

## Is a Democratic Transition Possible in Algeria? Fourteen Experts Respond

December 2019

*2019 has been a year of remarkable events in Algeria, shattering the illusion of a stable authoritarian regime with an apathetic citizenry. In February, peaceful protests erupted against the announcement that President Abdelaziz Bouteflika—in power since 1999 but so ill that he had not spoken in public since 2013—would seek a fifth term. In the weeks that followed, millions joined protests across the country that coalesced as a peaceful grassroots movement, or Hirak, with the slogan “no to a fifth mandate.” As the demonstrations grew, Bouteflika finally stepped down on April 2, pressured by the army, the power center of the regime.*

*Since Bouteflika’s resignation, the army has moved to the forefront, having long ruled mainly from behind the scenes. It has ordered (somewhat arbitrarily) the arrest and prosecution for corruption of certain unpopular regime figures, but has refused democratic reforms. In response, the Hirak’s peaceful mobilization has only increased. Protestors have marched every Friday and most Tuesdays against corruption, the army’s political dominance, and the entire ruling class. They march for sweeping change in the form of a civil democratic state granting freedoms, justice, and reforms.*

*Meanwhile, the regime is pushing ahead with a December 12 presidential election that aims to produce an army-approved successor to Bouteflika, while preserving the current political system and allowing the army to return to the background. The Hirak has called for a boycott, contending that the current regime must leave and systemic reforms must occur before a genuine election can be held. Whether a sufficiently large minority will turn out for the regime to pass off the vote as “legitimate” remains to be seen.*

*To shed light on dynamics in Algeria at this pivotal moment, POMED asked 14 experts to respond to the following question:*

**Is a genuine transition to democracy a possible outcome of events in Algeria since February? If not, why? If yes, what is the most important factor in the months ahead that will influence whether Algeria moves in the direction of democratization?**

*We are pleased to publish their responses here.*



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Since the inception of the Algerian Republic, the meaning of “democracy” has depended on who has defined it. For the Algerians protesting peacefully since February, democracy requires the complete removal of *Le Pouvoir* (the informal network of military and security officials, politicians, and businessmen who run the regime) and its replacement by independent figures who can implement needed socio-political reforms. For the military, the country’s main power center, honoring democracy means holding elections as soon as possible. Algerians who oppose holding the election on December 12 believe that the conditions for a free and fair vote are absent, and that a transition period and deep political reforms must come first. The military and its supporters depict these Algerians as enemies of the nation’s progress, and on this basis justify the crackdown on many of the HIRAK’s leading figures.

No genuine step toward democratization can be undertaken so long as the military remains a permanent presence within the political sphere. This presence is detrimental to civil society. It contradicts popular democratic demands and Articles 7 and 8 of the Constitution, which stipulate that sovereignty lies solely with the people and therefore they should decide who governs. Because the military’s political role distorts this sovereignty, many Algerians view the ballot box as a guarantor not of democracy, but of power for the enduring elite who have used their positions to pursue their material interests over the good of the country.

Thus, as the situation currently stands, we are unlikely to see a positive outcome after December 12, whether the election takes place or is cancelled. If the vote is called off—the third cancellation of a scheduled presidential election this year—the HIRAK would face even greater challenges, particularly if the regime imposes a state of emergency. This would bring more repressive measures and criminalize many activities, making mobilization and organization impossible. Therefore, whether or not the election happens this week, a transition to democracy led by civil society is unlikely to occur so long as the military refuses to entertain any solutions to the crisis other than those of its choosing.



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As the HIRAK continues into an eleventh month of mass protests, and as the regime hardens its positions, Algeria’s political crisis is mounting. Trust between the regime (i.e., the military) and the popular opposition—the crucial condition to resolve the crisis and begin a transition to democracy—is glaringly absent.

Longstanding suspicion of the military stems from its role in the 1992 coup and the subsequent civil war, and its history of perpetuating repression, electoral fraud, and corruption. The military, for its part, is equally suspicious of the population, seeing itself as the legitimate and superior ruler of Algeria, and thus is not yet ready to put its fate into the hands of the people.

Exacerbating the military’s misgivings is the unstructured and leaderless nature of the HIRAK. As an institution, the military fears that making political concessions could lead to its facing

accountability, even a purge, for its past actions. But the political roadmap it has imposed—holding an election to replace Bouteflika while keeping the corrupt political system intact—has done nothing but deepen public skepticism.

The most important trust-building measure the military could make now would be to delay the December 12 election, and, before an election is held, agree to an independent electoral commission, revision of the electoral rolls, and equal media access for all candidates. Moreover, ending the crackdown on the Hirak and releasing political prisoners would be significant confidence-building steps.

To bridge the trust gap between the Hirak and the military establishment, the movement could designate a leadership to negotiate with the regime and be accountable for upholding any agreements reached. Furthermore, offering an olive branch in the form of halting mass protests would go a long way in gaining the military's trust, as would offering the military immunity from prosecution. Such measures would make the army a partner in the transition, rather than a foe to be cast aside.

Should the election go ahead on December 12, however, the newly elected president will most likely lack legitimacy, credibility, and trust from much of the population, and the ongoing crisis will deepen.



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Since 1962, the Algerian regime has always made use of political crises to stay in power. The recipe was simple: enact cosmetic reforms, create institutional blockages to prevent any genuine dialogue, weaken potential intermediary groups, and endorse the army as the country's sole savior. This is how the generals put an end to the civil war in 1999—by imposing Bouteflika and introducing him as a “civilian” president who brought back peace, security, and economic prosperity.

This time, however, something has not worked as planned. Everything was fine as long as Algerians only went to the streets to demand Bouteflika's resignation. But when they started to ask for a civilian state and the end of the military regime, the army realized that it was at risk of losing control. By refusing elections or other leadership change imposed from the top, the Hirak has indeed deprived the regime of its usual role as national savior.

The key factor in resolving the current stalemate, then, is whether the army can move beyond its typical argument that it does not do politics, a tale that allowed it to survive the civil war and to play down its own responsibility. It is utopian to believe that the army is ready to leave power. But it *is* realistic for the army to acknowledge that the depoliticized tools it has previously used to solve crises—amnesties without transitional justice, rent redistribution without economic stability, elections without real citizen inclusion—are no longer adequate to calm down demands for change.

Instead of blaming the Hirak for lacking leadership, we should understand that in the current context it is possible only for the army, not the Hirak, to create institutional mechanisms to negotiate with civilians. Allowing political actors who support the Hirak to play a role in shaping a formal, transparent transition is the last appropriate card the regime has to play. Its failure to inject any legitimacy into the upcoming presidential election and to maintain stability without resorting to a crackdown, as shown by the mounting repression against protesters, has already cost it dearly among its international partners.

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**AMBASSADOR ROBERT FORD**

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Despite the peaceful, inclusive nature of the Hirak, Algeria is very far from becoming a democracy. The army is united and its authority is greater and more visible than ever. It is pushing hard for a presidential election on December 12. It is hard to see how the new president can change the army-dominated system, especially if he lacks the leverage with the generals that would come with a strong popular mandate. The Hirak will reject the new president's legitimacy and deny him that strong backing. This is the essence of Algeria's challenge: neither the army nor the Hirak accept negotiation about their demands and vital interests. Neither trusts the other to share power.

The Hirak had called for a national dialogue about the future of the country and its constitution but it rejected tenuous army outreach efforts last summer. The street protesters denounced the few politicians willing to speak to the army's designated dialogue team. Instead, the protesters had as a pre-condition that the army first remove the prime minister and interim president and accept a transition government. The Hirak's suspicions about the army's intent are well placed, but the Hirak has no detailed program nor even a list of persons acceptable for a transition government. The Hirak would have had to negotiate with the army and its civilian figureheads, but no leadership for the protesters has emerged that could deliver the consent of the street for the compromises inevitable in a negotiation.

The army may crack down harder, but the Hirak is ingenious at inventing new forms of protest. Because the Hirak disdains existing political parties, moves within it to develop a leadership and program with national backing would be a first step toward resolving the crisis—if the army is ever inclined to negotiate a transition to power-sharing. That willingness in the army is missing now. Algeria's economic situation, meanwhile, is growing perilous. Algerians endured huge economic hardships in the 1970s and 1980s, but that experience did not end well. Eventually, the army's rank and file might prefer another path, especially if the Hirak stays peaceful.

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A genuine transition to democracy is difficult to imagine under the current conditions. For the past ten months, despite some tangible achievements for the Hirak, the crisis has confirmed 1) the resilience of the existing system and 2) the political hegemony of the military, which has been shaping and piloting the transition since February.

The single most crucial development that could move Algeria in the direction of democratization would be for the army to return to its barracks and to let civilians take full control of the transition. The army would have to engage in real negotiations with the Hirak and make real concessions, such as immediately releasing political detainees, activists, and journalists and amending the constitution.

The problem is that the new president who will be “elected” on December 12 will not have the legitimacy needed to press the military to withdraw from politics or to govern. A majority of Algerians oppose holding a presidential election now, before any political reform has happened. They see the election as a dirty trick by the leadership to maintain the system by giving it a facelift instead of allowing genuine change. The next president will be under double pressure—from a population that will reject his leadership as illegitimate and from the military that, in effect, brought him to power.

Even if the army were to return to the barracks, it would do so to protect its reputation and interests, not to give up real power. It would continue to rule behind the scenes, exerting influence over a civilian government when needed.

For its part, the Hirak urgently needs to decide on its endgame and end-time—it cannot go on endlessly as it has been doing for months. It must provide an answer to a crucial question: What, at this point, would constitute a “victory” for the movement? If it does not define near-term objectives, the Hirak will be brought to an end—either by state repression or by its participants’ sheer exhaustion.



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The Hirak has become the most significant political movement in recent Algerian history. Its sustained mass mobilization has forced the resignation of Bouteflika, the arrest or marginalization of certain regime figures long seen as untouchable, and the weakening of the ruling system. It has caused the military junta to drop the charade of civilian governance and expose itself as the country’s real ruler.

The military now faces the Hirak in a direct confrontation that is becoming more entrenched each day. The only way to avoid a full-blown national crisis, and to launch a needed democratic transition, is for the military and the Hirak to negotiate a democratic transition. This transition must include an adjustment to military-civilian relations to grant the Algerian people sovereignty over the state's executive, legislative, and judicial branches.

Such a negotiation, however, would require the Hirak to organize in a different way than it has done so far. The Hirak has intentionally remained leaderless, an understandable choice to protect against the regime interference and retaliation that have weakened previous Algerian opposition movements. But the Hirak's proven ability to reclaim public spaces, to stay united, and to exert pressure on the system suggest it is strong enough to avoid regime intimidation or division.

At this point, the Hirak needs to show that it can produce a civilian alternative to the ruling junta. To this end, the Hirak should hold an intra-movement dialogue to articulate specific, actionable demands, and then form a leadership that can present these demands to the military leadership. It should organize and structure itself through regional and national committees. Such bottom-up representation will help the movement craft and put forward a more legitimate transition roadmap than what the junta is trying to impose.

The Hirak needs to plan for the creation of a new ruling system even as it is deconstructing the existing one. It must continue mobilization at a sufficient scale to exert pressure on the regime while empowering itself, politically and institutionally, to peacefully push the military junta to the negotiation table.



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Algeria's current democratic prospects do not look propitious. Massive demonstrations have so far failed to usher in a transition that gives the people a say in their country's future. The military high command refuses any reform of a bankrupt political system, and the Hirak has been unable to stop the December 12 election. The standoff between millions of Algerians and the security forces continues.

The media are more controlled than at any time since independence in 1962. The economy has been disrupted by arbitrary arrests, ordered by the generals, of certain business cronies of the Bouteflika clan for alleged corruption. Two former security chiefs also are under lock and key. But these detentions have not satisfied the popular demand for action against graft. There is no due process of law; the few trials held have been rushed; numerous corrupt figures remain protected. Meanwhile, many Algerians are losing their jobs. Economic mismanagement remains pervasive, especially in the oil sector, which provides 95 percent of national income and 60 percent of government revenue; the national oil company recently saw the appointment of its twelfth CEO in 20 years.

Moreover, solidarity from the outside world feels absent. Western governments vocally support pro-democracy uprisings in Hong Kong and elsewhere, but are silent about the one in Algeria, confirming that they still prefer to deal with an authoritarian regime there. A

European endorsement of the controversial December 12 election will destroy any semblance of the “neighborhood” policy the European Union has been seeking to build for southern rim Mediterranean countries. A presidential contest that is ‘legal’ in a very narrow sense but that many Algerians consider illegitimate will not guarantee the stability of North Africa—quite the reverse.

Yet amidst this gloomy picture, the Hirak has planted significant democratic seeds. The sheer sophistication of its slogans puts many European protest movements to shame. Women are playing visible and central roles. The movement is multi-generational and socially diverse and enjoys nationwide support. Most notable, the protests have stayed utterly peaceful. The fact that the Hirak remains, in essence, a revolutionary movement that eschews violence is tremendously significant for Algeria's future.



**SHARAN GREWAL**

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A transition to democracy in Algeria is still possible, but will require additional steps from the Hirak. The Tuesday-Friday protests succeeded in ousting Bouteflika and several of his associates, but they have not imposed enough costs on the regime to force a genuine transition—one that would devolve true power to a freely elected parliament or president. Meanwhile, the Hirak has refused to negotiate until the regime meets certain preconditions, such as releasing political prisoners and removing the interim president and prime minister. These dynamics have contributed to the current stalemate, with continued protests largely ignored by a regime that is determined to press on with the December 12 election.

The single most important factor in whether Algeria democratizes is what the Hirak does beginning on December 13, the day *after* the election. If the movement continues on the same path of (primarily) biweekly protests, the regime is unlikely to budge. A shift in tactics will be necessary.

One such shift would be for the protest movement to organize itself and agree to negotiate with the newly elected president. Such negotiations could initiate a limited, pacted transition, though not one that would radically restructure the regime in the short term. This pathway is unlikely, owing to the Hirak's desire not to grant legitimacy to the new president, its reluctance to abandon maximalist goals, and its leaderless nature, which complicates the movement's ability to put forth figures who could credibly negotiate on its behalf.

A second and more likely shift would be to escalate mobilization, such as by holding more frequent protests, complemented with strikes or sit-ins. The goal would be to impose sufficient economic and political costs on the newly elected president to force him to initiate a genuine transition.

But such an escalation is risky. While the Hirak has faced targeted repression, it has thus far escaped a large-scale crackdown, in part because the movement remains popular among non-protesters and the lower ranks of the security forces. Strikes and roadblocks could alienate these groups and make repression more likely. However, without a change in tactics, a genuine transition seems unlikely.



**LOUISA DRIS-AÏT HAMADOUCHE**

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The popular citizen uprising in Algeria can lead to a democratic transition. The main reason is that the existing political system has reached the limits of its resilience.

For one thing, the authorities are not able to use symbolic and material resources to perpetuate the system as effectively as they have previously. One such symbolic resource, the security discourse that exploits Algerians' fears of a resurgence of violence, has lost much of its efficacy with a large part of the population, especially the youth. The army high command, which promulgates this discourse, has come under greater public scrutiny. The slogans chanted in the streets make clear that Algerians are loyal to the institution of the military but distrust the army command. The distinction is clear in calls for a "civil state" in which the state must be demilitarized.

The material source of regime resilience traditionally has been based on the distribution of rents gained from hydrocarbon exports. But the depletion of foreign exchange reserves, the worsening of budget deficits, and the spread of corruption have both reduced state capacity for rent distribution and discredited it among Algerians.

For another thing, the nature of the popular uprising has exerted pressure on those who hold power. In the past, the political system was able to overcome socio-economic demands expressed through strikes and riots. It neutralized political opposition founded upon ideological and identitarian substrata. It instrumentalized violence to build a security-based legitimacy. But it has not been able to contest the unprecedented challenge represented by the Hirak, which is trans-ideological, trans-generational, and peaceful.

All these factors have caused discord within the interest groups that constitute the political system's decision-making circles. Functioning based on a search for equilibrium and consensus, the system has stumbled over the incapacity of decision-making circles to 1) avoid the crisis caused by the announcement of a fifth mandate for Bouteflika and 2) find his successor in short order. The situation has become so serious that it has called into question the system of governance by consensus and has imperiled the entire political edifice assembled in the aftermath of independence.

*Translated from the French by Sacha Gilles.*

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**WILLIAM LAWRENCE**

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A transition to democracy is a possible outcome of the Hirak protests, but not yet a likely one. The transitology literature demonstrates that the crucial factor in whether sustained large-scale protests lead to democracy is how a regime responds. Regime behavior during the 2011 Arab Spring protests in Tunisia, Syria, Bahrain, and elsewhere was the main determinant both

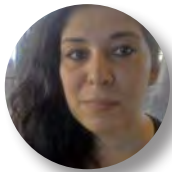


in whether an attempted transition turned violent or stayed peaceful and whether reforms were cosmetic or transformative.

The Algerian regime's behavior when faced with past large-scale popular protests never led to a full democratic transition. In 1988, the country witnessed huge pro-democracy protests, which Algerians now call "the first Arab Spring." The regime made systemic reforms, including free elections in 1990 and 1991 won by Islamists. Democratization was derailed, however, by the military's 1992 coup that prevented Islamists from taking power and plunged the country into a decade-long civil war. Since the war ended, Algeria has seen thousands of demonstrations annually. Most are micro-protests around specific socio-economic demands. During the 2011 Arab Spring the country experienced larger demonstrations with calls for political change. In every case, the regime's response has been to avoid escalatory violence, while agreeing to minor political and economic concessions.

The 2019 Hirak protests resemble those of 1988 in scale and scope, but the regime is still deploying its post-civil war playbook. It arrests leaders but stops short of a full crackdown; it removed Bouteflika but refuses to revise the constitution, revamp voter rolls, or leave power.

The regime will maintain this strategy for as long as possible. It will shift course only if key voices inside the regime change their minds and express those views at a private meeting, called a *conclave*, where Algeria's oligopoly takes major decisions. A power realignment could be negotiated with, or in opposition to, General Ahmed Gaid Salah; the regime would shift from managing protests to managing a transition. Unlike in 1992, Algerians must be allowed to choose their leadership. This time, an Islamist electoral victory is unlikely; the regime is more fearful of embarking on a transition without guarantees to protect elites from prosecution.



**ILHEM RACHIDI**

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Eight months after forcing Bouteflika's resignation, the Hirak remains strong. In recent weeks it has intensified, now holding daily demonstrations against the December 12 election.

So far, however, the Hirak has not been able to force changes to the political system. Algeria's establishment remains in charge, with Army Chief of Staff General Ahmed Gaid Salah as the new strongman. There has been neither a transition period nor any institutional reform. The election will be held within the same political framework as the 2014 presidential contest, which many Algerians considered a charade. All candidates hail from the same political class that has ruled for years, and the vote will be organized by the same opaque administration. The 2001 decree banning protests in Algiers has not even been repealed. Instead, the regime has cracked down on dissent, detaining at least 288 protesters, according to the National Committee for the Liberation of Detainees (CNLD), with arrests escalating in recent days.

Yet a transition to democracy remains possible in the longer run. Remarkable developments have taken place since the emergence of the Hirak. The wall of fear has been shattered and

political awareness and engagement have increased dramatically, as seen in the daring slogans at protests and the open discussions on social media. The Hirak has wide, and intergenerational, popularity: entire families go out to the demonstrations together. Acutely conscious of the legacy of the 1990s “black decade” of civil war, the Hirak has remained resolutely peaceful. The authorities have avoided mass violence and largely have tolerated the demonstrations, mainly because of the huge turnout.

To create a genuine democratic opening as the regime focuses on imposing elections and silencing protesters, and in the absence of a structured opposition, the Hirak will have to sustain pressure on the authorities through peaceful mass mobilization. The longevity of the demonstrations to date has been impressive, but it remains unclear whether protesters can establish a lasting and influential opposition force. Ultimately, Algeria’s democratic possibilities rest on who prevails in this test of strength between the street and the state.

**HUGH ROBERTS**

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A genuine transition to democracy is not a possible outcome of current events in Algeria. The popular movement known as the Hirak is not the bearer of a functional project of democratization and no other force with democratic credentials has the social influence and political capacity to carry out such a project.

United by what it opposes, the effective positions of the Hirak have been negative: the refusal of a fifth term for Bouteflika and the subsequent refusal of any presidential election under existing rules. Its unity spans the country, transcending age, gender, and regional differences and a wide spectrum of viewpoints—left and right, secularists and Islamists, Arabophones and Berberophones—and precisely for this reason the movement cannot advance specific positive proposals without putting its own unity in question. Its positive slogans have accordingly been vague, their practical implications never spelled out. They have also pointed in different directions.

The slogan *Al-Jazā'ir hurra wa dīmoqrātiyya* (‘a free and democratic Algeria’) may be thought to have received some elaboration in the demands for *un État de droit* and *dawla madaniyya* (a ‘civil state’), but these have remained mere phrases. At no point has anyone defined in what way a ‘civil state’ subject to the rule of law would differ in its institutions or procedures from the present much decried state. In particular, the demand for a reform of the Algerian parliament so that it might function as a counterweight to the executive branch of the state has not been raised by anybody. While the ‘sovereignty of the people’ has been invoked, neither the Hirak nor any political party has made a single practical suggestion as to how this sovereignty might be made effective in the government of the country.

For many protesters, the Hirak’s key demand is *Yetnahaw ga’a*—“let them all clear off!”—that is, a purge of the governing elite. This demand recalls the rhetoric of the Islamic Salvation Front 30 years ago and has no democratic implications. The army commanders have been happy to act on it by arresting prominent personalities on corruption charges while preserving the constitutional status quo.



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The democratic protest movement that crystallized in early 2019 is among the most powerful non-state entities to arise in Algeria since independence. The Hirak has positioned itself in opposition not only to the regime but also to the co-opted partisan electoral system. It has reclaimed the language and symbolism on which the state's legitimacy historically has relied—'Algerianness,' anticolonial struggle, and nationalism. Casting itself as the rightful executor of a revolution miscarried by successive post-independence regimes, the Hirak has become a key arbiter of legitimacy. Its boycott of the December 12 election has compelled large swathes of the political class to follow suit. Even if the Hirak's democratic demands are not met in the short term, state power in Algeria is forever eroded because the regime no longer owns the fundamental logic used to sustain itself.

The regime recognizes this and has been strategic in its repression. Until very recently, it had not fired upon or arrested protesters en masse, as a spectacle of repression and martyrdom would enhance the Hirak's legitimacy. Instead, it has arrested specific Hirak leaders, sowing fear and paranoia and leading the movement to redirect attention and resources to freeing detainees.

The near term may see the regime's coercive power strengthened even as its symbolic power is eroded. The president who emerges from the December 12 vote likely will be a regime pick with little legitimacy and with whom the opposition will refuse to negotiate, deepening the current stalemate. Foreign governments' tacit support for the regime, popular protest fatigue, regime-orchestrated counter-protests, and mounting repression may challenge democratic ambitions yet.

But even if Algeria doesn't see a *transition* to democracy this year, it will have undergone an unprecedented *transformation* in political culture, which is as important for the seeds of democracy as the institutions that eventually would enact it. The Hirak has dismantled the barrier of fear and the myths of political apathy. Whether what comes next is a pluralist, consultative transition, or a reconfiguration of authoritarian power, remains to be seen. But by making anti-system sentiment legible—even celebrated—within the wider political culture, the Hirak will inexorably have taken Algeria in a new direction.



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Democratization is possible, but not before Algerians manage to overcome at least four substantial obstacles.

First, the trust in dialogue and compromise necessary for a genuine transition are lacking in the regime, as well as in the Hirak. The regime has no history of treating its citizens as adults. It is used to flexing muscles and buying people off rather than seriously engaging with those

who demand profound reform. The Hirak sees pressure as the best way to force concessions; indeed, in the past the regime has negotiated with opposition actors only when it felt cornered. But since the regime has a record of co-opting or splitting opposition movements and sowing distrust, whoever in the opposition calls for compromise risks being seen as caving in.

Second, the balance of power within the regime must shift toward reform-oriented actors. Political hardliners must be sidelined or brought on board with democratization through guarantees. There are occasional rumors of fragmentation among regime elites, such as over how to deal with the Hirak, but the extent and depth of dissent is unclear.

Third, and related, those who stand to lose power in a democratic transition are likely to try to prevent it. Such spoilers include members of deep state political and economic networks, as well as many associated with the current regime-linked parties and the so-called *famille révolutionnaire* who fear loss of status and privileges. In addition, there may be ordinary citizens who profoundly resent the current system but fear that a transition process will cause instability and economic loss, and thus will quietly support the status quo.

Finally, Algeria will have to engage in an economic transformation in parallel to a political one. The economy is in deep crisis and the state's foreign reserves are dwindling. Ideological conflicts over a new economic model—more etatism or more liberalization—may fracture an opposition movement that so far has remained remarkably united. Moreover, if austerity measures are imposed, socio-economic demands may quickly override political ones. The question then becomes whether the regime retains the resources to respond through targeted distributive measures, or will be forced to consider political concessions.



**THE PROJECT ON MIDDLE EAST DEMOCRACY** is a nonpartisan, nonprofit organization based in Washington, DC, that is dedicated to examining how genuine democracies can develop in the Middle East and how the United States can best support that process. Through dialogue, research and advocacy, POMED works to strengthen the constituency for U.S. policies that peacefully support reform in the Middle East. POMED research publications offer in-depth, original expert analysis of political developments in the Middle East as they relate to the prospects for genuine democracy in the region and to U.S. policy on democracy and human rights. The views expressed in POMED publications are those of the authors and do not necessarily reflect the views of POMED. For more information, please contact Deputy Director for Research Amy Hawthorne at [amy.hawthorne@pomed.org](mailto:amy.hawthorne@pomed.org).

