

INSTITUTIONS AND POLITICAL LIFE

Algeria is a unitary State. It has a political presidential system. The president governs without necessarily having the support of the legislative majority. The electoral system is a proportional representation. The right to vote for women was recognized in 1962.

Since October 1988, the People's Democratic Republic of Algeria has been a constitutional representative democracy based on a multi-party presidential system supported by the 1996 constitution revised in 2016 and 2020. The State prerogatives are divided between the government, appointed by the president, and the parliament, elected by universal suffrage, for one-renewable five-year term.

The President of the Republic, directly elected by universal suffrage, is Head of State, Head of the Armed Forces and responsible for national defence. He shall govern for one-renewable 5-year term of office. The President of the Republic shall preside over the meetings of the Council of Ministers. He also chairs the High Security Council (HCS).

The Council of Government shall be chaired by a Prime Minister or a Head of Government, designated by the President of the Republic.

The General Secretariat of Government is essentially a permanent coordinating body for government legal activity. Acting on the authority of the Presidency of the Republic, it ensures that the procedures for drafting legislative and regulatory texts are observed regarding legal drafting techniques, terminology, compliance with interministerial consultation standards and procedures.

Like all democratic countries, Algeria has had a bicameral parliament since the entry into force of the 1996 constitution. The parliament is composed of a People's National Assembly (APN) (whose first legislative election took place on September 20th, 1962, just a few months after independence) and a Council of the Nation.

People's National Assembly (PNA) is composed of 407 members who are directly elected in 59 electoral districts including 58 administrative districts and one district representing the "Algerian community abroad". The seats of People's National Assembly are distributed in proportion to the population.

The Council of Nation is the second Chamber of the Algerian Parliament. The Council of Nation which is established for the first time by the Constitution of November 28th, 1996, comprises 176 members, 2/3 of whom are elected by universal indirect suffrage, among and by the elected representatives of the local assemblies (People's Municipal Assemblies (APC) and People's Provincial Assemblies (APW)) within each Province, the remaining third being designated by the President of the Republic.

The Council of Nation exercises legislative power with the People's National Assembly. As such, it votes the laws by a majority of 3/4 of its members.

CHRONOLOGY OF ALGERIAN REPUBLIC ADVENT

- **From 1962 to 1978:**

At independence, in 1962, Ferhat Abbas became the interim president and presided over Algeria from September 25th, 1962 to September 15th, 1963, when, with the support of the National Liberation Front (FLN), Ahmed Ben Bella became the first president of the Algerian Republic.

In 1963, the National Liberation Front (FLN) was recognized as a single party by the Constitution of the Algerian Republic. On June 19th, 1965, Houari Boumediene, then Minister of Defence and Vice-President of the Revolution Council, became the President of the Revolution Council. He reigned until 1978, when he died.

At the institutional level, a Charter and a Constitution were adopted. The 1976 charter gives up the "socialist revolution" allusion and places Algeria in the non-aligned camp.

Boumediene also launched the slogan "Mediterranean, lake of peace", and managed to convince President Bourguiba to join this initiative that aims to create a dialog between the countries of the Maghreb and those of Europe.

After Boumediene's death on December 27th, 1978, Rabah Bitat, then president of the first People's National Assembly, was entrusted with the task of acting as President of the State.

- **From 1978 to 1992:**

Chadli Bendjedid was chosen by the Central Committee of FLN as the sole candidate in the presidential election and assumed the presidency of the Algerian State on February 9th, 1979. The liberalization of the economy took place in 1987.

Internationally, Chadli Bendjedid opens the doors to dialog with the other leaders of the Maghreb and with the French President. Together with his foreign minister Mohamed Seddik Ben Yahia, he has toned down relations with the United States, and even travels to Washington where he meets President Reagan. In 1983, he was also the first Algerian Head of State to visit France at the invitation of his counterpart François Mitterrand.

In 1986, the drop in dollar and oil prices led to a sharp decline in oil export revenues. Algeria was committed to liberalize the country's economy, by restricting the monopoly of imports, and making a significant devaluation of the Algerian dinar. The State monopoly on trade was repealed in February 1991.

Several popular protest movements were triggered under the Chadli Bendjedid era. Following the events of October 5th, 1988, Algeria launched a democratization process. A new constitution approved by referendum in February 1989 thus marked the break with the single party, FLN, which at that time held all the seats of the government and other institutions. Multi-party elections and a press freedom regime were then established: several private parties and newspapers were created. Parliamentary elections followed in 1991.

After major disturbances of public order, President Chadli Bendjedid announced his resignation and the electoral process was interrupted on January 11th, 1992. A High State Committee (HCE) was set up on January 14th, 1992.

- **From January 1992 to January 1994:**

Mohamed Boudiaf, one of the historic leaders of the Algerian war for independence and founder of the FLN, after 28 years of exile, took over the leadership of the High State Committee on January 16th, 1992. Six months after his accession to power, he was assassinated in Annaba on June 29th, 1992.

Ali Kafi was then appointed President of the State from July 2nd, 1992 to January 30th, 1994.

- **From January 1994 to April 1999:**

Liamine Zeroual succeeds Ali Kafi on January 30th, 1994. He organized the first multi-party presidential election to restore the legitimacy of State institutions. He won this election on November 16th, 1995. A new constitution was then approved by referendum on November 28th, 1996. He governed Algeria from November 1995 until April 1999. By the end of 1998, President Liamine Zeroual announced his decision to resign a year before the term of office.

- **From April 1999 to April 2019:**

Abdelaziz Bouteflika came to power for a first term of office in April 1999. He was re-elected in 2004 for a second term. In 2009, he was re-elected a third time, following his amendment to the Constitution in 2008. He governed the State for the fourth term.

Bouteflika had passed "Civil Concord" law for the return of peace. On September 29th, 2005, the Charter for Peace and National Reconciliation was adopted by referendum.

- **From April 2019 to date:**

On February 22, 2019, a series of protests (called "Hirak") took place to protest Abdelaziz Bouteflika's candidacy for a fifth presidential term, then against his proposal to remain in power after the end of his fourth term under the pretext of ensuring a transition and undertaking reforms. Subsequently, protesters demanded the establishment of a second republic, and the departure of the regime's dignitaries.

On April 22nd, 2019, President Bouteflika resigned. Abdelkader Bensalah, President of the Senate, held the Presidency of the State until December 2019. Abdelmadjid Tebboune was elected President of the Republic on December 12th, 2019.

Source:

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