

The Practices of Systematic Torture by French Colonialism in Algeria (1954–1962): A War Crime and a Crime Against Humanity

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Received: 02/04/2026; Accepted: 02/05/2026; Published: 30/06/2026

Abstract:

This study examines the practices of the French colonial in systematic torture in Algeria, particularly following the outbreak of the Algerian Revolution, until Algerians became a testing ground for newly developed methods of torture, in which executioners from various colonial repressive apparatuses excelled. thus, turning it into an established method, for which it created dedicated schools, centers, and specialized apparatuses, as well as training officers specifically in its application. As a result, systematic torture became an organized and officially sanctioned practice, carried out under the supervision and endorsement of the French state. In doing so, France committed both a war crime and a crime against humanity.

Keywords: Systematic torture; French colonialism; Algerian revolution; Ware crime; crime against humanity.

INTRODUCTION

The French colonial presence in Algeria, from 1830 until 1962, was marked by the commission of brutal crimes against the Algerian people, classified under international conventions as crimes against humanity and war crimes perpetrated by France, which claims to uphold civilization and human values. Foremost among these crimes was the crime of torture in all its forms. As the Algerian Revolution intensified, the colonial authorities escalated the practice of systematic torture, They established specialized schools for it, and new methods

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were devised and taught to soldiers with the aim of suppressing the revolution. This raises several questions: Did France, through systematic torture, commit war crimes and crimes against humanity in Algeria? What were its motives for practicing torture? What methods, techniques, and forms were employed? Were these practices isolated acts, or carried out under official supervision by the French state? Were they random acts, or systematic torture codified into laws with its methods developed?

1. The Practice of Systematic Torture and Its Legalization by the French Colonial Authorities in Algeria.

The practice of torture is considered one of humanity's greatest disgraces and one of the most serious international crimes, due to its impact on an individual's physical and psychological well-being, as well as its violation of their dignity, freedom, and rights. It is an inhumane act universally condemned, regardless of time or place, ethnicity or culture, divine law, international legislation, or domestic law.

It is a crime that the United Nations Convention Against Torture defines as: "any act by which severe pain or suffering, whether physical or mental, is intentionally inflicted on a person for the purpose of obtaining information, or because of an act the person has committed or is suspected of having committed, whether by the individual or a third party, or on the basis of any kind of discrimination, and such an act is committed by, instigated by, consented to, or acquiesced in by an official or public authority". International conventions and laws agree in considering torture a violation of human rights and dignity. Due to its gravity, international efforts have mobilized to criminalize it and eliminate all forms of its practice⁽¹⁾.

(1) - Saleh Dafsti, Abdelraouf Debbach, "The Criminal Issue of the Crime of Torture," *Journal of Humanities*, University of Biskra, Vol. 20, No. 2, 2020, p. 117. also: Mohammed Moanes Mohibeddine, *Humanitarian Crimes in the System of the Criminal Court*, University for Security Sciences, Riyadh, 2010, p. 91.

The record of French colonialism in Algeria was replete with crimes against the Algerian people since the occupation in 1830, including torture in all its forms. The systematic torture perpetrated against Algerians constituted a violation of all international instruments related to human rights, turning the Algerian into a testing ground for experimental and innovative methods of torture, which torturers belonging to various colonial repression agencies carried out with grim ingenuity.⁽²⁾

The practice of torture by the French army in Algeria was not born with the Algerian Liberation Revolution; rather, it accompanied the French occupation as an automatic behavior linked to other brutal colonial actions such as arrests, persecution, forced displacement, and mass killings. Torture operations were considered a strategic necessity by the French administration and its repressive security apparatus to maintain French control over Algeria and to crush the spirit of Algerian resistance. Torture was not the result of individual acts or incidental events, but rather became a systematic method and a means of war inherent in the relationship between the colonizer and the colonized. Despite the French occupation authorities' denial of practicing torture in Algeria, numerous French individuals who were deployed there testified that its use was real and widespread. General Jacques Massu admitted to using torture, justified it, and emphasized the necessity of its application to maintain order.⁽³⁾

Similarly, General Aussaresses acknowledged the French army's crimes, including torture and indiscriminate killings, in his testimony while stationed in Skikda, stating: "*The battalion opened fire on the civilians indiscriminately, killing everyone in front... Unfortunately,*

(2) - Bashir Madyni, "Prisons and Detention Centers during the French Occupation of Algeria (1830–1962)," *Al-Hikma Journal of Historical Studies*, Ali Lounisi, University of Blida 2, No.11, 2017, p.167 - 168.

(3) - Raphael Branche, *Torture and the Army during the Algerian War, 1954–1962*, Gallimard, Paris, 2001, p. 251- 253. Also: Frantz Fanon, *El-Moudjahid*, No. 10, September 1957.

among the dead were women and children.” He further admitted on another occasion to the execution and mass burial of prisoners, and that he personally led operations of arresting and interrogating Algerians, often carrying out physical executions on the spot. He also acknowledged the widespread and systematic nature of torture, justifying it by saying: *“It was rare for those interrogated at night to be alive in the morning, whether they confessed or not.”*⁽⁴⁾

since 1956, torture in Algeria evolved from a random practice into a professional one, becoming an institution in its own right within the overall occupation system, with its own structures, theorists, and training centers in methods of torture. According to testimonies from some conscripts,⁽⁵⁾ torture had become professional and structured under the supervision of generals such as Massu and Lacoste, and it was an organized method for monitoring and subjugating individuals. Thus, it became a social and psychological tool.⁽⁶⁾

Researcher Rafaëlle Branche confirms that the practice of torture by the French army to suppress the Algerian Revolution since 1954 was a deliberate tool of war. Its implementation evolved thanks to the facilitation provided by exceptional measures, eventually becoming an institution in its own right and a central weapon in the war. It also developed into an official system with its own rules and methods,⁽⁷⁾ with the colonial administration organizing training sessions where recruits were instructed in the art of torture as a means of warfare. This was confirmed by General Jacques Massu when he was asked during a journalistic interview in 2000 whether torture existed. He acknowledged its existence, stating: *“It was widespread in Algeria,*

(4) - Paul Aussaresses, *My Testimony on Torture*, translated by Mostafa Farhat, Dar Al-Maaref, Algiers, 2008, pp. 46–59, 115–121.

(5) - Ahmed Redouane Charef eddine, “Torture: An Essential Necessity for the Colonial World – An Analysis of El-Moudjahid Newspaper (1957–1962),” *Al-Masader Journal*, Algiers, No. 08, May 2003, pp. 110–111.

(6) - Maghnia Lazreg, *Torture and the Decline of the Empire: From Algiers to Baghdad*, Dar Al-Hikma Publishing, Algiers, 2001, p. 156.

(7) - Raphael Branche, *op. cit.*, p. 251–253.

and later became institutionalized through the establishment of coordination centers between the armies and field protection units. I believe that the institutionalization of torture is the most horrific aspect of the entire operation.” ⁽⁸⁾ Henri Alleg also confirmed that torture had become institutionalized and systematized, officially practiced by specialized and experienced personnel, with dedicated apparatuses and training centers established for it.⁽⁹⁾

Despite attempts by French leaders to deny the practice of torture in Algeria, claiming that it was limited to isolated excesses committed by individual soldiers in retaliation for the deaths of their comrades, according to the statement of French Prime Minister Guy Mollet, the reality and the testimonies of some torture victims as well as those of certain French army officers confirm the existence of official practices of torture. General Robert Lacoste affirmed that, in order to obtain information, intelligence officers most often resorted to torture.⁽¹⁰⁾

Paratrooper Pierre Leullitte stated that torture had become a systematic weapon and a method of interrogation practiced by soldiers at the “Suzini” villa, who revived old Gestapo techniques. In 1957, General Charles de Gaulle confirmed the deep connection between the colonial system and the practice of torture, asserting that it was an integral part of the existing colonial system.⁽¹¹⁾ For his part, General Paul Aussaresses confirmed in his book *My Testimony on Torture* that while carrying out torture operations and executing prisoners without trial, he was following the orders of his superiors and the French government, stating: “*And when we executed the prisoners, we were carrying out the orders of the French Republic ... It was impossible to*

(8) - Jacques Massu, *Le Monde*, statements collected by Florence Beaugé, June 22, 2000; November 23, 2000.

(9) - Boualem Nejdj, *Torturers (1830–1961)*, translated by Mohamed Al-Ma'raj, ANEP Publications, Algiers, 2007, pp. 88–90.

(10) - Raphael Branche, *op. cit.*, p. 251- 253.

(11) - Ramadan Bourghda, *The Algerian Revolution and General de Gaulle, 1958–1962*, Dar Al-Raid for Books, Algiers, 2006, p. 150.

refer the prisoners to the judicial system due to their large numbers." Aussaresses elaborated further in his confessions, recounting a conversation with his superior, who expressed his disapproval of the widespread use of torture and the execution of prisoners without trial. Aussaresses replied: *"But this is what the higher authorities of the state decided, Colonel... Justice operates according to a system designed for peacetime, and we are now in Algeria amid war... Our mission requires us to achieve results, for which torture is often a bridge, and even killing."* He also confirmed that torture had become a normal practice in Algeria, And that various security agencies were carrying it out across different parts.⁽¹²⁾

When torture practiced by the security agencies in Algeria, became a reality, The occupation authorities could no longer deny it, so they established schools to teach it. torture was not a secret; rather, it was practiced as a specialized art with its own rules, instruments, facilities, and trained personnel. It constituted a complete and systematized regime, with an apparatus present throughout Algeria, evolving gradually as its operatives competed to invent unimaginable methods of torture.⁽¹³⁾

These methods were taught to soldiers in schools established by French generals. One soldier recalled that training in these specialized torture schools was a reality: during torture sessions, the prisoner was often so disfigured by beating, burning, and electric shocks that he was barely recognizable. Another soldier stated: *"My first introduction to methods of torture was at the military school in Cherchell, where military training included lessons on interrogation and torture techniques. I still remember a lesson I attended alongside 150 lieutenants on how to use the 'Gijon' machine and water."*⁽¹⁴⁾

(12) - Aussaresses, *op. cit.*, pp. 26–31.

(13) - Mohammed Salh Al-Siddiq, ***How Can We Forget While These Are Their Crimes***, Dar Al-Houma for Publishing, and Distribution, Algiers, 2009, pp. 16–19.

(14) - Jacques Jullard, *Torture: What I Saw in Algeria*, ***Le Nouvel Observateur***, December 14–20, 2000, p. 10.

All of this indicates that the practice of torture was a policy adopted by the French against the Algerian Revolution, carried out by individuals who received specialized training in schools established for this purpose which elevated torture to the level of inventing new methods. It became an officially sanctioned practice by the French state, as expressed by Pierre-Henri Simon, when he told the French public that they no longer had the right to criticize the Nazis, because what the French army was doing in Algeria, with the knowledge of the French government, followed the same policy as the Nazi occupation, which France imposed on an entire people, thereby stripping itself of honor and plunging into shame.⁽¹⁵⁾

2. Forms of Systematic French Torture against Algerians

2. 1. Physical Torture:

considered one of the most dangerous forms of torture, as it affects the physical integrity of the human being, and is carried out through brutal methods that inflict harm on the detainee's body, and was practiced on thousands of Algerians.⁽¹⁶⁾

- **Torture by Electric Shock:** This method was widely used, as confirmed by some of those who took part in such practices, including Aussaresses who stated that this method “*is characterized by precision, as its effects disappear*”⁽¹⁷⁾ It was usually carried out at night, during which the detainee would be laid naked on a table, with hands and feet bound. The body would be moistened with water, after which electric current would be applied to sensitive parts of the body such as the tongue and the genitals.⁽¹⁸⁾ Aussaresses stated in this regard: “*Torture was carried out using electric generators by*

(15) - Pierre-Henri Simon, *Against Torture in Algeria*, translated by Bahij Shaaban, Dar Al-Ilm Lil-Malayin, Beirut, 1957, pp. 79–85.

(16) - Bashir Madani, *op. cit.*, p. 309.

(17) - Hamid Bousselham, *The Algerian War 1954–1962: Tortured by the Pen*, Rahma-ANEP Edition, Algiers, 2000, p. 43.

(18) - Hamid Bousselham, *When France Tortured in Algeria*, Rahma-ANEP Edition, Algiers, 2001, p. 162.

administering electric shocks to the ears or the testicles.”⁽¹⁹⁾ It is worth noting that the victims were not immediately released after being subjected to such torture, as the executioners took precautions by treating the visible marks, so that the tortured individuals would appear physically intact in the eyes of observers.⁽²⁰⁾ Electric shock torture was the most commonly used method, as it was easy and effective in forcing detainees to disclose information. It is considered one of the lessons received by officers at the Jeanne d’Arc school, Massu (who acknowledged that torture in Algeria was widespread), regarding electric torture, stated: “*Some of us in the high military command and I tried the electric generator in my office.*”⁽²¹⁾

- **Water Torture:** This method was preferred by executioners, as it forced the victim to confess while leaving no physical traces. One of the most well-known methods of water torture involved inserting a tube into the victim’s mouth, then placing a funnel in the mouth through which dozens of liters of water were poured until the stomach became distended, after which the nostrils were blocked to cause suffocation, after which one of the executioners would jump on the victim’s abdomen, forcing water and sometimes blood to expel from the mouth and other orifices-all in order to compel a confession.⁽²²⁾

- **Fire Torture:** As for this form of torture, it is the most brutal. One of its methods is to tie the victim to a chair while bare-chested; then the interrogator blows the smoke of his lit cigarette into his eyes and extinguishes it on his chest and nipples.⁽²³⁾ Another method consisted of restraining the victim on the operations table, bare-chested, soaking the body with gasoline, and setting it on fire -an act that caused severe burns. In addition to burning the victim’s chest, arms, and legs with a heated iron. Another method involves tying the

(19) - Aussaresses, *op. cit.*, p. 29.

(20) - Boualem Nejdi, *op. cit.*, p. 146.

(21) - Rachid Zoubir, *France’s Colonial Crimes in the Fourth Wilaya, 1956–1962*, Dar Al-Hikma, Algiers, 2012, p. 22.

(22) - Aussaresses, *op. cit.*, p. 123 – 125. Also: Raphael Branche, *op. cit.*, p. 429.

(23) - Mohamed Saleh Al-Siddiq, *op. cit.*, p. 145.

hands behind the back, then placing lit matches on the fingertips to burn the nails, causing severe pain. Alternatively, the victim may be left barefoot, and a lit candle is placed underneath the feet until the flame goes out.⁽²⁴⁾

- **Iron Torture:** In this method, the victim would be tied to a chair, bare-chested, while the executioner scraped the flesh from the back, chest, and lips using pliers. Also, the victim's palms were placed on the ground, after which the executioner struck the back with the heels of daggers and the handles of axes. In another procedure, an adze was placed on a part of the body and dragged across it, similar to how a carpenter smooths a plank, after which salt was applied to the resulting wounds.⁽²⁵⁾

- **Rope Torture:** One of the most common methods involved tying the victim's hands and feet together with a rope, then he was hoisted toward the ceiling and the rope was released, causing the victim to fall on his head. Another technique consisted of tying the victim while seated on a chair, looping a rope around the neck, after which two interrogators would pull the ends of the rope beside the neck, gradually strangling the victim until suffocation or death ⁽²⁶⁾.

In addition to other brutal methods of torture, detainees were subjected to being attacked by dogs, flayed, having their nails and teeth pulled out, or being placed in a wooden box and thrown into a deep ravine.⁽²⁷⁾ They were also forced to walk naked on all fours while being kicked or struck on the buttocks with rifle butts. Some were made to stand under the sun inside a cage made of iron mesh. While

(24) - Hamid Bosselham, *op. cit.*, p. 18.

(25) - *El Moudjahid*, "Testimony of an Algerian Who Lived Through Some Forms of Colonial Repression," no. 12, November 15, 1957, p. 7- 9.

(26) - *El Moudjahid*, *op. cit.*, p. 9.

(27) - *El Moudjahid*, "Torture, Destruction, Massacres, Extrajudicial Killings, and Organized Famine: France and Its Crimes in Algeria," no. 9, 1957, p. 4.

many women were subjected to rape during interrogations⁽²⁸⁾.

2. 2. Psychological Torture:

Through this form of torture, the French colonial aimed to break the morale of detainees during interrogations. Psychologists were sometimes involved to force prisoners to confess or to abandon their principles for use as collaborators. Examples of this psychological warfare included sudden night-time raids on prison cells to terrorize detainees, and brainwashing through specialized questioning that led victims to lose their memory and mentally collapse, causing them to confess to things they did not know. Another humiliating method involved gathering family members, stripping them naked in front of the executioners, who then groped, beat, and terrorized them. Another example of psychological torture involved bringing the prisoner's wife or one of his daughters before him and subjecting her to sexual assault, resulting in severe psychological trauma for the detainee.⁽²⁹⁾

3. Centers, Agencies, and Schools of Systematic French Torture in Algeria

When the pace of the Algerian revolution intensified, the colonial authorities were compelled to deploy over 500,000 soldiers, most of whom lacked experience, to confront the uprising. This situation led them to adopt torture and incorporate it into their training programs to produce professional executioners. Given the significance of this project, it was directly funded by the Ministry of Defense in Paris, and methods of torture were taught to special forces in specialized military schools, with practical application carried out on samples of Algerian detainees. "Consequently, torture came to be regarded as a weapon of war, with training in its techniques conducted similarly to other military training. These schools also provided opportunities for

(28) - Mohamed Qantari, *From the Heroism of Algerian Women in the Revolution and the Crimes of French Colonialism: Facts, Testimonies, Documents, Studies, and Investigations*, Dar al-Gharb for Publishing, Oran, 2009, p. 165.

(29) - Bachir Madyni, *op. cit.*, pp.168–169.

executioners to exchange information on effective techniques and to share innovations to refine their skills.⁽³⁰⁾ Among these schools were:

3. 1. École Jeanne d'Arc:

Specializing in destructive warfare training, it was inaugurated by General Marcel Bigeard in May 1958 in Skikda. This school constituted a central institution for teaching methods of extermination and for training officers specialized in the curricula and techniques of torture. Bigeard described the objectives behind its establishment as providing the colonial army's general staff with officers proficient in new methods of torture and battalion leaders with high-level expertise in counter-insurgency operations. This school specializing in torture, received support from the Minister of Defense. Among its programs was the training of intelligence agents and torturers, conditioning them to be shielded from feelings of guilt and remorse they might otherwise experience.⁽³¹⁾ The torturers began his training at the school through observation as a prelude to practical application.⁽³²⁾ The lessons took place in a dedicated room, fully equipped for torture, a scene that instilled terror in the prisoners even before the procedure began.

After completing their training at this specialized torture school, the officers were assigned to prisons, detention camps, and torture centers spread across Algeria to implement the lessons they had received and to carry out brutal practices against the Algerians. After mastering the basic principles of torture, and benefiting from Nazi and techniques as well as their own experiences in Vietnam, these soldiers were able to devise new methods of torture and perfect their practice. In 1961, the French newspaper *Témoignage Chrétien* published a report of an interview conducted between one of its journalists and four French officers who had received training at École Jeanne d'Arc. They stated that one of the most important instructions given at the

(30) - Maghnia Lazreg, *op. cit.*, p. 167 - 169.

(31) - Raphaël Branche, *op. cit.*, pp. 278–280. Also: Bachir Madyni, *op. cit.*, p.164.

(32) - Maghnia Lazreg, *op. cit.*, p. 170.

school was that torture should be careful and clean, meaning it should leave no visible marks on the victim's body. This, they explained, could only be achieved through the use of water and electricity, and through diabolical methods that no one could endure, which ensured the most effective results.⁽³³⁾

The executioners of the Tenth Parachute Division tortured numerous Mujahideen, excelling in their craft due to the lessons they had received at the school, and even devising new techniques in the art of torture. When General Massu assumed command of the French Army in Algeria, he began applying his repressive theories and methods using these units against Algerians, and even against French citizens sympathetic to the Algerian cause, such as Maurice Audin and Henri Alleg, who was tortured using water tubes and electricity on sensitive parts of his body due to his writings on torture.⁽³⁴⁾

3. 2. Interrogation Centers, Detention Facilities, and Prisons

In addition to the Jeanne d'Arc school, there were other centers across Algeria dedicated to the practice of torture and the teaching of its methods, including: The Training Center for Security Consolidation and Counter-Revolution in Arzew, where torture techniques were taught. and "Arkol" psychological torture Center in Oran.⁽³⁵⁾ and Qasr al-Tayr Detention Center in Ain Oulmane, where brutal torture was practiced, including training in brainwashing techniques, interrogation, physical abuse, mutilation, and execution of detainees. also Cahora Detention Center in Ksar El-Boukhari, known as the " Detention of death " and El-Djerf Detention Center. In addition to the prisons where interrogations and torture were carried out, such as Barbrouss Prison, some isolated villas and farms were also used as secret torture sites (Villa Suzini)⁽³⁶⁾ and Amziane Farm,

(33) - Mohamed Saleh Al-Siddiq, *op. cit.*, pp. 18–20.

(34) - Henri Alleg, *Algerian Memoirs*, Dar Al-Qasbah, Algiers, 2007, p. 240.

(35) - Ali Boutraa, *op. cit.*, p. 218.

(36) - Rania Makhlouf, "The Battle of Algiers and the Crimes of French Colonialism in Algeria," *Al-Hikma Journal of Historical Studies*, University of Algiers, vol. 1, =

which was transformed into a center for torture and interrogation. ⁽³⁷⁾

Thus, torture came to be practiced in a systematic and organized manner, following structured school programs. The school, which was originally intended to teach moral, human, and scientific values, was transformed into an institution dedicated to destroying them, producing individuals who bear nothing of humanity except its name; professionals in the most brutal practices known to humanity throughout its long history.

These inhumane practices, embodied in the crime of torture, were overseen by various security services forming part of the French state apparatus, most notably: (Operational Protection Units. Operational Intelligence Service). ⁽³⁸⁾

4. Manifestations and Examples of Systematic Torture:

Systematic torture was widely employed in Algeria during the Algerian Revolution, by French security services. It targeted various segments of the population. Victims who suffered severe harm were often eliminated to conceal the crime, while others died under the brutality of torture. They were neither executed by gunfire nor did they commit suicide; rather, they were killed under torture. Among the most notable examples Larbi Ben M'hidi, who was arrested and tortured, as confirmed by Aussaresses: *"We isolated the prisoner in a specially prepared room and subjected him to physical and psychological torture for a full nine days... then we bound him and hanged him in a manner suggesting suicide."* ⁽³⁹⁾ This contradicts the official French narrative, which attributed his death to suicide rather than to the effects of torture. Likewise, Ali Boumendjel met the same

no. 1, January 2013, p. 231.

(37) - Jean-Luc Einaudi, *La Ferme Amezine: Investigation of Torture during the Algerian Revolution*, L'Harmattan, Paris, 1991, p. 102.

(38) - Claude Guian, *Soldier Torturers: The Algerian War – When Soldiers Turn into Instruments of Torture*, translated by Ahmed Ben Mohamed Bekli, Dar Al-Qasbah for Publishing, Algiers, 2013, p. 120.

(39) - Aussaresses, *op. cit.*, pp. 134–135

fate, as he was thrown from a building window on the fifth floor in 1957, following an interrogation that lasted 15 days.⁽⁴⁰⁾ Aissat Idir was also subjected to torture after his arrest on 1956, due to his trade union activities within the Union of Algerian Workers. He was then subjected to water torture, electric shocks, and burn torture.⁽⁴¹⁾

- Torture and Sexual Assault (rape) of Women:

Algerian women, for their part, also suffered from colonial brutality. Recognizing that Algerian women constituted a spiritual stronghold against attempts to subjugate Algeria, the French occupiers deliberately targeted them to destroy this fortress. And since Algerian women played a significant role in resisting the colonizer, the occupiers intensified their methods and psychological warfare against them,⁽⁴²⁾ subjecting them to degrading practices, including torture, sexual assault, and rape. Because these acts were often silenced for various reasons, only limited documents and some testimonies of officers and women who experienced these crimes are available. Since 1957, Algerian women's participation in the revolution became increasingly visible politically and militarily to the occupying authorities, who issued orders to treat women as suspects, just like men, and to subject them to the same violations.⁽⁴³⁾

The shameful reality is that women were subjected to torture and humiliation just like men. Executioners would strip detained women of their clothing before inflicting abuse. During interrogation, women, like men, were brutally beaten-slapped, on all parts of the body. They were deprived of food, water, and sleep, tortured by strangulation, submerged in water contaminated with human waste, subjected to electric shocks, sexually assaulted, and had sharp objects inserted into

(40) - Patrick Eveno, Jean Blanchais, *The Algerian War: European Files and Testimonies*, Algiers, 2013, p. 246.

(41) - Boualem Nejadi, *op. cit.*, p. 173.

(42) - Frantz Fanon, *Sociology of a Revolution: The Year Five of the Algerian Revolution*, Maspero, Paris, 1966, p. 23.

(43) - Raphaël Branche, *op. cit.*, p. 303.

their genital organs. Many also suffered humiliation and psychological torture through death threats and were forced to witness the torture of other victims.⁽⁴⁴⁾

For example, Djamila Boupacha became a symbol for thousands of Algerian women who were subjected to such brutality. In February 1960, she was subjected to brutal torture, including electric shocks to her chest, face, and all sensitive areas, including her genital organs; her body was burned with lit cigarettes; she was suspended from a wooden post inside a water tank; and she endured a degrading form of torture in which a broken-necked glass bottle was inserted into her genitalia, considered one of the most horrific and painful methods of torture.⁽⁴⁵⁾ Many other women like her were subjected to arrest and physical abuse, enduring brutal torture and humiliation.

Numerous testimonies were given, regarding the sexual targeting of Algerian women and the perpetration of rape by the French army, as well as the violation of women's dignity and honor. The researcher Alistair Horne pointed out that the rates of rape were horrifying and left lasting effects on Algerian women.⁽⁴⁶⁾ Benoist Rey, one of the French torturers, confirmed that the brutal rape of Algerian women was a common practice within his military unit, stating that before launching operations in villages, officers would tell them: "*Rape, but do it discreetly and in secrecy.*"⁽⁴⁷⁾ The Psychiatrist Godar, in her study on the psychological effects of war on a sample of French soldiers, also addressed the issue of torture and the rape of Algerian women by French troops. She stated: "*They told me about cases of violent rape*

(44) - Patrick Kessel, Giovanni Pirelli, *The Algerian People and the War: Letters and Testimonies, 1954–1962*, François Maspero, Paris, 1962, pp. 186–199.

(45) - *El Moudjahid*, "Djamila Boupacha and the Story of Torture," no. 70, June 13, 1960, p. 7.

(46) - Alistair Horne, *A Savage War of Peace: Algeria 1954–1962*, Papermac Publishers, London, 1987, p. 402.

(47) - Benoist Rey, *Les Égorgeurs*, Éditions du Monde Libertaire, Paris, 1999, p.39.

of women as if it were a systematic phenomenon. These soldiers wrote hundreds of reports containing horrific acts of rape.” ⁽⁴⁸⁾

This indicates that these practices, like torture, were deliberate and carried out in an official and systematic manner. were not isolated individual acts; the wide scope of this crime, its continuity, and its geographical distribution across all regions of Algeria demonstrate an organized French political and strategic intent to institutionalize wartime rape.

. CONCLUSION:

The practice of torture against Algerians continued throughout the colonial period and intensified as a means of breaking their morale following the outbreak of the Algerian Revolution. Algerians, including women and children, were subjected to the most horrific forms of physical and psychological torture. The shameful reality is that French colonial torturers competed to devise new methods of cruelty and took pride in their heinous acts; their objective was not always interrogation. Some even turned this practice into a form of entertainment. Their brutality went beyond the infliction of physical pain to include psychological torture, such as humiliating Algerians and the brutal rape of Algerian women-practices that left indelible physical and psychological scars on the victims. Thus, it becomes clear that France committed war crimes and crimes against humanity in Algeria. The practice of torture was not merely a set of individual acts; rather, it became part of the broader strategy of the colonial system. This practice was consolidated through numerous French military centers and schools specialized in training in torture and its methods. These institutions contributed to producing cohorts of Torturers. Paradoxically, the French occupation practiced torture in Algeria under the banner of civilization and progress.

(48) - Florence Beaugé, “The Taboo of Rape of Women during the Algerian War Begins to Be Lifted,” *Le Monde*, October 11, 2001.

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