

## **1. What is the Rachad movement?**

The Rachad movement is an Algerian movement founded and promoted by a group of Algerians, known for their principled opposition to the ruling regime that emerged from the coup of 11 January 1992, whether as independents or as members of other organisations. After many years of opposition, it became clear to them that they should join together in the framework of a movement that would act to move and organise and encourage Algerians who believe in comprehensive change in Algeria, whatever their persuasions.

## **2. What is the Rachad movement's goal?**

The Rachad movement seeks comprehensive change in Algeria. This change involves two steps : first, putting an end to the government's oppression and its misgoverning and, then, putting in place a system of good governance. This change seeks to restore freedom, dignity and safety to the people, and integrity and security to the nation. It is meaningless to talk of reform or economic growth or cultural rebirth without first fixing the essential problem: the legitimacy of the government and the institutions responsible for administering the country, as well as the instruments for making the citizen a true source of legitimacy, monitoring the government and protecting the country's constitution.

## **3. The Rachad covenant consists of a document full of technical expressions relating to good governance. Aren't you just following this fashion the way others followed socialism in the sixties and seventies?**

Good governance is not a new fashion, but a concept rooted in our history and civilisation. It is a basic and practical concept which integrates fairness and accountability and transparency into administration, and, from our perspective, is a tool to unblock the great potentials which remain crippled by this failing, corrupt, oppressive regime.

## **Rachad's structure and funding**

## **4. Can you give us an idea of the organisational structure of the movement, at home and abroad?**

There is a collective leadership consisting of members at home and abroad, and there is a basic constitution that regulates the inner working of the movement. Some of the members abroad were announced, and others at home will be announced at the appropriate time.

## **5. All your public faces have lived abroad for many years. How can you understand the situation inside to change it?**

Some of Rachad's members live in Algeria, and many of them have never left it. Others live abroad, but remain in touch with the country through constant communication. The most important development to come with the start of this century is the communications revolution; the world has become like a small village, to the point that many of those living abroad read the papers online before the ones living in Algeria do. The interaction between local and global has reached the point that any place is effectively the neighbour of any other.

## **6. Where do you fund the movement's activities from?**

So far, all funding comes from members' contributions, in the sense that each member of the movement funds his own work himself completely. The most valuable resource our members contribute is their time, sincerity and dedication; this is the thing that matters the most because we know that the most important capital is human capital. As Rachad's efforts expand, members' contributions will be required in a manner suited to the salary of each member. We call on all Algerians at home and abroad who believe in the goals and principles of Rachad to support Rachad financially and through their efforts and time, each according to their means. The matter is one for the whole people, not for individuals. Under no circumstances will we accept material support from any foreign party whatsoever, irrespective of the circumstances. The requirement of transparency in all that relates to the Rachad movement is a key principle that we will not compromise on.

## **7. Why aren't we seeing any women among Rachad's membership? Do you think that women are not suited to participating in or leading Rachad?**

We have no problem with that – to the contrary, we would like to have women not only in Rachad's membership but in its highest ranks too. We in Rachad consider women to be an essential part of society, and hence also an essential part of any change. Women have every right to be politically active.

## **8. I like the principles of the Rachad movement and want to join it. What should I do?**

To join us, contact one of our members securely and directly, by filling in the form and paying membership fees. At the Rachad website there is a form for this purpose.

## **Rachad and change in Algeria**

### **9. Is Rachad an armed resistance movement?**

The Rachad Movement is a resistance movement, but does not advocate the use or the threat of force to achieve change; instead it adopts nonviolent methods such as demonstrations and civil disobedience. The principle of Rachad is that there is no justification for the use of arms to change the current political situation in Algeria, whether in principle or from a pragmatic perspective.

### **10. Why a movement for change now?**

Because, notwithstanding the regime's propaganda, Algeria is in danger. Its political and legislative institutions are broken; its security institutions are being used to suppress the people, rather than to keep them secure ; its economy is reeling from the effects of mismanagement, bribery and embezzlement. The geopolitical threats and regional conflicts combined with the loss of legitimacy of the government clearly put the unity and sovereignty of Algeria at risk. This state of affairs can be changed only if the best among Algerians act vigorously and responsibly, and this is why Rachad was set up as an effort to put an end to oppression and corruption, and then to build a state of justice and good governance.

**11. What makes you in the Rachad movement think that the Algerian people want to change this regime?**

First, because we are Algerians. We feel the pulse of the street; we feel the hopes and aspirations of the people; we feel their pain. The news speak daily of demonstrations and riots in Algerian towns and villages, and people take daily to the streets for one reason or another, blocking roads, attacking the symbols of authority whether police or military or administration or “elected” representatives, burning government buildings and town halls... These actions, though usually bloodily suppressed, demonstrate that people want to change this disastrous reality. The Algerian people endured 130 years of destructive settler colonialism without ever once giving up hope of change. Local uprisings continued over decades and ultimately led to the revolution of November 1954 which changed the disastrous situation. A sharp reader of history and the present will see clearly on the horizon an Algerian people’s uprising that will put an end to oppression and corruption.

**12. You speak of nonviolent uprisings and demonstrations. Can you restrain the people rising up, bearing in mind how “hot-blooded” Algerians are?**

The members of Rachad agree to use only nonviolent methods, and seek to raise awareness and train people to practice nonviolent methods of change. They are aware of the importance and their responsibility of keeping to this principle. We shall always work to make the change not a gamble but a victory for all Algerians.

**13. Why doesn’t the Rachad Movement use the democratic elections as its tool for change?**

The road of democratic elections has not been open for a single day, apart from the years 1989-1991. The 1991 parliamentary elections, won by a party that the coup generals refused to accept, were cancelled and the generals proceeded to wage a dirty war against Algeria, state and society. Electoral fraud continues to rot political life, and no election has been free or transparent since. Elections take place under a State of Emergency, issued in 1992, which allows the rulers to dominate every aspect of life in the country. The elections have been emptied of all content and have become a giant fraud, designed to support the ruling intelligence service regime and strengthen it with a civilian façade, a façade of democracy essentially for foreign consumption. Despite this, elections in Algeria can be used as occasions to lay bare the regime’s policies and shame them before public opinion, to prepare people to join in the change we call for.

**14. Why don’t you subscribe to the National Reconciliation brought by Bouteflika?**

In brief: because it is neither true reconciliation nor national reconciliation nor any other kind of reconciliation. The least it can be called is attempted fraud, and a giant scam. If we look at the legal document enacting the so-called “reconciliation”, we find that it not only absolves criminals their of crimes and grants them immunity against any legal investigation or criminal proceedings, but goes so far as to glorify perpetrators of crimes among the high-ranking officers of the coup and the army and police and militias who committed crimes against humanity and war crimes against Algerians. The so-called “reconciliation charter” is nothing but an acclaim of the criminals and a condemnation of their victims.

Even worse, it decrees jail for up to five years for anyone who so much as questions the authorities' account of the events. The list of facts denied and efforts to fool the people is long. Mr. Bouteflika, who did not participate in the coup of 1992, could have pushed decisively for a resolution of the crisis, but unfortunately he preferred to stick with the advice of those who made him president. He has proved through this charter that he prefers to remain on the side of tyranny and against the Algerian people. If the reconciliation has been genuine, we would have been the first to support it and encourage it and struggle for it. We will not participate in an effort to fool our people – and we know that no one can fool all the people all the time.

**15. Don't you think that you risk destroying the peace that Algeria has benefited from through the National Reconciliation process?**

First, we are peaceful people, and we are determined to achieve peace, God willing – but not the peace that the regime and its supporters are selling. What has come back is not peace, and what they have promised is not reconciliation. It is true that armed violence has lessened, and that as a result the generals have become convinced that the system is not in danger anymore. There is however evidence that peace has not returned, and that reconciliation has not been accomplished. To recall just a few examples: 1) Stealing has become widespread, it is happening openly in broad daylight before people's eyes. 2) Physical and sexual assaults have become common to the point that no one can keep himself or his family safe; 3) Alcohol and drugs have become pervasive, reaching even primary schools and including universities, secondary schools, barracks, neighbourhoods and playgrounds; 4) Corruption has become normal among state officials, and the amounts looted come to billions of dinars and sometimes billions of dollars; 5) Unemployment is widespread, and poverty and misery have increased, and infectious and chronic diseases have spread, and scarcely anyone trusts anyone in anything. Youths have returned to the mountains bearing arms, and new ones have joined them, while others (the "harraga") are becoming refugees in Europe when don't end up as food for the Mediterranean fish. What peace are they talking about? And what reconciliation are they trying to palm off?

**16. Why do you not say frankly that you want the generals to be executed in public squares when the government falls?**

That would totally contradict the nonviolent principles of the Rachad Movement. We work to establish elected popular control over the army. We want a radical and comprehensive change to restore sovereignty to the people, but this change must be a responsible change, not "revenge". Those who think with the revenge mentality cannot achieve peace nor build a nation.

**17. Isn't the method you are proposing for putting an end to the governing system in Algeria similar to what happened in the ex-socialist states such as Ukraine and Georgia?**

There may be some similarity in the method of nonviolent change, but each country has its own peculiarities, and we differ from them in our rejection of any foreign interference. We will never bargain over our country's sovereignty and independence.

## **Rachad, violence, and armed resistance**

### **18. I have been trying to understand the reasons for the violence in Algeria for many years, but I haven't been able to. Why?**

This matter in fact takes some time to explain, but in brief summary: what opened the gates of hell on Algerians was a group of generals that decided on a coup against an elected president after the first free and fair parliamentary elections (admitted to be such by then-Minister of the Interior General Larbi Belkheir) gave an opposition party – the Islamic Salvation Front (FIS) – a majority of the seats that would allow it to establish the first elected government in Algerian history. A group of generals led by then-Minister of Defense General Khaled Nezzar announced on 11 January 1992 that the elections were cancelled and the democratic journey that had resulted from the blessed uprising of 5 October 1988 was over. In a matter of days this led to the arrest of tens of thousands of the representatives and members of the Islamic Salvation Front and to the killing of hundreds of them, then to popular demonstrations throughout Algeria, to which the generals responded by closing the victorious party and arresting the remainder of its leadership and imposing the state of emergency that remains in force to this day (2009). The response came, and there began a cycle of violence and counter-violence, sometimes through the actions of corrupted or infiltrated groups, sometimes at the hands of official bodies and militias implicated in war crimes and horrifying massacres. The Rachad movement sees the violence as the result of the coup, not just as an ideological deviation.

### **19. Don't you think that you risk bringing armed violence and massacres back to Algeria?**

Never. We are against the use of armed violence to change the disastrous situation that Algeria is experiencing. We are for non-violent work; although we think that armed resistance is within peoples' rights, particularly against a coloniser, we know that it is not the only tool. It may be the most effective one when the enemy is foreign and well-known and clear-cut, as in the days of the Algerian revolution for example. But we believe that violent action ends up being in the interests of the oppressor regimes. By the beginning of this century, the oppressor regimes had completely mastered the game of violence, to the point that no one can compete with them at it because they control the tools of power and violence. This is their favourite game, because they are prepared to sacrifice hundreds of thousands on the pretext of fighting terrorism. So we call for whoever wants to fight an internal oppressor to avoid violence whatever the provocations, including in self defence, and instead work to raise the people's awareness and make them stand as one against the oppression until it vanishes. That will be our way of resistance: intifadas, riots, peaceful protests until the oppressor regime falls.

### **20. Do you accept the membership of people who have borne arms (or are still bearing arms) in your movement?**

The conditions of membership are:

- Acceptance of the principles and goals of Rachad
- Belief in nonviolent change and desire to participate

- Uprightness and good morals

### **Rachad and the Islamist movement**

#### **21. Are you a new version of the Islamic Salvation Front (FIS)?**

No, never, even though some ex-members of the FIS have joined Rachad. Our convictions and principles led many of us to sympathise with the FIS because it was greatly wronged and because that wrong led to a terrible destruction of society and the nation. That sympathy was in truth sympathy with a wronged people, rather than with the party itself. But sympathy does not at all mean subscribing to the principles and program that the FIS espoused, nor the methods and tools it used for itself. Rachad seeks non-violent comprehensive change to establish a strong, just and well governed state in which Algerians enjoy freedom and dignity. Rachad is not a political party but a political movement for change open to all Algerians, and not a replacement for anything.

#### **22. I have read the main document and felt that it has an Islamic spirit and discourse. Are you afraid to say that you are Islamists?**

The crisis of the 1990s revealed an important truth: it exposed the shame of both “Islamists” and “democrats” who supported the coup. This was an important turning point for political imagination, in that not only did belonging to the Islamic movement in its classical sense become inadequate on its own to determine a group’s political identity, but the issue of examining the legitimacy of the government and of freedoms became crucial in that respect. Moreover, the *mukhabarat* regime always worked to maintain a deep split between Islamists, nationalists, and secularists; this division cannot be explained by ideological diversity alone. Naturally these groups for their part – whether consciously or not – reinforce this mutual conflict. But the question today is whether an Algerian can be nationalist, guarding the interests of his nation and its independence, *and* Islamic, considering Islam the key component in the identity of Algerians, *and* democratic, accepting the rule of the people – without getting bogged down in the different definitions of democracy? The answer, as we see it, is that this is possible, and we must work to realise it. In view of the importance of this issue, we in the Rachad movement decided to concentrate on the principles that we see as essential to reach good governance, which in our view include the legitimate and reasonable demands of the vast majority of Algerians.

#### **23. You speak of a state in the context of Islamic principles. Isn’t this a call for the establishment of a fundamentalist state in Algeria?**

Our project is a continuation of the project of the declaration of 1 November 1954, and our goal is a state of justice and good governance.

#### **24. When you speak about good governance (*hukm raashid*), do you mean to take Algeria 14 centuries backwards?**

We mean 21<sup>st</sup> century good governance accommodating the needs of the era. This does not contradict seeking inspiration from the era of the righteous (*raashid*) caliphs and other rulers and people of justice from every civilisation. By the word *Rashaad*, in its political sense of concern to us here, we intend

primarily to draw attention to a pivotal issue at the heart of the multifaceted problem that Islamic countries in general, and Algeria in particular, are suffering from: the lack of a legitimate government pursuing the community's interests in a just (*raashid*) manner. This word has a particular meaning for Muslims, in that it draws a comparison with a time – sadly short – when the best sense of the word was realised among Muslims. Also, in its modern sense it refers to the effort to improve methods of administration and management of states and organisations.

**25. Doesn't Islam require you to obey the ruler as long as you don't see open kufr in him?**

It tells us, above that, to forbid evil and remove injustice and tyranny. The Noble Prophet, the peace and blessings of God be upon him, considered the greatest jihad to be a word of truth in the face of a tyrannical ruler.

Those who make excuses for oppression in the name of Islam are committing a great sin against the rights of the faith, the community, and the nation.

**Rachad and Algerian issues**

**26. If you manage to overthrow the regime, how will you deal with Amazigh cultural and linguistic demands?**

We see the various languages and tongues as among God's universal miracles, and believe that every community and people and group, big or small, have the right to use and develop their own language or dialect. The rule of law will respect the people in all their diversity because it is built on popular legitimacy. We hope one day to see our state supporting all the cultural particularities that abound in it, to the enrichment of the nation.

**27. Why are you biased against the opposition parties in Algeria and accuse them of having failed despite their presence on the ground?**

We are not biased against anyone, but we insist on fair criticism. For the details see Rachad charter pp. 5-8.

**28. Many sources say that the press enjoys many freedoms in Algeria. Do you think so?**

It is an appearance of freedom. True, there is a small margin of freedom, but it is available only to improve the regime's image. The proof is that many papers have closed or been closed just for broaching certain sensitive issues. Papers in Algeria can criticise anyone except those in real authority.

**29. You accuse the Algerian secret services of being the root cause of Algeria's woes. How will you deal with its members, and in particular the higher-ranking officers, if you manage to overthrow the regime?**

We work to establish elected civilian control over the military. The secret services today are in practice above the law and even the constitution, so after the change there must be a radical reform of this

apparatus to keep it under the rule of law, to have it monitored by, and accountable to, elected constitutional bodies, and make it an apparatus to protect the people and their interests.

All security and military apparatuses must be under the supervision of the people, and not vice versa.

**30. I have read the document and did not find many answers on long-standing problems that Algerians are experiencing. Can you tell us how you will solve the problems of lack of housing, or homeless children on the streets, or single mothers, for example?**

That is possible only after changing the current regime and establishing a state of justice and good governance. The experience of Asian countries (for example) has proved that it is possible to solve the problems caused by poverty in a decade or two as long as the political will and good faith are there.

### **Rachad and Foreign Relations**

**31. Algeria has border problems with its neighbours, particularly Morocco and Libya. How will you deal with this issue?**

With brotherhood and wisdom, and if that cannot be found we will seek judgment from the World Court (see our principles of foreign relations) [insert link](#).

Our starting point is that what will certainly make these states grow closer together is the establishment of systems genuinely based on the rule of law. That will open the borders and lead to the growth of mutual aid in the context of a unity whose absence is already incomprehensible to the people. The unity of the Greater Maghreb is an essential goal of our movement.

**32. What is your view on the Polisario issue? Is it true that you will recognise the Sahara as part of Morocco?**

In our opinion the Western Sahara dispute can be resolved only in the context of a strong and thoroughgoing pan-Maghreb project lightening the burden of the borders fabricated to divide the people of the Maghreb, who are one people. Unfortunately, this strategic project has been broken for decades, due both to the lack of political will among the leaders of the Maghreb states and to the influence of foreign powers not wanting to see such a federation and seeking to abort it with alternative projects. When the Greater Maghreb is reborn, many of the region's problems will be resolved naturally on the principles of peaceful coexistence.

**33. Is it true that you hate France and seek revenge for its having once occupied Algeria?**

We neither hate nor are enemies of anyone except those who hate and are enemies of Algeria.

We want to establish peaceful links with France and other states, on the basis of mutual respect and shared interests. We also seek to preserve the memories and rights of our people throughout its history.

**34. Will you expel the multinational corporations doing business and investing in Algeria?**



We are not against transparent and fair investment with the goal of realising shared interests. But as for those who plunder Algeria's goods in partnership with the gangs there, honourable Algerians will certainly not accept that this shameful situation should continue.

**35. What is your view on the Palestinian issue? Will you support Hamas and Jihad and other such organisations calling for the destruction of Israel?**

We support in principle the right of all peoples to self-determination, and hence support the Palestinian people's resistance with the goal of achieving liberation and building their own state. But we believe that the Palestinian people will not be able to achieve freedom until the Arab peoples are free from the oppressive, corrupt, and collaborationist regimes that govern them.