

## **The Transitional Phase (March 19<sup>th</sup> - July 5<sup>th</sup>, 1962) in Algeria through the Iraqi Press**

**Dr. Naïma Tayeb Boujemâ**

Department of History, Faculty of Humanities and Social Sciences, University Ibn Khaldoun Tiaret (Algeria), E-mail: [naima.tayebboudjema@univ-tiaret.dz](mailto:naima.tayebboudjema@univ-tiaret.dz)

Received: 04/2024, Published: 05/2024

---

### **Abstract:**

Iraq did not hesitate in declaring its clear and explicit position in supporting the Algerian Revolution (1954-1962) from the moment it erupted on November 1<sup>st</sup>, 1954. It supported the revolution with all possible material and moral resources, and both the Iraqi people and government, whether under the monarchy or the republican era, embraced the Algerian Revolution from its early days. This position reflects the strong ties between the two peoples. From this perspective, the Algerian Revolution found a media platform in Iraq working vigorously to highlight and raise awareness about it among the Iraqi public first, and the Arab public second. Here, we refer to the Iraqi media with its various affiliations and orientations, especially the print press, which followed the events of the revolution with great interest from its first day, heralding and forecasting the victory that would be achieved by the heroes of the National Liberation Front and the sons of the Algerian people.

**Keywords:** Algerian Revolution; Press; Iraq; Transitional Phase; Media.

---

### **Introduction:**

The Algerian Revolution was a movement by a people who declared their rejection of the occupier and sought to reclaim their freedom. It was originated from him, but it also found support, not just locally, but also found a protective embrace which safeguarded and propelled it towards the desired goal. We refer here to the Arab embrace. The Arab support was not confined to specific limits but spanned several areas, including military, political, and economic aspects. This support did not cease with the declaration of the revolution's victory over the French occupier; it continued during 6<sup>th</sup> the transitional period, which marked the crucial phase between two periods of Algeria's history: the era of colonization and the era of independence and freedom. Given the importance of this stage, it was found necessary to shed light on it through the perspective of how the Iraqi press dealt with it. Hence, the research is titled: **"The Transitional Phase (March 19<sup>th</sup> - July 5<sup>th</sup>, 1962) in Algeria through the Iraqi Press"**

This article poses the question: How did the Iraqi press cover the events and developments of the Algerian Revolution during its transitional phase, from the ceasefire announcement on March 19<sup>th</sup> until Algeria's independence on July 5<sup>th</sup>, 1962, and the end of the colonial era?

### **Iraq's Support for the Algerian Revolution:**

Iraq, in its various public and official capacities, including parties, associations, and civil society, individuals, and ethnicities, stood by the Algerian Revolution that began on November 1<sup>st</sup>, 1954. Although the official position in the Iraqi monarchy did not always align with public sentiment, it was not a formal abandonment of the revolution. Instead, the Iraqi government offered support according to its capabilities and resources in a way that did not provoke reactions from Britain, France's ally. On the other hand, Iraqi public opinion, political parties, and political and cultural elites competed to demonstrate their support for the Algerian Revolution (AL Obaidi, 2014, p. 408), especially since the Iraqi media effectively highlighted the Algerian cause as an issue of no less significance than the Palestinian cause. In this context, "**Fata Al-Iraq**" newspaper says, "It parallels the actions of the Jews in Palestine, where they kill and displace Arabs. Algeria is the major Arab issue that they must struggle for" (Fata Al-Iraq newspaper, 1957), thereby stimulating Iraqi public opinion towards more vigorous support for the Algerian Revolution. As a result, the Iraqi government was encouraged to demonstrate necessary support for the Algerian revolutionists, and in September 1958, it approved the allocation of 250 000 Iraqi dinars (equivalent to approximately 750 000 U.S. dollars) for the relief of the North African disaster victims, for example (Al Husseini, 1972, p. 197).

The hesitant position of the official Iraqi regime in openly supporting the Algerian Revolution was no longer acceptable after the July 14<sup>th</sup>, 1958 revolution and the end of the monarchy and the proclamation of the republican system in Iraq (Al-Zubaidi, 1979, p. 17). The official Iraqi position saw numerous changes across political, economic, social, and military dimensions, and the issue of caring for Arab causes, particularly the Algerian issue, became among the priorities of Iraq's new foreign policy (Sobhi, 1994, p. 58). Shortly after the revolution in Iraq, the Cabinet in September 1958 approved the provision of an amount of 200 000 Iraqi dinars (about 700 000 U.S. dollars) to Algeria as part of the approach the Iraqi government would adopt in supporting the Algerian Revolution, in addition to an amount of 100 000 dinars for the relief of Algerian disaster victims (referring here to refugees) to improve their conditions and face harsh circumstances due to leaving their country, according to the statement of the Iraqi government (Iraq National Library and Archives 1962). Moreover, the Iraqi Foreign Ministry recognized the Provisional

Algerian Government and Iraq was the first country who announces it on September 19<sup>th</sup>, 1958. Over time, the volume of official Iraqi support and endorsement for the Algerian Revolution grew in line with the nature of the strong and supportive Iraqi public position (AL Obaidi, 2014).

From the preceding, it is evident that the Algerian issue was a priority in Iraqi foreign policy, and even the official stance was aligned with the public's support for the Algerian Revolution.

### **Iraqi Press and the Algerian Revolution:**

The Iraqi press closely followed the details of events in Algeria, including developments on the battlefields and political incidents in Algerian cities. It grasped the reality of severe abuses and dangerous behaviors by the French colonial forces, which enabled it to give the Algerian Revolution a national dimension. The Iraqi press focused on the danger these posed to Arab national security, considering the actions of the French forces as heinous crimes unparalleled in human history, akin to what the Zionist forces were doing in Palestine killing and displacing Palestinians (Al Obaidi, Asda' al-Thawra al-Jaza'iriya fi al-Sahafa al-Iraqiya 1954-1962 ("Fata Al-Iraq" newspaper Namudhajan). [Echoes of the Algerian Revolution in the Iraqi Press 1954-1962 (Newspaper of Iraq Youth as a Model)], 2006)

The Iraqi press followed every single detail of the course of events in Algeria, both nationally and internationally, and provided analyses and reports that heralded the imminent Algerian victory. The Iraqi press played a significant role in motivating Iraqi public opinion to support the Algerian Revolution, which Iraq considered an issue for all Arabs. This press supported the decisions of the National Liberation Front in everything, for example, it did not hesitate to support the Front's choice to negotiate with France, and kept the Iraqi public informed daily and comprehensively about the progress of the Évian Accords negotiations due to the coverage by Iraqi media (Al Obaidi, Asda'a Itifaqiyat Evian fi al-Sahafa al-Iraqiya: Ru'ya I'lamiyya lil-Nasr al-Diplomasi al-Jaza'iri. [Echoes of the Évian Accords in the Iraqi Press: A Media Perspective on the Algerian Diplomatic Victory], 2012)

### **Iraqi Press and the Transitional Phase:**

It is well-known that the transitional phase begins on the same day the Évian Accords were signed, after negotiations concluded with the French colonizer submitting to the will of the Algerian people. The Iraqi press published media leaks about the agreement and the arrangements that would result from it. "**Al-Zaman Al-Baghdadia Newspaper**" - on the eve of signing the accords - featured on its front page under the headline "Ending the Algerian War," and wrote: "It is now virtually

certain that the ceasefire agreement will be announced" (Hiwar ma'a al-Ra'is al-Iraqi Abd al-Karim Qasim. [Interview with Iraqi President Abd al-Karim Qasim], 1962). The Évian Accords were signed on March 18<sup>th</sup>, 1962, including an agreement on a ceasefire and the cessation of military operations in Algeria. At that time, Iraqi newspapers reported a statement by Iraqi President Abd al-Karim Qasim to the Iraqi News Agency, which stated: "The Republic of Iraq, which stood with Algeria before and during the negotiations, declares that with all its capabilities and the energies of its people, it will always stand with the Arab people in Algeria, and with every Arab people fighting colonialism for their freedom and independence under all circumstances and conditions. Any decision or position taken by the provisional Algerian government for the good of the brotherly Algerian people will have its absolute support and the support of the people of Iraq who appreciate the bold steps of the provisional Algerian government and its brave people" (Hiwar ma'a al-Ra'is al-Iraqi Abd al-Karim Qasim. [Interview with Iraqi President Abd al-Karim Qasim], 1962).

As "**Al-Thawra Newspaper**" emphasized, President Abd al-Karim Qasim warned the Algerian leadership to be cautious of the deceitful tactics of French colonialism. He stated, "We warn our brothers in Algeria in this critical phase of the treachery of colonialism. They must be vigilant and unwavering in their opposition to colonialism until their homeland is liberated, and the Algerian people enjoy freedom and independence" (Hiwar ma'a al-Ra'is al-Iraqi Abd al-Karim Qasim. [Interview with Iraqi President Abd al-Karim Qasim], 1962).

Following the announcement of the signing of the Évian Accords, the Iraqi press took interest in the official and public reactions in Iraq. "**Al-Aâhd Newspaper**" published interviews with several Iraqi ministers about their position towards the events in Évian. Among the statements it relayed was one from the Iraqi Minister of Industry, Muhyi al-Din Abd al-Ḥamid, who said: "Algeria has held high the head of the Arabs." He added, "The Algerian Revolution has elevated the Arab spirit through the struggle of its brave sons and the blood of its noble martyrs, providing the world with a living example of people's struggles and filling the world with pride, dignity, and faith in further victories that herald the liberation of the rest of the great Arab homeland" (newspaper, 1962). Minister Mohsen Al-Sheikh also commented on the matter, saying, "I cannot describe my feelings towards the victory achieved by the Algerian people... I feel it is our duty to rejoice in this occasion, which has achieved freedom and independence for the Algerian people" (newspaper, 1962).

In affirmation of Iraq's principled position, government and people alike, in supporting and standing with the Algerian cause, the Council of Ministers made a

decision to invite members of the provisional Algerian government, previously kidnapped by France, as a demonstration of Iraq's solidarity with the provisional Algerian government and recognizing it as the sole representative of the Algerian people and their aspirations (House of Books and Documents, 1962). Indeed, a high-level official Algerian delegation visited Iraq, arrived to Baghdad on April 5<sup>th</sup>, 1962. The delegation was led by Ahmed Ben Bella, Deputy Prime Minister of the provisional government, along with Hassan Ait Ahmed, Rabeh Bitat, and Mohamed Khider, ministers of state in the provisional Algerian government. The delegation received an official and popular welcome, led by President Abd al-Karim Qasim, members of the Council of Sovereignty, and several ministers. The Algerian delegation then moved through crowds of Iraqi people from the airport to their residence (Guidance, 1962, p. 578).

After three days filled with diplomatic and public activities, the Algerian delegation met with President Abd al-Karim Qasim and several ministers, as well as organizing many public and union gatherings for the Algerian delegation. Upon leaving Baghdad on April 8<sup>th</sup>, the head of the delegation, Ahmed Ben Bella, thanked the Republic of Iraq and the Iraqi people on behalf of the Algerian people for their support for the Algerian Revolution (Guidance, 1962, p. 578), stating: "As we leave beloved Iraq, I salute the entire Iraqi people and the leader Abd al-Karim Qasim for their brotherly meeting, and for all that we have seen and heard. All the brothers are very pleased with what they have experienced, especially the development, and they are very pleased with the results of our discussions with our Iraqi counterparts and with the leader. His Excellency the leader assured us that Iraq is with us, and that it is determined to assist us just as it helped us in the liberation phase. This increases our confidence in achieving the goals we set at the beginning of the revolution. Peace be upon you" ("Al-Thawra" Newspaper, 1962).

From the statement of the head of the Algerian delegation, Ahmed Ben Bella, we can deduce that the results of the visit were encouraging, and the official Iraqi position was in alignment with the orientations of the Algerian government. This is evident from Ben Bella's acknowledgment of Iraq's insistence on assisting the Algerian Revolution, which was a motivating factor for Algeria in the post-liberation war and the beginning of independence. The speech given by President Abd al-Karim Qasim during the farewell ceremony for the Algerian delegation demonstrates the Iraqi, both official and popular, engagement with the Algerian Revolution. He stated, "This visit by our heroic brothers from the free fighting Algeria, which has confronted colonialism, has had an everlasting effect in our history, and we spent wonderful good hours together. We agreed to continue the struggle to dismantle colonialism, and may God support the sincere who defend their homelands and

protect them, crushing the treacherous oppressors across all Arab lands. The noble Iraqi people, who have achieved great gains as a result of their victorious revolution on July 14<sup>th</sup>, will continue to join efforts with their Algerian brothers until a clear victory is achieved, and victory is from God. We swear by God Almighty and by our consciences that we will move forward, together, with cooperation, and through political, economic, and financial efforts and all beneficial actions that will lend strength, fortitude, and elevation to the honorable people of Algeria and to the sons of the entire Arab nation. Peace be upon you" ("Al-Thawra" Newspaper, 1962). Abd al-Karim Qasim's speech highlights Iraq's ongoing support and solidarity with the Algerian Revolution and the steps the Algerian people are taking towards freedom and independence.

From the perspective of full and unlimited support for the Algerian Revolution and Algeria after independence, it is clear that the Iraqi government took certain diplomatic measures in anticipation of the referendum in Algeria based on Article (17) of Chapter Three of the Évian Accords, which stipulated that a referendum would be conducted within a period ranging from three to six months from the date of publication of the accords, with this date to be determined according to the proposal of the executive body two months after its installation. In its weekly meeting held on June 25<sup>th</sup>, 1962, the Iraqi Council of Ministers approved the opening of an embassy for the Republic of Iraq in Algeria immediately upon the declaration of its independence, "in line with supporting Algeria and aiding it in all situations and circumstances that support its independence and sovereignty," according to the government announcement at the end of the meeting (Iraqi Ministry of Foreign Affairs, 1962).

Indeed, after the announcement of Algeria's independence on July 5<sup>th</sup>, 1962, Iraq appointed its first diplomatic representative to the Algerian capital, who officially began his duties on October 6<sup>th</sup>. On October 8<sup>th</sup>, 1962, Algeria joined the United Nations, and Iraq expressed its welcome for Algeria's joining the international organization through the Iraqi ambassador to the organization ("Al-Jumhuriya" Newspaper, 1962).

The measures did not stop there; due to the nascent Algerian state's limited capabilities, and following President Abd al-Karim Qasim's directive regarding the support of the families of Algerian martyrs, the Iraqi Council of Sovereignty and the Council of Ministers donated 1500 Iraqi dinars to the Martyrs' Children's Donation Committee, and it was decided to approve a public subscription to raise donations amounting to 150 000 Iraqi dinars in support of Algeria. Further donations approved included 17 500 Iraqi dinars to be disbursed by the Ministries of Finance and

Education, and 1500 tons of wheat from the Ministry of Finance. The Iraqi Ministry of Health also dispensed medicines, food, 4000 blankets, and other materials to Algeria (Iraqi Ministry of Foreign Affairs, 1962).

Iraqi support did not cease with the end of the revolution and the independence of Algeria; it continued for additional years. Iraqi support took on another dimension and multiple facets, notably assisting the Algerian state in the process of Arabization and developing the educational system by sending thousands of teachers and professors in various specializations.

### **Conclusion:**

From our study of the topic: **"The Transitional Phase (March 19th - July 5th, 1962) in Algeria through the Iraqi Press"**, we can draw the following conclusions:

1. Iraq showed its support for Algeria in all its choices, and the purpose behind Iraq standing behind the Algerian Revolution and supporting it was for the Algerian people to achieve their freedom and independence and to eliminate European colonial thought.
2. The Iraqi media alerted the Algerian leadership to the necessity of being aware of the French occupier's tricks and not to be led astray by them, as this would dilute the realized victory and defeat it militarily and politically.
3. The events showed significant interest from the Iraqi public in the political developments during the transitional period in Algeria, which compelled the Iraqi press to follow these developments and discuss and analyze them.
4. Iraq's interest in what was witnessed during the transitional period complements the follow-up by Iraqis on the political and military developments occurring in Algeria.
5. The Iraqi press's interest in the developments during the transitional phase reflects the Iraqi press's concern for the issues of the Arab nation and raising awareness among the Iraqi people about them, as it is part of this nation and its problems are its problems and its victories are its victories.

### **Bibliographie**

"Al-Jumhuriya" Newspaper. (1962, October 10). *"Al-Jumhuriya" Newspaper*.

"Al-Thawra" Newspaper. (1962, 4 9). *"Al-Thawra" Newspaper* *Al-Zaman" newspaper*. Hiwar ma'a al-Ra'is al-Iraqi Abd al-Karim Qasim. [Interview with Iraqi President Abd al-Karim Qasim]. (1962, March 17).

- "*Al-Thawra*" newspaper . Hiwar ma'a al-Ra'is al-Iraqi Abd al-Karim Qasim. [Interview with Iraqi President Abd al-Karim Qasim]. (1962, March 19).
- "*Al-Ahd*" newspaper Hiwar ma'a al-Wazir al-Sina'a Muhyi al-Din Abd al-Hamid. [Interview with the Minister of Industry, Muhyi al-Din Abd al-Hamid]. (1962, March 20).
- Al Husseini, A. (1972). *Asrar Thawrat 14 Tammuz 1958 fi al-Iraq. [Secrets of the July 14, 1958 Revolution in Iraq]* (5 ed., Vol. 3). Sidon , Bierut, Lebanon: Al Irfan.
- Al Obaidi, A. (2006). Asda' al-Thawra al-Jaza'iriya fi al-Sahafa al-Iraqiya 1954-1962 ("Fata Al-Iraq" newspaper Namudhajan). [Echoes of the Algerian Revolution in the Iraqi Press 1954-1962 (Newspaper of Iraq Youth as a Model)]. *Revue Ossor*, 5(1).
- Al Obaidi, A. (2012, December-Januray). Asda'a Itifaqiyat Evian fi al-Sahafa al-Iraqiya: Ru'ya I'lamiyya lil-Nasr al-Diplomasi al-Jaza'iri. [Echoes of the Évian Accords in the Iraqi Press: A Media Perspective on the Algerian Diplomatic Victory]. *Revue Ossor*, 11(5-6).
- Al Obaidi, A. (2012, December-Januray). Asda'a Itifaqiyat Evian fi al-Sahafa al-Iraqiya: Ru'ya I'lamiyya lil-Nasr al-Diplomasi al-Jaza'iri. [Echoes of the Évian Accords in the Iraqi Press: A Media Perspective on the Algerian Diplomatic Victory]. *Revue Ossor*, 11(5-6).
- AL Obaidi, A. (2014). The efforts of Iraqi Deputies in supportings the Algerian Revolution: The monarchical era 1954-1958. (U. o. Ghardia, Ed.) *Revue Al Wahat lil Al Abhath wa Al Dirasat*, 7(2), 408.
- Al-Zubaidi , L. A.-H. (1979). *Thawrat 14 Tammuz fi al-Iraq. Baghdad, Iraq. [The July 14th Revolution in Iraq. Baghdad, Iraq]*. Baghdad, Iraq.
- Fata Al-Iraq newspaper. (1957, 6 10). *Fata Al-Iraq newspaper*.
- Guidance, M. o. (1962). *Thawrat 14 Tammuz fi Aamha al-Rabi'*. Wizarat al-Irshad, Baghdad. [The July 14 Revolution in its Fourth Year]. Bagdad.
- Iraqi Ministry of Foreign Affairs. (1962). *Report on the Opening of the Iraqi Embassy in Algeria*. Iraq Nqntional Library and Archives, Bagdad.
- Sobhi, A. A.-H. (1994). ). *Asrar Thawrat 14 Tammuz 1958 fi al-Iraq. [Secrets of the July 14, 1958 Revolution in Iraq]*. Beirut, Lebanon: Al-Dar al Arabiya lil Mawsu'at.