



**Election Watch TEIM
ELECTORAL PROFILE:
ALGERIA/Legislatives
May 17th, 2007
OPEX Memorandum-Electoral Watch Series No. 2**

Rafael Bustos
*(In situ Monitoring)*¹

Background of the elections:

The legislative elections were held at the end of a 5-year term of Abdelaziz Būteflīqa, while he was ill but still in office. On 11th April, grave bomb attacks occurred in Algiers (with 30 deaths and 220 wounded) which were claimed by a terrorist group called the *Şalafist* Group for Preaching and Combat (GSPC). It is self-proclaimed to be an al-Qaeda branch in the Maghreb.² There were street demonstrations and condemning declarations. The parties demanded a high participation as a way of rejecting violence and support for politics of reconciliation. The candidature of 'Abdallah Ÿābāllah of the *Islāh* (Reform) party-Movement for National Reconciliation (MRN) was invalidated because he had not celebrated the necessary re-election congress. On his side, Ait Aḥmed announced the boycott of its party, the FFS in these elections.

Democracy quantitative indices:

Algeria was classified in the following ranking of democratic fulfilment right before the elections.

¹ This Observation Mission was possible under the patronage of the Spanish Agency for International Cooperation (Agencia Española de Cooperación Internacional, AECI) to the TEIM Electoral Watch.



² One of the founding fathers of GSPC, Hassan Ḥattab, unauthorised al-Qaida in the Maghreb and criticised the attacks on 11th April, as well as the real intentions of this group (see the Reuters information that can be seen in France24, "Le fondateur du GSPC désavoue al-Qaida", 17 April, available in:

<http://www.france24.com/france24Public/fr/archives/nouvelles/2007/Avril/afrique/20070417-Algerie-manifestation-GSPC>

Measurement	Name and year of the report or data base	Institution	Index	Ranking and Classification
Political rights and freedom	Freedom House Report 2007	Freedom House	PR: Political Rights; CL: Civil Liberties	PR: 6 CL: 5 Scale from 1 to 7, not free Status: Not free
Democratic degree of the elections	Polyarchy 2.0 2004	Peace Research Institute of Oslo and Tatu Vanhanen	DI: Synthetic Democratic Index; Part: Participation; Comp.: Competition	DI: 4.9 (max. 49); Part. 32.8 (max. 70); Comp. 15 (max. 70); (Democracy minimum: DI: 5; Part.: 10; Comp.: 30) Classification: It does not reach the minimum of democracy
Consolidation of the democratic and authoritarian institutions	Polity IV 2004	Center for International Development and Conflict Management, Univ. of Maryland	Democracy: consolidation of democratic institutions; Autocracy: authoritarian consolidation; Polity: synthesis of both	Democracy: 3 Autocracy: 1 Polity: +2 (Scale: +10: very democratic to -10: very authoritarian) Classification: weakly democratic
Corruption perception	Transparency International Corruption Perception Index 2006	Transparency International	TICPI: Corruption Perception	TICPI: 3.1 over 10 (Scale: 1 very corrupt to 10 not corrupted) Country rank: 84 / 163
Management of political and economic change	Bertelsmann Transformation Index (BTI) 2006	Bertelsmann Foundation	MI: Management Index, quality of management of change	MI: 3.63 over 10 Ranking: 91 of 119 countries; Classification: Management with small success
Democracy, including freedom and corruption	World Democracy Audit 2007	World Audit	World Democracy Rank: political freedom (FH) + press and corruption (TI)	WDA rank: 101 over 150 countries; 4th division of 4

Measurement of Democracy of these elections according to Polyarchy 2.0 index	Synthesis: 15.2-12.6* Part: 20 ³ Comp: 76-63.21*	Minimum joint democratic: Syn. 5, Part 10, Comp. 30 Classification: Democratic
--	---	--

* For Competition, we establish a two value degree: the first, considers the winning party, while the second considers the percentage of votes of the winning coalition. This competition degree is translated at the same time in the democratic one, which shall vary between 15.2 and 12.6.

³ For a census of 34 millions approximately people on 2007, while there were 32 million in 2004.

Definition of the Electoral System and Parties:

List of Proportional Representation system (List PR⁴) with the Hare formula for the legislative elections and 7% for the local ones. There is an electoral threshold of 5% for the legislative election and 7% for the local ones. In practice, the electoral system has a remarkable majority slant due to diverse factors (threshold, size of the circumscription and system of seats designation). Formally multiple party system with a tendency to splinting, marked by two official parties, the National Liberation Front (NFL) and the National Rally for Democracy (NRD), that share power.

Impact of the electoral procedure and size of circumscriptions on elections:

The majority effect as a result of the special application of the Hare formula is at the same time stressed by the relatively conservative design of the circumscriptions, due to the abundance in the 1997, the 2002 and 2007 elections of the small circumscriptions (17 and 15 circumscriptions of 4 and 5 seats respectively, of a total of 48). It is a well known electoral rule that the smaller size of the circumscriptions, the higher distortion of the representations and vice versa, to a limit.⁵

Results of the elections:

Participation: 35.67%, 6,692,891 voters over 18,761,084 registered voters. Invalid suffrages: 965,064 (14.4%). Valid votes: 5,727,827.

	Name of party or list	% of valid votes	Number of seats	% of the seats
Government coalition	National Liberation Front (FLN)	23%	136	35%
	National Rally for Democracy (RND)	10.3%	62	15.6%
	Movement of Society for Peace, MSP	9.6%	51	13.4%
Opposition	Independents	9.8%	33	8.4%
	Workers Party (PT)	5.0%	26	6.6%
	Rally for Culture and Democracy (RCD)	3.3%	19	4.4%
	Algerian National Front (FNA)	4.2%	15	3.3%
	Rest (16)	35%	47	13%
Total	23	100%	389	100%

Source: Algerian Constitutional Council, Interior Ministry of Algeria and personal elaboration of the data.

⁴ The denomination of the electoral systems are the ones used by IDEA, International Institute for Democracy and Electoral Assistance, concretely see the Electoral System Design in its web site: <http://www.idea.int/esd/world.cfm>

⁵ Agustí Bosch thus explains: "It is estimated that the systems with single-nominal circumscriptions produce a disproportional index that almost doubles that of the small (multi-nominal) circumscriptions (2-6 seats) and that these produce disproportional indexes that also double those of the medium circumscriptions (6-10 seats). On the other side, the systems with higher circumscriptions do not improve proportionality in a substantial way" (A. Bosch, *Guide of the Electoral System*, Publication Services of the Universidad Aut3noma de Barcelona, Barcelona, 2004, pp. 21.

Evaluation analysis of the elections:⁶

Participatory: according to Interior Ministry data, the level of participation was 35.67%, the lowest officially admitted until now. It is well under the 46% of the legislative elections of 2002, consolidating a considerable trend to the lowest that is affecting all polls, and specially, the legislative ones. As usual, participation was lower in cities and in the coast than in rural areas and the inland. The impression of this observer confirms a very low attendance to the polling stations at the capital, Blida and Médea. The al-Qaeda of the Maghreb video calling for a boycott and the bomb attack in Constantine the previous days could have some impact, but the population had already decided they would not go to the polls. Security measures were strengthened but the Algerians did not need al-Qaeda in order to abstain. The higher percentages (50-60%) were registered in the South and the high inland plateaus. At the Kabiliya, an area of special absenting tradition, participation rose till approaching that of the capital (with an average of 17% in the two capital cities of the region, while 18.4% in Algiers). This increase was already present at the Presidential elections of 2004. Meanwhile, in the circumscriptions of migrant voters, the percentage was lower, together with that of Algiers (18%) and quite lower than 33% of 2004.

Competitive: a total of 24 parties presented their lists, together with the independents with unequal presence at the country's *wilayas*. The only exclusion was that of the moderate Islamist leader 'Abdallah Ŷābāllah (5% in the last presidential elections and head of the third most voted party in parliament) who could not present his candidature as it was invalidated because he did not celebrate a congress to renew his leadership. Ŷābāllah followed the decision demanding abstention. So did the Front of Socialist Forces (FFS) of Ait Aḥmed, who resorted to a voters' boycott. The non-winning candidates obtained between 23-32.9% of the votes, if we consider the FLN the single winner of the presidential coalition (FLN-RND-MSP).

Cleanness: although the Interior Ministry Yazīd Zerhūnī in charge of presenting the results took pleasure in the recounting of an episode of fraud that had quickly been cut (in Ruiba) because of the discovery of several ballot boxes that had already votes before the process had started, the spectre of fraud would not finish there. The National Political Commission of Electoral Supervision (CNPSEL) recognised that at the beginning, there were general signs of electoral fraud. Later, it retracted to finally give a version closer to that of the Interior Ministry, that is, general normality. The polemics lasted several days in the press, nourished by the differences in the declarations of Zerhūnī and Būšair, president of the Commission. On this occasion, there were no international observers, as a difference to what happened in the presidential elections. Personally, as an observer in these elections, I was surprised to see the slowness in the presentation of the results: from Thursday, when the elections were held (Friday feast) until Saturday midday, when provisional results were announced. It is true though that the delay is allowed by the electoral law that establishes a 48 hour deadline. The complaints and demands presented by the parties were rejected by

⁶ In this sector the six criteria defined by TEIM are being used. These are: Participation, Competition, Cleanness, Representation and Debate, Openness and Relevance. See main page for an explanation of each.

the Constitutional Council, which roughly considered the results advanced by the Interior Ministry as valid.

Representation and Debate: it is evident that one of the reasons behind the abstentions and blank and null votes (almost a million) has been the inexistent renovation of the political class. It was enough to have a look at the propaganda signboards containing the photograph of the candidates in Algiers to realise that the age and faces of the candidates had hardly changed. The debate took place outside the parties and in the media, as it is becoming a habit. Though on this occasion, some parties reproached the media for fostering the abstention. In general, the spaces and electoral breaks assigned on TV and radio to the parties were respected. The archaic style of presentations with long static discourses contributed without any doubt, to move further away the voters from the parties. Besides, the TV was taken up by president Būteflīqa who was on a tour inside the country. During the electoral campaign, the public influx to the meetings was scarce, stating that not even the MSP had succeeded filling the sports hall as it did in the previous years.

Openness: the victory of the presidential coalition was expected. Nobody in Algeria or outside it anticipated any surprises and they did not occur. The only real enigma was the percentage of abstention that would overtly be admitted.

Relevance: the parliamentary change has been at its lowest, finding once more the absolute majority of the governing coalition. The FLN lost the majority which enjoyed but this is assured by its other two allied parties. On the other side, the importance of the *Islāh* as a solid party of the opposition is transformed into a myriad of smaller parties, until 14 that approximately sum up what the *Islāh* had in 2002. The elections neither mean any relevant change for the government, regardless rumours of Sa'īd Sa'adī (RCD) and Louiza Ḥanūn (PT) joining it. No changes neither in its members (except for 3, they all repeat) nor in its policy.

Consequences and impact over the political system:

The low participation sends a strong signal to the political classes and it is not to be attributed to the terrorist threats or to the call of some political party for a boycott. It has deeper reasons, such as the citizenship loosing trust in the electoral changes, at least with the present political elite. Besides these socio-political and economic reasons where corruption is very much present (for example, the known Khalifa's case), it must be noted that the administration stopped demanding the voter's letter with the stamp. The low participation has presented itself not only through the victory of abstention, but also through 14% of null votes and a very slow growth of the electoral body. From 17,981,000 in 2002 it grew to 18,761,084 in 2007 in a country where the inscription in the electoral register is voluntary.

The second consequence of it is the atomisation of parliament (from 10 parties and independent lists it passed to 23) and the loss of legitimacy of the Lower House due to a high abstention and a strong number of null votes (14%).

Finally, among the Islamist ranks, the disappearance (temporary?) of Ŷābāllah and its party (the *Islāh*) as a political force of importance (from 43 to 3 seats, leaving the third position of 2002) has not meant a significant increase of the

also Islamist MSP, as it could be expected by its ideologist proximity. It has only meant a rise of 7.05% to a 9.6% of the votes (from 38 to 51 of seats).

International political reactions:

In the main international media, the news stressed the low participation and secondarily, the climate of the terrorist threat. There was not though an answer or reaction at the main chancellorships. As a difference from prior occasions, there was no greeting communication by the normality or messages to the winning party. This lack of reactions reveals the difficult situation that the high abstention has created. Besides, in France it coincided with the formation of the new government and the transfer of power of the leaving Foreign Minister Philippe Douste-Blazy to Bernard Kouchner, who shall prepare the possible journey of Sarkozy to Algeria in July. Neither the EU through its high representative for the PESC said a word, nor did the foreign policy organs of Spain or of the US, that were very cautious by not making any evaluation. The US did not do it because it had just finished the small diplomatic crisis it had with Algeria that arose by an alarmist announcement done by the American embassy in Algiers. Spain, whose relations with Algeria are not at its peak, given the confrontation on the gas issue and the background of the negotiations about the Western Sahara, has preferred not to pronounce itself after the elections.

Implications for Spain:

These elections involve few or no changes for Spain in its relations with Algeria. The continuity in the formation and orientation of the government are absolute and in the parliament, the repetition of majorities will assure a calmed end of the Presidency, at least from the legislative point of view. The technocrats still remain in their posts, headed by the Energy Ministry Šakīb Khalīl. There shall not be further changes in the planned reform policies or in the public inversion or in the policies of reconciliation. The lessons or messages that can be drawn are that no surprises are wanted, and that stable institutions should be counted on in order to elude future setbacks. The only change of interest that happened at the government, took place in the Foreign Affairs Ministry. Muḥammad Beyaoui leaves his post to Mūrād Medelci, man from the west city of Tlemcen, like Būteflīqa and most of his collaborators. He is an expert and the person in charge of commerce and finances, and a loyal councillor of the President, who is going to substitute the re-known justice Beyaoui in the foreign relations portfolio.

In any case, the delicate matters of the gas and the Western Sahara that concern Spain and Algeria, both closely followed by the President of the Republic, will keep being negotiated with a global vision of the interests of the State. That is, strongly on the leeway and with independence of the slight changes that can occur within the government. The health condition of the President can in any case stress the good sense of the Algerian positions on foreign affairs, in a way that unnecessary risks are eluded. That means under the clue of the negotiations on the Sahara not doing big concessions in front of Morocco regarding its departing position. And under the clue of the gas which is somehow linked to the former question, to follow the exercise of exerting a reasonable pressure over Spain. Pressure that can be strong for moments, but that it will only last as long as there are negotiations and whenever the gas duct of Medgaz is not risked,

less the main supplying contracts. Spain unable of having any influence on the negotiations under the auspices of United Nations, can actually better explain its posture with Algeria and mostly, eliminate the reasons for the disagreement with the gas question, mainly, the upgrading of the Sonatrach access to the distribution of gas to Spain.

Conclusions:

At global level, these elections have sent a strong signal to the Algerian authorities about the fact that inversions and multiple reforms are not enough as long as political renovation remains stuck. Regardless the questions that a low participation pose, the Algerian society has expressed with a high democratic feeling that they expect real changes, and that they do not deserve less, given the many social troubles that persist within their society in spite of the hydrocarbons. On the other side, these results will allow certain stability to a Presidency that needs to tighten its belt and "drive" with calmness the final stage of Būteflīqa's tenure (less than two years). Although attention! Because this worrying fracture between the citizenship and the political elite cannot be indefinitely compensated on the charisma of the President.

References of two different internet based analysis of the elections.

1- "Algeria's Legislative Elections 2007" of Nazīm Fethi and Būalam Senhadji, for the MENA Project called Election Guide of the Konrad Adenauer Foundation. It can be seen at:

<http://www.mena-electionguide.org/country.aspx/23/Algeria>

2- «En Algérie, l'abstention n'a pas besoin d'Al-Qaeda!», Interview of Zyneb Drief to François Burgat about the legislative elections.

http://www.rue89.com/2007/05/16/legislatives_algeriennes_l_abstention_n_a_pas_besoin_d_alquaida_par_francois_burgat

Photographic testimony:

The electoral campaign



The voting



الجمهورية الجزائرية الديمقراطية الشعبية
انتخاب المجلس الشعبي الوطني
17 ماي 2007

الدائرة الانتخابية : الجزائر
قائمة : التجمع من أجل الثقافة والديمقراطية

PARTI : RCD

20	HAROU Bad	1	SADI Sadi	1	معتدي سعيد
21	OUSSER Houne	2	LOUNAOUI Houne	2	لوناسي حنين
22	BOUMEDJAH Edouche	3	BESSAB Tahar	3	بساس طاهر
23	ABBAS Khelil	4	BELEBAS Mehine	4	بلمباس مهنين
24	MEDOUER Amir	5	KAO Saida	5	فايد سaida
25	BEYTSAKAL Abdelhak	6	SELLAM Karim	6	صلاح كرايم
26	DANANE Hefsa	7	CHIBATI Mohamed	7	أبو علي أحمد
27	Eya Zennor	8	SAGOU Oussar	8	سعودي أوسر
28	SAB AHMED HIR	9	SAGAT Fatia	9	سيدات فاطمة
29	BEKKHRA Lakdar	10	MERABE Mehoud	10	ميرابيه مهود
30	DJEBBAR Bouahim	11	MEDOUH Younes	11	مرواح يونس
31	AMER Yousif Salah	12	BELEKHO Salah	12	بلخكي صالح
32	SAIBAOUI Abdelhrit	13	MEDOUH Younes	13	مرواح يونس
33	MERBAI Mohamed	14	ZZI Arthur	14	زوي شيور
34	AIT DJEBBARA Malrouka Eya Youssif	15	MAMEN Zaima	15	معتدي زaima
35	MEHALLA Tayeb	16	FERIK AH	16	فرايك علي
36	TIGHTI Mehmed Amekrou	17	BENAMER Babouam Ouhari	17	بن امير بكباشم بواحم
		18	LOUAOUEN Aki	18	لوواون اكي
		19	BELEKCHER Chahna	19	بليشير شاحنا

الجمهورية الجزائرية الديمقراطية الشعبية
انتخاب المجلس الشعبي الوطني
17 ماي 2007

الدائرة الانتخابية : الجزائر
قائمة : الجبهة الوطنية الجزائرية

PARTI : FNA

19	THETI Smat	1	TOUATI Moussa	1	تواتي موسى
20	ADOUA Abdelhak	2	GULDINE Tahar	2	رد الله الدين الطاهر
21	CHETOUMI Khalef	3	BENHALF Allah Abdelhrit	3	بن خلف الله عبد الحريم
22	SADI Djamel	4	HAMOU Abdelhrit	4	حموي عبد الحريم
23	BOUSSAIT Fouad	5	MERBAI Aki	5	ميرباي اكي
24	KHEMOUCHE Amar	6	ARDEMALIK Oumal	6	اردماليك اومال
25	LOUNE Ahmed	7	LOUNADI Youcef	7	لونادي يوسف
26	BEKADI Mohamed	8	GHAMOUH Abdelhamid	8	غاموحي عبد الحميد
27	AOU Younes	9	TOUHRI Babouam Houa	9	طواهري بابواحم هوية
28	GUETTOU Rabah	10	OULD MOHAMMED Aicha	10	ولد محمد ملكة
29	LABOU Ahmed	11	ALIM Sidi	11	عالم سعيدي
30	KHOULID Bessoud	12	BOUDELKHOUE Noureddine	12	بوادلخويع نور الدين
31	BRADOU Youcef	13	KAACHECHE Sadi	13	كاشيشي السعيد
32	BENTAG Abdelhamid	14	MERBAI Younes	14	ميرباي يونس
33	CHANE AH	15	AZEM Mehoud	15	عزم مهود
34	BRABTI Hani	16	SMAL Smail	16	سمال سمال
35	BELEKHOUI Rabah	17	BEZOU Abdelhak	17	بيزوي عبد الحريم
		18	CHETAN Arthur	18	شحات اثنور

الجمهورية الجزائرية الديمقراطية الشعبية
انتخاب المجلس الشعبي الوطني
17 ماي 2007

الدائرة الانتخابية : الجزائر
قائمة : حزب العمال

PARTI : PT

18	MERABET Fouad Eya Benkoussa	1	HANOUE Louisa	1	حنون لويلا
19	ALAOUI Mohamed	2	MIZAN Mohamed	2	مزيان محمد
20	DURBAZI Khelil	3	CHOUTEN Nedja Eya Bouahim	3	شوتن نادية زوية بويلا
21	BOUAF Hafs	4	MANEUR Mourad	4	منصور مراد
22	BENAOUI Mohammed	5	ANAN Yousif Eya Ghazi	5	اناني يوسيف زوية غازي
23	BOUZERAH Abla	6	BENAOUI Abdelhak	6	ابو علي عبد الحريم
24	BOHELLEH Mohamed	7	BENAOUI Rabah	7	بن اورد رابع
25	BENHAMA Abdelhak	8	BENKICHA Karima	8	بن كيشي كريمة
26	ELHOBI Fatia	9	BEYHANA Adelina	9	بن يحيى بن علي
27	RABAH Houche	10	SADAOU Mehoud	10	سادي مهود
28	MEHRELLI Oussar Mohamed Tahir	11	SOUAD Zaira Eya Bouad	11	سواد زيرة زوية بوادي
29	CHERAOUI Djamel	12	BOUMEDJENE Djamel	12	بوميدجني جمال
30	BOUKEROUH Saad-eddine	13	BOUSEH Houne	13	بوسيه حنين
31	DEFRACU Hoyet	14	HAGDAG Amara	14	حداغ امرا
32	OUNIS Houche	15	DJEBARA Bahia Eya Youssif	15	ديبارا باهيا زوية يوسيف
33	KAZI Abdelhrit	16	FELLAHI Sadi-Baba Eya Houne	16	فلاحي ساديه بويلا
34	AZOUZ Fouad	17	WLAN ABDELKADER Hassen Khelja	17	ولان عبد الحريم حنين خريجة
35	HAMED Bouamed				

الجمهورية الجزائرية الديمقراطية الشعبية
انتخاب المجلس الشعبي الوطني
17 ماي 2007

الدائرة الانتخابية : الجزائر
قائمة : التجمع الوطني الديمقراطي

PARTI : RND

19	KEDOU Ramzi Eya Hani Abdelhak	1	HACHOUH Abdelhrit	1	حواوي عبد الحريم
20	OUKI Tahar	2	CHIER Saida	2	شير سaida
21	BENKEDJA Abdelhak	3	DIENOUAT Salah	3	دينواط صالح
22	BOUADOU Karim	4	BENAF Moustapha	4	بن افا مصطفى
23	ZOUAI Meamar	5	SADI Fouad Eya Ben Saloume	5	سادي فواد زوية بن سلوم
24	SOULFI Abdelhrit	6	BOUGHNA Houche	6	بوغنا حنين
25	TAKALU Karim	7	BOUGHNA Lakdar	7	بوغنا شحات
26	SAHED Noureddine	8	MEHRI Abdelhrit	8	مهي عبد الحريم
27	ANSANI Omar	9	KHOULID Bessoud	9	خوليد بيسود
28	BEN MAFFOU Ahmed	10	KHOULID Bessoud	10	بن مافوف احمد
29	BOUDAF Moustapha	11	SAADALLAH Hani	11	سادالله هاني
30	BOU FOUK Hourane	12	ZEKAGH Abdelhrit	12	زكاغ عبد الحريم
31	BEZOU Djamel Eya Rifi	13	BENKEDOUH Younes Eya Felouch	13	بن بكاغ يونس زوية فلوش
32	KIBBOUA Selim	14	ALI KHOUA Abdelrahmane	14	علي خويجة عبد الرحمان
33	SAGHRI Saida	15	ROUBAH Sadi	15	روبع السعيد
34	DANI Bouzida Nedja Eya Houne	16	TOUHRA Abdelhamid	16	طواهري عبد الحميد
35	BOUSALAH Mohamed	17	BENABOUCHE Abdelrahmane	17	بن بواويح عبد الرحمان
		18	BOUVOUCIF Abouhak	18	بواويح عبد الله