

## ALGERIA'S ROLE IN LIBYA: TOWARDS A RENEWED REGIONAL DIPLOMACY

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**Abstract.** This paper aims to highlight the contents of the Algerian approach to resolving the current Libyan crisis, which is basically consistent with the principles of its foreign policy, by focusing on the principle of dialogue and emphasizing peaceful solutions, and rejecting all forms of foreign intervention. In this context, the Algerian diplomacy strives within the framework of the regional competition to find a solution to the Libyan conflict through dialogue between the Libyans parties. Thus, the Algerian approach and its perceptions of the solution to the Libyan crisis do not depart from the principles of the Algerian foreign policy and the principles of its military doctrine. In fact, Algeria does not hide its fulfilment to these principles, which are mainly based on non-interference in the internal affairs of states, respect for the sovereignty and unity of states and the choices of peoples, and searching for peaceful and diplomatic options to resolve international crises instead of resorting to the use of force and military decisiveness. Since President Abdelmadjid Tebboune came to office, the Libyan issue has topped the priorities of the Algerian foreign policy. Hence, Algeria's diplomatic initiative to solve the Libyan crisis is based on its historically impartial diplomatic weight in the region, and the output of Algeria's network of relations with the various active powers in the Libyan arena which has been the establishment of a new equilibrium.

**Keywords:** *Algerian Diplomacy; Algeria's Foreign Policy; Libyan Conflict; Algerian Reconciliation Approach in Libya*

### *Introduction*

Since the overthrow of the Muammar Gaddafi regime, and the NATO's military intervention in Libya which opened the Pandora box in the region, Libya became open to all security threats as a result of the total failure of the state institutions and the absence of any supreme authority exercising its sovereignty across the entire Libyan territory. Libya thus became the scene of

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armed conflicts and conflicts between different factions and armed militias. This led to the growth of various threats and security threats such as terrorism, organized crime, smuggling, trafficking in human beings and illegal migration, which have jeopardized the Libyan regional security in general and Algerian national security in particular, which since the beginning of the Libyan crisis has sought to find ways to resolve this crisis to reduce the security threats resulting from a comprehensive approach.

Historically, Libya has been a country of great importance for Algeria from different aspects: from a domestic security aspect, to avoid the spill-over of violence into its territory and penetration of jihadist groups, especially from the porous frontier where the Algeria – Libya border starts and runs from the tripoint with Tunisia in the north to the tripoint with Niger on a distance of 989 km. In this regard, the collapse of the state in Libya since 2011 has led to the exposure of the extended Algerian borders to non-state security threats, which increase the cost of securing the borders, thus making the eastern Algerian frontiers, especially those of a geographically desert and tribal nature, a fertile space for the activities of terrorist groups and organized crime networks in all their forms. Also, from geopolitical aspect to reaffirm its image as a geostrategic regional pivot power ready to defend its interests in a disputed area as strategic as North Africa. Meanwhile, the Algerian diplomacy strives within the framework of the regional competition to find a solution to the Libyan conflict through dialogue between the Libyans parties. The Algerian approach and its perceptions of the solution to the Libyan crisis do not depart from the principles of the Algerian foreign policy and the principles of its military doctrine.

In fact, Algeria does not hide its fulfilment to these principles, which are mainly based on non-interference in the internal affairs of states, respect for the sovereignty and unity of states and the choices of peoples, and searching for peaceful and diplomatic options to resolve international crises instead of resorting to the use of force and military decisiveness. In addition, it does not fail to recall the principles of its military doctrine, which is based on not permitting the involvement of Algerian armed forces into armed conflicts outside national borders, which corresponds to the nature of the constitutional roles defining the tasks and the powers of the popular national army, and reflects Algeria's great respect for the sovereignty of other countries. On the other hand, Algeria believes that a hard security approach based on a military solution to resolve internal conflicts does not work. This position is also related to its own experience of the black decade in the 1990s. Therefore, Algeria believes that the continuation of the armed conflict, especially in light of intense foreign intervention and multilateral military support, as is the case in Libya, will only lead ultimately to a greater undermining of Libyan and regional security. It also considers the necessity of involving all Libyan parties in the settlement process, to ensure that they do not return to rebellion and armed action in the future.

*Research Question:*

A key question that now arises, which the following research will tackle:

– What factors would contribute in the success of the Algerian mediation approach to Libyan conflict resolution?

In order to address this question, there are other sub research questions to be addressed as follows:

1. – What is the specificity of the Algerian approach to peaceful conflict resolution through mediation?

2. – Are Algerian's foreign policy principles a source of strength to resolve the regional/international conflicts?

*Algeria's Foreign Policy New Paradigm,  
More Pragmatic Less Doctrinal*

The Algerian foreign policy has always been discussed from two perspectives: the first perspective is about the principles and practices that drove the foreign policy choices of the Algerian government since its independence, which is based on several principles: non-alignment, non-interference in domestic affairs, and the principle of self-determination of peoples, which form the pillars of Algerian foreign policy, clearly stated in the 1976 Constitution and after.<sup>1</sup> The second, is the historical experience of Algeria, especially the period of the 60's and 70's, during which Algeria was known for significant activity in the international arena and within the framework of bipolarity, and it had a major role in resolving many international conflicts (the American hostage crises in Iran (1981), the settlement of territorial disputes between Iran and Iraq 1975). In fact, Mediation always appears as a central pillar of Algerian diplomacy and its foreign policy and it had participated actively in diverse organizations such as (Non-Aligned Organization, The African Union, The Arab league, and the Organization of the Petroleum Exporting Countries OPEC) and put forward the idea of the new international economic order, support the Palestinian cause and not be dragged behind the wave of normalization after the Oslo accords of 1993.<sup>2</sup> Actually, Algerian diplomacy was particularly active at the international level to make its voice heard. Also, it presented itself as the spokesman of the Third World.<sup>3</sup> Indeed, these two perspectives of Algerian foreign policy have governed its international behaviour for several decades. However, there are international circumstances and structural changes in international relations, especially the collapse of the Soviet Union in 1991, and the descent of Algeria into a bloody security crisis in

<sup>1</sup> See the articles 32, 33 of the People's Democratic Republic of Algeria Constitution 2020, available at: [constituteproject.org](http://constituteproject.org).

<sup>2</sup> Sam Younger, "Ideology and Pragmatism in Algerian Foreign policy," *The World Today*, Vol. 34, No. 3, 1978, pp. 107- 108.

<sup>3</sup> See Jeffrey James Byrne, *Mecca of Revolution: Algeria, decolonization, and the Third World order*. Oxford University Press, 2016.

1992-1999 presented a series of new challenges for Algerian foreign policy which made the continuation of Algeria's foreign policy on the old approach raise many questions and assessments about Algeria's new role at the regional and global levels, among supporters of the continuation of the constants of foreign policy and those who believe that there is an ebb and regression in the foreign policy and its inappropriateness to the new changes in the context of a more globalized environment than the previous one. Moreover, the waves of change in many Arab states (the Arab Spring) led to this policy being characterized by ambiguity, hesitation and lack of initiative, especially those challenges that touched Algerian territorial borders, mostly during the Tunisian and Libyan revolts, which overthrew their regimes.<sup>4</sup>

Undoubtedly, several changes confirm the pragmatism displayed by Algeria in its foreign policy as a result of the new geopolitical context in North Africa and the Sahel besides the environmental challenges in international politics that make Algeria reconsider many of the policies that it followed, and imposed on it to play its role as a regional player in the region, given what its internal resources and geographical location give it, and even a regional state influential at the level of North Africa, the Sahel and the Maghreb countries.

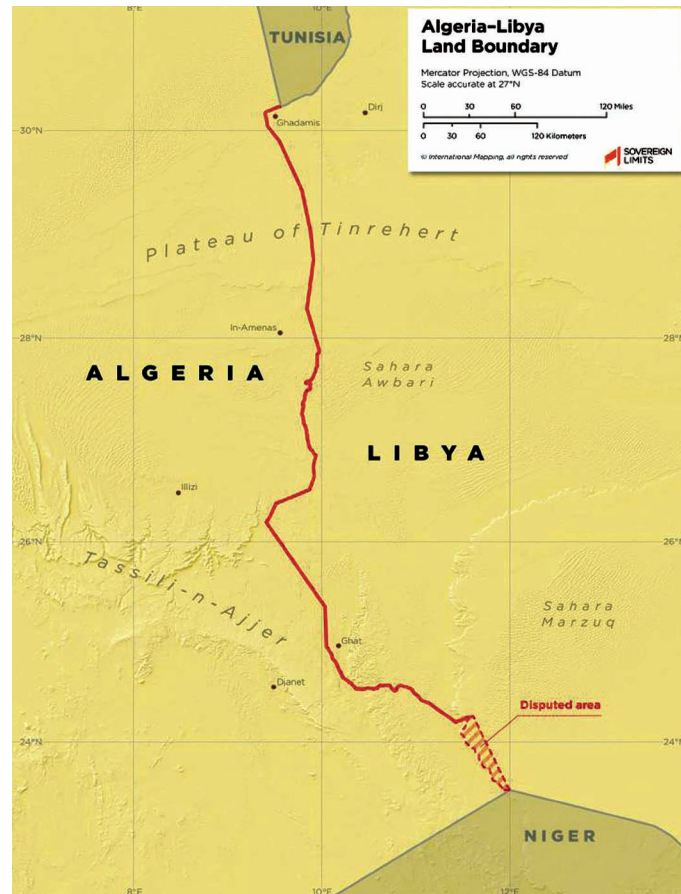
Since the inauguration of President Tebboune in December 2019, the Algerian authorities seem to have developed a more interventionist vision. Algeria passed a new constitution in November 2020 that allows, for the first time, deployment of troops abroad with a two-third majority of parliament.<sup>5</sup> The diplomatic corps is already engaged in a number of regional disputes with the recent appointment of several presidential envoys. As it seeks to realize its aspirations, Algeria will also have to face a number of logistical and diplomatic hurdles.

Currently, Algeria's foreign policy is focused on pursuing dynamic diplomacy, prioritizing the affirmation of the country's sovereignty, contributing to peace, defending just causes, promoting fraternity, and the development of cooperative relations. Algeria remains committed to the construction of the Maghreb Union and support the question of Western Sahara for the self-determination of its people. It also supports the efforts of the UN Special Representative for Libya to restore the peace and security in that country. At the bilateral level, at the level of the Maghreb, Algeria continues to build relations of dialogue, fraternity, solidarity, cooperation and good neighbourliness, and wishes to expand its relations to all its Maghreb countries.<sup>6</sup>

<sup>4</sup> Jean François Daguzan, *La politique étrangère de l'Algérie: le temps de l'aventure?* Politique étrangère 2015/3, pp. 36-37.

<sup>5</sup> Echorouk online newspaper, *Is Algeria heading towards revamping its military doctrine?*, <https://www.echoroukonline.com/is-algeria-heading-towards-revamping-its-military-doctrine/> [Accessed May 2020].

<sup>6</sup> Zine Labidine Ghebouli, *Algeria's foreign policy: Between hope and reality*, Middle East Institute MIE, Algeria's foreign policy: Between hope and reality | Middle East Institute (mei.edu) [Accessed 12 October 2021].

**Fig. 1** Algeria Libya Border

**Source:** Algeria–Libya Land Boundary | Sovereign Limits

### *Algeria a Pragmatic Broker of Stability in an Unstable Region*

Algeria is the largest country in Africa by landmass, and a pivotal actor in the stability of North Africa and the neighbouring Sahel region.<sup>7</sup> Besides, Algeria possesses such important resources as a beneficial geographical location at the border of Europe, the Mediterranean, the Arab world and Africa; one of the richest oil and gas reserves in the continent and a positive demographics, with the young population being in the majority. Algeria has a powerful and capable

<sup>7</sup> Dalia Ghanem (2019) 'Algeria's Crisis Outlook and Regional Implications,' Med dialogue series, No. 22, p. 3. Available at: [https://www.kas.de/documents/282499/282548/Final\\_Algeria+MedDialogueSeries22\\_Dalia\\_Ghanem.pdf/e662a013-707a-769a-b8bd-94b6cc2de688?version=1.0&t=1565080528587](https://www.kas.de/documents/282499/282548/Final_Algeria+MedDialogueSeries22_Dalia_Ghanem.pdf/e662a013-707a-769a-b8bd-94b6cc2de688?version=1.0&t=1565080528587) [Accessed 23 July 2020].

army, baptised in the fire of the civil war of 1991–1999, which is now one of the pillars of civic peace in the country.<sup>8</sup> In fact, the Algerian People's National Army (PNA) ranked 28<sup>th</sup> out of 138 armies worldwide and as the second most powerful army in Africa, after Egypt.<sup>9</sup> Algeria has become since the end of the 1990s a reliable and robust security partner for the EU and the US.<sup>10</sup> Algeria is by far the major player in the fight against terrorism in the region. It represents the last bulwark against the terrorist and violent extremist groups that are spreading in Tunisia, Libya and Mali.<sup>11</sup>

Sharing a very long border with Libya (989 Km)<sup>12</sup> which represent 15,48% of the total land borders. Consequently, the intertwined nature of the geographical, social, and geopolitical neighbourhood of Algeria and Libya has produced a sense of shared belonging and destiny, which justifies the growing serious concerns in Algeria of the scenarios for the “*Somalization*” of Libya. In this context the Algerian President Abdelmadjid Tebboune has warned that the risk is now that the Libyan tribes will take up arms in their turn, raising fears of a “*Somalization*” of Libya. “The country could become a terrorist sanctuary.”<sup>13</sup> Moreover, it is enough to know that the cost of protecting the Libyan borders reaches 500 \$ million annually<sup>14</sup>, which means a great security burden, if we consider that most of the neighbouring countries are politically unstable (Mali, Niger). As a consequence, Algeria once again find itself obliged to uphold its national security commitments alone, due to this situation. Regardless the fact that regional and sub-regional cooperation in the fight against security threats is a vital necessity, it remains that Algeria is determined to rely solely on its own strengths in developing a domestic political consensus and mobilizing its military and human resources without disregarding the contributions of the other countries.<sup>15</sup>

Indeed, the ongoing Libyan crisis is undoubtedly Algeria's main external threat<sup>16</sup>. Given its status as a regional military power and its solid knowledge of

<sup>8</sup> Aleksey M. Vasiliev and Natalia A. Zherlitsina, “Algeria: a regional leader or a potentially unstable state?” *Outlines of global transformations: politics, economics, law*, 2019, p. 99. Available at: <https://www.ogt-journal.com/jour/article/view/475> [Accessed 23 July 2020].

<sup>9</sup> *Global Firepower, Algeria Military Strength*, 2020. Available at: [https://www.globalfirepower.com/country-militarystrengthdetail.asp?country\\_id=algeria#:~:text=For%202020%2C%20Algeria%20is%20ranked,ge%20score.](https://www.globalfirepower.com/country-militarystrengthdetail.asp?country_id=algeria#:~:text=For%202020%2C%20Algeria%20is%20ranked,ge%20score.) [Accessed 12 July 2020].

<sup>10</sup> Dalia Ghanem, *op. cit.*, p. 7.

<sup>11</sup> Dalia Ghanem, “Algeria the Sleeping giant of North Africa”, 2015, Available at: <https://www.thebrokeronline.eu/algeria-the-sleeping-giant-of-north-africa-d12/> [Accessed 20 June 2020].

<sup>12</sup> World Factbook, 2020. Available at: [https://www.cia.gov/library/publications/the-world-factbook/geos/print\\_ag.html](https://www.cia.gov/library/publications/the-world-factbook/geos/print_ag.html) [Accessed 23 July 2020].

<sup>13</sup> Available at: <https://www.addresslibya.co/en/archives/57482> [Accessed 18 July 2020].

<sup>14</sup> Giorgio Cafiero, ‘Algeria's View of Libya's Crisis,’ *Middle East Online*, 2020. Available at: <https://middle-east-online.com/en/algeria%E2%80%99s-view-libya%E2%80%99s-crisis> [Accessed 18 July 2020].

<sup>15</sup> Belkacem Iratni, ‘Security challenges and issues in the Sahelo-Saharan region the Algerian perspective,’ Friedrich-Ebert-Stiftung, Peace and Security Centre of Competence Sub-Saharan Africa, 2017, p. 17. Available at: <https://library.fes.de/pdf-files/bueros/fes-pscc/14012.pdf> [Accessed 15 June 2020].

<sup>16</sup> According to the Algerian leaders' perception, there are five main security threats to the Algerian national security; 1.The challenge of Tuareg issue, Algeria worries about the rise of some extremist groups in Tuareg ethnicity who may call for separation; 2.The rise of organized crime such drug trafficking, arms trafficking and illegal immigration; 3.The foreign intervention under the reason of humanitarian reasons; 4.The rivalry among the world major powers on the natural resources of the Sahel such petrol, gas and uranium; 5.The military projects proposed in the African continent to build a military bases like AFRICOM that proposed by US.



the conflict dynamics in Libya, Algeria leveraged its diplomatic connections to facilitate dialogue between the disagreeing Libyan parties.<sup>17</sup> According to Francis Ghilès “Algeria confirmed its role as the key guarantor of Tunisian security since the fall of Ben Ali regime in 2011, a role which was not sufficiently appreciated internationally. Yet, in many ways Algeria has always wanted recognition as a regional leader.”<sup>18</sup>

Algeria has been actively involved for several years in international mediation efforts aimed at a political settlement of the Libyan crisis.<sup>19</sup> Algeria engagement is vital to the success of conflict management and resolution; it has a unique position to influence events in Libya. Most importantly, the basic principles underlying Algeria position are the territorial integrity of Libya, a political inclusive dialogue between the opposing forces, and non-use of force, and opposing foreign interference in internal conflict settlement in Libya, makes Algeria a sincere and credible mediator. In this context, Algeria's President Abdelmadjid Tebboune said “If we are given a mandate by the UN Security Council, we are capable of quickly bringing peace to Libya since Algeria is a sincere and credible mediator, and one that is accepted by all Libyan tribes,”<sup>20</sup> he added that all Libyan protagonists “are all favourable“ to Algeria's involvement in the process of resolving the crisis in Libya, revealing that “some of them, and in both camps, said that apart from Algeria, they don't trust anyone else.”<sup>21</sup>

### *The Algerian Approach in Libya; Slow but Steady*

#### *a. Old habits die hard*

Algeria's strict and inflexible adherence to the principle of non-intervention in the internal affairs of other countries explains its consistent position on neutrality and standing at the same distance from the various parties of the conflict in Libya since the start of the Libyan revolution until now.<sup>22</sup> This position has numerous advantages, but also significant disadvantages. Thus, the unprecedented worsening security situation surrounding Algeria in Libya and other neighbour countries has put the country's commitment to its principles to its hardest test yet.<sup>23</sup> However, this did not mean that Algeria distanced itself from observing the developments of

<sup>17</sup> Available at: <https://www.thebrokeronline.eu/algeria-the-sleeping-giant-of-north-africa-d12/> [Accessed 22 July 2020].

<sup>18</sup> Francis Ghilès and Akram Kharief ‘How Libya impacts North Africa’, CIDOB notes internacionales, 2020, p. 4.

<sup>19</sup> Aleksey M. Vasiliev and Natalia A. Zherlitsina, *op.cit.*, p. 105.

<sup>20</sup> Asharq Al-Awsat newspaper, ‘Algeria's President Says Capable of Bringing Peace to Libya’, Available at: <https://english.aawsat.com/home/article/2142501/algerias-president-says-capable-bringing-peace-libya> [Accessed 18 July 2020].

<sup>21</sup> Atammia Mostafa, ‘Why “Tripoli” is a red line for Algerian's security’, 2020. Available at: [https://www.academia.edu/43341007/WHY\\_TRIPOLI\\_IS\\_A\\_RED\\_LINE\\_FOR\\_ALGERIANS\\_SECURITY](https://www.academia.edu/43341007/WHY_TRIPOLI_IS_A_RED_LINE_FOR_ALGERIANS_SECURITY) [Accessed 18 July 2020].

<sup>22</sup> Dario Cristiani, ‘Algeria's Role in Libya: Seeking Influence Without Interference,’ *Terrorism Monitor*, No. 23, 2016. Available at: <https://jamestown.org/program/algerias-role-libya-seeking-influence-without-interference/> [Accessed 20 June 2020].

<sup>23</sup> Geoff D. Porter, “Questioning Algeria's Non-Interventionism,” *Politique étrangère*, 1(3), 2015, p.1.

the crisis in Libya, and trying to find a basis for dialogue between Libyan actors and convergence of views between the various parties. In fact, we can summarize Algeria's movements in diplomatic path in two major significant actions, which are Algeria's endeavour to bring the Libyan parties to the dialogue and urging them to adopt it as a basis to reach a solution to the crisis on the one hand, and support the international efforts in Libya on the other hand.

"Algeria's approach to managing the protracted conflict in Libya favours diplomatic tools, based on the country's traditional ideology-based non-interventionist dogma, and opposing the military intervention in Libya". Algeria argued that the only way to establish an enduring solution to the destabilization is to pursue a political solution, not a military one. Furthermore, Algeria own experience of a radicalism-driven insurrection in the 1990s, and major security concerns linked to trans-Saharan violent terrorist organizations, underline the importance of stability in Libya.<sup>24</sup> The Algerian president Abdelmadjid Tebboune clearly confirm in an interview with the local press agency, APS, "With regard to what is happening in Libya, our fundamental principle that we have clearly expressed is that the resolution of the conflict cannot be military and that all states, including the powerful ones, should adhere to Algeria's plan and approach,"<sup>25</sup> The Algerian president Abdelmadjid Tebboune participated in his first external activity in the Berlin International Conference on Libya in January 2020, after which he agreed shortly with Turkish president Recep Tayyip Erdogan to implement what was decided at the Berlin conference, and establish peace in Libya 'under Algerian-Turkish patronage'.<sup>26</sup> During his meeting with the head of the Tripoli-based Government of National Accord (GNA), President Abdelmadjid Tebboune declared the Libyan capital of 2.3 million people a "red line that no one should cross."<sup>27</sup> He further explained why he considers Tripoli a red line in interview aired on the National TV on June 13<sup>th</sup>, 2020 with for journalists representing four different Algerian media outlets by arguing that: "...if Tripoli fails we will be witnessing the same scenario of what is happening in Syria and then Libya will be a failed state as it is Somalia. A failed State will trigger a civil war between many tribes across the Country. Algeria shares almost 989 Km of border with Libya. And every uncontrolled war will have devastating outcomes on our borders."<sup>28</sup>

For President Tebboune, the most important in the Algerian approach to the settlement of this crisis "is the will of Algeria to make the Libyans profit from our bitter experience of division, tragedy and bloodshed at some point in our history", stressing furthermore that "there is no solution apart from dialogue,

<sup>24</sup> Andrea Dessì and Ettore Greco, 'Search for stability in Libya OSCE's role between internal obstacles and external challenges,' IAI Research Studies, 2018. Available at: [https://www.iai.it/sites/default/files/iairs\\_1.pdf](https://www.iai.it/sites/default/files/iairs_1.pdf) [Accessed 20 June 2020].

<sup>25</sup> Available at: <https://atalayar.com/en/content/algeria-bets-alliance-tunisia-and-egypt-solve-libyan-crisis> [Accessed 22 June 2020].

<sup>26</sup> Alia Brahimi and Akram Kharief, 'Why Algeria is suddenly more interested in Libya,' 2020. Available at: <https://www.atlanticcouncil.org/blogs/menasource/why-algeria-is-suddenly-more-interested-in-libya/> [Accessed 22 June 2020].

<sup>27</sup> Middle East Eye, 'Algeria's president declares Libya's Tripoli a red line'. Available at: <https://www.middleeasteye.net/news/algerias-president-declares-libyas-tripoli-red-line> [Accessed 20 June 2020].

<sup>28</sup> Atamnia Mostafa, *op. cit.*



tolerance and harmony between the belligerents”.<sup>29</sup> For his part, the Algerian Foreign Minister Sabri Bogadoun urged “the brothers in Libya to pursue the option of dialogue as the only way to find a political solution to the crisis, in accordance with international legitimacy and the outcomes of the Berlin Conference, with full respect to the will of the Libyan people.”<sup>30</sup>

*b. Algeria's shuttle diplomacy: does it work?*

Over the previous few months, Algeria has embarked on a diplomatic marathon to propose new political initiatives to solve the Libyan crisis. On 23<sup>rd</sup> January 2020, Algeria hosted a broad-based meeting of the foreign ministers of countries bordering Libya (Algeria, Tunisia, Egypt, Chad, Sudan, Niger and Mali) to establish coordination and consultation among these countries and international players in order to support the Libyans in reviving the process of political settlement of the crisis through an inclusive dialogue between the various Libyan parties at issue.<sup>31</sup> The intertwined Algerian interest with the international parties involved in Libya (France, UAE, Russia, and Turkey) makes the Algerian diplomatic movement more complicated. It seems that Algeria is more inclined to a peaceful settlement, which is evident in its participation in international conferences on this matter (Berlin), and in hosting foreign ministers of countries neighbouring Libya, then the meetings of the Algerian president in February 2020 with the Egyptian president Abdel Fattah el-Sisi, and then with Tunisian President Qais Said to discuss Libyan conflict. Algeria is pursuing a political solution in coordination with Tunisia and Egypt. It has also increased border security to address the uptick in militant and smuggling activity in Libya.<sup>32</sup>

However, Algeria road map for stabilising Libya could collapse, it is established that the Algerian role in Libya conflict is confronting outside powers agenda and the warring sides interest. Therefore, it is extremely difficult for Algerian diplomacy to reconcile these contending interests, regarding the non-zero-sum game between Algeria and the state/non-state actors (including proxy forces) in Libyan arena.<sup>33</sup> As a matter of fact, the US-Egypt – Emirates triple objection to the appointment of the Algerian UN special envoy to Libya Ramtane Lamamra<sup>34</sup> after the resignation of the Lebanese UN special envoy Ghassan Salame in March 2020<sup>35</sup>

<sup>29</sup> *Ibidem*.

<sup>30</sup> Available at: <https://libyareview.com/?p=4662> [Accessed 23 June 2020].

<sup>31</sup> Echoroukonline, <https://www.echoroukonline.com/boukadoun-algeria-will-continue-to-play-leading-role-in-settlement-of-libyan-crisis/> [Accessed 23 June 2020].

<sup>32</sup> Emily Estelle, ‘A strategy for success in Libya’, 2017. Available at: <https://www.criticalthreats.org/wp-content/uploads/2017/11/A-Strategy-for-Success-in-Libya.pdf> [Accessed 28 June 2020].

<sup>33</sup> Francis Ghiles “Algeria out of the Picture in the Libyan Crisis and for a Reason”, *The Arab Weekly*, 2020. Available at: <https://the arabweekly.com/algeria-out-picture-libyan-crisis-and-reason> [Accessed 23 June 2020].

<sup>34</sup> Ramtane Lamamra was Algeria's foreign minister from 2013 to 2017 and African Union commissioner for peace and security from 2008 to 2013. He also served as Algeria's ambassador to the United Nations and the United States in mid-1990s. he was re-appointed to the post of foreign minister, as part of a cabinet reshuffle on July 2021. See: Lamamra takes office as minister of Foreign Affairs and National Community Abroad (aps.dz)

<sup>35</sup> The North Africa Post. Available at: <https://northafricapost.com/39877-u-s-rejects-ex-algerian-fms-appointment-as-head-of-un-special-envoy-to-war-torn-libya.html> [Accessed 25 July 2020].

is a clear evidence. For Jalel Harchaoui, a Libya analyst at the Dutch Clingendael Institute, “Algerian diplomacy has never really been tested with a geopolitical crisis as complex or as internationalized as present-day Libya,” Harchaoui added “Algiers has faced situations in the past that were dangerous such as in Mali, but not an imbroglio with so many states involved on opposite sides. Algeria’s credibility in the diplomatic realm is rightfully robust but it is not certain at all it can make a dent into Libya’s current mess.”<sup>36</sup> Nonetheless, Algeria tends to involve countries of the Arab Maghreb in the solution and perhaps resorting to the African umbrella to make up for the international polarization as a result of the escalating US-Russian disagreement with regard to the Libyan issue. In this context, Algeria coordinates closely with Tunisia in order to build a joint initiative, the late one that holds strong cards in the Libyan dossier and maintains close ties with the elites of western Libya,<sup>37</sup> where the risks of spill over from the conflict in Libya are the greatest concern for both states. Additionally, Algeria is pushing for a greater role for the African Union (AU) in Libya, which is the most appropriate regional organization to the Libyan crisis settlement.<sup>38</sup>

### Conclusion

It is evident that Algeria is a key player in the North Africa, where it has been leading over the past months some political and diplomatic efforts to bring together Libyan conflict parties in order to reach a solution to the crisis. Thus, Algeria has employed its political capabilities and diplomatic expertise to assist in comprehensive intra-Libyan dialogue leading ultimately to an inclusive and Libyan-owned political solution. Nonetheless, despite of the intensive Algerian efforts in the Libyan crisis in order to push up the political solution, these efforts might face a set of challenges that may constitute a constraint on the Algerian role. In that regard, is obvious among the causes of the Libyan dilemma that the Libyan decision is out of the hands of the Libyans, but in the hands of external parties driven by ambitions and interests, which it could undermine the Algerian peace initiative in Libya. In particular, the lack of seriousness of the influential forces (the Government of National Accord – GNA with its Presidential Council – PC, Haftar and the Libyan National Army – LNA, The Libyan House of Representatives – HoR), in Libya concerning support Algerian efforts. Rather, regional and international actors (Egypt, France, the UAE, Turkey, Russia, and AU) must engage in a way that is complementary rather than competitive to Algeria’s political and diplomatic initiatives in Libya, it is crucial that external actors should refrain from taking actions that compromise the Algerian efforts.

<sup>36</sup> Simon Speakman Cordall, ‘Algeria, “Tunisia on sidelines of regional diplomacy over Libya conflict,’ 2020. Available at: <https://www.almonitor.com/pulse/originals/2020/07/egypt-decision-troops-libya-war-algeria-hifter.html> [Accessed 25 July 2020].

<sup>37</sup> The Emirates Policy Center (EPC), *Algerian Mediation Project in the Libyan Crisis: Background and Prospects*. Available at: <https://epc.ae/brief/algerian-mediation-project-in-the-libyan-crisis-background-and-prospects> [Accessed 25 July 2020].

<sup>38</sup> Algeria Press Service (APS). Available at: <http://www.aps.dz/en/algeria/32825-algiers-meeting-on-libya-neighbouring-countries-au-must-be-part-of-crisis-settlement-initiatives> [Accessed 23 July 2020].

Although Algeria holds really strong cards in the Libyan arena, mainly the relations maintained with the main political parties and military leaders, the success of the Algerian reconciliation project in Libya is contingent on three factors, namely:

1 – The existence of a minimum level of international consensus over the requirements and determinants of reconciliation, which means that the Libyan issue would enter into a broad regional path of settlements put forward between the US and Russia (the Syrian issue, the Iranian nuclear issue).

2 – Preserving the interests of international & regional powers present in the Libyan arena.

3 – The capability to ensure a comprehensive and feasible representation of the Libyan political and tribal powers and armed groups, which would constitute a major dilemma that requires making an exhausting and exceptional effort.

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