



Refugee Documentation Centre (Ireland)  
LEGAL AID BOARD

## **Algeria - Researched and compiled by the Refugee Documentation Centre of Ireland on Monday 5 & Tuesday 6 October 2015**

### **Information on current human rights**

In January 2015 commenting on events of the preceding year, *Human Rights Watch* points out in a report that:

“2014 saw no overall improvement in human rights conditions in Algeria despite promises that the government has made since 2011 to introduce reforms. Authorities curtailed free speech and the rights to freedom of association, assembly, and peaceful protest, and arrested and prosecuted political and trade union activists” (Human Rights Watch (29 January 2015) *World Report 2015: Algeria*).

An *Amnesty International* report published in February 2015 commenting on events of 2014 states that:

“The authorities restricted freedoms of expression, association and peaceful assembly, particularly in the run-up to April’s presidential election, dispersing demonstrations and harassing activists. Women faced discrimination in law and practice and remained inadequately protected against violence, despite proposed legislative reforms. Impunity prevailed for perpetrators of gross human rights abuses during the 1990s and acts of torture committed in subsequent years. Irregular migrants faced discrimination, abuse and arbitrary expulsion. Armed groups carried out lethal attacks. Death sentences were imposed; no executions were carried out” (Amnesty International (25 February 2015) *Amnesty International Report 2014/15*).

In June 2015 the *United States Department of State* reviewing events of 2014 points out in a report that:

“The three most significant continuing human rights problems were restrictions on the freedom of assembly and association, lack of judicial independence and impartiality, and overuse of pretrial detention. Other human rights concerns were the excessive use of force by police, including alleged torture; limitations on the ability of citizens to change their government; widespread corruption accompanied by reports of limited government transparency; and societal discrimination against persons with disabilities, persons living with HIV/AIDS, and lesbian, gay, bisexual, and transgender (LGBT) persons. Women faced violence and discrimination, and there was some reported child abuse. Additionally, the government maintained restrictions on worker rights and did not actively combat conditions of forced labor. The government did not take steps to investigate, prosecute, or punish officials in the security forces and elsewhere in the government who committed violations. Impunity for police and security officials remained a problem, and the government rarely provided information on actions taken against officials accused of wrongdoing. Abuses by illegal paramilitary forces remained a significant problem. Terrorist groups committed several attacks against civilians and government officials and targeted military personnel in particular.” (United States Department of State (25 June 2015) *2014 Country Reports on Human Rights Practices – Algeria*).

In July 2015 *Freedom House* commenting on events of 2014 notes that:

“Ailing President Abdelaziz Bouteflika's reelection in April to an unprecedented fourth term with 82 percent of the vote sparked both protests and a new level of coordination among diverse opposition forces. Former prime minister Ali Benflis, the runner-up with 12 percent of the vote, alleged "fraud on a massive scale." Debilitated by a 2013 stroke, Bouteflika had made only one campaign appearance. Following his election, Bouteflika proposed a new package of constitutional reforms – including a return to a two-term presidential limit that would be effective after he steps down. Former prime minister Ahmed Ouyahia led a constitutional reform discussion on the president's behalf in May and June; the new opposition coalition, the National Coordination for Liberties and a Democratic Transition (CLTD), boycotted a June meeting. While Bouteflika's presidency remained largely focused on increasing the power of the presidency vis-à-vis rival elements in the security establishment, his proposed reforms would actually decrease presidential power in favor of the parliament and prime minister. Throughout the year, thousands of small protests flagged deteriorating socioeconomic conditions. These were accompanied by infrequent larger protests against political and economic stasis. Internal and external threats posed by the Islamic State (IS) and other armed groups on the Tunisian and Libyan borders, involving Algerian insurgents and terrorists, prompted new domestic and international pressures on Algeria to play a vigorous role in regional stabilization. Memories of the long civil war, along with the 2013 war in Mali and new terrorist attacks, gave support to elements of the Algerian state advocating harsher treatment for Islamist radicals and a more robust role for Algerian security forces.” (Freedom House (10 July 2015) *Freedom in the World 2015 – Algeria*).

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