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Unbowed: An Algerian Woman Confronts Islamic Fundamentalism (Critical Authors and Issues)

Khalida Messaoudi, Elisabeth Schemla (interviewer)

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In 1993, a handwritten envelope arrived in Khalida Messaoudi's mailbox. In it was an official communique announcing that she had been condemned to death by the Islamic Salvation Front. This letter came after a series of threats and an attempt on her life in retaliation for her role as a leader of the feminist and democratic movements in Algeria and a fierce opponent of Islamic fundamentalism.

Messaoudi did not flee from this threat by seeking refuge outside her country. Instead, she went into hiding within Algeria, where she continues her fight for emancipation and independence from religious extremism. Her battle continues today with the same goal—to restore in Algeria what she describes as "the basics of dignity"—a woman's right to pursue her studies, practice a profession, make a living, marry and divorce freely, and walk the streets without a veil.

Readers of *Unbowed* will have the unique opportunity to sit in on a series of intensely personal conversations between Messaoudi and renowned journalist Elisabeth Schemla. In their discussions, Messaoudi gives a first-hand perspective of the situation in her homeland. She remembers the Algeria of her youth, recounts the changes that have gradually consumed her country, and laments the horrifying realities that face Algerian women today. She also tells her own story of terror, despair, hope, and determination.

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