

# Global Network for Rights and Development (GNRD)

## OBSERVATION MISSION REPORT ON THE ALGERIAN PRESIDENTIAL ELECTIONS 17 April 2014

الشبكة الدولية للحقوق والتنمية



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## Foreword



The Global Network for Rights and Development (GNRD) is an international NGO established in June 2008 with the aim to enhance and support both human rights and development by adopting new strategies and policies for real change.

The main objectives of GNRD are to promote and protect democracy, human rights and the rule of law worldwide. Accordingly, GNRD's election observations aim to strengthen democratic institutions, build public confidence in electoral processes and help deter fraud, intimidation and violence.

This report highlights the successes of the GNRD mission to Algeria, gives an overview of the sites, which were accessed, and notes the main points of contention. It summarises a brief history of modern Algeria and offers insights into the politico-legal infrastructure that governs the electoral process.

The mission was able to establish a strong working relationship with the Algerian authorities and highlighted seven areas where electoral procedure can be improved in future. These include stricter control over the regulations on the posting of campaign materials, improved access for voters with limited mobility and ensuring greater media freedom and independence.

In conclusion, we are continuing the GNRD tradition of performing the valuable role of observing elections in fragile democracies, and offering concrete solutions for future improvements.

**Dr. Loai Deeb**  
**President, Global Network for Rights and Development**  
**Stavanger, 5 May 2014**

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## Executive Summary

Having received special authorization from the Algerian government, international non-governmental organisation Global Network for Rights and Development (GNRD), conducted a successful observation mission to monitor the country's Presidential election in April 2014. The mission, which was intended to certify the preparation of election officials and measure the election's compliance with international standards, included 10 accredited experts from GNRD offices in Belgium, Norway, Spain, and Switzerland.

The GNRD observation team, headed by Mr. Ramadan Abu Jazar (Director of GNRD Brussels), conducted its mission in strict accordance with international standards for election monitoring. Prior to the election, the mission inspected 3 polling stations and 37 electoral offices evaluating their capacity and preparedness to receive voters. On election day, GNRD observers split into groups and visited 53 polling stations and more than 650 electoral offices to monitor the integrity of the voting process.

As prescribed by the Algerian constitution, Presidential elections are held every five years; the process is controlled by the Constitutional Council and presided over by the Ministry of the Interior. Presidential elections are monitored by two government institutions, the National Commission for Supervision of Presidential Elections (NCSEP) and the National Commission for the Surveillance of Presidential Elections (NCSEP).

This year, GNRD and four other international organisations were invited by the Algerian government to observe the elections. The GNRD team reported that the electoral process went smoothly. Stations were provided with adequate security and the voting process was largely without incident. Electoral officials were also extremely attentive and positively engaged; all staff and authorities were extremely cooperative with the GNRD experts.



**Mr. Ramadan Abu Jazar during a press conference in Algiers**

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Unfortunately, the observers also recorded a low voter turnout, especially amongst the youth population. In addition, not all polling stations were properly equipped to handle voters with disabilities and some polling stations featured campaign materials. However, GNRD experts recorded that election procedures were conducted in accordance with national legislature and international standards.



**GNRD Observatory Mission to Algeria 2014**

## Election Observation Methodology

GNRD assessed the electoral process in Algeria against the country's national legal framework as well as its international obligations for legitimate democratic elections.

Algeria has ratified a series of international and regional human rights treaties with provisions relevant to the electoral process. These treaties include the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights (ICCPR), the Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination Against Women (CEDAW), the Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities, and the African Charter on Human and Peoples' Rights (AfCHPR). Table 1 (Annex) provides an overview of the applicable international treaties, which Algeria signed, ratified, or acceded to.

GNRD observation missions are conducted in accordance with the Declaration of Principles for International Election Observation and Code of Conduct for International Election Observers, which was adopted at the United Nations in 2005 and has been endorsed by 37 election observation groups. The declaration details principles for the conduct of credible and professional election observations. In accordance with these guidelines, GNRD's evaluation of the election focused on civil and political rights and provided an impartial assessment independent of any bilateral or multilateral considerations.

GNRD remains committed to completing all election observations in a nonpartisan, unbiased and professional manner. To ensure consistent accuracy and quality of information, GNRD utilizes a standardized methodology to gather and evaluate data. Observers meticulously assess the electoral procedures using a series of detailed checklists that measure various aspects of the visited polling stations and the conduct of polling officials. These checklists are designed to measure both the competency and training of officials and the election's compliance with international standards. GNRD also uses questionnaires to record voter opinions and experiences (Annex 1). These questionnaires are adapted to address the specific concerns of each country.

Every GNRD observation mission seeks to provide a comprehensive analysis of the electoral process and recommendations for further improvements. This report provides an overview of Algeria's electoral institutions; relevant legal framework; presidential candidates and their campaigns; pre-election developments and a summary of the political background - as well as an assessment of elections management, voter registration and demographics, and the-media. The report also details election day and post election developments.

## Overview of the GNRD Observation Mission

Having previously administered observation missions in Egypt, Jordan, and the Republic of Sudan, GNRD received authorization from the Algerian government to conduct an observation mission monitoring the 2014 presidential elections. The mission's goal was to:

- Provide an impartial assessment of the election's compliance with the international standards,
- Measure the integrity of voting procedures, and
- Support the right of the Algerian people to hold free and fair elections.

Once approval to perform the mission was granted to GNRD, Mrs. Anne-Marie Lizin, Head of the GNRD High Commission on Europe, travelled to Algeria to form an official agreement with Mr. Hashemi Brahmi, the President of the National Committee overseeing the elections. Facilitation of formal and logistical arrangements was performed by the Algerian authorities.

The observation mission, which consisted of 10 experts from GNRD offices in Belgium, Norway, Switzerland and Spain, arrived in Algeria prior to the election day and stayed until April 20, by which time the electoral process had been completed. The GNRD mission concentrated its work in four Communes of Algeria:

- Commune de El Mouradia
- Commune de Sidi M'hamed
- Commune El-Mouradia, and
- Commune d'Alger Centre.

Mr. Ramadam Abu Jazar, the Director of GNRD Brussels, served as the head of the mission, responsible for general supervision, coordination of mission activities, and the management of press relations. Ms. Evgenia Kondrakhina, GNRD Chief Executive Manager, oversaw the coordination of the observer teams and handled technical issues. The observers were divided into four teams and included experts from Spain, Russia, Norway, Belgium, Latvia, France, Armenia and the United Kingdom.

### GNRD Pre-election preparation

On the eve of the election, the GNRD mission was given an opportunity to certify that polling stations were properly prepared to receive voters. The mission received exclusive access to three randomly selected polling stations and 37 electoral offices, enabling the observers to confirm the presence of necessary election materials, and ensure that the stations adhered to campaign regulations.



The mission sought to ascertain the existence of locked transparent ballot boxes containing essential equipment such as seals and inkwell stamping and examined the voting booths to ensure that the voters' anonymity would be protected.

To verify staff training and measure the approximate time of the voting process, the team re-enacted the full voting process at the Freedom Park polling station. This process consisted the staff checking the voter's ID, confirming the presence of the voter's name in the electoral register, giving the voter the ballot card, and then designating a booth to vote. After the card was completed and put into an envelope, the voter walked to the locked transparent box and deposited the ballot. The team also interviewed the officials in charge at all three stations and requested the head of each electoral centre to explain the electoral process. Upon completion of the observational field visit, the team recorded the satisfactory capacity and preparedness of the electoral offices to receive voters and recorded that the three polling stations satisfied all criteria.

In addition to field operations, GNRD observers closely followed campaign activities and the work of the election administration and relevant state bodies, as well as implementation of the legislative framework, in order to gauge the overall climate and fairness of the presidential election. Throughout the mission, GNRD observers drafted press releases and statements, which detailed the engagement of election officials, assessed voting procedures, and noted personal observations. GNRD conducted its mission with strict adherence to national legislation as well as the Declaration of Principles for International Election Observation and Code of Conduct for International Election Observers.

### Other International Observers

In addition to GNRD, four other international and regional organizations participated in the observation of the Algerian presidential elections:

**The League of Arabs States:** On 9th March 2014, a memorandum was signed between the Arab League States and the Algerian Foreign Office, which allowed for the deployment of 123 observers of Arab League States in Algeria. The observers operated in 48 Wilayas and met the concerned ministries during this period. The mission studied Algerian constitutional law and other regulations on the elections in Algeria.

**The United African Organization (UAO):** Under the supervision of His Excellence Mr Dileita Mohamed Dileita, the previous Prime Minister of Djibouti, 200 UAO observers conducted an observation in Algeria. UAO observers consisted of pan-African and national parliamentarians, ambassadors, and civil society delegates. Their mission was to monitor the implementation of the voting regulations and transparency and equability of the voting procedure. They conducted observation in 48 Wilayas.

**The United Nation Organization (UNO):** As there was no specific resolution from the Security Council or the General Assembly on the observation mission to Algeria, the UN sent a small group of experts to monitor the presidential elections. The panel met the Interior Minister and Local Collectivities.

**The Organization of Islamic Cooperation (OIC):** Pursuant to the agreement signed between Algeria and OIC on 2nd April 2014, the Organization sent an observation mission to Algeria between the 12<sup>th</sup> and the 20<sup>th</sup> April. The OIC mission was in charge of observing different stages of the electoral process, including the administrative preparation, the conduct of the electoral campaign and the announcement of the results.



## Historical and Political Background

### A Brief History of Post-Colonial Algeria

The victory of the National Liberation Front (FLN) in the Algerian War of Independence in 1962 brought an end to nearly a century of French colonialism. It ushered in a period of democracy, and handed the rule of Algeria to its people.

Only three years later, however, democracy was brought to a halt when military officer Houari Boumédiène deposed Algeria's first elected president Ahmed Ben Bella in a bloodless military *coup d'état*. The elected National Assembly was immediately dissolved and the new Constitution suspended. Political pluralism was no longer tolerated and the FLN was declared the only legal political party. Throughout his 13 years in power, Boumédiène's regime survived several attempted coups and promoted social justice and equality with domestic policies that offered free education and free medical care.

Following Boumédiène's death in 1978, Chadli Bendjedid was elected to the presidency. Bendjedid reduced state surveillance of its citizens and the political influence of the military in the government. In 1988, however, Algerian youth revolted, as discontent with perceived government wasteful spending and sharp economic decline (caused by the falling price of oil) reached boiling point. The state's response to the riots left nearly a thousand dead, and Bendjedid acquiesced to public opinion and agreed to a new Constitution, political pluralism, and democratic reform. The legalization of new political parties led to a resounding defeat of the FLN in December 1991 by the Islamic Salvation Front party (FIS). Bendjedid was forced resignation from the presidency in January 1992.

### Civil War

In response to the FIS leadership's stated intentions to abolish the Algerian democracy and establish an Islamic state, the military retook control of the government with a *coup d'état* in 1992. The ensuing controversy between the military and Islamist supporters sparked the bloody Algerian Civil War and led to the deaths of over 100,000. The FIS was subsequently banned and thousands of its members arrested. Algeria quickly descended into chaos as Islamist groups such as the Armed Islamic Group (GIA) began campaigns of terror, indiscriminately attacking police and civilians.

Terrorist attacks left several thousand Algerians dead by 1993, but increasing dissension between the various Islamic groups led to a disorganized and decentralized Islamist movement. In 1994, the GIA declared war on the FIS, which was considering initiating peace negotiations with the army, and began a campaign of massacres, destroying entire villages. The conflict began to wane in 1997, when the FIS negotiated a ceasefire with the military. Violence declined further in 1999 with a new law that granted amnesty to many Islamist fighters, although the GIA continued an insurgency until its final defeat in 2002.

## Bouteflika and New Algerian Democracy

Following the resignation of General Liamine Zéroual, who served as president throughout most of the civil war, Abdelaziz Bouteflika was elected to the office in 1999 with the support of both the military and the FLN. Bouteflika is credited with restoring peace and security to Algeria; notably by granting amnesties to Islamist fighters and encouraging reconciliation activities. Bouteflika's tenure as president has been marked with a significant reduction in violence and the restoration of political stability. After being re-elected in 2004, Bouteflika was repeatedly hospitalized with stomach cancer and other health problems. In 2008, a constitutional amendment was passed that removed presidential term limits, allowing Bouteflika to win a third consecutive term in 2009.

It is worth noting that although political pluralism has flourished in Algeria, with over 40 political parties now in existence, Bouteflika's party, the FLN, has maintained a considerable majority with 208 out of 462 seats in the People's National Assembly.

## Islamic and Liberal Opposition Parties

The Islamist Movement of Society for Peace announced on 25 January 2014 that it would boycott the elections. The Islamic Renaissance Movement followed with its own announcement of a boycott on 7 February. On 22 March, about 5,000 people rallied in Algiers, calling for a boycott in response to Bouteflika's attempts to seek a fourth term. The protestors also called for reforms to the political system. Both Islamic and secular parties were present at the protest, with Rally for Culture and Democracy's Mohsen Belabes saying: "The people here are the people who have been excluded, who have been put aside, but this is the real Algeria. The regime will collapse, but Algeria will survive".

Finally, a movement called Barakat has rejected the idea of a fourth term for Abdelaziz Bouteflika; this group opposed the nature of the elections, and has organized protests demanding a new political order.

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# Electoral Institutions and the Framework for the Presidential Elections

## Legal Framework

According to article 74 of the Algerian Constitution, presidential elections in Algeria are held every 5 years, with a successful candidate being selected through a majority vote for a five-year term. Algerian elections are regulated by several legal documents; the following laws are relevant to the presidential elections:

- The Constitution of the Democratic and Popular Republic of Algeria, 8 December 1996, modified by Organic Laws 02-03, 2002 and 08-19, 2008, and
- Organic Law 12-01, 2012 on Electoral System.

## The Constitution

The Constitution forms the basis for elections in Algeria; articles 71-75 of the Constitution set rules for presidential elections in the country. It establishes the method of voting - a universal, direct and secret vote with the two-round majority system, although second round has never been necessary. The Constitution also sets rules for balloting procedure, which is similar to the French ballot and envelope system, and establishes the requirements to be a candidate for president, the length of term, and rules for re-eligibility. It also contains provisions for other elements of the Algerian electoral system, such as “proxy voting” and the establishment of itinerant polling stations in some desert provinces for nomad population.

## Electoral Code

The Electoral Code specifies further regulations and standards for electoral proceedings in Algeria. The code includes specific articles on the presidential elections, which establish rule of electoral consultation via referendum, and campaign and financial regulations. Certain articles also dictate the composition of the Electoral Commissions and control mechanisms. To protect the fairness of elections, the Electoral Code sets provisions for the use of transparent ballot boxes and the supervision of vote counting by party representatives.

## Electoral Institutions

The highest judicial body in Algeria is the **Constitutional Council**, which ensures the conformity of the electoral process with the provisions of the Constitution. It is responsible for accepting the applications of the presidential elections candidates and for publishing the final results of the elections. The Council also



receives appeals and complaints related to the electoral process and its decisions are expected within ten days after the submission of the appeals.

The **Ministry of Interior** is the body in charge of the electoral process, and is responsible for logistical activities such as the preparation of electoral materials.

In 2012 two new bodies were created to monitor the electoral process:

- **The National Commission for Supervision of Presidential Elections (NCSEP)** is an ad-hoc body, made up of judges appointed by the President. Its role is to monitor the elections and ensure they are conducted according to the Constitution of Algeria and other legal provisions.
- **The National Commission for the Surveillance of Presidential Elections (NCSEP)** consists of party representatives and is entitled to monitor the electoral process.

Legal aspects of the electoral process are regulated by the **Ministry of Justice** through Magistrates who preside over *Communal Electoral Commissions*. Each community's commission, composed of one judge, the president of the community popular assembly, the general secretary of the community, and two community voters, is responsible for elaborating and updating the electoral lists. There is also a *Consular Electoral Commission* for each Consular circumscription. The *Wilaya Electoral Commission* is responsible for issuing the voter's card (*carte d'électeur*).

## Elections Management

Article 30 of the Electoral Code states that the presidential elections may last no more than one day. For the 2014 election, the elections process was scheduled to open on Thursday, April 17, 2014 at 8 a.m. in the morning, and closed at 7 p.m. in the evening. However, according to the Electoral Code, the voting hours can also be extended under necessary circumstances; at this elections voting hours were extended until 8 p.m.

Articles 36 of the Electoral code establish the composition of the electoral office staff, which should consist of a president, a vice president, a secretary and two assessors. Each electoral office can also have two substitute staff members. The members of the electoral office personnel and the substitutes are appointed from among voters residing in the *Wilaya*. Each electoral office may also have up to five representatives from political parties.

The functions and responsibilities of these officials are defined by the article 36 of the Code include:

- The president has policing power inside the electoral office and is required to organize the proper conduct of the voting. This means that he/she has the power to expel any person who disrupts the normal operations of the voting process. The president also communicates the results of the voting to the head of the polling station.

- The vice president, or one of the assessors are responsible for stamping voters' cards with the phrases "voted" or "voted by proxy" and for marking the voters' fingerprint in the voters' register book.
- The secretary or the second assessor verify the voters' identity in the voters register list, and provide them with the ballots and an envelope. One of the assessors is also responsible for controlling access of the voters to the electoral office.

## Voting procedure

Each electoral office must have at least one voting booth, which should guarantee the secrecy of vote of each voter (Articles 42, 43, 44 of the Electoral Code). The number of envelopes in the electoral office must correspond to the exact number of the registered voters in the list. There should be one ballot for each presidential candidate. The transparent ballot box must be sealed and closed by two different locks.

Article 44 states that upon entering the room, the voter should present an identity document to the vice-president/assessor. The identity document could be a national identity card, passport or other valid official document identifying the person. They must also present their voter card, if they possess it. The voter takes one envelope and a copy of each ballot and proceeds to the voting booth to put his/her ballot in the envelope. The voter must then place the envelope in the ballot box. The voter places his/her index finger in the inkwell and places the fingerprint in front of his/her name on the voter register list. As the last step of the voting procedure, the vice president or one of the assessors stamps the voter identification card using a rubber stamp that includes the date of voting.

## Pre-election Developments

### Voters Registration and Databases

#### Eligibility to vote

Each voter's eligibility to vote was determined by the Articles 3 and 4 of the Algerian Electoral Law. According to these articles, all citizens over the age of 18 who are registered on the electoral list of their districts and are not prohibited by law may vote (see below). Consequently, citizens not registered on the electoral list of their constituency are not eligible to vote.

According to Article 5 of the Organic Law, which defines those citizens who are barred from voting, citizens who cannot register include:

- Those whose conduct during the Algerian war of independence contradicted the nation's interest
- Those condemned for a crime and not rehabilitated
- Those who declare bankruptcy and have not attempted to resolve the situation
- Imprisoned and banned persons

Electoral lists are created in each municipality under the supervision of an electoral administrative commission, which includes a judge, the President of the Municipal People's Assembly, a Secretary General of the municipality and two voters from the municipality. As a general rule, these lists are permanent with updates conducted during the final quarter of each year.

#### Voters' registration

Citizens who wish to register to vote, must provide the following documents:

- National ID or passport;
- Proof of residence such as title property, a lease, rent receipt, electric and gas bill, or water bill; and
- A certificate of cancellation from the electoral list of the former municipality of residence for any voters who have changed their place of residence.

According to the last update to the voters' register, conducted in January and February, the total number of registered voters in Algeria is 22,880,678. This includes 12,418,468 men (54%) and 10,462,210 women (46%).

#### Voting from abroad

As per Executive Decree 14-24 (issued on February 2, 2014) absentee voting for the presidential elections is processed through Algerian the embassies and consulates abroad.

Algerian citizens residing abroad and registered on the voters' lists were permitted to vote directly at the embassy or consulate of Algeria in which they were enrolled. Voters unable to vote directly had an opportunity to vote in absence- in accordance with the Article 54 of Organic Law 12-01.

Algerian citizens residing abroad, not registered on the voters' lists, but meeting legal conditions for registration, also had an opportunity to register through the Algerian embassy or consulate in the country of their residence. The embassies or consulates issued voter ID cards to all voters registered at that location. Voters were only eligible to vote at the embassy or consulate in which they were registered.

### **Voting in absence**

The official voter's guide for the presidential elections states that registered voters who are sick, hospitalized, or confined at home; severely disabled; on business travel on election day; students studying outside their district of origin; temporarily abroad; members of the army, security forces, customs officials, or work in a prison; or are otherwise unable to travel to their polling station, may exercise their right to vote in absence.

### **Voters Education and Information**

The voter information campaign was supervised by the Algerian government and was aimed at informing the citizens of elections procedure, the presidential candidates, and providing information on technical issues, such as eligibility to vote and details of the voting process. Additionally, the Algerian government had published guidelines leaflet to explain how to vote.

The Interior Ministry published two guidelines leaflets explaining the electoral rules and the Algerian Electoral Code, as well as specific information for presidential candidates regarding the management of their campaigns. After the last elections, the European Union had provided the Algerian Government with concrete recommendations on how to improve voters' education and information. For that reason, during these presidential elections the Algerian government focussed on voter education and information and published the above-mentioned guidelines both for voters and the candidates.

## Candidates and Campaigns

The Electoral Code regulates the organisation and conduct of the electoral campaigns. According to the electoral code, the campaign period begins 21 days prior to election day and must end 2 days before election date. It codifies that each presidential candidate must present his/her programme to the voters and to media outlets. It also mandates that all candidates get the same broadcasting times. The Electoral code prohibits any of the candidates from campaigning in places of worship and education. Finally, the document asserts that actions and language used shall not be illegal or immoral and also prohibits candidates from using state attributes to bolster their campaign. The candidate's campaign expenses are limited to 15 million Dinars in the first round, and campaign finances must be drawn from political parties, state aid and candidate's personal income.

Both the mainstream political parties and the boycott movements were guilty of violations of these rules. Some candidates used violent and provocative rhetoric when campaigning, which risk inciting further violence. Some candidates' campaigns hung campaigning materials near polling stations on election day (i.e. Abdelaziz Bouteflika in Algiers). Due to the secrecy of the financial resources by parties, state aid and candidate's income, there is no official document that details presidential campaign expenditures.

Finally, not all candidates' campaign programs were readily available for citizens to see and discuss in traditional gatherings and academic circles. The following information represents a profile of the six candidates that were approved by the Constitutional Council to run for Presidential elections in 2014. The text will briefly describe the candidate's background and election programs.

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Candidate	Party	Brief History	Election Policies	Medium Used
Ali Benflis	Independent	Previous General Secretary at the office of the Algerian President, as well as Chief of Staff at the Presidential Cabinet. After that, he was appointed as Head of the Government and Secretary-General of the FLN Party, and it was during this post when he ran for president for all elections since 2004.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Change of regime</li> <li>- Pluralism</li> <li>- Increase freedoms</li> <li>- Judicial independence</li> </ul>	Television, social media, street posters, rallies, talk shows.
Abdelaziz Belaid	Front for the Future	Grassroots activist in the National Union of Algerian Students (UNEA) from 1986 to 2007. Chairman of the National Union of Algerian Youth. He was one of the youngest to be elected as a member of the National People's Congress (NPC), as a National Liberation Front (FLN) candidate (from 1997-2002 and 2002-2007). In 2011, he resigned his FLN membership and created his own party in 2012 called the 'Front for the Future'. It was his first time running for the 2014 presidential elections.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Fighting Corruption</li> <li>- Independence of Judiciary</li> <li>- Promotion of rights for women, youth and business</li> <li>- Increase economic freedoms</li> <li>- Decrease dependency on oil export</li> <li>- Full parliament control over economic management</li> </ul>	Television, social media, street posters, rallies, talk shows.
Louisa Hanoune	Workers' Party	Known activist since the 1980s, fighting successfully for women's rights and the independence of the General Union of Algerian Workers (UGTA). She joined the underground movement called the Socialist Workers Organisation (OST) and was arrested in 1988 because of that. After the	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Social inclusion of women, workers and youth in the political system</li> <li>- Political reform</li> </ul>	Television, social media, street posters, rallies, talk shows



		recognition of the multi-party system, the OST made an offshoot party called Worker's Party in 1990 where Hanoune became spokesperson. Since then she won three terms in the People's Assembly. In 2003, she was elected Secretary General of the Party. Her first bid for presidency in 1999 was rejected by the constitutional council but later approved for all other elections. She is also a member of the Women Workers Committee and the Africa Committee of the International Liaison Committee of Workers. She is also involved in all initiatives and initiated by the union coalition U.S. anti-war, the International Confederation of Arab Trade Unions and the International Liaison Committee of Workers (EIT) campaigns against the occupation of Iraq.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Socialist economic policy</li> <li>- Reform of the political regime</li> <li>- Inclusion of ethnic minorities into the constitution (i.e. Amazigh language becomes official state language)</li> <li>- Increase national productivity</li> </ul>	
Ali Fawzi Rebaine	Ahd 54	Human Rights activists and founder of Algeria's first human rights association. Imprisoned twice from 1983 to 1987 for forming an illegal organization. Founded Ahd 54 party in 1991 and has been its Secretary General ever since.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Equality of rural and urban</li> <li>- Political democratic reform</li> <li>- Economic and social development.</li> </ul>	Television, social media, street posters, rallies, talk shows
Moussa Touati	Algerian National Front	Moussa Touati joined the People's National Army (ANP) before holding various positions within the National Customs, the Ministry of Housing and the National Society Research and mining (SONAREM). Mr. Touati is also a founding member of the movement of children chouhadas,	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Anti-corruption</li> <li>- Rule of Law</li> <li>- Accountability</li> </ul>	Television, social media, street posters, rallies, talk shows



		National Organization of children chouhadas (ONEC) and the National Coordination children chouhadas. In June 1999, Mr. Touati creates the Algerian National Front (FNA) and was elected head of the party, which he continues to chair. Ran for presidency consecutively since 2004.		
Abdelaziz Bouteflika	National Liberation Front	At the age of 19, he joined the Army of National Liberation, which is a military branch of the National Liberation Front (FLN). In 1957, he became controller of the Wilaya and then administrative secretary to the first president Houari Boumedienne. After independence in 1962, Bouteflika became deputy of Tlemcen in the Constituent Assembly and Minister for Youth and Sport in the government led by Ahmed Ben Bella. The following year, he was appointed as Minister for Foreign Affairs. In 1978, after Boumedienne death, Bouteflika was in exile due to political pressure. Returned to Algeria, ran and successfully won the presidency election in 1999. He also won the second, third and fourth election in 2014. He is credited for current Algerian foreign policy, reconciliation, economic rise, and increased security.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Change in constitution to include more freedoms and equality</li> <li>- More social and economic development</li> <li>- Youth inclusion into politics</li> </ul>	Television, social media, street posters, rallies, talk shows by representatives of his campaign due to illness.

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## The Media

Media freedom in Algeria has been steadily improving since the chaos that plagued the country throughout the 1990s. During this period, a legal state of emergency was set (from 1992 to February 2011), that allowed the government to penalize speech that threatens the public order. Nevertheless, privately owned newspapers, many of which take a variety of positions on government activity, continued to circulate.

In January 2012, however, the Algerian government approved a new law that greatly enhanced media freedom and opened the broadcasting service to private operators. Both reporters and human rights activists praised this law as an important step forward for media freedom in Algeria. Since 2012, the media in Algeria has grown considerably, and a large number of private newspapers representing the entire political spectrum are readily available.

The use of online news and social media has seen a slow but steady rise amongst the Algerian population. According to a [report](#) from Freedom House, in 2012, only 15% of the Algerian population had access to the internet suggesting that the limiting factor in further uptake is the limited access Algerians have to the World Wide Web.

### Mass media during the campaign

Despite his illness and limited public appearances, the incumbent presidential candidate Abdelaziz Bouteflika has been at the forefront of political and electoral campaigning. Many media outlets have offered strong endorsements for Bouteflika, and subsequently devoted much attention to his messages and his political program. Due to Bouteflika's current illness, some media outlets have used the candidate's previous speeches as well as ones given by Bouteflika's representatives.

Bouteflika's campaign was also covered in privately-owned press such as L'Expression, El Khabar or Le Soir newspapers. In nearly all cases, all candidates received equal amount of coverage in regards to the size of the photos and the space allotted for their information. Some newspapers focused mainly on the two primary contenders, Bouteflika and Benflis, who were largely viewed as the two most favoured candidates. In each piece, Bouteflika and Benflis received equal coverage; every piece of information about the current president was followed by information on Mr. Benflis' campaign.

Candidate coverage from most online media and news outlets was minimal, although online publications generally represented a wider variety of opinions and exercised greater editorial liberty when reporting. Many online pieces made cases, both for and against, nearly every candidate.

Despite the low use of the Internet in Algeria, social media featured a range of reactions and opinions, mostly from the Algerian youth. Facebook and Twitter were most commonly used to voice support for either



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**GNRD Observation Mission  
Presidential Elections in Algeria  
17 April 2014**

Benflis or Bouteflika, and frequently expressed disappointment about the possible turnout of the election. The remaining four candidates were hardly mentioned in comparison to the two front-runners, with only a few tweets and social media posts tagging their names.



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## Election Day

The GNRD observation mission's work was concentrated in the capital of Algeria, Algiers. Observers were divided into four groups to observe 53 polling stations, 650 electoral offices in total. The observation took place in 5 communes of Algiers: Commune de El Mouradia, Commune de Sidi M'hamed, Commune El-Mouradia, Commune d'Alger Centre.

The observation started at 7:30 in the morning, with teams of observers arriving at polling stations before the voting process started. The observation process finished after the closing of the polling stations at 8 o'clock in the evening. The observers also visited Saint-Elizabeth polling station to monitor the counting process.

GNRD adopted a random sampling technique when choosing which polling stations to monitor. This was due the limiting factors such as the vast geographical area of the polling stations, the large amount of eligible voters (around 23 million) and the existence of 50,000 polling stations.

### General Atmosphere

In general, the observers have witnessed a calm and peaceful atmosphere in all polling stations. In most cases, they were given free access to the stations and the officials warmly welcomed their presence. Overall, the observers recorded high level of competence and preparedness among polling stations officials.

Despite the fact that voter turnout was low, especially in the morning hours, the turnout among older voters was noticeable in all polling station. The presence of representatives of candidates inside the electoral offices was noted, and these representatives were given full freedom to perform their duties of monitoring both the voting procedure and the counting process.



**Ms. Evgenia Kondrakhina, Chief Executive Manager, GNRD  
speaking with Algerian Press**

The voters were mostly happy with the organization and operation of the voting process. They told the observers that there was sufficient information provided by the government about the elections procedure and the candidates to allow them to take part in the elections.

## Polling Stations

The observers noted that the polling stations were provided with sufficient security infrastructure and were staffed appropriately. The administration of the polling stations was mostly cooperative with the observers. There was only one case where observers were not given the total number of the registered voters by the head of the polling station when this information was requested.

Most stations were properly organised, allowing the voting process to work effectively. However, in some cases there were access difficulties, as a number of electoral offices were located on the second or third floor of a building without lift access which made it difficult for some voters to enter, especially for elderly /disabled people.

## Voting Process

Some observers noted the lack of information and guidance in regards to the voting process displayed inside the polling stations these materials were not displayed in suitably public locations. In addition, at some locations campaign materials were posted within or nearby to the polling stations, in contravention with regulations.

Generally the process of voting was sufficiently supervised by officials who fulfilled their duties. However, in a number of locations, observers noted poor organization in handing ballots to the voters. According to the Electoral Code, the vice-president or one of the assistants are required to make sure that the voter takes one envelope and one ballot for each candidate. However, some observers noticed that the polling stations officials were not always successful in ensuring that this was the case. In addition, there was only one voters' register book used both for checking the voters' ID and for marking their fingerprints, which caused delays in the voting process.

## Media Role on Election Day

Despite some problems that foreign media faced on entering Algeria, authorities eventually approved a five-day visa to foreign reporters. However, the issued visas only allowed freedom of movement within the city of Algiers and were only issued a few days before the elections. Due to these restrictions, some journalists (including those from Al Jazeera or ZDF) could not travel to Algeria-and those who could were not able to travel around the country to report on the elections.

However, within the city of Algiers reporters did not face any major obstacles collecting information or posting their material. In discussion with journalists, observers noted that journalists were only required to show their documentation and answer some basic questions about the outlets they represented to acquire access to the polling stations. French media agency France 24 and Spanish newspapers El Mundo and El País were among the international media outlets covering the elections from Algiers.

On a domestic level, local media functioned as usual, primarily featuring information on their respectively endorsed candidate. Certain newspapers, such as the state controlled El Moudjahid or Ech Chaab, published articles strongly in favour of Bouteflika, while others displayed images of Bouteflika's electoral brochure in their election day editions. The newspaper Al Ahrar featured this brochure on the cover page.

Radio and television broadcasting services issued regular updates throughout election day. After the closure of polling stations, stations including Canal Algérie or Djazairia analysed the day's events and labelled them as "normal", "calm" and "promising".

Unsurprisingly, social media updates via Twitter and Facebook provided the most immediate source of information throughout election day. However, most of the posts either reported low turnout or complained about the predicted final results. Despite the criticisms, the most commonly used descriptions in the media during the election day were "stability", "people's will", "democracy" and "great day".

Based on its observations, the mission has concluded that in general, many media outlets offered voters biased information; focusing on their preferred candidates and campaigns. The television broadcasts of presidential campaigns displayed a similar bias; for example, stations in favour of Bouteflika showed footage of the current president during previous campaigns and in a better state of health.

As a rule, privately-owned media outlets displayed a higher level of neutrality than public media, although it must be noted that overall, there was no extensive criticism of the current regime. As expected, online media reporting offered a much more critical view of the Algerian government and President Bouteflika than the printed press. After analysing media publications during the election campaign, the mission noted that French media in Algeria was generally more neutral than the Arabic media.

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## Post Election Development

### Counting and Announcement of Results

After voting closed, the observers attended ballot counts and obtained figures from a variety of different polling stations.

The observers were welcomed into the polling stations and were informed about the outcome by officials in each station. The observers and representatives of some political parties (mainly representing either Bouteflika or Benflis) were also present during the process. The observed counting process developed according to the regulations.

On Friday 18<sup>th</sup> April, preliminary results were presented by the Minister of Interior, Tayeb Belaiz, in a press conference held at Al Aurassi Hotel.

These preliminary results included the following figures:

- Total number of registered voters: 22,880,678
- Number of voters nationwide: 11,307,478
- Number of valid votes: 10,220,029
- Participation rate: 51.7%

The preliminary results per candidate were:

Candidate	% votes
Abdelaziz Bouteflika	81.53%
Ali Benflis	12.18%
Abdul Aziz Bil'in	3.36%
Louisa Hanoun	1.37%
Ali Fawzi Baian	0.99%
Musa Toutyin	0.56%

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## **Electoral Disputes and the Results Process**

On April 17<sup>th</sup>, a few hours after polling closed, the main opposition candidate Ali Benflis declared that he rejected any announced results and alleged both “massive fraud” and “serious irregularities”. "Our history will remember this date as a great crime against the nation by stealing the voice of the citizens and blocking popular will," he said in his [statement](#). He also vowed to use "all peaceful political means as well as legal avenues" to resist the results. The election results were also [rejected](#) by the candidate Moussa Touati, who alleged ballot box stuffing, fraud, and low turnout in the elections and claimed that he will file an appeal to the Constitutional Council.

In contrast, Louisa Hanoune - a presidential candidate who is also General Secretary of the Workers Party, recognized the election results and [announced](#) that the results are a "victory" for the Algerian nation and they will ensure "stability, peace and national sovereignty, preventing the country from plunging in chronic disorder and anarchy".

On Tuesday 22<sup>th</sup> April the Constitutional Council of Algeria [issued](#) a statement in a state television announcing the results of the presidential election of 17<sup>th</sup> April 2014, claiming the results were final and could not be challenged. According to the statement, voter turnout was 50.7%. According to their analysis, Bouteflika won 81.53% of total votes, Premier Ali Benflis came second with 12.18%. The other candidates Abdelaziz Belaid gained 3.36%, Louisa Hanoune 1.37%, Ali Fawzi Rebaine 0.99%, and Moussa Touati 0.56%.

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## Conclusions and Recommendations

After conducting a thorough inspection of polling sites and observing the voting process throughout the election day, the GNRD mission is pleased to report that the election was generally conducted in a free and fair manner, and that the process of voting went smoothly in most locations visited. Observers reported that voting stations were given sufficient security and that officials were welcoming and generally positive to the presence of observers. Personnel were extremely attentive and helped wherever necessary; they were well aware of their duties and took pride in a proper performance. The atmosphere in the polling stations remained relatively calm.

It is unfortunate to note that some polling stations contained campaign materials and at most stations voting instructions were absent. Some voters experienced difficulties accessing polling sites especially when these were located on the upper floors of the polling stations. However, it is important to note that in majority of the cases they were helped by the station staff. In light of these concerns GNRD observers have offered the following recommendations:

- Place voting instructions in prominent locations at all polling stations
- Provide clear direction to voting booths inside the polling stations
- Improve distribution of ballots and envelopes to voters, ensuring continuous provision and supervision
- Ensure no campaign materials (posters, brochures, etc.) are present either at polling stations or in the immediate vicinity
- Arrange appropriate disposal for unused ballots
- Ensure that all voters are aware of registration procedures prior to elections.

Observers also noted the relatively low voter turnout, especially among the youth population. In order to boost youth representation at future elections, GNRD recommends the implementation of a campaign to engage voters of different political backgrounds and age. A strong voter turnout from all demographics is imperative to a strong democracy.

GNRD would like to express its gratitude to the Government of the Republic of Algeria for the opportunity to perform this observation mission in Algeria; for facilitating logistical procedures; securing visas and ensuring consistent access to the polling stations.

## Annexes and Tables

**Table 1: Algeria - Status of Ratifications**

Treaty/Declaration	Status	Date
International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights	Ratified/Acceded	1989
International Convention on the Elimination of all Forms of Racial Discrimination	Ratified/Acceded	1972
Convention on the Elimination of Discrimination Against Women	Ratified/Acceded	1996
Convention on the Political Rights of Women	Ratified/Acceded	2004
Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities	Ratified/Acceded	2009
Convention on the Rights of the Child	Ratified/Acceded	1993
United Nations Convention Against Corruption	Ratified/Acceded	2004
Universal Declaration of Human Rights	Persuasive upon	1948
African Charter on Human and Peoples' Rights	Signed	2003
International Convention for the Protection of All Persons from Enforced Disappearance	Signed	2007

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## Annex 1: GNRD Polling Station Evaluation check-list

### Checklist for the polling stations

Name/Number of Polling Station: .....  
 Number ..... of ..... Your  
 Group: .....  
 .....  
 Time In : .....h ..... Time Out: .....h.....  
 Number of voters registered in the polling station: .....  
 Number of proxy voters registered in the polling station: .....

1. Did you face any difficulties to access the polling station?

1. Yes

2. No

3. Not applicable

Leave a comment:

.....  
 .....

2. Were the voting instructions located in an obvious/visible place?

1. Yes

2. No

3. Not applicable

Leave a comment:

.....  
 .....

3. Did you notice any campaign materials outside and inside the polling station?

1. Yes

2. No

3. Not applicable

Leave a comment:

.....  
 .....

4. Did you see any voter who did not present his/her identity document?

1. Yes

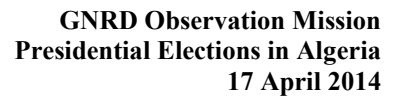
2. No

3. Not applicable

Leave a comment:

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Leave a comment:

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10. Did the polling station officials fulfil their duties properly?

1. Yes

2. No

3. Not applicable

Leave a comment:

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11. Was the counting procedure implemented according to the set regulations (presence of voters' representatives and candidates' representatives, separate submission of questionable and allegedly invalid ballots)?

1. Yes

2. No

3. Not applicable



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ANY ADDITIONAL COMMENTS:

### QUESTIONS TO VOTER(S)

1. Are you satisfied with the voting procedure?

1- Satisfied                      2- Moderately satisfied                      3- Not satisfied

2. Are you satisfied with the way how the polling stations officials fulfil their duties?

1- Satisfied                      2- Moderately satisfied                      3- Not satisfied

3. Have you been well informed about the candidates and the voting procedures?

1 – Yes                      2 – No

4. Any comments?







## Annex 2: Summarised Results of the GNRD Evaluation Check-lists

<b>Number of registered voters</b>	<b>145418 in 51 visited stations</b>	<b>Two stations did not provide information</b>	
<b>Total stations</b>	<b>53</b>		
	<b>Yes</b>	<b>No</b>	<b>Not applicable</b>
1. Did you face any difficulties to access the polling station?	3	50	
2. Were the voting instructions located in an obvious/visible place?	10	42	1
3. Did you notice any campaign materials outside and inside the polling station?	15	37	1
4. Did you see any voter who did not present his/her identity document?	4	44	5
5. Did each voter receive 6 equally printed ballots (one ballot for each candidate) and one non-transparent envelope?	50		3
6. After having voted, did all voters put their index finger in the ink and left a fingerprint on the voter register sheet? (If 'No', please, provide details in comments)	47		6
7. Was the voting procedure for disabled people organized properly?	4	9	40
8. Were the ballot boxes transparent and closed (with 2 locks with different keys)?	50	2	1
9. Was the polling station staffed according to the requirements: president, vice-president, secretary, assistants, substitutes, representatives of political parties (max. 5 people)?	50	2	1
10. Did the polling station officials fulfil their duties properly?	44	4	5