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Home Office

Country Policy and Information Note

Algeria: Internal relocation and background information

Version 1.0

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Preface

Purpose

This note provides a summary of and links to country of origin information (COI) for use by Home Office decision makers handling particular types of protection and human rights claims. It is not intended to be an exhaustive survey of a particular subject or theme.

It is split into two main sections: (1) general background to the country concerned, including demography and geography; and (2) issues which may be relevant to protection claims. Unlike country policy and information notes, it does **not** contain an assessment of risk, availability of protection or reasonableness of internal relocation.

Decision makers **must**, however, still consider all claims on an individual basis, taking into account each case's specific facts.

Country of origin information

The country information in this note has been carefully selected in accordance with the general principles of COI research as set out in the [Common EU \[European Union\] Guidelines for Processing Country of Origin Information \(COI\)](#), dated April 2008, and the Austrian Centre for Country of Origin and Asylum Research and Documentation's (ACCORD), [Researching Country Origin Information – Training Manual, 2013](#). Namely, taking into account the COI's relevance, reliability, accuracy, balance, currency, transparency and traceability.

The structure and content of the country information section follows a [terms of reference](#) which sets out the general and specific topics relevant to this note.

All information included in the note was published or made publicly available on or before the 'cut-off' date in the country information section. Any event taking place or report/article published after this date is not included.

All information is publicly accessible or can be made publicly available, and is from generally reliable sources. Sources and the information they provide are carefully considered before inclusion.

Factors relevant to the assessment of the reliability of sources and information include:

- the motivation, purpose, knowledge and experience of the source
- how the information was obtained, including specific methodologies used
- the currency and detail of information, and
- whether the COI is consistent with and/or corroborated by other sources.

Multiple sourcing is used to ensure that the information is accurate, balanced and corroborated, so that a comprehensive and up-to-date picture at the time of publication is provided of the issues relevant to this note.

Information is compared and contrasted, whenever possible, to provide a range of views and opinions. The inclusion of a source, however, is not an endorsement of it or any view(s) expressed.

Each piece of information is referenced in a brief footnote; full details of all sources cited and consulted in compiling the note are listed alphabetically in the [bibliography](#).

Feedback

Our goal is to continuously improve our material. Therefore, if you would like to comment on this note, please email [the Country Policy and Information Team](#).

Independent Advisory Group on Country Information

The [Independent Advisory Group on Country Information](#) (IAGCI) was set up in March 2009 by the Independent Chief Inspector of Borders and Immigration to support him in reviewing the efficiency, effectiveness and consistency of approach of COI produced by the Home Office.

The IAGCI welcomes feedback on the Home Office's COI material. It is not the function of the IAGCI to endorse any Home Office material, procedures or policy. The IAGCI may be contacted at:

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Information about the IAGCI's work and a list of the documents which have been reviewed by the IAGCI can be found on the Independent Chief Inspector's pages of the [gov.uk website](#).

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Assessment

Section 1 updated: 21 September 2020

1. Introduction

1.1 Scope of this note

- 1.1.1 Whether, in general, a person who fears serious harm or persecution from non-state actors can internally relocate within Algeria.

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1.2 Points to note

- 1.2.1 For further information and guidance on particular claim types, see the [Country Policy and Information Notes \(CPINs\) on Algeria](#).

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2. Consideration of issues

2.1 Credibility

- 2.1.1 For information on assessing credibility, see the instruction on [Assessing Credibility and Refugee Status](#).
- 2.1.2 Decision makers must also check if there has been a previous application for a UK visa or another form of leave. Asylum applications matched to visas should be investigated prior to the asylum interview (see the [Asylum Instruction on Visa Matches, Asylum Claims from UK Visa Applicants](#)).
- 2.1.3 Decision makers should also consider the need to conduct language analysis testing (see the [Asylum Instruction on Language Analysis](#)).

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2.2 Exclusion

- 2.2.1 Decision makers must consider whether one (or more) of the exclusion clauses applies. If the person is excluded from the Refugee Convention, they will also be excluded from a grant of humanitarian protection. Each case must be considered on its individual facts and merits.
- 2.2.2 For further guidance on the exclusion clauses and restricted leave, see the [Asylum Instruction on Exclusion: Article 1F of the Refugee Convention](#) and the [Asylum Instruction on Restricted Leave](#).

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2.3 Internal relocation

- 2.3.1 According to a 2020 estimate, Algeria's population was over 42 million. The majority of Algeria's population is located in the northern, coastal regions of the country, with 73.7% residing in urban areas. There are a number of large cities including Algiers, Oran and Constantine. Ethnically, the population is largely Arab-Berber. Most Algerians in all parts of the country speak Arabic and French, and various Berber dialects are spoken. Most Algerians are Sunni Muslim (see [Geography and Demography](#)).

- 2.3.2 Algeria is a lower-middle income country with an economy dominated by the state and with relatively low levels of unemployment. Women reportedly face discrimination in the workplace and although they have higher access than men to tertiary education, face barriers in accessing the job market (women represent 18.3% of the labor force). Education at all levels is free for all, but enrolment rates are lower in rural areas and amongst the poorest households and barriers to education exist for children with disabilities. Citizens have access to basic healthcare and there is a state-subsidised housing programme to assist those from lower-income households (see [Employment](#), [Economy](#), [Women](#) and [Education](#)).
- 2.3.3 A person is legally, practically, and generally safely able to move freely around the country. There is a well established transport infrastructure particularly in the Mediterranean coastal regions (see [Freedom of movement](#) and [Transportation](#)). However, given as of 25 July, COVID-related lockdown measures, as of 25 July 2020 all land borders remained closed and non-cargo domestic and international air and maritime travel suspended. A curfew was also imposed in 29 out of Algeria's 48 provinces from 8pm to 5am.
- 2.3.4 In general, where the risk is from non-state agents or rogue state agents, relocation to another area of Algeria is likely to be reasonable. Decision makers, however, must give careful consideration to the relevance and reasonableness of internal relocation taking full account of the individual circumstances of the particular person.
- 2.3.5 For further guidance on internal relocation, see Asylum Instructions on [Assessing Credibility and Refugee Status](#) and [Gender Issues in the Asylum Claim](#).

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Country information

Section 3 Updated: 21 September 2020

3. History

3.1.1 For a brief history of Algeria see the [CIA World Factbook – Algeria](#).

3.1.2 For further historical background see:

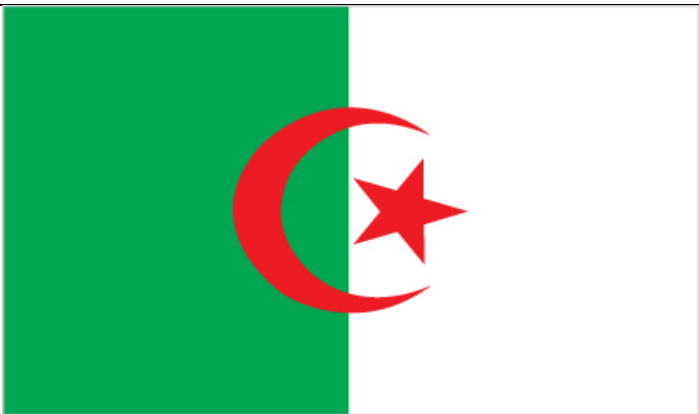
- [Encyclopaedia Britannica](#)
- BBC News – [Algeria country profile](#)
- Center for Security Studies Analyses in Security Policy - [Algeria: Stability against All Odds?](#)
- Bertelsman Stiftung's Transformation Index – [Algeria Country Report 2020](#)
- House of Commons Library – [Algerian Spring?](#)

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Section 4 Updated: 20 August 2020

4. Geography and demography

4.1 Key geographic and demographic facts:

Full country name:	People's Democratic Republic of Algeria ¹
Area:	Total land area: 2,381,740 sq km ² Algeria is approximately 10 times bigger than the UK ³ . Algeria is the 11 th largest country in the world by area ⁴ and the largest in Africa ⁵ .
Flag:	 6

¹ BBC, '[Algeria Country Profile](#)', 23 December 2019

² CIA, '[World Factbook - Algeria](#)' (Geography), updated 4 August 2020

³ My life elsewhere, '[Country Size Comparison](#)', undated

⁴ CIA, '[World Factbook - Algeria](#)' (Geography), updated 4 August 2020

⁵ World Atlas, '[Largest Countries in Africa...](#)', 21 November 2018

⁶ CIA, '[World Factbook - Algeria](#)', updated 4 August 2020

Population:	42,972,878 (estimate: July 2020) ⁷
Capital city:	Algiers ⁸
Other main cities/towns:	See Population distribution
Position:	The CIA Factbook noted: 'Northern Africa, bordering the Mediterranean Sea, between Morocco and Tunisia.' ⁹
Languages:	Arabic (official), French (lingua franca), Berber or Tamazight (official); dialects include Kabyle Berber (Taqbaylit), Shawiya Berber (Tacawit), Mزاب Berber, Tuareg Berber (Tamahaq). ¹⁰ Freedom House in its Freedom in the World 2020 report, covering events in 2019, noted that: '...Tamazight, the Berber language, was named a national language in 1995 and again in 2002... Tamazight did not become an official language nationwide until the Constitution was amended in 2016... Arabic remains the language of government.' ¹¹
Ethnic groups:	Arab-Berber 99% (Note that the CIA World Factbook stated: 'although almost all Algerians are Berber in origin (not Arab), only a minority identify themselves as primarily Berber, about 15% of the total population'), European less than 1% ¹²
Religious groups:	Muslim (predominantly Sunni) - 99%, other 1% including Christians, Jews, Ahmadi Muslims, Shia Muslims, and a community of Ibadi Muslims residing principally in the province of Ghardaia ¹³ For more information see Religious groups

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4.2 Administrative divisions

4.2.1 CIA World Factbook stated that:

'Algeria is divided into 48 provinces: Adrar, Ain Defla, Ain Temouchent, Alger, Annaba, Batna, Bechar, Bejaia, Biskra, Blida, Bordj Bou Arreridj, Bouira, Boumerdes, Chlef, Constantine, Djelfa, El Bayadh, El Oued, El Tarf, Ghardaia, Guelma, Illizi, Jijel, Khenchela, Laghouat, Mascara, Medea, Mila,

⁷ CIA, '[World Factbook - Algeria](#)' (People and Society - Population), updated 4 August 2020

⁸ CIA, '[World Factbook - Algeria](#)', (Government), updated 4 August 2020

⁹ CIA, '[World Factbook - Algeria](#)', (Geography), updated 4 August 2020

¹⁰ CIA '[World Factbook - Algeria](#)', (People and Society - Languages), updated 4 August 2020

¹¹ Freedom House, '[Freedom in the world 2020](#)' (section F), 4 March 2020

¹² CIA, '[World Factbook - Algeria](#)', (People and Society - Ethnic Groups), updated 4 August 2020

¹³ USSD, '[2019 Report on International Religious...](#)' (executive summary), 10 June 2010

Mostaganem, M'Sila, Naama, Oran, Ouargla, Oum el Bouaghi, Relizane, Saida, Setif, Sidi Bel Abbes, Skikda, Souk Ahras, Tamanrasset, Tebessa, Tiaret, Tindouf, Tipaza, Tissemsilt, Tizi Ouzou and Tlemcen.¹⁴

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4.3 Population distribution

4.3.1 The CIA World Factbook also noted that 'the vast majority of the populace is found in the extreme northern part of the country along the Mediterranean Coast. Urban population: 73.7 percent of total population (2020).'¹⁵ The largest cities are the capital, Algiers, with a population of 2.77 million, and Oran, with 899,000, in 2020¹⁶.

4.3.2 The Encyclopaedia Britannica noted that:

'Algeria's annual rate of population growth was high throughout much of the latter half of the 20th century, but by the late 1980s overall growth – birth rates in particular – had begun to decline. The population is youthful, almost a third being age 15 or younger. A drop in infant mortality rates contributed to a decline in overall death rates, but these were partly offset by the lower birth rates. The decline in fertility occurred in the cities, where the government has focused some efforts at family planning. Life expectancy is about 70 years.'¹⁷

4.3.3 According to Populationstat, Constantine has a population of 414,000 in 2020¹⁸.

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¹⁴ CIA, '[World Factbook - Algeria](#)' (Government – Administrative Divisions), updated 4 August 2020

¹⁵ CIA, '[World Factbook - Algeria](#)' (People and Society), undated, 16 March 2020

¹⁶ CIA, '[World Factbook - Algeria](#)' (People and Society), undated, 16 March 2020

¹⁷ Encyclopaedia Britannica, '[Algeria](#)', (Demographic trends), undated

¹⁸ Populationstat, '[Constantine, Algeria population](#)', live updates

4.4 Map



4.4.1 This map of Algeria shows the surrounding countries, international borders, the national capital Algiers, province capitals, towns, villages, major airports, roads and railroads¹⁹.

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4.5 Transportation

4.5.1 According to Encyclopaedia Britannica:

‘...The main rail line parallels the coast and extends from the Moroccan to the Tunisian border. Several standard-gauge lines branch from the main line to port cities and to some interior towns, and a few narrow-gauge lines cross the High Plateau to the Algerian Sahara. Two trans-Saharan roads have been built: one paved route from El-Goléa to Tamanghasset and then South to Niger, the other from El-Goléa to Adrar and then on to Mali. A state bus company and several private companies provide reliable intercity bus services. In 2011 the country’s first subway line was opened in Algiers. At its

¹⁹ Nations Online, ‘[Map of Algeria](#)’, undated

inauguration, it spanned five and a half miles (nine kilometres) and had 10 stations.’²⁰

4.5.2 The same source continued that:

‘The principal ports are Algiers, Oran, Annaba, Bejaïa, Bettioua, Mostaganem, and Ténès, in addition to the primarily petroleum and natural gas ports at Arzew and Skikda. Algeria’s merchant fleet has grown into a major world shipping line. Administered by the Algerian National Navigation Company, the fleet includes more than 150 vessels, including oil tankers and specialized liquefied natural gas tankers.

‘Air Algérie, the state airline, operates flights to many foreign countries and provides daily domestic flights between the country’s major cities and towns. There are international airports at Algiers, Annaba, Constantine, Oran, Tlemcen and Ghardaïa.’²¹

4.5.3 For further information on transportation see:

- Bertelsman Stiftung’s Transformation Index – [Algeria Country Report 2020](#)
- CIA – [The World Factbook Algeria](#)

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Section 5 Updated: 21 September 2020

5. Constitution

5.1.1 For the full text of the constitution see [The Constitution of the People’s Democratic Republic of Algeria](#).

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Section 6 Updated: 21 September 2020

6. Political system

6.1 Head of state, executive and legislature

6.1.1 Encyclopaedia Britannica observed that:

‘Algeria was dominated for the first three decades following independence by the National Liberation Front (Front de Libération Nationale; FLN), until 1989 the sole legal political party. New electoral laws passed in that year made the country a multiparty state. The Constitution adopted in 1996 provides for a strong executive branch headed by a President, who was to be elected by universal suffrage for a maximum of two five-year terms; in late 2008, however, the legislature approved a constitutional amendment that abolished the two-term limit. The President, who is Head of State and Head of Government, appoints numerous state officials, including a wide range of civilian and military leaders, provincial governors, and the Prime Minister. The President appoints the members of the government after consultation

²⁰ Encyclopaedia Britannica, ‘[Algeria](#)’ (Transportation and telecommunications), undated

²¹ Encyclopaedia Britannica, ‘[Algeria](#)’ (Transportation and telecommunications), undated

with the Prime Minister, who then presents a program to the lower house of the nation's bicameral legislature for ratification.'²²

6.1.2 The same source continued that:

'Once the government is in place, the Head of Government presents draft legislation, which is debated first in the country's lower house, the National People's Assembly (Majlis al-Sha' bī al-Waṭanī), deputies of which are elected for five-year terms by universal adult suffrage. Debate then passes to the upper house, the Council of the Nation (Majlis al-Ummah), members of which serve six-year terms. One-third of council members are appointed by the president, and the remaining two-thirds are elected indirectly by a secret ballot of local and district legislatures. In addition, the Constitution requires that one-half of the council's members be replaced every three years. Both houses are able to debate any draft law put before them, but only the lower house may alter draft documents. The upper house is required to vote on material presented to its members by the lower house and must achieve a three-fourths majority to pass any legislation. The legislature meets twice per year, each session lasting no less than four months. It is empowered to draft and ratify legislation on a wide variety of issues, including matters of civil and criminal law, personal status, state finance and the exploitation of natural resources.

'The Constitution of 1996 also established a Constitutional Council (Majlis Dustūrī) to oversee elections and referenda, rule on issues of the constitutionality of treaties, negotiations, and amendments, and, when called on by the President, issue opinions on the constitutionality of laws. The Council is appointed jointly by the executive, legislative and judicial branches.'²³

6.1.3 The CIA World Factbook noted that:

'[The] bicameral Parliament consists of: Council of the Nation (upper house with 144 seats; one-third of members appointed by the president, two-thirds indirectly elected by simple majority vote by an electoral college composed of local council members; members serve 6-year terms with one-half of the membership renewed every 3 years) National People's Assembly (lower house with 462 seats including 8 seats for Algerians living abroad); members directly elected in multi-seat constituencies by proportional representation vote to serve 5-year terms).'²⁴

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6.2 Elections

6.2.1 The Freedom House report covering events in 2019 noted:

'The President is directly elected to a five-year term for a maximum of two terms. In 2008, these term limits were removed, allowing President Abdelaziz Bouteflika to serve four terms, but they were reinstated in 2016 when Parliament passed a constitutional reform package. The 2014

²² Encyclopaedia Britannica, '[Algeria](#)' (Government and Society), undated

²³ Encyclopaedia Britannica, '[Algeria](#)' (Government and Society), undated

²⁴ CIA, '[World Factbook - Algeria](#)', (Government - Legislative Branch), updated 4 August 2020

presidential vote was marred by ballot stuffing, multiple voting, inflated electoral rolls, and the misuse of state resources to benefit the incumbent.

'President Bouteflika's decision to seek another term, which would have been his fifth, sparked the Hirak protests in February 2019; protesters originally called for him to step down during their twice-weekly rallies. In April [2019], President Bouteflika resigned, following loss of support from the armed forces. Upper house speaker and Bouteflika ally Abdelkader Bensalah was named interim President and faced immediate protests due to his association with his predecessor. Despite Bensalah's appointment, army chief of staff General Ahmed Gaïd Salah was considered the country's de facto ruler in Bouteflika's stead. In early June [2019], protesters derided the Constitutional Council's decision to reject the only two candidates who completed timely applications to contest the next presidential election and delay the vote, which was due on 4 July [2019].'²⁵

6.2.2 The report continued that:

'In September [2019], President Bensalah signed legislation creating a new Independent National Authority for Elections (ANIE), which updated the country's electoral rolls in October [2019]. In November [2019], as the campaign began in earnest, the ANIE announced five candidates for the presidency; nearly all of them served as Ministers in President Bouteflika's cabinet, roiling protesters who called for a new selection of contestants. November [2019] was also marked by a crackdown against the ongoing protests, with hundreds of rally attendees and protesters arrested at the height of the campaign. In addition, authorities issued lengthy prison terms to three former politicians two days before the poll.

'In the December [2019] election, former Prime Minister Abdelmajid Tebboune won the presidency in the first round with 58 percent of the vote... The Constitutional Council reported a record low turnout of just under 40 percent, while one outside expert suggested a figure as low as 20 percent. Protesters called the election a sham and orchestrated a boycott, and outside observers were not allowed to enter the country to monitor the poll.'²⁶

6.2.3 The report further noted that:

'The 462 members of the People's National Assembly, the lower house of Parliament, are directly elected to five-year terms. In the 2017 elections, the ruling FLN and RND won a combined 261 seats. Several other parties each won a far smaller share of seats. An unpublished European Union assessment of the polls, acquired by Algerian newspaper Liberté, noted serious deficiencies in the electoral process, highlighting the inaccessibility of voter rolls and opaque vote-counting procedures. Opposition parties and other observers alleged widespread fraud, and media outlets carried videos recorded by voters that appeared to show ballot-box stuffing and other irregularities.'²⁷

²⁵ Freedom House, '[Freedom in the World 2020](#)' (section A), 4 March 2020

²⁶ Freedom House, '[Freedom in the World 2020](#)', (section A), 4 March 2020

²⁷ Freedom House, '[Freedom in the World 2020](#)' (section A,B), 4 March 2020

6.2.4 Following the December 2019 elections, on 2nd January 2020 a new government was appointed as follows:

- President and Defence Minister: Abdelmadjid Tebboune
- Prime Minister: Abdelaziz Djerad
- Finance Minister: Abderrahmane Raouia
- Energy Minister: Mohamed Arkab
- Interior Minister: Kamel beldjoud
- Foreign Minister: Sabri Boukadoum.²⁸

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6.3 Political parties

6.3.1 The US State Department (USSD) Country Report on Human Rights Practices for 2019 stated that:

‘Pursuant to the Constitution, all parties must have a “national base.” The electoral law adopted by Parliament in 2016 requires parties to have received 4 percent of the vote in the preceding election or to collect 250 signatures in the electoral district in order to appear on the ballot. Opposition parties from across the political spectrum criticized the new law for creating a more complex process for qualifying for the ballot, as well as for establishing an electoral monitoring body whose members would be appointed by the President and Parliament, which is controlled by a coalition headed by the President’s party.’²⁹

6.3.2 The report continued that:

‘The law prohibits parties based on religion, ethnicity, gender, language, or region, but there were various political parties commonly known to be Islamist, notably members of the Green Alliance. According to the Ministry of Interior, in September [2019] there were 70 registered political parties, unchanged from 2018. The Ministry reported 14 parties applied for registration during [2019], and the Ministry approved four requests. Parties must hold a party congress to elect a party leader and confirm membership before the Ministry of Interior will count them as a registered party. The Ministry explained that though it approved new parties, these organisations did not hold their congresses yet.

‘...The law also bans political party ties to non-political associations and regulates party financing and reporting requirements. According to the law, political parties may not receive direct or indirect financial or material support from any foreign parties. The law also stipulates the collection of resources from domestic contributions by the party’s members, donations, and revenue from its activities, in addition to possible state funding, must be reported to the Ministry of Interior.’³⁰

²⁸ France 24, [‘Algeria appoints new government amid political crisis’](#), 2 January 2020

²⁹ USSD, [‘2019 Country Reports on human rights practices: Algeria’](#) (section 3), 11 March 2020

³⁰ USSD, [‘2019 Country Reports on human rights practices: Algeria’](#) (section 3), 11 March 2020

6.3.3 A list [political parties and leaders](#) is available on the CIA World Factbook website.

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Section 7 Updated: 21 September 2020

7. Economy

7.1 Overview

7.1.1 The following table contains some key points:

Currency	Algerian Dinar (DZD) ³¹
Exchange rate	1 GBP = 149.86 DZD (as of 9 April 2020) ³²
GDP per capita (purchasing power parity)	US\$15,200 [GBP 11,900 ³³] (2017 est.) ³⁴
GDP growth	0.80 in 2019 ³⁵ compared to 1.5 percent in 2018 and 1.4 percent in 2017 ³⁶ .

7.1.2 Trading Economics stated that 'The Gross Domestic Product (GDP) in Algeria was worth 169.99 billion US dollars in 2019, according to official data from the World Bank and projections from Trading Economics. The GDP value of Algeria represents 0.14 percent of the world economy.'³⁷

7.1.3 The World Bank reported that Algeria moved from an upper-middle income country in July 2019, to a lower-middle income country in July 2020³⁸.

7.1.4 The CIA Factbook observed:

'Algeria's economy remains dominated by the state, a legacy of the country's socialist post-independence development model. In recent years the Algerian Government has halted the privatization of state-owned industries and imposed restrictions on imports and foreign involvement in its economy, pursuing an explicit import substitution policy.

'Hydrocarbons have long been the backbone of the economy, accounting for roughly 30 percent of GDP, 60 percent of budget revenues, and nearly 95 percent of export earnings. Algeria has the 10th-largest reserves of natural gas in the world - including the 3rd-largest reserves of shale gas - and is the 6th-largest gas exporter. It ranks 16th in proven oil reserves. Hydrocarbon exports enabled Algeria to maintain macroeconomic stability, amass large foreign currency reserves, and maintain low external debt while global oil prices were high. With lower oil prices since 2014, Algeria's foreign

³¹ USSD, '[2019 Country Reports on human rights practices: Algeria](#)' (section 5), 11 March 2020

³² InforEuro, '[European Commission](#)', undated

³³ XE, '[currency converter](#)', undated

³⁴ CIA, '[World Factbook - Algeria](#)' (Economy), updated 4 August 2020

³⁵ Trading Economics, '[Algeria GDP](#)', undated

³⁶ The World Bank, '[Algeria's Economic update](#)', 9 October 2019

³⁷ Trading Economics, '[Algeria GDP](#)', undated

³⁸ World Bank Blogs, '[New World Bank country classifications by income level...](#)', 1 July 2020

exchange reserves have declined by more than half and its oil stabilization fund has decreased from about \$20 billion [GBP 16 billion³⁹] at the end of 2013 to about \$7 billion [GBP 5 billion⁴⁰] in 2017, which is the statutory minimum.

'Declining oil prices have also reduced the government's ability to use state-driven growth to distribute rents and fund generous public subsidies and the government has been under pressure to reduce spending. Over the past three years, the government has enacted incremental increases in some taxes, resulting in modest increases in prices for gasoline, cigarettes, alcohol, and certain imported goods, but it has refrained from reducing subsidies, particularly for education, healthcare, and housing programs.'⁴¹

7.1.5 The World Bank noted that:

'Algeria is one of a handful of countries that have achieved 20% poverty reduction in the past two decades. The Algerian government took significant steps to improve the wellbeing of its people by implementing social policies in line with the United Nations' Sustainable Development Goals. The country's oil boom has enabled the authorities to clear Algeria's external debt, invest in infrastructure projects, and improve the country's Human Development Indicators...

'There are no recent poverty estimates for the country, but official numbers from 2010/2011 show that 5.5 percent of the population was considered poor, with large regional variations and higher concentration in the Sahara and the Steppe regions. These estimates are based on poverty lines of less than US\$3.6/day [GBP 2.9⁴²] which is far below the US\$5.5 [GBP4.4⁴³] poverty line associated with upper middle-income countries.'⁴⁴

7.1.6 Algeria is ranked 82 out of 189 countries in the [2019 Human Development Index Rating](#) produced by the United Nations.

7.1.7 For further information on the economy see:

- [Encyclopaedia Britannica](#).
- [United Nations Development Programme - Human Development Indicators](#).
- CIA – [The World Factbook Algeria](#)
- Bertelsman Stiftung's Transformation Index – [Algeria Country Report 2020](#)

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³⁹ XE, '[currency converter](#)', undated

⁴⁰ XE, '[currency converter](#)', undated

⁴¹ CIA, '[World Factbook - Algeria](#)' (Economy), updated 4 August 2020

⁴² XE, '[currency converter](#)', undated

⁴³ XE, '[currency converter](#)', undated

⁴⁴ The World Bank, '[The World Bank in Algeria](#)' (Overview), 1 October 2019

7.2 Housing

7.2.1 The Centre for Affordable Housing Finance in Africa, 'an independent think tank in South Africa'⁴⁵ reported in November 2019:

'While the supply of housing seems sufficient for high-income households and expatriate buyers, affordable housing is not yet within the reach of low-income Algerians. In fact, excess demand keeps house prices at a very high level. The housing sector still faces a number of challenges. According to a study on the price evolution in the real estate sector from 2011-2015 released by LKeria.com, an Algerian real estate expert, there is a housing deficit of one million while the number of vacant dwellings is estimated at two million.

'The State remains the main provider of housing in the property market alongside private developers... The involvement of private property developers remains limited, since the government is the main landowner. Most of the dwellings come from state housing programmes, although they are sometimes entrusted to private developers or companies.'⁴⁶

7.2.2 Oxford Business Group, a research publishing firm which 'publishes authoritative reports and online economic briefings'⁴⁷ stated:

'The government offers a state subsidy scheme to help lower-income households afford property. The state-subsidised housing programme is being carried out through five separate schemes. Four of the schemes offer housing of varying size and quality depending on the household's income. The social housing programme provides rental housing for households earning less than 1.5 times the monthly minimum wage of AD16,000 (€147.20). Rent ranges from €11–21 a month. The programme is a rent-to-own formula for households earning between AD24,000-108,000 (€221-994), and with limited down-payment capacity. Buyers pay rent and charges to the state until they pay off their reduced share of the price. The Assisted Housing Programme supports home ownership for households earning up to six times the minimum wage. It provides an upfront grant of either €4460 or €7760 to assist with down-payments and subsidised loan finance with interest rates between 1-3%. Meanwhile, the Private Promotional Housing programme is available to households with monthly earnings of AD100,000-200,000 (€920-1840) with three classes of housing at fixed prices of between AD9m (€82,800) and AD12m (€110,400) in a lease-to-own arrangement, with a 10% payment required before entry. There is also a Rural Housing Programme for rural areas, where an eligible household receives a subsidy of €81 for renovation or new home construction.

'For low and middle-income households, the purchase process is slow and waiting lists are long, while down payments can be a challenge. The state offers a middle income housing programme, but between AD700,000 and AD1m (€6440-9200) is required upfront, which is a relatively high amount for the target groups. In 2014, the price-to-income ratio in Algiers rose to 26.1

⁴⁵ CAHF, '[About CAHF](#)', undated

⁴⁶ CAHF, '[Housing Finance in Algeria](#)' (Overview), 28 November 2019

⁴⁷ Oxford Business Group, '[Our History](#)', undated

times the average income, according to CAHFA, making it extremely difficult for many people to access housing on the private market. Nearly 70% of Algerians still earn less than €749 per month, which puts the price of private sector housing beyond the means of many households.⁴⁸

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7.3 Employment

7.3.1 Trading Economies, which provides economic information for 196 countries⁴⁹, stated that ‘employment in industry (% of total employment) in Algeria was reported at 30.73 % in 2019, according to the World Bank collection of development indicators, compiled from officially recognized sources.’⁵⁰

7.3.2 The same source also noted that ‘Unemployment Rate in Algeria decreased to 11.4 percent in the second quarter of 2019 from 11.7 percent in the third quarter of 2018.’⁵¹

7.3.3 The USSD report for 2019 stated:

‘The law prohibits discrimination with respect to employment, salary, and work environment based on age, gender, social and marital status, family links, political conviction, disability, national origin, and affiliation with a union...

‘Few businesses abided by the law requiring that they reserve 1 percent of jobs for persons with disabilities. NGOs reported that the government did not enforce payment of fines for failing to abide by the law. As of September the Ministry of Labor audited 160,218 organizations and found that 2,389 companies did not respect the 1-percent quota. The government gave 89 organizations formal notices to abide by the law. The ministry has not confirmed receipt of fine payment.

‘The law does not explicitly prohibit discrimination with respect to employment based on sexual orientation, HIV-positive status, or religion. The government did not adequately enforce the law, since discrimination reportedly existed, specifically against migrant workers in the informal economy who lacked a legal means to address unfair working conditions.

‘Men held a large percentage of positions of authority in government and the private sector...’⁵²

7.3.4 For further information on employment see:

- CIA – [The World Factbook Algeria](#)

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⁴⁸ Oxford Business Group, ‘[Government efforts seek to address Algeria's public housing...](#)’, undated

⁴⁹ Trading Economies, ‘[About us](#)’, undated

⁵⁰ Trading Economies, ‘[Employment in Industry \(% of total employment\)](#)’, undated

⁵¹ Trading Economies, ‘[Algeria unemployment rate](#)’, undated

⁵² USSD, ‘[2019 Country Reports on human rights practices: Algeria](#)’ (section 7d), 11 March 2020

8. Media and telecommunications

8.1.1 According to BBC News in December 2019: 'Algeria has a lively private press but the state broadcaster avoids criticism of the government. Recent legislation allows several privately-owned TV stations to operate from Algerian soil, but none of them are opposition-leaning.'⁵³

8.1.2 Key media/telecommunications points:

International dialing code:	+213 ⁵⁴
Internet domain:	.dz (stands for الجزائر or, in the Latin alphabet, al-Jazā'ir, pronounced as Al Dzayer) ⁵⁵
Broadcast media:	<p>Etablissement Public de Television (EPTV) - state-run</p> <p>Echourouk TV - private, based in Algiers, via satellite</p> <p>Ennahar TV - private, based in Algiers, via satellite</p> <p>EI Djazairia TV - private, via satellite</p> <p>Djair TV - private, via satellite</p> <p>BRTV - Berber, via satellite from France⁵⁶</p>
News agencies	<p>Algerian Press Service (APS) - state-run agency</p> <p>Algerie Focus - news site, in French</p> <p>Tout Sur l'Algerie - news site, in French</p> <p>Algeria Channel - news aggregator, in Arabic</p> <p>Tamurt - Berber news site⁵⁷</p>
Newspapers	<p>EI Khabar - (The News) private, Arabic daily</p> <p>Echourouk - (The Sunrise) private, Arabic daily; website has English-language pages</p> <p>Le Quotidien d'Oran - private, French-language daily</p> <p>EI Moudjahid - (The Freedom Fighter) state-run, French-language daily; website has English-language pages</p> <p>Ech Chaab - (The People) state-run, Arabic daily</p> <p>EI Watan - (The Homeland) private, French language daily</p>

⁵³ BBC News, '[Algeria Country Profile](#)' (Media), 23 December 2019

⁵⁴ Countrycode.org, '[Algeria](#)', undated

⁵⁵ WorldStandards.eu, '[internet country domains list](#)', 13 May 2020

⁵⁶ BBC News, '[Algeria Profile](#)' (Media), 2 May 2017

⁵⁷ BBC News, '[Algeria Profile](#)' (Media), 2 May 2017

	<p>Le Soir d'Algerie - private, French-language daily</p> <p>Liberte - private, French-language</p> <p>La Tribune - private, French-language</p> <p>Algerian Press Portal - press directory⁵⁸</p>
Radio	Radio Algerienne - state-run, operates Arabic, Berber and French networks and local stations ⁵⁹

- 8.1.3 The Encyclopaedia Britannica stated that ‘Despite intensive investment in Algeria’s telecommunications infrastructure, telephone, mobile telephone, and Internet access is still limited. Few Algerians can afford the luxury of a home computer, and cable and telephone access has limited the number of Internet subscribers. Consequently, cybercafes are popular among those seeking Internet access.’⁶⁰
- 8.1.4 The World Bank indicated that in 2018, 49% of the population used the internet⁶¹.
- 8.1.5 For more information see [Media and the internet](#).

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9. Citizenship and nationality

9.1 Citizenship rights

- 9.1.1 The United Nations stated its Annual Report of the United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights and reports of the office of the High Commissioner and the secretary-general in 2009:

‘The Government of Algeria stated that Algerian legislation contains most of the relevant provisions of international treaties concerning the right to a nationality. Article 30 of the Constitution of Algeria regulates issues related to Algerian citizenship...

‘The Government indicated that Algerian citizenship is obtained at birth if the mother is an Algerian citizen. Children born in Algeria from unknown parents are also considered as Algerian citizens.

‘Article 18 of the Law on Nationality provides that dual nationality is not recognized by Algerian legislation. Algerian citizens who acquire a foreign nationality lose their Algerian citizenship. According to articles 20 and 21 of the Law on Nationality, children are not affected by the loss of Algerian citizenship of their parents. The Government reported that article 19 of the Law on Nationality, which established that persons lost their Algerian citizenship if they worked for a foreign country or for an international organization to which Algeria is not a member, was abrogated.

⁵⁸ BBC News, [‘Algeria Profile’](#) (Media), 2 May 2017

⁵⁹ BBC News, [‘Algeria Profile’](#) (Media), 2 May 2017

⁶⁰ Encyclopaedia Britannica, [‘Algeria’](#) (Transportation and Telecommunications), undated

⁶¹ The World Bank, [‘Individuals using the internet \(% of population\)’](#) (Algeria), undated

'The Law on Nationality establishes the conditions for the loss of Algerian citizenship, including situations of persons who are accused of a crime affecting public order and persons who are accused in Algeria or abroad of a crime against Algerian interests and is imprisoned for more than five years. Naturalized Algerian citizens may be deprived of their Algerian citizenship if it was obtained through illegal means or fraud. Persons who have been deprived of their Algerian citizenship have the right to judicial remedy within 18 months of the decision to deprive them of their citizenship.'⁶²

9.1.2 No other sources indicate that there have been any changes made to Article 30 of the Constitution of Algeria related to Algerian citizenship.

9.1.3 According to multiplecitizenship.com, '... Citizenship is based upon the Code of Algerian Nationality, dated December 15, 1978... Birth within the territory of Algeria does not automatically confer citizenship. The exception is a child born to unknown or stateless parents.'⁶³

9.1.4 In regards to citizenship 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.

'... 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.'⁶⁴

9.1.5 See the original [Algeria Nationality Code \(2005\)](#) which is in Arabic and French.

9.1.6 The USSD Country Report of 2019 noted that 'the mother or father may transmit citizenship and nationality [to a child]. By law, children born to a Muslim father are Muslim, regardless of the mother's religion. The law does not differentiate between girls and boys in registration of birth.'⁶⁵

⁶² UN, '[Annual Report of the United Nations High Commissioner for human rights...](#)', 26 January 2009

⁶³ Dual and Multiple Citizenship, '[Algeria](#)', undated

⁶⁴ Dual and Multiple Citizenship, '[Algeria](#)', undated

⁶⁵ USSD, '[2019 Country Reports on human rights practices: Algeria](#)' (section 6), 11 March 2020

9.1.7 The Government of Canada stated on its website that ‘Children born to Algerian fathers automatically acquire Algerian citizenship at birth, regardless of where they were born. Even if the child is listed on the mother’s foreign passport, Algerian authorities consider the child an Algerian citizen if the father is Algerian.’⁶⁶

9.1.8 The following are authoritative sources to consult for further information on citizenship laws in Africa, including Algeria:

- African union, African Commission on Human and Peoples’ Rights, The Right to Nationality in Africa, May 2014, <https://www.refworld.org/pdfid/54cb3c8f4.pdf>
- Manby, B. (Open Society Foundations), Citizenship Law in Africa, A Comparative Study, January 2016, <https://www.opensocietyfoundations.org/publications/citizenship-law-africa>

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10. Corruption

10.1.1 Transparency International ranked Algeria 106 out of 180 countries in its Corruption Perceptions Index 2019 (a low ranking reflecting higher levels of corruption)⁶⁷.

10.1.2 The USSD noted in its report for 2019 that ‘The law provides for criminal penalties of two to 10 years in prison for official corruption, but the government did not fully implement the law. Corruption remained a problem, and officials sometimes engaged in corrupt practices with impunity...Corruption throughout the government stemmed largely from a lack of transparent oversight.’⁶⁸

10.1.3 Similarly, Freedom House stated: ‘Anticorruption laws, a lack of government transparency, low levels of judicial independence, and bloated bureaucracies contribute to widespread corruption at all levels. Moreover, anticorruption investigations are often used to settle scores between factions within the regime.’⁶⁹

10.1.4 For further information, see Country Policy and Information Note [Algeria – Actors of protection](#).

10.1.5 For further information, also see:

- Bertelsman Stiftung’s Transformation Index – [Algeria Country Report 2020](#)
- [USSD human rights report for 2019](#) (section 4)
- [FH report for 2019](#) (section c)

⁶⁶ Government of Canada, ‘[Algeria](#)’, updated 15 July 2020

⁶⁷ Transparency International, ‘[Algeria: Corruption Perception Index 2019](#)’, January 2020

⁶⁸ USSD, ‘[2019 Country Reports on human rights practices: Algeria](#)’ (section 4), 11 March 2020

⁶⁹ Freedom House, ‘[Freedom in the World 2020 - Algeria](#)’ (section C), 4 March 2020

- The Washington Institute, [Fighting Corruption in Algeria: Turning Words into Action](#), 12 December 2018.

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11. Official documents

- 11.1.1 The USSD 'Algeria Reciprocity Schedule' provides background information to the various types of official documentation and where these are obtained⁷⁰.
- 11.1.2 The Immigration and Refugee Board of Canada (IRB) provides information on passports in its 2019 response - [Algeria: Requirements and procedures to obtain passports and national identity cards, both from within and outside the country \(2017-July 2019\)](#)

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Section 12 Updated: 21 September 2020

12. Healthcare

12.1 Provision of services

- 12.1.1 The Report of the Special Rapporteur on the right of everyone to the enjoyment of the highest attainable standard of physical and mental health, on his visit to Algeria, stated in April 2017:

'The Ministry of Health, Population and Hospital Reform manages the hospitals and the public health sector. There are five health regions across the country, with five regional health councils, five regional health observatories and 48 health and population directorates (one in each wilaya). The country is divided into 185 health districts.[...]

'The health-care system has posted impressive results in making care available and accessible, with strengthened infrastructure, equipment and workforce. The population has financial coverage for most of the basic health services, which has contributed to a significant improvement in health indicators over the past decades.

'Public investment in the national health system is among the highest in the region. In 2014, per capita health expenditure amounted to US\$ 932 [GBP 745⁷¹]; total health expenditure was 7.2 percent of gross domestic product compared to 5.6 percent in Egypt, 5.9 percent in Morocco and 7.0 percent in Tunisia. General public expenditure on health in 2014 was 9.9 percent of total public expenditure. Out-of-pocket expenditure represented about 26.5 percent of total expenditure on health in 2014.'⁷²

- 12.1.2 The same source stated:

'In 2007, Algeria launched the reform of its health system with the aim of improving the quality of services, ensuring efficiency of health-care

⁷⁰ USSD, '[Algeria Reciprocity Schedule](#)', undated

⁷¹ XE, [currency converter](#), undated

⁷² UN Human Rights Council, '[Report of the Special Rapporteur...](#)' (paras 19-21), 20 April 2017

establishments and the national health system in general, and minimizing disparities and inequalities among regions.

'The health-care system was reorganized to bring health-care structures closer to the people: 195 public hospitals, 271 community health centres and 26 new mother-and-child hospitals were established. Specialized hospitals (établissements hospitaliers spécialisés) have independent status and funding and are dedicated to providing care to the target population.'⁷³

12.1.3 The US Embassy stated on its website that 'As of July 25 [2020] Algeria confirmed 26,764 cases of COVID-19 and 1,146 COVID-19 related deaths in its borders...As of March 18, 2020, Algerian authorities announced that they are quarantining known cases of confirmed COVID-19 within its borders.'⁷⁴

12.1.4 More detailed information about the healthcare system is available in

- [Report of the Special Rapporteur on the right of everyone to the enjoyment of the highest attainable standard of physical and mental health on his visit to Algeria](#), 20 April 2017
- World Health Organisation, [Country Profile: Algeria](#).

12.1.5 For a list of Algerian hospitals and clinics, see the [US Embassy in Algeria – medical assistance](#).

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12.2 Mental health

12.2.1 The UN Special Rapporteur on Physical and Mental Health noted:

'Mental health conditions account for 6 percent of the causes of disabilities in Algeria. For the population as a whole, the incidence of mental health conditions has been estimated at 0.5 per cent for both sexes... An epidemiological study carried out by the Ministry of Health in 2004 showed that chronic mental disorders were diagnosed in 0.7 percent to 1.9 percent of subjects in different age groups. Those below 40 years of age and women were particularly affected.

'In 2011, public expenditure on mental health accounted for 7.3 percent of the total health budget, of which expenditure on inpatient hospitalization represented 81.44 percent of the total mental health budget. Algeria has an urgent need for qualified human resources in the mental health sector. For a number of years now, different programmes have been set up to strengthen the training of mental health professionals (psychiatrists, nurses, psychologists) and increase the number of mental-health positions.'⁷⁵

12.2.2 The source further stated:

'The updated Mental Health Policy 2016-2020 covers prevention, treatment and rehabilitation with an intersectoral and a life course approach, in line with WHO Mental Health Action Plan (2013-2020) [...] Previous mental health policies reportedly faced challenges in their implementation[...]

⁷³ UN Human Rights Council, '[Report of the Special Rapporteur...](#)' (paras 23-24), 20 April 2017

⁷⁴ US Embassy, '[Algeria Specific Information](#)', 25 July 2020

⁷⁵ UN Human Rights Council, '[Report of the Special Rapporteur...](#)' (paras 115-116), 20 April 2017

'The mental health sector in Algeria is excessively reliant on psychiatric hospitals and inpatient care. Instead of building new psychiatric hospitals, each general hospital should have an inpatient psychiatric unit to make mental health care more accessible to all and avoid stigmatization. Although the availability of mental health services in primary-care centres has increased in recent years, with 129 centres providing such services, additional steps should be taken to reinforce outpatient services within general hospitals and reduce dependency on hospital care. There should be a shift in mental health services and public investments in the community, with initiatives grounded in human rights and modern principles of mental health policy and based on quality services and the empowerment of users.'⁷⁶

12.2.3 For an overview of the Mental Healthcare, see:

- [WHO, Mental Health Atlas – 2017, country profiles](#)
- [Psychiatric services in Algeria, February 2017, by Zoubir Benmebarek](#)

⁷⁶ UN Human Rights Council, '[Report of the Special Rapporteur...](#)' (paras 119, 122), 20 April 2017

Key issues relevant to protection claims

The issues below are not meant to be exhaustive; rather the key topics which may be relevant to protection claims.

Section 13 Updated: 21 September 2020

13. Civil society groups

13.1 Non government groups

13.1.1 The International Centre for Not-for-Profit Law stated that there are 1,027 National Associations and 92,627 Local Associations⁷⁷.

13.1.2 For further information on non government groups see:

- The International Centre for Not-for-Profit Law – [Algeria](#)
- Bertelsman Stiftung’s Transformation Index – [Algeria Country Report 2020](#)

13.1.3 Freedom House reported:

‘The 2012 law on associations effectively restricts the formation, funding, and activities of nongovernmental organizations (NGOs). Permits and receipts of application submission are required to establish and operate NGOs, but organizations often face considerable delays and bureaucratic obstacles when attempting to obtain such documents, leaving them in a legally precarious position.

‘NGOs must notify the government of staffing changes and submit detailed reports on their funding; those that accept foreign funding without government approval risk fines or imprisonment. In early 2019, NGOs demanded the repeal of the law on associations.’⁷⁸

13.1.4 The USSD country report for 2019 noted:

‘A variety of domestic human rights groups operated with varying degrees of government restriction and co-operation. The law requires all civil associations to apply for operating permission, and at year’s end several major civil associations remained unrecognized but tolerated.

‘Amnesty International maintained an office and actively reported on human rights issues, but it did not receive official authorisation to operate from the Ministry of Interior. Amnesty International has received authorisation to open a bank account, although the organisation awaits final documentation from the government to open the account.

‘Although the government did not renew the accreditation of LADDH [League for the Defense of Human Rights], the organisation had members countrywide, received independent funding, and was one of the most active independent human rights groups. The Algerian League for Human Rights, a

⁷⁷ International Centre for Not-for-Profit Law, ‘[Civic Freedom monitor...](#)’ (At a glance), 15 June 2020

⁷⁸ Freedom House, ‘[Freedom in the World 2020](#)’ (section E2), 4 March 2020

separate but licensed organisation based in Constantine, had members throughout the country monitoring individual cases.⁷⁹

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13.2 National human rights commission

13.2.1 The USSD country report for 2019 noted:

‘In 2016 the government replaced the National Consultative Commission for Promotion and Protection of Human Rights with the National Human Rights Council (CNDH). The CNDH has budget autonomy and the constitutional responsibility to investigate alleged human rights abuses, officially comment on laws proposed by the government, and publish an Annual Report. The CNDH completed its first annual report in November [2019] and presented it to then Interim President Abdelkader Bensalah but has not published the report to the public yet. The previous entity had presented its first draft report to President Bouteflika, but the report had not been made public by year’s end. During [2019], the CNDH organised seminars and workshops on topics such as penitentiary reform and trafficking in persons. The CNDH reports receiving 687 complaints of human rights abuses during the year, of which it has investigated 638 as of September. A CNDH representative said the organisation viewed the most serious human rights concerns as limits on socioeconomic rights, as well as limits on free speech.’⁸⁰

13.2.2 The UN Human Rights Committee (UNHRC) noted, in its concluding observations on the fourth periodic report of Algeria, dated 17 August 2018, that it was concerned at allegations that members of the National Human Rights Council were not independent⁸¹.

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Section 14 Updated: 21 September 2020

14. Children

14.1 Child abuse

14.1.1 The USSD 2019 report noted:

‘Child abuse was illegal but was a serious continued problem. The government devoted increasing resources and attention to it. A national committee is responsible for monitoring and publishing an annual report on the rights of children. The government supported the Qatari NGO Network for the Defence of Children’s Rights.

‘Laws prohibiting parental abduction do not penalize mothers and fathers differently and the punishment for convicted kidnappers includes the death penalty.

‘The legal minimum age of marriage is 19 for both men and women, but minors may marry with parental consent, regardless of gender. The law forbids legal guardians from forcing minors under their care to marry against

⁷⁹ USSD, ‘[2019 Country Reports on human rights practices: Algeria](#)’ (section 5), 11 March 2020

⁸⁰ USSD, ‘[2019 Country Reports on human rights practices: Algeria](#)’ (section 5), 11 March 2020

⁸¹ UNHRC, ‘[Concluding observations on the fourth periodic report...](#)’ (para 15), 17 August 2018

the minor's will. The Ministry of Religious Affairs required that couples present a government-issued marriage certificate before permitting imams to conduct religious marriage ceremonies.

'The law prohibits solicitation for prostitution and stipulates prison sentences of between 10 and 20 years when the offence is committed against a minor under age 18. By law the age for consensual sex is 16. The law stipulates a prison sentence of between 10 and 20 years for rape when the victim is a minor.

'The law established a national council to address children's issues, gives judges authority to remove children from an abusive home, and allows sexually abused children to provide testimony on video rather than in Court.'⁸²

14.1.2 For more information, see:

- Global Initiative to End All Corporal Punishment of Children, [Corporal Punishment of Children in Algeria](#), January 2020.
- US Department of State, [2019 Trafficking in Persons Report: Algeria](#), 20 June 2019.
- UN Committee on the Rights of the Child, [Concluding observations on the report submitted by Algeria under article 8 \(1\) of the Optional Protocol to the Convention on the Rights of the Child on the involvement of children in armed conflict](#), 22 June 2018

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14.2 Child labour

14.2.1 According to the US Department of Labour, in their 2018 annual report:

'In 2018, Algeria made a moderate advancement in efforts to eliminate the worst forms of child labour. In addition to conducting routine labour inspections, the government conducted a dedicated period of inspections focused solely on child labour and achieved 98 convictions. The National Committee for the Prevention of and Fight Against Trafficking in Persons held six public events to raise awareness on human trafficking and training sessions for law enforcement and judicial personnel. The government also altered policy regarding labour law enforcement, allowing labour inspectors to assess penalties on those who violated labour laws. However, children in Algeria engage in the worst forms of child labour, including in commercial sexual exploitation and forced begging, each sometimes as a result of human trafficking. Children also perform dangerous street work tasks. The government has not sufficiently prohibited the use of children in illicit activities or determined by national law or regulation the types of work that are hazardous for children to perform. Furthermore, the government's number of labour inspectors is not in accordance with the International Labour Organisation's technical advice to ensure that child labour laws are enforced in all geographic areas.'⁸³

⁸² USSD, '[2019 Country Reports on human rights practices: Algeria](#)', (section 6), 11 March 2020

⁸³ US Department of Labour, '[2018 Findings on the worst forms of...](#)', (page 1), 27 September 2019

14.3 Education

14.3.1 The UN Compilation as part of the UPR Review of Algeria reported in February 2017:

‘After a visit in early 2015, the Special Rapporteur on education considered that the realization of the right to education had been remarkable in many respects. School enrolment rates were excellent, education was provided free of charge at all levels and gender parity at all levels had been largely achieved. Furthermore, the infrastructure for providing education was well in place and considerable budgetary resources were allocated to education: it was second only to national defence among national budgetary priorities, accounting for 16 percent of the national budget in 2014.[...] However, Algeria did not have a legal framework for national spending in the field of education. The Special Rapporteur recommended that the government prepare such a legal framework in order to set a minimum percentage of the national budget to be allocated to education. That framework should also include a budget for education quality.[...]

‘The Special Rapporteur noted, however, that Algeria faced a number of challenges, particularly the quality of education. He considered that the general standard of education needed to be raised as a matter of urgency.[...] Additionally, there were high rates of school dropout, grade repetition and classroom overcrowding. Enrolment rates were sometimes lower in certain regions, in rural areas and among the poorest households. Ensuring equal opportunities in access to education for children with disabilities was still a challenge. There was also a perceptible decline in the teaching of Tamazight.[...]’⁸⁴

14.3.2 According to the USSD 2018 annual report:

‘The Algerian public education system is free and open to all children, regardless of ethnicity and nationality. Non-Algerian children must provide documentation of grade level or sit for testing to determine their level. There are no laws or regulations that prevent access to school, although there are reports of isolated cases of migrant children without valid documentation being denied enrolment and reported to authorities. Many children with disabilities do not have the opportunity to access mainstream education because of social stigma, the relatively low number of teachers with specialized training, the lack of a transportation system for children with disabilities, and the limited accessibility of school buildings. In addition, an estimated 300,000 children remain outside formal schooling and 500,000 high school-age children are at risk of dropping out due to pressures stemming from barriers to education. Barriers to education, including those placed on migrant children and children with disabilities, result in absence from school and increased vulnerability to child labour.’⁸⁵

14.3.3 A United Nations report noted:

⁸⁴ UN Human Rights Council, ‘[Report of the Office of...](#)’, 17 February 2017

⁸⁵ US Department of Labor, ‘[2018 Findings on the worst forms of...](#)’ (page 2), 27 September 2019

'The Committee is concerned that the education of children with disabilities falls under the purview of the Minister of National Solidarity, the Family and Women and that segregated education for children with disabilities still exists. It is also concerned that there is no policy on the right of children with disabilities to inclusive education, or strategy to transform specialized settings into inclusive education environments, including revised curricula and training.'⁸⁶

14.3.4 However, the USSD 2019 report stated:

'The Ministry [of National Solidarity, Family, and Women] stated that it worked with the Ministry of Education to integrate children with disabilities into public schools to promote inclusion. The majority of the Ministry's programs for children with disabilities remained in social centres for children with disabilities rather than in formal educational institutions. Advocacy groups reported that children with disabilities rarely attended school past the secondary level. Many schools lacked teachers trained to work with children with disabilities, threatening the viability of efforts to mainstream children with disabilities into public schools.'⁸⁷

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15. Freedom of movement

15.1.1 The USSD 2019 report noted:

'The Constitution provides for freedom of internal movement, foreign travel, emigration and repatriation but the government restricted the exercise of these rights....

'The Constitution provides citizens "the right to freely choose their place of residence and to move throughout the national territory." The government requires that foreign diplomats and private sector personnel have armed security escorts from the government should members of these groups travel outside of Algiers wilaya (province), El-Oued, and Illizi, near hydrocarbon industry installations and the Libyan border, respectively...

'The Constitution states that the right to enter and exit the country is provided to citizens. The law does not permit those under age 18 to travel abroad without a guardian's permission. Married women under 18 may not travel abroad without permission from their husbands, but married women older than 18 may do so. The government did not permit young men eligible for the draft who had not completed their military service to leave the country without special authorisation. The government granted such authorisation to students and persons with special family circumstances.'⁸⁸

15.1.2 Freedom House in its report covering events in 2019 noted 'While most citizens are relatively free to travel domestically and abroad, the authorities closely monitor and limit access to visas for non-Algerians. Men of military

⁸⁶ UN Convention on Rights of..., '[Concluding Observations...](#)', (paragraph 40), 27 June 2019

⁸⁷ USSD, '[2019 Country Reports on human rights practices: Algeria](#)' (section 6), 11 March 2020

⁸⁸ USSD, '[2019 Country Reports on human rights practices: Algeria](#)', (section 2), 11 March 2020

draft age are not allowed to leave the country without official consent. The land border between Algeria and Morocco remains closed....Married women younger than 18 must obtain the permission of their husbands to travel abroad.’⁸⁹

15.1.3 As of 25 July 2020 the US embassy website noted that due to Covid-19:

‘All land borders remain closed and the suspension of non-cargo domestic and international air and maritime travel remains in place. All vehicle travel between the 29 provinces listed below as being impacted by a curfew has been prohibited for one week as of July 10. The governor of Algiers prohibited all public transportation on Fridays and Saturdays until further notice. Public transportation (and depending on the province, private transportation) may be suspended in the other 28 provinces affected by a curfew on Fridays and Saturdays.

‘A curfew is in effect in 29 of Algeria’s 48 provinces, including in Algiers, where the curfew is from 8pm to 5am. The other provinces covered by the curfew are: Boumerdes, Souk Ahras, Tissemsilt, Djelfa, Mascara, Oum El Bouaghi, Batna, Bouira, Relizane, Biskra, Khenchela, M’sila, Chlef, Sidi Bel Abbes, Médéa, Blida, Bordj Bou Arreridj, Tipaza, Ouargla, Bechar, Constantine, Oran, Sétif, Annaba, Bejaia, Adrar, Laghouat, El Oued. Curfews are constantly being reviewed and revised and the curfew may be more restrictive in certain provinces or in certain areas of the provinces above for short periods of time as the health situation develops...

‘Algeria closed all land borders and suspended non-cargo international air and maritime travel as of March 17 and suspended domestic flights as of March 22.’⁹⁰

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Section 16 Updated: 21 September 2020

16. Journalists and media workers

16.1.1 The 2019 USSD report noted, ‘While public debate and criticism of the government were widespread, journalists and activists believed they were limited in their ability to criticize the government publicly on topics crossing unwritten “red lines.”’⁹¹

16.1.2 Freedom House reported in its annual report covering 2019:

‘Authorities use legal mechanisms to harass the media and censor or punish controversial reporting. As a result, journalists and bloggers face brief detentions, short jail terms, suspended sentences, or fines for offenses including defamation and “undermining national unity.” In March 2019 a court freed Merzoug Touati, a blogger who had been arrested in 2017 for conducting an interview with an Israeli Foreign Ministry spokesperson and publishing it online.

⁸⁹ Freedom House, ‘[Freedom in the world 2020](#)’ (section G), 4 March 2020

⁹⁰ US Embassy in Algeria, ‘[Algeria specific information](#)’, 25 July 2020

⁹¹ USSD, ‘[2019 Country Reports on human rights practices: Algeria](#)’ (section 2), 11 March 2020

‘Since the beginning of the Hirak protests, police have intensified arbitrary arrests to intimidate journalists. In February 2019, a dozen journalists were briefly arrested at a sit-in against media censorship. In July, a journalist accused the police of using physical and verbal violence against him during his brief arrest in the port town of Annaba.

‘Foreign correspondents have found themselves expelled from Algeria on several occasions in 2019. In March, Reuters journalist Tarek Amara was expelled after reporting on a protest against former president Bouteflika. In April, Aymeric Vincenot, an Agence France-Presse (AFP) bureau chief, was forced to leave the country after his accreditation was not renewed. In May, a Moroccan journalist was briefly detained and subsequently expelled.’⁹²

16.1.3 Amnesty International stated that in 2019:

‘During the year [2019], at least 10 Algerian journalists covering the Hirak protests were arrested, held for a few hours and interrogated about their work, while four foreign journalists doing the same were arrested and subsequently deported. Ahmed Benchemsi, Middle East communications and advocacy director at Human Rights Watch, was arrested on 9 August while observing a protest in Algiers, held for 10 hours and deported 10 days later.

‘From June onwards, the authorities regularly disrupted access to independent news websites Tout sur l’Algérie and Algérie Part, apparently to censor their reporting on the protests.’⁹³

16.1.4 Reporters without Borders ranked Algeria 146 out of 180 countries in its 2020 World Press Freedom Index⁹⁴.

16.1.5 The report stated ‘An unstable political environment is increasing the threats to the freedom to inform in Algeria. The authorities continue to step up their harassment of the media. Journalists covering the “Hirak” protests that began in February 2019 are often detained for questioning, placed in police custody or even jailed for extended periods. As a result of judicial harassment, the Algerian media struggle to fulfil their role.’⁹⁵

As of July 2020, RSF had not documented any journalists, media assistants or citizen journalists killed but recorded 2 journalists being in prison⁹⁶. In August 2020 RSF reported that Khaled Drareni, Algerian correspondent of the French TV channel TV5 Monde and editor of the Casbah Tribune was sentenced to a three-year prison sentence and a fine following his coverage of Algeria’s Hirak protest movement.⁹⁷

16.1.6 For further information on the treatment of journalists / media workers, see:

- USSD Country Report for [Human Rights Practices 2019](#), Section 2A, March 2020

⁹² Freedom House, ‘[Freedom in the world 2020](#)’ (section D1), 21 April 2020

⁹³ AI, ‘[Human Rights in the Middle East and North Africa...](#)’, 18 February 2020

⁹⁴ Reporters without Borders, ‘[Algeria](#)’, undated

⁹⁵ Reporters without Borders, ‘[Algeria](#)’, undated

⁹⁶ RSF, ‘[Violations of press freedom barometer](#)’ (The figures in 2020), undated

⁹⁷ RSF, ‘[RSF shocked by Algeria correspondent’s three-year jail sentence](#)’, 10 August 2020

- Reporters without Borders, [Algeria](#)

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Section 17 Updated: 21 September 2020

17. Media and the internet

17.1 Freedom of expression

17.1.1 The USSD 2019 report noted:

‘The Constitution provides for freedom of speech and press and independent media outlets regularly criticized and satirized government officials and policies, but the government on some occasions restricted these rights. The government’s actions included harassment of some critics; arbitrary enforcement of vaguely worded laws; informal pressure on publishers, editors, advertisers, and journalists; and control of an estimated 77 percent of the country’s advertising money in newspapers and magazines and 15 percent of billboard revenue and printing capabilities. Some media figures alleged the government used its control over most printing houses and large amounts of public sector advertising preferentially and that the lack of clear regulations over these practices permitted it to exert undue influence on press outlets.

‘...Authorities arrested and detained citizens for expressing views deemed damaging to state officials and institutions, including the use of the Berber flag during protests, and citizens practiced self-restraint in expressing public criticism. The law criminalizing speech about security force conduct during the internal conflict of the 1990s remained in place, although the government said there had never been an arrest or prosecution under the law. A separate law provides for up to three years’ imprisonment for publications that “may harm the national interest” or up to one year for defaming or insulting the president, parliament, army, or state institutions...’⁹⁸

17.1.2 The BBC media profile for Algeria noted: ‘The government exercises broad control over the media. Until 2014, a state monopoly forced private satellite TVs to operate from outside Algeria.’⁹⁹

17.1.3 The Encyclopaedia Britannica stated:

‘Despite pressure from the government and threats and intimidation by Islamic militants, Algeria has one of the most vigorous presses in the Arab world. Daily newspapers are published in both Arabic and French in Algiers, Oran and Constantine. Several weeklies and a host of magazines are also published in the country. The number and range of newspapers increased during the 1990s, despite frequent violent attacks directed against journalists by Islamic extremists. Radiodiffusion Télévision Algérienne operates as a broadcasting institution under the Ministry of Information and Culture. Its three radio channels offer programming in Arabic, Kabyle, and, on its international channel, a mixture of French, English and Spanish. The television network—with two channels—transmits to most of the country.

⁹⁸ USSD, ‘[2019 Country Reports on human rights practices: Algeria](#)’ (section 2), 11 March 2020

⁹⁹ BBC, ‘[Algeria Media Profile](#)’, 2 May 2017

The number of satellite dishes has increased and many Algerians are now able to receive European stations.’¹⁰⁰

17.1.4 The USSD report for 2019 observed:

‘The government monitored certain email and social media sites.

‘Internet users regularly exercised their right to free expression and association online, including through online forums, social media, and email. Activists reported that some postings on social media could result in arrest and questioning; observers widely understood that the intelligence services closely monitored the activities of political and human rights activists on social media sites, including Facebook.’¹⁰¹

17.1.5 The [BBC profile](#) lists print publications, as well as TV and radio stations.

17.1.6 For further information on state’s harassment and censorship, see:

- RSF, [20/2020 List of press freedom’s digital predators](#)

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Section 18 Updated: 21 September 2020

18. Political opposition

18.1 Parties and protest movements

18.1.1 The USSD report for 2019 noted: ‘International and local observers alleged that authorities occasionally used antiterrorism laws and restrictive laws on freedom of expression and public assembly to detain political activists and outspoken critics of the government.’¹⁰²

18.1.2 The report further stated:

‘The Ministry of Interior must approve political parties before they may operate legally.

‘The government maintained undue media influence and opposition political parties claimed they did not have access to public television and radio. Sometimes security forces dispersed political opposition rallies and interfered with the right to organise. During popular protests against the government, security forces sometimes dispersed demonstrations when protesters came near to government buildings.’¹⁰³

18.1.3 In addition, the report stated ‘Membership in the Islamic Salvation Front, a political party banned since 1992, remained illegal.’¹⁰⁴

18.1.4 Amnesty International reported:

‘In February [2019], the protest movement known as Hirak (“movement” in Arabic) started, with millions of Algerians marching in overwhelmingly peaceful protests in cities across the country, calling for the “removal of

¹⁰⁰ Encyclopaedia Britannica, ‘[Algeria](#)’, (Media and Publishing), undated

¹⁰¹ USSD, ‘[2019 Country Reports on human rights practices: Algeria](#)’ (section 2), 11 March 2020

¹⁰² USSD, ‘[2019 Country Reports on human rights practices: Algeria](#)’ (section 1e), 11 March 2020

¹⁰³ USSD, ‘[2019 Country Reports on human rights practices: Algeria](#)’, (section 3), 11 March 2020

¹⁰⁴ USSD, ‘[2019 Country Reports on human rights practices: Algeria](#)’, (section 3), 11 March 2020

everyone” linked to the ruling power. On 2 April, Abdelaziz Bouteflika resigned as president after 20 years in power...

‘Despite strong opposition from the protest movement, in July interim President Abdelkader Bensalah named a six-member panel to oversee a national dialogue and in September announced presidential elections, which took place on 12 December.’¹⁰⁵

18.1.5 Human Rights Watch explained in a 2019 article:

‘A protest movement known as the Hirak in Arabic initially came together in February to oppose President Abdelaziz Bouteflika’s plan to seek a fifth term, and has maintained its momentum with huge demonstrations every Friday calling for the ouster of the existing government and a more pluralistic and inclusive framework to prepare for free elections. Authorities initially tolerated the protests, but beginning in June started arresting groups of protesters, including at least 40 for brandishing the Amazigh flag, a symbol of that ethnic group that, until then, had been tolerated.

‘The authorities prosecuted some prominent Hirak figures such as Lakhdar Bouregga, a veteran of Algeria’s independence war, starting in June, and have intensified the crackdown since September. The authorities have filed charges against the movement’s leaders such as threatening state security, national unity, and territorial integrity, calling for an illegal gathering, and undermining army morale. At least 13 of these leaders are in pretrial detention while others are free pending trial.’¹⁰⁶

18.1.6 Freedom House noted:

‘Opposition parties play a marginal role in the national legislature, and their activities are regularly curtailed by the government. Election boycotts by opposition groups are not uncommon.

‘Since the beginning of the Hirak in February 2019, the government has curtailed the ability of opposition parties to assemble and campaign. In August, the authorities prevented three opposition parties, the Socialist Forces Front, the RCD, and the Labour Party, from holding a meeting inaugurating their planned electoral alliance.

‘Parties dominated by the ethnic Amazigh (Berber) community, like the RCD and the Socialist Forces Front (FFS), are allowed to operate, but their activities are curtailed by the military. These parties control a handful of municipalities, mainly concentrated in the northern region of Kabylie. However, ethnic Berbers have been targeted by the authorities for engaging in political activity. In November 2019, 19 Amazigh activists were handed six-month prison sentences for carrying Amazigh flags during demonstrations, having been accused of endangering Algeria’s territorial integrity. In a separate trial earlier that month, more than 20 activists were fined and sentenced to a year in prison for “threatening national unity.”’¹⁰⁷

18.1.7 The International Center for not-for-profit Law reported:

¹⁰⁵ AI, ‘[Human Rights in the Middle East and North Africa...](#)’, 18 February 2020

¹⁰⁶ HRW, ‘[Algeria: escalating repression of protesters](#)’, 14 November 2019

¹⁰⁷ Freedom House, ‘[Freedom in the World 2020](#)’ (section A,B), 4 March 2020

‘On April 1 2020, purportedly to combat the spread of covid-19 in prisons, President Abdelmadjid Tebboune pardoned 5,037 prisoners who had a year or less of their sentence remaining. However, those pardoned did not include individuals detained for their participation in the Hirak protest movement. Nearly 50 political prisoners remain in prison, and more members of civil society were targeted following the pardon decision...

‘The continued bi-weekly protests were met by an increased crackdown by the military, under the leadership of Army-chief Ahmed Gaid Salah. Civil society space was increasingly restricted by the arrests of protesters, bloggers, political opponents and other peaceful activists. The pre-election period was marked by several trials against civil society members on one hand and, on the other hand, trials of members of the former government of Bouteflika.’¹⁰⁸

18.1.10 For further information, see:

- USSD Country Report for [Human Rights Practices 2019](#), Section 2A and 2B, March 2020.
- Freedom House – [Freedom in the World 2020 – Algeria](#)
- Bertelsman Stiftung’s Transformation Index – [Algeria Country Report 2020](#)
- [International Crisis Group, Algeria: Bringing Hirak in from the Cold, 27 July 2020](#)

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18.2 Armed groups

18.2.1 The USSD terrorism report for 2019 noted:

‘Algeria continued its significant efforts to prevent terrorist activity within its borders and remains a difficult operating environment for terrorist groups. Algerian armed forces and internal security forces published figures that showed continued pressure on terrorist groups. In 2019, the Algerian government increased the number of arrests of terrorists or terrorist supporters compared with the previous year and undertook a comparable number of operations to destroy arms and terrorist hideouts. Some analysts assessed that Algeria’s steady drumbeat of sweeping operations substantially diminished the capacities of terrorist groups to operate within Algeria. AQIM [Al Qaeda in the Islamic Maghreb], AQIM-allied groups, and ISIS’s Algeria branch – including elements of the local group known as Jund al-Khilafah in Algeria (or Soldiers of the Caliphate in Algeria) – remained in the country but were under considerable pressure by Algerian security authorities. These groups aspired to impose their interpretations of Islamic law in the region and to attack Algerian security services, local government targets, and Western commercial interests. Terrorist activity in Libya, Mali, Niger, and Tunisia – as well as human, weapons, and narcotics trafficking – contributed to the overall threat, particularly in border regions.

¹⁰⁸ ICNL, [‘Algeria – Coronavirus response’](#), 15 June 2020

‘Algeria’s domestic efforts to defeat ISIS through counter-messaging and their capacity-building programs with neighboring states indirectly contribute to the Global Defeat-ISIS Coalition mission. Algeria is a member of the GCTF and co-chaired the GCTF’s West Africa Region Working Group.’¹⁰⁹

- 18.2.2 The same report noted: ‘Neither AQIM nor ISIS conducted any attacks in Algeria in 2019, although media reported that, on January 16 [2019], an unidentified terrorist group killed a lone shepherd in Tarek Ibn Ziad, a mountainous area about two-and-a-half hours southwest of Algiers. Several clashes, however, took place between terrorists and security forces during sweeping operations in which AQIM and ISIS primarily used IEDs and small arms.’¹¹⁰
- 18.2.3 The UN Security Council reported in January 2020 that ‘While its activity on the Algerian side of the border remains constrained, AQIM [Al Qaeda in the Islamic Maghreb], sought to exploit political developments by announcing support for demonstrations and attacking security forces in Tipaza Province in November 2019. ISIL activity in Algeria was also revived after a two-year hiatus when Jund al-Khilafah in Algeria (JAK-A) (QDe.151) launched an attack in November against security forces in Tamanrasset, near the border with Mali and the Niger.’¹¹¹

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Section 19 Updated: 21 September 2020

19. Prison conditions

- 19.1.1 The UN Human Rights Committee noted in August 2018 that it:

‘...finds it regrettable that the use of confessions obtained under torture is not expressly prohibited by law and is left to the discretion of the judges... Taking note of the delegation’s assertion that the use of torture by law enforcement personnel would henceforth be a residual phenomenon, the Committee is all the same concerned by claims that torture and ill-treatment continue to be used in counter-terrorism operations, in particular by personnel of the Department of Surveillance and Security. Those officers, who enjoy the prerogatives of the criminal investigation police, do not, in practice, come under the supervision of the State Prosecutor. The Committee is also concerned that so few of the officers who committed acts of torture and ill-treatment have been prosecuted and punished and that article 45 of Ordinance No. 06-01 of 27 February 2006, although it applies to a period in the past, in fact fosters to this day a climate of impunity for law enforcement personnel.’¹¹²

- 19.1.2 The same source further highlighted:

‘While noting the delegation’s assertion that there are no secret detention sites in the territory of the State party, the Committee is concerned by reports documenting the existence of such centres. It is also concerned by

¹⁰⁹ USSD, [‘Country reports on Terrorism 2019: Algeria’](#), 24 June 2020

¹¹⁰ USSD, [‘Country reports on Terrorism 2019: Algeria’](#), 24 June 2020

¹¹¹ UN Security Council, [‘Letter dated 20 January 2020...’](#) (para. 29), 20 January 2020

¹¹² UN Human Rights Committee, [‘Concluding observations...’](#) (para. 33), 17 August 2018

cases of arbitrary detention that seem not to have been investigated or prosecuted...The Committee is concerned as well by (a) reports that article 51 bis of the Criminal Code is being invoked systematically, even for prisoners being held on charges of crimes other than terrorism; (b) the fact that prisoners may only meet with their counsel in the presence of a criminal investigation police officer; and (c) the high percentage of prisoners who are being held in pretrial detention (arts. 7 and 9).¹¹³

19.1.3 The USSD human rights report for 2019 noted: ‘There were no significant reports regarding prison or detention center conditions that raised human rights concerns. The penal code prohibits the detention of suspects in any facilities not designated for that purpose and declared to the local prosecutor, who has the right to visit such facilities at any time.’¹¹⁴

19.1.4 For further information see

- [World Prison Brief - Algeria](#)
- USSD Country Report for [Human Rights Practices 2019](#), Section 2C, March 2020

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Section 20 Updated: 21 September 2020

20. Religious groups

20.1.1 The USSD International Religious Freedom report, covering events in 2019, noted ‘The constitution provides for freedom of conscience and worship. The constitution declares Islam to be the state religion and prohibits state institutions from behaving in a manner incompatible with Islam. The law grants all individuals the right to practice their religion if they respect public order and regulations. Offending or insulting any religion is a criminal offense. Proselytizing Muslims by non-Muslims is a crime.’¹¹⁵

20.1.2 Freedom House in its report covering events in 2019 stated:

‘Algeria’s population is overwhelmingly Sunni Muslim. Members of religious minorities, including Christians and members of the Amazigh community, suffer from state persecution and interference. Proselytizing by non-Muslims is illegal. Authorities have cracked down on the small Ahmadi minority, claiming that its members denigrate Islam, threaten national security, and violate laws on associations. Religious communities may only gather to worship at state-approved locations.’¹¹⁶

20.1.3 The United States Commission on International Freedom reported:

‘In 2019, Algeria escalated its ongoing repression of religious minorities. The government systematically cracked down on the Evangelical Protestant community in particular through a string of church closures and raids, including two of the largest Protestant churches in the country. The current crackdown mirrors the scale of past waves of church closures in 2008 and

¹¹³ UN Human Rights Committee, ‘[Concluding observations...](#)’ (para. 35), 17 August 2018

¹¹⁴ USSD, ‘[2019 Country Reports on human rights practices: Algeria](#)’ (section C), 11 March 2020

¹¹⁵ USSD, ‘[2019 Country Reports on human rights practices: Algeria](#)’ (exec. summary), 11 March 2020

¹¹⁶ Freedom House, ‘[Freedom in the World 2020](#)’, 4 March 2020

2011, and has been ongoing since November 2017 and worsened in 2019. Officials have made arbitrary demands that churches cease all religious activities, accusing them of violating safety regulations, operating illegally, or evangelizing, or giving them other justifications for sealing off their places of worship.

‘The Algerian government forcibly closed three of the country’s largest Protestant churches in October 2019. The Association of Protestant Churches of Algeria (L’Eglise Protestant d’Algerie, or EPA) has not been permitted to register officially since the Law on Associations came into effect in 2012 and required churches to reapply for official authorization. The EPA currently represents 45 churches in Algeria, many of which have been targeted for closure over the past two years—in particular in the Tizi Ouzou and Béjaia provinces. In 2019, USCIRF met with EPA leadership, who reported that 12 of their member churches remained closed by authorities at the end of the reporting period.

‘The government of Algeria systematically restricts non-Muslims’ ability to register, operate houses of worship, proselytize, and practice their faith in other ways... laws are actively used to arrest and charge individuals for proselytism, or for transporting or possessing religious objects such as Bibles.

‘The Algerian government further discriminates against minority communities that do not conform to mainstream Sunni Islam, such as Shi’a and Ahmadi Muslims, often asserting that they are not Muslim. In addition to placing specific restrictions on these communities, the government also exerts control over the Sunni Muslim majority. It directly hires and trains imams and places speech restrictions on religious leaders...’¹¹⁷

20.1.4 Human Rights Watch reported:

‘The Algerian penal code punishes with three to five years in prison and/or a fine whoever “offends the Prophet and God’s messengers, denigrates the dogma or precepts of Islam by whatever means.” Authorities have used this article to sentence members of the tiny Ahmadiyya community, which practices a version of Islam different from the officially recognized dogma.

‘A 2006 ordinance discriminates against non-Muslims by subjecting them to constraints that do not apply to Muslims. Collective worship by non-Muslims can only be organized by government-licensed religious organizations in designated places. The Protestant Church of Algeria said that in the year ending in October 2019, authorities had shuttered nine of their churches because they lacked permission or were not suited to receive the public.’¹¹⁸

20.1.5 See the [Key geographic and demographic facts](#) for figures on religious groups.

20.1.6 For further information, also see:

- Christian Solidarity Worldwide, Algeria: [Freedom of Religion or Belief](#), September 2018

¹¹⁷ USCIRF, ‘[Algeria Chapter - annual report 2020](#)’, April 2020

¹¹⁸ HRW, ‘[Algeria – events of 2019](#)’, 14 January 2020

- Christian Solidarity Worldwide, [Algeria: General Briefing](#), 1 May 2020
- Bertelsman Stiftung's Transformation Index – [Algeria Country Report 2020](#)

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Section 21 Updated: 21 September 2020

21. Women

21.1 Socio-economic rights

21.1.1 The UN Human Rights Committee noted in August 2018 that it:

'...is concerned that... the representation of women is insufficient for the purposes of achieving parity and that the proportion of women in the workforce remains unsatisfactory. The Committee welcomes the fact that the Constitution establishes the principle of equality between men and women, but nevertheless expresses concern regarding the fact that many provisions that are discriminatory towards women remain in force in the area of family law.'¹¹⁹

21.1.2 According to Amnesty International: 'Women were discriminated against in law and practice. The Family Code continued to discriminate against women in matters of marriage, divorce, child custody and guardianship, and inheritance...

'The Penal Code continued to prohibit rape without defining it or explicitly recognizing marital rape as a crime.'¹²⁰

21.1.3 The USSD country report for 2019 noted:

'Although the constitution provides for gender equality, aspects of the law and traditional social practices discriminated against women. In addition, some religious elements advocated restrictions on women's behaviour, including freedom of movement. The law prohibits Muslim women from marrying non-Muslims, although authorities did not always enforce this provision.

'Women suffered from discrimination in inheritance claims and were entitled to a smaller portion of an estate than male children or a deceased husband's brothers. Women did not often have exclusive control over assets that they brought to a marriage or that they earned.

'Women reported facing employment discrimination with job offers being extended to less qualified male applicants. Leaders of women's organisations reported that discrimination was common, and women were less likely to receive equal pay for equal work or promotions.'¹²¹

21.1.4 According to the 2020 Freedom House report, 'The Constitution guarantees gender equality, but women continue to face both legal and societal

¹¹⁹ UN Human Rights Committee, '[Concluding observations...](#)' (para. 21), 17 August 2018

¹²⁰ AI, '[Human Rights in the Middle East and North Africa](#)', (Women's Rights), 18 February 2020

¹²¹ USSD, '[2019 Country Reports on human rights practices: Algeria](#)', (section 6), 11 March 2020

discrimination. Many women make lower wages than men in similar positions, and there are few women in company leadership positions...'¹²²

- 21.1.5 The 2020 BTI report noted that 'Women have significantly higher access to tertiary education than men (1.7 female-to-male enrolment rate), but face significant barriers in accessing the job market, representing only 18.3% of the labor force.'¹²³
- 21.1.6 The report also noted that 'since 2012, quotas related to the numbers of women in elected assemblies have led to over 30% of parliamentary deputies being women.'¹²⁴
- 21.1.7 UN 2018 data indicates that the gender inequality index in Algeria was 0.443 and was ranked 82 out of 189 countries¹²⁵.

21.2 Divorce

- 21.2.1 The USSD report for 2019 stated:

'Women may seek divorce for irreconcilable differences and violation of a prenuptial agreement. In a divorce, the law provides for the wife to retain the family's home until the children reach age 18. Authorities normally awarded custody of children to the mother, but she may not make decisions about education or take the children out of the country without the father's authorization. The government provided a subsidy for divorced women whose former husbands failed to make child support payments.'¹²⁶

- 21.2.2 The Human Rights Watch 2020 world report, covering events in 2019, observed: 'Algeria's Family Code allows men to have a unilateral divorce without explanation but requires women to apply to Courts for a divorce on specified grounds.'¹²⁷

- 21.2.3 Landinfo noted in its 2018 report: 'Algeria: Marriage and divorce':

'...the divorce rate in Algeria is around 20%. Divorce is therefore not uncommon in an Algerian context. Attitudes to divorced women will vary according to geographical area, social group and family values. Individual circumstances, such as whether the woman is held responsible for the divorce, may also affect the attitude of the community towards the woman. Different families experience different levels of conflict caused by divorce, from unproblematic divorces based on mutual consent, to harrowing conflicts that last for many years. Being a divorced woman is not socially beneficial, but, as divorce has become increasingly common in recent decades, it no longer creates a unilateral negative social status. The challenges facing divorced women are more related to their economic situation than the loss of social status. Divorced women can rent or own housing, take paid employment or establish their own business and manage their own lives, but

¹²² Freedom House, '[Freedom in the world 2020](#)', (section F), 4 March 2020

¹²³ BTI, '[Algeria country report 2020](#)', 23 December 2019

¹²⁴ BTI, '[Algeria country report 2020](#)', 23 December 2019

¹²⁵ UN, '[Human development reports](#)' gender inequality index, undated

¹²⁶ USSD, '[2019 Country Reports on human rights practices: Algeria](#)', (section 6), 11 March 2020

¹²⁷ HRW, '[Algeria – events of 2019](#)', (Women's Rights and Sexual Orientation), 14 January 2020

they have to deal with the same challenging housing and labour market as much as all other Algerians.’¹²⁸

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21.3 Polygamy

21.3.1 According to the USSD 2019 report:

‘The law affirms the religiously based practice of allowing a man to marry as many as four wives. The law permits polygamy only upon the agreement of the previous and future wife, and the determination of a judge as to the husband’s financial ability to support an additional wife. It was unclear whether authorities followed the law in all cases since local authorities had significant discretion and the government did not maintain nationwide statistics.’¹²⁹

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21.4 Domestic abuse

21.4.1 The 2020 BTI report noted that ‘in 2015, Algeria passed a law criminalizing violence against women...’¹³⁰

21.4.2 The UN Human Rights Committee noted in August 2018 that it ‘remains concerned by the continued prevalence and acceptance in society of violence against women. The Committee is concerned by the low rates of reporting and of prosecution of perpetrators of violence, owing in particular to the risk of stigmatization and insufficient shelters and protection measures, and by the fact that victims are not aware of their rights. While noting the delegation’s explanations regarding forgiveness clauses, which were said to apply only in the context of misdemeanours, the Committee remains concerned by allegations that such clauses have been invoked in certain courts, including in the context of crimes, and by the social pressure on victims, who are encouraged to grant their pardon rather than to bring a complaint. The Committee also expresses concern regarding article 326 of the Criminal Code, pursuant to which any person who kidnaps a girl aged under 19 years without the use or threat of force escapes prosecution if he marries the victim and the girl’s family does not lodge a complaint. The Committee is also concerned that, although rape is classified as an offence under the Criminal Code, it is not defined, which leaves wide discretion to courts to accept or reject this classification.’¹³¹

21.4.3 The USSD report for 2019 observed:

‘The law criminalizes rape but does not specifically address spousal rape. Prison sentences for rape range from five to 10 years, and, although sex crimes are rarely reported owing to cultural norms, authorities generally enforced the law. A provision of the penal code allows an adult accused of “corruption of a minor” to avoid prosecution if the accused subsequently marries his or her victim and if the crime did not involve violence, threats, or fraud.

¹²⁸ Landinfo, ‘[Algeria: Marriage and divorce](#)’ (page 29), 12 March 2018

¹²⁹ USSD, ‘[2019 Country Reports on human rights practices: Algeria](#)’, (section 6), 11 March 2020

¹³⁰ BTI, ‘[Algeria country report 2020](#)’, 23 December 2019

¹³¹ UN Human Rights Committee, ‘[Concluding observations on the...](#)’ (para. 23), 17 August 2018

‘Domestic violence remains a society-wide problem. The law states that a person claiming domestic abuse must visit a “forensic physician” for an examination to document injuries and that the physician must determine that the injuries suffered “incapacitated” the victim for 15 days. The law prescribes up to a 20-year imprisonment for the accused, depending on the severity of injuries. If domestic violence results in death, a judge may impose a life sentence.

‘For the first quarter of the year [2019], the Ministry for National Solidarity, Family, and Women reported that there were 1,734 logged cases of violence against women. According to statistics from women’s advocacy groups published in the local press, between 100 and 200 women died each year from domestic violence. The government maintained two regional women’s shelters and plans to open two additional shelters in Annaba by the end of [2019]. These shelters assisted with approximately 300 cases of violence against women during [2019]. The Information and Documentation Centre on the Rights of Children and Women, a network of local organisations that promoted the rights of women, managed call centres in 15 provinces.

‘On 8 August [2019], a man killed his wife at the home of her parents following a marital dispute. The victim, a teacher and mother of three, was found by her family and transported to the local hospital, where she died from severe blood loss. The husband was arrested and placed in pre-trial detention pending his appearance in Court.’¹³²

21.4.4 The report continued:

During [2019] a women’s advocacy group, the Wassila Network, received 200 cases of domestic violence. The Wassila Network noted this number is a fraction of actual cases since victims of domestic violence rarely report the abuse to authorities and because of a forgiveness clause provided in the legal code. The clause stipulates that, if the victim forgives his or her aggressor, legal action ceases. The Wassila Network described situations in which a victim goes to police to report a domestic violence incident and family members convince the victim to forgive the aggressor, resulting in no charges.

‘The law provides for sentences of one to 20 years’ imprisonment for domestic violence and six months to two years’ incarceration for men who withhold property or financial resources from their spouses.

‘In February 2018 the Ministry for National Solidarity, Family, and Women and UN Women launched an administrative database, named AMANE, to collect information on violence against women. They were working to translate the database into Arabic. UN Women is using the information collected to assist the government in developing targeted programs to support and protect women in vulnerable situations, including violence, as part of one of its programs funded by the Belgian Government.’¹³³

21.4.5 Human Rights Watch world report 2020, covering events in 2019, observed:

¹³² USSD, [‘2019 Country Reports on human rights practices: Algeria’](#), (section 6), 11 March 2020

¹³³ USSD, [‘2019 Country Reports on human rights practices: Algeria’](#), (section 6), 11 March 2020

'While Algeria's 2015 law on domestic violence criminalized some forms of domestic violence, it contained loopholes that allow convictions to be dropped or sentences reduced if victims pardoned their perpetrators. The law also did not set out any further measures to prevent abuse or protect survivors. Article 326 of the Penal Code allows a person who abducts a minor to escape prosecution if he marries his victim.'¹³⁴

- 21.4.6 According to the 2020 Freedom House report: '...Domestic violence is common, and the laws against it are weak; for example, cases can be dropped if the victim forgives the alleged abuser. Women's rights groups report that between 100 and 200 women are killed in domestic abuse incidents each year. No law addresses spousal rape.'¹³⁵
- 21.4.7 The report further stated that 'Sexual harassment, while punishable with fines and jail time, is nevertheless common in workplaces. Women have also been subject to public campaigns of violence and intimidation...'¹³⁶
- 21.4.8 Please also see The Norwegian Country of Origin Information Centre, Landinfo, Algeria: Marriage and Divorce, [Section 11 and 13](#), 12 March 2018.
- 21.4.9 For more information on state and societal treatment of women and the specific institutions' protection available to them, see:
- Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development, [Social and Gender Index, Algeria](#), 2019.
 - Immigration and Refugee Board of Canada, [Algeria: Situation of single or divorced women living alone, particularly in Algiers; whether they can find work and housing; support services available to them \(2012-2015\)](#), August 2015.
 - Human Rights Watch, ["Your Destiny is to Stay with Him" - State Response to Domestic Violence in Algeria](#), April 2017.
 - UN Human Rights Council, [documents submitted as part of the Universal Periodic Review of Algeria](#) in May 2017.
 - [Report of the Special Rapporteur on the right of everyone to the enjoyment of the highest attainable standard of physical and mental health on his visit to Algeria](#), 20 April 2017.

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21.5 Lone women

- 21.5.1 The Arab Weekly, an independent English language publication¹³⁷, reported in April 2019 that 'Article 39 of the [family] code states that, if a woman is single, she is under the guardianship of her closest male relative...'¹³⁸
- 21.5.2 Immigration and Refugee Board of Canada, Algeria: Situation of single or divorced women living alone, particularly in Algiers; whether they can find

¹³⁴ HRW, [Algeria – events of 2019](#), (Women's Rights and Sexual Orientation), 14 January 2020

¹³⁵ Freedom House, [Freedom in the world 2020](#), (section G), 4 March 2020

¹³⁶ Freedom House, [Freedom in the world 2020](#), (section F), 4 March 2020

¹³⁷ The Arab Weekly, [About Us](#), undated

¹³⁸ The Arab Weekly, [After protests, Algerian women reconquer the public space](#), 28 April 2019

work and housing; support services available to them (2012-2015), 13 August 2015, stated:

'In correspondence with the Research Directorate, the Project Director of the Algerian League for the Defense of Human Rights (Ligue algérienne pour la défense des droits de l'homme, LADDH), an NGO [Non-Government Organisation] with headquarters in Algiers that works to [translation] "defend, promote and culturally integrate human rights in Algeria and the rest of the world"... , stated that it is not common practice for a single or divorced woman in Algeria to live alone... Similarly, in correspondence with the Research Directorate, the President of the Association of Algerian Women for Development (Association femmes algériennes pour le développement, AFAD), an Algerian NGO located in 18 wilaya [prefectures] across the country, including in Algiers, that works to [translation] "help women in vulnerable situations integrate and reintegrate (socially)," stated that single women [translation] "do not often live alone"...' ¹³⁹

21.5.3 The IRB further added:

'According to the LADDH Project Director, most single or divorced women live in the [translation] "family home"... Similarly, in correspondence with the Research Directorate, an associate professor in sociology and Middle Eastern studies from the University of Texas in Austin, which is also affiliated with the Middle Eastern Women's Rights Program at Rice University in Houston, stated that "[d]ivorced or single women will typically live with members of their extended family such as their parents or a married sibling"... An article in the Algerian daily *Les Débats*, which cites the results of a study conducted by a Dutch radio station on celibacy in the Arab world, notes that [translation] "single women in Algeria generally live with [their] parents or [their] brothers"... Moreover, according to the President of AFAD, single women [translation] "either live with their parents, on university campus or rent and share housing paid for by their parents most of the time"... An article published by the Algerian online news journal *Algérie-Focus* (*Algérie-Focus* n.d.) states that a growing number of women who are employed or in school choose to live with someone [translation] "because of financial concerns or to avoid feeling alone"... However, according to *Les Débats*, groups of single women living together in apartments are limited to big cities like Algiers and Oran...

21.5.4 'According to the Associate Professor, a woman's capacity to live alone is based on her socio-economic status, her level of education and her income... The same source stated that only a few women can afford their own housing... However, according to the LADDH Project Director, this number is growing...'¹⁴⁰

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¹³⁹ IRB, [Algeria: Situation of single or divorced women living alone...](#), 13 August 2015

¹⁴⁰ IRB, [Algeria: Situation of single or divorced women living alone...](#), 13 August 2015



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New COI and assessment.

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