or impulsive crimes⁶.

² Mohamed Kantari, *From the Heroics of Algerian Women in the Revolution and the Crimes of French Colonialism*, Dar Al-Gharb Publishing and Distribution, 2009, p. 21 and beyond.

Gisèle Halimi, Simone de Beauvoir, *Op. Cit.*, p. 42.³
The program "In the Footsteps of the Ancestors: The Price of Freedom (Rape)" was aired by Algerian Television⁴ on the occasion of the 52nd anniversary of Algeria's independence. For further reference, you can consult the link provided. <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=xQRDhDeVacE>
J (M), *Rapes during the Algerian War, Twentieth Century, History Review*, No. 75, July–September 2002, pp. ⁵ 123-132.

⁶ See: Mathieu Rigouste, *The Internal Enemy: The Colonial and Military Genealogy of the Security Order in Contemporary France*, La Découverte Editions, 2009, p. 132.

Secondly: Searching for Evidence of the Rape Crime

Currently, more than fifty-six years after the defeat of French colonialism in Algeria, it is not easy to find evidence left by the French of their rape crimes. Some of it has been erased, and what remains does not fully convey the brutality of what occurred.

A. Factors Contributing to the Obliteration of Evidence

Several factors have contributed to the obliteration of much evidence of French colonial crimes in Algeria, particularly the rape of Algerian women. These factors vary in their historical, social, and legal nature and can be classified as follows:

- **The Conservative Nature of Algerian Society, Particularly During the Colonial Period:** Algerian society was reluctant to reveal issues of honor, even when they involved the colonizers. Freedom fighters often married raped women to protect their honor, rendering rape a "silenced" crime and a "neglected issue." It was, and still is, referred to as the "crime of ambiguous figures." Even nowadays, rape is still a stigma and scandal in free Algeria, and seeking justice often involves exposing the victim and publicizing the attack on her honor.

- **The Disappearance of Algerian Archives and Their Significance in Documenting French Crimes, Especially Rape:** France seized and closed off these archives to Algerians, and they were removed during the 132 years of occupation, becoming French property. France now refers to this as "transferred archives," regarding it part of its "spoils" and history. The Algerian government has not formally demanded their return. What has been recovered to date is thanks to the efforts of civil society—lawyers, historians, legal experts, and academics—who, since 1999, have managed to retrieve some of the archives, though this material has not yet offered conclusive evidence of crimes against the Algerian people⁷.

- **Lack of Global Media Coverage:** The global media, which could have served as a key witness to French colonial crimes, including rape, failed to bring these issues to international attention and document the war. The French military imposed censorship to prevent the true nature of its dirty war in Algeria from being exposed.

- **The Évian Agreements of March 8, 1962:** The interim government made concessions requested by French government representatives, which encompassed amnesty for Algerians who collaborated with France. The agreements also contained a clause to halt legal proceedings against both Algerian freedom fighters and French military personnel, in Algeria and France. This contributed to the perpetrators escaping punishment⁸.

- **Prisons and Unofficial Detention Centers:** These facilities did not function under a foundational law and were not legally recognized. Their officials and torturers enjoyed legal immunity, protecting them from prosecution and legal accountability. They had full powers of torture and execution. Furthermore, all civilian and military

⁷ Aaid Amira, *Algeria Buys Back Its Stolen Archives from France*, article available on the website: <https://www.noonpost.org/content/17492>, accessed on 20/02/2018.

⁸ Daho Ould Kablia, *The Évian Accords: Communications, Talks, and Negotiations During the National Liberation Revolution (1954-1962)*. Available at: http://www.dgsn.dz/IMG/pdf/watika_juin_2012.pdf.

authorities were aware of these centers' existence but consistently denied it. These centers were often private properties, not under government control, in the capital. They became unofficial command centers for the Foreign Legion units, such as "Villa Sisney," which turned into one of the most notorious French torture centers during the Algerian War of Independence. Many women involved in bomb-making were raped there. Other notable locations included the Chouani Farm detention center in Blida, the Rou Farm in Oued Tlilat, and the Char Farm in the municipality of Zahana. These were mostly private properties not under French administration⁹.

•**Lack of International Legal Personality for Algeria:** It prevented Algeria from joining international agreements protecting combatants or civilians from wartime brutality, such as the Geneva Conventions of 1949, which coincided with the French occupation of Algeria. However, despite Algeria's lack of international status required to enforce international agreements on the treatment of civilians and prisoners, the Front did apply the Geneva Conventions from the outbreak of military operations due to their inherently humane provisions, which aligned with the struggle of the Algerian people.

B. Evidence Left by History

France was expelled from Algeria in 1962, taking with it the traces of its crimes, leaving behind only photographs, victim testimonies, and confessions from French torturers.

1. Modest Testimonies of Rape Victims

The rape of Algerian women by the French army was a daily occurrence for this military force. Numerous firsthand testimonies have emerged from Algerian women who endured severe physical and psychological torture as a result of rape. Many of these testimonies surfaced later, including notable accounts from freedom fighters such as Djamila Bouhired and Djamila Boupacha. One of the most controversial testimonies came from Louiza Ighil Ahriz in 2000, when she spoke to a Le Monde journalist about the torture and violence she experienced at the hands of the 10th division of soldiers under General Massu in a barracks between September and December 1957. These statements were later detailed in her book *Algérienne*, which sparked significant debate. The controversy intensified when General Massu dismissed Louiza's claims as "lies" during a French TV interview on March 6, 2002, leading to the case being brought before the French Supreme Court¹⁰.

2. Confessions from Torturers

The confessions of torturers, often found in memoirs, are considerable. One of the most significant is from the war criminal Paul Aussaresses, whose revelations about torture and rape in his book *The Special Services in Algeria* caused a stir. Aussaresses not only admitted to the widespread use of torture but also acknowledged that even French women sympathetic to the Algerians were subjected to rape. For instance, Annik Castel-Bayeh, married to a French

Henri Pouillot, *Villa Susini (Torture in Algeria: A Conscript Speaks, June 1961 - March 1962)*, Éditions Tirésias,⁹ Paris, 2001, p. 29.

Report broadcast on May 20, 2016, on the French channel (France 2), *Rapes During the Algerian War*, available¹⁰ on YouTube at: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=nyTlHxznCeQ>, accessed on 20/01/2018.

Communist sympathetic to the Algerian National Liberation Front, was arrested and raped by a French paratrooper. He was tried in 1958 and sentenced to two years in prison, suspended¹¹.

Henri Pouillot, a French soldier, also discussed in his book *Villa Sésini*—a villa where torture and rape were conducted during the ten months he spent there from June 1961 to March 1962—that rape was employed as a method of interrogation by the French army, among other revelations from several sources¹².

3. Photographs Captured by Cameras

Anyone browsing the images left by history concerning rape crimes—whether in history books, historical documents, or French and Algerian websites addressing French colonial crimes in Algeria—will be shocked by the disturbing and abhorrent images of brutal colonizers. These images show soldiers reveling in the humiliation of women and men, after torture and rape, and then photographing and sending these images to their families and friends in France. Recently, some images from that period have surfaced, depicting rape in its most horrific forms and demonstrating painful stories hidden by time about women who withstood the enemy, only to have their honor brutally attacked in return¹³.

Section Two: Algeria's Chances of Holding Rape Criminals Accountable

Since the end of World War II to the present day, a strong legal framework has been established against rape in times of war and armed conflict. International humanitarian law involves texts in the Geneva Conventions and Additional Protocol II that prohibit rape and classify it as a war crime and a crime against humanity. The Rome Statute of the International Criminal Court, along with the decisions of ad hoc criminal tribunals (Nuremberg, Rwanda, the former Yugoslavia, and Sierra Leone), and the Convention on the Prevention and Punishment of the Crime of Genocide, among others, place rape in the category of war crimes, crimes against humanity, and also crimes associated with genocide.

Firstly: Rape as a Crime Penalized by International Law During French Occupation

In this regard, we cannot cover all the international legal instruments and mechanisms. Thus, we will focus on the most significant conventions and international courts that criminalize the act of rape.

A. Rape in the Geneva Conventions

Women, like other civilians, are entitled to protection and political rights as enshrined by law, equally and without any discrimination, while regarding the particularities of the female gender, such as physical capabilities, pregnancy, and child-rearing, as well as the concept of honor. In this framework, the Fourth Geneva Convention and Additional Protocol I included

Testimony of Annick Castel Paillet (a victim of rape during the Algerian War), broadcast on May 23, 2015, on ¹¹ the French channel (Arte), *Shocking Documentary on Rapes During the Algerian War*. Available at: <http://www.ina.fr/video/4669392001>. Accessed on 25/01/2018.

Henri Pouillot, Op. Cit.¹²

Film critic Ahmed Bjaoui considered that the only genuine images that circulated outside of French military ¹³ censorship during the Algerian War of Independence were those taken by American journalists led by John Kraft. These images exposed the brutal reality of the French military's actions in Algeria and significantly contributed to internationalizing the issue and gaining support for it in global forums. For more, see Sharif Kleib, *Media and Image During the War of Independence*, published in *El-Nasr* newspaper on 1/11/2014.

various provisions emphasizing the necessity of protecting women from sexual violence during armed conflict. Key among these are:

- **Article 27, Paragraph 2 of the Fourth Geneva Convention**, which states: "Women shall be especially protected against any attack on their honor, in particular against rape, forced prostitution, or any other form of indecent assault."

- **Article 76, Paragraph 1 of Additional Protocol I**, which reaffirms this protection: "Women shall be the object of special respect and shall be protected, particularly against rape, forced prostitution, and any other form of indecent assault¹⁴."

Although these provisions recognize the illegality of rape in armed conflicts, they fail to acknowledge the severity of this crime or act, as rape is not explicitly listed among the serious violations of international humanitarian law under Article 147 of the mentioned convention. However, this article considers rape and forced prostitution as some of the most inhumane, vile, and despicable treatment.

B. Rape in the Nuremberg and Tokyo Tribunals

Sexual violence crimes were not always explicitly categorized as crimes against humanity. In Paragraph (c) of Article 6 of the London Charter, which formed the basis for the International Military Tribunal at Nuremberg, and in Paragraph (c) of Article 5 of the Tokyo Charter for the International Military Tribunal, the references to crimes against humanity generally mentioned "other inhumane acts" without specifically addressing sexual violence. However, these acts were implicitly considered crimes against humanity, as "general principles of law" recognize rape and other forms of sexual violence as clearly inhumane acts subject to accountability.

C. Rape and the Convention on the Prevention and Punishment of the Crime of Genocide

In some cases, rape is considered a part of genocide according to the "Convention on the Prevention and Punishment of the Crime of Genocide." What distinguishes these crimes as acts of genocide is the malicious intent and criminal purpose of the perpetrators, rather than the extent or frequency of the acts. Particularly, if rape or other forms of sexual violence are committed with the intent to destroy, in whole or in part, a national, ethnic, racial, or religious group, then these acts are immediately considered acts of genocide¹⁵. This involves rape, genital mutilation, or sexual slavery, as interpreted from Paragraph (b) of Article 2 of the Convention on the Prevention and Punishment of the Crime of Genocide.

Secondly: Major Documents and International Tribunals Criminalizing Rape After Algeria's Independence

The Fourth Geneva Convention on the Protection of Civilian Persons in Time of War, dated August 12, 1949, is ¹⁴ available on the International Committee of the Red Cross website at the following link: <https://www.icrc.org/ara/resources/documents/misc/5nsla8.htm>

Rawaa Atiyah, *Rape in International and Non-International Armed Conflicts as a War Crime and Crime Against Humanity: Between the Precision of the Text and the Limitations of Implementation*, Center for Secular Studies and Research in the Arab World, 2015, p. 22.

International law's focus on sexual violence crimes, especially rape, has intensified, with treaties and international tribunals increasingly criminalizing and punishing such acts. Key among these are:

A. Rape in the Statute of the International Criminal Court

The Statute of the International Criminal Court (ICC) pays special attention to crimes of sexual violence, classifying them as crimes against humanity if the criteria outlined in Article 7 are met, or as war crimes if the criteria in Article 8 are met.

The ICC Statute greatly broadens the scope of defined sexual crimes. According to Article 7 of the Rome Statute of the International Criminal Court (1998): "For the purposes of this Statute, 'crimes against humanity' means any of the following acts when committed as part of a widespread or systematic attack directed against any civilian population, with knowledge of the attack, including acts of rape, sexual slavery, enforced prostitution, forced pregnancy, enforced sterilization, or any other form of sexual violence of comparable gravity."

Article 8 states: "The Court shall have jurisdiction in respect of war crimes, when committed as part of a plan or policy or as part of a large-scale commission of such crimes, including acts of rape or sexual slavery, enforced prostitution, forced pregnancy as defined in Article 7(1)(g), enforced sterilization, or any other form of sexual violence..."¹⁶

The ICC Statute is the first document of its kind to explicitly and clearly recognize that rape and other forms of sexual violence during armed conflicts constitute war crimes and crimes against humanity. Furthermore, it establishes that crimes against humanity and war crimes are not subject to statutes of limitations, according to Article 1. However, the principle of non-retroactivity means that it applies only from the date of the ICC's establishment. Accordingly, rape crimes committed against Algerian women during the colonial era fall outside the Court's jurisdiction¹⁷.

B. Rape and International Criminal Tribunals

The International Criminal Tribunal for the Former Yugoslavia issued judgments against military rapists in the "Foca" case, regarding the detention of women in rape camps in 1992 and 1993. This tribunal was the first of its kind to address rape as a war crime. The court demonstrated that the armed forces used rape as a tool to instill fear, humiliation, and degradation¹⁸.

In the same context, the Statute of the International Criminal Tribunal for Rwanda (1994) grants the authority to prosecute individuals responsible for several crimes, including rape, when committed as part of a widespread and systematic attack on civilians for reasons of

Articles 7 and 8 of the Rome Statute of the International Criminal Court, adopted on 17/07/1998 and entered into force on 01/07/2002. For more, see Mahmoud Cherif Bassiouni, *The International Criminal Court: Its Creation and Its Statute*, Dar El-Shorouk, Cairo, 2001.

Jasem Zour, *International Guarantees for the Protection of Women Against International Crimes*, Academy of Social and Human Studies, Faculty of Law, University of Aleppo, 2016.

The Security Council, by its resolution 780, established a panel of experts to investigate and gather evidence on severe violations of the Geneva Conventions and other breaches of international humanitarian law following the conflict in the former Yugoslavia. Subsequently, in its session 3217, dated 25/05/1993, the Council adopted resolution 827, which established the statute of the International Criminal Tribunal for the former Yugoslavia. For more information, see Morshid Ahmed El-Sayed and Ahmed Ghazi Al-Harimzi, *International Criminal Justice: An Analytical Study of the International Criminal Tribunal for the Former Yugoslavia Compared with the Nuremberg, Tokyo, and Rwanda Tribunals*, Dar El-Shorouk, 2002.

ethnicity, politics, or religion. It considers rape a crime against humanity¹⁹. The judgment in the Akayesu case by the International Criminal Tribunal for Rwanda marked the first time an international court convicted an individual for international sexual violence crimes.

The rape of Algerian women by French forces bears similarities to the crimes later committed in Yugoslavia and Rwanda. However, the situations in these regions were framed as issues impacting international peace and security, which led to Security Council intervention under Chapter VII of the United Nations Charter and the establishment of special criminal tribunals. This framework does not apply to the events that occurred in Algeria at that time. Even if a similar decision were possible today, France, as a permanent member with veto power, would likely block such a resolution.

Thirdly: Bold Judicial Efforts to Break the Taboo of Rape

One notable judicial effort to emphasize the crime of rape is the case of Mr. Mohamed Guern, the first "war victim" officially recognized by the French judiciary. Born in 1960 as a result of his mother, Kheira, being subjected to gang rape by French soldiers at the age of 15, after being captured in a village in Thénia, Tissemsilt, and placed in detention. Mohamed Guern endured a harsh life in orphanages and was later adopted by a wealthy family, only to return to the orphanage during adolescence.

Upon reaching adulthood, Mohamed Guern made strenuous efforts to find his biological mother. By the age of 26, in 1988, he succeeded, but she concealed her trauma and only revealed the truth in 1994. Despite his efforts to prove his lineage from his alleged father, the victim discovered that he was the child of a gang rape by French soldiers. The Supreme Court ruled that Mohamed Guern was a product of gang rape. Subsequently, in 1998, he began legal action against the French state to obtain recognition as a "war victim," and his efforts were successful. France officially recognized him as such in 2001, awarding him compensation. This acknowledgment was a significant moral victory, condemning the "abuses" of the French military during the Algerian War²⁰.

Conclusion

In this presentation, I aimed to shed light on one of the most egregious crimes of French colonialism committed against Algerian women—a crime long forgotten by history and concealed by shame and embarrassment for many years. Today, it is referred to as the "**silenced crime**." It is evident that rape was perpetrated under obscure conditions throughout 132 years of colonization, serving as a military policy and strategy initially against popular resistance and later against the liberation revolution to break the fighting spirit of the Algerians. We have seen that the crime of rape during French colonization, like all crimes committed by the French colonial forces, fully qualifies as a crime against humanity as defined in international trials and regulations by international bodies. However, it has not been subject to international judicial

Rawaa Atiyah, *op. cit.*, p. 23.¹⁹

Mohamed Garne, *Français par le crime: J'accuse*, Éditions Le Harmattan, 2011.²⁰

follow-up for several historical, legal, and political reasons, despite the evidence from victim testimonies, criminal confessions, and images that still bear witness to its atrocity.

Based on our study, we humbly recommend:

- **The necessity for Algerian historians to gather these documents, images, and testimonies, and to collaborate with legal experts to carry out a comprehensive investigation into the issue, preparing a legal dossier on rape during the colonial period.**

- **The need for victims of French colonialism and the liberation revolution to organize into specialized groups that will collect facts, testimonies, and evidence to facilitate the defense of their rights (victims of rape, nuclear testing, etc.).**

- **The significance of retrieving the national archives, particularly military archives, and the need for countries that were victims of colonialism and whose artifacts and archives were stolen to form an international coalition employing relevant international organizations to demand the return of their archives and heritage.**

- **The necessity for the Algerian state to intervene and enact a law criminalizing French colonialism, which would condemn all French colonial crimes in Algeria in response to the "colonial glorification" law issued on February 23, 2005, in France. Such a law would serve as a safeguard for Algeria against "political regression," which has started to emerge just half a century after regaining national sovereignty.**

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