WHEN INTOLERANCE BECOMES VIOLENCE

TransHomos

Ensemble-protégeons-notre-intégrité

LGBTI TESTIMONIES FROM ALGERIA

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NOTE

In order to ensure the safety of the people who testified and to avoid identifying them with the events, the names and sometimes the cities have been changed

I - INTRODUCTION

For a society to be healthy, violence should never be allowed, and nothing should justify it. However, every day we meet people whose boundaries have been violated and whose mental and physical wellbeing is threatened because of the rejection of their gender and/or sexual orientation.

In the previous reports, we have shown how the criminalization of homosexuality under the code 338, and also by social codes, leads to the hatred and discrimination against LGBTI people, both in public and private spaces.

TransHomosDZ continues to document the different forms of violence experienced by LGBTI people: verbal, psychological, and physical. The first two forms are often dismissed. This report intends to be closer to the everyday life of the community and it tends to show that the most common acts of violence can lead to extreme violence.

II – VIOLATIONS

1. Family and Society's daily pressure

My name is Sanda, and I have been a lesbian since forever. Or rather, I have been attracted to women since forever. I have only found out it's called being a lesbian when I grew up.

I am from Boumerdes, and I am 29 years old. When I was young I used to think that I was the only one like this. That has plunged me into a state of great loneliness that lasted for a long time. When I was 5 or 6 years old, I remember them telling me, like they tell all little girls, « ki tekebri tetzewdji » (when you grow up, you will get married) and I knew right then that I would never marry a man. The mere idea of it disgusted me. Until now, I still feel the same way.

I was what people call « a tomboy ». However, I prefer to say that I just have a look that is different from other girls. Both my older sister and my mother (before marriage) had the same different look, for them what I was going through (the fact that my appearance was a little bit masculine) was nothing but a phase that would eventually change, but it never changed, and it is impossible for it to change. The fact that I have a look and a somewhat masculine attitude still has some advantages : I can go out more than my sister, I can hang out in places other girls can't go to, when I fight with boys they are scared of me, and I had a lot to fight, in every sense of the word.

Two years ago, I was in a relationship with a girl, and we were both very much in love with each other. She was heterosexual before she met me, we were friends first and we spent a lot of time together, and little by little she started to fall in love with me. What followed was one of the best times of my life. I was very happy, we s aw each other very often, and she even told her family that she would never get married (which is huge). My family, of course, was not aware of our relationship, we would meet outside, but she could never come over to my house since my family already had suspicions about me. It was very good for a short while but then reality caught up with us. My ex, out of jealousy, informed my family about our relationship, and all hell broke loose after that.

There was a lot of tension at home, when I would talk nobody would respond to me, all my moves were constantly watched, it was a daily pressure from my mother and my older sister since my father was not aware of any of it.

They would insult me constantly, my mother even told me: trohiljehenema ,ya7ar9ek Rabi, tza3z3i 3arch Rabi… (You will go to hell, God will Burn you, you are shaking the throne of God), even though I was just being myself, and I never harmed anyone else. Fortunately, these words did not affect me as much they used to when I was young, because when I was a teenager I was always afraid and I constantly told myself that I was abnormal and that God will punish me. However, now it's not really about the religious weight these words hold, but rather it's the fact that they are coming from my mother that hurts most. My girlfriend on the other hand was very afraid, she thought that what we were doing was bad, and she was very sensitive and affected by the words my mother said when I told her about them,yet she could not leave me, our love was stronger than her, and despite all we were happy together. Even now she still tells me the happiest days of her life were with me.

My daily life at home consisted of my little sister talking badly to me, my older sister and my mother insulting me, they would even harass me on the phone if I manage to slip out of the house for an hour. At a certain point they even started to hit me. They stopped giving me any money, but my girlfriend was there for me through it all and it was thanks to her that I managed to hold on. She never brought up the subject of separation or break up until the day another issue came up.

A day like every other, the police arrived at my home. My older sister and I, in addition to another friend of ours were all accused of many things, we didn't understand anything! This had came out of nowhere, the charges were: prostitution, drug trafficking, kidnapping, corruption of a minor, and abortion. The complaint was filed anonymously but we later found out that it was a friend of ours who ran away from home and when she was found, she played the victim and accused us of the things she did. The security services kidnapped my girlfriend and turned her phone off for 24 hours, nobody had any idea where she was. It was only after they came to my house that I knew that they took her.

When I arrived at the police station they did not allow me to see her because they were aware of our relationship. I begged them to let me see her, but they refused. They told me that they have a picture of us together in a compromising position and that if I don't cooperate they will show it to my father. I asked them to show me the picture they have and when I saw it, it was a picture of us where we were going to kiss each other. I laughed and told them that it was a normal picture and that a lot of girls do this together. But they kept insisting on me they told me: «We know you're going out with her, this is not our issue, but if you do not help us we will cause you problems …». They held my girlfriend and two other friends of ours for an entire week, they hit them, threatened them…and my girlfriend was so scared, when they finally released them she told me it's over between us. When i asked her why she said : what we are doing is Haram (forbidden) and I asked God rabiselakninhabess ga3 lhajatmechimlah (God save me and I will stop doing all these bad thing), and for her that was me, I was the bad thing.

I told her that since she is talking about God then I have nothing to say to her. I am a believer too but I know deep down that I am doing nothing bad, and that God is love. I told her that I will not force her to stay with me. I made a lot of research about religion which is why I am at peace with God. He does not forbid us from being in love, I don't steal, I don't kill, I never hurt anyone. I am a good person, for me a good person is somebody who never harms others, and we never harmed anyone, but she did not understand.

I told her that I accepted her decision, but she could not stand it, and after that a twisted game started between us. We have always been so in love with each other, so I knew that she was not doing it on purpose, the feelings were stronger than her, she just could not detach herself from me, and she started to abuse me.

On one hand she would say that she wants us to stay friends, on the other, when we are alone, she would tell me that she wants me, and that she loves me more than anyone else, after that she would feel guilty and tells me that we need to stop everything, I tell her okay, and then it starts again.

She started talking to me about the men she met, and I could not stand it. I told her to give me some time so that we can become friends again, but she told me she could not live without me. It was a very difficult and complicated situation. At the same time my family members were constantly hurting me, I still could not go out even talking on the phone was a hard thing to do. They started to comment on my look, and tried to force me to wear tight clothes that would bring out my «femininity », even though my style and my look had nothing to do with being a lesbian, and when I refused they would threaten and insult me.

My ex girlfriend ended up in a relationship with a man, but she kept telling me that I am still her only love, she still says that even now. This story has torn me apart, but now I am in a relationship again, and I am really happy, but the problem is that when I start showing signs of happiness and well-being, my family would assume that I am with a woman again and the insults, threats, and imprisonment start all over again.

2. For a gay drag queen, life in Algeria is hopeless

I have a brother who I have always loved, Amine. I say my brother, but at the same time I mean my sister. Amine was a drag queen. Today he is 35 years old, 3 years older than me and I have always been very close to him. I myself am gay but I am not going to tell my story, I will tell the story of Amine. The one I witnessed and lived with him.

When we were young we spent a lot of time together. We went to the same places, spent time with the same people we were two young men from the popular neighborhoods of Algiers. When I was 13 and he was 16 we started to go out and see men for money because we didn't have any. We went out with them. They touched us, they were adult men and there were many of them. It seemed normal to us at that time because we received many requests. We used to not get back home until 2 or 3 AM. My brother was a "loudmouth" he did not let himself be trifled with at home. He wore make up, had long hair, and dressed as a woman. He was someone who defended himself, when our family bothered him he broke things, screamed, and made a big scene. All that made them avoid him. My other brothers and the rest of my family did not dare mess him. For them he was already a lost case. After that they started turning their anger towards me, because I was easily accessible.

After that, he started to change. He started going out alone without me. Started hanging out with different people in different places. He was seeing other drag queens and injecting himself with hormones. I noticed that he started to change physically. For example, he started to grow breasts. He began to dye his hair, first black, then brown, and then blond until it became platinum blond.

He shaved his eyebrows, put on make-up; he even started waxing at home. My family sometimes insulted him; they spoke to him like he was "something" dirty and disgusting. But since he was the one providing for them and bringing money they knew they needed him so they did not allow themselves to insult him too much.

Overtime, I felt how heavy the burden he was carrying got. He became more aggressive, even with me. I felt how violent society was to him. As soon as he left the house the problems began, or rather continued. He often came back home injured. He started to rob his clients, when he went into someone's car he demanded more money because for him the amount he usually received was never enough to compensate for all that he suffered. He needed more money to keep his appearances and to support all that he was going through. He told me "These people sleep with me just to point fingers at me later, it's normal for me to rob them."

He defended the gays, the drag queens, trans people. He did not hesitate to take what was in reach, a stone, a bottle to hit with. He shouted loudly and insulted those who oppressed others. But all this exhausted it him. She was pulling away from me so I would not follow the same path. I knew all these scenes she was making were just a front, because deep down she was very fragile. She told me that she went into this world and was stuck in it, and she did not want her little brother to suffer the way she did. I attended many of her court trials, as her brother I had the right to be there. They (the police) placed them one next to the other for "public indecency" and "solicitation". They displayed what they had in their bags and what they were wearing, it was obvious that they had not slept, they were exhausted. The first time I attended a trial I ended up fainting on the bus on my way back home. I saw so much hatred and contempt. They were treated like animals not like humans.

When she went into prison, my other brothers confiscated all her belongings. She had a stereo system she used to have fun with, they sold it. They threw all the women clothes she had away. They took the money she left calling it "dirty" but they did not hesitate to spend it. They never went to see her in prison. I went there many times even though she told me not to bother but it was very important for me to go and see her.

When Amine got out of Jail, he did not find his stuff. He asked about his stereo system because it was his only escape from all the problems at home. He started breaking everything. One of my brothers went to the kitchen and grabbed a knife and everyone was panicking. Amine went on top of the bed to get away from him. My brother tried to stab him but he could not touch him. However at some point Amine shifted and suddenly he screamed, the knife touched him but fortunately the wound was not deep. Amine ran out of the house and went straight to the police station where the ambulance came to pick him up later. After that he filed a complaint against my brother. He had to do that or else he would have targeted him again. When the court summons started coming they didn't go. Sometimes it was Amine who missed it, other times it was my brother. At the end Amine dropped the charges.

After that he found a job in a company. He had the support of his manager and everyone there knew about who he was. His boyfriend worked with him too. One day they were caught making love, and those who found them called the police. They were put in prison for that. In the police report their crime was labeled "choudoudjinsi" which means homosexuality. His coworker then called my brother to tell him Amine was sent to prison. My brother didn't know why so he went to ask for the reason and with a sarcastic tone they told him it was for homosexuality. When he came back home he made a big scene. Amine stayed in prison for 6 months.

When Amine was finally released, he was able to return to his job. Unfortunately not only did he lose the support of his manager but he also started receiving threats and bad comments from his co-workers all the time and ended up changing jobs. This happened many times after that. He started spending the night out or at some of his friends' houses. He would come back home in the morning and sleep all day. He started taking painkillers and antidepressants. He was very pale and had dark circles under his eyes from lack of sleep. After that he began to go out at night to "navigate" which means to prostitute himself. He was feeling bad, all the time. He just could not find his place in the world yet, he was not hurting anyone.

This year, Amine went to France and applied for a refugee status. This is the only solution he could find in order to not sink further into this life. When he left, I knew he was not coming back. I cried a lot because he was always my support, my brother, my sister, and my confidant. He made me laugh and we talked for hours. With me, he was himself, an amazing person. I miss him very much but on the other hand I feel relieved for him. At least now he has a better life.

Fahim, I come from a neighborhood in Algiers, 32 years old.

3. Why are you like this?

My family has always tried to turn me into a girl. But I am a boy. When they dress me as a girl, I end up changing into my own clothes, those that are for a boy. They have tried everything but since nothing worked they started to use the (very) violent way. They believe they can change me like that. They think violence is the solution. They keep telling me « You have to do this. » « You have to be that. ». The only thing that helped me to reduce their violence is the fact that I am a very good student. That has protected me a little. My family is a conservative known family from Khenchla. They do not accept me. Throughout my entire life I heard them say thing like: "Why are you like this?".

I am a man. My name is Amir and I am 32 years old. I was born in the body of a girl, but I am also intersex. I do not have the same uterus as others. It was deformed, my ovaries were sterile and not in their right place, they were internal testicles. I have a XXY karyotype, however in Algeria any difference can be the cause of great violence...

We are a big family made of eight boys and three girls. But for them we are seven boys and four girls. My sisters are very feminine, and my brothers are very masculine but me? Who am I among them? They all kept saying "Why are you like this? ". They used to say they will help me "settle" at a young age but of course that did not work because of the ignorance and violence of my environment. I always wondered what I was, and now I finally know. However, after that I started to wonder why am I like that? I picked up the question they always tormented me with and started asking it myself "Why am I like this?".

One of my brothers is extremely religious with his beard he thinks he is God. He told me (over and over again) all the time that I must be feminine and pious, and that I must give a good image of my family. Actually, a year ago I had a fight with him. I was watching football and when he saw me he attacked me and started insulting me because to him I am a woman, and women should not watch football. He hit me aggressively and then pulled my arm back so hard it caused my shoulder to dislocate. I went to the hospital and told them it was an accident. It was my friend who took me there. I decided later to not file a complaint just to not cause my mother any distress.

I behaved as a boy since I was very young. When I started primary school I was attracted to girls and not boys. At school I only played with boys and I often fought them. I was physically and morally strong, so they could not assault me. In middle school my family, especially my extremist brother, doubled in their abuse to me. They started saying "you must look like a girl..you must walk like a girl..and you must put on the headscarf".

The word "girl" hurt me more than the physical beating I was constantly getting from them. My body was bruised but it was my inner self that suffered the most. They beat me and raged on me all the time. My parents started telling me that my brothers, especially my extremist brother, were hitting me to "educate" me and to "discipline" me because I was not normal. They kept telling me "nta moun7arif" (You are deviant). At a certain point I wanted to tell them "Okay, I am not normal then take me to a doctor instead of beating me". But this is the common solution in my country. When we are disregarded we hit, when we don't understand something, we hit. Take me to a doctor, don't hit me. I was just a kid, and I was beaten all the time just because I liked to play football. I was constantly told "why are you like this". I could not act like a girl because I was not a girl. It was only after I grew up that I found out that my condition had a name and it was called being trans.

In high school things got even more violent and difficult. My family knew that what I cared about most was my education so they imposed a tough condition on me. They said "You want to study, you have to wear the headscarf. You want to be what you dream of, you have to stay home and not go out." So I wore it, I wore this piece of fabric and told myself I was going to do what I wanted with mu life. But their pressure over me didn't change and the issues remained the same. "Why do you walk like that? Respect your scarf! You are wearing the scarf so why are you hanging around boys?". They imposed the scarf on me but it only drove me further away. They continued with their "Why are you like this?" but they did not know that when I constantly locked up in my room I was anxious and crying because I was so afraid for my life.

I could not wait to finish high school and go to a university away from my hometown. When I graduated I signed up for Batna.

My family had a really hard time accepting this and thought that "kountrahndirrayiki nba3ed 3lihoum" (I would do whatever I wanted away from them) but I persevered and I left home. However, I went to a girls' dormitory so I was not really in my preferred environment. But there I met the first person who understood me and supported me. Asma* who became my girlfriend. She knew who I was, she knew I was a boy and accepted me like that. When I started wondering about my body she and talking to my girlfriend about it she asked me to see a gynecologist in Batna. She also insisted that I tell the doctor about my case. When I arrived the gynecologist she told me that my voice was too hoarse and that it was a man's voice. She treated me badly and had a contemptuous look on her face. She checked me as if I was a "dirty thing". She even tried to undress me without warning. She asked me to do an ultrasound and some blood tests for hormones. When I came back to her she always treated me as if I was a weird thing. She told me that I had a cyst which was causing all these issues, and it was the reason for the hormonal imbalance. She then prescribed me a very strong pill for the cyst which was later proved to be non-existent. When I was leaving her practice she gave me a letter and said "You have to go see a psychologist" I was already struggling with myself so I went to see that psychologist.

I started taking the pill the gynecologist gave me and in three months I went from 54 kilos to 90 kilos and to add to it I had depression. This gynecologist ruined my life. Before I had no breasts but after I started taking her treatment my breasts started to grow. Before I did not get my period but after I started taking this poison I started bleeding. When I got that, my mother took me to another gynecologist who told me that I had to keep taking the treatment, and added at the end "why are you like this?". I slept a lot because of the hormones and in addition to depression and gaining weight I was also always out of breath. I was feeling really sick, and my body did not understand anything.

As I said before, I went to see that psychologist. At first she said the same thing as everyone else. She told me that I had to change. However, with time I convinced her, she didn't find any other solution because I took everything she said and explained how it was all just prejudice. I saw her for w year. In the beginning she treated me with a contemptuous manner, but she changed her attitude over time. After few sessions she told me that I was totally normal, and that I was a boy, but she could not write that down because in Algeria I would never be accepted and the subject itself is among the most forbidden taboo subjects. Around this time, I started having problems with my girlfriend. People around us started talking, because even though I was wearing the headscarf I was still a boy, and they could not understand that. We stayed together for 5 years but eventually her family pressured her to get married. We could not get married to each other because I was still considered a girl. We ended up separating because of society, we tried everything to stay together but sometimes that's just how life is. When she got engaged she did not tell me. She only told me few weeks before her wedding. I had a big mental breakdown after that.

I have always wondered about myself and my karyotype. At that time, I did not yet know that I was Intersex. I then went to Algiers, to the Mustapha Pacha hospital, with two of my intersex friends. One of them was from Jijel and the other from Biskra. The doctors refused to see us because they said we needed to get letters from a gynecologist. However, because of previous experience with a gynecologist I could not go back, I was physically and psychologically. Besides, we did not know the word intersex existed of course. There was one doctor who agreed to see us but only to end up sending us to a psychologist in Cheraga.

In Cheraga, each of us went to the psychologist individually. My two friends had external testicles, but my case was more difficult.

We were going back and forth between the hospital and the psychologist, but I was told that I had to focus on going to the psychologist and that it was what I needed. They also told me that since I had a uterus, my testicles could be removed and I could live normally as a girl. They did not want to understand that I was a man. It was as if I was going tp the mechanic instead of a doctor. We heard about an urologist in Oran who was used to dealing with intersex people and we decided to go see him. But reality caught up with us quickly. He also sent us to another psychologist who called her friends and invited them to come and see the "strange things" I felt like an alien. This doctor saw us as guinea pigs he can experiment on. It is said that there are 9000 intersex people known in Algeria, so why does the medical system treat us with such contempt?

My two friends agreed to let this doctor operate on them. I refused, thankfully, because he ended up screwing the poor two up. He promised he was going to help us but in the end we were just subjects who would serve him and his thesis. He told us that either way we were never going to live a normal life so it is better to just carry on living as we were and not try to do any surgeries that would only make us worse. As if it was our fault, and he as a doctor had no responsibility.

It was because of all the ignorance and the aggressiveness of the medical system here that I decided, a year ago, to do my surgical transition in Egypt. I programmed everything and I went there. The doctor had told me that he had already done trans surgeries so I was pretty confident. The day after the surgery I was very happy! I was finally myself. However, my happiness and enthusiasm was short lived. I noticed that the operation was not at all well done. I found out later that this doctor took advantage of many trans people. He took their money and screwed them up.

The first surgery became infected quickly, he disinfected me but when I returned to Algeria I had a fever and I was not feeling very well. I went to a clinic in Algeria and the doctor there told me with hate that I need to go back and see my doctor but that was impossible since my doctor was in a different country. I took some medicine and waited for the time to go back to Egypt. Two months later I went back to the doctor so he can "fix me" but at first he refused and told me that he was safe anyways because I was a stranger to the country and also because I was trans and nobody would care. He said it would take years in court if tried to sue him. However, he operated on me again and the second surgery was better than the first, but it was still mchew'ha (A rough draft).

I am not at all satisfied with the result but I do not want to see any other doctors because I know it will get worse. I also cannot take hormonal treatment now even if I need it because everyone already looks at me in a weird way. Can you imagine if I take hormones too? I would like to take them but there is too much at risk. I already get many comments about it and I don't want to lose my job since it is my only way out. I have a colleague who accepts me but she always talk to me with feminine pronouns because that's what she's used to, but I admit that I do not care. I always wear the headscarf because I get called "3icha rajal", "moun7arif" (tomboy, deviant). Once I was with a judge in court, we were sitting in one room and another person opened the door and said "9a3da ntiwiyeh, makhaftichmenou? keshnhar net3awnou 3lih nchoufouwesh houa " (Are you sitting with him alone? Are you not afraid of him? One day we should catch him and find out what he is.). A colleague also once told me when I was sitting with another male colleague "manfer9ouch men b3dakoum" (We cannot tell the difference between you two). I hear this kind of comments every day.

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Even if I wear the headscarf, I wear it because society imposed it on me, but I am a man. I play this role to preserve myself in front of them, for my safety. But as soon as I find myself alone or with people who understand me, I become myself again.

Since its summer vacation now, I am going to have to go back home to Khanchla because I do not have where to stay in Algiers, and as my father dies, my brothers tell me that I pretend to be a boy to inherit more (since women inherit less than men). I am ready to confront the entire world, but I cannot do it with my family.

Sometimes I think about killing myself but then I pull myself together. I have already attempted suicide many times but life still wants to torture me. However, I know that I will get up every time like I have always done.

4. Ordinary or institutional homophobia

I am a young gay man living in Algiers. I am 32 years old and like most young people, i like to go out. However, Algiers, unlike other Capitals in the world, is very quiet. There is practically nothing to do. We live in total boredom and the city is very poor in leisure. Which is why, my friends and I often frequent the same places because e try to somehow stay discreet about our identities, and not attract any attention even though I am a gay man who is not effeminate.

In the beginning of 2017, I spent an evening at a nightclub with three of my friends. At the end of the night we were heading towards the parking lot. Three of us were walking ahead and the fourth was slowly following us. Suddenly we heard someone scream. When we turned around to see what's happening we found our friend on the ground and a man was hitting him. We ran towards him without thinking and that was when we noticed the attacker was not alone. Two other men joined him. They were all muscular and very tall. Next to them we looked like smurfs (chuckle).

They started hitting us even though we only wanted to calm things down and help our friends. We managed to escape but they had already battered us badly and landed some serious blows. They kept yelling at us and insulting us "sales PD, Nkoucha" (dirty faggots…), the rest I prefer to censor.

We drove to the hospital and when we got there we found a group of boys and girls who told us they had been attacked at the same place.

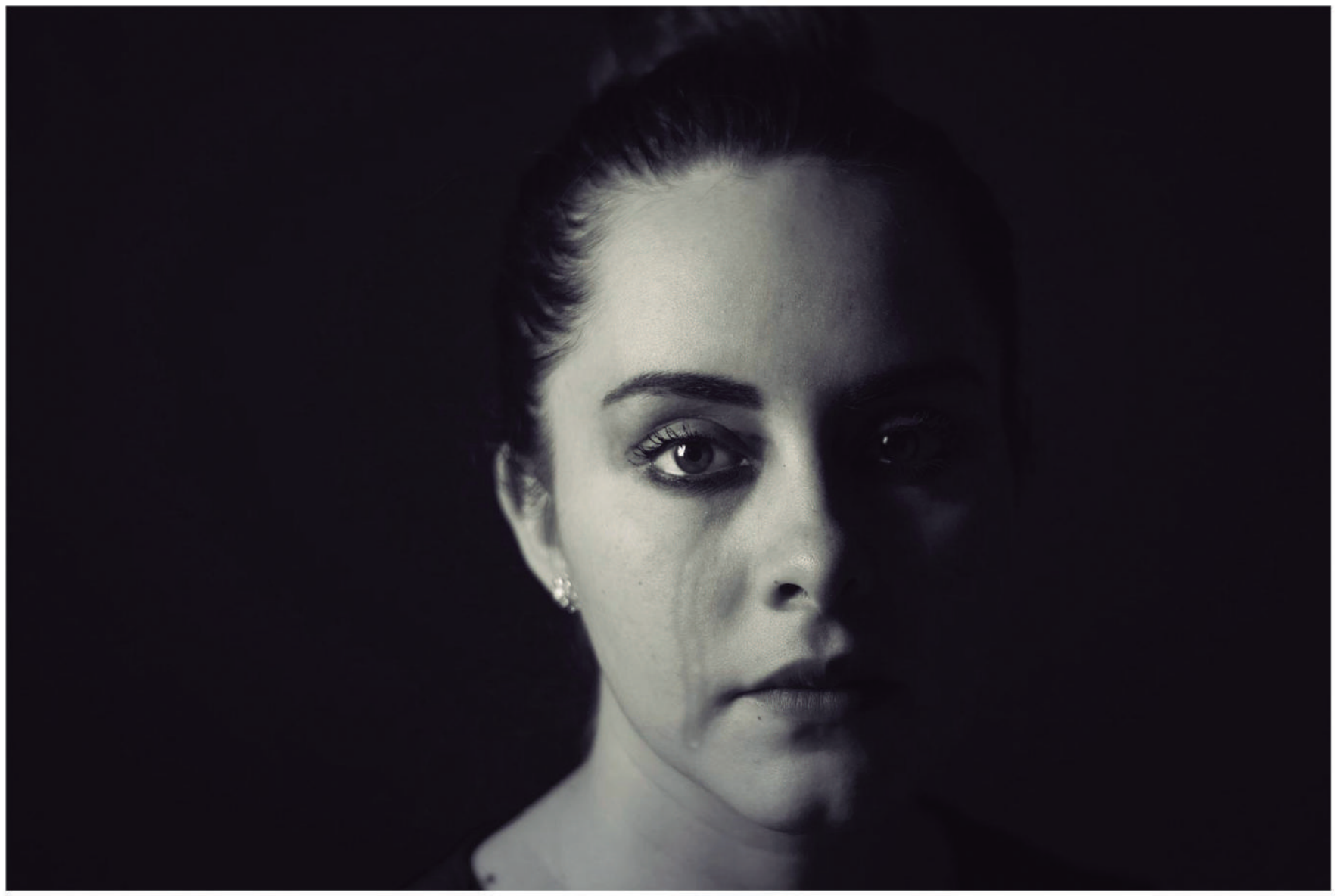
After that, we got the medical care we needed quickly. The next day, after a sleepless night and after the shock passed, we decided to file a complaint. Only two of us wanted to do it.

The others were afraid they will get their sexual orientation denounced. We were able to talk to a lawyer but he could not do anything for us. Apparently, in order to file a complaint you need a medical certificate of leave for at least 21 days.

Despite the bruises on our faces, the blood on our clothes, the sock, and the humiliation, it was that piece of paper that allowed victims to defend themselves, and since we did not have that paper we gave up after two days.

For a year and a half now, I have a knot in my stomach and a constant fear that another attack will happen from which I have no protection. Worse yet, it is a fact that if someone wants to freely attack me just because they think I am gay, they have all the freedom to do so and no punishment to face.

5. The impossible love of a woman



Fadyia, 24 years old, Algiers.

We live in a society that is very conservative and closed to all that is different. In Algeria, I have the impression that we live day by day, and each day is more dangerous than the last one. As a woman, I suffer verbal assault all the time. It wears me down and discourages me to move forward with my life. Instead of using my energy to do beautiful things, improve my life, and progress, I lose it all to depression, anger, and regression. I have the feeling that every step I take is a big burden and that any thoughts I might have are negative.

I had boyfriends since middle school. They were childhood sweethearts. I grew up like everyone else, I loved, I was disappointed, I disappointed in return. When I was a teenager I dreamed of that day, the best day of my life, my wedding day. I laugh about it now with hindsight.

However, everything changed in university. I had a group of friends made of girls and boys and we were inseparable. One day we were at a Pizzeria and a friend of ours came with his childhood friend who we never met before. The girl in question was very awkward at first so we were all sure she was his secret girlfriend. She sat next to me and I did all I could to make her feel at ease because I too did not like to hang out with a group if I did not know anyone.

After half an hour, we were laughing to tears. She was very friendly. I really liked her so when we were leaving I left her my Facebook account so we can stay in touch. She added me on the same evening and we talked until 2AM. I felt really good talking to her.

We met again a week later, alone. It was even more pleasant to see her smile and hear her talk. After that we became inseparable. A month after we met she invited me over to her house. Her parents had gone away for the weekend.

The evening went very well, and when there was only the movie left to watch things started getting out of hand. Sitting on the sofa, I kept watching her instead of paying attention to the movie. I wanted to caress her hair, touch her, and sometimes when she made a comment, I found myself staring at her mouth. I had a crazy desire to kiss her. I was feeling every emotion. It was like my body was a volcano and my mind was a big tornado.

I felt like I was about to explode. At one point she turned to me and said: "do you mind if I lie on you?". I no longer felt my senses, everything was numb for a while then I answered with a trembling voice "of course you can." The moment she put her head on my lap I started stroking her hair and my eyes closed automatically.

That night we kissed for the first time. It was all new to me so it was really my first kiss and it felt so natural. That girl, I had feelings for her and I did not care if she was a women. Our relationships lasted two years in secret. I experienced very beautiful things with Amel. I felt understood all the time. I really lacked nothing, I was just happy.

However, one day everything changed. My life became a nightmare. That day, I curse it until now. My friends confirmed that Amel and I were a couple even though I tried many times to deny it, but that day nothing could be done. I was subjected to free aggression. The girls in my group distanced themselves from me. They stopped answering my phone calls. They cut me off social media. One of them even called me a freak and told me she did not want me to "infect" her.

On the boys' side it was even worse. Vulgar provocations like "Thabbi Sba3" (you like finger), "invite me when you do it so I can help you come" "haya ana nchouf berk" (come on, I will just watch)…and so on. At one point it became constant harassment. I found myself completely alone, hurt, attacked, and I did not want to talk about it with Amel. After all this was my group of friends and not hers. I also was trying to protect her from all of it in my own way, but instead of protecting, and trusting her, I gradually withdrew from the person I loved most in the world. I lost Amel because of my cowardly behavior and I always regretted it. A year after I started ignoring her, she moved to France. I have not heard from her since then.

I knew other girls after her, while remaining discreet of course, but none of them made me forget my Amel. My heart has been mourning her absence for three years.

We all have our own secret garden. I do not understand why people always try to violate it. And when they get there they destroy you for no reason whatsoever.

To you Amel, you were my first love and you will always be my last.

6. The violence of words

The beginning of my life was upsetting for me. I was always asking myself questions, good ones? I don't know, but I had to ask them to myself because of all that was around me.

When I was little I suffered a lot of hatred from those around me. I loved in a neighborhood in Algiers, and all my family only spoke to me to scold me or to hit me. I did not understand why until I went to school for the first time. I was approached for the way I talked, walked, sat, and just was. I was too soft, too effeminate for them. I did not want to leave my mom. She was the only person who instead of yelling at me, hugged me and whispered in my ear "you are my jewel, be strong everything in life will pass".

My mom left us when I was 14, my life did not change much after that, but at least before I had some support. Often when my father would beat me up I knew I could end up in my mother's arms. It was the only moment that I had for myself. It had become a privilege and a joy to be hurt. But my mother was tired too, that's why she left, far from us, far from that nightmare, far from me who probably was deep down the reason of her shame. I blamed myself for a long time.

When I was 17 I graduated high school. It was such pride for me! But I had no one to share my success with.

I said to myself it does not matter as long as you succeed in finding a job quickly to be able to leave this crazy family that I survived with until now..but at what price! In high school it was no better, I had no friends. Some girls at least said hello to me sometimes.

The boys, however, almost never approached me, and when they did, I really preferred I was invisible, non-existent, it was only to make fun of me. They knew nothing about my life or what I had to overcome to come to school and succeed.

The blows I received throughout my life made me indifferent. However, on the other hand I discovered something more powerful than that. Words, the insults I have heard traumatized me until now. Today, I work, I live alone, I have a car, and yet I still help my family for my mother's memory only. I accept myself for who I am better now, but despite all those words come back to my mind from time to time. They sound so loud sometimes that I have to take painkillers."106, Pidale (they couldn't even say Pédale) Mriwa (girly) ba-Qlawa" words, words, only words but they can still destroy you.

A year ago I met a man who helped me a lot. If you ask me how old are you? I will answer: one year. I finally started to live, to know myself, to be interested in my own well-being. I started doing sports at 28, I made friends at 28, I was able to travel for the first time at 28, I am happy at last at 28. Sometimes I can still heat them, but I was able to reduce my use of medications thanks to sports and to speaking because now I let things out. I sometimes think of these young boys who are called effeminate (like me) and my heart tightens. I feel their suffering without knowing them.

To all those who are different, know that you are unique because your life will never be simple. You will fight all the time. But look at the bright side, at least your life will never be monotonous (smile).

Fight for your right to love, your right to happiness, and talk about it around you. Tell yourself that you are not alone. Live! Live!

Karim.

7. Fear on the streets of Algiers

Let me introduce myself. My name is Ramy from downtown Algiers, and I am 28 years old.

Last year around 9 pm I was with two of my friends, Mounir and Farid, we were walking towards La Grande Poste (The big post office of Algiers) to grab some tea. I love walking in Algiers during night. It is so much more pleasant than during the day. With tea in hand we walked past Pasteur Street where a group of six individuals started to provoke us, "Ara etayyaw, kesh 20 da bechnechrietay?" (Hey give me some tea. Do you have 20DA for me to buy tea?), but they did not really want tea. They just wanted to harass us.

I got scared so I asked my friends to hurry up. When one the guys heard me he tripped me and I fell on the ground. However, I had quick reflexes so I got up quickly, because I expected worse. I thought: the longer you are on the ground, the more hits you are going to get. Meanwhile, Farid got away and Mounir got slapped by another guy.

I got up quickly and I shouted at Mounir to run. We ran the entire Pasteur Street because those guys were following us. At that moment I remembered the police station that was not fat towards the Doctor Saadane Street. I asked my friend to hurry up. When we arrived at the police station we were no longer being followed by the attackers. They had disappeared. At the reception I told the police officer that we came to file a complaint for assault.

We waited for a long time then they told us: "this is not our division you have to go to the police station at Cavaignac". I explained to them that we were afraid to go there because the guys have run after us and they could be waiting for us somewhere. However, of course as I was expecting the only answer we got was "machi secteur ta3na" (not our division).

Meanwhile, Farid, who had run away, had met a friend of his who was driving. They picked us up from the police station to go to Cavaignac. As we drove by we noticed that the guys were still at the same place, like watchmen. In the other police station it was all the same. We waited for a long time with no results. However, I insisted on the police officers to check the spot. I told them those guys were still at the same place and we have to hurry before they leave. But it was like talking into the void. Unfortunately, in Algeria when you are a victim they treat you like a criminal, and vice versa. We waited until 11PM but since nothing was being done, I decided to go back home.

As we were leaving the police station, a police van stopped next to us and asked us what was going on. I told them quickly and they asked us to go with them and show them the place and the individuals in questions. However, of course we were too late. It was clear that these young men were not from the neighborhood. I don't understand how the people living there bare with it and none of them files any complaints.

After this incident, I heard about several similar assaults in the area, but strangely, more towards people of my community, the gay community. Too bad people don't file complaints often. It is true that the treatment we get from the police is discouraging but if every person who was harassed or assaulted went to the police maybe they will become more responsive.

8. Limits overstepped every day

March 28th, 2017, another shitty day. I apologize for the word but It defines well what I live. I am Fatima, a very active, Algerian, 35 years old. I am a very sociable and kind person, but unfortunately, where I live these factors for most men mean that a girl is easy, not to forget that I am a big smoker and my fashion style is very casual.

I work as a freelancer so I meet a lot of people (on all levels). That day, like many others, I was confronted once again with misogyny and of course it is often followed with homophobia. But every time it happens I cannot react. I do not know if it's the way I was raised, my society, myself, the fear, of the zero courage I have. Often when I want to react I slow myself down by thinking that I do not know how far the other person will go. Some other people's experiences come to mind (aggression, rape, outing…etc).

Several scenarios play in mu head. I tell myself to do something, talk! But nothing comes out of my mouth. I remain paralyzed and then later I regret it. I do not know why it is always like that.

I want to have a manual of how we can react to this kind of situations. Everyone has their own way of dealing with things of course, but how to just take a step and break the silence.

That day I was in the cat with a colleague and the driver. A new contract means new people to work with. On the way, the driver started talking to me in male pronouns and with and air of "dssara" (a disrespectful familiar air). He said to me: "a kho wine enrouhou ? ya kho ntayia si, ntayia ça" (bro, where do we go? Bro this, bro that)..etc. I swallowed down the first sentence, then the second, and the third. However, on the fourth I glared at him and answered "khti hadik hyia" (yes sister that's it) the guy responded "what?" with a malicious look. Before answering him I grabbed my courage with both my hands and told him again "oui hadik hyia khti" (yes sister that is it). My other colleague was there, he said nothing but he laughed and that was even more irritating.

Less than ten minutes later the driver starts with something else. We had to pick up another colleague who I did not know yet and there he said; "Tchu m'as compris?" (do ou get me?) I answered by acting stupid while I knew exactly what he was trying to insinuate I said "no I do not understand". He opened his mouth again to repeat his bullshit "Tchu m'as compris?" (Do you understand me?)

I answered with a smile "what do you mean? I do not understand you." He continued with a third "Tchu m'as compris?" (Do you understand me?), at that moment I got really angry and simply told him "well if you want me to understand something you have to bloody tell it to me". He went silent then, but then he went back to talking to my silent colleague about a girl who works with us, calling her crazy and shameless. There I had no more strength to react, he has exhausted all my energy.

I am tired of these provocations and innuendos. Instead of concentrating on my work I found myself managing their mentalities, managing my own stress, and my desires to murder them. It is all keeping me from staying cool.

When I arrived at work I was so worked up that I could not help but be rude to others, unfortunately. They did not do anything to me, but it is what it is! I did not ask to have a jerk driver and an accomplice colleague either.

9. To be gay is to face violence on daily basis

Salim 21 years old

I cannot leave my house without a knot it my stomach. I am a young gay Algerian man who is watching his youth get wasted. Since I was young, every time I go out is like a nightmare. People look at me strangely, they insult me, and sometimes they come and attack me, and hit me. Why? Because I am not "manly", because I am "effeminate" and we all know how much everything feminine is despised in this country. They label me as "pd, 106, nokch, femelette..etc" (faggot, girly…etc). Every time I pass a group of guys in the street I'm scared. I am afraid they will attack me because that has already happened before. Especially since, I usually hang out with girls because they are less judgmental, and more understanding. I think that makes boys jealous or whatever it is that goes through their heads.

Last year I was walking down the street in Algiers. I was with a friend and besides some "soft" remarks we received, or rather I received, everything was going fine. We were talking when a group of boys passed by us. I asked my friend to hold my hand, but they still started to follow us. They were acting like they were catcalling, or rather harassing, two women, and laughing about it. At one point I turned around and said: "okay, that's enough, go away." But they continued to laugh and did not take me seriously. The passers-by did not intervene of course, other than some of them who slowed down to watch the show. »

My friend pulled me by the arm to leave and I was going to do so when one of them touched me and said « t'hab ki yadarbouhelek » (you like to take it?) I felt to humiliated, so hurt, and so angry. I took his hand and I pushed him, that's when he went wild, and his friends with him. They started to beat me, to spit on me and to hit my friend who was trying to free me from their claws. There was a traffic police officer nearby, but of course he did not do anything. I was able to extricate myself from their hand and me and my friend fled as fast as we can. I was shocked, and shaking, but we thankfully went far away from them and could not see them anymore. I did not want to file a complaint because I already accompanied a friend who was attacked once and I saw how he was treated. The police accused him and cleared his attacker. We continued to walk. I had hardly came back to my senses when a man passed by and said "wesh ya nokch" (what's up faggot) at that moment I exploded. I shouted at him and I insulted him, I let all my anger out on him. He did not dare reply because he saw how irritated I was. It is as if I have to always be in this state to not get bothered by them, and that is very tiring.

Some men insult me then beg me to sleep with them. They are disgusting, deep down that's the only thing they want. I cannot count on the police because they are the same. Besides, they leave the law criminalizing homosexuality up so all complaints are dropped. What do I do with people like this? Sometimes I feel like I'm sinking deeper in the face of so much hatred. And in addition to that, they give legitimacy to this hatred. I am what I am. I did not to choose to be so, I do not regret what I am, but they chose to be monsters.

10. The Intolerance against a lesbian

I want to talk about the intolerance of people, or rather about their fake tolerance. These people who always say they tolerate a lot of things, but at the end they turn up to be as hateful as everyone else.

When my friends found out about my homosexuality everything went wrong. But what was more problematic was realizing that it made them laugh, like it was an interesting subject, or something mysterious to them. At that time I lived under a lot of pressure at home. I thought it was due to me not having a boyfriend, or because of something I did not understand. It wasn't until later that I found out that it was because some people who were very close to me were spreading some things about me. Before, I did not live my life as a homosexual. When I wanted to talk to people like me I always did it virtually, and I chose people who lived far away from me because I wanted to protect myself. However, in college I met my so-called friend Hamza who became my best friend. I also met a girl called Samia who was also my best friend. She came to my house every day. We went to college together, we did our activities together and we spent most of our time together. I trusted them, and we never discussed those subjects.

Hamza was an ace in computer science. It was him who would fix and format my PC, who installed the necessary software..etc. makountch nahsablou ana hsab (was not worried about him). He did not have a girlfriend and over time people started wondering why we were not dating each other.

So we started saying we were together. It was all pretend. He was happy to be with me but I did not know what was going on all around me. With Samia I invented stories, I told him that I went out with men but they did not please me enough, I did not want to out myself, so I invented these stories.

Shortly after Hamza and I started playing couple a friend, who was not as close as Samia to me, called and told me that Hamza had hacked me. I must say that I wrote a lot, and there was a little poem I wrote on an LGBT forum that he had read. He was acting like he was in love with me even though we were just pretending to be together, especially since I found out later that he was gay (a very homophobic gay). It was not like he was actually in love with me. I do not know why he did that to me. Probably so he can prove his masculinity or whatever. He had hacked me because he was jealous of my friendship with an "effeminate" guy at college, Nabil. He was the first person I ever came out to, he told me he was gay too but he was not comfortable talking about it.

When Hamza had hacked me he went and told everyone else instead of talking to me about it first.

He told them he had wanted to ask for my hand in marriage and that I had betrayed his honor and some other bullshit like that. Samia started telling others "I feel betrayed, I slept next to her, maybe she's in love with me..etc" when I learned all that I was furious, but she did not tell me the same thing. She said that that it was amazing and that I was special. I was confidante and told myself that she was tolerant. In time I started to handle the situation better. I talked to some straight friends who took it well, but as we got older most of the girls wanted to get married and from there I began to discover how they really viewed me.

Samia told me she did not care about my sexuality. She even started going out with girls out of curiosity. But at the same time she still wanted to get married to a man, and she ended up doing it. After the wedding she became a whole other person. Over a night, she started to insinuate things. She became a moralist, and judged far too much. When I met the woman I am still dating now, Samia started speaking to me about psychology, mental disorders, and a lot of other strange things. I did not understand why she came up with all these things, especially since she was never conservative. I wonder why as soon as they adopt the heterosexual standards of living they become preachers. But that was not what bothered me the most. Samia had many cousins, I found out years later that her cousins knew about my intimate life. She told her cousins, and her cousins told their girlfriends, and their girlfriends told their friends, and here I was being pointed at by everyone even without assuming my own sexuality and without even living it.

My sister was going out with Hamza's cousin. He knew very well that their relationship was serious, and he knew deep down that he was gay himself, but he still told his cousin I was gay anyway. My sister of course told my mother. That's when it became violent. My mother took my phone away. She called me "gouina", insulted me and called me names. She humiliated me.

Thankfully I was not in a relationship then so I had nothing to hide. She told me that I had to get married and sometimes she said: « wesh ndir bik, louken 9teltek » (what do I do with you? I should have killed you). With all the pressure I sometimes thought about getting married to save myself, especially since all the problems I was living made it hard for me to focus on my studies and I had no source of income. But fortunately, I soon abandoned the idea. My dear friends did all this to me just because they discovered a poem on a forum.

It was the people who said they were tolerant, who said they wanted a better world, who caused all these problems. Years later, Hamza started hanging out with gay people, and had a GLA account (Gays and Lesbians Forum in Algeria) I know his family, his cousin married my sister, but I never caused him any problems. These people benefit from the bad situations of others. They knew things at home were going badly and I was not in a relationship, and that I needed a friends who I can trust. He and the other took advantage of that.

When I started going out with my girlfriend I wanted to establish our relationship. I wanted to introduce her to Samira but the later kept coming up with excuses to not meet her. My girlfriend, because of the heavy family pressure she was under, decided to set up a marriage of convince (with a gay man). I was really hurt by that at first and so was she. We say that it's a solution but it is still a lot of pressure, because when you get married you never know what the other person might do to you. Then I started asking myself a lot of questions then: "will she get a divorce if we live together? Will we want to break it off? Am I going to be obliged to do the same thing? What can we do to live together?..etc) especially since I know what I am, and I know it is natural and not an illness. It is also because I was with her that I discovered many things and I finally accepted myself.

One day I was in my office working and I was not feeling too good because my girlfriend was preparing her papers for the wedding. Samia came over and she noticed that something was wrong. She kept asking me what was going on but I did not say anything. When my girlfriend called me I burst into tears. Samia insisted more that I tell her and I ended up spilling out that my girlfriend was getting into a marriage of convince and it was very difficult and I couldn't accept it. Her response came like a strike. She said "you see? Normal people will go on with their lives. Life has to go on. If you do whatever you want and act like a teenager and now god is testing you, Rabi ba9i star (may God preserve us)" a very degrading and depressing lecture. If I could control my tears she would have been the last person to see me cry. I knew that my girlfriend did not want to get married and was doing it out of obligation, but I could not answer Samia. What could I have said to her? I did not want to justify my relationship or my existence. Since then I did not want to see her anymore.

Until now, I do not know what the definition of tolerance is in these people's heads. Those who tell you they are tolerant, end up being liars. When I see debates where people use hurtful and violent words I tell myself that this is why we cannot live our lives. It is because people desperately lack tolerance.

These friends I am talking about are no longer my friends. We have kept a very superficial relationship. Since I live alone now my mother does not care for me anymore, and after having know women like me "fe9t beli manich mahboula fi la société" I realized that I am not crazy in this society, and I know there is many people who are like me.

11. Hate crossed their paths

This is the story of two young men who do not know each other, and have never met. Rami and Ahmed are respectively aged 20 and 24. They are from the same city in the east of the country and their homes are few kilometers from each other. Nothing could have caused these two young men to cross paths since their lives, and their journeys were completely different. Yet, they lived the same nightmare that could bind the rest of their lives.

Rami is an only child and he lives with his mother who separated with his father since he was 3 years old. The only thing he has from his father is a name on a birth certificate. His father accused his mother of cheating on him. He was always convinced that Rami was not his son and that's why he totally abandoned him. Rami is an average student. He does not really like school but he foces himself to go forward so he can graduate and have a job and return to his mother a little of what she gave him.

Ahmed, on the other hand, is the second to last child of a very close family composed of his parents, his 3 sisters, and his 2 brothers. Despite having a different way of life than his brothers and his father, Ahmed has always been able to count on them and he always felt protected by them. The year he was supposed to start high school, Ahmed decided to drop out since he had no interest in school and thought of it as a waste of time. His parents initially refused this decision but eventually accepted it.

A few months later, he joined a small sewing workshop where he learned the trade and he still works there until today.

Despite the different lives, aspirations, and life goals, Ahmed and Rami are both from very poor families and neighborhood, and both of them are very effeminate. However, other than few insults when they were kids, and some from time to time in their adult lives, both young men say they did not suffer much.

In September 2017, TransHomosDZ received a message from Rami telling us about the rape he went through four months ago, specifically Saturday night, May 20th 2017. Rami is not the type to go out at night. He always goes home no later than 9PM. He has dinner with his mother, checks his social media, then falls asleep so he can get up early the next day. On that cursed Saturday, as he calls it, he was invited to a birthday party of a close friend. His friends convinced him to stay longer as an exception that night so he can have some fun since he never goes out much. He agrees and spends a great evening with them. At 11:30PM he starts feeling tired and decides to go home. His neighborhood was close and he needed a 10 minute walk to get home. After few dozen meters he sees 3 young men sitting at the door of a building. He picked up his pace since the area didn't feel safe. One of the guys calls out to him "Eh Halwa, my friend is diabetic and needs urgent sugar". Halwa, which means candy, is often a term used to describe homosexuals. Rami started walking faster but suddenly he was caught by his shirt. His aggressor said "who do you think you are? We are talking to you and you ignore us? Do you think you are better than us little PD? We told you our friend needs sugar what are you waiting for?". Rami not wanting to show fear, asks them to leave him alone and let him go because he has to get home. Suddenly the two others join their friend and one of them pulls out a knife and puts it on Rami's stomach. Terrified, Rami begged them to let him go, but one of the attackers got angry and pressed the knife hard, ordering him to shut up while threatening to gut him.

Rami does not shut up but he stops resisting. With the knife always on his stomach, they lead him calmly towards the back of the building they were sitting next to. The place looked like a landfill with rubbish, empty bottles and cans of beer everywhere. It smelled bad and was terrifyingly quiet. Rami told us: "we could see everything in the distance because of the street lights but nobody could see us. It was totally dark where we were. When we arrived at the spot one of them asks another to go keep watch on the other side. He hand the knife to the third attacker and the later puts it immediately back on the same spot on my stomach. I did not know what was going to happen to me. I was just so scared they were going to kill me. I have 200 dinars in my pocket and I told them that if they let me go I will bring back 5000 dinars that I had home and give it to them. The two guys who stayed with me laughed and said "Do not worry, you have something better to offer us and you don't even have to leave" the other one started trying to take of my pants. I tried to stop him but he pressed the knife to my belly so hard I thought I was stabbed. I could not resist anymore. While one was controlling me with the knife the other broke the zipper of my pants and took them off. He then tore my underwear with his knife.

I finally understood what they wanted from me, but I did not fight anymore. I let go and just waited for it all to be over. I thought they were not going to let me live after, I really thought the end of this night would be my death. One of them was holding my head against his chest while the one holding the knife spat on his cock and raped me. At first it hurt so bad that I screamed loudly but they put the rest of my underwear in my mouth to shut me up. When the first one finished he exchanged places with the other and it started again. It went back on forth between. They kept telling me "you will lose the desire to prostitute you dirty PD, you will become a man because in this country sissies like you we either cure them or we erase them from existence."

They kept telling me "you will lose the desire to prostitute you dirty PD, you will become a man because in this country sissies like you we either cure them or we erase them from existence." The third came from time to time to press them and tell them it was his turn. When the second was finished, the first took the watching duty. The third came. He was laughing hysterically while yelling some bad words that should not be said. He threw me on the floor and raped me while the other one held my heard to the ground with his foot. They finished and told me to live. I understood that they were going to let me live and I started walking away. However, the first rapist came back and caught me saying "No, I did not have enough of you. I want to take my fill of sugar so I don't run low." He put me on the ground and raped me again. I was in so much pain, I was disoriented and just waiting for him to finish. At the end one of them said "come back to us, you know where to find us. We will eventually heal you. You'll see." They left me on the ground and went. I put my pants back on, they were all dirty and did not close anymore, and I started walking towards home. On the way, all I could think about was that I can't let my mother see me like this, let alone know about what happened. Because that would be even worse than what has happened to me. I arrived home and went straight to the bathroom. I had wounds everywhere and I was in great pain. I washed the blood then I tore my pants with scissors and put them in a bag to throw them away myself the next day because I did not want my mom to see them. The days that followed, I pretended that nothing had happened, and I promised myself I would never go out late at night and I especially will never pass by that neighborhood again."

TransHomosDZ unfortunately receives many stories of rape of homosexual people or those suspected to be homosexual. However, this time it is different because we have just received the testimony of Ahmed who tells us about the night of his rape which was one week after that of Rami, on Saturday , May 27th 2017.

It was exactly at the same place and the facts reported by Ahmed were disturbingly similar to what was told by Rami. The description of the attackers, the fact that they also wore, as Rami has told us, Spanish football club "FC Barcelona" sportswear, the place where they hang out all the time, the knife..etc. There were only two points of difference between Ahmed and Rami's stories. Ahmed knew his attackers because they were from his neighborhood. And also Ahmed was raped by 4 men instead on 3. The fourth was the youngest, around 19 years old, and was the brother of one of the 3 attackers. Ahmed knew them all because all of them were customers at the workshop where Ahmed works. In the story of Ahmed he told us that on the night of his assault he was responsible for closing up the workshop. He went to the mosque to pray and he was later because the call for the prayer took a longer time than usual. When he passed by the 3 attackers he was caught by them. A knife was used like with Rami to drive him to the scene of the crime. The two rapes were identical except when Ahmed was raped he heard one of the guys who caught him on the phone talking to a fourth person saying "come to the place I told you about". Ten minutes later, Ahmed saw the fourth rapist. He realized that he was the younger brother of the one who was on the phone. The older brother asked one of his accomplices, who had not finished his crime, let his younger brother do it instead, and he obeyed. The fourth aggressor hesitated for few seconds but then decided to go on with it and raped Ahmed. As soon as the younger brother was finished he was ordered to leave by his older brother, and he went. The first rapist then resumed raping Ahmed, and the gang rape goes on like these criminals wanted.

Ahmed stayed home for a week after that without leaving his house. He pretends that he has a severe stomach ache. He resigned himself to going back to work after that and going on with his life. Ahmed received remarks several times in the workshop.

One of his attackers gave him a provocative smile every time he was there but Ahmed just looked away and ignored him.

Both victims refuse to press charges for one reason, which is shame and fear of dishonor. TransHomosDE offered to arrange a meeting between the two victims but they firmly refused.

Rami had been going to a psychologist since early 2018, but Ahmed just wants to forget it happened. Both young men are devastated until today.

12. The prison of an Algerian homosexual

I have always been a big dreamer. I am someone who searches for love and tenderness even though I lived under so much violence, and received so much hate during my 30 years of life.

The story I am about to tell started five years ago in Algiers. I had a regular job but my life at home was very bad. I had two brothers who were very violent. They both knew about my homosexuality and they brutalized me many times. They insulted me, beat me, humiliated me, and even threatened to kill me. It was then that I met a young man, Mourad was from Ain Timouchent and he was a year younger than me. He was unemployed and looking for a job. He had always worked in pizzerias and restaurants. At first he was very nice. We often spoke on the phone. After that he invited me to his house. He lived in a remote area in Zeralda. I started going to his house very often. He was very affectionate. We made love every night. He prepared me food, took care of me. He did everything. When I started talking to him about my problems at home he reassured me and told me that he could take care of me. He often proposed that I move in with him. I went back and forth between his house and mine regularly.

Sometimes I stayed over at his place for a week or even ten days. Every time I went to his house I took some of my clothes and belongings and left them there. When I went back home for a day he would ask me to come back. I knew then that I could leave my house and go live with Mourad, who was romantic, thoughtful, and caring.

Little by little he started having total power over me and he knew it very well, that's how the nightmare started. He started insulting me, as soon as I said or did something he did not like. He started hitting me as soon as he got angry about any reason he would take it all on me. He chased me out of the house and threw all my clothes out. I would pick up clothes and wait outside crying, or walk for miles at 2 or 3 in the morning. Once during Ramadan I had prepared a lot of things to eat. We were talking then suddenly he became very angry over something minor and knocked the entire table over me. That was a normal incident to him. What I experienced with his brought back the trauma I had suffered at home. He had become very violent. He made a scene every time I went out. He even managed to give me a rectal examination more than once to see if I was having sex. It was a great humiliation for me. I was always petrified by violence therefore I was terrified every time he hurt me. I could not go back to my family's home especially not after everything that went down with my brothers. At first, after his angry outbursts he would become nice again and apologize but those little moments of kindness faded with time.

I started seeing one of my friends, Kenza. I knew her family and we got along well. She wanted to get closer to me, to understand me. She told me that I was not like the others and that she felt good with me because I did not have an ounce of perversity. But I told her that a day would come when she would be disappointed with me because of who I was. But she discovered my sexuality and accepted me as I was. Mourad became very jealous of my relationship with her. When he called me and I did not answer he would call her and say "« djewzili hedeketahan, ma3labalakch wesh ydir, weshe lif ih » (pass me that bastard, you don't know what he does, what he is). One day I was out with her like usual and he kept calling me and pressuring me and I just could not take it anymore.

On my way home I bought sleeping meds both syrup and pills and headed to the bathroom. I could not stop crying and hitting my head against the wall. I could not stand it anymore. My life was hell and I couldn't see any other end. However, the ambulance was called quickly and I was taken to the hospital and they gave me a gastric lavage. The law enforcement came and made me sign a report because suicide attempts are punished by jail here. But they were very nice. They told me that everything will pass and nothing was worth doing this for. Kenza came with me to the hospital. She told me to go back home (to my family's house). She said Mourad was too violent and that I had to leave him. But I could not, I just could not. He came to the hospital and kept looking at me and then looking at her. He unkindly looked at Kenza and told her that all this was happening because of ther. He then told me that he had problems, and that he did not want to live where we were anymore. He said that if we change the place it will all work out and I had believed him. I believed him.

Since we had no money, I borrowed some. We found a house to rent but it was too far. It was all the way in Boumerdes, in the middle on nowhere. It was even more remote than Zeralda, and after a month I could not go. I told him we had to change places but he ignored me. He was still treating me badly at home. He drank at the house. He got drunk and hit me. When I did not want to sleep with him he raped me. It happened many times. He also told me "do you think I'm gay? I'm just doing it for fun". He continued to humiliate me. He forbade me from sitting with his friends when he invited them over he told me that I was disgusting and I would sleep with one of them. I was completely demeaned.

We stayed in Boumerdes for only a month then we went back to the house we lived in before. I still did not get to see anyone. I was not allowed to even go to my family's home. To my surprose it was my brothers who came where I lived. Not to hug me, far from that, they came to humiliate me. They were screaming and making a whole scene in front of my neighbors. They asked me to go back with them but of course I refused. I fled the executioners to fall in the hands of another executioner.

What saved me was that I saw Kenza once a week. Every Saturday we went somewhere together. Little by little she became attached to me and that was my only support. Mourad was still trying to create problems with her. He called her and said random stuff things about me. He told her that I was doing pornography and that she did not know me ..etc. But she did know me very well and knew they were lies. I then made a decision that was very difficult.

I got along very well with Kenza and I know her family. Our relationship was healthy, so I asked her to marry me and she accepted. When Mourad found out about it he was shocked, but he knew he could not do anything, it was too late. We still lived together when it happened but in separate rooms. Sometimes he threatened to kill me and commit suicide. It was a nightmare that lasted for hours every day. I finally had the strength to leave him, after 4 years of suffering.

During my engagement he came to intimidate me but thankfully he did not make any scene. When I got married he tried to take revenge by telling my brothers that my sister going out with him but they ignored him. After that he didn't try to contact me anymore.

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After my marriage, my brothers have calmed down a little bit. My relationship with them is peaceful. I will never forget what they did to me and all that I suffered because of them, but at least now they are leaving me alone.

Djamel

13. Suppressing his nature to have some kind of peace

When I was little I loved playing with my female cousins. They were all my age and I loved playing with them with dolls, jump rope, and many other games. My male cousins and my brother played football all the time but I was never interested in it. Which is my I preferred to spend time with girls because I do not play football. All this caused them to start calling me "b'nita, 106, tafla, mriwa ..." (girly, gay..) everyday, they never stopped. I had this cousin who liked to bother me, every time he passed me he would say "bnita" (girl), everyday! He would pass me and say it so casually. It hurt because he humiliated me in front of people. They were also jealous of me because I was good at school. I was educated. But I started to pretend to b e like them, otherwise I was "weird". Once, when I was a child, a man tried to sexually assault me. I went up to my brother thinking he would kill him and protect me but he told me it was my fault. He said it was because this man saw the way I behaved like a girl and that's why he did that.

When we got older girls stopped playing outside, they stayed at home. So I started playing with boys. I controlled my actions, my way of speaking, and the words I used. I was striving to fit in, and I wanted to be safe and no longer get harassed. I was careful to make my voice more serious and manly.

Around the age of 14 or 15 the harassment stopped. We had moved so I changed my life, my friends and my entourage.

I told myself that I will stop acting like I did before so I won't be bothered. It was the only chance I had to stop the harassment. I paid attention to everything I did and that's how I changed. It became automatic. But I feel good as I am. When I'm around my gay friends I let go and I let my feminine side out, I do not deny that. But even if I don't get bothered on the streets I saw an incident that had shaken me completely.

There was a group at a certain time in Algiers that only harassed guys at night. They spotted the "effeminate" guys and attacked them. They had already attacked friends of mine who had gone to the police but they did nothing to help them. One day I was with two friends who had already been attacked and while we were walking they saw the group of the attackers. They went pale. They turned blue from the fear. They insisted that we turn around, but I told them that there was nothing to be scared of and that we had the right to go anywhere we wanted. The attackers recognized them, and began to follow us.

We went to the nearest police station and told them that my friends' attackers were chasing us. They took our ID cards and they stated telling my friend "why are you dressed like this? Look at your friend bayen wild familia bayen beli khatih (he is obviously respectful and from a good family)" they only said that because I did not look effeminate but that does not stop me from being gay. They added to my friend "loukan jit normal telbess mayetbelewekch" (if you were dressed normally they would not harass you) the same thing my brother told me when I was a kid. They blame the victim and encourage the aggressor to attack more with liberty and impunity. I told one of the cops not to mix things up, it's not their job to judge, these attackers hit my friends, that's the only fact there is and it is their job to catch and stop these attackers. But he still continued talking nonsense trying to play the role of a moralist, and of course he did not take the complaint.

My friend has started to avoid many places because of these aggressors, to whom the cops gave a green card to attack. Those who harass are the first ones to sleep with men if they are asked for 500DA. These same aggressors who say that gay people are an epidemic would not hesitate to jump to bed with a man when gives the first opportunity. But go figure all the hypocrisy these people live with.

Hamid, 25 years old, from Algiers.

III – REPORTING VIOLATIONS

In order to effectively and efficiently collect incidents of violence and abuse based on sexual orientation and gender identity, we provide a high quality software on our website that covers the entire national territory. For more information you can check it here :

https://transhomosdz.org/declarer-un-abus/

All date used to supply this report has been digitized and recorded. Organizations that wish to have access to it can contact us at this address

contact@transhomosdz.org

IV - ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

We would like thank, first of all, all those who agreed to share their experiences and what they went though. We are grateful for their trust, their courage, and their patience. For patience it took from them to agree to attend several sessions. Their strength and support immensely helped us to continue this work and made us realize the necessity and need to document it all.

All our partners without whom this would not have been possible, and all the people who contributed, from neat or fat, by their presence, their encouragement, and their remarks, to improve the work.

We also want to thank the actor and actresses who will use this report to bring awareness to the extent of what LGBTI people are experiencing every day.

Team Transhomosdz

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