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The Algerian Diplomacy in Africa:

1999-2021

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وبعد قيام (الطالب) (الطالبين) (الطالبتين) بتصحيح كل الملاحظات والتوجيهات المقدمة من
لجنة المناقشة، فلا مانع في أن آذن بطبع المذكرة وتقديمها للجهات المعنية .

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اسم ولقب وتوقيع المشرف

عزيز مصطفاوي

Dedication

I dedicate this work to:

- My beloved parents who are the source of my success and happiness.
- My dear wife and kids (Farah and Mejd), my constant source of unconditional love during all challenges.
- My whole family members for all their positive encouragement and support.
- All those who helped and encouraged me to do this work.

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Abstract

Algerian diplomacy has gained an important place within the African continent, with its foreign policy and its ongoing contributions to the African Union, starting from independence till the present day, because Africa has always been a priority and a center of interest for Algerian diplomacy. The latter became an important subject for studies and research, due to its rapid development and emergence at the regional and international level, especially in representing the African continent in many events, and maintaining peace and stability in the region. On the one hand, this research aims to show the effects of the Algerian diplomacy at the African level, and toward the African Union, especially in preserving and maintaining peace and security, and solving conflicts between African countries. On the other hand, it aims at highlighting the most important strategies and approaches adopted by Algerian diplomacy in achieving security and stability in the Sahel region. After the major comeback of Algerian diplomacy in the African arena starting from 1999, when President Abdelaziz Bouteflika gave a huge importance to reinforcing relations with African countries with a new foreign policy toward Africa, Algerian diplomacy managed to accomplish many achievements in settling conflicts, fighting terrorism, and maintaining stability in the Sahel region, through its new orientations in dealing with all conflicting parties in the region. In addition, Algeria helped in developing the African continent by contributing in founding many organs within the AU, like the Peace and Security Council, the initiative of NEPAD, all this made the Algerian diplomacy active within the African continent.

Keywords: Algerian diplomacy, African Union, Peace, Security, Conflicts, Stability, Foreign policy, Sahel region.

الملخص:

احتلت الدبلوماسية الجزائرية مكانة مهمة في القارة الإفريقية من خلال سياستها الخارجية ومساهماتها ضمن الاتحاد الإفريقي منذ الاستقلال إلى يومنا هذا، حيث لا طالما كانت إفريقيا محل اهتمام وألوية للدبلوماسية الجزائرية. أصبحت الدبلوماسية الجزائرية من المواضيع المهمة للعديد من الدراسات والبحوث، نظرا لتطورها السريع وبروزها على المستوى الإقليمي والدولي، خاصة في تمثيل القارة الإفريقية في العديد من المناسبات والمحافظة على السلام والأمن في المنطقة. يهدف هذا البحث إلى التعريف بتأثيرات الدبلوماسية الجزائرية على المستوى الإفريقي عامة والاتحاد الإفريقي خاصة في المحافظة على السلام والأمن، وإيجاد حلول للنزاعات بين الدول الإفريقية. هذا من جهة، ومن جهة أخرى فإن هذا البحث يهدف إلى إظهار أهم الاستراتيجيات المتخذة من قبل الدبلوماسية الجزائرية لتحقيق الأمن والاستقرار في منطقة الساحل. بعد عودة الدبلوماسية الجزائرية إلى الساحة الإفريقية منذ سنة 1999، أين أولى الرئيس الجزائري عبد العزيز بوتفليقة أهمية كبرى لتعزيز العلاقات مع الدول الإفريقية عن طريق سياسة خارجية جديدة تجاه إفريقيا، حققت الدبلوماسية الجزائرية عدة إنجازات تمثلت في حل العديد من النزاعات، مكافحة الإرهاب والحفاظ على الاستقرار في منطقة الساحل، عن طريق توجهاتها الجديدة في التعامل مع الأطراف المتنازعة في المنطقة. إضافة إلى كل ذلك ساعدت الجزائر في تطوير القارة الإفريقية عن طريق تمويل العديد من أجهزة الاتحاد الإفريقي كمجلس السلم والأمن، المساهمة في مبادرة النيباد، كل هذا جعل الدبلوماسية الجزائرية نشطة على الصعيد الإفريقي.

الكلمات المفتاحية: الدبلوماسية الجزائرية، الاتحاد الإفريقي، السلام، الأمن، النزاعات، الاستقرار، السياسية الخارجية، منطقة الساحل.

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List of Abbreviations and Acronyms

AQIM	Al Qaeda in the Islamic Maghreb
AU	African Union
CEMOC	<i>Le Comité d'Etat-Major Opérationnel Conjoint</i> (Joint Military Staff Committee).
ESCC	Economic, Social, and Cultural Council
EU	European Union
FLN	<i>Front de Libération Nationale</i> (National Liberation Front)
ISGS	Islamic State in the Great Sahara
JNIM	<i>Jama'at Nusrat al-Islam Wal-Muslimin</i>
OAS	Organization of American States
OAU	Organization of African Unity
PRC	Permanent Representatives Committee
PSC	Peace and Security Council
UFL	<i>Unité de Fusion et de Liaison</i> (Fusion and Liaison Unit)

General Introduction

Diplomacy has an important status within the international community for its effective role in maintaining relations between countries, and its central objectives in finding peaceful resolutions for different conflicts and issues. With the rise of new ethnic conflicts, disputes about borders, and new political changes in many countries around the world, diplomacy played a major role through its different approaches, like mediation, dialogue, peaceful resolutions to maintain peace and security around the world.

All this led to the creation of regional and international organizations, such as the UN, the OAU which became later the AU, and the EU. These organizations aimed at putting an end to all sorts of conflicts and wars, using diplomacy as an effective tool to maintain peace and security in the world.

After independence, Algerian Diplomacy managed to gain a leading role in the African continent with its support for colonized countries, and liberation movements. Algeria has been one of the early member states of the OAU and later the AU, it is considered as one of the main top five member states in matters of funding and contributing to the development of the AU. In addition to that it contributed greatly in preserving and maintaining peace and security among African countries through mediation and adopting the principles of non-interference, resolving conflicts peacefully, and respect of the inherited borders from colonialism.

Starting from the nineties, Algerian diplomacy entered into a stagnation phase, due to the crisis of the civil war it encountered from 1990 to 2002, however, it succeeded in emerging again at the African level, right after the election of former President Abdelaziz Bouteflika, with its contributions in solving many conflicts, to restore peace and security at the regional level, especially in the Sahel region which became a source of continuous threats to the security and stability of Algerian government. Therefore, this study will shed

light on the role played by Algerian diplomacy in the African Union, and highlight to what extent it helped maintain peace and security in the continent, especially the Sahel region.

This study aims at determining the role played by Algerian diplomacy at the African level, especially being a newly independent country that suffered years of struggle against colonization, and managed in a short time to gain a central role at the diplomatic level, within the African continent and also within the international community.

In light of what has been said, the current research addresses the following questions:

- What were the contributions of Algerian diplomacy at the African level (the OAU and AU)?
- How did Algerian diplomacy regain its position in the African continent after its setbacks?
- What were the strategies of Algerian diplomacy toward the Sahel region to maintain its security and stability?

The research in hand will focus on how the Algerian diplomacy managed to regain its Golden Age from 1999 to 2021, and also on its contributions within the AU's structures and organs, and in helping resolve different conflicts in the African continent.

This research has been divided into three chapters; the first chapter will provide a historical background about diplomacy in general and Algerian diplomacy in particular.

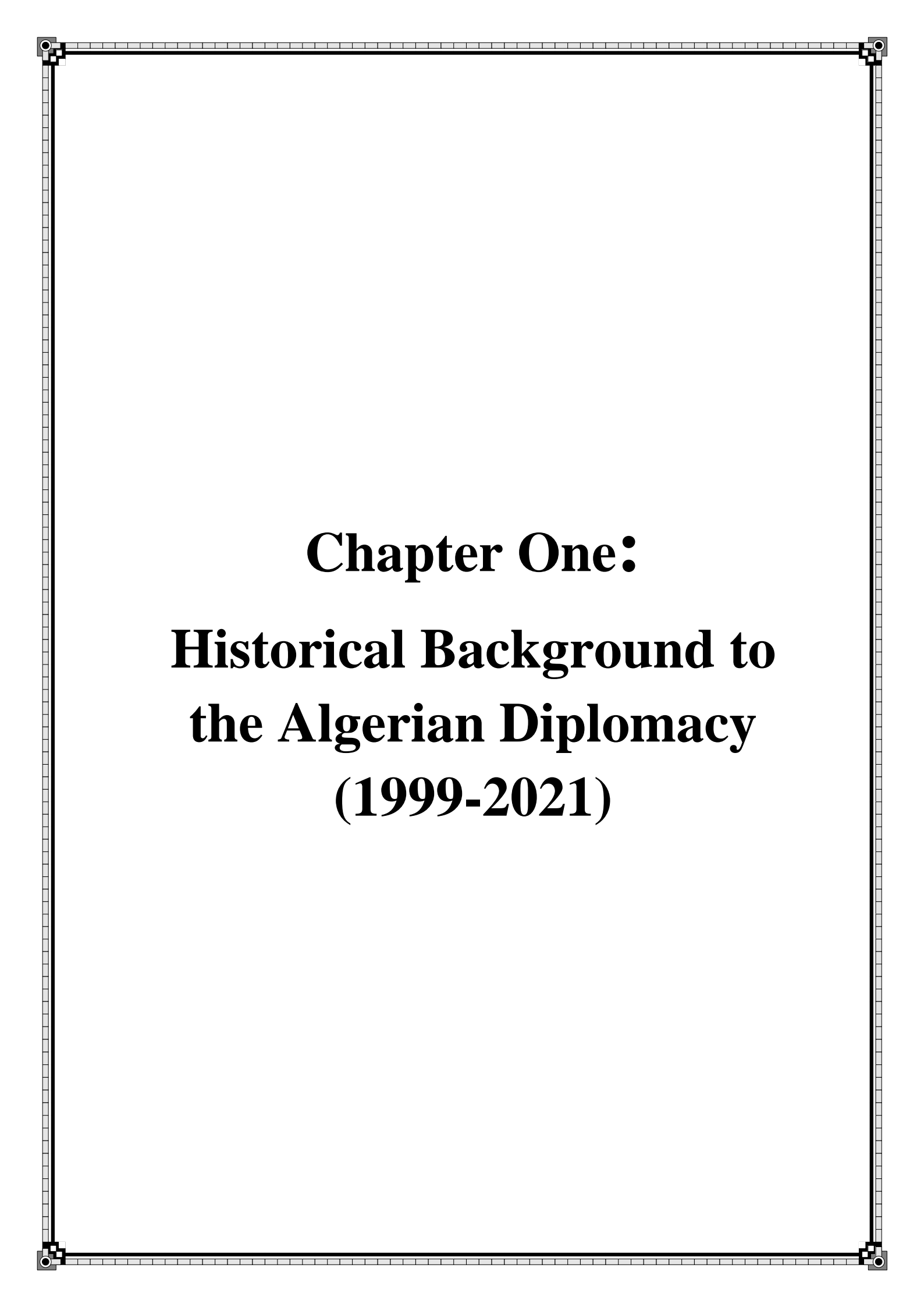
The second chapter will discuss the OAU and AU, along with the contributions of Algerian diplomacy at the African level, and how it solved many conflicts with its mediation, also discusses the setbacks of the Algerian diplomacy during the Black decade.

The third chapter gives an insight into the process of the return of Algerian diplomacy to the African arena, also provides a look at the Sahel region and the threats surrounding the Algerian government, and the strategies and approaches taken by Algeria through its diplomacy to preserve peace and stability in this important region.

The choice of making research about Algerian diplomacy is because of its importance in the field of academic research, and for being one of the successful diplomacies in the African continent and Arab world, which enables it to represent the continent in many international forums. Furthermore, choosing this subject is due to the important role of Algerian diplomacy in fighting terrorism and spreading peace and security in the region, through several strategies and approaches taken in this context.

Literature Review

Algerian diplomacy has been the subject of several writings, publications, studies and even reports, which all dealt with Algerian diplomacy from independence to recent years, focusing on Algerian-African relations. Many Algerian scholars like Mohamed Boacha, Abdelkader Rezig El Mokhademi, and Belkacem Louh, talked about Algerian diplomacy and its mediation in solving conflicts in the African continent, and the obstacles it faced during this process, also about the activities of Algerian diplomacy within the OAU, in liberating African countries, setting grounds for cooperation and development of the continent, and fighting terrorism and poverty, along with its contributions for the integration of the OAU and the re-establishment of the AU.



Chapter One:
Historical Background to
the Algerian Diplomacy
(1999-2021)

Diplomacy has always been one of the essential priorities for the Algerian government since its foundation. The Algerian diplomacy was an important factor in the liberation of the country from colonization which had attempted to wipe out the Algerian identity. Moreover, it has managed to maintain a pivotal role over the years, starting from the Ottoman rule, then the colonial period, and after independence. This made it the center of attention of the whole world.

1. A Brief History of Diplomacy

Diplomacy has been practiced since the formation of the first city-states (between the fifth to fourth centuries BC). At first, diplomats were sent only for specific negotiations and would return immediately after their mission ended. They were selected from the ruling family or were individuals of a very high rank to have legitimacy when they were sent for negotiation with other states. The origins of modern diplomacy are often traced to the states of northern Italy in the early Renaissance when they established the first embassies in the thirteenth century. Francesco Sforza, Duke of Milan, established permanent embassies in other cities and states of northern Italy (“History of Diplomacy - E Diplomat”).

Italy was the cradle of many modern traditions of diplomacy, such as the presentation of an ambassador’s credentials to the head of state. The practice of diplomacy spread later to other European countries. In 1455 Milan sent a representative to the court of France, but, it refused to host the French representative, fearing espionage and possible intervention in internal affairs. Later on, more European powers such as France and Spain became more interested in Italian politics, and were eventually exchanging representatives. By the late sixteenth century, permanent missions became the standard (“History of Diplomacy - E Diplomat”).

The top rank of representative was an ambassador, which was always attributed to the noblemen, who had little foreign or diplomatic experience and needed to be supported by large embassy staff. From the seventeenth to the eighteenth centuries, the French adopted the Italian diplomatic traditions and developed them by introducing confidentiality with information gathering, restructuring of protocols, and diplomatic corps. Despite these significant improvements, the French system contained some flaws, such as excessive secrecy in negotiations, localities, hereditary appointments by traditional aristocrats, and the inclination of diplomats to conduct business at a most leisurely pace (Berridge10).

Diplomacy is essentially a well-resourced and skilful political activity. Its main purpose is to enable states to secure the objectives of their foreign policies without resorting to force, propaganda, or law. It is a process that depends on communication between professional diplomatic agents and other officials in charge of securing agreements (Berridge xxvii).

2. Algeria during the Ottoman Rule (1518-1830)

Algeria was an Ottoman province before the era of French colonization. It had many transactions and relations with different countries, and it exported many goods, such as wheat, barley, beans, and dates. The main countries Algeria exported to were European, Islamic, and African countries. During the Ottoman period, Algeria knew a variety of different currencies, mainly Spanish currency, due to the economic transactions and political deals with Spain at that time, whose currency was used in different parts of Algeria including Oran, and Bejaia. Also, the Tunisian currency was greatly used in the Algerian-Tunisian economic relations during that time (Lamri139).

2.1. The Algerian State

According to the Algerian historian Abou El Kacem Saâdallah, the Algerian state had come into existence from 1516 to 1830, based on its geopolitical and economic unity, in addition to the intellectual and spiritual unity founded since the Islamic conquest (Glorious Algeria). Algeria had its own army and maritime fleet, a flag and parliament, cash and capital, and at the same time, it had its traditions and diplomacy under international law (Glorious Algeria).

2.2. The Algerian Diplomacy during the Ottoman Period

Algeria was an independent state before French colonization despite the political dependency of Ottoman rule over North Africa. In 1671, the Dey of Algeria was elected by the parliament. Algerian diplomatic affairs did not go through Ottoman rule. Rather than being held by the Dey in the name of the Algerian state, the Algerian government at that time held many international agreements with many European and other countries, such as France, the Netherlands, Britain, Spain, Portugal, Denmark and the USA. Most of these agreements were about navigation and commerce in the Mediterranean Sea (Fochar2).

Algeria had consular relations with France to facilitate commercial exchange along with some privileges to French institutions, such as fishing and finding coral reefs in the Algerian waters, but during the year 1827, the French government broke its commitments toward Algeria, which prompted Algeria to stop the privileges granted to France based on reciprocity, and thus the famous fan incident occurred (Fochar 2).

2.3. Algerian Relations with Maghreb, Arab, and African Countries

The Ottoman rulers in Algeria managed to build a range of economic transactions with different Maghrebian countries, including Tunisia and Morocco. Algerian-Tunisian relations were very friendly, and the main exchanges between the two countries were

different goods including wool, dates, leather, spices, coffee, and silk fabrics. Unlike the Algerian-Tunisian relations, the Algerian-Moroccan connections during Ottoman rule were very weak. Only a few traders from the Algerian West, mainly Oran and Tlemcen, sold some of their products in Morocco and vice versa. The weakness of these relations was due to border problems and attacks that both countries launched against each other (Lamri 139).

The Ottoman rulers created good relations with Egypt, and Algeria had representatives in Cairo to deal with issues of the Algerian pilgrims. These representatives also worked as intermediaries between Algerian and Egyptian traders (Lamri 139).

During the period of Ottoman rule, Algeria managed to create good relations with African countries including Chad, Niger, Mali, Senegal, and Central Africa. Southern districts such as Ourgla, Ain Saleh, and Oued Souf, exported what were estimated 16000 quintals of wool to African companies at that time (Lamri 140).

The French occupation of Algeria had a specific purpose: to dominate the country militarily, culturally and economically, as well as to eradicate the Algerian identity. This occupation encountered huge resistance on the military level, along with political and diplomatic efforts by presenting the Algerian case internationally and showing the horrors of the French colonization over the Algerian people (Lamri 140).

3. The Algerian Diplomatic Activity (1830-1919)

After France entered Algeria in 1830, it faced many popular revolutions led by different figures of the Algerian Government, like that of Ahmed Bey, and El Amir Abdel-kader, followed by political resistance led by Messali El Hadj. During this period the Algerian diplomacy known many activities on the international and regional level, which helped present the Algerian case to the world.

3.1. Diplomatic Activities of El Hadj Ahmed Bey and Hamdan Khoudja

El Hadj Ahmed Bey, the governor of Constantine, played an important diplomatic role at the beginning of the French occupation, during the period between 1830 and 1848 mainly in making contact with leaders of his era (Emir Abd-el-kader, Emir Khaled, and Hamdan Khodja), to convince France to abandon the idea of invading Algeria. He tried to reinforce his relations with the Ottoman Empire to gain support against the French, but in vain because of the weakness of this empire. This is what led Hadj Ahmed Bey to proceed with another diplomatic plan which aimed to create competition between the French and the British. Therefore, he made contact with British authorities to gain their support in exchange for some privileges. On the other hand, Khodja managed to play an effective role in enlightening public opinion with his pen about what was going on inside Algeria, exposing the crimes committed by the French colonizers in England and France through his book entitled *The Mirror* (Fochar 4).

3.2. Diplomatic Activities of Emir Abd-el-Kader and Emir Khaled (1832-1847)

Emir Abd-el-kader played a significant role in the establishment of the modern Algerian government which gained the admiration of many European and Arab and countries. Emir Abd-el-kader was able to defeat France militarily, forcing the French government to acknowledge his sovereignty through the agreement of “Di Michel” in 1834, when France admitted the sovereignty of Emir Abd-el-kader over certain regions and let him deal with weapons and armory along with making communications with many Arab countries. In addition to that, in 1837 Emir Abd-el-kader signed another treaty called “The Tafna Treaty” which granted him sovereignty over the region under his power and

the right to establish diplomatic relations with France and other regions under its control (Fochar 5).

Emir Abd-el-kader seized the rivalry between the British and the French and the tension between them and sent many missionaries to the British authorities in Tanger (Morocco) and Tunisia to support him against the French. He also sent a message to London in December 1841, suggesting an exchange in relations for both sides, the British help, for the right to use the port of Tenés as a trading centre. On the other hand, Emir Khaled worked during the First World War to present the Algerian case before the League of Nations. In 1917 Algerian-Tunisian commissioner sent a memo to President Wilson to demand independence for the Algerian and Tunisian people and pleaded with the international world to avow their right to self-determination (Fochar 6).

4. The Algerian Diplomatic Activity (1919-1953)

During this period, three major political and nationalist movements emerged: the liberal reforming movement, the cultural-religious Association of Algerian Muslim Ulema, and the revolutionary movement. Each movement played a significant role in presenting the Algerian case at the international level.

4.1. The Liberal Reforming Movement (1940-1958)

This movement was represented by Ferhat Abbas who held meetings along with Ben Djaloul and Robert Murphy, the representative of President Roosevelt, asking for help from the United States against colonization. Ferhat Abbas had many political activities and called for the United Nations to acknowledge the right to preserve freedom and the right of self-determination for colonized people. He was also against the decision of France to divide Palestine and called for the creation of a North African union (Fochar 8).

4.2. The Association of Algerian Muslim Ulema

It was founded in 1931 by a gathering of 72 scholars from all over Algeria. Its main figures were Abdelhamid Ben Badis, and Mohamed Bachir El Ibrahimi. In 1935, Abdelhamid Ben Badis called for all political organizations (the elected federals, the Association of Algerian Muslim Ulema, the association of communists, and the North African party) to hold a conference to discuss the Algerian case. It was the first attempt to form a united political front, gathering all leaders of the nation, despite their differences and orientations to agree on certain political, social, economic and cultural demands. The conference came out with several decisions which the French government did not approve. Yet, this political move was considered a turning point in the history of the Algerian fight against French colonization (Helili and Halimi 254).

4.3. The Revolutionary Movement

This movement had strong effective activities at the international level, by making relations with organizations that had the same purposes. In 1927, the North African Star participated in the convention of colonized people held in Brussels, where it introduced the case of North Africa and Algeria. The party made relations with other leaders of anti-colonialist organizations, considered the Palestinian case one of the most important preoccupations of Algerians, and worked to expose the project of dividing Palestine. It called all Algerian Muslims to protest against this project, demanding full independence for Palestine (Fochar10-11).

In 1947, the Moroccan patriots formed a front to defend North Africa, which led later to hold the Maghreb conference sponsored by the Arab League. It aimed at coordinating the activities of the Moroccan nationalist movement with its Algerian equal and linking the Algerian case with its Tunisian and Moroccan counterparts to internationalize it (Fochar 12).

In November 1948, the national parties in Algeria, Morocco, and Tunisia presented a memo to the Secretary-General of the United Nations, demanding the application of Wilson's principles of the right of people to self-determination. Within all this international diplomatic activity, the revolutionary Committee for Unity and Action was formed and later, the National Liberation Front party emerged (Fochar 14).

5. The Diplomatic Activity of the Algerian Revolution

Internationalizing the Algerian cause through diplomatic activity was one of the basic principles of the National Liberation Front (FLN) party, which was announced in the Declaration of 1st November 1954, and for that, this party worked to prove the existence of a revolution to the world, especially within the United Nations.

On 29th July 1955, the Secretary-General of the United Nations received a petition from fourteen Asian and African countries, demanding the inclusion of the Algerian case in the agenda of the tenth session of the General Assembly, based on instructions from their governments which proved that the FLN was in contact with these governments in one way or another (Fochar 18).

The first conference of FLN was on 20th August 1956 (the conference of Summam) which focused on defining the activities of the front at the international level by isolating France from Algeria and the world politically, and expanding the revolution by making it correspond to the international law. It had several goals, among which were: isolating France, expanding the revolution, gain as much support (material, moral, and spiritual) as it could get, escalation of public opinion, and the development of diplomatic aid from other governments (Fochar 18).

6. The Algerian Diplomacy after Independence

After independence, Algeria linked itself to Africa, the Arab world, and the Maghreb. Its constitution stated in the 2nd article that: "Algeria is an integral part of the

Arab Maghreb, the Arab world and Africa”. (qtd. in Moncef 2). Algeria played a great role in the elimination of colonialism from the continent

In 1963, Ahmed Ben Bella became the first president of the newly independent Algeria and followed an anti-imperialist policy. During his presidency, Algeria became “Mecca” of anti-colonial movements. Algeria tried to help people and nations under colonialism, using its own experience with French colonialism (Lamri111-112).

Ben Bella played a significant role in the creation of the Organization of African Unity (OAU) in 1963, by participating in different conferences. He led the Algerian foreign policy to play an important role in shaping the Organization of African Unity (Lamri 112).

Houari Boumedienne was appointed by Ben Bella as Minister of defense and vice president. Later on, Boumedienne overthrew Ben Bella and appointed himself as the president. He was loyal to the principles of the Algerian revolution and aimed at continuing its policy. This meant helping in the fight against colonialism and imperialism, and supporting the movements struggling for unity (Moncef 2).

President Houari Boumedienne based his political orientations on the Algerian colonial past, mainly the war of liberation. He contributed greatly in shaping post-independence Algeria, that is to say, ideological texts formulated during the period of liberation shaped most of Boumedienne’s national and foreign policies. Moreover, president Boumedienne stated: “We have to preserve the revolutionary principles which inspired our fight for liberation, for we paid for these with the blood of the best of our brothers” (qtd. In Moncef 3).

The Algerian diplomacy contributed greatly in solving many political issues in Mozambique, Angola, and Congo. It helped promote peace and security at the African level, under the leadership of its two late presidents, Ben Bella and Boumedienne, who

held the continent's causes to free it from colonialism and imperialism, and supported self-determination for all people in the continent (Ziani and Belferdi 1111).

The efficiency of Algerian diplomacy during the time of these two presidents was relative in some cases. On the one hand, it rose and grew in solving some issues, and it gained stability within the African organization. On the other hand, Algerian diplomacy failed in solving some racial and ethnic issues on the African level due to the intervention of some European countries like France, Britain, and Portugal which aimed at maintaining their hold on Africa, especially during the period of the Cold War (Ziani and Belferdi 1112).

7. The Principles of Algerian Foreign Policy

The Algerian foreign policy is based on certain principles mentioned in the Algerian constitution in the seventh chapter, from articles 86 to 93 (*CONSTITUTION of the People's Democratic Republic of Algeria*). Moreover, Algeria adopted the principles included in the charter of the United Nations, the Organization of African Unity, the Arab League, and the Non-Aligned Movement. Some of these principles are:

7.1. The Principle of Neighborliness

Algeria adopted this principle which was endorsed by many international organizations, with a special conceptual definition, calling it "positive good neighborly relations". In late 1981, President Chadli Ben Jdid said: "At the regional level, Algeria is a part of Arab Maghreb, and belongs to Saharan countries. It ensures the fulfillment of the principle of good neighborliness..." (qtd. In Salim 27). In this respect, Algeria announced its commitment to the decisions of the OAU, regarding the respect of borders after independence (Salim 27).

According to Algeria, the principle of good neighborliness aims not only at preserving peace between neighboring countries, but also at developing peace between

them, and getting rid of all misunderstandings by opening all channels of communication to solve any differences and develop cooperation and relations between countries. According to Algeria's perception, this principle is based on three elements: setting borders with neighboring countries according to the rule of the inherited borders from colonization, cooperation between neighboring countries, and supporting people's right to self-determination (Salim 29).

7.2. Solving Conflicts Peacefully

This principle is adopted in the charter of the United Nations. It aims at resolving international conflicts by using peaceful means, such as negotiations, reconciliation, and juridical settlements to preserve peace and security. Algeria has always called for cooperation and to solve conflicts peacefully, whether through direct negotiation or regional organizations. The Algerian foreign policy contributed to its diplomacy in solving many international conflicts. After independence, Algeria faced borders issues with its neighbors and tried to solve them without resorting to force, mainly after the invasion of Moroccan troops of the Algerian land. Algeria sought the intervention of the OAU to solve this problem with Morocco, to avoid using force that could harm both sides (Salim 34).

7.3. Non-Interference in Internal Affairs of Neighboring Countries

The United Nations charter, in article 2/7 emphasizes the principle of non-interference in the internal affairs of other countries, as many organizations did, like the Arab League, and the Organization of African Unity (Salim 34). Algeria as a member of the United Nations guarantees the application of this principle by imposing mutual respect for political, economic, and social regimes in neighboring territories, which is the basis of good neighborliness relations (Salim 35).



Chapter Two:
The Algerian Diplomacy,
the OAU, and the AU

The political ties between Algeria and other African countries date back to the colonial period, during which the Provisional Government of the Algerian Republic had participated in many African conferences, such as the Accra Conference (1958), the Monrovia Conference (1959), the Lagos Conference (1960), and the Tunis Conference (1961). Algeria joined the OAU on 25 May 1963, and became an effective member by supporting many African countries against colonization. Algeria played a leading role in promoting the role of the Organization of African Unity (OAU) regarding peace, security, governance, and integration; and in representing the continent at the international level, along with trying to solve as many conflicts as it could in the continent.

1. Foundation of the OAU

Africa knew colonization in most parts of the continent at the beginning of the nineteenth century. After World War II, many African political parties demanded immediate independence from the colonizer, and after a long time of political and arm struggle, Libya and Ghana were given independence respectively in 1951 and 1957. Afterwards, many leaders in Africa urged for the creation of an organization to unite the African countries, to stand against colonialism and to put an end to it in the continent. Kwame Nkrumah was the first politician who called for the creation of an African Union and delivered many speeches in this respect in many sessions of the United Nations. After many attempts, African leaders managed to create the Organization of African Unity (OAU) in Addis Ababa (Ethiopia) in May 1963, and Algeria became a member in May 25th of the same year. It aimed at uniting all African countries and reinforcing cooperation and relations, and building a united Africa (Lamri 62).

After the creation of the OAU, 32 African states signed its Charter which called for the promotion of unity and solidarity of African countries. Its main objectives were: to defend the sovereignty of members and eradicate all forms of colonialism in the continent,

to promote international cooperation and to coordinate between member states' economic, diplomatic, educational, health, welfare, scientific and defense policies (“African Union (AU)”).

1.1. Principles and Doctrine of the OAU

The OAU Charter contains 32 main articles which specified its principles, different institutions, and bodies of the organization. The second article stated the objectives and goals of the OAU and aimed at promoting unity and cooperation between member states in different fields, such as economics, health, and scientific and technical grounds. Besides it aimed at defending the sovereignty and autonomy of its member states and eventually put an end to colonialism in the continent (Lamri 66).

All member states in the OAU agreed to respect certain principles and doctrines which were stated in the third article of the OAU Charter which called for total sovereignty of all member states (OAU Charter 1963, p. 3). That meant they would stay autonomous at the domestic and exterior levels. One of the principles of the OAU was to encourage peace and cooperation between all African countries. It called also for ending all disputes and border conflicts. The OAU remained neutral during the Cold War, following the principle of non-alignment (Lamri 66).

1.2. Structure of the OAU

The OAU was composed of four main institutions:

- The Assembly of Heads of States and Government: Its main objective was to discuss issues of progress for Africa. This assembly would meet at least once a year and had the power to determine legislation and regulations.
- The Council of Ministers: It was composed of different ministers of foreign affairs. This body was required to meet at least twice a year, for the purpose of preparing conferences for the Assembly of Heads of States.

- The General Secretariat: It contained members appointed by the heads of state; its functions were protected by the OAU Charter.
- The Commission of Mediation, Conciliation, and Arbitration: Its main objective was to mediate different disputes and conflicts between member states using peaceful means.

In addition to the aforementioned institutions, the OAU contained specialized commissions in different fields: economy, social, education, scientific, cultural and health, and defense. These commissions were established by the Assembly of Heads of States and Government (Lamri 67).

2. The African Union

The African Union (AU) is the successor of the OAU. While the latter aimed to unite African nations and solve common issues through collective action, the former's primary objectives was to develop and increase political and economic integration among its member states, and to eradicate all forms of colonialism within the continent ("The African Union: Achievements, Challenges, & the Future of Africa").

2.1. History of the Establishment of the AU

The OAU had played a significant role in the elimination of colonialism from the continent; however, it could not keep up with the new challenges that faced Africa in the 21st century. Therefore, some African leaders thought about creating a new organization to reinforce continental cooperation, social development and the elimination of all forms of divisions within the continent (Lamri 76). All these efforts led in September 1999 in Sirte (Libya) to the creation of the African Union, and which was designated to be the successor of the OAU, with a total of 55 members by the year 2002. The AU came to achieve new objectives and make the organization more focused on the determination of promoting unity, solidarity, cohesion, and cooperation among the peoples of Africa and African

states, and also to be able to face more effectively the challenges posed by globalization (“The African Union: Achievements, Challenges, & the Future of Africa”).

2.2. Principles and Aspirations of the AU

The AU mainly focuses to overcome social and political unrest, armed violence, and extreme poverty in Africa. It introduced the determination to pursue socio-economic development, build a partnership between governments and member states, prevent all sorts of conflicts, protect human rights, and consolidate democratic institutions and culture. All these goals are considered aspirations of the AU (Yihdego 576).

Article 3 of the 2001 Act dictated the core objectives of the AU (Constitutive ACT of the AFRICAN UNION). Its main preoccupations were to promote democratic principles and institutions, coordinate and harmonize policies between the existing and future regional economic communities, make research in all fields, especially in science and technology, and promote good health in the continent by working with global partners (Yihdego 576).

Article 4 of the Act initiated other principles, such as the peaceful settlement of disputes, non-interference in the internal affairs of other states, bans on the use of force to solve conflicts, respect of democratic principles and human rights, the promotion of balanced economic development, the promotion of self-reliance, and the participation of the African people in the Union’s activities (Constitutive ACT of the AFRICAN UNION). Most of these principles brought by the AU Constitutive Act showed the solid political will of the African leaders to adopt ambitious policies and establish institutions. On the other hand, principles such as respect for democracy and human rights are mentioned in the Charter of the Organization of American States (OAS), the European Union (EU), and the Association of South East Asia Nations (ASEAN) (Yihdego 577).

2.3 The AU Institutions

While the OAU had only four principal bodies, the Constitutive Act of the African Union established nine organs including:

- The Assembly of the Union: It is composed of the different heads of state and government. It is required to meet at least twice a year in two ordinary sessions. The chair of the assembly should be elected by the member states and can serve only for one year (Lamri 80).
- The Executive Council: It is composed of the ministers of foreign affairs of the member states, and meets twice a year, too. It is responsible for making the majority of decisions at economic and civil levels (Lamri 81).
- The Specialized Technical Committees: According to Article 14 of the AU Constitutive Act, there are six main committees, namely: the Committee on Rural Economy and Agricultural Matters, the Committee on Monetary and Financial Affairs, the Committee on Trade, Customs, and Immigration Matters, the Committee on Industry, Science and Technology, Energy and Natural Resources and Environment, the Committee on Health Labor, Social Affairs and finally, the Committee on Education, Culture and Human Resources (Lamri 81-82).
- The Pan-African Parliament (PAP): It was officially created in the Abuja Treaty of 1991, and it is considered the democratic body in the AU. It is responsible for the application of democracy in the continent and among member states (Lamri 82).
- The Court of Justice: It was adopted on the 1st of July 2003 and came into force on 24th January 2013. It is composed of eleven main judges, nationals of states to the treaty (Lamri 84).

- The Commission: It is considered to be the Secretariat of the Union. It is composed of ten members, including the chairperson and his deputies, along with a staff composed of different commissioners, in charge of helping him in directing his work (Lamri 85).
- The Financial Institutions of the Union: it is composed of three main institutions: the African Central Bank, the African Monetary Fund, and the African Investment Bank. The AU Constitutive Act did not provide any description for these institutions (Lamri 86).
- The Permanent Representatives Committee (PRC): It is composed of groups that function according to the type of work required, along with other functions mentioned in the AU Constitutive Act in Article 21 (Lamri 88).
- The Economic, Social, and Cultural Council (ESCC): This body was part of the OAU, but it did not function as in the AU, it aimed for achieving development in many fields in African, such as: social, educational, and cultural. It is composed of social and professional groups appointed by the member states (Lamri 88).

3. Algerian Diplomacy and its Contributions at the African Level (1954-2002)

Algerian diplomacy achieved great accomplishments through international and regional forums, especially during French colonization, whether at the level of the General Assembly of the UN, or at the level of different international conferences, such as the Bangdong conference in 1955, when the Algerian case gained support and sympathy from the Afro-Asian countries, and allowed the FLN to represent the Algerian case internationally (Rekouli 490). In addition, the Provisional Government of the Algerian Republic participated in many other international conventions, such as the second Accra conference held in Ghana in December 1958, the conference of Addis Ababa in 1960, and the conference of Belgrade in 1961 (Salim 65).

After independence, the Algerian diplomacy dealt with different regional cases and became an important player in dealing with different African issues including eradicating colonialism, supporting liberation movements, and standing against Western colonialism and the Apartheid system in South Africa (Rekouli 66).

3.1. The Role of Algerian Diplomacy in Solving African Conflicts

Algerian diplomacy was able to settle many armed conflicts peacefully, through mediation within the OAU, and among which were:

3.1.1. Algerian Mediation in Settling Malian-Burkinabe Conflict (1983-1986)

Algeria intervened to settle border issues between these two countries. It referred this conflict to the International Court of Law for peaceful resolutions, and it was able to do so without resorting to war between the two countries (Rekouli 66).

3.1.2. Algerian Mediation between Senegal and Mauritania (1989-1992)

Algeria made huge efforts through its diplomacy to solve this border issue between the two countries. In addition to the efforts of Morocco and France which led to an end to this dispute (Rekouli 491).

3.1.3. Algerian Mediation in Chad (2004-2007)

Algeria worked hard to achieve reconciliation between opposing parties over power in Chad, and in keeping out foreign intervention. It managed to gather representatives from the government and the opposing party and was able to contain the dispute and announce the gradual retreat of foreign forces from Chad, in a statement of its foreign Ministry (Rekouli 492).

3.1.4. Algerian Mediation in Solving Libyan-Tunisian Dispute (1974-1977)

Algeria intervened also to find a solution for the dispute that occurred between Libya and Tunisia over borders, after failing in achieving unity between the two countries (Rekouli 67).

3.1.5. Algerian Mediation in Stopping Egyptian-Libyan War (1977)

Despite all efforts of some international parties to put an end to the continuation of this war, it could not achieve that. However, thanks to the efforts of Algerian diplomacy which at that time were focused on the Palestinian case, Egypt stopped its invasion toward Libya (Rekouli 67).

3.1.6. Algerian Mediation in Ethiopia-Eritrea Conflict (1995-2000)

Algeria was able to solve this dispute, after a flurry of diplomatic interventions by various players including the OAU. In June 2000, Algeria was able to convince the two parties to sign a ceasefire agreement in Algiers, under the leadership of President Abdelaziz Bouteflika (Rekouli 492).

3.1.7. Algerian Mediation in to Settle the Tuareg Issue in Mali (1990-2012)

The Tuareg issue was a huge problem for all countries of the region (Mali, Mauritania, Niger, Burkina Faso, and Senegal) because it threatened the unity and stability of the African Sahel region. Given the seriousness of the situation, Algeria tried to contain the conflict in Mali through its diplomacy and held many conventions to create peace and stability and find a solution for the Tuareg problem, gathering all political parties of the region (Nadia 46).

3.1.8. Algerian Mediation in Supporting Western Saharan Case (1963)

One of the main principles in Algerian foreign policy is the right of people's self-determination, and support of the liberation movements; therefore, Algeria has always defended the Western Saharan case, whether at the regional level (OAU-AU) or the international level (UN). The Algerian point of view over this case was based on the decisions issued by the UN's committee on eradication colonialism which gave the Saharan people the right to self-determination through the referendum organized by the UN in the second half of 1975, when Morocco and Mauritania demanded to divide Western Sahara between them, and which Algeria strongly opposed (Rekouli 68).

Algeria was able through its political-diplomatic movements to attract the support of many countries on the Maghrebian, African, and even international level, over the case of Western Sahara, which was concretized through the Libyan-Algerian meeting in Hassi Messaoud on the 29th December 1975. Later on, Algerian diplomacy was successful in convincing Mauritania to abandon the idea of sharing Western Sahara with Morocco and sign a peace agreement with the front of Polisario on 19th August 1979 (Rekouli 69).

The Algerian activities within the General Assembly of the UN achieved the goal of admitting Polisario as a legal representative of the Saharan people. After the year of 1976, it demanded Morocco to make direct negotiations with Polisario for a final and just resolution of the Western Saharan case, and called for the necessity of holding a general referendum to decide the fate of the Sahrawi people (Rekouli 70).

3.2. The Role of Algeria in Founding and Supporting NEPAD

The idea of New Partnership for Africa's Development (NEPAD) came in July 2001, after many adjustments for approaches proposed by African leaders to reconstruct the African continent and get rid of all sorts of underdevelopment, and integrate African countries into the development process as a means of supporting and enhancing the

existing potential of each country. This strategy adopted by five African countries (Algeria, Egypt, Nigeria, Senegal, and South Africa) under the supervision of the OAU, came to make social, economic development in the African continent, eradicate poverty, and achieve sustainable development in light of globalization (Zouaouid and Mefatih 21).

The return of Algerian diplomacy into the African Arena came through the 35th summit of the OAU in 12-14 July 1999, when it prepared a development plan along with Nigerian President Olusegun Obasanjo, under the name of MAP (Millennium Partnership for the African Recovery), followed by the OMEGA plan which was presented by the Senegalese President Abdoulaye Wade, in January 2001, as an attempt to find an original approach, drawing inspiration from the relevant principles of self-sustaining growth to formulate economic policies that would eradicate poverty and improve the well-being of the people. Later on, within the same year, African leaders welcomed the two initiatives and decided to combine them into one initiative that demonstrated a unified African position, which was known as 'NEPAD', to integrate the African continent into the global economy (Salim 117).

The cooperation between Algerian diplomacy and the OAU achieved many compromises between disputing African countries over borders, and other issues, such as civil wars, ethnic and tribal conflicts. All this made Algerian diplomacy a principal player in the African continent, especially in supporting liberation movements, denouncing foreign interference, and standing against countries contributing to the spread of racism in Africa like Britain and Portugal, by criminalizing this phenomenon at the level of the regional, and international organizations.

3.3. The Role of Algeria in Fighting Terrorism

After the Black Decade (1991-2002), Algeria gained a huge experience in fighting terrorism and tried to influence the AU's policy-making, regarding fighting terrorism, and

to consider it as a global phenomenon. After the 9/11 events, Algeria joined the US and Europe in their position on terrorism (Eriksson and Gelot 49). As Professor Yahia H. Zoubir argued, Algerian authorities launched a fight against terrorism on a global level during the 35th OAU summit in Algiers (qtd in Eriksson and Gelot49).

The Algerian efforts culminated in the adoption, at a high-level meeting of the OAU member states, of an action plan on the Prevention and Combating of Terrorism, followed by the establishment of the Peace and Security Council of the African Union during the summit of Durban in July 2002. Algeria made it clear that it would be a leader in the process of fighting terrorism, domestically and internationally. On July 5, 2002, Minister for Maghreb and African Affairs Abdelkader Msahel declared that: “Algeria, which has constantly called for international cooperation to prevent this bane [of terrorism] ... is prepared to make its experience in the prevention and fight against it ... available to the international community, particularly to the member states of our organization [African Union]” (qtd. in Eriksson and Gelot 49-50).

4. The Setback of the Algerian Diplomacy (1982-1999)

In 1982 Algeria witnessed the assassination of its minister of foreign affairs Mohamed El Seddik Ben Yahya along with thirteen diplomats, when his plane was hit on the borders between Iraq and Iran, during a diplomatic mission to solve the Iraqi- Iranian war. This incident represented a setback for the Algerian diplomacy and made it withdraw from the Middle East arena (“Algeria is Struggling to Restore its Diplomatic Prestige”).

During the 1990s until the 2000s, Algeria entered in a civil war, known as the ‘Black decade’. It was a war fought between the Algerian government and various Islamic rebel groups. During this period, the Algerian government followed an isolationist strategy, distancing itself both internationally and regionally. The country entered in a stage of virtual international isolation in which the Algerian diplomacy focused only on regional

affairs and settled only with the construction of Arab, Maghreb, Mediterranean, and eventually African relations (Lamri 153).

Algeria regularly participated in OAU summits, and had the support of most African countries in its war against the Islamic insurgents. On the other hand, when Algeria was busy dealing with its internal affairs, support for the Western Sahara case diminished within the OAU, leading some African countries to demand the end of Western Sahara's presence in the OAU. This revealed the Algerian importance in defending the Western Saharan case within the OAU (Lamri 153).

Chapter Three:
The Algerian Diplomacy
and the Sahel Region

After the setbacks of the Algerian diplomacy during the internal crisis in the 1990s, the Algerian government wanted to regain its position in the African continent through the adoption of many issues in Africa (political, economic and social problems) in general, and in the Sahel region in particular, especially with the new geopolitical changes the world had witnessed after the Cold War and the 9/11 attacks in the USA.

1. The Return of Algerian Diplomacy (1999-2021)

Although Algeria had been preoccupied with its civil war from 1992 till 2002, it kept a basic diplomatic activity within the OAU, which later ensured the return of Algeria to the African arena with an experience of ten years of fight against terrorism and insecurity, and paved the way for it to regain its status in the African continent.

1.1. The 35th Ordinary Session of the OAU (12-14 July 1999)

After the election of President Abdelaziz Bouteflika, the conflict of the Black Decade started to resolve, and after three months of presidency, Algeria hosted the 35th OAU summit during the period from 12 to 14 July 1999, with the participation of 45 African states and an impressive attendance of secretaries of regional and international organizations, such as the UN, the Arab League, Organization of Islamic Cooperation, Francophone organizations, and other organizations like UNESCO, FAW, in addition to the participation of other Islamic countries like Saudi Arabia, Iraq, and Iran.

Hosting the summit was a major diplomatic move to reassert Algeria's leading role in Africa (Eriksson and Gelot 45). On the other hand, it was a response to Morocco who tried to convince some Arab and African countries to stop their support to Western Sahara, and also Libya who created the Community of Sahel Saharan States, but excluded Algeria from it, in a move to strengthen its status on the African level (Lamri 154).

The summit of Algiers was an important move to revive Algerian diplomacy's involvement in solving conflicts at the continental level. This was the case in the Ethiopia-

Eritrea border conflict, with Abdelaziz Bouteflika's intervention as a mediator, a peace treaty was signed on 12 December 2000. Many participants considered the summit successful, while Algerians saw it as a first step toward the return of the country to the international arena (Eriksson and Gelot 45).

Algeria urged for the creation of institutions within the OAU, to stand against terrorism which is a transnational phenomenon and a threat to human rights and freedom, and international peace and security of all nations. Algeria wanted to express its position internationally through the OAU:

We call for ... effective and efficient international cooperation which should be given concrete expression under the auspice of OAU, through a speedy conclusion of a Global International Convention for the Prevention and Control of Terrorism in all its forms and the convening of an international summit conference under the auspice of the UN to consider this phenomenon and the means to combat it. Africa wants to make its full contribution by adopting its own convention on this matter. (qtd. in OAU 35th Assembly of Heads of State and Government Algiers, 12-14 July 1999)

One of Algeria's successes was the strengthening of its leading role in the war against terrorism, in addition to nudging African countries to: reject forceful seizures of power, unconstitutional changes of government, and accept the threat of exclusion of authors of coups from the Organization (Eriksson and Gelot 47). These decisions became later an important component of the AU Charter.

1.2. Algerian Participation in NEPAD (July 2001)

Along with the other five African countries, Algeria initiated a new African initiative 'NEPAD', to eradicate poverty, guarantee sustainable development, and integrate Africa

into the global economy. In 2007, NEPAD was adopted by the AU as an instrument of development which advocates Africa's integration into the global neoliberal order (Eriksson and Gelot 48).

1.3. The Algerian Presence in the AU

Algerian president Abdelaziz Bouteflika played a significant role in the reformation of the Organization of African Unity to become the African Union. He decided to change the country's radical international policies into neo-liberal economic reforms to integrate the country into the global economy (Eriksson and Gelot 47).

During Bouteflika's administration, Algerian diplomacy occupied high-ranking positions in the different bodies and organs of the African Union (Lamri 162). This is what gave the Algerian diplomats an important role in the decision-making process within this organization. As a result, the AU Commission passed many regulations against terrorism and considered it as an activity that threatens the existence of entire countries, and a danger to human rights that could not be justified under any condition (Lamri 162).

Algeria became a global leader in fighting terrorism and contributed to the establishment of the Peace and Security Council (PSC) in the African Union. Moreover, after the two bomb attacks in Algiers on 11th April 2007, Bouteflika called for the establishment of the African Centre for Studies and Research on Terrorism, which was directed by Said Djinnit, an Algerian diplomat, who was the first commissioner of the AU's Peace and Security Department (Lamri 162).

1.3.1. Commissioner of Peace and Security Council, Said Djinnit

Said Djinnit is an Algerian Diplomat who occupied many important positions within the AU's bodies and organs. He served as a special representative to the African Union, and he was the first commissioner of Peace and Security in the African Union from 2002 to 2008. Djinnit believed that the issue of peace, security, and democracy should be dealt

with more decisively (Lamri 163). Due to the important role of Said Djinnit in the AU, he was appointed to attempt to resolve the Darfur Conflict which led him to ally with international organizations, such as European Union and the United Nations, to get assistance in resolving the problem (Lamri 164).

In July 2014, Djinnit was appointed as the Special Envoy of the United Nations Secretary-General for the Great Lakes region in Africa, a mission that ended in 2019, making him one of the most high-ranking diplomats in the AU, and one who had contributed to spreading peace and safety in the region (Lamri 164).

1.3.2. Algeria's Permanent Representative to the United Nations, Ramtane Lamamra

Ramtane Lamamra is one of the major figures of Algerian diplomacy. He graduated from the Algerian National School of Administration in Algiers, and he occupied many diplomatic positions in the United Nations, the OAU, and the AU. Lamamra served as the Secretary-General of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs, and later on he was elected as the successor of the former commissioner of the Peace and Security Council in the African Union, Said Djinnit, from 2008 to 2013. He was appointed as Algeria's Permanent Representative to the United Nations in 1993, and he served as Ambassador to the United States from 1996 to 1999. He was assigned to many peace-building missions, like in Somalia, Mali, and others (Lamri 165).

Lamamra had a long career and experience in dealing with African countries; therefore, he was able to mediate in resolving many conflicts in the African region, strengthening thereby the position of Algerian diplomacy within the African Union, along with reinforcing and deepening cooperation and partnership between the AU and the United Nations (Lamri 165). On 11 September 2013, Lamamra was appointed as the minister of Algerian foreign affairs and had to resign from his post as the commissioner of

the PSC. Yet he did not neglect his objectives toward the African continent. Shortly after his appointment as minister of foreign affairs, Lamamara made several diplomatic visits to different African countries such as Mauritania, Mali, and Niger to strengthen Algerian-African diplomatic relations, and this led the Algerian government to play the role of mediator in different continental problems (Lamri 167).

Lamamara tried to mediate several conflicts in the continent, including the Malian conflict in 2012, and the Libyan conflicts, and called to impose stability and security in these two countries, through peaceful resolutions (Lamri 169). In 2017, Lamamra left the Algerian Ministry of foreign affairs and later in the same year, he was appointed as the AU's High Representative for Silencing the Guns and continued his path in spreading peace and security on the continental level (Lamri 170).

1.3.3. The Secretary-General of Arab Maghreb Union, Abdelkader Msahel

Abdelkader Msahel is an Algerian diplomat who specialized in Algerian-African relations. He was known by the name of Mr. Africa (Lamri 177). He was appointed in the Ministry of foreign affairs as the general African director, as an ambassador to Burkina Faso, and as an ambassador to the Netherlands. Msahel had been in charge of many positions in the ministry along with Lamamra, until he was appointed as the minister of foreign affairs (2017-2019). Msahel tried to build good diplomatic relations with all countries in the world, unlike Lamamra who focused only on Africa (Lamri 177).

1.3.4. Former Minister of Foreign Affairs, Sabri Boukadoum

Boukadoum is one of the Algerian politicians and diplomats who occupied several posts, including chair of the UN's first committee (Disarmament and International Security) in 2016, ambassador to Cote d'Ivoire (1996-2001), ambassador to Portugal

(2005-2009), in 2019, he was appointed in the administration of President Abdelmajid Teboune as Algerian minister of foreign affairs (Lamri 178).

After he was appointed minister of foreign affairs, Boukadoum participated in a meeting in Rome in 2019, and addressed the Libyan conflict. He called for solutions that would maintain peace and security in the region. He also tried to mediate to solve different conflicts within the continent, especially those of neighboring countries of Algeria (Lamri 179).

2. The Role of Algerian Diplomacy in Keeping Peace and Security in the Sahel

Algeria has always considered the Sahel region as a strategically important region because of the long borders it shares with this area, along with different crises and problems which affected the security and stability of the whole region. These crises led to the spread of religious extremism and the appearance of terrorist groups claiming to adhere to the Jihadist movement. This deeply affected the stability and security of the whole Sahel-Saharan region.

2.1. The Sahel Region

The Sahel region is considered one of the most important areas in Africa, due to many complicated issues and the widespread number of transboundary threats. The Sahel region is characterized by many problems, such as state protection, security issues, and governance issues, crises affecting government regimes, poverty, ethnic conflicts, and rebellion against central authorities. These crises are related to the rise of violent terrorist groups and organized crime. All this made the Sahel region a source of security threats to the neighboring countries, including Algeria. The Sahel region gained huge importance after the discovery of energy resources which increased the rivalry among the world's

superpowers like the USA, France, and China, over the natural reserves of the region (Tandoğan and Bouacha 306).

The Sahel region covers more than 80 per cent of desert land. It stretches from the Red Sea to the Atlantic Ocean, encompassing parts of Eritrea, Sudan, Chad, Nigeria, Niger, Mali, Burkina Faso, Mauritania, and Senegal (Tandoğan and Bouacha 307). The Sahel region knew over the last few decades many crises in different aspects, which presented huge security challenges to the neighboring countries, especially Algeria which shares about 6280 km of borders with the Sahel countries, a large space of the desert, which is considered a transit area between the North and the South of the African continent. Therefore, the Sahel has always presented a major strategic area for Algeria and a dangerous one at the same time. As Tandoğan and Bouacha argued: “The Sahel today is the second biggest black market for arms trafficking; also, it is considered a preferred place for terrorist groups like al-Qaida and Boko Haram” (313). All these aspects led the Algerian government to form a general security approach to face different threats coming from the region (Tandoğan and Bouacha 313).

2.2. The Security Threats Facing Algeria in the Sahel Region

To understand the strategy of Algeria in the Sahel region, it is important to examine the threats surrounding Algerian national security.

2.2.1. The Tuareg Issue

After independence, Algerian officials were afraid of the potential demand of Tuareg for autonomy or independence, especially after the increase of Tuareg rebellions in the Sahel region, and the rebellion in Northern Mali in 1963-1964. At that time Algerian authorities allowed the Malian troops to pursue any rebels attempting to flee into Algerian borders. This was a step that demonstrated a deep concern over the Tuareg issue in the Sahel and its impact on its national security and unity (Lounnas 11).

Afterwards, the Algerian government took some measures to integrate the Tuareg of Algeria into civil society, by appointing some of their major local figures, like the Amenocal Bey Ag Ahamouk who was a local leader of the Tuareg as the 3rd vice president of the National Assembly. Ag Ahamouk was replaced in 1975 by Hadj Moussa Akhamoukh, another leading figure of the Algerian War of Independence. Later on, he was appointed by the ruling party FLN as a deputy of the National Assembly (Lounnas 11).

The Tuareg issue escalated after Colonel Gaddafi took power in Libya and tried to establish himself in the Sahel region, using the Tuareg rebellion in Niger and Mali as a means to take over the region of the Sahel by providing the rebels with weapons and offering them military training (Lounnas 12). Therefore, the Tuareg issue was an important threat to Algerian national security, especially after the fall of Libya in 2011, when thousands of Tuareg fighters fled to Northern Mali, forming the National Movement for the Liberation of AZAWAD. This made things worse in Mali and started the 2012 war (Lounnas 13).

2.2.2. Trafficking in the Sahel

The Sahel region has always been characterized by a weak and poor economy, one of the weakest economies in the continent, in addition to the inability of facing the effects of climate change which causes mostly the collapse of agriculture (Tandoğan and Bouacha 308). This region has also known few human development projects in Mali, Burkina Faso, and Niger. All these factors made the Sahel region the poorest in the world, and as a result, the people of this region have resorted to ‘trafficking’ as their alternative economy to survive in such a weak and poor area. Therefore, the Sahel region is considered a favored place for human, weapons, and drug trafficking, all of which are considered significant threats to Algerian security (Lounnas 14).

2.2.2.1. Human Trafficking

Human trafficking in the Sahel has become a highly lucrative business. Migrants from all over Africa use the Sahel region as a transit area to reach North Africa and then Europe. Algeria was one of the major transit areas for migrants heading to Europe, a phenomenon considered as a major threat to the country's national security because it is directly linked to the instability and insecurity in the Sahel region (Lounnas 15).

2.2.2.2. Weapons and Drug Trafficking

After the fall of Gaddafi regime in Libya 2011, the Sahel region became a favorite place for militias, mafias, and traffickers who deal with all sorts of weapons (Kalashnikov, semi-automatic weapons, and missiles), that anyone could buy. Traffickers started dealing with weapons from the Algerian-Tunisian borders to the Malian-Algerian borders (Lounnas 16). Weapons trafficking thrived along with drug trafficking in the Sahel region due to the increase of militias, banditry, and self-defense and jihadist groups.

Drug trafficking was not a new phenomenon in the Sahel region. Traffickers use this region as a transit area to transport cocaine to Europe via Africa, because of the lax security measures in West Africa. Drugs were smuggled through the Sahel via Mauritania, Algeria, Niger, and Chad. Dealing with weapons and drugs generated enormous amounts of money for traffickers and jihadist groups, who presented a direct threat to the national security of Algeria (Lounnas 18).

Over the years, the Algerian security forces were able to seize huge amounts of weapons along with psychotropic and heavy drugs, especially in the cities of Ain Guezzam, Adrar, and Tamanrasset. Algerian authorities consider cooperation between arm-drug traffickers and jihadist groups, especially the most dangerous active jihadist groups like Jama'atNusrat al-Islam wal-Muslimin (JNIM), and The Islamic State in the

Grand Sahara (ISGS) as one of the gravest menaces to Algerian security and stability (Lounnas 18).

2.2.2.3. Jihadist Groups in the Sahel

Due to the increase of chaos and instability in the Sahel region, many jihadist groups operate close to the Algerian borders. This represents a direct threat to the security of the country. Al Qaeda in the Islamic Maghreb (AQIM) and ISGS operated on the Algerian-Malian borders as rivals, along with JNIM (an affiliated jihadist group of AQMI created in 2017), using hostage-taking and dealing with traffickers, as their main income to fund their operations against Algeria. These jihadist groups conducted several direct attacks targeting security forces and Gas and Oil sites, such as the hostage-taking incident at the Tiguentourine Natural Gas refinery, which was a blow to the Algerians' international image. In 2020, ISGS along with Daech organized a suicide bomb attack against the Algerian Army (Lounnas 22-23).

3. The Algerian Strategy toward the Sahel Region

The Algerian authorities have always advocated for political solutions to solve the Sahel crises adopting a double-track strategy and deploying massive military forces on its borders to prevent the infiltration of terrorists and traffickers from the Sahel into the country. Algeria has also always called for the use of inclusive dialogue between parties involved in conflicts, and rejected all kinds of foreign interference in the domestic affairs of regional countries. It played the role of mediator to find political solutions to end conflicts in the region (Lounnas 24).

Due to the gravity of the situation in the Sahel region and the dangers that threaten the national security, and stability of Algeria, along with the fight against residual terrorism on its territory, the Algerian government started working side by side with its partners in the Sahel region. Algeria aimed to set a strategy based on cooperation among

different army and security services to mediate in settling conflicts around the Sahel region (Iratni 20-21).

3.1. Reinforcing Security Mechanisms between Algeria and the Sahel Countries

Algeria wanted to ensure the security of its borders and the coordination between all partners of the Sahel region by reactivating the border Committee with Niger, and resuming the Algerian-Malian joint commission in March 2014 which led to the signing of a cooperation agreement in the area of defense (Iratni 21).

Algeria continued its fight against terrorism with its partners in the Sahel with the creation of many mechanisms of cooperation, such as the joint Operational General Staff Committee (CEMOC), and the Fusion and Liaison Unit (UFL), which were a great contribution to reinforce security cooperation between Algeria and other Sahel countries. These efforts had led to the creation of a joint operation in the Algerian-Malian-Mauritania border triangle (Iratni 21).

3.2. Playing the Role of Mediator in Solving Different Crises

Algeria has always followed a policy of mediation when it came to resorting conflicts, especially in the Sahel region, as was the case in the conflict between the Tuareg and central authorities in Niger and Mali. This showed the ability of Algeria to play the role of mediator in solving security matters around the continent in general, and the Sahel region in particular. All this gave Algerian diplomacy a leading role in the international mediation of the Malian conflict (Iratni 21). In 2015, Algeria's mediation was able to solve the conflict in Mali with the signing of a peace agreement on 15th May, followed later by the establishment of an international monitoring committee to ensure the embodiment of this agreement (Iratni 22).

3.3. Use of Non-Military Methods

Algeria set a new strategy that aimed at re-establishing ancestral values and showing the real form of Islam to prevent any imported ideologies from the Sahel-Saharan region into its territories. Algeria organized many conferences (between 2013 and 2015), gathering imams and preachers of Algeria and Sahelian countries (Mali, Niger, Mauritania, and Burkina Faso) as an attempt to reinforce coordination between Sahelian countries against violent religious extremism and the spread of jihadist groups in the region (Iratni 22). Sheikh Daouda Abdou Boureima of Niger, the chairman of the League of Ulema, said during the second congress of the League of Ulema held in Algiers in November 2015 that: “The fight against terrorist groups cannot be conducted through military might only, but by cultivating the values of tolerance and the basic tenets of Islam” (qtd. In Iratni 22).

3.4. Reinforcing Regional Efforts against Terrorism

After the Black Decade, Algeria continued the fight against terrorism on the regional level and called for regional coordination and cooperation to fight this phenomenon. It managed to sign a treaty in 1999 in the 29th summit of African Union which was held in Addis Ababa, for preventing and combating terrorism, gathering all regional security forces to stand against the phenomenon of terrorism which represents a real threat to the international community (Bosseti 810). This treaty set forth cooperation and coordination between African countries, to exchange information and expertise, and to deprive terrorist groups of financial resources and weapons. It also called for establishing a legal system that dealt with matters related to terrorism and organized crime (Bosseti 810).

In 2011, Algeria created the Joint Military Staff Committee (CEMOC) in conjunction with Mali, Mauritania, and Niger, in an attempt to coordinate the fight against terrorism making Tamanrasset its headquarter (Iratni17).

4. Algeria's New Approach to the Sahel Region (2020-2021)

Right after the election of President Abdel Madjid Tebboune in December 2019, he clearly expressed his intentions for Algeria's coming back to the regional arena, especially after the stagnation the country knew during the fourth presidency of Bouteflika.

After the coup d'Etat that took place in Mali in 2020, President Tebboune sent the then-Algerian minister of foreign affairs Sabri Boukadoum, to meet with the newly established military authorities, as a signal for the return of Algerian diplomacy to the region in general, and the Sahel in particular. This was a clear confirmation of Algeria's commitment to the Sahel region and Mali. The Minister of foreign affairs, Boukadoum ensured Algeria's intentions to revive the Algiers Agreement of 2015 and called all parties to implement it (Lounnas 35).

Algeria was so motivated to return to the Sahel region after the announcement of the French retreating from Mali and the end of Operation Berkane. In 2021, President Tebboune recalled Ramtane Lamamra who was considered the architect of the Algiers Agreement. This was an opportunity for Algiers to re-assert its position as the main power in the region, and to make sure that the Sahel would not fall into the hands of the Jihadist groups in Northern Mali (Lounnas 35).

Another attempt at Algerian diplomacy's return to the Sahel region was the agreement made with Niger to reopen the borders with Algeria during the visit of Nigerien President Mohamed Bazoum to Algeria in July 2021. This was an important move for Algeria because it allowed it to strengthen its position in the Sahel region, and a step forward to solving the Sahelian crisis. The two presidents agreed on reinforcing security cooperation and exchanging experience in combating terrorism (Lounnas 37).

The new strategy of Algeria toward the Sahel region is to update and adapt its diplomacy to the current situation in the region. This new political approach involves

reopening channels of dialogue and negotiations with parties involved in the Sahel crisis. In 2021, Ramtane Lamamra met with Imam Dicko in Bamako and assured Algeria's intentions for dialogue and negotiation to end the ongoing crisis in the Sahel region (Lounnas 37).

The Algerian diplomacy made another move to renew its activism in the Sahel region by changing its military doctrine from noninterventional to the possibility of being deployed abroad. As Lounnas argued that: "There was a major change to Article 91 that now authorizes the president to deploy the Algerian army abroad with the agreement of two-thirds of the chambers of the parliament... for peacekeeping purposes within the framework of the UN, AU, or Arab League." (qtd. In Lounnas 38).

General Conclusion

Algerian diplomacy has witnessed ups and downs from the Ottoman period till the present time. However, it managed to stick to its principles and maintain a pivotal role, both internationally and regionally, especially in facing challenges linked to its national security, and the situation in the neighbouring countries and the Sahel region.

Algeria has managed to accomplish an enormous diplomatic activity on a continental as well as global level over the years. This is due to the strategic location of Algeria in the African continent which has enabled it to play a leading role in international relations, especially in representing the African continent and presenting many issues at different international forums despite the setbacks it had faced during its internal conflict, the 'Black Decade,' in the 1990s.

Algerian diplomacy was able to gain a tactical position among the international community through its role as mediator in many African, American, and Arab conflicts, which was crowned with success. Algeria has always based its foreign diplomatic activities on the principles of the Declaration of 1st November 1954 and its constitutions. Moreover, it has adopted the principles of good neighbourliness, non-interference in the internal affairs of other countries, and the use of peaceful approaches to solving conflicts.

Even though Algeria faced an internal crisis during the 1990s, which made its diplomatic activities go through a stagnation phase, it managed to regain its position at the continental and international levels after the election of President Abdelaziz Bouteflika. Algeria changed its foreign policy toward fighting terrorism, not only in Africa but also around the world. This was shown when the Algerian government convinced the African Union to create the Peace and Security Council, and other security institutions that serve some of Algeria's interests in the region. In addition to that, Algeria continued its fight to

maintain and preserve the principles of peace and call the international community to avoid using violence and power to resolve conflicts.

Algeria was able to maintain its strong presence within the OAU and the AU, especially within its structures and organs. It represented the African continent on the international level and worked to solve many continental issues through its mediation, such as the Ethiopian-Eritrean conflict (1999-2000), and to support the Western Saharan cause. It has also always played a major role in solving the African Sahel crisis in Mali from the 1990s to the present day.

Since the election of President Abdelmadjid Tebboune in 2019, Algerian foreign diplomacy has been intensely active to regain its international position, or what was known as the Golden Age of Algeria's foreign policy. This was embodied in the change of Algerian strategy to adapt its diplomacy to the current situation in the region, mainly the Sahel region, by reopening channels of dialogue and negotiations with parties involved in the Sahel crisis, and changing its military doctrine to allow its army to be deployed abroad within UN or AU efforts.

Algerian diplomacy played a strong and effective role at various international forums, especially in maintaining security in the world, fighting terrorism, and being a mediator between African and other international groups. Continentally, the efforts of Algerian diplomacy were embodied in its defensive position toward African countries and its contributions to the development of organs and institutions of the African Union, along with its relentless efforts to keep foreign interference away from the African continent.

Despite all these efforts, Algerian diplomacy is still facing many challenges and security threats in the African continent, such as poverty, hunger, incurable and dangerous diseases, racial and ethnic conflicts, corruption, and the rise of terrorism. Yet, Africa has always been a strategic option for Algerian diplomacy, and for that Algeria has aimed at

reinforcing its presence in the African Union. Nevertheless, some political researchers believe that Algerian decision-makers have favored the building of a stable country on the regional level, but have not been so efficient on the geopolitical or international level. According to them, Algeria is doing little to enhance economic and commercial integration in the African Union, because of the passive role of Algerian business groups who are afraid of making long-term investments in Africa.

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