

Platform for a political and peaceful solution to the Algerian crisis

(the Rome Platform)

San Egidio, 13 January 1995

The Algerian Opposition Parties, meeting in San Egidio, declare on this 13th day of January 1995, that:

Today Algeria is suffering a period of unprecedented tragedy.

More than thirty years after achieving independence at such a terrible price, many of the principles and objectives of November 1st 1954 have foundered, and the people's hopes and desires which flourished after October 1988 have been steadily eroded.

Today the people of Algeria live in a climate of terror without equal, exacerbated by intolerable social and economic conditions. In this faceless war, kidnappings, disappearances, assassinations, systematic torture, mutilations and reprisals, are the daily fare of the men and women of Algeria.

The consequences of the events of June 1991 and the coup d'état of 11 January 1992, the interruption of the electoral process, the closure of the political arena, the dissolution of the FIS [Islamic Salvation Front], the establishment of a state of emergency, the repressive measures and the reactions these have provoked, have resulted in a situation of permanent confrontation.

Since then, this violence has escalated continuously. The attempts by the authorities to create militias within the population mark a new departure in this politics of fear. There is a real risk of civil war, threatening the security of the population, the unity of the country and national sovereignty.

A global political and peaceful solution is imperative, to give new hope to the people who desire peace and political legitimacy.

The current leadership have merely initiated false dialogues, which have served to cover up unilateral decision-making and a politics of fait accompli.

Genuine negotiation remains the only means to a peaceful and democratic outcome.

A - Framework: values and principles

- The participants commit to this process on the basis of a national contract with the following principles, and which must be accepted for any negotiation to be valid;
- The declaration of November 1, 1954: “The restoration of the sovereign democratic Algerian state governed by the principles of Islam (article 1)”;
- Rejection of violence for purposes of attaining or maintaining power;
- Rejection of any dictatorship whatever its nature or form, and the right of the people to defend their elected institutions;
- Respect and promotion of human rights as stated in the Universal Declaration, international agreements on human rights, and the international Convention against Torture, and underpinned by the legal texts;
- Respect for political change through universal suffrage;
- Primacy of legitimate law;
- Guarantee of fundamental individual and collective liberties for all people, of any race, sex, religion or language;
- Recognition of a multiparty system;
- Exclusion of the army from the political process; a return to its constitutional functions of safeguarding the unity and indivisibility of the national territory;
- The Algerian personality is based on Islam, Arab identity and Amazigh identity; space and institutional support within this unifying framework must be provided for the culture and two languages which underpin this personality, with no exclusion or marginalisation;
- Separation of judicial, legislative and executive powers;
- Freedom and respect for all faiths.

B - Measures preceding negotiations

- Release of FIS leaders and all political detainees. The provision of all necessary resources and guarantees required for FIS leaders to be able to meet freely, and with anyone else they deem necessary for decision-making.
 - Political and media arenas to be opened up. Reversal of the decision to abolish the FIS. Full reinstatement of the activities of all parties.
 - All bans and suspensions of newspapers, written material and books, applied during the state of emergency to be lifted.
 - An immediate, effective and verifiable end to the practice of torture.
 - The cessation of capital punishment, extra judiciary executions, and victimisation of the civilian population.
 - A call for the condemnation and cessation of acts of violence and attacks on the civilian population, foreigners and public goods.
 - An independent commission to be established to investigate acts of violence and serious violations of human rights.

C - Re-establishment of peace

A new movement towards peace should be gradual, concurrent and negotiated, and should include:

- Both, genuine measures of **detent**: closure of detention camps, lifting the state of emergency, and the repeal of special measures;
- And, an urgent and unambiguous call for an end to all confrontation. All Algerians seek the return of civil peace. The means to achieve this will be determined by the two parties in the conflict, with the active participation of other representative parties.

This movement requires the full and active participation of all peaceful and representative political forces. These latter are capable of contributing to the current process and ensuring the support of the population.

D - Return to constitutional law

All parties agree to respect the Constitution of 23rd February 1989, which may only be amended in line with the constitution.

E - Return of popular sovereignty

The negotiating Parties must define a transitional legal framework for implementing and monitoring the agreements. To this end a national Conference should be held, of representative political forces, with real powers and competencies.

This Conference will set out how to:

- Establish the transitional structures, the terms and conditions and the duration of a period of transition as brief as possible, leading to free and plural elections which will guarantee the full sovereignty of the people;
- Ensure freedom of information, unrestricted access to the media, and freedom of choice for the people;
- Guarantee the outcome of any choices made thereby.

F- Guarantees

All Parties to the negotiation are entitled to mutual guarantees.

The Parties, while maintaining their decision-making autonomy:

- are opposed to any interference in the internal affairs of Algeria;
- denounce the internationalisation of the situation which has resulted from the confrontational politics of those in power;
- remain convinced that a solution to the crisis must be the work of Algerians, in Algeria;

- will carry out an information campaign with the international community to publicise this Platform and ensure their support;
- undertake to launch an international petition to press for the necessity of a peaceful political solution in Algeria;
- appeal to the international community to express their active solidarity with the Algerian people;
- determine to maintain contact with each other with a view to ongoing consultation and agreement.

Names of signatories to be inserted.

Pour la LADDH : Abdennour Ali Yahyia

Pour le FLN : Abdelhamid Mehri

Pour le FFS : Hocine Aït Ahmed ; Ahmed Djeddaï

Pour le FIS : Rabah Kebir ; Anwar Haddam

Pour le PT : Louisa Hanoune

Pour le MDA : Ahmed Ben Bella ; Khaled Bensmain

Pour Ennahda : Abdallah Jaballah

Pour le JMC : Ahmed Ben Mouhammed