

ALGERIA

Party Portrait

After gaining independence from France in 1962, Algeria witnessed increased Arabization and conflict, particularly in its eleven-year-long civil war. Presently, the Algerian state is plagued by domestic rivalries among the Army General Staff, the Presidency, and the recently dismantled spy agency, the Department of Intelligence and Security (DRS). This split is further complicated by internal clan and factional conflicts within the groups. These groups compose the shadowy business, intelligence, military, and political forces controlling the nation. They act behind the scenes in pursuit of their own various interests, either through the elected government or around it.

Key Interests

- Maintain military dominance of the North Africa region
- Strengthen and expand military and intelligence cooperation with Western powers
- Settle the Western Sahara dispute in favor of the self-determination of the indigenous Polisario Front

Sources of Leverage

Military – The Algerian military boasts the largest defense budget in Africa; at \$13 billion USD, it is over twice the size of its Egyptian counterpart. Algeria also possesses robust military power projection capabilities and widely acknowledged counterterrorism experience.

Regional Strategy

Algeria seeks to maintain its military dominance of North Africa, and to strengthen military and intelligence cooperation with Western powers while seeking non-threatening economic innovations. Diplomatically, Algeria aims to become more engaged in the region, and avoid being isolated for its strong support of self-determination and national sovereignty in the case of Western Sahara.

Powerful Individuals

Ahmed Gaïd-Salah (Chief of the General Staff and Deputy Defense Minister) Abdelaziz Bouteflika (President), General Mohamed “Tewfik” Mediène (former head of the DRS), Said Bouteflika (brother of the President and advisor), Abdelmalek Sellal (Prime Minister), Ali Haddad (prominent businessman and presidential advisor)

Potential Negotiation Moves

Come to the table for Western Sahara peace talks - Talk with Morocco and the Polisario Front regarding Western Sahara. Since Morocco refuses to come to the table without Algeria’s participation, this would be a positive step toward settling the conflict. However, Algeria’s internal fractures may impede Algeria’s ability to engage in negotiations.

Internal Conflicts

Algerian politics are complicated by the strong internal conflicts among the Army General Staff, the Presidency, and the former DRS. The former DRS is still able to manipulate extremist groups, civil society, and media; it is unknown whether the erstwhile agency retains influence in the government.

Memberships

ARAB LEAGUE, AU, IAEA, MEDITERRANEAN DIALOGUE, OIC, OPEC, UN

Allies

MOROCCO Polisario Front, UNITED STATES

Partners

EGYPT Government, EUROPEAN UNION, FRANCE, LIBYA Government of National Accord, LIBYA House of Representatives, NATO, RUSSIA, SAUDI ARABIA, TUNISIA

Rivals

HOLY SEE, MOROCCO Government

Adversaries

N/A

Active Armed Opponents

N/A

Proxy

N/A

External Sponsor

N/A

Aid Recipient

N/A

Aid Donor

N/A