

English Translation of Dr. Hafidha Chekir Comments for 9-24-25

Dear Ladies and Gentlemen, dear friends,

It is a great honor for me today to receive from your hands the Amel Zenoune Zouani prize for the year 2024, awarded by the International Network for Gender Equality and Law.

I would like to thank my friends Saif Thairi and Mahassen Segni for the wonderful idea they had to propose my candidacy for this prize.

This Amal Zannoun Zouani prize has honored me as it has honored many other women activists who have fought against dictatorial regimes and the patriarchal system imbued with sanctity.

The struggle I lead in my country and in our region in general, with my friends and fellow human rights activists, is not easy.

On one hand, it faces the difficulties of developing an autonomous and free feminist discourse in a context marked by retrograde rhetoric and patriarchal mentalities, where the condition of women is a prime target for challenges linked to political change, economic and climate crises, and where women's rights are often contested in the name of cultural and religious relativism. On the other hand, it suffers from increasing restrictions on freedoms and human rights, which hinder any activity and any critical and free discourse.

It is in this context that I continue to campaign for human rights in general and women's rights in particular, and to advocate for the universality of human rights, their interdependence, indivisibility, and complementarity, because I am always convinced that equality and non-discrimination are the foundation of these rights, just as human dignity and respect for the human person are.

And because I am always convinced that to achieve democracy in the country, we must start by achieving equality for all and fight against the patriarchy that underpins and justifies all discrimination and violence suffered by women.

Also, like many feminist jurists, from all professions (professors, lawyers, judges, etc.), I have spent a long part of my life campaigning for human rights, fighting against discrimination and gender-based violence.

My activist journey began at university in the student movement, continued in the union movement, and always in the feminist movement.

This journey has combined research and activism, as I have often conducted research to find a basis for the actions carried out by the feminist movement to which I belong in the fight for equality and non-discrimination. My numerous publications, in Arabic or French, attest to this.

Being convinced that the fight for human rights is part of the struggle for recognition and guarantee of rights for all, without discrimination, and that a feminist approach is one that includes all those who fight against the established patriarchal order, I have emphasized the discrimination suffered by all...

...LGBTQI++ people and the violations of their rights, and I have stood in solidarity with them to call for the repeal of laws criminalizing them for their sexual orientation and the free disposition of their bodies. I have also worked on the rights of vulnerable people such as stateless persons and migrants, for the recognition of their rights and the protection of their dignity based on equality and non-discrimination.

I have taken an interest in political trials and special courts by working on political justice at the legal level.

Similarly, considering that the Palestinian question is at the heart of all struggles for the conquest of collective and individual human rights, I have always campaigned within the ATFD or FIDH, of which I was an elected member of the international bureau, for the right of peoples to self-determination, and I have spoken out against the suffering and genocide affecting Palestinians, especially in Gaza.

In conclusion, I can only tell you that my life has been rich in struggles for equality and non-discrimination and for democratic and citizenship causes. It continues, especially in a context of regression of human rights and women's rights in particular, especially with the emergence in Tunisia and worldwide of populist movements and anti-rights movements (the backlash) that call into question women's sexual and reproductive rights, including the right to abortion and the right to free sexual orientation for LGBTQI++ people, and challenge the democratic achievements of all, without discrimination.

I thank you again for all the efforts you have made to enable me to receive this prize and hope that we will all continue our fight for the conquest of women's rights and human rights in general through our solidarity and activist actions.

Hafidha Chekir

Notes:

- ATFD: Tunisian Association for Women's Rights
- FIDH: International Federation for Human Rights