

OFFICIAL NAME: Democratic and Popular Republic of Algeria

CAPITAL: Algiers

SYSTEM OF GOVERNMENT: Multiparty Republic with interim military administration

AREA: 2,381,741 Sq Km (919,595 Sq Mi)

ESTIMATED 2000 POPULATION 31,624,000

Algeria is located in North Africa midway along the Mediterranean coastline. It is bound by the Mediterranean Sea to the north, Morocco to the west, Mauritania and Mali to the southwest, Niger to the southeast, Libya to the east and Tunisia to the northeast. The two mountain ranges of the Tell Atlas and Sahara Atlas divide the country into three topographical zones, (1.) a narrow fertile coastal plain and (2.) a high plateau which is a vast steppe plain that forms a depression between the Tell and Sahara Atlases. The plateau is also covered by salt lakes and salt marshes. (3.) The Sahara Desert which accounts for over 85% of the land area. Most of the Sahara is covered by Hamadas which are rocky plateaux and two great sand deserts, the Great Western Erg and the Great Eastern Erg. The only permanent river is the Chelif River. Major Cities (pop. est.); Algiers 1,507,000, Oran 610,000, Constantine 441,000, Annaba 223,000, Batna 182,000 (1987). Land Use; forested 2%, pastures 13%, agricultural-cultivated 3%, other 82% (1993)

CLIMATE: The climate of Algeria is divided into three types, (1.) a Mediterranean in the north with dry hot summers and mild wet winters with rainfall increasing from west to east. (2.) A continental in the high plateau regions with higher daily temperatures while rainfall is patchy falling mainly within a short period. (3.) A true desert climate in the Sahara with erratic and spasmodic rainfall. In the summer Algeria experiences hot winds from the south known as the Chehili or Sirocco. The average temperature ranges in Algiers are from 9 to 15 degrees Celsius (48 to 59 degrees Fahrenheit) in January to 22 to 29 degrees Celsius (72 to 84 degrees Fahrenheit) in August.

PEOPLE: The principal ethnic majority are the Arabs or Arabized Berbers who account for around 83% of the population while the remaining 17% are Berbers. The non-Arab and non-Berber population accounts for 100,000 people mainly of European descent, predominantly French, although there are minorities of Italians, Spanish, Maltese and Corsican descendants. Although Algeria is predominantly a Muslim nation it is one of the few Muslim countries to have a surplus of females and over 50% of the population reported to be under the age of 20.

DEMOGRAPHIC/VITAL STATISTICS: Density; 11 persons per sq km (28 persons per sq mi) (1991). Urban-Rural; 49.7% urban, 50.3% rural (1987). Sex Distribution; 50.5% male, 49.5% female (1987). Life Expectancy at Birth; 65.8 years male, 66.3 years female (1987). Age Breakdown; 44% under 15, 28% 15 to 29, 14% 30 to 44, 8% 45 to 59, 4% 60 to 74, 2% 75 and over (1987). Birth Rate; 33.2 per 1,000 (1988). Death Rate; 4.9 per 1,000 (1988). Increase Rate; 28.3 per 1,000 (1988). Infant Mortality Rate; 63.4 per 1,000 live births (1987)

RELIGIONS: The official religion is Islam with 99% of the population Sunni Muslims while Roman Catholics and Jews combined represent less than 1% of the population.

LANGUAGES: The official language is Arabic which is spoken by approximately 81% of the population, although due to France's long colonial rule French is also spoken with many Berbers choosing it as opposed to the imposition of Arabic. By necessity most Berbers are bilingual and even trilingual as they also have their own language with dialects.

EDUCATION: Economically active aged 16 or over and having attained: no formal schooling 38.2%, primary 20.8%, secondary 11.1%, vocational 19.7%, higher 9.3% (1989). Literacy; literate population aged 15 or over 6,281,000 or 49.6% (1987)

MODERN HISTORY - WWII TO 1993: In 1945 an Arab nationalist movement launched a guerrilla war against French rule which resulted in heavy casualties. The eventual ceasefire as well as the withdrawal of the French troops was negotiated by the French President Charles De Gaulle, and as a result some one million Europeans were repatriated. On July 3, 1962 Algeria gained independence and Ahmed Ben Bella, the victor of the resulting infighting, ruled from 1962 to 1965 when an army coup installed Col. Houari Boumedienne as leader. In 1967 Algeria declared war with Israel, broke with the US and moved toward eventual military and political ties with the former USSR. In 1988 some 500 people died in riots protesting against economic hardship and in 1989 voters approved a new constitution which cleared the way for a multi-party political system as well as guaranteed fundamental rights and freedom for the Algerians. After the 1990 municipal elections in which the Front Islamique du Salut (FIS) won a weeping victory, the party leadership began to insist on general and presidential elections in 1991. The government (FLN) responded by promising legislative elections in June, but refusing presidential elections as well. During the year the government continued its market economy and electoral reforms. However, the FIS objected to these electoral reforms claiming they gerrymandered the new constituencies in favor of the FLN. In June 1991 a general strike called by the FIS led to fierce fighting between demonstrators and riot police and the country was placed into a State of Emergency which resulted in the postponement of elections. Also resulting from the crisis was the dismissal of Mouloud Hamrouche's government and its replacement by a pragmatic administration until elections in Dec. 1991. In the first round of elections held on Dec. 26, 1991 the FIS won a clear majority, however, before the planned Jan. 11, 1992 second round of elections took place the Algerian army forced Pres. Chadli Bendjedid to resign. A new army-backed regime, invited the political exiled Muhammad Boudiaf to return from Morocco to head the High Security Council (HSC). The security forces dismantled the FIS arresting some 9,000 militants and on Mar. 4, 1992 banned the FIS which resulted in an urban terrorist campaign against the regime. In April, 1992 Boudiaf appointed a 60-man Consultative Council and attempted to create a new political movement, the Assemble Patriotique. On June 29, 1992 Boudiaf was assassinated by

a member of his personal bodyguard as a result of his anti-corruption drive and succeeded by Ali Kafi. On July 8, 1992 Belaid Abdessalam replaced Sid Ahmed Ghozali as Prime Minister and in October established special courts and severe punishments in an attempt to halt urban terrorism. During 1993 urban violence continued at the same levels as the previous year with more than 200 security personnel killed. During Feb. 1993 attacks and killings continued against prominent figures which resulted in a mass demonstration in Algiers on March 22. On the same day 18 soldiers were also killed in their barracks at Bougzoul. On Aug. 21, 1993 the HSC forced Abdessalam from office and established a new administration led by Redha Malek. Malek reversed his predecessor's policies by rescheduling foreign debt while maintained a resolute opposition to the Islamist movement. By Oct. 1993 some 1,000 Islamist sympathizers had died with 3,800 before the courts and 240 condemned to death.

CURRENCY: The official currency is the Dinar (DA) divided into 100 Centimes.

ECONOMY: Gross National Product; USD \$44,347,000,000 (1993). Public Debt; USD \$24,587,000,000 (1993). Imports; USD \$7,770,000,000 (1993). Exports; USD \$10,230,000,000 (1993). Tourism Receipts; USD \$55,000,000 (1992). Balance of Trade; USD -\$260,000,000 (1991). Economically Active Population; 5,711,000 or 22.8% of total population (1990). Unemployed; 27% (1994)

MAIN TRADING PARTNERS: Its main trading partners are France, Germany, Japan, the US, Italy, the UK, Spain, Belgium and the Netherlands.

MAIN PRIMARY PRODUCTS: Barley, Cattle, Cereals, Citrus Fruits, Copper, Dates, Fish, Grapes, Iron Ore, Lead, Livestock, Oats, Oil and

Natural Gas, Olives, Phosphates, Sheep, Timber, Uranium, Vegetables, Wheat, Zinc.

MAJOR INDUSTRIES: Agriculture, Cement, Clothing, Fertilizers, Food Processing, Iron and Steel, Mining, Machinery, Oil and Natural Gas Production and Refining, Petrochemicals, Textiles, Transport Equipment, Wine Production.

MAIN EXPORTS: Crude Oil, Dates, Fruit and Vegetables, Natural Gas, Petroleum Products, Wine.

TRANSPORT: Railroads; route length 3,836 km (2,384 mi) (1988), passenger-km 1,972,000,000 (1,225,000,000 passenger-mi) (1987), cargo ton-km 2,937,000,000 (1,327,000,000 short ton-mi) (1987). Roads; length 81,648 km, (50,734 mi) (1986). Vehicles; cars 712,700 (1985), trucks and buses 471,500 (1985). Merchant Marine; vessels 148 (1990), deadweight tonnage 1,062,067 (1990). Air Transport; passenger-km 2,248,000,000 (1,397,000,000 passenger-mi) (1987), cargo ton-km 10,622,000 (7,275,000 short ton-mi) (1987).

COMMUNICATIONS: Daily Newspapers; total of 5 with a total circulation of 1,000,000 (1992). Radio; receivers 3,500,000 (1994). Television; receivers 2,000,000 (1994). Telephones; units 1,068,000 (1993).

MILITARY: 122,000 (1995) total active duty personnel with 86.3% army, 5.5% navy and 8.2% air force while military expenditure accounts for 3.0% (1993) of the Gross National Product (GNP).

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