

Whose FIS Is This?

In recent weeks France has undertaken the task of raising funds for Algeria's military regime. A \$1 billion standby loan has already been mustered from the International Monetary Fund (IMF), and the \$5 billion in debts owed to foreign nations by the junta have been rescheduled. France is taking every precaution possible to ensure that the efforts of Muslims in Algeria to make it an Islamic state will be fruitless.

Algeria, for the past three years, has become a battlefield on which much blood has been spilt. The military government which seized power in 1992 has been responsible for much of the fighting. It was initially a political conflict between the Islamic Salvation Front (FIS) and the former ruling party, the National Liberation Front (FLN), but after the freeze on the elections in which the FIS was victorious, the feud moved to the streets. The number of estimated deaths in Algeria lies somewhere between 30,000 to 40,000.

The FIS which is the backbone of the Islamic opposition has tried to counter the regime's oppressive attacks. Unfortunately compromise has been its main tool. In the past two months, the FIS has held two meetings with other senior Algerian politicians for the purposes of resolving the critical situation. In the second week of January, a meeting was held in Rome with the support of a Catholic group named Sant' Egidio which orchestrated a deal between Mozambique's regime and its Renamo rebels in 1992. Present at the meeting were Anwar Haddam, a FIS representative; Abdulhamid Mehri, secretary-general of the FLN; Hocine Ait Ahmed, leader of the Socialist Front Forces; and Ahmed Ben Bella, independent Algeria's first president.

The objective of the meeting was to write a draft peace proposal that all the warring factions could agree upon.

The FIS stance has been distressing. Their initial attempt to establish an Islamic state in Algeria is being bartered for a coalition government.. Rather than maintaining an Islamic basis for its actions, the FIS has often resorted to its own method of acting, an approach that has led to its defeat.

What began as a small-scale movement eventually did become a political tidal wave, but the FIS lacked a clear method for change.

This led to two key mistakes. The first was the attempt to change Algeria via elections, a method which failed and led a faction of the FIS to resort to armed struggle. Armed struggle in this case meant a clash with a predominantly Muslim army. The question which arises is why, if change, as defined by the FIS, is to be done through elections, would it resort to force?

Since its independence in 1962 from France, the people of Algeria have expressed dissatisfaction with the lack of economic and social progress. Their unrest led to the drafting of new constitution in 1989. The new framework allowed opposition parties to exist. In June 1990, regional and local elections were held. The FIS won 55% of the popular vote, 32 out of 48 provinces and 853 municipalities out of 1,539, defeating even the FLN by a landslide. In the legislative elections held in December of 1991, the FIS won 188 out of 231 seats, only 23 short of a majority, but still much greater than its opponents. The Socialist Forces Front came in second with 25 seats. The second round of elections scheduled for January 16, 1992 in which the FIS was expected to win a majority in Parliament never took place. The army intervened, annulled the results of the December election and banned the FIS proving that the Islamic state cannot be established through elections even if the vast majority vote for it.

FIS' failure was expected. An article published in an earlier issue of Ar-Raya said that the FIS or any other Islamic group could never acquire power via elections. The simple reason why is because Allah (swt) created this world and subjugated it to a specific order in which it is impossible for kufr to allow Islam to remove and dominate it. The only correct, and therefore successful, model is the one shown by the Prophet (saw).

Although public opinion was in favour of the FIS, they failed to realise that power lay in the hands of the army, an army which eventually showed the FIS that it was in control. Had the FIS

maintained Islam's revolutionary approach they would have attempted to convince the army to accept the notion of implementing Islam and give them the *nusrah* (physical support and protection). With the army on their side, the situation in Algeria would never have occurred.

The FIS must also take heed of the fact that it is prohibited to use democratic channels to decide the implementation of Islam via voting. Islam must be implemented whether the majority agrees or disagrees, and the only way to bring about its implementation is by following the method of the Prophet (saws), a method which neither involves fighting nor voting, but, rather, political and ideological struggle. Allah (swt) states in the Qur'an: "*Verily in the Messenger of Allah you have a good example for everyone who looks for Allah and looks for the last day and who mentions Allah much.*" (TMQ Ahzab: 21)

When the Quraysh felt the heat of the Messenger's Da'wah they attempted to forge an agreement with Muhammad (saws). They offered wealth and women. When this was refused, they tried to get the Messenger (saws) to share power in a coalition government. They said, "*Muhammad, let us worship what you worship and you worship what we worship; and let us share our authority with you. And if our way is better than yours, then you would have shared part of it. If your way is better than ours, then we would have shared it with you.*"

Today, Sant' Egidio, the FLN and the Socialist Front Forces among others have come together like the kuffar did 1400 years ago. They too have promised gifts and have offered a draft peace proposal. They too would like to form a coalition government. They wish to have the FIS compromise Islam just like the Kuffar wished 1400 years ago. So far the FIS has given in. What the FIS must say to these "peace" negotiators is what the Messenger (saws) said to the Kuffar 1400 years ago. "(Lakum deen ukum wa leyad deen) Unto you, your deen; and unto me mine."

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