



## Algeria - Researched and compiled by the Refugee Documentation Centre of Ireland on Monday 24 November 2014

### Information on whether the Presidential election of April 2014 was considered free and fair including if there were any voting irregularities

In April 2014 a document published by *The Guardian* states:

“Abdelaziz Bouteflika has been sworn in for a fourth term as Algeria's president after he won an election that opponents dismissed as unfair and returned to power for another five years” (The Guardian (28 April 2014) *Abdelaziz Bouteflika sworn in for fourth term as Algerian president*).

*Reuters* in April 2014 points out that:

“Algerian President Abdelaziz Bouteflika, the independence veteran in power for 15 years, won re-election on Friday with more than 80 percent of a vote opponents dismissed as fraud to keep an ailing leader in power” (Reuters (18 April 2014) *Algeria's ailing Bouteflika wins re-election*).

This document also states:

“Benflis, a former FLN chief and once a Bouteflika ally, called the vote a fraud and refused to accept the results. But he gave little evidence and the government dismissed his claims” (ibid).

The *United Nations News Service* in April 2014 notes:

“Secretary-General Ban Ki-moon today congratulated the people and Government of Algeria on the peaceful holding of recent presidential elections and encouraged them to work together to strengthen the democratic process in the country. Incumbent Abdelaziz Bouteflika reportedly won last week's poll, garnering over 80 per cent of the votes cast in the North African nation. Mr. Ban, who has closely followed the elections, had deployed – at the request of the Government – a three-member panel of experts to the country to follow the electoral process and keep him abreast of the latest developments” (United Nations News Service (24 April 2014) *Lauding peaceful polls, Ban encourages Algerians to work together to strengthen democracy*).

The *Algeria Press Service* in April 2014 notes:

“Climate in which the presidential election was held in Algeria was also praised by international organizations like the Arab League, the Organization of Islamic Cooperation (OIC), the African Union (AU) and the International Network for Rights and Development, which sent observation missions to Algeria during this election” (Algeria Press Service (20 April 2014) *Many countries, international organizations hail smooth election*).

In April 2014 the *Algeria Press Service* states:

"The 2014 presidential election was held "in accordance with international standards" and has not recorded any excesses that may affect the final results of the election, said Saturday in Algiers the head of the Global Network for Rights and Development (GNRD) mission, Ramdane Aboudjazr. The reports of the ten-man delegate mission indicate that the voting process was conducted in accordance with international standards, said. Aboudjazr during a press conference, noting that the negative aspects recorded do not affect the final results of the election" (Algeria Press Service (19 April 2014) *Global Network For Rights And Development: Presidential Election in line with international standards*).

The *Associated Press* in April 2014 states:

"The Algerian commission charged with supervising the election and African Union observers said the vote went smoothly" (Associated Press (18 April 2014) *Algerian President Abdelaziz Bouteflika Wins Fourth Term*).

A report published in April 2014 by *Deutsche Welle* points out that:

"Few Algerians believe the election was free and fair..." (Deutsche Welle (19 April 2014) *Algeria's Bouteflika wins fourth term despite serious illness*).

A publication in April 2014 by the *Rosa Luxemburg Stiftung* notes:

"Electoral outcomes in Algeria are usually forged, with results negotiated behind closed doors, long before polls have opened" (Rosa Luxemburg Stiftung (April 2014) *Presidential Elections In Algeria – In The Name Of Stability*, p.1).

This document also states that:

"Immediately after the ballot, electoral fraud allegations intensified. Even before the announcement of the official figures, Benflis published a statement in which he accused Bouteflika's clan of «large-scale electoral fraud». Benflis, Rebaïne and Touati do not recognize the results. Louisa Hanoune was the only candidate who recognized the final figures. She stated that the elections are a «great victory for the Algerian people» and called its results «legitimate and untouchable» compared to 2009 when she loudly opposed the official numbers.<sup>5</sup> Three weeks before the elections, though, the Algerian daily newspaper *El Watan* wrote «Fraud has already begun». The paper expressed serious doubts about the allegedly collected four million signatures by Bouteflika that were submitted to the Constitutional Council for registering Bouteflika's nomination. All signatures were collected in only eight days, a logistic impossibility. Furthermore, *El Watan* reported that employees of state-owned companies such as the airline Air Algérie or the Gas and Oil company Sonatrach as well as public servants were forced or bribed by Bouteflika allies to sign these forms and support Bouteflika. Moreover, the official figures about the turnout are not credible. Journalists on the ground reported about empty polling stations and expressed doubts concerning the reliability of the official numbers" (ibid, p.3)

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This response was prepared after researching publicly accessible information currently available to the Refugee Documentation Centre within time constraints. This response is not and does not purport to be conclusive as to the merit of any particular claim to refugee status or asylum. Please read in full all documents referred to.

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