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# Charter

Of the

# Rachad Movement:
For the Rule of Law and Good Governance in Algeria

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## 0. Summary

Throughout their history, the Algerian people have resisted every form of domination, whether by external occupation or internal tyranny. They paid an especially heavy price to free themselves from the French colonial yoke and entertain the hope of establishing a social and democratic sovereign state within the framework of Islamic principles.

Unfortunately, the policy of murdering opponents, practiced by the military security already during the revolution, and the overthrow of the provisional government, in the summer of 1962, forced the Algerian people to live under the stranglehold of the military, which put into place a culture of coups and state violence.

These reprehensible practices have led to the multidimensional crisis Algeria has been experiencing: power is monopolised by part of the army's high command,
directly or through a civilian façade they control, the country's political affairs are managed in a mainly repressive manner, free political activity is severely restricted, the media are muzzled, civil society is smothered, the judiciary has been brought to heel, the ruling elites contemptuously regard the Algerian people as immature and irresponsible, corruption resulting from their stranglehold on the economic and financial spheres is widespread; and political and economic national sovereignty has been lost notwithstanding the propaganda slogans of the regime.

The governments that have ruled Algeria since independence, and especially since the coup of January 1992, have led the country into a disaster whose grim features are the aggravation of militarism, the decline of freedoms, political exclusion, the abuse of the law, economic and social regression, and an identity crisis resulting from political manipulation of the nation's founding values.

It has become imperative to put forward, to the Algerian people, an alternative for a radical and responsible change which matches their convictions and legitimate aspirations. This task requires that the initiators of this change be clear-sighted, sincere, selfless, and loyal to the nation's core values. The Rachad movement is born precisely to meet this imperative.

By its methods and objectives, Rachad seeks to become a means of mobilising the Algerians to make a change enabling them ultimately to live in a free country, under the rule of law and in a well-governed state. It will strive to ensure that the political authority which will govern Algeria in the future is committed to the rule of law, legitimate, civilian, sovereign, fair, social, foresighted, participatory, effective, transparent, and accountable.

Rachad is not a political party, because it believes that the incumbent regime does not make space for representative political activities, in which ideas confront one another and Algerians choose freely those given a mandate to implement the program for which they get elected. It also refuses to be a party in the current political set-up in order to make clear its rejection of having to beg the current regime for official recognition, a procedure which is unnecessary and would indicate that Rachad is nothing but the umpteenth party endorsed by the ruling clique.

Rachad aims to be a rallying political, social and intellectual force for real change in the political system, because only such a change may free Algerians completely and guarantee them a democratic space and honest political competition in the interests of all Algerians.

Rachad shall use non-violent means to achieve its goals: It shall listen to and involve all sections of Algerian society. It is also open to all initiatives for building bridges and confidence between political actors and shall seek to contribute to their coming and acting together.

Rachad considers that the rule of law and good governance will contribute to achieving a genuine construction of the Maghreb, strengthening ties with the peoples around the Mediterranean basin, and of Africa, the Arab world and the Islamic world, and realizing peace and stability in the world.

## 1. Introduction

Algeria is not well; tyranny and corruption are eating away at it. Many are those who say it.

However, few among those who denounce the injustice, illegitimacy, corruption, and social ills dare tackle the root problem: the secret services' unchecked domination of all parts of the state.

Since independence *le pouvoir* has not changed in nature even if it has changed its façade occasionally. In order to preserve itself, it has sought near-complete control of all forms of opposition, be it political, religious, cultural or through the media. It has done so by taming its opponents through bribery or undermining them through harassment and repression, or by involving them in conflicts between Arab nationalists, Francophones and Berberophones, or between Islamists and secularists, or else in regionalist bigotry.

Faced with this unacceptable situation, the opposition has not, to this day, been able to offer a credible alternative around which Algerians can mobilise to bring about the necessary change.

Under these difficult circumstances, Algeria needs a non-violent and inclusive citizens' movement to rally every section of society in order to restore hope for a future of justice, freedom and dignity. This is what the Rachad Movement was founded for. For doing so, Rachad shall reject the bogus divide between Islam, nation and democracy, and, faithful to the principles of 1st November 1954, it shall integrate them in a social project grounded on the convictions and principles that make up Algerian identity.

The present document explains Rachad's approach, sets out its principles and goals, and suggests a framework for its work. After a historical overview in section 2, section 3 deals with the crisis of governance and the absence of legitimacy in Algeria. Section 4 then documents Algeria's current predicament with an account that makes the need for change imperative. Section 5 introduces the Rachad Movement and its goals. Finally, section 6 presents an overview of the most important values and principles on which Rachad is based.

## 2. Historical overview

The geographical situation of Algeria has made it a crossroads of civilisations since the earliest ages. While the people of this land have become known for their openness to the cultures of other nations, they have also become known for guarding their freedom and independence, and for their heroic resistance against occupation and tyranny, on account of which they received the well-deserved name of Amazigh – Free men.

Algeria's history has witnessed many periods of such heroism against foreign occupation, in particular the Roman, Vandals, Byzantine, and French, and of resistance to tyranny, as in certain stages of the Islamic era.

The Algerian people have embraced successive monotheistic divine revelations, and have defended them with great sacrifices. Many tribes followed the religion of Moses (peace be upon him); and when the message of the Messiah, Jesus (peace be upon him) came, these tribes did not hesitate to respond to it. Several centuries later it was the message of Islam that was to spread in the land of Algeria. The inhabitants of this land embraced it and contributed to spreading it to other nations in Africa and Europe.

The Arabs and Amazighs fused to become a single nation, whose members shared the values of Divine Unity, freedom, honour, cooperation and solidarity. Ibn Khaldun describes this nation as characterised by 'great honour, rejection of oppression and difficulties, fighting under impossible odds, and leaving property and sacrificing themselves to make God's religion victorious'. Among the most important results of this fusion was the birth of a new regional entity: the Islamic Maghreb.

The Algerian people has stood in the way of all attempts to violate its integrity and demonstrated its commitment to its identity during French colonisation. The resistance for more than a century to French colonialism, which perpetrated the worst crimes, culminated in the glorious War of Liberation which put an end to it and held out the promise of 'a sovereign democratic social state of Algeria within the framework of Islamic principles,' as outlined in the declaration of 1 November 1954.

## 3. Illegitimacy and the crisis of governance

The multi-faceted crisis that Algeria has been experiencing can be traced back to the following factors:

- The monopolisation of power following independence by part of the army's high command, whether directly or through a civilian façade subjected to military domination;
- Takeover of the National Liberation Front, the movement which led the liberation war, and its instrumentalisation by the actual powerholders;
- The administration of the country's political affairs through force, and the elimination of all opposition which does not agree to remain subordinate to the actual power – including the assassination of opponents;
- The denial of political and civil rights and liberties, including freedom of thought, expression, association and movement;
- Contempt and patronising of the Algerian people;
- Widespread corruption resulting from the ruling elites' domination of the economic and financial spheres;
- Loss of national political and economic sovereignty.

The policy of assassinating opponents, put into practice already during the revolution, may be considered the precursor of the dictatorship. The forceful removal of the provisional government in the summer of 1962 initiated the culture of coups and the practise of state violence. Under the leadership of officers from the liberation army stationed in Morocco and Tunisia and former officers in the French army, the army gradually took over power. As for the successive governments, they have been nothing but a political façade whose main task is confined to the administration of everyday state matters: In this political set-up, the president is just an intermediary between the government and the real power-holders, i.e. the military security apparatus.

Over time, the erosion of legitimation through revolutionary history, the gradual demise of socialism, and the growing arrogance and corruption of the single party's members led to a serious deterioration of the situation which culminated in the nationwide uprisings of October 1988. These events revealed the true face of a regime whose military chiefs had ordered torture on a large scale and the firing on unarmed youths in many Algerian cities, causing hundreds of deaths. To this day, there has yet to be an official investigation into the responsibility of the security services involved in these crimes. Through these painful events, the Algerian people discovered what the military oligarchy were capable of doing in order to retain power and keep their privileges.

These events seemed to have changed fundamentally the socio-political map of Algeria, as they led to a multi-party system and new civil and political liberties (freedom of expression and association, etc.). However, this political openness turned out to be nothing but a subterfuge allowing the military institution to renew its image under the guise of democracy while perpetuating its domination over the centres of decision making. Using the secret services, the military leadership implemented an effective strategy of either cooptation or infiltration and division of the newly created parties.

The Islamic Salvation Front (FIS)'s victory in the local elections of June 1990 confounded the expectations of the regime, which started to bear hard upon the elected officials and muddy the waters of the political situation, thus causing the strike and the events of May-June 1991. The military leadership once again resorted to violence, firing at the demonstrators and detaining without trial the leaders and campaigners of FIS in the first of the Saharan detention centres.

The regime then organised legislative elections in December 1991, betting on the division that it had worked hard to sow in the ranks of the opposition, on the inflated number of independent candidates, and on the use of parties dependent upon it. Nonetheless, the results of these elections left the military leadership with no room for doubt that the Algerian people wanted real change. Rejecting the will of the people, the generals opted for the military coup of 11 January 1992, which plunged the country into a sea of blood and tears and massive human rights violations.

After the second round of the legislative elections had been cancelled, the generals decided to ban the winning party, detain without trial tens of thousands of its members, and use systematic torture and extra-judicial

executions in an attempt to consolidate their putsch. As a result of these outrages, an armed resistance movement emerged.

In response the military brass put into place a political eradication strategy focused on four axes:

1. The physical liquidation of members of the opposition;
2. Infiltration of the opposition groups;
3. Conscription of citizens into militias;
4. Outside support to eliminate the opposition and isolate it internationally.

The ultimate goal of this counterinsurgency strategy, led by the DRS (*Direction du Renseignement et de la Sécurité* – Intelligence and Security Directorate), has been to tame the Algerian people. Violence has been the regime's only means of dealing with the opposition, be it political, cultural or social.

The military junta resorted to a range of coercive methods to achieve these objectives: i) Intimidation, ii) sacking employees for political motives, iii) terrorising populations and forcibly displacing them, iv) politically motivated detention, v) torture, vi) assassinations and extra-judicial executions, vii) enforced disappearances, and viii) massacres.

The reports of human rights organisations and the press, and the disclosures of major figures in the Algerian government, indicate that the 'dirty war' cost the Algerian people a horrifying price, as the following figures indicate:

- more than 200,000 killed, many in horrifying collective massacres;
- more than 18,000 disappeared, kidnapped by the security forces;
- tens of thousands tortured and jailed;
- more than a million people internally displaced and 400,000 exiles;
- more than $20 billions worth of damages;
- destruction of several hundred thousand acres of forests through bombardments.

The Algerians paid a heavy price for the conspiracy of a dictatorial and repressive regime, while the opposition, across the political spectrum, has been unable to bring about the desired change. The deviation of some of the armed groups, the infiltration of some others by the secret services, along with the regime's arming of civilian militias fuelled the war against the citizen and spread terror within the population.

Since 1992, many wise voices have called for a comprehensive political solution to the conflict in Algeria based on the principle of dialogue and inclusion, as expressed for example in the platform of the National Contract signed by most of the active political parties in Rome in 1995. But the regime has persisted in its policy of violence and exclusion, and resorted to deceptions such as the 'Civil Concord' of 1999, or the "Charter for Peace and Reconciliation' in 2005. These cannot be considered solutions to the Algerian crisis because:

- They glorify the perpetrators of crimes against humanity and sanction their impunity by granting them an absolute and unconditional amnesty;
- They circumscribe the nature of the conflict in Algeria to 'terrorism' and 'the national tragedy', dodging the identity of those responsible for the state's crimes;
- They criminalise those who opposed the coup of 11 January 1992 and the barbaric repression that followed it;
- They seek to silence the victims of illegal detentions, torture, enforced disappearances, extra-judicial executions or massacres and/or their families;
- They punish Algerian citizens who insist on exercising their constitutional rights to freedom of speech and recourse to the law, and deny some others their civil and political rights.

To this day, Algerians continue to hope for a comprehensive political solution which does not ignore memory, truth, and justice.

## 4. Algeria today and the need for change

The regime that has ruled Algeria since independence, and especially after the coup of January 1992, has led the country into a disaster whose worst expressions are the exacerbation of militarism, the curtailing of political and civil liberties and rights, the abuse of the law, economic and social regression in addition to the identity crisis. This appraisal of Algeria's situation today is widely confirmed by numerous indicators and studies by Algerian

and international organisations and institutions.

### 4.1 The exacerbation of militarism

The Algerian state is not a political institution embodying the aspirations of the electorate. It is in fact a private instrument of the military command which licences it to handpicked civilian elites who accept the principle of civilian subordination to the military.

The army chiefs consider sovereignty as resting ultimately with the military institution, not the Algerian people. In addition to their colonial military heritage which predisposes them towards internal control of the population, these commanders think that the army is the healthiest, most cohesive part of the nation, thus entitling them to intervene in matters of government, the economy, foreign affairs, political parties, civil society, the media, the family, education, mosques, etc. in order to ensure what they call 'national security'.

The army still dominates the political system in Algeria; it holds the state's resources, has a strong corporatist identity, and is more powerful and better organised than the civilian government itself. Continual increases in the military budget, an overgrowth in the number of army and police personnel, and massive imports of arms and especially technologies for political control have greatly amplified the military's power to control the citizens, and increased their authority and autonomy within the state, while strengthening their inclination to resort to violent methods in dealing with political, economic, social, and cultural problems.

Contrary to received wisdom, Bouteflika's rule has not curtailed the power of the military. The system of militarism and state terror remains intact, in fact hardened and into its stride more than ever before.

As the Stockholm International Peace Research Institute's data indicate, arms expenditures rose sharply over the bloody decade, and have continued to rise since 1999, under Bouteflika's rule, contrary to the regional average.

The ministry of interior announced in July 2005 that they were recruiting 40,000 new policemen, raising the degree of Algeria's militarisation to no less than 30 members of the security forces (all forces included) per 1000 inhabitants – 7 times the European average (4.5 members of the security forces per 1000 inhabitants). For comparison, the world average is 6.94 members per 1000 people. Even at the height of the Bosnian War, there were no more than 18 members of the security forces per 1000 people; this indicator of militarization has only reached 20 per 1000 in Iraq under American occupation. The Algerian government has confirmed this trend in 2006, with plans to double the size of the police force.

During Bouteflika's mandate, the power of coercion and control of the army has extended even into the legislative domain: in September 2005, the penal code legalised 'the infiltration of any organisation and the use of false identities by members of the secret services'.

The removal of some widely hated generals involved in the January 1992 putsch has often been invoked as evidence that the army has withdrawn from political life. However, it is clear that the bulk of the top brass who led the coup of January 1992, and ordered the campaigns of detention, torture, kidnappings and massacres still remain at the top of the military hierarchy. In fact, the ringleader of the coup's perpetrators and head of the DRS, Mohamed Mediene, was promoted to the highest rank in the Algerian army in July 2006.

Since September 2001 and under the guise of the war on terror, the army has aggravated its dependency on foreign powers whose geo-strategic and trade interests are opposed to the emergence of real democracy in Algeria, and which provide it with weapons and military services (training, exercises, and support). History will record that it was during this period that America's National Security Agency (NSA) set up a listening post in the south of the country, and that the American CIA and the French DGSE opened an Alliance Base – a branch of the French-American Counterterrorist Intelligence Centre established in 2002 – in Algiers, and that the Algerian army participated in joint military exercises with the Israeli army in Gavdos (Greece) on 1 November 2005.

The DRS continues to control and patronise the country's civilian political life – national government, the regional and local governments, the National Assembly, the Senate, the political parties whether in government or in the 'opposition', the trade unions, civil society, the media, the mosques

etc.– while becoming the agent of the loss of national sovereignty.

### 4.2 Restriction of liberties

Algeria is still under the state of emergency imposed after the coup of 1992, which restricts the freedoms of expression, association, and movement. Basic rights such as running for election, forming a political party, a trade union, or a non-governmental organisation continue to be denied. Under Bouteflika's rule, it was decreed that demonstrations are banned in the capital, and dozens of demonstrations across the country were violently repressed by the security forces. The harassment of personalities, political groupings, and NGOs that criticise the government continues unabated. Freedom of movement is violated repeatedly every year, with a ban on Algerian citizens entering certain parts of their own country, such as Hassi-Messaoud, which have become exclusion zones guarded by the army for the profit of multinational oil companies.

This situation is confirmed by ratings of various international organisations measuring the level of political rights and civil liberties. These indicators show that Algeria is not a free country, and indicate that under Bouteflika's term in office up to 2006 no improvement has been made in this regard. For comparison, the ratings show that, over the same period, countries such as Benin, Mali, Botswana, and Namibia in Africa, and Chile and Argentina in South America have been rated as free countries. Even countries such as Morocco, Senegal, Ghana, Burkina Faso, Uganda, and Tanzania in Africa, and Colombia in South America, and Bangladesh in Asia, have been rated as 'partially free' over the same period.

Freedom of the press, already limited since 1992 by a set of security-related, legal, financial, and structural tools of control, has shrunk ever narrower since Bouteflika's re-election. Since then, many newspapers have been suspended, and many journalists fined or imprisoned, as a result of venturing to make political criticisms of the regime or revealing cases of bribery or violations of human rights. This qualitative trend is born out in indices of press freedom which show that even countries like Mali, Botswana, and Uganda enjoy a freer press than Algeria's.

### 4.3 Political exclusion

The people of Algeria continue to be excluded from the decision-making process regarding the management of the country's affairs. Since independence, when this exclusion has not been direct through military coups, it has been practised indirectly through illegitimate intermediaries.

Electoral fraud has continued to rot the national body politic. Legislative and local elections have been neither fair (partisan administration, unfair electoral laws, gerrymandering, non-transparent methods of counting votes, unequal treatment of parties, pressure on parties, candidates, and voters) nor free (limited freedom of expression and association, restrictions on running for election, on access to the voting booths, and on challenging the resulting violations).

The people of Algeria have for the most part realised that elections and referenda are not events where they exercise their will or express their choice. Just like in the colonial period, they simply serve to give a veneer of legitimacy to the choices of the regime in power, and to perpetuate its rule under a democratic façade. Knowing this, the people react with abstention or apathy, as shown by the steady fall of the rates of turnout at the polls since the 1992 coup. This trend has been confirmed by the latest referendum on the 'charter of national reconciliation'.

Algerian society is excluded from participation in the running of the country, even through para-political organisations (trade unions and NGOs), which are systematically infiltrated, co-opted, or completely taken over by the DRS. A large portion of the organisations grouped under the label of 'civil society' are completely dependent upon the government for funding, and have no function but ideological or political utility for the power-holders (support during elections, political manoeuvring, working to create splits in, or weakening or dividing trade unions and social movements etc.) or as tools to benefit from the oil rent. NGOs are meant to fill the space between the government, the parties, and the people, and contribute to building a consensus balancing the different interests of the various parts of society. However, in Algeria, NGOs have been turned into a social arm of the DRS.

### 4.4 Abuse of the law

All the components of the law in Algeria – from the fundamental law which is the Constitution to the security services charged with enforcing the law, including the legislative apparatus, Parliament, and the courts – have always simply been tools in the hands of the ruling power, which shapes and uses them according to its expediencies and interests.

Algeria is on its fifth Constitution since independence. The first, adopted by referendum in 1963, was changed in 1976 under the rule of Col. Houari Boumedienne to provide a legal framework for 'socialist dictatorship'. It was amended a second time in 1986 to dampen increasing popular anger at the time. Following the intifada of October 1988, Col. Chadli was forced to make two amendments to the Constitution, the first in November 1988, ostensibly to limit the role of the army in politics, and the second in February 1989 to establish a multiparty system. The 1989 amendments allowed real progress in the matter of citizens' rights, but they unfortunately had a short life. The new constitution was suspended following the coup of January 1992 and then amended in 1996, under General Zeroual's rule, in order to prop up a system imposed by the putsch leaders. Ten years later, it has been Bouteflika's turn to launch a campaign for his own revision of the constitution.

All parliaments since independence – apart from the one elected in the December 1991 elections and prevented from exercising its functions by the coup of January 1992 – have been no more than rubber stamping assemblies more concerned about the material privileges of its members than legislating and exercising control in the interest of the citizen.

Algeria has inherited its judicial system mainly from colonial France. After independence, the French legal code was renewed by the decree of 31 December 1962 'except for the dispositions which are inconsistent with national sovereignty.'

Up to 1975, French law remained in force, and the promulgation of new Algerian laws did not fundamentally change the legal system. However, as the legal system in France was getting updated as French society changed, the Algerian legal system remained ossified and became so outdated that the legal provisions established by French legislators to combat the insurgency during the Algerian Revolution were reused, word for word, by the regime that emerged from the coup of January 1992 in order to 'combat Islamist terrorism'.

Since independence, justice has been conceived as an 'apparatus' under the nominal tutelage of the single party, but in reality it has been used to secure the interests of the army and its auxiliaries.

The primary reason for the lack of credibility of the judicial system is the absence of the rule of law. The law has never reflected the will of representatives freely elected by the citizens of Algeria, but has been the embodiment of the force of the real 'decision makers.'

Servility and corruption have always been the primary features of both Algerian judicial system and the security services in charge of enforcing the law. The latter are simply tools of repression and domination of society.

The regime's sporadic attempts to reform the 'judicial apparatus' have led nowhere because they all were settling score exercises among different factions of the regime competing for its control.

### 4.5 The economic crisis

Starting from an extremely vulnerable position at the beginning of the nineties, due to untenable level of foreign debts and low oil prices, Algeria has managed to achieve a macroeconomic balance as a result of the upsurge in oil prices as well as the shock treatment dictated by the IMF and the World Bank, with all its disastrous consequences on society. The improvement of macroeconomic indicators should have built a basis for a sustained economic growth if it had been coupled with adequate structural changes, but the current regime has not been up to the task. In fact, even though the GNP grew at 2.7% on average per year between 1999 and 2005, with a similar non-hydrocarbon growth rate, it remains below that of emerging economies with two-digit growth rates.

The rise in oil prices completely overturned the deficits in the public finances and the balance of payments. Both recorded considerable surpluses in 2005. The rate of inflation fell from over 20% in 1994 to 3.1% in 2005, as a result of a significant drop in the prices of locally produced food products, which represent 50% of household expenditure. The

drop in food prices was a direct result of the greater availability of non-cereal products alongside lower taxes on small food farms (which make up the greater part of the food farming market) and lower tariffs on imports.

Despite favourable circumstances, Algeria remains vulnerable to the volatility of oil prices. The hydrocarbons sector continues to dominate economic growth in Algeria as it contributes nearly 30% to the GNP, provides 65%-70% of total fiscal revenues, and makes up nearly 98% of export revenues. Algerian exports are vulnerable too as they are one of the least diversified among medium-revenue countries. 70% of non-hydrocarbon exports go to just five countries, mainly in southern Europe, while most goods exported are produced by public enterprises which enjoy substantial state protection and support. The lack of economic diversification has increased the volatility of revenues. While dependency on imported agricultural food products continues to increase – Algeria is the world's biggest importer of wheat, and its production barely covers half its needs – the other sectors of the economy remain highly dependent on imported products, especially capital goods.

With the establishment of a Ministry for Partnership and Investment Promotion, a new framework for privatisation has been established, but with no real success, mainly because of the failure to persuade foreign capital to invest in Algeria.

The current regime has failed to reduce the acute dependence of the economy on oil exports and to create favourable foreign investment conditions.

### 3.6 Social dislocation

On the social front, the situation remains very tense, and the social malaise is widespread, as shown by the frequent riots all over the country. The citizen feels excluded from the financial windfall that the state enjoys, and suffers daily from unmet basic needs, injustice, nepotism, and corruption. The relation between the citizen and the regime's local representatives is becoming explosive.

Even as it becomes difficult for Algerians to get basic services such as information, transport, housing, and drinking water, the demand for these services is rising steadily, while the quality of education and health services are in dramatic decline. Unemployment is widespread, particularly for the youth (80% of the unemployed are under 30, 76% are looking for their first jobs) and poorly educated city dwellers.

As expected, the harsh structural adjustment programs of the 1990s, along with the uncompleted reforms and the lack of dynamism in the private and public sectors have been obstacles to achieving growth rates sufficient to raise the inhabitants' living standards.

The weaknesses of the educational system have been clearly exposed in the face of monetary constraints. There are major inefficiencies in resource allocation. Most of the budget is spent on salaries, which are nonetheless low relative to other Maghreb countries, and whatever is left goes towards investment or infrastructure. As a result, there has been a decline in the quality of training, and the effectiveness of the educational system itself has suffered.

The absence of any coherent education policy and the low status of the highly educated and skilled workforce, which thus find itself forced to emigrate, are the main causes of the dangerous drop in educational quality at all levels. All university rankings indicate that Algerian universities have fallen below the standard of African nations poorer than Algeria. The curricula have become obsolete and inappropriate to economic needs, which is bound to impact adversely Algeria's economic competitiveness, and make Algeria's joining the WTO or its partnership with the EU – both prompted more by political than by economic considerations – a risky move.

According to a report published in early June 2006 by the National Centre for Studies and Analyses for Planning (CENEAP), educational losses affect nearly 32% of the population between 6 and 24 year old, as 400 to 500 thousand Algerian youths are thrown into the streets without qualification every year. Nationally, only 8 out of every 100 students pass their baccalaureate. Youths no longer see in education a path to social success and many of them fall into delinquency or crime. Prostitution, taking and trading in hard drugs, suicide and the abandonment of tens of thousands of children – all bear witness to the country's social dislocation.

There is no doubt that the current system, by its nature and its methods, has proved

incapable of establishing a political, economic and social environment able to achieve growth, employment, social cohesion, and reduction of poverty, and unable to improve the effectiveness of public services (justice, education, health, social protection, water, housing, fighting corruption, etc.)

### 4.7 Identity crisis

Algeria is experiencing a profound identity crisis, torn between, on the one hand, a powerless majority that rejects the exclusion of Islam's fundamental principles from the centres of national life and calls for political, cultural, linguistic, and ideological decolonisation to consolidate the territorial decolonisation, , and on the other hand, an all powerful ideological minority which thinks of Islam as an archaic atavism and a sociological handicap one needs to get rid of.

This fracture has been compounded by a linguistic divide pitting two opposing conceptions about the status of Arabic, Tamazight, and French, resulting in the sidelining of Tamazight and the hindering of Arabic.

The identity crisis that Algeria is experiencing has also been aggravated by the antagonism between those wanting strong relations with the Arab-Islamic world, and the advocates of a Westernised Algeria, in addition to the conflict between traditionalists and modernists as well as the tensions of regionalism.

### 4.8 The need for a political alternative

Initiating a new movement or political party is justified only to the extent that can improve upon the ideological rootedness of the existing political groupings in Algeria, as well as their forms of organisation, their ties with society, and their roles and performances.

It is necessary, in this respect, to acknowledge frankly that the responsibility for Algeria's quagmire does not rest solely with the military's rule and their domination of the political system since independence; the civilian elites bear part of this responsibility too.

As regards ideology, one observes that the political parties, in their excessive partisanship, continue to appropriate references to Islam, the nation, or democracy and misuse them as tools for excluding and demonising the other side, rather than integrating them into their programs, activities and discourses in order to buttress Algerian political identity. Ideological confusion prevails in the country in the sense that the discourses and actions of political parties lack coherent conceptions regarding issues such as freedoms, justice, civilian-military relations, let alone growth, property, revenue, production, the distribution of wealth, globalisation, and international relations. This criticism applies as much to the parties in power as to the opposition.

It must be acknowledged that one of the biggest shortcomings of Algeria's political parties has been their organisational weakness.

The distribution of military coups around the world indicates that only well-organised, cohesive civilian political groupings in tune with the majority can be an effective opposition to this kind of political violence. The anatomy of political organisations in Algeria accounts for their failing to achieve this.

The parties in or close to the government – which are co-opted or controlled by the DRS when they have not been created by it – operate without internal democracy, transparency and accountability, and are completely dependent for funding on the government. Rather than training activists or cadre, they have chosen to become schools of electoral fraud and corruption.

As for opposition parties, they are weakened by internal conflict, sometimes resulting from DRS infiltration but often due to leadership feuds, internal mismanagement, and inadequate means.

The political parties' links to society also calls for a radical alternative.

On the one hand, one observes that the parties allied with the military regime interact weakly with society. Their interaction with society is limited to election time, when they come out as social agents in charge of propaganda and overseeing matters on behalf of the power-holders.

On the other hand, even if some opposition parties have developed a real social base, it must be acknowledged that there is no opposition force in Algeria effective at the national, regional, and local levels, and active

throughout the major social segments: workers' unions, farmers, professional associations, students, pupils, teachers, employers, charities, religious social, women and cultural organisations, societies, and youth and sports associations.

While considerations of ideology and organisation and social rootedness alone suffice to justify the need for launching an alternative political movement capable of correcting these failures, critical examination of the roles and performances of political groups in Algeria makes this initiative imperative.

The role of the parties close to the government is not to raise the problems, grievances, and concerns of Algerian society in the political arena. Be they 'Islamic' or 'democratic' or 'nationalist' or 'Berber', these political arms of the DRS reach parliament through electoral fraud. They are utilised to facilitate and legitimate coups, to cover up human rights violations, to maintain the democratic façade of the regime, to legalise its security, political, and economic decisions, and to attack the real opposition.

In return for these services, the military leadership grant the members of these parties official positions, well-paid jobs in the public sector, privileges, favours and protections, thus perpetuating clientelism, electoral fraud and corruption.

As for the political opposition, it has been able to represent the various viewpoints in society whenever it has been possible and within its limited means. It is also true that the opposition groups have criticised the regime and the government's activities at critical junctures. But these achievements remain very far from the potential of popular struggle and expectations of Algerian society, which still awaits a cohesive political opposition capable of conscientising and mobilising people to free Algeria from the grip of this oppressive regime.

Nothing illustrates this better than the opposition's inability to push forward the project of establishing civilian primacy over the military in the political sphere. For 45 years, no party has managed to prompt a national debate about this issue. Since October 1988, most citizens have gradually become aware of the military's control of the political system, but the political parties have not been able to create a debate about the centres of power, their means of intervention, the history and mechanisms of the army's political control of Algerian society.

Fifty years after the failure of some FLN leaders to establish civilian primacy over the military, the political opposition remains unable to go further than denouncing the military's takeover with the same half-century old statements. It has yet to fulfil its responsibility for proposing a program to enable the elected civilian authorities to control effectively the army through adequate laws, institutions, and mechanisms which minimise, monitor, and balance the military's power without compromising national security.

This assessment may be regarded as excessive or self-seeking criticism but the riots recurring throughout the country in the past six years are evidence that the space between state and society is empty of political alternatives though crowded with political actors. When the political class performs its duty of political representation and mediation, society feels it is being listened to, and no longer resorts to violence to voice its concerns. The feelings of discontent, injustice, exclusion, and despair underlying these explosions of rage question the raison d'être of the whole political class – or at least the opposition.

The military regime is deaf to the message of these riots as it is too used to quell them and manipulate them to manage its own internal contradictions. However, these protests speak of the final rejection of the current regime and call urgently for a new political alternative.

It has become imperative to put forward, to the Algerian people, an alternative for a radical and responsible change which matches their legitimate aspirations. This task requires that the initiators of this change be clear-sighted, sincere, selfless, and loyal to the nation's core values.

The *Rachad* movement is born precisely to meet this imperative.

**5 Rachad and its goals**

The Rachad Movement seeks a radical change in the conception of power in Algeria, and will work to establish the rule of law and a management of public affairs, at various levels of government, that is effective, fair, transparent, and accountable.

By its methods and objectives, *Rachad* seeks to become a means of mobilising Algerians to make a change enabling them ultimately to live in a free country, under the rule of law and in a well-governed state.

Rachad is not a political party, because it believes that the incumbent regime does not make space for representative political activities, in which ideas confront one another and Algerians choose freely those given a mandate to implement the program for which they get elected. It also refuses to be a party in the current political set-up in order to make clear its rejection of having to beg the current regime for official recognition, a procedure which is unnecessary and would indicate that *Rachad* is nothing but the umpteenth party endorsed by the ruling clique.

*Rachad* aims to be a rallying political, social and intellectual force for real change in the political system, because only such a change may free Algerians completely and guarantee them a democratic space and honest political competition in the interests of all Algerians.

Rachad seeks to be a truly popular movement managed collectively and according to the criteria of good governance.

Rachad is opposed to the regime in place on principles and will never adopt any policy that may help it recycle itself.

*Rachad* shall use non-violent means to achieve its goals, and listen to and involve all sections of Algerian society.

Convinced that no political force can on its own bring about the change expected by Algerians, Rachad shall welcome any initiative which seeks to build bridges and confidence between political actors and shall contribute to their coming and acting together.

In a world that is increasing global, Rachad considers that the rule of law and good governance will contribute to achieving a genuine construction of the Maghreb, strengthening ties with the peoples around the Mediterranean basin, and of Africa, the Arab world and the Islamic world, and realizing peace and stability in the world.

## 6. Rachad's values and principles

As Rachad is not a political party, it does not intend to present a full political program – which is within the competence of political parties. However, it puts forward a platform of values and principles it considers as a shared base of all Algerians.

Rachad is working to make the political authority governing Algeria: 1) committed to the rule of law, 2) legitimate, 3) sovereign, 4) civilian, 5) fair, 6) social, 7) foresighted, 8) participative, 9) effective, 10) transparent, 11) accountable.

This authority must implement the following values and principles:

### 6.1 Rule of law

- The state must ensure the separation of executive, legislative and judicial powers;
- The State must guarantee the inviolability of the honour, dignity, security, life and legally acquired property, rights, and privacy of all citizens;
- The State must establish political, legal, educational, and social institutions and mechanisms guaranteeing the defence and promotion of human rights for every citizen.

### 6.2 Legitimacy

- A government is legitimate only if it is freely and fairly elected by the people and serves the highest interests of the nation;
- An election is free if and only if human rights have been respected and the following liberties are guaranteed: freedom of speech, freedom of assembly, freedom to vote or run as a candidate or a party, the absence of coercion, free access to the voting booths, freedom to vote in secret, and freedom to contest irregularities;
- An election is fair if and only if the administration entrusted with organising it is non-partisan, the electoral law is protected by the Constitution, suffrage is universal, access to the polling stations is guaranteed to all, access to campaign funding is equitable, the vote counting process is open to all and transparent, the treatment of parties, candidates, and voters by the government, police,

army, and judiciary is fair and non-coercive.
- Using violence or force to stay in power or reach power is unacceptable, and will absolutely not be tolerated.
- Changeover of political power and the multiparty system must be enshrined in the Constitution and respected.

### 6.3 Sovereignty

- The Algerian state must be 'a sovereign democratic social state within the framework of Islamic principles,' as outlined in the declaration of 1 November 1954.
- The political authority must preserve Algeria's independence and security.
- The political authority must be free from any interference by any lobby, Algerian or foreign, or by any foreign government.
- The political authority must seek to eliminate dangerous forms of economic dependence in Algeria, and secure its independence in strategic domains.
- Algeria's foreign relations must be organised on the principles of cooperation, reciprocity, and safeguarding mutual interests.
- Every treaty of universal import signed by Algeria must be respected.

### 6.4 Civilian nature

- The Algerian state is neither a 'police state', nor a 'theocratic state', nor a 'secular state'.
- The army and security forces should be subordinated to the civilian authority and subject to parliamentary oversight.
- The army should restrict itself to its constitutional duties of safeguarding the territorial integrity of the nation, and defence against external threats.
- The army should not intervene in the country's political, economic, and social life.
- The army acknowledges that the people, from which it stems, is the ultimate holder of sovereignty; it must respect the political, economic, and social changes resulting from the exercise of that sovereignty.

### 6.5 Equality

- The State should guarantee equality before the law to all its citizens without discrimination by colour, race, language, sex, social status, or political opinion.
- The State should guarantee all essential freedoms, individual or collective, in the framework of the Constitution.
- The State should recognise and promote all the constituents of the Algerian identity, i.e. Islam, Arabness, and Amazighness, without sidelining or marginalising any of them.

### 6.6 Social nature

- The State must promote social justice and guarantee a dignified, decent life (education, work, housing, health) to all citizens.
- The State must guarantee all citizens, men and women, the right to political, social, economic, cultural, and intellectual advancement and fulfilment in the framework of Islamic values.
- The State must fight all forms of violence.
- The State must wage a war against social ills such as illiteracy and poverty, moral degradation, drug taking and selling, and criminality etc.

### 6.7 Foresight

- The State should be run according to a strategic vision and a foresighted policies.
- The State should advance a policy of sustainable development and take measures to properly exploit natural resources and all sources of power and manage them well while protecting the environment.
- The State should guarantee balance and complementarity in regional development projects.

### 6.8 Participation

- The State should work towards devolving power and encouraging citizens' direct participation by granting greater powers to local assemblies (wilaya, daira, and municipality) and by popular canvassing;

- The State should guarantee the right to set up associations, unions, and parties without any need for permission from the administration.
- The State should promote society's active participation in completing political, economic, and cultural tasks.

### 6.9 Effectiveness

- The State should continuously reform the civil service and reduce the bureaucratic hindrances.
- The State should reduce public spending without compromising social welfare.
- The State should respect and promote the principles of freedom of enterprise and free competition in addition to the principles of rationality, balance, and integrity in all economic and financial enterprises.
- The State should encourage the setting up of a system of monitoring and promotion by peer review in order to grant merit on competence alone.
- The State should call for external cooperation for training and acquiring skills and knowledge.
- The State should guarantee the harmonious co-existence of public, private, and mixed sectors of the economy.

### 6.10 Transparency

- The State should encourage the establishment of independent and credible balancing forces, and guarantee the freedom of the press.
- The State should put into place laws, mechanisms, and organisations to oversee the fight against corruption.
- The State should guarantee transparency in its economic and financial activities.
- The State has an obligation to establish an institution to oversee the accounts of the State and public institutions.
- The State should respect and promote moral values, and fight all forms of corruption.

### 6.11 Accountability

- At every level of the State, the elected authority must be accountable to the people.
- The people are competent to punish, and remove if need be, any members of government through appropriate mechanisms.
- The State should reinforce the role of elected assemblies to oversee the finances of the State and of public institutions through expert commissions.
- The State should promote the culture of auditing and referring cases to the courts;
- The judicial apparatus should be empowered to freely confront any recorded irregularity.

The State should guarantee, on the grounds of evidence examined by all sides in judicial procedures, the confiscation of wealth and goods acquired in an illegal manner and their restoration to their rightful owners, or if that proves impossible, to the public treasury, and the repatriation of national wealth smuggled abroad.