



Algeria – Researched and compiled by the Refugee Documentation Centre of Ireland on 13 July 2015

Algeria: Are there any reports on criminal gangs operating in the Algiers and Hussen Dey areas?

Information on criminal gangs in Algeria was extremely scarce among sources available to the Research and Information Unit.

The 2015 Overseas Security Advisory Council report states:

“While the Algerian government does not publish statistically valid crime reports, media reporting and anecdotal observation indicates that the frequency and intensity of criminal activity remains moderate. A significant percentage of crimes go unreported.” (Overseas Security Advisory Council (OSAC) (29 January 2015) *Algeria 2015 Crime and Safety Report*, p.1)

An Immigration and Refugee Board of Canada response to a request for information on the crime situation in Algeria, in a paragraph headed “Organized Crime”, states:

“Sources cite the Algerian president as saying, during the opening of the [translation] ‘judicial year,’ that ‘organized crime is becoming more and more serious’. According to media sources, the events in neighbouring countries are likely to contribute to the strengthening of organized crime in Algeria. A report by Le Jour d’Algérie, a national newspaper, indicates that security problems in Libya, Tunisia, Mali and Egypt have favoured the growth of organized crime in Algeria.” (Immigration and Refugee Board of Canada (19 October 2012) *DZA104205.E – Algeria: Crime situation, including organized crime; police and state response, including effectiveness; state protection for witnesses and victims of crime (2009-September 2012)*)

An article from the Economist states:

“The region’s governments are becoming especially annoyed by the growing drugs trade. Algeria seized 50 tonnes of cannabis in the first half of this year and 73 tonnes last year—almost twice as much as in 2008. That is partly the result of a crackdown by authorities, but drug networks have proliferated throughout the country and traders have refined their methods thanks to closer collaboration with international criminals.” (The Economist (17 August 2013) *Boom boom*)

This article also states:

“The most sinister trafficking webs have become entangled with terrorism. Jihadists in north Africa are big customers for weapons. They are also guaranteeing safe passage for cash to smugglers. Criminals in Algeria now depend so heavily on this arrangement that the departure of many of their

jihadist bodyguards to fight in Mali has made them tetchy. Algerian authorities say that, as a result, traffickers are targeting security forces with unusual aggression.” (ibid)

A report from the Italian news agency ANSAmed states:

“In Algeria, youth violence is constantly on the rise with the slums' increasing social marginalization to blame for the phenomenon as young people there grow up dreaming of ways to make money easily and fast and therefore choose theft and robbery as a way to make their dream come true. Sometimes they also turn against those who symbolize authority, even if they are teachers. Attacks against professors who are abducted from their classes and thrown out of school amid cheers are multiplying as if they were the enemies instead of a society deeply divided in different economic and social classes. Violence doesn't only target teachers but schools where windows, desks and teaching materials are often destroyed. Rival gangs also fight one another to control a street or to gain respect among affiliates. And when these fights take place, often at night, anything can happen as knives are often used.” (ANSAmed (12 November 2013) *Algeria: country hostage of youth violence: Young Algerians from slums control streets*)

See also ANSAmed report which states:

“One hundred people have been killed since the beginning of the year in ongoing gang warfare in Algeria, and the numerous police deployed to curb the violence seem unable to do so. Though affecting the entire country, roughly 60% of the crimes are concentrated in ten of the administrative 'wilayas', including those of Algiers, Blida and Oran. Reformist daily El Watan sounded the alarm on Wednesday, attentive as it is to Algeria's social trends and often critical of the central authorities' anti-crime policies. Crime levels continue to rise every year, and Algerian gangs have become more dangerous as they have started to follow the example of other organized crime groups, including French ones, whose techniques and strategies they openly imitate. Murders are every more heinous and frequently end with the burning of the victims' corpses to make identification either impossible or at least more time-consuming.” (ANSAmed (13 August 2014) *Algerian police take action against gang warfare: Over 100 killed in 2014, bodies burnt to avoid identification*)

This response was prepared after researching publicly accessible information currently available to the Research and Information Unit 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.

References:

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