



EMBASSY OF THE PEOPLE'S DEMOCRATIC REPUBLIC OF ALGERIA  
2118 KALORAMA RD, NW, WASHINGTON, D.C., 20008

# ALGERIA TODAY

Volume 1, Issue 1

Monday, October 31st, 2005

## MESSAGE FROM H.E. AMINE KHERBI

Dear Reader:

*I would like to welcome you to the first issue of "Algeria Today." I hope this newsletter will keep you informed on current issues in Algeria and that it will be another bond between Algeria and the United States. I also hope that it will help foster a better understanding of the progress achieved by Algeria since its independence and that it will strengthen the ties and friendship and amity that have united Algeria and the United States for close to two centuries.*

*I would like to also take advantage of the forum this newsletter offers me to briefly reflect on past, present and future issues dear to my country, as it sets about commemorating the 51<sup>st</sup> Anniversary of its Revolution.*

*In November 1954, the Algerian people answered the call of the National Liberation Front for armed struggle and rose up determined to free themselves of the shackles of colonial rule and emerge, eight years later, as an independent nation. Algeria paid the ultimate price, as over a million and a half of its bravest and most selfless men and women gave their lives so their countrymen may live in peace and freedom.*

*In November 2005, after more than a decade of abject terrorism committed on the people and the economy of their country, the Algerian people have once again demonstrated their political maturity and joined hands, determined, as their elders did in 1954, to put country before self. About a month ago, Algerian men and women freely*

*See Message, pg 4*

## NOVEMBER 1ST MARKS ANNIVERSARY OF ALGERIAN REVOLUTION



November 1, 1954, will always be remembered as the beginning of the Algerian Revolution. After having suffered for over a century under French occupation, Algerians were called upon to rise up against colonial rule and fight for their freedom.

The events of November 1st marked the birth of the National Liberation Front (FLN). The FLN issued its first official proclamation, asking Algerians to join in the struggle for the "restoration of the Algerian state, sovereign, democratic, and social, within the framework of the principles of Islam."

In Algeria, the people proudly remember this historic day when a nation stood up to its occupiers, determined to wring independence from them. The people embraced the cause of freedom in 1954 and remain united behind the cause of national independence.

Seven years of armed struggle ended with the celebration of freedom and independence for which a million and a half Algerian men and women, young and old, sacrificed their lives.

Today, as the Algerian people pay tribute to the heroes and heroines of the November Revolution, they are reminded that freedom does not come cheap and that they share a responsibility in working together for their common future: a stable, prosperous and strong Algeria living in peace in its region and the world.

## STANDING IN SOLIDARITY WITH PAKISTAN, INDIA



Algeria responded to the tragic earthquakes in Pakistan and India by sending humanitarian aid on Monday, October 10, 2005, a couple of days after the disaster struck. Algeria donated 800 tents, 3000 blankets, and ten tons of medicines. Supplies were sent on board two aircraft, one for each country.

## HOLY MONTH HIGHLIGHTS CULTURE



In Algeria, Ramadan customs have been practiced for generations. Algerians generally break their fast with either a glass of milk or buttermilk and the sweet date fruit. Dinner tables are covered with a variety of warm meat and vegetable dishes and cold salads. Hot soups, such as “harira,” or “shorba,” are consumed first. At the end of the meal, people indulge in dessert, such as “qalb a louz,” zlabiya, and q’tayef.

Ramadan nights are more alive. Men, women, and children visit family and friends, go shopping, and tend to stay out late.

This is also a time for Algerian artists to show off their work – musicians perform concerts in city halls, parks, and theaters; artists display their work in exhibitions. The Cultural Palace in Algiers is currently hosting a Middle East Artifacts Fair.

Ramadan is a time when Algerians become more attuned to people in need. Volunteering has become a Ramadan tradition, particularly among young people. High school students devote some of their time to cooking and serving dinners at “Rahma” restaurants, (*Rahma* is Arabic for clemency). There are about five Rahma restaurants in the Greater Algiers region, each serving between 120-400 meals a night. It is important that the “dignity of the people” is preserved and that everyone can break their fast with a warm meal, said President Bouteflika.

## IMF: ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENTS IN ALGERIA ARE POSITIVE

An International Monetary Fund (IMF) staff mission to Algeria stated on October 16, 2005 that the country’s economic developments are positive, with real economic growth rate at about 5%, unemployment on a downward trend, and stable inflation.

The IMF concluded that the major structural reforms, the modernization of the legislative and regulatory framework in the hydrocarbons sector, tax administration modernization, and the presentation of a law to control corruption, were positive developments and would accelerate the pace of both economic and social development in Algeria. The IMF also acknowledged that Algeria’s financial position, in comparison with the rest of the world, continues to improve because of the rise in oil prices on the international market.

The IMF said that the government’s economic program is geared towards increasing public investment in infrastructure, housing, education, health, and the process of transitioning to an open market economy through the acceleration of structural reforms.

## BIOGRAPHY: H.E. AMINE KHERBI

H.E. Amine Kherbi, became Ambassador of Algeria to the United States on May 26, 2005. Ambassador Kherbi, a career diplomat, previously served as adviser on international security issues to President Bouteflika (June 2002), Minister-delegate for Foreign Affairs (June 2001), and as Ambassador to China (1996-2001), as well as to Brazil, Colombia, Spain, Indonesia and Austria (1980-91). He also was Permanent Representative to the International Organizations in Vienna.

Within the Ministry of Foreign Affairs, he became Director-General of Multilateral Relations (1992-96), Director of Political Affairs for Western Europe and the Americas (1977-80), and Counselor in the Economic and Finance Department (1972). In addition, Ambassador Kherbi was adviser to the Minister of Agriculture and permanent secretary on the Committee of Coordination (1968-70).

After that post, he became head of regional planning at the Governorate of Algiers (1970-72), and Counselor for economic affairs and Deputy Permanent Representative at the Algerian Permanent Mission to the United Nations (1973-77).

His career began while preparing his doctorate in political science at the University of Algiers. He served in the Office of the President as Assistant in charge of Economic Affairs and International Relations (1967-68). Fluent in Arabic, French, Swedish, English, Portuguese, and Spanish, Ambassador Kherbi has a master’s degree in social sciences from Uppsala University in Sweden, and is married with three children.

## UN RESOLUTION ON WESTERN SAHARA AFFIRMS DECOLONIZATION



Algeria's ambassador and permanent representative to the United Nations (UN), Abdallah Baali, expressed satisfaction with the new resolution on the Western Sahara. The fourth commission of the UN General Assembly adopted the resolution by consensus on Tuesday, October 11, 2005. It reaffirmed the fact that the conflict "constitutes a question of decolonization," which comes within the competence of the UN decolonization commission. Ambassador Baali said that his "delegation is delighted," that the international community has reiterated the fact that the conflict is a question of decolonization.

Ambassador Baali expressed his hope that the unanimous response by the international community will continue to support the plan for peace and auto-determination for the people of the Western Sahara. He also underlined the fact that the General Assembly had reaffirmed the UN's responsibility in ensuring the liberation of the detained persons, captive since the beginning of the conflict. Decolonization, according to Ambassador Baali, is best addressed once Morocco abides by the decisions of the international community to withdraw. President Bouteflika, also issued a statement on October 15, 2005, that the question of the Western Sahara can only be resolved by the UN.

### ALGERIAN PARLIAMENT APPROVES COMPLEMENTARY 2006 FINANCE BILL *Government Encourages Privatization*

The National People's Assembly (APN), the Algerian Parliament, adopted the 2005 complementary finance bill on the evening of October 11th by the overwhelming majority of the 127 members. The vote showed 116 yes votes, and 11 no votes; no one abstained.

Algeria's Cabinet proposed the 2006 draft finance act on Monday, October 3, 2005, establishing a capital budget without precedent. The anticipated capital budget is more than 1,300 billion Algerian Dinars (AD) (nearly \$17 billion). This bill proposes a budget that is 28% higher than that of 2005. The President of Republic initiated a five-year growth supporting program that covers a public capital budget of \$55 billion overall between 2005 and 2009.

This new bill comes at a time when Algeria is considering new economic measures that will spark more development strategies. Between 2001-2004, direct foreign investment was channeled to 314 projects with a sum of 387 million AD (\$5.2 million). In 2004 alone, 2 million AD was invested in Algerian development projects.

Minister of Finance Mourad Medelci, declared that Algeria needed to open its financial sector to international insurance groups so that higher standards of living can



be achieved. Minister of Investment Promotion and Participation, Hamid Temmar, recently went to France to encourage and accelerate privatization, a move towards creating

*See Privatization, pg 4*

### SOUTH AFRICA, ALGERIA CONSIDER GTL PROJECT

Sasol, a South African Petrochemicals group, has turned to Algeria and the United States to grow production of liquid fuels from coal and gas. Sasol, along with its multinational partner Chevron, submitted a proposal for an Algerian gas-to-liquid (GTL) facility at the end of September 2005.

The integrated GTL project will consist of the development of wet gas and oil fields, as well as the construction of a GTL plant. The contract is set to run for 30 years, the first five years are allotted for plant construction.

### RESTORATION OF THE CASBAH

Algeria is launching a program for the restoration and preservation of the Algiers Casbah by improving a total of 192 buildings that date back to the Ottoman era and were affected by the May 2003 earthquake.

The Casbah is a significant part of Algeria's heritage. UNESCO adopted the Casbah in 1990 as part of its World Heritage Center.

The committee in charge of the restoration and protection of the Casbah launched this operation in January 2004 after being granted 60 million AD by the Wilaya of Algiers. Presently, 22 buildings have been reconstructed and 74 await restoration.



**EMBASSY OF THE  
PEOPLE'S DEMOCRATIC  
REPUBLIC OF ALGERIA  
2118 KALORAMA RD, NW,  
WASHINGTON, D.C., 20008**

**OFFICE OF COMMUNICATIONS**

**TEL: 202-265-3893**

**FAX: 202-667-2174**

**EMAIL:**

**AMBASSADOROFFICE@YAHOO.COM**

**ALGERIAN BOXER HONORED WITH  
GOLDEN GLOVE**

Loucif Hamani, boxing legend, and two-time African champion, was awarded the "African Golden Glove" at a ceremony in Algiers on October 8, 2005. He was symbolically fitted with one golden glove before several sporting and political personalities, including representatives from the International Federation of Boxing. This is the first time a figure of Algerian boxing is recognized. An official source said that Hamani deserves "much more than the gold glove."

**ALGERIAN-AMERICAN  
COMMUNITIES CELEBRATED  
RAMADAN TOGETHER**

Ambassador Kherbi and his wife attended an Algerian cultural evening hosted by the Algerian-American Association of Greater Washington. The annual "Ramadhan Sahra" or *Ramadhan Evening*, was on Saturday October 8th, 2005 from 8:00 pm to 12:15 pm. The Sahra took place at the Potomac Community Center in Maryland and about 200 people were in attendance according to the AAAGW's President, Abdelrahmi Bessaha. Guests were from all the neighboring states, including Delaware and Pennsylvania. Members of the Association brought desserts complementing the cold drinks, coffee and tea provided by the association. Entertainment was provided by two Algerian bands, Andalousia and Numidia; Bessaha said, "The dancing did not stop." He said that there was a "Relaxed and fun atmosphere," throughout the evening, where "Everyone had fun!"

**MESSAGE, continued from pg 1**

*and democratically chose to live in peace and reconcile with one another for the sake of their nation. In so doing, they also demonstrated their concern for their own future and the future of their children and their children's children.*

*With its political and institutional stability fully regained, Algeria can now devote its human and natural resources to shaping a better future for its children, big and small. Profound political, economic and social reforms are being implemented and the country is forging full-steam ahead with its development. The road to the future may be full of obstacles but none are insurmountable.*

*It is my hope that the current and future generations of Algerians will keep learning from the lessons of the past: With sacrifice, selflessness, determination and hard work, everything is achievable.*

**PRIVATIZATION, continued from pg 3**

more investment opportunities in Algeria and competing in the global market. Minister Temmar said that he is campaigning for the Algerian economy to become paramount to European enterprises.

Privatization, according to Minister Temmar, has become "normal" in Algeria, where in six months, 200 enterprises have successfully been privatized. An example being the production of Mouzaia, a mineral water – within ten months, there was an increase in employees and production exceeded 65%, compared to 10% before privatization.

**DEVELOPMENTS:**

- This year, Algeria's foreign exchange reserves amounted to new historic record \$51.7 billion, reported the Governor of the *Banque d'Algérie*, Laksaci Mohamed. The reserves totaled \$32.9 billion and \$46 billion respectively in 2003 and 2004.

- *World Markets Research Centre* reported on Thursday, October 20, 2005, that Algeria's external debt stood at \$17.8 billion at the end of September 2005, down from \$21.4 billion in December 2004. "Continued political stability and the improved external position, in conjunction with the business-friendly reforms implemented by the government, will make Algeria a more attractive investment destination, even outside of the lucrative hydrocarbon sector," concluded *World Markets Research Centre*.