

**DEMOCRATIC AND POPULAR REPUBLIC OF ALGERIA
PLATFORM FOR NATIONAL UNDERSTANDING**

I. PREAMBLE:

1 – For several years Algeria has been living through a crucial stage in its history. Thanks to their maturity and patriotism, the Algerian people have been able to withstand all attempts to destabilise the country. Taking inspiration from their history marked by struggles for their liberty and dignity and faithful to the message of the Revolution of November 1st 1954 and to the pledge made to its martyrs, the people have set themselves the task of building a pluralist democracy, strengthened by its national values.

2- The November Revolution was the expression of the will of the people to recover national sovereignty and build a strong and respected State, based on pluralist democracy. It was both the extension and the crowning achievement of all of the resistance struggles of the Algerian people against the occupying forces.

3 – The November Revolution was also a work of consolidation of the Algerian character in all its forms, a national character strengthened by its Islam, Arab and Amazigh identities.

4 – Algeria has recovered its national independence and regain its place among the community of Nations [Concert des Nations], thanks to the unity and mobilisation of its people.

5 – The sacrifices endured by the Algerian people during the November Revolution have contributed to the strengthening and deepening of democracy and fundamental liberties, in an independent Algeria, an Algeria of national enlightenment and development.

6 – The Algerian Revolution provides an example for the peoples of the Third World. It has helped to consolidate the independence movements of these peoples.

7- Independent Algeria has made great advances in all domains of economic, social and cultural life. It has expanded knowledge and culture for the benefit of the entire population. It has worked to construct a strong and respected Nation State, of which its people may rightly be proud.

8 – But this Algeria of development, of productive work and of many specific achievements, was destined to take many wrong turns because of errors made and a narrow vision in which the higher interests of the Nation were sacrificed and the legitimate needs of the people were denied.

9 – The people hoped for change and fought for it in tragic circumstances, but a lack of vision in which the same mistakes were made thwarted the citizens' desire for this.

10. Against a background of a deteriorating socio-economic situation, political and religious manipulation, and violence, the State has been seriously weakened, and its retreat has exposed the country to grave dangers.

11. Hence the whole population had to endure the national crisis. Its integrity was particularly threatened by terrorist violence. It was also subject to serious threats to and divergences from its sacred religion, in flagrant violation of the Constitution and the Laws of the Republic.

12. Thanks to its citizens' patriotic awakening, it was possible to end this destabilisation of the countries' institutions. This leap forward would turn the situation around, and lead to the organisation of a National Consensus Conference resulting in the adoption of a Platform. This Conference enabled some organs of transition to be put in place, and for elections to be held in a pluralist democratic environment. It meant that the process of restoring national stability could also begin.

13. The pluralist presidential election of November 16, 1995, an essential step towards a global solution to the crisis, enabled the Algerian people to exercise their choice freely and democratically for the first time in the history of independent Algeria. This sovereign choice expressed by the Algerian people gave the country its first legitimate institution.

14. Therefore and thanks to the eloquent message of November 16, 1995, the Algerian people were able to clearly reaffirm their resolute attachment to unity, and the development of the nation. They made clear their wish to build a strong and democratic State, a State built on the national values of tolerance, dialogue and understanding.

II. CONSTITUTIVE ELEMENTS OF THE PLATFORM FOR NATIONAL UNDERSTANDING

15 – The national dialogue embarked on by the President of the Republic, was open to all political forces and to civil society in general, with due respect for national values and norms. This highlighted a common will to work to consolidate a pluralist democracy and to build the institutional foundations of the State based on free and fair elections.

16 – To this end the participants in the Conference of National Understanding:

- convinced of the need to provide the pluralist political system with a coherent framework,
- wishing to work towards the strengthening of democratic culture, based on respect for republican principles,
- respectful of national values and wishing to strengthen, promote and defend the superior interests of the Nation, aiming to strengthen the foundations of the new pluralist political system, and to build the institutional framework, and to pursue these objectives while respecting:
 - o the fundamental components of national identity,
 - o the broad principles of political pluralism,
 - o and democracy, the sovereign choice of the people of Algeria.

1/ THE BASIC COMPONENTS OF NATIONAL IDENTITY

17 – In order to develop a pluralist democracy within a republican State and a united Nation with a clearly preserved identity, we must protect from the field of competitive politics and any partisan or political exploitation, the fundamental components of our national identity, which is the common heritage of every Algerian, namely:

- Islam,
- Arab,
- Berber.

- ISLAM:

18 – The people of Algeria are a Muslim people. Islam is the State Religion and is a fundamental component of Algerian identity.

19 – Islam, our sacred religion, must be protected from any behaviour or manipulation which in any way exposes it to “fitna”, and must be protected from any political manipulation.

20 – Islam has been a fundamental factor in mobilising the Algerian people’s capacity to resist and fight foreign aggression, and any attempt to destroy their national character. They have drawn moral energy and strength from the justice, equality and tolerance of the Islamic religion in their victorious defeat of colonialism.

21 – Islam has cemented together Algerian society and has made of the Algerian people a united population, attached to the same land, beliefs, and language, that of the Quran and of the divine Message. The Algerian Revolution has made Islam an essential factor in uniting the Nation and helping it to flourish.

22 – The Algerian State will continue to mobilise all means possible to preserve and promote forever the values if Islam founded on tolerance, brotherhood, solidarity, liberty, justice and progress.

23 – The Algerian State will also ensure that all places of worship are used only for their original purpose

- ARAB:

24 – Arabic-Muslim values provide the Arab dimension of the national identity of the Algerian people.

25 – The Arabic language has expanded and helped to spread the sacred Message to which the Algerian people have faithfully subscribed, and confirmed their attachment to Arabic as the national language. The Algerian people have contributed brilliantly to the development of the Arabic language, using it to help unite the nation and to withstand colonialism’s constant attempts to destroy their national identity.

26 – The Arabic language, a basic attribute of the Algerian people, is one of the basic elements of national identity. It must be protected from any political, ideological or partisan instrumentalisation. State structures shall continue to be used to promote and develop it as the national and official language of the country.

- BERBER :

27 – Every Nation recognises itself in its History, which reflects its unity on the basis of its origins. This is the basis for specifying the personality and national identity of the Algerian Nation, which includes Berber, the heritage of all Algerians.

28 – The Berber dimension is a fundamental component of national identity. The State shall rehabilitate the Berbers, and promote the Berber language in the education, cultural and communication sectors.

29 – As for the other components of national identity, it is in the Nation's interests to protect the Berbers from any partisan or political exploitation.

2/ THE FOUNDING PRINCIPLES OF POLITICAL PLURALISM

30 – In the area of practical politics, the founding principles of political pluralism embody the constitutional and democratic rules which the Algerian people have chosen. Hence, all of the stakeholders in the political life of the nation and all electoral candidates are governed by a national or local political mandate. These principles ensure the proper functioning of democracy and are:

- Respect for and implementation of the principles of November 1st, 1954,
- Respect for the Constitution and the Laws of the Republic and an undertaking to comply with them,
- Rejection of violence as a means of expression and/or political action and of access to and/or maintenance or termination of power,
- Respect for individual and collective liberties and respect for Human Rights,
- Consolidation of national unity,
- Preservation of national sovereignty,
- Support for democracy which respects national values,
- Adherence to political pluralism,
- Respect for alternation in government through the free choice of the Algerian people.

- *Respect for and the implementation of the principles of November 1st, 1954* :

31 – The Algerian Revolution, with its roots in the Proclamation of November 1954, instilled respect for the basic principles which guide the progression of independent Algeria, through the generations. The consolidation of unity and national independence, the national interest above all other considerations, a democratic and social State, sovereign within the framework of Islamic principles, respect for all fundamental liberties, the mobilisation of all energy and natural resources in the service of the Nation, and the fundamental and non-transgressible principles of the proclamation of

November 1st, 1954 are the best guarantors for the construction of a democratic, just, stable and prosperous Algeria.

- Respect for the Constitution and the Laws of the Republic and an undertaking to comply with them :

32 – The Constitution and the Laws of the Republic apply to all stakeholders in political life and to all citizens. This underlines their importance and the need to respect them within the Rule of Law to which our people legitimately aspire.

33 – No violation of the Basic Law or the Laws of the Republic shall be permitted. Ongoing respect for the Constitution and the Laws of the Republic supports the objectives of the State, as well as those of society and of the political class, because their violation would endanger the Nation and threaten democracy itself.

- Rejection of violence as a means of expression and/or political action and of access to and/or maintenance or termination of power :

34 - Rejection of violence as a means of expression and/or political action and of access to and/or maintenance or termination of power is a fundamental principle of the Rule of Law, of democracy and of any society which aspires to the development and well-being which is needed for stability.

35 – The Algerian people, who desire security and national stability, unequivocally, massively and actively reject violence as a means of expression and/or political action and of access to and/or maintenance of power.

36 – Violence represents the very negation of democracy. It is by respecting the Law, and by using the ballot box freely, democratically and independently that power shall henceforth be obtained and maintained in Algeria, in accordance with the free and sovereign will of the people.

- Respect for individual and collective liberties and respect for Human Rights :

37 - The Rule of Law to which the Algerian people legitimately aspire, is the guarantor of all individual and collective liberties, enshrined by the Constitution and the Laws of the Republic, and to which the Algerian people have been deeply attached throughout their history.

38 – In order to respond fully to the legitimate aspirations and expectations of the Algerian people, the State shall ensure, everywhere and in all circumstances, respect for all individual and collective liberties. The State shall ensure with the full force of the Law that any attack on or denial of the individual and collective liberties guaranteed by the Constitution shall be punished.

39 – The rule of Law shall be consolidated with the active support of institutions, the political class, civil society and citizens together to become a real and integral aspect of the culture of the Algerian people.

- Support for democracy which respects national values

40 – The recognition of democracy was a major objective of the November Revolution.

41 – Democracy is founded on universal values which have their origin in the secular struggle of all peoples to obtain recognition for their fundamental rights and liberties. All peoples have a legitimate right to construct a democratic system nourished by their authentic national values, and fundamental rights and freedoms.

42 – The Algerian people for their part are determined to build a democratic national order which shall protect both the universal democratic values and the national values which they have developed throughout their history, in their long struggle against colonialism and to regain their national sovereignty, their fundamental rights and their liberties.

43 – In this regard, the Algerian people, through the Republican institutions including the political parties, undertake to strictly respect the principle of non-interference in the internal affairs of other peoples, and to reject any tendency or attempt to interfere in the internal affairs of the Algerian State.

- Adherence to political pluralism :

44 – The fundamental idea of liberty is the basis of political pluralism, which implies diversity of opinion, the recognition of the will of the majority and the protection of the legitimate right of minorities to defend their opinions.

45 – Political pluralism, recognised constitutionally, in accordance with the rules which govern the activities of political parties and in particular with the principle of refusing to use for partisan and political ends the three components of national identity, constitutes the essence of the democracy which the people of Algeria are determined to consolidate.

46 – This pluralist democracy may only be that which is freely chosen by the sovereign people alone in accordance with the values and the project of the Revolution of November 1st 1954.

- Respect for alternation in government through the free choice of the Algerian people :

47 – Pluralist democracy, nourished by the authentic values of the Algerian people, rejects the imposition of any single opinion or programme. Based particularly on freedom of expression and political pluralism, it requires strict respect for alternation in government through the free choice of the Algerian people.

3/ PLURALIST DEMOCRACY, SOVEREIGN CHOICE OF THE ALGERIAN PEOPLE

48 – Pluralist democracy, in which our national values, the superior interests of the Nation, and individual and collective liberties are respected, is the sovereign choice of the Algerian people, for which the State and its institutions shall be the guarantors.

49 – It is by respecting our national values, positive values inherited from our ancestors and which do not contradict the Constitution and the laws of the Republic, that pluralist democracy shall blossom and be strengthened.

50 – The present Platform is a new achievement which follows on directly from the fundamental principles of the November Revolution.

51 – The present platform also represents the development of a national political consensus concerning respect for the basic principles and national characteristics on the basis of which pluralist democracy shall be consolidated, and the institutional structure shall be built.

52 – Finally the present Platform provides the basis for a new departure for a Nation reconciled with itself and committed with determination and confidence to national recovery.

53 – It is thanks to the unwavering unity of its members and its legendary patriotism that the Algerian people shall implement the ideals of the November Revolution by building a Society attached to its national values, a Society of progress where social justice and the fair distribution of the costs and fruits of its development are guaranteed. The Algerian people, faithful to the message of November, shall strengthen their national independence and consolidate the role of Algerian peace and stability in the Concert of Nations.

54 – The people of Algeria shall build together in a spirit of fraternity and solidarity, this democratic, stable and prosperous country to which our people aspire.

ANNEX

ELECTORAL TIMETABLE

In order to provide an indicative timescale, a timetable is proposed for the different due dates:

- the referendum on revision of the Constitution shall be organised before the end of the year 1996;
- the legislative elections shall take place during the first half of the year 1997;
- the local elections shall be held during the second half of the year 1997.

In this respect, the “Conference on National Understanding” Committee has expressed its full confidence in the person of the President of the Republic to make any necessary changes to this timetable in the light of events, in order to best serve the current process to overcome the crisis.

**Liste des Partis Politiques, Organisations et Associations Nationales Concernés Par la
Signature de la Plate-Forme de l'Entente National
14-15 Septembre 1996**

PARTIS POLITIQUES

SBENHAMOUDA Boualem, Secrétaire général du Parti du Front de Libération Nationale
TALEB Mohamed Chérif, Président du Parti National pour la Solidarité et le Développement
BOUKROUH Noureddine, Président du Parti du Renouveau Algérien
KHELIL Ahmed, Président du Parti Social Libéral
DJABALLAH Abdellah, Président du Mouvement de la Nahda Islamique
MERBAH Abdelkader Secrétaire général du Mouvement Algérien pour la Justice et le Développement
NAHNAH Mahfoud, Président du Mouvement de la Société Islamique HAMAS
MALEKRÉda, Président de l'Alliance Nationale Républicaine
BENDRID Ibrahîm, Président du Front du Salut National
BELHADJ Khelil, Président du Parti de l'Union Arabe Islamique Démocratique
SASSI Mebrouk, Secrétaire Général du Parti Progressiste Démocratique
HAMIDOU Redouane, Président du Mouvement de la Jeunesse Démocratique
LASSOUED Amar, Président du Mouvement des Forces Arabo-Islamiques
ZEGHDOUD Ali, Président du Rassemblement Arabo-Islamique
MEGDOUD Foudil, Président de l'Union du Peuple Algérien
SAAD Mohamed, Président du Front du Djihad pour l'Unité
YOUSFI Mohamed, Président du Front des Générations de l'indépendance
SEDDIKI Abdelkrim, Coordinateur de l'Union pour la Démocratie et les Libertés
TLEMÇANI Mustapha, Président 'du Front des Forces Populaires
BELHAI Abdelkader, Président du Parti du Rassemblement National Algérien
LEKAL Yacine, Président du Rassemblement pour L'Unité Nationale
AINOUCHE Mohand Ameziane, Président du HIZBOLHAQ
LAKHDARI Lazhar, Secrétaire général du Rassemblement des Jeunes de la Nation Algérienne
SENIGR} Mohamed Ali, Président du Parti National Démocratique Socialiste
BOUACHA Amar, Président du Mouvement National des Jeunes Algériens et Algériennes
RABIE Naji, Président du Parti Libérateur Juste
AKIF Abderrahmane, Président du Mouvement National pour la Nature et le Développement

ORGANISATIONS NATIONALES

BENHAMOUDA Abdelhak, Secrétaire général de l'Union Générale des Travailleurs Algériens
ABBES Mohamed Chérif, Secrétaire général de l'Organisation Nationale des Moudjahidine
NAIMI Abdelkader, Secrétaire général de l'Union Nationale des Paysans Algériens et des Travailleurs du Secteur Agricole
BENBAIBECHE Tahar, Secrétaire général de l'Organisation Nationale des Enfants de Chouhada
BOUZGHOUB Mohamed Tahar, Président de l'Association Nationale des Retraités de l'A.N.P.
KHALFA Mebarek, Secrétaire général de l'Organisation Nationale des Enfants de Moudjahidine
TOUATI Moussa, Coordinateur national de la Coordination Nationale des Enfants de Chouhada

ORGANISATIONS PATRONALES PUBLIQUES ET PRIVEES

PATRONAT PUBLIC

Mr. SLIMANI ALI, Secrétaire général del'Union Nationale des Entrepreneurs Publics (UNEP)
Pour les associations suivantes:
Fédération des Associations des Gestionnaires des Petites et Moyennes Entreprises Publiques

Union Nationale des Entrepreneurs Publics

PATRONAT PRIVE

Mr. TITAH Mohamed Lamine, Président de la Confédération Algérienne du Patronat (CAP)

Pour les associations suivantes:

Association des Chefs d'Entreprises

Confédération Générale des Opérateurs Economiques Algériens

Confédération Algérienne du Patronat

Confédération Nationale du Patronat Algérien

Association pour la Promotion des Femmes Managers

ASSOCIATIONS DE JEUNES

Mr. BELAID Nourreddine, Commissaire Général des Scouts Musulmans Algériens (SMA)

Pour les associations suivantes :

Fédération Nationale des Associations des Personnes Handicapées

Association Algérienne des Activités Scientifiques et Techniques de la Jeunesse

Association Nationale des Activités de Plein-Air, de Loisirs et des Echanges de Jeunes

Association Nationale de Volontariat (TOUIZA)

Scouts Musulmans Algériens

Association nationale pour la Promotion et la Protection de la Femme et de la jeune fille

Union Nationale des Etudiants Algériens

Association Nationale pour la Promotion et l'intégration des Jeunes

Union Nationale de la Jeunesse Algérienne

Association pour la Promotion de la Culture et du Tourisme Etudiant

Association Nationale des Echanges de Jeunes

Association Algérienne de l'information et de la Communication

Union Générale des Etudiants Libres

Association Algérienne des Jeunes Intellectuels

Association Nationale Jeunes pour la Santé, la Culture et le Développement

Association Nationale des Jeunes Avocats

ASSOCIATIONS FEMININES

Mme BARKI Aïcha Présidente de l'Association Nationale pour la Lutte contre l' Analphabétisme (IQRA)

Pour les associations suivantes:

Association Voix de Femmes,

Association Nationale pour la Lutte contre l'Analphabétisme

Mouvement des Femmes Algériennes pour la Solidarité avec la Famille Rurale

Association Nationale des Familles Victimes du Terrorisme

Association Nationale de Soutien aux Enfants en Difficulté en Institution

Rassemblement des Femmes Nationalistes Algériennes