

# Algeria national day

## Long Algeria-Japan friendship

Sid Ketrandji  
AMBASSADOR OF ALGERIA

As we celebrate Algeria's national day, I am pleased to convey to their Majesties Emperor Akihito and Empress Michiko, my most sincere wishes of good health and happiness. It is also my desire to address to the government and people of Japan a message of friendship and consideration, while hop-



ing for continuous progress for the Japanese nation.

Sixty years ago, on Nov. 1, 1954, the people of Algeria launched an armed struggle for independence and national revival. On this occasion, I would also like to pay tribute to all our remarkable Japanese friends who supported us during those years of sacrifice, planting the seeds of mutual friendship and cooperation. I like to recall that this friendship started before independence, thanks to the establishment in 1958 of our National Liberation Front mis-

sion for the Far East, in Tokyo. It was therefore not surprising that Japan was among the first countries to recognize Algeria as an independent country on July 4, 1962.

As the only non-western country having historically succeeded in achieving modernization while preserving the fundamentals of its cultural authenticity, Japan has always been seen in Algeria, and I believe in a large number of third world countries, as an inspiring model. Undoubtedly, given the links woven during our national liberation struggle, Algerian people soon viewed Japan as a natural partner. It took less than six months for newly independent Algeria, to send to Japan its first economic mission.

Only two years after our independence, Japanese enterprises started engaging with Algeria where they gained a well-deserved and ongoing reputation for excellence and reliability.

Algeria will not forget Japan's contribution for the development of its hydrocarbon sector, so necessary to ensure its sovereignty on vital oil and natural gas resources. Many strategically important projects were accomplished by Japanese firms for the benefit of Algeria, and mutual friendship has continued to grow accordingly. The majority of the

Japan-Algeria association members are Japanese people who used to work in our country and who feel close to our people.

The same aspiration which presided over our struggle for national freedom and against oppression, is translated in our constant effort to achieve social justice, socioeconomic progress and political advancement through democracy.

While following its own path of global reforms, Algeria is investing a huge amount of resources for its development, offering a large spectrum of partnerships for investors with long-term visions and a sense of win-win association. We remain profoundly convinced that, after some necessary clarifications of an institutional nature are made, economic bilateral relations with Japan will reach an unprecedented level in the near future.

With its new social, economic and political dynamics, Algeria is also becoming a "stability exporter" as eloquently stated by our Foreign Minister H.E. Ramtane Lamamra. It is making immense efforts toward a political and inclusive solution of the crisis in Mali, hoping to preserve its unity and territorial integrity.

The Algerian government has recently announced an initiative aimed at bringing Liby-



A painting that depicts Emir Abd-el-Kader, Algerian national hero and man of peace. A poet and mystic, the Emir Abd-el-Kader strove to build a modern Algerian state while leading the resistance against the French invasion in 1830. He is shown in this work by Hiroshi Hayashi, comforting Christian Damascene children during a particular period of their history marked by sectarian tension. Emir Abd-el-Kader is considered by many Christians of the Orient as a savior and he is a symbol of Islamic humanism and universalism. HIROSHI HAYASHI

an protagonists to enter into negotiations in Algiers, for a peaceful resolution of the crisis in their country.

Bearing in mind the growing interest of Japanese authorities for peace in Africa, we also welcome the newly established political and security dialogue between Algeria and Japan. As

a matter of fact, the tragic terrorist attack waged against Algeria in January 2013, which took the lives of innocent Japanese citizens, cannot be for-

gotten. Drawing the lesson from that aggression which jointly hit Algeria and Japan, and given the common threat

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The book "Japan and Algeria: 50 Years of Friendship" (Nihon-Arujeria yuko no ayumi) was published by Chikura Shobo in August. EMBASSY OF ALGERIA

## Book shines light on 50-year relationship

Those interested in Algeria-Japan relations may enjoy the book "Japan and Algeria: 50 Years of Friendship," recently published in Japan (Chikura, 2014) and Algeria, with prefaces by the foreign ministers of both countries. Co-edited by Tsukasa Kawada, the former ambassador of Japan to Algeria and professor Smail Debeche from the University of Algiers,

It contains a collection of articles written by people who have been involved in the relationship, at different periods of time.

In the book, readers can find information on how the mutual friendship started in 1957, during Algeria's independence struggle, and the solidarity shown by Japanese from different backgrounds. It helps to

understand how that solidarity paved the way for mutual friendship and cooperation after independence, in particular the Japanese participation in the efforts for Algerian development.

The article by Abdelmalek Benhabyles, who was the head of the Algerian National Liberation Front office, in Tokyo, in the fifties, before becoming the first ambassador of an independent Algeria to Japan, is an informative narrative on his activities in Japan to promote the cause of his country. It appears that Japanese supporters of Algeria were more motivated by a sense of human brotherhood and justice rather than ideology. On this particular point, one would recommend

the important text written by Susumi Taniguchi, a former Yomiuri Shimbun journalist, who was the first person to welcome, in Japan, Algerian fighters for independence. According to professor Masatoshi Kisaichi of Sophia University, Algeria was the country that received the most media coverage in the Arab and Muslim world during the fifties.

In his contribution, the Algerian ambassador to Japan focuses on aspects of the modern history of Japan and its inspiring example. He points out some rather surprising, but interesting facts of rapprochements between the two nations such as an Algerian horse called Hayanama, which belonged to Emperor Meiji.



Abdelmalek Benhabyles (right) with Japanese supporter of Algeria Tokusaburo Dan in 1962. EMBASSY OF ALGERIA

Readers will also learn that the Science and Technology University of Oran, Algeria's second largest city, was designed by the great Japanese

architect Kenzo Tange and read testimonies of Japanese who lived in Algeria and came back with it in their heart.

Finally, the book provides useful insight to better understand how the seeds of mutual friendships, planted during Algeria's liberation struggle, led after independence to the strong and beneficial presence of Japan in Algeria.

To conclude this brief presentation of the book it is worth mentioning Sid Ahmed Ghazali's interview. Ghazali was among the Algerian leaders in the seventies who made the strategic choice of associating Japanese companies to the development of his country's oil and gas sector. As an admirer and subtle connoisseur of Japan, he states his strong confidence in the future of bilateral relations, declaring, "A time will come when the presence of Japan in Algeria will be five to ten times more important than it is now."

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# Algeria national day



The capital Algiers is sometimes called "Algiers the White" for the bright facades of its buildings, especially when seen from the Mediterranean Sea. EMBASSY OF ALGERIA

## Vibrant region makes progress

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of terrorism, the two countries have come to realize the necessity to further strengthen and expand bilateral cooperation.

At this juncture, I must pay tribute to the valuable support of Japan to Africa's own efforts for development, through the Tokyo International Conference on African Development (TICAD) process. As a vibrant region, Africa has achievements and progress to display. Although the road ahead is still fraught with difficulties and challenges, it did reach some important accomplishments in different fields. Unfortunately, such progress is not sufficiently put into light. The media has a more positive role to play in that regard, by conveying a richer and a more balanced report on Africa.

One cannot help but wonder why Japanese media does not deal with Africa in a more positive way. Perhaps the reason is that they rely on Western opinion makers for the perception and situation of that region. The same could be said for the Arab and Muslim worlds.

Bearing in mind such considerations, Japanese friends of Algeria and myself are more than happy to see the long-awaited, collaborative book

"Japan and Algeria: 50 Years of Friendship," has finally become a reality this year. Published in Japan and Algeria, this book will certainly help to provide the Algerian and Japanese readers with useful information on the links existing between the two countries, and thus contribute to a better mutual knowledge.

The same satisfaction is felt with regards to the painting by Hiroshi Hayashi on our national hero, the Emir Abd-el-Kader, who strived to build the modern Algerian state while leading the resistance against the French invasion in 1830. The painting represents him comforting Christian Damascene children. It is an evocation of his role as their savior during a particular episode of the history of Syria under the Ottoman Empire, which was marked by sectarian tension. I do believe that in present times, the Emir Abd-el-Kader is a symbol of Islamic humanism that deserves to be more known outside the Muslim world, particularly in Japan.

I highly value the fact that he inspired a great Japanese artist like Hiroshi Hayashi, as we celebrate the 60th anniversary of the launching of our national liberation struggle and its universal message.

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