



Refugee Documentation Centre (Ireland)
LEGAL AID BOARD

Algeria - Researched and compiled by the Refugee Documentation Centre of Ireland on Friday 10 July 2015

Treatment of Berbers

A paper issued in January 2014 by the *Governance and Social Development Resource Centre* states that:

“The government has made a number of concessions to Berber communities following discontent over its arabisation policies. Berber protests tend to be related to broader social issues...” (Governance and Social Development Resource Centre (January 2014) *Conflict Analysis of Algeria*, p.5).

This document also states that:

“...the state has pursued Arabisation policies in national education and politics, that are seen by some Berbers as disadvantageous.” Berber groups in the Kabylia region have been particularly focused on demanding language and cultural rights...Periodic unrest in Kabylia has been caused by perceived official discrimination and neglect...The region has also become increasingly isolated economically, as a result of AQIM activity and connected security measures, which have made it hard for businesses to operate in the area...” (ibid, p.14).

The *Jamestown Foundation* in May 2014 points out in a report that:

“Berber people are well integrated in the social, political and economic structure of the country” (Jamestown Foundation (2 May 2014) *Algeria's Political Transition Begins in the Midst of Major Security Challenges*).

The *International Work Group for Indigenous Affairs* in a report issued in April 2015 states in a report that:

“The Amazigh in Algeria are unable to benefit from the natural resources found on their lands and territories (water, forests, oil and gas)” (International Work Group for Indigenous Affairs (April 2015) *The Indigenous World 2015*, p.361).

A report published in June 2015 by the *United States Department of State* commenting on events of the preceding year notes:

“The ethnic Amazigh (Berber) population of approximately 10 million participated freely and actively in the political process and represented more than one-third of the government” (United States Department of State (25 June 2015) *Country Reports on Human Rights Practices for 2014, Algeria*, p.22).

This document also states:

“Security forces failed to prevent and respond adequately to intercommunity violence in the city of Ghardaia, 370 miles south of Algiers, that restarted in December 2013. Violence between the two ethnically and religiously different Mozabite (Berber) and

Malikite (Arab) communities claimed the lives of 13 persons and injured several hundred during a period of several months” (ibid, p.32).

In July 2015 a report released by *Agence France-Presse* states:

“At least 22 people have died in fighting between Berbers and Arabs in southern Algeria, the bloodiest toll in two years of frequent clashes between the communities, national news agency APS reported Wednesday” (Agence France-Presse (9 July 2015) *22 dead in Arab-Berber unrest in Algeria: media*).

Agence France Presse in July 2015 notes that:

“Berbers represent around 30 percent of the Algerian population and have long considered themselves marginalised by the country's dominant Arab culture” (Agence France Presse (9 July 2015) *Algeria mobilises army against ethnic violence in south*).

References

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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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