

# ALGERIA

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People's Democratic Republic of Algeria

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**Authorities maintained their closure of civic space through a severe crackdown on the rights to freedom of expression, peaceful assembly and association. The use of unfounded terrorism charges to crush peaceful dissent continued, including against political activists, journalists, trade unionists and human rights defenders. Authorities increased the penalty for irregularly exiting Algeria and introduced a penalty of up to five years' imprisonment for facilitating an irregular exit. The government collectively and unlawfully expelled at least 31,404 refugees and migrants to Niger. Authorities failed to investigate allegations of torture and other ill-treatment. Civil society reported 48 femicides; there remained no comprehensive official statistics on gender-based violence. A prolonged climate-induced drought negatively affected the realization of human rights. Authorities introduced measures to address inflation; food inflation slowed but remained high.**

## BACKGROUND

Early presidential elections took place on 7 September. According to the Constitutional Court, President Abdelmadjid Tebboune was re-elected with 84.3% of the vote from a turnout of 46.1% of eligible voters.

In July the World Bank reclassified the Algerian economy from lower-middle-income to upper-middle-income following a revision to national accounts statistics undertaken by the authorities.

According to the World Weather Attribution initiative, July's extreme heatwave in the Mediterranean region, including Algeria, was related to climate change.

## REPRESSION OF DISSENT

### Political activists

Authorities continued to restrict the rights to freedom of peaceful assembly and

association of members of opposition political parties, and to arbitrarily arrest and prosecute political opposition activists for exercising their human rights.<sup>1</sup> In August, judicial authorities subjected political activists to judicial supervision under abusive conditions including a ban on all publications, media interventions and political activity.

### Freedom of peaceful assembly and of association

Authorities remained highly intolerant towards peaceful gatherings and other peaceful assemblies. Throughout the year, security forces prevented at least three human rights and cultural events from taking place and arrested at least 64 activists who attempted to organize peaceful gatherings.

In March the ILO's Committee on Freedom of Association expressed deep concern about the multiple difficulties encountered by leaders of the Trade Union Confederation of Productive Forces (COSYFOP) and affiliated organizations in the exercise of their trade union rights and rights to freedom of association.

In a May report the UN Special Rapporteur on the rights to freedom of peaceful assembly and of association declared that the criminalization of civil society work in Algeria had "a chilling effect and has created a climate of fear, resulting in a severe shrinking of civic space".

### Counterterrorism and human rights

The use of vaguely worded and unfounded terrorism charges to suppress peaceful dissent remained widespread. Activist and poet Mohamed Tadjadit was arbitrarily detained for nine months following his arrest on 29 January on "terrorism" charges.<sup>2</sup> On 28 March, union leader Hamza Kherroubi, president of the COSYFOP-affiliated Algerian Union of Industries (UAI), was unjustly convicted and sentenced to 20 years in prison on baseless terrorism-related charges.

### Freedom of expression and of the press

On 28 April the president ratified Law 24-06 amending and supplementing the Penal Code. The law introduced a plethora of overly

broad and vague amendments and new provisions which facilitate the criminalization of acts protected by international human rights law. The law could lead to further self-censorship and prevent free and open discussions on matters of public interest.

Authorities continued to curtail the work of journalists through arbitrary detentions and prosecutions and unlawful sanctions against independent media outlets. On 13 June, the Algiers Court of Appeal confirmed the arbitrary dissolution of media group Interface Medias, after the conviction and sentencing of its director and founder, Ihsane El Kadi, to seven years in prison in June 2023 on trumped-up and vague charges.<sup>3</sup> Ihsane El Kadi was released on 1 November in a presidential pardon for 4,000 prisoners, which also included activist Mohamed Tadjadit (see above), human rights defender Mohad Gasmi and at least 20 other arbitrarily detained activists, human rights defenders and journalists.

Authorities also placed or maintained arbitrary travel bans and other restrictions on activists, lawyers, trade unionists and journalists in relation to the exercise of their human rights, including freedom of expression.

## **WOMEN'S AND GIRLS' RIGHTS**

The Penal Code and Family Code continued to unlawfully discriminate against women in matters of inheritance, marriage, divorce, child custody and guardianship. Women's rights groups continued to call for the repeal of discriminatory provisions.

The activist group Féminicides Algérie recorded at least 48 femicides as of 23 December. No comprehensive official statistics were available on gender-based violence, amid concerns over severe under-reporting due to societal stigma, police inaction, limited shelters, fear of further abuse and other barriers for women and girls seeking protection and justice.

## **LGBTI PEOPLE'S RIGHTS**

The Penal Code continued to criminalize consensual adult same-sex sexual relations,

punishable by up to two years in prison and a fine.

## **FREEDOM OF MOVEMENT**

Law 24-06 increased the maximum penalty for irregularly exiting Algeria from six months' to three years' imprisonment. Article 175bis1 introduced a new penalty of up to five years' imprisonment for "anyone who facilitates or attempts to facilitate, directly or indirectly" an irregular exit.

## **REFUGEES' AND MIGRANTS' RIGHTS**

According to the organization Alarm Phone Sahara, Algeria summarily and collectively expelled at least 31,404 refugees, asylum seekers and migrants to Niger during the year.

## **FREEDOM OF RELIGION AND BELIEF**

Authorities continued to use Decree Law 06-3, which discriminates against religions other than Sunni Islam, to violate the rights of non-Muslims for practising their faith, including through criminal prosecutions.

According to the Protestant Church of Algeria, 46 out of 47 of their churches remained closed either due to judicial harassment or because the authorities ordered their closure.

## **TORTURE AND OTHER ILL-TREATMENT**

Judicial and security authorities continued to ignore detainees' allegations of torture and other ill-treatment.

Authorities failed to open an investigation after journalist Merzoug Touati submitted a complaint on 12 August in which he alleged that police officers in the north-eastern city of Bejaia subjected him to torture and other ill-treatment to reveal the location of his phone, including by threatening to subject him to sexual violence in police custody.

Algeria again failed to submit its fourth periodic report to the UN Committee against Torture, which was due in 2012.

## **RIGHT TO A HEALTHY ENVIRONMENT**

A January report from the European Commission's Joint Research Centre highlighted the effects of ongoing and severe

climate change-related droughts across the Mediterranean region, including Algeria, with negative repercussions on agriculture, ecosystems, drinking water availability, energy production and the increased risk of wildfires.

To address the drought, on 8 February, Algeria announced a programme to rehabilitate several wastewater treatment plants, with the declared objective of deriving 60% of water for irrigation from treated wastewater by 2030.

On 8 June, protests erupted in the north-western region of Tiaret following months of water shortages and rationing related to the drought. The government sacked the local officials it alleged were responsible for mismanagement, mobilized water trucks and announced the construction of a water pipeline.

Algeria remained in the top nine gas flaring countries globally. Gas flaring releases greenhouse gas emissions and can harm the health of surrounding communities. In June, the World Bank reported a 5% reduction in gas flaring volume and a 3% decrease in flaring intensity in Algeria compared to the previous year, in addition to a 2% decrease in oil production.

## ECONOMIC AND SOCIAL RIGHTS

On 1 July a court unjustly convicted and sentenced civil society activist Rabah Kadri to a one-year suspended prison term, a fine and payment of damages in relation to his TikTok posts criticizing socio-economic conditions in Algeria and demanding political change.

Food inflation slowed but remained high at almost 5%, threatening the rights to food, health and housing for the poorest section of the population. According to the World Bank, food accounted for more than half of household expenditure for the poorest 40%.

The 2024 budget introduced tax exemptions on sales and imports of several food products, increased the salary scale for public sector employees by about 15%, and increased allowances for students, people with disabilities and unemployed people. Authorities announced a new assisted employment contract for unemployed people

in April and a 10% to 15% increase in retirement benefits in May.

Algeria had yet to submit its fifth periodic report to the UN Committee on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights which was due in 2015.

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1. "Algeria: Authorities must halt ongoing repression of civic space ahead of presidential elections", 2 September 1
  2. "Algeria: Authorities must drop bogus charges against Hirak activist Mohamed Tadjadit", 17 July 1
  3. *Algeria: Further Information: Journalist's Sentence Confirmed on Appeal: Ihsane El Kadi*, 16 January 1

# ANDORRA

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## Principality of Andorra

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**A total ban on abortion remained in place. An activist who raised concerns about the ban was acquitted after a protracted judicial process. A bill to address concerns around affordable housing was welcomed but deemed insufficient.**

## SEXUAL AND REPRODUCTIVE RIGHTS

A total ban on abortion remained in place, violating the right to safe abortion care. Those in need of an abortion had no alternative but to travel – if able – to other countries in search of essential healthcare.

## HUMAN RIGHTS DEFENDERS

In January, following a judicial process lasting more than four years, the trial of Vanessa Mendoza Cortés, president of the women's rights organization Associació Stop Violències, ended in acquittal. She had been charged with "a crime against the prestige of the institutions" after speaking out about women's rights and the harmful impact of Andorra's abortion ban during a CEDAW Committee session in 2019.<sup>1</sup>

## RIGHT TO HOUSING

In March, a report published by the European Committee of Social Rights found Andorra in breach of the European Social