

Protection of personal data in the context of the move toward the digitalization of elections in Algeria

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Abstract---Algeria is striving toward the digitalization of elections, an inevitable step toward modernization. The initial stages of this process began with the digitization of electoral lists and candidate endorsement forms as part of a broader effort to apply digital technologies across all phases of the electoral process, particularly the submission of candidacy files and electronic voting. This transition requires the use of modern technological tools and significant investment in infrastructure and cybersecurity, especially given the circulation of personal data belonging to individuals, notably voters. Although Law No. 18--07 on the protection of personal data contributes to safeguarding voters' information, it remains a general legal framework. Therefore, it is necessary to explicitly incorporate detailed provisions on data protection within the Electoral Law itself to ensure consideration of the specific sensitivities inherent in the electoral process.

Keywords---digitalization; electoral list; personal data; data protection.

1. INTRODUCTION

Elections constitute the democratic mechanism for the peaceful transfer of power. In light of technological progress and digitalization, reliance on digital tools in electoral processes has become essential to enhance efficiency and accuracy and ensure greater participation of the electorate amid growing voter apathy. Consequently, Algeria, like many countries worldwide, has moved toward institutionalizing digitalization in its elections.

This shift has led to the extensive processing of personal data belonging to both voters and candidates. Such information, if not adequately protected, may be misused for nonelectoral purposes, such as commercial exploitation of the national voter database. Therefore, it is imperative to safeguard these data by establishing robust legal frameworks and implementing technical and security measures to ensure their integrity and confidentiality.

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Accordingly, this study raises the following question:

To what extent does the digital transformation of the electoral process ensure the protection of personal data?

This study aims to assess the current state of electoral digitalization in Algeria, identify the legal mechanisms provided by national legislation for the protection of personal data in the digital context, and offer recommendations that support the comprehensive digital transformation of the electoral process. A descriptive-analytical method was employed to analyse the provisions of the Organic Law governing the electoral system, as well as the legal texts concerning the protection of personal data of natural persons.

2. Aspects of Electoral Digitalization in Algeria

Digitalization has become an inevitable choice amid technological advancement. Algeria has sought to implement digitalization across various sectors, including elections, as reflected in the Organic Law on the electoral system. The Independent National Electoral Authority has actively worked to promote this process through its decisions and measures, particularly in the digitalization of electoral rolls and candidate endorsement forms, issues that will be examined in detail in this study.

2.1 Digitization of Electoral Registers

The digitization of electoral registers represents the first step undertaken by the Independent Authority for Elections. This initiative contributes to reducing manipulation and inflation of electoral lists through the integration of the automated civil registry, which provides the Authority with the necessary information.

2.1.1 Digitization and Digital Updating of the National Electoral Database

The *National Electoral Database* refers to a nationally unified electronic register that contains a database of individuals eligible to vote in elections and referendums. It encompasses the totality of electoral lists, including those of diplomatic or consular centers abroad.¹

The National Electoral Database for the electoral body includes the following data for each voter:

- The name of the municipality and wilaya (province) or of the diplomatic or consular representation, as applicable;
- The voter's surname and given name;
- The date and place of birth;
- The national identification number;
- The father's name, the mother's surname, and the given name;
- The name and number of polling centers;
- The number of polling stations.

The independent authority continuously and periodically updates the National Electoral Database. To ensure regular updating and review of this database, the central services of the National Automated Civil Registry within the Ministry of the Interior, at the end of each year, provide the independent authority with acknowledgement of receiving information on individuals aged eighteen (18) years and above, as follows:

- A list of individuals whose National Identification Numbers have been changed, accompanied by an electronic medium containing their first and last names, birth certificate numbers, municipality and place of birth, as well as both their old and new identification numbers.

¹ Decision of the President of the National Independent Authority for Elections No. 06 of 14 Muḥarram 1445/1 August 2023, determining the conditions and modalities for the management and use of the national electoral register, National Independent Authority for Elections website, INA-elections.dz.

- A list of individuals whose personal information has been corrected pursuant to judicial rulings or whose surnames have been modified under presidential decrees, accompanied by an electronic medium containing their first and last names, municipality and place of birth, and identification numbers, with a specification of the corrected data.²

The Information Technology Committee of the Independent Authority subsequently subjects the national registry to audit and data processing to detect any material errors that may be present, such as duplicate registrations of a person in multiple electoral lists. After authorization from the President of the Authority is obtained, the Committee refers such cases to the secretariat of the municipal committee for the revision of electoral lists.³ The latter then proceeds to make preliminary legal corrections to the voters' list, which include deleting the names of deceased voters and correcting inaccurate voter data.⁴

- **Preparation and issuance of voter cards:** The legislature defines the voter card in Article 2 of Ordinance No. 21--01 of the Organic Law on Elections as “a personal card issued by the Independent Authority for Elections to an individual after their registration in the electoral list, enabling them to exercise their right to participate in electoral and referendum operations.” The Independent Authority is responsible for issuing these cards to the respective individuals.⁵
- Notably, within the framework of digitalization, the Independent Authority for Elections has established an electronic platform that serves voters, through which they can request a voter card. Any individual registered on the electoral lists can access the link provided by the authority and fill in the required personal information to obtain their voter card.
- **Right of citizens to access electoral lists:** Citizens are entitled to consult the electoral lists, as political parties and candidates have been granted access to review and obtain copies of these lists. Article 70 of the amended and supplemented Organic Law on the Electoral System states the following:

“The independent authority is needed, on the occasion of each election, to make the municipal electoral list and the electoral list of diplomatic and consular centers abroad available to legally authorized representatives of political parties participating in the elections and to independent candidates, without prejudice to personal data of a private nature.”

- The independent authority must also transmit a copy of these lists to the Constitutional Court.
- Every voter has the right to consult the municipal electoral list concerning them upon request.
- The procedures for implementing this article are defined by a decision of the President of the Independent Authority, published in the Official Gazette of the People's Democratic Republic of Algeria.

This prerogative, granted by law to citizens, independent candidates, and political parties, serves as a form of oversight over the work of the municipal committee responsible for revising the electoral lists, thereby preventing any manipulation of these lists. Consequently, as a logical outcome of recognizing the right to access electoral lists, the legislature emphasized the protection of personal data for entities that receive these lists.

2.1.2 Importance of the Automated Civil Status Registry in the Digitization of the Electoral Process:

² Article 59 of the Decision of the President of the National Independent Authority for Elections outlines the conditions and modalities for managing and using the national electoral register. See the National Independent Authority for Elections website.

³ Article 55 of the Decision of the President of the National Independent Authority for Elections determines the conditions and modalities for the management and use of the national electoral register. See the National Independent Authority for Elections website.

⁴ Article 63 of the Decision of the President of the National Independent Authority for Elections determines the conditions and modalities for the management and use of the national electoral register. See the National Independent Authority for Elections website.

⁵ Art. 10 of Ordinance No. 21-01 containing the Organic Law relating to the Electoral System, as amended and supplemented.

The Independent Authority for Elections relies heavily on the data provided by the Automated Civil Status Registry, particularly in the context of digitizing the electoral process, as it serves as the official source of information. The Automated Civil Status Registry is defined as “a nonpaper, digital electronic record that contains information related to individuals’ identities as recorded in the paper-based civil status registers at the national level, through a digital medium.”⁶

Through this system, all municipalities and their annexes, as well as diplomatic and consular missions abroad and other institutions such as the Independent Authority for Elections, have been interconnected. The purpose of this integration is to establish a comprehensive national database accessible across all municipalities, enabling the issuance of civil status documents such as birth certificates, death certificates, marriage certificates, and others.

To achieve this goal, all civil status records were digitized through optical scanning and subsequently transmitted to the National Automated Registry.⁷ Consequently, the Automated Civil Status Registry serves as the primary source of citizens’ personal data.

The Automated Civil Status Registry is linked to the central services of the Independent Authority for Elections.⁸ Pursuant to Article 25 bis of Law No. 14--08 on Civil Status, as amended and supplemented.⁹ It constitutes the official and reliable source that provides the Independent Authority for Elections at the end of each month and upon receipt, with the following:

- Verification of individuals meeting the legal voting age requirement (18 years or older).
- The voter lists are cleaned by providing a list of deceased persons, accompanied by an electronic medium containing the national identification number, death certificate number, municipality of death, and municipality of birth.
- A list of individuals whose national identification numbers have changed, accompanied by an electronic medium containing their full names, birth certificate numbers, birth municipalities and places, and both old and new identification numbers.
- A list of individuals whose birth records have been modified pursuant to judicial rulings or whose surnames have been changed by presidential decrees, accompanied by an electronic medium containing their names, identification numbers, and the specific data that have been corrected.

The Information Technology and Cybersecurity Committee of the Independent National Electoral Authority subsequently processes these data in accordance with the electoral lists for each municipality and each diplomatic or consular mission, as applicable. It then analyses the obtained results and immediately submits a detailed report to the President of the Independent Authority, accompanied by proposed measures and actions to be taken in accordance with the applicable legislative and regulatory provisions.

This procedure facilitates the auditing and verification of electoral rolls, enabling the detection of any discrepancies, errors, or instances of unlawful registration.

The digitalization of electoral rolls has also made it easier for citizens who have changed their place of residence to update their polling stations. Through the Independent National Electoral Authority’s

⁶ Sara Marwan, “Manifestations of the Digital Organization of Civil Status in Algerian Law,” *Journal of Knowledge Issues*, University of Djelfa, vol. 2, no. 1: 28.

⁷ Nawal Abd Allah, “Digitization of the Civil Status Service under Law 14-08,” *Journal of Knowledge Issues*, University of Djelfa, vol. 2, no. 1 (2022): 95.

⁸ Art. 59 of Decision of the President of the National Independent Authority for Elections No. 06, determining the conditions and modalities for the management and use of the national electoral register, National Independent Authority for Elections website.

⁹ Art. 25 bis of Law No. 14-08 of 13 Shawwāl 1435/9 August 2014 amending and supplementing Ordinance No. 70-20 of Dhū al-Ḥijja 1339/19 February 1970 relating to civil status, *Official Journal*, No. 49, 20 August 2014.

electronic platform, citizens can request a change of residence and register in their new location.¹⁰ The platform also enables voters to request a digital copy of their voter card.

The automated civil status registry, which serves as the primary and exclusive source of citizens' personal data, plays a crucial role in the continuous updating of the national electoral database. This helps limit manipulation and multiple registrations. Consequently, the relationship between the Independent National Electoral Authority and the automated civil status registry is characterized by ongoing cooperation and coordination, ensuring the integrity and accuracy of the electoral rolls.

2.2 Digitization in the collection and verification of signatures

For candidacy in presidential elections, the Algerian legislature requires that a candidate submit either of the following:

- A list containing six hundred (600) individual signatures from elected members of municipal, provincial, or parliamentary councils distributed across at least twenty-nine (29) wilayas (provinces); or
- A list containing at least 50,000 signatures from registered voters in the electoral roll, collected from at least 29 wilayas, with no fewer than 1,200 signatures from each wilaya.

The aspects of digitization related to signature forms in presidential elections are reflected in the mechanism that enables the candidate or their legally authorized representative to obtain individual signature collection forms electronically through a digital platform.¹¹ Each form contains a set of data, which includes the following:

- The title *is the People's Democratic Republic of Algeria*.
- The official seal.
- The logo of the Independent Authority for Elections.
- The form's identification number.
- The name and surname of the candidate;
- Data specific to the voter or elected official, as applicable;
- A designated space for the signature or the left index fingerprint of the signer (voter or elected official, depending on the case);
- A designated space for authentication by the public officer.¹²

The legislature classifies the data contained in the signature form as personal data of a sensitive nature and as confidential information. Unauthorized disclosure of such data, by any means, is strictly prohibited and subject to penalties under the law.¹³

Furthermore, assistant agents of the public officer are responsible for entering the data exclusively into the electronic platform of the Independent Authority for Elections. Data entry is restricted solely to this platform, with any violation subject to legal sanctions.¹⁴ Within this framework, a QR code is printed on the individual signature collection form after the data have been entered.

¹⁰ Nahla Jadidi and al-Makki Draji, "Digitization of the Electoral Process in Algeria: Reality and Prospects," *Journal of the Constitutional Court*, Constitutional Court, no. 4 (2024).

¹¹ Articles 5 and 6 of the Decision of the President of the National Independent Authority for Elections No. 01 of 2 Dhū al-Hijja 1445/8 June 2024, determining the modalities and procedures of individual signatures in support of candidates for the early presidential elections of 7 September 2024, National Independent Authority for Elections website.

¹² Art. 31 of Decision of the President of the National Independent Authority for Elections No. 01 of 2024, determining the modalities and procedures of individual signatures in support of candidates for the early presidential elections of 7 September 2024, National Independent Authority for Elections website.

¹³ Art. 23 of Decision of the President of the National Independent Authority for Elections No. 01 of 2024, determining the modalities and procedures of individual signatures in support of candidates for the early presidential elections of 7 September 2024, National Independent Authority for Elections website.

¹⁴ Art. 21 of Decision of the President of the National Independent Authority for Elections No. 01 of 2024, determining the modalities and procedures of individual signatures in support of candidates for the early presidential elections of 7 September 2024, National Independent Authority for Elections website.

3. Mechanisms for the Protection of Personal Data under Law No. 18--07

With Algeria's initiative to digitalize the electoral process, it has become crucial to accompany this transition with significant legislative measures aimed at protecting voters' personal data. Such data, classified as personal in nature, are considered *sensitive information*, and any unauthorized disclosure of it by any means is strictly prohibited and subject to legal sanctions.¹⁵ In this context, the protection of voters' personal data encompasses both administrative protection and criminal protection mechanisms.

3.1 Composition of the National Authority for the Protection of Personal Data (NAPPD)

Law No. 18--07, concerning the protection of natural persons in the processing of personal data, established the *NAPPD*. This body is responsible for overseeing and ensuring the protection of personal data. Voters may refer their cases to this Authority in the event of any violation of their privacy.

The authority is an independent national institution endowed with a legal personality, as well as financial and administrative autonomy. It also enjoys independence in formulating internal regulations. The Authority operates under the auspices of the President of the Republic, with its headquarters located in Algiers.¹⁶

The National Authority (NA) is composed of sixteen (16) members, appointed by the President of the Republic through a presidential decree for a renewable five-year term, as follows:¹⁷

- The President of the Republic appoints three competent persons, including the Authority's president, from among specialists in domains associated with the Authority's mission;
- Three judges, chosen among the Supreme Court and Council of State justices, were suggested by the High Council of the Judiciary;
- The speaker of each house of Parliament appoints one (1) member from each chamber after consulting with the leaders of parliamentary factions.
- One (1) representative of the National Council for Human Rights;
- One (1) representative of the Ministry of National Defense;
- One (1) representative of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs;
- One (1) representative of the Ministry of Finance;
- One (1) representative of the Ministry of Justice, Keeper of the Seals;
- One (1) representative of the Ministry of Post, Telecommunications, Technology, and Digitalization;
- One (1) representative of the Ministry of Health;
- One (1) representative of the Ministry of Labor, Employment, and Social Security.

Members of the National Authority (NA) are selected on the basis of their legal or technical expertise in the field of processing personal data. This composition reflects an emphasis on specialization, particularly in information and communication technologies (ICTs), with a focus on the processing of personal data, as well as on legal expertise, despite members' affiliations with different sectors. Accordingly, the consideration of specialization among the Authority's members enhances the effectiveness of its role in protecting personal data.¹⁸ The authority's efficiency is further strengthened by the legislature's provision, allowing it to enlist the assistance of a qualified individual to support its activities.

¹⁵ Art. 31 of Decision of the President of the National Independent Authority for Elections No. 01 of 2024, determining the modalities and procedures of individual signatures in support of candidates for the early presidential elections of 7 September 2024, National Independent Authority for Elections website.

¹⁶ Art. 22 of Law No. 18-07 of 25 Ramaḍān 1439/10 June 2018 relating to the protection of natural persons in the processing of personal data, *Official Journal*, No. 34, 10 June 2018.

¹⁷ Art. 23 of Law No. 18-07 relating to the protection of natural persons in the processing of personal data.

¹⁸ Hanan Mazhoud, "The Repressive Jurisdiction of the National Authority for the Protection of Personal Data between the Requirements of Protection and the Constraints of Supervision," *Academic Journal for Legal and Political Research*, University Amar Thliji, Laghouat, vol. 7, no. 1: 694.

3.2 Powers of the National Authority for the Protection of Personal Data (NAPPD)

The NA undertakes a range of responsibilities concerning the protection of personal data, as stipulated in Law No. 18-07 mentioned above. It exercises both prior and subsequent oversight, which will be addressed in this section.

3.2.1 Authority Supervisory and Prior Oversight Functions

A. Monitoring Preliminary Processing Procedures:

The NA maintains the National Register for the Protection of Personal Data, in which it records the declarations submitted to it and the authorizations it issues. Any individual or entity responsible for data processing is required to obtain either a declaration receipt or an authorization from the NA before processing personal data.¹⁹ Consequently, every operation involving the processing of personal data is subject to a prior declaration or authorization from the Authority, unless otherwise provided by law.

B. Prior Declaration:

Article 13 of the same law stipulates the obligation to submit a prior declaration to the NAPPD. This declaration may also be submitted electronically, and the acknowledgement of receipt is sent in the same manner. The person responsible for processing may begin their work immediately upon receiving the receipt, assuming full responsibility.²⁰

The prior declaration for processing personal data must include a set of conditions specified in Article 14 of the same law, as follows:²¹

- Both the data controller's name and address and, if relevant, the representative's name and address.
- The features, natures, and goals of the data processing procedure.
- One or more types of data subjects and personal data or categories of personal data about them are described.
- The recipients or groups of recipients to whom the information could be shared.
- The type of information that will be shared with other nations.
- The length of time that the data are kept.
- The body or organization that, if appropriate, allows the data subject to exercise the rights provided by this legislation, as well as the policies put in place to make it easier for them to do so.
- A comprehensive explanation that enables a preliminary assessment of the effectiveness of the measures taken to ensure the privacy and security of data processing.
- Any linkage or connection between data, including sharing, transferring, or subcontracting processing, regardless of whether it is done for free or in exchange for payment.

The same article, in its final paragraph, further emphasizes the obligation to notify the NA of any modification or deletion affecting the aforementioned information or the data processing itself.

Data processing tasks that are performed only to maintain the accessibility of a public register to those with a legitimate reason to access it are not required to be declared. However, a data controller must still be chosen, and the NA must be informed of their identity and made public. As required by law, this controller is fully responsible for ensuring that the legal rights of the individuals involved are respected.²²

¹⁹ Art. 12 of Law No. 18-07 of 25 Ramaḍān 1439/10 June 2018 relating to the protection of natural persons in the processing of personal data, *Official Journal*, No. 34, 25 Ramaḍān 1439/10 June 2018.

²⁰ Art. 13 of Law No. 18-07.

²¹ Art. 14 of Law No. 18-07.

²² Art. 16 of Law No. 18-07.

C. Prior Authorization for Data Processing

Prior authorization constitutes a measure undertaken by the NA for the protection of privacy and the fundamental rights and freedom of individuals. This step follows the examination of a declaration submitted by a person or entity concerning the processing of specific personal data. Such authorization is required in cases where data processing may pose a clear risk to the privacy and fundamental freedom of individuals. Before granting final permission to commence processing, the Authority must ensure that the applied procedures respect these rights and provide adequate safeguards against any infringement.²³

The NA grants authorization for data processing within ten (10) days from the date the declaration is filed, and the decision must be duly justified.²⁴ However, authorization to process sensitive data is, in principle, prohibited and may be granted only when it is strictly necessary. The processing of such data may be authorized in cases involving public interest, where it is essential for fulfilling the legal duties of the data controller, or when carried out on the basis of the explicit consent of the concerned individual, the existence of a legal provision, or authorization from the NA.

Under Law No. 18-07, the Algerian legislature has established strict restrictions on the processing of sensitive data, requiring a strong justification for any authorization to be granted. Processing is permitted only in specific circumstances directly linked to the public interest or to legal obligations compelling the data controller to perform such processing.

Processing of sensitive data may therefore be authorized under the following conditions:²⁵

- Public interest: When the processing of data is necessary for the performance of legal duties related to the public interest.
- Consent of the Data Subject: When the entity responsible for processing has obtained the explicit consent of the individual concerned with the sensitive data.
- Legal basis: When there is a specific law that explicitly authorizes the processing of sensitive data.
- Authorization from the NA: When the NA has granted special permission for the processing of such data.

Furthermore, the Algerian legislature established additional criteria to determine the cases that require authorization for processing sensitive data, as provided in paragraph (3) of Article 18 mentioned above.

3.2.2 Duties of the NA (NA) in Supervision and Subsequent Oversight

According to Article 25 of Law No. 18-07, the NA is responsible for several tasks that ensure the security of personal information. Its primary responsibilities are to ensure that personal data processing activities comply with legal requirements and to prevent the abuse of information and communication technology that might endanger people's rights, public liberties, and privacy.

The main tasks of the NA include the following:

- Granting permissions and receiving notifications; educating individuals and data controllers about their rights and responsibilities; providing guidance and assistance to those conducting experiments or activities involving the processing of personal data; handling appeals and complaints related to data processing operations; and approving the transfer of data overseas.²⁶
- Submitting proposals aimed at simplifying and improving the legislative and regulatory framework governing the processing of personal data.
- Publishing the granted authorizations and issuing opinions in the *National Register for the Protection of Personal Data*.

²³ Amina Masyad, "Mechanisms for the Protection of Personal Data under Law 18-07," *Journal of the Researcher in Legal and Political Sciences*, University Mohamed Cherif Messaadia, Souk Ahras, vol. 3, no. 5 (2021): 108.

²⁴ Art. 17, para. 2, of Law No. 18-07.

²⁵ Art. 18, paras. 1 and 2 of Law No. 18-07.

²⁶ Art. 25 of Law No. 18-07.

- Coöperous relations with foreign authorities of a similar nature should be developed in accordance with the principle of reciprocity.
- Codes of conduct and ethics applicable to the processing of personal data were established.
- Notifying concerned parties and data controllers of their rights and responsibilities, such as the right to information and advance notice about the data controller's identity, the reason for processing, and any other pertinent information (such as the data's recipient, whether a response is needed, the repercussions of not responding, the rights of the individual, and the potential transfer of data overseas). When individuals use their personal information on an open network, they should be aware that it may spread across networks without any security assurances and could be viewed or used by unauthorized parties.²⁷

According to Article 46 of Law No. 18--07, in the event of a violation of the provisions of this law, the NAPPD may take the following administrative measures:

- Issuing a warning,
- Serving a formal notice,
- Imposing a fine,
- Temporarily suspending authorization for a period exceeding one year, or
- Permanently withdrawing the declaration or authorization.²⁸

Furthermore, decisions issued by the NAPPD are subject to appeal before the Council of State.²⁹

The NA is also vested with several other diverse competencies, including the following:

- Authorization to transfer personal data abroad, in accordance with the conditions stipulated in this law.³⁰
- Orders are given for changes that need to be made to keep personal data safe while it is being processed, as well as ordering the closing, withdrawal, or destruction of data. The authority may also suggest ways to make the laws and rules governing the processing of personal data easier to understand and more effective.³¹
- The NA may, where applicable and without delay, withdraw the declaration receipt or authorization if it is determined, after the processing subject to the declaration or authorization has taken place, that such processing undermines national security or contravenes morality or public order.³²
- In addition to administrative procedures, the legislature has granted the NA procedural powers, including investigative and inspection powers necessary to ensure legal compliance in data processing. These powers enable authorized agents of the authority to inspect sites where data processing operations are conducted, except for residential premises.

Furthermore, the law stipulates that professional secrecy may not be invoked before the NA, thereby granting it the right to access all information and documents related to data processing, regardless of their medium. The authority is also empowered to rely on inspection agents, excluding judicial police officers and agents, to record offenses related to violations of this law and to prepare official reports of their findings, which are sent directly to territorially competent public prosecutors. These procedures are carried out under the supervision of the latter.³³

²⁷ Art. 32 of Law No. 18-07.

²⁸ Art. 46, para. 1, of Law No. 18-07.

²⁹ Art. 47 of Law No. 18-07.

³⁰ This situation is provided for in the Arts. 44 and 45 of Law No. 18-07.

³¹ Adel Qarana and Fares Bouhdid, "Functions of the National Authority for the Protection of Personal Data in Algerian Legislation," *Journal of Legal and Social Sciences*, University Zian Ashour, Djelfa, vol. 6, no. 2 (2021): 1068.

³² Art. 48 of Law No. 18-07.

³³ Arts. 49–51 of Law No. 18-07.

According to Article 61 of Law No. 07--18, the legislator obliges the data controller to cooperate with the competent NA fully. Failure to comply with this obligation, or any deliberate refusal to cooperate, constitutes an offense that obstructs the functioning of the NA.

This cooperation entails providing the authority with all necessary information and documents, responding within the prescribed time limits, and ensuring transparency and accuracy in the submission of data. The manifestations of such cooperation include the following:

- Behaviors that obstruct the submission of applications or official registrations, such as providing inaccurate or noncompliant information or documents, submitting unclear or incomplete materials, intentionally including errors, or sending documents after deadlines are established by the competent authority. These practices hinder the proper progress of administrative procedures and may result in the rejection of the request or the imposition of legal sanctions.³⁴
- Forms of obstruction that hinder onsite verification procedures carried out by the NA to uncover violations and collect evidence related to data processing. Such obstructions include preventing committee members from entering premises, physically turning off electronic systems, or refusing to provide passwords, which constitutes a technical form of interference.

The verification process encompasses all inspection and oversight activities conducted by members of the authority on data processing systems, whether manual or electronic. The law criminalizes any refusal or failure to provide the committee members with the requested information or documents, as well as any concealment or destruction of such materials, including deletion in electronic processing or physical shredding in manual processing.³⁵

4. Conclusion

Algeria has indeed taken concrete steps toward digitizing the electoral process, a direction that enhances the efficiency and transparency of elections. The initial phase of this strategy commenced with the digitization of the electoral register and the electronic processing of forms related to presidential candidacies, with the ultimate goal of extending digitization to all stages of the electoral process.

As a result of this digital transformation, personal data are increasingly circulated within electoral operations, necessitating their protection. This protection is ensured under Law No. 18-07 and through the oversight of the NAPPD, which is responsible for enforcing this legislation.

Through this study, several key findings have been reached, leading to a set of recommendations.

Study Findings:

- The digitization and continuous updating of the National Electoral Database are achieved through reliance on the automated civil registry managed by the central services of the Independent Authority for Elections.
- The NAPPD in Algeria plays a crucial role in safeguarding the personal information of voters and signatories of candidacy forms by providing a legal and regulatory framework to ensure data protection.
- Law No. 18-07, concerning the protection of natural persons in the processing of personal data, constitute a general law on data protection. However, detailed provisions specifically addressing electoral processes are lacking. Therefore, it is necessary to introduce specific articles within the Electoral Law to ensure comprehensive protection of personal data in electoral contexts.

³⁴ Art. 61 of Law No. 18-07.

³⁵ Fatiha Khaldi, "The National Authority for the Protection of Personal Data as a Mechanism for Protecting the Right to Privacy under Law 18-07," *Journal of Law and Human Sciences*, University Zian Ashour, Djelfa, vol. 13, no. 4 (2020): pp. 45–55.

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