

## Lesson n°2: Algeria's History

### I. Introduction

Algeria, the largest country in Africa, has a rich and diverse history shaped by various cultures, peoples, and significant historical events. From ancient civilizations to colonial struggles and modern independence, Algeria's past is a tapestry of complexity and resilience. This study will explore key periods in Algeria's history, including ancient times, the Islamic period, colonial rule, and post-independence developments.

### II. Ancient History

#### 1. Prehistoric Period

The history of Algeria dates back to prehistoric times, with evidence of human habitation found in the Tassili n'Ajjer and Hoggar Mountains. The region was home to ancient hunter-gatherers, whose rock art provides insight into their lives and environment.

#### 2. Berber Civilization

By the first millennium BCE, the Berbers, the indigenous people of North Africa, established various kingdoms. Notable among them were the Numidians, who united under King Masinissa in the 2nd century BCE. The Numidians played a significant role in the Punic Wars and had interactions with the Roman Empire.

#### 3. Roman Rule

In the 2nd century BCE, Rome established control over parts of North Africa, including Algeria. Cities like Timgad and Tipasa became major centers of Roman culture and trade. The Romans introduced infrastructure, such as roads and aqueducts, which contributed to urban development.

### III. Islamic Period

#### 1. Arab Conquest

In the 7th century, Arab armies conquered North Africa, bringing Islam and the Arabic language. This led to significant cultural and religious transformations, as the Berber population gradually embraced Islam.

#### 2. Almoravid and Almohad Dynasties

In the 11th and 12th centuries, the Almoravid and Almohad dynasties emerged, expanding their influence across North Africa and Spain. These dynasties promoted Islamic scholarship and architecture, leaving a lasting legacy.

#### 3. Ottoman Empire

In the 16th century, Algeria became part of the Ottoman Empire, governed by a series of local leaders known as dey. The Ottomans established a powerful naval presence in the Mediterranean and maintained relative autonomy while collecting taxes.

### Colonial Rule

#### 1. French Colonization

In 1830, France invaded Algeria, marking the beginning of a brutal colonial regime. The French sought to exploit Algeria's resources and land, leading to the displacement of many Algerians. Over the next century, French settlers (colons) established control over vast agricultural areas.

#### 2. Resistance and Rebellion

Algerians resisted French rule through various means, including uprisings and revolts. Notable figures like Emir Abd el-Kader emerged as leaders in the struggle against colonization. However, French forces suppressed these movements with increasing violence.

### ***3. The Algerian War of Independence***

The struggle for independence intensified after World War II. In 1954, the National Liberation Front (FLN) launched a guerrilla war against French forces. The conflict escalated, leading to widespread violence and atrocities on both sides. The war drew international attention and sympathy for the Algerian cause.

## **IV. Independence and Modern Era**

### ***1. Independence (1962)***

After a protracted and bloody conflict, Algeria gained independence on July 5, 1962. The war left deep scars on the nation, but it also fostered a strong sense of national identity and pride.

### ***2. Post-Independence Developments***

Following independence, Algeria adopted a one-party socialist system under the leadership of Ahmed Ben Bella. The government focused on nationalization of industries and land reform, but economic challenges and political repression led to dissatisfaction.

### ***3. Civil War (1990s)***

In the late 1980s, political unrest led to a multiparty system. However, the victory of the Islamic Salvation Front (FIS) in the 1990 elections triggered a violent civil war between government forces and various Islamist groups. The conflict resulted in significant loss of life and social upheaval.

### ***4. Contemporary Algeria***

In the 21st century, Algeria has experienced political and economic challenges, including youth unemployment and demands for democratic reforms. The Arab Spring in 2011 inspired protests, but the government maintained control. Recent years have seen renewed calls for political change and transparency.