



COMPARATIVE STUDY OF TRANSITIONAL JUSTICE IN AFRICA

ALGERIA

DJAMILA OULD KHETTAB

2018

CONTENTS

- CONTENTS** 2
- INTRODUCTION** 4
- SECTION ONE. Colonial Factors** 6
 - Pre-colonial society 6
 - Colonial society 7
 - French conquest of Algeria** 7
 - French colonial rule** 8
 - End of the colonisation 10
 - Causes** 10
 - Algerian anti-colonial main actors** 11
 - War of independence** 12
 - Official narrative** 15
 - Political transition** 16
 - State-building** 17
 - Oil-dependent socialist economy** 18
- SECTION TWO. Conflict factors** 20
 - Socioeconomic factors 20
 - Oil prices collapse** 20
 - Islamism: a political alternative** 19
 - 1988 riots against “hogra”** 24
 - Algeria’s short-lived democratic transition** 25
 - 1992-1999: Algeria’s civil war 26
 - 1992 military push** 26
 - Escalating violence** 22
 - Counter-terrorism struggle** 32
- SECTION THREE. Transitional and societal factors** 35
 - Peace process 35
 - Getting to the table** 35
 - The main clauses of the agreement** 38
 - Political transition 39
 - The preservation of the status quo?** 39
 - International support** 44
 - Weak civil society 45

SECTION FOUR. Choices in transitional justice	48
Policy consideration	48
Policy mechanism.....	49
Civil Harmony Law	49
Charter for peace and national reconciliation	50
Policy implementation	51
SECTION FIVE. Determinants of transitional justice policies	53
Hegemonic narrative.....	53
Reparation.....	54
Resistances.....	56
SECTION SIX. Effectiveness of implemented transitional justice policy	59
Decline of violence	59
Non-sustainable peace.....	60
Permanent state of emergency	61
CONCLUSION	63

INTRODUCTION

Back to 1992, Algeria headed to a bloody conflict between the state army and multiple Islamist groups. In a war-torn country, tens of thousands of people were tortured, injured or killed, thousands of young men were forcibly disappeared, thousands of women were sexually assaulted, and many civilians had to flee their home and seek refuge in safer places.

The ten year-long cycle of violence erupted after a group of high-ranking army officers decided to cancel the parliamentary election. That was considered as a military coup to prevent a potential victory of the Islamic Salvation Front (*Front Islamique du Salut*, FIS), the main Islamist party during that period.

Consequently, the democratic transition that the country was experiencing since 1989 came to a sudden halt. Algeria's short democratic breakthrough, which ended almost three decades of a single-party system, was a result of the expression of an acute anger among the Algerian population, especially the youth, against the long-lasting military-dominated regime. That resentment was exacerbated by both deteriorating economic situation and declining living standards.

This paper focuses on the Algerian experience of a transitional justice amid a conflict between the state army and Islamist fighters during the 1990s.

From 1999, the north-African country has progressively transitioned from civil war and insecurity to stability and a relative security. Today, the Algerian people live in a relative security. They do no longer fear for their life when they return home late. They are no longer afraid of traveling across their country nor sightseeing in remoted areas as the probability of being killed by Islamist fighters at a makeshift roadblocks ("*faux barrage*") has been significantly diminished since the end of 1990s. Neither do they live in the anxiety of being kidnapped by hooded security agents who break down front doors and take male occupants away. That was part of their routine life during the civil war.

The military, who hold the political power since Algeria gained its independence in 1962, were the main architect of the transitional justice process.

In Algeria's post-independence political system, the Algerian ruling elite is primarily composed of top military leaders. Mohamed Hachemaoui, a senior political analyst at Science Po Paris, refers to them as the "*collège des prétoriens*" (praetorian college).¹ Thanks to their revolutionary legitimacy, the military rules, even if it does not directly govern. It does so from atop a pyramid of power in which the interests of the military, the FLN leadership, and members of the political and economic elite are intertwined.²

Abdelaziz Bouteflika, Algeria's first civilian President, who has run the country since he took office in 1999, has also played a key role in promoting the transitional justice process.

Officially, the Algerian civil war ended in 2005 when the population approved via a referendum the adoption of the Charter for peace and national reconciliation. But twelve years after the official end date of Algeria's civil war, many victims and relatives are still contesting the ruling elite's choices in transitional justice.

Algeria's experience of transitional justice raises a number of legal and ethical questions. According to the Article 140 of the country's Constitution, only the parliament has the power to approve amnesty

¹ Hachemaoui, 2016, p. 174

² Ghanem-Yazbeck, 2018

law.³ Yet, a *grâce amnistiante* (French for “pardon with the force of amnesty”) was granted to the Islamist fighters who laid down their arms by a presidential decree, released on 10 January 2000.

It also raises fundamental political question: whether a transitional justice process driven from the top can possibly succeed and whether a transitional justice programme, which guarantees amnesty to the perpetrators without securing the right to know and tell the truth, can be successful.

This paper describes the underlying reasons that led to the decade-long conflict, questioning both the colonial and postcolonial factors (section 1). Section two focuses on the causes and the main actors of the lingering conflict, placing a special emphasis on the role of the army. While they were still combating the Islamist fighters, the military launched a peace process (section 3). Backed by the army, newly-elected President Bouteflika adopted a non-judicial approach to end the civil war, which includes a series of amnesty laws (section 4). In the meantime, the regime offered a reparation programme to the victims and their relatives but most of them have not been satisfied with the peace deal, challenging the official narrative (section 5).

The peace plan designed by President Bouteflika has succeeded in significantly limiting the terrorist threat and in overcoming the regime’s deep legitimacy crisis into which it was plunged due notably to the responsibility of the security forces in certain human rights violations during the conflict. But the regime’s efforts to hasten peace and block any truth-seeking mechanism to investigate human rights abuses perpetrated during the civil war have considerably undermined the chance to reach a national reconciliation and a sustainable peace (section 6).

³ The Constitution of Algeria published on the Official Journal (*Journal Officiel*): <https://www.joradp.dz/hfr/consti.htm>

SECTION ONE. Colonial Factors

The root causes of the decade-long civil war can be found in the inner political tensions that erupted in the wake of the independence of Algeria. After the end of the 7-year bloody war against the French colonial forces, the anticolonial leaders did not engage in an inclusive and peaceful political transition. Several factions fought each other for the control over the state, in July and August 1962. There is still not a consensus in the historiography on how to describe these violent events. They were alternatively considered as the “summer crisis”, the “summer struggle”, or a “civil war”.⁴

The nature of the Algerian state that emerged after the summer clashes also rooted the 1990s civil war. The anticolonial leaders who seized the power by force established a military-dominated authoritarian regime with a single-party ruling system. The regime since 1962 gave no space to the opposition and allowed no alternative discourse. The oil-rich state was also built on a fragile social contract, based on the redistribution of energy revenues via a system of social subsidies.

Pre-colonial society

The territory known today as Algeria had been a base for conflicts and piracy in the Mediterranean Sea for centuries. It had a long history of colonisation: Phoenicians, Romanians and Arabs had successively conquered and controlled the territory.

Since the invasion of Algiers by the Ottomans Oruch and Barbarossa in 1516, Algeria was under Ottoman rule. The Ottoman Empire created administrative boundaries within the territory, known as *Djazirat el-Maghrib*.⁵ The regency of Algiers was separated from the regency of Tunis and the regency of Tripoli. The Ottoman Empire had an indirect control of Algeria, which was placed under the control of a Dey. The Dey governed the regency of Algiers for life and had a high degree of autonomy from the Ottoman sultan. The main sources of his revenues were taxes. The regency of Algiers was divided into four provinces (beyliks): *Dar el-Soltane*, in the periphery of Algiers (Mitidja), the western *beylik*, with Oran as a regional capital, the *beylik* of Titteri (in Médéa), and the *beylik* of Constantine.⁶ Each *beylik* was composed of many regions (*ouatan*), which were governed by *caïd* (governor).⁷

Since the Arab invasion in the 8th century, Islam has been the main religion of what is known today as Algeria. Non-Muslim minorities, including Roman Catholic, Protestant, and Jewish communities, lived peacefully with the Muslim majority.

In 1830, the indigenous Algerian population was near three million.⁸ Algeria’s population is a mixture of two main ethnic groups: the indigenous Berbers, who originally lived in north-Africa, and the Arabs. There were also several other marginal ethnic groups. The pre-colonial society was a rural and tribal society.

⁴ Ottaway, p. 177 ; Quandt, 1969, p. 171 ; The article of Malika Rahal published on Middle East Eye on 7 July 2017

⁵ Peyroulou, Siari Tengour, Thénault, p. 19

⁶ Ibid., p. 21

⁷ Ibid., p. 22

⁸ Ibid., p. 22

Colonial society

French conquest of Algeria

The French monarchy launched the conquest of Algeria for political and economic reasons related to King Charles X's waning popularity, a desire for agriculturally exploitable territory, and the notion that France had the responsibility to civilize non-European populations.

Indeed, in the 1820s, the French monarchy became increasingly brittle as King Charles X, who ascended to throne in 1824, was facing a potent combination of political opposition and social unrest. At that period, France was on the verge of bankruptcy, mostly caused by poor grain harvests.

The invasion of Algeria appeared as an opportunity to divert attention from domestic political discontent. The regime of King Charles X, facing an economic collapse, was also interested by Algeria's economic potential given its profitable and fertile land.

Before the invasion, France and the regency of Algiers were in constant trade. Since the 18th century, France had been importing most of its food from the coastal region of Algeria. At that time, Algeria was an important wheat-producer.

During Napoleon Bonaparte's military campaign in Egypt and Italy, between 1795 and 1799, Algeria provided the French army with important quantities of grain as to feed the French soldiers. Bonaparte refused to pay the bill back, claiming it was excessive. The relations between the French monarchy and the regency of Algiers, which were good, gradually soured. It reached a breaking point in 1827, when a French diplomat, Pierre Daval, was sent to Algiers to inform Hussein Dey, the governor of the regency of Algiers, that France had no intention of honouring its debt. The Dey allegedly hit the French envoy with a fly swatter.

On the pretext of revenging the humiliation of the French diplomat in Algiers, France's monarch Charles X launched the invasion of Algeria in 14 June 1830. Following a plan of invasion of Algeria, first conceived by Napoleon in 1808, Charles X sent 103 vessels and 3 500 ships that landed 40 000 men in the bay of Sidi Ferruch, today known as Sidi Fredj.⁹ Algiers was defeated after a three-week campaign. On 5 July, Hussein Dey was forced to surrender and fled into exile. Facing local opposition, France doubled the numbers of soldiers.

The French colonisation of Algeria was extremely brutal. The French army was responsible of atrocious acts of brutality to defeat recalcitrant tribes. The brutal strategy, called the "razzia" tactic, included burning villages, driving away cattle, destroying harvests and whole towns, uprooting orchards, poisoning wells, and expropriating land farmers as well.¹⁰

The French army was battling against a non-professional army. Most of the indigenous combatants who resisted against the French invasion were farmers, herdsman, and artisans.¹¹ The French soldiers were better organised and equipped, and more numerous. The number of French regular-force members increased from 37 000 men in 1830 to 100 000 in 1847.¹²

During the first invasion phase that lasted from 1830 to 1848 the civilian rule was the exception. Only small urban pockets were under the civilian French government. In these areas, the French civil servants and magistrates behaved as if they were in France, applying the French metropolitan law.

⁹ Ibid., p. 25

¹⁰ Thoral, p. 16

¹¹ Peyroulou, Siari Tengour, Thénault, loc. cit. , p. 31

¹² Ibid., p. 31

Until 1848, Algeria was divided into three types of territory: the “*civils*”, the “*arabes*”, which were placed under a military administration, and the “*mixtes*”.¹³ The territory was ruled by a general governor, a position held only by French high-ranking military officers. For instance, General Thomas Robert Bugeaud, head of the French colonial expedition, served as general governor from 1841 until 1847.¹⁴

It took forty years to beat the native population. Algeria was occupied at a tremendous human cost. There were three million Algerians when France invaded Algeria in 1830. By 1867, it was reduced **by** near 500 000 due to outbreaks of epidemic diseases (malaria and cholera), food shortages and general famine, voluntary exile (in neighbouring Tunisia and Morocco) and forced deportations (of Algerian opponents to New Caledonia and Guyana).¹⁵

French colonial rule

The French colonial system destroyed the traditional infrastructures of Algeria. Traditional Muslim leaders were replaced by French officials. Native tribes were broken up and the tribal system that had organised the society in Algeria disintegrated. It brought a new architectural design by constructing Haussmann-like buildings and boulevards. More symbolically, it changed the name of the cities, calling them by their Latin name or inventing French names instead of their Algerian name. For instance, Annaba was renamed “Bône” and Skikda was called “Philippeville” by the French colonial administration.

In Algeria, the French colonial empire opted for the system of assimilation. By 1848, northern Algeria was fully under the French control and became an extension of France. Contrary to the other territories under the French colonial rule, Algeria was not considered as a colony but as an integral part of France. While Morocco and Tunisia acquired the status of protectorates, Algeria was fully annexed as part of France itself.

Indeed, France’s constitution of 1848 stated that Algeria was an integral part of France and promised to extend the laws of France to Algeria. According to the French constitution, the Algerian territory was divided into three *départements* (French administrative regions): Oran, Constantine and Algiers.

In each of the three *départements*, there were areas under civilian and military control. In the civilian areas, the regions were divided into *arrondissements* (districts) and communes just as they were in metropolitan France. The civilian areas were mostly located in the North whereas the South generally remained under a military control.

The colon population had representation in the French parliament but not the Muslim Algerians. Indeed, each *départements* had one representative in the Chamber of Deputies in Paris.

The French monarchy established in Algeria a colony of settlement. Algeria was settled by a large number of Europeans, mostly French people. The occupation of the northern coast also attracted settlers from southern Europe (Spain, Italia, Malta) seeking for new economic opportunities. In 1860, 200 000 Europeans were living in Algeria and owned 340 000 hectares of land, rising to more than 1.2 million hectares by 1881.¹⁶ At the end of the World War II, more than 930 000 Europeans lived in Algeria, 83 percent of whom were born there.¹⁷

¹³ Ibid., p. 33

¹⁴ Idem.

¹⁵ Thoral, op. cit., p. 26

¹⁶ Rahal, 2013, p. 6

¹⁷ Khellil, 2012

The colonisation of Algeria destroyed pre-colonial social, economic and military structures and created new ones. The French colonial system founded a social hierarchy dominated by European settlers. The old Ottoman aristocracy fled. A new class of French bureaucrats, dominating the indigenous population, appeared.

In this new social hierarchy, the French officers divided the Algerian population into several groups based on racialised and religious distinctions. Arabs were separated from Berbers and Muslims from Jewish, and other religious minorities.

The colonial social hierarchy put the Europeans settlers, known as *the Algerians*, on the top. Under the settlers were the Jewish Algerians who were given French citizenship through the Cremieux Decree on 24 October 1870. The social hierarchy set up by the French government put the Muslim Algerians at the bottom of the social ladder.

Although Algeria was considered as a part of France, the French government thought the Muslim Algerians were too inferior to be French citizens. In the *Sénatus-Consulté* (a decree adopted by the French senate) of 14 July 1865, the French government decreed that Algerians were French subjects and could only obtain French citizenship through an application process. Criteria to obtain the citizenship were very restricted. Most of the Algerians refused to apply. They became subjects of the French colonial empire. In 1912, the French government imposed the conscription on the Muslim Algerians, while remaining subjects of the empire. Muslim Algerians remained the only community within the Algerian population to not receive automatically the French citizenship.

In 1874, the French government introduced the *Code de l'indigénat* (indigenous code), a series of repressive measures against the Muslim Algerians. The Code allowed French officials to imprison Muslim Algerians without trial if they suspected them of breaking the law or subverting the order.

Regarding the gender issue, the colonial administration did not take any step to improve women's rights. Ironically, the French government ratified an ordonnance allowing French women to vote, in Algiers, on 21 April 1944, but Algerian women, who were seen as second class citizen, were excluded.¹⁸

The impact of the French colonisation was particularly palpable in the agricultural sector. Traditional centres of power, which were based on land ownership, were destroyed by land confiscation. Indeed, the French government confiscated agricultural lands, owned by Algerian farmers, and distributed it for free to newly-arrived colons in an attempt to encourage the colonisation of rural areas. Local farmers were squeezed into less productive lands while some displaced land owners were forced to become labourers or servants. Others preferred to move to larger cities along the coast. In a country where over 90 percent of the population was rural, land confiscation was dramatic.¹⁹ European settlers developed their agriculture on a capitalist basis and linked it directly to metropolitan France. They created large agricultural tracts and small holdings, and built factories and businesses.

While the traditional schools system subsisted in neighbouring territories, in Tunisia and Morocco, the old educational system was almost eradicated by the French colonial administration. The access to French education was profoundly restricted. *Lycées* (high schools) sprang up across the north of Algeria but there were built exclusively for colons. The rest of the territory was neglected, receiving little investment in educational infrastructure. As a consequence, the illiteracy rate impressively increased among the indigenous population, notably the Muslim community. In 1889, only 2 percent of the

¹⁸ Lalami, p. 19

¹⁹ Idem.

Algerian children went to school compared to 84 percent of the French settlers' children.²⁰ In 1950s, 10 percent of Algerian children and only 4 percent of Algerian girls went to school while 97 percent of European children were sent to school. As a result, over 90 percent of Algerian women were illiterate in 1962.²¹

Girls were not only persistently under-represented at school, they also faced gender stereotypes. Thus, they were taught nothing else than how to do housework chores (cleaning, cooking, and ironing) and traditional handcraft (weaving, embroidery) at the few training centres, which were inaugurated for the century of France's conquest of Algeria, in 1930s.²²

Classical Arabic language was another victim of the colonisation. The French language was imposed on the native Algerians. In 1923, the French language became the official language in Algeria while Arabic was declared foreign language.

End of the colonisation

Causes

The movement of independence came from the Algerians' dissatisfaction with social and political growing imbalances, segregation, and discrimination. An anti-French sentiment grew as the indigenous population could no longer stand being treated as subjects of the French colonial empire.

The physical occupation of the territory caused destruction of Algerian culture, language and property, starvation, and other forms of sufferings. All this caused the need among the Algerian population to fight for political freedom and independence.

The growing number of European settlers coming to Algeria, who treated Muslim Algerians no more than serfs, played a big role in the development of a burgeoning Algerian nationalist movement.

The immigration of thousands Algerians in France also played a pivotal role in the emergence of an Algerian nationalistic sentiment. During both world wars, Algerian men were conscripted into the French army. Because of shortages of First World War, France had to recruit combatants and workers among the Algerian population. In 1954, the year the war against France began, up to 211 000 Algerian men were working in France.²³ These people left Algeria to move temporarily in France as they were seeking for a job to provide for their family. The large majority of them were young, aged between 24 and 30, and many of them came from the mountainous region Kabylie. In this Algerian region, 6 out of 10 young men were sent to France to find a work. 30 percent of the total Algerian workers, who migrated to France, settled down in the region of Paris.²⁴

The exposure to western social norms in France allowed those Algerian immigrants to notice the social and political imbalances between their fellows and French citizens. The fact that France needed the involvement of Algerians in the war effort revealed to the Algerian immigrants that their colonisers were vulnerable and certainly not invincible.²⁵

²⁰ Merad, p. 604

²¹ Lalami, p. 19

²² Idem.

²³ Insee, Recensement de la population immigrée et étrangère en 1999

²⁴ Khellil, 2012

²⁵ Benkada, 2004

Algerian anti-colonial main actors

The first anti-colonial group was formed by young Algerian intellectual in 1900. Led by Emir Khaled, the grandson of the nationalist hero Abdel Kader, this movement was named *Jeunes-Algériens*. The first nationalist political party, the Algerian People's Party, was founded in 1937. But it was not until 1945 that the independence movement really began to emerge in Algeria.

Since the beginning, the nationalist movement was split into different factions, inspired by different ideologies, and defending incompatible agendas. The Algerian nationalism began to be structured after World War I, with the emergence of three main and competing nationalist forces. These three groups, which infused nationalist sentiment amongst the Algerian people, were:

The rare Algerians who had access to French education and formed a new local elite. They were called "assimilationists" because they agreed for a permanent union with France as long as the civil rights of French people could be extended to the indigenous population. In 1930, Ferhat Abbas created the Federation of Elected Muslims calling for representation of the Algerian people in the French parliament, and equal rights for Muslims.

The second group gathered Muslims reformers, inspired by the Salafi movement founded in the late 19th century in Egypt by Sheikh Muhamma Abduh. Algeria's Islamic reform movement stressed the Arab and Islamic roots of Algeria, and firmly opposed assimilation. Led by Sheikh Abd al Hamid Ben Badis, the reformist Oulema (religious scholar) organised the Association of Algerian Muslim Oulema in 1931. They were based in Constantine, eastern Algeria. The French government did not allow them to speak at the mosques in order to squelch the nascent opposition movement.

The third group was more proletarian and radical. It was organised by Algerian workers in France in the 1920s. This group was led by Messali Hadj, a member of the French Communist Party and close friend of future Vietnamese revolutionary leader Ho Chi Minh, and Emir Khaled, who was chosen as the honorary President, who stood against the French conquest in 1830s. They founded the *Etoile nord-africaine* (Star of North Africa), in 1926. The Bolshevik Revolution of 1917 was a source of inspiration for them. The group presented a radical program at a Socialist International Conference in Brussels in 1927. The leader read a declaration demanding the independence of Algeria, withdrawal of French troops, a creation of a national army as well as the nationalisation of large estates. It was the first group to call for Algerian independence. In addition of independence from France, the nationalist pioneer group called for freedom of speech and association, and the establishment of a parliament elected through universal suffrage.

The participation of Algerians in the World War II was a watershed moment in the history of Algeria's nationalism. After the conflict, all Algerian nationalist leaders demanded Muslim equality in exchange for this service. Charles de Gaulle, the leader of the French resistance against Germany, agreed to grant French citizenship to some selected Muslims. His offer was unsatisfactory and increased the tensions between the indigenous population and the settlers.

After 1945 and the end of World War II, nationalist organisations bloomed in Algeria but it was not yet unified:

Mouvement pour le triomphe des libertés démocratiques (Movement for the Triumph of Democratic Liberties, MTLD) was created in October 1946 to replace the outlawed PPA. Messali Hadj was appointed at the head of this new political party. The MTLD followed PPA's agenda, demanding a full independence of Algeria. The MTLD had a secret branch called the Organisation Spéciale (OS), which was disbanded by the French in 1950.

Union Démocratique du Manifeste Algérien (Democratic Union of the Algerian Manifesto, UDMA) was founded in April 1946 by Ferhat Abbas. It called for free, secular and republican Algeria, federated with France.

A group of young dissidents of the MTLA created the *Front National de Libération* (National Liberation Front, FLN), on 1 November 1954. The FLN quickly became the leading nationalist party. It was initially based on a five-man leadership. The original leaders were: Mohamed Boudiaf, Mostefa Ben Boulaid, Larbi Ben M'hidi, Rabah Bitat, Mohamed Didouche, and Belkacem Krim. They received the support of paramilitary groups who were in exile, in such places as Cairo and Tunis. Those leading from abroad included Ahmed Ben Bella, Hocine Aït Ahmed, and Mohamed Khider.

Contrary to the pioneer nationalist parties, the FLN sought to reconcile the different warring nationalist factions. By 1956, the FLN managed to unify and control most of the nationalist factions through forceful or voluntary co-optation. This way, it achieved its dominant position over other nationalist groups.

Unlike the other revolutionary groups, the FLN were willing to go through any means necessary, including any form of violence, to gain independence from France. In a written declaration released on 1 November 1954, entitled 'To the Algerian people', the FLN made its intention clear, calling for the decolonisation of Algeria and the "restoration of the sovereign, democratic and social Algerian state, within the framework of Islamic principles".²⁶

War of independence

The FLN launched the war against France on 1 November 1954. At the beginning, the French colonial regime underestimated the FLN's threat. From its perspective, the FLN was a group of terrorists and the beginning of the war for independence a "problem".

The war of independence broke when the *Armée de libération nationale* (National Liberation Army, ALN), the FLN's military arm, staged guerrilla attacks on French military and communication posts and called on all native people to join their struggle.

The Algerian revolution was a protracted war, conducted in a highly decentralised manner all over the country and even outside it. During the Algerian war for independence, the ALN was put under the control of Colonel Houari Boumediene. It was composed by both internal and external wings. The latter were based in the neighbouring countries, Tunisia and Morocco, during the war. From camps stationed behind Tunisian and Moroccan borders, the ALN's external contingent provided logistical support and weaponry to the ALN forces operating within the country. At the end of the war, the external wings, which were better trained and armed, made up the bulk of the *Armée nationale populaire* (National popular army, ANP), Algeria's state army, created in 1962.

The 7-year war between France and the FLN fighters was brutal. The French soldiers were not the only ones torturing the civilians. Indeed, the FLN's non-peaceful strategy did not target the French colonisers only. The FLN members firmly believed that people were either with them and willing to fight for them or against their movement. If someone was not willing to collaborate with them, regardless that person was a native Algerian, he or she could either be threatened with death, tortured or murdered. While the French army launched manhunts for FLN fighters, the National Liberation Front was hunting native people who were suspected to be allied with the European settlers.

²⁶ The full text of the declaration of the FLN made on 1st November 1954 (in French): <http://www.jeuneafrique.com/41168/politique/1er-novembre-1954-le-texte-int-gral-de-la-d-claration-du-secr-tariat-g-n-ral-du-fln/>

Algerian women played a significant role during the war for independence. In 1974, Algeria's ministry for Veteran's Affairs declared that near 11 000 women participated in the Algerian revolution, totalling 3 percent of all participants.²⁷ 90 percent of them were under 30.²⁸ Some of these Algerian female anti-colonial activists joined the nationalist movement after the death of their husband while others took part to the rebellion alongside with their spouse.²⁹

Algerian women, who were completely barred from public life, took part in the nationalist resistance in various ways. The majority of them served in non-military traditionally feminine roles as nurses, cooks, and laundresses. Approximately 2 percent of them – near 2 000 women – can be classified as *moudjahidat* (female fighters).³⁰ From 1956, some Algerian women began to be military active, depositing bombs, purchasing and distributing weapons, and conveying and delivering messages to the different cells of resistance.³¹

Female nationalist activists, alike male militants, were facing France's brutal repression. An estimated 2 200 women, suspected of being nationalists, were arrested, tortured, and raped by the French military.³² In jail, they suffered all sort of abuse: they were stripped and slapped, drenched with cold water, deprived of sleep and screamed at, as well as sexually abused. Violent genital penetration, genital electric shocks, rape or the threat of rape were all common techniques used against women fighters.³³

The sexual violence was not employed against Algerian women identified as activists only. Sexual crimes against Muslim women committed by the French military reached "appalling levels during the war".³⁴

Women's participation in the liberation struggle was used in the FLN's propaganda.³⁵ The stories of the female fighters were told in FLN's wartime newspaper *El Moudjahid* in order to acquire sympathy and support, and encourage international protest against the French colonisation.

But, despite the fact that Algerian women embraced the anti-colonial struggle, almost from the beginning, they never played a political role during the war against France. There was no female member in the National Council of the Algerian Revolution (*Conseil national de la revolution algérienne*, CNRA), created in 1956.³⁶

End of the war of independence

The 7-year anti-colonial war ended in 1962 when the French government and representatives of FLN went on the table of negotiations. Those negotiations took place in Evian, in Switzerland. The French government and FLN's leaders agreed to sign an agreement on 19 March 1962.

The *accords d'Evian* (Evian agreement) consisted in a cease-fire combined with a general amnesty that prohibited the prosecution of any Algerian nationalist or French soldier, policemen or politician for

²⁸ Kathun, p. 87

²⁹ Lamali, p. 22

³⁰ Lazreg, p. 124

³¹ Lamali, op. cit., p. 22

³² Thurshen, p. 891

³³ Levine, p. 9

³⁴ Idem.

³⁵ Lamali, op. cit., p. 23

³⁶ Ibid., p. 22

crimes committed during the war for independence. Near 15 000 Algerians imprisoned in Algerian and 5 500 in France were released.³⁷

The *accords*, which signalled the end of a 132-year colonial rule in Algeria, was approved by a referendum held in France in April, with a large majority of voters in favour of the end of the war and Algeria's independence from France. On 1 July, an overwhelming majority of Algerians voted in a referendum for the independence. France's president Charles de Gaulle pronounced Algeria an independent state on 3 July.

The amnesty of the French military forces and pro-colonisation civilian activists was progressively granted through the promulgation of three laws. The first amnesty law was signed on 23 December 1964, the second one on 17 June 1966, and the third one on 31 July 1968. The latest offered amnesty to members of the Secret armed organisation (*Organisation armée secrète*, OAS), a politico-military underground group founded in 1961 by dissident French generals.³⁸

In France, the amnesty laws were implemented through executive decrees, issued by the president, although the declaration of amnesty was traditionally a prerogative of the parliament.³⁹

The amnesty process was hastily conducted by the French authorities because they certainly felt "guilty" about the extreme violence of the war and the French military's use of torture on Algerian people. Indeed, the French government's attitude during the war contrasted with the country's tradition of commitment to human rights.⁴⁰

Because the end of the conflict did not lead to a real transitional justice process, and no investigation on human rights' abuses committed by both sides was made, we cannot say with certainty how many people were wounded or died during the conflict. According to the FLN, as many as 300 000 Algerians die from war-related causes but the number of Algerian casualties remained unknown. According to the Algerian ministry of war veterans, 150 000 members of the FLN were killed in the fighting.⁴¹ The French military authorities listed their losses at nearly 18 000 dead and 65 000 wounded. European civilian casualties exceeded 10 000, including 3 000 deaths, in 42 000 recorded attacks.⁴²

Since the proclamation of Algeria as an independent state, France and its former colony have maintained an uneasy relationship. More than fifty years after the end of the war, plans for a friendship treaty between the two countries have remained on hold over France's refusal to apologize. Indeed, the Algerian authorities have been waiting for the French government to apologize formally for more than a century of colonisation and hundreds of thousands of human losses between 1830 and 1962.

A new generation of French political leader seems ready to say sorry. While campaigning for the presidential election in 2017, Emmanuel Macron, 39, former minister of Budget and centre-left candidate, qualified the French colonisation a "crime against humanity" and said that France should "offer apologies to all those toward whom we directed these acts".⁴³ It was the first time in France's postcolonial history that a major political figure has openly recognized human right crimes committed by the French army during the invasion of Algeria and the decolonisation war.

³⁷ Gacon, p. 272

³⁸ Ibid., p. 271

³⁹ Ibid., p. 272

⁴⁰ Idem.

⁴¹ Kathun, p. 79

⁴² Ibid., p. 80

⁴³ Echourouk TV, 14 February 2017 <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=fZZyN9tcjhs>

Official narrative

The Algerian regime has always been eager to control the memory of the war of independence by creating an official narrative and stifling any alternative narrative.

When the FLN came to power after the war for independence, it reinterpreted past events producing an official narrative of the liberation struggle that was hegemonic and linear. This univocal narrative helped both the FLN and the ALN to create a single-party state, stay in power, and shape the nationhood. After the independence, they claimed that nationalism had been conveyed through a single ideological thread. As a consequence, all other political organisations were considered illegitimate, and their contributions to a national struggle muted.

The FLN also claimed that armed struggle was the only viable tool to obtain independence. The official narrative neglected the ongoing peaceful movement of resistance that had taken place in Algeria since the French authority took control of the territory in 1830s. From the invasion of Algeria until the decolonisation process, episodic nonviolent forms of resistance evolved from an organic reaction to protect the collective fabric of indigenous people to the demand for full citizenship and sovereignty of the people.⁴⁴

The FLN narrative defined the Algerian identity as Arabic in both ethnicity and language, and Muslim in religion, excluding other ethnic groups, such as the Berbers, other languages, such as French and Tamazight (Berber language), and religions, such as Judaism and Christianity.

Consequently, Algeria's nationhood was built on "denial of plurality": on one hand, the plurality of political ideologies and nationalist parties, and their contribution to the struggle for the establishment of an independent state in Algeria; on the other hand, the plurality of the Algerian identity.⁴⁵

From the beginning, the Algerian regime embraced the martyr mythology in the state building process while the FLN invoked its revolutionary credentials and legitimacy to establish and run national institutions.

It used a genuine figure around whose image all Algerians could unite. This was Emir Abdelkader, who fought against the French invasion. After suffering heavy losses and many military reversals, France, represented by General Bugeaud, signed with Emir Abdelkader the Treaty of Tafna in 1837. The treaty entailed the sovereignty of Emir Abdelkader in a large part of the Algerian territory. But the French army broke the peace agreement in 1839 when King Louis-Philippe ordered the invasion of Constantine. As a result, Emir Abdelkader rebooted the war against the French army.⁴⁶ But he failed and took refuge in Morocco. Based there, he conducted raids against French forces but he was again obliged to surrender. Incarcerated in a French prison, he was reprieved by Napoleon III and went into exile in Damascus, in Syria, where he died in 1883. At the end of the war for independence, Abdelkader was unanimously considered as Algeria's first nationalist hero. He still embodies the Algerian nationalism. Symbolically, a bronze statue of him was erected in the capital's downtown.

Moreover, both *shahid* (martyr) and *moudjahid* (fighter) were used as a nation-building tool. Algeria's national narrative was formed around both those who fought for the liberation of the country and survived (*moudjahid*), and those who lost their lives during the revolution against the French empire (*shahid*). Across the Arab world, Algeria became known as *al balad a million Shaheed* (the country of a million martyrs). Besides, a memorial was built in all cities and villages in honour of local martyrs. Many

⁴⁴ Rahal, 2013, p. 7

⁴⁵ Ibid., 2013, p. 27

⁴⁶ Frémeaux, 2008

other symbols are ingrained in Algerian people's daily life. For instance, many streets, squares, and public offices were named after local or national martyrs.⁴⁷

A martyr's memorial (*Maqqam al shahid*) was built on the highest hill above Algiers to honour the sacrifice of the nationalist fighters. The edifice, which houses a museum of the *moudjahid* and a museum of the national army, was revealed to the public in 1982, marking the 20th anniversary of the country's independence.

The official narrative was institutionalised in Algeria academia during the 1970s and was infused in book publication, including history textbooks. Such monopoly on the revolutionary narrative led to a loss of memory, especially the memory of nonviolent forms of resistance conducted by cultural associations, political organisations, unions as well as Islamic institutions.

Despite the fact that no competing narrative were allowed, some groups challenged the official nationhood narrative. The Tamazight-speaking communities, who mostly live in Kabylie, Aurès and southern Algeria, contested the official narrative that said that Algeria was an Arabic state, reminding people of the country's Berber roots.

The official narrative has been recently reformed. Curbing the "ferocious identity politics", the ruling elite has developed a more inclusive conception of the Algerian national identity.⁴⁸ In January 2016, Tamazight was finally recognised as Algeria's second national language, with Arabic. In January 2018, Ennayer, a Berber celebration, was celebrated as a national holiday for the first time.

Political transition

The transition from French colonial system to the creation of an Algerian independent state occurred amid political instability. The indigenous political elite was heavily fragmented. Several anticolonial leaders were competing for control over the state, each of them representing different factions.

In 1962, the FLN contained at least ten relatively independent centres of authority, including the *état-major* (military chief of staff) of the ALN in Morocco and Tunisia, the *Gouvernement provisoire de la république algérienne* (Provisional government of the Algerian republic, GPRA), which was internationally recognized as the legal representative of the FLN, the FFFLN (the French federation of the FLN which was the financial source of the revolution), the "historic leaders", and the six wilayas (regional armies).

Within the military there were two separate groups: the external wings, which were based in Tunisia and Morocco, and the internal wings, which fought in Algeria. The latter were known as the *maquisards* (active member of the resistance).

The control of the country was not negotiated in a power sharing agreement. All factional leaders met in May 1962 in Tripoli but they failed to reach an agreement. Two main factions emerged from this meeting: on one hand, the so-called "Oujda clan", which included commanders of the ALN in Oran, Aurès Mountain, and Sahara, supported Ben Bella; on the other hand, the GPRA, which received the support of the wilaya of Constantine and Tizi Ouzou.⁴⁹ Both clans understood that it was essential to receive the support of the external wings of the ALN. It finally endorsed the Oujda clan.

The signing of Evian Accords led to accentuate divisions within the FLN that had existed since the creation of the movement and remained latent during the 7-year war against France. The political transition took place from the proclamation of the sovereignty of Algeria, on 3 July 1962, to the

⁴⁷ Alcaraz, 2016

⁴⁸ Roberts, 2007, p. 16

⁴⁹ Idem.

establishment of a National Constituent Assembly, which was scheduled on 20 September of the same year. The post-war period was marked by what historians call Algeria's "summer 1962 crisis".⁵⁰

That violent episode involved a considerable number of actors, including charismatic political leaders, such as Ahmed Ben Bella, and high-ranking officers of ALN as well. The rival clans, including the Oujda clan, fought in an anarchic chaos during summer 1962. About thousands of people were killed during this fight for the power. At the end of the 1962 summer, the GPRA was defeated and dismantled. Backed by the most powerful wings of the army, the Oujda clan took over the country.

State-building

The army and the political leadership have been tightly enmeshed since Algeria gained its independence from France in 1962. After the end of the war for independence, the National Liberation Army (ALN) became the National People's Army (*Armée nationale populaire*, ANP), Algeria's official state army. Since it was the most organised group at the end of conflict and thanks to its revolutionary legitimacy, the ANP took over the colonial state apparatus without any serious opposition. Algeria's first leaders came from military backgrounds.

From 1962 to 1988, the centre of power remains in the military's hands. Since the establishment of the Algerian structures of power, the Algerian army has played a prominent role, contradicting with the principles announced during the Soummam summit – the rule of the civil supremacy over the military.⁵¹ The army wanted to appear as the sole trusted "guardian of the revolution".⁵²

In 1963, military-dominated Algerian elite established a military authoritarian regime with a single-party presidential system, according to the constitution. Based on its revolutionary credentials, the FLN became the sole allowed party in Algeria's political scene. In this political system, the FLN and the nascent state were so closely interrelated that it was difficult to tell the difference between the political party and the government.

The power of the military forces was strengthened by the politico-military coup of 1965 that brought Houari Boumediene, former ALN's chief and minister of Defence, to power. In June 1965, on the eve of the Afro-Asian conference, the army arrested Ahmed Ben Bella, Algeria's first president, in his bed. When the coup was publicly revealed, it caused little stir among the population.

Military-backed, Houari Boumediene dissolved the National Assembly, suspended the 1963 constitution, and appointed a military-dominated Council of Revolution, which substituted to government.

Boumediene beefed up the *Sécurité militaire* (Military security), a secret police force, that hunted any political organisation operating independently to the FLN. This secret police is suspected for the assassination of leading historic figures, including Krim Belkacem, who were challenging the official narrative of the war for independence.

During the Boumediene's presidency, nationalism became the dominant ideology. Pluralism, opposition, and competitive ideology were not tolerated under his reign. Any form of opposition was immediately neutralised by the Military Security.

The military push, that occurred only three years after Algeria gained its independence from France, has remained one of the key event of the country's post-independence era because it has shaped an unwritten rule which is still active: the army is the most powerful force in the Algerian political scene

⁵⁰ Mohand-Amer, 2016

⁵¹ Bourrat, 2012, p. 23

⁵² Idem.

and it has the last word in the presidential election victory. For instance, Boumediene's successor, Chadli Bendjedid, was selected at an assembly composed of senior military commanders led by the chief of the secret services at the time, Kasdi Merbah.⁵³

From 1962 to 1988, Algeria was invariably a one-party state and belonged to the same category of other authoritarian regimes, based on a single-party rule. However, the FLN was not a source of decision during Boumediene's era. At that time, the FLN possessed neither a central committee nor a political bureau, and no congress of the party was held. After Boumediene's death, senior figures in the regime tried to establish the FLN as a serious independent institution. It held a national congress in 1979, in attempt to equip the party with formal organisational structures, powers, and capacities that would enable it to challenge the informal military commanders' influence on decision making. That was seen as an effort to promote the demilitarisation of the Algerian power structure. But this was never successful.⁵⁴

In the postcolonial Algerian political system, the position of president has usually been a relatively powerless one. Only Houari Boumediene was able to fully exercise his prerogatives of president as defined in the constitution. This achievement was due to his unique position as the architect of the unification of the scattered armed forces of the ALN, his capacity as minister of Defence to transform the ALN into a modern state army (ANP).

The intelligence and security service has also possessed an "enormous power".⁵⁵ Created by Colonel Abdelhafid Bousouf, the commander of ALN's *wilaya* V (Oranie), the Military Security (*Sécurité militaire*, SM) was renamed the Department of intelligence and security (*Département du renseignement et de la sécurité*, DRS), in 1990. The DRS, Algeria's KGB-inspired spy agency, would acquire greater influence during the 1990s, and played an important in the counter-terrorism campaign, infiltrating the Islamist armed groups.⁵⁶

This complex system of distribution of powers between civilian leaders and military could result from the absence of a single undisputed leader at the end of the war for independence. Contrary to Egypt or Tunisia, there was no one authentic leader, who stand out of the crowd. The Algerian revolutionary elite, which was composed of FLN's heads and ALN's chiefs, consisted of individuals who were generally unwilling to recognize the leadership to any one among them.⁵⁷

The Algerian government asserted state control over religious activities for purposes of national consolidation and political control. Islam became the religion of the state. The ministry of Religious Affairs controlled an estimated 5 000 public mosques by mid-1980s. Imams were trained, appointed, and paid by the government. The Friday sermon was issued to them by the ministry. That ministry also administrated religious properties, provided for religious education and training in schools.

Oil-dependent socialist economy

The FLN was composed of a wide range of ideological philosophies unified by the common desire for independence from the French colonial system. The left wing of the party had a greater influence after the victory in the war for independence. Ahmed Ben Bella, the first president of Algeria, promoted the Marxist ideology within the FLN-led government. Ben Bella's consultants were deeply influenced by the Marxist ideology. He even collaborated with foreign advisors, who wanted the newly independent

⁵³ Ghanem-Yazbeck, 2018

⁵⁴ Roberts, 2007, p. 5

⁵⁵ Roberts, 2007, p. 12

⁵⁶ Idem.

⁵⁷ Ibid., p. 8

state to serve as a “laboratory of the revolution”.⁵⁸ His main rival, Houari Boumediene, espoused the Arab nationalism, an ideology similar to Nasserism.

Despite those inner tensions within the ruling party, the first two decades of Algeria’s existence as an independent state were marked by the establishment of a highly centralised socialist economic system. The regime was at first committed to egalitarianism.

On the eve of the independence, the newly-established Algerian regime had an ambitious development plan: to use burgeoning energy revenues to develop an industrial economy and build up infrastructures that would eventually transform the Algerian society. Thus, Boumediene decided to nationalise the Algerian oil industry on 24 February 1971. That gave a tremendous boost to the state’s treasury. Since then, the exploitation of the country’s energy resources has become the main, if not the only one, source of foreign earnings and state revenues. The Algerian regime has played the role of a “distributive state”.⁵⁹

Algeria’s industrialisation programme was based on the theory of ‘industrialising industries’ (*industries industrialisantes*). This economic theory consists to give priority to heavy industries which will have a strong effect on the development of other industries and other sectors, such as agriculture. In Algeria, expensive state investments were made in the chemical, hydrocarbons, and goods industries. This development strategy was financed by the oil rent. Therefore, the agricultural sector was relatively neglected after the war for independence, while the rural sector was traditionally dominant in Algeria’s economy.

Until the 1990s, the Algerian economy was under the control of state firms. Employment was mainly public and industrial. Near 1 300 local public firms and 400 national companies accounted for about 80 percent of value added, and 75 percent of employment in the manufacturing sector in 1993. Moreover, public sector employment at the end of 1991 accounted for 70 percent of industry.⁶⁰

Buoyed by high oil prices, the regime’s development programme was successful to raise people’s living standards. It was able to meet the socioeconomic needs of most sections of the population through provision of subsidies, public sector employment and huge investment in both healthcare and education systems, winning the reputation as one of the third world’s few welfare states.

In the mid-1970s, Algeria had one of the highest growth rate of oil-exporting emerging countries. Less than a decade after becoming an independent state, the North-African country, an Organization of Petroleum Exporting Countries (OPEC) member, was considered as one of the most politically and economically stable oil exporters.

⁵⁸ Aït-Chaalal, 2002, p. 64

⁵⁹ Roberts, 2007, p. 7

⁶⁰ Zouache, 2012, p. 95

SECTION TWO. Conflict factors

Algeria had lived under the rule of ANP-FLN, a self-proclaimed ruling elite, over near twenty-five years, after it gained independence from France in 1962. But, in late 1980s, Algeria's social contract, which mostly consisted in a subsidies system (high public spending on basic goods and housing), funded by energy revenues, became increasingly brittle. It was at risk as the regime found difficulties to continue to "buy social stability" through top-down, ad hoc spending measures.⁶¹

At that time, marginalised and oppressed groups began to understand the link between their poor economic standing and the lack of economic opportunities available to them, and the decisions of an unrepresentative and undemocratic regime. The collapse in the level of healthcare, the degradation of living standards, the negative repercussion of the rentier system, and the absence of good governance procedures began to nourish a grassroots resentment against the regime that had controlled the country since the independence. The ruling elite began to be considered by marginalised groups as a "new colonial force".⁶²

In late 1980s, the regime failed to maintain the balance between making "limited concessions" and controlling the country through violence. The ruling elite went "too far in resorting to repression and indiscriminate violence". This "misguided approach" partially explained the increasing popularity of the Islamic Salvation Front (*Front Islamique du Salut*, FIS) among the frustrated and marginalised populations.⁶³

Algeria's civil war erupted in January 1992, when the army suspended the country's first ever democratic parliamentary election, therefore robbing the FIS, the Islamist party that was poised to win, of a victory. It was a group of incumbent major generals who decided to cancel the December 1991 parliamentary elections and crack down on the opposition, thereby catalysing the civil war.⁶⁴

The Algerian civil war was not an internal conflict between two clear-cut sides. It was rather an armed opposition between the military-dominated regime to a welter of distinct Islamist armed groups, whose most of them were affiliated to the FIS. All the belligerents were inclined to terrorise the population. This conflict has become known as the "Black Decade", or the "Dirty Decade" (*Décennie noire*).

Socioeconomic factors

The authoritarian regime, which had ruled Algeria for two decades on the basis of a one-party rule and the dominance of a small politico-military elite, began to crack amid global oil price plunge. The regime's lack of efficiency became obvious after 1986 oil price collapse.

Oil prices collapse

By 1982, the global demand for oil was declining. Oil prices fell from their peak of close to \$40/barrel in 1980 to less than \$10/barrel in 1986.⁶⁵ The oil prices collapse was a result of the increase in Saudi

⁶¹ Ould Khettab, on Al Jazeera, 5 February 2015

⁶² Labat, 2003, p. 4

⁶³ Ghanem-Yazbeck, 2018

⁶⁴ Ashour, 2008, p. 10

⁶⁵ Lowi, 2009, p. 3

production in an attempt to keep up with the market force of new producers. In the meantime, the value of the dollar, the currency in which hydrocarbons are traded, declined as well.

With plummeting oil prices, the North-African country's economy has started to sink. The effect of the oil price shock on Algeria's external revenues, 97 percent of which come from oil and gas, was abrupt: it declined by 55 percent in value in a single year, decreasing from \$47 billion in 1985 to \$21 billion in 1987.⁶⁶ Similarly, the role of hydrocarbon revenues in total government revenues fell from 44 to 24 percent. Falling oil prices also brought a 40 percent drop in imports between 1983 and 1987, causing some shortages of essential foods. From 1986 to 1990, the Algerian economy's growth rate remained consistently negative.⁶⁷

The sharp deterioration of the country's export revenues led **to two years** of bitter austerity, starting from 1986. The austerity plan produced long lines in grocery stores as well as shortages of basic foods, such as bread.

High unemployment, particularly among the young population— about 70 percent of the Algerians were under 30, and 44 percent of the total population was under the age of 15 – was a source of instability for the regime. Algeria's young population was hit by a galloping unemployment rate, estimated at 25 percent in 1987.⁶⁸

Eroding political status quo

The regime's difficulties to respond to people's needs at that time caused a serious loss of legitimacy in the eyes of the population. That benefited the Islamist movement, which emerged as a serious political alternative to the political system inherited of the war for independence.

The emergence of Islamism as a political alternative to the status quo

Although the regime created a single-party system, the Islamist movement, an ancient movement which had existed for hundreds of years in the region, was never entirely eradicated. Indeed, the idea of reformist Islam (*al-Islah*), inspired by the reformist *Salafiyya* movement, reached Algeria early 1900s, when the renowned Egyptian reformer Sheikh Mohammed Abduh visited the North-African country.⁶⁹ Inspired by his philosophy, Sheikh Abdelhamid Ben Badis founded the Association of Muslim Ulama (Association des Oulémas Musulmans Algériens), in 1931. The principal purpose of the Association was to promote a reformed and puritan Islam and to bring about the revival of the Arabic language and Islamic culture in Algeria. The Association of Ulama rallied to the FLN in 1956. The FLN incorporated the Association into its own structure, as it did with other nationalist factions.

After the independence, the Association was formally dissolved. That raised tension within the Islamist movement. Eventually, it split into those who accepted this co-optation and those who refused the subordination of Islam to the nationalism ideology, and to the FLN-ANP state. The development of radical Islam across Algeria can be seen as a reaction to the incorporation of the Ulama's movement into the FLN, therefore the FLN-ANP state.⁷⁰

After the independence, the Islamist movement went underground, but it remained active. As early as 1964, a militant Islamist movement, called *Al Qiyam* (The Values), was created. This group did not openly challenge the regime, but it demanded official support to its campaign against non-Islamic

⁶⁶ OECD, 2003, p. 57

⁶⁷ Joffé, 2002, p. 8

⁶⁸ Greenhouse, on The New York Times, 1988

⁶⁹ Hasan, Hendriks, Janssen, Meijer, 2012, p. 73

⁷⁰ Idem.

cultural manifestations and values. It called for a more dominant role for Islam in Algeria's legal and political systems. This group became popular, being able to gather up to 5 000 people at a meeting. It was banned by President Boumediene in 1970.⁷¹

Islamism permutated again in the 1970s. That time, the Islamist movement was developed within university campuses, and challenged left-wing student groups. In the late 1970s, Islamist militants carried out actions on the basis of fundamentalist principles: they harassed women whom they said were inappropriately dressed, smashed establishments that served alcohol, and removed official imams from their mosque. The Islamist militants escalated their actions in the 1980s, becoming increasingly powerful.

Until 1990s, the relation of the regime towards the Islamist movement was ambiguous. During the Boumediene's era, the Islamist movement was suppressed and the influence of Islam was reduced to the state religion or "official Islam".

Yet, Chadli Bendjedid administration (1979-1992), which took over the control of the state after the death of Boumediene, did not use a hard approach against the emerging Islamist movement. Instead of repressing it, Bendjedid administration tried to contain it by winning support within the Islamist movement, as President Anwar el-Sadat did in Egypt in the 1970s with the Muslim Brotherhood.

Thus, Bendjedid allowed more room for the Islamists to express their opinion. The Ministry of Religious Affairs allowed the so-called "free mosques" to be built by private initiatives, outside the control of the state. Thanks to private donors, the Islamist movement had 9 000 mosques in its network, almost double the number of official state mosques, in the late 1980s.⁷²

By the 1980s, the Islamist movement spread across the country thanks to its network of private mosques. While, in the official mosques, sermons were delivered to the government-paid imams from the Ministry of Religious Affairs, in the private mosques, administrated by the Islamist movement, sermons were written on the basis of fundamentalist principles, and hostile to the regime. The so-called "free mosques" played a significant role in whipping up popular resentment against the ruling elite.

Chadli Bendjedid administration made several other compromises with Islamist opponents in order to preserve the political status quo that had prevailed since 1962. It adopted a series of conservative measures in attempt to co-opt Islamist supporters. Thus, Bendjedid intensified the Arabisation and Islamisation of the educational system. Classical Arabic became the medium of instruction and religious teaching, which was restricted to Koranic schools and Islamic institutes, was integrated in the curriculum. Therefore, several Algerian scholars studied in Egypt to learn standard Arabic, while many Egyptian scholars arrived in Algeria to teach standard Arabic and a rigorist version of Islam.

Some of these compromises jeopardized women's rights. In 9 June 1984, the Algerian parliament adopted a family code that made all women minor in education, marriage, divorce, work, and inheritance, and guaranteed polygamy to men.

Feminist groups tried to resist to the adoption of the code regulating family life. Their petition protesting the code was signed by one million of Algerians. They wrote a letter to President Bendjedid, in which they listed six demands: same legal age of majority for women and men, unconditional right to work, equality in marriage and divorce, end of polygamy, equal inheritance rights, legal status for

⁷¹ Ibid., p. 75

⁷² Youssef, on The New York Times, 25 June 1990

unwed women and abandoned children.⁷³ The family code, which was amended in 2005, is still in effect today.

The relation between the Algerian state and the Islamist movement episodically turned into violent hostility, throughout the 1980s. Violent clashes between the security force and members of the Islamist movement intermittently erupted between 1982 and 1987, when Mustafa Bouyali, a war-veteran of the FLN, led a small guerrilla. His armed group was called the Algerian Islamic Movement (*Mouvement islamique algérien*, MIA), and was active in the hinterland of Algiers. This armed rebellion can be seen as an attempt to “liberate Algeria from the ‘colonial yoke’ and the ‘Frenchified’ generals”.⁷⁴ It also revealed the “vitality of the guerrilla tradition of the maquis in the mountains”, stemming from the war of independence.⁷⁵

From the independence to the outset of the civil war, the Islamist movement was one of the most powerful unauthorised political forces, which were secretly operating in Algeria, alongside both the Leftist and the Berberist movements. The Islamist movement, which would form the Islamic Front of Salvation (*Front Islamique du Salut*, FIS), was a state-like organisation capable of providing many welfare and education services, in the late 1980s.

The founders of the FIS transposed their religious charity engagement into their political party. It developed a “charity strategy” that consisted in providing a day-to-day social assistance to marginalised and poor population.⁷⁶ The party’s “social” and “preaching commission” was in charge of conducting all sorts of localised charitable activities at the local, regional, and national level.⁷⁷ That included: creation of low-price food and clothing markets during the holy month of Ramadan in 1990 and 1991, called the “*Rahma* markets”, distribution of school supplies, cash donations to poor families, widows, and sick people, and the collection and distribution of medicines, free Quran teaching for children etc.⁷⁸ Thanks to their attendance of mosques, the members of the FIS had a good knowledge of local residents’ needs.

The FIS also managed to organise broad assistance and solidarity operations. For instance, in the aftermath of Tipaza earthquake on 29 October 1989 and the floods that happened in the South the following year, it took charge of the collection and distribution of tents, blankets, clothing, food, and medicines.⁷⁹

In addition, the “social commission” of the party hosted an employment and investment sub-commission that offered advice and skills training to young Algerians looking for a job or willing to start a business. Furthermore, it supervised “clean cities” operations by organising the collection and distribution of cleaning materials.⁸⁰

By organising multiple charitable activities, the FIS might have “filled the gap” left by the public institutions when dealing with the precarious situation of an increasingly poor population.⁸¹ The FIS

⁷³ Turshen, 2002, p. 894

⁷⁴ Hasan, Hendriks, Janssen, Meijer, 2012, p. 76

⁷⁵ Idem.

⁷⁶ Aït-Aoudia, 2013, p. II

⁷⁷ Idem.

⁷⁸ Ibid., p. VII

⁷⁹ Ibid., p. V

⁸⁰ Ibid., p. VI

⁸¹ Ibid., p. II

was the only Algerian political party to carry out this type of social activism and compensate the state's failures in this domain.⁸²

That charitable activism, which can be considered a form of "political clientelism", was one of the reasons of the Islamist party's breakthrough electoral victory in 1990.⁸³

1988 riots against "hogra"

In reaction to the escalating inflation, high unemployment, shortages of essential goods, among other issues, combined with the incapacity of the regime to effectively address the severe socioeconomic dislocation, precipitated by the oil price shock, students and workers jointly took the streets in October 1988.

The 1988 riots began on the night of 4 October when several incidents broke out in Bab-el-Oued, a working-class neighbourhood in Algiers. Teenagers burnt cars and threw stones at some stores. The morning after, the troubles spread across the capital. Young people sacked public offices, including the headquarters of the Ministries of Youth and Sports, and Education and Transport, FLN local committee rooms, and police stations as well. Meanwhile, airline headquarters, drugstores, supermarkets, shopping centres were looted. Protesters took quickly control of certain neighbourhoods, they installed roadblocks, and carried out identity control. As a consequence, public offices, schools, and many businesses did not open on 5 October.

The grassroots riots, which erupted in Algiers, soon grew into a major unrest, which swept into other major urban areas in the north of the country, including Oran and Constantine, and less intensely small towns. The scenes of riots were similar everywhere: ransacking of public offices and shops.

As a reaction, a state of siege, which granted the army both the administrative and security control, was decreed by the President, on the evening of 5 October. The security forces began shooting at the protesters. After five days of ongoing riots, up to 500 young men were killed, thousands wounded, and 3 500 arrested in what became known as the "Black October", Algeria's worst episode of violence since the independence.

At the outset, the 1988 riots were politically unorganised, unstructured, with no banners or slogans, and led by very young boys. The protesters were mainly boys aged from 12 to 20. They were high school students, middle-schoolers, or unemployed. They lived in poor neighbourhoods of the capital and belonged to the marginalised and underprivileged groups of the society. The protesters were stigmatised as "thugs" by the ruling elite.⁸⁴

What was initially about protesting the deteriorating socioeconomic situation rapidly turned into calls for more political and institutional reforms. The grassroots riots took on a political dimension when various social groups joined the protest movement. Among them were doctors, lawyers, journalists, academics, intellectuals, former *mujahidin* and leading figures of the nationalist movement such as Ahmed Ben Bella and Hocine Aït-Ahmed, and human rights activists as well. This way, the grassroots and unpolitical rebellion turned into a multi-sectoral and politicised mobilisation.

The spontaneous uprising of the young population was seen as a window of opportunity to reiterate long-standing claims. Echoing to the youth's protests, a constellation of different social groups cooperatively instigated a civil resistance to the regime, organising street demonstrations and public

⁸² Ibid., p. VIII

⁸³ Ibid., p. XIII

⁸⁴ Aït-Aoudia, 2015, p. 66

meetings, distributing leaflets, and sending a letter to the President.⁸⁵ They denounced the repression of the young demonstrators as well as the authoritarian nature of the regime, and the confiscation of the power by a corrupt authoritarian elite. They demanded an effective freedom of speech, the right to create autonomous and representative unions for workers and students, the recognition of the Berber culture and language as an integral part of the nation's identity, the promotion of social justice, and the end of the single-party system. One of the slogans of this movement was "fighting against "hogra"". This Algerian expression referred to the sentiment of humiliation and socioeconomic exclusion felt by marginalized sections of the society.

These collective and spontaneous actions were characterised "by their simultaneity and a certain homogeneity". Consequently, the urban riots were no longer seen as a form of vandalism, but they began to be considered as a "social and political revolt of the young victims of the FLN-ANP state".⁸⁶

During the 1988 riots, the Islamist movement became an important mobilising force. They were able to speak to the people's frustration and to turn what had started as street protests led by young people into a full-scale campaign against the single-party system and the dominance of the military. On the third day of the demonstrations, the Islamist supporters held a march on 9 October 1988 that ended in carnage - with hundreds dead.

The regime was under an increasing pressure and appeared to be obliged to make some concessions to the unique far-reaching protest movement that gathered liberals and Islamists.

Algeria's short-lived democratic transition

In order to save the regime, President Chadli Bendjedid was forced to respond to the growing unrest with liberal measures. In 1989, President Bendjedid fired many senior officials and appointed reformist and former war veteran Mouloud Hamrouche Prime Minister. His mission was to lead the liberal transition.

The political transition, which took place from 1988 to 1991 in Algeria, was the first democratic transition in the Arab world.⁸⁷ Contrary to the Arab Spring of 2011, this transition was a top-down process as it was conducted by the ruling elite. On 10 October 1988, President Bendjedid gave a speech announcing that the constitution would be reformed.⁸⁸

Bendjedid administration initiated a transition to a multi-party system, putting an end to 25 years of a single-party system. It promulgated a new constitution that allowed the creation and participation of competitive political associations.

As a result, political parties and independent media mushroomed across the country. Dozens of independent newspapers were created. In the meantime, roughly thirty political movements, ranging from communist through social democrat to Islamist, which were willing to return to more traditional values, were legalised or founded. For instance, the *Front des forces socialistes* (Socialist Forces Front, FFS), Algeria's oldest opposition party, which was created in 1963 by veteran war Hocine Ait Ahmed, was legalised. Ali Belhadj, a young militant and charismatic speaker in the mosques, and Abassi Madani cofounded the *Front islamique du salut* (Islamic Front for Salvation, FIS) in 1989. Many considered Madani to represent the moderate side of the FIS, while Belhadj represented the more radical side one. Salafi scholars, including Hassan al-Banna, the founder of the Egyptian Muslim Brotherhood,

⁸⁵ Idem.

⁸⁶ Idem.

⁸⁷ Labat, 2011, p. 175

⁸⁸ Idem.

considerably influenced Belhadj. The government legalised the FIS, despite a constitutional provision that made a party based on religion of questionable legality.

President Bendjedid built the liberal transition with the hope of preserving the FLN's long-lasting dominance over Algeria's political scene. But his hope was soon quashed by the electoral result in Algeria's first democratic elections. In local election, held in June 1990, the FIS won 54 percent of the seats whereas the FLN obtained a mere 28 percent.⁸⁹ The FIS won in three of the country's most important cities, Algiers, Constantine and Oran.

The **FIS** headed by Abassi Madani, which brought together a broad coalition of radical Islamists, war veterans against the Soviets in Afghanistan, students, urban businessmen and unemployed people as well, emerged as the FLN's biggest rival.

In order to win a surprising victory at the local election, the FIS managed to capitalise on the population's disillusionment with the FLN-led government's vacillating socialist programme. The discourse of the Islamist groups pointed to the regime's incapacity to tackle the declining oil prices crisis, criticising the drastic austerity measures. The FIS propaganda focused on a critique of socialism, described as a Western ideology, opposed to an authentic Algerian identity centred on Islam.

1992-1999: Algeria's civil war

1992 military push

Algeria's democratic experience did not last long. While the FIS was on the verge of winning Algeria's parliamentary elections, the FLN-led government tried to increase its chance of winning the election by reforming the electoral code in 1991. Instead of proportional representation, the government opted for a winner-take-all formula for the parliamentary election in 1991. This electoral rule (two-round majority winner-take-all) tended to magnify the weight of the largest party.

That reform worsened the atmosphere and led to further demonstrations and strikes of FIS supporters. Abbassi Madani and charismatic and fiery preacher Belhadj were arrested on 22 July 1991, along with eight other top leaders of the FIS. Their arrest was the result of their call in May 1991 for protesting the new election law that they said was intended to put them at a disadvantage. They all were charged with conspiracy to overthrow the government. Nearly 5 000 adherents of the party were also arrested in Algiers, Oran, Constantine, and other major cities.⁹⁰

While Algerians were heading to the country's first multi-party parliamentary election, tensions between the regime and the Islamist movement run high. Few days before the vote, a military checkpoint in Guemar, in southern Algeria, were attacked by an Islamist commando. A dozen of young soldiers were killed during this attack, which occurred on 27 November 1991.⁹¹

When the result of the first round of Algeria's first multi-party parliamentary election in December 1991 showed that the FIS came very close to win an absolute majority, obtaining 47 percent of the votes, which represented 188 out of 230 contested seats, and received twice as many votes as the FLN, the FLN-led government found itself in an unprecedented crisis.⁹²

⁸⁹ Shabafrouz, 2010, p. 10

⁹⁰ New York Times, 26 July 1991

⁹¹ Labat, 2011, p. 177

⁹² International Crisis Group (ICG), 2004, p. 4

The second round was scheduled on 16 January 1992 but it never took place. Backed by the military, the government swiftly put an end to the democratic transition, by taking a series of radical decisions. On 4 January, a presidential decree dissolved the National People's Assembly and President Bendjedid announced his resignation on 11 January.

Behind all those decisions, there was a group of incumbent, powerful, and very influential army generals. This group was composed by Major General Khaled Nezzar, who was the Minister of Defence at the time of the coup, General Larbi Belkheir, the then-Minister of Interior, Major General Mohamed Lamari, who was the Commander of the Land Forces at that time and would become Chief of Staff from 1993 to 2004, Mohamed Médiène, alias Toufik, Head of the Intelligence agency (DRS) from 1988 until 2015, General Smaïn Lamari, Head of the Counterintelligence agency (*Direction du contre-espionnage*, DCE), and Major General Mohamed Touati.⁹³

After a short democratic experience, the military regime re-imposed its authoritarian rule. On 14 January, the High Council of State (Haut Conseil d'Etat, HCE) was created by the High Council of Security (Haut Conseil de Sécurité, HCS), an institution provided by the Constitution of 1976. It was composed of six members, mostly prestigious figures of the Algerian revolution, including veteran war Mohamed Boudiaf. They were appointed to collectively assume the role of the president until the end of Bendjedid's mandate in December 1993.

Shortly after being established, the Council suspended the Constitution and decided to cancel the second round of the parliamentary election, which was required since no party had won a majority in the first round. The HCE also sought to control all Islamic and non-Islamic opposition forces, banning the FIS from Algeria's political scene. It banned the FIS, using the high court to claim that the constitution prohibited political parties based on religion, race, or regional identity, in March 1992. The FIS has remained illegal since then.

The military elite feared a strategic alliance between the remaining leaders of the FIS and the segment of the FLN, which endorsed disgraced former president Chadli Bendjedid. This alliance would have marginalised the army from the political process. Consequently, the military regime undertook a campaign of repression and elimination of FIS' supporters. They humiliated them by different means, forced them to shave off their beard, and even tortured some of them. Many people suspected of being FIS' activists were arrested and tried by military courts, receiving severe sentences. The repression was total, with soldiers seizing newspapers, townships, radio and television, and mosques thought to be controlled by the FIS.

Additionally, the HCE imposed a collection of measures restricting civil liberties, under a state of emergency that originally was decreed for one year but, eventually, had been implemented for 19 years. During the 1990s, from 10 000 up to 30 000 people were interned in nine camps in the Sahara, Algeria's remoted desert. Among them were elected FIS politicians, Islamist activists, suspected members or sympathizers of the party. Detention centres in Algeria's desert were known as *al-Muhtashadat* (concentration).⁹⁴

The liberal opposition criticised the military regime's authoritarian initiatives. Supporters of the military interventions justified it, saying that the FIS could not be trusted to uphold democratic principles because Islam and democracy are not compatible.

⁹³ Ashour, 2008, p. 10

⁹⁴ Ibid., p. 6

The military regime's reaction to a potential victory of an opposition group showed that it actually was not ready to lose its grip on power.

Main actors of the conflict

After this initial period of calm, following the interruption of the election process, a low-level insurgency began. The main body of the FIS was moderate. They were willing to consider reconciliation with the authorities if FIS members who had been imprisoned were set free and the party legalised. But the military government's repression radicalised some elements in the FIS and in the military.

While the FIS was dominating the Islamist movement until 1991, more radical splinter groups emerged after the interruption of the election process. These Islamist anti-regime groups, previously existent but dormant cells in wait for the election results, announced their intentions to militarily confront the FLN-led government.

The FIS and the other Islamist anti-regime groups had the same agenda: to establish an Islamic state in Algeria. However, they disagreed on the means to achieve it. The FIS believed in the establishment of an Islamic state through elections. For the FIS, violence was only intended to force the regime to reinstate the FIS as a legitimate and competitive political party. Unlike the FIS, most of the splinter groups believed that the only way to effectively annihilate the FLN and establish an Islamic state in Algeria was by force rather by democratic means.

The Algerian civil war cannot be depicted as an opposition between the regime and the FIS. The situation on the ground was much more complex. Four main Islamist armed groups led the insurgency against the military regime throughout the 1990s: the *Mouvement islamique armé* (Armed Islamic Movement, MIA), was the first Islamist group to opt for a military approach, and started using violence in the 1980s; the *Armée Islamique du Salut* (Islamic Salvation Army, AIS), was formed in 1992 under the leadership of Abdelkader Shabbouti, alias General Shabbouti, and was the FIS' military arm; the *Groupe Islamique Armé* (Armed Islamic Group, GIA) was founded in 1993 by Algerian who fought alongside the Taliban in Afghanistan against the Russian invasion in 1980s; and lastly the *Groupe Salafiste pour la Prédication et le Combat* (Salafist Group for Preaching and Combat, GSPC), which was created in 1998 by dissident fighters of the GIA and support from abroad.

They differed in their ideology and had competitive motives. The MIA and the AIS declared they were driven by the interruption of the elections in 1992. They aimed by military means to force the regime to bring the ex-FIS back into the political arena. The AIS believed that armed opposition to the regime was a last resort, a defensive tactic to create an Islamist state. It also believed that violence would not resolve the Algerian crisis. The AIS was inspired by the ideas of the Egyptian Muslim Brotherhood, a group that had renounced violence against the Egyptian regime since the 1970s.⁹⁵ Therefore throughout the civil war it attempted to negotiate a truce, first via the FIS political leadership and then via its own leadership.

By contrast, the GIA targeted not only government personnel, but also civilians, including women who refused to wear the Islamic veil, journalists, and foreigners. Eventually, they went to war against all the social groups that they considered were helping to ensure that the ruling elite stayed in power.

The GIA was an isolated group. It had very limited interactions with others actors of the conflict, mainly because of its excessively violent strategy.⁹⁶ By contrast, the AIS had developed interactions with a

⁹⁵ Ibid., p. 8

⁹⁶ Ibid., p. 2

variety of members of the Islamist movement, including non-violent and moderate Islamist factions. These interactions influenced somehow the AIS' position on not to use extreme violence.

The first cells of the AIS were established in western Algeria in 1993. In 1994, the AIS was mainly operating primarily in the west and the east of Algeria under the joint leadership of Ahmed Ben Aicha and Madani Mezrag respectively. Both figures were mid-ranking leaders in the FIS in 1991. Ben Aicha was an elected member of the parliament in Chlef district. He turned to armed action against the regime after the cancellation of the electoral process. Mezrag was a former activist in al-Nahda Movement, an Islamist party. In 1990, he was appointed the FIS representative in the Jijel province and a member of the FIS national committee for monitoring the elections. When the military coup happened in 1992, both emerged as leading figures able to organise the armed rebellion against the regime.⁹⁷

Detailed information on the armed militants is scarce. In 1992, Algerian Islamist fighters were estimated at 2 000. By 1993, the number of Islamist fighters reportedly grew to 22 000, peaking at 40 000 in 1994.⁹⁸

Young, marginalised, and angry Algerians were a potential reservoir for the Islamist armed groups. The Islamist armed groups managed to enlist young Algerians who felt overall excluded from mainstream society and the country's political life, among who unemployed people and *trabendists* (smugglers). Those people entered in 1988 in Algeria's political arena, adopting from the beginning an anti-state and anti-establishment rhetoric.⁹⁹

The GIA was principally composed of young Algerians, aged from 16 to 25 year-old. Many of them were on the front line to protest against social, economic, and political exclusion, during the 1988 riots. The GIA enrolled the poorest, most marginalized, and less educated members of the FIS, whereas the AIS essentially recruited former FIS' executives. Many of AIS' fighters graduated from Algerian universities.

¹⁰⁰

Many young Algerian who joined the GIA were looking for a "personal progress".¹⁰¹ Joining an armed groups was a way of gaining wealth and prestige in someone's community. As the war progressed, many GIA's local leaders became more interested in recasting social relationships in their zone in their own favour, rather than replacing the regime by an Islamic state.

In the regime's perspective, the decade-long conflict was a war against "Islamist terrorism", and its initiators were "Islamist terrorists". In September 1992, the Algerian government vaguely defined terrorism as "subversive activities".¹⁰² Three years later, in 1995, the Algerian penal code was amended, providing a more precise definition of terrorism. It said that terrorism is regarded as "any offence targeting state security, territorial integrity or stability or normal functioning of institutions by not only spreading panic or creating a climate of insecurity, but also by means of impeding the activities of public authorities".¹⁰³ It also condemned all forms of justification, encouragement, and financial support of terrorist attacks. However, the official definition of terrorism was so wide-ranging that it could be used against peaceful exercise of civil and political rights if the organisation was critical of the government.

⁹⁷ Ibid., p. 3

⁹⁸ Lilley, 2012

⁹⁹ Labat, 2003, p. 13

¹⁰⁰ Hasan, Hendriks, Janssen, Meijer, p. 78

¹⁰¹ Idem.

¹⁰² Legislative Decree no. 93-05 of April 1993

¹⁰³ Algerian Penal Code, Article 88 bis 3

Escalating violence

The FIS officially entered into the conflict against the FLN in September 1992, when it formed its armed wing, the AIS. Initially, Islamist fighters targeted both the security forces and state representatives. In summer 1993, AIS' fighters killed up to ten police officers each night. Most of the massacres of civilian people took place in urban areas, more specifically in districts that voted for FIS candidates in 1991 elections. The insurrection spread across the country, affecting several remoted mountainous regions, which were not easy to control for the state army, such as the Mount Chr ea, near Algiers, Kabylie, and Eastern Aur es.

In 1993, there was a major split within the Islamic insurgency, between the AIS and the GIA. The radical faction, the GIA considered too conciliatory. The GIA fighters expanded their terror campaign, beginning with systematic assassination of specific individuals, who publicly expressed their opposition to their cause. Workers' unionists, liberal political activists, secular intellectuals, journalists, women's group leaders, teachers, senior government figures as well as anyone who spoke out against the Islamists were subsequently targeted by terrorist attack.

By October 1993, the GIA extended its list of vulnerable targets to all foreigners and non-Muslims. It issued a warning to call foreigners to leave the country otherwise they would be killed. As a show of its ability to defy the government, it kidnapped – and subsequently released – the Omani and Yemeni ambassadors in July 1994.

The GIA and to a lesser extend the AIS took the initiative to attack economic targets, from spring 1994. They would loot everything, arson factories and warehouses, sabotage roads, railway tracks and electric networks. They also managed to divert planes and trains, to rob banks and even to temporarily seize control of some villages. At some point, some parts of the national territory had become no-go zones for most citizens. At the same time, Islamist groups benefited from large recruitment capacity. Near 500 young men – and some young women – were enrolled each week.

The year 1994 was a watershed moment in the decade-long conflict. Indeed, the Algerian civil war transitioned from an atmosphere of resistance of the Islamist supporters to the military regime to one where terror increasingly set in. Until that year, the population was relatively spared from the urban-based terror orchestrated by the Islamist fighters. But, by 1994, the Islamist fighters moved toward a "total war". They opted for a scorched earth policy, killing indiscriminately an increasing number of civilians. These massacres stood out by their cruelty: throat slitting, mutilations, dismemberment etc. Children and new-borns were among the victims of the massacre.

Most fighting was done at night. Islamist fighters were anonymous urban residents during the day. Security forces, which fought at night against Islamist fighters, rounded up suspects during the day. One strategy was to infiltrate the Islamist groups by disguising as an Islamist rebel.

In the areas under the control of Islamist armed groups, the so-called "free zones", rigorous Islamic rules were implemented: the sale of cigarettes and pro-government newspapers were prohibited, music lessons in school (and in some places French lessons as well) were cancelled, some hairdressing salons were closed by force, and the use of satellite dish was controlled. Women were forced to wear the Islamic veil and dress modestly.¹⁰⁴

In 1994, the GIA forbade the Algerian population from sending the children to school. Most of the families continued to accompany their children to school.¹⁰⁵ The GIA ordered the population to not

¹⁰⁴ Labat, 2003, p. 13

¹⁰⁵ Labat, Taussig, 2004, p. 117

vote as it considered the election *kufr* (impious) and threatened to death any voter.¹⁰⁶ In 1995, at the presidential election, millions of Algerian citizens defied GIA's order and casted a ballot. In 1996, GIA released a fatwa condemning all the Algerian people *kafir* (impious).¹⁰⁷ In consequence of GIA's radicalisation, the Islamist fighters started to lose the supporter of Algerian people who stood against the regime and endorsed the FIS.¹⁰⁸

In 1996, the Islamist fighters' bombing campaign reached a peak. Hundreds of people were victims of bomb attacks on buses, markets and trains. During that period, hundreds of schools buildings, factories, shops, administrative buildings etc. were bombed by Islamist fighters. Many roads going to villages were controlled by Islamist fighters, establishing *faux barrages* (roadblocks). They could stop any bus or car transporting passengers for hours and liquidated some or all of them. They kidnapped young girls and women, forcing them to serves as cooks and cleaners in their forest camps. They were exploited as sex servant.

In this context of terror, everyday life became a great achievement for the civilian population. The Algerian hide inside their home, only leaving it when they had to work, go shopping or at rare occasions. Parents could not send their children to schools for months because either they did not how to bring them there or because they were afraid a terrorist attack would take place on the way or at school. The Algerians were living under nightly curfews, instituted in December 1992 and not lifted until 1995. At that period, anyone who was found on the street after the sunset was subject to arrest.

This atmosphere of terror forced many Algerian families to flee their homes to supposedly safer locations. Those who could not leave or did not want to abandon their houses found themselves in even greater isolation.

Young men caught between both sides. Islamist fighters urged conscripted young men to join them, threatening death to those who served in the army. Meanwhile, the army threatened young men, whose identity papers did not show correct military service. Those were subject to arrest.

When the conflict took an international scope, with the killings of foreign residents, the hijacking of an Air France airbus in December 1995 and a series of bombing in the Parisian metro in 1996, Algeria became increasingly isolated. Embassies in Algiers began to close their doors and some foreign airlines avoided Algerian airports.

The period between 1997 and 1998 were marked by gruesome collective massacres of civilian population in rural and isolated villages of *Mitidja*, the fertile plains that surround Algiers, such as in Bentalha, Sidi Youcef, and Sidi-Hamed. These towns were not entirely remoted as military barracks and gendarmes' offices were close by. This proximity raised the question of the responsibility of the military, therefore of the regime, in these series of massacres. The army was accused of failing to protect the civil population, living in these villages and towns.¹⁰⁹

Those massacres took place at night in small towns. Each incident left tens of hundreds of people dead. In some localities, the entire communities of 50 to 500 inhabitants were slaughtered. These massacres were mostly attributed to the GIA. These mass killings were intended to terrorise the Algerian people who were hostile to the Islamists or those who were no longer supporting the Islamist armed groups.

¹⁰⁶ Labat, 2011, p. 178

¹⁰⁷ Idem.

¹⁰⁸ Idem.

¹⁰⁹ Martinez, 2001, p. 49

Counter-terrorism struggle

The regime adopted both a hard and soft approach to militarily defeat the Islamist insurrection.

Since the assassination of President Boudiaf, two wings had emerged in the Algerian power structure: on one hand, those who wanted a brutal suppression of the Islamist movement, the so-called “eradicators” (*éradicateurs*); on the other hand, those who believed in the virtue of a peaceful dialogue with political Islam, the so-called “conciliators” (*conciliateurs*).¹¹⁰

The eradicators group was more powerful in the army’s hierarchy, and determined for the large part the regime’s security strategy throughout the civil war. In October 1994, President Liamine Zeroual called upon the security forces for a “total eradication” of the Islamist armed groups.¹¹¹

From 1992 until 1997, the Algerian regime implemented a “total security strategy” against the armed Islamist groups, which consisted in militarily exterminating the fighters.¹¹² That military strategy was based on the slogan: “Making the fear change sides” (*La peur doit changer de camp*).¹¹³ The government rapidly unified the military and the security services under a single command. Major General Mohamed Lamari, appointed chief of staff of the state army in 1993, was leading the counter-terrorism offensive. He was in charge of waging “total war” against the Islamist armed groups, with the assistance of DRS.¹¹⁴

To engage in a counter-terrorism struggle, the Algerian army recruited men and bought military equipment. Initially, the counter-terrorism offensive was carried out by 20 000 soldiers and 25 000 gendarmes. By 1997, they were up to 80 000 soldiers, backed by 80 000 gendarmes.¹¹⁵ Meanwhile, the army modernised its information gathering systems, relying extensively on computer datasets. To run these systems, the army recruited from college graduates.

The government’s response to the Islamist insurgency was brutal. The security forces regularly used waterboarding-like water torture, sexual abuse and beatings, and electrocution as interrogation techniques against suspected Islamist fighters.

The strategy of the army aimed at gaining control of the cities, uprooting the Islamist fighters from their supportive environment and then driving them into the *maquis* of the interior. The army surrounded the suburbs, which were controlled by the Islamist fighters, and transformed them into “Islamist ghettos”. The government also established thousands of checkpoints across the territory. The military hoped that the Islamists would lose the support of the local population because of the worsening situation and ongoing violence.

Because many rebel groups operated in the remote *maquis* where intelligence-gathering was difficult, the Algerian security forces sought to infiltrate armed Islamic groups in an effort to neutralise and control them as part of its counter-terrorism struggle. In 1994, Major General Lamari instructed the DRS agents to start infiltrating the armed Islamist groups. Thus, some violence attributed to Islamist fighters was likely committed with the state involvement. Indeed, while the GIA took responsibility for some of the mass murderers, some associations of victims, opposition figures, former intelligence officers, and diplomats have accused the regime of being directly or indirectly responsible for others.¹¹⁶

¹¹⁰ Hasan, Hendriks, Janssen, Meijer, 2012, p. 79

¹¹¹ Idem.

¹¹² Lounnas, 2013, p. 148

¹¹³ Hasan, Hendriks, Janssen, Meijer, 2012, p. 80

¹¹⁴ Ibid., p. 79

¹¹⁵ Martinez, 2001 p. 47

¹¹⁶ Ashour, 2008, p. 6

Using another counter-insurgency tactic, the minister of Interior set up state-armed paramilitary militias, composed of civilians. From 1994, the military privatized the war by arming 200 000 civilians as “Patriots” or “self-defence groups”.¹¹⁷ There were more than 5 000 civilian self-defence units, in 1998.¹¹⁸

The militias were slowly constituted from March 1994, under the command of the gendarmerie and the involvement of former *mujahidin* (veteran of the war for independence). The mission of these militias was to protect villages and their populations from incursions of Islamist fighters. These militias went beyond that mission and became a back-up to the army. Many among the militias were recruited full-time with high revenues (clearly above the minimum wage).

These groups demonstrated their efficient contribution on the ground through intelligence gathering, early warning, and prompt actions against terrorist groups trying to commit criminal acts in their area or only transiting or wishing to deploy. The enrolment of the population in the security deployment played a decisive role in the regime’s counter-terrorism offensive.

The involvement of pro-government militias and the militarisation of a part of the civil society contributed to the escalating level of violence in the conflict. The regime was either unable or unwilling to control the behaviour of the self-defence groups.

1993 and 1994 were the hardest years for the army, but it regained ground from 1995. The army managed to push the Islamist fighters out of the capital and most important cities. From 1995, the state army managed to clear the zones surrounding sensitive targets. The Islamist fighters were no longer capable of attacking any important economic and military installations.

In parallel of its military strategy, the regime implemented a soft approach by encouraging the repentant Islamist fighters to speak out publicly. Their testimonies were broadcast on state-owned television at peak hours. Their confessions helped the security forces to gain the sympathy of the population and discredit the Islamist fighters as they described (or were forced to describe) their war against the state as “hell”.¹¹⁹

The young population, which was a potential reservoir for the Islamist groups, were at the core of the regime’s economic policy during the conflict. The regime implemented a series of persuasive measures and patronage towards the youth, ranging from job offer in the public sector, to bonuses and assistance in building a house, and free-interest loans for young entrepreneurs as well.¹²⁰ All this aimed at dissuading the youth from joining the Islamist armed groups.

During the civil war, the Algerian ruling elite deliberately preserved the multi-party system, and held regular elections as to maintain a façade of democracy in spite of the violence. In theory, all political parties were allowed to compete in elections as Algeria adopted a multi-party system in 1989. But, in practice, only moderate parties were free to campaign. Indeed, the regime allowed only some Islamist parties to participate in the elections. By doing so, it intended to restore the people’s confidence on the country’s institutions. Yet, the results never challenged the political status quo in favour of pro-regime parties, notably the FLN.

¹¹⁷ Martinez, 2001, p. 47

¹¹⁸ New York Times, 22 January 1998

¹¹⁹ Hasan, Hendriks, Janssen, Meijer, 2012, p. 81

¹²⁰ *Ibid.*, p. 109

SECTION THREE. Transitional and societal factors

The massacres of civilians ceased only after the September 1998 resignation of President General Liamine Zeroual (he resigned in September 1998 but stayed in power until April 1999). But peace talks were conducted by the military early 1995. The end of Algeria's civil war was a combination of a military victory and a negotiated peace process between the army and the Islamist groups.

The democratic process, initiated in 1989, has remained underway. Some of the liberal reforms taken in late 1980s were maintained during and after the civil war. Since the outset of the conflict, the Algerian regime went from being "outright authoritarian to a hybrid mix of authoritarian and democratic".¹²¹ Thus, the regime has allowed opposition groups and civil society organisations a certain amount of space for contestation. But many of these organisations have been co-opted, demonized, marginalized, and repressed.¹²²

Algeria's political scene has become more complex, with new political actors emerging. When political Islamism emerged in Algeria, it emerged as a strong bloc challenging the political elite. Since the ban on the FIS of the country's political scene, the political Islamist movement has split into multiple parties. Some Islamist factions are still challenging the regime while others have joined the presidential coalition. Yet, Algeria's political arena remained unceasingly dominated by pro-regime, while the political opposition is still deeply fragmented.

Peace process

Getting to the table

Direct negotiations between the army and the radical groups began as early as in 1993. The military force was the first institution of the Algerian state to try to negotiate with Islamist armed groups. At the beginning, only the army's high commanders and the FIS' armed wing, the AIS representatives, were at the negotiating table. Political elite, civilians, victims, other Islamist armed groups, and international peace consultants as well were excluded from the budding peace talks.

Before 1995 and the *Rahma* Law, there were three previous attempts on behalf of the regime to negotiate a peaceful resolution to the civil war. These three attempts took place in 1993, 1994, and in 1995. All were negotiated by the political leader of the FIS, rather than its military commanders.¹²³ None of these attempts of dialogue was successful.

In 1993, several informal meetings took place between the government and imprisoned FIS leaders to convince the FIS to dissociate itself from the armed factions. This attempt failed as the FIS leaders demanded that the cancellation of the election result should first be revoked.¹²⁴ In summer 1994, when the GIA's terror on the security forces and the civilian population escalated, the regime tried to find a compromise with the AIS. But this second attempt failed as well, when the army found letters between AIS leaders and their GIA fellows.¹²⁵ The third attempt occurred in Rome where representatives of the FLN, the FIS, and other pro-democracy opposition leaders met under the tutelage of the Catholic

¹²¹ Ghanem-Yazbeck, 2018

¹²² Idem.

¹²³ Ashour, 2008, p. 2

¹²⁴ Hasan, Hendriks, Janssen, Meijer, 2012, p. 82

¹²⁵ Idem.

community Sant'Egidio. The meeting led to the establishment of a Platform for Peaceful Political Solution to the Algerian crisis in January 1995. However, the Algerian army rejected the initiative out of hand, accusing the FIS of not renouncing its ambition to establish an Islamic state in Algeria.¹²⁶

Liamine Zeroual, a former high command of Algeria's state army and minister of Defence who became president in January 1994 after the dissolution of the High Council of State, tried to reach a political deal with the FIS in October of that same year. Zeroual's administration issued the *Rahma* (clemency) Law in 1995. The *Rahma* Law stipulated that Islamist fighters, who laid down their arms, would be granted clemency (and not amnesty) as long as they were not involved in blood crimes, permanent injuries, or destruction of public property and assets. Those involved in blood crimes would have their death penalty reduced to between fifteen and twenty years in jail, and all other prisoners would have their sentences halved. The main goal of this law was not to end the conflict but rather to create large numbers of desertions within the Islamist factions, ultimately weakening the Islamist rebellion. The *Rahma* Law was not significantly effective as the conflict between the army and the Islamist fighters continued and even intensified.

The de-radicalisation and truce process was resumed in 1997, at the height of the conflict. That time, the AIS took over the negotiation process and relegated the FIS' political leaders to a mere advisory role.

These peace talks were a bottom-up process. Without requesting the authorisation from the political leadership of the FIS, the AIS leaders sent a message to several mid-ranking officers in the military fifth zone (eastern Algeria), many of whom had blood ties with several AIS commanders from the eastern areas (mainly from Jijel province). The contacts between them became increasingly frequent. The AIS' commanders of the eastern region then came into contact with the state's army commanders of the fifth zone. That came wittingly to the attention of the military top-ranking commanders in Algiers.¹²⁷

In 1997, Major General Lamari, head of the security and intelligence department (DRS), visited the headquarters of the AIS in Jijel's Beni Khattab mountains where he met Madani Mezrag, AIS' chief.¹²⁸ With the FIS considerably weakened, negotiations led to an unconditional, unilateral ceasefire on 21 September 1997. The details of the agreement have never been made public, but Mezrag issued a communiqué ordering all insurgents under his command to stop fighting from 1 October 1997 and urging other Islamist armed groups to do the same. An estimated 3 000 militants obeyed the order, including many from the GIA, who were not under Mezrag's command. But many more armed militants refused to comply, demonstrating that the FIS leadership had little control on the Islamist insurgency.

There are several factors that explained why the dismantlement of the AIS was relatively successful. First of all, the AIS was less radicalised than other Islamist armed groups, such as GIA. It was able to interact with other armed organisations, FIS factions, moderate Islamist leaders, and political parties. The massacres of civilians in 1997 had also an impact on the AIS' decision to agree to disarm and dismantle. Indeed, the AIS could no longer protect neither the families of its members nor the FIS supporters, especially in central Algeria. For instance, in Bentalha, a small town in southern Algiers, whose residents massively voted for the FIS in 1991, 417 civilians were killed in one night (between 22 and 23 September 1997). Many of those victims were relatives of the AIS members.¹²⁹ They were allegedly killed by the GIA. By declaring a unilateral ceasefire, the AIS leadership were aiming to send

¹²⁶ *Idem*.

¹²⁷ Ashour, 2008, p. 3

¹²⁸ *Ibid.*, p. 3

¹²⁹ *Ibid.*, p. 7

a message to the rest of the population that they were not behind those slaughters, and that they were putting down arms to “expose whoever is behind them”.¹³⁰

In 1999, the regime moved from an “eradicator” to a “conciliatory” approach. While “eradicator” line in the army had the upper hand, particularly in the first years of the civil war, Abdelaziz Bouteflika’s victory at the presidential election marked a turning point in the conflict.

Algeria’s peace process seriously began with the election of Abdelaziz Bouteflika. The presidential election campaign of April 1999 offered the prospect of real reconciliation between all Islamists fighters and the military authorities. This election was even called “the real start of a political solution” by FIS leaders in exile.¹³¹ Bouteflika’s ultimate objective was to end the civil war by initiating a policy of national reconciliation and defining acceptable conditions for the reintegration of Islamists who were willing to lay down their arms.

Abdelaziz Bouteflika belongs to the old-guard of Algeria’s politics. He is a veteran war and was a close ally of Houari Boumediene. Bouteflika was appointed minister of Foreign Affairs at 26, becoming the world’s youngest head of a similar department. He prematurely left Algeria’s political life in early 1980s amid corruption charges. He was convicted for embezzling over than \$23 million from Algeria’s embassies. For his defence, he claimed that the money was “reserved” to build a new building for his ministry. Although he was granted amnesty, Bouteflika left Algeria and spent a luxury exile, between Switzerland and the Arab Gulf, allegedly becoming a multimillionaire, between early 1980s and 1990s.

After two decades of exile, Abdelaziz Bouteflika returned to Algeria’s political scene in 1999 as the military’s preferred candidate.

The consensus that existed among the decision makers at Bouteflika’s accession to the presidency in April 1999 can be explained by the pressing need to break out of the devastating international “quarantine” that Algeria had been confined in by Western countries, because of the international repercussions of the civil war.¹³² Since the hijacking of the French Airbus at Algiers airport in December 1994, France was among the group of countries that isolated Algeria at the international stage. As former foreign minister, Bouteflika was seen as the ideal choice to convince Western countries that the Algerian state could be perceived once again as a legitimate partner. Barely three months after his election, Bouteflika reconnected with continental leader at the Organization of African Unity Summit, which was held in Algiers in July 1999. One year after his election, Bouteflika flew to Paris where he made a “flamboyant” state visit, in May 2000.¹³³

With the sensational collective decision of the six other candidates to withdraw from the presidential race, Bouteflika was seen as a “president by default”.¹³⁴ From the army commanders’ perspective, this was the ideal result: the candidate they preferred won, and he was so “badly elected” that he could benefit no legitimacy. In short, the 1999 presidential election was presumed to pose no threat to the military’s domination of the country’s political scene.¹³⁵

During the campaign, Bouteflika put the national reconciliation at the core of his political program. His main electoral promise was to restore a much needed civil peace in Algeria and to open a new chapter in the country’s history.

¹³⁰ Ibid., p. 8

¹³¹ Sour, 2015, p. 31

¹³² Roberts, 2007, p. 12

¹³³ Ibid., p. 13

¹³⁴ Ibid., p. 11

¹³⁵ Idem.

While campaigning for the first presidential election since the civil war, Bouteflika declared that he was willing to reach an agreement with the Islamist factions so as to bring peace and stability back to the North-African country. He claimed during a meeting: "I am determined to make peace and I am prepared to die for it".¹³⁶

With such promises, Bouteflika rapidly became popular. Indeed, the population was deeply traumatized by the atrocities committed during the civil strife and aspired to live in peace. But, in the end, his electoral appeal was not tested. He was the sole candidate running for presidency as the six others pulled out on the basis that the ballots were rigged. Therefore, the army's preferred candidate was elected President for the first time in April 1999, having secured 74 percent of the votes, according to official results.

One of President Bouteflika's proposals was to offer amnesty to some of the Islamist combatants. This position split the army, some opposed the measure while others supported it. Bouteflika faced a great resistance. He had to replace six senior general officer to push the amnesty program forward.¹³⁷

Bouteflika discharged two other senior generals: Mohamed Lamari, a significant player in the decision to cancel the 1992 elections and head of the army (1993-2004), and Larbi Belkheir, head of the presidential office. This move could be interpreted as a strategy to curb the influence of the military force on Algeria's political life.

The main clauses of the agreement

The peace agreement focused on restoring peace by offering amnesty to the perpetrators, who agreed to repent. It benefited to the Islamist fighters and the security agents conducting the regime's counter-offensive. During the first years of the peace process, some groups of victims and their families were left out. Reparation for all victims of the conflict had not been the top priority of Algeria's peace process. The government addressed all victims' complaint only under the pressure of a large grassroots movement, composed of different groups of victims.

Algeria's agreement between the politico-military elite and the Islamist fighters took the form of a national stabilization plan. The agreement included measures to end state prosecution against Islamist fighters, reduce or commute sentences for Islamist condemned and not eligible to release, and to condemn individuals who committed rapes, set off explosives in public places, or carried out assassinations.

Concerning the state agents responsible for forced disappearances, torture and other civil rights abuses, the Charter for peace and national reconciliation offered them amnesty as well. By protecting them from any prosecution, the military regime was trying to move away from any accountability.

The transitional justice model promoted by President Bouteflika was an exclusive top-down process. It appears that the Algeria's peace agreement first served the interests of the military forces and was used as an instrument to restore the political status quo that has prevailed in Algeria since the independence. The fact that the peace deal does not recognize the responsibility of the state in the conflict but only the responsibility in failing to guarantee the security of all citizen during that time, and does not allow any investigation on the crimes committed by both sides (the Islamist armed groups and the security forces) showed that the authorities' main objective was self-preservation.

¹³⁶ Sour, 2015, p. 31

¹³⁷ Sorenson, 2007

Political transition

The preservation of the political status quo?

Introduced in 1989, the system of political pluralism was maintained throughout the 1990s. It has remained in being since then. Formally contested elections have been held at regular intervals since the beginning of the civil war: in 1995, 1999, 2004, 2009, and 2014 for presidency; in 1997, 2002, 2007, 2012, and 2017 for regional and municipal assemblies, and parliamentary elections.

While the country was under the hegemonic dominance of the FLN-ANP leadership from the independence until late 1980s, the political scene has become increasingly more complex than it used to be before the civil war interrupted in 1992. Today, the Algerian society has appeared to be divided into at least four sizeable political blocs, each with a somewhat different ideology and agenda. There is a nationalist group, made up of officials, state workers, and rural voters, that reliably has voted for the FLN or other pro-regime parties over the past two decades. There is a Berber-dominated group that has challenged the state's hegemonic official narrative and campaigned for the plurality of the Algerian identity. There is a scattered bloc of democrats and liberals. Finally, there is still an Islamist movement. But, since the ban on the FIS, it has been divided between those who agree to join the government, therefore to collaborate with the ruling elite, and those who vow to remain in the opposition, and compete against the ruling elite with democratic and peaceful means.

Nonetheless, the distinction between pro-regime parties and opposition parties has increasingly become unclear. Some political forces, which define themselves as oppositional, have yet joined the presidential alliance, a coalition of parties which governed the country from 1997 to 2002, or endorsed the government's policy, therefore contributed to Algeria's ongoing political status quo. For instance, the Workers' Party (*Parti des Travailleurs*, PT) of Louisa Hanoune, the first female candidate at a presidential election in 2004, has rarely stood against Bouteflika's decisions while refusing to join the presidential alliance. The Algerian Popular Movement (*Mouvement populaire algérien*, MPA), which is ideologically affiliated to the democrats bloc, has endorsed the government and campaigned for Bouteflika's re-election in 2014. One of its founder Amara Benyounes, a former deputy of the RCD, served as Minister of Health (1999), Minister of Environmental Affairs (from 2012 to 2013), Minister of Industry (2013 to 2014), and Minister of Commerce (2014 to 2015).

Since the outset of the civil war, the composition and dynamics of the Algerian political elite has slightly changed. Since the end of the single party system in 1989, the Algerian political elite is composed at least of three different and inter-related circles of influence. The inner circle comprises the prime decision makers, and includes the president, persons close to the president such as his brother (Saïd Bouteflika), the head of the DRS, and a group of generals. The second circle comprises those with substantial advisory. They can generally be described as "clients" of the first circle. The second circle includes some members of the business elite – such as Ali Haddad, president of the FCE (*Forum des chefs d'entreprises*), Algeria's most powerful business union –, incumbent and former prime ministers and ministers, the leaders of pro-government parties (FLN, RND), and the head of some trade unions – such as Abdelmajid Sidi-Saïd, head of the General Union of Algerian Workers (*Union Générale des Travailleurs Algériens*, UGTA). Finally, the third circle includes those with limited advisory power and those with nuisance power, such as leaders of independent trade unions, leaders of opposition party leaders.

Since the late 1990s, a generational change has been taking place within the political elite as Algeria has experienced a rejuvenation of its political life. Three generations have been represented in the country's institutions, since the end of the civil war: the generation of the revolution, who was born

before mid-1940s and fought against the French colonial system, the second generation, who was born before the Independence but was too young to fight against the French colonial system, and the third generation, who was born after the Independence. By the end of Bouteflika's first term, in 2004, the third generation was moving into higher positions in the third circle of influence, and even made its way into the second circle. Partly, the fact that the revolutionary generation has progressively lost its numerical dominance was the result of a deliberate strategy of rejuvenation. A main campaign topic of the FLN in the 2002 parliamentary election was the rejuvenation (*rajeunissement*) of the historical party.¹³⁸

A new trend, which has recently emerged in Algeria's politics, is the increasing representation of women. The parliament approved gender quotas in 2012, preserving 30 percent of the seats to women (same quota for local institutions). Thus, Algeria has become Maghreb's champion of women participation in the political life, doing better than the neighbouring countries. Besides, women leaders are in charge of some of the most prevailing ministries such as the ministry of Education.

Even though Algeria has experienced a selective political liberalisation from late 1980s, it did not develop a discernible democratisation dynamics.

None of the existing political parties in Algeria, even the most ostensibly democratic in ideology, is governed internally by democratic procedures. Competitions within the parties, even the most ostensibly democratic, are rare. Algerian parties, with few exception, have tended to be inspired by "traditional" social organisation, even if their organisation as defined by the statutes of the party did not substantially differ from democratic parties in Europe. They have been led by a prominent personality, who had (co)founded the party and whose re-election – if it had taken place at all – has never been seriously contested.

Moreover, the generation change is not challenging the long-lasting political status quo. Young members of the politically relevant elite stem almost exclusively from certain privileged layers of society that have an interest in maintaining their privileges, therefore preserving the political and economic status quo. In most of the cases, the new political actors have come either from a family that already had members within the political elite (descendent of a high FLN functionary, relative of a head of a state-owned company), from a revolutionary family (*famille révolutionnaire*), from colonial and pre-colonial mercantile elites or tribal notables, or from religious "nobility", whether marabouts families or founders of zaouïas.¹³⁹ With these reproduction mechanisms of the elite, non-privileged social groups have remained marginalised.

Although the number of contesting political actors has significantly increased, no strong alternative has been able to emerge. Despite increasing pressure from contesting actors, the regime has not been forced to negotiate a new deal, including more democratic rules, since the late 1980s. One of the principal reasons of the lack of an alternative to the status quo is the fragmentation of the opposition. The societal cleavages based on regionalism, ethnicity or language, competitive outlooks on strategic issues, and the lack of a strong leadership have prevented the emergence of a broad, coherent, and sustainable alliance of contesting actors. Indeed, there is no single political figure or party around whom contesting actors would rally. Opposition forces formed a large coalition when they collectively called for the boycott of the 2014 presidential election, contesting Bouteflika the right to run for a fourth consecutive term given his fragile health. After Bouteflika re-election, the coalition continued to work together on a platform from which an alternative project would come out. Eventually, the coalition broke down less than two years after its creation. Since then, the opposition parties have not try to collaborate again.

¹³⁸ Werenfels, 2009, p. 182

¹³⁹ Ibid., p.186

The co-optation strategy implemented by the regime towards some opposition parties, notably the Islamist factions, has prevented them from emerging as a coherent and powerful political alternative. While the country was plunging into a civil war, the regime has begun to exploit the divergences within the Islamism movement. Indeed, some of the former FIS' officials temporarily step away from politics whereas others joined moderate Islamist parties, which resisted to the FIS' call for jihad, such as Ennahda or Hamas, today known as Movement for Society and Peace (*Mouvement pour la société et la paix*, MSP). The latest has emerged as Algeria's main Islamist party.

During the civil war, the regime began to use a strategy of co-optation towards the moderate Islamist parties. Because Islam is an importation component of Algerian society, the regime needed to show to the Algerian people that Islamist parties still had a place in the political arena, and the MSP was the "ideal tool" with which to do that.¹⁴⁰

In 1995, the moderate Islamist parties responded to the regime's call for the relaunch of the democratic process and took part in the presidential election. MSP's candidate, Mahfoud Nahnah, finished in second place, right after the army's candidate, Liamine Zeroual. Following the parliamentary election, which were held in 1996, moderate Islamist parties agreed to take part to the decision-making process, therefore to collaborate with pro-regime parties. For the first time in post-independence Algeria, Islamist leaders were appointed ministers. The government, head by Prime Minister Ahmed Ouyahia, was composed of 8 Islamist ministers, including Aboudjerra Soltani, Nahnah's right-hand man, who served as junior Minister at the Department of Agriculture.

Over time, as a result of rapprochement between moderate Islamist and pro-regime factions, the Islamists have joined several coalition governments and clinched a number of parliamentary seats and ministerial portfolios. Thus, some moderate Islamist leaders served as Minister of Industry (Soltani) and Minister of public works (Ahmed Ghoul). Moderate Islamist parties also supported the transitional justice process instigated by the regime. In September 1999, they said "yes" to the referendum for the ratification of the Concord Civil.

That co-optation strategy has aimed at undermining moderate Islamist parties, which could have emerged as a "replacement for the FIS" and a significant and powerful alternative to the status quo. But today, Islamist parties, which compromised with the regime, are seen as a "tool of the state, not a real opposition force or a true Islamist party". They also have "lost [their] capacity to mobilize voters".¹⁴¹ The divisions among Algerian Islamists and the rapprochement of some moderate Islamist factions with the regime mean that, unlike neighbouring Tunisia and Morocco, "their chances of electoral success are limited".¹⁴²

Despite the introduction and the preservation of the multi-party system, pro-regime parties have still overwhelmingly dominated the country's political life. In Algeria's post-civil war, two key political parties have been the primary forces in the country's electoral politics: FLN and the RND, which was founded in 1997 by then-Prime Minister Ahmed Ouyahia, has retained a tight grip on parliament. Both of these parties endorse the government policies, and safeguard the loyalty of local political figures to help to win elections. In exchange, these parties have been able to secure political and administrative positions.¹⁴³

¹⁴⁰ Ghanem-Yazbeck, 2015

¹⁴¹ Idem.

¹⁴² Fabiani, 2017

¹⁴³ Ghanem-Yazbeck, 2018

Alternately, they have won all the elections that have taken place since the eruption of the civil war. In the 2017 parliamentary election, they gained a comfortable majority, with the FLN securing 161 seats and the RND 100 out of 462 seats.¹⁴⁴

However, their electoral victories have been marked by recurring allegations of voting fraud. Indeed, the opposition parties complain of the ruling elite's use of public means to campaign (state-owned offices and vehicles, public funds etc.) and its strategy to rig any election.¹⁴⁵

Given the opacity of the Algerian regime, we cannot describe with certainty the evolution of the balance of power between the military and the civil leaders. The question of who is actually ruling the country today is crucial, especially regarding Bouteflika's physical condition. Two competing theories on the relationship between President Bouteflika and the military have been developed since 1999. Some considered that President Bouteflika has been the regime's democratic façade while others are convinced that Bouteflika is actually in charge, despite his fragile health.

Some scholars of the Algerian history and politics believed that Bouteflika has managed to bring the army under control, at least provisionally and conditionally. According to Hugh Roberts, head of the department of history at the University of Tuft in the United States, who has a comprehensive knowledge of the Algerian history, Bouteflika's first moves, when he came to power in 1999, aimed at re-establishing the presidency power, in place of the commanders of the *état-major*, which governed the country during the civil war.¹⁴⁶

But it was not until Bouteflika secured his re-election for a second consecutive term in April 2004 that the balance of power began to shift in favour of the presidency. For some scholars of the Algerian history and politics, Abdelaziz Bouteflika, who swore not to be a "three-quarter president", tried to restore the authority of the minister of Defence over the army's high commanders, therefore the authority of the presidency over the army, by initiating a major shake-up in key security positions.¹⁴⁷

In summer 2004, President Bouteflika was allegedly behind a purge of the top-military commanders, who ruled Algeria during the 1990s. Indeed, he issued a series of decrees removing several civilian associates and senior military officers from government and military positions. Those decrees appeared to target the group of "eradicators" especially. Officially, Major General Mohamed Lamari, chief of staff of the *état-major*, resigned for reasons of health. But, according to some scholars, Lamari was forced into retirement and replaced by "self-effacing" Major General Ahmed Gaïd Salah, who still serves as minister of Defence.¹⁴⁸

The military reshuffle that occurred in summer 2004 is also considered as a response of Bouteflika to the army's strategy during the presidential, which was held in April of that year. According to some scholars, Bouteflika, who was the army's handpicked candidate in 1999, presumably lost the confidence of the military, who endorsed his main opponent, former Prime Minister Ali Benflis.¹⁴⁹ Nonetheless, we cannot say with certainty if the duel between Bouteflika and Benflis was not, in reality, an "illusion".¹⁵⁰ The 2004 presidential could be as pre-determined as the previous ones.

More recently, Abdelaziz Bouteflika, Algeria's longest-serving president, took initiatives that raised question about the distribution of the power between the civilian and the military elite. In 2015,

¹⁴⁴ Radio Algérienne, 18 May 2017

¹⁴⁵ Ould Khettab, Al Jazeera, 2 July 2015

¹⁴⁶ Roberts, 2007, p. 2

¹⁴⁷ Darbouche, 2011, p. 150

¹⁴⁸ Roberts, 2007, p. 11

¹⁴⁹ Boubekeur, 2009

¹⁵⁰ Quandt, 2004, p. 90

Bouteflika was reportedly behind an attempt to reduce the influence of the army on the Algerian political life by ordering a purge of army' top commanders and the intelligence service.

In July, the heads of three groups responsible for securing his personal security was dismissed after an alleged lack of security at the presidential residence in Algiers. Bouteflika was reportedly fearing a "medical putsch", similar to the coup that toppled Tunisian President Habib Bourguiba in 1987.

In August, General Abdelkader Aït-Ouarabi, alias General Hassan, the deputy head of the intelligence service responsible for counterterrorism, was arrested. He had been sentenced to five years in prison for destroying documents and breaching regulations. Since then, the 71 years old General has remained incarcerated.

In September, the retired General Hocine Benhabib was arrested and jailed for eight months for denouncing nepotism in Algeria's politics and referring to the president's brother as the "big boss".¹⁵¹ Meanwhile, Bouteflika administration passed legislation forbidding the retired security officials to speak out on politics.

The long-lasting head of the security and intelligence service (DRS), Mohamed Mediene, alias General Toufik, who used to be known as the most powerful leader in Algeria since 1990, was targeted by the purge of the intelligence as well. General Toufik was assumedly forced to resign in September 2015. His unexpected resignation was seen, by some scholars and journalists, as a move to curb the influence of the military on the Algerian politics.

Few months after the retirement of General Toufik, the powerful state security and intelligence service was dissolved. This has been the most important institutional reform that have been implemented since the end of the civil. In February 2016, the DRS became the DSS (Department of Surveillance and Security). The new security and intelligence service has been placed under the president order whereas the dissolved department was under the army's control. Some scholars and journalists believe that this institutional reform, designed by President Bouteflika, has significantly transformed Algeria's political and check and balances systems. By eroding the influence of the intelligence and security service, therefore the influence of the military on the politics, Bouteflika would try to strengthen the presidency. With these moves, Bouteflika has consolidated considerable power and has been striving to establish a "civilian state" as opposed to Algeria's police state, said Rachid Tlemçani, a senior political analyst at University of Algiers.¹⁵²

Moreover, Abdelaziz Bouteflika has also tried to distance himself from the FLN, the military, and the secret services by establishing his own support network, relying on entrepreneurs who have set up their business empire in the 1990s. Thanks to an increase in energy prices, between 1999 and 2009, Bouteflika was able to launch economic recovery plan, awarding his allies large public construction projects. The *Forum des chefs d'entreprises* (FCE), Algeria's most powerful business union created in 2001 and representing over 500 companies, played a significant role in the re-election of Abdelaziz Bouteflika in 2014 for the fourth consecutive term.¹⁵³

According to the second hypothesis on the Algerian leadership, the military elite Bouteflika's actions did not represent significant changes, nor did they constitute a threat to the military leadership.

According to Dalia Ghanem, a senior political Analyst at Carnegie Middle East Center, it would be an "exaggeration" to think that Bouteflika has managed to fundamentally undermine the power of the

¹⁵¹ Radio M, « L'entretien », 1st Septembre 2015 : https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=k9dwjT_e7Rk

¹⁵² Tlemçani, 2016, p. 6

¹⁵³ Boubekour, 2013, p. 475

military or the ex-DRS. Ghanem also said that the Algerian president's move were ultimately more of a "political sideshow than anything else".¹⁵⁴ Indeed, the DSS is currently run by General Bachir Tartag, who is a former close associate of General Toufik.

For some scholars, the rivalry between the presidency and the army is a masquerade as Bouteflika's longevity could have not been possible without a substantial military backing. Thus, Ghanem said that the large part of the military have "continuously" supported the incumbent president, who could run for a fifth consecutive mandate in 2019, because they do not consider him as a threat to the ongoing status quo, neither to their interests.¹⁵⁵ For instance, when Bouteflika pushed for a constitutional reform in 2008 that would lift the term limit and allow him to run for a third consecutive term, the army did not prevent him. And in 2014, when he run for a fourth consecutive term, despite his fragile health, the army did not pick another candidate.

For these scholars, it appears that Algeria has not experienced a real political transition during and after the end of the civil war. Despite these seemingly liberal changes that occurred between 1988 and 1990, and Bouteflika's actions, the nature of the Algerian system has remained by and large the same: a police and authoritarian military state. Algeria's decision-makers still consist mainly of senior members of the ANP, political parties with close ties to the military, such as FLN and RND, and other influential political and economic elites.¹⁵⁶

In post-independence Algeria, the executive branch of the state has continuously prevailed over both the legislative and judiciary powers, while being subjected to the hegemony of the military.¹⁵⁷ According to William B. Quandt, professor of politics at the University of Virginia who has a comprehensive knowledge of the Algerian politics, military has got the "ultimate arbiters of power".¹⁵⁸ All that has remained unchanged in post-civil war Algeria.

Somehow, the civil war further bolstered the military's political legitimacy, as the army played a crucial part in combating the Islamist groups. The army's popularity has even increased thanks to its military success against the Islamist groups and capacity to bring stability back in the country. It remains the "most trusted institution".¹⁵⁹

The military's sway on Algeria's political life is unlikely to change as Algeria faces increasing potential external security threats at its borders with neighbouring Tunisia and Libya. While other ministries, the Ministry of Culture and Health, have been cut over the past two years, amid oil price plunge, the military and security budget continued to rise. In 2017, it accounted for near 25% of the national budget.¹⁶⁰

International support

In early 2000s, the primary objective of the Algerian regime was to end almost a decade of isolation from the rest of the world. With the gradual return of peace to Algeria, the regime progressively resumed and even consolidated its bilateral relations. Embassies, who were locked down during the civil war, were gradually reopened.

While Algeria was internationally perceived as a breeding ground for Islamist terrorism, the regime managed to restore the country's image. To do so, the regime presented Algeria as an early victim of

¹⁵⁴ Ghanem-Yazbeck, 2018

¹⁵⁵ Idem.

¹⁵⁶ Idem.

¹⁵⁷ Roberts, 2007, p. 2

¹⁵⁸ Quandt, 2004, p. 83

¹⁵⁹ Ghanem-Yazbeck, 2018

¹⁶⁰ Official Journal, 28 December 2017

Islamist terrorism and became a major actor in the global fight against international terrorism.¹⁶¹ But, by doing so, it underestimated the domestic causes of the civil war.

The US-Algerian relationship was resumed amid increasing concerns over Islamist terrorism and security. The 11 September 2001 attacks “came as a blessing” for the Algerian ruling elite, who was determined to end the North-African country’s isolation.¹⁶² In the aftermath of 9/11 attacks, a bilateral cooperation between Algeria and the United States against terrorism, that includes intelligence sharing training and equipping the security forces, was enhanced. It even led to a political rapprochement between the two countries. In 2001, President Bouteflika and his fellow American, President George W. Bush, met twice. President Bush welcomed President Bouteflika at the White House in July and in November of that year.

In the post-2001 World Trade Centre terror attack era, several European and American countries have hailed Algeria’s role in the fight against terrorism, considering its experience as a “model for the Maghreb, Africa and even for Europe”.¹⁶³ The Algerian expertise in counterterrorism has become a valuable resource that worths to be shared amid the progression of international Islamist terrorism across the world, over the past two decades.

The association agreement with the European Union, the Euro-Mediterranean-Partnership (or Barcelona Process), which was finalised in late 2001 and finally implemented in 2005, was another victory for the Algerian ruling elite. It signalled the end of almost a decade of quarantine of the Algerian state in Europe.

By the beginning of Bouteflika’s second term, in 2009, the Algerian state was internationally rehabilitated, in spite of its highly questionable policies and practices during the civil war. It became a regular guest at G8 summits. The attitude of some of the leading international actors towards the Algerian regime after the civil war legitimised the authorities’ war against the Islamist fighters.

Since the 2010s, the international and regional geopolitical context has changed in favour of Algeria. It has been emerged as a strategic anchor for stability among the increasingly instable Sahel and north-African countries. The Algerian regime embarked on reclaiming the country’s leadership role on the African continent, at least on the northern area. Indeed, Algeria has become a regional peace broker, promoting political dialogue and stability in Libya, Mali, and Tunisia, over the past decade. Given the political instability in the Sahel and Maghreb, the Algerian regime is likely to continue to benefit from an international support.

Weakened civil society

The civil society, which was heavily fragmented at the end of the civil war, was excluded of the peace process. Given the authoritarian nature of the regime, the civil society has remained weak since the end of the civil strife. Civic organisations have failed to “serve as a bridge between the country’s leaders and citizens”.¹⁶⁴

Although, the local association network has remained important in terms of quantity, it has significantly been less influential. According to the minister of Interior, there are over 92 000 voluntary

¹⁶¹ Boukhars, 2013

¹⁶² Ghanem-Yazbeck, 2018

¹⁶³ APS, 10 July 2017

¹⁶⁴ Ghanem-Yazbeck, 2018

organisations in Algeria, but many of which are fictitious, inactive, or created in order to receive public grants.¹⁶⁵

The ruling elite has implemented a variety of methods designed to control the civil society actors' activities and ensure that they cannot disrupt the long-lasting political system. These methods range from co-optation to coercion.

Many Algerian civil society organisations have become "extensions of the state and the public administration" since the 1990s.¹⁶⁶ The political co-optation of many society organisations has been even exacerbated during Bouteflika's era. In Exchange for financial assistance from state, communal or regional budgets, these co-opted organisations have been called upon by the government to strengthen the socio-political base of the ruling elite and the state administration. They have participated in major events, such as ministerial visits and national festivals, and supported government policies as well as the president.¹⁶⁷ They were used to preserve and bolster a domestic popular support to the administration.

Civil society organisation, independent civil activist or journalist that refuse to be co-opted face administrative and judiciary harassment or arrests and termination. Even though the constitution formally grants freedom of speech (article 48), the government has incessantly used administrative harassment, informal pressure, and the threat of imprisonment for journalists, cartoonists, and human rights activists as well to control and limit freedom of speech and of the press.¹⁶⁸ When citizens criticize officials or the state's institutions, beyond the limits drawn by the regime, they run the risk of being fined or serving jail time. One example among many cases of the use of such legal coercive measures to interrupt or disrupt civil rights activists' actions, Djilali Hadjaj, the president of the Algeria Association Against Corruption, was arrested on grounds of forgery and embezzlement of public funds in September 2010. Similarly, Tahar Belabès, the coordinator of the National Committee for the Defense of the Rights of the Unemployed (CNDDC), has been arrested several times over the past decade, while he was taking part to peaceful protest.

Algeria's civil society is strictly regulated by the government. Political parties, associations, and trade unions must register with the *wilaya* (region) at the local level or with the ministry of Interior at the national level in order to operate legally. In 2012, the government has introduced new laws restricting the NGOs. The Law 12-06 relating to associations has tightened the regime's control on independent organisations and gave the authority the power to deny them registrations or funding, and suspend or dissolve them. The authorities often refuse to authorise organisation critical of government policies. Fines and imprisonment are a risk for anyone leading an unregistered organisation. Yet, many illegal associations continue to operate. Although foreign funding is not officially forbidden, the government has considerably limited foreign support of nongovernmental organisations, political parties, or local unions.

Algeria, where the emergency law has been lifted in 2011 amid the Arab Spring, has turned into a permanent state of emergency. The civil society has continued to suffer threats and harassment from the authorities. People are still prevented to take the street and demonstrate, even peacefully. Since the official end of the civil war, the situation has not changed: all the peaceful marches have been severely repressed by the police forces. For instance, the elite-driven movement calling for the boycott of the 2014 presidential election and standing against Bouteflika's campaign for a fourth consecutive

¹⁶⁵ Freedom House Report, 2011, p. 16; Jousour Algérie, 2012, p. 9

¹⁶⁶ Ghanem-Yazbeck, 2018

¹⁶⁷ Idem.

¹⁶⁸ Idem.

term, nicknamed “*Barakat* movement” (Arabic for “enough”), faced repression. Rallies were dispersed by the police forces and many activists were arrested. That was also the case of a demonstration led by some of the most leading political figures of the opposition (including former Prime Minister Benflis) that took place in 2015 and was broke up by the anti-riots forces. More recently, the grassroots movement against the exploration of shale gas resources, which emerged in Ain Salah, a small Saharan town, have also been repressed.

Given the repression of opposition movement to the ruling elite, opponents have recently began to use a more radical method. An increasing number of activists organised hunger strikes as a tool to stand against the regime. Over the past year, many regime’s challengers, including several independent journalists, have launched a hunger strike. One example among many, Mohamed Tamalt, a British-Algerian journalist, was sentenced to two years in prison for “defaming public institutions”, and “offending” the president. In December 2016, Tamalt died in jail under suspicious circumstances, after being on a hunger strike and spending three months in a coma.¹⁶⁹

¹⁶⁹ Ould Khettab, 2016

SECTION FOUR. Choices in transitional justice

Algeria has adopted a non-judicial approach to solve the conflict, aiming to achieve the following goals: restoring both peace and security, ending ongoing human right abuses, providing victims or their families with reparations and promoting national reconciliation. The Algerian authorities have move from an exclusive transitional approach (1997-1999) to a more inclusive approach (2005).

Algeria's peace process includes an arsenal of laws and the acceptance of moderate Islamist movements as legitimate political actors. Instead of investigating past crimes, identifying the people responsible for human rights violations and imposing sanctions on some of the responsible for serious human rights abuses and working to prevent future violation, the Algerian authorities have decided to offer substantive measures to the perpetrators. These measures included amnesty to both Islamist fighters and security forces.

All major decisions concerning the country's effort for a national reconciliation were promulgated by presidential decree and confirmed by hastily called referendums. None of these regime's initiatives has never been submitted to a public consultation.

Policy consideration

The nature of the state had a great impact on the choice of transition justice policy. The Algerian ruling elite has never been accountable for the crimes committed before the 1990 conflict erupted. For instance, it was not accountable for the human rights abuses committed during the riots in October 1988. In Algeria, most of the political decisions are taken in closed doors and not in the parliament or public debate.

The resolution of the decolonisation also provides insights into the choice of transitional mechanisms implemented during the civil war. Indeed, the Algerian regime did not experience a transitional process after the end of the war for independence. Neither the French authorities nor the Algerian nationalist leaders, including high-profile members of the FLN and ANP, were held accountable of the barbarity committed during the bloody colonial. France has never truthfully faced its colonial past and debated about the crimes perpetrated in Algeria during the traumatic invasion, the colonial period that lasted 132 years, and the bloody decolonisation war, while the FLN and ANP have never taken responsibility for the atrocities perpetrated by their fighters. In 1962, both sides decided to turn a blind eye to the war crimes. Somehow, the choice made for the 1990s transitional justice are rooted in what Farouk Ksentini, former president of National consultative commission on the promotion and protection of human rights, called the "culture of amnesty" that emerged in Algeria when it gained its independence from France.¹⁷⁰

The ruling leaders do not explicitly say if any normative frameworks shape the Algerian transitional justice process. According to Ksentini, the South African model or any other foreign experience of transitional justice would not had fit in the Algerian context.¹⁷¹

An amnesty consists of partly or completely pardoning a punishment or not persecuting a crime after a change of circumstances, such as the end of a war or change of regime. However, in Algeria, there

¹⁷⁰ Interview of Farouk Ksentini, 12 October 2017, Blida

¹⁷¹ Interview of Farouk Ksentini, 12 October 2017, Blida

has not been a particular change of circumstances, but rather a reduction in the level of violence when the negotiation process took place. Indeed, the regime started to negotiate with AIS while it continued to battle against other Islamist groups, which did not capitulate. The transitional justice mechanisms, which essentially consisted in not investigating the past events neither persecuting the perpetrators, appeared as a way for the ruling elite to exonerate the security forces of their collective and individual responsibilities.

In parallel of the transitional justice, the army continued to fight on the ground the Islamist fighters by military means. After 1999, the Algerian army implemented a new strategy: “double containment”. This strategy consisted in encircling the remaining fighters in few strongholds in northern Algeria, forcing them to retreat in mountainous wooded and remoted areas. The reduction of their mobility made the army’s identification operations more efficient. As a result, surrounded by the Algerian army and contained, the remaining Islamist fighters changed their strategy and started the suicide bombing operation from 2007 until 2011.¹⁷²

Policy mechanism

Various amnesty policies were implemented to put an end to the violence and to pardon those who were responsible for crimes (both Islamist fighters and security forces).

All the transitional justice mechanisms implemented by the Algerian regime focused on narrow civil and political rights violations. It targeted only the conflict-related crimes (killings, murders, rape, sexual crimes etc.). Algeria’s transitional justice process was not mean to examine the broader socioeconomic causes of violence and seek remedies to prevent future conflict.

Civil Harmony Law

Only three months after moving to El Mouradia presidential palace, Abdelaziz Bouteflika turned his attention to the legal and political resolution of the conflict. In July 1999, he introduced in the National People’s Assembly the Civil Harmony Law, which he defined as the political expression of the agreement between the military high command and the AIS.

The Civil Harmony Law (“Concorde civile”) granted conditional amnesty to radical Islamists who laid down arms and renounced violence before 13 January 2000 – a mere four months away. Islamist fighters were eligible for amnesty providing that they fully disclosed their past, and as long as they were not responsible for deaths, killings, massacres, rape, and permanent injury. Terrorists, who had committed any of those crimes, would receive reduced sentences but not a full amnesty. But, in practice, serious crimes were rarely investigated and amnesty was granted indiscriminately.

The Civil Harmony Law was exclusive since it recognized only the responsibility of the Islamist groups and did not mention the involvement and the crimes committed by the security forces. It also spoke about the victims of terrorism without mentioning the victims of the state agents.

The Civil Harmony Law was submitted to a referendum in September 1999 and was overwhelmingly approved by the voters. According to the official figures, 98.6 percent of the voters said “yes”, with a turnout at 85 percent. Though this official figures are certainly exaggerated, we can say for sure that a majority of Algerians were desperately waiting for an end to the violence and, for this reason, they

¹⁷² Lounnas, 2013, p. 150

supported the peace plan. The Civil Harmony Law was then approved unanimously with little debate by both the Assembly and the Senate, two institutions controlled by the RND and the FLN.

Three days before the deadline for applying for the amnesty, President Bouteflika introduced *la grâce amnistiante* (French for “pardon with the force of amnesty”). This executive decree extended the amnesty to a list of armed Islamists, who agreed to lay down their arms and disband. But the list was never made public and many criminals benefited from total amnesty without any investigation of their activities.

The decree stirred up a public outcry. Families of the victims of terrorism protested, saying that the executive decree offered a blank amnesty while the Civil Harmony Law excluded any general amnesty for those responsible for dreadful terrorist crimes. It was also seen as manifestly unfair since it allowed some individuals guilty of serious crimes to go free, while many who had been captured and sentenced in the early 1990s for lesser crimes continued serving life sentences.

In July 2003, the leaders of the FIS, Abassi Madani and Ali Belhadj, who were detained since 1991, were set free after serving their 12-year sentence.

Charter for peace and national reconciliation

In an attempt to definitely close the chapter of the civil strife and pave the way to a full national reconciliation, President Bouteflika started a new push with a speech he delivered in July 2005. “To get our country of the deadly crisis, Algerians must support national reconciliation through a referendum”, he declared, adding: “I call on all Algerian men and women to learn again how to live together and join forces to improve their condition and achieve prosperity for their loved ones”.¹⁷³

In 15 August 2005, Abdelaziz Bouteflika issued a decree containing a draft of the “Charter for peace and national reconciliation”. The Charter essentially repeated the principles contained in the Civil Harmony Law. It called for amnesty for Islamist insurgents, except those who had taken part to massacres, rapes and bombings in public places. It also called for an end to judicial proceedings against Islamist fighters, including those who had found a refuge abroad and had been convicted in absentia.

But Bouteflika’s Charter went further. It exempted all individuals, whether Islamist insurgents, civilian auxiliary forces, security forces and state-armed militias responsible for extra-judicial killings and the disappearance of thousands of Algerians from prosecution for crimes and human rights abuses committed during the civil war.

Besides amnesty, the ruling elite established rehabilitation programme for Islamist perpetrators, including housing, employment, financial support etc.

Like the Civil Harmony Law, the Charter did not include a truth-seeking mechanism to investigate human rights abuses committed since 1991, nor measures to reform the country’s institutions in order to prevent past violations to repeat again.

Contrary to the first amnesty law, the Charter for Peace and National Reconciliation was more inclusive as it mentioned women’s rights violations and the situation of families of the forced kidnapped people for the first time.

Like he did for the Civil Harmony Law, President Bouteflika opted for a referendum to pass the Charter for peace and national reconciliation. The vote was organized within a month, with almost no public debate.

¹⁷³ Sour, 2015, p. 1

The official campaign in favour of the Charter used the slogan “From concord to national reconciliation. For Algeria”. It basically sent the message that there was not any alternative to the Charter. However, the social and political forces that opposed the text were not able to adequately communicate the arguments for a “no” vote. One of the few exceptions was a declaration against the Charter signed by a list of personalities, including intellectuals, journalists, and civil activists, that was published in the national newspaper. Meanwhile, Bouteflika administration held successive meetings across a country.

On 29 September 2005, an improbable 97 percent of Algerian voters approved the “Charter for peace and national reconciliation” in the referendum.

The government adopted the decree implementing the Charter for peace and national reconciliation on 27 February 2006 while the parliament was not in session, in a move to avoid a public debate.

Some controversial articles, featured in the Charter, showed the President’s determination to bury the past as fast as possible without any public discussion. The Charter makes it a criminal offense to speak of the disappearances in such a way as to “undermine the good reputation of [state] agents who honourably served the country or to tarnish the image of Algeria internationally”. Furthermore, article 46 of the decree says that “anyone who, by speech, writing or any other act uses or exploits the wounds of the national tragedy to harm the institutions of the Democratic and Popular Republic of Algeria or to say much of anything negative about it or its officials will be punished by three to five years in prison and a fine of 250 000 to 500 000 Algerian dinars [almost \$2200 to almost \$4400]”. Many argue that this article was inconsistent with a constitutional principle featured in article 36 of the Law: freedom of speech to all Algerians.

The article 47 of the Charter for Peace and National Reconciliation, which empowers the Algerian president to take any measures he considers necessary to implement the peace plan, was also very controversial.

Both the content of the Charter for Peace and National Reconciliation and the way it was approved are a blunt reminder of the culture of opacity, authoritarianism and injustice which has remained deeply embedded in Algeria since it gained its independence from France in 1962.

De-radicalisation programme

In parallel with the promulgation of amnesty laws, the regime initiated a programme of de-radicalisation in the prisons. Thus, the detainees, who belonged to an Islamist armed group, had limited access to radio and television programmes, and were allowed to read only newspaper approved by the prison administration.¹⁷⁴

Concomitantly, the government has intensively monitored sermons at mosques across Algeria in an effort to detect Islamist extremism at the earliest stage possible.¹⁷⁵ It has also introduced the importance of preventing Islamist extremism into the programme of religious schools.¹⁷⁶

Policy implementation

The disarmament and demilitarisation process of the AIS took place from 1997 to 2000. It was a short and pragmatic process, without an “ideological/theological component”.¹⁷⁷ The leadership of that organisation not only was able to dismantle the group, but also was able to influence smaller armed

¹⁷⁴ Hasan, Hendriks, Janssen, Meijer, p. 98

¹⁷⁵ Idem.

¹⁷⁶ Idem.

¹⁷⁷ Ashour, 2008, p. 10

organisations and factions to join the de-radicalisation process, including subgroups from the notorious GIA and GSPC. The AIS had a solid charismatic leadership that was willing to de-radicalize. That leadership was influential enough to convince 7 000 Islamist fighters that made up the organisation to laid down their arms, without causing any split, and hundred members of other smaller groups as well.¹⁷⁸

In contrary, both the GIA and the GSPC, a splinter group of the GIA created in 1999, rejected the de-radicalisation process. Even though some of its affiliated militias joined the de-radicalisation process, the bulk of this Islamist armed group refused to de-radicalise. The demilitarisation process he de-radicalisation of the AIS was relatively successful while the regime failed to de-radicalise the GIA.

Even before the approval of the peace plan in the referendum, an executive order released in July 1999 set up committees in each province to determine whether the people who wanted to surrender were eligible for amnesty and to define the terms of their probation. Each committee was headed by a general prosecutor, usually a representative of the security forces. The committees functioned without transparency. Not surprisingly, most applicants claimed that they had never taken part in terrorism but had barely helped the Islamist fighters by tracking the security forces, cooking for the rebels, treating wounded militants etc.

The probation committees that were established to determine who was eligible for amnesty were not transparent, nor were they held publicly accountable. The lack of both transparency and accountability deepened suspicions that, in practice, amnesty was granted indiscriminately.

In theory, the peace agreement offered reduced prison sentences and not full amnesty to insurgents who had committed rape or death, or used explosives in public places. In practice, certain emirs, who were high commanders of armed Islamist groups and were responsible of human right's crimes, benefited from the amnesty as well.

Few perpetrators were punished for the crimes they committed and only among the Islamist groups not among the security forces who were guaranteed a total blank amnesty. The large majority of Islamist rebels benefited of both amnesty and rehabilitation programme.

From 1999 to 2005, tens of thousands of political prisoners, affiliated to the FIS, including high-profile detainee, like Ali Belhadj or Abd el-Haqq Layada, were released.¹⁷⁹

¹⁷⁸ Ibid., p. 2

¹⁷⁹ Ibid., p. 9

SECTION FIVE. Determinants of transitional justice policies

Indemnification of all the victims was not the regime's top priority when it launched the transitional justice process. At first, some victims and their relatives were ignored. It is only after the families of disappeared people and female victims created well-organized groups and tried to raise awareness of their sufferings that the ruling elite agreed to tackle this issue. In 2003, Bouteflika established a commission to investigate the forced disappearances and the state has offered conditional reparations to families since 2005. Reparations were guaranteed as an alternative solution to truth-seeking commission.

From the victims' perspective, the reparation deal has remained unsatisfactory. Despite a law banning any critic of the peace process, some groups of victims have continued to challenge it.

Hegemonic narrative

The official narrative of the conflict participated to the efforts to uncover the truth of the war years. First of all, none of the peace deal, neither the Civil Harmony Law nor the Charter for National Peace and Reconciliation, legally qualifies the exact nature of the conflict that has torn apart the North-African country over ten years. It is either called "national tragedy" or "Black Decade". Designating the conflict between the regime and the Islamist fighters as a civil war has remained a taboo within the ruling elite. The population has used the regime's terminology, calling the decade-long conflict the "Black Decade". Similarly, the regime's narrative designates the Islamist fighters, who surrendered, not as criminals but as the nation's "lost children".¹⁸⁰

More than ten years after the official end of the conflict, many aspects of the conflict have remained to be told. It is still not clear how many radical Islamists took part in the conflict and fought against the existing institutions. It cannot be said with certainty how many Islamist fighters agreed to surrender and obtained amnesty. The official figures are incomplete and contradictory: the number of Islamist combatants who laid down arms varies from 5 000 to 20 000 fighters.¹⁸¹

Similarly, the number of Islamists who were killed during the civil strife is murky. In 2006, then-Prime minister Ahmed Ouyahia declared that the security forces had killed 17 000 "armed Islamists" out of an estimated 25 000 operating between 1992 and 1997.¹⁸²¹⁸³ Even if the figure is correct, it is impossible to know how many of those killed were truly armed Islamist fighters and not innocent civilians caught in a crossfire. The number of security and military personnel killed is still a state secret.

There are indications that some of the Islamist fighters have left the country to continue their activities in neighbouring countries, Iraq, and elsewhere. In 2003, the Algerian government estimated that between 600 and 1 000 Algerians were active in transnational terrorist networks. According to the Algerian authorities, former radical fighters who ended up in Iraq constituted 20 percent of the foreign suicide bombers in 2005.¹⁸⁴

Concerning the number of civilian casualties, the official figures remained vague. During the 1999 presidential campaign, the official estimating for victims of the civil strife increased from 26 000 in

¹⁸⁰ Ministry of Foreign Affairs, 2015, p. 2

¹⁸¹ Tlemçani, 2008, p. 11

¹⁸² Idem.

¹⁸³ Ashour, 2008, p. 6

¹⁸⁴ Idem.

February 1998 to 100 000 before the presidential vote. During Bouteflika's two-decade long presidency, the official number of civilian losses varied from 150 000 up to 200 000 deaths.¹⁸⁵¹⁸⁶

The official narrative is hegemonic. It allows no alternative narrative. Since the 2016 constitutional reform, the peace agreements, both the Civil Harmony Law and the Charter for National Peace and Reconciliation, have been incorporated into Algeria's constitutional Law, therefore, it has been elevating to the status of sacred rules.

In the regime's narrative, the national reconciliation participated to Algeria's state-building process after the decade-long civil war. In the regime's propaganda, amnesty was considered as the unique political solution to end the decade-long civil stifle, and regain and retain the state's stability. Campaigning for the adoption of the Charter through a referendum, Bouteflika declared on 14 August 2005 that the "project of national reconciliation, submitted to your free choice is destined to hurry the definitive return of security and peace in our country, and also destined to bring us towards national reconciliation and towards the consolidation of our national cohesion".¹⁸⁷ He also said that "national reconciliation is a thoughtful choice that gives priority to the supreme interest of the Nation", that it is a "strategic choice that will heal the wounds of an entire nation which will in this way reconcile with itself".

The regime's propaganda focused on convincing the population, including the victims and their families, to move on without looking back neither asking for accountability. In the meantime, it does not recognize the state's responsibility in the conflict and emphasises the responsibility of Islamist fighters for the violence. Security forces and state-armed militias were described as blameless in the conflict and successful in their efforts to eradicate the Islamist terrorism.

The regime called on all Algerians to "forgive without forgetting, and to look resolutely to the future and reinvent a new way of living together".¹⁸⁸ But, in practice, the regime has given no other choice to the population than to forget the atrocities committed during the civil war. The transitional justice process did not include any symbolic mechanism, such as the postcolonial commemorative policy. No memorialisation measure, neither state monuments, nor national holidays, was taken. While the history education of the war for independence is very comprehensive, there has been no school curriculum changes as to incorporate a section in history textbooks about the civil war.

Reparation

While the martyr's sacrifices was used as a crucial state-building lever in the 1960s, the new wave of martyrs, innocent civilian people who were killed during the civil war, has not been weaved into the narrative. Martyrdom was no longer celebrated. While thousands of Algerians have received pensions for fighting the French colonial empire, some victims of the civil war and relatives have struggled to be recognised as victims. Indeed, at first, the reparation programme was not inclusive. A President decree n° 99-44, released in 13 February 1999, addressed victims of terrorism, granting indemnification of individual victims of injuries or property damage suffered as a result of acts of terrorism or due to "accidents that occurred during the fight against terrorism", as well as the indemnifications of their heirs. They have received monthly pension, amounting between 10 000 (\$85) and 40 000 dinars (\$340), depending the situation of the victim.

¹⁸⁵ Ibid., p. 6

¹⁸⁶ Ibid., p. 6

¹⁸⁷ Sour, 2015, p. 31

¹⁸⁸ Ministry of Foreign Affairs, 2015 p. 2

This legal framework did not include the families of the disappeared people neither the female victims of terrorism.

The first people who publicly criticised the peace deal and demanded the truth were the mothers and wives of the forced disappeared people. In autumn 1997, after the great wave of kidnappings that occurred from 1994 to 1997 and resulted in thousands of forced disappearances, the relatives of the disappeared people understood that they were not alone and that forced disappearances by security forces were massive. First, the families asked for the liberation of the disappeared. Soon afterwards, they demanded to know the truth about the fate of their loved ones.

Thanks to its perseverance, this grassroots movement mainly composed of women, including uneducated housewives, has dared to face the regime's hostility. It has not hesitated to address those they believed to have ordered the kidnappings. In 1998, for instance, SOS Disparus, an Algerian non-partisan civic organisation defending the rights of the families of the disappeared people, sent an open letter to the then chief of staff of the army, Major General Mohamed Lamari.

While campaigning for the 1999 presidential election, Abdelaziz Bouteflika turned a deaf ear to the voices of thousands of parents and relatives still mourning the death or the disappearance of their loved ones.

Bouteflika's peace initiative did not initially address the issue of the disappeared people in a manner that could satisfy the victims' families. The newly-elected President was willing to bury the issue with as little discussion as possible. But the families, with the support of domestic and international human rights organisation, refused to accept the official position that the majority of disappearances either were perpetrated by Islamists disguised as security agents or were voluntary disappearances by guilty people, who were trying to avoid justice.

With the credibility of his peace plan at stake and the increasing pressure of the families of the disappeared people, who began to hold weekly public sit-ins, President Bouteflika conceded to set up a body to determine the fate of those who had gone missing during the conflict. The 03-299 presidential decree, released in 11 September 2003, established for 18 months the "ad hoc inquiry commission in charge of the question of disappearance", composed by seven members of the National consultative commission on the promotion and protection of human rights and presided by attorney Farouk Ksentini.

Nevertheless, President Bouteflika made it clear that the ad hoc commission in charge of the question of the disappearance was never conceived as a truth-seeking commission. The commission's mandate was only to identify cases of alleged disappearances and determine the fate of the disappeared as well as to suggest measures to provide aid and reparation to the victims' families. Yet, the mandate of the ad hoc commission did not include identifying those responsible for the disappearances. It neither had statutory power to compel testimony of the government officials, nor access to the security forces' archives.

On 31 March 2005, Farouk Ksentini submitted a preliminary report to President Bouteflika. The report has never been made public.

According to Ksentini, the ad hoc commission estimated that there were about 7 000 to 12 000 disappearances during the conflict, and attributed 6 146 kidnappings to elements of the security forces who had acted unlawfully in abducting people.

Though the elements of the security forces had unquestionably committed abuses in the struggle against terrorism it was impossible to investigate each case individually because of the anarchy that

had prevailed in that period. “We found no document, no testimony showing that the state institutions had given instructions”, Ksentini said.¹⁸⁹

The commission’s president explained that the Algerian state in war against Islamist rebellion was “responsible but not guilty” for a number of reported disappearances but the security agents had acted on their own volition, not under orders.¹⁹⁰

He concluded that because the Algerian state had failed to assure the security of the people who went missing it had to offer reparation to the victims’ families. “Financial compensation was the best solution under the circumstances”, Ksentini said.¹⁹¹

Families of the disappeared were made eligible for up to one million Algerian dinars (approximately \$ 8 500) on condition that they provide a death certificate stating that the disappeared person was killed in a skirmish or implicated in terrorist activity.

Since the adoption of the Charter, the government has considered the case of the disappearances closed and has consistently refused to meet with the families. Although, Algeria signed the International convention for the protection of all persons from enforced disappearance in February 2007, the government still refuses to welcome UN working groups on enforced or involuntary disappearances, representatives of a UN special report on torture nor the UN special envoy on extrajudicial executions.

The gender nature of past violations is one of the latest question that was tackled by the authority. Women victims of sexual crimes were offered reparations in 2014, only 9 years after the adoption of the Charter for national reconciliation that marked the official end of the conflict. The government response to those victims has been a pittance. According to the decree, women can receive up to 35 000 Algerian dinars (about \$297) as compensation.

Resistances

The regime’s offer has let some victims, especially the families of the forced disappeared, deeply unsatisfied. They expected from the creation of the ad hoc commission to be a step towards truth but beyond the acknowledgment that state agents were responsible for thousands of disappearances this the institution had done little to advance their cause.

Algerian women, including wife and mother of disappeared people, and women victims of sexual crimes, were the first category of the population to speak out against the regime’s peace deal. They openly criticised the regime for having established one and biased narrative of what happened during the “Black Decade”. For them, the regime’s peace process covers the civil strife in opacity rather than trying to find an unbiased truth thanks to an independent truth commission. This has been complemented by the regime’s way of speaking about the civil war, which paints a binary picture of the conflict and recognizes the responsibility of the Islamist rebels only. Until 2003, the Algerian state gave the conflict a too simplistic narrative. Those women also criticised the regime for not admitting its own responsibility in the force disappearance of thousands of Algerian, neither recognising specific crimes committed against women. Those women received the support of some sections of the civil society and some opposition parties.

¹⁸⁹ Interview of Farouk Ksentini, 12 October 2017, Blida.

¹⁹⁰ Idem.

¹⁹¹ Idem.

Those victims believed that, instead of truth and a real reconciliation, the government offered them “amnesia” only.¹⁹² SOS Disparus has steadily criticised the fact that in order to receive the compensation, a family has to sign a death certificate without seeing the dead body neither knowing the truth about the circumstances of the death. This turns to give up the truth, SOS Disparus members say.

“The Algerian regime has tried to bribe families of victims with reparation. It tries to buy our silence”, said Nacera Dutour, cofounder and head of SOS Disparus, whose son, Amine, 21, was kidnapped in 1997.¹⁹³

The outlawed association has registered 8 000 cases of forced disappearances that occurred between 1992 and 1998. Most of them were men, as young as 14 and as old as 80. They were arrested by plain-clothes policemen, who suspected them of being supporter of Islamist fighters, and taken in for questioning – then vanished without a trace.

According to SOS Disparus, 80 percent of the families have agreed to obtain compensation and recognize the death of their disappeared relative while 20 percent still refuse any payment without an explanation.

However, families of victims of kidnapping, either they accepted the state’s reparation or not, still demand the truth. They still look for their loved ones on their own, searching in police stations, prisons, morgues, cemeteries and mass graves.

Families of the disappeared people and victims of sexual crimes say that there was never reconciliation in Algeria since the basis of any reconciliation is truth but Algerians still know nothing about what really happened in the 1990s. “The only consensus was between the government and the terrorists. The basis of national reconciliation is both investigation and fair trials. We want the truth. That’s all what we want”, Nacera Dutour said.¹⁹⁴

Those victims have been challenging the official narrative, although it is forbidden to tell an alternative narrative under the Charter. Thus, relatives of missing people have used domestic judicial tool to find the truth. With the support of associations, they have filed hundreds of complaints at the local courts but the justice system has never helped any family to find a single missing person, nor identified a single person of the security officials responsible for the disappearance.

Despite physical assaults from the police, groups of mothers of the missing still organize a weekly sit-in in Algiers every Wednesday morning to protest against “impunity”.

Despite it is forbidden to tell a different story, under the peace deal, victims of both sides are challenging the state’s narrative by developing their own narrative. For instance, the association promoting the right of the families of the disappeared people to know the truth about the disappearances has created their own media. In 2015, they launched an independent web-radio on which relatives share their story. Since its creation, the web-radio, named *La Radio des sans voix* (“the voice of the voiceless”), has been censored. To counter the regime’s censorship, the association broadcasts its podcasts on Youtube.

In their resistance efforts, those victims have received the support of many international non-governmental organisations. Most of the human rights activists in Algeria and major international human rights organisations, including Amnesty International, Human Rights Watch, the International

¹⁹² Interview of Nacera Dutour, 10 October 2017, Algiers.

¹⁹³ Idem.

¹⁹⁴ Idem.

Centre for Transitional Justice, and the International Federation of Human Rights, condemned the Charter. They say that the Charter consecrates impunity for actions and amnesia, and that it would silence public debate on the Algerian civil war.

SECTION SIX. Effectiveness of implemented transitional justice policy

The level of violence considerably decreased following the implementation of the transitional justice mechanisms, early 2000s. Yet, the military and President Bouteflika failed to reach and guaranty a sustainable peace in Algeria.

Decline of violence

The transitional process, combined with a military response, has considerably helped to reduce the number of Islamist fighters in activity. From 1999 to 2005, up to 7000 Islamist fighters left the rebellion against the regime, surrendered, and repented.^{195 196} As a consequence of both the transitional justice process and counter-terrorism effort, the recruitment of new fighters was limited.

The most positive aspect of the transitional justice process led by President Bouteflika is the fact that the bloodshed has dramatically subsided in most parts of the country, giving Algerians greater security. Abdelaziz Bouteflika's peace initiative succeeded in consolidating the army's military gains against the insurgency and convincing the most members of the Islamists armed groups to surrender by the full amnesty granted to perpetrators of minor crimes and reduction of sentences for those who committed major crimes.

As a result of deaths, surrenders and moves to other countries, the GIA, which had become famous for its use of violence against civilians, ceased to exist after 2004, and other Islamist factions, including the GSPC, has been greatly reduced. By the early 2000s, the Algerian government could claim that the once-widespread terrorism that had plunged the country into turmoil for a decade had been reduced to "residual violence". Consequently, the threat of an Islamist coup has been substantially diminished in Algeria.

While the GIA was completely eradicated by 2005, a minority within the GSPC tried to negotiate its disarmament, but the largest part became even more radical. By 2007, the bulk of the GSPC internationalised its cause, allying with the al-Qaeda network. That alliance initiated the creation of al-Qaeda in Maghreb AQIM, the North African branch of al-Qaeda, in January 2007.

Speaking at the 2015 Fikra conference in Algiers, former UN envoy in Syria, Lakhdar Brahimi, who regularly visited Algeria's President, said that Abdelaziz Bouteflika would be remembered for both bringing back stability in Algeria and turning the North-African state into a key regional player – evidenced by its hosting Malian and Libyan peace talks.¹⁹⁷

From the regime's perspective, the peace process is a frank success. "Both the Civil Harmony Law and the Charter saved the country from sinking deeper into chaos", Kamal Rezag-Bara, a senior adviser to Bouteflika, told Algeria's public radio station on September 29 2015, which marked the 10th anniversary of the Charter's signing.¹⁹⁸

Though the regime has kept saying that the Algerian society is reconciled thanks to the peace process it has implemented since 1999, in reality, it has remained deeply fragmented and traumatised. More than ten years after Algeria's reconciliation deal ending a decade-long civil war that cost tens of

¹⁹⁵ Lounnas, 2013, p. 149

¹⁹⁶ Boubekeur, 2008, p. 7

¹⁹⁷ Ould Khettab, 3 November 2015

¹⁹⁸ Algeria's public radio channel *Chaîne 3, L'invité du direct*, 29 September 2015 : <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Pe-iRLeWGR4>

thousands of lives, victims and their families are still clamouring for justice and radical groups remain active. Many consider that there was never any reconciliation in Algeria. Women have played a key role in protesting the peace deal offered by the regime.

One recent example that shows how divisions within the Algerian population are still active is the large public outcry that was caused by the invitation of the former AIS' leader at the presidential palace. In 2015, Madani Mezrag, who spent the 1990s in the mountains fighting against the army until his surrender in 1997, was hosted at El Mouradia palace to discuss the upcoming constitutional reform plan. Many Algerians, especially the victims and their relatives, blamed the regime for treating the ex-Emir as a regular political leader.

“The government turns criminals, who were wanted during the 1990s, into honourable public figures. I can't describe devastated the victims of the Black Decade were when they saw Madani Mezrag received at El Mouradia presidential palace consulted on the constitutional reform last year. That was simply galling, scandalous and insulting”, said Cherifa Kheddar, head of *Djazairouna* (Our Algeria), an association for women victims of sexual crimes during the civil war.¹⁹⁹

This recent episode, among others, proves that the Algerian people, particularly those who still grieve for their loved ones, have not yet turned the page of the civil strife and not accepted the Charter for Peace and national reconciliation as the official end of the conflict.

The Charter was intended to reintegrate repentant terrorists and compensate victims but in practice it has been used to ensure impunity for the military and for the repentant Islamist factions who agreed to return to civilian life.

Non-sustainable peace

The rehabilitation of “repentant” Islamist fighters was not completely successful. The transitional justice process has indeed failed to prevent “repentant” Islamist fighters to join again armed groups. After the declaration of the Civil Concord Law in 1999, only those leaders of the GIA and the AIS who had negotiated directly with the army were able to reintegrate the society and reconvert (often into business). But the majority of the former Islamist fighters had continued to be subjected to police control or to encounter difficulty in receiving their promised monthly pension from the state (around 12 000 dinars, or \$102). Their social reintegration has also been complicated by the mistrust or hatred of their neighbours, often the victims of terrorist acts, who cannot accept seeing these “repentant” terrorist enjoying a peaceful life.²⁰⁰

That could explain why some of the 3 000 thousands former Islamist fighters, who were released in January 2007 by the Algerian Department of Justice because they benefited from the amnesty laws, returned to the ranks of their armed group.²⁰¹ According to the Algerian government, 20 percent of the former Islamist fighters took up arms again – this figure could be underestimated. Thus, the mastermind behind the suicide bombing in Batna on 6 September 2007 was a “repentant”, who recruited young Algerians and coordinated the attack.²⁰²

¹⁹⁹ Interview of Cherifa Kheddar, 12 October 2017

²⁰⁰ Boubekeur, 2008, p. 11

²⁰¹ Hasan, Hendriks, Janssen, Meijer, p. 88

²⁰² Idem.

It is clear that the regime's peace process have failed to completely end the violence and bring a sustainable peace in Algeria. On the battlefield, the conflict between the Islamist fighters, who did not agree to surrender and went underground, and the Algerian government is not over, with terrorist attacks targeting mainly the security services occurring regularly since the early 2000s. Thus, Algerian soldiers continued to die regularly in ambushes.

Even though the Islamist violent movement has steadily decreased in extent and in intensity since the end of 1990s, Islamist armed fighters have remained a threat in their northern mountainous strongholds. Over the past decade, the Islamist terrorism has even experienced new extensions, notably in Algeria's Saharan desert.²⁰³

Indeed, with the mutation of the GSPC into al-Qaeda in the Islamic Maghreb (AQIM) in 2006-07, terrorism in Algeria came under the increasing influence of transnational jihadi networks. "The Islamic terrorism has been almost entirely defeated in Algeria under President Bouteflika but it is not completely eradicated, with the growing presence of Al-Qaeda in the Islamic Maghreb (AQIM) and Jund Al-Khilafa, a group affiliated to the Islamic State", Omar Baghzouz, a professor of Law in the University of Tizi Ouzou, said.²⁰⁴

Despite the army's ongoing counter-terrorism efforts, terrorist attacks have continued to be a problem for both Algerian and foreign civilians. In September 2007, President Bouteflika survived to a suicide attack in Batna and two kamikaze plots targeted the UN building and the constitutional council in Algiers in April of the same year. The latter assault was perpetrated by a terrorist who had been pardoned under the national reconciliation law and AQIM claimed responsibility for both attacks.

In January 2013, an armed group of radical Islamists, who pledged allegiance to AQIM, attacked Tiguentourine gas plant, in In Amenas, a Saharan town located roughly 1.600 km (994 miles) southeast of Algiers. The group said they raided the gas complex, run jointly by Norway's Statoil, Britain BP and Sonatrach, the Algerian state-run gas company, in an attempt to stop "the bleeding theft of Muslim's gas and oil".²⁰⁵ They took the employees, among them many foreign residents, hostage. The four-day siege ended when the Algerian security forces stormed the facility. Some 40 workers, mostly foreigners, were killed. The terrorist raid in Tiguentourine reveals that AQIM has still the capacity to pull off a big terrorist attack in Algeria.

More recently, Jund al-Khalifa – Arabic for Soldiers of the Caliphate –, an obscure extremist cell which officially broke away from al-Qaeda's North Africa branch and sided with ISIL in 2015, became a serious threat in Algeria when it abducted Herve Gourdel, a 55-year-old French alpinist, while he was hiking with five Algerian friends in Kabylie, in September of the same year. The splinter group, headed by Gouri Abdelmalek, whose nom de guerre is Khaled Abu Suleimane, released on September 24 a video on Youtube showing the execution of the French tourist.²⁰⁶

Permanent state of emergency

Even though, the regime proclaimed the end of the civil war, claiming that terrorism has been vanquished in Algeria, the population has continued to live under a state of emergency that has severely limited civil rights. For instance, according to the emergency state, the minister of Interior is allowed to ban any public gathering under the pretext that it could disturb the public order. This way,

²⁰³ Bourrat, 2012, p. 34

²⁰⁴ Interview of Omar Baghzouz, 9 October 2017, Algiers.

²⁰⁵ Al Jazeera, 18 March 2016

²⁰⁶ Ould Khettab, 30 December 2015

the Algerian authorities have prevented many organizations, openly against the government or deemed to stand against the regime's interest, from holding meeting in public venues. Military barricades, prohibition of demonstration, night searches by security forces, just to name a few, are examples of the restriction of the Algerian citizens' civil rights in the name of the emergency state.

The state of emergency also permitted administrative arrests and secret detention in the name of counter-terrorism struggle. The Algerian constitutional Law says that a suspect can be detained for a maximum of 48 hours without charge. It also stipulates that the detainee must be allowed access to his or her family, legal counsel and medical care. Persons suspected of betrayal of national security or of terrorism can be kept in preventive detention for up to 20 months.

Many abuses have been reported concerning kidnapping of civilian by security forces. There were also reports that disappearance and torture have been committed under the guise of preventive detention. For instance, Malik Medjnoune, accused of the murder of the Berber singer and activist Matoub Lounes in 1998, has been held in preventive detention for 11 years. He was finally released in 2011.²⁰⁷

The emergency state, which was adopted in 1992 only for a year, was eventually implemented until 2011. The 19-year-old law was lifted only in concession to both opposition parties and the civil society in an attempt to keep out the wave of uprising that were sweeping the Arab world in 2011.

But, the lifting of the state of emergency has had in really few implications. Despite the suspension of the emergency powers, Algeria's largest cities, especially Algiers, remain under a tight military control and the army has continued to involve itself in domestic security. Marches in the capital remain banned.

²⁰⁷ Freedom House Report, 2011

CONCLUSION

Since the end of the 1990s, peace has been gradually restored in Algeria. That has been the result of a combination of a military victory of the state's army over the multiple Islamist armed groups and a transitional justice process.

Algeria's experience of transitional justice following the prolonged civil war was not democratic. Neither opposition parties nor civic organisations took part to its elaboration. For instance, during the referendum's electoral campaign for the Charter for national reconciliation and peace, no one opposing the bill was allowed to speak publicly against it. Until today, associations of families of victims of the civil, who challenge the official narrative and the choice of transitional justice mechanism, still face coercive measures.

The transitional justice process was initiated by the military in accordance with the principles of the political system, in mid-1990s. Design to reconcile the Algerian society with Islamist fighters and brutal security agents, Algeria's peace agreements primarily reflect a desire to hide the state's responsibility in a large number of crimes and to grant amnesty to the military and police institutions partially responsible for human rights abuses. The vast majority of Islamist fighters also escaped justice.

By doing so, it appears that the main purpose of the regime's transitional justice process has been to restore its stability and the country's historical political status quo, inherited from the independence war. That would explain why the Algerian authorities have consistently rejected demands coming from victims, victims' families, domestic and international human rights organisations, and United Nations agencies as well to establish the truth about past violations.

Since the end of the civil war, the balance of power has not significantly evolved. Despite a certain degree of political pluralism, the balance of power has remained in favour of the military elite and existing authoritarian structures have been preserved. The Algerian regime has shown "a significant degree of resilience and adaptability".²⁰⁸

Consequently, fifty-five years after Algerian's independence, the army is still effectively ruling the country through a civilian and democratic façade. Because it rules behind the scene, it cannot be held accountable for its decision.²⁰⁹

Although the Algerian state proclaimed the end of the civil strife in 2005, therefore the end of the transitional justice process, many Algerians, particularly relatives of the disappeared people, continue to struggle for accountability, truth, and celebration of the memory of the victims. Some Algerian human rights lawyers have legally challenged the Charter's amnesty provisions but the case is still pending at Algerian courts.

Contrary to the regime's discourse, it appears that national reconciliation has not yet taken place in Algeria. A reconciliation cannot come out of an exclusive transitional process, negotiated by a minority, and imposed from the top down. Rather it is a long and inclusive process, which includes a truth-seeking mechanism.

²⁰⁸ Ghanem-Yazbeck, 2018

²⁰⁹ Idem.

Ultimately, Algeria has failed to address the underlying issues including the distribution of the political and economic power and the hegemony of the military that led to the civil war. The issues will remain there until the entire social fabric will be able to debate publicly their disagreements and past violence.

Since the end of the civil war, the Algerian has maintained a tenuous peace through army's counterterrorism efforts, repression, co-optation, and handouts. With growing concerns over President Bouteflika's health and declining oil revenues, the Algerian regime could face with the threat of a post-civil war generation, who grew up in a climate of violence, terrorism, and are vulnerable the Islamists' message and aspiration to end the political status quo.

BIBLIOGRAPHY

Interviews

Baghzouz, Omar, 9 October 2017, Algiers.

Dutour, Nacera, 10 October 2017, Algiers.

Ferhani, Hacène, 10 October 2017, Algiers.

Kheddar, Cherifa, 12 October 2017, Blida.

Ksentini, Farouk, 12 October 2017, Blida.

Law, decree, state's communiqué

The Constitution of Algeria published on the Official Journal (*Journal Officiel*): <https://www.joradp.dz/hfr/consti.htm>

Algeria's Minister of Foreign Affairs, *Algeria and deradicalization: an experience to share*, September 2015: <http://www.algerianembassy-japan.jp/docs/doc20151209-english.pdf>

Décret exécutif n°99-47, 13 February 1999

Décret exécutif n°14-26, 1st February 2014

Official Journal (*Journal Officiel*), *Loi de Finances 2018*, 28 December 2017 : https://www.mfdgi.gov.dz/images/pdf/lois_de_finances/LF2018F.pdf

Ordonnance N°06-01, 27 February 2006, related with the implementation of the Charter for peace and national reconciliation

Radio Algérienne, *Résultat définitifs des élections législatifs du Conseil constitutionnel* : <http://www.radioalgerie.dz/news/fr/article/20170518/112523.html>

Reports

International Crisis Group (ICG), *Islamism, violence and reform in Algeria: Turning the page*, ICG Middle East Report n°29, Cairo/Brussels, 30 July 2004

Freedom House, *Countries at the crossroads, Algeria*, 2011: <https://freedomhouse.org/report/countries-crossroads/2011/algeria>

Institut National des Statistiques et des Etudes Economiques (INSEE), *Recensement de la population immigrée et étrangère en 1999*, Tableau rétrospectif : Etrangers selon la nationalité de 1946 à 1999 : <https://www.insee.fr/fr/statistiques/2118512?sommaire=2118522>

Joussour Algérie, Auteur : Soraya Akkouche, *Manuel pour les associations algériennes*, Edition : Fondation Friedrich Ebert, 2012

Hasan, Noorhaidi ; Hendricks, Bertus ; Janssen, Floor ; Meijer, Roel, *Counter-terrorism strategies in Indonesia, Algeria, and Saud Arabia*, published by the Netherlands Institute of International Relations 'Clingendael', 2012.

OECD, *African Economic Outlook*, 2003

Essays

Aït-Aoudia, Myriam, *La genèse d'une mobilisation partisane : continuités et politisation du militantisme caritatif et religieux au sein du FIS*, *Politix*, 2013/2, n°102, p. 129-146.

Aït-Aoudia, Myriam, *Des émeutes à une crise politique : Les ressorts de la politisation des mobilisations en Algérie en 1988*, *Politix*, 2015/4, n°112, p. 59-82.

Aït-Chaalal, Amine, *L'Algérie depuis 1962 : retour sur une histoire contrastée*, *Revue internationale et stratégique*, 2002/2, n°46, p. 61-72.

Alcaraz, Emmanuel, *La guerre d'indépendance algérienne : une mémoire disputée dans le champ politique algérien*, *Cahiers d'histoire. Revue d'histoire critique*, 130, 2016, p. 125-146. Online: <http://journals.openedition.org/chrhc/5017>

Aronson, Adria Lawrence, *Colonial Approaches to Governance in the periphery: direct and indirect rule in French Algeria*, *Comparative politics workshop*, University of Chicago, May 2017

Ashour, Omar, *Islamist De-Radicaliation in Algeria: Successes and Failures*, *The Middle East Institute Policy Brief*, n° 21 November 2008.

Benramdane, Djamel, *Les associations algériennes: des acteurs émergents en manque de reconnaissance*, Juin 2015

Benkada, Saddek, *La revendication des libertés publiques dans le discours politique du nationalisme algérien et de l'anticolonialisme français (1919-1954)*, *Insaniyat*, n°25-26, p. 179-199, 2004. Online: <http://journals.openedition.org/insaniyat/6387>

Botha, Anneli, *Terrorism in the Maghreb, the transnationalisation of domestic terrorism*, Chapter 2 *Terrorism in Algeria*, monograph n°144, June 2008.

Boubekeur, Amel, *Salafi and radical politics in postconflict Algeria*, *Carnegie Middle East Center, Carnegie Papers*, n°11, September 2008

Boubekeur, Amel, *Lessons from Algeria's 2009 presidential election*, 13 April 2009, *Carnegie Middle East Center*: <https://carnegie-mec.org/2009/04/13/lessons-from-algeria-s-2009-presidential-election-pub-22983>

Boubekeur, Amel, *Rolling either way? Algerian entrepreneurs as both agents of change and means of preservation of the system*, *The Journal of North African Studies*, 18:3, 2013, p. 469-481

Boukhars, Anouar, *Algerian foreign policy in the context of Arab Spring*, 14 January 2013, *Carnegie Middle East Center*: <http://carnegieendowment.org/2013/01/14/algerian-foreign-policy-in-context-of-arab-spring-pub-50613>

Bourrat, Flavien, *L'armée algérienne: un Etat dans l'Etat ?*, *Les Champs de Mars*, vol. 23, n°1, 2012, p. 21-37.

Darbouche, Hakim: *Algeria's failed transitions to a sustainable politic coming to yet another crossroads*, MEDPRO Technical Report n°8, October 2011.

Darbouche, Hakim, *Algeria's chequered democracy experiment*, in Emerson Michael and Youngs Richard, *Democracy's plights in the European neighbourhood. Struggling transitions and proliferating dynasties*, Centre for European policy studies (CEPS), 2009, p. 148-155.

Fabiani, Riccardo, *Algerian Islamists, Fragmented and Irrelevant*, 14 April 2017, Carnegie Middle East centre: <http://carnegieendowment.org/sada/68679>

Frémeaux, Jacques, *Abd el-Kader, chef de guerre (1832-1847)*, *Revue historique des armées*, 250, 2008, p. 100-107. Online: <http://journals.openedition.org/rha/194>

Gacon, Stéphane, *Les amnisties de la guerre d'Algérie (1962-1982)*, *Histoire de la justice* 2005/1, n°16, p. 271-279.

Ghanem-Yazbeck, Dalia, *Limiting change through change: Key to Algerian regime's longevity*, 8 May 2018, Carnegie Middle East Centre: <https://carnegie-mec.org/2018/05/08/limiting-change-through-change-key-to-algerian-regime-s-longevity-pub-76237>

Ghanem-Yazbeck, Dalia, *Future of Algeria's main Islamist party*, 14 April 2015, Carnegie Middle East Centre: <http://carnegie-mec.org/2015/04/14/future-of-algeria-s-main-islamist-party-pub-59769>

Hachemaoui, Mohammed, *Qui gouverne (réellement) l'Algérie ?*, *Politique africaine*, 2016/2 (n°142), p. 169-190

Joffé, Georges, *The role of violence within the Algerian Economy*, *Journal of North African Studies*, 7, 1, 2002

Khatun, Rabeya, *Analysis of the causes of the independent movement of Algeria*, *IOSR Journal of Humanities and social science (IOSR-JHSS)*, volume 19, issue 6, ver. V, June 2014, p. 79-95

Khellil, Mohand, *L'émigration algérienne en France aux XXè siècle. Un exil planifié*, *Hommes & Migrations*, vol. 1295, n°1, 2012, p. 12-25. Online: <http://journals.openedition.org/hommesmigrations/1495> ; DOI : 10.4000/hommesmigrations.1495

Labat, Séverine, *Islamisme et mouvement social en Algérie*, *Vingtième Siècle. Revue d'Histoire*. 2003/3, n°79, p. 3-18.

Labat, Séverine, *Ce héros anonyme vient de très loin. C'est le murmure des sociétés...* (Michel Certeau, *L'intervention du quotidien*, 1/ Arts de faire, Gallimard), *Confluences Méditerranée*, 2011/3, n°78, p. 173-191.

Labat, Séverine ; Taussig, Sylvie, *La résistance de la société contre les islamistes en Algérie*, *Cités*, 2004/1, n017, p. 113-120.

Lalami, Feriel, *L'enjeu du statut des femmes durant la période coloniale en Algérie*, *Nouvelle Questions Féministes*, 2008/3, vol. 27, p. 16-27.

Lazreg, Marnia, *The eloquence of Silence. Algerian women in question*, New York & London Routledge, 1994.

Levine, Philippa, *Gendering decolonisation*, *Histoire@Politique*, 2010, vol. 11, n°2, p. 9.

- Lilley, Kelly, *A policy of violence: the case of Algeria*, E-International relations students, 11 September 2012. Online: <http://www.e-ir.info/2012/09/12/a-policy-of-violence-the-case-of-algeria/>
- Lounnas, Djalil, *La stratégie algérienne face à AQMI*, *Politique étrangère*, 2013/3, Automne, p. 147-157.
- Lowi, Miriam, *Oil wealth and the poverty of politics: Algeria compared*. Cambridge Middle East Studies, 2009
- Martinez, Luis, *Algérie : Les massacres de civils dans la guerre*, *Revue internationale de politique comparée*, 2011/1, vol. 8, p. 43-58/
- Merad, Ali, *Regards sur l'enseignement des musulmans en Algérie (1880-1960)*, *Confluent*, juin-juillet 1963, n° 32 et 33, p. 595-646.
- Mohand-Amer, Amar, *Les wilayas dans la crise du FLN de l'été 1962*, *Insaniyat*, 65-66, 2014, p. 105-124. Online: <http://journals.openedition.org/insaniyat/14796>
- Ottaway, David; Ottaway, Marina, *Algeria: The politics of a socialist revolution*, Berkeley: University of California Press, 1970.
- Peyroulou, Jean-Pierre ; Tengour, Ouanassa Sairi ; Thénault, Sylvie, *1930-1880 : La conquête coloniale et la résistance des Algériens*, in Bouchène Abderrahmane, *Histoire de l'Algérie à la période coloniale*, La Découverte « Poche / Essais », 2014, p. 17-44.
- Quandt, William B., *Algeria's transition to what?*, *The Journal of North African Studies*, vol. 9, n°2, Summer 2004, p. 82-92.
- Quandt, William B., *Revolution and Political Leadership: Algeria, 1954-1968*, Cambridge: MIT Press, 1969.
- Rahal, Malika, *Algeria, Nonviolent resistance against French colonialism, 1830s-1950s*. Maciej J. Bartkowski. Rienner, p. 107-223, 2013.
- Roberts, Hugh, *Demilitarizing Algeria*, *Carnegie Paper*, Carnegie Endowment Middle East Program, number 86, May 2007.
- Shabafrouz, Miriam, *Oil and the eruption of the Algerian civil war: a context-sensitive analysis of the ambivalent impact of resources abundance*. German Institute of Global and Areas Studies (GIGA), Research programme "Violence and security", Working Paper n°118, January 2010
- Sorenson, David, *Civil-military relations in North Africa*, Volume 14, Winter 2007, Number 4, Middle East Policy Council. Online: <https://www.mepc.org/journal/civil-military-relations-north-africa>
- Sour, Lotfi, *The Algerian domestic strategy of counter-terrorism, from confrontation to national reconciliation*, *Pol. Sc. Int.* XII, 2, January 2015
- Steele, Ryan D., *Violence in Algeria: From colony to independent nation*, 2017, Student theses, papers and projects (History). 62
- Thoral, Marie-Cecile, *French colonial counter-insurgency: General Bugeaud and the conquest of Algeria, 1840-47*, *British Journal of Military History*, Volume 1, Issue 2, February 2015
- Tlemçani, Rachid, *Civil strife and national reconciliation*, *Carnegie Middle East Center*, number 7, February 2008.

Tlemçani, Rachid, *The purge of powerful Algerian generals: Civil-military reform or presidential grab power?*, 12 February 2016, Al Jazeera Centre for Studies.

Turshen, Meredith, *Algerian women in the Liberation struggle and the civil war: From active participants to passive victims?*, Social Research vol. 69, No. 5, 2002

Volpi, Frédéric, *Algeria versus the Arab Spring*, *Journal of Democracy*, Volume 24, Number 3, July 2013, p. 104-115, The Johns Hopkins University Press

Willing Balch, Thomas, *French colonization in North Africa*, *The American Political Review Science Review*, vol. 3, n°4, Nov. 1909, p. 539-551

Watanabe, Lisa, *Algeria: Stability against all odds ?*, CSS Analyses, n°29, May 2017

Willis, Michael J., *The development of the Islamist movement in Algeria*, Durham theses, Durham University, 1995

Werenfels, Isabelle, *An equilibrium of instability: Dynamics and reproduction mechanisms of Algeria's political system*, *Confluences Méditerranée*, 2009/4, n° 171, p. 179-194.

Zouache, Abdellah, *The economics of Algeria since independence*, Jaargang 46, Nummer 3, 2012

Newspapers

Algérie Presse Service (APS), *Lutte antiterroriste : L'expérience algérienne, un modèle à suivre au Maghreb, en Afrique et en Europe*, 10 July 2017.

Al Jazeera, *Algerian plant hit by rocket attack*, 18 March 2016

Greenhouse, Steven, *Algeria's misfortune: 'One quick blow' from oil*, *New York Times*, 12 October 1988

New York Times, *Islamic Strike in Algeria: a Mistake, then arrests*, 26 July 1991

New York Times, *Algeria to arm more civilians for fight against Islamic militants*, 22 January 1998

Ould Khettab, Djamilia, *Oil price slump threatens to erode Algeria status quo*, *Al Jazeera*, 3 February 2015

Ould Khettab, Djamilia, *Q&A Ali Benflis' take on Algerian politics*, *Al Jazeera*, 2 July 2015

Ould Khettab, Djamilia, *The 'Black Decade' still weighs heavily on Algeria*, *Al Jazeera*, 3 November 2015

Ould Khettab, Djamilia, *Algeria a 'symbolic target' for ISIL*, *Al Jazeera*, 30 December 2015

Ould Khettab, Djamilia, *Jailed journalist Mohamed Tamalt die in coma*, *Al Jazeera*, 16 December 2016

Rahal, Malika, *Why Algeria's independence was a miracle*, *Middle East Eye*, 7 July 2017

Youssef, Ibrahim, *Militant muslims grow stronger as Algeria economy weakens*, *The New York Times*, 25 June 1990: <https://www.nytimes.com/1990/06/25/world/militant-muslims-grow-stronger-as-algeria-s-economy-weakens.html>