



Algeria

Last update:	17 October 2011
Author:	Hacer Yilmaz, Maxim Moussa, Gerard Ritsema van Eck
Population:	34,994,937 (July 2011 est.)
Prime minister:	Ahmed Ouyahia (since June 2008)
President:	Abdelaziz Bouteflika (since April 1999)
Governemental type:	Republic
Ruling coalition:	Nation Liberation Front (NLF), National Democratic Rally (NDR) and Movement of a Peaceful Society
Last election:	Presidential (first round) 9 April, 2009
Next election:	Legislative 2012
Sister parties:	Socialist Forces Front, FFS (full member)



In the beginning of 2011, widespread protests broke out over the sudden increase in staple food prices. The government lowered the food prices, but the Arab spring in neighbouring countries inspired labour unions, opposition parties and religious groups to organise large-scale protests across the entire country. In late February, Bouteflika's government lifted the 19-year state of emergency in response to the protests. However, demonstrations continue throughout Algeria on an almost daily basis. Police turnout at these rallies is very high, but reports of police violence are relatively scarce.

INTRODUCTION

The People's Democratic Republic of Algeria is an Islamic, Arab and Amazigh (Berber) country. After a long history of colonisation by France, the Algerian people were dissatisfied with the way the French treated them on their own land. Then the War of Independence broke out. After the independence a bloody Civil War emerged, that was the result of an undemocratic interference of the military. In the Civil War there were many casualties, but the current President Bouteflika gave an amnesty to the guerrilla fighters. The violence has declined from that point on and Algeria can now start to work on a constructive way to democratisation.

ELECTION AND POLITICAL SITUATION

Presidential elections of 2009

The most recent presidential elections took place in April 2009. The Council of Ministers announced on 3 November 2008 that a planned constitutional revision would remove the two-term limit on the Presidency, thereby enabling President Abdelaziz Bouteflika to run for a third term. The People's National Assembly endorsed the removal of the term limit on 12 November 2008; only the Rally for Culture and Democracy (RCD) voted against its removal.

Bouteflika announced his independent candidacy for a third term at a rally in Algiers on 12 February 2009. Other candidates running in this election were Louisa Hanoune: candidate of the Trotskyist Workers' Party (PT), Moussa Touati: candidate of the Algerian National Front (FNA), Mohammed Said: independent candidate (Party of Justice and Liberty), Djahid Younsi: candidate of the Movement for National Reform and Ali Fawzi Rebaïne: candidate of the Ahd 54.



Algeria's main opposition leaders said before the election that it's a "done deal" set up in Bouteflika's favour. Some urged former President Liamine Zérroual to run for President. However, in a published statement on 14 January 2009 he said that he would not run, while also suggesting that it was not in the best interests of democracy for President Bouteflika to run for a third term. RCD leader Saïd Sadi announced on 15 January 2009 that the RCD would not participate in the election, which he described as a "pathetic and dangerous circus", saying that participating would be a humiliation for the country. Sadi was among the strongest opponents who had called for a boycott of the vote.

Summary of the 9 April 2009 Algerian presidential election results

Candidates and parties	Votes	%
Abdelaziz Bouteflika - National Liberation Front	12,911,705	90.24
Louisa Hanoune - Workers' Party	604,258	4.22
Moussa Touati - Algerian National Front	330,570	2.31
Djahid Younsi - Movement for National Reform	176,674	1.37
Ali Fawzi Rebaine - Ahd 54	133,129	0.93
Mohammed Said - Party of Justice and Liberty	132,242	0.92
Invalid votes	1,042,727	7.25
Total (turnout 74.54%)	15,351,305	

The results of the presidential election of 9 April 2009 were clearly in favour of President Abdelaziz Bouteflika. Interior Minister Noureddine Yazid Zerhouni said Bouteflika won 90.24 percent of the votes. Authorities put the turnout at more than 74 percent, which is unusually high for Algeria. According to the authorities nearly 13 million of Algeria's 20 million registered voters casted their ballot for the president, meaning that calls from the opposition to boycott the vote were largely ignored. According to Mohamed Lagab, professor of political science at Algiers University, the high turnout means that the supporters of the boycott have neither political nor social influence. Bouteflika called the election an "eloquent lesson in democracy" shortly after results were announced. He thanked Algerians for the confidence they granted him.

Bouteflika repeatedly said that he needed a massive victory to continue his policy of national reconciliation and reconstruction following an Islamist insurgency. He also promised to launch a 0 billion investment plan and create 3 million jobs during his third term as president. His victory was a record for an Algerian president since the former one-party state first allowed opposition parties in 1989.

Allegations of fraud

Observers and Bouteflika's five low-profile challengers criticized Bouteflika's victory, according to them there was a lot of fraud. The interior minister, however, did not notice any precise and concrete cases which would indicate



large scale fraud. People protesting against the results after they were announced blocked roads with burning tires and clashed with police in the Kabylie province east of Algiers. The opposition Front of Socialist Forces accused the authorities of artificially inflating the turnout. "There was a real tsunami of massive fraud which reached an industrial scale", the party said in a statement. The RCD, which called for a boycott of the election, said youth tried to storm its Algiers headquarters after the announcement of the results. A party statement said clashes occurred when Bouteflika supporters tried to pull out the black flag the party was waving above its offices in sign of mourning for Algeria's faltering democracy. Said Sadi also said he would take Algerian PM Ahmed Ouyahia to court for defamation. During the election campaign Ouyahia had publicly denounced those calling for an election boycott as traitors to the nation. The opposition leader also accused Bouteflika of violating the country's law by appropriating the struggle against the colonial French for himself, saying Bouteflika abused the nation's symbols of heritage. Sadi accused the Algerian president of using liberation war heroes for his campaign posters even though Algerian electoral law prohibits it. He was not very optimistic about his chances of success in an Algerian court but insisted his legal action did have a more symbolic importance.

Foreign reactions on the election were mainly positive; The African Union, which is part of a 200-strong monitoring mission with the Arab League and the Islamic Conference, congratulated Algeria for the "freedom and transparency" of the elections. The United States government said it was looking forward to continue working with Bouteflika. But State Department spokesman Richard Aker said about the fraud allegations: "We are concerned about these issues, and we want the government to address them." In France, President Nicolas Sarkozy offered "warm and friendly" congratulations quickly after the election result. dddddd

The election result matters to the outside world because Algeria, an OPEC member, has the world's 15th largest oil reserves and accounts for 20 percent of the EU's gas imports. Turmoil in Algeria could lead to a wave of illegal migrants to Europe. Some sections of the population feel disconnected from the political process and analysts say that helps feed Algeria's low-level Islamist insurgency, now affiliated to al-Qaeda.

Presidential elections 2004

On 8 May 2004 there were six candidates in the running for president: Abdelaziz Bouteflika; Ali Benflis, Secretary General of the FLN; Abdallah Djaballah, chief of Reformist party Islah; Saïd Sadi, president of the Rally for Culture and Democracy (RDC); Louisa Hanoune, spokeswoman for the Workers Party (PT); and Ali Fawzi Rebaine, chief the nationalist party Ahd. Bouteflika once again won the elections, even though Benflis stood a real chance against Bouteflika. Bouteflika got 83.49% of the votes and Benflis only got 7.93%.

Benflis, Djaballah and Sadi were not pleased with the outcome of this election and announced that there must have been fraud at all levels. But they never had any proof of their allegations and were not backed by the 120 international observers monitoring the poll. The overwhelming victory of Bouteflika – a veteran of Algeria's war of independence – is mainly due to the fact that he restored peace in the country after 10 years of civil strife, and for reconciling with Islamic militants by offering them amnesty. Bouteflika also ran a massive electoral campaign, which had a big influence on the voters. Analysts and intellectuals believe that an authoritarian regime and restrictions of liberties will ensure his election.

Summary of the 8 April 2004 Algerian presidential election results:

Candidates	Nominating parties	%
Abdelaziz Bouteflika	National Rally for Democracy (RND)	85.0
Ali Benflis	National Liberation Front (FLN)	6.4
Abdallah Djaballah	Movement for National Reform (El Islah/MRN/MI)	5.0



Said Sadi	Rally for Culture and Democracy (RCD)	1.9
Louiza Hanoune	Worker's Party (PT)	1.0
Ali Fawzi Rebaine	Ahd	0.6
Total turnout		58.1%

Presidential elections

The head of the executive branch of Algeria is an elected president for a term of five years. Candidates can be nominated in two ways; either by 600 elected officials or by popular petition of at least 75.000 registered voters. The Prime Minister, who is appointed by the President, appoints the members of the cabinet.

On 11 September 1998, President Zeroual announced he would stand down and that early presidential elections would be called. He did this to facilitate a transfer back to normal elections for the office, for he was once appointed in 1992 as President to achieve this goal. On 15 April 1999 the elections were held. After the withdrawal of six candidates, only Abdelaziz Bouteflika (National Rally for Democracy RND) remained. The other candidates withdrew because they were afraid of massive fraud in favour of Bouteflika. Early in April they demanded that results from mobile and other special polling stations should not be counted, as they suspected government departments of swelling their number to make rigging easier. At the end Bouteflika won the elections with 73.79%.

Parliament

The People's Democratic Republic of Algeria has a bicameral parliament, which is made of the National People's Assembly and the Council of the Nation.

The National People's Assembly

The National People's Assembly (the lower house) consists of 388 members who are elected with the universal, direct suffrage according to the proportional representation system. Eight of these seats are reserved for Algerians living abroad. Term of legislature is 5 years. The members of the National People's Assembly are directly elected in 48 multi-member constituencies – corresponding to country's wilayas (administrative districts) – with seats allotted according to the population: one seat for every 80,000 inhabitants and one supplementary seat for every fraction of 40,000. No wilaya has less than four seats. Only lists obtaining 5% or more of the popular vote are allocated seats. Voting is not compulsory. Either the President or one of the parliamentary chambers may initiate legislation.

In December 1991 the first free multiparty general elections for the former National People's Assembly were held. After the first round it was very clear that the fundamentalist Islamic Salvation Front (FIS) was going for a victory. The army then cancelled the elections and suspended the Constitution. This escalated and was followed by widespread disturbances and numerous arrests of prominent Islamists.

After the escalations had cooled down an advisory body on legislation, the National Consultative Council was set up in April 1992. It functioned until the National Transitional Council was inaugurated in May 1994 for a three-year transitional period. In March 1997 a new electoral law was adopted and a new date for elections was announced in June 1997. The elections were in a context of mounting violence by armed groups, as well as human rights violations. FIS called for a boycott after being barred from running. The elections took place in the presence of 200 international observers; the turnout was officially 65.6%. The National Rally for Democracy (RND), who did not even exist three months earlier, had won 156 out of 380 seats. The MSP-Hamas won 69 seats, the National Liberation Front (FLN) won 64 and the Islamist Party 34. Women represented 3.4 % of the total number of members of the Assembly. UN observers noted that some voting conditions could not fully guarantee neutrality in the voting process.

Parliamentary elections 2007

On 17 May 2007 parliamentary elections took place in Algeria. The elections were preceded by several violent incidents. In the weekend before the elections dozens of people were killed during fights between the military and



armed groups. Also more than 30 people died in a series of bomb attacks in Algiers on 11 April and in Constantine on 16 May. The responsibility of the attack in Algiers was claimed by an Islamist armed group that calls itself the al-Qaeda Organisation in the Islamic Maghreb. On Monday 14 May 2007, the leader of this organisation, Abou Moussab Abdelaouadoud, called for a boycott of the elections in a statement broadcast on al-Jazeera television. High security measures were implemented to ensure that the voting could proceed without incidents.

During the election campaign political parties struggled to attract crowds to rallies and the media attention was low. The voter turnout was 35 percent and the ruling coalition of the Nation Liberation Front (NLF), National Democratic Rally (NDR) and Movement of a Peaceful Society won 249 of the 389 seats. Thus keeping control of the Assembly. The low voter turnout was widely attributed to a belief amongst the electorate that President Bouteflika, and not the legislature, has the most political power in Algeria. Also, those who hold power generally operate outside the public eye, adding to the sense of a lack of accountability and therefore giving voting less importance. There are 28 women in the Assembly, 7,2 percent of the seats.

The Radical Workers Party became the largest opposition party. Several opposition parties, the Socialist Force Front (FFS), the main factions of the MNR and the leftist Social Democratic Movement (MDS), boycotted the elections. The FFS argued that the elections were not free and were geared to achieve a victory for the ruling regime's parties. There were reports of irregularities, the National Electoral Monitoring Commission had send a letter to President Abdelaziz Bouteflika regarding these irregularities. However, Interior Minister Zerhouni downplayed these allegations stating they only concerned a small number of stations.

Summary of the 17 May 2007 Algerian People's National Assembly election results

Party	Number of votes	Percentage	Number of seats
National Liberation Front (FLN)	1,315,686	22.98 %	136
National Democratic Rally (RND)	591,31	10.33 %	61
Movement of a Peaceful Society (MSP)	552,104	9.64 %	52
Workers' Party (PT)	291,312	5.09 %	26
Rally for Culture and Democracy (RCD)	239,563	4.18 %	19
Algerian National Front (FNA)	192,49	3.36 %	13
National Movement for Nature and Development (MNND)	114,767	2.00 %	7
Independent Candidates	562,986	9.83 %	33
Other Candidates	1,865,869	32.59 %	42

Parliamentary elections 2002

Currently the National Liberation Front (FLN) is part of a ruling coalition together with the National Rally for Democracy (RND) and the Movement of Society for Peace (Hammas/HMS/MSP). The next legislative elections in Algeria will be held in May 2007.

Summary of the 30 May 2002 Algerian People's National Assembly election results



Party	% of votes	seats
National Liberation Front (FLN)	34.3	199
Movement for National Reform (El Islah/MRN/MI)	9.5	43
National Rally for Democracy (RND)	8.2	47
Movement of Society for Peace (Hamas/HMS/MSP)	7.0	38
Worker's party (PT)	3.3	21
Algerian National Front (FNA)	1.6	18
Islamic Renaissance Movement (MN)	0.6	1
Party of Algerian Renewal (PRA)	0.3	1
Movement of National Understanding (MEN)	0.2	1
Non-Partisan	4.9	30
Front of Socialist Forces (FFS) Rally for Culture and Democracy (RCD) Movement for Democracy in Algeria (MDA)	Boycott	0
Total (turnout 46.2%)		380

The National Council

The National Council (the upper house) was first instituted in 1996 and consists of 144 seats, wilaya assemblies indirectly elect 96 and 48 are appointed by the President. The term of legislature is 6 years, of which a half of the members are being re-elected or reappointed every three years.

At this moment the elected seats of the National Council mainly go to the RND (about 83.3%), FLN (10.4%), FFS (Front of Socialist Forces 4.1%) and Hamas/HMS/MSP (Movement for a Peaceful Society 2.1%). The last election of the National Council took place in December 2003.

The president of the National Council is Abdelkader Bensalah. Women represent 5.5% of the total members of the Council. The National Council is a legislative branch and must approve any law approved by the National Assembly with a three-quarters majority.

LATEST DEVELOPMENTS

On 29 December 2010, large-scale riots over the housing shortage, increased food-prices and the high unemployment broke out in the capital of Algiers. In the week between 3 and 10 January the protests turned violent and spread nationwide. Police cracked down on the protesters. On January 8th, the regime lowered the prices of certain consumer goods. Protests soon calmed down.

However, inspired by the Arab spring in surrounding countries, political and civil society groups kept organising protests and strikes throughout the country, with attendance varying between a few dozens and several thousands of people. The country was also hit by a wave of self-immolations between 14 January and 21st of February, with over twenty attempts resulting in four deaths.

After Hosni Mubarak's ouster from Egypt on February 11th, the protests in Algeria gained new momentum. Fridays



and Saturdays soon turned into the weekly highpoints of the demonstrations. On February the 24th, Bouteflika's government lifted the 19-year state of emergency in response to the protests, however, demonstrations in the capital of Algiers were still forbidden because of "terrorist threats."

Demonstrations continue throughout the country on an almost daily basis. Police turnout at these rallies is very high, but reports of police violence are relatively scarce.

In total, at least eight have been killed and over 400 wounded in the protests at the time of writing (October 17th, 2011).

IMPORTANT POLITICAL ISSUES

Algerian War of Independence

Algeria was a part of the Ottoman Empire from the 16th century until 1830. Then it was conquered by France and was given the status of a department.

The struggle for independence began in 1954 headed by the National Liberation Front. The movement for independence came from the Algerian's dissatisfaction with being treated as second-class citizens by the French colonial government.

The National Liberation Army (ALN), which was the military arm of the FLN, was to conduct the War of Independence within Algeria. On 1 November 1954 the ALN began with its attacks and the FLN broadcasted a proclamation calling on Muslims in Algeria to join in a national struggle for the restoration of the Algerian state.

On 1 July 1962 the Algerians cast their ballots in a referendum on independence. The outcome was nearly unanimous. The French President de Gaulle pronounced Algeria an independent country. The official day of national independence is each year celebrated on 5 July.

Algerian Civil War

The Civil War began in December 1991, when the government cancelled the second round of the parliamentary elections, after the first round results had shown that the Islamic Salvation Front (FIS) would win. The government was afraid that the FIS would end the democratic system in Algeria. After the FIS was banned and thousands of its members arrested, Islamist guerrillas rapidly emerged and began an armed campaign against the government and its supporters.

The conflicts were based around mainly two armed groups, knowing the Islamic Armed Movement (MIA) and the Armed Islamic Group (GIA). The MIA later regrouped with other smaller groups and became the Islamic Salvation Army (AIS).

In 1997 the AIS opted for a unilateral ceasefire with the government, while the GIA was torn apart by splits. In 1999 a new law by Presidents Bouteflika gave amnesty to most guerrillas, following a decline of violence.

A splinter group of the GIA, the Salafist Group for Preaching and Combat (GSPC), still remains an active guerrilla organisation in Algeria. As of 2006, the low-level fighting activities of the GSPC are mainly concentrated in the mountainous parts of the east of Algeria. A complete end to the violence is not yet in sight.

Corruption

Algeria scored 3 on Transparency International's Corruption Perception Index 2007. The scale runs from 0 (high corruption) to 10 (no corruption). Algeria is in the 99th place among 179 countries.

President Bouteflika submitted an Anti-Corruption law in 2005 that reinforces existing legislation to comply with



the UN Convention against Corruption, which Algeria had ratified in 2004. The draft provides for the creation of a national body that will work on preventing and combating corruption. In 2005 there was a 'clean hands' campaign in which powerful governors were put in jail and which forbade chief executive officers from leaving the country. In 2006 hundred agents were fired, and 530 were sued for alleged involvement in several corruption affairs. However critics question the seriousness of the government's will. Similar initiatives have been turned back in the past by the president.

Press freedom

The law specifies that freedom of speech must respect "individual dignity, the imperatives of foreign policy, and the national defense". The Penal Code in 2001 furthermore threatens journalists with heavy fines and up to 24 months in jail for defamation or 'insult' of government figures. The press freedom has declined since Bouteflika was re-elected in 2004. In 2005 there were 114 prosecutions of journalists resulting in 111 fines or prison sentences. Newspapers were sued for supposed libel and have been chased with censorship, repeated police actions, government prosecutions and biased judges that often lead to self censorship. According to the WorldWide Press Freedom Index 2007 of Reporters Without Borders, Algeria is at the 123th place out of the 169.

Human rights

The conditions of human rights in Algeria remain poor, although there have been improvements in specific areas. Torture has decreased significantly, but it still continues to go on. All cases of forced disappearances remain unresolved. Investigations and committees on human rights abuses are rarely carried out, non transparent trial procedures are still today's practices, detention without any legal reason is still in order. Domestic and foreign travel is legal according to the law, as well as freedom to emigrate, but the government restricts these rights from time to time especially for former FIS leaders. It is also not allowed for draft-aged men to leave the country without a travel permit.

Women's rights

Women continue to face discrimination in several areas. The family code of 1984, which is largely based on the Sharia, places women under the legal guardianship of their husband or male relative. It also makes it nearly impossible to divorce for women, while it is much easier for men. The government has promised to focus on reform by putting forward legislation to reserve many of the code's articles. The past years there has been some positive modifications to the code. The government banned sexual harassment and commissioned a study on violence against women. Despite these minor changes, some feminist groups have asked for the family code to be scrapped altogether. But the government has not made any promises for that yet.

On the other hand women's participation in non-governmental organisations, associations and political organisations has increased with the spread of pluralism. Many women even occupy management and even leadership positions.

The Berber population

The Berber minority makes up for 20% of the population. They mostly live in the Kabylie region, which is a mountainous area in the north of Algeria. Their cultural, ethnic and linguistic rights are not fully recognised. They have been forced to use Arabic, which is regarded by the Berbers as a form of Arabic imperialism.

While Berbers have not been subject to harsh government repression, many of them hold the government responsible for not protecting them from attacks by Muslim fundamentalist militants. The government also frequently targets Berber activists and often denies Berber NGOs operating licenses. Berber protest is likely to continue so long as Berbers remain underrepresented in national politics and Tamazight (Berber ethnic language) remains unrecognised by the Algerian central government.

Foreign relations

Algeria has diplomatic relations with more than 100 foreign countries, and over 90 countries maintain diplomatic representation in Algiers.

Algeria has repeatedly taken the lead in working on issues related to the African continent. It was the host of the Organisation of African Unity Conference in 2000. Algeria was an important key in bringing Ethiopia and Eritrea to the peace table in 2000. Together with its African neighbours it has worked on the establishment of the New African



Partnership. It also played a major role in reviving the Union of the Arab Maghreb with its regional neighbours.

Algeria and Morocco have somewhat hostile relations with each other ever since Algeria's independence. Morocco's disputed claim to portions of western Algeria and Algeria's support for the Polisario, an armed group of Sahrawi refugees seeking independence for the Moroccan ruled Western Sahara, are the two main reasons for these relations. Since 1991 the UN has been trying to get these two countries to agree on arrangements for a referendum to decide the future of the territory, but has been unsuccessful so far.

Algeria has maintained a favored position in foreign relations with France, despite the colonial history. Despite strained political relations, economic ties with France have persisted throughout independent Algerian history. Especially relations on oil and gas went on going.

There has been a big number of immigrants from Algeria to France. French popular sentiment has generally been unfavorable toward its Arab population. The French government has provided substantial educational, economic and cultural assistance to the emigrant community, but has been less consistent in defending emigrant workers' rights in France.

French remained the language of instruction in most schools in Algeria and the language used in two-thirds of all newspapers and periodicals and on numerous diplomatic programs. Over time, however, the arabization of Algeria have mobilized anti-French sentiment.

Italy, Spain, Greece and Turkey share also a privileged position in Algerian foreign relations. Whereas Algeria's relations with France have been complicated by confusing emotional and cultural complexities, its relations with the other Mediterranean countries have been primarily driven by economic factors.

Relations with the EU

The Barcelona Conference initiative in November 1995 established a Euro-Mediterranean Partnership, bringing together the EU and the countries bordering the Mediterranean in North Africa (excluding Libya). The partnership seeks to achieve political stability in the region through economic and financial cooperation and establish a free-trade zone early in the 21st century. There have also been specific European financial efforts directed toward Algeria to fund industrial restructuring and privatisation.

Algeria is now involved with the MEDA neighbourhood programme of the European Commission, with the aim of strengthening the impact of crossborder cooperation of Algeria with the Mediterranean countries of the European Union.

Currently the Programme Accompanying the Application of the Association Agreements (P3A) is also been set up that should cover any measures geared to start-up the European Neighbourhood Policy Action Plan for Algeria and support good governance. SOCIAL DEMOCRATIC PARTIES Socialist Forces Front

The Socialist Forces Front (FFS) is a Berber-based social democratic and secularist political party in Algeria and is a member of the Socialist International. It was founded in 1963 by Hocine Ait Ahmed and was banned until 1990, because no other parties were allowed to participate in the parliamentary elections. Hocine Ait Ahmed is a historical leader in the national struggle for liberation and always opposed the single party system. Hocine Ait Ahmed is still the political leader of the FFS.

In the elections in December 1991, the FFS became the third most important political party while participating for the first time in parliamentary elections. It became also the leading party in the Berber regions. This success can be explained by the fact that they demand a multilingual society where Berber and French should be recognised alongside Arabic.

The FFS has always been a strong opposer of the army controlling the (setting up of the) institutions and has always called for the re-establishment of the democratic process.

The FFS favours the dialogue with the moderate wing of the Islamic Salvation Front (FIS), despite its deeply secular basis. The FFS has condemned violence as a means of political action, called for real negotiations with the governing



power and re-establishing the FIS.

The constitutional change of November 1966 was also one of the issues that the FFS did not agree on. The February 1997 law on political parties based on the new constitution concerns the FFS. This law proscribes the use by the parties of the components of the national identity (Islam, Arab, Berber), prohibits parties to become a member of international organisations (FFS is a member of the Socialist International) and prohibits involvement in associative movements (which the FFS is based on). In 2002 the FFS boycotted the parliamentary elections out of protest for the rights of the Berber population.

Website FFS: <http://membres.lycos.fr/troubles/ffs.htm>

OTHER POLITICAL PARTIES

The National Liberation Front (FLN) was set up on 1 November 1954 as a merger of other smaller groups as a socialist party, to obtain independence for Algeria from France. During the 1980s the FLN toned down the socialist content of its programme.

At the latest parliamentary elections in 2002 the FLN received 34.3% of the votes and has 199 members in parliament. The FLN is also member of the governing coalition. The former secretary-general of the FLN Ali Benflis was a candidate for the presidential elections. He received only 6.4% of the votes. After the elections Abdelaziz Belkhadem took control of the party.

The FLN is a member of the presidential alliance together with the Movement of Society for Peace and the National Rally for Democracy, which is a three party political alliance created in 2005.

Website: <http://www.pfln.org.dz/>

National Rally for Democracy

The National Rally for Democracy (RND) got 9.5% of the votes in the 2002 elections. It has 47 out of the 380 seats in the Algerian Parliament. The RND is also a part of Algeria's governing coalition. The leader of the party is the Prime Minister Ahmed Ouyahia.

The RND is a member of the presidential alliance. They are loyal to the current President of Algeria, Abdelaziz Bouteflika, and considered to have close relations with the politically powerful Algerian military.

Movement for National Reform

The Movement for National Reform (MRN) is a moderate Islamist political party that received 9.5% of the votes in the 2002 elections and has 43 members in the parliament. The party was parting faction from the Ennahda movement (Islamic Renaissance Movement), after that party opted for cooperation with Algeria's government. Party leader Abdallah Djaballah then left to found and lead the more radically oppositional el-Islah. The current party leader is Abdallah Djaballah.



Movement of Society for Peace

The Movement of Society for Peace (HMS) is an Islamist party led by Mahfoud Nahnah until his death in 2003. The current leader is Bouguerra Soltani. In the 2002 elections it received 7% of the votes and has 38 members in parliament. It is part of the ruling coalition together with the FLN and RND. This party has close relations with international Muslim Brotherhood. Furthermore, it favours the Civil Harmony Act, an amnesty for guerrillas who lay down their arms and is strongly opposed to proposed changes in the Algerian Family Code.

Website: <http://www.hmsalgeria.net/>

Workers' Party

The Worker's Party is a Trotskyist political party who has close relations with the Worker's Party in France. The party is led by Louisa Hanoune. In 2004 she was the first woman in Algeria to run for the presidential elections. She received 101.630 votes (1%) in the 2002 elections. The party received 3.3% votes in the parliamentary elections and has 21 seats in the parliament.

Website: <http://membres.lycos.fr/pstdz/>

Algerian National Front

The Algerian National Front was founded in 1954. At the last elections they won 1.6% of the votes and currently have 8 seats in the parliament. The current leader is Moussa Touati.

Website: <http://www.fna.dz/>

Islamic Renaissance Movement

The Islamic Renaissance Movement was founded in 1990 as a Islamist center-right party, which claims the ideology of the Islamic Brotherhood movement in Egypt. In the 2002 elections it received 0.6% of the votes and has one member in parliament. The political leader is Lahbib Adami.

Party of Algerian Renewal

The party of Algerian Renewal is a minor political party, led by Yacine Terkamne, which received 0,3% of he votes in the 2002 elections and has one member in parliament.

Movement of National UnderstandingThe Movement of National Understanding is a minor political party, led by Ali Boukhazna, which received 0.2% of the votes in the 2002 elections and has one member in parliament.

Rally for Culture and Democracy

The Rally for Culture and Democracy (RCD) is a Berber based radically secularist political party which was founded in 1989 by Saïd Sadi.



In the local elections of 1990, boycotted by the FFS, the RCD focused on the demands of the Berbers and took control of most local governments in the Berber region without any difficulty. In 1991 however, during the parliamentary elections, it did not win a single seat while the FFS, which took part in the elections for the first time, won 25 seats.

The party leader Said Sadi, who was a presidential candidate in 1995, won 9.3% of the votes. In 1997 the RCD won 19 seats at the parliamentary elections. In 2002 they boycotted the elections because of the lack of rights of the Berber population.

Website: <http://www.rcd-algerie.org/>

Movement for Democracy in Algeria

The Movement for Democracy in Algeria is a moderate Islamist party and boycotted the 2002 elections. Its political leader is Ahmed Ben Bella.

Website: <http://www.wmd.org/>

Ahd 54

Ahd 54 (meaning Oath 54) is a minor Algerian party led by Ali Fawzi Rebaine. He was one of the founders of the independent Algerian Human Rights League in 1985 and was jailed several times. The name of the party is a reference to the principles carried out by the FLN when it led the war of independence. Rebaine was also a candidate for the presidential elections in 2004. He received 0.6% of the votes.

Website: <http://www.ahd54.org/>

Islamic Salvation Front

The Islamic Salvation Front (FIS) is an outlawed Islamist political party in Algeria. The FIS centres its ideology on the strict respect of Islamic values. It was founded on 18 February 1989, soon after it was allowed to establish other parties than the ruling single party FLN, and was legalised by the Interior Ministry on 16 September 1989.

Since its creation, the FIS has appeared as the country's leading political party. During the 12 June 1990 local elections, it won 54.3% of the votes, proving its solid implantation in a large number of regions. During the first round of the parliamentary elections in 1991 it won 47.3% of the votes. After the army's show of strength, which interrupted the electoral process on 11 January 1992, the FIS was outlawed. The army saw the seeming certainty of resulting FIS rule as unacceptable. It cancelled electoral process, forcing President Bendjedid to resign, arresting many FIS members and declaring a state of emergency. The party reorganised in exile and illegally in Algeria.

The Army of Islamic Salvation (AIS), the FIS's armed branch, became active in July 1992. The situation changed after the election of President Bouteflika in April 1999. Two months after his election, the AIS proclaimed a unilateral cease-fire, which was followed by the pardon given by Bouteflika of 2300 jailed Islamists. Bouteflika also presented the National Harmony Law, that was adopted and it provides for an amnesty for members and supporters of the AIS.

The FIS could eventually be recognized in the future as a political party but under a different name as the 1996 constitution bans political parties based on religion. But the main problem is that the FIS has no capable leader that can lead the party into legislation. This is a consequence of the actions of the government during the Civil War, in which the main leader of the FIS was executed and others were imprisoned.



Website: <http://www.fisweb.org/>

National Liberation Front (FLN)

In the last legislative elections in May 2002, the National Liberation Front (FLN), led by Ali Benflis, won an overwhelming majority of seats. This outcome marked the FLN's return to Algeria's political centre stage and is mainly due to the popularity of Benflis. The turnout of the elections was 46.2%. Women represent 6.2% of the total number of members of the Assembly. There was great unrest in the largely Berber-speaking region and terrorist groups resumed their bomb attacks in the capital Algiers and surrounding towns.