



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

# ALGERIA TODAY

Volume 0, Issue 0

Friday, September 30th, 2005

## ALGERIANS VOTED MASSIVELY FOR A PEACEFUL FUTURE

*97.36% Voted YES for Peace and National Reconciliation*

An impressive 97.36% of Algerian voters responded yesterday to President Bouteflika's call in favor of the draft Charter on Peace and National Reconciliation. The President had presented it as the best option for Algeria's continued process of peace building and stability enforcement. Out of the 18,313,594 registered voters, 14,054,164 cast a "yes" vote while 381,127 (2.64%) voted "no." At the national level, average voter participation was 79.76% (14,606,798 voters), cast ballots amounted to 14,435,291.



The nation woke up on Friday morning to a new era—a new period of peace and national reconciliation.

What does that mean now that the Algerian people have decided to turn the page?

Firstly, the people have united in a decision to find closure to the past decade of pain. Algeria can now focus on its development through the completion of a process to restore peace and stability. The Algerian people's endorsement of the draft Charter reflects their strong desire to return to the innate Algerian values of tolerance, peace, and civility. Therefore the nation has demonstrated that it is ready to move forward and prosper with liberty and dignity.

Implementing the charter will complete the process of social appeasement that started in 1999 and strengthen state stability.

Algeria has now stepped onto the world stage with greater affirmation. The peace and national reconciliation process will help deepen current reforms and create better conditions for Algeria's integration in the world community and provide more investment and trade opportunities. Security within the nation will become more established as the rule of law is consolidated, and democratic processes and social development are rightfully accelerated.

With a massive rate of approval, the Algerian people have voted to build on the regained stability and pursue a better life. This Charter is promising them the extension of peace as a protection of fundamental basic freedoms. Today, Friday the 30th of September, stands witness to an integration of all Algerian citizens - making them all contributors to an appeased and cohesive society. It is the beginning of a new era.

### AIMS & OBJECTIVES OF CHARTER

In order to consolidate peace in Algeria the charter calls for granting pardon to individuals convicted or imprisoned for armed violent actions. It frees from legal action those who did lay down arms in response to previous amnesty offers, namely the Law on Rahma and the Law on Civil Concord. It also stipulates the renunciation of all prosecution against those wanted in Algeria and abroad, and/or those who voluntarily turned themselves to authorities, as long as they were not involved in mass murders, rapes, and use of explosives in public places.

Pursuing "national reconciliation" means that the people will have to put their patriotic duty first and contribute to ending the national tragedy. The charter recognizes the difficulty grieving families of individuals still unaccounted for may have in accepting the referendum. However, it explains that this is the best way to

*See Objectives, pg 2*

### ALGERIA'S PROCESS OF PEACE & RECONCILIATION

The process of peace and national reconciliation started when Abdelaziz Bouteflika was elected President of Algeria in 1999. He declared amnesty for thousands of individuals under the Law on Civil Concord. Many armed groups did disband and surrendered their arms by the deadline of January 13th, 2000.

People voted in droves (85% turnout) and a large majority of voters (98%) supported the President's offer. The Law on Civil Concord contributed significantly to solving the crisis. The surrendering of over 6,000 repenting former members of armed groups greatly reduced the number of acts of violence and improved the security situation throughout the country.

The new Charter complements the 1999 Law on Civil Concord and therefore completes the process of national reconciliation.

## **OBJECTIVES**, *continued from pg 1*

overcome the past and construct a peaceful society for the coming generations.

The Charter calls upon the State to take the appropriate measures to preserve the national identity of its sovereign people as a foundation for reconciliation.

The Charter addresses the issues of people still unaccounted for. Consequently, the Charter calls for reparations to be made to the families of the disappeared.

Lastly, the Charter focuses on national cohesion as essential to reconciling with the past in order to construct a better future.

*"We will continue the battle for the development of our country... this charter is the necessary path to national reconciliation."*

- President of the Republic, Abdelaziz Bouteflika,

## **REFORM IN ALGERIA: RECONCILIATION OPENS DOORS**

Peace and national reconciliation will strengthen political stability and will enable Algerian economic development to finally achieve its full potential. Socially, the President's program creates a sense of reconciliation of "Algerians with themselves and with their State."

Among the reforms currently implemented, some focus on the integration of all people, namely those who had been detained. The charter targets all aspects of society and aims to improve the lives of the people under a concrete rule of law, through the values of peace and national reconciliation.

## **STRONG AWARENESS CAMPAIGN PILOTED THROUGHOUT ALGERIA**

An awareness campaign for the September 29th referendum occupied the full attention of President Bouteflika and the Algerian people. Since the President announced the draft Charter's referendum, he spent nearly 45 days traveling throughout Algeria, relentlessly spreading the message of peace and national reconciliation.

At every destination, the president mobilized large groups of people and encouraged approval of the draft Charter. Thousands of people greeted the President and demonstrated their support. President Bouteflika reiterated his call for a mass turnout during the referendum and repeated that the aim of national reconciliation is to unify the country, creating a positive base for stability, peace, and revived economic development. The President insisted that the referendum was not a general amnesty and he called on remaining armed individuals to lay down their arms. In his last campaign speech, he asked the crowds to vote and to understand that they are "free to choose, either for or against peace."

Political parties and more than 600 associated movements also did their part in the awareness campaign. As referendum day drew closer, different regions of the country prepared for the vote-with awareness meetings where speakers addressed the draft's importance and capacity to restore an appeased society.

*The aim of national reconciliation is to unify the country, creating a positive base for stability, peace, and revived economic development.*

## **A CALL TO ALGERIANS ABROAD**

The President reached out to the Algerian community abroad in some of his speeches. He called upon Algerians everywhere to get involved in the national reconciliation process and "to really contribute to the Charter's success."

Referring to the issue of "brain drain," the President called on all qualified Algerians to return to their country because it does "need their experience and their know-how." He said that they are needed in order to contribute to the country's development.

## **ALGERIANS VOTING IN USA**

The Algerian community residing in the United States of America started voting on the referendum Saturday the 24th. Seven itinerant polling stations were opened around the USA: Boston, Chicago, Los Angeles, San Francisco, Miami, as well as the Permanent Mission of Algeria to the United Nations in New York and the Embassy of Algeria in Washington, DC. The Algerian community living in the vicinity of the State of Texas voted in Austin instead of Houston due to Hurricane Rita. Over 5,500 Algerians in America were called on to vote in the referendum.

## PRESIDENT BOUTEFLIKA ADDRESSES THE UNITED NATIONS SUMMIT:



### **“ One of the major threats to peace and international security is terrorism”**

President Abdelaziz Bouteflika addressed the UN World Summit in New York on Wednesday, September 14, 2005, the first day of the session. In his speech, he said that one of the ‘major threats to peace and international security is terrorism.’ He condemned all manifestations of terrorism, and called on other member states to work together, under UN authority, to combat it. The President also stated that the UN is in need of ‘serious reform that will reinforce its dynamic character’ and meet today’s challenges since it has a central role in world relations.

He explained that Algeria was fully engaged in the battle against terrorism and stressed the importance of seeking peace and national reconciliation as a way of contributing to national and regional stability. The President stated that Algeria views the full integration of all people as the best way to put an end to the national tragedy.

The President also called for African representation on the Security Council, saying that the continent deserves permanent representation. The UN Security Council unanimously passed a resolution proposed by Algeria, Benin, and Tanzania that calls

### PRESIDENT BOUTEFLIKA AWARDED “LOUISE MICHEL” PRIZE

The Paris *Center of Political and Societal Studies* honored President Bouteflika with the ‘Louise Michel’ Prize on September 27th, 2005. The prize is awarded annually to a high ranking personality who stands for the virtues of dialogue, democracy, development, and peace. President Bouteflika said that such an invaluable recognition is “encouraging” not only to him, but to the entire country.



*President Bouteflika with the Center’s President, Mrs. Jeanette Burtelle-Duba, at the People’s Palace in Algiers.*

### NOMINATION

Mr. Boualem Bessaïeh was nominated by President Bouteflika to serve as President of the Algerian Constitutional Council on Monday, September 26, 2005.

Mr. Bessaïeh is a former Minister for Foreign Affairs and Minister of Culture. He has also served as Ambassador to many countries, most recently in Morocco. Mr. Bessaïeh is a renowned scholar and writer.

### ALGERIAN FOREIGN MINISTER MOHAMMED BEDJAOUÏ’S SPEECH AT THE UN



On Tuesday, September 20<sup>th</sup>, the Algerian Minister of State, Minister for Foreign Affairs, H.E. Mr. Mohammed Bedjaoui, addressed the 60th Session of the UN General Assembly. He called for “action that will prevail over terrorism.” He called on member states to unite their objectives and work on consolidating their interests to overcome poverty, oppression, and terrorism. Minister Bedjaoui recognized that the UN has to undergo extensive reform which “should not lose sight of either the legitimate claims made by Africa or the preoccupation to maintain sensitive equilibriums between the various organs” of the United Nations.

Minister Bedjaoui touched upon all timely issues – including the Western Sahara, the situation in Iraq, nuclear proliferation, and Middle East peace. He also underlined that Algeria is reforming its system and moving towards peace and national reconciliation.

### ECONOMIC UPDATE: REFORM EXAMINED

Algerian Minister of Finance, Mr. Mourad Medelci, examined ways of reinforcing cooperation between Algeria and international financial institutions while attending the International Monetary Fund and World Bank annual meetings in late September. Mr. Medelci had the opportunity to meet with many world economic leaders and explored with them ways to strengthen bilateral relations in the fields of finance. They also discussed how to best incorporate Algeria in the current global trends of investment and commerce.



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

**CONTACT US:  
OFFICE OF COMMUNICATIONS &  
MEDIA RELATIONS  
PHONE: 202-265-3893  
FAX: 202-667-2174  
EMAIL:  
AMBASSADOROFFICE@YAHOO.COM**

### **ALGERIAN WOMEN ACTIVE IN SOCIETY**

Algerian women continue to make strides in civil society, thanks to the creation of yet another professional group: The *Association of Women Managers*. The association assists women integration in the workforce.

Additionally, Algerian women journalists joined other North African counterparts in an Arab Women' s media conference, titled "Arab Women in Media Facing Political Change," in Amman, Jordan, from September 6th to 8th, 2005.

### **AMBASSADOR KHERBI'S MEETINGS**

- The Ambassador of Algeria to the United States, H.E. Amine Kherbi, met on September 8th, 2005, in San Francisco, with members of the Algerian-American Association of Northern California (AANC). He addressed the draft Charter on Peace and National Reconciliation, among other matters.

The Ambassador then attended the *United States-Algeria Business Council (USABC) Agribusiness Symposium* that was also held in San Francisco from September 7th to the 9th, 2005. He made a presentation on Algeria's growing agribusiness sector and stressed the wide range of potential business opportunities that can benefit both America and Algeria.

- In New York City, on September 20th, 2005, the Ambassador met with members of the Executive Committee of the Algerian-American Association of New York. He discussed with them several issues related to the activities of their association and the upcoming referendum on the draft Charter for Peace and National Reconciliation.

- In Washington, D.C., on Wednesday, September 28th, 2005, Ambassador Kherbi met with the Acting President and Chairman of the Export-Import Bank of the United States, James H. Lambright, and with other EximBank high officials. They exchanged views on financial assistance by the EximBank to development projects in Algeria. Both the Ambassador and the President of the EximBank discussed the critical issue of diversification of US investments in Algeria.



### **RECENT DEVELOPMENTS: ALGERIA ON THE INTERNATIONAL STAGE**

- Algeria is participating in the *Arab World Market of Tourism and Travels* in Beirut, Lebanon, scheduled from September 29th to October 2, 2005, to promote and highlight its potential in the tourism sector.
- Algeria co-hosted the 18th World Petroleum Congress (WPC), which opened Sunday the 25th, in Johannesburg, South Africa. The proceedings gathered oil-producing and -consuming countries, and examined the application of scientific advances in the oil and gas industries to the benefit of mankind.
- Pakistan and Algeria have agreed to exchange oil, gas and mineral expert delegations as a first step towards exploring areas of cooperation between the two countries. In addition, a Pakistani newspaper honored President Bouteflika for Algeria being the 'Best -Governed Muslim' country.
- The International Trade Fair of Oran, held from September 24 until October 3, features 43 exhibits from countries including France, Italy, Syria, Pakistan, Burkina Faso, Morocco and Libya. The objective is to foster trade opportunities at the bilateral level and with the European Union.
- The Association Agreement between Algeria and the European Union went into effect September 1, 2005 signifying Algeria' s ongoing commitment to economic and social reform. This serves as another catalyst for economic development through direct investment and modernization.
- Algerian writer Tahar Ouettar, 82, was co-recipient of the 2005 Sharjah prize for Arab culture, awarded by UNESCO. He was recognized and awarded \$25,000 on Thursday, September 29th, 2005. The award honors those who significantly contribute to the development, dissemination and promotion of Arab culture.