

# GENERAL ASSEMBLY

THIRTEENTH SESSION

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**Chairman: Mr. Miguel Rafael URQUIA (El Salvador).**
**AGENDA ITEM 63**
**Question of Algeria (A/3853, A/C.1/L.232) (continued)**
**GENERAL DEBATE (continued)**

1. Mr. PALAMAS (Greece) stated that the Greek delegation remained true to the position it had taken previously on the Algerian question. That attitude, completely free from bias, had not been shaken by a bitterness which was more than justified. Under the terms of the Charter of the United Nations, the Algerian people itself had the right to decide its own future by choosing between self-government, independence, union or integration. Accordingly, though in favour of negotiations, his delegation thought that the final decision should be taken by the Algerian people as a whole.

2. In his delegation's opinion, France was moving in the right direction. It had found its true self again in the person of its great leader, General de Gaulle. After it had offered the peoples dependent on it the free choice of associating themselves with France or separating from it, France could not make an exception in the case of the Algerian people, even though the conditions prevailing in Algerian territory might be different and might cause certain delays. His delegation had no right to offer the French advice which they did not need in order to find the correct solution for the Algerian problem by giving the people its freedom. France was more a nation, it was a civilization, and in that sense it possessed the great privilege of gaining, not by what it took from others, but by what it gave to them.

3. Mr. NUÑEZ PORTUONDO (Cuba) wished to restate the position which his delegation had defined at previous sessions of the General Assembly.

4. In his opinion, Article 2, paragraph 7, of the Charter deprived the United Nations of any jurisdiction with respect to the question of Algeria, since that was a domestic matter which concerned only France. At the time when the United Nations had been established, Algeria had been an integral part of France and no country had raised any objection on that score. Without the consent of France, therefore, the United Nations could not arbitrarily alter that country's political geography, and no one could validly maintain that Algeria was a Trust Territory or a Non-Self-Governing Territory over which the United Nations exercised a certain authority. It seemed absurd that some of those

who were calling passionately for the freedom and independence of the Algerian people were representatives of States which were keeping other countries under their domination.

5. It was even more absurd to accuse France of colonialism now that it had set the world a magnificent example by permitting its colonies to decide their own future, especially when not the slightest criticism was made against that great contemporary colonial Power which in forty years had conquered and colonized peoples and nations to an extent never before recorded in history. In that connexion, it should be recalled that when the United Nations had considered the question of Hungary—at the request of the legitimate Government of a country which had been invaded by a foreign army, a fact which established the Assembly's jurisdiction beyond any dispute—some of the Member States which were now trying to intervene in the domestic affairs of France had not voted for the draft resolutions aimed at the strict application of the principles of the Charter.

6. In spite of his delegation's admiration for the representative of Tunisia, he thought that the United Nations did not have the right to analyse, as the Tunisian delegation had done (1014th meeting), the manner in which the referendum of September and the elections of November 1958 had been held in France and its overseas territories. He merely wished to point out that General de Gaulle, whose probity no one ventured to doubt, had declared his intention to solve the Algerian question in a just and honourable manner and that, consequently, any hasty action on the part of the United Nations, far from facilitating the solution of the problem, might make it more difficult.

7. For that reason, his delegation would be unable to vote in favour of any draft resolutions which involved intervention in the domestic affairs of France. In its opinion, the more prudent course for the Assembly would be to express once again its hopes for a peaceful and just solution, which General de Gaulle would undoubtedly endeavour to bring about.

8. Mr. BUDO (Albania) said that, in spite of General Assembly resolution 1184 (XII), no negotiations had been entered into between France and the Algerians and that the situation in Algeria had only become worse. The available figures clearly showed that the war was still in full progress and that the Algerian army was increasing in strength, so that from time to time the French Government was forced to send forth troop reinforcements. Repression continued and the French authorities were terrorizing the Arab population. In contrast to the Algerian Government, the French authorities were not observing either international conventions or the elementary principles of international law with respect to prisoners. In fact, the struggle was constantly increasing in scope and threatened to spread to neighbouring countries, as had

been shown, for example, by the incident at Sakiët-Sidi-Youssef.

9. The Provisional Government of the Algerian Republic had declared its willingness to negotiate without setting any preliminary conditions. It had demonstrated its good will by deciding to free as many French prisoners as possible and by putting a stop to the armed attacks of the National Liberation Front (FLN) in France. Unfortunately, instead of replying with similar measures, the Head of the French Government had decided to intensify the policy of pacification and repression and had proposed nothing more than the unconditional surrender of the FLN, which was unacceptable. The policy of the present French Government, therefore, was similar to that of its predecessors. The referendum, the elections and the solution promised by the so-called Algerian representatives who had been elected in those elections were nothing but a hoax, since the consultation of the people had been carried out under pressure applied by the French Army. The plans for integration even represented a step backward in comparison with previous plans, which had at least provided for Algerian self-government. It was absurd to claim that Algeria was an integral part of France. As the head of the Algerian Government had said on 26 September 1958, Algeria was not France and the Algerian people were not French.

10. The Algerian people could not be deceived by the five-year plan promised by the French Government. Its sole purpose was to enable French ruling circles to exploit, with the help of other Western countries the oil of the Sahara, while ignoring the rights of the peoples of North Africa and Africa South of the Sahara. The Algerian people, however, were not fighting for a crust of bread; they were fighting first of all for a free and independent fatherland.

11. The problem could only be solved, therefore, by negotiation, which would enable peace to be restored on the basis of the recognition of the Algerian people's legitimate aspirations to freedom and independence. The policy of violence which had hitherto been followed by the various French governments brought France no positive results. It was time, therefore, for the French Government to take advantage of the good intentions of the Provisional Government of the Algerian Republic and to use that opportunity to seek a just solution of the conflict consistent with the legitimate rights of the Algerian people as well as with the interests of France. Similarly, it was the duty of the United Nations to tell the parties that negotiation offered the only means of putting an end to the war in Algeria and at the same time to define the principles which should underlie the solution in conformity with principles of the Charter and, in particular, with that of the right of peoples to self-determination.

12. Mr. KETRZYNSKI (Poland) said that his delegation had always felt profoundly sympathetic to the cause of the Algerian people. He considered that that people had the right to claim its freedom, for Algeria had a historical, political, cultural and religious personality of its own, separate from that of France. No constitution or juridical statute would remove that difference and it was inevitable that, sooner or later, Algeria would succeed in winning its independence.

13. The fact that the Algerian problem had come before the General Assembly for the fourth time proved

beyond any doubt that that question came within the jurisdiction of the United Nations, whose duty it was to make it possible for the Algerian people to achieve self-determination in accordance with the guarantees given in the Charter. While acknowledging the work done by generations of Frenchmen in North Africa, even though it had been done under a colonial system whose darker sides were well known, and without overlooking the fact that, for several generations, a large number of Frenchmen, whose fate France could not ignore, had been living on African soil, the Polish delegation felt in duty bound to defend the cause of the Algerian nation's right to independence and self-determination.

14. It was essential for peace to be re-established in Algeria if France was to be able to play its role as an element of stability and security in Europe, since an economically strong and politically healthy France was one of the essential factors for peace in that region of the world. No one contemplated the possibility of imposing a solution of a problem in which France's interests and responsibilities were so much involved. It was, however, necessary for the parties concerned to begin pourparlers with the view to finding a solution acceptable to all. The General Assembly must therefore reiterate the wish it had expressed in resolution 1184 (XII) since the question could only be settled by negotiation and not by a call for surrender.

15. His delegation would therefore support any constructive draft resolution whereby the United Nations would contribute to the realization of the wish unanimously expressed at the twelfth session by the General Assembly.

16. Mr. ZABARAH (Yemen) regretted that the French delegation was not participating in the present debate since problems could not be solved if one of the parties directly concerned took a negative attitude and ignored the very Organization which had been created to maintain peace and to promote understanding among nations.

17. As the General Assembly had adopted two resolutions on the subject at previous sessions, France might have been expected to attend in order to say how far those measures had been put into effect. France was not serving the purposes of the Charter by taking unilateral decisions and it was inviting the Algerians to continue their struggle by its refusal to take account of their wishes and to negotiate with the Provisional Government of the Algerian Republic.

18. The United Nations was therefore in duty bound to use its moral authority in defence of the Charter and to take a stand reflecting the will of those who had met at San Francisco to give explicit recognition to human rights.

19. France could not solve the Algerian question by pursuing a policy of domination, exploitation and repression, for the developments which had taken place in Algeria called for a solution in conformity with the Charter of the United Nations. If France failed to understand that and refused to change its attitude, the Algerians would have no choice but to continue the war, which would become a full-scale war that could no longer be confined to Algeria for the Algerian were considering obtaining material help from any big Power which might offer it.

20. The General Assembly could not, therefore, ignore the situation. It should clearly point the way to

a solution and not rest content with an expression of its wishes. It must take the following facts into consideration: a war was being waged in Algeria by Algerians to secure the restoration of their independence and dignity; in the four years that the war had lasted the French Army had been unable to crush the Algerian liberation movement; the Algerian Provisional Government was the true representative of Algeria with which France should negotiate. There was only one possible solution: the recognition of the right of the Algerian people to independence.

21. There could be no question of negotiations between France and Frenchmen to settle the Algerian question and to determine the future of 12 million Arabs. Nearly all the candidates who had come forward in the Algerian elections represented either the army or the colons and all those elected were integrationists. Nor could there be any confusion between an offer of negotiations and a request for unconditional surrender, such as Prime Minister de Gaulle had made to the Algerians on 23 October 1958.

22. The Provisional Government of the Algerian Republic had never rejected the idea of negotiation; on the contrary, it had been the first to propose it. Its offer still stood and it was ready at any moment to arrage for a meeting with representatives of the French Government. The Algerian war could be brought to a speedy end if such was the desire of France, but if the French Government refused negotiations, then the Algerian Provisional Government could not but hold it responsible for the prolongation of the war.

23. Mr. JAWAD (Iraq) said that the only result of the tremendous French war effort against the FLN had been to strengthen the determination of the Algerian nation to win back its independence. The admirable resistance offered by the Algerian people, who had had no military experience, was not in the least surprising; they were convinced that they were fighting for a just cause, and had a deep love of freedom.

24. The United Nations was the only centre where international disputes could be settled. It was a matter for regret that the General Assembly's consideration of the Algerian question had had no positive result because France had persisted in disregarding the recommendations made to it.

25. Not a single French colonial possession had obtained its independence by peaceful means. The governments which had succeeded each other in Paris had never been able to accept the implications of the political awakening and attainment of maturity of subjugated peoples; in that connexion, one need only remember Syria, Lebanon and Indo-China. The reason for that state of affairs was the nature of the economic relations which bound France to its colonies and formed the politico-economic basis of French society, whose prosperity was dependent on colonial exploitation.

26. There was another factor which had to be taken into account. The ruling class in France was moving towards curtailing the rights of the French people themselves and replacing liberal régimes by variants of authoritarianism. The readiness with which the majority of members of the French Parliament had deferred to the army and to political adventurers showed how ready they had been to acquiesce in the use of force as a means of protecting their economic and political privileges.

27. It was obvious that the French Army would never win the war in Algeria. That was why it had been reduced to seeking an excuse, as it had done in the events of 13 May 1958.

28. Under the Fourth Republic, parliamentary manoeuvres and the resultant governmental instability had prevented any progress towards a settlement. Little by little, with the war in Algeria demanding ever-increasing resources, that state of affairs had become intolerable. Defeat had become imminent on three fronts: the ruling class, the Army and the French economy were threatened. The only solution had appeared to lie in joint action by the army and ruling circles. Armies which have suffered reverses abroad have frequently sought to re-establish their position by imposing their will at home.

29. With General de Gaulle as Head of the Government, power had passed into the hands of the high-ranking officers in Algeria. For fear of a rebirth of the Popular Front, many French political leaders had agreed to the suspension of parliamentary institutions, instead of defending the republican régime and reforming it.

30. The new régime stood for integration. The General Assembly would do well not to lose sight of the fact that the French Government did not wish to put an end to the war, but intended to continue it until the Algerian rising was crushed.

31. There was a reason to believe that the new French Constitution had been adopted much more because of the name of its sponsor than on its own merits. The Constitution represented a step backward from that of 1946. It treated Algeria as an integral part of metropolitan France; that had prevented the Algerians from choosing their political status for themselves.

32. The referendum of September 1958 had had three different meanings: for Frenchmen, it had meant selecting the constitution under which they would be ruled; for Algerians, it had meant voting for or against French institutions; and for inhabitants of the colonies, it had meant determining the political status of their territory. The pressure brought to bear on the inhabitants of the overseas territories to support the de Gaulle Constitution was well known. By abstaining in the vote on the admission of Guinea at the Security Council's 842nd meeting, France had shown what the good will of the new régime was worth.

33. In Algeria the referendum had been merely symbolic. Its organizers had wished to divert the attention of world opinion from the war and to give the impression that the Algerians had in reality accepted French status.

34. General de Gaulle was the instrument of a combination of three forces: the Army, the colons and the right-wing politicians. Those three groups agreed in wishing to keep Algeria under French domination, even if it meant using force. Faced with those developments in French politics, one could not but think of the methods adopted by fascist régimes during the period between the two world wars.

35. The elections of November 1958 had served to preserve a semblance of freedom and democracy. They had brought to power, for the first time since 1871, an anti-parliamentary assembly. In that connexion, he quoted an editorial entitled "No Cheers for Democracy," published in the New Statesman of 6 December,

according to which more than half the members of the majority parties had pledged themselves to the suppression of basic freedoms at home and the continuation of the colonial war.

36. If the Algerian question was to be seen in its proper perspective and General de Gaulle's statements properly interpreted, the situation in France had to be taken into account. Thus, it would be foolish to mistake the real significance of the "negotiations" which the General had envisaged in his Press conference of 23 October 1958. In fact, the General was demanding that the insurgents should capitulate, in conformity with French policy, which proceeded from the premise that "Algeria is France". However, the facts showed clearly that there was no truth in that contention.

37. The FLN was continuing to win successes. A Provisional Government had been set up. Only one thing was still lacking, and that was for the French ruling class to realize that only Algerian independence could put an end to the war and save France from fascism and economic ruin.

38. The CHAIRMAN announced that the delegations of Afghanistan, Burma, Ceylon, Ghana, Indonesia, Iraq, Jordan, Lebanon, Liberia, Libya, Morocco, Nepal, Saudi Arabia, Sudan, Tunisia, United Arab Republic and Yemen had submitted a draft resolution (A/C.1/L.232).

39. Mr. EL-RIFAI (Jordan) said that the problem of Algeria continued to present the gravest challenge to the conscience of mankind and to the United Nations. It was the problem of the stronger using his might to suppress the weaker, the problem of a people with a will beyond description and a conviction beyond definition which was struggling for its freedom. It was the problem of a country whose great traditions of liberty, equality and fraternity seemed to have been designed for internal consumption only. It was the problem of a country which did not understand reality and was stubbornly trying to bring back to life something which was dead.

40. The problem of Algeria had been discussed at various international conferences and meetings: at Bandung, Brioni, Accra, Cairo and Tangier, as well as in the Security Council and at the tenth, eleventh and twelfth sessions of the General Assembly. Various resolutions had already been adopted at all those conferences and meetings. Some had called for a just, democratic and peaceful solution, while others had been more specific and had called for Algeria's independence. All, however, emphasized the right of the Algerian people to freedom.

41. The French Government's attitude towards the United Nations was most unfortunate. If the question of its jurisdiction was to be determined solely by any one Member State, the Organization would be virtually paralysed. It was the United Nations itself which decided what fell within its jurisdiction; and once that decision was made, no country had the right to challenge or defy it.

42. France's allegation that Algeria was a part of France convinced no one, not even the French themselves, otherwise they would readily have come and attempted to convince the members of the Committee that the Algerians shared with them their ideals, their

philosophy, their religion, their culture and their way of life.

43. France possessed a respected culture and tradition, but there existed in Algeria an Arab culture and Arab traditions which had never yielded to French values. To the Algerians, Arab culture was the fruit of generations of hard work and struggle. It was a source of dignity and pride which reflected the time when their ancestors had carried to the West the torch of civilization. The Algerians did not wish to abandon their culture and be moulded into Frenchmen. That was the origin of the war in Algeria.

44. That war, which had entered into its fifth year, was costly for both the Algerians and the French. So far it had been limited to Algeria, but it posed a dangerous threat to world peace. There was no need to remind the Committee of the acts of aggression committed by French troops against all the States in North Africa. The United Nations would be failing in its duties if it did not take the necessary steps to put an end to that regrettable situation.

45. The parties concerned also had to participate in the solution of the problem. His delegation was happy to note that the Algerian Provisional Government, which was the only authority that could speak for the Algerians, earnestly desired to bring the hostilities to an end. It had declared openly that it was ready to meet with representatives of the French Government for negotiations at any time and at any place outside of France. However, the French Government had rejected that fair and legitimate offer. The Head of the French Government, who was a military man, did not want negotiations. He had proposed a "brave man's peace": in other words, capitulation.

46. A similar offer had been made in 1847 to Abd-el-Kader; but when the cease-fire had become effective, there had been no more question of negotiating for the independence of Algeria, and Abd-el-Kader had been called upon to bow to France's terms: to cease any talk of independence, to adopt French nationality and to request the French Government to make him a grant of property. The Algerian leader had refused, however, saying that the Algerians and the French did not speak the same language and had not the same customs, laws or religion, and that for the Algerians to adopt France as their country meant death. He had been jailed in France, and had died in exile. He had not even been granted his last wish, to be buried in his homeland.

47. Those facts, as well as other instances—such as the kidnapping in mid-air of the five Algerian leaders who had been invited by the Heads of State of Morocco and Tunisia—made one realize what the French meant when they spoke of cease-fire first, and talk later.

48. The Algerians insisted that the cease-fire should become a reality, in order that negotiations likely to result in a peaceful settlement might be initiated. Such negotiations would have to deal with the real causes of the war. They could not be between France and the "elected" people in Algeria, for those people did not represent the Algerian people: they were French agents.

49. He had intentionally avoided going into the details of the war in Algeria, with its massacres and "reprisals", which had stained the pages of modern French

history with the blood of Algerians, of a people fighting to liberate itself from colonialism.

50. His delegation prayed that France would learn from history, that it would learn from its experience in its other colonies and that it would realize that the will of people fighting for freedom was mightier than all the might it could muster. France must remember that the key words to peace and harmony in the world were freedom and independence.

51. Mr. SYLVAIN (Haiti) said that it was the misfortune of his delegation that, whenever the painful debate on the question of Algeria was renewed, it had no other choice than to defend the only values which his people placed above their filial love for France: liberty, law and justice.

52. Linked to France by three-centuries-old bonds which transcended those of friendship, indebted to France even for the most minor aspects of its personality as a people, including its steadfast rejection of oppression and its deep attachment to liberty, inheriting the French language and culture and benefiting from French civilization—of which it had rightly been said that if, some day, it were to disappear, darkness would envelop the earth—Haiti suffered not only whenever France was itself attacked and in danger, but also whenever France committed what it considered to be an error likely to cast doubt on the traditional French generosity and to cast a shadow over French prestige and greatness.

53. That explained the spirit in which the Haitian delegation was participating in the debate. However, in order not to envenom the debate or jeopardize any chance of achieving the just and early solution which it desired, his delegation would simply state its position once again.

54. The Algerian question was primarily the war in Algeria, which the United Nations must endeavour to terminate as rapidly as possible, for it had already overflowed the Algerian borders and was threatening international peace and security. The Algerian question was also the question of the right of the Algerian people to recover its sovereignty and the right of the Algerian people to self-determination, a right which was proclaimed in the Charter of the United Nations. It was not sufficient, however, to proclaim those principles and to ignore the facts of the Algerian problem. One million Frenchmen, whose native land was Algeria and who were tied to France only by sentiment and memory, had been settled in Algeria for generations. That fact would have to be taken into account in any solution of the Algerian problem within the framework of the United Nations. No less important was the need to determine, in the spirit of the Charter, the status of the Algerian people.

55. His delegation therefore appealed to France, whose absence from the debate it regretted, to heed the growing voice of world opinion and particularly the views of its true friends, and was prepared to join in any constructive effort which would contribute to the opening of immediate negotiations between the French Government and the undisputed leaders of the Algerian people.

56. His delegation was also prepared to vote in favour of any draft resolution which, taking into account the general interest, would reaffirm the principles of the Charter relating to the right of peoples to self-determination, and would recommend the initiation of such negotiations.

The meeting rose at 1.5 p.m.