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COUNTRY OF ORIGIN INFORMATION REPORT

ALGERIA

2 NOVEMBER 2007

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Preface

- i This Country of Origin Information Report (COI Report) has been produced by Research, Development and Statistics (RDS), Home Office, for use by officials involved in the asylum/human rights determination process. The Report provides general background information about the issues most commonly raised in asylum/human rights claims made in the United Kingdom. The main body of the report includes information available up to 28 September 2007. The latest news section contains information available up to 2 November 2007.
- ii The Report is compiled wholly from material produced by a wide range of recognised external information sources and does not contain any Home Office opinion or policy. All information in the Report is attributed, throughout the text, to the original source material, which is made available to those working in the asylum/human rights determination process.
- iii The Report aims to provide a brief summary of the source material identified, focusing on the main issues raised in asylum and human rights applications. It is not intended to be a detailed or comprehensive survey. For a more detailed account, the relevant source documents should be examined directly.
- iv The structure and format of the COI Report reflects the way it is used by Home Office caseworkers and appeals presenting officers, who require quick electronic access to information on specific issues and use the contents page to go directly to the subject required. Key issues are usually covered in some depth within a dedicated section, but may also be referred to briefly in several other sections. Some repetition is therefore inherent in the structure of the Report.
- v The information included in this COI Report is limited to that which can be identified from source documents. While every effort is made to cover all relevant aspects of a particular topic, it is not always possible to obtain the information concerned. For this reason, it is important to note that information included in the Report should not be taken to imply anything beyond what is actually stated. For example, if it is stated that a particular law has been passed, this should not be taken to imply that it has been effectively implemented unless stated.
- vi As noted above, the Report is a collation of material produced by a number of reliable information sources. In compiling the Report, no attempt has been made to resolve discrepancies between information provided in different source documents. For example, different source documents often contain different versions of names and spellings of individuals, places and political parties etc. COI Reports do not aim to bring consistency of spelling, but to reflect faithfully the spellings used in the original source documents. Similarly, figures given in different source documents sometimes vary and these are simply quoted as per the original text. The term 'sic' has been used in this document only to denote incorrect spellings or typographical errors in quoted text; its use is not intended to imply any comment on the content of the material.

- vii The Report is based substantially upon source documents issued during the previous two years. However, some older source documents may have been included because they contain relevant information not available in more recent documents. All sources contain information considered relevant at the time this Report was issued.
- viii This COI Report and the accompanying source material are public documents. All COI Reports are published on the RDS section of the Home Office website and the great majority of the source material for the Report is readily available in the public domain. Where the source documents identified in the Report are available in electronic form, the relevant web link has been included, together with the date that the link was accessed. Copies of less accessible source documents, such as those provided by government offices or subscription services, are available from the Home Office upon request.
- ix COI Reports are published regularly on the top 20 asylum intake countries. COI Bulletins are produced on lower asylum intake countries according to operational need. Home Office officials also have constant access to an information request service for specific enquiries.
- x In producing this COI Report, the Home Office has sought to provide an accurate, balanced summary of the available source material. Any comments regarding this Report or suggestions for additional source material are very welcome and should be submitted to the Home Office as below.

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ADVISORY PANEL ON COUNTRY INFORMATION

- xi The independent Advisory Panel on Country Information was established under the Nationality, Immigration and Asylum Act 2002 to make recommendations to the Home Secretary about the content of the Home Office's country of origin information material. The Advisory Panel welcomes all feedback on the Home Office's COI Reports and other country of origin information material. Information about the Panel's work can be found on its website at www.apci.org.uk.
- xii It is not the function of the Advisory Panel to endorse any Home Office material or procedures. In the course of its work, the Advisory Panel directly reviews the content of selected individual Home Office COI Reports, but neither the fact that such a review has been undertaken, nor any comments made, should be taken to imply endorsement of the material. Some of the material examined by the Panel relates to countries designated or proposed for designation for the Non-Suspensive Appeals (NSA) list. In such cases, the Panel's work should not be taken to imply any endorsement of the decision or

proposal to designate a particular country for NSA, nor of the NSA process itself.

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Latest News

EVENTS IN ALGERIA, FROM 29 SEPTEMBER TO 2 NOVEMBER 2007

- 2 November Difficulty over the finalisation of candidate lists for Algeria's November 29th local elections have raised the spectre of a repeated low turnout, such as that of the May 17th legislative elections. In protest to proposed candidate lists, members of several major parties have announced their collective resignation.
Magharebia, Struggles over candidate lists spark concern in Algeria, 2 November 2007
http://www.magharebia.com/cocoon/awi/xhtml1/en_GB/features/awi/features/2007/11/02/feature-02
Date accessed 5 November 2007
- 1 November Algeria has implemented a national blood programme with a budget of 1.5 billion dinars for the period 2006-2009, aiming to improve the collection of blood, the preparation of blood products and the testing and distribution of blood. Blood donations in Algeria are in short supply and Algerian hospitals have difficulty maintaining sufficient supplies for surgeries. Doctors often rely on contributions from patients' friends and families to be able to operate. The shortage is exacerbated by the country's inability to process the blood that is donated.
Magharebia, Algeria to encourage blood donors, 1 November 2007
http://www.magharebia.com/cocoon/awi/xhtml1/en_GB/features/awi/features/2007/11/01/feature-02
Date accessed 2 November 2007
- An Algerian court has sentenced 10 Islamic militants to death and 12 others to life in prison. Six of the men sentenced to death were found guilty of driving trucks full of explosives into two police stations last year, killing three people and injuring 20 others. The other four men, accused of affiliation with a terrorist group, remain at large. Algeria has not used the death penalty since 1993, when seven Islamic extremists were executed for attacks on an Algerian airport.
United Press International, Algeria sentences 10 extremists to death, 1 November 2007
http://www.upi.com/NewsTrack/Top_News/2007/11/01/algeria_sentences_10_extremists_to_death/9717/
Date accessed 2 November 2007
- 31 October The General department of national security has asked international companies for bids to purchase over 17,000 semi-automatic guns as part of a promotional programme for national police's capacities. The department has increased the police staff to 17,000 and is considering recruiting 80,000 policemen by 2009.
Echorouk, Algeria: national security considers purchasing 17,000 guns, 31 October 2007
<http://www.echoroukonline.com/english/modules.php?name=News&file=article&sid=8097>
Date accessed 1 November 2007
- 30 October The Minister Delegate in Charge of the Family and Women's Affairs, Nouara Saadia Djaafar, said a national strategy for fighting violence

- against women had been launched under the slogan 'Women's safety, stability of family'.
Echorouk, Algeria kicks off national strategy for fighting violence against women, 30 October 2007
<http://www.ech-chorouk.com/english/modules.php?name=News&file=article&sid=8089>
Date accessed 1 November 2007
- 28 October At least 17 terrorists and one army officer were killed during clashes between Algerian security forces and al-Qaeda in the Islamic Maghreb at Djebel Al-Anoual near Tebessa, and in Jijel.
Magharebia, At least 17 terrorists, one soldier killed in latest clashes in Algeria, 28 October 2007
http://www.magharebia.com/cocoon/awi/xhtml1/en_GB/news/awi/newsbriefs/qenral/2007/10/28/newsbrief-01
Date accessed 29 October 2007
- 27 October Algerian security forces killed terrorists hiding in the Tebessa mountains (east Algeria) on Friday, including the leader of the Salafist Group for Preaching and Combat, Hassouna, and his main assistant.
Echorouk, Terrorist leader, three Libyans killed in eastern Algeria, 27 October 2007
<http://www.echoroukonline.com/english/modules.php?name=News&file=article&sid=8058>
Date accessed 29 October 2007
- 24 October The popularity of Algeria's Islamist parties appears to be in decline in the lead-up to local elections in November.
Magharebia, Islamist movement in Algeria loses ground, 24 October 2007
http://www.magharebia.com/cocoon/awi/xhtml1/en_GB/features/awi/features/2007/10/24/feature-03
Date accessed 25 October 2007
- A court in the wilaya of Ghardaia in south Algeria has postponed the trial of Mokhtar Belmokhtar because judicial prosecution processes were not achieved regarding failure to attend.
Echorouk, Algeria: trial of GSPC senior member postponed, 24 October 2007
<http://www.echoroukonline.com/english/modules.php?name=News&file=article&sid=8036>
Date accessed 25 October 2007
- French laboratories export 65% of pharmaceutical products to Algeria. Algeria's pharmacy imports bill is about 1.2 billion USD, compared to 1.07 recorded in 2005.
El Khabar, French labs control Algeria's pharmaceutical market, 24 October 2007
<http://www.elkhabar.com/FrEn/lire.php?ida=84707&idc=52>
Date accessed 24 October 2007
- 23 October The National Gendarmerie command is launching awareness-raising campaigns for minors and young people to protect them from being involved in terrorist acts. The campaign comes after Al-Qaeda in the Islamic Maghreb adopted the policy of mobilising children and teenagers in suicide attacks.
Echorouk, Algeria: awareness-raising campaigns to protect children from Al-Qaeda, 23 October 2007
<http://www.echoroukonline.com/english/modules.php?name=News&file=article&sid=8025>
Date accessed 24 October 2007

- 21 October Figures show that sexual assaults against women in Algeria have been continually increasing.
 Echorouk, Algeria : over 800 sexual assaults since January, 21 October 2007
<http://www.echoroukonline.com/english/modules.php?name=News&file=article&sid=8004>
 Date accessed 23 October 2007
- Mokhtar Belmokhtar alias Laaouar or Abu Abbas, a senior member of the Salafist Group for Preaching and Combat (GSPC) has been charged with forming a terrorist group.
 Echorouk, Algeria: GSPC senior member Belmokhtar to go on trial, 21 October 2007
<http://www.echoroukonline.com/english/modules.php?name=News&file=article&sid=8005>
 Date accessed 23 October 2007
- France has handed Algeria details of where its forces laid millions of landmines on the country's eastern and western borders half-a-century ago.
 Agence France-Presse, France tells Algeria where independence war mines are buried, 21 October 2007
<http://afp.google.com/article/ALeqM5hKvXgo0eREXsl5TrZP9MHNzN4TTw>
 Date accessed 23 October 2007
- The trial of Hassan Hattab, former leader of the Salafist Group for Preaching and Combat will open in Algiers on November 4th.
 Magharebia, Algeria's GSPC founder goes to trial, 21 October 2007
http://www.magharebia.com/cocoon/awi/xhtml1/en_GB/news/awi/newsbriefs/general/2007/10/21/newsbrief-01
 Date accessed 23 October 2007
- 20 October A total of 68 judges participated in training sessions between 2002 and 2007. The training is a new strategy based on foreign expertise and constitutes a cornerstone for Algeria's strategy in view of economic and social mutations that have occurred in the country.
 Echorouk, U.S. ambassador to Algeria: talks on Guantanamo Algerian detainees to end soon, 20 October 2007
<http://www.echoroukonline.com/english/modules.php?name=News&file=article&sid=7997>
 Date accessed 23 October 2007
- 18 October The International Federation of Journalists condemned a wave of recent attacks on journalists in Algeria, particularly in the Djelfa, where journalists are being charged under the penal code for press offences.
 AllAfrica, Algeria: Journalist Sentenced to Jail; Another Summoned On Defamation Charges; a Third Harassed By Authorities for Critical Reporting, 18 October 2007
<http://allafrica.com/stories/200710191015.html>
 Date accessed 23 October 2007
- 17 October A number of suspected terrorist havens in Algeria's Boumerdas region are being targeted by the army.
 United Press International, Algeria targets suspected terror havens, 17 October 2007.
http://www.upi.com/NewsTrack/Top_News/2007/10/17/algeria_targets_suspected_terror_havens/1343/
 Date accessed 23 October 2007
- A Roman Catholic Church's survey found that the number of Christians in Algeria is about four thousand.

El Khabar, Algeria embraces 4 thousand Christians, 17 October 2007.

<http://www.elkhabar.com/FrEn/lire.php?ida=83733&idc=52>

Date accessed 17 October 2007

Security services tighten control over pharmaceutical laboratories to cope with the marketing of illegal psychotropic drugs.

El Khabar, Security services tighten control over pharmaceutical labs, 17 October 2007.

<http://www.elkhabar.com/FrEn/lire.php?ida=82907&idc=52>

Date accessed 17 October 2007

16 October The UN Refugee Agency says humanitarian operations in Western Sahara and Algeria refugee camps are under threat due to lack of money.

VOA News, UNHCR: Two Vital Programs at Risk for Lack of Money, 16 October 2007

<http://www.voanews.com/english/2007-10-15-voa28.cfm>

Date accessed 17 October 2007.

15 October Battles and attacks involving Islamists and Algerian security forces have left four Islamists and a policeman dead.

Agence France-Presse, Five killed in Algeria violence, 15 October 2007.

<http://afp.google.com/article/ALeqM5iD-H8COPK6WrDNrBYUwRaoAVfLKQ>

Date accessed 17 October 2007

Algeria has called upon Member States of the UN to work on full implementation of the strategy in the fight against terrorism.

Echorouk, Algeria warns against 'selective implementation' of fight against terrorism strategy, 15 October 2007.

<http://www.echoroukonline.com/english/modules.php?name=News&file=article&sid=7952>

Date accessed 17 October 2007.

11 October The National Union of Pharmacy Operators is to organise an international forum in Algeria to discuss a strategy to develop Algeria's pharmaceutical sector.

El Khabar, Algeria to Host an International Pharmaceutical Forum, 11 October 2007.

<http://www.elkhabar.com/FrEn/lire.php?ida=83510&idc=52>

Date accessed 11 October 2007

10 October Algerian security forces killed the deputy leader of the Maghreb offshoot of Al-Qaeda in a clash in the east of the country. Zobeir Harkat, better known as Sofiane Fassila, was killed Sunday in fighting in the troubled Kabylie region.

Agence France-Presse, Top Al-Qaeda fighter reported killed in Algeria, 10 October 2007.

http://afp.google.com/article/ALeqM5isWtRMUMkdiKuHr_Ld-7M-bsxbhg

Date accessed 11 October 2007

9 October Two Algerian television journalists charged with broadcasting blasphemous cartoons of the prophet Muhammad have been acquitted.

Guardian Unlimited, Algerian TV pair acquitted over cartoons, 9 October 2007.

http://blogs.guardian.co.uk/greenslade/2007/10/algerian_tv_pair_acquitted_ove.html

Date accessed 12 October 2007

8 October The Algerian army has admitted an operation against a group suspected of links to al-Qaida in which twenty two militants and seven

- soldiers were killed, which reportedly targeted the region of Tebessa, 400 miles east of the capital, Algiers.
Pravda, Anti-terrorist sweep left 29 people killed in Algeria, 8 October 2007.
http://english.pravda.ru/news/hotspots/08-10-2007/98366-algeria_clash-0
Date accessed 12 October 2007
- 7 October The families of French nationals employed by Michelin in Algeria are being evacuated by the tyre company as a precautionary security measure.
United Press International, Michelin begins evacuations in Algeria, 7 October 2007.
[http://www.upi.com/NewsTrack/Business/2007/10/07/michelin_begins_evacuati ons in algeria/2606/](http://www.upi.com/NewsTrack/Business/2007/10/07/michelin_begins_evacuati ons_in_algeria/2606/)
Date accessed 12 October 2007
- Home Affairs Minister, Yazid Zerhouni, says that only 20 of the 6,000 terrorists who surrendered under the Civil Concord Law have gone back to terrorism strongholds.
Algeria Watch, Zerhouni says only 20 repentant terrorists joined back terrorism strongholds, 7 October 2007.
http://www.algeria-watch.org/en/articles/2007/zerhouni_repentant.htm
Date accessed 17 October 2007
- 5 October Algeria's interior minister confirmed that one of the guerrilla chiefs opposed to Algeria's government, Hassan Hattab of the GSPC, has surrendered to police.
Agence France-Presse, Algeria confirms GSPC guerrilla chief has surrendered, 5 October 2007.
http://news.yahoo.com/s/afp/20071005/wl_africa_afp/algeriaunrestislamarest
Date accessed 12 October 2007
- 3 October The national chief of Al Qaeda in the Islamic Maghreb, Abdelmalek Droukdel, has been overthrown and replaced by Ahmed Haroun.
Algeria Watch, Abdelmalek Droukdel alias Abu Mussab Abdelouadoud overthrown, 3 October 2007.
http://www.algeria-watch.org/en/articles/2007/new_chief.htm
Date accessed 17 October 2007
- 2 October An army major was killed, and six people wounded when a hand made bomb was detonated at a check point.
El Khabar, A major murdered and 6 wounded in an explosion in Tigzirt, 2 October 2007.
http://www.elkhabar.com/FrEn/lire.php?ida=82702&idc=52&date_insert=20071001
Date accessed 17 October 2007
- Eleven have been remanded in custody charged with conspiracy in the murder attempt on President Bouteflika on 6 September, including six men between the ages of 17 and 26 who were about to join terrorist groups in the region.
El Khabar, Bouteflika murder attempt masterminds arrested, 2 October 2007.
http://www.elkhabar.com/FrEn/lire.php?ida=82700&idc=52&date_insert=20071001
Date accessed 17 October 2007
- 1 October Prime Minister Abdelaziz Belkhadem has said that Algeria's loss-making state-owned companies will be broken up while others will be privatised alongside the country's banks.
Middle East Online, Algeria to shape up unprofitable firms, 1 October 2007.
<http://www.middle-east-online.com/english/?id=22450>
Date accessed 12 October 2007

75 people died in political violence in September, including 60 killed in suicide bombings, one of which was a failed assassination attempt on President Bouteflika. The September toll compared to 29 in August, bringing the number of people killed in violence in 2007 involving al Qaeda linked Islamist rebels and the security services to 369.

Reuters, Algeria violence death toll jumps in Sept – reports, 1 October 2007

<http://africa.reuters.com/top/news/usnBAN133605.html>

Date accessed 11 October 2007

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REPORTS ON ALGERIA PUBLISHED OR ACCESSED SINCE 29 SEPTEMBER 2007

Economist Intelligence Unit

Algeria politics: Punctured, 10 October 2007

http://www.eiu.com/index.asp?layout=displayVw&article_id=1532652938&geography_id=210000021®ion_id=

Date accessed 12 October 2007

US Department of State Bureau of Consular Affairs

Consular Information Sheet – published 10 October 2007

http://travel.state.gov/travel/cis_pa_tw/cis/cis_1087.html

Date accessed 12 October 2007

US Department of State

Background Note on Algeria, October 2007

<http://www.state.gov/r/pa/ei/bgn/8005.htm>

Date accessed 15 October 2007

Amnesty International

Algeria: Briefing to the Human Rights Committee – published 1 October 2007

<http://www.unhcr.org/cgi-bin/texis/vtx/refworld/rwmain?page=search&docid=4705e9782&skip=&query=algeria&searchin=title&display=10&sort=date>

Date accessed 11 October 2007

Foreign and Commonwealth Office

Country Profile: Algeria, reviewed 16 October 2007

<http://www.fco.gov.uk/servlet/Front?pagename=OpenMarket/Xcelerate/ShowPage&c=Page&cid=1007029394365&a=KCountryProfile&aid=1018535850896>

Date accessed 29 October 2007

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Background information

GEOGRAPHY

- 1.01 The official state name is the People's Democratic Republic of Algeria or Al Jumhuriyah al Jaza'iriyah ad Dimuqratiyah ash Shabiyah. [23b] (p1) Algeria lies in North Africa, with the Mediterranean Sea to the north, Mali and Niger to the south, Tunisia and Libya to the east, and Morocco and Mauritania to the west. (Europa World: Country Profile, accessed 14 August 2007) [1c] [It] is the second largest country in Africa, with over four fifths of its territory covered by the Sahara desert [6o] (Country description)
- 1.02 The capital is Algiers (el-Djezaïr). There are sixteen other principal towns, the largest being Oran (Ouahran), Constantine (Qacentina), Batna and Annaba. The area of Algeria is 2,381,741 square kilometres (919,595 square miles). (Europa World: Area and Population, accessed 14 August 2007) [1d] "... 80 per cent of the country lies within the dry Sahara Desert, where few Algerians have chosen to make their home." (Jane's Sentinel Country Risk Assessments: Algeria. Posted 18 May 2007) [83a]
- 1.03 The Europaworld.com website (accessed 14 August 2007) states: "The country is divided into 48 departments (wilayat), which are, in turn, sub-divided into communes. Each wilaya and commune has an elected assembly." [1e] (Government)
- 1.04 The Central Intelligence Agency (CIA) World Factbook, updated 19 July 2007, gives a July 2007 estimate of the population of 33,333,216 people. [2a] (People)
- 1.05 "Arabic is the official language, but French is widely used. Tamazight, the principal language of Algeria's Berber community, was granted 'national' status in 2002." (Europa World: Country Profile, accessed 14 August 2007) [1c] "In mid-2003 the Government agreed to permit the use of the Berber language, Tamazight, as a language of instruction in Algerian schools". (Europa World, accessed 14 August 2007) [1f] (Education) A report by Forced Migration Online in January 2004 stated that: "The official language is Modern Standard Arabic, although this is rarely spoken outside official situations. The huge majority of the population speak the Algerian dialect of Arabic, which is similar to Moroccan and Tunisian Arabic but very different from the Arab dialects of the Mashrek." [53] (p8)

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MAP

1.06



- 1.07 A map of Algeria is given at:
<http://www.unhcr.org/cgi-bin/texis/vtx/publ/openssl.pdf?tbl=PUBL&id=42d4cd284&page=publ>

Link to Multimaps for more detailed searches:

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ECONOMY

- 2.01 The Central Intelligence Agency (CIA) World Factbook, updated 19 July 2007, summarises the economy as follows:

“The hydrocarbons sector is the backbone of the economy, accounting for roughly 60% of budget revenues, 30% of GDP, and over 95% of export earnings. Algeria has the eighth-largest reserves of natural gas in the world and is the fourth-largest gas exporter; it ranks 18th in oil reserves. Sustained high oil prices in recent years, along with macroeconomic policy reforms supported by the IMF, have helped improve Algeria’s financial and macroeconomic indicators. Algeria is running substantial trade surpluses and building up record foreign exchange reserves. Algeria has decreased its external debt to less than 10% of GDP after repaying its Paris Club and London Club debt in 2006. Real GDP has risen due to higher oil output and increased government spending. The government’s continued efforts to diversify the economy by attracting foreign and domestic investment outside the energy sector, however, has [sic] had little success in reducing high unemployment and improving living standards. Structural reform within the economy, such as development of the banking sector and the construction of infrastructure, moves ahead slowly hampered by corruption and bureaucratic resistance.” [2a] (Economy)

- 2.02 The Europaworld.com website (accessed 14 August 2007) states that: 100 centimes = 1 Algerian dinar (AD). The 2006 Average Exchange Rate was 72.647 dinars per US \$. [1g] (Finance)

- 2.03 The United States State Department (USSD) 2006 Country Report on Human Rights Practices, Algeria, published on 6 March 2007 states regarding the legal oversight of employment:

“The national minimum wage of \$140 (10,000 dinars) per month did not provide a decent standard of living for a worker and family. Ministry of Labor inspectors were responsible for ensuring compliance with the minimum wage regulation; however, enforcement was inconsistent.

“The standard work week was 37.5 hours, with one ten-minute break and one hour for lunch. Employees who worked beyond the standard work week received premium pay on a sliding scale from time-and-a-half to double-time, depending on whether the overtime was worked on a normal work day, a weekend, or a holiday.

“The law contains well-developed occupational, health, and safety standards, but Ministry of Labor inspectors did not enforce these regulations effectively. There were no reports of workers being dismissed for removing themselves from hazardous working conditions. Because employment was usually based on detailed contracts, workers rarely were subjected to unexpected conditions in the workplace. If workers were subjected to such conditions, they first could attempt to renegotiate the employment contract or, failing that, resort to the courts; however, the high demand for employment in the country gave an advantage to employers seeking to exploit employees.” [6i] (Acceptable Conditions of Work)

- 2.04 The United States Social Security Administration's Algeria entry in its document 'Social security programs throughout the world', updated 2005, outlines unemployment benefits, noting that they are only available through contributory social insurance schemes. It also gives details of workers' medical benefits; family allowance; and other social benefit schemes. [41a]

TELEPHONE SYSTEM

- 2.05 The CIA World Factbook, updated 19 July 2007, notes:

"General assessment: telephone density in Algeria is very low, not exceeding 5 telephones per 100 persons; the number of fixed main lines increased in the last few years to nearly 2.6 million, but only about two-thirds of these have subscribers; much of the infrastructure is outdated and inefficient domestic: good service in north but sparse in south; domestic satellite system with 12 earth stations (20 additional domestic earth stations are planned) international: country code - 213; submarine cables - 5; microwave radio relay to Italy, France, Spain, Morocco, and Tunisia; coaxial cable to Morocco and Tunisia; participant in Medarabtel; satellite earth stations - 51 (Intelsat, Intersputnik, and Arabsat) (2005)" [2a] (Communications)

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HISTORY

PRE-1992

- 3.01 The Europaworld.com website (accessed 14 August 2007) summarises the history of Algeria, beginning with the French colonial period in the 1830s. It states that: "On 1 November 1954 the principal Algerian nationalist movement, the Front de libération nationale (FLN), began a war for national independence, in the course of which about 1m. Muslims were killed or wounded. The French Government agreed to a cease-fire in March 1962, and independence was declared on 3 July 1962." [1h] (Recent History)
- 3.02 Ahmed Ben Bella, founder of the FLN, became Prime Minister, further to be elected President in 1963. "In June 1965 the Minister of Defence, Col Houari Boumedienne, deposed Ben Bella in a bloodless coup and took control of the country as President of a Council of the Revolution..." Boumedienne's death in 1978 led to the adoption of a new party structure and the accession of Col Ben Djedid Chadli as President. "From mid-1988 severe unemployment, high prices and shortages of essential supplies (resulting from economic austerity measures imposed in 1987 in response to a decline in world petroleum prices) provoked a series of strikes, and in early October rioting erupted in Algiers, spreading to Oran and Annaba." Chadli responded to the October 1988 riots by imposing a six-day state of emergency, accelerating economic reforms and introducing wide-ranging political changes. These changes allowed non-FLN candidates to participate in elections. [1h] (Recent History)
- 3.03 These political changes included introducing a controlled multi-party political system, as mentioned in the BBC News website timeline, updated 21 September 2007, "The National People's Assembly revokes the ban on new political parties and adopts a new electoral law allowing opposition parties to contest future elections." [60a] The Economist Country Brief states the following about developments from the 1980s to 1992:
- "As the government responded by attempting political and economic liberalisation, Islamist parties, led by the Islamic Salvation Front (FIS), grew in popularity. In 1992 the military cancelled elections that the FIS was poised to win. The party was banned, and in 1996 a ban on all parties based on religion, ethnicity or gender was written into the constitution. This disenfranchisement, along with allegations of election-rigging, led to brutal violence waged by the military and armed Islamic groups which claimed more than 100,000 lives during the 1990s." [12a]

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MILITARY TAKEOVER

- 3.04 Human Rights Watch published the testimony by Tom Malinowski to the US House of Representatives International Relations Committee/Subcommittee on International Terrorism and Nonproliferation (IRC/SITN) of 4 March 2005 headed 'Human Rights in Algeria' that summarised the events of 1992:

"In January 1992, an army-backed coup in Algeria halted national elections that would have given the Islamist Salvation Front a commanding majority in

parliament. Isolated acts of terror had occurred before then in Algeria, but they became endemic after the electoral process was interrupted.” [27e] (p1)

- 3.05 From the evidence given by Mr Leslie Campbell, National Democratic Institute at the 3 March 2005 US House of Representatives IRC/SITN hearings:

“Contrary to what the electoral engineers had sought, the FIS scored a massive victory in the first round of legislative elections, finally held in December 1991, and was well placed to further consolidate these gains in the second round, to be held in early January. The army subsequently decided to force the resignation of President Chadli Bendjedid, and over the protests of the FLN, FFS and FIS, the three parties that had won the largest number of seats in the first round, cancelled the elections. The regime then went on in February to outlaw the FIS and instituted a state of emergency, which, incidentally, is still in force today. The regime therefore effectively closed off what remained of the legal and peaceful means by which the country’s largest opposition party, the FIS, could contest political power; tragically, the more radical elements of the FIS, which had now gained the upper hand, turned to terrorist acts against state institutions and employees. As has been noted by the International Crisis Group in their 2004 report on ‘Islamism, Violence and Reform in Algeria’, the authorities’ decision to transform ordinary members of what had been a legal party into outlaws had the effect of driving them into the arms of the most extremists [sic] elements within and close to the FIS – groups that might otherwise have remained marginal. And so Algeria’s experience with terrorism began. This is not a justification of the decision of those FIS members still at large to take up arms but shows that an important root of the terrorist phenomenon in Algeria was the decision of the authorities to close off all avenues of peaceful expression to their main political opponents.” [10a] (p13)

See also [State of Emergency Political Parties](#)

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POST-1992

- 3.06 The Foreign and Commonwealth Office Country Profile on Algeria, updated 17 November 2006, summarises the ongoing violence and related developments:

“Political parties developed, such as the Front Islamique du Salut (FIS), a broad coalition of Islamist groups. In December 1991 the FIS dominated the first of two rounds of legislative elections. Fearing the election of an Islamist Government, the authorities intervened on 11 January 1992, cancelling the elections. President Chadli Bendjedid resigned and a High Council of State was installed to act as Presidency. The FIS was subsequently banned, triggering a vicious civil insurgency between its armed wing, the Armée Islamique du Salut (AIS), and the armed forces in which over 100,000 are thought to have died. The AIS declared a ceasefire in October 1997.

“Algeria held elections in 1999 which were won by President Abdelaziz Bouteflika. Bouteflika focused on a restoring stability to the country following his election and announced a ‘Civil Concord’ initiative, approved by popular referendum, under which many political prisoners were pardoned, and several

thousand members of armed groups were granted exemption from prosecution under a limited amnesty which was in force up to 13 January 2000. The AIS disbanded and levels of insurgent violence fell rapidly. The Groupe Salafiste pour la Prédication et le Combat (GSPC), a splinter group of the Group Islamic Armée, continued a terrorist campaign against the Government. Bouteflika was re-elected in April 2004 after campaigning on a programme of national reconciliation. The programme comprised economic, institutional, political and social reform to modernise the country, raise living standards and tackle the causes of alienation. It also included a second amnesty initiative, the Charter for Peace and National Reconciliation, which was approved in a referendum in September 2005 and offers an amnesty to most guerrillas and Government security forces. The window for seeking amnesty expired in late August 2006. The remaining provisions of the Charter applied until 28 February 2007.” [5a] (Politics, accessed 15 August 2007)

- 3.07 “The Islamic Salvation Front (FIS) was initially created as a network of small, informal mosque groups. After Algerian constitutional reforms allowed the creation of political parties for the first time, the FIS filed for legal recognition and was certified as a political party in September 1989. ...

“Although FIS leadership initially remained ambiguous about the use of violence by its followers, imprisoned deputy leader Belhadj endorsed the armed struggle and indicated unity with an explicitly violent group, Abdelkader Chebouti’s Mouvement Islamique Arme (MIA) in January of 1993. A breakdown in an attempted dialogue between the regime and the FIS in late 1993 led a number of senior FIS leaders to defect to the more extreme Groupe Islamique Armee. To counter the influence of the GIA, the FIS officially created an armed wing in July of 1994, the Arme Islamiques du Salut (AIS), although this name had been used since 1993 to refer to the variety of armed groups loyal to the FIS. Although the FIS distanced itself from the GIA’s civilian massacres, a January 1995 car bomb at the police headquarters in Algiers killed forty-two people and injured 286. In September of 1997, the FIS declared a ceasefire and in July of 1999, a new Algerian government formed an accord with the FIS and issued an amnesty for several thousand AIS guerrillas. FIS leaders Abassi Madani and Ali Belhadj were released from prison in 2003.” (MIPT Terrorism Knowledge Base) [85a]

- 3.08 Jane’s Sentinel noted on 18 May 2007 that: “The radicalisation and transformation of the GSPC culminated in January 2007 with the decision of the group to rename itself ‘Al-Qaeda in the Islamic Maghreb’. This declaration presaged an upturn in violence as the group launched bomb attacks in February and March and again in April, when bombs exploded in Algiers for the first time in over a decade. The attacks served as a potent reminder to the Algerian government and population that violence has not been completely eradicated from society, even if its nature may have changed. The Algerian military launched a major crackdown in response to the attacks, but it seems that more attacks in the future can be expected.” [83b]

- 3.09 “The al-Qaeda Organization in the Islamic Maghreb (formerly known as the Salafist Group for Call and Combat (GSPC)) is a violent extremist group based in Algeria. The organization has operated since 1996 and is now the most significant terrorist movement in Algeria. As the Salafist Group for Call and Combat, the group broke away from the Armed Islamic Group (GIA),

which was the primary terrorist entity during the 1992-2000 insurgency in Algeria. ...

"As a result of the long, bloody conflict from 1992-2000, which cost over 100,000 lives, GIA's support was relatively weak in Algeria. Using this weakness to its advantage, GSPC pledged to avoid inflicting civilian casualties in Algeria. While the group has in fact killed civilians, the numbers are significantly less than the casualties of the GIA. Instead, GSPC concentrated on targeting Algerian government and security forces, especially those in rural areas. The group has also pledged to attack Western targets and has been linked to several foiled attacks against U.S. and European targets in Western Europe. The GSPC has usurped GIA as the primary terrorist force in the country, and because of its minimal attacks against civilians, GSPC benefits from a larger support network in the country." The organisation "... officially announced its name change in February 2007 in a public announcement following six near-simultaneous attacks of police stations in towns east of Algiers.

"The al-Qaeda Organization in the Islamic Maghreb is based in Northern Africa, specifically Algeria. Its primary objective is the establishment of an Islamist state in Algeria. The GSPC continues to be active, and members of the organisation have been implicated in a number of recent plots to bomb and poison western targets. (MIPT Terrorism Knowledge Base) [85b]

See also [Non-Government Armed Forces/Insurgents](#)

- 3.10 "Following the Black Spring riots of 2001, which were sparked by the killing of a young Berber man by government forces, the Algerian government began making concessions to the Berbers, including constitutional recognition of the Berber language Tamazight as a national language." (Freedom House: Freedom in the World – Algeria (2007)) [29a] **(Political Rights and Civil Liberties)** The Australian Government's Travel Advice, published on 10 September 2007, noted that violent disturbances continued to be a problem in the region with the killing of seven Algerian police officers near Beni Yeni on 4 March 2007. "On 13 February 2007, seven coordinated bomb attacks against Algerian security installations took place in Bourmerdes district, 50 kms east of the capital, and in Tizi Ouzou district, 100kms east of Algiers, in the Kabylie region. Previously, bomb attacks have taken place in the Boumerdes region in May, June, August and October 2006." [86] (p1)

See also [Berbers](#)

- 3.11 The EuropaWorld website (accessed 14 August 2007) recounts some of the other incidents that the GSPC (Salafist Group for Preaching and Combat), were implicated in, in 2003 and 2004:

"In early March 2004 it was reported that fighting had occurred between the Chadian military and a faction of the GSPC led by the group's second-in-command, Amari Saifi, resulting in the deaths of more than 40 militants. Saifi was wanted in Algeria and abroad for various crimes, including the kidnapping in 2003 of a group of 32 European tourists and the killing of 43 Algerian soldiers. It was announced in October 2004 that Saifi had been taken into Algerian custody, having been intercepted by Libyan authorities on the Chadian–Libyan border. Meanwhile, in mid-June 2004 Nabil Sahraoui, the

GSPC's leader since October 2003, was reportedly killed by the Algerian military in Kabylia during a gun battle that also killed four of his senior aides, including his likely successor, Abdi Abdelaziz. The army subsequently announced that it had 'completely neutralized' the leadership of the GSPC and had seized many of its weapons and documents. Shortly after the announcement of Sahraoui's death, an explosion at the Hamma power station near Algiers injured 11 people. The Government declared the explosion to be accidental; however, the GSPC later claimed responsibility and warned that further attacks would ensue. In September 2004 Sahraoui was replaced as leader of the GSPC by Abdelmalek Droukdal (also known as Abu Musab Abd al-Wadud)." [1h] (Recent History)

See also [Non-Government Armed Forces/Insurgents](#)

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YEARS 2004 – 2007 (FROM APRIL 2004 PRESIDENTIAL ELECTIONS)

- 3.12 The EuropaWorld website (accessed 14 August 2007), summarised the re-election of President Bouteflika in April 2004 as follows:

"Bouteflika was decisively re-elected for a second term of office on 8 April 2004. He received 85.0% of the valid votes cast, while his nearest rival, Benflis, took 6.4%. Djaballah secured 5.0%, Saâdi 1.9%, Hanoune 1.0% and Rebaïne 0.6%. The rate of turn-out by eligible voters was reported to be 58.1%, although this rate was estimated to be as low as 18% in Kabylia. Bouteflika's rivals immediately accused the President of electoral malpractice; however, international observers declared the election to have been representative of popular will and free from any vote-rigging. Both Benflis and Saâdi boycotted Bouteflika's inauguration ceremony on 19 April, at which he vowed to resolve the Berber crisis and to improve the rights of women by readdressing the controversial family code of 1984. He also emphasized his commitment to his campaign for 'true national reconciliation'. Ahmed Ouyahia resigned as Prime Minister, as required under the Constitution, but was immediately reinstated and given the task of forming a new government. On 26 April 2004 Ouyahia named his new Council of Ministers, which retained most of the senior ministers from the previous administration. The new Government consisted principally of FLN members and non-partisan supporters of Bouteflika, with a few representatives from the RND and the MSP. Meanwhile, Benflis resigned as Secretary-General of the FLN. At an FLN congress held between the end of January and early February 2005 the Minister of State for Foreign Affairs, Abdelaziz Belkhadem, was elected to the post of Secretary-General and President Bouteflika was elected honorary President of the party. [1h] (Recent History)

- 3.13 The main political events / human rights issues after the April 2004 presidential elections centre around the Government's report on the civil conflict of the 1990s, published in March 2005; President Bouteflika's presentation of a 'National Charter for Reconciliation' and subsequent referendum held on 29 September 2005 to endorse the charter's proposals; the major release of prisoners in March 2006 (after the referendum's endorsement of the plan) and a wide-ranging amnesty (that critics regard as a non-pursuance of military human rights abuses); and a series of bombings

and attacks between December 2006 and September 2007, especially in the run up to the May 2007 parliamentary elections at which pro-government parties retained their absolute majority. Al-Qaeda in the Islamic Maghreb (formerly the GSPC) claims responsibility for many of the attacks. [60a]

See also [National reconciliation process](#) [Referendum of 29 September 2005](#)
[Annex A – Chronology of major events](#)

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RECENT DEVELOPMENTS

- 4.01 The level of violence has reduced since the end of the 1990s, however, unverified media reports claim that more than 300 people were killed by either armed factions or government security forces in 2006, including over 70 civilians. 265 people were reported to have been killed between 1 January and 1 August 2007 due to continued fighting between security forces and remaining armed factions who refuse to surrender under the government amnesty measures. In 2007, there has been a series of bomb attacks, some of which appear to have deliberately targeted civilians, the most recent attacks are summarised below.
- 4.02 In May 2007, dozens were killed in the run up to the Parliamentary elections in a wave of fighting between the military and armed groups. Pro-government parties retained their absolute majority in parliament. [60a] Al-Jazeera television reported that Ali Belhaj, the second in command of the banned Islamic Salvation Front, urged Algerians to boycott the elections, saying that they did not serve the country. The same report said that Abou Mousaab Abdelouadoud, leader of Al Qaeda in the Islamic Maghreb (AQIM, formerly the GSPC), also urged Algerians to boycott the elections, saying that they 'remain a mere farce'. [82c]
- See also [Violence / Abuse by Non-Government Armed Forces / Insurgents](#)
- 4.03 In July 2007, a suicide bomber targeted a military barracks near Bouira, killing at least nine people. [60a] Reuters reported that "A suicide truck bomber destroyed a coastguards barracks in Algeria on Saturday, killing 22 people ... The blast in the port of Dellys 100km ... east of Algiers happened less than 48 hours after a suicide bombing in Batna town killed 20 people in an attack seen by the government as a bid to wreck efforts to end 15 years of political violence." [17d]
- 4.04 In August 2007, according to a report from Le Jeune Independent website, security forces destroyed an AQIM hideout in Less Issers, Boumerdes Province, 50km east of Algiers. Allegedly, the terrorists had been alerted and had fled in advance of their arrival. The report states that the destruction of the hideout has deprived the terrorists of a fall-back area in that region. [106]
- 4.05 In September 2007, at least 50 people were killed in a series of bombings. AQIM claimed responsibility for the attacks. [60a] The Guardian Unlimited website reported that 16 people were killed and at least 74 wounded when a suicide bomber blew himself up in a crowd that was waiting outside the Al-Atik mosque for a visit by President Bouteflika. The bomb was detonated 45 minutes before the President's arrival. [107]

CONSTITUTION

- 5.01 The EuropaWorld website (accessed 14 August 2007), states:

“A new Constitution for the Democratic and People’s Republic of Algeria, approved by popular referendum, was promulgated on 22 November 1976. The Constitution was amended by the National People’s Assembly on 30 June 1979. Further amendments were approved by referendum on 3 November 1988, on 23 February 1989 and on 28 November 1996. On 8 April 2002 the Assembly approved an amendment that granted Tamazight, the principal language spoken by the Berber population of the country, the status of a national language.” [1i] (**The Constitution**)

- 5.02 The full English-language text of the 1996-amended constitution is available via the website of the Algerian permanent mission to the United Nations. [44a]

- 5.03 The Central Intelligence Agency (CIA) World Factbook, updated 19 July 2007, states:

“Country name:

Conventional long form: People’s Democratic Republic of Algeria.

Conventional short form: Algeria

Local long form: Al Jumhuriyah al Jaza’iriyah ad Dimuqratiyah ash Sha’biyah

Local short form: Al Jaza’ir” [2a] (**Government**)

STATE OF EMERGENCY

- 5.04 The EuropaWorld website (accessed 14 August 2007), notes that a state of emergency was declared in June 1991 which was revoked in late September of that year. Another, 12 month state of emergency was declared on 9 February 1992, which was renewed indefinitely in February 1993. [1h] (**Recent History**)

A report on Algerian radio on 8 March 2006 stated that the Minister of State for Interior said, regarding the state of emergency:

“So long as there are a few terrorists still active, we are forced to maintain it, because ... It allows us to coordinate the security service’s action. He added that the state of emergency, had up until now, no effect of [sic] public freedoms and on individual and group freedoms, and would, in the future, have no effect on these same freedoms. He went on to add that political parties were operating normally and that they were allowed to hold meetings indoors.” [67c]

A report by Algerian newspaper El-Khabar, dated 10 June 2006, contained a statement on the state of emergency by the Algerian Human Rights League (LADH):

“The state of emergency law has deprived Algerians of their political citizenship as a result of restriction on their political freedom, right to create independent trade unions; the right of workers to go on strike and to protect their jobs.” [35f]

- 5.05 The Freedom House, ‘Freedom in the world report – Algeria 2007’, states:

“The country’s ongoing state of emergency places restrictions on freedom of assembly and association. Government permits, sometimes difficult to obtain, are required for public meetings. A decree bans demonstrations in Algiers, although a number of groups have violated this ban with little or no consequence. Security forces occasionally disperse peaceful demonstrations, sometimes violently. Permission is needed to establish a nongovernmental organization (NGO), and the government is wary of any organization with Islamist leanings. Algerian workers have the right to form labor unions, which must be approved by the Ministry of Labor. Workers also have the right to strike, which they sometimes do, but technically, a 14-day period of negotiations or arbitration must elapse before a strike can be considered legal.” [29a] (Political Rights and Civil Liberties)

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POLITICAL SYSTEM

- 6.01 The United States State Department (USSD) 2006 Country Report on Human Rights Practices, Algeria, published on 6 March 2007 states: "Algeria is a multiparty republic of approximately 33 million inhabitants whose head of state (president) is elected by popular vote to a five-year term. The president has the constitutional authority to appoint and dismiss cabinet members and the prime minister, who serves as the head of government. The president also serves as commander-in-chief of the armed forces." [6i]

THE PRESIDENT

- 6.02 The EuropaWorld website (accessed 14 August 2007), states, regarding the role of the President:

"The Head of State is the President of the Republic, who is elected by universal adult suffrage for a five-year term, renewable once. The President presides over a Council of Ministers and a High Security Council. The President must appoint a Prime Minister as Head of Government, who appoints a Council of Ministers." [1e] (Government)

- 6.03 The Constitution, amended 1996, in Article 73 states:

"To be eligible to the Presidency of the Republic, the candidate should: have, solely, the Algerian nationality by origin; be a Muslim; be more than forty (40) years-old the day of the election; enjoy full civil and political rights; prove the Algerian nationality of the spouse; justify his participation in the 1st of November 1954 Revolution for the candidates born before July 1942; justify the noninvolvement of the parents of the candidate born after July 1942, in actions hostile to the 1st of November 1954 Revolution; submit a public declaration of his personal and real estate existing either within Algeria or abroad. Other conditions are prescribed by the law." [44a] (Part Two, Chapter One – The Executive Power)

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THE PARLIAMENT

- 6.04 The September 2007 Economist country report on Algeria states under the section 'Political structure', accessed 17 September 2007, with reference to the legislative process: "[Legislature is] Bicameral; the lower house, the Assemblée populaire nationale, with 389 members, was first elected in June 1997, replacing the Conseil national de transition, which was set up in May 1994; the upper house, the Conseil de la nation, which has 144 seats, was formed in December 1997, with two-thirds of its members elected through municipal polls and the remainder appointed by the president." [84b] (p4)
- 6.05 The EuropaWorld website (accessed 14 August 2007) adds, regarding the Algerian Parliament:

"The bicameral legislature consists of the 389-member National People's Assembly and the 144-member Council of the Nation. The members of the National People's Assembly are elected by universal, direct, secret suffrage

for a five-year term. Two-thirds of the members of the Council of the Nation are elected by indirect, secret suffrage from regional and municipal authorities; the remainder are appointed by the President of the Republic. The Council's term in office is six years; one-half of its members are replaced every three years. Both the Head of Government and the parliamentary chambers may initiate legislation, which must be deliberated upon by the National People's Assembly and the Council of the Nation, respectively, before promulgation." [1e] (Government)

LOCAL GOVERNMENT

- 6.06 The EuropaWorld website (accessed 14 August 2007) states: "The country is divided into 48 departments (wilayat), which are, in turn, sub-divided into communes. Each wilaya and commune has an elected assembly." [1e] (Government)

POLITICAL PARTIES

- 6.07 The USSD Report on Human Rights Practices for 2006 states the following on political parties:

"The law requires that potential political parties receive official approval from the MOI [Ministry of Interior] to be established. To obtain approval, a party must have 25 founders from across the country whose names must be registered with the MOI. The government refused to register Wafa (in full, Wafa wa al-Adl or Movement for Fidelity and Justice) because its perceived ties to the banned FIS constituted a threat to national security, according to the minister of interior. The government also failed to provide an official response to the 1998 registration request of the Democratic Front. It was unclear why there was no response, but the party leadership claimed the government was not ready for 'real democratic openness.' No party may use religion or ethnic heritage as a basis to organize for political purposes. The law also bans political party ties to nonpolitical associations and regulates party financing and reporting requirements." [6i] (Section 2d)

- 6.08 The EuropaWorld website (accessed 14 August 2007) adds:

"Until 1989 the FLN was the only legal party in Algeria. The February 1989 amendments to the Constitution permitted the formation of other political associations, with some restrictions. The right to establish political parties was guaranteed by constitutional amendments in November 1996; however, political associations based on differences in religion, language, race, gender or region were proscribed." [1j] (Political Organisations)

- 6.09 A report by Forced Migration Online (FMO) in January 2004 also stated that: "Political parties represent three main tendencies: pro-regime parties, such as the FLN or the RND; Berber parties, the FFS and the RCD, both of which are rooted in Kabylia; and Islamist parties (though the FIS remains illegal, several have received approval, including MSP and the recently successful MRN)." [53] (p7)

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LEGAL PARTIES

- 6.10 From the evidence given by Mr Leslie Campbell, of the National Democratic Institute, at the 3 March 2005 US House of Representatives IRC/SITN hearings:

“Algeria now has legal and effective Islamist political parties: The MSP, MRN/Al-Islah and Ennahda. Algerians wishing to express their political views, even Islamist views, now have outlets. Radical Islamists and terrorists have largely been shunted to the fringes.” [10a] (p10)

- 6.11 Parties not directly aligned to the establishment and Islamist parties are represented by the Parti des Travailleurs (PT), and “The two main Kabylia-based [Berber] parties”: the Front des Forces Socialistes (FFS) and the “staunchly anti-Islamist” Rassemblement pour la Culture et la Démocratie (RCD). [84c] [83b]

ILLEGAL PARTIES

- 6.12 The CIA World Factbook, updated 19 July 2007, notes: “A law banning political parties based on religion was enacted in March 1997.” [2a] (Government)

See also [Opposition groups and political activists](#)

ELECTIONS

- 6.13 The president “... is nominated by the party with the majority in parliament and elected by popular vote through universal adult suffrage for a five-year term that may be renewed once.” The last presidential elections were held in 2004 with President Bouteflika being returned for a second term with over 83 per cent of the vote. (Jane’s Sentinel Country Risk Assessments: Algeria. Posted 18 May 2007) [83b] The USSD report for 2006 states:

“For the first time since the end of the one-party system and after more than a decade of civil strife and continuing acts of terrorism, in 2004 a sitting president not only completed his five-year term of office, but was re-elected in a contested election. However, the election and the electoral system were not without flaws. In the 2004 election, President Bouteflika won approximately 85 percent of the vote, according to official results. Voter participation was 58 percent, compared to 46 percent in the 2002 legislative elections.” [6i] (Section 2d)

- 6.14 Jane’s Sentinel says of the 2004 election:

“... the run up to the election in April was marked by bitter political infighting in the FLN over who to back as its favoured candidate. Bouteflika had helped successfully navigate Algeria towards a point where an end to the insurgency was in potentially in sight, however, his fellow FLN members were concerned not only at the state of his health (about which there had been numerous rumours), but also there were growing suspicions over what observers saw as an autocratic streak in the president’s rule. For these reasons many in the FLN favoured the up and coming prime minister Ali Benflis. The FLN’s inability to

choose led to a split between pro- and anti-Bouteflika supporters, but eventually, the FLN chose to back Benflis, a move that led Bouteflika to seek (and receive) the backing of the RCD opposition.

“Adding to the sense of instability in the run up to polling day were concerns that once again the military would intervene and ask Bouteflika to stand down. However, the military high command appeared as divided as the FLN (despite sharing many of the same concerns about the president) and in the end choose not to back any candidate. Ultimately, the political turmoil had little effect on an electorate seemingly happy to credit Bouteflika with bringing relative stability to the country and he was returned with a landslide majority. Allegations of electoral fraud aside, Benflis and the FLN (and for that matter the military too) were eclipsed, leaving Bouteflika in an enormously powerful position from which to launch his second term. As a measure of the new level of control he held, the powerful army chief of staff, Mohamed Lamari resigned four months after Bouteflika’s re-election, a move that allowed the president to carry out a reshuffle of the military high command and put in place men with views more in keeping with his own.” (Jane’s Sentinel Country Risk Assessments: Algeria. Posted 18 May 2007) [83b]

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Human Rights

INTRODUCTION

- 7.01 The United States State Department (USSD) 2006 Country Report on Human Rights Practices, Algeria, published on 6 March 2007 states:

“The government continued to fail to account for thousands of persons who disappeared in detention during the 1990s. Other significant human rights problems included reports of abuse and torture; official impunity; prolonged pretrial detention; limited judicial independence; denial of fair, public trials; restrictions on civil liberties, including freedom of speech, press, assembly, and association; security-based restrictions on movement; limitations on religious freedom, including increased regulation of non-Muslim worship; corruption and lack of government transparency; discrimination against women; and restrictions on workers’ rights.” [6i] (p1)

- 7.02 The same USSD report however, adds:

“Both the constitution and Legal Code prohibit torture and other cruel, inhuman, or degrading treatment or punishment; however, there were reports from Algeria Watch in March and Amnesty International (AI) in April that government officials employed such practices” that “The Penal Code criminalizes torture; government agents can face prison sentences for up to three years for committing such acts. However, impunity remained a problem” and that “In January 2005, all security forces were provided a copy of a code of conduct establishing regulations for conduct and sanctions for abuses.” [6i] (1c,d)

- 7.03 The US Overseas Security Advisory Council Algeria Crime and Safety Report for 2007, dated 20 June 2007, also states:

“In 2006, the security situation in Algeria took some notable steps backward and remained a serious issue. Throughout the year, there was a general increase in crime, violence, and new terrorist tactics. On September 11, 2006, the Salafist Group for Preaching and Combat (GSPC), the primary terrorist organization operating in Algiers, formally aligned itself with al-Qaeda. With this new alignment came a shift in the traditional targeting of government and security targets to include Westerners. The year 2006 also marked the first time in several years that bombings penetrated the capital city of Algiers and the first time ever that an American company was targeted in a terrorist attack.

“Since 1992, more than 150,000 people are estimated to have died in Algeria’s battle with extremist Islamist terror groups, most notably the GIA (Armed Islamic Group) and the GSPC. In September 2005, the Algerian people voted in a referendum in favor of President Bouteflika’s national reconciliation charter, which allowed former terrorists not involved in mass killings, bombings, or rapes to turn themselves into authorities and/or to be released from prisons. As a result of the national reconciliation, approximately 2400 individuals considered to be terrorists were released into society. Since August 2006, security forces have taken the initiative in hunting down terrorists who continue to fight and an average of 40 people are still killed monthly. Although the level of violence previously experienced has

significantly decreased from its height in the mid-1990s, terrorism is still a major problem.” [6h] (Overall Crime and Safety Situation)

LE POUVOIR

7.04 The Economist Intelligence Unit, in its 2006 country profile, states:

“Mr Bouteflika, in power since 1999, has played a major part in the gradual transformation of Algeria, notably by using the authority of his office to marginalise senior members of the opaque military old guard ‘le pouvoir’ who used to be the major powerbrokers in Algerian politics. However, this has raised concerns about the concentration of power in the hands of one individual, and about the lack of a clearly designated successor. Mr Bouteflika has announced that a referendum will be held on a proposal to amend the constitution, including a clause to increase the number of terms a president is allowed to serve from the current limit of two five-year periods. Following several delays, [it is believed] that the referendum will take place early in 2008, following the scheduled local elections in November [2007]. Rumours abound that the president’s health is deteriorating, although this has been strongly denied.” [84c] (p7)

7.05 The Economist Intelligence Unit’s September 2007 Country Report added:

“In his second term [re-elected 9 April 2004 for a five year term], he has pushed the military further into the background of Algerian politics.” [84b] (p17)

7.06 The Economist Intelligence Unit, in their 2006 Country Profile, elaborates on the military establishment in the section ‘Political Forces’:

“The tightly-knit collection of senior generals, known as le pouvoir, has for many years been the ultimate source of power in Algerian politics. However, their influence on events has begun to weaken as Mr Bouteflika has managed to accrue power and establish himself as an international statesman. During Mr Bouteflika’s first term the most prominent of these military figures was General Mohammed Lamari, who resigned as chief of staff of the armed forces in July 2004. The new chief of staff, General Salah Ahmed Gaid, is not thought to have strong political ambitions. The most important senior military figure to have retained his position during Mr Bouteflika’s presidency is the head of military intelligence, General Mohammed ‘Tewfik’ Mediène. On July 5th 2006 (Independence Day) Mr Bouteflika promoted General Mediène to the rank of full general, along with General Gaid and Benabbès Gheziel, a presidential adviser and former head of the gendarmerie (paramilitary force). This coincided with his announcement of plans to change the constitution so as to allow him to serve a third presidential term, and was thus interpreted as a signal that key figures in the military would support him in this. One of the most influential figures behind the scenes of Algerian politics has been Larbi Belkheir, a retired general. Mr Belkheir was instrumental in enabling Mr Bouteflika to become president in 1999, and was subsequently called on to run the president’s private office. In August 2005 he accepted the post of ‘extraordinary and plenipotentiary’ ambassador to Morocco. In this capacity he is likely to play an important part in seeking to improve Algerian-Moroccan relations. However, his departure from the centre of power reflects a shift in the balance of forces within the post-independence military elite.” [84c] (p18)

The website of the Algerian Free Officers Movement, a group of dissident former officers, contains a list of mercenaries, an account of the assassination of President Boudiaf and a military file. [50a]

- 7.07 An Amnesty International (AI) report of June 2003 states that AI had not found that the general conditions and situation in Algeria had improved significantly during the period 1999-2002 and assessed that the human rights situation in Algeria remained fundamentally unchanged, despite official rhetoric. [26a] (p3) AI also reported in September 2003 that: "The human rights situation, although improved since the mid to late 1990s, remains of serious concern." [26c] (p3) A further AI report, dated 10 July 2007, stated that "Although the level of serious human rights abuses in Algeria has decreased compared to the 1990s, it is precisely in the context of counter-terrorism measures that serious human rights violations continue to be reported." [26i] (Introduction)

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SECURITY FORCES

INTERNAL SECURITY

- 8.01 The EuropaWorld website (accessed 15 August 2007) states:

“As assessed at November 2006, the estimated strength of the armed forces was 137,500 (including some 75,000 conscripts), comprising an army of 120,000, a navy of about 7,500 and an air force of 10,000. The defence budget for 2006 was estimated at AD 224,000m. Military service is compulsory for 18 months. There are paramilitary forces of about 187,200, controlled by the Ministry of Defence and the Directorate of National Security, and an estimated 150,000 self-defence militia and communal guards.” [1] (Defence)

- 8.02 The USSD report for 2006 states: “While civilian authorities generally maintained effective control of the security forces, there were a few instances in which elements of the security forces acted independently of government authority.” [6i]

See also [Security forces Events of 2001-2007 Kabylia](#)

POLICE FORCES

- 8.03 The USSD report for 2006 states:

“The General Directorate for National Security (DGSN), or the national police force, falls under the control of the Ministry of Interior and has national jurisdiction. The Gendarmerie, under the Ministry of Defense, also perform police-like functions outside urban areas. Police were generally effective at maintaining order throughout the country. Low levels of corruption existed, especially in the customs police.” [6i] (Section 1d)

- 8.04 The US Overseas Security Advisory Council Algeria Crime and Safety Report for 2007, dated 20 June 2007, adds:

“The police in and around Algiers are responsive to all kinds of incidents and have proven to be very effective in maintaining security. With the new shift in terrorist tactics and activity, there was a noticeable surge in police presence in and around the capital in the latter half of the year. While the police have traditionally maintained a heavy presence in Algiers, it is not yet clear whether they can adapt to counter new recruiting and attack trends. Over the last few years, the government has begun a program to increase the size of the police force by approximately 30,000 personnel. This increase in size is due to the police regaining their traditional roles and responsibilities, which were handled by the military during the conflict with the terrorists. A policy of professionalism is being pursued by the government that is expected to show results. This program, coupled with an increase in pay and benefits, is intended to lead to better quality police recruits. The heavy police presence is noticed most readily in the major cities, but it is expected that smaller cities will also benefit from increased police staffing. Police (in the cities) or Gendarmes (in the countryside) display a wide variation in training, equipment, and abilities. They can be expected to be responsive to requests for assistance, particularly from

foreigners. Algerian police have standing orders to notify the appropriate embassy or consulate if a foreign national is arrested.” [6h] (Police Response)

Local militias

- 8.05 Amnesty International (with Human Rights Watch, the International Center for Transitional Justice, and the International Federation for Human Rights), in a public statement dated 1 March 2006, expressed concern that Groupes de légitime défense (Legitimate Defence Groups, Legitimate Self-Defense Groups or GLDs) would not be pursued in relation to perpetrating past abuses:

“The text does not explicitly mention members of civilian militias armed by the state, the so-called ‘Legitimate Self-Defense Groups’. However, the phrases ‘artisans of safeguarding the ... Republic’ and ‘belonging to any component whatsoever of the defense and security forces’ suggest that the amnesty in fact covers abuses committed by members of these groups.

“The decree also provides an amnesty to members of armed groups who surrender or are in prison, as long as they did not ‘commit, or were accomplices in, or instigators of, acts of collective massacres, rape, or the use of explosives in public places’. However, these exceptions, no matter how appropriate, do not extend to other grave crimes, suggesting that armed group members who murdered one or more persons will go free as long as the killings were not collective in nature. The amnesty would also cover other grave crimes committed by armed groups, including torture and the abduction of persons whose fate remains unknown.

“Moreover, no details have been provided concerning the mechanism or process for determining whether armed-group members applying for amnesty are ineligible due to their implication in ‘collective massacres, rapes, or the use of explosives in public places’. Given the virtual lack of investigations into these crimes when they were committed, a thorough vetting process today to exclude their perpetrators from the amnesty would require much political will and resources from the state. The Civil Harmony Law of 1999 created a screening mechanism that operated arbitrarily and with a lack of transparency, resulting in de facto wide-ranging impunity for abuses committed by armed groups.” [26h] (p2)

Arbitrary arrest and detention

- 8.06 The USSD report for 2006 states: “The constitution prohibits arbitrary arrest and detention. As in previous years, the security forces arbitrarily arrested and detained citizens; however, the Algerian League for the Defence of Human Rights (LADDH or ALDHR) and the Algerian Human Rights League (LADH) reported that such abuses occurred with decreasing frequency. In 2005, the head of the National Consultative Commission for the Protection and Promotion of Human Rights (CNCPPDH) said that pretrial detention, although defined as an exceptional measure by Article 123 of the Penal Procedure Code, was overused.” [6i] (Section 1d)

See also [Missing people](#)

- 8.07 The USSD report for 2006 stated: “Impunity remained a problem. The government did not provide disaggregated public information on the numbers,

infractions, or punishments of police, military, or other security force personnel. According to human rights attorneys, police officials, and local NGOs, the most frequent abuse of police authority occurred as a result of officers not following established guidelines for arrests. In January 2005, all security forces were provided a copy of a code of conduct establishing regulations for conduct and sanctions for abuses.” [6i] (Section 1c) AI also reported in ‘Steps towards change or empty promises?’, published in September 2003, that:

“The authorities’ almost routine failure to respect domestic legislation protecting detainees’ rights contributes directly to the persistence of the problem of secret and unacknowledged detention. Despite the safeguards in the law, detainees are generally not allowed to communicate with the outside world, including their family, either immediately following their admission into garde à vue or even at any stage during it. They are also usually not allowed to receive visits from their family. Moreover, according to Amnesty International’s findings, few are informed of their rights in this regard.” [26c] (p8,9)

- 8.08 The same AI report also stated that: “The problem [of abuse] is exacerbated by the fact that, as mentioned above [prior to p7 in the AI report] legal safeguards which should protect detainees and have been in place for years have often not been respected by the judicial authorities or the security forces.” [26c] (p8)

Torture

- 8.09 A report by Amnesty International dated 10 July 2006 stated that:

“The ICCPR and the Convention against Torture, to which Algeria is a state party, prohibit torture and other cruel, inhuman and degrading treatment or punishment at all times and in all circumstances.” [26i] (p25) “While there has been a decrease in reports of torture and other ill-treatment in the custody of police and gendarmerie, torture and other ill-treatment continue to be used systematically by the ‘Military Security’, an intelligence agency which specializes in interrogating individuals who are believed to have information about terrorist activities. Although it is still widely known as ‘Military Security’, its official name since 1990 has been the Department for Information and Security (Département du renseignement et de la sécurité, DRS).” [26i] (p3)

- 8.10 Amnesty also reported that: “Algerian President Abdelaziz Bouteflika, ... also holds the position of Minister of Defence, in which capacity he oversees the DRS, the service most frequently associated with secret detention and torture.” [26i] (p4) “According to reports of killings in the Algerian media, the level of violence has fallen continuously in recent years. These reports, however, still rely exclusively on security sources and cannot be independently verified. During 2005, some 400 killings were reported in Algerian newspapers as a result of continuing violence, including dozens of civilians. In the first four months of 2006, some 140 people were reportedly killed, among them over 60 civilians. Killings are committed by armed groups during attacks on military targets, and suspected active members of armed groups continue to be killed during operations by the security forces.” [26i] (p12)

- 8.11 The Amnesty report continued:

"The most serious violations reported to Amnesty International have been committed in the cases of individuals arrested or detained by the DRS on suspicion of terrorist activity. Suspects are routinely held in undisclosed places of detention, without any contact with the outside world, and there are persistent reports of torture or ill-treatment. ..."

"... although allegations of beatings, intimidation and other forms of illtreatment

continue to be frequently reported, Amnesty International has received fewer reports of torture in the custody of police and gendarmerie. According to Algerian lawyers, some safeguards under Algerian and international law are increasingly adhered to by police and gendarmerie. For example, detainees held by these forces have in some cases reportedly been informed of their rights after having been arrested; and they appear more frequently to be able to communicate with their families while held in a police or gendarmerie station." [26i] (p14)

- 8.12 The US House of Representatives sub-committee on International Terrorism and its Non-Proliferation heard on 4 March 2005 from HRW's expert witness Tom Malinowski, and the transcript, taken from the prepared statement from the HRW website, states:

"In October 2004, Algeria's parliament took the positive step of amending the penal code to criminalize acts of torture. We remain concerned that the amendment fell short of international standards by failing to criminalize cruel, inhuman and degrading treatment or punishment, and by failing to refer to the consent or acquiescence to torture or cruel, inhuman or degrading treatment or punishment by a public official or other person acting in an official capacity." [27e]

- 8.13 The USSD report for 2006 states:

"Human rights lawyers maintained that torture continued to occur in military prisons, more often against those arrested on 'security grounds'. However, they believed that the frequency and severity of torture declined during the year, due in part to better training of the security forces and alternative intelligence-gathering techniques." [6i] (Section 1c)

- 8.14 Amnesty International, in the interim report, published 25 May 2005, of its fact-finding mission on Algeria on 6–25 May 2005, states:

"Despite the recent inclusion of torture as a criminal offence in the Penal Code and the reduction in allegations of torture and ill-treatment by the police and gendarmerie, the organisation has received a significant number of allegations about such abuses by officers of the Département du Renseignement et de la Sécurité (DRS), Department of Information and Security. These allegations include detention of the accused in places impossible for them to know the location of, and torture, including beatings and the torture known as chiffon. The delegation questioned the authorities about the fact that it could find no mention of these abuses in the medical reports written by the doctors responsible for examining detainees in these centres. If these allegations are confirmed, such breaches of duty would constitute grave violations of medical ethics." [26f]

"In addition, the use of torture to obtain confessions constitutes a flagrant violation of international instruments to which Algeria is a party, such as the Convention against Torture. Similarly, judges have the duty to initiate investigations into any allegations of torture that come to their attention. However, as far as the organisation's delegation can establish, no such inquiry has been made into DRS officers' activities in this regard." [26f]

- 8.15 The Europa World website's account of the violence in the 1990s repeatedly states that security forces were blamed by critics of the Government for involvement in the deaths of civilians and Islamists. [1h] (**Recent History**, accessed 15 August 2007)

- 8.16 Amnesty International reported in 'Steps towards change or empty promises?', published September 2003, that:

"The vast majority of cases of torture and secret detention recorded in the last two to three years have indicated that the acts were carried out by operatives of Military Security, or Sécurité militaire, a security service bearing the official title of the Département du renseignement et de la sécurité (DRS), Department of Information and Security, formally under the authority of the Ministry of Defence. The torture is generally alleged to have taken place inside military compounds, most notably the centre of Ben Aknoun in Algiers and the centre of Haouch Chnou in Blida, used, among other purposes, for the detention of suspects." [26c] (p15)

- 8.17 Amnesty International notes earlier in the same report the prime purpose of the use of torture:

"The purpose of torture in most cases appears to be to extract statements or 'confessions' from the person held in custody, often by forcing detainees to sign statements which they have not read. In cases involving what the government describes as 'terrorist' activities, the statement usually implicates them as being linked in some way with an armed group. In cases involving political protesters, torture may also be used by the security forces to punish the detainee and deter others from taking similar action."

"The implications of torture being used systematically in 'terrorism'-related cases and selectively in other political and criminal cases are very serious indeed, not only because of the physical and mental trauma, but also because it impacts on the administration of justice. Convictions are often made, largely or solely, on the basis of statements obtained in the custody of the security forces under duress, gravely prejudicing the right to a fair trial and leading to long prison sentences or, in some cases, the death penalty." [26c] (p11)

- 8.18 Human Rights Watch in 2003 identified cases of disappearance where Military Security were allegedly involved and states "Of all the various security forces Military Security acts with the greatest degree of impunity. It is 'almost untouchable' according to human rights commissioner Ksentsini." [27c] (**Counting Cases, Identifying Perpetrators**) The AI September 2003 report adds detail to the comment, stating:

"Military Security appears to employ a number of particular measures that make it difficult to hold its agents accountable for violations. Firstly, a series of

measures are taken to keep the identity of the operatives hidden. Not only do Military Security personnel operate in plain clothes, but they also almost never identify themselves or even the service to which they belong to the individuals they are arresting. Often no arrest warrant is produced. On the interrogation reports drawn up by Military Security, the officers responsible generally identify themselves simply by a first name, without reference to their rank or surname or Military Security, making it impossible to verify their status or trace them later.

“Secondly, measures are taken to keep the place of detention secret from the person arrested. Detainees often report not having been informed of the place of their detention. In addition, some detainees have told Amnesty International that on their way to the place of detention and on their way out, they are transported in such a way as to make it difficult for them to identify where they were held. For instance, some detainees have been blindfolded or made to crouch down in the back of the vehicle transporting them.” [26c] (p15)

8.19 AI in its 2003 report notes, regarding witnesses to torture:

“Research carried out by Amnesty International also indicates that very few formal complaints are made about torture in Algeria. However, in the vast majority of incidents of torture or ill-treatment, it appears that those affected do not make formal complaints. In most cases known to Amnesty International, detainees who have been tortured do not even declare to the examining magistrate that they were tortured during garde à vue or that they were coerced into confessing to something they had not done. Amnesty International’s research into dozens of cases in the last two to three years suggests there are several reasons why this is the case. They may be threatened by the security force personnel who have tortured them. They may be told not to change their story and not to report the torture to which they have been subjected if they do not want to be returned to the place where they have been tortured. In addition, with no access to legal counsel to explain the judicial process and the security forces failing to inform them of their rights, the accused may be unaware that the examining magistrate is a member of the judiciary, believing instead that they are talking to another security force officer. Finally, with no evidence available that investigations take place into torture or that those responsible are brought to justice, the torture victim may not know that the magistrate can and should do something about the complaint.” [26c] (p12,13)

“Other obstacles later stand in the way of torture victims who seek to lodge a formal complaint. On the one hand, they realize that their chances of being able to provide proof of the torture are slim. As discussed, a medical examination carried out after weeks or months is unlikely to lead to establishing evidence of torture. On the other hand, they are afraid that reporting the torture will only exacerbate their predicament or expose family members to risks of reprisals from the security forces. Furthermore, even if the victim was prepared to lodge a complaint, only a small number of lawyers inside the country are willing to take on such cases, since doing so can result in harassment and intimidation by the authorities.” [26c] (p13)

Torture methods

8.20 The USSD report for 2006 states:

“In May 2005 AI reported that the ‘chiffon’ method - stuffing a rag into a person’s mouth while forcing contaminated liquids into the stomach until the person vomited - was the preferred method of torture because it left no physical traces of assault.” [6i] (p3) (Section 1c)

- 8.21 A report by Amnesty International dated 10 July 2006 outlines the main methods used:

“The most frequently reported methods of torture include beatings, electric shocks, and the method known as chiffon in which the victim is tied down and forced to swallow large quantities of dirty water, urine or chemicals through a cloth placed in their mouth. Detainees have also reported that they had been undressed and humiliated, beaten on the soles of their feet (a method known as falaka), or suspended by the arms from the ceiling for prolonged periods of time until they claimed they had ‘remembered’ something. In some cases, detainees reported that they had been threatened that female family members would be arrested and raped.” [26i] (p26)

- 8.22 The Medical Foundation for the Care of Victims of Torture, in the report, ‘Rape as a method of torture’ by Dr Michael Peel, published in [April] 2004, states in relation to Algeria:

“In Algeria at the time of the study [2002] there was a policy of intimidation and humiliation, of which sexual assault was an integral part. Men were made to squat with the neck of a soft-drink bottle against their anus. They were then kicked or pushed so that they lost balance and they were penetrated by the bottle. Rape was not generally accompanied by questioning, but it was officially sanctioned. It was made known unofficially by the authorities that men had been raped in detention, and should no longer have the status of adult males in the community. This fitted into the overall pattern of intimidation through torture in which semi-conscious bodies were dumped by the authorities, covered with blood and bruises, to discourage others from questioning their authority.” [63a] (p66)

- 8.23 The USSD report for 2006 mentions allegations that were raised in one case:

“In April police detained Mourad M’hamed, a journalist at the daily newspaper El-Khabar. Police shoved and, according to the newspaper, subjected him to ‘heavy psychological pressure’ for several hours because he had published a document concerning the terrorist group GSPC, an act viewed as a threat to national security. In July he was tried for releasing information on national security to the public and acquitted.” [6i] (Section 1c)

Government response

- 8.24 The USSD report for 2006 states, regarding anti-torture legislation:

“The Penal Code criminalizes torture; government agents can face prison sentences for up to three years for committing such acts. However, impunity remained a problem.” [6i] (Section 1c)

- 8.25 Amnesty International, in its September 2003 report, states:

“Some of these measures are illegal according to Algerian legislation. The Criminal Procedure Code clearly states that all law enforcement officials, including Military Security personnel, must not only present an arrest warrant to the accused, but also give them a copy. The Code also stipulates that statements such as interrogation reports must indicate that their authors are law enforcement officials authorized to carry out such duties, meaning that their rank and full name must be mentioned.” [26c] (p15,16)

“The way in which Military Security officers conduct their operations appears to be symptomatic of their lack of accountability. As law enforcement officials they operate, according to the Criminal Procedure Code, under the control of the judicial authorities. In practice, the judicial authorities are too intimidated by them to challenge their authority. Amnesty International is not aware of a single case of a Military Security operative ever having been investigated or brought to justice for committing human rights violations in the exercise of their functions in the service’s history, despite the overwhelming evidence pointing to the involvement of its agents in human rights violations, including those of a grave and systematic nature.” [26c] (p16)

8.26 The USSD report for 2006 also reported that:

“Impunity remained a problem. The government did not provide disaggregated public information on the numbers, infractions, or punishments of police, military, or other security force personnel. According to human rights attorneys, police officials, and local NGOs, the most frequent abuse of police authority occurred as a result of officers not following established guidelines for arrests. In January 2005, all security forces were provided a copy of a code of conduct establishing regulations for conduct and sanctions for abuses.

“In March the DGSN director stated that as part of a national police internal crackdown on malfeasance, several DGSN officials had been arrested for embezzlement, use of public money for personal gain, and cronyism. In April the Judicial Police (the main body of the DGSN) brought official legal action against 10 police officers. Results had not been made public by year’s end.

“In March the Gendarmerie officially announced that 4,200 gendarmes had been dismissed between 2000 and 2005 for lack of discipline and abuse of power.” [6i] (Section 1d)

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NON-GOVERNMENT ARMED FORCES/INSURGENTS

See also [Annex D - Armed groups](#)

- 9.01 The US State Department's Country Report on Terrorism 2005: Algeria, dated 28 April 2006 states:

"According to Algerian authorities, fewer than 800 terrorists remained active in Algeria, down from the estimated 28,000 terrorists in the mid-1990s." [6m]

THE ARMED ISLAMIC GROUP (GIA) (GROUPE ISLAMIQUE ARMÉ)

- 9.02 The BBC News website's Country Timeline for Algeria states: "2005 January – Authorities announce the arrest of rebel Armed Islamic Group (GIA) head Nourredine Boudiafi and the killing of his deputy and declare the group to be virtually dismantled." [60a]

- 9.03 The following information is from the United States Department of State Country Report on Terrorism, updated 30 April 2007:

"Armed Islamic Group (GIA) a.k.a. Al-Jama'ah al-Islamiyah al-Musallah; Groupement Islamique Arme

"Description

An Islamic extremist group, the GIA aims to overthrow the Algerian regime and replace it with a fundamentalist Islamic state. The GIA began its violent activity in 1992 after the military government suspended legislative elections in anticipation of an overwhelming victory by the Islamic Salvation Front, the largest Islamic opposition party.

"Activities

The GIA has engaged in attacks against civilians and government workers. The GIA began conducting a terrorist campaign of civilian massacres in 1992, sometimes wiping out entire villages and killing tens of thousands of Algerians, thus alienating itself from the Algerian populace in the process. Since announcing its campaign against foreigners living in Algeria in 1992, the GIA killed more than 100 expatriate men and women, mostly Europeans, in the country. Many of the GIA's members have joined other Islamist groups or have been killed or captured by the Algerian government. The government's September 2005 reconciliation program led to an increase in the number of GIA terrorist suspects who surrendered to security forces. The GIA's most recent significant attacks occurred in August 2001.

"Strength

Precise numbers are unknown, but probably fewer than 100.

"Location/Area of Operation

Algeria, the Sahel, and Europe.

"External Aid

The GIA has members in Europe that provide funding but mostly the group engages in criminal activity to finance activities and raise funds." [6p] (Chapter 6)

THE SALAFIST GROUP FOR CALL AND COMBAT (GSPC) / AL QAEDA IN THE ISLAMIC MAGHREB (AQIM)

9.04 The following information is from the United States Department of State Country Report on Terrorism, updated 30 April 2007:

“Al-Qaida in the Islamic Maghreb (AQIM) [Formerly Salafist Group for Preaching and Combat (GSPC)] aka Le Groupe Salafiste pour la Predication et le Combat; Salafist Group for Call and Combat

“Description

The Salafist Group for Preaching and Combat (GSPC) officially merged with al-Qaida in September 2006, and subsequently changed its name to al-Qaida in the Islamic Maghreb (AQIM). GSPC members abandoned the Armed Islamic Group (GIA) over disagreements about leadership and tactics, but retained the mission of overthrowing the Algerian Government and installing an Islamic regime. AQIM/GSPC is the most effective and largest armed group inside Algeria. In contrast to the GIA, it has pledged to avoid civilian attacks inside Algeria.

“Activities

AQIM/GSPC attacked a U.S. contractor bus in December 2006 in greater Algiers. In Zawahiri's September 11 speech announcing the GSPC's merger with al-Qaida, Zawahiri called on it to be 'a bone in the throat of the American and French crusaders' and to sow fear 'in the heart of the traitors and apostate sons of France.' AQIM/GSPC continues to conduct operations aimed at government and military targets, primarily in rural areas, although civilians are sometimes killed. AQIM/GSPC executed simultaneous attacks on October 30 on two police stations just east of Algiers, killing three civilians, wounding 14 police officers, and causing substantial damage to both facilities. In 2005, the GSPC claimed responsibility for an attack on a remote Mauritanian military outpost, killing 15, while indicating a shift in its strategy toward a more global war beyond Algerian borders.

“Police in France, Italy and Spain arrested several Algerians suspected of providing support to AQIM/GSPC, and French officials announced that the AQIM/GSPC had issued an Internet call-to-action against France, declaring France 'public enemy number one.' The Government of Algeria scored major counterterrorism successes against AQIM/GSPC in 2004, killing AQIM/GSPC leader Nabil Sahraoui and separately taking custody of Abderazak al-Para, who led a AQIM/GSPC faction that held 32 European tourists hostage in 2003.

“Strength

Several hundred fighters with an unknown number of facilitators outside Algeria.

“Location/Area of Operation

Algeria, the Sahel, Canada, and Western Europe.

“External Aid

Algerian expatriates and AQIM/GSPC members abroad, many residing in Western Europe, provide financial and logistical support. AQIM/GSPC members also engage in criminal activity.” [6p] (Chapter 6)

- 9.05 Mr Lorenzo Vidino, of The Investigative Project, at the 3 March 2005 US House of Representatives IRC/SITN hearings stated "According to the latest reports [as of 2005], the GSPC has no more than 5,000 fighters. Most of them are segregated to the mountains or to the desert areas, so they do not pose the same threat that they used to pose 5 or 10 years ago." [10a] (p35)
- 9.06 An article on Algeria's Liberte website, dated 15 August 2007, reported on Al-Qaeda's recruitment methods:
- "This young man, ... used to regularly attend ... [a] mosque located in Appreval, in Kouba [eastern suburbs of Algiers]. It was in that mosque that he was in contact with recruiters using the Iraqi cause as their excuse."
- The article continues to report a repentant [armed Islamists who give themselves up to the authorities in exchange for amnesty] as saying:
- "It's a trick, you must not believe the pictures and the videos that are in circulation in the mosques and the cybercafés, they're only lies" [98a]
- 9.07 The Amnesty International September 2003 report, 'Steps towards change or empty promises?' notes that motives for the killings by armed groups are attributed to the Islamic ideological struggle, but some of their activities are criminal rather than political such as 'turf wars' between rival groups, revenge banditry, land grabs, committing robberies or operating protection rackets. [26c] (p37)

Violence / Abuse by Non-Government Armed Forces / Insurgents

- 9.08 The testimony of Tom Malinowski, Human Rights Watch, to the US House of Representatives Committee in March 2005 states, regarding the continuing violence:
- "Estimates of the number of Algerians killed in political violence since 1992 range between 100,000 and 200,000. President Abdelaziz Bouteflika was quoted on February 23 [2005] as putting the figure at 150,000. In fact there are no precise data on the number of those killed, or the breakdown of civilians, security force members, and armed militants among the victims, or the proportion of the killings attributable on the one hand to armed groups and on the other hand to the security forces and their civilian allies." [27e]
- 9.09 Amnesty International in their Annual Report for 2007, states regarding the violence:
- "Algeria was an important ally in the US-led 'war on terror'. Violence by residual armed groups persisted, often in connection with criminal activities such as smuggling, protection rackets and money-laundering. The government continued its armed campaign against these groups, which it claimed were aligned with al-Qa'ida."
- The report continues to state that: "More than 300 people were reported to have been killed by either armed groups or government security forces during the year, including over 70 civilians."

“Armed groups continued to carry out attacks on military and, to a lesser extent, civilian targets. Military forces carried out search operations and attacks in areas where armed group violence persisted, killing alleged armed group members. There were concerns that some of these killings might have been extrajudicial executions and that some of those killed were women and children related to armed group members, but details were difficult to obtain.” [26j]

9.10 The USSD report for 2006 states:

“During the year, according to the Ministry of the Interior (MOI) and press releases, the total number of terrorist, civilian, and security force deaths declined to 323 (compared to 488 in 2005, 429 in 2004, and 1,162 in 2003). Of these, the government stated that terrorists killed 54 civilians (76 in 2005) and 90 security force members (177 in 2005); security forces killed an estimated 179 suspected terrorists (235 in 2005).

“Terrorists targeted civilians, security forces, and infrastructure. Press reports estimated that 135 civilians and 174 members of the security forces were killed in terrorist attacks, most of which were attributed to the Salafist Group for Preaching and Combat (GSPC).

“Revenge, banditry, and land ownership disputes--not terrorism--prompted some killings. In February Ali Tounsi, head of the national police, stated that terrorism in the country had been nearly eliminated and that some violence was the result of organized crime, not terrorism. Most of the violence occurred in mountainous and rural areas. For the first time in more than two years, there were terrorist attacks in the capital. On October 19, an improvised explosive device (IED) exploded outside a military barracks in the Algiers suburb of El-Harrach, wounding six, and on October 30 two bombs killed two persons approximately 20 kilometers (12.4 miles) from downtown Algiers. On December 10, a shuttle bus carrying 20 expatriate workers of a Western oil services company was attacked in a suburban area of Algiers near residences of senior government officials and a major hotel. Two men on the bus were killed.” [6i] (Section 1a)

9.11 Terrorist incidents and security forces' clashes with armed groups have continued in 2007. Reports on the BBC timeline include: Seven bombs going off almost simultaneously east of Algiers, in February, killing six; the Army stepping up its offensive against Islamist militants to stamp out a surge in attacks in March-April; three Algerians and a Russian killed in a roadside attack on a bus carrying workers for a Russian gas pipeline construction company in March; 33 people killed and more than 200 injured in two bomb blasts in Algiers in April, one of them near the prime minister's office. Al-Qaeda in the Islamic Maghreb claims responsibility; dozens killed in the run-up to the Parliamentary elections in May, in a wave of fighting between the military and armed groups. Pro-government parties retain their absolute majority in parliament; a suicide bomber targets a military barracks near Bouira in July, killing at least nine people; at least 50 people killed in a series of bombings in September. Al-Qaeda in the Islamic Maghreb claims responsibility for the attacks.” [60a]

9.12 Amnesty International's 'Steps towards change or empty promises?' of September 2003 adds detail regarding civilian deaths:

“Some of the attacks appear to be indiscriminate, such as when bombs are exploded in busy public places, such as markets, killing dozens of people. Other attacks involve bogus roadblocks when small groups of men armed with machine guns, automatic pistols or hunting rifles shoot dead the drivers and passengers of passing vehicles.” [26c] (p37)

“There are also attacks that appear to be targeting particular individuals or groups of individuals, such as when extended families, of a dozen or more people, are attacked and killed in their homes or at times of celebration, such as wedding parties, when families are gathered together. The most vulnerable – women, children and the elderly – are not spared and the killings are often carried out in a brutal fashion. The assailants often knife their victims to death, cut their throats, decapitate them or smash their heads, sometimes mutilating the body afterwards. Disturbingly, the perpetrators generally escape without being apprehended, even when killings are reported close to security force bases. While victims and relatives of victims may sometimes be able to identify perpetrators of killings or provide important testimonies to locate those responsible, little attempt appears to be made to investigate killings and apprehend those responsible, so that most questions remain unanswered.” [26c] (p38)

- 9.13 The Global IDP Project's paper, 'Algeria: return continues amid improved security' of 4 July 2006 considers displacement of population by the violence:

“Conflict between the government and insurgent groups displaced at least one million Algerians between 1992 and 2002. Fighting and attacks targeting the civil population forced large numbers to flee rural areas and find security in nearby urban centres. Today, government forces have largely regained control over rural areas and a large majority of the former insurgents have accepted an amnesty offered by President Bouteflika and approved by the Algerian people in a referendum during fall 2005.

“The actual number of people displaced by the conflict is difficult to determine given the information void that has pervaded the conflict in Algeria since its onset. The European Union estimated in 2002 that violence had displaced one million people, while others put the number as high as 1.5 million. There is no information available about the current number of internally displaced persons (IDPs), but it is regularly documented that many still live in the shanty towns that mushroomed across Algeria during the conflict.

“With security returning to the former conflict zones, the government has launched a rural rehabilitation programme to encourage the return of displaced people. Several newspapers write about return to the former conflict-areas, but there are also several reports about villages that remain empty due to administrative delays and lack of live-lihood opportunities.” [54b] (p1)

- 9.14 The US International Religious Freedom Report 2007 states, regarding Muslims not aligned to radical Islamist groups as victims of violence:

“The country's decade-long civil conflict pitted Islamist terrorists belonging to the Armed Islamic Group and its offshoot, the Salafist Group for Preaching and Combat (GSPC), against the Government. While estimates vary, approximately 100 thousand to 150 thousand civilians, terrorists, and security

forces have been killed during the past 15 years. Islamist extremists have issued public threats against all 'infidels' in the country, both foreigners and citizens, and have killed both Muslims and non-Muslims. During the reporting period, terrorist violence based on religious extremism increased after the GSPC was recognized by al-Qa'ida in September 2006 and changed its name in February 2007 to al-Qa'ida in the Islamic Maghreb (AQIM). As a rule the majority of the country's terrorist groups do not differentiate between religious and political killings." [6k] (Section 2)

Numbers of Insurgents

- 9.15 The USSD 2005 Country Report on Terrorism in Algeria, published on 28 April 2006, states:

"According to Algerian authorities, fewer than 800 terrorists remained active in Algeria, down from the estimated 28,000 terrorists in the mid-1990s. The government's success in capturing or killing a number of GSPC terrorists further weakened the effectiveness of this group. Though the remaining GSPC members continued to be quite active and engaged in low-level attacks in several areas across the country, the group has lost considerable public sympathy following its July congratulatory message to al-Qaida on the killing of two abducted Algerian diplomats in Iraq. As a sign of the waning effectiveness of terrorist organizations in Algeria, terrorism analysts from the African Union (AU) Center for Study and Research on Terrorism, based in Algiers, now consider terrorism to be more a threat against public safety than a strategic threat to Algeria's national security." [6m]

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NATIONAL RECONCILIATION PROCESS

CIVIL CONCORD LAW (AKA CIVIL HARMONY LAW)

10.01 The Europa World website (accessed 15 August 2007) states:

“Following clandestine negotiations between the Government and representatives of the FIS, in June 1999 the Armée islamique du salut (AIS, the armed wing of the FIS) announced the permanent cessation of its armed struggle against the Government. President Bouteflika’s plans for a national reconciliation initiative were incorporated in a Law on Civil Concord, promulgated in July, whereby there was to be an amnesty for members of armed Islamist groups who surrendered within a six-month deadline and who were not implicated in mass killings, rape or bomb attacks on public places. The legislation was approved by 98.6% of those who voted (85% of the electorate) in a national referendum in September.” [1h] (Recent History)

10.02 The Europa Regional Survey of 2005 states, regarding the controversial nature of the amnesty:

“Families of victims of Islamist attacks denounced the new Law on Civil Concord, which was condemned by the French-language press as ‘a shameful capitulation to Islamist violence’. An editorial in the independent daily Le Matin accused Bouteflika of handing the ‘terrorists’ a political victory ‘on a silver platter’ just when they had been defeated militarily. Given the controversial circumstances of his election, some politicians accused Bouteflika of using the referendum to bolster his own legitimacy. After the results of the vote were announced the President called for those members of armed groups who surrendered to be welcomed back into society without question.” [1a] (p175)

10.03 The Europa World website (accessed 15 August 2007) continues that “In early January 2000, following discussions between representatives of the Government, the army and the AIS, an agreement was reached whereby the AIS pledged to disband in return for the restoration of full civil and political rights to its former members. It was estimated that some 1,500–3,000 rebels were to be granted a full pardon under the agreement, some of whom were to be temporarily enlisted in an auxiliary unit to assist the security forces in apprehending members of the GIA and of a breakaway group from the GIA, the Groupe salafiste pour la prédication et le combat (GSPC, or Da’wa wal Jihad). In mid-January, following the expiry of the amnesty period specified under the Law on Civil Concord, the armed forces launched a concerted assault on rebel strongholds in the north-east and south-west of the country, in an attempt to eliminate remaining anti-Government factions. It was officially stated at this time that 80% of members of armed groups had surrendered.” [1h] (Recent History) “In October 1997, in what appeared to be a major breakthrough, the FIS’s armed wing the Islamic Salvation Army (AIS), declared a ceasefire...” This was subsequently followed up in January 2000, with the AIS officially dissolving itself. (Jane’s Sentinel Country Risk Assessments: Algeria. Posted 18 May 2007) [83b]

10.04 The Amnesty International September 2003 report, ‘Steps towards change or empty promises?’ notes:

"The Algerian authorities have not published any precise official figures on how many members of armed groups benefited from each of these two measures and Amnesty International has been unable to obtain these figures despite repeated requests. However, government sources have indicated to the press that just over 1,000 AIS and LIDD (Islamic League for the Call and the Combat) members benefited from the amnesty and around 4,500 members of other armed groups, such as the GIA and GSPC, surrendered to the authorities under the terms of the Civil Harmony law." [26c] (p42)

- 10.05 AI also noted in its September 2003 report, 'Steps towards change or empty promises?' that: "There is even less clarity about how many of those who surrendered under the Civil Harmony law were brought to justice and how many of these were convicted and for what crimes. Algerian government officials told Amnesty International delegates in May 2000 that judicial proceedings had been initiated against some 350 people who had surrendered under the Civil Harmony law, but it is not known whether any of these have been convicted of human rights abuses." [26c] (p42)

Ongoing amnesty situation

- 10.06 The AI report of September 2003 notes that President Bouteflika has said that the amnesty is still available to those who want to give up terrorism, although there is apparently no formal extension of the Civil Concord Law. [26c] (p43)

- 10.07 AI in its September 2003 report states:

"Since 13 January 2000, hundreds more armed group members are reported to have surrendered to the authorities. During this time, no legal provisions have existed allowing for such people to be granted exemption from prosecution, or even to receive reduced penalties. Justice Ministry officials confirmed this during a meeting with Amnesty International delegates in February 2003, stating that all armed group members who gave themselves up were systematically brought to justice so that any crimes they might have committed could be investigated. However, government authorities, including President Bouteflika himself, have indicated, since January 2000, that members of armed groups who surrendered voluntarily would still benefit from some unspecified measures of clemency. The President, moreover, has repeatedly talked of a National Harmony project since January 2001. No information has been provided about what this project entails in detail, but the President has suggested that it may involve an expanded version of previous amnesty measures. The contradiction between the law and political pronouncements appears to be reflected in practice. Consistent reports during the last three and a half years have indicated that individuals or groups of individuals who gave themselves up after 13 January 2000 have been allowed to return home immediately or shortly after their surrender, suggesting that they are being granted exemption from prosecution. Given that such measures do not fit within the framework of any legal provisions, they can only be described as arbitrary. Moreover, no investigations appear to be conducted into what human rights abuses, such as killings of civilians, these former armed group members may have committed. Amnesty International has learnt that some armed group members who have surrendered to the authorities since 13 January 2000 have been given an official certificate, bearing their name, photograph and dossier number, to prove that they are exempt from prosecution. Significantly, the certificate reportedly bears no date, in a

possible attempt to conceal the fact that exemptions from prosecution continue to be granted outside of any legal framework. The organization has also received information that some of those who give themselves up are given back their weapons after leaving armed groups in order to defend themselves against former comrades.” [26c] (p43)

COMMISSIONS OF INQUIRY

- 10.08 Amnesty International, in its September 2003 report, ‘Steps towards change or empty promises?’, states, regarding Commissions of Inquiry:

“Commissions of inquiry which have been set up in Algeria in recent years have often been subject to the strongest criticism from the national and international human rights community. They have generally lacked independence and authority or failed to carry out the mission assigned to them. Most importantly, the Algerian authorities have systematically neglected their duty to investigate the mass human rights abuses that have taken place since the early 1990s despite repeated calls by UN human rights mechanisms and local and international human rights organizations.” [26c] (p18)

NATIONAL RECONCILIATION PROCESS

- 10.09 Human Rights Watch (HRW), as part of a group of international human rights organisations (Amnesty International, Human Rights Watch, the International Center for Transitional Justice, the International Commission of Jurists and the International Federation for Human Rights), in a news release of 14 April 2005, entitled ‘Amnesty law risks legalizing impunity for crimes against humanity’, states:

“President Abdelaziz Bouteflika is proposing an amnesty law as a step towards ‘national reconciliation.’ He has recently declared that he envisages a referendum on the law ‘as soon as the necessary conditions are satisfied.’

“... This proposal comes after years of failure by the Algerian authorities to investigate the human rights abuses committed during the internal conflict that began in 1992. This failure is all the more serious in light of the severity and magnitude of these abuses, some of which amount to crimes against humanity.

“ ... In the overwhelming majority of cases, the authorities have not taken action to clarify the circumstances of the crimes and bring the suspected perpetrators to justice, despite the tireless efforts of victims and their families to search for the truth and provide information to the judicial authorities in cases where complaints have been filed.

“In this context, a general amnesty would leave the legacy of the past unresolved and might permanently undermine future prospects for full human rights protection. It would prevent the truth about the crimes of the past from ever emerging in Algerian courts, and thus impede any chances of ensuring that justice and accountability become part of a transition to peace.” [27d]

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REFERENDUM OF 29 SEPTEMBER 2005

- 10.10 A referendum was held by the Algerian Government on 29 September 2005 to approve or reject President Bouteflika's 'Charter for Peace and National Reconciliation'. The CNN news world / election watch page on the referendum summarises the purpose as:

"This referendum was to approve the Draft Charter for Peace and National Reconciliation, which called for implementing measures to strengthen national cohesion in Algeria." [61a]

- 10.11 The same CNN page notes that a popular majority was needed for the referendum to pass and gives the actual wording posed to the voters:

"This referendum asked voters: 'Do you agree with the Draft Charter for Peace and National Reconciliation, which is proposed to you?'" [61a]

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Events before the referendum

Charter for peace and national reconciliation

- 10.12 The draft Charter was unveiled by President Bouteflika on 14 August 2005. A Middle East Online article, dated 15 August 2005 and entitled 'Bouteflika unveils new reconciliation plan', noted:

"The draft calls for 'concrete steps to stop the bloodshed and restore peace' in the north African country after 13 years of unrest while banning the 'exploitation' of Islam for political purposes, Bouteflika was quoted as saying.

"It provides for legal proceedings to be dropped against those Islamic extremists who ended their armed activities and surrendered to authorities after January 13, 2000, when legislation on 'civil reconciliation' took effect." [78c]

- 10.13 The same report adds further detail:

"It provides for legal proceedings to be dropped against those Islamic extremists who ended their armed activities and surrendered to authorities after January 13, 2000, when legislation on 'civil reconciliation' took effect.

"But the draft excludes those involved in mass killings, rape or bomb attacks in public places." The report continued:

"Persons involved in activities of support of terrorism who identify themselves to the competent authorities' will also have legal charges against them dropped, Bouteflika said, adding that the plan provides for sentences to be commuted or reduced in the cases of other individuals who have been tried and found guilty of terrorism." [78c]

NGO concerns

- 10.14 Amnesty International (with Human Rights Watch, the International Center for Transitional Justice, and the International Federation for Human Rights) in a public statement dated 1 March 2006, continued to highlight the aspect of extension to security forces as their main concern, and stated:

“A presidential decree in Algeria will consecrate impunity for crimes under international law and other human rights abuses, and even muzzle open debate by criminalizing public discussion about the nation’s decade-long conflict.” [26h] (p1)

The referendum and its conduct

- 10.15 The CNN news world/election watch page on the referendum gave the electorate as 18,310,125 people out of a total population of 32,531,853 (July 2005 estimate). [61a]

Results

- 10.16 The same CNN report gave the referendum results as 14,054,164 valid ‘Yes’ votes (97.36 per cent of all valid votes cast) and 381,127 valid ‘No’ votes (2.64 per cent). [61a]

Reaction to the referendum

- 10.17 The turnout, and thus the popular support, of the referendum has been questioned in the September-October 2005 issue of the Amnesty International associated UK Algeria Watch:

“Independent estimations of the number of voting people show for the main cities results about 20- 30% less than the official results. The newspaper Le Soir d’Algérie, for example, estimates a participation in the city of Sétif of 50%, in spite of the 90.27% declared by official sources. In w. Annaba independent sources estimate a participation of the 9.86% [sic], in spite of the 89.94% declared by official sources. Abroad, where foreign media observed the participation to the vote, the rate number is less than 36%.” [19a]

- 10.18 A Political Risk Services (PRS) Group article, dated 1 November 2005 and headed ‘Algeria – and the winner is Bouteflika’, suggests a political context for the referendum, stating:

“The protection of members of the armed forces from prosecution for wartime abuses will leave the military indebted to the president, while a provision of the charter banning Islamist parties sidelines one of the most important potential sources of organized opposition.” [40a]

Events after the referendum

- 10.19 The US State Department’s Country Reports on Terrorism, dated 30 April 2007, states on the effect of the reconciliation:

“The final stages of implementation of the national reconciliation, a major policy initiative of Algerian President Abdelaziz Bouteflika, took place in 2006, and sought to bring closure to the near civil war between Algeria’s secular government and Islamic terrorists in the 1990s. A cornerstone of this initiative

was the six-month amnesty program from March to September 2006 for repentant imprisoned or active terrorists who had not committed bombings, massacres, or rapes. As of September, over 2,300 convicted terrorists were released and more than 350 terrorists surrendered to authorities in order to benefit from the amnesty; statistics on the recidivism of these individuals were not available. Despite a September deadline for amnesty, the government has quietly extended the amnesty grace period indefinitely. In addition, some members of the banned political party Islamic Salvation Front returned to the country from self-imposed exile as part of the amnesty.

“The National Reconciliation policy was an effort to resolve divisions that had resulted during more than a decade of civil strife. The amnesty, however, paradoxically appeared to harden the resolve of the remaining terrorists. Indeed, there were reports of terrorists killing cohorts who surrendered to the authorities. During the March through September amnesty period, 199 security officials and civilians were killed, compared to 107 during the rest of the year. Perhaps as a show of defiance and renewed determination, the AQIM/GSPC was responsible for the death of 78 security officials and civilians in October and November, immediately after the amnesty period ended.” [6p] (Chapter 2)

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MILITARY SERVICE

- 11.01 The Central Intelligence Agency (CIA) World Factbook, updated 19 July 2007, notes that as of 2005, the main branches of the military were National Popular Army (ANP; includes Land Forces), Algerian National Navy (MRA), Air Force (QJJ) and Territorial Air Defense Force, combining a potential force of males aged 19-49 of 8,033,049, of whom 6,590,079 were deemed fit for military service (figures 2005 estimates). [2a] (Military)

- 11.02 An article in the Arab Reform Bulletin titled 'Algeria: Bouteflika and Civil-Military Relations' published June 2007 states:

"Since his rise to power, President Abdelaziz Bouteflika has struggled to sever the traditional link between the power structure and the military. Even during his 1999 presidential campaign - in which the army supported him and all other candidates withdrew - Bouteflika sent messages to the army that civil-military relations needed to change. The army, according to Bouteflika, had arrogated to itself extra-constitutional powers during the exceptional and painful circumstances of the civil war. According to the constitution, Bouteflika said, the army should be under the president's authority.

"During his first term in office Bouteflika maneuvered to diminish military involvement in politics. At the beginning of his presidency, Bouteflika struggled to control cabinet appointments, at one point protesting that he would not be 'three-quarters of a president.' Looking to boost his popularity, Bouteflika publicly repudiated the cancellation of the 1991 elections, calling it 'an act of violence.' He gradually began to place personal and political allies in top posts in the ministries and regional institutions, while launching a process of shifts in the army high command to acquire loyalty among those most able to undermine his efforts.

"With time, Bouteflika's efforts began to tell. By May 2003, Chief of Staff Lt. Gen. Muhammad Lamari announced that the army would not have a preferred candidate in the 2004 presidential election and that it would be prepared even to accept an Islamist as president if he were committed to upholding the democratic institutions of the Algerian state. Bouteflika was re-elected, and took advantage of his constitutional prerogatives by creating the position of General Secretary within the Ministry of Defense. Another important indication that Bouteflika was asserting his authority came with the official resignation of Lamari, who was then replaced by Bouteflika's close friend Major General Ahmed Salah Gaid. Bouteflika was also able to consolidate his authority over the Ministry of Defense by appointing retired General Abdelmalek Guenaizia to the newly created post of Deputy Minister.

"As Bouteflika nears the end of his second term, it is clear that he has diminished the military's power over the presidency." [91]

CONSCRIPTION

- 11.03 The Central Intelligence Agency (CIA) World Factbook, updated 19 July 2007, estimates that 374,639 young men reached military age annually. The source continues to state that as of 2006, the conscript service obligation is 18 months to be performed between the ages of 19 and 30 years of age. [2a] (Military)

- 11.04 Amnesty International states in the 1 June 2003 report, 'Algeria: asylum-seekers fleeing a continuing human rights crisis':

"At the end of 1999, the Ministry of Defence announced that those over 27 years of age who had not performed military service, including those who had deferred or evaded the draft, would have their situation 'regularized'. The Ministry has subsequently extended the age range of those affected by this process to include all those born before or during 1980. At the time announced by the authorities for a given age group, those falling within it who have submitted applications reportedly have their cases examined on a case-by-case basis. After this a decision is made on whether they will receive a document declaring that they are exempt from military service. However, the authorities' criteria for deciding who should obtain exemption from military service under this scheme have not been made public and, to Amnesty International's knowledge, the names of those so exempted have not been published. It is therefore not possible to determine precisely who has been or will be exempted.

"Meanwhile, military service remains compulsory for all men and currently lasts 18 months. The minimum age for compulsory recruitment is 19. After completing service soldiers must remain available to the Ministry of Defence for five years and may be recalled at any time. Thereafter, they form part of the reserve forces for a further 20 years. Conscripts can normally postpone service until they are 27 years old in order to complete studies. Draft evasion in times of peace is punishable by up to five years' imprisonment according to the Code de justice militaire (Military Justice Code), article 254." [26a] (p14)

- 11.05 Jane's Sentinel states that:

"Conscription is still used each year to bring up to 80,000 young men into the army for 18 months of service. This includes six months of basic army training, with the remainder served with the regular army, often undertaking civilian aid projects and, especially during the period of the insurgency, internal security operations. There are no conscripts assigned to the air force or navy." (Jane's Sentinel Country Risk Assessments: Algeria. Posted 13 August 2007) [83e]

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DESERTERS

- 11.06 The Washington Post, in an article entitled 'US is faulted over Algerian's detention; UN panel calls confinement 'arbitrary'', published on 22 March 2005, states:

"Human rights organizations, including Amnesty International, have said that deserters from the Algerian military sometimes face 'torture and execution upon return.' The Algerian Embassy has in the past insisted that its military has not executed a deserter since 1962." [46a]

- 11.07 The Canadian IRB / CISR issued a Response to Information Request (RIR) dated 18 May 2005 that noted:

“An undated article posted on the Algeria-Watch Website stated that [translation] ‘a large proportion of youths’ avoid military service without even obtaining an exemption or stay (yellow card). According to the article, they wait - sometimes until their thirties - for a possible amnesty (Algeria-Watch n.d.). The article also stated that these youths are eventually forced to join the army after ignoring many notices to report for duty (ibid.).”

“According to the Website for the Algerian consulate in Saint-Étienne, France, national service regularization does not apply to deserters, [translation] ‘under the 1999 presidential measures, which stipulate that Algerian citizens born before 31 December 1981 no longer have to justify their national service status at border stations upon leaving Algeria’ (n.d.).” [8f]

11.08 The Canadian IRB / CISR issued a further RIR dated 25 May 2005 that noted:

“The Website of the Algerian Embassy in Ottawa indicates that regularization of national service status is offered to draft dodgers from 2002, that is, those who were born in 1982, and to [translation] ‘citizens from earlier groups who were late to regularize their status and who completed or abandoned their studies by 31 December 2001’ (n.d.a). However, according to the consular section at the Algerian Embassy, this regularization is offered to people born in 1983 and earlier (24 May 2005).

“Persons concerned must report to Algerian authorities with their birth certificate, a piece of identification, their consular registration card, two photographs and a copy of their diploma (or a certificate indicating abandonment of studies) (Algerian Embassy n.d.a). The embassy also indicated that a certificate of activities and an application form, available on the embassy’s Website in Arabic only, must be filled out (ibid.).

“In 24 May 2005 correspondence, the consular section of the Algerian Embassy in Ottawa indicated that the process to regularize an individual’s national service status is the same in Algeria as it is abroad.” [8g]

11.09 The same RIR also states:

“According to the consular section at the Algerian Embassy in Ottawa, two types of documents are issued to people who have regularized their situation: a deferment card (for individuals who are continuing their studies and who have provided evidence of that) and an exemption card (for individuals whose status has been regularized) (24 May 2005).” [8g]

Another RIR, dated 13 May 2005, gives descriptions and further details of these documents. [8h]

In a follow-up to the RIR of 18 May 2005, an RIR dated 7 June 2005 notes the punishments for draft evaders as being:

“... if an Algerian is convicted of draft evasion, sentences could entail incarceration for a maximum of 36 months, 18 months of military service, or both. The courts tend to impose ‘more lenient sentences, especially for those who merely sought to avoid doing their service, and the latter are, therefore, often only sentenced to do their normal service term’.” [8j]

And continues on punishments for deserters:

"Deserters are dealt with much more severely than draft evaders. If deserters under 55 years of age are caught, they can be taken before a military tribunal for trial. 'The penalty can be 6 months' to 5 years' incarceration for junior military personnel and up to 10 years for an officer, after which he may still be required to finish his military service.' However, Brian Davis could not provide any information 'on how tribunals are presently deciding these types of cases'." [8j]

11.10 Similar information about national service is posted on the Algerian Consulate, London's website. [42b] Algerian passports and identity cards may be renewed at the Algerian Consulate, with the website giving the documentation required. [42a]

11.11 The USSD Report for 2006 notes, in relation to military tribunals:

"Military courts in Oran, Blida, Constantine, and Bechar try cases involving state security, espionage, and other security-related offenses involving military personnel and civilians. Each tribunal consists of three civilian judges and two military judges. Although the president of each court is a civilian, the chief judge is a military officer. Defense lawyers must be accredited by the military tribunal to appear. Public attendance at the trial is at the discretion of the tribunal. Appeals are made directly to the Supreme Court. The military tribunals tried cases in 2005 and during the year, but the tribunals did not disclose information on proceedings." [6i] (Section 1e)

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JUDICIARY

STRUCTURE

12.01 The CIA World Factbook, updated 19 July 2007, summarises as follows:

“Legal system: socialist, based on French and Islamic law; judicial review of legislative acts in ad hoc Constitutional Council composed of various public officials, including several Supreme Court justices; has not accepted compulsory ICJ [International Court of Justice] jurisdiction.” [2a] (Government)

12.02 The EuropaWorld website (accessed 14 August 2007) states regarding the court system:

“The highest court of justice is the Supreme Court (Cour suprême) in Algiers, established in 1963, which is served by 150 judges. Justice is exercised through 183 courts (tribunaux) and 31 appeal courts (cours d’appel), grouped on a regional basis. New legislation, promulgated in March 1997, provided for the eventual establishment of 214 courts and 48 appeal courts. The Court of Accounts (Cour des comptes) was established in 1979.” [1k] (Judicial System)

12.03 The EuropaWorld website (accessed 14 August 2007) notes:

“In February 1993 three special courts were established to try suspects accused of terrorist offences; however, the courts were abolished in February 1995. Constitutional amendments introduced in November 1996 provided for the establishment of a High State Court (empowered to judge the President of the Republic in cases of high treason, and the Head of Government for crimes and offences), and a State Council to regulate the administrative judiciary. In addition, a Conflicts Tribunal has been established to adjudicate in disputes between the Supreme Court and the State Council.” [1k] (Judicial System)

12.04 The USSD report for 2006 states:

“Most trials are public and non-jury. Defendants are presumed innocent and have the right to be present and to consult with an attorney, provided at public expense if necessary. Defendants can confront or question witnesses against them or present witnesses and evidence on their behalf. Defendants also have the right to appeal. A woman’s testimony is equal to that of a man’s.

“In August 2005, the government began a program designed to eliminate judicial corruption. A National Council of Magistrates met twice (and twice in 2005) to take disciplinary measures, resulting in the investigation of more than 40 magistrates. In December, 12 judges went before the council for abuse of power, lack of reserve, and unethical relationships. The results of the investigations had not been made public at year’s end.” [6i] (Section 1e)

SHAR’IA

12.05 The USSD report for 2006 adds, regarding the effect of Shar’ia:

“The Family Code, adopted in 1984 and amended in February 2005 by presidential decree, is based in large part on Shar’ia. The Family Code

prohibits Muslim women from marrying non-Muslims, although this regulation was not always enforced. Amendments in February 2005 to the Nationality Code allowed a woman to marry a foreigner and transmit citizenship and nationality in her own right to both her children and spouse. The Family Code does not restrict Muslim men from marrying non-Muslim women. Under both Shari'a and civil law, children born to a Muslim father are Muslim, regardless of the mother's religion." [6i] (Section 5)

12.06 The USSD report for 2006 states: "Regular criminal courts can try cases involving security-related offenses at the local level." The same report adds: "The judiciary is composed of civil courts, which hear cases involving civilians facing charges not related to security or terrorism; and the military courts, which can also hear cases involving civilians facing security and terrorism charges." [6i] (Section 1e)

12.07 Amnesty International (AI) reported in 'Steps towards change or empty promises?' of September 2003:

"The Algerian authorities announced legislative changes in June 2001 as an important step in bringing domestic law into line with international standards, pointing to textual changes to strengthen the presumption of innocence; increase the control of law enforcement agents by the judiciary; bolster the rights of detainees held in the custody of the security forces; limit the recourse to pre-trial detention; and establish the right of an individual wrongfully held in pre-trial detention to compensation. The authorities have stressed that more reform projects are currently at the planning stage." [26c] (p6)

12.08 AI also stated in the same report of September 2003:

"However, Amnesty International's assessment to date is that many of the new safeguards had yet to be translated into practice. While the amendments should strengthen the rights of detainees held in the custody of the security forces, they have not impacted on the ongoing problems of secret detention and torture." [26c] (p6)

The interim report of the AI mission to Algeria, May 2005, highlights allegations of torture at the hands of the security forces as an ongoing concern. [26f] (p2)

12.09 The USSD report for 2006 states that:

"Although the constitution provides for an independent judiciary, executive branch decrees and influence limited judicial independence. The constitution provides for the right to a fair trial; however, in practice, authorities sometimes did not respect legal provisions regarding defendants' rights, and denied due process. Defendants and their attorneys were sometimes denied access to government-held evidence relevant to their cases.

"In February 2005, the Superior Council of Judges permanently dismissed and disbarred Judge Mohamed Ras El Ain at a disciplinary hearing that did not afford full due process. Human rights lawyers and local and international press reported that he was accused of criticizing the politicization of the judiciary. Ras El Ain maintained that the judicial system had been abused to serve the interests of a political party." [6i] (Section 1e)

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ARREST AND DETENTION – LEGAL RIGHTS

STANDARD DETENTION PROVISIONS

13.01 The USSD report for 2006 states, with regards to arrest and initial detention:

“Police must obtain a summons from the prosecutor’s office to require a suspect to appear in a police station for preliminary questioning. Summonses are also used to notify and require the accused and/or the victim(s) to attend a court proceeding or hearing.

“The government issues warrants under three different circumstances: to bring an individual from work or home to a court; to execute a prosecutor’s approved request to place a person into custody pending trial; or to arrest a suspect considered to be a flight risk. Police may make arrests without a warrant if they witness an offense taking place. Lawyers reported that procedures for warrants and summonses were usually carried out properly.

“The constitution specifies that a suspect may be held in detention for up to 48 hours without charge. If more time is required for gathering additional evidence, the police may request that the prosecutor extend the suspect’s detention to 72 hours. In practice, the security forces generally adhered to the 48-hour limit in non-terrorism cases.” [6i] (Section 1d)

STANDARD PRE-TRIAL DETENTION

13.02 The Amnesty International report, ‘Steps towards change or empty promises?’ of September 2003 notes:

“Similarly, changes to the Criminal Procedure Code in June 2001 significantly extended the legally permitted period of pre-trial detention. Previously, anyone accused of a crime, whatever its nature, could be held for no longer than 16 months while their case was being investigated by the examining magistrate. Now, those accused of crimes punishable by sentences of at least 20 years’ imprisonment can be held for 20 months while their case is investigated by the examining magistrate; those accused of ‘crimes considered to be terrorist or subversive acts’ for 36 months; and those accused of a ‘transnational crime’ for up to 60 months. According to the UN Human Rights Committee, pre-trial detention should be an exception and as short as possible.” [26c] (p7)

EXCEPTIONAL PROVISIONS (GARDE À VUE EXTENSIONS)

13.03 The Amnesty International report ‘Steps towards change or empty promises?’ of September 2003 adds:

“Algerian law also retains many of the elements of emergency legislation, drawn up in 1992, which were incorporated into the Criminal Procedure Code and Penal Code when they were revised in 1995, some of which violate international standards. A significant example as far as detainees’ rights are concerned is the time limit of 12 days during which suspects in crimes categorized as ‘acts of terrorism or subversion’ can be held in garde à vue. Amnesty International is concerned that the time limit contravenes, for instance, the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights, to which

Algeria is a state party. Article 9 requires anyone arrested on a criminal charge to be brought 'promptly' before judicial authorities. The UN Human Rights Committee has further stated that delays in bringing anyone arrested or detained before a judge or other officer authorized by law to exercise judicial power must not exceed a few days." [26c] (p8)

HUMAN RIGHTS REPORTS

- 13.04 The USSD report for 2006 stated that: "Prolonged pretrial detention remained a problem. The law does not provide a person in detention with the right to a prompt judicial determination of the legality of the detention. Persons accused of acts against the security of the state, including terrorism, may be held in pretrial detention as long as 20 months, according to the Code of Penal Procedure; the prosecutor must show cause every four months for continuing pretrial detention.

"Judges rarely refused prosecutor requests for extending preventive detention. Detention can be appealed to a higher court but is rarely overturned. If the detention is overturned, the defendant can request compensation. In December 2005, the minister of justice acknowledged publicly that prosecutors sometimes abused investigative detention." [6i] (Section 1d)

- 13.05 Amnesty International observed in the report, 'Steps towards change or empty promises?' of September 2003 that legal safeguards to protect detainees have often not been respected. [26c] (p5,7) The same report states:

"The authorities' almost routine failure to respect domestic legislation protecting detainees' rights contributes directly to the persistence of the problem of secret and unacknowledged detention. ... It is when an individual is held on suspicion of crimes categorized as 'acts of terrorism or subversion' that their detention outside the protection of the law becomes a particularly serious matter. With the legal limit of garde à vue set at 12 days, the detainee's physical security is put in grave danger, as the results of Amnesty International's research show." [26c] (p8,9)

See also [Missing people](#)

DOUBLE JEOPARDY

- 13.06 The Office of the UNHCR's website relays that Algeria is a signatory of (as of 10 December 1968) and has ratified (as of 12 September 1989) the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights, agreed New York, 16 December 1966, and thus of Article 14.7: "No one shall be liable to be tried or punished again for an offence for which he has already been finally convicted or acquitted in accordance with the law and penal procedure of each country." [88a] [88b]

IN ABSENTIA CONVICTIONS

- 13.07 An article on Reuters Alertnet titled 'Top Algeria rebels get death sentence in absentia', dated 18 March 2007 states that:

“An Algerian court has sentenced to death in absentia two former leaders of an al Qaeda-aligned rebel group for forming ‘an armed terrorist group’ and carrying out attacks, state radio said on Sunday.

“Hassan Hattab, former leader of the Salafist Group for Preaching and Combat (GSPC) and Mokhtar Belmokhtar, a senior member of the same armed movement, were condemned to death on Saturday at a court in Batna province, 430 km (270 miles) east of the capital Algiers, the radio said.” [17b]

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PRISON CONDITIONS

14.01 The USSD report for 2006 states:

“According to the UN Development Program (UNDP), prison conditions were difficult but improving...

“... There were approximately 51,000 inmates in 127 prisons. Overcrowding was a problem in some prisons. The quality of medical care was uneven, according to international observers, and depended upon the prison. In 2005 there were hunger strikes in several prisons to protest conditions and the length of pretrial detentions, but reports of such strikes diminished sharply during the year. Independent human rights observers reported that conditions in prisons generally improved during the year. According to press reports, the justice minister ordered an investigation into prison conditions as a result of prisoner complaints. Also according to press reports, the government fired prison guards at two prisons and reshuffled administrations at 18 prisons.” [6i] (Section 1c)

14.02 The USSD report for 2006 notes: “In May and July, President Bouteflika pardoned 200 journalists who had been convicted of defamation, including those serving sentences. However, journalists involved in ongoing prosecutions for defamation were ineligible for pardons.” [6i] (Section 1d)

POLITICAL PRISONERS

14.03 Following Bouteflika's election as president in April 1999 he announced “... a programme of dialogue and concessions to ‘moderate’ Islamists. This included the release of thousands of imprisoned activists and the consolidation of the October 1997 ceasefire. (Jane's Sentinel Country Risk Assessments: Algeria. Posted 18 May 2007) [83b] The further release of political prisoners followed in September 2005, when following a referendum, a large number of political prisoners were granted an amnesty under President Bouteflika's Charter for Peace and National Reconciliation. [6i] (Section 1b) The USSD report for 2006 stated that there were reports of political prisoners and political detainees, these being mainly journalists serving prison sentences for defamation against government officials. [6i] (Section 1e)

See also [Restrictions in practice](#)

INDEPENDENT MONITORING OF PRISONS

14.04 The USSD report for 2006 noted that:

“The government permitted the International Committee of the Red Cross (ICRC), the UNDP and the Red Crescent Society to visit regular, non-military prisons. The ICRC declined to report its findings. The government denied independent human rights observers visits to military and high-security prisons and detention centers.” [6i] (Section 1c)

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DEATH PENALTY

- 15.01 The abolitionist NGO group Hands Off Cain website gives the following details regarding Algeria and the death penalty in 2007:

“Algeria’s laws prescribe the death penalty for a range of crimes including ordinary crimes. In 1992 the scope of the death penalty was extended to terrorist offences. The [1966] Penal Code provides for the application of the death penalty for serious offences including: treason and espionage, attempts to change the regime or actions aimed at incitement, destruction of territory, sabotage to public and economic utilities, massacres and slaughters, participation in armed bands or in insurrectionary movements, counterfeiting, murder, acts of torture or cruelty, kidnapping and aggravated theft. On April 3, 2006, Algeria approved a new criminal code that did not scrap the death penalty. It had seemed as though the government was intent on abolishing capital punishment, however, the new code retained a full version of ‘Article 5’ foreseeing its application. The political events of 1991/92 which culminated in an annulment of the vote following the election of the Islamic Front, and subsequent acts of terrorism, led to the declaration of a state of emergency and the introduction of special laws in September 1992 (anti-terrorism decree) extending the application of the death penalty. This special decree was almost entirely included in the ordinary law of 1995 that is currently applicable.” [47a]

- 15.02 The Hands Off Cain website continues, regarding the effective moratorium on the death penalty:

“Former President Liamine Zeroual declared a moratorium on executions in December 1993 and no executions have been carried out since. The last executions took place in August 1993, when seven armed Islamists were executed. They had been condemned to death for a 1992 attack on Algiers airport by special courts, which have since been dissolved.” [47a]

- 15.03 The Hands Off Cain website continues:

“In 2001 President Bouteflika pardoned 7,000 prisoners and 115 inmates condemned to death had their sentences commuted to life imprisonment. On June 27, 2004 Justice Minister Tayeb Belaiz pledged to abandon the death penalty for all but serious crimes such as terrorism and treason, media reports said.” [47a]

See also [Death penalty and extradition](#)

- 15.04 The Hands Off Cain website adds, regarding continuing use of the death sentence:

“In 2003, 14 death sentences were handed down by the country’s courts.” [47a]

“June 19, 2007: an Algerian court handed death sentences to 13 Islamists, the Algerian News Agency reported. The condemned, who were in absentia from the court in Boumerdes, east of the capital Algiers, were found guilty of ‘belonging to an armed terrorist group’, kidnapping, issuing death threats, and murder. (*Sources: Independent Online, 20/06/2007*)” [47a]

“June 18, 2007: in Algeria, 24 Islamists were sentenced to death in a court in Boumerdes, east of the capital Algiers. They were awarded capital punishment for ‘belonging to and creating an armed terrorist group, trying to commit premeditated murder, and planting explosives’. No death sentence has been carried out in Algeria since August 1993. (Sources: *Independent Online*, 20/06/2007)” [47a]

“March 17, 2007: an Algerian court in Batna province sentenced to death in absentia two former leaders of an al Qaeda-aligned rebel group, state radio said. Hassan Hattab is the former leader of the Salafist Group for Preaching and Combat (GSPC), and Mokhtar Belmokhtar is a senior group member. The GSPC this year renamed itself al Qaeda Organisation in the Islamic Maghreb to boost its links to al Qaeda. Hattab and Belmokhtar were among 27 Islamist militants sentenced to death for ‘forming an armed terrorist group and possession of weapons’ and carrying out armed attacks. It was not immediately clear whether the 25 others were present in court or, like Hattab and Belmokhtar, on the run. (Sources: *Reuters*, 18/03/2007)” [47a]

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POLITICAL AFFILIATION

FREEDOM OF POLITICAL EXPRESSION

16.01 The USSD report for 2006 states:

“The government actively monitored the communications of political opponents, journalists, human rights groups, and suspected terrorists.” [6i] (Section 1f)

16.02 The USSD report for 2006 continued to report that:

“Article 10 of the constitution provides citizens with the right to change their government freely. In 2004 citizens exercised this right through a multiparty presidential election held on the basis of universal suffrage. The constitution mandates presidential elections every five years and limits the incumbent to two terms. The election was generally transparent.” [6i] (Section 3)

16.03 The USSD report further noted that:

“Opposition candidates also complained that the Ministry of Interior (MOI) regularly blocked registered parties from holding meetings, denied them access to larger and better equipped government conference rooms, and pressured hotels into not making conference rooms available, while facilitating the activities of the pro-Bouteflika FLN. Opposition candidates had access to the state-controlled media during the official three-week election campaign period, but not before or after the campaign.” [6i] (Section 3)

FREEDOM OF ASSOCIATION AND ASSEMBLY

16.04 The USSD report for 2006 states:

“Article 41 of the constitution provides for the right of assembly; however, the emergency decree and government practice continued to sharply curtail this right. A 2000 decree continued to ban demonstrations in Algiers. Citizens and organizations were required to obtain permits from the appointed local governor before holding public meetings. The government frequently granted licenses to political parties, NGOs, and other groups to hold indoor rallies, although licenses were often granted on the eve of the event, thereby impeding publicity and outreach. After repeated difficulties in 2005 in obtaining permission to hold outdoor meetings, the Algerian League for the Defence of Human Rights (LADDH or ALDHR) decided to hold indoor meetings. Groups opposing the Charter on Peace and Reconciliation also had difficulty securing permission to hold public gatherings. In September 2005, a gathering of the families of the disappeared in Constantine was violently disbanded by the police. In Algiers the same month, families of the victims of terrorism gathered in front of the prime minister’s office for three consecutive weeks to protest.

“During the year the government broke up numerous marches, protests, and demonstrations outside the capital.” [6i] (Section 2b)

16.05 The Freedom House Annual Report 2007 states:

“The country’s ongoing state of emergency places restrictions on freedom of assembly and association. Government permits, sometimes difficult to obtain, are required for public meetings. A decree bans demonstrations in Algiers, although a number of groups have violated this ban with little or no consequence. Security forces occasionally disperse peaceful demonstrations, sometimes violently.” [29a] (Political Rights and Civil Liberties)

- 16.06 Likewise, the testimony of Mr Leslie Campbell, of the National Democratic Institute, at the 3 March 2005 US House of Representatives IRC/SITN hearings states:

“Today, of the emergency law provisions that were imposed in 1992 and remain in place, most of those relating to terrorism are no longer being utilized; for example, curfews. However, the law is utilized to limit the political opposition, especially in terms of meetings, public meetings and the like.” [10a] (p10)

- 16.07 The USSD report for 2006 states, “A 2001 ban on marches and demonstrations in Algiers remained in effect.” [6i] (Section 6b)

- 16.08 The USSD report for 2006 adds that the protests of the families of the ‘disappeared’ have continued:

“... SOS Disparus resumed its weekly gathering in front of the CNCPPDH [National Consultative Commission for the Promotion and Protection of Human Rights] headquarters to urge President Bouteflika to find a different solution to the problem of the disappeared.” [6i] (Section 2b)

- 16.09 The USSD report for 2006 further notes:

“On June 28, in the Tiaret province, more than 300 young men gathered in the streets and marched, blocking the main national highway in the province to protest the absence of water, gas, and secure and paved roads. Police attempted to break up the protest, but riots lasted for three days. One individual died as a result of tripping over a felled lamp pole, 67 persons were arrested for vandalism, and 34 persons were injured. On the third day of the conflict, the tension escalated when demonstrators asked local officials to release all of the incarcerated youths. Due to their status as minors, 57 youths were released after less than one week of detention, while the remaining 10 served prison sentences ranging from one to four months.

“On July 22, the Movement for a Society of Peace (MSP), a party in the governing coalition, organized a march in Algiers in support of the Lebanese and Palestinian people. When security forces attempted to prevent the march, violence occurred. Fifteen demonstrators were arrested, but were released the same day following negotiations between police and MSP officials.” [6i] (Section 2b)

- 16.10 Amnesty International, in the interim report, published on 25 May 2005, of its fact-finding mission to Algeria on 6–25 May 2005, states:

“It [the AI delegation] drew the attention of interlocutors to the difficulties experienced by associations when trying to organise meetings, public

activities or demonstrations, including the ban on demonstrations to raise awareness about human rights” [26f]

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Trades Unions

16.11 The USSD report for 2006 states:

“The constitution allows workers to form and join unions of their choice but requires workers to obtain government approval to form a union. The law on labor unions requires the labor ministry to approve or disapprove a union application within 30 days and allows for the creation of autonomous unions. However, the government may invalidate a union’s legal status if its objectives are determined to be contrary to the established institutional system, public order, good morals, or the laws or regulations in force. There were no legal restrictions on a worker’s right to join a union. Approximately two-thirds of the labor force belonged to unions. There was only one labor confederation, the General Union of Algerian Workers (UGTA). The UGTA includes national unions that are specialized by sector.

“The law prohibits discrimination by employers against union members and organizers and provides mechanisms for resolving trade union complaints of antiunion practices by employers. It also permits unions to recruit members at the workplace. Although unions may form and join federations or confederations, in practice, attempts by new unions to form federations or confederations have been obstructed by delaying administrative maneuvers. Since early 1996, the Autonomous Unions Confederation has attempted unsuccessfully to organize the autonomous unions, and it functioned without official status. The law permits unions to affiliate with international labor bodies and develop relations with foreign labor groups. For example, the UGTA is a member of the International Confederation of Free Trade Unions. However, the law prohibits unions from associating with political parties and also prohibits unions from receiving funds from foreign sources. The courts are empowered to dissolve unions that engaged in illegal activities.” [6i] (Section 6a)

Strikes

16.12 The USSD report for 2006 states:

“The law provides for the right to strike, and workers exercised this right in practice, subject to some conditions. The law provides for collective bargaining for all unions, and the government permitted the exercise of this right in practice for authorized unions. Under the state of emergency decree, the government can require public and private sector workers to remain at work in the event of an unauthorized or illegal strike. According to the law on industrial relations, workers may strike only after 14 days of mandatory conciliation or mediation. On occasion, the government offered to mediate disputes. The law states that decisions reached in mediation are binding on both parties. If no agreement is reached in mediation, the workers may strike legally after they vote by secret ballot to do so. A minimum level of public services must be maintained during public-sector service strikes.

"The law provides that all public demonstrations, protests, and strikes must receive prior government authorization. Strikes and labor gatherings occurred throughout the year in various sectors, including the construction, medical, port facility, education, and customs sectors. A 2001 ban on marches and demonstrations in Algiers remained in effect." [6i] (Section 6b)

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OPPOSITION GROUPS AND POLITICAL ACTIVISTS

Front Islamique Du Salut (Islamic Salvation Front) (FIS)

- 16.13 The Norwegian Refugee Council in its 4 July 2006 report 'Algeria: return continues amid improved security' adds the following summary:

"Violence in Algeria was triggered by an army-backed coup in January 1992 to block the electoral victory of the Islamic Salvation Front (FIS) over the ruling National Liberation Front (FLN), which had ruled without a break since driving out the French colonialists in 1962. An army-backed High State Committee was set up in January 1992. The FIS was dissolved the following month and thousands of activists arrested." [54b] (p3)

- 16.14 Mr Lorenzo Vidino, of the Investigative Project, at the 3 March 2005 US House of Representatives IRC / SITN hearings stated that the FIS was a coalition party of about 15 different parties, adding: "Some of them were definitely radicals and some of them were veterans of the Afghan war. Some of them are parties that fought the Algerian Government in the 1980s. Some of them were more moderate forces who actually somehow started negotiations with the Government in 1993 and 1994." [10a] (p39-40)

- 16.15 The USSD report for 2006 notes: "Membership in the Islamic Salvation Front (FIS), a political party banned in 1992, remained illegal." [6i] (Section 2b) Amnesty International noted in June 2003: "Members or sympathizers of the banned Front Islamique du Salut (FIS), Islamic Salvation Front, as well as members of their families remain vulnerable to human rights abuses. However, it is not always clear whether the abuses are being committed against individuals on account of their association with the FIS or for other reasons." [26a] (p16)

- 16.16 The Europa World website (accessed 15 August 2007) records that "In early July 2003 the two leaders of the proscribed FIS, Abbassi Madani and Ali Belhadj, were released, after having completed their 12-year gaol sentences. However, upon their release both men were issued with court orders prohibiting them from: engaging in any political activity; holding meetings; establishing a political, cultural, charitable or religious association; voting or standing as candidates in any election." [1h] (Recent History)

See also [Political system Annex B - Political organisations](#)

FREEDOM OF SPEECH AND MEDIA

- 17.01 The USSD report for 2006 summarises the situation regarding freedom of speech as follows:

“The constitution provides for freedom of speech and press; however, the government restricted these rights in practice.

“Individuals generally were able to criticize the government privately without reprisal. However, citizens were less inclined to criticize the government in public. The government attempted to impede criticism by monitoring political meetings.” [6i] (Section 2a)

- 17.02 Amnesty International (AI) expressed concern, in the document ‘New amnesty law will ensure atrocities go unpunished’, published 1 March 2006, over the provisions of the new charter that would restrict the freedom of expression on the topic of the 1990s conflict:

“Perhaps most ominously, the new legislation seeks to end not only prosecutions for crimes of the past, but even public debate about them. Article 46 states:

‘Anyone who, by speech, writing, or any other act, uses or exploits the wounds of the National Tragedy to harm the institutions of the Democratic and Popular Republic of Algeria, to weaken the state, or to undermine the good reputation of its agents who honorably served it, or to tarnish the image of Algeria internationally, shall be punished by three to five years in prison and a fine of 250,000 to 500,000 dinars.’

“This provision threatens the right of victims and their families, human rights defenders, journalists, and any other Algerians to document, protest, or comment critically on the conduct of state security forces during the years of the internal conflict. It even threatens to penalize families of the ‘disappeared’ who continue to campaign for disclosing the truth about the fate of their relatives. At a time when Algerian authorities have been aggressively prosecuting journalists working in privately-owned media for independent reporting and critical speech, and when state media allow virtually no dissenting views, laws based on this formulation would further narrow the space for free expression in Algeria, and for pursuit of truths about past events.” [26h] (p3)

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INDEPENDENT MEDIA

- 17.03 The USSD report for 2006 notes:

“The country’s non-state-owned print media consisted of more than 43 daily, 60 weekly, and 17 monthly publications that supported or opposed the government to varying degrees; only six newspapers’ circulation exceeded 10,000 copies. The government owned two French-language and two Arabic-language newspapers. Many political parties, including legal Islamic parties, had access to the independent press and made use of it to express their

views. Opposition parties also disseminated information via the Internet and in communiqués.” [6i] (Section 2a)

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Restrictions in practice

- 17.04 Amnesty International, in the interim report, published on 25 May 2005, of its fact-finding mission to Algeria on 6-25 May 2005, states:

“The [AI] delegation expressed its consternation at the considerable number of judicial proceedings against journalists in recent months, proceedings that regularly result in prison sentences and/or considerable fines. The organisation reminded the government of the importance of a free and responsible press and the government’s duty to respect its international obligations in this area.” [26f]

- 17.05 The Amnesty International report, ‘Steps towards change or empty promises?’ of September 2003, had previously stated comments on legislative changes that impacted upon freedom of expression, and states:

“Some of the changes made to Algeria’s Penal Code in June 2001, for instance, threaten the right to freedom of expression. Penalties for defamation were increased and the definition of the offence was widened. Amendments to the law prescribed prison terms of up to one year and fines of up to 250,000 dinars (approximately US\$ 3,200) for individuals found guilty of defaming the President of the Republic or other state institutions such as the army, parliament or the judiciary, using the written or spoken word or an illustration. The editor and publisher of an offending article or illustration are also liable to be prosecuted. The amendments have been used to inflict harsher penalties on those criticizing state institutions, particularly the military establishment.” [26c] (p7)

- 17.06 The USSD report for 2006 also reports that:

“The law specifies that freedom of speech must respect ‘individual dignity, the imperatives of foreign policy, and the national defense.’ The state of emergency decree gives the government broad authority to restrict these freedoms and take legal action against what it considers to be threats to the state or public order. These regulations were heavily applied throughout the year, and in some instances the government targeted specific media organizations and their staff....” [6i] (Section 2a)

- 17.07 The Freedom House report 2007 states:

“Although Algerian newspapers are aggressive in their coverage of local affairs, the government uses various methods to punish those critical of the regime. The government enforces strict antidefamation laws and influences content through the state-owned printing press and advertising company. In February 2006, the cabinet approved, as part of a decree implementing the Charter for Peace and National Reconciliation, Article 46, which says, ‘[A]nyone who, by speech [or] writing, ... exploits the wounds of the National Tragedy ... shall be punished by three to five years in prison and a fine of

250,000 to 500,00 dinars.’ While television and radio are government controlled, there is little monitoring or restriction of the internet.

“Mohamed Benchicou, publisher of the defunct French-language daily *Le Matin*, was released from prison following the completion of his two-year sentence in June 2006. Benchicou was jailed in 2004 after being found guilty of violating currency laws. Algerian journalists and human rights activists believe that the charges against him were politically motivated and the result of the newspaper’s harsh criticism of Bouteflika and powerful government ministers. Prior to his imprisonment, Benchicou had written a book titled *Bouteflika, An Algerian Fraud*. Earlier in 2006, a reporter for the independent Arabic-language daily *El-Khabar* spent a month in prison after he was found guilty of defaming public officials. In July, following an original announcement in May on World Press Freedom Day, Bouteflika reiterated an amnesty for journalists who were on trial for defamation.

“Like many other Muslim states, Algeria was affected by the fallout from the publication in Denmark in 2006 of cartoons depicting the prophet Muhammad. According to international human rights groups and press reports, two Algerian publications - the weeklies *Panorama* and *Essafir* - were closed and their editors briefly imprisoned after they ran articles that criticized the Danish publication, but also printed the cartoons. According to press reports, several journalists working for two television stations were dismissed after the stations ran footage with images of the cartoons.” [29a] (Political Rights and Civil Liberties)

17.08 The USSD report for 2006 adds:

“The law permits the government to levy fines and to imprison members of the press in a manner that restricts press freedom. The government censored directly and indirectly and intimidated the media into practicing self-censorship. The government used defamation laws to harass and arrest journalists, and the press faced government retaliation for criticizing government officials.

“Charges of defamation are based on the 1990 communication law which protects Islam from defamation, controls access to external information, and outlaws writing that threatens national unity. In 2001, the laws were amended to criminalize writing, cartoons, and speech that insult or offend the president, parliament, judiciary, or armed forces. The Penal Code imposes high fines and prison terms of up to 24 months for defamation or ‘the insult’ of government figures, including the president, members of parliament, judges, members of the military, and ‘any other authority of public order.’ Those convicted face prison sentences that range from 3 to 24 months and fines of \$675 to \$6,750 (50,000 to 500,000 dinars).” [6i] (Section 2a)

17.09 The USSD report for 2006 states with regards to Government control of the newspaper media by limiting printing resources:

“Government economic leverage on the media was considerable. Unlike in previous years, there were no closures of newspapers for debts to the state-owned printing house. All newspapers were printed at government-owned presses, and the government continued to influence the independent press through the state-owned advertising company, *Agence Nationale d’Edition et de Publicite* (ANEP), which decided which independent newspapers could

benefit from advertisements placed by state-owned agencies and companies. ANEP, and therefore the government, controlled the largest source of income for newspapers.

“Most independent newspapers continued to rely on the government’s four publishers for printing presses and newsprint.

“In March, the government banned Boualem Sensal’s book ‘Algiers: Dead Letter Box’ because it criticized the government and suggested fewer people were killed in the war for independence than officially claimed.

“The government continued restrictions on both the local and the international media’s coverage of issues relating to ‘national security and terrorism.’

“In February, the government blocked distribution of two editions of the French newspapers France Soir and Le Monde because they contained the Danish cartoons depicting the Prophet Muhammed.” [6i] (Section 2a)

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Radio and television

17.10 The USSD report for 2006 states:

“Radio and television are government-owned, with coverage favorable to government policy. During the year, opposition spokesmen were generally denied access to the public radio or television. Television access continued to be severely limited for some opposition parties. These limitations were less evident for radio. Presidential candidates received equal amounts of time on the state-owned radio and television channels during the three-week official campaign season prior to the 2004 elections. Restrictions remained in place on the international media, limiting its ability to report freely; however, the restrictions were not as stringently enforced as in previous years. Al-Jazeera’s office remained closed. At year’s end, neither Ahmed Megaache from Al-Arabia nor Ait Larbi from Le Figaro had received accreditation. [6i] (Section 2a)

“Access to print and broadcast media for Tamazight (Berber language) and Amazigh culture continued to grow. Tamazight programming also increased on the non-Berber language channels, as did advertisements in Tamazight on all television and radio channels. Beginning in the 2006-2007 scholastic year, the Tamazight language was officially taught in primary schools, starting in the fourth grade in 17 predominantly Berber provinces.” [6i] (Section 2a)

17.11 The USSD report for 2006 states: “The government limited academic freedom. While a growing number of academic seminars and colloquiums occurred without governmental interference, there were extensive delays in issuing visas to international participants and instances where international experts were denied entrance.” [6i] (Section 2a)

TREATMENT OF JOURNALISTS

17.12 The USSD report for 2006 states:

“... In 2001, the laws were amended to criminalize writing, cartoons, and speech that insult or offend the president, parliament, judiciary, or armed forces. The Penal Code imposes high fines and prison terms of up to 24 months for defamation or ‘the insult’ of government figures, including the president, members of parliament, judges, members of the military, and ‘any other authority of public order.’ Those convicted face prison sentences that range from 3 to 24 months and fines of \$675 to \$6,750 (50,000 to 500,000 dinars)...

“... During the year, 68 press-related cases were tried. In 2005, there were 114 recorded cases of press harassment.

“In May and July, President Bouteflika pardoned all 200 journalists with pending defamation cases or defamation convictions, including 11 sentenced to jail terms in 2005.” [6i] (Section 2a)

17.13 The USSD report for 2006 summarised the Benchicou affair:

“In 2004, Mohamed Benchicou, the managing editor of the opposition paper *Le Matin* and author of a book critical of the president, Bouteflika - *An Algerian Imposter*, was convicted of violating foreign exchange controls in attempting to sell the book. He was sentenced to two years in prison and released in June. He challenged the continued confiscation of his passport, and in September a judge ordered it returned to him.” [6i] (Section 2a)

17.14 The Algeria section in ‘Attacks on the Press 2006’ from the Committee to Protect Journalists (CPJ) website reported that Kamel Bousaad, editor of the pro-Islamist weekly *Errissala*, and Berkane Bouderbala, managing editor of the weekly *Essafir*, were arrested in February after their newspapers published controversial Danish cartoons depicting the Prophet Muhammad. They were released after four weeks in prison, but according to CPJ sources the publications were suspended. In the same month, cartoonist Ali Dilem was sentenced to one year in prison and fined 50,000 dinars (US\$730) for a series of cartoons depicting President Abdelaziz Bouteflika that appeared in the French-language daily *Liberté* in 2003. An appeals court later found him not guilty of the charges but the director of Canal Algérie, Lotfi Shriat, and the director of Thalita TV, Houriya Khateer, showed two of the cartoons during news broadcasts and were dismissed by state-owned *Télévision Algérienne*, which runs both channels. [31b]

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HUMAN RIGHTS INSTITUTIONS, ORGANISATIONS AND ACTIVISTS

NON-GOVERNMENTAL ORGANISATIONS (NGOs)

18.01 The Norwegian Refugee Council noted, in its 4 July 2006 report, 'Algeria: return continues amid improved security': "For years, all major international human rights organisations have been prohibited from visiting the country. However, during 2005, visits from several NGOs such as Amnesty International, Freedom House and the International Federation of Human Rights Leagues (FIDH) were accepted, although confined to the capital city (AI May 2005; FIDH, July 2005; US DOS, 8 March 2006). At the same time, the few domestic human rights NGOs working in Algeria have faced obstacles and restrictions in the conduct of their work." [54b] (p7)

18.02 The USSD report for 2006 adds:

"The government interfered with attempts by some domestic and international human rights groups to investigate and publish their findings. Although some human rights groups, including the Algerian Human Rights League (LADH) and the Algerian League for the Defence of Human Rights (LADDH or ALDHR), were allowed to move about freely, the most active and visible organizations reported interference by government authorities, including surveillance and monitoring of telephone calls, difficulty in securing meeting spaces, and difficulty in obtaining approval for international speakers to speak on sensitive issues.

"Domestic NGOs must be licensed by the government and are prohibited from receiving funding from abroad without approval from the minister of national solidarity. However, approximately 100 unlicensed NGOs operated openly, such as women's advocacy groups and charity organizations." [6i] (Section 4)

18.03 The USSD report for 2006 continues:

"The most active independent human rights group was the LADDH, an organization with members throughout the country. The LADDH was not permitted access to government officials for human rights advocacy or research purposes or to prisons, except for normal lawyer-client consultations.

"The less active LADH is an independent organization based in Constantine. LADH has members throughout the country monitoring individual cases." [6i] (Section 4)

INTERNATIONAL NGOS

18.04 The USSD report for 2006 notes that:

"Although international NGOs continued to experience delays in obtaining visas, outright refusals were rare. Delays in processing visa applications nonetheless prevented a number of NGOs from conducting programming during the year. AI, for example, planned to organize a seminar on violence against women in March. Because it was unable to obtain visas for the presenters, AI moved the seminar to Morocco. On at least two occasions, programming by the National Democratic Institute (NDI) was cancelled or

postponed due to visa problems. An NDI conference on electoral systems planned for June was cancelled because international experts could not obtain visas. NDI's 'Young Political Leaders Forum,' which was planned for September, was indefinitely postponed because of visa difficulties for international experts. NDI's local resident director was denied reentry into the country from September to December; she was finally allowed re-entry, but only to retrieve her belongings and depart...

"... International NGO Handicap International and local NGO FOREM [National Foundation for Health Progress and Research Development], which both work on children's rights, did not report difficulty conducting investigations.

"In 2005, the government invited the UN special rapporteur on freedom of expression and on violence against women to visit, although neither did. However, the government continued to deny requests for visits from the UN Working Group on Enforced or Involuntary Disappearances (pending since 1997), the UN special rapporteur on torture (pending since 1997), and the UN special rapporteur on extrajudicial executions (pending since 1998)." [6i] (Section 4)

See [Freedom of movement](#)

Entry into Algeria for international NGOs

18.05 The USSD report for 2005 notes:

"During the year [2005], the government took steps to improve access to the country for international NGOs. Visits by international human rights NGOs occurred both at the invitation of the government and independently, although, some NGOs experienced long visa delays. Representatives of Amnesty International, Human Rights Watch, Solidarity Center, International Foundation for Election Systems, Fund for Global Rights, Freedom House, the International Federation of Human Rights Leagues, American Bar Association, Internews, Creative Associates, Arab Cevitas, and National Democratic Institute visited throughout the year. Some international NGOs that experienced visa delays due to past critical reports were eventually granted visas." [6a] (p11-12 – Section 4)

"... During the year [2005], the government invited the UN special rapporteur on freedom of expression and the UN special rapporteur on violence against women to visit. However, the government continued to deny requests for visits from the UN Working Group on Enforced or Involuntary Disappearances, the UN special rapporteur on torture, and the UN special rapporteur on extrajudicial executions. The UN rapporteur on the freedom of religion was last allowed to visit in 2002." [6a] (p12 – Section 4)

18.06 Amnesty International (AI) published on 25 May 2005 an interim report, entitled, 'Algeria: initial report of an Amnesty International delegation's visit to Algeria, 6-25 May 2005'. [26f]

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FREEDOM OF RELIGION

- 19.01 The US State Department International Religious Freedom (USSD IRF) Report 2007 states:

“The Constitution declares Islam to be the state religion and prohibits institutions from engaging in behavior incompatible with Islamic morality. The Constitution does not provide explicitly for religious freedom; however, it provides that the people set up institutions whose aims include the protection of fundamental liberties of the citizen. Ordinance 06-03, which delimits the conditions and rules concerning the exercise of religious rites for non-Muslims, provides for the freedom to practice religious rites, on condition that the exercise thereof is in keeping with the ordinance, the Constitution, other laws and regulations, and that public order, morality, and the rights and basic freedoms of others are respected. The law limits the practice of faiths other than Islam, including prohibiting public assembly for the purpose of their practice. However, the Government allows registered non-Muslim religious groups, in limited instances, to conduct public religious services in preapproved locations. Religious practices that conflict with the Government's interpretation of Shari'a (Islamic law) are prohibited.

“There was no change in the status of respect for religious freedom by the Government during the period covered by this report. In 2006 the Government confined non-Muslim worship to specific buildings approved by the state, increased requirements for the registration of religious organizations; increased punishments for anyone who proselytizes Muslims; and made regulations on the importation of non-Islamic religious texts more stringent through the adoption of Ordinance 06-03. Since it took effect in September 2006, there have been no reports of its enforcement. In May and June, 2007, the Government issued executive decrees providing greater specificity to Articles Eight and Nine of the Ordinance, and which functioned as implementing legislation.

“Differences within the Muslim majority about the interpretation and practice of Islam caused some discord among religious groups. Islamist terrorists continued to justify their killing of security force members and civilians by referring to interpretations of religious texts. Terrorist violence based on religious extremism increased after the terrorist organization Salafist Group for Preaching and Combat (GSPC) was recognized by al-Qa'ida in September 2006 and changed its name in February 2007 to al-Qa'ida in the Islamic Maghreb (AQIM).

“Differences that remain within the country's Muslim majority about the interpretation and practice of Islam caused some discord among religious groups.” [6k]

- 19.02 The Freedom House Annual Report 2007 states: “Algeria's population is largely Muslim, though the few non-Muslims residing in the country are generally free to practice their faith. As a result of the civil strife of the 1990s, the government monitors mosques in order to prevent political activity.” [29a] (Political Rights and Civil Liberties)

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ISLAM

- 19.03 The USSD IRF 2007 report states: "More than 99 percent of the population is Sunni Muslim. There is a small community of Ibadi Muslims in Ghardaia." [6k] (Section 1)
- 19.04 The USSD IRF Report 2007 adds: "The Government appoints imams to mosques and, by law, is allowed to provide general guidance on sermon topics. In theory the Government also can prescreen and approve sermons before they are delivered publicly during Friday prayers. In practice each wilaya (state) and daïra (county) employs religious officials to review sermon content, generally after the sermons are delivered." The USSD IRF Report adds that activities in mosques are monitored for security reasons. [6k] (Section 2)
- 19.05 The USSD IRF 2007 report states that:
- "The country's decade-long civil conflict pitted Islamist terrorists belonging to the Armed Islamic Group and its offshoot, the Salafist Group for Preaching and Combat (GSPC), against the Government. While estimates vary, approximately 100 thousand to 150 thousand civilians, terrorists, and security forces have been killed during the past 15 years. Islamist extremists have issued public threats against all 'infidels' in the country, both foreigners and citizens, and have killed both Muslims and non-Muslims. During the reporting period, terrorist violence based on religious extremism increased after the GSPC was recognized by al-Qa'ida in September 2006 and changed its name in February 2007 to al-Qa'ida in the Islamic Maghreb (AQIM). As a rule the majority of the country's terrorist groups do not differentiate between religious and political killings." [6k] (Section 2)

OTHER RELIGIONS

- 19.06 The USSD IRF Report 2007 states:
- "Official data on the number of non-Muslim citizens is not available; however, practitioners reported it to be less than five thousand. The vast majority of Christians and Jews fled the country following independence from France in 1962. Many of those who remained emigrated in the 1990s due to violent acts of terrorism committed by Islamic extremists. According to Christian community leaders, Methodists and members of other Protestant denominations account for the largest numbers of non-Muslims, followed by Roman Catholics and Seventh-day Adventists. There are three thousand members of evangelical churches (mostly in the Kabylie region) and three hundred Catholics. A significant proportion of the country's Christian alien residents are students and illegal immigrants from sub-Saharan Africa seeking to reach Europe; their numbers are difficult to estimate." [6k] (Section 1)
- 19.07 On the Jewish community, the USSD IRF 2007 adds "There was no active Jewish community, although a very small number of Jews continue to live in Algiers. Since 1994 the size of the Jewish community has diminished to virtual nonexistence due to fears of terrorist violence, and the synagogue in Algiers remained closed." [6k] (Section 1)

PROSELYTISING AND CONVERSIONS

19.08 The USSD IRF report 2007 notes:

“Conversions from Islam to other religions are rare. Shari’a, as interpreted in the country, does not recognize conversion from Islam to any other religion; however, conversion is not illegal under civil law. Due to safety concerns and potential legal and social problems, Muslim converts practice their new faith clandestinely. Christians report that conversions to Christianity take place.” [6k] (Section 2) The report continued:

“In general society tolerates foreigners who practice faiths other than Islam; however, citizens who renounce Islam generally are ostracized by their families and shunned by their neighbors. The Government does not usually become involved in such disputes.” [6k] (Section 3)

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ETHNIC GROUPS

BERBERS

- 20.01 The World Directory of Minorities, published in 1997, states regarding the Berbers:

“Berbers call themselves Imazighen [alt. Amazigh] meaning noble or free born. The term ‘Berber’ derives from the Greek ‘barbario’ and the Latin ‘barbari’ from which Arabs derived the term ‘barbari’, meaning primitive or foreign. The Berber-speaking population of Algeria comprises a little over one quarter of the population of 26 million and is concentrated in the mainly mountainous areas of Kabylia, Chaouia, the Mزاب and the Sahara. Berbers are the indigenous inhabitants of the North African littoral, isolated from the rest of Africa by the Sahara Desert.” [3] (p393)

- 20.02 The USSD report for 2006 summarises, regarding the political status of Amazighs:

“The ethnic Amazigh minority of about nine million centered in the Kabylie region participated freely and actively in the political process and represented one-third of the government. However, Amazigh protests and boycotts surrounding the 2003 and 2004 elections underscored the economic and social neglect felt by many in this community. In 2005 the government signed an agreement with ethnic Berber leaders that promised more economic aid for the region, but at year’s end it had not been delivered.” [6i] (Section 3)

Berber language and culture

- 20.03 “A 1998 law that enshrined Arabic as the official language of public life was seen as a major setback” for Berber culture. However, in what was meant as a concession to the Berbers, the government announced in March 2002 “... that Tamazight would be recognised as a national, although not an official language.” (Jane’s Sentinel Country Risk Assessments: Algeria. Posted 18 May 2007) [83b] The US State Department Background Note, published in February 2007, noted that the status of the Tamazight language remains a contentious issue. [6j] (History)

See also [Education](#)

Berber Groups – The MCB (Mouvement Culturel Berbère)

- 20.04 The Canadian Immigration and Refugee Bureau (Canadian IRB) database of responses notes in a response dated 5 August 2004 on the MCB:

“Founded in 1980 in Kabylia (ICG 10 June 2003, 3), the MCB is an organization made up of various factions that sometimes espouse different ideas (L’Expression, 27 Apr. 2003). According to L’Expression, the MCB, which was formerly [translation] ‘repressed by the only party, ended up flourishing because of a multi-party system and the will of the public to move toward democracy’ (17 Apr. 2004).” [8b]

“In August 2003, one faction of the MCB, led by Ould Ali El-Hadi, organized a summer university, in which over 200 supporters of Berber culture participated (L’Expression, 14 Aug. 2003). When an Algerian political party, the National Liberation Front (Front de libération nationale, FLN), announced that it was willing to work with the MCB, El-Hadi explained the reasons for the break with the Berber political party Rally for Culture and Democracy (Rassemblement pour la culture et la démocratie, RCD), which, according to him, was not open enough to the opinions of the other factions (ibid.).” [8b]

“On 20 April 2004, two factions of the MCB held a demonstration to denounce some of the government practices concerning poverty in Algeria and to affirm their rights as Berbers (Le Matin 18 Apr. 2004).” [8b]

- 20.05 A report by the International Crisis Group (ICG) in June 2003 stated that the MAK – Mouvement pour l’Autonomie Kabylie, led by Ferhat Mehenni and a minor party that advocates an autonomous Kabylia – although supported outside Algeria, was not popular in Kabylia, and that it had been used by the authorities to divert attention from the demands of the protest movement. [37c] (p24)

Treatment of Berbers

- 20.06 The ICG report of June 2003 states: “The Kabyles are not generally discriminated against in public life on the basis of their identity, and their preoccupation with the issue [of identity] has other causes.” [37c] (p5)

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Events of 2001-2007 in Kabylia

- 20.07 As summarised in the US State Department’s Background Note dated February 2007:

“In 2001, Berber activists in the Kabylie region of the country, reacting to the death of a youth in gendarme custody, unleashed a resistance campaign against what they saw as government repression. Strikes and demonstrations in the Kabylie region were commonplace as a result, and some spread to the capital. Chief among Berber demands was recognition of Tamazight (a general term for Berber languages) as an official language, official recognition and financial compensation for the deaths of Kabyles killed in demonstrations, an economic development plan for the area and greater control over their own regional affairs.” [6j] (History)

ISSAD Report

- 20.08 The Europa World website (accessed 15 August 2007) summarises the findings of the official inquiry into the July 2001 riots, and its subsequent political reception, stating:

“Meanwhile, in December 2001 the final report of the Issad commission had been published, confirming the initial findings that the gendarmerie had been to blame for the repression in Kabylia, and also expressing deep pessimism about the immediate future of the region. Emphasizing the increasing authority

of the military throughout the country since 1992, the report stated that the responsibilities of the civil and military authorities had become blurred and denounced the subtle slide from 'a state of emergency to a state of siege'. Issad also condemned the military's widespread abuse of its powers and the laws of the country." [1h] (Recent History) "Algeria's Berber community continues to feel marginalised and under-represented at a national level, although government concessions, including the recognition of the Berber's Tamazight language and the withdrawal of the hated gendarmes from the main Berber region, Kabylia, have gone some way to appeasing the political militants." (Jane's Sentinel Country Risk Assessments: Algeria. Posted 18 May 2007) [83c]

EL Kseur

- 20.09 A BBC News report dated 17 January 2005, 'Algeria strikes deal with Berbers', adds: "Several aspects of the new agreement, such as making Tamazight an official language and cutting the number of security forces in Kabylia, have not been agreed in detail and could take years to implement." [60b]
- 20.10 In a news report of 24 November 2005, AFP reported that two provinces in the Kabylie region held polls for 131 local councils and 90 members of provincial parliaments. [59d] The majority of the population are of the Berber minority, and the report talks about the dissolution in July 2005 of the previous assemblies and councils with the co-operation of the Berber community leaders (the a'archs), stating, "President Abdelaziz Bouteflika's government struck a deal with influential traditional Berber tribal leaders, the a'archs, to dissolve the assemblies because local people regarded them as unjustly put in place." [59d] The AFP reported the next day, on 25 November 2005, that, "Algeria's main opposition parties have kept their lead and support in elections in the two northeastern Kabylie provinces where most of the country's Berber minority live, official results showed Friday [25 November 2005]." [59e] The same report adds detail as to why the previous assemblies were held to be unrepresentative: "When the last poll for assemblies of the mainly poor, highland provinces were held at the end of 2002 the outcome was strongly contested. In some areas the opposition called for a boycott and turnout was less than one percent." [59e]

TUAREG

- 20.11 The World Directory of Minorities, published in 1997, states:

"The 12,000 Tuareg, who are nomadic Berbers, live almost exclusively among the mountainous massifs of Ajjer and Ahaggar in southern Algeria. Raiding and the control of caravan routes were the traditional mainstay of Tuareg economic organization in pre-colonial times, but increasing French control limited raiding and necessitated the development of salt caravans to Niger. Independence brought the almost total disruption of Tuareg society with its large class of slaves, iklan, bought from Sudan, and former slaves, haratin. Socialist ideology and nationalism committed Algeria to the assimilation of minority groups and the welding of the north and south into a unified state. Freed slaves, haratin, began to rise against the Tuareg and refuse to pay their contract dues for cultivating land. Violent skirmishes resulted in the imprisonment of some Tuareg and a policy of promoting sedentarization

through the construction of cooperatives. By the end of the 1960s the Tuareg had little choice but to assimilate into the Algerian system.” [3] (p394)

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LESBIAN, GAY, BISEXUAL AND TRANSGENDER PERSONS

LEGAL RIGHTS

- 21.01 An April 2007 world survey of laws prohibiting same sex activity between consenting adults by Daniel Ottosson and published by ILGA states that under:

“Penal Code (Ordinance 66-156 of June 8, 1966), Article 338
Anyone guilty of a homosexual act is punishable with imprisonment of between 2 months and two years, and with a fine of 500 to 2000 Algerian Dinars.
If one of the participants is below 18 years old, the punishment for the older person can be raised to 3 years’ imprisonment and a fine of 10,000 dinars”.
[30b]

- 21.02 The Amnesty International report of 1 June 2003, ‘Asylum-seekers fleeing a continuing human rights crisis’ adds:

“Sexual relations between persons of the same sex is punishable under Article 338 of the Penal Code. Penalties range from imprisonment of 2 months to 2 years and a fine of 500 to 2,000 Algerian dinars. If one of the individuals is less than 18 years old, punishment for the adult can be raised to up to three years’ imprisonment and a fine of 10,000 Algerian dinars.” [26a] (p8)

GOVERNMENT ATTITUDES

- 21.03 The Canadian Immigration and Refugee Bureau’s Refinfo database in an entry dated 28 July 2004 updates its information on the treatment of homosexuals by Algerian society and police, and states:

“In addition to making both male and female homosexuality illegal (Sodomy Laws 19 July 2004), Article 338 of the Algerian Penal Code prescribes a sentence of two months to three years in prison for anyone guilty of sodomy. Offenders must also pay a fine of 500 to 2,000 Algerian dinars.

“Any person who sodomizes a male under 18 years of age can be punished by a maximum sentence of three years in prison and a fine of 10,000 dinars.

“According to the United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights (UNHCR) and the Austrian Centre for Country of Origin and Asylum Research and Documentation (ACCORD), ‘[a]lthough in Shar’ia law homosexuality is prohibited, this offence is rarely prosecuted in Algeria’. [8a]

SOCIETAL ILL-TREATMENT OR DISCRIMINATION

- 21.04 The Amnesty International report of 1 June 2003, ‘Asylum-seekers fleeing a continuing human rights crisis’ states, regarding homosexuality:

“Homosexuality is a taboo subject in Algeria, as it is in various other countries in North Africa and the Middle East. In practice, the shame associated with homosexuality means that few individuals openly reveal their sexual orientation. Homosexuals may suffer harassment from the security forces and society in general.” [26a] (p8)

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DISABILITY

22.01 The USSD report for 2006 states:

“The law provides free medical care for persons with disabilities, especially children; however, there is widespread societal discrimination against persons with disabilities. The law does not prohibit discrimination against persons with disabilities in employment, education, access to health care, or the provision of other state services. The government did not mandate accessibility to buildings or government services for persons with disabilities. Public enterprises, in downsizing their work forces, generally ignored a 2002 law which requires them to reserve one percent of jobs for persons with disabilities. Social security provided payments for orthopedic equipment, and some healthcare-oriented NGOs received limited government financial support. The Ministry of National Solidarity provided financial support to NGOs; however, for many NGOs this financial support represented only a very small portion of their budgets - approximately 2 percent. The Ministry of National Solidarity maintained that there were 2.5 million persons with disabilities in the country. However, according to the Federation of Disabled Associations (FAHM), there are currently three million persons with disabilities in the country.” [6i] (Persons with Disabilities)

22.02 Details of statutory disability benefits in Algeria are outlined in the Algeria overview of the United States Social Security Administration’s ‘Social security programs throughout the world’, updated September 2005. [41a] The overview sets out details of permanent disability pensions (“80 per cent of average earnings during the last year or the best three years of the total professional career (whichever is higher)”) [41a] (p28), and temporary disability benefits (100 per cent of net daily earnings until recovery or certification of permanent disability). [41a] (p30)

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WOMEN

- 23.01 Freedom House in *Freedom in the World – Algeria (2007)* reported that: “Algerian women continue to face discrimination, at both the legal and societal levels. According to the family code, which is based on Islamic law, women do not enjoy equal rights in marriage and divorce. There remains considerable room for improvement, particularly in the area of inheritance, where women receive less than men.” [29a]
- 23.02 The Afrol Gender Profile – Algeria (accessed on 17 July 2007) noted that: “The 1984 Family Code, based in large part on Shari’a, treats women as minors under the legal guardianship of a husband or male relative.” [13b] The Profile went on to state that female life expectancy was “71.02 years (2000 est.)”.
- 23.03 The US State Department Report on Human Rights Practices 2006 (USSD 2006), published on 6 March 2007, noted that: “Article 29 of the constitution provides for gender equality; however, some aspects of the law and many traditional social practices discriminated against women.” [6i] (Section 5)
- 23.04 The Economist Intelligence Unit’s 2006 Country Profile on Algeria stated that:
- “The Ministry of Health says that the trend towards a lower birth rate is a result of improved access to contraceptives and the implementation of family planning policies, despite conservative opposition.” It went on to state that: “the average age of marriage is relatively late: 31.3 years for men and 27.6 for women.” [84c]

POLITICAL RIGHTS

- 23.05 The US State Department Report on Human Rights Practices 2006 (USSD 2006), published on 6 March 2007, noted that:
- “Thirty-two women served in senior positions in the executive and legislative branches. There were three women in the cabinet: the minister of culture and minister delegates for family and female condition and for scientific research. Women also held 24 of the 389 seats in the Assembly and 4 of the 144 seats in the Council of the Nation. A woman led the Workers Party, and all the major political parties, except the Islah Party, had women’s divisions headed by women.” [6i] (Section 3)
- 23.06 On 11 January 2005, the Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women (CEDAW) Committee noted “the increasing number of women in the judiciary, who now account for approximately one third of magistrates, and in leadership posts, such as the presidency of the State Council, courts and tribunals”, as well as “the improvement in women’s participation in public life and ... the inclusion of four women ministers in the current Government”.
- However, the Committee was concerned about “the low level of representation of women in decision-making positions, particularly their political representation at all levels and their representation in the administration and the foreign service”. [25c] (p3, 5)

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SOCIAL AND ECONOMIC RIGHTS

- 23.07 With regard to marriage and citizenship, the Algerian Consulate, London's website outlines the regularisation of marriage in terms of an Algerian national registering an Algerian civil marriage as follows:

"The marriage of an Algerian National can be registered at the Algerian Consulate. Required documents are:

1. Copy of marriage certificate issued by Registration Office (Marriage certificates issued by Mosque are not valid)
2. Copy of birth certificate of applicant
3. Copy of birth certificate of spouse. If the spouse's birth certificate is issued in another language than Arabic, English or French, please provide a translation of this document." [42c]

"One of the key aspects of the marriage process in Algerian society is the role of the bride's male guardian, the *wali*. El Alami & Hinchcliffe, *Islamic Marriage and Divorce Laws of the Arab World*, London 1996 reproduces the 1984 Family Code, (given as "Law No. 84 - 11 of 9 June 1984 comprising the Family Law"), which includes the following: "Article 20: The future husband may be validly represented in the conclusion of the contract of marriage by a representative who is given a proxy to do so." [43] (p42) It should be noted that this is the final act of a marriage process that begins with betrothal, includes agreements over dowry, and overseen by the marriage guardian of the bride (*wali*). The marriage has to "be concluded before a notary or official who is legally competent subject to the provisions of Article 9 of this law." (Article 18) The marriage has to be registered in the Register of Civil status and a marriage certificate issued. [43] (p42) The modifications of the 1984 Family Code, which were introduced into parliament in August 2004, did away with the need for a male guardian in marriages where the woman is 19 years or older. [7e] (p15871)

- 23.08 The US State Department Report on Human Rights Practices 2006 (USSD 2006), published on 6 March 2007, noted that:

"Women suffered from discrimination in inheritance claims. In accordance with Shari'a, women are entitled to a smaller portion of an estate than are male children or a deceased husband's brothers. According to Shari'a, such a distinction is justified because other provisions require that the husband's income and assets are to be used to support the family, while the wife's remain, in principle, her own. However, in practice women do not always have exclusive control over assets that they bring to a marriage or that they earn themselves. Married women under 18 years of age may not travel abroad without permission of their husbands. Married women may take out business loans and use their own financial resources. According to the National Center of Trade Records, 93,328 women had their own business. There were an estimated two million unemployed women in Algeria." [6i] (Section 5)

23.09 The USSD 2006 report also noted that:

“According to statistics published on May 2 by the minister delegate in charge of family and female condition, females represent 60 percent of the medical profession, 55 percent of the media profession, 30 percent of the upper levels of the legal profession, and more than 60 percent of the education profession. Of the 7.7 million workers, 1.4 million are female, representing only 18 percent of the workforce. Women may own businesses, enter into contracts, and pursue careers similar to those of men. Two female magistrates, one appointed by President Bouteflika and one elected by peers, were among the 18-member High Council of Magistrates. In addition, 55 percent of magistrates were women; the 2005 class of new judges was 50 percent women; and women served at all levels in the judicial system. In 2005 the Ministry of Interior (MOI) began adding more women to the police force and placed at least one female officer in each precinct to assist women with their abuse claims. This policy continued during the year, as part of a ministry strategy that is currently scheduled to last until 2009.” [6i] (Section 5)

23.10 The report continued: “According to a study by the Research Center in Applied Economics for Development, 17.5 percent of females are unemployed compared to 14.9 percent of males.” [6i] (Section 5)

23.11 A 1 February 2007 article on the United Nations News Centre detailed a United Nations’ independent human rights expert’s fact finding mission in which she stated that: “the Government ... deserved praise for achieving equal access for boys and girls to all levels of education ‘in little more than one generation,’ with girls now numerically over-represented in secondary schools and universities.” [100]

23.12 An article in the New York Times, dated 26 May 2007, reported that:

“Women make up 70 percent of Algeria’s lawyers and 60 percent of its judges. Women dominate medicine. Increasingly, women contribute more to household income than men. Sixty percent of university students are women, university researchers say.

“In a region where women have a decidedly low public profile, Algerian women are visible everywhere. They are starting to drive buses and taxicabs. They pump gas and wait on tables.

“Although men still hold all of the formal levers of power and women still make up only 20 percent of the work force, that is more than twice their share a generation ago, and they seem to be taking over the machinery of state as well.” [101]

23.13 The article continued to state that:

“... for women, [Hugh Roberts, the North Africa project director of the International Crisis Group] added, university studies get them out of the house and allow them to position themselves better in society.” [101]

Later in the same article, it was noted that:

"In some neighborhoods, ... birthrates appear to have fallen and class sizes in elementary schools have dropped by nearly half. It appears that women are delaying marriage to complete their studies, though delayed marriage is also a function of high unemployment. In the past, women typically married at 17 or 18 but now marry on average at 29, sociologists said." [101]

- 23.14 On 11 January 2005, the CEDAW Committee noted: "... the increase in women's enrolment in institutions of higher learning, from 39.5 per cent in 1990 to approximately 55.4 per cent in 2003. It also appreciates that girls now comprise 57.53 per cent of students in secondary education."

However, it was concerned that: "... insufficient progress has been made in achieving de facto equality between women and men in all sectors...", that "... discriminatory practices and strong stereotypical attitudes persist about the roles and responsibilities of women and men in the family and in society, hence negatively affecting women's enjoyment of their rights and impeding the full implementation of the Convention" and "... that women constitute only 14.18 per cent of the total employed population." [25c] (p3, 5-6)

- 23.15 Commenting on the report of Algeria to be considered by the CEDAW Committee in 2005, Amnesty International noted that: "As a consequence of the 'disappearance' of a male relative, thousands of women suffer economic hardship, which is compounded by laws that deny many access to pensions, savings and property." [26k]

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VIOLENCE AGAINST WOMEN

- 23.16 The US State Department Report on Human Rights Practices 2006 (USSD 2006), published on 6 March 2007, noted that:

"Spousal abuse occurred, and in practice was prosecuted under Article 264 of the Penal Code, which states that a person must be incapacitated for 15 days or more and present a doctor's note certifying the injuries before filing charges for battery. Because of societal pressures, however, women frequently were reluctant to endure this process. According to a joint study in 2004 by the justice ministry, women's associations, and the National Institute of Public Health (INSP), 70 percent of abused women refused to lodge a complaint or follow through with the complaint.

"Spousal abuse was more frequent in rural areas and among less-educated persons. According to the government, from January to March there were 1,762 cases of violence against women. According to a March 2006 INSP study, 70 percent of abused women are jobless and 26 percent are illiterate. In 2005, according to the government there were 7,419 cases of violence against women, including 5,178 cases of physical violence, 277 cases of sexual violence, 1,753 cases of 'ill treatment', 34 murders, and 176 cases of sexual harassment. According to a September 2006 National Research Center for Anthropology study, 52 percent of a sample of 13,000 women indicated that they had suffered from physical abuse on at least one occasion.

“Rape, spousal and nonspousal, occurred. Nonspousal rape is illegal; spousal rape is not. Prison sentences for nonspousal rape range from one to five years. There were strong societal pressures against a woman seeking legal redress against her spouse for rape, and there were few reports of the law being applied in such cases. However, women’s groups have begun to speak out against violence in the family and held several seminars and conferences in 2005 and during the year.” [6i] (Section 5)

- 23.17 In an article, dated 1 February 2007, on the United Nations News Centre website, which detailed a United Nations’ fact finding mission, Yakin Ertürk, the independent human rights expert reported that:

“Recent surveys reveal that violence against women is a major concern in Algeria in both the home and the public space,’ ... noting that many women also endure sexual harassment in their workplaces.

“The Rapporteur [Ertürk] added that the issue ‘remains largely invisible. The social taboos around violence in the society and the lack of a sufficient institutional response and support for victims of violence silence the victims and perpetuate the violence.’

“Many women and girls are ejected from their family homes after suffering physical attacks by husbands or other relatives, forcing them to try to survive on the streets where they are often subjected to further violence.

“The situation is exacerbated by the problems hanging over from what Professor Ertürk called Algeria’s ‘black decade of violence’ during its civil war in the 1990s, when there was ‘systematic and widespread rape and sexual enslavement of women.’” [100]

- 23.18 In a response to information request on the Immigration and Refugee Board of Canada website (August 2006), the following was detailed:

“... the Commissioner of the Algerian police stated that the number of cases of violence against women is still on the rise in Algeria. In 2005, the National Public Health Institute (Institut national de santé publique, INSP) published a study on abused women conducted by the research group Violence Against Women (Violences à l’encontre des femmes). The results of the study indicated that approximately half of the 9,033 abused women who participated in the survey were married, which implies that domestic violence is widespread, since ... ‘married women account for less than a third of the population’ (Algeria 2005, 42). The study indicated that 64.9 percent of attacks on women occur in the family home (ibid., 197). It also showed that close to 50 percent of the cases reported by married or formerly married women involve attacks by spouses or former spouses (ibid., 213).

“... according to Algerian police records, during the first quarter of 2006, 1,762 women were abused - 1,113 of them were physically abused, 53 were sexually abused, 527 were subjected to ill-treatment, 6 were killed, and 63 were sexually harassed. The records indicated that the perpetrators were husbands in 237 of the cases, brothers in 67 cases, lovers in 67 cases, children in 52 cases, and fathers in 30 cases.

“... a representative of the Information and Documentation Centre for Children’s and Women’s Rights (Centre d’information et de documentation sur les droits de l’enfant et de la femme, CIDDEF), an Algerian non-governmental organization that defends women’s and children’s rights, ... indicated a lack of specific legislative measures against domestic violence in Algeria (19 Aug. 2006). However, the president of SOS Women in Distress (SOS Femmes en détresse), an Algerian non-governmental organization for women’s rights, noted that domestic violence is punishable under Article 264 of the Algerian Penal Code (19 Aug. 2006). Article 264 (Order No. 75-47 of 17 June 1975 and Law No. 82-04 of 13 February 1982) stipulates that ... any person who willfully [sic] causes injury to another person or who commits any other violent act or assault that results in illness or incapacity to work for more than 15 days shall be punished by a term of imprisonment of two months to five years and a fine of 500 to 10,000 Algerian dinars [approximately CAN\$7.85 to \$15.71 (Bloomberg.com 23 Aug. 2006)].

“When the above-mentioned violent acts result in mutilation or the loss of use of a limb, in blindness, in the loss of an eye or in any other permanent injury, the perpetrator shall be punished by a term of imprisonment of 5 to 10 years.

“If the violent act or injury is committed willfully [sic] but without intent to kill and the injuries sustained by the victim lead to death, the perpetrator shall be punished by a term of imprisonment of 10 to 20 years. (Lexalgeria n.d.)

“The President of SOS Women in Distress and the Representative of CIDDEF indicated that abused women must present a doctor’s note certifying their injuries and the period during which they could not work before they can file charges under Article 264 of the Algerian Penal Code (SOS Femmes en détresse 19 Aug. 2006; CIDDEF 19 Aug. 2006). The President of SOS Women in Distress stated that victims who want to file a complaint must first go to a police station with their medical certificate (19 Aug. 2006). Then their file is forwarded ... ‘to the judge who will decide the punishment’ to be imposed on the perpetrator (SOS Femmes en détresse 19 Aug. 2006). No information on the enforcement of Article 264 of the Algerian penal code could be found among the sources consulted by the Research Directorate. [8k]

- 23.19 Amnesty International (AI) in ‘Steps towards change or empty promises?’ published in September 2003, states:

“While abductions, torture and killings of male victims by armed groups appear to have become isolated cases, abductions and rape of women continue to be reported in the Algerian press, albeit at much lower levels than in the years preceding 1999.” [26c] (p39) The report continued:

“...Women’s organizations have complained that victims of rape by armed groups do not benefit from rehabilitation provided by the government, including medical, psychiatric and other post-traumatic counselling, nor from compensation which other victims of armed groups have been able to receive. Non-governmental organizations, such as the member organizations of the Wassila Network, offer medical and psychological assistance to a limited number of individuals, but do not have adequate resources to provide it to the hundreds of women and girls who need help.” [26c] (p40)

- 23.20 On 11 January 2005, the CEDAW Committee was concerned that "... the consequences of the physical violence suffered by women from terrorist groups, contained in paragraph 77, and the situation of wives of disappeared persons, contained in paragraph 81, have been insufficiently addressed". It was also concerned about "... the high incidence of violence against women, including domestic violence, and about the continuing lack of specific legislation to address and eliminate violence against women." [25c] (p3, 5)
- 23.21 Commenting on the report of Algeria to be considered by the CEDAW Committee in 2005, Amnesty International observed that: "... women have little prospect of obtaining justice and redress for abuses they have suffered and that current laws and practice continue to discriminate against women and facilitate violence against them."

It continued to state that "... Based on interviews with Algerian women survivors of violence and a range of organizations and activists both inside and outside Algeria, Amnesty International's main observations include:

- Discriminatory provisions in the Family Code have facilitated violence against women, legitimized discrimination in practice and made it particularly difficult for women to deal with the consequences of widespread human rights abuses.
- A continuing lack of thorough investigations into allegations of rape and other forms of sexual violence against women and a failure to bring those responsible to justice.
- Inadequate training for police, judges and other law enforcement officials dealing with cases of sexual violence or violence in the family.
- The virtual non-existence of state care for women survivors of sexual violence, despite the psychological trauma and social stigma they face." [26k]

- 23.22 The Women's International League for Peace and Freedom (WILPF) website (accessed 20 July 2007) contains details of nine Non Governmental Organisations that exist in Algeria to assist women. [102]

The US State Department Report on Human Rights Practices 2006 (USSD 2006), published on 6 March 2007, highlighted various activities and four NGO groups that provided assistance to women:

"In January and May, SOS Femmes en Detresse, a local NGO advocating for women's rights, organized two seminars related to sexual violence against women. In July, Femmes en Communication, another NGO advocating for women's rights, organized a two-day seminar on violence against women. Throughout the year, the government's office of the minister delegate for the family and female condition held a series of seminars that articulated a national strategy to combat violence against women.

"SOS Femmes en Detresse and Wassila Network, another local NGO, provided judicial and psychological counseling to abused women. Women's rights groups experienced difficulty in drawing attention to spousal abuse as an important social problem, largely due to societal attitudes. Several rape crisis centers run by women's groups operated, but they had few resources. The Working Women section of the General Union of Algerian Workers (UGTA) established a counseling center with a toll free number for women suffering from sexual harassment in the workplace. The center receives a growing number of calls.

During the year, the center received 1,524 calls, compared to 1,010 calls in 2005.” [6i] (Section 5 Discrimination, Societal Abuses, and Trafficking in Persons: Women)

- 23.23 Amesty International stated that “in Algeria, the Wassila network, a loose association of women’s and children’s groups, health workers and other individuals formed in 2000, has documented the testimonies of women victims of violence, and offers them medical care and psychological assistance.” [26i]
- 23.24 A presentation on the Maghreb – Machrek from the Institut Panos Paris website stated that “Women in Communication [Femmes en Communication] is an Algerian association created on May 8, 1995 in Algiers ‘born of the need to exchange, dialogue, communicate on our concerns between women and with the very whole company, this association wants to try to organize this communication by establishing the relays, the networks necessary and the adequate supports.’ It reconciles a 15 years experiment in journalism radio operator (with the radio Algerian Television Chaîne 3, international) his secretary-general, Mrs. Mina Zerrouk, a practice of lobbying with the organization in 1996 of a national campaign of information inviting to revise the code of the family in force since 1984 (a million signatures for the women’s right in the family) and a training activity of the graduate future young people (coeds in journalism) in order to sensitize them with their privileged role of support to the evolution of the female statute as future professional of the media.” [103]
- 23.25 In the response to information request on the Immigration and Refugee Board of Canada website (August 2006), the following on assistance for women was detailed:

“The CIDDEF representative stated that Algeria has six centres that work with abused women; two are managed by community organizations and four by the Algerian government (19 Aug. 2006). No additional information on these centres could be found among the sources consulted by the Research Directorate within the time constraints for this Response.

“The CIDDEF representative also noted that community organizations are starting to raise awareness of domestic violence among police officers and gendarmes (CIDEFF 19 Aug. 2006). However, correspondence from the President of SOS Women in Distress indicated that domestic violence is still a part of ... private life’ and that neither the police nor the gendarmes tend to intervene in domestic disputes (19 Aug. 2006). She also stated that abusive husbands often prevent their wives from filing complaints (SOS Femmes en détresse 19 Aug. 2006). According to the study conducted by Violence Against Women, the victims who report attacks are mostly educated women with a certain degree of financial independence (Algeria 2005, 43). According to the CIDDEF representative, many victims of domestic violence do not dare to file complaints against their aggressors because the family code does not protect them (19 Aug. 2006).

“In an article published in *El Watan*, a representative of the government department responsible for families and the status of women indicated that her department is working to implement ... ‘an empowerment program for abused women and children’ that will run until 2007 (12 July 2006). In addition to bringing about legislative reforms, the program will encourage victims to become independent (*El Watan* 12 July 2006; CIDDEF 19 Aug. 2006). [8k]

- 23.26 A report on the Women Against Fundamentalism (WAF) website of a joint meeting between Solidarity with the Women's Struggle in Algeria (SWASWA) and WAF noted that: "Women's associations include SOS Women in Distress which supports battered women, divorcees and abandoned women with children (since the introduction of the Family Code, men usually get the family house after divorce). The aim of SOS is to empower women so they can go back into society, for example helping them find employment. It has a shelter in Algiers and runs an advice service. Other groups include Dia a]-Rahma [sic], which has collected funds for refugees and shelters for children, and the sick and old. Also The Association for Families and Children have sensitised Algeria to the taboo subject of abandoned children and managed to get the law on adoption improved so that people are now allowed to give adopted children the family name." [104]
- 23.27 In the article, dated 1 February on the United Nations News Centre, which detailed a United Nations' fact finding mission, Yakin Ertürk, the independent human rights expert welcomed:
- "... a national charter of peace and reconciliation adopted in 2005, which excludes many of the most serious crimes such as rapes, collective massacres and bombings from a wider amnesty.
- "She also described the recent criminalization of some forms of sexual harassment as 'a positive first step' towards tackling the problem, and endorsed a draft national strategy to combat violence against women, which is yet to be adopted by the country's Cabinet." [100]

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LEGAL PROVISIONS AND ACCESS TO THE LAW (INCLUDING THE FAMILY CODE)

- 23.28 The United Nations announced that Algeria became a party to the UN Women's Treaty on the Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women (CEDAW) on the banning of all forms of discrimination against women, on 22 May 1996. [25a] However, Algeria had reservations to articles 2, 9(2),15(4), and 16. Reservations to articles 2 and 16 [Article 2: The Government of the People's Democratic Republic of Algeria declares that it is prepared to apply the provisions of this article (condemning discrimination against women in all its forms, agreeing to pursue by all appropriate means and without delay a policy of eliminating discrimination against women) on the condition that they do not conflict with the provisions of the Algerian Family Code. Article 16: The Government of the People's Democratic Republic of Algeria declares that the provisions of article 16 concerning equal rights for men and women in all matters relating to marriage, both during marriage and at its dissolution, should not contradict the provisions of the Algerian Family Code. [25d]] are contrary to the object and purpose of the Convention. [25c] (p4) Amnesty International said "The government of Algeria has shown a lack of political will to ensure that women are protected from violence. Algeria's reservations to CEDAW are a serious impediment towards guaranteeing the fundamental rights of women and should be lifted." [26k]

- 23.29 The second periodic report of Algeria was considered by the CEDAW Committee during the 32nd Session, on 11 January 2005. Algeria's progress against and compliance with its obligations under the UN CEDAW was reported on and discussed. [25b]
- 23.30 In its concluding comments, the Committee appreciated "... progress achieved in the area of women's health, including the decrease in maternal and infant mortality and the increase in women's life expectancy". However, it was concerned "... about the apparent lack of cooperation of the authorities with non-governmental organizations in the implementation of the Convention including in follow-up to the concluding comments. The Committee notes with concern that women's non-governmental organizations were not consulted in the process of preparing the report." [25c] (p3,6)
- 23.31 The EuropaWorld website (accessed 20 July 2007) gives the following information:
- "In August 2004 a bill to improve women's rights was drawn up by the commission in charge of revising the family code, which had been established in October 2003. The new legislation was approved by the Government and sent for review by the Council of Ministers, despite fierce opposition from Islamist groups who considered that it went against the teachings of the Koran. The reform would make it illegal for a man to divorce his wife without stating clear grounds, and would allow a woman to receive financial support from her husband once they were divorced. Moreover, women would no longer have to seek permission from a male relative in order to marry." [1h] (Recent History)
- 23.32 Radio Algiers, as reported by the *Africa Research Bulletin* in August 2004, outlines the main features of the new Family Code draft:
- "A new bill will revoke marriage by authorization, so that marriage can be concluded between a man and a woman who reach the age of 19 and there is no need for guardianship of a woman who is aged 19. Both husband and wife will enjoy equal rights. If a woman want [sic] to, she can ask a judge for divorce. In case of divorce, the husband must give the house to the wife or at least rent a house for the wife who looks after her children. Alternatively, the wife has the right to stay in her husband's house even if she is divorced. Meanwhile, immediately after the mother, it is the husband who has the right to bring up his children in case of divorce." [7e] (p15871)
- 23.33 The US State Department Report on Human Rights Practices 2006 (USSD 2006), published on 6 March 2007, noted that:
- "The Family Code, adopted in 1984 and amended in February 2005 by presidential decree, is based in large part on Shari'a. The Family Code prohibits Muslim women from marrying non-Muslims, although this regulation was not always enforced. Amendments in February 2005 to the Nationality Code allowed a woman to marry a foreigner and transmit citizenship and nationality in her own right to both her children and spouse. The Family Code does not restrict Muslim men from marrying non-Muslim women. Under both Shari'a and civil law, children born to a Muslim father are Muslim, regardless of the mother's religion.

“Under the 2005 amendments, women can seek divorce for irreconcilable differences and violation of the prenuptial agreement, among other grounds. In a divorce, the amendments provide for the wife to retain the family's home until children reach 18 years of age. Custody of children normally is awarded to the mother, but she may not make decisions on education or take them out of the country without the father's authorization. In practice, more women retained the family's home when they have custody of the children.” [61] (Section 5)

- 23.34 This is corroborated by an article on Women's eNews dated 3 April 2007, which reported that:

“A law passed in 2005 - announced by Algeria's president on March 8, International Women's Day - addressed the special vulnerabilities of women undergoing divorce. The reform law leaves mothers, in most circumstances, with custody rights over children and requires a man to give up the conjugal residence or provide housing when the ex-wife retains custody.”

However, the article continued to state that: “... the 2005 law has the potential to help divorced women but is currently left largely unenforced” and “... many women in Algeria - despite a 2005 law intended to help them - end up homeless and living in the street, often after their husbands suddenly decided to exercise their right to divorce.”

The article continued to state that: “According to SOS Women in Distress, a women's rights organization in Algiers, at least 540 women throughout Algeria have been victims of the nation's family law and became homeless last year. But the number of women who have found themselves living in the street, very often with their children, is certainly higher. Women gathered at night in the streets of Algiers are a common sight.” [99]

- 23.35 On 11 January 2005, the CEDAW Committee commended Algeria for “including the offence of sexual harassment in the revised Penal Code”.

However, “... While noting that the Constitution, in its articles 29 and 31, stipulates equality before the law without discrimination, including on the basis of sex, the Committee is concerned that [Algeria's] legislation does not contain a definition of discrimination in accordance with article 1 of the Convention, nor provisions on equal rights of women in line with article 2 (a) of the Convention”.

The Committee was also “... concerned about the lack of progress in revising discriminatory legislation. In particular, it expresses concern that the revision of the Code of Algerian Nationality established by Order 70-86 of 15 December 1970 and of the 1984 Family Code has not been completed, thus allowing for the persistence of discriminatory provisions that deny women equal rights with men concerning the transmission of nationality, as well as on issues related to marriage and family life, including divorce and child custody. It also expresses concern that the proposed amendments to the Family Code do not include the abolition of polygamy and of women's legal guardianship”.

The Committee was concerned “that, although women's access to justice is provided for by law, their ability in practice to exercise this right and to bring cases of discrimination before the courts is limited”. [25c] (p3,4)

- 23.36 Amnesty International provided a briefing to the CEDAW Committee, observing “The existence of discriminatory laws such as a legal duty to obey the husband and the husband’s prerogative of unilateral divorce with no duty to pay maintenance or provide housing.” [26k]

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CHILDREN

BASIC INFORMATION

24.01 The USSD report for 2006 states that:

“The government was generally committed to protecting the welfare, rights, health, and education of children.” [6i] (Section 5)

24.02 It continued to state that:

“The government provides free education for children through high school. Education is compulsory until the age of 16. According to the ministry of national education, 98 percent of children completed the ninth grade. Boys and girls generally received the same education, although girls from rural areas were slightly more likely to leave school because of familial financial reasons, and sons were often given educational priority.” [6i] (Section 5)

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Age of consent

24.03 According to the Avert website, the age of consent for male to female sex in Algeria is 16. [105]

Child abuse

24.04 The USSD report for 2006 reported that:

“Child abuse is illegal but continued to be a problem. NGOs that specialized in the care of children cited continued instances of domestic violence against children, which they attributed to the ‘culture of violence’ developed since the civil conflict of the 1990s and the social dislocations caused by the movement of rural families to the cities to escape terrorist violence. In April 2005, the INPS reported that in 2004, 4,554 children younger than 16 were abused, of whom 2,306 were hospitalized for injuries stemming from abuse; 1,386 were victims of sexual abuse; and 53 were victims of incest. Experts assumed that many cases went unreported because of familial reticence.

“According to press reports, children continued to be victims of terrorist attacks. In January, February, and April, according to press reports, there were incidents involving the kidnap and rape of girls by terrorists. In May the bodies of 22 children were found in the province of Jijel. They were alleged to have been used as human shields by the GSPC. In July the body of a young girl, allegedly decapitated by terrorists, was found in Bouira. Terrorist groups did not claim responsibility for any of the incidents.” [6i] (Section 5)

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Child labour

24.05 The USSD report for 2006 states that:

“... the minimum age for employment is 16, except for apprentice positions. In order to be an apprentice, minors must have the permission of a legal guardian. The law prohibits participation by minors in dangerous, unhealthy, or harmful work, or in work that is considered inappropriate because of social and religious considerations. On February 20, the Ministry of Labor stated that only 95 ‘young workers’ were identified during site visits performed by labor inspectors at 5,847 companies. The Ministry of Labor enforces minimum age laws by means of surprise inspections of public sector enterprises, but it does not consistently enforce relevant statutes in the agricultural or private sectors.

“In 2005 the Ministry of Labor reported a rate of child participation in the labor force of 0.56 percent. That figure was challenged, however, by the local NGO FOREM [National Foundation for Health Progress and Research Development], which runs a children’s rights watchdog group financed by the European Union. According to the watchdog group, in the eight most populous provinces six percent of children age 10 and younger participated in the labor force, while 63 percent of children age 13 to 16 participated. The survey found children working a variety of hours in small workshops, on family farms, and especially in informal trades, where children from impoverished families are employed for economic reasons.” [6i] (Section 6d)

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EDUCATION

- 24.06 The EuropaWorld website (accessed 12 July 2005) gives the following information:

“Education, in the national language (Arabic), is officially compulsory for nine years between six and 15 years of age. Primary education begins at the age of six and lasts for six years. Secondary education begins at 12 years of age and lasts for up to six years (comprising two cycles of three years each). In 2003/04 the total enrolment at primary schools was equivalent to 96.7% of children in the relevant age-group. The comparable ratio for secondary enrolment was an estimated 66.2%. In mid-2003 the Government agreed to permit the use of the Berber language, Tamazight, as a language of instruction in Algerian schools. In 2004 some 16.7% of total government expenditure was allocated to education and training. Priority is being given to teacher-training, to the development of technical and scientific teaching programmes, and to adult literacy and training schemes. In addition to the 27 main universities, there are 16 other centres universitaires and a number of technical colleges. In 2003/04 a total of 716,452 students were enrolled in higher education.” [1f] (Education)

- 24.07 An article on Middle East Online, dated 20 June 2007 reports:

“The Algerian government Tuesday approved a plan to set up an academy of the Amazigh language, spoken by the Berber minority, many of whom live in Kabylie in the mountainous north of the country.

“The council of the government has examined and endorsed two presidential decree projects... relating to the creation of an Algerian Academy of the

Amazigh Language and of a Higher Council of the Amazigh language,' a government statement said after its weekly meeting.

"The academy is described as 'a national institution of a scientific and cultural nature.'

"Both it and the higher council will be under the direct supervision of the presidency under the terms of the decree.

"The measures have been taken in conformity with 2002 legislation amending the constitution making the Berber language a national language on the same footing as Arabic.

"That recognition followed a year of demonstrations in the Kabylie region between April 2001 and March 2002 following the death of a high school student in a police station at Beni Douala, near Tizi Ouzou, east of Algiers.

"Political parties and organisations promoting Berber identity and culture are still calling for the Berber language to be recognised as an official language by the constitution.

"A High Commission for Amazigh affairs (HCA) was set up in 1995 to promote the teaching of the Berber tongue in public schools but has been criticised by Berber cultural movements for its inertia." [78b]

24.08 The Country Background Note of the US State Department of February 2007 states:

"Algeria's educational system has grown dramatically since the country gained its independence. In the last 12 years, attendance has doubled to more than 5 million students. Education is free and compulsory to age 16. Despite government allocation of substantial educational resources, population pressures and a serious shortage of teachers have severely strained the system. Modest numbers of Algerian students study abroad, primarily in Europe and Canada. In 2000, the government launched a major review of the country's educational system and in 2004 efforts to reform the educational system began." [6j] (People)

24.09 The Economist Intelligence Unit's country profile for Algeria states in relation to education:

"Since independence the number of children receiving schooling has risen dramatically. Enrolment rates of 99% are estimated for primary school, falling to 60% for secondary school. However, adult illiteracy still stood at 31% in 2002 according to the World Bank (down from 38% in 1995). Education and training account for more than 30% of current government expenditure. Development plans for the future include a new university in Oran at Ain El Beida. The new facility should help with overcrowding in the Oran's Oran-Es-Senia university. It will complement eight existing major universities and tertiary institutions in 16 other towns." [84c] (p29)

24.10 The Algerian youth literacy rate (the percentage of people aged 15-24 who can, with understanding, both read and write a short, simple statement relating to their everyday life) according to Globalis shows an increase:

Year	1980	1985	1990	2004
Youth literacy rate (Percent)	60.6	69.4	77.3	89.9

[97]

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CHILD CARE

- 24.11 The UK Foreign and Commonwealth Office (FCO) states in a letter to Country Information and Policy Unit dated 22 September 2002 that: "The decision to place a child in a home is made by the authorities concerned when they are abandoned at birth, or by the Infants Judge after an investigation into the situation of the infant." [5b]
- 24.12 The FCO information above also states: "Care homes for lone children are set up and run by the Government. They are regulated by the law, namely Executive Decree No 92-182 of 13 October 1992. Such care homes are intended to upkeep nurslings and only children below the upper limit of compulsory school attendance may be placed in such homes. They take boys and girls. A number of charities also run care homes, such as the Association Algérienne Enfance et Familles d'Acceuil Benevolés. Algerian families often adopt young children from state and charity homes under the Kafala system of adoption under Islamic law. Kafala is widespread in Algeria. But in nearly all cases it concerns babies." [5b]
- 24.13 The FCO information continues: "Older children who lack family support are placed in homes by court order or allocated to foster care. The fostering of children is regulated by the law, namely Ordinance No. 72-103 of 10 February 1972 relating to the Protection of Children and Youth. For the purposes of this law infants are defined as being under 21 years of age. The provisions of Ordinance No. 72-103 applies [sic] to those infants whose health, security, morality or education are in danger. As a consequence they are placed under the protection of the State and the Infants Judge is empowered to take all necessary measures. He may decide, depending on the youth's situation, to place him in a specialised centre, a care home, or a vocational centre. He may also entrust a person with the care of the child." [5b]

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CHILD SOLDIERS

- 24.14 The Coalition to Stop the Use of Child Soldiers, in the 'Child Soldiers Global report 2004' Algeria section, published on 17 November 2004, states:
- "Although the voluntary recruitment age remained unclear, children did not appear to have been recruited into government armed forces. There were unconfirmed reports of under-18s being used by government-allied paramilitary forces and armed political groups, but little documented evidence was available." [39a]

- 24.15 The Global Report 2004 continues, in relation to local militias and Government-backed paramilitary groups:

“There were no safeguards to prevent recruitment of under-18s into local militias or government-allied paramilitary groups authorized and supported by the authorities.

“Such groups include ‘communal guards’, created in 1996 to defend public order. ‘Communal guards are recruited amongst candidates of at least 19 years of age who have gained the best marks in tests’ (Executive Decree 96-266, Article 21).

“Groupes de légitime défense (GLD), Legitimate Defence Groups, are self-defence militias established under Executive Decree 97-04 of January 1997. Authorized by joint order of the Ministries of Defence and Interior, they are supplied with arms by the authorities (Article 8) and required to wear distinctive uniforms. According to government officials, enlistment is voluntary and, although no minimum age for recruitment is specified, recruitment is on the same basis as for the armed forces. The minimum age for carrying firearms in Algeria is 19. In 2003 the GLD were estimated to have up to 300,000 members.

“One study by Algerian human rights activists was given evidence of children being recruited and carrying automatic weapons in a family-run GLD headed by local officials.” [39a]

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TRAFFICKING

25.01 The USSD Trafficking in Persons report 2006, published on 5 May 2006, states:

“Algeria is a transit country for men and women trafficked from sub-Saharan Africa en route to Europe for the purposes of commercial sexual exploitation and involuntary servitude. These men and women often enter Algeria voluntarily, but illegally, with the assistance of smugglers. Once in Algeria, however, some women are coerced into commercial sexual exploitation to pay off smuggling debts, while some men may be forced into involuntary servitude in construction and other low-skilled work. According to one NGO, an estimated 15,000 illegal sub-Saharan African migrants currently reside in Algeria, of which approximately 9,000 are victims of trafficking. In addition, one NGO maintains that children are trafficked from Niger and Mali. Some Algerian children reportedly are trafficked within the country for domestic servitude.

“The Government of Algeria does not fully comply with the minimum standards for the elimination of trafficking and is not making significant efforts to do so. The government does not prohibit and punish all crimes of trafficking in persons. It does not draw a distinction between trafficking in persons and illegal immigration and, as such, has not developed policies and programs to address the specific needs of trafficking victims. Algeria does not adequately identify trafficking victims among illegal immigrants. The government did not take serious law enforcement actions to punish traffickers who force women into commercial sexual exploitation or men into involuntary servitude in other sectors. Moreover, the government reported no investigations of trafficking of children for domestic servitude or improvements in protection services available to victims of trafficking.” [61] (Country Narratives)

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MEDICAL ISSUES

GENERAL

26.01 The USSD report for 2006 states that: "The government provided free medical care for all citizens - including children with disabilities - albeit in generally rudimentary facilities." [6i] (Children)

26.02 The US State Department Background Note on Algeria, updated February 2007, states:

"Housing and medicine continue to be pressing problems in Algeria. Failing infrastructure and the continued influx of people from rural to urban areas have overtaxed both systems. According to the United Nations Development Program, Algeria has one of the worlds highest per housing unit occupancy rates, and government officials have publicly stated that the country has an immediate shortfall of 1.5 million housing units." [6j] (People)

26.03 Jane's Sentinel noted on 18 May 2007 that:

"Despite a rise in life expectancy after the civil war and comparatively low birth and immunisation rates, Algeria's health system suffers from major problems. There are an inadequate number of doctors (one per 1,000 people) and hospital beds (2.1 per 1,000), as well as poor access to potable water (87 per cent of the population and sanitation (92 per cent of the population). Policy favours prevention, with an emphasis on clinical-based care rather than a large number of hospitals. This, along with a young population, explains the government's proactive immunisation strategy. Nevertheless, the problems caused by a lack of adequate drinking water and sanitation provision has led to outbreaks of tuberculosis, hepatitis, measles, dysentery, typhoid and cholera." [83f] Jane's also noted that:

"Public access to health care is improved by the fact that doctors and dentists are required to work in the public sector for at least five years; nevertheless, doctors are far more easily found in the cities of the north than in the southern Saharan region of the country." [83f]

26.04 The UN Development Programme (UNDP) Report 2006 (accessed 17 September 2007) placed Algeria in 102nd place out of 177 countries in its Human Development Index. The report stated that life expectancy in 2004 was just over 71.4 years. [23a] The Europa World website (accessed 15 August 2007) states that Government expenditure in 2003 on public health was 4.1 per cent of GDP. [1m] (Health and Welfare)

26.05 The Economist Intelligence Unit's 2006 Country Profile on Algeria states that:

"Algeria's healthcare system has improved greatly since independence. According to the World Development Indicators 2006, in 2003 total health expenditure as a share of GDP was 4.1%. Public health spending as a percentage of GDP amounted to 3.1% (compared with an estimated 2.2% in Egypt and 1.7% in Morocco). By the end of 1999 there were 261 hospitals with 54,000 beds, roughly one bed for every 550 inhabitants, according to Economist Intelligence Unit estimates. However, the number of doctors per inhabitant was

less impressive: 85 per 100,000 people in Algeria in 2001, compared with 218 in Egypt. There have been some improvements, especially a drop in the infant mortality rate from 54 per 1,000 births in 1990 to 34 per 1,000 in 2004 (according to the World Bank). Even so poverty-related diseases have been on the increase in recent years, in line with a general increase in poverty. According to the World Development Indicators 2006, the share of the population below the national poverty line had risen to 22.6% in 1995, up from 12.2% in 1988, and there is little to suggest that this proportion has fallen significantly over the past decade. In addition, the UN estimates that 0.1% of the adult population (ages 15-49) had HIV/AIDS at the end of 2003, slightly below the rate in Egypt. According to the World Bank, life expectancy was 71 years in 2004 (up from 67 in 1990) compared with 70 for Egypt (up from 63).” [84c] (p29)

26.06 The Algerian Ministry of Health and Population publishes medical data. This includes lists of regional and specialist hospitals and numbers of medical personnel in the public sector. [22] (Le Ministere, National System of Health)

26.07 MD Travel Health website provides daily updated health information and reports recent outbreaks in Algeria:

“An outbreak of typhoid fever was reported in August 2007 from Djelfa province, 300 km south of Algiers, causing 36 cases by the end of the month.” [92]

26.08 The MD Travel Health website states:

“Medical facilities are improving, especially in large urban centers, but are still not up to Western standards. Important pharmaceuticals may not be available.” [92]

A World Bank report titled ‘The Status and Progress of Women in the Middle East and North Africa (2007)’ states regarding health:

“Notable progress was accomplished in access to reproductive and health services with 96 percent of births attended by skilled health staff in 2002. The average fertility rate among Algerian women dropped significantly in twenty years to 2 children / woman in 2004.

“Maternal mortality remains a notable phenomenon with large disparities between different areas. A Child and Mother’s Health survey conducted nationally reported 215 deaths per 100.000 live births in 1992 and a rate of 117 in 1999. According to the Ministry of Health and Population, maternal mortality rates were cut in half in ten years. The maternal mortality ratio of 75.5 deaths per 100.000 live births in 1995 had decreased to 37 deaths per 100.000 live births in 2004.

“Despite continuous efforts undertaken by the State to improve health services (through massive training and construction of health infrastructures), the government has underlined several areas in which the following action is necessary:

- Provide greater emergency obstetrical services and equip health structures with adequate equipment and necessary products to make deliveries safer, particularly in the regions of the south and the high Plateaux.
- Invest additional resources to improve the delivery quality of specific services in the areas of reproductive health, family planning, cancer tests, HIV and AIDS tests and treatment, as well as violence against women.

- Reinforce the statistical database in terms of production and dissemination of data on reproductive health." [34c]

- 26.09 The US Department of State Consular Information Sheet offers the following advice regarding medical facilities and health information in Algeria as at 7 March 2007:

"Hospitals and clinics in Algeria are available and improving in the large urban centers, but are still not up to Western standards. Doctors and hospitals often expect immediate cash payment for services. Most medical practitioners speak French; English is not widely used.

"Prescription medicines are not always readily available. Some pharmacies may at times be out-of-stock. In addition, the medicine may be sold under a different brand name and may contain a different dosage than in the U.S. Please be aware that some newer medications may not yet be available in Algeria. It is usually easy to obtain over-the-counter products.

"Emergency services are satisfactory, but response time is often unpredictable. In all cases, response time is not as fast as in the U.S.

"Cases of tuberculosis are regularly reported, but do not reach endemic levels. Every summer, public health authorities report limited occurrences of water-borne diseases, such as typhoid. In addition, HIV/AIDS is a concern in the remote southern part of the country, especially in border towns." [6o]

- 26.10 AllAfrica.com ran a report dated 18 September 2007 noting that Algeria and South Africa have worked together on a number of health issues:

"In 2003, South Africa sent its first cardio-thoracic surgery team to Algeria to perform operations at the request of the Government of Algeria.

"The team was sent off by the South African Health Minister, Dr Manto Tshabalala-Msimang, and the Algerian Minister of Health and Population, Abdelhamid Aberkane.

"South Africa provided emergency relief to Algeria during the unfortunate incident of an earthquake that led to the death of more than 2000 people and left more than 8000 injured in May 2003.

"The relief included medical supplies, medical personnel and equipment to detect bodies trapped during the destruction of some of the infrastructure." [93a]

- 26.11 An article on the Algeria Events website dated 19 September 2006, updated 17 July 2007, states that:

"Jordanian doctors and businessmen will embark within the few forthcoming months on the general and specialized medicine private hospitals' construction in Algeria.

"Some of the projects fall within partnership with Algerian doctors' framework, and others come as individual initiatives. The projects are to cover Algeria deficient specialities.

“In another hand, Jordanian doctors will come to Algeria in order to oversee surgical operations as of next month. The doctors supposed to come to Algeria regularly are going to supervise the difficult surgical operations, The Jordanian health minister advisor, Dr. Rateb Henaoui told El Khabar.

“Many surveys are underway namely technical and financial ones so as to get acquainted with the array of opportunities likely to be seized by investors, thanks to the Algerian legislation’, he pointed out, stressing that ‘such operations are to take place each three months’. Whereas the agreement concluded between the two ministries enacts the difficult cases’ evacuation to Jordan.

“Moreover a great importance is attached to medicines manufacturing, along with expertise exchanges in terms of medical tests. Moreover, a feasibility study, undertaken by the Algerian and Jordanian health ministries is underway on the most important fields lacking Algeria, be it in health care or medicines, to keep in line with 1997 Agreement.” [94]

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HEALTH CARE PROFESSIONALS

- 26.12 The World Health Organisation’s (WHO) presents the 2002 figures for healthcare professionals in Algeria [15e]

PHARMACEUTICALS

- 26.13 A Pharmaceutical Pricing website, provided by URCH Publishing Ltd, and updated 15 June 2005, states that:

“The quality of healthcare delivery in Algeria varies strongly from one region to another. A reform of the public sector is currently under consideration to consolidate the national healthcare provision and to ensure an appropriate coverage for the population. Hospital reform is a priority for the current authorities.

“The principal characteristics of the Algerian pharmaceutical market are its relatively large size, its potential for growth and its high dependence on imported drugs.” [95]

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HIV/AIDS

- 26.14 The World Health Organization / UNAIDS document, ‘AIDS epidemic update, December 2005’, reports, regarding Algeria:

“Algeria recorded twice as many new HIV cases in 2004 (266 diagnoses) compared with the year before. This might herald a surge in the country’s hitherto small epidemic, which is still inadequately surveyed. Modes of transmission are unknown for almost three quarters of the 1721 official HIV

diagnoses made by end-2004, making it difficult to pinpoint the routes of transmission (Ministère de la santé Algeria, 2005). However, most infections appear to be occurring during heterosexual intercourse, with commercial sex a prominent factor, especially in the south, where HIV prevalence is much higher than elsewhere in the country. The highest infection levels recorded to date have been among sex workers: 1.7% in Oran, in the north, and as high as 9% in Tamanrasset, in the south, where it has risen sharply from the 2% found in 2000 (Institut de Formation Paramédicale de Parnet, 2004: Fares et al., 2004). In addition to sex workers, military personnel and migrants appear to be particularly vulnerable to HIV in Tamanrasset." [15d] (p71)

The December 2006 update added:

"... the use of non-sterile injecting equipment appears to be common. Various studies show that as many as four in ten injecting drug users in Algeria, ... have used non-sterile syringes. ... in Algeria and Morocco, unprotected sex accounts for the majority of reported HIV infections, and women represent an increasing proportion of people living with HIV (Ministère de la Santé Maroc, 2005). At some antenatal clinics in the south of Algeria, more than 1% of pregnant women have tested HIV-positive (Institut de Formation Paramédicale de Parnet, 2004)." [15f] (p60)

26.15 Jane's Sentinel noted on 18 May 2007 that:

"The HIV infection rate among 15-49 year olds is 0.1 per cent." [83f]

Two articles on AllAfrica.com dated 8 and 11 January 2006 question Algeria's HIV/AIDS statistics and say that the figures could be much higher due to fear of condemnation under Islam. However, the 8 January 2006 article continues to state:

"In an effort to broaden the fight against AIDS, Amar Tou - the Minister of Health, Population and Hospital Reform - announced last month that 42 new testing centres would be opened in Algeria during the first four months of 2006. Six centres have already been set up, providing a service that is voluntary, anonymous and free.

"We are going to make sure that each wilaya (prefecture) has its own testing centre,' said Tou. There are 48 wilayas in Algeria.

"Care for people who are battling AIDS-related diseases is also provided free of charge, at public hospitals. Ali Ibrir, vice president of Izuran Tmurt, an anti-AIDS group, estimates that almost 2,000 people are currently in need of treatment. According to the health ministry, about 20 cases of full-blown AIDS are recorded each year.

"In addition, an AIDS prevention and awareness campaign was held in Algeria during November and December last year, when posters and publicity flyers were distributed throughout the country." [93b] [93c]

26.16 Based in Cairo, the Regional Support Team for the Middle East and North Africa (MENA) for UNAIDS covers 22 countries, including Algeria. In an interview published on IRIN on 2 March 2006, the head of UNAIDS-MENA region said:

“... until HIV/AIDS becomes significantly visible, there’s a tendency not to commit that much political energy to the issue. However, a number of countries are taking this more seriously. For example, in Algeria, there’s a certain high level of political commitment that has even led to the president making a very strong declaration about the issue.” [96]

- 26.17 According to information published on the UNAIDS website, accessed 17 September 2007, Algeria has a comprehensive and budgeted STIs/HIV/AIDS National Strategic Plan 2007–2011 with an integrated monitoring and evaluation plan. Current spending was US\$6.7 million (national funds spent by governments from domestic sources). [16]

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MENTAL HEALTH

- 26.18 The World Health Organization’s (WHO) ‘Mental health atlas 2005’ section on Algeria notes the mental health care system in Algeria operates both in the primary health care system and in the acute treatment of severe mental health disorders in an intermediary mental health centre system, though there is no provision in Algeria for care located directly within the community. [15b]
- 26.19 The WHO ‘Mental health atlas 2005’ also notes the availability of the following medications, classing them as “generally available at the primary health care level of the country”: Carbamazepine, Ethosuximide, Phenobarbital, Phenytoinsodium, Sodium Valproate, Amitriptyline, Chlorpromazine, Diazepam, Fluphenazine, Haloperidol, Carbidopa, and Levodopa. Lithium and Biperiden are held not to be available. [15b]

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HUMANITARIAN ISSUES

MISSING PEOPLE

- 27.01 The USSD report for 2006 introduces the issue in the following summary: “Most of the thousands of disappearances in the mid-1990s, many of which have been attributed to the security forces, remain unresolved... Press reports indicated that the GSPC kidnapped approximately 55 civilians during the year.” [6i] (Section 1b)
- 27.02 The Amnesty International report of September 2003, ‘Steps towards change or empty promises?’ notes: “Amnesty International has received information on the cases of some 4,000 ‘disappeared’, the vast majority of whom were arrested between 1994 and 1998. The organization recognizes, however that the true figure may be much higher.” [26c] (p26)
- 27.03 The USSD report for 2006 adds:
- “The total number of disappeared during the 1990s continued to be debated. During the year, the government estimated that 6,546 persons were missing or disappeared as a result of government actions between 1992 and 1999, with some 10,000 additional persons missing or disappeared from terrorist kidnappings and murders. Local NGOs reported that security forces played a role in the disappearances of approximately 8,000 persons.” [6i] (Section 1b)

NGO concern over the Government’s approach

- 27.04 Amnesty International (AI) reported in ‘Steps towards change or empty promises?’ of September 2003 “The authorities acknowledge that they have received thousands of complaints from families alleging that relatives have ‘disappeared’ following arrest by the security forces or state-armed militias, but generally do not accept the complaints as well-founded.” [26c] (p28)
- 27.05 AI also reported in the same document, “The way in which the authorities have dealt with mass graves which have been discovered since 1998 has generated considerable fears and anxieties that the available evidence is either not being processed in line with internationally accepted standards or, worse, is being destroyed.” [26c] (p31) AI continued later in the same report:
- “These families [of missing people] believe that the remains of their relatives may lie in a mass grave and hope that sooner rather than later those remains might be exhumed, allowing them to lay their relatives to rest with dignity. Associations of families of the ‘disappeared’ are also deeply concerned, as they believe that some sites may contain bodies of individuals who ‘disappeared’ after arrest by the security forces or state-armed militias.” [26c] (p31)
- 27.06 Human Rights Watch reported in December 2003, in ‘Truth and Justice on Hold: The New State Commission on ‘Disappearances’ that: “Authorities first denied the problem. Then, beginning in 1998, they acknowledged but minimized it while claiming to be investigating and resolving individual cases. But the issue continued to tarnish Algeria’s image abroad. In 1999, officials began acknowledging the problem as a difficult one that needed to be addressed.” [27b] (p10)

The 'Ad Hoc Mechanism'

27.07 The USSD report for 2006 states:

"In September 2005 voters approved by referendum President Bouteflika's proposed Charter for Peace and National Reconciliation, which ended the Ad Hoc Mechanism that was established in 2003 to account for the disappeared." [6i] (Section 1b)

27.08 HRW states in 'Truth and Justice on Hold: The New State Commission on 'Disappearances' of December 2003 that:

"The decree gives this new body weak investigative powers and defines the information it can seek narrowly. While it may take the welcome steps of verifying claims of 'disappearance' and proposing compensation to families, it is unlikely to challenge the long-standing refusal of state agencies to divulge how 'disappearances' were carried out by their agents and which units and individuals are responsible for them. Unless it embraces a more expansive interpretation of its mandate to investigate and make recommendations, the new body is unlikely to help Algerians turn the page on this national tragedy and end the climate of impunity for human rights abuses." [27b] (p2)

CRIME

27.09 The US Overseas Security Advisory Council Algeria Crime and Safety Report for 2007, dated 20 June 2007, states the following about the displacement of the threat of terrorism with general crime:

"Crime is on the increase. This increase is due in part to remaining members of the terrorist groups resorting to crime in order to finance terrorist activity, and former terrorists changing their occupation to that of a career criminal. Socio-economic factors also drive the increase. The unemployment rate hovers unofficially above 25%, and mostly affects males under 30. This contributes to the crime rate, particularly in urban areas. False road blocks, long a favorite tactic of terror groups seeking to kill or kidnap opponents, are now used to extort money. Kidnappings are still common in the wilayas (provinces) east of Algiers, but there were no reports in 2006 of any foreigners being targeted. Family members of wealthy Algerians are the primary targets of kidnapping attempts. The level of street crime is rising, with criminals boldly victimizing people in crowded shopping areas within sight of police checkpoints. While the use of firearms by criminals is relatively rare in the city of Algiers, knives are commonly employed. These weapons are used to cut objects such as purse straps from victims, as well as to threaten bodily harm. Organized crime is a growing concern, with increased incidents of drug trafficking, counterfeiting, vehicle theft, and money laundering." [6h] (Crime)

27.10 The USSD report for 2006 continues, with regards to roadblocks:

"Armed bandits and terrorists intercepted citizens at roadblocks, often using stolen police uniforms and equipment to rob them of their cash and vehicles. On occasion, armed groups killed groups of military and civilian passengers at these roadblocks." [6i] (Section 2d)

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FREEDOM OF MOVEMENT

28.01 The USSD report for 2006 states:

“Article 44 of the constitution provides for these rights [Freedom of Movement Within the Country, Foreign Travel, Emigration, and Repatriation]; however, the government restricted the exercise of them. The government did not permit young men eligible for the draft and who had not yet completed their military service to leave the country without special authorization; however, such authorization was granted to students and to those persons with special family circumstances.

“Under the emergency decree, the interior minister and the provincial governors may deny residency in certain districts to persons regarded as threats to public order. The government also maintained restrictions for security reasons on travel into the four southern provinces of Ouargla, El-Oued, Laghouat, and Ain-Salah, where much of the hydrocarbon industry and many foreign workers were located...

“... The Family Code does not permit anyone under 18 to travel abroad without a guardian’s permission.

“The law does not provide for forced exile, and it was not known to occur.” [6i] (Section 2d)

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INTERNALLY DISPLACED PEOPLE (IDPs)

SAHRAWI REFUGEES IN ALGERIA

29.01 The Europa World website (accessed 15 August 2007) notes that Western Sahara is a territory to the south west of Algeria under the administration of Morocco, whose sovereignty is under dispute between the government of Morocco and the Polisario Front (Popular Front for the Liberation of the Saguia el Hamra and Rio de Oro), an organisation seeking independence for the region. The area was part of Spanish Sahara until 1976. [1o] (Country Profile - Morocco)

29.02 The USSD report on Human Rights Practices in Western Sahara for 2006, dated 6 March 2007 gives the following information with regards to the status of the area:

“In 1988 Morocco and the Polisario accepted the joint Organization of African Unity/UN settlement proposals for a referendum allowing the Sahrawis to decide between integration with Morocco or independence for the territory. Disagreements over voter eligibility were not resolved, however, and a referendum has not taken place.” [6n]

“On October 31, the Security Council adopted Resolution 1720, extending MINURSO [the United Nations Mission for a Referendum in Western Sahara] and its 227-member military staff until April 30, 2007.” [6n]

29.03 The USSD report for 2006 for Algeria summarises, regarding the Sahrawi refugees:

“The government provided protection to as many as 100,000 refugee Sahrawis, who left the Western Sahara after Morocco took control of the territory in the 1970s. The Office of the UN High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR), the World Food Program, the Algerian Red Crescent, and other organizations also assisted Sahrawi refugees. The government generally cooperated with UNHCR and other humanitarian organizations in assisting refugees, but did not permit UNHCR to conduct a census of the Sahrawi refugees.” [6l] (Section 2d)

29.04 The USSD report for 2006 for Western Sahara adds:

“Morocco and the Polisario disputed the number of persons in refugee camps. The Moroccan government continued to claim that the Polisario detained 45,000 to 50,000 Sahrawi refugees against their will in camps near Tindouf, Algeria. The Polisario claimed that refugee numbers at Tindouf were much higher, but it denied that any refugees were held against their will. The UNHCR and the World Food Program appealed regularly to donors for food aid, and distributed it to a population of approximately 155,000 in the refugee camps. The UN, however, reduced the planning figure to 90,000, partially in response to concerns about inflated refugee numbers. During February floods humanitarian aid to the camps increased; in August the amount of aid reverted to prior levels. Local advocacy groups in the Western Sahara protested against the treatment of the Sahrawi refugees in the Tindouf camps throughout the year.” [6n]

29.05 The USSD report for 2006, on Western Sahara adds further detail:

“In 2004 the UNHCR completed a six-month program of confidence-building measures, highlighted by family visits that brought 1200 persons to meet for five days with long-separated relatives. Most participants were Sahrawi refugees from the camps in Algeria visiting relatives in the Moroccan-controlled territory. In 2005 approximately 19,000 Sahrawis registered to participate in the program, and the UNHCR transported 1,476 persons for visits. The confidence-building measures also included telephone exchanges between relatives in the territory and refugee camps in Algeria. The program was interrupted in August 2005 due to a lack of funding but resumed briefly in November and December 2005. On November 3, the UN resumed family reunion flights after a five month suspension with the intent to continue through the end of 2007, provided funding is available.” [6n]

29.06 The BBC reported on 16 February 2006, in the article ‘UN food aid for Saharan refugees’, that the camps had been badly hit by flooding in western Algeria, with the UN assessing on 11 February 2006 that four out of the five camps had been badly affected, with half the dwellings in two of the camps destroyed, and that food was in desperately short supply. [60f]

29.07 An Amnesty International report in June 2003, entitled ‘Asylum-seekers fleeing a continuing human rights crisis’ and numbered MDE 28/007/2003, states: “Amnesty International is not aware of Sahrawi refugees being allowed by the Algerian authorities to leave the camps without the authorization of the Polisario authorities and to find safe haven in other parts of Algeria.” [26a] (p17) The USSD report for 2006 for Western Sahara states: “The Moroccan government continued to claim that the Polisario detained 45,000 to 50,000 Sahrawi refugees against their will in camps near Tindouf, Algeria. ... Local advocacy groups in the Western Sahara protested against the treatment of the Sahrawi refugees in the Tindouf camps throughout the year.” [6n]

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CITIZENSHIP AND NATIONALITY

- 30.01 The United States Office of Personnel Management, Investigations Service published a compendium of the citizenship criteria of all nations in March 2001. The Algeria entry, (accessed 19 September 2007), states:

“CITIZENSHIP: Citizenship is based upon the Code of Algerian Nationality, dated December 15, 1978.

- BY BIRTH: Birth within the territory of Algeria does not automatically confer citizenship. The exception is a child born to unknown or stateless parents.

- BY DESCENT:

- Child of an Algerian father, regardless of the country of birth.

- Child of an Algerian mother and an unknown or stateless father, regardless of the country of birth.

- BY NATURALIZATION: Algerian citizenship may be acquired upon fulfillment of the following conditions: Person has resided in Algeria for at least seven years, (18 months if the person was born abroad to an Algerian mother or father), is of good morality, good health, has no criminal convictions, is at least 21 years of age, has assimilated into Algerian society and has a secure means of support.

DUAL CITIZENSHIP: NOT RECOGNIZED.

LOSS OF CITIZENSHIP:

- VOLUNTARY: Voluntary renunciation of Algerian citizenship is permitted by law. Contact the Embassy for details and required paperwork.

- INVOLUNTARY: The following are grounds for involuntary loss of Algerian citizenship:

- Person voluntarily acquires a foreign citizenship.

- Person's employment with a foreign nation or company is not in the interest of Algeria.

- Naturalized citizen is convicted of a crime (abroad or in Algeria) and sentenced to five years or more.

- Naturalized citizen is involved in acts incompatible with the interests of Algeria.” [48]

“The Algerian parliament unanimously approved on March 14, 2005 a decree that amends the current citizenship law to grant Algerian citizens the right to dual citizenship.” [23d]

“The revised provisions (Ordinance No. 05-01 of 27 February 2005) of the Code of Algerian Nationality (Code de la nationalité algérienne), ... allow, among other things, Algerian woman [sic] married to a foreigner to transmit Algerian nationality to her children” [90] (p2)

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EXIT/ENTRY PROCEDURES

TREATMENT OF RETURNED FAILED ASYLUM SEEKERS

- 31.01 The UNHCR highlighted its renewed concerns regarding returnees in a position paper published in December 2004, particularly in relation to returnees perceived as terrorists:

“UNHCR is concerned that asylum seekers found not to be in need of international protection, who are returned to Algeria may face hostile treatment due to the Algerian Government’s perception that such persons may have been involved in international terrorism.

The position paper continues that Western government intelligence reports about terrorist infiltration into North African migrant communities in Europe may have heightened the suspicions of the Algerian authorities towards returnees, notably those linked with Islamist movements. The paper argues: “Therefore, there is a strong presumption that such persons may be subject to persecutory treatment upon return. ... Therefore, the UNHCR continues to emphasize the need to exercise the utmost caution when considering the forced return of rejected asylum seekers to Algeria.” [24a]

- 31.02 In a Human Rights Watch (HRW) open letter of 23 June 2005 to Mr Tony Blair, UK Prime Minister, entitled ‘UK: Empty promises can’t protect people from torture’, HRW stated:

“In Algeria, Morocco, Jordan, and Tunisia, persons suspected of terrorist activity or labeled as such are specifically targeted for abusive treatment, including torture. Research by Human Rights Watch and Amnesty International, and detailed assessments of the United States Department of State, all demonstrate the very real risks of sending persons labeled as terrorism suspects back to these countries.” [27f]

Period in detention

- 31.03 The Amnesty International report, ‘Steps towards change or empty promises?’, of September 2003 notes:

“... and those accused of a ‘transnational crime’ for up to 60 months. According to the UN Human Rights Committee, pre-trial detention should be an exception and as short as possible.” [26c] (p7)

Death penalty and extradition

- 31.04 The Hands Off Cain NGO website (updated January 2005) states:

“The EU had repeatedly requested Algeria to abolish the death penalty and eradicate torture. Algeria intended to co-operate more closely with European authorities, that refuse to hand over Algerian nationals detained on the continent on charges of terrorism because of the existence of the death penalty in the north African state. The European Convention on Human Rights binds EU countries to reject extradition requests if there is a possibility of a death sentence.” [47]

UNACCOMPANIED MINORS

- 31.05 The Amnesty International report of 1 June 2003, 'Asylum-seekers fleeing a continuing human rights crisis', states regarding unaccompanied minors:

"Amnesty International is not aware of any NGO playing a role in the tracing of parents of relatives, nor, given the difficulties of access to information in Algeria, is it easy to imagine any NGO being able to play such a role. Amnesty International has no information about state or charity care of unaccompanied minors who are returned to Algeria." [26a] (p12)

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EMPLOYMENT RIGHTS

- 32.01 The USSD report for 2006 states: "The constitution prohibits all forms of forced or compulsory labor, including by children; however, there were reports from the labor ministry that such practices occurred." [6i] (Section 6c) The USSD report for 2006 adds that 16 years is the minimum age for employment. [6i] (Section 6d)

See also [Child labour](#)

- 32.02 The USSD report for 2006 states:

"The national minimum wage of \$140 (10,000 dinars) per month did not provide a decent standard of living for a worker and family. Ministry of Labor inspectors were responsible for ensuring compliance with the minimum wage regulation; however, enforcement was inconsistent.

"The standard work week was 37.5 hours, with one ten-minute break and one hour for lunch. Employees who worked beyond the standard work week received premium pay on a sliding scale from time-and-a-half to double-time, depending on whether the overtime was worked on a normal work day, a weekend, or a holiday.

"The law contains well-developed occupational, health, and safety standards, but Ministry of Labor inspectors did not enforce these regulations effectively. There were no reports of workers being dismissed for removing themselves from hazardous working conditions. Because employment was usually based on detailed contracts, workers rarely were subjected to unexpected conditions in the workplace. If workers were subjected to such conditions, they first could attempt to renegotiate the employment contract or, failing that, resort to the courts; however, the high demand for employment in the country gave an advantage to employers seeking to exploit employees." [6i] (Section 6e)

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Annex A: Chronology of major events

- 1962** Algeria gained independence after a war with France.
- 1989** **February:** A new constitution ending the one party state was approved by referendum.
FIS founded and over 20 parties licensed.
- 1990** Widespread strikes and demonstrations occurred.
June: In the local elections the FIS received 55 per cent of the votes cast.
- 1991** **May:** FIS organised general strikes to protest about the organisation of the forthcoming elections.
June: Violent clashes between Islamic fundamentalists and security forces.
July: The President of FIS, Abbasi Madani, and the Vice President, Ali Belhadj, were arrested.
December: First round of the general election. FIS were the largest party with 47.5 per cent of the votes cast.
- 1992** **January:** The National People's Assembly dissolved, and President Chadli resigned. The second round of voting was cancelled. A five-member High Council of State (HCS) was appointed to act as a collective presidency.
February: HCS declared a state of emergency.
March: FIS dissolved by the Government.
June: President Boudiaf assassinated. Violence increases and the GIA emerges as the main group behind these operations.
July: Madani and Belhadj were sentenced to 12 years' imprisonment.
- 1993** **February:** State of emergency renewed for an indefinite period.
- 1994** **January:** Liamine Zeroual appointed Head of State for a three-year term.
September: Madani and Belhadj released from prison and placed under house arrest.
- 1995** **November:** Presidential election. There were four candidates, and President Zeroual won 61 per cent of the valid votes. The FLN, FFS and FIS urged people to boycott the elections.
- 1996** **November:** A referendum approved changes to the constitution which included changing the law regulating political parties, banning those based on religion, language, gender or regional differences.
- 1997** **January:** The Secretary General of the UGTA, Abd al-Hak Benhamouda, was assassinated.
March: supporters of President Zeroual set up the National Democratic Rally (RND) to run in the 5 June legislative elections.
April: FIS called for a boycott of the elections. Hamas changed its name to Movement of a Peaceful Society, to conform with the new laws regulating political parties.

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June: Elections – the turnout was officially recorded as 65 per cent. The RND won 155 seats and became the largest party in the National Assembly. They formed a coalition with the Islamist Movement for a Peaceful society (MSP), and the National Liberation Front.

September: FIS chief Madani released, but then placed under house arrest.

October: A major split occurred in FIS, when supporters of Madani denounced other FIS leaders for declaring a cease-fire of its military wing, the Islamic Salvation Army (AIS). Local elections were won by the RND. In October and November the main legal opposition groups organised demonstrations against what they saw as fraud in the elections. Demonstrators were beaten with batons.

December: Members of Algeria's local councils chose representatives to sit in the upper house of parliament. The National Democratic Rally gained 35 of the first 42 seats decided.

1998 February: Four other armed Algerian fundamentalist organisations, the Ansar Battalion, the Al-Sharq al-Awsat, the Rahman Battalion and the Islamic League for the Call and the Jihad had joined the truce announced by the armed wing of the FIS in October 1997.

The violence continued in the early part of 1998, and 400 were killed in one massacre.

May: An executive decree was signed by Algeria's Health Minister on 5 May allowing women who had been raped by suspected Muslim rebels to have abortions.

Thirty political parties were dissolved for failing to conform with the new rules on political parties.

June: On 25 June Matoub Lounes, a popular Berber singer, was killed, and his wife and two sons were wounded, at a false roadblock by an armed group. Rioting and demonstrations in Berber towns followed.

July: Implementation of a law generalising the use of Arabic in enterprises and public departments.

Visit to Algeria by Eminent Panel appointed by the Secretary General of the United Nations.

September: President Zeroual announced that he would resign before the end of his term of office and hand over power after presidential elections in early 1999.

1999 April: Abdelaziz Bouteflika announced as the winner of the presidential election. On the eve of the presidential election six of the seven presidential candidates withdrew from the elections claiming fraud. [1h]

June: The AIS declared an end to their guerrilla struggle against the Government in June. [1h]

President Bouteflika promised an amnesty for the AIS and its supporters and submitted an amnesty law as part of the Civil Concord Law. [1h]

July: Thousands of prisoners imprisoned for subversive acts were released. [83b]

September: Referendum on the question of 'Do you agree with the President's approach to restoring peace and civil accord?' was won by the Yes votes.

November: Abdelkader Hachani, a leader of the FIS, was killed in Algiers. In December a suspect was arrested. [7a]

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- December:** A new Prime Minister, Ahmed Benbitour, and cabinet were appointed. [1h]
- 2000** **January:** About 180 people were killed during Ramadan. [7b]
 The AIS and LIDD armed Islamist opposition groups disbanded just before the expiry of the amnesty for armed groups. [1h]
 It was reported that many AIS members would join the national army to fight the remaining armed groups. [1h]
April: Four international human rights groups, including AI, were allowed to visit Algeria. [1a]
August: Ali Benflis was appointed Prime Minister. [1h]
November: The Government refused to legalise the WAFA party on the grounds that many of its members were ex-FIS members. [1a] [7f]
December: Over 300 people were killed in violent incidents during the month of Ramadan. [7g] [73b]
- 2001** Violent incidents and clashes with the security forces continued to be reported. Over 66 insurgent acts were reported in the first three months and about 300 people were killed. [73b]
 Up to 80 people were killed in riots in the Kabylia region between April and June. This followed the killing of a man in police custody and coincided with the annual "Berber Spring" demonstrations. The RCD party withdrew from the government in protest at its handling of the situation. [1h]
November: Over 700 people were killed in Algiers when floods engulfed the working class district of Bab el Oued following a torrential downpour. [1a]
- 2002** **February:** GIA leader Anton Zouabri was killed by security forces. [1a] (p180)
 According to unconfirmed reports Rachid Oukali alias Abou Tourab Errachid, his reported successor, was killed by security forces in June. [7m]
March: The Government agreed a number of concessions in response to the Berber complaints. These included amending the constitution to give official status to the Berber language, and compensation for relatives of victims of the violence. [1h]
May: The FLN party won majority control in elections for the legislative assembly. [1h] [7l] The elections were described in reports as marred by violence and a boycott by the two main Berber parties. [7l] A new government was formed under the previous Prime Minister, Ali Benflis. [7l]
October: The FLN party won the majority in local elections. [7o]
- 2003** **May:** Ahmed Ouyahia replaced Ali Benflis as Prime Minister. [1h]
 An earthquake caused serious damage and loss of over 2000 lives in north east Algeria, including parts of Algiers. [1a]
July: Two main FIS leaders, Abassi Madani and Ali Benhadj, were released from prison and house arrest on completion of their sentences. [1h]
August: Tourists kidnapped by an armed Algerian Islamist group in the Sahara desert were freed. [7r] (p15432)
September: Several FLN ministers were dismissed from the government. [1h] [7s] (p15445)

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October: A FLN Congress that was to announce the candidature of Ali Benflis for President was banned by the government. A new cabinet was announced. [7t] (p15488)

December: An Algerian court froze the activities of the FLN party. [7v] (p15562)
The RND party of President Bouteflika obtained 17 out of 46 seats in elections for the Council of the Nation [Senate]. [7v] (p15562) [59f]

2004 January: The head of the Algerian army, General Lamari, stated the army would be neutral in the forthcoming presidential election, also that the army would deal with any threat to political stability. [7w] (p15587)

A joint declaration by leading political figures denounced methods used by the head of state and his clan to hang on to power and called for transparency in the presidential election. [7w] (p15587)

March: Six candidates for the Presidential Election in April were approved by the Constitutional Council:

Ali Benflis: National Liberation Front (FLN) leader

Abdelaziz Bouteflika: Incumbent president

Saad Abdallah Djaballah: National Reform Movement (MRN) leader

Louisa Hanoune: Workers' Party (PT) leader

Said Sadi: Rally for Culture and Democracy (RCD) leader

Ali Fawzi Rabaine: Ahd 54 party leader

It rejected three applicants: Ahmed Taleb Ibrahimi, Sid Ahmed Ghazali and Moussa Touati. [60c]

8 April: Abdelaziz Bouteflika was re-elected as President with 84.9 per cent of the votes cast. [59m]

2005 January: Authorities announce the arrest of rebel Armed Islamic Group (GIA) head Nourredine Boudiafi and the killing of his deputy and declare the group to be virtually dismantled.

Government makes deal with Berber leaders, promising more investment in Kabylie region and greater recognition for Tamazight language.

March: Government-commissioned report says security forces were responsible for the disappearances of more than 6,000 citizens during the 1990s civil conflict.

29 September: Referendum on the president's charter for reconciliation and reform. "Voters back government plans to amnesty many of those involved in post-1992 killings." [60a]

November: "Opposition parties keep their majority in local elections in the mainly-Berber Kabylie region, held as part of a reconciliation process." [60a]

December: "President Bouteflika returns home after receiving surgery in Paris for a stomach ulcer." [60a]

2006 1 February: Ahmed Abou al-Baraa / Ahmed Zarabib, the spiritual leader of the GSPC killed by security forces.

16 February: BBC reports devastating floods hit the Saharan refugee camps. [60f]

2 March: The first wave of a release of 2,600 prisoners under the charter for reconciliation.

March: Six-month amnesty begins, under which fugitive militants who surrender will be pardoned, except for the most serious of crimes. The authorities free a first batch of jailed Islamic militants.

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May: Algeria is to pay back all of its \$8bn debt to the Paris Club group of rich creditor nations, in a move seen as reflecting its economic recovery.

September: Leader of the banned Islamic Salvation Front (FIS) Rabah Kebir returns from self-imposed exile and urges rebels still fighting the state to disarm.

December: Roadside bomb hits a bus carrying staff of a US oil firm, killing one man. The Salafist Group for Preaching and Combat (GSPC) claims responsibility and shortly afterwards calls for attacks against French nationals.

2007 January: Salafist Group for Preaching and Combat renames itself the al-Qaeda Organisation in the Islamic Maghreb.

February: Seven bombs go off almost simultaneously east of Algiers, killing six.

March-April: Army steps up offensive against Islamist militants to stamp out a surge in attacks.

March: Three Algerians and a Russian are killed in a roadside attack on a bus carrying workers for a Russian gas pipeline construction company.

April: 33 people are killed and more than 200 are injured in two bomb blasts in Algiers, one of them near the prime minister's office. Al-Qaeda in the Islamic Maghreb claims responsibility.

May: Parliamentary elections: dozens are killed in the run-up, in a wave of fighting between the military and armed groups. Pro-government parties retain their absolute majority in parliament.

July: A suicide bomber targets a military barracks near Bouira, killing at least nine people.

September: At least 50 people are killed in a series of bombings. Al-Qaeda in the Islamic Maghreb claims responsibility for the attacks. [60a]

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Annex B: Political organisations

See also [Political system](#) and [Opposition groups and political activists](#)

Sources 1, 2, 12, 89a and 84 contain more detailed information about Algerian political parties of the past ten years.

El-Islah see MRN

Ennadha (or Nahdah)

Led by Hahbib Adami. Fundamentalist Islamist group. [1j]

Ettahadi / Challenge – see MDS

Front Democratique (FD)

Headed by former Prime Minister, Sid Ahmed Ghazali, the FD applied for registration in 1998, but received no response within the time period specified by law and has since remained unrecognised but operating without interference. [6i] Ghazali's application to be a contender for the April 2004 presidential election was unsuccessful. [60c]

Front Islamique du Salut (FIS) / Islamic Salvation Front / al-Jibhat al-Inqath

The Islamic Salvation Front (Front Islamique du Salut: FIS) was established in 1989 by Abassi Madani and Ali Belhadj to represent the flourishing Islamist movement. It quickly became the most potent opposition force in the country, thanks to a network of mosques and wide support base among the urban poor. It performed extremely well in both the 1990 municipal elections and in the first round of the 1991 National Assembly elections. The second round was cancelled by the military, however, and the FIS was banned in March 1992 and both Madani and Belhadj were subsequently arrested. Madani and Belhadj were both released from captivity in July 2003 and there were fears on the part of the authorities that they would re-energise the FIS, despite continued bans on their and its political activity. However, it quickly became apparent that there was (and still is) little enthusiasm for reopening the wounds of the past. The FIS remains banned, despite periodic hints from the government that it might consider legalising the party. (Jane's Sentinel Country Risk Assessments: Algeria. Posted 18 May 2007) [83b] Some ex-FIS members are in the Ennadha, MRN (el Islah), and Wafa parties. [20]

See also [Opposition groups and political activists](#)

Front de Liberation Nationale (FLN) / National Liberation Front / Jabha al-Watani

"The National Liberation Front (Front de Libération Nationale: FLN) was founded in 1954 as a pro-independence, socialist, non-aligned and pan-Arabist party. It led the armed struggle against France, which ultimately resulted in Algeria gaining its independence in 1962. After independence the FLN took control of Algerian politics and established itself at the heart of a single-party state. In the 1980s, the party moderated its strict espousal of socialism after traditionalists lost to reformists led by then President Chadli Bendjedid. The FLN's poor performance in the 1990 municipal elections demonstrated the extent to which the party had lost popular support over the years. The FLN's relationship with the High Council of State, which was established after the cancellation of the 1991-92 elections, was somewhat confused; although the FLN offered some support in the early years, by the mid-1990s it was campaigning for a resumption of civilian rule. It endorsed a boycott of the 1995 presidential elections by the 'Rome Group' (FLN, FFS, MDA and Ennahda).

"The FLN came third in the 1997 National Assembly elections, gaining just 62 seats, and subsequently joined the ruling coalition with the RND and the MSP. The FLN supported President Bouteflika in the 1999 presidential elections and regained its political dominance in the May 2002 parliamentary elections when it gained 199 seats. The FLN also made significant gains in the October 2002 local elections.

"The FLN was split in the run up to the 2002 presidential election when party leader Ali Benflis close to run against President Bouteflika. Benflis had hoped that the military would suggest to Bouteflika that he step aside in favour of the FLN leader, but this did not happen and Benflis was soundly beaten into second place in the election. Benflis was subsequently ousted as leader and the FLN then joined what in some quarters has been called the 'presidential alliance' of parties supporting Bouteflika. It consists of the FLN, the Movement for a Peaceful Society / Hamas (Mouvement de la Société pour la Paix: MSP) and the RND. The FLN confirmed its return to the front line of Algerian politics in 2006 when its new leader and staunch Bouteflika ally, Abdelaziz Belkhadem was chosen as prime minister to replace Ahmed Ouyahia." [83b] Secretary-General: Abdelaziz Belkhadem. Until 1989 this was the only legal party in Algeria. [1j] "Founded in 1954, led by its Secretary-General, Mr. Abdelhamid Mehri. The group's orientation is said to be socialist. When first founded, it was anticolonialist and pan-Arabist, secular but supporting the maintenance of Islam as the country's religion. Following independence in 1962, the FLN was the ruling party, and was formalized by the 1976 Constitution as the sole and ruling party. However, the 1991 electoral crisis brought an end to FLN rule: a transitional government formed in June 1991 excluded senior FLN figures, and the June 1992 creation of a High Council of State (HCS) further underlined the changed position of the party when 'associations of a political nature and mass associations were required to surrender state properties . . . including FLN party headquarters in the Zighout Youcef palace' (Political Parties of Africa and the Middle East, 1993, 6). The FLN participated in the peace negotiations at Sant' Egidio, and is said to believe that it is better to work with the Islamist parties in order to restrain and guide them (Le Monde Diplomatique, avril 1995). It favours the relegalization of the FIS (International Affairs, April 1995)." [89a] The FLN gained a majority in the June 2002 legislative elections. [60a] The party has been in conflict internally over the rivalry between Ali Benflis and the President. Benflis was a contender in the Presidential election of April 2004.

See also [Years 2004 – 2007 \(from April 2004 presidential elections\)](#)

Front des Forces Socialistes (FFS) / Socialist Forces Front / Front of Socialist Forces

"The Socialist Forces Front (Front des Forces Socialistes: FFS) is a secular Berber-based opposition party. Although it has traditionally relied on support in the Kabylie region, it has developed support throughout Algeria. Like most parties it was banned until 1989. The party is led by Hocine Ait-Ahmed, a respected veteran of the independence movement who has spent much of his life since independence in self-exile in Switzerland. The FFS boycotted the 1995 presidential elections but participated in the 1997 National Assembly elections; it won 20 seats, a poorer performance than expected. Its involvement in the resurgent Berber movement, which began in April 2002, may have gained it more support. The FFS boycotted the May 2002 elections." [83b] "Founded: in 1963; revived and legalized in 1989; became consultative member of Socialist International in 1992. It is led by Hocine Alit Ahmed, who lived in exile in Switzerland from 1966 until 1989. Described as left-wing, and increasingly seen as democratic socialist and advocating a mixed economy. Draws support from Berber heartland in the Kabylie region. In the 1991 first-round elections it emerged as the

leading non-Islamist party, but refused participation in the second round of elections to avoid forming a coalition with either the Islamic Salvation Front (FIS) or the FLN. However, the group is said to favour the re-legalisation of the FIS, participated in the Sant' Egidio negotiations and is a signatory of the Rome Accord (International Affairs, April 1995)." [89a] The party believes in democratic socialist principles, and dialogue with the FIS. It obtains most of its support from Berbers and middle-class urban residents in Algiers and some other cities. [1a] [20] The FFS boycotted the June 2002 legislative elections but took part in the October 2002 local elections. [1a] [7o] A new first secretary, Djoudi Mammeri, was appointed in April 2003. [7q] (p15232)

Front National Algérien (FNA) / Algerian National Front

"The Algerian National Front (Front Nationale Algérie: FNA) was established in November 1998 by Mousa Touati. The FNA won eight seats at the May 2002 elections." [83b] Leader: Moussa Touati. [1j] Won eight seats in the May 2002 legislative elections. [37b]

Hamas – see MSP

Mouvement Cultural Berbère (MCB) / Berber Cultural Movement

"Founded in 1976, with the goal of achieving recognition of the Berber identity (Le Devoir, 1-2 avril 1995). Closely linked to the Front of Socialist Forces (FSS) and the Rally for Culture and Democracy (RCD), each April the MCB organizes demonstrations in the towns of Kabylie to commemorate the 'Berber spring', marking the bloody suppression of a student demonstration in Tizi-Ouzou. In September 1994 it successfully organized a one-day general strike in Kabylie (Office fédéral des réfugiés, octobre 1994)." [89a]

Mouvement Democratique et Social (MDS) / Democratic Social Movement, formerly Ettahadi and PAGS

"Ettahadi / Ettahadi - Le Défi. Founded: 1993, as successor to the PAGS. It is led by Cherif Hachemi, and favours the separation of church and state, the recognition of the Berber language (Tamazigh), and equality for men and women. Opposes Islamists as well as a 'bureaucracy enriched by petroleum' (Office fédéral des réfugiés, octobre 1994). Its membership consists largely of leftist trade union members and intellectuals (Ibid.). It opposes the relegalization of the FIS (International Affairs, April 1995). In February 1995, it issued a statement saying that it welcomed all moves towards the restoration of peace and security within a republican framework without, however, recourse to foreign intervention (Algerian TV, 5 February 1995)." [89a] Secretary-General: Al-Hashemi Cherif. Left wing. Launched in October 1999 as successor to Ettahadi, itself created as successor to the Socialist Vanguard Party (Parti de l'Avant-Garde Socialiste – PAGS), itself descended from the Communist Party (CPA) founded in the 1930s. Ettahadi boycotted the 1997 and 1999 elections. Its conversion into the MDS signified a renewed commitment to the democratic process and the mixed economy, as well as opposition to any compromise with Islamic extremism. [1a] (p163) [20]

Mouvement pour la démocratie en Algérie (MDA) / Movement for Democracy in Algeria

"Originally created in Europe in 1985 by the exiled former NFL leader and President, Ahmed Ben Bella, it was officially recognized in 1990. It is still led by Mr. Ben Bella. Originally, the party called for pluralist elections to a constituent assembly which would draw up a Constitution separating the powers and guaranteeing political and ideological freedoms (Revolutionary and Dissident Movements, 1991, 9). Like the MAJD, the MDA opposes the High Council of State (HCS) and the increased use of

military courts for trials under emergency rule (Political Parties of Africa and the Middle East, 1993, 4). The party is mostly active in exile (Office fédéral des réfugiés, octobre 1994), it supports the relegalization of the FIS and is one of the signatories of the Rome Accord (International Affairs, April 1995).” [89a] Ceased to exist legally in 1997. [8ak]

Mouvement de la société pour la paix (MSP) / Movement of a Peaceful Society / Harakat Mujtamaa as-Silm (formerly Hamas)

“Formerly the Islamic Hamas Party, the Peaceful Society Movement (Mouvement de la société pour la paix: MSP; or Harakat Moudjtamaa es-Slim (Hamas)) had to change its name to side-step the ban on religious parties. Despite the militant connotations of its original name, it is considered to be a moderate Islamist group that advocates the co-existence of all political and religious groups and a gradual move towards an Islamic state that would still respect individual liberties. Algerian governments have, therefore, viewed the MSP as an acceptable alternative to the more radical FIS. Indeed, the MSP became part of the governing coalition after it won 69 seats in the 1997 elections to the National Assembly. It also supported Abdelaziz Bouteflika in the 1999 and 2004 presidential elections. The MSP won 38 seats in the May 2002 elections and is part of the ‘presidential alliance’ (with the FLN and RND) supporting President Bouteflika.”

[83b] “Movement of the Islamic Society - Mouvement de la Société Islamique - Harakat al-Mujtamaa al-Islamiya (MSI/HAMAS). Founded in 1990, and led by Shaikh Mahfouz Nanh. The group opposes the FIS on the grounds that the FIS attempts to dominate the Islamic movement in Algeria. Offers a less radical alternative to the FIS, emphasizing a reformist interpretation of Quranic values, the respect for human rights, for women’s rights in the workplace and the consolidation of the democratization process (Ibid.; Office fédéral des réfugiés, octobre 1994). The party also favours the relegalization of the FIS, participated in the Sant’ Egidio negotiations and is a signatory of the Rome Accord (International Affairs, April 1995). In February 1995 its leader indicated the party’s support for the presidential elections (Algerian Radio, 7 February 1995).” [89a] The name was changed in April 1997 in order to meet the criteria of the law banning political parties based on religious or ethnic issues. It is a moderate Islamic party and condemns violence and intolerance in the name of religion. It promotes respect for human rights, including women’s rights in the workplace. [1a] [20] The party’s leader, Mahfoud Nahnah, died in June 2003. [1a] (p176) Muhammed Megahria became the interim leader, and in August 2003 Boudjerra Soltani was announced as the new leader. [1j]

Mouvement de la Renaissance (MR) / Renaissance Movement / Harakat al-Nahda al-Islamiyya

“Islamic Renaissance Movement (Mouvement de la Renaissance Islamique: MRI) or Ennahda, which translates as Renaissance, is a moderate Islamic party that has been allowed to participate in Algeria’s political processes. Although intolerant of secularism, the party has consistently denounced the use of violence and stresses the importance of political pluralism, popular political sovereignty and the rule of law. The party won 34 seats in the 1999 presidential elections. It supported the election of President Bouteflika in 1999. The party performed extremely badly in the May 2002 elections, gaining only one seat and losing much of its support to the MRN, which was established by Ennahda’s former leader Abdullah Djaballah. The party’s general secretary, Lahbib Adami, took full responsibility and offered his resignation, but the party persuaded him to continue as leader.” [83b] Moderate Islamist. Founded in 1990 by Sheikh Abdallah Djaballah. [1a] (p164) [20]

Mouvement de la réforme nationale (MRN) / EI-Islah

"The Movement for National Reform (Mouvement du Rénouveau National: MRN), also known as El-Islah, is a legalised moderate Islamist party. Abdullah Djaballah, a leading Algerian Islamist founded the party in 1999. He was formerly the leader of Ennahda but lost control to a rival faction following that party's electoral success in 1997. The party participated in the 2002 May elections, winning 43 seats, but announced that it would not participate in government as its policies differed too much from those of the FLN. The result confirmed that the MRN had overtaken the MSP and almost wiped out Ennahda to become Algeria's leading Islamist party. Djaballah contested the April 2004 presidential election and officially finished third with 4.84 per cent of the vote." [83b] Founded in 1998 and headed by Sheikh Abdallah Djaballah. [1j] Djaballah was one of the candidates in the presidential election of April 2004. [60c]

Nahdah see Ennadha

Parti du renouveau algérien (PRA) / Algerian Renewal Party

Secretary-General: Kamel Bensalem (acting). Leader: Nouredine Boukrouh. [1j]

Parti Républicain Progressif (PRP) / Progressive Republican Party

Secretary-General: Slimane Cherif. Political Parties of the World, 5th edition (2002) states: "The moderate PRP was established as a legal party in 1990 under the then leadership of Khadir Driss. In the June 1997 parliamentary elections it won three of the 380 seats with 0.7 per cent of the national vote."

Parti du Travail (PT) / Parti des travailleurs / Workers Party

"The Workers Party (Parti des Travailleurs: PT) is a small trotskyist party led by Louisa Hanoune, who has a reputation as a plain speaker and has won much support through her civil and female rights campaigning. The party was established in 1989 based on the previously illegal Socialist Workers' Organisation. It is against the privatisation of Algeria's assets. The party won four seats in the June 1997 elections and 21 seats in the widely boycotted May 2002 elections. Hanoune stood for president in April 2004, the first woman in Algeria to do so, and won 1.16 per cent of the vote." [83b] Leader: Louisa Hanoune. Left wing. [1j] [20] Louisa Hanoune was one of the candidates in the presidential election of April 2004. [60c]

Rassamblément pour la culture et la démocratie (RCD) / Rally for Culture and Democracy

"The Rally for Culture and Democracy (Rassemblement pour la Culture et Démocratie: RCD), is the second Berber party after the FFS. Unlike its larger rival, it has to rely exclusively on support in the Kabylie region. The party was formed in 1989 to represent Berber interests and supports the use of the Berber language and the separation of Islam from the state. The RCD is led by Said Sadi. The party won 19 seats in the 1997 elections. The RCD boycotted the May 2002 parliamentary elections and the October 2002 local elections, saying that its participation would be implying tacit support for the government. However, Said Sadi stood as a candidate in the 2004 presidential election and won 1.9 per cent of the vote." [83b] "Officially recognized on 9 September 1989, it is led by Said Saadi, its Secretary-General. The group is said to be the more moderate of the Berber parties. It is secular, advocates the use of Berber as a national language and favours a central economy (Office fédéral des Réfugiés, octobre 1994). A participant in the Sant' Egidio negotiations, the RCD also favours the relegalization of the FIS and signed the Rome Accord (International Affairs, April 1995)." [89a] President: Saïd Sadi. [1j] This party was set up in 1989 by former FFS members. It is largely made up of Berbers. It advocates recognition of the Berber language, Tamazight, as a national language. It is secular and anti-Islamic and supports the government in its campaign against the Muslim fundamentalist rebels. It is against legalisation of the FIS.

[20] The RCD boycotted the June 2002 legislative elections and the October 2002 local elections. [70] During 2002 it was alleged that four members of the RCD and their families had been detained and tortured and no action had been taken in connection with the case by the authorities by the end of 2003. [6b] (1c) Said Sadi was one of the candidates in the presidential election of April 2004. [60c]

Rassemblement nationale démocratique (RND) / National Democratic Rally

"The Democratic National Rally (Rassemblement National Démocratique: RND) was formed in the run-up to the 1997 elections as a pro-government party, laced with cabinet ministers. The RND subsequently became the largest party in the National Assembly, confirming its position as the new ruling party (until the May 2002 elections) even though the government was formed from a coalition with the FLN and the MSP. The party regained the position of prime minister under its leader, Ahmed Ouyahia, in May 2003. However, he was replaced by new FLN leader Abdelaziz Belkhadem in May 2006. The RND supported President Bouteflika in the 1999 and 2004 presidential elections and is considered to be close to the Algerian military." [83b] Set up in March 1997 by supporters of President Zeroual to contest the 5 June legislative election. In that election it won 156 seats. [1j]

Wafa wa al-Adl (Wafa) / Mouvement Fidélité et Justice / Movement for Fidelity and Justice

Leader: Ahmed Taleb Ibrahimi (former foreign minister and 1999 presidential candidate). Founded in 1999, but refused government recognition as a political party in 2000 on the grounds that it contained large numbers of FIS supporters. [1j] [20] [7f] Ibrahimi's application to be a contender for the April 2004 presidential election was unsuccessful. [60c]

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Annex C: Prominent people: past and present

Ahmed, Hocine Ait

Socialist Forces Front leader (FFS) who returned to Algeria to participate in the 1999 presidential elections following self-exile in Europe. One of the historic leaders of the Algerian War of Independence. [1j]

al-Wadud, Abu Musab Abd

GSPC/AQIM's emir.

Belhadj, Ali

FIS Vice-President, charged with armed conspiracy against the State and sentenced to 12 years' imprisonment in late July 1992. He was released from prison in mid-September 1994 and placed under house arrest until completion of his sentence in early July 2003. [1h]

Bella, Ahmed Ben

Founder of FLN. First President of Algeria after independence. Leader of the now banned MDA. [1h]

Benbitour, Ahmed

Former Prime Minister of the cabinet. He was appointed in December 1999 and resigned in August 2000. [1h]

Benhadjar, Cheikh Ali

Leader of the Islamic League for the call and the Combat (LIDD) – a fundamentalist Islamic militia which disbanded in January 2000. [7b] (p13835)

Benflis, Ali

Replaced Benbitour as Prime Minister from August 2000 but was dismissed by Bouteflika in early May 2003 reportedly due to 'far-reaching divergencies'. [1h]

Boudiaf, Muhammad

President (then known as Chairman of the High Council of State) from January 1992 until he was assassinated 29 June 1992. [1h] [1a] (p164-5) One of the historic leaders of the Algerian War of Independence. [1a] (p164)

Bouteflika, Abdelaziz

President of Algeria and Minister of National Defence from 27 April 1999 to date. [1n]

Bbrahimi, Ahmed Taleb (or Ibrahimi)

See Ibrahimi below.

Chadli, Col Ben Djedid

President of Algeria from January 1979 until he resigned on 11 January 1992. [1h]

Djaballah, Sheikh Abdallah

Former leader of Ennahda/Islamic Renaissance Movement. [1a] (p164) Secretary General of the MRN / El-Islah party. He was a candidate in the 1999 and 2004 presidential elections. [1h] [61b]

Ghozali, Sid-Ahmad

Former Minister of Foreign Affairs, appointed Prime Minister in June 1991, resigning in July 1992 [1h] Leader of FD party and former Prime Minister. [1a] (p165) His attempt to run in the April 2004 presidential election was rejected. [60c]

Hachani, Abdelkader

Senior FIS official. Led FIS election campaign in 1991. Murdered in Algiers in November 1999. [1a] (p170) [7a] (p13799)

Haddam, Anouar

Head of the self-declared FIS Parliamentary Mission Abroad. [2]

Hattab, Hassan

Leader of GSPC armed group. [1a] (p170) Allegedly replaced in 2003. [59e] [4b]

Hamrouche, Mouloud

Prime Minister from September 1989 until his resignation in July 1990 [1h]. Presidential candidate in 1999. [1a] (p163, 169)

Hanoune, Louisa

Leader of PT party [1j]. Candidate in the presidential election of April 2004. [61b]

Ibrahimi, Ahmed Taleb

Leader of Wafa party. [1j] See Annex B Political Organisations. Former Minister of Foreign Affairs who was supported by the outlawed FIS in the April 1999 presidential elections [1h] his attempt to run in the April 2004 election was rejected. [60c]

Kebir, Rabah

One of the senior FIS leaders in Europe. [1a] (p166, 167)

See also [Annex B – Political organisations](#)

Lamari, Lt-Gen Muhammad

Chief of staff of the army, resigning in August 2004. [1h]

Lamari, Maj-Gen Smain

Head of counter-espionage and internal security. [1a] (p170)

Layada, Abdelhak

Second in command of the GIA [1h] – currently in prison.

Lounès, Matoub

Popular Berber singer and critic of the Government and the fundamentalist Islamist movement. Assassinated. [1h] Killed at a roadblock in 1997. [37c] (p16)

Madani, Abbassi

FIS leader. [1j] Arrested in July 1991, charged with armed conspiracy against the State for threatening to launch a jihad and sentenced to 12 years in prison in July 1991. He was transferred to house arrest in September 1994 and released in July 2003. [1h]

See also [Annex B – Political organisations](#)

Medienne, Maj-Gen Tawfik

Head of military intelligence and security. [1a] (p169, 170)

Merzag, Madani

ALS leader. [1a] (p68)

Nahnah, Sheikh Mahfoud

Former leader of MPS – formerly Hamas. Came second in the Presidential elections in 1995. He died in June 2003. [1a] (p176)

Ouyahia, Ahmed

Secretary General of RND. [1j] Prime Minister from December 1995 until December 1998. Re-appointed Prime Minister in May 2003 until resigning in May 2006. [1h]

Sadi, Saïd

President of RCD party. [1j]

Swain, Mohamed

Human rights activist.

Zaoui, Ahmed

Former member of the FIS consultative committee and acting official spokesman for the new FIS coordination council abroad. Granted asylum in New Zealand in 2003 but is still in detention pending security investigation by the authorities. [59d]

Zéroual, Liamine

Former General and Minister of Defence from July 1993. President of a transition government in 1994 and President of Algeria from 1995 until April 1999. [1h]

Zouabri, Antar

GIA leader, killed by security forces in February 2002. [1h]

Zouita, Ali

Prominent lawyer; was held in detention from 1993 until 1997 despite being acquitted by a court of aiding an armed group.

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Annex D: Armed groups

See also [Non-Government Armed Forces/Insurgents](#)

1. Two of the armed groups operating in Algeria, the GSPC (now known as AQIM) and the GIA, are proscribed organisations in the UK under the Terrorism Act 2000.
2. Terrorist incidents still occur, particularly in the provinces of Boumerdes, Tizi-Ouzou, and in the remote southern areas of the country. The vast majority of killings take place in mountainous and rural areas, smaller towns and the outskirts of cities in the more densely populated north of the country. Attacks on civilians are now relatively rare occurrences in the centres of larger cities, but no part of northern Algeria is safe from armed group attacks. Certain patterns of attacks may return unexpectedly. [6i] (Section 1a) [6j] (History) [26c] (p37)

The Salafist Group for Call and Combat (GSPC) / Groupe Salafiste pour la Prédication et le Combat / Da'wa wal Djihad / Al-Qaeda in the Islamic Maghreb (AQIM)

3. Jane's Sentinel has the following information:

"Group name: Groupe Salafiste pour la Prédication et le Combat (Salafist Group for Preaching and Combat; GSPC).

Level of threat: The GSPC's strength is decreasing and although its members pose a threat to the lives of security and regime personnel, it does not constitute a serious challenge to the stability of the Algerian state.

Status: The GSPC is active and periodically launches attacks against the Algerian regime, although these generally take the form of ambushes against military convoys or vehicles. The group has been on the US list of designated Foreign Terrorist Organisations (FTOs) since March 2002, on the UK list of Proscribed Terrorist Groups since February 2001, and on the Australian list of specified terrorist groups since November 2002.

Date of founding: 1998.

Group type: Militant Islamist.

Aims and objectives: To overthrow the Algerian regime and to replace it with an Islamic state under sharia law. It aims to achieve this by attacking regime targets including the military, police and security services.

Leaders: Abu Musab Abdel Wadoud; Mokhtar Belmokhtar" [83d]

Jane's Terrorism and Security Monitor states in 'Algerian Salafists adopt Al-Qaeda brand', dated 9 February 2007:

"The Salafist Group for Preaching and Combat (Groupe Salafiste pour la Prédication et le Combat: GPSC) concluded its drawn-out rebranding initiative when it announced it had changed its name to Al-Qaeda in the Islamic Maghreb in an internet statement dated 24 January. While there are fears that a powerful new branch of Al-Qaeda is emerging in North Africa, the Algerian government is dismissing the name change as a marketing strategy by a nearly defeated group.

"The 24 January statement, which was issued in the name of GSPC emir Abu Musab Abd al-Wadud, hints that propaganda was the driving force behind the new name, saying it 'will give an impression of the unity and strength in the alliance and the sincerity of the link between the mujahideen in Algeria and their other brothers in Al-Qaeda.'

"It followed the 13 September 2006 statement in which Abu Musab Abd al-Wadud pledged loyalty to Osama bin Laden, saying the Al-Qaeda leader 'can use us to strike whomever and wherever he wishes and he will find nothing but obedience from us and shall only receive what pleases him'. The statement stressed the importance of unifying the mujahideen under Al-Qaeda's leadership and added that the GSPC considers itself 'one stone in the building of the coming Islamic nation'.

"The GSPC's rebranding mirrors the renaming of Abu Musab al-Zarqawi's Tawhid wa al-Jihad group as Al-Qaeda in Iraq (Tanzim al-Qaidat al-Jihad fi Bilad al-Rafidain) in October 2004. The change in the Iraqi group's name was apparently confirmed by Osama bin Laden himself. In an audio recording released in December 2004 he said: 'I believe that the mujahid emir, dignified brother Abu Musab al-Zarqawi, and the groups affiliated with him are good, and are from the group that fights according to the orders of God.' The GSPC's name change has yet to be confirmed by the Al-Qaeda leadership.

"Regional franchise

"The GSPC has long been considered Al-Qaeda's Algerian affiliate. Al-Qaeda encouraged its establishment in 1998 as it wanted to distance itself from the Armed Islamic Groupe (Groupe Islamique Armée: GIA), which was being blamed for massacring civilians during Algeria's jihadist insurgency in the 1990s. Formed from a few hundred GIA cadres, the GSPC subsequently eclipsed its antecedent as Algeria's most infamous jihadist group.

"While Al-Qaeda set itself up as the vanguard of an internationalised jihad against the US, the GSPC remained focused on overthrowing the Algerian regime, a revolution that has looked increasingly less likely in recent years. Indeed, as jihadist violence waned in Algeria, it seemed that the GSPC's support networks in Europe were becoming increasingly internationalised and absorbed by Al-Qaeda. While Algerians have been well represented in the global jihadist movement, the role played by the GSPC leadership in facilitating this shift of personnel from a national to an international struggle remains unclear.

"The weakening of the jihadists in Algeria underpins the assertion that the rebranding of the GSPC is an act of desperation intended to give it a second lease on life. Having formally turned itself into a regional branch of Al-Qaeda, it will hope to attract more recruits and co-opt other North African jihadist organisations, such as the shadowy Moroccan Islamic Combatant Group (Groupe Islamique Combattant Marocain: GICM) and the Fighting Islamic Group in Libya (FIGL). This shift towards a pan-Islamic identity is stressed in the GSPC's September 2006 statement, which talks of inspiring Muslims to rid themselves of 'the disease of national sensitivity'.

"There is evidence to suggest the GSPC has enjoyed some success in attracting jihadists from other North African countries. A group of militants that

crossed into Tunisia from Algeria in December 2006 may have been linked to the GSPC, for example. The Tunisian authorities announced that 12 'Salafist terrorists' had been killed and another 15 captured after gun battles on 23 December and 3 January. Apart from one Mauritanian, they were all Tunisians.

"Press reports claimed the group was led by a former gendarme that had trained in camps in Afghanistan. The group was heavily armed and put up quite a fight in a country known for its tight security. The leader was reportedly wounded and captured, but died of his injuries in hospital.

"More significantly, the minister of the interior claimed that blueprints of embassies and documents listing names of some foreign diplomats were found after the shoot out, along with homemade explosives. While none of the embassies or diplomats were officially identified, the revelation implied a specific threat against Western interests in Tunisia.

"A link to the GSPC has not been confirmed, but the media seems to have presumed one on the basis that some members of the group came out of Algeria. Linking up with Algerian jihadists is an obvious option for aspiring jihadists in Tunisia, which lacks a domestic jihadist movement. Algeria has arrested at least two groups of Tunisians suspected of wanting to join the GSPC since April 2005.

"Meanwhile, the Moroccan authorities announced on 4 January that they had dismantled a group of 62 Moroccans linked to Al-Qaeda and the GSPC who had been involved in recruiting volunteers to fight in Iraq. In early February, a Moroccan court sentenced six Islamists to between one and 10 years for plotting attacks and attempting to get military training from the GSPC. Another Moroccan suspected of being a member of the GSPC was arrested in Spain on 5 February under an international arrest warrant filed by Morocco.

"The GSPC also seems to be more active inside Algeria. There were two truck bombings outside police stations on 30 October 2006, a wave of attacks on the security forces followed in November 2006 and the group claimed a bomb attack on two buses carrying foreign oil workers on 10 December 2006. An Algerian driver was killed and several foreigners working for the Halliburton subsidiary Brown & Root-Condor were injured.

"The last attack is notable as the first against foreign interests in Algeria in years. The GSPC also claimed responsibility by releasing one of its most sophisticated videos to date on 21 January. Over eight minutes long, it includes graphics and excerpts of speeches from Bin Laden and his deputy Ayman al-Zawahiri. It goes on to show masked militants making explosives, testing mobile phone detonators, studying Google Earth images and making a reconnaissance run in preparation for the attack, which is shown at the end.

"The fear is that North Africa's jihadists will unite under the Al-Qaeda banner and emerge as a major threat to Western interests as well as local regimes. It seems that they will carefully target either foreigners or security forces, avoiding the attacks on civilians that discredited Algeria's jihadists in the 1990s. There has also been speculation about the repercussions for European countries. Abu Musab Abd al-Wadud has made several threats against the West and France in particular. He stated in a 3 January statement: 'To hell

with you people of France, the allies of the Crusader, the occupiers of our land.'

"Marketing hype

"An Algerian minister has dismissed the GSPC threat, however. Daho Ould Kabila told Algeria's *Liberte* newspaper on 31 January that the group 'is in the process of being rendered incapable of causing harm in Algeria and really does not constitute a danger for either the countries of the Maghreb or France.' He added: 'Apart from some messages of verbal support, there has never been, as far as we are aware, any direct help from Al-Qaeda to the Algerians either financially, logistically or materially.'

"The newspaper also reported that the GSPC suffered an internal split when an emir in the west of the country formed the Protectors of the Salafist Call (*Houmat al-Dawa al-Salafia*). This name was listed as a terrorist group by the US Department of State in April 2004. According to *Liberte*, it is close to the GICM, which, if true, makes an alliance between Al-Qaeda in the Maghreb and its Moroccan counterpart less likely.

"Other established North African groups may also be reluctant to accept the domination of the new Al-Qaeda branch. The FIGL posted a rare internet statement on 31 January to deny rumours that it was abandoning its jihad. It did not mention Al-Qaeda in the Maghreb and it focused its anger on the Ghadaffi regime, eschewing the pan-Islamic rhetoric that the GSPC has adopted.

"While the GSPC may now be more attractive to young North Africans that want to fight with Al-Qaeda forces in Iraq, the foreign military presence is probably the main draw for the would-be jihadists. Algeria is not being occupied by foreigners, however much the GSPC argues that it is, and its people are tired of jihadist violence.

"While it remains to be seen whether the GSPC will be empowered by its new name, it is clear that it will continue to imitate Al-Qaeda and its regional branches in terms of both ideology and tactics. To date, the GSPC has not been credited with any co-ordinated multiple suicide attacks, Al-Qaeda's trademark tactic." [87a]

4. Jane's Terrorism and Security Monitor states in 'Algeria's new jihad', dated 10 May 2007:

"Al-Qaeda in the Islamic Maghreb's suicide attacks in the Algerian capital are just the start, according to the group's emir. Jane's examines the evolution of Al-Qaeda's new North African branch and its ability to threaten the region.

"'Even a superficial association with Al-Qaeda and its Iraqi branch is likely to help the Algerian group attract recruits'

"The Algerian jihadist group Al-Qaeda in the Islamic Maghreb (AQIM) is threatening more suicide bombings. Abu Musab Abd al-Wadud, the group's emir, said in a video statement: 'We have decided to adopt the style of martyrdom operations in the confrontation with our enemies from now on. The video was broadcast by Al-Jazeera on 8 May along with footage of militants

apparently preparing for the unprecedented 11 April suicide bombings in Algiers.

"AQIM is the name adopted by the Salafist Group for Preaching and Combat (Groupe Salafiste pour la Predication et la Combat: GSPC) in January after consultation with Al-Qaeda leaders, according to Abu Musab Abd al-Wadud. Indeed, Ayman al-Zawahiri announced that the GSPC had joined Al-Qaeda in his 11 September 2006 statement. This was followed by a GSPC statement in which Abu Musab Abd al-Wadud pledged to follow Osama bin Laden 'all the way to martyrdom'.

"The GSPC adopted tactics and targeting more commonly associated with Al-Qaeda after this pledge of allegiance. There was a co-ordinated truck bombing on police stations on 30 October 2006 and a roadside bomb attack against a minibus carrying foreign workers in an affluent eastern Algiers suburb on 10 December 2006. AQIM claimed a similar attack on 3 March, this time targeting Russian contractors, one of whom was killed along with three Algerians.

"Most of the GSPC's previous attacks reflected the rural guerrilla operations typical of Algerian rebels since the war of independence. Indeed, the group has often appeared to be a fairly loose alliance of regional 'brigades' operating from mountainous hideouts, with the various regional emirs vying for supremacy.

"The 10 December roadside bombing was a significant departure as it targeted foreigners in the capital, but employed traditional GSPC roadside bomb tactics. One key difference was the presence of a cameraman who filmed the attack from a distance. The film was released weeks later. It was edited with excerpts from statements made by Al-Qaeda's leaders and footage documenting the planning and execution phases. It was the most sophisticated example of GSPC propaganda to date.

"On 11 April, the group launched a trademark Al-Qaeda attack in the form of three near-simultaneous suicide vehicle bombings against the Government Palace in central Algiers and a police station in an eastern suburb. The explosions killed 33 people and injured more than 200. They also proved that the group was capable of indoctrinating suicide bombers and had attack cells in the capital to guide them to their targets. Algeria had seen only one previous suicide attack, which was carried out by the Groupe Islamique Armee, the GSPC's predecessor, in Algiers in 1995.

"Failed amnesty

"The suicide bombings embarrassed the Algerian government, which has been claiming for years that the GSPC is a nearly defeated force with only a few hundred members. The authorities had previously talked up the success of an amnesty that ran from March to September 2006. About 350 militants surrendered, according to the US Department of State's Patterns of Global Terrorism Report 2006.

"The Algerian authorities also released around 2,300 former combatants from jail and allowed exiled members of the outlawed Islamist party Front Islamique du Salut to return. Former GSPC emir Hassan Hattab tacitly approved the amnesty, even though he officially remains a wanted man.

“Despite these positive political indicators, the amnesty clearly failed to end the threat. The surrender of less committed members may have even strengthened the GSPC by stream-lining it into a hardcore of close-knit cells that are less vulnerable to infiltration by the security services. The marginalisation of less militant emirs - such as Hattab - may have also given Abu Musab Abd al-Wadud more freedom to impose his own ideology.

“While the government heralded the amnesty’s successes, the GSPC launched an increasing number of fatal attacks, aimed primarily at the security services. According to Patterns of Global Terrorism, 199 security officials and civilians were killed by suspected militants during the official amnesty period. This figure compares to 107 for the rest of year, 78 of whom were killed in October and November in an apparent demonstration of the GSPC’s defiance and renewed determination.

“Indeed, the amnesty and security operations have made little impact on the group’s strength. Figures from the Algerian security services state they killed around 260 militants and arrested an additional 450 in 2006, compared to a combined figure of 400 in 2005. While more than 1,000 militants either surrendered during the amnesty or were arrested or killed in 2006, Algerian officials continue to estimate that the GSPC still has as many as 800 fighters.

“Iraqi fallout

“Abu Musab Abd al-Wadud claimed in his 8 May statement: ‘The list of martyrdom-seekers is growing every day.’ While the length of his list remains debatable, it seems that his group’s closer association with Al-Qaeda is helping it to recruit young men who want to fight in Iraq, then divert them to domestic operations.

“The Iraq insurgency has wider support in Algerian society than the domestic jihad to topple the regime and establish an Islamic state. Like the war against the Soviet forces in Afghanistan in the 1980s, the Iraq conflict is widely seen as a legitimate ‘defensive’ jihad against a non-Muslim occupation. Thousands of Algerians volunteered to fight in Afghanistan and went on to form the backbone of the country’s Islamist rebellion when they returned.

“The Iraqi jihad seems similarly popular. More than 400 Algerians suspected of having links to Iraq have been arrested in recent months. Algerian security sources tell Jane’s that the majority of detainees were extradited from Syria following raids against a network channelling foreign fighters to Iraq. The rest were arrested in Algeria during operations against Islamists believed by to have ties to Iraq.

“In some respects it would seem counterproductive for an Algerian rebel group to encourage its members to leave for another theatre as it would deprive it of manpower for the domestic jihad. A large proportion of volunteers are likely to be killed in Iraq and many of the returnees would be of limited use as they are being monitored by the security services.

“For these reasons, the perceived relationship with Al-Qaeda is probably more important to AQIM than its actual connections to the Iraqi insurgency.

"The Algerian authorities claimed to have broken up several AQIM cells in early May that they said were recruiting both for Iraq and the domestic conflict. Some recruits had already recorded wills and a fatwa was found authorising suicide attacks in Algeria and other North African countries, according to the Algerian newspaper *Liberte*. The security services believe AQIM is also diverting money donated to support the Iraqi insurgency to buy arms for domestic operations.

"However, attacks like the Algiers suicide bombings risk undermining this association. While Al-Qaeda is seen by many as a legitimate resistance movement battling Western oppression of Muslims, the introduction of tactics that involve large numbers of Muslim civilian casualties is unlikely to increase the local popularity of its Algerian namesake.

"The dubious tactical utility and theological legitimacy of the Algiers bombings was also noted on pro-jihadist websites. A poll posted on www.muslim.net found that a majority of its users disagreed with the suicide attack. Forty-eight per cent responded 'No, I disagree... this is the killing of innocents', 43 per cent responded 'Yes, I agree with the recent bombings in Algeria', and nine per cent were unsure.

"Regional links

"A recent spate of jihadist activity in neighbouring Morocco and Tunisia, as well as the arrest of suspected militants alleged to have links to GSPC factions, has heightened fears that the group's Al-Qaeda branding could help it attract support across the region and even co-opt other national groups such as the Moroccan Islamic Combatant Group (GICM) and the Libyan Islamic Fighting Group (LIFG).

"A day before the Algiers bombings, three Moroccans blew themselves up after a police raid in Casablanca. A fourth was shot dead before he could detonate his explosives. One police officer was killed and several other people were injured in the explosions. The raid targeted suspects connected to a man who blew himself up in a Casablanca internet cafe on 11 March after being caught surfing jihadist websites. One of the men killed on 10 April was named as the brother of the 11 March bomber.

"Moroccan officials have presented the militants as self-organised with no international connections. While it is unclear whether they were about to launch attacks or were wearing their bomb vests as a standard security precaution, the cell appeared amateurish in comparison to the Algerians bombers that struck the following day.

"It is currently unclear how keen the more established North African Islamist groups are to adopt a radical pan-Islamist, rather than national-Islamist, ideology and ally themselves with AQIM. While amalgamations could lead to more recruits and funds, their leaders would have to accept the hegemony of Abu Musab Abd al-Wadud. In a rare internet statement posted on 31 January, the LIFG made no mention of Al-Qaeda and eschewed its pan-Islamist rhetoric to focus its anger on the Ghadaffi regime.

"Lacking a notable domestic group of their own, Tunisian militants are more likely to be attracted to AQIM. It already seems that Tunisians who want

military training or to travel to Iraq see the Algerian group as their best hope. A group of young Tunisian men trying to reach Iraq were arrested in Algeria in 2006 and extradited. During their trial in Tunisia, the prosecution said they were in Algeria to receive training from the GSPC to prepare them for Iraq and launching attacks in their home country, the Arabic daily Al-Hayat reported on 12 April.

"The newspaper suggested that the case might be connected to a man arrested in Algeria who 'as said to have contacts with the GSPC'. He apparently headed a Syria-based network channelling foreign recruits to Iraq and was allegedly ordered by Al-Qaeda in Iraq to return to Algeria in 2005 to help a group of Tunisians travel to GSPC strongholds for weapons and explosives training.

"Another group of Tunisians were involved in unprecedented shootouts near Tunis in December and January. While their connections with the GSPC/AQIM have not been detailed, some of them crossed into Tunisia from Algeria, according to Moroccan officials. They are alleged to have been planning attacks on foreign embassies in the capital.

"European threat

"While GICM and LIFG leaders may be reluctant to give up their groups' individual identities, they may have little choice if their supporters in Europe decide to align with AQIM. The well-established North African networks in Europe that support the groups in their home countries - largely through criminal activity - already form an interconnected Islamist community.

"This interconnectivity is increasing, according to a Spanish intelligence report made public in November 2006. It said the GSPC was looking to unite the various North African cells in Europe and noted an increase in money flowing between the groups in a number of European countries.

"There is understandable concern that AQIM will attempt to turn some of these supporters into attack cells capable of perpetrating something similar to the Madrid train bombings. Abu Musab Abd al-Wadud has threatened the West - especially France - on numerous occasions. After the criticism of the Algiers bombings, AQIM would do well to restrict itself to foreign targets. An attack in Europe would enable it to limit Muslim civilians and prove its global jihadist credentials.

"The combination of the enhanced legitimacy of the association with Al-Qaeda, the Iraqi recruits, and the GSPC's well-developed infrastructure and training apparatus seems set to turn AQIM into a significant international threat. The merger of North African groups under its banner is likely to occur gradually, with Al-Qaeda ideology taking precedence over local score settling and nationalist agendas. In the short term, Western interests and the energy sector are likely to be key targets in North Africa, with the additional spectre of a spectacular attack being carried out in Europe." [87b]

5. Breakaway group from the GIA [1h] founded in 1988 [1j] It appears to have eclipsed the GIA since 1998 and is now the largest and most active and effective armed group operating in Algeria. [6a] (Appx B) Its adherents appear to have largely co-opted the support networks of the GIA, active particularly

- throughout Europe, Africa and the Middle East. [6a] (Appx B) Cells reportedly exist in Italy, Germany, Belgium, and Spain, as well as in Algeria, with Tunisian and Moroccan members, as well as Algerians. [1a] (p179)
6. The main emir of the GSPC was Hassan Hattab. [87b] In October 2003 Hattab was replaced by Nabil Sahraoui. [1h] (Recent History) In September 2004 Sahraoui was replaced as leader by Abdelmalek Droukdal (also known as Abu Musab Abd al-Wadud). [1h] (Recent History) In June 2004, Sahraoui was reportedly killed by the Algerian military in Kabylia during a gun battle. [1h] (Recent History) [6p] (Chapter 6) A splinter group called the Free Salafi Group (GSL) led by Abou Mouthala was reported in February 2004 to have formed in response to the attempts at negotiation between the security services and the GSPC. [9a]
 7. "Particularly active in the east of Algiers and in Kabylia; [the GSPC] has reportedly split into several factions in recent years; responds to preaching by Ali Belhadj, the second most prominent member of the proscribed FIS; reportedly renamed the 'al-Qa'ida Organization in the Islamic Maghreb' in Jan. 2007". [1j] "It was reported in late January 2007 that the GSPC had restyled itself as the 'al-Qa'ida Organization in the Islamic Maghreb'. The announcement followed reports in 2006 that the GSPC had 'joined' the al-Qa'ida (Base) organization of the Saudi-born Islamist Osama bin Laden". [1h] The GSPC appears to operate mainly in the central, eastern and southern parts of the country, [26c] (p37) namely the region between Boumerdes province and part of Kabylia, [106] [86] (p1) in the mountainous regions to the east of the capital, Algiers. The government estimates that some 800 GSPC fighters still remain at large, roughly divided between the mountainous and heavily forested Kabylia region (to the east of Algiers) and the deep south of the country. [84b] (p10) [84c] (p15) A Le Monde article indicates that these armed groups are located in the mountainous regions of Kabylia (Tizi Ouzou, Bouira, Boumerdès), of the east (Skikda, Jijel and Khenchela), of the west (Sidi Bel Abbès) and in the Grand Sud. It is reported to have groups in Jijel, Tizi Ouzou, Some of its emirs are of Kabyle (Berber) origin. [6i] (Section 5) [8c] The GSPC also operates in some cities, such as Boghni [8z]
 8. According to some reports the organisation has been weakened by rifts in recent months, and the defection of splinter groups, also by operations against them by the Algerian army. [9a] [59e] Hattab directly controlled the activities in the centre-east, known as 'the second region' including Tizi Ouzou and the Kabylia region and some coastal areas to the east of the capital. [4a]
 9. The 'Salafi Group' is a part of the GSPC, led by Amari Saifi, also known as Abderazzak 'El Para'. [59j] He is reportedly a former GIA emir and second in command of the GSPC. [59e] [59i] [4a] He leads the activities of the group in the eastern province (or what is known as the 'fifth region'), in the area of Batna, the capital of the Aures. This group was trying to infiltrate Algiers in 2002. [4a]
 10. According to an article on El Watan's website, the GSPC, or Al-Qaida in the Islamic Maghreb, is in a comparatively weakened state and is primarily composed of katibat [squads or brigades] 'Al Farouk de Bouira', with Abderrezak Sersoub (alias Abdeldjabar) at its head assisted by Ahmed Djebri, 'Al Ansar' which Abdelfatah directs, and 'Al Arqam' under the direction of Djamel Niche. [9b]

11. The GSPC concentrates its operations mainly on regime targets including the military, police and security services [83d] It is often behind the ambushes and killing of soldiers and municipal guards in roads and mountainous areas. [7h] (p14268) It is said to carry out fewer operations than the GIA but they are more deadly. [8z] It finances its operations by racketeering, cross border smuggling in western Algeria, real estate investments, money laundering activities and Algerian support networks, particularly those outside Algeria. [8z] The group also collaborated with smugglers and Islamists in the south who supplied insurgents with weapons and communications equipment for attacks in the north. [6a] (p2)
12. Although the strength of the GSPC is unknown, [26c] (p36,37) it is estimated by various sources as about three hundred and fifty [1a] (p180) [18a] (p7) Former GSPC emir, Hassan Hattab tacitly approved the amnesty [87b] and more than 350 terrorists surrendered to authorities in order to benefit from it. [6p]
13. The authorities have also sought to convince members who are hiding in the mountains to abandon their arms and give themselves up, in exchange for a promise of good treatment. According to some reports many members of the group came down from the mountains after they read the fatwas which describe those who carry out operations on behalf of the armed groups as 'defectors'. [4a] However a public statement by the GSPC rejected the call by the FIS leader, Abassi Madani, for a truce with the authorities. [4b]

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Armed Islamic Group (GIA) / Armed Group / Groupes Islamiques Armés

14. Jane's Sentinel has the following information:

"TOTAL STRENGTH

Approximately 800 (2006 estimate, Algerian Interior Ministry)

...

Group name: Armed Islamic Group (Groupe Islamique Armée: GIA).

Level of threat: An estimated 150,000 people have died in political unrest in Algeria since 1992 and the GIA has been one of the most violent and indiscriminate organisations in the conflict. Internecine bloodletting in the late 1990s, the capture or death of three group leaders in late 2004, and depletion of the movement's assets and weaponry has downgraded its potency to the extent that Algerian authorities have announced its termination. Although its numbers and support have been drastically reduced, it may still pose a low-level threat to civilian and political/security targets southwest of Algiers. In March 2006, the Algerian interior minister announced that the GIA, along with the GSPC, were trying to rebuild their rural and urban networks in the Wilaya of Chlef. These claims have not been substantiated and there is little evidence to suggest that the GIA has been able to rebuild anything. Probably the true threat of the group now lies in the dispersal of its radical cadres into the GSPC both within alternative groups in Algeria and through the diaspora in Europe, although this threat remains limited.

Status: Active.

Date of founding: 1993 (GIA claims 1989).

Group type: Militant (Sunni) Islamist.

Aims and objectives: To overthrow the secular government of Algeria and establish an Islamist state. The group also wanted to eliminate all Western

interests from the country. Although a number of the group's members were veterans from Afghanistan, the GIA has concentrated on a mainly domestic set of objectives. It views all Algerian civilians as legitimate targets, because if they are not members of the GIA then they support the government.

Leaders: The GIA's philosophy and tactics were largely drawn up by Cherif Gousmi, a pro-Iranian activist and veteran of the Afghan war. He was killed in September 1994 by the security forces. The movement became associated with the most depraved practices and indiscriminate killings under the leadership of Djamal Zeitouni and his successor Antar Zouabri in the mid 1990s." (Jane's Sentinel Country Risk Assessments) [83d]

15. Jane's Sentinel states:

"Small/splinter extremist groups such as the Armed Islamic Group (GIA) network had come to dominate armed opposition since 1996, however, and they were not neutralised through the amnesty process, but only with increasingly daring counter-terrorist action co-ordinated by the Algerian security services, and especially the Intervention and Surveillance Unit (dubbed the 'black ninjas'). The GIA network of independent cells made effective counter measures difficult to sustain, but most of the leaders of GIA cells, the infamous 'emirs of the GIA,' were killed in clashes with the police or security services in the late 1990s." [83c]

16. "... a radical FIS breakaway faction, the Armed Islamic Group (Groupe Islamique Armée - GIA), warned that any accommodation with the government would lead to more violence." (Jane's Sentinel Country Risk Assessments) [83b]

17. "In October 1997, in what appeared to be a major breakthrough, the FIS's armed wing the Islamic Salvation Army (AIS), declared a ceasefire in an effort to show that it was actually the GIA that was perpetrating the massacres that were costing the party significant popular support. Despite various upheavals, the ceasefire held and there was even talk in Algiers of co-opting some FIS units into the security forces for the ongoing campaign against the GIA. The military, however, remained determined not to allow the FIS to make any political capital out of the truce." (Jane's Sentinel Country Risk Assessments) [83b]

18. "Present leadership unknown and former leaders have been killed: Cherif Gousmi (alias Abou Abdallah Ahmad) on 26 September 1994; Abdelkader Hattab (alias Mouloud) in July 1994, and Murad Si Ahmad (alias Djafar Al-Afghani) in February 1994. The group is reportedly the most radical of the Islamist groups. In November 1993 it issued an ultimatum to all foreigners to leave Algeria. Also said to be responsible for the assassination of women who do not wear the veil (hijab), and for the December 1994 hijacking of an Air France plane during which they killed three passengers (Time, 5 January 1995). Moreover, it has allegedly threatened to eliminate the other Islamist groups in its goal to be the sole standard-bearer of the Jihad (Holy War) (Libération, 22 mars 1995). Operates mainly in urban centres, especially in Algiers and in the east (Ibid.). According to government reports said to have been published by the official Algerian Press Service in the newspapers l'Authentique and Liberté, more than 2,800 GIA guerrillas were killed in a massive two-week military operation conducted at the end of March 1995, with the government claiming a 'spectacular success' over the 'decapitated' GIA movement (Christian Science Monitor, 3 April 1995). The group is allegedly composed of individual cells operating independently and in isolation from one another. In Algiers, members

of each unit 'maintain a simple network of spotters, each within eyesight of another . . . [exchanging] . . . information with hand signals, standing in doorways or on street corners . . . [or] . . . peering through car windows in search of government officials, political opponents or foreigners' (Time, 20 March 1995). [89a]

19. This group emerged in 1993 and claimed to be involved in a Jihad or holy war. [1a] (p165) Its stated aim was to overthrow the current regime and set up a fundamentalist Islamic state. [1a] (p165) [6a] (Appx B) Held to be dissolved in January 2005, after months of arrests beginning with the capture of Boudiafi Nouerredine in November 2004. [81a]
20. Many GIA members were former guerilla fighters in Afghanistan. [1a] (p165) [8z] Many of these have been killed in combat or are still fighting with the GIA, and some are in Europe. They are considered to be the harshest faction. [8z]
21. The GIA is no longer a nation-wide force. [6a] (p2) [8z] In 1996 there were splits in the GIA that led to a number of smaller groups being formed. [8z] It is composed of semi-autonomous groups each controlled by local emirs, a loose assembly of groups which are sometimes described as GIA factions and sometimes given separate titles. [1a] (p180) [26c] (p37) Another report estimated that the groups each contained six to seven fighters whose actions were uncoordinated. [1a] (p180)
22. The former main emir, Antar Zouabri, was killed by security forces in February 2002. [1h] His replacement was Rachid Abou Tourab (real name Rachid Oukali), apparently captured in November 2003 (despite reports of his death during a raid by security forces in July 2002). However, in early January 2005, the Ministry confirmed that, despite reports to the contrary, Tourab had been killed by members of his own group in July 2004. [1h] [7m] (p14936)
23. The current strength of the GIA is estimated by various sources as ranging between sixty, [18a] (p7) fewer than a hundred, [6a] (Appx B) and a few hundred. Nevertheless they are still not a negligible force, bearing in mind that they are not afraid of the consequences of their actions. The major weakness of this group is that its members have lost the trust of the local population, following the horrible massacres that are attributed to them. [4a]
24. The GIA views all Algerian civilians as legitimate targets, because if they are not members of the GIA then they support the government. [83d] The group's strategy is based on terrorising the population and stealing their provisions. [4a]
25. The GIA is perhaps best known for its penchant for mass killings, beheadings, and throat-slittings. The GIA has massacred entire villages, hacking their victims to death or slitting their throats with swords, daggers, axes, and knives, while others have been cut to pieces with chain saws. Those who attempted to flee the GIA raiding parties were doused with petroleum and then set on fire. One of the GIA's best known tactics is to behead captives taken during its raids into Algerian cities. The group recruited a butcher's apprentice who went by the kuniyat (assumed name) of Momo le Nain (Mohammed the Midget). During one of le Nain's best-known massacres, he is reputed to have single-handedly decapitated 86 Algerians, including more than a dozen children, as part of a GIA raid into the Algiers suburb of Ben Talha in 1996. [11a] (Section 3.2) Some attacks on communities are said to be because they had not provided support to the armed groups, and to steal food and goods. Others

are false roadblocks set up by the GIA posing as soldiers for the purpose of extortion, robbery and murder. [8z]

26. The group members stay in an area for a few days only. If one of them comes down from the mountains and does not come back within one day, the group immediately leaves its hide-out and moves to another area. This is in case the person in question might have been arrested or might have decided to inform the police about his comrades and their hide-out. [4a]
27. The GIA is reportedly active in large sections of the northern part of the country [26c] (p37) notably in the central and western parts of the country, and in the Algiers region [8z] especially Mitidja, [1a] (p180) [8z] [18a] (p7) Medea, [8z] and Blida. [4a] They are scattered in various regions inside the chain of mountains in western Algeria such as the wilayas of Ain Delfa, Chlef and Medea. [7h] (p14268) [8z] [4a] They compete for influence with other splinter groups that are mainly active in the centre-east and eastern provinces. [4a]
28. The GIA was also said to be very aggressive in the areas of Tipaza and Bouira where many cases of racketeering and extorting money from villagers were ascribed to them. [28a] (p15) The GIA does not now have a presence in Kabylia [8z] (although a large part of its membership was of Kabyle (Berber) origin. [28a] (p3)

See also [Ethnic Groups](#)

There are also GIA residue pockets further west in Relizane, Mascara, Tiaret and Saïda. [7h] (p14268)

29. The GIA rejected the amnesty law. [1a] (p177) However, some GIA members surrendered to the Algerian authorities within the framework of the measures provided by the law on restoring civil accord. [7d] (p14119)

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Katibat El Ahoual / El Ahwal / Houmat ed-Da'wa Salafiya / Defenders of the Salafi Propagation / Protecteurs de la predication salafiste (Guardians of Salafist Preaching - PPS)

30. This is reported to be a dissident splinter group of the GIA and one of the most dangerous and well organised armed groups. [1a] (p180) [4a] It is said to include members who fought alongside the mujahidin in Afghanistan, including the leader, Slim Al Afghani, [4a] and to have links to Al Qaida. [1a] (p180) [18a] (p7) It is said to operate west of Algiers. [18a] (p7) Specific sites reported include around Chlef, [1a] (p180) Tiaret, Tissemsilt and Relizane. [1a] (p180) [7b] (p13835)
31. The size of the group is said to be seventy members [18a] (p7) or three hundred and fifty members. [1a] (p180)

Groupe Salafiste pour le Djihad

32. Abdelkader Souane, a former FIS militant, [1a] (p180) is the reported leader of this group. [1a] (p180) [18a] (p7) They are said to have a political strategy, including restoring the FIS to legality, and to be close to Mourad Dhina, head of the FIS executive. [1a] (p180)

See also [Annex B - Political organisations](#)

33. They are said to number sixty men [18a] (p7) or possibly one hundred, and to target members of the self-defence groups and their families. [1a] (p180)

Other Groups

34. Small numbers of new recruits were reported to be coming forward on a regular basis since 2002. They included former repentants and false repentants, who switched to setting up new networks that were responsible for attacks specifically against police officers in the spring and summer of 2002, according to some observers and comments by the Algerian Minister of Home Affairs in July 2002. [1a] (p180)
35. The Djamaat al-Ahrar / Independents Group was claimed to be responsible for a number of attacks in and around Algiers in mid-2002, including killings of policemen. [74a]
36. "The armed wing of the Islamic Salvation Front (FIS), the Army of Islamic Salvation (AIS), was initially the primary vehicle for opposition to the military-controlled government which cancelled elections and seized power in January 1992, but more extreme splinter groups emerged later in the 1990s. The security situation improved in 1997 when the AIS declared an unconditional, unilateral ceasefire; more insurgents surrendered during an amnesty in 1999." [83c] "In October 1997, in what appeared to be a major breakthrough, the FIS's armed wing the Islamic Salvation Army (AIS), declared a ceasefire in an effort to show that it was actually the GIA that was perpetrating the massacres that were costing the party significant popular support. Despite various upheavals, the ceasefire held and there was even talk in Algiers of co-opting some FIS units into the security forces for the ongoing campaign against the GIA. The military, however, remained determined not to allow the FIS to make any political capital out of the truce." [83b] "Madani Mezrag, the AIS leader, announced the 'definitive abandonment of the armed struggle'. He was followed by Abassi Madani, historic leader of the FIS, who broke two years of silence under house arrest to assure Bouteflika of his 'total and unreserved support for the position taken by Mezrag, to stop the fighting'. The AIS formally joined the campaign by the security forces against diehard Islamists still holding out in various parts of the country." [83b] "The law of Concorde Civile offered any militant not involved in murder, rape or bombings amnesty if they gave themselves up before 16 January 2000. While several thousand guerrillas, mostly former AIS fighters, had surrendered by the deadline, the more extreme groups vowed to continue the fight." [83b] "Founded in 1994 and currently led by Sheikh Madani Mirzag (alias Abou Al-Haithem), who was nominated in March 1995 as the interim national leader. As the military arm of the FIS, it was formed in 1994 along the lines of the Armed Islamic Movement (Mouvement Islamique Armée - MIA), allegedly as a counterweight to the GIA (Middle East Report, January-February 1995). However, the GIA and AIS are said to have enjoyed good relations and cooperate with one another, with the AIS also having 'burned down schools and committed its share of assassinations' (Ibid.). The March 1995 decision to nominate Sheikh Mirzag as interim national leader was reportedly made after consultations with the FIS leadership, with the aim of preventing the use of its name by clandestine groups or publications not under its direct control. (Libération, 16 mars 1995; Office fédéral des réfugiés, octobre 1994). At present, the AIS is said to be more open

than the GIA to negotiations with the Algerian government aimed at ending the three-year-long civil strife (Reuters, 27 April 1995). Publication: 'Al-Fafh Al-Moubine' (Office fédéral des réfugiés, octobre 1994)." [89a] Islamic Salvation Army (AIS) / Armée Islamique du Salut was created in mid-1994 [1a] (p166) and is often called the armed wing of the FIS. [1h]

37. Following a ceasefire in October 1997, [1a] (p168) the AIS declared an end to their guerrilla struggle against the Government in June 1999. [1h] In early January 2000, following discussions between representatives of the Government, the army and the AIS, an agreement was reached whereby the AIS pledged to disband in return for the restoration of full civil and political rights to its former members. It was estimated that some 1,500–3,000 rebels were to be granted a full pardon under the agreement, some of whom were to be temporarily enlisted in an auxiliary unit to assist the security forces in apprehending members of the GIA and the GSPC. [1h] [7b] (p13834)
38. Islamic League for Call and Jihad / Ligue Islamique de la dawaa et du Djihad (LIDD) was led by Ali Benhadjar, a former FIS leader. [7b] (p13835) Part of the LIDD joined the cease-fire announced by the AIS in October 1997 and also followed the AIS in disbanding in January 2000. [7b] (p13835)
39. Islamic Front for the Armed Jihad / Front Islamique de Djihad armé (FIDA/FIJA) emerged by the end of 1992 and defected to the GIA in mid 1994. [14] (p115,125) It was active in the 1990s, but has since been neutralised. It was responsible for the killing of prominent figures or representatives such as white collar professionals, officers, academics, intellectuals, trade unionists and journalists. [74a]

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Annex E: Government Cabinet list – July 2007

President
Prime Minister

Abdelaziz Bouteflika
Abdelaziz Belkhadem

MINISTERS AND MINISTERS OF STATE

Foreign Affairs
Interior & Local Governments
Justice & Keeper of the Seals
Minister of State without Portfolio
Agriculture & Rural Development
Commerce
Communication
Culture
Employment & National Solidarity
Energy & Mining
Finance
Fisheries & Fishing Resources
Health, Population, & Hospital Reform
Higher Education & Scientific Research
Housing & Urban Development
Industry & Promotion of Investments
Labour & Social Security
National Defence
Education
National Solidarity
Postal Services
Public Works
Relations with the Parliament
Religious Affairs
Small & Medium-Sized Enterprises & Handicrafts
Transport
Urban Planning, the Environment, & Tourism
Vocational & Educational Training
War Veterans (Moudjahidine)
Water Resources
Youth & Sports
Development
Affairs & Women's Issues
Scientific Research
Environmental Affairs
[2b]

Mourad Medelci
Noureddine Zerhouni
Tayeb Belaiz
Bouguerra Soltani
Said Barkat
El Hachemi Djaaboub
Abderrachid Boukerzaza
Khalida Toumi
Djamal Ould Abbas
Chakib Khelil
Karim Djoudi
Smail Mimoune
Amar Tou
Rachid Harraoubia
Noureddine Moussa
Abdelhamid Temmar
Tayeb Louh
Abdelaziz Bouteflika
Boubekeur Benbouzid
Djamel Ould Abbas
Boudjemaa Haichour
Amar Ghoul
Mahmoud Khedri
Bouabdellah Ghlamallah
Mustapha Benbada
Mohamed Maghlaoui
Cherif Rahmani
El Hadi Khaldi
Mohamed Cherif Abbas
Abdelmalek Sellal
Hachemi Djar
Rachid Benaissa
Nouara Saadia Djaafar
Souad Bendjaballah
Abderrachid Boukerzaza

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Annex F: List of abbreviations

AI	Amnesty International
AIS	Armée Islamique du Salut – Islamic Salvation Army
ALDHR	Algerian League for the Defence of Human Rights, see also LADDH
ANFD	Association Nationale des Familles des Disparus – National Organisation of the Families of the Disappeared
ANdVT	Association Nationale des Victimes du Terrorisme
AQIM	Al-Qaida in the Islamic Maghreb (armed group), formerly known as GSPC
CEDAW	Committee on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination Against Women
CNCPPDH	Conseil (National Consultative Committee for the Promotion and Protection of Human Rights)
CPJ	Committee to Protect Journalists
EU	European Union
EBRD	European Bank for Reconstruction and Development
FCO	Foreign and Commonwealth Office (UK)
FGM	Female Genital Mutilation
FH	Freedom House
FIDA/FIJA	Front Islamique du Djihad Armé – Islamic Front for Holy War
FFS	Front des Forces Socialistes – Socialist Forces Front
FIS	Front Islamic de Salut/al-Jibhat al-Inqath – Islamic Salvation Front (banned Islamic political party)
FLN	Front de Liberation Nationale/National Liberation Front/Jabha al-Watani (political party)
GDP	Gross Domestic Product
GIA	Group Islamic Armé/Armed Islamic Group (armed group)
GSL	Free Salafi Group (breakaway group from GSPC)
GSPC	Groupe Salafite pour la Prédication et le Combat/Salafist Call and Combat Party (armed group), renamed AQIM in 2006
HIV/AIDS	Human Immunodeficiency Virus/Acquired Immunodeficiency Syndrome
HRW	Human Rights Watch
IAG	Illegal Armed Group
ICG	International Crisis Group
ICRC	International Committee for Red Cross
IDP	Internally Displaced Person
IFRC	International Federation of Red Cross and Red Crescent Societies
IMF	International Monetary Fund
IOM	International Organisation for Migration
LADDH	Ligue Algérienne de Défense des Droits de l'homme – Algerian League for the Defence of Human Rights (ALDHR)
LADH	Ligue Algérienne des Droits de l'Homme
LIDD	Islamic League for Call and Combat (armed group)
MCB	Mouvement Culturel Berbère (Berber Cultural Movement)
MDA	Mouvement pour la Démocratie en Algerie – Algerian Movement for Democracy (political party)
MDS	Mouvement Démocratique et Social/Social Democratic Movement (formerly Ettahadi) (political party)
MIA	Armed Islamic Movement (Former armed group)
MPS	Movement of a Peaceful Society (formerly Hamas) (political party)
MSF	Médecins sans Frontières
NA	Northern Alliance

NATO	North Atlantic Treaty Organisation
NCC	National Consultative Council
NGO	Non-Governmental Organisation
NPA	National People's Assembly
OCHA	Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs
ODIHR	Office for Democratic Institutions and Human Rights
ODPR	Office for Displaced Persons and Refugees
OECD	Organisation of Economic Cooperation and Development
OHCHR	Office of the High Commissioner for Human Rights
ONDH	Observatoire national des droits de l'homme – National Observatory for Human Rights
ONVITAD	Organisation nationale des familles des victims du terrorisme et des ayants droit
ONVT	Organisation nationale des victimes du terrorisme
OSCE	Organisation for Security and Cooperation in Europe
PRA	Parti de Renouveau Algérien – Algerian Renewal Party (political party)
RCD	Rassemblement pour la Culture et la Démocratie – Rally for Democracy and Culture (Berber political party)
RND	Rassemblement national démocratique – National Democratic Rally (political party)
RSF	Reporteurs sans Frontières
STD	Sexually Transmitted Disease
STC	Save The Children
TB	Tuberculosis
TI	Transparency International
UGTA	Union Générale des Travailleurs Algériens – General Union of Algerian Workers
UN	United Nations
UNAIDS	Joint United Nations Programme on HIV/AIDS
UNEA	Union Nationale des Etudiants Algériens – National Union of Algerian Students
UNESCO	United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization
UNFA	Union Nationale des Femmes Algérien – National Union of Algerian Women
UNHCHR	United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights
UNHCR	United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees
UNICEF	United Nations Children's Fund
UNODC	United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime
USAID	United States Agency for International Development
USSD	United States State Department
WFP	World Food Programme
WHO	World Health Organization

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