



Door 5

THE HISTORY ALGERIAN POLITICAL PARTIES

Until 1945, Algerian political parties included the Social French Party SFP and the Popular French Party PFP, representing segments of the European settler population; the Algerian Communist Party ACP, integrating educated Muslims, Jews, and Europeans; the Etoile Nord Africaine (ENA), the Algerian People Party APP and the Movement for the Triumph of Democratic Liberties MTDL, representing the parties and associations of Algerian nationalism. When the Algerian War of Independence commenced in November 1954, one major movement-party, the National Liberation Front NLF, became dominant. It incorporated under its wings nationalist movements and leaders of different generations; it even developed its own liberation army - the National Liberation Army NLA. Only one movement sought to challenge, albeit with little success, the nationalistic monopoly of the (NLF). It was the National Algerian Movement NAM, led by the veteran nationalist Messali al-Hadj.

Until 1989 Algeria had a single-party system dominated by the National Liberation Front. At the time of Boumediene's rule, the small Algerian Communist Party was allowed to be active, up to a certain point. Shortly after independence, one of the NLF's historic leaders, Hocine Ait Ahmed, founded the Socialist Forces Front SFF, which gained legal recognition only in 1989. The sudden liberalization between 1989 and 1991 saw the proliferation of many other political organizations, most importantly the Islamic Salvation Front ISF, which has been banned since it was declared illegal in 1992. With the resumption of parliamentary elections in 1997, many parties were allowed to compete, but this pluralism has not translated into a reallocation of power. The election outcomes are often heavily contested by the opposition, as well as by Un-Governmental Organizations and in the media. Formal and informal restrictions make it difficult for parties to wield real power. The opposition therefore struggles repeatedly with the question of whether or not to take part in elections.

THE TURNING POINT: POLITICAL PARTIES & ELECTIONS SINCE 1990 TO NOWADAYS

On 12 June 1990 the country's first free municipal elections took place. Chief among the numerous political parties contending for power were the ruling NLF; the Islamist fundamentalist Islamic Salvation Front, founded in 1989 and led by *Abassi Madani* and *Ali Belhadj*; *Hocine Ait Ahmed's* pro-Berber Front of Socialist Forces; and another pro-Berber party - the Rally for Culture and Democracy RCD. The results were stunning: The ISF won a majority of the municipal seats in the country's four largest cities - Algiers, Oran, Constantine, and Annaba - as well as 65 percent of the popular vote and 55 percent of 15,000 municipal posts throughout Algeria. It won representation in 32 of the 48 provinces.

Support for FIS was part of the growing admiration in the Arab-Muslim world for Islamic fundamentalist leaders in the wake of the Iranian Revolution of 1979 and the parliamentary victory achieved in 1989 by the Muslim Brotherhood in Jordan. Many of the voters used their votes to protest against low salaries, spiralling inflation, and limited economic choices for young people under the NLF regime. In fact, the vote for the fundamentalist party was not so much massive support for ISF as a reaction against the NLF's record of authoritarian rule and economic miss-management and corruption.

Its electoral successes notwithstanding, ISF was somewhat vague from the outset about its objectives. It is known, however, that *Madani* struck an alliance with local merchants and espoused a free market economy instead of the NLF's state socialism. Both *Madani* and *Belhadj* described a woman's primary role as rearing a family, and limited women to such jobs as nursing and teaching. The local and provincial municipal councils, which serve five-year terms, have jurisdiction over such matters as renewal of liquor licenses, the type of activities allowed at cultural centers, and the issuance of permits to build mosques. *Madani* and *Belhadj* opposed public drinking, any form of dancing, and secular programming in the media.

At the time, in addition to the many secular parties that were newly created or had been revived after years of virtual clandestine existence, there also emerged Islamist parties who competed with the ISF. Among them two are noteworthy: the Society for Peace Movement (SPM), also known at one time as *Harakat alMujtama al-Islami*, or *Hamas*; and the Movement for Islamic Renaissance MIR which became later the Movement for National Reform (MNR). Those parties were moderate towards central government control, sought to take part in the ruling cabinet, and opted for a gradual Islamization of society through religious education. The SPM and MIR shunned violence, unlike the ISF, which in the early 1990s developed the Islamic Salvation Army (ISA), a paramilitary force to struggle against the authorities.

The backing for ISF in 1990 and subsequently came primarily from the Arab population, which constituted at least 70% of the total Algerian Sunni Muslim population of approximately 28 million. The Berber Muslims, as well as the ethnically mixed Arab-Berber population, were prone to support secular parties, including the Berber parties, especially the SFF and RCD. Both the NLF and the ISF were challenged in June 1990's elections by the Kabyle's, members of the largest, and most important Berber group. The Berbers demanded then, as they still do, greater political freedom and the ability to expand their cultural heritage. The RCD is especially stubborn about the need to augment the influence of their Tamazight Berber dialect. Besides the ISF, the other major beneficiaries of the 1990 elections were the SFF and RCD. The latter gained 8% of the municipal vote.

The gains made by Islamist and Berber parties prompted these forces to pressure the authorities to call for general parliamentary elections, which were scheduled for 27 June 1991. The elections did not take place, however. Fearing an Islamist victory, the army declared martial law and arrested, on 30 June 1991, the top ISF leadership, including *Madani* and *Belhadj*.

Under relentless pressure from all political parties, the government rescheduled new parliamentary elections for December 1991, with second-round runoffs planned for January 1992. These elections were to provide a serious national test for the new multiparty system; they were open to all registered parties. Voting was by universal suffrage and secret ballots, and assembly seats were awarded based on a proportional representation system. Only 231 of the 430 seats were decided in the first round of elections, in which 59% of eligible voters participated, but a ISF victory seemed assured by the Islamist command of 80% of the contested seats. The second round of elections never took place following the overturn on 11 January 1992 because the military canceled them to avert a sweeping Islamist victory. The putsch also marked a temporary end to NLF rule, and led to the resignation of President *Bendjedid*. From this point until the parliamentary elections of 1997, Algeria was guided by a five-member High State Council, which was backed and manipulated by the military.

The canceling of the second round of elections, coupled with political uncertainty and economic turmoil, led to a violent reaction on the part of ISF adherents and other Islamists. These elements organized themselves into the Islamic Salvation Army (ISA), the more extreme Armed Islamic Group (AIG), and a faction that seceded from it - the Salafist Group for Preaching & Combat SGPC. A campaign of assassinations, bombings, and massacres gained unprecedented strength. The High State Committee officially dissolved and outlawed the ISF in 1992 and began a series of arrests and trials against ISF members that reportedly resulted in

over 50,000 members being jailed. Despite efforts to restore the political process, violence and terrorism rocked Algeria throughout much of the 1990s and the early years of the twenty-first century. As many as 100,000 Algerians died as a result.

In November 1995 presidential elections took place despite the objection of some political parties to holding elections that excluded the ISF. *Liamine Zeroual*, who also headed the State (as a nominated president of the State), was elected president by 75% of the vote. In an attempt to bring political stability to the nation, the National Democratic Rally (NDR) was formed soon thereafter as the regime's new ruling party by *Zeroual* and a progressive group of NLF members. It was meant to constitute Algeria's major secular party alongside the declining NLF. *Zeroual* announced that presidential elections would be held in early 1999, nearly two years ahead of the scheduled time. In April 1999 the Algerian people elected *Abdelaziz Bouteflika* president with an official count of 70% of all votes cast. *Bouteflika* was the only presidential candidate that enjoyed the backing of the NLF and NDR. His inauguration for a five-year term took place on 27 April 1999.

NEW POLITICAL & LEGAL REFORMS: A REAL ACTIVE POLITICAL SCENE?

Whether secular, nationalist or Islamist, these parties participated in the successive municipal and legislative elections that took place in 1997, 2002 and 2007. Many of them (NLF, NDR, MI, SPM, PT, ANF, Ennahda (MN), RCD, PRA, MEN, UDR, and the MJD) have held seats in the APN. Yet, the existence of this multitude of parties has not fostered citizens' participation in political life.

Today, the authority opted many reforms, new laws adopted since January 2012, it is within this context that a new law authorized, in December 2011, the creation of new parties. Given the staunch refusal by the authorities to authorize any new party under the president's rule, the shift was most probably caused by the Arab Spring, official statements to the contrary notwithstanding. By April 2012, 21 new political parties had been approved. Forty-four political parties have been allowed to participate in the legislative election of May 10th, 2012, the municipal elections of 29th November 2012, legislative elections of May 17th 2017 and municipal elections of November 23rd 2017.

The table below provides a succinct roster of the new parties:

LIST OF NEW ESTABLISHED POLITICAL PARTIES AFTER 2012

NAME	FRENCH ABRV	NATURE	PRESIDENT	BACKGROUND	ORIGIN
Liberty of Justice Party (LJP)	PLJ	Islamist	Mohamed Said	Presidential candidate 2009	/
Justice and Development Front (JDF)	FJD	Islamist	Abdallah Djab Allah	Presidential candidate 99-2004	Dissident of Nahda-Islah
New Generation "Jil Jadid" (JJ)	JJ	Nationalist-Islamist	Sofiane Djilali	Former SG of PRA	Dissident of PRA
National Front for Social Justice (NFSJ)	FNJS	Nationalist	Khaled Bounedjma	Martyrs children association	Martyrs children association
New Algeria's Front (NAF)	FAN	Islamist	Djamel Benabdeslam	Islah Party	Dissident of Nahda-Islah
El-mostakbal Front (MF)	FM	Nationalist	Belaid Abdelaziz	FLN deputy	Dissident of FLN
Youth Party (YP)	PJ	Nationalist	Hamana Boucharma	/	Dissident of RND
El-karama Prty (KP)	PK	Nationalist	Mohamed Benhammou	/	Dissident of FNA
Union of Social Democratic Forces (USDF)	UFDS	Nationalist	Noureddine Bahbouh	Former ministre	Dissident of RND
Front of Change (FC)	FC	Islamist	Abdelamjid Menasra	Former MSP member	Dissident of MSP
National Front for Freedom (NFF)	FNL	Nationalist	Mohamed Zerouki	/	/
Algerian National Party (ANP)	PNA	Nationalist	Youcef Hamidi	/	/
Free Nationalist Movement (MNL)	MNL	Nationalist	Mustapha Boudina	Senator (third presidential)	/
Popular Algerian Movement (PAM)	MPA	Anti-Islamist, Republican	Amara Benounes	Former minister	Dissident of RCD
Movement of Free Citizens (MFC)	MCL	Republican	Abdelaziz Ghermoul	Union of Algerian Writers	Union of Algerian Writers
Party of Young Democrates (PYD)	PJD	Republican	Salim Khalfa	/	/
El Fadjr El Jadid Party (FDP)	PFD	Nationalist	Tahar Benbaibeche	Former SG of RND	Dissident of RND
Free Patriotic Party (FPP)	PPL	Nationalist	Tarek Yahiaoui	/	/
Party of Equity and Proclamation (PEP)	PPE	Nationalist	Naima Salhi	/	Close to FLN
E Nour Eljazairi Party (NJP)	PED	Nationalist-Democratic	Badreddine Belbaz	/	/
Good Governance Front (GGF)	FBG	Technocratic	Aissa Belhadi	/	SG of ONSE
Algeria's Hope Gathering (AHG)	TAJ	Nationalist	Ammar Ghoul	Former minister	Dissident of MSP
Talaie el Houriat Party (THP)	PTH	Nationalist	Ali Benflis	Former SG of FLN	Dissident of FLN

❶ QUESTIONS:

- TRANSLATE THE UNDERLINED TERMS INTO ARABIC.
- GIVE AN ABSTRACT (IN ARABIC) TO THE TOPIC.