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# Civic Freedom Monitor: Algeria

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## Recent Developments

Algerian authorities are increasingly imposing travel bans as a means of restricting the freedom of movement of citizens who criticize the government. For example, on July 30, 2025, Algerian human rights defender Nassera Dutour was not allowed to enter Algeria and was sent back to France in violation of the right of every person to return to their country. The authorities also continue to use anti-terrorism provisions to prosecute critical voices. In November 2025, for example, poet and Hirak activist Mohamed Tadjadit was sentenced to five years in prison, while trade unionist Ali Mammeri received a 15-year sentence on charges of condoning terrorism. Please see the News section below in this report for additional details.

*While we aim to maintain information that is as current as possible, we realize that situations can rapidly change. If you are aware of any additional information or inaccuracies on this page, please keep us informed; write to ICNL at [ngomonitor@icnl.org](mailto:ngomonitor@icnl.org).*

## Introduction

Civil society in Algeria operates in a highly constrained environment, with legislation restricting the exercise of civil and political rights. Algeria’s legal system is largely inspired by French law and jurisprudence, but also contains elements of Islamic law.

The 2012 Law on Associations (Law 12-06 of 2012) [[French](#)] [[عربي](#)] generally fails to protect the freedom of association in line with Algeria’s international obligations. Also in 2012, Algeria’s government adopted a new Law on Information, which placed substantial restrictions on associations’ ability to publish and disseminate information.

Since 2020, a series of laws have been introduced that further restrict fundamental freedoms. Notably, authorities are increasingly using anti-terrorism legislation to prosecute peaceful dissidents.

***This Civic Freedom Monitor (CFM) country note was made possible through research conducted by MENA Rights Group.***

## Civic Freedoms at a Glance

<b>Organizational Forms</b>	Associations
<b>Registration Body</b>	The President of the People’s Communal Assembly (for communal associations); the governor of the province in which the association is headquartered (for Wilaya, or provincial, associations); and the Ministry of the Interior for national or inter-Wilaya associations.

<b>Approximate Number</b>	108,940 (source: Ministry of Interior)
<b>Barriers to Formation</b>	<p>Algerian law requires associations to obtain prior approval from government authorities to operate legally and imposes criminal penalties for participation in an “unregistered” association.</p> <p>The law imposes obstacles on the registration of associations, including eligibility restrictions, high founding member thresholds, and broad grounds for denial of registration.</p>
<b>Barriers to Operations</b>	<p>Associations may only pursue activities in a limited number of areas, including “professional, social, scientific, religious, educational, cultural, sports, environmental, charitable and humanitarian domains.”</p> <p>The government can suspend an association if it believes the association’s activities interfere with the “internal affairs” or threaten the “national sovereignty” of the country.</p> <p>Associations are prohibited from establishing any “organic or structural relations” with political parties.</p>
<b>Barriers to Resources</b>	<p>The receipt of international funds is subject to prior authorization from the authorities.</p> <p>Algerian law criminalizes the receipt of funds, gifts, or advantages from “a State, an institution or any other public or private body or from any legal or natural person, inside or outside the country” if intended to carry out or incite acts deemed to “undermine the security of the State, the stability and normal functioning of its institutions, national unity, territorial integrity, the fundamental interests of Algeria or public security.”</p>
<b>Barriers to Expression</b>	<p>Whereas the establishment of print and electronic press outlets is subject to the filing of a declaration with the minister responsible for communication under Law 23-14 relating to information, the establishment of any audiovisual communication service, as well as the broadcasting of radio or television programs by cable, terrestrial transmission, or satellite, shall be subject to prior authorization issued by the minister responsible for communication. It also provides that media activities must respect “the Muslim religion, Islam in the national context, and other religions, national identity, national norms, the moral and cultural values of the nation, national sovereignty, national unity and territorial unity.”</p> <p>Presidential decrees criminalize speech on certain topics. The Penal Code criminalizes defamation and insult against public officials or institutions. Anti-terrorism legislation, such as Article 87 <i>bis</i> 4 of the Penal Code on the glorification of terrorism, is used to silence peaceful dissent.</p>
<b>Barriers to Assembly</b>	<p>Algerian law prohibits any meeting or demonstration that “opposes national fundamental principles” or harms “the symbols of the revolution of November 1, the public order or public morals.”</p> <p>Organizers of “public gatherings” must notify the authorities of their plans at least three days in advance; authorities may prohibit such gatherings without providing any justification. The law requires organizers of “public demonstrations” (separately defined) to request approval from the governor at least eight days in advance.</p> <p>The law imposes possible criminal penalties, including imprisonment and fines, for participation in unauthorized assemblies.</p> <p>All demonstrations are banned in Algeria’s capital city, Algiers.</p>

## Legal Overview

This section provides a brief overview of Algeria's legal framework for the promotion and protection of civic freedoms. Click a subheading for more, or [click here to expand all subheadings](#).

### RATIFICATION OF INTERNATIONAL AGREEMENTS

Key International Agreements	Ratification*
International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights (ICCPR)	1989
Optional Protocol to ICCPR (ICCPR-OP1)	1989
International Covenant on Economic, Social, and Cultural Rights (ICESCR)	1989
Optional Protocol to ICESCR (OP-ICESCR)	No
International Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Racial Discrimination (ICERD)	1972
Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination Against Women (CEDAW)	2025
Optional Protocol to the Convention on the Elimination of Discrimination Against Women	No
Convention on the Rights of the Child (CRC)	1993
International Convention on the Protection of the Rights of All Migrant Workers and Members of their Families (ICRMW)	2005
Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities (CRPD)	2009

Key Regional Agreements	Ratification
Arab Charter on Human Rights	2007
African Charter on Human and Peoples' Rights	1987
African Charter on the Rights and Welfare of the Child	2003
Treaty Establishing the African Economic Community	2001
Protocol to the African Charter on Human and Peoples' Rights on the Rights of Women in Africa	2003
Protocol to the African Charter on Human and Peoples' Rights on the Establishment of an African Court on Human and Peoples' Rights	2003

\* Category includes ratification, accession, or succession to the treaty

## **CONSTITUTIONAL FRAMEWORK**

On November 1, 2020, the current Constitution of the People's Democratic Republic of Algeria was adopted by popular referendum.

Constitutional provisions affecting civil society include the following:

### **Article 52**

Freedom of expression shall be guaranteed.

Freedom of association and public assembly shall be guaranteed upon obtaining a permit. The law shall determine the modalities for exercising these freedoms.

### **Article 53**

The right to form associations shall be guaranteed upon obtaining a permit.

An organic law shall determine the modalities for the establishing of associations.

Associations shall not be dissolved except by virtue of a judicial decision.

### **Article 54**

Freedom of the press, be it written, audiovisual, or on media networks, shall be guaranteed equally for all public and private media outlets. It shall not be restricted by any form of prior censorship.

Freedom of the press shall include in particular the following:

- freedom of expression and creativity of journalists and media collaborators
- the journalist's right to access sources of information within the framework of respect for the laws in force
- the right to protection of the journalist and his professional confidentiality
- the right to publish and investigate upon obtaining a permit to do so
- the right to establish television and radio channels and websites and newspapers within the conditions specified by law
- the right to publish news, ideas, photos, and opinions within the legal framework while respecting the community's heritage and religious, social, and cultural values

This freedom shall not be exploited to infringe upon the dignity, liberty, and rights of others.

The publication of discriminatory hate speech shall be prohibited.

Press offences shall not incur a custodial sentence.

### **Article 55**

The citizen shall have the right to access, acquire, and transmit information, documents and statistics.

The exercise of this right shall not infringe on the private life and the rights of others, the legitimate interests of institutions, or the requirements of national security.

The law shall determine the modalities for exercising this right.

# NATIONAL LAWS, POLICIES, AND REGULATIONS

National laws, policies, and regulations affecting civil society include the following:

- Ordinance No. 06-01 of February 27, 2006 implementing the Charter for Peace and National Reconciliation [[Français](#)]
- Law 12-06 on Associations (2012) [[Français](#)] [[عربي](#)]
- Law 12-05 on Information (2012) [[Français](#)]
- Organic law No. 23-14 on Information [[Français](#)]
- Law No. 23-19 on the print and electronic press
- Law No. 23-20 on audio-visual activities [[Français](#)]
- Law No. 19-91 on Public Meetings and Gatherings (1990) [[Français](#)]
- Ordinance 06-03 on the Conditions and Rules of Practice of Faiths other than Islam (2006) [[Français](#)]
- Law No. 90-14 on the exercise of the right to organize (1990) [[Français](#)]
- Law No. 16-13 establishing the National Council for Human Rights (2016) [[Français](#)]
- Decree No. 20-332 governing the Electronic Press
- Law 25-14 amending the Code of Criminal Procedure [[Français](#)]
- The Penal Code, as amended
- Ordinance No. 21-09 relating to the protection of administrative documents and information and the authorization of surveillance tools.
- Law No. 23-02 of April 25, 2023 relating to the exercise of trade union rights [[Français](#)]
- Ordinance No. 06-01 of February 27, 2006 implementing the Charter for Peace and National Reconciliation [[Français](#)]

## PENDING REGULATORY INITIATIVES

### 1. Draft Law on Associations

On June 19, 2022, the Council of Ministers examined a draft Law on Associations that, if approved, would abrogate the 2012 Law on Associations, which currently subjects NGOs to a prior authorization procedure. The draft Law aims to removing the pre-authorization requirement for forming associations, as provided for in article 53 of the 2020 Algerian Constitution. However, at the same time, the text, if approved, would subject an association's stated objectives to even more vague and imprecise general criteria, such as the "respect for national constants, principles, values enshrined in the constitution, national and territorial unity, the fundamentals of national identity, the symbols of the State and its institutions, national security and defence, public order and good morals." In addition, cooperation with foreign organizations and the receipt of funds from abroad would be subject to prior clearance by the authorities. The text remains on Parliament's agenda for the 2024-2025 ordinary session. In addition, a revised version of the draft Law on Association has also been circulated with equally restrictive provisions.

Although in January 2025 the National Civil Society Observatory (ONSC) organized a civil society consultation on the draft law on Associations, the consultation's impact has been undermined by the fact that the main Algerian CSOs have been dissolved in recent years. This negatively affects CSO participation in the consultation.

## 2. Draft Law on Political Parties

As of late November 2025, Parliament is working on a draft Law on Political Parties, which provides that a political party that fails to take part in two consecutive elections may be dissolved by court order. This is aimed at political parties that have decided to boycott elections.

## 3. Peaceful Assembly Bill

As of late November 2025, Parliament is planning to examine a bill setting out the conditions and procedures for the exercise of freedom of assembly and peaceful demonstration.

Please help keep us informed; if you are aware of pending initiatives, write to ICNL at [ngomonitor@icnl.org](mailto:ngomonitor@icnl.org).

## Legal Analysis

This section provides an in-depth assessment of Algeria's legal environment for civic freedoms, including the barriers to the exercise of the freedoms of association (formation, operations, resources), expression, and peaceful assembly. Click a subheading for more, or [click here to expand all subheadings](#).

### ORGANIZATIONAL FORMS

Most civil society entities in Algeria register and operate as associations. The 2012 Law on Associations defines associations as “individuals or legal entities” that “form a group on a contractual basis for a specific or non-specific period of time and share in a common, voluntary, and non-profit purpose.”

Religious associations, or *awqaf*, are governed by separate laws and are regulated by the [Ministry of Religious Affairs and Awqaf](#). Non-Muslim religious associations are governed by Ordinance 06-03 on the Conditions and Rules of Practice of Faiths other than Islam. The National Commission for Non-Muslim Religious Services is responsible for registering and regulating these groups.

### PUBLIC BENEFIT STATUS

According to Article 34 of the 2012 Law on Associations, associations regarded as “being in the general interest and/or of public utility” can receive financial aid from the government. However, the Law does not specify how to assess an association’s “public utility” or define what constitutes the “general interest,” leaving the government considerable discretion in determining an association’s eligibility. In practice, the Algerian government does not provide associations with any direct or indirect financial benefits, such as tax exemptions or public utility discounts.

### BARRIERS TO FORMATION

Article 53 of the 2020 Algerian Constitution guarantees “the right to create associations,” stating that this right is exercised by simple declaration. While this shift toward a notification-based system is a positive step, in practice, Algerian law still requires associations to obtain prior approval from government authorities to operate legally and imposes criminal penalties—including three to six months’ imprisonment or fines between 100,000 and 300,000 Algerian Dinars—for participation in an “unregistered” association.

The Law also creates additional obstacles to the formation and registration of associations:

- **Eligibility restrictions:** Only Algerian nationals of legal age who retain full civil and political rights

may create, administer, or run an association. Individuals with prior convictions for offenses deemed “incompatible with the association’s activities” are barred from serving as executive members unless rehabilitated.

- **High Founding Member Thresholds:** Associations must meet high minimum membership requirements—10 members for local, 15 for regional, and 25 for national associations. In addition, associations must provide extensive information on their founders in their establishment documents, including the founders’ marital status, professions, residences, and copies of their police records. National groups must also provide proof that their founders come from at least 12 different regions in Algeria.
- **Broad Grounds for Denial:** The Law gives broad discretion to the government to refuse to register an association. For example, the government can deny registration if an association’s purposes and goals are not “in the general interest” or are contrary to Algeria’s “national principles and values, public order, morality, and the laws and regulations in force.” Although applicants may appeal a denial, the government can initiate further proceedings to annul registration entirely through a process that is neither subject to appeal nor decided by an independent judiciary.
- **Administrative Obstruction:** The Law requires authorities to issue a receipt when an association submits its registration documents, as well as a final registration receipt once a specified amount of time (30-60 days, depending on the type of group) has lapsed without the government rejecting the registration. In practice, however, authorities often ignore these obligations and withhold the receipts, effectively denying associations legal recognition. Without a registration receipt, an association cannot open a bank account or rent property. Many associations remain in legal limbo with the authorities failing to respond to their registration applications. This includes Amnesty International’s branch in Algeria and several other human rights organizations that have waited over five years without official acknowledgment of their applications.

While the creation of unions is also subjected to a declaration-based system of registration, in practice this system functions as an authorization-based one.

## **BARRIERS TO OPERATIONS**

The 2012 Law on Associations permits associations to engage in activities in “professional, social, scientific, religious, educational, cultural, sports, environmental, charitable and humanitarian” domains. Article 2 of the Law requires that an association’s purpose and goals must be “in the general interest” and be defined “with precision” at the time of registration. Associations are allowed to spend money only on activities that are directly related to these stated purposes. The Law gives the government the authority to dissolve any association that engages in activities outside the scope defined in its statute.

Associations are prohibited from having “any relationship [...] whether organic or structural” with political parties or accepting gifts of any kind from them.

The law permits the government to forcibly dissolve an association or suspend its activities for interfering in the “internal affairs of the country” or posing a “threat to national sovereignty”—broad and undefined terms that grant authorities sweeping discretion to terminate an association with no judicial oversight or arbitration. Although the law requires prior warning before taking such action, this safeguard is frequently ignored in practice.

Active associations often report state interference, including surveillance, phone monitoring, and difficulties securing venues for meetings or events.

The 2012 Law on Associations also requires associations to receive prior approval from the Ministry of the Interior before entering into any cooperation agreement with an international entity. This requirement allows the government to tightly control cross-border collaboration, severely limiting Algerian

associations' ability to partner with international organizations. Senior government officials have publicly warned against meetings between local civil society actors and foreign missions, accusing them of interfering in Algeria's internal affairs. Since 2017, Algeria has been cited in five reports of UN Secretary-General for intimidation and reprisals against those who cooperate with the UN on human rights issues.

An association is considered foreign if it has headquarters abroad where it is legally recognized and has been authorized to establish itself or if, while having its headquarters within the national territory, it is wholly or partially directed by foreign nationals. Although foreign associations are permitted to operate in Algeria, the Ministry of the Interior may suspend or revoke their authorization if their activities are considered a threat to "the national sovereignty, the established institutional order, the national unity or integrity of the national territory, public morality and order, or the national values of the Algerian people." They may likewise be de-authorized for carrying out activities outside those provided for in their statutes. Additionally, a foreign association may be prohibited from operating in Algeria if its home country has not signed a bilateral agreement with Algeria.

There are several examples of the government using the 2012 Law on Associations to restrict association's operations.

On June 29, 2022, the Administrative Court of Algiers ordered the [dissolution](#) of the Algerian League for the Defence of Human Rights (LADDH) following a complaint filed by the Ministry of the Interior. In its judgment, the Court found that LADDH had carried out activities that were not in accordance with its statutes; failed to notify the authorities of changes to its statutes and executive body in a timely manner; and failed to submit copies of the minutes of its general assembly and annual financial reports in a timely manner. The court also found that LADDH violated Article 23 of the 2012 Law by failing to seek prior approval before engaging with international organizations. The decision also referenced "the presentation of false information" to the UN Human Rights Council as well as interactions with its UN Special Procedures mandate holders. In December 2024, the Administrative Court of Appeal in Algiers upheld the court's original decision to dissolve LADDH upon appeal.

The 2012 Law on Association was also invoked against Bel Horizon, a cultural association based in Oran known for its work in heritage preservation and tourism training. In February 2023, the Oran Administrative Court dissolved the organization, citing breaches of the Law on Associations. In early 2024, the mayor of Oran ordered the association's premises to be sealed.

Ordinance 06-03 of 2006, which regulates the practice of non-Muslim faiths, imposes a number of administrative requirements on non-Muslim religious associations. These include mandatory registration of places of worship and a restriction on religious activity to approved sites. The ordinance also criminalizes proselytizing among Muslims on behalf of other faiths and dissemination of materials aimed at "shaking the faith of a Muslim." On that basis, the Algerian authorities have forcibly closed dozens of Christian churches, most of which are affiliated with the Protestant Church of Algeria (EPA).

## **BARRIERS TO RESOURCES**

Under the 2012 Law on Associations, the receipt of funds from abroad are subject to prior authorization from the authorities. Article 30 of the Law prohibits associations from receiving donations, subsidies, or other contributions from any "foreign legations or non-governmental organizations" unless part of a "duly established cooperation relation" and approved by the competent authority. This significantly limits access to vital funding sources, jeopardizing the survival of many associations.

In April 2020, amendments to the Penal Code introduced by Law No. 20-06 criminalized the receipt of funds, gifts, or advantages from "a State, an institution or any other public or private body or from any legal or natural person, inside or outside the country" if intended to carry out or incite acts deemed to "undermine the security of the State, the stability and normal functioning of its institutions, national unity, territorial integrity, the fundamental interests of Algeria or public security." The vague language provides the authorities with excessive power to prosecute activists and human rights defenders receiving foreign funding.

Violations carry penalties of five to seven years' imprisonment and fines between 500,000 and 700,000 Algerian Dinars. If the funds are received within "the framework of an association, group, organization or agreement, regardless of its form or name," the penalties are doubled.

On February 7, 2023, President Tebboune promulgated Law No. 23-01 amending and supplementing Law No. 05-01 on the prevention and combating of money laundering and terrorist financing. The law prohibits associations "from receiving any donations or grants considered by law as a crime or misdemeanor, from natural or legal persons or organizations or bodies involved, inside or outside the territory of the Republic, in activities related to terrorist offenses." Given the broad scope of terrorist offenses listed in the Penal Code, this provision poses further risks to Algerian civil society organizations by enabling arbitrary application.

These laws have already been used to prosecute civil society actors. In April 2021, the Algerian authorities arrested several members of the cultural association *SOS Bab El-Oued*, including its president Nacer Meghne. They were charged with receiving "foreign funding" and engaging in "subversive" activities in violation of the provisions of Law No. 20-06. On September 26, 2021, Meghne was sentenced to eight months in prison, a term later increased to one year. He was finally released in April 2022.

## **BARRIERS TO EXPRESSION**

Algerian law imposes multiple restrictions on the ability of associations to publicly express themselves. The 2012 Law on Associations requires an association's stated objective to be in line with vague and imprecise general criteria, such as the "public interest" and "respect for national values" and "principles."

Law on Information No. 12-05 requires all publications to be approved in advance by a media regulatory authority, limiting an association's ability to conduct advocacy through written materials.

Presidential decrees have also criminalized speech on certain topics. Notably, Ordinance 06-01, which implements the Charter for Peace and National Reconciliation, penalizes criticism of the conduct of security forces during the internal conflict of the 1990s. Article 46 of the Ordinance prescribes imprisonment and fines for statements that attack the institutions of the state party, impugn the honor of its officials, or tarnish its international reputation. This provision has a chilling effect and creates a climate of self-censorship, particularly on associations of victims of enforced disappearances committed during Algeria's "dark decade" that are seeking truth and justice.

The Penal Code also contains numerous provisions that restrict freedom of speech and association. Charges such as defamation and insult against public officials or institutions are frequently used to stifle the work of civil society actors.

In addition, authorities have used anti-terrorism legislation to silence peaceful dissent. Ordinance No. 21-08 broadened the definition of terrorism and provided for the establishment of a national list of terrorist persons and entities. To implement this requirement, the first terrorism list was published in the official gazette in February 2022. It includes the *Rachad* movement and the Movement for the Self-Determination of the Kabylie region (MAK), as well as 16 alleged members of both organizations.

At the same time, the authorities have used terrorism charges to prosecute individuals peacefully exercising their fundamental freedoms. Notable cases include the following:

- On November 16, 2024, the Algerian authorities arrested French-Algerian novelist [Boualem Sansal](#) for "undermining the integrity of national territory" under article 87 of the Penal Code.
- On August 24, 2021, Karima Nait Sid, co-president of the World Amazigh Congress, which defends the rights of the Amazigh ethnic group, was arrested and charged with "undermining national unity and state security and membership of a terrorist organization." She was sentenced to three years in prison and was released on September 1, 2024.

- On June 14, 2020, environmental activist [Mohad Gasmî](#) was arrested and charged with “praising terrorism” in two Facebook posts. The first post called on the Algerian army to “serve the people” during the COVID-19 pandemic. The second claimed that the government’s continued marginalization of people living in southern Algeria was responsible for the armed movement, the Mouvement des Enfants du Sud pour la Justice (MSJ). On October 17, 2021, Gasmî was sentenced to five years in prison. His sentence was reduced on appeal to two years in prison in June 2022. On April 14, 2022, he was also sentenced to three years in prison for “sharing confidential information without the intent of treason and espionage.” He was released on November 1, 2024, following a presidential pardon.
- On February 18, 2022, human rights defender [Zakaria Hannache](#) was arrested for “praising terrorism” and “undermining national unity” in relation to his work documenting arbitrary arrests and prosecutions since 2019. On March 31, 2022, Hannache and 70 other prisoners of conscience were temporarily released pending trial.
- In 2021, whistleblower [Mohamed Benhalima](#) was sentenced *in absentia* to 20 years in prison for charges including “participation in a terrorist group” and “publishing fake news undermining national unity.” He sought asylum in Spain after learning that his name was on a list of wanted military officials at risk of detention by the Algerian army. Spain rejected his asylum application and deported him back to Algeria on March 24, 2022, despite the risks of torture and serious human rights violations he faces in the country.
- Kaddour Chouicha, Jamila Loukil, and Saïd Boudour, former members of the dissolved Algerian League for the Defense of Human Rights (LADDH), were tried for terrorism charges in December 2023. Although acquitted, the prosecutor appealed the decision.
- Mohamed Tadjadit, known in Algeria as the “poet of the Hirak,” was arrested on January 29, 2024, for “apology and incitement to terrorist acts,” “use of communication technology to support terrorist activities and organizations and the voluntary or involuntary dissemination of his ideas.” Between 2019 and 2022, he was detained four times for his participation in peaceful protests or exercising his right to freedom of expression and assembly. On November 1, 2024, he was provisionally released under a presidential pardon. On January 16, 2025, however, he was arrested again in another case before being tried and sentenced to 5 years in prison.
- In January 2022, blogger and reporter Merzoug Touati was sentenced to a year in prison over social media comments.
- On June 7, 2022, [Ihsane El Kadi](#), the director of the Algerian radio station *Radio Mand* of the website *Maghreb Émergent*, was sentenced to six months in prison for “disseminating false information,” “disrupting elections,” and “reopening the issue on the national tragedy.” The charges were related to an article published on the *Radio M* website about the *Rachad* movement and the *Hirak*. He is also being prosecuted in another case for “belonging to a terrorist group,” and was arrested in December 2022 for illegal funding charges. On April 2, 2023, El Kadi was sentenced to five years in prison, including two years on probation. But in June, the Court of Appeal increased his sentence to seven years in prison, including two years on probation. He was finally released under a presidential pardon on November 1, 2024. Both *Radio M* and *Maghreb Émergent* were forced to cease operations on June 19, 2024, after the Algiers Court of Appeal ordered the dissolution of Interface Médias. The reasons for this are still under seal.

In the run-up to the presidential elections scheduled to be held on September 7, 2024, the Algerian authorities intensified their repression of dissent by the political opposition:

- On August 6, 2024, political activist Yacine Mekireche, a member of the suspended political party the Democratic and Social Movement (MDS), was arbitrarily arrested over Facebook posts.

- Fethi Ghares, the former coordinator of MDS, was arrested in August for “contempt of the president” and “dissemination of false information and hate speech through publications on social networks.”
- At least 60 political activists, most from the political party the Rally for Culture and Democracy (RCD), including its chairman Atmane Mazouz, were arrested in August.
- The terms of the judicial supervision of Karim Tabbou, a political activist and president of the unregistered Democratic and Social Union (UDS) party, were restricted further to bar him from publishing political comments or participating in debates. He had been placed under judicial supervision in May 2023 after taking part in a TV show with former Tunisian president, Moncef Marzouki.

The government increasingly imposes travel bans, known in Algeria as ISTN, on civil society activists, opposition political party leaders, journalists, unionists, and others critical of the regime. These bans, which violate the right to freedom of movement and restrict broader civil and political rights, are often issued without formal notice, are unlimited in duration, and nearly impossible to challenge. The practice is based on Article 36 *bis* 1 of Ordinance No. 15-02 of 2015, on the Code of Criminal Procedure, which states that “the public prosecutor may, for the purposes of an investigation, on the basis of a reasoned report by a judicial police officer, order a ban on leaving the country on any person against whom there is evidence of probable involvement in a felony or an offense.”

The right to receive and impart information is further undermined by annual internet shutdowns during national school exams, a practice that began in 2016. These disruptions affect millions who rely on internet access for work, education, and communication.

On March 7, 2023, Law No. 23-02 was adopted, governing the exercise of trade union rights. It bans union members from engaging in political activity or associating with political parties. The law also conditions the right to strike on “not harming the principles of the continuity of public service [or] the protection of people’s and property’s security,” vague concepts that authorities could interpret to arbitrarily restrict strikes.

Lastly, the authorities have increased the use of anti-terrorism provisions to prosecute critical voices. In November 2025, for example, poet and HIRAK activist Mohamed Tadjadit was sentenced to five years in prison, while trade unionist Ali Mammeri received a 15-year sentence on charges of condoning terrorism.

## **BARRIERS TO ASSEMBLY**

### **Lack of Legal Protections**

Article 52 of Algeria’s 2020 Constitution protects the freedom of assembly, stating that “[t]he freedom of expression, association, and assembly is guaranteed.” However, restrictive legislation and executive decrees have significantly curtailed Algerians’ ability to exercise this right.

In 1991, Parliament amended Law No. 89-28 of 1989 on Public Meetings and Demonstrations, narrowing the right to assemble and conduct meetings. The resulting legislation, Law No. 91-19, remains in force and continues to regulate public gatherings in Algeria. Additionally, a 2001 ban on all demonstrations in Algiers—introduced following violent clashes between protesters and police in the capital—remains in effect.

### **Vague Provisions**

Law No. 91-19 prohibits any meeting or demonstration that “opposes national fundamental principles” or harms “the symbols of the revolution of November 1, the public order or public morals.” The Law does not provide further definitions for these terms, providing authorities with broad discretion to prohibit assemblies based on subjective interpretations of their objectives.

## **Advance Notification**

Under Law No. 91-19, organizers of “public gatherings” must notify the authorities of their plans at least three days in advance (Articles 5, 15). The Law defines a “public gathering” as a “temporary rally of people, agreed upon beforehand and organized outside public roads in a closed place that is easy for people to join. Its purpose is the exchange of ideas or the defense of joint interests.” Authorities may prohibit such gatherings without being required to provide justification.

The Law distinguishes public gatherings from “public demonstrations,” which are defined as “processions, parades, or gatherings of people in a public manner, and all demonstrations that go through public roads.” The law requires organizers of public demonstrations to request approval from the governor at least *eight* days in advance. The governor is required to either approve or deny the demonstration at least five days in advance.

Appeals of administrative decisions are technically permitted under Articles 800 and 801 of the Civil and Administrative Procedure Code. However, organizers of assemblies have reported that the authorities often wait until the last minute to notify assembly organizers of a refusal, giving them no time to appeal the decision.

On May 9, 2021, the Algerian Ministry of the Interior issued a statement requiring march organizers to submit detailed information to the relevant authorities, including the names of organizers, start and end times, the planned route, and slogans to be used.

## **Criminal Penalties**

Law No. 91-19 imposes possible criminal penalties, including imprisonment and fines, for participation in unauthorized assemblies. Article 23 states that “[a]nyone found responsible for participating in the organization of an unauthorized demonstration will get either a prison sentence ranging from three months to a year, a fine between 3,000 and 15,000 Algerian Dinars, or both.”

Article 97 of the Penal Code prohibits “unarmed gatherings,” while Article 98 states that “any unarmed person shall be punished by imprisonment of two months to one year, who is part of an armed or unarmed gathering and does not abandon it after the first summons. The imprisonment is from six months to three years if the unarmed person continued to be part of an armed gathering that has only dissipated in the face of the use of force.”

Article 100 of the Penal Code addresses “incitement to unarmed gathering,” stating that “any direct provocation to an unarmed assembly either by speeches made publicly, or by writings or printed materials posted or distributed, is punishable by an imprisonment of two months to one year, if it was followed by effect, if not, by an imprisonment of one to six months and a fine of 2,000 to 5,000 Algerian Dinars or of one of these two penalties only.”

## **Blanket Bans on Demonstrations**

Residents of Algiers have been restricted from exercising their right to peaceful assembly since 2001, under an unpublished Presidential Decree of June 18, 2001, that bans all demonstrations in the capital. Although this decree has never been officially published, it has been consistently enforced. During Algeria’s fourth periodic review before the UN Human Rights Committee in 2018, government representatives acknowledged the existence of a general ban on protests in Algiers, citing concerns over public order and counterterrorism efforts as justification (Replies to the List of Issues, March 14, 2018, UN Doc. CCPR/C/DZA/Q/4/Add.1).

## **Arrests of Protesters**

Since February 2019, amid the rise of the *Hirak* movement, authorities have further escalated restrictions on the freedom of assembly, dispersing protests nationwide and arresting participants, including journalists. Notably, journalist Khaled Drareni was sentenced to two years in prison for reporting on

demonstrations.

On May 11, 2021, the Spokesperson for the UN High Commissioner for Human Rights expressed concern over “sustained reports of unnecessary and disproportionate force against peaceful protesters, as well as continuing arrests.” In a [briefing note](#), the spokesperson reported that authorities were blocking access to demonstration sites and arbitrarily arresting individuals alleged to be protesters. Some detainees were reportedly released only after being coerced into signing pledges to cease participation in future protests.

On May 14, 2021, Algerian authorities [arrested](#) at least 16 journalists covering demonstrations in downtown Algiers. All were released the following day.

## Additional Resources

This section contains links to external reports and news reports relevant to civic freedoms. The Historical Notes section contains links to past developments which ICNL has reported on. Click a subheading for more, or [click here to expand all subheadings](#).

## GLOBAL INDEX RANKINGS

Ranking Body	Rank	Ranking Scale (best - worst possible)
<a href="#">UN Human Development Index</a>	96 (2023)	1 - 193
<a href="#">World Justice Project Rule of Law Index</a>	84 (2024)	1 - 140
<a href="#">Transparency International</a>	107 (2024)	1 - 180
<a href="#">Fund for Peace Fragile States Index</a>	87 (2024)	179 - 1
<a href="#">Freedom House: Freedom in the World</a>	Status: Not Free Political Rights: 10 Civil Liberties: 21 (2025)	Free/Partly Free/Not Free 100 - 0 40 - 0 60 - 0
<a href="#">World Press Freedom Index</a>	126 (2025)	1-180

## REPORTS

UN Universal Periodic Review Reports	<a href="#">Algeria UPR Page</a>
UN Human Rights Reports	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• <a href="#">Algeria OHCHR page</a></li><li>• <a href="#">A/HRC/56/50/Add.2: Visit to Algeria - Report of the Special Rapporteur on the rights to freedom of peaceful assembly and of association, Clément Nyaletsossi Voule</a></li></ul>
U.S. State Department	<a href="#">2024 Country Reports on Human Rights Practices: Algeria</a>
Fragile States Index Reports	<a href="#">Fund for Peace Failed States Index</a>
IMF Country Reports	<a href="#">Algeria and the IMF</a>

International Commission of Jurists	<a href="#">Algeria</a>
ICNL Online Library	<a href="#">Algeria</a>

## NEWS

### [Algeria jails pro-democracy Hirak poet for five years on terrorism charges](#) (November 2025)

Algerian activist and poet Mohamed Tadjadit, widely known as “the poet of the Hirak” for his spoken-word performances during the 2019 pro-democracy protests, was sentenced on November 10, 2025 to five years in prison. Tadjadit has been jailed multiple times since 2019, most recently being released under a presidential pardon last November before being arrested again in January and receiving a separate reduced sentence. His case highlights the wider crackdown on Hirak activists under President Abdelmadjid Tebboune since late 2019.

### [Report reveals widespread and arbitrary use of travel bans as a tool of repression](#) (October 2025)

MENA Rights Group released a report on October 30, 2025, exposing the Algerian authorities’ growing use of travel bans as a mass repression tool to stifle dissent and restrict freedom of movement. The report, titled “Algeria: Travel bans, a tool of mass repression in the hands of the authorities,” documents how measures have been systematically imposed on activists, journalists, political opponents, and human rights defenders, often without notification, legal justification, or avenues for appeal.

### [Activist denied entry at Algiers airport](#) (July 2025)

Nassera Dutour, president of the Collective of the Families of the Disappeared in Algeria (CFDA) and mother of a disappeared person, was subjected to a forced and arbitrary expulsion upon her arrival at Algiers airport. She was then forced to board a flight to Paris. An Algerian citizen, Nassera Dutour was forcibly removed from her own country, in flagrant violation of her fundamental rights.

### [Muzzled freedom in Algeria](#) (May 2025)

On the occasion of World Press Freedom Day, eleven human rights organizations issued a joint statement condemning the Algerian authorities for ongoing, systemic violations of press freedom and civil liberties. The signatories highlight Algeria’s misuse of vague and overbroad legal provisions to criminalise dissent, citing arbitrary detentions, judicial harassment, and censorship as key tactics. Particular concern is raised regarding the convictions of writer Boualem Sansal and poet Mohamed Tadjadit. The signatories demand the immediate release of all arbitrarily detained individuals and legislative reforms to uphold Algeria’s international human rights obligations.

### [Crackdown on freedoms in Algeria: a panel of experts calls for urgent reforms](#) (April 2025)

On March 7, 2025, Amnesty International, Article 19, the Cairo Institute for Human Rights Studies, Euromed Rights, the International Federation for Human Rights (FIDH), Human Rights Watch, MENA Rights group, and the World Organisation Against Torture (OMCT) organized a side event during the 58th session of the United Nations Human Rights Council. The event focused on the shrinking civic space in Algeria since the visit in the country of the UN Special Rapporteur on the situation of human rights defenders, Mary Lawlor, in 2023. The discussion coincided with the presentation of the Special Rapporteur’s country visit report. Speakers included Mary Lawlor, UN Special Rapporteur on the situation of human rights defenders; Zakaria Hannache, a prominent human rights activist; Mouloud Boumghar, professor of public law; and Nassera Dutour, president of the Collective of the Families of the Disappeared in Algeria.

### [Joint open letter to member and observer States of the UN Human Rights Council calling on them to address ongoing repression of civic space in Algeria during the 58th Session of the Council](#) (March 2025)

Ahead of the UN Human Rights Council’s review of a report by the United Nations Special Rapporteur on Human Rights Defenders, seven human rights organizations have urged member states to take a firm

stance against Algeria's ongoing repression of civic space. They highlight the persistent criminalization of peaceful dissent, arbitrary arrests, and judicial harassment targeting activists, journalists, and human rights defenders. The letter raises concern over a draft law on associations that, despite promising reform, fails to meet international standards and grants excessive control to executive authorities. The signatories call for the immediate release of those detained for exercising their rights and urge Algeria to align its laws with international human rights obligations.

### [\*\*Algerian writer Boualem Sansal sentenced to five years in prison\*\*](#) (March 2025)

An Algerian court has sentenced Franco-Algerian writer Boualem Sansal to five years in prison for "undermining the integrity of the national territory," following statements in a far-right French media outlet echoing Morocco's claim that France had transferred land from Morocco to Algeria during colonization. The 80-year-old author, detained since November, was also fined 500,000 Algerian dinars. Prosecutors had sought a ten-year sentence, and the case has intensified an already severe diplomatic crisis between Algeria and France. UN human rights experts have asked the Algerian authorities to provide immediate explanations regarding the situation of journalist Mustapha Bendjama and that of civil activist Tahar Larbi, after receiving reports of possible violations committed against them because of their participation in peaceful activities or the publication of their political opinions on social

### [\*\*Law on Political Parties almost adopted before being examined by Parliament\*\*](#) (February 2025)

Presented as being in line with the 2020 Constitution, the new draft organic Law on Political Parties aims, according to the Algerian authorities, to establish a more structured framework and encourage transparency. But in the headquarters of the main parties, the text is already generating criticism and fears.

### [\*\*Algeria's arbitrary travel bans against critics\*\*](#) (February 2025)

Algerian authorities have increasingly used arbitrary travel bans to retaliate against perceived critics, Human Rights Watch and MENA Rights Group said. The authorities should lift the arbitrary bans and stop using them as a tool to repress dissent. The arbitrary bans can be imposed without formal notice, are often unlimited in duration, and are almost impossible to challenge. They prevent people from leaving the country, violate their right to freedom of movement, and undermine the rights to freedom of association, assembly, and expression. In some cases, they have led to families being separated or affected the work and mental health of those targeted.

### [\*\*Launch of a consultation with associations to enrich the preliminary draft of the law on associations\*\*](#) (January 2025)

The National Observatory for Civil Society (ONSC) has launched a national consultation of associations to enrich the preliminary draft of the organic law setting out the conditions and procedures for the creation of associations.

### [\*\*Special Rapporteur dismayed by continued criminalization of human rights defenders after her visit\*\*](#) (January 2025)

In a press release issued on January 30, 2025, Mary Lawlor, the UN Special Rapporteur on the situation of human rights defenders, condemned Algeria's ongoing restrictions and harassment of human rights defenders for their peaceful activities. Reflecting on her visit to Algeria at the end of 2023, she expressed deep disappointment that individuals she met continue to face arbitrary arrests, judicial harassment, intimidation, and criminalization. She highlighted that these actions are often justified under vague legal provisions, such as charges of "harming the security of the State."

### [\*\*President decides on pardons and appeasement measures for 2,471 prisoners\*\*](#) (December 2024)

On December 25, 2024, the President of the Republic of Algeria, Abdelmadjid Tebboune, decided to grant presidential pardons and appeasement measures to 2,471 prisoners, according to a press release from the Presidency of the Republic.

### [\*\*The President of the Republic decides on presidential pardons and appeasement measures for 2,471 prisoners\*\*](#) (December 2024)

On December 25, 2024, the President, Abdelmadjid Tebboune, decided to grant presidential pardons and

appeasement measures to 2,471 prisoners, according to a press release from the Presidency of the Republic.

### [The Algerian government's global crackdown on dissenters](#) (November 2024)

The Cairo Institute for Human Rights Studies (CIHRS) published a report on November 26, 2024 that reveals the Algerian government's expanding strategy of transnational repression, systematically targeting activists, journalists, and human rights defenders living abroad. The report, titled "The Noose is Tightening Around Us: Algeria's Use of Transnational Repression to Crackdown on Dissent," details the array of tactics employed by the Algerian government to silence dissent beyond its borders, drawing troubling parallels to authoritarian practices of countries like China and Egypt.

### [Algeria holds French-Algerian writer Boualem Sansal on national security charges](#) (November 2024)

Algerian authorities have remanded in custody on national security charges prominent French-Algerian novelist Boualem Sansal following his arrest earlier this month that sparked alarm throughout the literary world, his French lawyer said. His detention by Algeria comes against a background of tensions between France and its former colony, which also appear to have spread to the literary world. The 75-year-old writer, granted French nationality this year, was on November 16 arrested at Algiers airport after returning from France, according to several media reports.

### [Algeria: journalist Ihsane El Kadi is free after a Presidential pardon](#) (November 2024)

Ihsane El Kadi has finally regained his freedom after 22 months in prison. The director of Radio M and Maghreb Émergent was pardoned by President Abdelmadjid Tebboune on October 30, 2024.

### [Repression of civic space ahead of presidential elections](#) (September 2024)

Presidential elections will be held in Algeria on September 7, 2024 amidst severe restrictions on civic space and a continued crackdown on human rights including the rights to the freedom of expression, peaceful assembly and association, and media freedom. In addition to these restrictions, Amnesty International is concerned that Algerian authorities have adopted a series of legislation to blatantly curtail the effective exercise of human rights in the country.

### [A new election goes against democratic aspirations](#) (September 2024)

On September 7, 2024, the Algerian people will once again be called upon to ratify a presidential election that has already been decided. A group of citizens from the Algerian diaspora is calling for the construction of a genuine democratic alternative in line with the aspirations of the Algerian people. With this appeal, they refuse to accept the choice imposed on them by this political system: enslavement, silence, prison or exile.

### [New penal code amendments escalate attack on freedom of expression](#) (August 2024)

ARTICLE 19 expresses alarm about recent amendments to the Algerian Penal Code, which mark a significant escalation in the Algerian government's crackdown on dissent. By introducing new speech offences and increasing the penalties for existing ones, Algeria is expanding its legal tools to silence the opposition and critical voices ahead of the presidential election on September 7, 2024.

### [Press owner Ihsane El Kadi's Radio M website ceases publication](#) (June 2024)

The Radio M website, which is part of the independent media group run by Algerian journalist Ihsane El Kadi, who has been imprisoned since late 2022, ceased publication on June 19, 2024.

### [A tougher penal code to combat the 'excesses' of social networks](#) (May 2024)

Presented as a response to the "excesses of websites, mobile applications and platforms for creating social links", the new penal code promulgated in Algeria introduces a new repressive twist four months ahead of the presidential election scheduled for September 2024. The new law raises concerns among journalists, lawyers, political activists and even ordinary citizens. Everyone is wondering how these measures will be applied on the ground, and what interpretation the judges will make of them.

### [Algeria: Detainees must be released and civic space opened](#) (April 2024)

As part of the Ramadan #ReleaseThem campaign, local and international CSOs called on Algerian

authorities to release unjustly imprisoned detainees for expressing their opinions or peacefully exercising their freedoms, and to open up civic space to civil society actors in order to ensure the unhindered exercise of their missions towards the rule of law.

### [\*\*After five years of protests, the narrowing of civic space extends beyond the southern shores of the Mediterranean\*\*](#) (February 2024)

In the five years since the start of the Hirak protest movement, human rights defenders and activists have faced widespread repression, sometimes forcing them into exile. In this context, a coalition of human rights NGOs express their concern and call for an end to this repression, urging the Algerian authorities to respect fundamental rights. They also urge the French authorities to put an end to the harassment of Algerian activists present on their territory.

### [\*\*Amendments to the Algerian Penal Code: towards a restricted civic space\*\*](#) (February 2024)

The recent revisions to the draft law on criminal sanctions raise doubts about respect for civil liberties in Algeria. Under the guise of moralisation and the fight against terrorism, the provisions might undermine civil liberties.

### [\*\*“Flagged” or banned from travelling, opponents, businessmen and journalists live in fear\*\*](#) (January 2024)

Algerians report being detained for long periods at the airport when they travel, and even forbidden to leave the country, without knowing what they are accused of.

### [\*\*Algeria: Reactions following the visit of the Special Rapporteur on the situation of Human Rights Defenders\*\*](#) (December 2023)

Following the official visit to Algeria by the United Nations Special Rapporteur on the Situation of Human Rights Defenders, Ms. Mary Lawlor, eleven organizations, including EuroMed Rights, OMCT, FIDH and MENA Rights Group, call on the Algerian government to release imprisoned activists, repeal oppressive laws, and protect endangered civil society organizations.

### [\*\*Algeria: Freedom of Association, Assembly Under Attack\*\*](#) (September 2023)

Algerian authorities have crushed civic space over the past four years, Human Rights Watch said in a briefing paper it submitted to the United Nations special rapporteur on the rights to freedom of peaceful assembly and association, Clément Nyaletsossi Voule, who began on September 16 a ten-day visit to Algeria. The briefing paper details how authorities have dismantled the country’s independent civil society and hindered political pluralism based on restrictive laws on associations, political parties, and unions.

### [\*\*UN rights expert calls on Algeria to pardon convicted protesters\*\*](#) (September 2023)

“The Government must loosen tight restrictions on assemblies and associations to bring laws and practice into conformity with the national Constitution and international human rights law”, said Clément Voule, Special Rapporteur on the right to assembly, in a statement at the end of a 10-day official visit to Algeria. He was there as the country weighs ongoing reforms to bring legislation into line with the 2020 Constitution and the aspirations of what are known as the “Hirak demonstrations”, which saw hundreds of thousands of Algerians take to the streets across major cities to protest every week for more than a year between 2019 and 2020.

### [\*\*Kamira Nait Sid and Slimane Bouhafis sentenced to 3 years in prison\*\*](#) (July 2023)

On July 4, 2023, the Dar El Beida Court sentenced Kamira Nait Sid, co-president of the Amazigh World Congress (CMA), and Slimane Bouhafis, a UNHCR-recognized refugee and Christian Amazigh activist, who was abducted and forcibly returned from Tunisia in 2021, to three years in prison for “undermining national territorial integrity”.

### [\*\*Mohad Gasmi has been in detention for three years and will go on hunger strike\*\*](#) (July 2023)

Environmental activist, Mohad Gasmi, who is being held in Adrar prison, has decided to go on hunger strike from July 5 on the occasion of the 61st anniversary of Algeria’s independence. A community activist and environmentalist, Mohad Gasmi has become a leading figure in citizen protests in the south of the country. He was heavily involved in the movement of the unemployed in the south and the 2019 Hirak.

He was a leading figure against shale gas operations between 2012 and 2015.

### [Algeria: Free People Held After Activist Fled](#) (June 2023)

Algerian authorities have been holding at least four people for more than four months, including a journalist, for allegedly helping an activist to leave the country in February 2023, Human Rights Watch, the Cairo Institute for Human Rights Studies, and EuroMed Rights said on June 27, 2023. The activist, Amira Bouraoui, who was convicted for her peaceful activism and was subjected to an arbitrary travel ban since 2021, fled across the Tunisian border.

### [Algeria: Journalist Ihsane El-Kadi sentenced to three years in prison](#) (April 2023)

The Algerian press owner Ihsane El-Kadi, quite critical of the government, was sentenced on [April 2] to five years in prison, of which three years are firm, announced the court of Sidi M'hamed in Algiers, which delivered its verdict in the presence of the accused. The court also ordered the dissolution of the company Interface Médias, publisher of the two media outlets run by Mr El-Kadi, the confiscation of all its assets, and a fine of 10 million dinars (more than 68,000 euros) against his company.

### [In Algeria, journalists are under increasing pressure](#) (April 2023)

The new media regulation law passed by the Assembly is now being examined by the Senate and should be adopted quickly. It provides for a stronger framework for the work of journalists, in an already very restrictive context for press freedom.

### [Statement by the GI-TOC on the arrest of senior analyst Raouf Farrah](#) (February 2023)

Following press reports in local Algerian media, the Global Initiative Against Transnational Organized Crime (GI-TOC) can confirm that on February 14, 2023, Raouf Farrah, Senior Analyst with the GI-TOC was arrested in Annaba, Algeria, by officers of the Gendarmerie Nationale and the judicial police. Raouf was visiting his parents with his wife and child when detained. He has been held under arrest since. Both his parents have also been detained and although his mother was released, his father remains in detention at the time of writing.

### [Algeria: Reverse decision to dissolve leading human rights group](#) (February 2023)

The Administrative Court of Algiers dissolved the LADDH following a complaint filed by the Interior Ministry on June 29, 2022, the organization said on January 20, 2023, after it learned of the judgment by finding it on the internet. The LADDH, which said it had been unaware of the judicial proceedings, including the complaint, is the most recent organization targeted by the authorities' campaign to neutralize independent civil society organizations.

### [Algeria Arrests Relatives of Wanted Dissident: Rights Group](#) (February 2023)

Algerian authorities have arrested the mother and sister of wanted activist Amira Bouraoui days after she left for France, a rights group and a radio reported on April 12, 2023. Bouraoui, a French-Algerian doctor by training, had been arrested in Tunisia and risked being deported to Algeria, but she was finally able to board a flight to France on Monday evening. She was sentenced in Algeria in May 2021 to two years in jail for "offending Islam" and for insulting the president. Her departure, following French intervention, created a diplomatic incident between Algiers and Paris, with Algeria recalling its ambassador from France for consultations.

## **ARCHIVED NEWS**

[Journalist Ihsane El Kadi is under arrest](#) (December 2022)

[2022 a "dark year" for journalism](#) (December 2022)

[Towards a restriction of the right to strike?](#) (November 2022)

[Journalists demonstrate and demand the release of Belkacem Houam](#) (September 2022)

[Visit of the UN special rapporteur postponed](#) (September 2022)

[Kaddour Chouicha prevented from travelling](#) (August 2022)

[Social networks and messaging inaccessible](#) (June 2022)

[Authorities must release defence lawyers and stop assault on right to fair trial](#) (June 2022)

[Online campaign calls on Algerian authorities to stop assault on civic space and fundamental freedoms](#) (May 2022)

[Algeria newspaper \*Liberte\* closes after 30 years](#) (April 2022)

[Mounting repression as more human rights defenders are detained](#) (March 2022)

[Three Years On, Repression on Protest Tightens](#) (February 2022)

[Escalating repression threatens the survival of independent civil society](#) (February 2022)

[Leading pro-democracy NGO dissolved by the courts](#) (October 2021)

[Repression in Algeria: Could it end the \*Hirak\* Movement?](#) (July 2021)

[Algeria cancels France 24's operating license](#) (June 2021)

[Oldest party wins most seats in voting for 'new Algeria'](#) (June 2021)

[UN High Commissioner press briefing notes on Algeria](#) (May 2021)

[Algeria to impose restrictions on street protests](#) (May 2021)

[Le journaliste Rabah Karèche reste en prison malgré les protestations](#) (April 2021)

[Islamic scholar sentenced to three-year prison term for "offending Islam"](#) (April 2021)

[Algerians back constitutional reforms amid low voter turnout](#) (November 2020)

[Algerian journalist jailed for two years on appeal](#) (September 2020)

[Algeria's Hirak protesters defy virus lockdown](#) (May 2020)

[Algeria accused of using coronavirus to 'settle scores' with media](#) (April 2020)

[Leading Algerian activist jailed as crackdown continues](#) (April 2020)

["Fake news" bill will tighten gag on press freedom in Algeria](#) (April 2020)

[Anti-government protests thwarted as Algeria bans street marches over coronavirus](#) (March 2020)

[Algeria: One Year On, Activists Languish in Jail](#) (February 2020)

[The Algerian Hirak: what role for civil society?](#) (February 2020)

[In Algeria, a dangerous crackdown on independent trade unions](#) (February 2020)

[Algeria's new president reiterates reform pledges, protesters divided](#) (December 2019)

[Algeria: Escalating Repression of Protesters. Leaders Arrested Ahead of Disputed Presidential Elections](#) (November 2019)

[Algerian activists demand a place at the table](#) (June 2019)

[Hundreds of Algerians protest against proposed energy law](#) (October 2019)

[Civil society organizations in Algeria agree to a "transition from six months to one year"](#) (June 2019)

[NGOs call for more freedom, end to restrictive associations law](#) (October 2018)

[Algeria 'fails' on human rights and freedom of expression, says EU](#) (October 2017)

[Algeria should accept UPR recommendations on freedom of speech, assembly and association](#) (September 2017)

[Government: 60,000 Associations Outside the Law](#) (December 2016)

[Algeria on the Brink? Five Years after the Arab Spring](#) (May 2016)

[Will a New Constitution Help Algeria?](#) (February 2016)

[Arrested for Ironic Facebook Post](#) (March 2015)

[Algerian Civil Society Committed to Fight against Climate Change](#) (October 2014)

[Algerian Churches, NGOs Wary as 'Restrictive' Law Comes into Force](#) (January 2014)

[Protest Picnic Defends Ramadan Rights of Algerian Christians](#) (September 2013)

[New Law On Associations Used to Stifle Civil Society](#) (May 2013)

[EU-Algeria Association Council: Priority to Human Rights!](#) (December 2012)

[Algerian Government reconciles with citizens](#) (November 2012)

[Human rights activist arrested by Algerian police](#) (October 2012)

[UN Human Rights chief Navi Pillay calls for Algeria to reconsider restrictions on CSOs](#) (September 2012)

[Algeria rights activist cleared of charges](#) (September 2012)

[ANHRI denounces detention of four activists in Algeria on assembly charges](#) (June 2012)

[Upcoming elections must address civil society's legitimate demands on freedom of association](#) (May 2012)

[Harassment of union leaders and bans on demonstrations continue in Algeria despite the repeal of the state of emergency](#) (March 2012)

[New Media Law Stifles Free Expression, says CPJ](#) (January 2012)

[Algeria's Bouteflika to end State TV and radio control](#) (September 2011)

[Algerian women test the 'Arab Spring' winds](#) (March 2011)

[Change in Algeria fundamental for human rights and security](#) (February 2011)

[Rally for culture and democracy](#) (January 2011)

[Aid groups advocate solution to decades-old warehousing of refugees](#) (April 2010)

## **HISTORICAL NOTES**

The first Algerian Constitution was passed in 1963 by referendum after the end of the War of Independence with France. Algeria's second constitution was passed in 1976 during the Boumédiène era and recognized the freedom to associate and form organizations. After public uprisings in 1988, a third constitution was adopted, expanding on individual freedoms, including by allowing citizens to elect representatives and form political parties. Parts of this constitution were suspended following the 1992 military coup, however, when the government declared a state of emergency. The constitution was again

modified in 1996, 2002, and 2008 without substantial changes to individual rights and freedoms.

In 2011, President Bouteflika promised a raft of reforms that included constitutional revisions. Consultations on recommended changes took place from 2011 to late 2015, when President Bouteflika approved the draft amendments, and Parliament approved them in February 2016. Among other things, the amendments reinstated a two-term limit on the office of the presidency, and a requirement that the prime minister be selected from the parliamentary majority rather than directly chosen by the president.

On November 1, 2020, Constitutional changes were passed after a popular referendum with a record low voter turnout was held. The revised Constitution limits the role of the army to “the consolidating and developing of the Nation’s defensive capabilities; preserving national independence and defending national sovereignty; and protecting the unity of the country and the integrity of its territory” (Article 30). However, it does not prohibit the armed forces from intervening in the political or economic affairs of the country. It additionally does not provide for civilian oversight of the armed forces, though under the adopted constitution, the president remains the Supreme Commander of the Armed Forces and in charge of national defense.

The amendments to the Constitution also placed more power in the hands of the president by providing him with the power to appoint and dismiss the prime minister, one-third of the upper chamber of Parliament, ministers, judges, the head of the supreme court, the head of the higher administrative court, the head of the court of accounts, and the head of the constitutional court. Under this amended Constitution, the president also serves as the president of the Higher Judicial Council, and his powers are unchecked. He is unimpeachable and may dissolve the People’s National Assembly under any circumstances.

Under article 39 of the amended Constitution, torture or cruel, inhuman, or degrading treatment is punishable by law, but cruel, inhuman, or degrading punishment is neither prohibited nor criminalized. Article 44, moreover, maintains that no person shall be arrested, detained or prosecuted for reasons other those provided by the law and mandates that persons must be provided with the reason behind their arrest. It also holds that acts of arbitrary detention be punished and that pre-trial detention only be used as an exceptional measure. Although the Constitution holds that acts of arbitrary detention be punished and that pre-trial detention only be used as an exceptional measure, it falls short of guaranteeing the right of everyone “to liberty and the security of person.”

Finally, although articles 52 and 53 of the Constitution provide that freedom of assembly and peaceful demonstration are guaranteed and that the right to create associations are guaranteed and may be exercised by simple declaration, these rights are seriously limited in law and in practice. Similarly, while freedom of opinion and expression are enshrined in articles 51 and 52 of the Constitution, articles 54 and 55 state that freedom of the press must be exercised in “respect of the fundamental religious, moral and cultural values of the nation” and not infringe on “the legitimate interests of companies and the requirements of national security.”

INTERNATIONAL CENTER  
FOR NOT-FOR-PROFIT LAW

<https://www.icnl.org/resources/civic-freedom-monitor/algeria>