



## Algeria - Researched and compiled by the Refugee Documentation Centre of Ireland on 21 November 2013

### Information on the current security situation in Algeria

Reviewing events of 2012, a report published in May 2013 by the *United States Department of State* points out that:

“Al-Qa'ida in the Islamic Maghreb (AQIM) remained a significant security threat to Algeria in 2012. AQIM operated primarily in the mountainous areas east of Algiers and in the expansive desert regions near Algeria's southern border. The deteriorating security situation in neighboring northern Mali, the proliferation of weapons smuggled out of Libya, and the emergence of the Mali-based Movement for Unity and Jihad in West Africa (MUJAO), which targeted Algeria on several occasions, all contributed to the terrorist threat to Algeria. Within Algeria, AQIM remained the most active terrorist threat. The group's Algeria-based contingent remains dedicated to the overthrow of the Algerian government. AQIM continued its historical targeting practices, largely attacking Algerian security forces. It frequently attacked local government targets and westerners in the Sahel, but as of year's end, had not conducted an attack outside the region. Over the past year, Algerian security forces further isolated AQIM in the north and decreased the number of successful terrorist attacks, sustaining pressure on the group's Algeria-based leadership and capturing a number of key terrorists” (United States Department of State (30 May 2013) *Country Reports on Terrorism 2012 - Algeria*).

The *United States Department of State* in October 2013 notes:

“Terrorist activities, including bombings, false roadblocks, kidnappings, and ambushes occur often, particularly in the Kabylie region east of Algiers and in the southern part of the country” (United States Department of State (1 October 2013) *Algeria, Country Specific Information*).

A publication in October 2013 by *Magharebia* points out that:

“Algeria is amending legal provisions against terrorists and smugglers” (Magharebia (11 October 2013) *Algeria adopts tougher terrorism laws*).

A document released in October 2013 by the *Jamestown Foundation* notes:

“Algeria, a forerunner in the fight against Islamist terrorism due to its decades-long experience with Islamist extremists, is facing new challenges in terms of tactics and strategy. Beyond the spectacular January In Aménas attack, new trends in local terrorism were already in place. The recent attacks by jihadist groups on the Tunisian army and National Guard along the border with Algeria have had an impact on the security of Algeria itself. Facing the changes of Islamic terrorism in the area, Algeria's Armée nationale populaire (ANP – People's National Army) itself has embarked on a campaign aimed at combating jihadism with new tactics and operations. The Algerian Army is

one of the most advanced, both qualitatively and quantitatively, not only in North Africa but throughout the African continent. The active military force—about 150,000 soldiers—is second in size only to Egypt, while the Ministry of Defense budget is the largest in Africa” (Jamestown Foundation (17 October 2013) *Jihadism and Counterterrorism Policy in Algeria: New Responses to New Challenges; Terrorism Monitor Volume: 11 Issue: 19*).

This document also points out that:

“Over the past two years, at least four factors have contributed to the emergence of new threats to Algerian security:  
The war in Libya and the resulting south-west movement of weapons and rebels  
The radicalization of Malian Islamist movements and the consequent conflict in Mali  
The creation of new organized crime networks in the Sahel region linked to jihadist activities  
The radicalization of Islamist movements in Tunisia and the instability on the border between Algeria and Tunisia” (ibid).

In October 2013 *Magharebia* notes:

“In a move described as the largest border mobilisation yet, Algeria is sending thousands of troops to secure the eastern and southern frontiers to thwart the infiltration of terrorists” (Magharebia (23 October 2013) *Algeria masses forces to secure borders*).

*Magharebia* in November 2013 states:

“Terrorists on Saturday (November 9th) killed an Algerian trader at a fake checkpoint in Larbaatache, 30 km west of Boumerdes, El Watan reported...The incident occurred less than a month after a bomb attack in the same area killed one soldier and injured two others” (Magharebia (11 November 2013) *Terrorists kill Boumerdes merchant*).

A report issued in November 2013 by *Magharebia* notes:

“An Algerian army unit at dawn on Tuesday (November 12th) took out five terrorists and wounded another after an armed clash near Debdeb, some 450 kilometres from the centre of Illizi wilaya. The operation came five days after Prime Minister Abdelmalek Sellal declared during his visit to Tamanrasset wilaya that the only problem faced by Algerian authorities in the region was al-Qaeda” (Magharebia (14 November 2013) *Algeria vows to pursue al-Qaeda*).

## References

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This response was prepared after researching publicly accessible information currently available to the Refugee Documentation Centre within time constraints. This response is not and does not purport to be conclusive as to the merit of any particular claim to refugee status or asylum. Please read in full all documents referred to.

### **Sources Consulted**

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