

Charter Project for Peace and National Reconciliation

The History of Algeria is a series of struggles by its people to defend their liberty and dignity. Thanks to this heritage which has developed over the years, Algeria is a country in which the values of tolerance, peace, dialogue and civilisation are respected. The Algerian people, made stronger by their unity and drawing on their spiritual values and secular morality, have triumphed in the face of the most painful ordeals to write a new and glorious page in their History. Refusing to give in to oppression, they have organised their resistance with patience and determination, despite the terrible attempts to destroy their culture and exterminate them during more than a century of colonial occupation. The glorious revolution of November 1, 1954, a shining light in the darkest of nights, has come to crystallise the aspirations of the Algerian people, and is guiding their struggle to regain independence and liberty.

This historic struggle was followed by other battles, no less important, to reconstruct the State and develop the nation. For more than a century, Algeria's natural path of development has been waylaid by a criminal attack without precedent, which by its sinister acts has tried to wipe out the achievements of a population subject to terrible sacrifices, and still worse has threatened the Nation State itself. The vast majority of the Algerian people very quickly understood that aggression on this scale threatened their nature, their History and their culture. It is therefore only natural that they have resisted, fought and eventually overcome this aggression.

The Algerian people have suffered in their hearts and their soles the "affres" of this great "fitna" which has ravaged Algeria. For every citizen, for every Algerian family, it is vital to overcome this tragedy, which is not simply an ideological debate involving exchanges of opinion between individuals and organisations, inside the country or abroad. This vital question concerns the security of goods and of people and even their honour, in other words all that is sacred under Islam and is protected and guaranteed under law. Algeria has survived this terrible ordeal thanks to the fierce resistance and self-sacrifice of its people, who have shed so much blood to save their nation.

Algeria has survived thanks to the patriotism and sacrifices of the National Popular Army, the security forces and each and every Patriot, who, with patience and determination, have organised the nation's resistance to this criminal and inhuman aggression. The Algerian people honour and will always honour all those who have made the ultimate sacrifice for a democratic and populist Republic of Algeria. They will never abandon the families of the martyrs who have died for their nation, nor the families of the victims of terrorism, who have died defending the values of Algerian society. The State will spare no effort, whether moral or in kind, to remember these families and their dependents, to honour them and to support them in line with the sacrifices they have made. The Algerian people are united and will always be united.

Terrorism has targeted people and their property, destroyed an incalculable amount of the country's human and material wealth, and tarnished its reputation on the international stage.

This chaos has engendered unpatriotic actions in the name of the country's religion and on the part of some of its citizens. Throughout history Islam has been a fundamental component of national identity and, contrary to the odious and mystifying arguments put forward by some, a cohesive force and a beacon of light, liberty and tolerance. This barbaric terrorism which the Algerian people have suffered for a decade is absolutely opposed to the true values of Islam and Muslim traditions of peace, tolerance and solidarity. The Algerian people have vanquished this terrorism and now wish to move on from this "fitna" and its terrible consequences and properly restore peace and security. Thanks to Allah the All Powerful and "Misericordieux", terrorism has been vanquished and contained throughout the national territory, where peace and security now prevails.

All Algerian men and women are absolutely convinced that no political, social or economic development will bring the benefits they hope for, without a return to peace and security. Having been deprived, for a time, of this peace and security, they appreciate how important it is, for each and every one of them and for the nation itself. A new approach is now needed for a definitive return to peace and security based on national reconciliation, because it is only through national reconciliation that we can heal the wounds caused by this national tragedy. The Algerian people genuinely desire national reconciliation. And this desire is all the more acute given the many developmental challenges Algeria now faces. The Algerian people are convinced that in national reconciliation lies hope and the chance to consolidate all the advantages of a democratic and republican Algeria, to the great benefit of all of its citizens.

Their widespread support for a policy of Civic Concord underlines this. The diabolical movement which threatened to destroy the nation has been broken by this policy of civic accord - and by the policy of "rahma" which preceded it. And this policy has saved thousands of human lives and brought back political, economic, social and institutional stability to Algeria. This peace and reconciliation policy will complement the efforts of every member of the Algerian population to keep the country alive. Today the Algerian people are called upon to pass their judgement on the provisions in the present Charter for Peace and National Reconciliation. By approving it they give their formal support to those measures necessary to bring about peace and national reconciliation. By approving it, they confirm their determination to learn the lessons of this tragedy, and in so doing consolidate the base on which the Algeria of tomorrow will be built. The Algerian people, respectful of the country's state of law and international engagements, approve the following measures designed to consolidate peace and re-establish national reconciliation, in response to the multiple demands for this from the Algerian families affected by this national tragedy.

I. THE ALGERIAN PEOPLE'S HOMMAGE TO THE SAVIOURS OF THE DEMOCRATIC AND POPULAR REPUBLIC OF ALGERIA

The Algerian people pay tribute to the Popular National Army as well as to the Security Services and all the Patriots and anonymous citizens who helped them, for their patriotic commitment and sacrifices which have saved Algeria and preserved the assets and institutions of the Republic. The Algerian people, by sovereign adoption of this Charter, affirm that no one in Algeria or abroad may exploit or capitalise on the wounds inflicted by the national tragedy to attack the institutions of the Democratic and Popular Republic of Algeria, weaken the State, damage the reputation of any of the officials who have duly served it or tarnish Algeria's international reputation.

II. MEASURES DESIGNED TO CONSOLIDATE PEACE

- Firstly: A moratorium on legal proceedings against any individual who has reported to the authorities since January 13, 2000, date of debarment of the Civic Concord law.
- Secondly: A moratorium on legal proceedings against all individuals who cease fighting and turn in their weapons. This moratorium does not apply to any person involved in group killings, rape or attacks using explosives in public places.
- Thirdly: A moratorium on legal proceedings against any wanted individuals, in the country or abroad, who give themselves up voluntarily to the competent Algerian authorities. This moratorium does not apply to any person involved in group killings, rape or attacks using explosives in public places.
- Fourthly: A moratorium on legal proceedings against all individuals involved in terrorism support networks who decide to declare their activities to the competent Algerian authorities.
- Fifthly: A moratorium on legal proceedings against all individuals charged with contempt of court, other than those involved in group killings, rape or attacks using explosives in public places.
- Sixthly: Individuals charged and imprisoned for activities supporting terrorism to be pardoned.
- Seventh: Individuals charged and imprisoned for acts of violence to be pardoned, other than those involved in group killings, rape or attacks using explosives in public places.
- Eighth: Reduced and commuted sentences for all persons, whether wanted or definitively charged, not covered by the moratorium on legal proceedings described above.

III. MEASURES DESIGNED TO CONSOLIDATE NATIONAL RECONCILIATION

In order to consolidate national reconciliation, the Algerian people wish to take steps towards greater unity, to banish the seeds of hatred and to guard against any potential deviation.

- Firstly: The sovereign Algerian people agree to the implementation of specific measures designed to lift the constraints still encountered by all those supporting the Civil Concord, and put their patriotic duty above all other considerations. These citizens have worked responsibly and continue to work to strengthen peace and national reconciliation, refusing any exploitation of Algeria's crisis by hostile elements inside the country and abroad.
- Secondly: The sovereign Algerian people also support those measures needed to normalise the social situation of all those citizens (including their families), made redundant by the state in exercising its duty.
- Thirdly: While disposed to be generous, the Algerian people cannot forget the terrible consequences of the odious instrumentalisation of the precepts of Islam, religion and the State. They affirm their right to be protected from any repetition of these events and determine, in their sovereignty, to exclude all those responsible for this exploitation from all political activity. The sovereign Algerian people also confirm that anyone participating in terrorist activities who refuses, despite the terrible human and material damage inflicted by terrorism and the instrumentalisation of religion for criminal purposes, to recognise their responsibility for originating and propagating this pseudo "djihad" against the nation and the institutions of the Republic, will be denied the right to political activity.

IV. MEASURES TO SUPPORT INVESTIGATION OF THE TRAGIC MISSING PERSONS DOSSIER

The Algerian people are reminded that the missing persons dossier has been under consideration by the State for at least a decade and is being closely examined in order to deal with it appropriately. They are also aware that the drama of these missing persons is a consequence of the scourge of terrorism which has afflicted Algeria. And they confirm that in many cases these disappearances are the result of the criminal activity of bloodthirsty terrorists who take the lives of everyone into their own hands, whether Algerian or foreign. The sovereign Algerian people firmly reject all claims that the State is directly responsible for these disappearances. They consider that the reprehensible acts of certain state agents, which have been sanctioned by the judicial authorities each time they have occurred, cannot be used as a pretext for discrediting the law enforcement authorities, most of whom discharge their national duties with the help of the people. It is in this spirit that the Algerian people support the following measures to bring the missing persons' dossier to a definitive conclusion.

- Firstly: The State is responsible for all persons missing in the context of the national tragedy and will take all necessary measures to solve these cases.

- Secondly: The State will take all necessary measures to enable the missing persons' successors to overcome this terrible ordeal.
- Thirdly: Missing persons are considered to be victims of the national tragedy, and their successors are entitled to compensation.

V. MEASURES DESIGNED TO STRENGTHEN NATIONAL COHESION

- Firstly: The Algerian people are aware that the national tragedy has affected the entire nation and directly or indirectly affected the lives of millions of people.
- Secondly: The Algerian people consider it is a national duty to ensure that no citizen should feel excluded on the grounds of poor choices made by a family member. They consider it important in the interests of Algeria to eliminate all instances of exclusion which could be exploited by the enemies of the nation.
- Thirdly: The Algerian people believe that national reconciliation must address the predicament of families whose members have participated in terrorist action.
- Fourthly: The Algerian people agree that the State will provide state support for families tried and tested by the terrorist activities of their family members. By approving the present charter the Algerian people wish to consolidate peace and the foundations of national reconciliation. They believe that from now on it is the duty of every citizen to make their contribution to peace, security and national reconciliation, so that Algeria will never relive the national tragedy she has endured, and may proclaim "Never again"! The people mandate the President of the Republic to request the pardon of every victim of the national tragedy and thereby to embed peace and national reconciliation.

The Algerian people cannot forget the foreign intrusions and the internal political manoeuvring which have prolonged and aggravated the torment of the national tragedy. The Algerian people who embrace the present charter declare that from now on every person in the country must adhere to its will. They reject all external interference which might contradict their sovereign choice, freely and democratically expressed in the present Charter. They confirm that from now every citizen must devote him or herself to the task of national reconstruction, while respecting the rights and duties conferred on all by the Constitution and by the laws of the Republic. The Algerian people declare their determination to use all of the State's institutions to defend the Democratic and Popular Republic of Algeria and its democratic and pluralist system against any extremist or antinational interference. While underlining their wish to modernise Algeria, they proclaim their determination to work to promote its character and identity.

The Algerian people call on each and every citizen to help to strengthen national unity, to promote and consolidate the country's character and national identity, and to perpetuate the noble values of the Declaration of November 1954 across the generations. Convinced of the importance of this endeavour which will keep future generations close to their roots and their

culture, the people mandate the state to preserve and promote the nation's character and culture, by promoting its history and the religious, cultural and linguistic spheres. The sovereign Algerian people approve the present Charter for Peace and Reconciliation and mandate the President of the Republic to take all necessary measures to implement its provisions.

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