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World Report 2025 - Algeria

Algerian authorities continued to crush dissent and close civic space by cracking down on critical voices and restricting freedom of expression, the press, association, assembly, and movement.

President Abdelmadjid Tebboune was re-elected for a second term in September in a climate of repression and muzzling of the media, absent genuine political debate.

Authorities continue to repress critical voices, including in the media, prosecuting activists, journalists, and lawyers for peaceful expression.

Authorities tightened criminal legislation and continued to use repressive laws against dissent, including anti-terrorism provisions.

Presidential Election

Abdelmadjid Tebboune was [re-elected](#) for a second term with 84.3 percent of the vote in the September 7 ballot. During the election campaign, several dozen people were arrested in connection with peaceful statements or activism, according to [Zakaria Hannache](#), a human rights defender monitoring the situation. Tebboune first acceded to the presidency in December 2019, after a low-turnout presidential election [contested](#) by peaceful [Hirak protests](#) and followed by [arrests](#) of dozens of activists.

Freedom of Expression

Authorities continue to crack down on freedom of expression. Dozens of people have been detained in connection with the exercise of their fundamental rights, including activists, lawyers, journalists, and social media users, according to Hannache.

Activist [Mohamed Tadjadit](#), who has been harassed by security forces and imprisoned several times since 2019, was arrested in January and detained on [charges](#) of “apology of terrorism” and “use of communication technologies to support the actions and activities of terrorist organizations.” He was released by [presidential decree](#) on October 31 on the occasion of the 70th anniversary of the outbreak of Algeria’s war of independence.

On July 23, an Algiers court [sentenced](#) him in another case to six months’ imprisonment for “publications likely to harm national interest” and “inciting an unarmed gathering.”

On July 4, French-Algerian artist [Djamila Bentouis](#) was [sentenced](#) to two years in prison and a fine by an Algiers court in connection with a [song](#) she performed denouncing repression of the Hirak protests. Bentouis was interrogated at the airport upon entering Algeria in February and detained on March 3. She was charged under anti-terrorism legislation and [convicted](#) of “undermining national interest” in videos and “inciting an unarmed gathering.” [UN experts](#) urged the Algerian Court of Appeal to overturn Bentouis’ prison sentence and clear her of all charges. On October 2, her sentence was [reduced](#) to 18 months in prison on appeal.

On August 6, political activist and member of the [suspended](#) Democratic and Social Movement party, [Yacine Mekireche](#), was arrested and detained for Facebook posts. He was charged with “spreading hate speech” and “inciting an unarmed gathering.” He was [sentenced](#) in November to six months in prison.

Freedom of Media

Authorities continued to crack down on the press and arrest and imprison journalists for carrying out their work. Reporters Without Borders ranked [Algeria](#) 139th out of 180 countries on its press freedom barometer for 2024, down three places from 2023.

In January, a Constantine court [sentenced](#) independent journalist Fouzia Amrani to a year's imprisonment – later [reduced](#) to eight months – for “insulting a state official.”

On June 27, the director of online media outlet Algeria Scoop, Omar Ferhat, and its editor-in-chief, Sofiane Ghirous, were [detained](#) for airing a video critical of authorities and prosecuted for “spreading hate speech,” according to the National Committee for the Liberation of Detainees.

On June 13, the Algiers Court of Appeal upheld the [dissolution](#) of Interface Médias, the media company of journalist [Ihsane El Kadi](#), who was imprisoned for almost two years, for “operating an audiovisual communication service without authorization.”

El Kadi, Ferhat, and Ghirous were [released](#) by presidential decree on October 31.

Freedom of Association and Assembly

Algerian authorities cracked down on organized gatherings. They [prevented](#) the association [SOS Disparus](#), which represents the families of thousands of people who disappeared between 1992-2002, from putting on two human rights events in Algiers in February and March.

On June 29, security forces [raided](#) a book presentation in a Béjaïa bookshop, preventing it from taking place. The book was [not banned](#), yet authorities ordered the bookshop to close, claiming the event was banned. They arrested all attendees, including the author, her publisher, and the bookseller before releasing them a few hours later, [according](#) to the publisher.

On July 10, lawyer and human rights defender [Sofiane Ouali](#) was arrested after organizing a sit-in in front of the Béjaïa court to protest the arbitrary detention of his client, political activist Mira Moknache. Ouali was provisionally released on July 18 but is facing prosecution on terrorism-related charges.

On August 20, security forces [prevented](#) many people who had come to the village of Ifri Ouzellaguen for the commemoration of a historic event of Algeria's war of independence from accessing the site. They arrested several people, including activists from the Rally for Culture and Democracy political party, according to a [lawyer](#).

In May, the UN special rapporteur on the rights to freedom of peaceful assembly and freedom of association released his report from a 2023 visit to Algeria, in which he documented “repression and intimidation of individuals and associations critical of the Government.” He [called](#) on authorities to respect the rights to freedom of peaceful assembly and freedom of association; to lift travel bans imposed on civil society actors; to drop proceedings against those exercising their right to freedom of peaceful assembly, association, or expression; and to repeal article 87 bis of the penal code on counter-terrorism, which is used “inappropriately” against human rights defenders, activists, and journalists.

Freedom of Movement and Travel Bans

Since 2022, Algerian authorities have increasingly used [arbitrary travel bans](#) to stifle dissent. While these bans are in many cases ordered by a public prosecutor, the time limits are almost never enforced, rendering them virtually indefinite.

In April, journalist Mustapha Bendjama, [imprisoned](#) over politically motivated charges from February 2023 to April 2024, was arbitrarily prevented from traveling to Tunisia.

In another instance of restriction on freedom of movement, Algerian journalist Farid Alilat was [arbitrarily prevented](#) from entering Algeria in April. He [said](#) he was questioned and held for several hours by security services at Algiers airport before being expelled to France, where he lives. The minister of communication, Mohamed Laagab, [said](#) that Alilat was banned from entering because his media outlet had taken “unfriendly stances” towards Algeria.

Abusive Laws

[New amendments](#) to the penal code introduced on May 6 tightened existing repressive criminal legislation. The new provisions [criminalized](#) vaguely defined acts including “disclosing information deemed sensitive to national security, defense, or the economy,” “undermining the image of the security services” or “any act undermining investment.”

The authorities, who [expanded](#) an already overbroad definition of terrorism in June 2021 and established a list of “terrorist” entities and individuals, have increasingly used [terrorism-related charges](#) to suppress peaceful dissent ever since. On November 16, security forces [arrested](#) Algerian-French writer Boualem Sansal at Algiers airport. Subsequently, authorities prosecuted him on terrorism related charges."

A new law on the [film industry](#) came into force on April 29, further increasing authorities' control over film productions and introducing a prison sentence of up to three years for financing or working in film productions contrary to vaguely worded criteria including “national values and principles,” “national sovereignty,” “national unity,” or “the supreme interests of the nation.”

Migrants' Rights

Algerian authorities continued to arbitrarily and collectively [expel migrants](#) of various African nationalities, including women and children, to life-threatening conditions in the desert at the border with Niger, often without individual screenings or due process and accompanied by [abusive treatment](#). Between January and August, Algeria expelled nearly [20,000 people](#) to Niger. At least eight people reportedly [died](#) following the expulsions.