

## DIMINISHING RETURNS:

### ALGERIA'S 2002 LEGISLATIVE ELECTIONS

#### I. OVERVIEW

Multiparty parliamentary elections are a comparatively recent innovation in Algeria, and in each instance to date the outcome has been overshadowed by the process that preceded or followed it. The first, held at the end of 1991, were cancelled before the second round of voting had taken place. The parliament, which would otherwise have been dominated by the Islamic Salvation Front (FIS), never came into being and Algeria went through a period of overtly unconstitutional rule dominated by the army commanders.

In June 1997, Algerians elected their first multiparty National Popular Assembly (APN) since the country's independence in 1962. However, the parliament's legitimacy was marred from the outset by serious allegations of vote-rigging and other electoral manipulation.

Algerians returned to the polls on 30 May 2002, after the term of that parliament expired. This time the elections were marked by a high abstention rate (over 50 per cent of the registered voters).

In short, one might be tempted to conclude that in 1991 Algerians voted but their votes were negated; in 1997 they voted but their votes were rigged; and in 2002 they simply did not vote.

However, the 2002 elections carry a deeper significance, in terms of:

- Popular attitudes, a mixture of displeasure, apathy and, in the case of Kabylia, the largely Berber region which is the country's most troubled, even rage;
- Re-composition of the political space, with resurgence of the former single party, the National Liberation Front (FLN), collapse of

the previously dominant Democratic National Rally (RND), endurance of an Islamist current in the form of Djaballah's Movement for National Reform, and emergence of the Workers' Party at the head of the "secular-democratic" opposition; and

- The future course of Algeria's policy.

In many ways, Algeria is at a critical juncture: Islamist-inspired and other forms of violence that raged throughout the 1990s have been partially subdued, but attacks by the Armed Islamic Group (GIA) and the Salafist Group for Preaching and Combat (GSPC) still claim around 100 victims a month. Economic reforms that received international plaudits so far have failed to improve living standards and have cost more jobs than they have created. The return of ostensibly democratic institutions, most notably the outgoing parliament elected in 1997, disappointed expectations both in terms of origins, marred by allegations of vote-rigging, and track record, marked by an almost total lack of influence over governmental actions.

In short, Algeria has yet to recover fully from the decision to cancel the elections in 1991-1992 and the ensuing war that has been civil in name only. The country's rulers must overcome a decade of continuing violence, political fragmentation and a significant gap between themselves and their citizens. Against this backdrop, Algeria's leaders and political parties (in power and in opposition alike) face the daunting task of recapturing the confidence of ordinary Algerians. This will require, above all, a greater focus on the everyday challenges they face and an ability to translate reform programs from theory into practice. Unless they can achieve this, the political elites will have gained only a poisoned chalice.

This briefing paper examines the background and results of the elections and looks at what they

might mean in terms of Algeria's efforts to end its ten-year crisis. It will be followed by more extensive reporting on Algeria's domestic situation and the situation in Kabylia.

## II. THE CAMPAIGN AND THE ELECTIONS

From 20 February 2002 when President Bouteflika first announced the date of the elections, to the launch of the official campaign on 9 May 2002, debate was dominated by whether the vote should take place at all. While Bouteflika made an effort to provide guarantees that it would be free and fair and past abuses would be avoided,<sup>1</sup> the minds of Algerians clearly were elsewhere. Alarming levels of violence in Kabylia,<sup>2</sup> nationwide strikes and prison riots all took centre stage, and several (principally Kabylia-based) opposition parties called for a boycott of the polls, while using the unrest as a platform from which to launch a critique of the political system as a whole. The Front of Socialist Forces (FFS) in particular urged "passive national electoral resistance", arguing that the elections were pre-arranged, illegitimate and a distraction from the more urgent business of addressing the Kabyles' demands and restoring peace to the region.<sup>3</sup> The result was a strong

counter-campaign joined by other opposition forces designed to convince, and, in some cases, to pressure, Algerians to stay away from the polls.

Other reasons also help explain the lack of interest in the campaign and the low rate of participation. The outgoing parliament was perceived to have been both illegitimate and irrelevant in a system that concentrated most powers in the executive branch. Algerians had lived through two previous elections only to find that little had changed, let alone improved. The executive itself was viewed as ineffective, able to implement macro-economic reforms but not follow-up sufficiently on the micro-economic level. Unemployment officially stands at 30 per cent and is in all likelihood higher. Perhaps most glaring in this respect is that the U.S.\$18 billion in reserves amassed by the end of 2001 by the Algerian treasury as a result of foreign debt reduction and hydrocarbon exports have not translated into improved living standards or rebuilt infrastructure. At the time of the elections, for instance, and with an unusually severe drought, water reached households in the capital Algiers at most one day out of three.<sup>4</sup>

Across the board, patience with the government's inability to translate promises into material results has been running short. In the past few months alone, strikes and demonstrations have taken place across more than 30 of Algeria's 48 *wilayat* (provinces), demanding jobs, housing, social welfare, better basic infrastructure, and improved salaries and working conditions for university staff, chemists and doctors. In a poll conducted in mid-April, 48.8 per cent of those interviewed declared they had no confidence in any of the political parties to resolve the problems of the country.<sup>5</sup>

Adding to the general malaise is the widely held belief that President Bouteflika's authority is severely constrained by a senior military establishment that has not relinquished the role it assumed after it cancelled the 1992 elections.

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<sup>1</sup>An ex-general close to President Bouteflika, who played an important part in the interruption of the 1991 elections, Larbi Belkheir, explained in April 2002 that that not only would voting be "absolutely free", but that "the elections of 2002 will not resemble those of 1997".

<sup>2</sup> The Kabyle crisis was triggered by the death of a young Kabyle, Massinissa Guermah, while in the custody of the local gendarmerie in April 2001. Riots erupted as did violent confrontations between the gendarmerie and local youths. Following a period of relative calm in early autumn 2001, a second wave of protests was unleashed when Prime Minister Ali Benflis convened a "dialogue" in December 2001 with appointed "representatives" who enjoyed little support in the grass-roots movement.

<sup>3</sup> In mid-April, four prominent political figures issued a statement questioning whether free and fair elections would be possible given the popular unrest and the non-democratic nature of the regime. They were: a former General, Rachid Benyellès, the First Secretary of the Socialist Forces Front (FFS) acting on behalf of the party's founder and President, Hocine Aït Ahmed, a former Foreign Minister, Ahmed Taleb Ibrahimi, and a human rights lawyer, Ali Yahia Abdennour. Other parties and

prominent personalities also boycotted the elections, though they were not associated with the FFS.

<sup>4</sup> As of the time of publication of this report, apartment blocks of seven floors or higher were reported to have received no water at all for 20 days. See Nabil Amir "El Watan", 13 June 2002.

<sup>5</sup>Yassin Temlali "Près de la moitié des algériens désespèrent des parties politiques" [www.algeria-interface.com](http://www.algeria-interface.com), 16 April 2002. The polling sample was 1,144 persons.

Unanswered allegations – regarding the attitude of the military in response to some of the acts of violence, the conduct of the armed forces and gendarmerie in Kabylia, responsibility for disappearances, and the lack of integrity of the judicial system – seriously undermine the legitimacy of the civilian establishment.<sup>6</sup> Abuses of power, arbitrary governance and the excessive use of force in subduing popular unrest generally are blamed on an unaccountable and secretive group of senior military officers, popularly referred to as “*les décideurs*” or “*le pouvoir*”. While the army’s primary function has been to combat the Islamist groups that took up arms after the FIS was deprived of its victory and that continue murderous activities to this day, it also has a say in a far broader range of policy issues and a stake in their outcome.

Viewed as unresponsive to popular socio-economic demands, captive to a small group of unaccountable decision-makers and plagued by earlier vote rigging, in other words, the regime lacked the credibility to mobilise voters.

Twenty-three parties stood at the elections together with 123 lists of independent candidates though only seven parties received any significant number of votes. In the early stages of the campaign, candidates attempted to focus on the substance of their programs though they were compelled by low attendance at rallies and the virtual inability to campaign in Kabylia to defend the very notion of the election itself.<sup>7</sup> One paradoxical result of this lack of interest was that parties found themselves having to actively reach out to voters and use innovative campaigning tools (e.g., the National Liberation Front developed a rap song directed at youth).<sup>8</sup>

The ultimate message of the elections was, in this respect at least, unambiguous. A mere 46.17 per

cent of the electorate went to the polls according to official figures – the lowest turnout in Algeria’s history as an independent nation, and far less than the 65.49 per cent officially recorded as having participated in 1997.<sup>9</sup> As expected, turnout was particularly low in the region of Kabylia where the boycott movement was strongest and one of the main organisations (the *co-ordination des arouch, dairas et communes*<sup>10</sup>) actively prevented voting in many locations. In some cities in Kabylia, turnout was as low as 2 per cent (1.87 per cent. in Tizi Ouzou, the capital of Greater Kabylia; 2.62 per cent in Bejaïa, the capital of Lesser Kabylia). Even those percentages may have been inflated as a result of the “special vote” of security forces stationed there.<sup>11</sup>

Some Kabyles were prevented from voting not by the actions of the pro-boycott forces but by those of the government. Indeed, fearing an escalation of violence in several localities in Kabylia, Yazid Zerhouni, the Minister of Interior, ordered the closure of a number of polling stations on the morning of the vote.<sup>12</sup> The strong evidence that people were prevented from voting casts serious doubt on the validity of the results in this region and on the Constitutional Council’s decision to

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<sup>9</sup>Even these low participation figures have been challenged as being vastly inflated, both by the parties that chose to boycott the elections and by some who participated in them, including the Democratic National Rally and the Movement of Society for Peace. All figures are based on the official validation of the results by the Constitutional Council on 3 June 2002. Even though these figures showed significant discrepancies with the results announced by the Minister of Interior on 31 May 2002, the overall distribution of seats changed in only one case (one seat was taken from the Democratic National Rally in favour of the Independents). The results may still change as more than 100 protests have been lodged with the Constitutional Council. For the Constitutional Council’s results, see [www.aps.dz](http://www.aps.dz).

<sup>10</sup>The CADC is the most prominent of several co-ordinating bodies for the semi-organised resistance of local councils at the district (*daira*) and communal (*communes*) level in Kabylia. The ‘*arouch*’ is a term that denotes traditional local communities in Kabylia, but it has been adapted to refer to the inclusive and theoretically consultative basis of the ‘citizens’ movement that has mobilised since April 2001 in Kabylia.

<sup>11</sup>According to ICG interviews carried out on 9 June 2002 in Tizi Ouzou, the “special vote” amounted to 8,758 votes, meaning that only an estimated 1,694 local residents took part in the election.

<sup>12</sup>ICG eyewitness accounts, Tizi Ouzou, 30 May 2002, evoked the courage of individuals who tried to vote despite threats to their personal security and these other obstacles.

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<sup>6</sup>An independent report commissioned by the government to examine the management of unrest in Kabylia and known as the Issad report, for example, highlighted areas where security forces had exceeded their powers, but the larger issues raised in the report have not been addressed since its release in December 2001.

<sup>7</sup>Only Louisa Hanoune, the leader of the Trotskyist Workers’ Party (PT), managed to hold campaign meetings in the two main cities of Kabylia, Tizi Ouzou (the capital of Greater Kabylia) and Bejaïa (the capital of Lesser Kabylia) during May 2002.

<sup>8</sup>ICG interview, Algiers, June 2002.

certify them. That decision arguably failed to uphold the electors' right to vote. If this issue is left unaddressed, it would constitute a grave precedent with respect to universal rights associated with elections.

In other areas as well, Algerians stayed away from the polls. In Algiers, nearly 70 per cent of the electorate failed to vote. Even in the southern and central parts of the country, traditionally areas of high participation rates, voters declined to turn out. In many other parts of the country turnout was also unusually low: 41.94 per cent at Constantine (compared to 68.78 percent in 1997), 45.32 percent at Aïn Defla (70.40 percent), 45.84 percent at Ouargla (64.23 percent), 49.74 percent at Oum el Bouaghi (80.41). Even El Tarf, in the extreme Northeast, which maintained its tradition of high turnout figures with 68.81 percent, was well down from the 81.07 percent it recorded five years earlier.<sup>13</sup>

Clearly, this was a far cry from the energy and mobilisation that characterised Algeria's original introduction to political pluralism a decade earlier. Deepening political alienation and economic despair and, above all, the deterioration of law and order over ten years of struggle between Islamist forces and a narrow power apparatus have taken their toll.

### III. THE OUTCOME

A preliminary note regarding the tabulation of results is in order. The Minister of the Interior communicated initial results on 31 May 2002. These subsequently were modified, without explanation, by the Constitutional Council. The revised figures are puzzling, to say the least. The Council gave no figures for votes going to parties that failed to win seats, detailed results remain unavailable, and adding up the votes tallied by the Council yields strange results.<sup>14</sup> This does not necessarily mean

that the figures are inaccurate but rather that full and logical justifications have been wanting. That hardly anyone in Algeria has chosen to make an issue out of this or to demand an explanation<sup>15</sup> speaks volumes about how seriously the public is taking these elections and the political process as a whole.

The elections saw the clear victory of the National Liberation Front (FLN), which, thirteen years after the end of its single-party rule, was able to capture an absolute majority of parliamentary seats. They also saw the demise of the Democratic National Rally, which was created on the eve of the 1997 elections in which its victory was marred by serious allegations of fraud. On the Islamist side of the spectrum, the elections marked a reshuffling of the deck, as the Movement of National Reform/el-Islah founded in 1999 took first place over the Movement of Society for Peace. Finally, the Workers' Party of Louisa Hanoune, a Trotskyist, did well, emerging as the principal non-Islamist opposition party.

Although the elections by and large took place in relative calm – Kabylia excepted – some observers and party leaders unsurprisingly cast doubt on their fairness. Voters were said to have been encouraged to vote for the FLN, ballots for certain parties reportedly were missing and, as in the past, a number of parties disputed the results. In interviews with ICG, some claimed that procedures were transparent and proper during the vote itself, but that the rigging took place before and after. So far, these allegations remain unverifiable.<sup>16</sup>

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According to the figures provided by the Constitutional Council, parties and independents that won seats received 5,265,721 votes. If, as reported by the Council, the total of valid votes cast was 7,420,867, it follows that 2,155,146 valid votes are unaccounted for. The Council does not provide figures for the fourteen parties that failed to meet the threshold to gain a single seat, so it is reasonable to assume that those 2,155,146 went to them. But that would mean that, on average, these parties polled no less than 153,989 votes each, or more than ten times the number attributed by the Council to the Movement for National Undertanding (MEN), which gained one seat, nearly eight times the number attributed to the Algerian Renewal Party (PRA), which also gained one seat, and 1.35 times the number attributed to the Algerian National Front (FNA), which gained eight. If nothing else, this is a mystery.

<sup>15</sup> Ahmed Djeddaï, from the Front of Socialist Forces, was one exception.

<sup>16</sup> ICG interview with a deputy from MRN/al-Islah, Algiers, 11 June 2002; ICG interviews with foreign witnesses, June 2002.

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<sup>13</sup> Turn-out data from Algerian Ministry of Foreign Affairs website (<http://www.mae.dz>) and *Journal Officiel de la République Algérienne*, No. 40, 11 June 1997 (Proclamations - Conseil Constitutionnel - Annexe Tableau no. 3 Relatif à la participation au niveau national).

<sup>14</sup> The figures provided by the Interior Ministry on 31 May and by the Constitutional Council on 3 June can be found in the tables appearing at the end of this briefing paper.

## A. THE FLN

The National Liberation Front (FLN) emerged as the overall winner by margins that surprised even its most committed activists. The FLN's 35.5 per cent share of the vote (as compared to 16.1 per cent in 1997) and 199 seats (up from 62) in the 389-seat Assembly mark a significant change in the make-up of the Assembly, where no party had enjoyed an absolute majority. It is a striking comeback for an organisation that was Algeria's ruling (and only) party for roughly three decades but was only a junior partner in the outgoing parliament to the Democratic National Rally.

As the embodiment of Algeria's independence struggle, the FLN had long enjoyed a virtual political monopoly. During the 1970s, as Algeria took advantage of the boom in oil prices and stood at the vanguard of the non-aligned movement, the FLN was seen by many as a guarantor of stability and prosperity. President Bouteflika often makes nostalgic allusions to this period of relative calm.

In the 1980s and early 1990s, Algeria went into economic decline – a victim, among other things, of the bloated state-sector, excessive centralisation, mounting foreign debt, neglect of the agricultural sector, a staggering population growth rate and the collapse in oil prices. The rigid, repressive single-party system was ill-adapted to deal with mounting social unrest – and the FLN was increasingly viewed as a force representing maintenance of the privileges of a political class incapable of responding to the needs of a younger, post-independence generation.

In the 'wilderness years' of the mid-1990s, after the cancellation of the elections, the then FLN Secretary-General, Abdelhamid Mehri, briefly took the party into opposition. It was then that the FLN aligned itself with parties calling for reconciliation with, rather than the eradication of, the Islamic Salvation Front (FIS). In January 1995, it attended a meeting with representatives of the outlawed FIS and other parties and signed the 'Rome Platform' that called for an end to violence, political negotiations, the release of political prisoners and the legalisation of the Islamic Salvation Front. The Rome Platform's template for a negotiated solution to the violence was instantly rejected by the

military-backed interim government.<sup>17</sup> The FLN's actions led to Mehri's ouster in 1996 and, in 1997, the recently created RND displaced the FLN as the principal regime-backed party.

Internal party reforms begun under Mehri's leadership, nevertheless, left their mark. The party sought to attract a younger, more reformist minded membership. Its fortunes began to shift with the election to the presidency of Bouteflika – himself a long-standing FLN member – in April 1999.<sup>18</sup> Bouteflika appointed Ali Benflis, a former magistrate and minister of justice, as prime minister in August 2000. After Benflis was catapulted to the leadership of the FLN in September 2001, party members received key ministerial jobs.<sup>19</sup>

Although Benflis stands firmly on the side of the reformers, he has yet to subdue the FLN's conservative wing. Internal tensions remain over privatisation, land reform, and sensitive issues such as education and the status of women.

In the run-up to the campaign, Benflis won a small internal victory by blocking the re-selection of the majority of outgoing deputies, in favour of younger and female candidates. (As a result, the new assembly contains 25 women, eighteen of whom were elected on FLN lists. The previous assembly included only thirteen women.) He also made a

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<sup>17</sup> The initiative was rejected by the government on the grounds that it constituted undue foreign interference, in view of the facilitating role played by the Catholic community of Sant'Egidio which hosted the meeting in Rome.

For a copy of the Rome Platform see: <http://www.algeria-watch.de/farticle/docu/platform.htm>. Signatories included: Hocine Ait Ahmed and Ahmed Djeddaï for the FFS, Rabar Kebir and Anwar Haddam for the FIS, Louisa Hanoune for the PT, Abdallah Djaballah for the Islamist Ennahda, former President Ahmad Ben Bella for the Movement for Democracy in Algeria (MDA), Abdennour Ali Yahyia for the Algerian League for the Defence of Human Rights (LADDH) and the Contemporary Muslim Youth (JMC).

<sup>18</sup> The FLN was among the first to support his candidacy.

<sup>19</sup> Notably Abdelaziz Belkhadem, appointed minister of foreign affairs. Ali Benflis served as Minister of Justice in the government's of Kasdi Merbah (1988-89) and Mouloud Hamrouche (1989-91) and was associated with the latter's economic liberalisation programme. Following Hamrouche's resignation in July 2001, Benflis briefly served under Prime Minister Ahmed Ghazali, but resigned over the internment of FIS activists in camps in southern Algeria. His resignation earned him a reputation for probity. Until his appointment as Bouteflika's campaign director in 1999, he was as a member of the FLN's political bureau. See [www.algeria-interface.com](http://www.algeria-interface.com) *Profiles*.

concerted effort to reach out to the electorate. In contrast to press reports suggesting that rallies were repeatedly cancelled or snubbed by the electorate, the FLN apparatus ensured that Benflis enjoyed large attendance at appearances in Constantine and Annaba in the east of the country and Mascara and Tlemcen to the west. To some extent, this was due to the far superior infrastructure and facilities enjoyed by the FLN – a legacy of its many years of dominance. But it also can be attributed to Benflis' attempt to modify the party's image, admit past mistakes, and make clear that today's FLN no longer represents a coterie of vested interests.

In substantive terms, the FLN unveiled a twelve-point election manifesto that focused on the need to unify national forces and tried to satisfy a wide array of social groups. Benflis promised greater emphasis on regional development programs, particularly in the less populated South. He also tackled the controversial question of how to allocate land to farmers, rejecting such privatisation on the grounds that it was divisive and therefore harmful to the national interest. For the young, Benflis offered greater opportunities in the arts and education. To women, he promised a greater role in a society where female participation in the workforce is the lowest in North Africa. Privatisation of nationally owned companies and the Association Agreement with the European Union of April 2002, he pledged, would create jobs.

## **B. THE DEMOCRATIC NATIONAL RALLY (RND)**

For the RND, dominant in the last national assembly, the electoral results were little short of disastrous. It lost two-thirds of its seats, as its support dropped from 38 per cent (156 seats) at the 1997 elections to a mere 8.5 per cent (47 seats) in 2002. Although the scale of this decline was a surprise, it was not totally unexpected. Formed as a coalition of technocrats only months before the 1997 elections to support then President Zeroual's program, the RND developed neither a coherent social ideology nor a firm base, despite its success in siphoning support away from associations and unions that had been part of the FLN's natural constituency.<sup>20</sup> Moreover, as the leading force in

the national assembly, the RND bore the brunt of popular disenchantment and was mired in local corruption scandals.

The RND also suffered from the unpopularity of its secretary-general, Ahmed Ouyahia, who was minister of justice in Benflis's government. As Prime Minister from 1996 to 1998 under Bouteflika's predecessor, Ouyahia acquired the reputation of a politician prepared to serve whoever was in power. His image also suffered from his role in overseeing the deeply unpopular structural adjustment program inspired by the International Monetary Fund (IMF) that is seen by many as responsible for Algeria's macro-economic wealth but micro-economic poverty. More recently, Ouyahia has been plagued by his inability to satisfy public demand for judicial reforms, which Bouteflika had touted as a central goal.

Like Benflis, Ouyahia took advantage of the pre-campaign period to rid his party lists of deputies who had clearly failed to impress and in some cases were awaiting trial on corruption charges. Yet in doing so, he also dispensed with individuals who had acquired valuable parliamentary experience. This not only provoked disunity in party ranks but also led to counter lists of "independents" and defection of some members to the FLN. Coming on the heels of the FLN's resurgence in key ministerial posts at the RND's expense, commentators at the outset of the campaign were already suggesting that the RND had served its mission and had its political day.<sup>21</sup>

During the campaign, which Ouyahia led at a frenetic pace, the RND managed to orchestrate a respectable number of meetings despite the defections and frictions at the local level. The RND's main platform, in keeping with its liberal economic image, differed from the FLN's in that it backed privatisation of land. It also supported accelerated economic liberalisation in order to attract foreign investment to sectors beyond the lucrative hydrocarbon sector. To the disbelief of many, Ouyahia – the outgoing justice minister commonly referred to as the "minister of injustice"

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<sup>20</sup> This included in particular the General Union of Algerian Workers (UGTA) and organisations of former combatants in the war of national liberation and of the children of

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martyrs of the war. The UGTA is now a strong opponent of the government's privatisation program, which it blames for the loss of hundreds of thousands of jobs since the 1990s.

<sup>21</sup> See, for example, "Le RND perd du terrain au profit du FLN" in *El Watan*, 15 May 2002.

– also spoke out against widespread failings of the justice system.<sup>22</sup>

Ouyahia above all brandished – without much success – the spectre of a possible return of Islamist extremism if the RND was not returned in force. In contrast to the 1997 campaign, however, the issue of Islamist violence appeared to have been subsumed, if not supplanted, by broader socio-economic matters. Indeed, the fact that the RND was the only party to make extensive references to the dangers of Islamist extremism was viewed as yet another sign that it was badly out of step with the public mood. As Louisa Hanoune, the leader of the Workers' Party, pointed out, Ouyahia had had no difficulty serving in a coalition government that included Islamist parties (albeit representing a more moderate brand of Islamism than that of the still banned, and now largely fragmented, FIS).

The future of the party is, of course, in question. Its true and only strength had been its close connection with the regime – so much so that it was known as the “party of the administration,” formed initially for the sole purpose of supporting former president Zeroual. Its electoral defeat may have deprived the party of its very purpose.

### C. THE ISLAMISTS

The most significant development on the moderate Islamist front was the almost total redistribution of power. The third largest party in the previous assembly and a loyal stalwart of the outgoing government coalition, Sheikh Mahfoud Nahnah's Movement of Society for Peace (MSP), saw its support base halved from 16.7 per cent (69 seats) to 7.74 per cent (38 seats). The main beneficiary was Sheikh Abdallah Djaballah who, after being evicted in 1998 from the party he once led, Ennahda, formed the Movement for National Reform (MRN/al-Islah). It won 10.08 per cent of the vote and 43 seats, basically capturing the votes that had gone to Ennahda in 1997 (9.9 per cent for 34 seats). Ennahda and its new leader, Lahbib Adami, suffered a crushing defeat, winning only 3.5 per cent of the vote and a single seat.

Overall, the combined figures represent a drop in electoral support for the Islamist parties from roughly 26 per cent in 1997 to roughly 21 per cent

and a drop in seats from 103 to 82. But it would be premature to reach any conclusion from this about the end of political Islam. The FIS called on its followers to boycott the elections and many of its former voters may well have done so.

In a sense, the electoral decline of the Movement of Society for Peace and the collapse of Ennahda can be interpreted as retribution for their participation in the government.<sup>23</sup>

Beyond that, Nahnah's Movement for Society and Peace never was able to take advantage of the campaign. Armed with a lengthy manifesto calling, *inter alia*, for national unity and the strengthening of Arabic as the national language, Nahnah's campaign was uninspired, consisting largely of unconvincing announcements that he would withdraw if he uncovered evidence of vote rigging.<sup>24</sup>

Taking 43 seats on behalf of the Movement for National Reform/al-Islah, Djaballah left Adami with a humiliating single seat. In his campaign Djaballah sought to cast a pale over Adami and Ennahda, contrasting their compromises with the regime to Djaballah's principled opposition. While Djaballah appealed primarily to his native constituency in the regions around Constantine and Annaba in the East, he also campaigned, to smaller audiences, in the western city of Oran and in the South. In every location, his message was the same: electoral fraud could only be contained by vigilance at the polling stations and high voter participation. In contrast to proponents of electoral boycott, Djaballah argued that “the presence of political parties on the political stage must bring change and contribute to reinforcing the authority of the state”.<sup>25</sup>

During the campaign, both Adami and Djaballah competed for support of former FIS members, and

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<sup>23</sup> “Neither party has had anything significant to show for participation in government, in which they have been bought off with minor portfolios, and they have ended up as neither fish nor fowl, impossible to take seriously either as government or as opposition”. Hugh Roberts, MERIP Press Information Note 97, “Musical Chairs in Algeria”, 4 June 2002.

<sup>24</sup> The MSP also admits to having had serious problems mobilising its base, due to overconfidence, single-minded focus on potential vote-rigging, and in some cases, poor candidates. ICG interview, Algiers, June 2002.

<sup>25</sup> “Rami Narimane Djaballah, jeudi dernier à Batna”, *La Tribune*, 25 May 2002.

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<sup>22</sup> ICG interviews, Algiers, 10 June 2002.

both openly admitted that as much as 25 per cent of their party ranks were former FIS activists. Local candidates from both parties were vetoed by the Ministry of the Interior on the ground that they contained "members of an illegal organisation". Twenty-seven of Adami's party's list and 53 of its candidates were barred on this basis.

Djaballah openly blamed the army for closing the door to the political rehabilitation of individuals excluded from public life for the past ten years, declaring at a public forum: "The army is behind the rejection of certain of our electoral lists. Everyone knows that it's *Les Tagarins* [the Ministry of Defence] who command in Algeria and not *El Mouradia* [the Presidency]".<sup>26</sup>

Indeed, Djaballah campaigned on a platform that echoed themes previously articulated by the FIS, focussing on governmental abuses of power, nepotism and economic corruption, all of which he attributed to the absence from public life of Islamic values. He promoted national reconciliation as the best means of achieving the security and stability needed for socio-economic development. He also urged the government to swiftly address outstanding grievances, such as the cases of nearly 5,000 people who have disappeared over the past decade and whose families are awaiting official investigation. While Djaballah's meetings were not as widely attended as those of some other parties and were only partially covered by the press, MRN activists focussed their attention on winning support at the grass-roots level, out of the limelight, in localities where they were able to provide legal assistance to individuals well before the official campaign was launched.<sup>27</sup>

#### D. THE WORKERS' PARTY

In the non-Islamist camp, the Trotskyist Workers' Party (PT) of Louisa Hanoune appeared to reap the rewards of an aggressive campaign. Its support more than doubled from 2.1 per cent to 4.8 per cent. Under the rules governing Algeria's proportional system, this translated into an even more significant jump from four to 21 seats. The PT strongly criticised the "destructiveness" of the parties that boycotted the elections – notably the

Front of Socialist Forces (FFS) and the Rally for Culture and Democracy (RCD). In addition, the party platform denounced all forms of outside interference – whether through the adoption of IMF-style macro-economic policies or the terms of the new Association Agreement with the European Union – arguing that they undermined national cohesion and were at the root of conflicts such as that in Kabylia.

The Workers' Party also was outspoken in its rejection of privatisation of national enterprises, claiming that it had deprived over a million Algerians of jobs. Hanoune repeatedly and openly condemned the government for "hoarding" U.S.\$20 billion in reserve funds. She argued that while the government was busy invoking the pretext of "attracting investors who don't come", the "misery" of ordinary Algerians has been increasing.<sup>28</sup> Finally, she advocated lifting the state of emergency in effect since 1992 and convening a national conference of all concerned parties "to get the country out of the crisis into which it has been plunged for the past decade".<sup>29</sup>

#### E. THE PRO-BOYCOTT PARTIES: FFS AND RCD

Proponents of a boycott, principally the Front of Socialist Forces (FFS) and the Rally for Culture and Democracy (RCD), led an altogether different campaign. Both draw on support from the Berber-populated region of Kabylia and were thus faced early on with the decision whether or not to run in the elections, once the co-ordinating committees for the Kabyle revolt (both the *Coordination des arouch, dairas et communes* or CADC and local citizens' groups) called on their supporters to stay away from the polls.<sup>30</sup>

The leader of the RCD leader, Saïd Sadi, already weakened by his chequered career in and out of the opposition, was left with little choice but to follow

<sup>26</sup> ICG eyewitness account, Algiers, 6 May 2002.

<sup>27</sup> ICG interview with newly elected MRN/al-Islah deputies, Algiers, 11 June 2002.

<sup>28</sup> A. M'haïmoud, "Louiza Hanoune: Cette caste qui veut diviser le pays", in *El Watan*, 16 May 2002.

<sup>29</sup> A.Y & Abdou K., "Louisa Hanoune demande la levée de l'état d'urgence", *El Watan*, 11 May 2002.

<sup>30</sup> The CADC is the most prominent of several co-ordinating bodies that seek to organise resistance at the local level in Kabylia. The term "arouch" denotes traditional local communities in Kabylia and currently is meant to refer to the broader "citizens' movement" that has emerged there since 2001.



his remaining Berber constituency and was the first to embrace the boycott.<sup>31</sup>

The elections posed a far more difficult dilemma for the FFS, which has sought over the years to rise above its Kabyle roots, position itself as a national party and place both the causes and the resolution of the Kabyle crisis in a broader national context. A decision to boycott could be used by its opponents to categorise the party as purely ethnically-based. Moreover, a decision to boycott the elections would mean automatic loss of the twenty parliamentary seats held in the last legislature – together with the attendant loss of parliamentary privileges such as immunity from prosecution.

On the other hand, a decision to run carried the serious risk for the FFS of alienating its political base in Kabylia.

After two meetings that highlighted the party's internal divisions, the FFS decided in early April to boycott the elections and to launch a peaceful campaign aimed at persuading both voters and local officials charged with organising the elections to stay away from the polls. In this, they generally differed from the Kabyle "citizens' movement", whose efforts to prevent the elections from taking place included recourse to violent means if necessary.<sup>32</sup>

The FFS argued that the "peaceful national electoral dissidence" was a national movement reflecting the aspirations of all citizens, not merely Kabyles. It explained that the socio-economic problems facing the citizens of Kabylia were largely the same ones faced by all Algerians.<sup>33</sup>

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<sup>31</sup> Saïd Sadi was a member of the FFS until 1981, then leader of the Berber Cultural Movement (MCB) in the 1980s, and finally, as a radical opponent of Islamism throughout the 1990s, paradoxically agreed after 1997 to serve as a member of coalition governments that included Islamists. He left abruptly in May 2001, following the outbreak of violence in Kabylia a week earlier.

<sup>32</sup> Because some members of the FFS are part of the *arouch* movement, and given its internal divisions and lack of discipline, the participation of individual FFS members in election-related violence and intimidation cannot be ruled out. ICG telephone interview, Algiers, June 2002.

<sup>33</sup> To illustrate this point, the party chose to boycott the parliamentary session recognizing the Berber language, claiming that it was meaningless unless it occurred in the context of a national political dialogue and as part of an effort to resolve the country's other pressing problems.

The authorities prohibited most meetings that the FFS and RCD attempted to hold during the campaign on the grounds that the venues chosen were reserved for participating parties. While the high rate of abstention arguably can be seen as a success for these parties, ultimately it may prove something of a pyrrhic victory. With limited opportunities for future political action at the national scale, the FFS and the RCD soon will have to face the questions of defining their longer-term strategies and whether also to boycott local elections due to take place in October 2002 – and if not, why not.

Longstanding and deep rivalry between the two parties makes any cooperation at the national level virtually impossible. At the local level in Kabylia, however, recent events appear to have brought about a re-insertion of FFS and RCD activists – although in competition with one another – within the *Coordination des arouch, dairas et communes*.<sup>34</sup> It is unclear whether this will eventually strengthen the two parties nationally, or rather create tensions between the Algiers-based leaderships and local activists seeking to appeal more to feelings in Kabylia.

The more vulnerable of the two is Saïd Saadi's RCD. His credibility is affected by the fact that he served in previous coalition governments. His decisions, first to join the opposition, which he took only in May 2001, and then to boycott the elections have been seen by some as belated attempts to follow the mood of the party rank and file.

The FFS, while more consistent in its attitude toward the government and its regular denunciations of electoral fraud,<sup>35</sup> nonetheless must address difficult questions. Friction among party leaders, tension between its regional roots and national aspirations, and, perhaps most importantly, the inability to define for itself an effective and longer-term role in Algeria's current political setting risk rendering the FFS increasingly irrelevant to the immediate concerns of most Algerians.

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<sup>34</sup> ICG interview, Kabylia, May 2002.

<sup>35</sup> Ahmad Djedjai was quick to denounce electoral fraud, pointing to the unexplained discrepancies between figures announced on 31 May 2002 and those confirmed by the Constitutional Council on 3 June 2002.

## F. INDEPENDENTS

The real unknowns are the large number of independents (30) who were elected. Some are businessmen and professionals with technical rather than political experience, while others are dissidents from various political formations or local activists representing regional interests. Given their varied backgrounds, they are unlikely to act as a bloc, though they may provide an interesting counterweight to the predominantly Algiers-focused tendency of the last Assembly.

## IV. POLITICAL IMPLICATIONS

The 2002 elections can be viewed cynically as a mere re-arrangement of Algeria's political furniture in an assembly lacking genuine control over the executive branch. According to the constitution, ministers are nominated by the prime minister but appointed directly by the president. In practice, this has meant that they depend on the president rather than the prime minister – let alone the parliament – for survival in office. Yet, as some observers have begun to suggest, the re-emergence of the FLN may also be evidence of a new axis around which the official political system will be re-organised.<sup>36</sup>

For the FLN, this re-composition is both a blessing and a curse. Certainly, it is a striking reversal of fortunes for a party, consigned to the backwaters for much of the 1990s. Yet at the same time, its re-emergence comes at a time that bears uncomfortable analogies to 1988 – on the eve of the introduction of political pluralism.

Indeed, while the 1990s were marked by the spectre of Islamist violence, the regime's relative success in containing armed groups over the last two years has refocused public attention on the same socio-economic issues that led to the FLN's downfall a decade ago. Those issues largely were in abeyance – and in many instances became worse – while the battle against Islamist violence raged. Voters who still rely on the state to remedy their ills may have assumed that the FLN – traditionally viewed as the “party of the state” – would be best placed to address them. In this respect, the combination of the

FLN's past with Benflis's reputation as a man of integrity unsullied by the corruption of the RND and possessing a common touch may have been enough to overcome at least some residual doubts and propel the party to victory.<sup>37</sup>

Benflis' overwhelming parliamentary advantage, first and foremost, means that the FLN will have to assume explicit responsibility for the government's performance. Yet at the same time, the victory may not translate into a clear margin of political manoeuvre. Benflis's main challenge will be to overcome the widespread resistance to reform in powerful circles – including the military and the business community. Benflis' close ties to President Bouteflika may help, but they certainly do not constitute a guarantee of success. During the two years that he headed the government, Benflis often seemed encumbered by a system he did not control, that did not respond to his initiatives and that he was unable or unwilling to confront.<sup>38</sup>

A related challenge facing Benflis and the FLN will be to restore popular trust regarding who actually holds the reins of power. The opacity of Algerian decision-making and the role played by the military, will continue to undermine the credibility of the political system as a whole. With a clear majority, Benflis should in theory be able to make decisions and implement them. But a continuing lack of clarity in the institutional and power relationships between the president and the prime minister and between the two of them and the military establishment will seriously complicate this. President Bouteflika has made extensive use of his power to appoint government ministers since 1999, even if the prime minister can make strong representations on individual candidates.<sup>39</sup> In practice, the choice and appointment of ministers appears to have been the result of secret

<sup>37</sup> ICG interviews, Algiers, June 2002.

<sup>38</sup> Abed Charef, “La victoire d'Ali Benflis: Un cadeau empoisonné,” *Le Quotidien d'Oran*, 1 June 2002. There also are potential tensions between Bouteflika and Benflis that the Algerian press can be counted on to exacerbate. Within days of the election, rumours were circulating of a rift between them over the re-appointment of the controversial Minister of Interior, Yazid Zerhouni, a long-standing ally of Bouteflika's who is reportedly not much appreciated by Benflis on account of his clumsy handling of the Kabyle crisis (*El Watan*, 5 June 2002). Benflis also has been touted as a presidential candidate in 2004, a rumour that, accurate or not, could undercut their relationship over the next two years.

<sup>39</sup> Article 79, Constitution 28 November 1996.

<sup>36</sup> Roberts, op. cit.

negotiations between the president and senior members of the military establishment. In the case of Bouteflika's first government, the process took a full eight months. If Benflis is unable to choose most of his ministerial team, if Bouteflika treats him essentially as a foreman of a government primarily answerable to himself for carrying out the presidential program, and if Bouteflika in turn is accountable to the obscure "*décideurs*", public scepticism and alienation is bound to increase.

Benflis appears to be aware of the dangers lurking behind his party's success. As the election results became known, he made it clear that even with an absolute majority, the FLN would share the burden of government with other parties. "We are perfectly conscious," he said, "that no single party, on its own, can bring the country out of crisis, and for this it needs the combined means of all the parties".<sup>40</sup> He specifically left the door open to cooperation with "all political forces".

The new government line-up announced on 17 June 2002 includes five women (there previously had been only one) and more than fifty per cent new members. Most key economic portfolios remain in the hands of technocrats reportedly close to the president, with only minor appointments for the Democratic National Rally (RND) and the Movement of Society for Peace (MSP).

The option of participating in the new government was reportedly open to both Hanoune and Djaballah, but within ten days of the election they made clear that they intended to remain outside. The questions that the Workers' Party and the MRN/el-Islah face are what they intend to do with their newfound status as leaders of the parliamentary opposition, and whether they will have any success in giving the assembly more legitimacy and credibility than its predecessor and in providing an alternative, practical vision – a task Algeria's opposition, of which they have long been members, by and large has failed to perform in the past.

Their decision to run in the elections, despite the tarnished credibility of the outgoing assembly, may also give them some leverage with the regime if not with the disenfranchised electorate. Moreover, with strong nationalist credentials, both parties are relatively immune to the charge (so common in Algerian politics) of having sold out to foreign or

ethnic interests.<sup>41</sup> The FLN should not be able to rest on its nationalist laurels as a way of disqualifying – and thereby fending off – opposition critiques. Ultimately, with nationalism providing a measure of common ground between the main government and opposition parties, it may be possible for other – programmatic and policy – differences to emerge as major themes of political debate.

As a result, Hanoune's Workers' Party and Djaballah's MRN/el-Islah might have an opportunity to have their voices heard on issues like how to resolve Algeria's political crisis or how to attend to its socio-economic problems. Although belonging to radically different political traditions, their parties (with a combined 64 seats) might find common ground on some of these issues. Hanoune and Djaballah signed on to the 1995 Rome Platform and continue to believe in the need for a genuine national reconciliation to devise a larger political settlement. They could also combine forces on social matters such as raising the minimum wage, an issue for which Hanoune has vowed to fight.<sup>42</sup>

## V. CONCLUSION

The new assembly, which convened on 9 June 2002, faces a straightforward task in the months ahead: to prove its utility. Over five years, its predecessor failed to initiate a single piece of legislation and rejected all propositions from the opposition benches. The significant government bills that were approved, such as the laws on privatisation, the new investment code and the 2001-2 budget, were adopted without serious debate, even when they were introduced at the beginning of a parliamentary session.<sup>43</sup> Partly in response to this paralysis, Bouteflika chose to make increasing use of his constitutional prerogative to introduce laws by decree in the period in between parliamentary sessions – a practice that was protested more in the columns of the press than by the assembly itself. Little wonder, therefore, that voters appeared so broadly indifferent to the 2002 elections.

<sup>41</sup> Roberts, op. cit.

<sup>42</sup> ICG interview, Algiers, 10 June 2002.

<sup>43</sup> Faouzia Ababsa "Une APN sans pouvoir ne constitue pas un enjeu", *La Tribune*, 16 May 2002.

<sup>40</sup> Interview in *El Watan*, 4 June 2002.

Although suspicions persist, the 2002 Assembly may not suffer as much as its 1997 counterpart from allegations of high level manipulation. But the exceptionally low turnout will affect its credibility in other ways. Because of it, some seats allocated in Kabylia to the FLN, the Workers' Party and an independent candidate actually will "represent" constituencies in which fewer than 1,000 people voted.<sup>44</sup>

The new assembly, the government and the political parties face a number of urgent tasks:

- *To win over the nearly 54 per cent of the electorate that chose not to vote.* Disaffection with the electoral process stems to a considerable extent from the feeling that it does not matter. In the minds of many Algerians, the parliament has virtually no power, the prime minister is a tool in the president's hands, and the president is answerable only to the mysterious "décideurs".

To remedy this, there should be a clear division of labour between the presidency and the prime minister's office regarding who runs the government, decides its program, chooses its personnel and, ultimately, is responsible for its performance. Likewise, the "décideurs" need to be pressured – from both within Algeria and abroad – to give the political parties adequate freedom of action to take positions and promote them publicly.

In many ways, this may be the parliament with the last chance to establish the credibility of the present political system. Should the FLN five years from now be as discredited as the RND is today, and should the MRN and the Workers' Party have little or nothing to show for their parliamentary activities, Algeria will have run out of credible political parties.

- To deal with demands in Kabylia that, if left *unheeded, will lead to further violence.* The government will need to re-engage with the protesters before the violence, which has claimed over 100 lives in confrontations between demonstrators and security forces,

becomes endemic.<sup>45</sup> A key for the government will be to launch a negotiating process that is more credible than the previous, unproductive discussions with appointed spokesmen. Instead of seeking to divide the various interests represented in the local *Coordination des arouchs, dairas et communes*, the government would be better served to try to find a way to channel these protests and respond to them with concrete measures.

The government also should consider rerunning elections in Kabylia, given the actions that prevented much voting there. The Constitutional Council's decision to turn a blind eye has created a dangerous precedent that ought to be remedied. Moreover, assuming it takes credible measures on the ground, the government could consider engaging the parties that called for a boycott, the FFS and the RCD, to smooth the path towards their reinsertion into the political process including participation in the upcoming local elections.

- To tackle the continuing Islamist-backed violence, as well as other violence the sources of which are not always so easily identifiable. On the eve of election day, 23 nomads were killed at Chlef, 200 kilometres west of Algiers. In the wake of the elections, a new spate of macabre violence took place. On 13 June, thirteen people were killed when a bus was struck by assault rifle fire in Médea, 70 kilometres southwest of Algiers. In the capital itself, two police motorcyclists were killed. All in all, the number of violent deaths since the beginning of 2002 stands at nearly 630, of

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<sup>44</sup> Some observers have evoked the possibility of reconvening partial elections in Kabylia at a later stage.

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<sup>45</sup> The demands of the Kabyle basically are contained in the "El Kseur Platform" of June 2001 and include, *inter alia*, recognition of Berber as a national and official language, withdrawal of the gendarmerie from the region (both these requests were partially addressed by April 2002), and arrest and trial of individual gendarmes responsible for the deaths of over 100 protesters in the violence since April 2001. In a speech delivered on 12 March 2002, President Bouteflika assured protesters that the relevant individuals had been arrested pending trial, but this remains a point of contention. See Ghania Mouffok "Après le boycottage des élections, les mouvements de contestation kabyles se trouvent dans une impasse", *Le Monde*, 5 June 2002.

which around 150 are members of the security forces.<sup>46</sup>

Most recent killings have been attributed to the Armed Islamist Group (GIA), which despite its diminishing numbers, has continued to launch attacks, including within Algiers. Its stronger counterpart, the Salafist Group for Preaching and Combat (GSPC), has inflicted the majority of casualties on the army, as it continues to resist sustained counter-attacks against its strongholds. Tackling this issue with the appropriate mix of security measures and political initiatives will be one of Bouteflika's and Benflis's most difficult tasks – and one in which the generals' involvement will be heaviest.

An early test of Bouteflika's and the government's intentions will be whether the former exercises his constitutional prerogative to lift the state of emergency. Imposed ten years ago, it (together with associated security legislation) has become associated in people's minds with the abuse of power and the undue influence of shadowy decision-makers from within the military.

The question of whether the new government and assembly possess the required authority and will to seriously confront Algeria's political, social and economic problems remains open. But the high abstention rate suggests that the people already have made up their minds. This, and the general disaffection of youth, are a potential recipe for people to seek extra-institutional means of protest and change. Already, there are signs of a small, unfocused, but nonetheless rising tendency within certain constituencies to disregard traditional political channels and express dissatisfaction with the status quo in direct and at times violent ways. In other words, voter apathy should not automatically be equated with disinterest in politics *per se*, but rather in the kind of politics that is being practiced.

Since Algeria's independence, its political system has evolved through several phases: from a prolonged era of single-party rule, to a turbulent encounter with pluralism, to appalling violence. Today, it is governed by a formula of regulated pluralism that, as the May 2002 legislative elections demonstrated, is showing signs of diminishing

returns. The credit that the Algerian people are prepared to give to the regime, their willingness to take part in the political game, and their respect for the politicians involved all are in decline. It is up to the government and the political parties – both those in power and those in opposition – to seek new modes of engaging their constituents, reaching out to civil society and civic organisations, and finding credible ways to address their demands.

**Algiers/Brussels, 24 June 2002**

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<sup>46</sup> Rabah Iguer, "Près de 630 personnes tuées depuis le début de l'année", *La Tribune*, 13 June 2002.

## TABLES

[Box 1]: APN Election 30 May 2002: Official results at 3 June 2002 (validated by Constitutional Council)  
 (Source: Algerian Ministry of Foreign Affairs, Algérie Presse Service <http://www.mae.dz>; [www.aps.dz](http://www.aps.dz))

<b>Registered voters:</b>	17,951,127
<b>Actual number of voters</b>	8,288,536
<b>Number of spoiled ballots</b>	867,669
<b>Total valid votes</b>	7,420,867
<b>Participation rate (national and international combined)</b>	46.17%
<b>Participation rate (Algerians abroad only)</b>	20.84%
<b>Total number of seats</b>	389

[Box 2]: APN Elections 30 May 2002: Official Distribution of votes by party, according to Interior Ministry figures (31 May 2002) and Constitutional Council figures (3 June 2002)  
 (Source: <http://www.mae.dz>, [www.elwatan.com](http://www.elwatan.com))

Party	Number of votes received (Ministry of Interior figures, 31 May 2002)	% of valid votes (Ministry of Interior figures, 31 May 2002)	Number of votes received (Constitutional Council figures, 3 June 2002)	% of valid votes (Constitutional Council figures, 3 June 2002)	Seats (3 June 2002)
<b>FLN</b>	2,632,705	35.52	2,618,003	35.27	199
<b>MRN/El-Islah</b>	746,884	10.08	705,319	9.5	43
<b>RND</b>	630,241	8.50	610,461	8.23	47
<b>MSP/HMS</b>	573,801	7.74	523,464	7.05	38
<b>Independents</b>	789,492	10.65	365,594	4.92	30
<b>PT</b>	355,405	4.80	246,770	3.3	21
<b>FNA</b>	234,530	3.16	113,700	1.53	8
<b>Ennahda</b>	265,495	3.58	48,132	0.65	1
<b>PRA</b>	162,308	2.19	19,813	0.27	1
<b>MEN</b>	139,919	1.89	14,465	0.19	1
<b>Total votes of parties that won seats</b>	6,530,780	88.12	5,265,721	70.96	
<b>Votes of fourteen other parties</b>	880,218	11.88	N/A <sup>1</sup>	N/A <sup>1</sup>	
<b>Total Valid Votes</b>	7,410,998	100.00	7,420,867 <sup>2</sup>	100	

<sup>1</sup> No figures are available due to the failure of the Constitutional Council to provide them.

<sup>2</sup> For lack of a total for the "Other parties", there is no statistical corroboration of this figure.

**Parties:**

**FLN:** Front de Libération Nationale (National Liberation Front)

**MRN/EI-Islah:** Mouvement de la Réforme Nationale/Harakat al-Islah al-Watani (Movement for National Reform)

**RND:** Rassemblement National Démocratique, Democratic National Rally

**MSP/HMS:** Mouvement de la société pour la paix/ Harakat Moudjtamaa As-Silm/Movement of Society for Peace

**PT:** Parti des Travailleurs – Workers' Party

**FNA:** Front National Algérien – Algerian National Front

**PRA:** Parti du Renouveau Algérien – Party of Algerian Renewal

**MEN:** Mouvement de l'Entente Nationale – Movement for National Understanding

[Box 3]: Comparison between APN elections of June 1997 & May 2002 (main parties & independents only)  
 (Sources: <http://www.mae.dz>, <http://electionworld.org/election/algeria.htm>)

Party	1997 % vote	2002 % Ministry of Interior Figures/ Constitutional Council Figures	1997 seats <sup>1</sup>	2002 seats
<b>RND</b>	38.1	8.5 / 8.23	156	47
<b>MSP/HMS</b>	16.7	7.74 / 7.05	69	38
<b>MRI/Ennahda</b>	9.9	3.58 / 0.65	34	1
<b>MRN/EI-Islah<sup>2</sup></b>	--	10.08 / 9.5	--	43
<b>FLN</b>	16.1	35.52 / 35.27	62	199
<b>FFS</b>	5.7	N/A <sup>3</sup>	20	N/A
<b>RCD</b>	4.8	N/A <sup>3</sup>	19	N/A
<b>PT</b>	2.1	4.8 / 3.33	4	21
<b>Independents</b>	5	10.65 / 4.92	11	30

<sup>1</sup> Contested seats in the 1997 APN totaled 380, in 2002, 389.

<sup>2</sup> MRN/EI-Islah was formed in 1998 as a breakaway from the MN/Ennahda.

<sup>3</sup> Both the FFS and RCD boycotted the 2002 poll.



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