



Algeria - Researched and compiled by the Refugee Documentation Centre of Ireland on Friday 16 February 2018

Information on the presence of Jihadist/IS groups and their interactions with the state

In July 2017 the *United States Department of State* notes in a report that:

“Algeria continued an aggressive campaign to eliminate all terrorist activity within its borders, and sustained its policing efforts to thwart terrorist activity in urban centers. Al-Qa’ida in the Islamic Maghreb (AQIM), AQIM-allied groups, and ISIS elements including the Algerian branch known as Jund al-Khilafah in Algeria (JAK-A, Soldiers of the Caliphate in Algeria), were active terrorist organizations within Algeria and along its borders” (United States Department of State (19 July 2017) *Country Reports on Terrorism 2016 – Algeria*).

A document issued in July 2017 by the *International Crisis Group* states that:

“Jihadists who pledged allegiance to ISIS and operate within Algeria were drawn chiefly from pre-existing groups previously affiliated with al-Qaeda in the Islamic Maghreb (AQIM). They are remnants of the 1990s “black decade” who for the most part survived in the mountainous parts of Kabylia and eastern Algeria...To date, only two such groups have declared their loyalty to ISIS and, overall, only a relatively small number of Algerians are ISIS members; while some have encouraged attacks in their home country from Syria...very few individuals in Algeria itself – most probably less than 100 – 86 have heeded the call to pledge allegiance to ISIS” (International Crisis Group (24 July 2017) *How the Islamic State Rose, Fell and Could Rise Again in the Maghreb*, p.21).

This document also notes that:

“...Algeria has put into practice a three-part strategy: massive force deployment against militant groups; pervasive security presence (the ranks of the police, in particular, have expanded considerably over the last decade); and, notably through the Civil Concord, a policy of national reconciliation that provided an amnesty to Islamist insurgents and, in exchange for leaving politics, allowed them to engage in conservative social activism...ISIS’ emergence led to the addition of a fourth dimension, a focus on cybersecurity and online jihadist recruitment” (ibid, p.23).

In December 2017 the *Italian Institute for International Political Studies* states that:

“At the tactical level, the military and the security forces were able to keep jihadist threat at low in the country, hinder jihadist activities and confine them to specific regions (north-East mountains of the Kabylia and in the borders). The Islamic State organization, for instance, was not able to gain a foothold in the country as it did in neighboring Libya and Tunisia. The PNA nipped the group in the bud and prevented it from structuring itself as each of its emir (leaders) have been killed a few months after their advent” (Italian Institute for International Political Studies (7 December 2017) *The Algerian Army: Cooperation, Not Intervention*).

A report published in January 2018 by *Reuters* states:

“Algeria emerged from a conflict with armed Islamists in the 1990s that left an estimated 200,000 dead. But al Qaeda in the Islamic Maghreb and small bands of fighters allied to Islamic State have been active in remote parts of the sprawling, oil-producing North African country” (Reuters (26 January 2018) *Algerian army kills eight armed men in Khenchela province: ministry*).

A document produced in January 2018 by the *Africa Center for Strategic Studies* notes that:

“...in Algeria...ISIS continues to struggle to establish a stronghold...” (Africa Center for Strategic Studies (26 January 2018) *Africa's Active Militant Islamist Groups (January 2018)*).

A report issued in January 2018 by the *Associated Press* notes that:

“Algeria's Defense Ministry say military forces have killed eight Islamic militants in the east of the country...It was the first major military operation of the year in Algeria. Extremist groups are still active in the country. There were several attacks against police forces last year” (Associated Press (26 January 2018) *Algerian military kills 8 Islamic extremists*).

In February 2018 an article issued by *Reuters* includes the following quote that:

“AQIM is in decline (in Algeria), it can't restructure or redeploy here,” an Algerian security source said” (Reuters (7 February 2018) *Al Qaeda trying to regroup in Tunisia after Islamic State setbacks: sources*).

In February 2018 the *Irish Times* states:

“...in...Algeria, the number of those who have pledged allegiance to Islamic State is probably less than 100 in total” (Irish Times (10 February 2018) *Islamic State: Defeated but still dangerous*).

In April 2018 *Business Monitor International* states that:

“Algeria still suffers from regular militant attacks on its military and security services...” (Business Monitor International (1 April 2018) *Algeria - Q218*).

Business Monitor International in April 2018 points out that:

“...The most direct threat to the government comes from al-Qaeda in the Islamic Maghreb (AQIM). Its frequent attacks on the symbols of government - public buildings, police stations and military installations – as well as on oil infrastructure (most notably the attack at the In Amenas gas plant in January 2013) undermine the government and its claims to have brought security to Algeria. Beyond internal threats, the security services and military are now also confronted with a vastly more challenging regional security environment since 2011.” (Business Monitor International (1 April 2018) *Algeria Country Risk Report*).

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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.

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