Algeria

2016 Country Review

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Country Overview

Country Overview

ALGERIA

Located in northern Africa bordering the Mediterranean Sea, Algeria is a gateway between Africa and Europe. It has a population of about 35 million.

Present-day Algeria was part of the Turkish Ottoman empire from the 16th century until its conquest by the French in 1830. The grueling struggle for independence began in 1954, headed by the National Liberation Front (FLN), which came to power with independence in 1962 and has dominated politics ever since.

Algeria's civil war began when the military canceled the second round of legislative elections in 1992, in which the extremist Islamic Salvation Front (AIS) -- the armed wing of the Islamic Salvation Front (FIS) -- was the expected winner. Insurgents and government forces then became embroiled for years in a brutal, bloody, and violent conflict, which left at least 200,000 people dead according to government statistics. An amnesty in 1999 led many rebels to lay down their arms.

In recent years, the country had seen some degree of calm and the return to stability. This level of stability has been helped to some degree by the government's decision to adopt a national reconciliation policy. However, since 2007, an increasing number of violent incidences by extremist Islamists have augured a disturbing shift in Algeria's political terrain. The FIS, now reconstituted in new form as al-Qaida in the Maghreb, has been blamed for much of the recent violence.

The start of 2011 brought civil unrest, sparking anxieties about the stability of Algeria. One key problem for the government of Algeria has been the national state of emergency, which was in effect for about two decades, since the aforementioned civil war. While the government has said that the state of emergency was needed to ensure national security, critics have accused of the authorities of exploiting the state of emergency, to the detriment of civil liberties. But after the attack on a gas field complex in Algeria in January 2013 by Islamist terrorists, the government of Algeria would have a powerful argument that the threat from extremist Islamists continued to plague the country.

Algeria's petroleum-based economy has yielded a large cash reserve, but it has not been used to address the country's many social and infrastructure problems. Poverty remains widespread and unemployment high, particularly among youth.

Key Data

Key Data	
Region:	Africa
Population:	36640256
Climate:	Arid to semiarid; mild, wet winters with hot, dry summers along coast; drier with cold winters and hot summers on high plateau; sirocco is a hot, dust-laden wind especially common in summer.
Languages:	Arabic French Berber dialects Afro-Asiatic languages
Currency:	1 Algerian dinar = 100 centimes
Holiday:	Anniversary of the Revolution, 1 November (1954), Labour Day is 1 May, Independence Day is 5 July (1962)
Area Total:	2381740
Area Land:	2381740
Coast Line:	998

Algeria

Country Map

Africa

Regional Map

Chapter 2

Political Overview

History

Similar to many countries in the region, Islam, Arabization (the spread of Arabic culture and language), colonization and the subsequent struggle for independence have been major forces shaping Algeria's history. The country's position bordering the African and European worlds resulted in an influence from various cultures-a mixture of influence that remains evident today. A unique blend of Phoenician, Roman, Vandal and Byzantine cultures dominated the region and defined indigenous Berber culture until the spread of Islam and the proliferation of Arabic culture and language.

From the seventh through the 11th centuries, Arab armies invaded the region. A number of Arab rulers, Umayyads; Abbasids; Fatimids; Almoravids; Almohads; and Zayanids, introduced and subsequently segmented the predominance of Islam and Arabic culture and linguistics in the region. Both factors posed a threat to the indigenous Berber culture but did not eliminate it.

Algeria's Arab rulers stayed in power until the 16th century, when no dynasty was capable of keeping control. In the resulting power vacuum, piracy became the prevailing economic practice in the region, which attracted European interference in the region. The Muslims of Algeria petitioned the sultan of the Ottoman Empire, the world's prevalent Islamic power, for assistance in countering Spanish occupation of their ports. Beginning in the early 16th century and for more than 300 years, Algeria would be a province of the Ottoman Empire with Algiers as a regency capital.

The next great external influence came in 1830 with the French occupation of Algeria, an occupation that would last 132 years. French occupation marked the end of successful piracy from the Algerian coast. 1830 also marks the date at which Algeria's modern borders were formed. Although the French considered Algeria a province rather than a colony and significant numbers of French settled in Algeria, resistance to foreign occupation quickly arose. By the middle of the 20th century, Algerians began their struggle for independence.

An Algerian nationalist movement emerged between the World Wars, at first only demanding equal civil rights for the indigenous population. Due to perceived insensitivity by the French, Algerian demands grew. A serious struggle for autonomy and sovereignty began on Nov. 1, 1954, with the formation of a group of revolutionary nationalists called the "Front de Libération Nationale," or

National Liberation Front, under the leadership of Ahmed Ben Bella. Its activities led to a full-scale "War of Independence" that lasted almost eight years, ending with the signing of a cease-fire in Evian, France in 1962. The Algerian War of Independence is widely considered one of the bloodiest and most violent wars fought for independence. An estimated 300,000 people died during the conflict, ending with a declaration of independence promulgated on July 3, 1962; long before, most French nationals had left the country.

Since independence, Algeria has had three constitutions. It has sought to create political structures that not only reflect the unique character of the country, but to erect structures strong enough to withstand inherent resistance fashioned from decades of civil strife.

Despite these intentions, Algeria's political history continued to be marked by turmoil. After the election of President Ahmed Ben Bella in 1963, for example, a coup d'état was launched in 1965, toppling President Ben Bella and replacing him with Colonel Houari Boumediene, the head of the Council of the Revolution. He remained in power until his death in 1978. Colonel Chadli Bendjedid succeeded Boumediene. Throughout the post-independence era, political power has rested in a small elite tied to the military despite talk of political liberalization or socialism.

The revised constitution of February 1989 altered the configuration of the state and allowed political parties to compete. This experiment with democracy proved short-lived. In early 1992, the ministry of defense led a coup d'état in response to the Islamic Salvation Front's impending victory in the elections fearing that a democratically elected Islamic government would institute policies that were inherently anti-democratic. Since that time, Algeria has dealt with continued domestic political turbulence.

Note on History: In certain entries, open source content from the State Department Background Notes and Country Guides have been used. A full listing of sources is available in the Bibliography.

Political Conditions

Introduction

Following a bloody and violent sovereignty fight and the subsequent attainment of independence from France in 1962, Algeria was led by Ahmed Ben Bella.

In 1965, Ben Bella was overthrown by Col. Houari Boumedienne in a bid to end corruption. By 1976, Boumedienne introduced a new constitution in which a commitment to socialism was enshrined, and the National Liberation Front (FLN) was named the sole political party. The constitution also recognized Islam as the state religion. Late that very year, Boumedienne was elected president (in a country with only one political party) and concentrated his efforts on moving Algeria toward rapid industrialization. Boumedienne stayed in office until his death in 1978. At that time, he was replaced by Col. Chadli Bendjedid.

The 1980s saw economic challenges, exemplified by increasing unemployment and inflation, and made worse by the collapse of oil and gas prices at that time. The result was a spate of strikes, riots and violent industrial demonstrations.

By the late 1980s, the legislative branch, called the National People's Assembly, revoked the ban on multiple political parties. It also adopted legislation which allowed opposition parties to compete in future elections. As a result, a score of new parties were registered, including the Islamic Salvation Front (FIS).

In 1990, the FIS showed it political strength by winning 55 percent of the vote in the country's local elections. A year later in 1991, parliamentary elections were scheduled for mid-year. The news of elections also came with an annoucenment that there had been changes to the electoral process, which would limit campaigning from within mosques. The announcement was met with outrage from the FIS, which found its base support in the religious factions of society. As such, the FIS called for a general strike. A state of chaos ensued as a result. A state of siege was declared, the elections were postponed and two FIS leaders, Abassi Madani and Ali Belhadj, were arrested and then imprisoned.

In late 1991, elections were finally held and the FIS again showed its strength by winning 188 seats. A second round of elections were expected to follow, and it was anticipated that the FIS would hold an absolute majority. Then, in early 1992, the Defense Ministry launched a coup d'état in response to the Islamic Salvation Front's impending victory in the elections of that period. They feared that a democratically elected Islamic government would institute policies that were inherently anti-democratic. Since that time, Algeria has dealt with continued domestic political turbulence including the deaths of hundreds of thousands of people, and the assassination of the Chairman of the Higher State Council, Mohamed Boudiaf, in 1992. An official report also alleged that thousands of civilians had disappeared during the state of civil war in the 1990s, as a result of the actions of security forces.

During most of the 1990s, Algeria was ruled by Liamine Zeroual, a retired army colonel, who was appointed chairman of the Higher State Council in 1994. In 1995, Zeroual easily won election. Then, in1996, constitutional changes were approved by referendum. The constitutional

changes provided for the pardoning of militants and followed secret negotiations with the FIS and its Islamic Salvation Army, the AIS. Parliamentary elections the next year entailed a good showing for moderates. By 1998, President Zeroual said that he did not intend to finish his term on schedule, but instead would call for new presidential elections. In the presidential elections of 1999, Algeria's former Foreign Minister, Abdelaziz Bouteflika, was elected as president following the withdawal of all the opposition candidates from the political contest. The opposition candidates charged that there were no guarantees that the election would be free, fair and transparent.

Political Violence

Algeria experienced a surge of political unrest throughout the spring and summer months in 2001, which continued well into 2002. In August 2001, killings by suspected Islamists intensified and Algerian newspapers reported more than 100 deaths in such attacks.

In early September 2001, a prominent figure of the outlawed Islamic Salvation Front, or FIS, Sheikh Omar, escaped to Europe after threats on his life had been made. Sheikh Omar has been known as one of the best-known moderates in the FIS and his escape coincided with signs of deep division within the government over whether to open a dialogue with moderate Islamists.

While there had been a temporary cessation of violence in cities since September 2001, cities like Algiers continued to be rocked with bomb attacks. On March 29, 2002, two people were killed and several others were wounded following a bomb blast in a crowded outdoor market. The explosion took place in a village Ouled Yaich, located near the town of Blida, just south of the capital city, Algiers. Then, on May 2, 2002, armed extremists killed 31 people in two separate incidents in western Algeria. In the area of Ksar Chellah, 20 people were killed and five were wounded in one of the most deadly attack in Algeria in 2002. In Sidi Khaled, close to the town of Tiaret, 11 people were killed. Most victims in these attacks, as well as the one in March, were thought to be civilians.

On May 5, 2002, a military convoy headed in the direction of Mizrana, in the district of Tizi-Ouzou just east of Algiers, was ambushed by armed forces; 15 soldiers were killed and sever were kidnapped. The ambush was facilitated by exploding bombs, which had been laid along the route of the convoy. Following the explosion, the soldiers were surrounded by militants and then shot by others further away in the mountains.

That sort of violence was increasing in Algeria in the previously two months, presumably due to the anticipated legislative elections that were scheduled for May 30, 2002. Despite the upsurge of violence, as well as the threat of a boycott by the Berber-speaking area of Kabylia, the Algerian authorities were adamant that the elections would proceed as planned. The election was not expected to shift the political balance in Algeria in any significant manner.

Many such killings have been attributed the Armed Islamic Group (GIA), as well as the hard-line Salafist Group for Predication and Combat (GSPC).

In 2002, hundreds of people, including many Islamic fundamentalists, were killed in Algeria's ongoing and bloody civil war. In spring 2002, GIA leader Antar Zouabri was killed by security forces. Since appointing a new head -- Rachid Abou Tourab -- the GIA has increased its violent attacks. Indeed, soon after his appointment, Tourab stated that he had every intention of continuing the GIA's extremist agenda stopping only when Algeria is transformed into an Islamic state.

In October 2002, a Paris court sentenced two Algerians to life in prison for their role in three attacks in the French capital in 1995, during one of the worst waves of terrorist violence in recent French history. The sentences given to Boualem Bensaid and Smain Ait Ali Belkacem were the maximum under French law. Bensaid, 34, was given life in prison with parole after 22 years for an October 1995 bombing near a Paris Metro station that wounded 18 people. He was also deemed an accomplice in two other 1995 Metro bombings, which killed eight people and wounded more than 150. Belkacem, also 34, was sentenced to life imprisonment without parole for his role in a Metro station bombing near the Orsay museum in Paris, which wounded 26 people in October 1995. The two men have been linked with Algeria's brutal Armed Islamic Group, or GIA, which police say staged a half-dozen bombings in France between June and November 1995.

Then, in late December 2002, suspected Algerian terrorist Abdelkrim Hammad, alias "Aldelnassa", was arrested in northern Spain. Hammad was seeking support in Spain for an Islamic Jihad and allegedly received training at Osama Bin Laden's terrorist camps in Afghanistan.

Also, in December 2002, President Bouteflika pardoned 5,000 common law offense prisoners on the night of destiny, which was observed on the 26th day of Ramadan. The move also reduced the sentences of serving prisoners and those whose jail terms were about to end. However, the pardon excluded prisoners who were convicted for acts of terrorism, corruption, destruction of assets, spilling of blood, drug trafficking, rape or indecent assault.

Violence continued early in the new year. In January 2003, a group of terrorists assassinated Hamid Hireche, the 54-year-old mayor of Si Mustapha, east of Algiers. Witnesses said the assailants cut his head with an axe before shooting him to death. The Salafist group led by Hassan Hattah was believed to be responsible for his murder. Earlier in the month, another group of terrorists assassinated the mayor of El-Hadjar.

On Jan. 22, 2003, two Algerian nationals charged with terrorism offenses relating to Osama Bin Laden's al-Qaida network were scheduled to go on trial in the English Midlands. Baghdad Meziane and Brahim Benmerzouga were to appear at the crown court in the Midlands city of Leicester. Meziane had been charged with "directing the activities of al-Qa'ida," with membership of the outlawed group, and with inciting an act of terrorism overseas. Benmerzouga was charged with

membership of al-Qaida and possession of 19 videotapes showing images intended to stir up racial hatred.

Also in early 2003, French President Jacques Chirac traveled to Algeria for a historic visit to the former French colony. Chirac was greeted ecstatically by Algerians, despite the legacy of a difficult Franco-Algerian post-colonial relationship. Many Algerians called on Chirac to raise questions about the several thousands of people who died during the decades of civil conflict. Chirac's visit was the first official state visit by a French leader since Algerian independence.

As the United States waged war against Iraq, President Bouteflika vehemently declared his opposition. He charged that the war actually endangered Iraq as well as international institutions. Bouteflika also stated that the Iraqi people were going through the agony of a war that defied international legality.

In early May 2003, President Bouteflika dismissed Prime Minister Ali Benflis after increased differences over Benflis' intention of to participate in presidential elections scheduled for April 2004. Bouteflika then assigned Ahmad Oyahya to replace Benflis as Prime Minister.

Tragedy struck in late May 2003 when Algeria was hit with the worst earthquake the country had seen in more than two decades. Nearly 2,300 people were killed and more than 10,000 others injured in the devastating quake and several aftershocks that followed. Boumerdes and Alger were the two provinces worst hit by the earthquake, which registered 6.7 magnitude on the Richter scale and occurred on May 21, 2003. More than 200,000 of the country's inhabitants were left homeless.

In response, the Algerian government US$1.8 billion dollar budget to fund reconstruction of houses and infrastructures destroyed by the tremors. The government, at that time, said the money would be spent over the next two years to build 20,000 housing units to house an estimated 80,000 people of those left homeless. President Bouteflika also called for the enactment of a legislation making provisions to enhance the government's capacity to deal with natural disasters in the future.

Meanwhile, the European Union provided one million Euro to help victims of the earthquake. Several countries also pledged to help in Algeria's reconstruction, including Qatar, which offered to finance the construction of 1,500 houses for earthquake-stricken people. France granted Algeria a low-interest loan of between 30 million to 50 million Euros for the rehabilitation of damaged infrastructure.

On the national security front, the top two leaders of the outlawed Islamic Salvation Front (FIS) in Algeria were freed from custody in June 2003 after serving their 12-year sentences. Specifically, FIS leader Abassi Madani was released from house arrest and his deputy, Ali Belhadj, from prison. Shortly after their release, Algerian authorities announced the two men were totally banned from all political activity. The two men had been arrested in 1991 after their party called for a general

strike.

Then, in October 2003, Algeria's main political party pulled out of the government in a dispute over the next presidential election scheduled for April 2004. The National Liberation Front (FLN) accused President Bouteflika of seeking to stop its leader, Ali Benflis, from challenging him in 2004.

By late January 2004, the United States was voicing concern at the lack of a level political playing field in the run-up to the April 2004 presidential election. It was not the first time. In November 2003, United States Secretary of State Colin Powell had called for an honest, fair and transparent election in Algeria.

Human Rights

Needless to say, human rights have been severely neglected during these years of violence. Over the prior year, the numbers of killings, arrests and "disappearances" had diminished, but Algeria still remained the most violent country in the region. In 2001, human rights organizations were allowed access to the country, but that did little to scale down the criticism. Contrary to the military leaders' expectations, President Bouteflika's policy has not managed to stop criticism of the country's human rights practices. Instead, the civil concord policy has strengthened criticism by human rights organizations. Amnesty International has called upon the Algerian authorities to declare the amnesty null and void. The human rights organization argues that the amnesty extended to the armed militants will lead to no one ever being held accountable for the massacres, also including misdeeds on the government's side. Failing to carry out impartial investigations into the massacres, killings and disappearances of more than 150,000 people, is not only a serious violation of human rights, but such a policy will also undermine the legitimacy of the regime, and will impede the process of healing and reconciliation.

In early 2002, a European Union or EU delegation for human rights was twice refused visas to enter Algeria. In February, Algerian human rights activist Mohamed Smain was sentenced to a year in prison for defamation. That same month Amnesty International reported that witnesses to human rights abuses have often refused to speak to authorities on the abuses out of fear of consequences. Amnesty International suggested that, "reported cases of human rights abused may represent only the tip of the iceberg." Furthermore there is concern by rights groups that as Algeria strengthens diplomatic and economic ties with the West, the West will overlook or turn a blind eye to the grave human rights situation in the country.

Two books recently published in France by the 1997 Bentalha massacre survivor, Yous Nerrouallah, and retired Algerian officer Habib Souaidia, provide chilling indications of government involvement in the massacres. The Algerian government is considering whether to give political support to moves by former defense minister General Khaled Nezzar to sue a French TV channel

which aired a report, based on Souaidia's book, accusing senior Algerian military officers of being implicated in the killings routinely blamed on Islamists.

A power game between competing military and political fractions seems to be playing out behind the curtains on Algeria's political stage, and violence continues. Nobody has been brought to court for the attacks, and without those responsible for the murders of more than 100,000 civilians ever being brought to justice; the Algerian people's process of healing seems impossible. Algerian authorities are sitting on a demographic, political and economic time bomb. Dialogue with moderate Islamists and a cleaning-up process within the ruling elite, and possibly with a South African style "truth and reconciliation committee" are steps that will help Algeria. However, that remains unlikely given the political climate in Algeria, and the lack of international attention and pressure, into consideration.

In late December 2002, the International Human Rights Federation (FIDH) described the situation in Algeria as worrisome. "Unemployment is endemic, the shortage of housing acute, the bulk of the Algerian people are experiencing deplorable living conditions, while human and social rights are scorned," the human rights group declared in a statement.

The Berber Conflict

On April 18, 2001, the killing of a young Berber while in police detention in the Berber capital Tizi Ouzou unleashed a wave of protest and violence. Protesting the killing in particular, but also brutal police behavior and government neglect in general, frustrated young Berbers took to the streets. The Algerian police answered with ruthless repression, and more than 80 people were killed during demonstrations that continued throughout April, May and June, and which later spread to other parts of the country. At the end of May, protests culminated with 500,000 people taking to the streets of Tizi Ouzou, and 300,000 people in the capital, Algiers. The Algiers protest got out of control (some claimed the Algerian government planted infiltrators who instigated attacks and provoked fights), and Berber political leaders failed to hand over a letter of demands at the presidential palace.

The reasons behind the protests were many, and so were the conspiracy theories. While some claimed the demonstrations were staged to undermine the president, others believed the government used them to divert attention from the contentious human rights and the Islamists issues. However, a more plausible explanation was genuine frustration. Police brutality and government neglect have been prevalent in the Kabylia region while Algeria, at large, has suffered from severe economic problems. Unemployment in the early 2000s was estimated at 30 percent, the shortage of housing was acute, and Algeria's youth (more than 60 percent of the population is under 25) saw little hope for the future.

The demonstrations brought about a reshuffling of the government in June 2001, when a Berber-

based party pulled out of the government. The violence abated in July, but little qualitative change took place. An International Monetary Fund and World Bank inspired restructuring program did not alleviate ordinary Algerians' plight, and, rather, pushed several thousands out of jobs.

The Berber political ranks have also been split between the moderates who have been willing to make compromises with the government, and the those who refuse to negotiate. Nevertheless, in October 2001, the government agreed to confer official status upon to the Berber language as part of a package of concessions.

In the run-up to the 2002 legislative election, the situation in the Kabylia region became extremely volatile. Despite the President Bouteflika mandating the Berber language of Tamazight to be recognized as a national language, the Berbers were relentless in their demands for greater human rights, economic opportunity and cultural recognition. In March 2002, Berber activists began demanding a boycott of the legislative elections and continued widespread anti-government demonstrations.

The 2002 and 2004 Elections

On May 30, 2002, Algeria held legislative elections. Over ten thousand candidates from twenty-three political parties and 1,266 independent candidates vied for 389 parliamentary seats. Five political parties boycotted the election, these parties include the Socialist Forces Front and the Rally for Culture and Democracy, both pro-Berber political parties; the Republican National Alliance; the Movement of Democrats and Socialists, and the Socialist Worker's Party.

In the weeks leading up to the poll, the election atmosphere was clouded by a rash of terrorist bombings and massacres. Rebel Islamic militants terrorized Algiers and its surrounding towns. Just before polls opened on May 30, 23 nomads were massacred near a village west of Algiers. On voting day, security forces were visible in Algiers and as a result, voting day there ended up being relatively peaceful.

While the government had been actively encouraging the electorate to vote; widespread voter apathy led to a low voter turnout. The feelings of hopelessness and government distrust are not singular to the Kabylia region; many voters across the country expected the vote to be rigged, as it had been in past elections. There was a deep feeling that no matter the outcome of the poll, in the end, no real change or opportunity would come to Algeria.

Unlike in Algiers, the Kabylia region was virtually shut down in a general strike. Protesters burned ballot boxes and blocked roads to prevent votes from being cast. Bands of young men clashed with police on election day. One person was killed and several dozen were injured in the region. Only two percent of the Kabylia electorate voted in the elections.

Nationwide, the voter turnout was at 46 percent (with an estimated 17.9 million voters) -- the lowest voter turnout since Algeria's independence. It was becoming increasingly clear that over half the Algerian population rejects the government's integrity.

In the end, the National Liberation Front won 199 of the 389 seats. The National Democratic Rally received 48 seats, a significant drop from the 155 parliamentary seats it formerly held. The Islamic-oriented Movement for National Reform placed third with 43 seats while 38 went to the other Islamist party, Peace Society Movement (MSP). The extreme left Workers party got 21 seats. A total of 39 incumbent legislators retained their constituencies while 25 women made their entry into parliament.

Opposition parties -- two of which represented Berbers -- called the election a farce and rejected the results.

Prime Minister Ali Benflis was re-appointed after tendering the collective resignation of his government to make room for a fresh cabinet following the elections. Moments after submitting the resignation, President Bouteflika re-appointed Benflis and requested him to form a new government. Benflis, leader of the National Liberation Front, said at the time he would invite other parties to join in a coalition government, saying "the multi-faceted crisis in the country cannot be solved by a single party."

By-elections to fill positions of city councils were scheduled in Kabylia to take place before the end of March 2003. Some 16.7 million Algerian voters were expected to go to the polls to elect local government representatives for city councils and prefectures.

Over 32,600 candidates were vying for 1,960 seats in prefectures where 24 political parties have fielded most of the candidates but there were several independents. At the municipal level there were 13,981 seats to be filled. In all, 22 parties backed 119,614 candidates, but there were also 488 independent candidates in the race for the seats.

These elections are held once every five years and enable the party with the greatest number of seats to control the Senate. They were originally to be held in October 2002 but were cancelled in 60 communes in Kabylia due to demonstrations in the region. Algerian electoral law provides for by-elections within 45 days, but officials postponed the polls because of Ramadan and the usual harsh winter in that part of Algeria.

In May 2003, Benflis, who was now in a political power struggle with the president, was replaced with Ahmed Ouyahia of the National Democratic Rally as the new head of government.

By October 2003, Algeria's main political party had pulled out of the government in a dispute over the next presidential election scheduled for April 2004. The National Liberation Front (FLN) accused President Bouteflika of seeking to stop its leader, Ali Benflis, from challenging him in

2004.

By late January 2004, the United States was voicing concern at the lack of a level political playing field in the run-up to the April 2004 presidential election. It was not the first time. In November 2003, United States Secretary of State Colin Powell had called for an honest, fair and transparent election in Algeria.

A call for an election boycott in Kabylie, the homeland of Algeria's Berber minority, was sparking fears in March 2004 that the April presidential vote would be no more credible than the last of its kind. This time authorities promised a vote that would be a model of openness and regularity. However, the Berbers and several opposition candidates remained skeptical. Ali Benflis, a key Bouteflika rival, was quoted as saying, "Great suspicion of fraud and manipulation hangs over this electoral moment."

In early February 2004, Benflis and nine other politicians set up an "anti-fraud front." When officially announcing his candidacy on Feb. 22, 2004, Bouteflika promised to organize a "regular, transparent and credible vote." In an effort to prove his sincerity, Boutflika set up a national election watchdog to guarantee transparency, ordered the administration to stay neutral and also invited international observers to the polls. In the end, some 120 international observers were present. However, Benflis was not comforted and dismissed the pledge as "an alibi to cover fraudulent actions."

In the run-up to the elections, the five opposition candidates accused the president of having exploited his control of state television, the courts and the treasury to gain unfair advantages over them. But Western diplomats present in Algiers allege the poll appeared to be the fairest since multi-party politics was introduced in 1999.

Ultimately, when the elections were held on April 9, 2004, President Bouteflika was re-elected in a landslide -- reportedly winning 83 percent of the votes cast. Benflis received just 8 percent of the votes and was claiming "massive fraud." Supporters of Bouteflika flooded the streets of Algiers while riot police firing tear gas at a crowd trying to hold a protest in Algiers.

According to the Interior Ministry, the national turnout rate was about 58 percent, about 2 percentage points lower than in the last presidential election.

Developments in 2005 and 2006

At the start of 2005, Algerian authorities said that they had arrested Nourredine Boudiafi , the head of the rebel group,
Armed Islamic Group (GIA); they also said that his deputy had been killed and the group was largely vanquished.

Early 2005 also saw the government attempt to meet some of the ongoing demands of Berbers by committing to greater investment in the region of Kabylia and more recognition of the Tamazight language.

In March 2005, an official report was released, which found that the country's security forces were responsible for the disappearances of more than 6,000 people during the civil war that plagued Algeria in the 1990s. With the report sparking hot debate and spurring the possibility of renewed tensions, attention turned to the need of establishing a sense of stability across the country.

In a referendum held on Sept. 29, 2005, Algerians voted overwhelmingly to approve a government peace plan. Indeed, 97 percent of voters affirmed the peace plan. In the shadow of the voting result were questions about the veracity of the outcome. Journalists on the ground in Algiers said they saw only a few voters entering polling stations, while the government claimed that voter turnout was 79 percent.

The plan has been aimed at ending the country's state of civil war. Called the Charter for Peace and National Reconciliation, the plan followed on the heels of a 1999 vote in favor of reconciliation and proposed the granting of amnesty to Islamic militants. Specifically, militants would be pardoned, with the exception of those responsible for mass murder, bombings and rapes, and the sentences of those already in prison would be shortened. The plan would also offer compensation to families of victims.

Opposition groups were hoping for a different result and urged a boycott. They warned that without justice, there could be no reconciliation. They also pointed to the lives tens of thousands of lives lost in the conflict. Meanwhile, families of victims complained that the plan would absolve those responsible. Human rights groups, such as Amnesty International, similarly argued the plan would prevent crimes from being investigated and would absolve not only Islamic militants, but also the military, which was believed to be partially responsible for the bloody violence of the last decade.

In March 2006, the government of Algeria released the first wave of almost 2,000 Islamic militants from imprisonment. The prisoner amnesty was officially approved by President Abdelaziz Bouteflika's government in February 2006 following the 2005 referendum discussed just above.

For his part, President Bouteflika has characterized the plan as the only way for Algeria to progress. Other supporters of the amnesty program have said that the measures will help build a climate of rapprochement in a country plagued by years of brutal violence. Certainly, the program was welcomed by many war-weary Algerians tired of the bloodshed that cost the country more than 150,000 lives.

In September 2006, Rabah Kedir, the head of the banned Islamic Salvation Front (FIS), returned home to Algeria from self-imposed exile and called on still-warring elements of the former militant movement to finally disarm.

Despite these overtures towards peace and stability, the close of 2006 was marred with violence. In September 2006, a bomb explosion hit a bus, injuring several people employed with an American oil company and killing one man. The attack was attributed to the Islamic extremist enclave, the Salafist Group for Preaching and Combat (GSPC), which itself called for attacks against foreign nationals.

Meanwhile, on the political front, President Bouteflika replaced head of government, Ahmed Ouyahia, with Abdelaziz Belkhadem in May 2006 amidst political disagreements. Ouyahia, as noted above, was the leader of the National Democratic Rally, which was part of the ruling coalition, while Belkhadem, was a member of the National Liberation Front Party (FLN) -- the leading party within the ruling coalition. For his part, Belkhadem said that he would proposed constitutional changes that would facilitate the president's prospects in running for a third term in office.

Late 2006 saw elections to the Senate, which were won by the ruling party. Indeed, the Front pour la Libération Nationale (National Liberation Front or FLN), won 29 seats from among those up for re--election. The Rassemblement National pour la Démocratie (National Rally for Democracy or RND) garnered 12 seats of the portion being contested, while the Islamic Mouvement de la Société pour la Paix (Society for Peace Movement or MSP), took three seats and the Rally for Culture and Democracy or RCD won one seat. It should be noted that the in the Senate, or the Council of Nations, is composed of 144 seats, one-third of the which appointed by the president, and two-thirds of which are elected by indirect vote; to serve six-year terms; the constitution requires half the council to be renewed every three years.

Developments in 2007

In January 2007, a clash between Islamist militias and Algerian security forces led to the deaths of 15 people in the eastern area of Batna. The clashes were spurred after militants launched a rocket attack on an army post, thus killing five soldiers. The army responded with a counter-attack in which 10 Islamists died. It was believed that the Islamist militias were part of an umbrella organization called "al-Qaida in the Islamic Maghreb." The group was once known as Salafist Group for Preaching and Combat (GSPC), which was allegedly responsible for the bombing of a bus in late 2006.

In mid-February 2007, a series of bombs exploded in north-eastern Algeria, killing six people and injuring several more. The apparent targets included seven police stations in Kabylia,

approximately 62 miles or 100 kilometers from the capital city of Algiers. According to government sources, five of the seven bombs appeared to have been detonated from vehicles. The aforementioned al-Qaida affiliated group, "al-Qaida Organization in the Islamic Maghreb," was said to be responsible for these and other recent attacks in Algeria in the first part of 2007. The coordinated nature of the attacks seemed consistent with the tactics of the terrorist enclave, al-Qaida.

These incidents marked something of a change in the Algerian landscape, which had been regarded as calm terrain in recent years. Another shift was manifest by the use of posters in north-central Algeria calling on people to pass on information that could be used to fight terrorists. In this way, security forces were employing means used in the fight against radical Islam in the 1990s when authorities called on the general population to help gather key information.

April 2007 saw violent gun battles between the Algerian military and militant Islamists, and resulted in the deaths of at least 15 people. Among the dead were nine Algerian soldiers and six militant Islamists. The fighting took place after armed Muslim insurgents ambushed a military patrol in the Zaccar forest, just west of the capital city of Algiers. The incident appeared to be another manifestation of the upsurge in violent attacks by Muslim insurgents in recent months.

On April 11, 2007, there were two apparent terrorist bombings in the Algerian capital city of Algiers. One bomb exploded close to the office of the prime minister, while the other exploded at a police station. Both attacks resulted in the deaths of approximately 25 people, while more than 160 people were injured.

The terrrorist group, al-Qaida in the Maghreb, was reported to have claimed responsibility for the attacks, which came a day after Moroccan authorities said that they had foiled a terror plot in that country. In Morocco, three suspects trying to elude police detonated the explosives strapped to their bodies, while a fourth suspect was shot to death by the authorities in hot pursuit.

Algerian Prime Minister Abdelaziz Belkhadem was not hurt in the attack on the government building, but characterized the bombings as "cowardly and criminal." The country has been plagued by a spate of violence since the start of the year, most of which has been attributed to the main extremist Islamic rebel enclave, the Salafist Group for Preaching and Combat (GSPC). As noted above, that group changed its name to the al-Qaida in the Islamic Maghreb.

The attacks in Algiers came a day after the authorities in neighbouring Morocco said they had foiled a plot to target foreign and strategic interests by suicide bombers. Three suspects blew themselves up after being pursued by the authorities, and a fourth was shot dead by police. But that foiled plot was followed by another suicide bombing in Morocco that left one woman injured. It also followed clashes with militants in Tunisia earlier in the year. Collectively, these attacks raised the specter of violence at the hands of Islamic extremists in North Africa.

On May 16, 2007, Algerian voters went to the polls to cast their votes in parliamentary elections. On election day, candidates from more than 20 political parties were contesting the 389 parliamentary seats at stake. Notably absent from the list of eligible contenders were Islamist parties who have been legally prohibited from participating in the political spectrum after years of civil war. With this ban in place, Islamist militants called for a boycott of the elections.

The election occurred on the heels of a series of bomb attacks across the country. In one such attack in Constantine, one person was killed and five others were injured. As noted above, a month earlier, the capital city of Algiers saw bloody bomb attacks. Officials attributed the bombings to Islamist extremists aimed at sabotaging the country's democratic system. As well, the pre-election period was marked by violent clashes between the military and armed groups.

Noureddine Yazid Zerhouni, Algeria's Interior Minister, encouraged voters to go to the polls in high numbers as a pro-active means of responding to the latest increase in violence. Nevertheless, turnout was low at only 35 percent and preliminary results suggested that no political party won an absolute majority. Those preliminary results, however, did not hold up as the counting continued.

Instead, the results were as follows: Front pour la Libération Nationale (National Liberation Front or FLN), along with its allies in the ruling coalition, secured control over 249 seats in total -- a majority of the 389 seats in the People's National Assembly. The FLN won 23 percent and 136 seats, while Rassemblement National pour la Démocratie (National Rally for Democracy or RND) garnered 10.3 percent and 61 seats, and the moderate Islamic Mouvement de la Société pour la Paix (Society for Peace Movement or MSP), took 9.6 percent and 52 seats. The radical Parti du Travail (Workers' Party or PT), acquired 5.1 percent and 26 seats, as well as the distinction of being the largest opposition entity in parliament. Rally for Culture and Democracy or RCD acquired 3.4 pecent and 19 seats; Front National Algerien (Algerian National Front or FNA) gathered 4.2 percent and 13 seats; independents secured 9.8 percent and 33 seats, while others took the remaining 34.6 percent and 49 seats. In this way, the ruling party won an absolute majority.

The election results were not without controversy. Apart from the low level of turnout, which placed the election at risk for its legitimacy to be questioned, there were also some complaints about irregularities. Indeed, the National Electoral Monitoring Commission sent a letter to President Abdelaziz Bouteflika expressing concern about such irregularities. For some critics, these concerns, in conjunction with the low level of voter participation, appeared to contradict the government's position that the elections had been successful.

As expected following the elections, Prime Minister Abdelaziz Belkhadem of Algeria resigned from power. President Abdelaziz Bouteflika accepted the resignation of the government and left Belkhadem in place as head of government at the helm of a caretaker government with a reduced cabinet. By early June 2007, President Bouteflika re-appointed Belhadem as the head of

government. The prime minister then formed a new government.

In July 2007, Algeria saw more violence when a suicide bomber detonated explosives at military barracks located close to Bouira. Approximately ten people were killed as a result.

September 2007 began in Algeria with a series of terror attacks by Islamic terrorists. On September 6, 2007, a suicide bombing in the town of Batna to the south east of Algiers left more than 20 people dead. Victims included those gathered in a crowd awaiting a visit by the president. Just days later on September 8, 2007, a truck bomb at naval barracks in the port city of Dellys left more than 30 people dead. Al-Qaida in the Maghreb -- a reconstituted version of the extremist Islamic Salvation Front, which was responsible for decades of civil war -- claimed responsibility for both attacks. They were also responsible for terror attacks in the capital city of Algiers, and were blamed for the killing at the military barracks at Bouira, some months prior.

By Sept. 9, 2007, public outrage in Algeria was at a high and provoked mass protests as thousands of people took to the streets in Algiers and other Algerian cities to participate in peace rallies. Protestors were also making clear their support for President Bouteflika -- a possible target in one of the two September attacks -- as well as their condemnation of terror tactics. To these ends, protestors chanted slogans in support of the president and denouncing terrorism.   Among those participating was Prime Minister Abdelaziz Belkhadim.

The protest peace rallies had been organized by the Algerian Workers' General Union (UGTA). Abdelmajid Sidi Said, the head of the UGTA, said in an interview with the media that the current landscape in Algeria was to be distinguished from the situation a decade earlier, which was marked by war and bloodshed. Warning that the people of Algeria would not accept that path again, he said, "Algeria of 2007 is different from Algeria of the year 1997. Algeria is united against terrorism. The period of the '90s is over."

About 10 days after the series of attacks plagued Algeria at the start of the month, mid-September 2007 saw a bomb exploded just in front of a police compound in Zemmouri, to the east of the capital city of Algiers. At least three people died as a result, while survivors suffered massive injuries. In two cases, victims had to have their legs amputated. While there was no immediate claim of responsibility, there was heavy speculation that the group al-Qaida in the Islamic Maghreb, which claimed responsibility for earlier attacks, was also responsible for this one.

Approximately one week later, another bombing in Algeria left nine people wounded. The latest incident ensued in Bouira, to the south east of the capital city of Algiers. Foreign workers -- two from France and one from Italy, as well as a local Algerian driver, and five Algerian police escorts -- were among the casualties. As has been the case in most of these attacks, the group al-Qaida in the Maghreb claimed responsibility.

On Dec. 11, 2007, a car bomb exploded in the Algerian capital of Algiers, shattering the front of the building housing the United Nations (U.N.) refugee agency in that city. The building housing the U.N. Development Program was also damaged. At least 11 U.N. employees were killed in the blast. A second bomb exploded at the Algerian Constitutional Council, killing students in a bus passing. Although the initial death toll in the twin attacks was said to be 26 people, emergency personnel warned that more than 60 people likely died. In addition, close to 180 people were injured. There were also reports of some U.N. employees being pulled from the wreckage alive. Nevertheless, it was the worst attack on a U.N. installation since 2003 when militants bombed the U.N. offices in Baghdad, Iraq just after the United States-led invasion of that country.

U.N. General Ban Ki-moon characterized the act of terrorism as "an abjectly, cowardly strike." U.N. High Commissioner for Refugees, Antonio Guterres, said, "This is of course a target for those that have a completely nihilist vision of today's world." As was the case in the last terror attacks in Algeria in September 2007, the group al-Qaida in the Maghreb claimed responsibility. The group said the U.N. building was an "international infidels' den" and noted that it had carried out the attack in honor of one of its militants who died in clashes with Algerian troops.

Developments in 2008

The start of 2008 saw a suicide attack in Algeria at a police station to the east of the capital city of Algiers. At least four police officers were killed as a result and more than 20 people were wounded. It was yet another act of terrorism in the North African country, which has experienced a surge of violence ever since the main Islamist extremist group transformed itself into al-Qaida in the Islamic Maghreb at the start of 2007.

In May 2008, the Algerian president was looking toward a third term in office. To that end, the Algerian government proposed several constitutional amendments to extend the term of President Abdulaziz Bouteflika past 2009. Because of a 2007 assassination attempt by suspected al-Qaida operatives as well as reports of health issues for the 70-year old leader, there were concerns about the stability of the country should the president continue on for another term. One proposal included a provision for the nomination of a vice president, who would have to be approved by the parliament of Algeria. There were at least four other proposals on the table for discussion at the time.

At the start of June 2008, double explosions at a train station in Algeria left at least a dozen people dead. A French citizen was among the dead. Both bombs exploded in quick succession in the town of Beni Amrane, located in the in Boumerdes region to the east of the Algerian capital of Algiers. The attacks came only days after a roadside bomb killed six soldiers returning to their barracks, and another bombing targeted barracks in Algiers. All three incidents were blamed on the aforementioned group, al-Qaida in the Islamic Maghreb. For his part, French Foreign Minister

Bernard Kouchner strongly condemned the attack saying, "I want to express my feeling of disgust and my absolute condemnation of this blind terrorist violence that nothing can justify." He also applauded the Algerian government for its efforts to fight terrorism.

In the first part of August 2008, northern Algeria was hit by suicide bomb. Eight people were reported to have been killed as a result and about 20 were injured in the blast. The attack took place in the northern Algerian city of Zemmouri, located about 31 miles (50 kilometers) to the east of the capital city of Algiers, and well-known as a popular summer times seaside destination. The blast came from a vehicle that was packed with explosives and the target appeared to be a police station. While there was no immediate claim of responsibility, this attack came only one week after 20 people were injured in another suicide car bombing of a police station in Tizi Ouzou, which was also located in northern Algeria. Al-Qaida in the Maghreb claimed responsibility for the Tizi Ouzou attack and was therefore suspected in connection with the Zemmouri attack as well.

In the last week of August 2008, a car bombing at a paramilitary police training college, located at Issers to the east of Algiers, left 43 people dead and 38 others wounded. The attacker drove an explosives-laden car right into the entrance of the college campus, effectively targeting pupils waiting outside to take examinations. Interior Minister Yazid Zerhouni went to the scene of the devastating bombing and said that the attack was "an act against Algerians." Overcome with emotion, the Algerian politician said, "May God punish them for the crime they have committed against these youngsters, and their country." This particular attack came around the same time of another incident whereby Islamist militants reportedly ambushed eight policemen, three soldiers and a civilian near to the town of Skikda in the eastern part of the country. As before, although there was no formal claim of responsibility, these attacks have been blamed on Islamic insurgents whose violent attacks have plagued Algeria for decades.

By November 2009, attention had returned to the domestic political sphere when the parliament of Algeria approved constitutional   changes paving the way for President Bouteflika to run for a third term in office.

Election of 2009

On Feb. 2, 2009, Algerian President Abdelaziz Bouteflika announced he would run for a third presidential term in the forthcoming elections. At a rally in the capital of Algiers, the president addressed cheering supporters and said that he would stand as an independent candidate to contest the elections, which were scheduled to take place on April 9, 2009. Explaining his desire to continue the work he had started as president, Bouteflika that he wanted "to pursue the implementation of my program, notably national reconciliation," which had seen much success, manifest by thousands of Islamist rebels laying down arms. The program, which was not without controversy, included amnesty for former militants and was aimed at healing the wounds of an

Islamic insurgency that plagued the North African country in the 1990s. Bouteflika's ambitions were not unexpected as the Algerian parliament passed a constitutional amendment to lift a two-term presidential limit in November 2008 (as noted above), effectively removing the main obstacle preventing him from running for re-election.

By March 2009, six presidential candidates in Algeria began their respective election campaigns for the votes of Algerians. Bouteflika nonetheless appeared to be the favorite with an eye on victory at hand. Indeed, since the start of the campaign, Bouteflika held several rallies in five main cities. Several supporters expressed appreciation of the president's efforts to lead the country out of the traumatizing political turmoil and terrorist violence of past years. Indeed, in his 10 years in office, Bouteflika has gained a reputation as a staunch advocator of peace and national reconciliation. On the issues, the incumbent president promised to continue this policy to help restore social stability. He also promised to accelerate social and economic development. On the matter of national security, the incumbent president excoriated extremists, saying that Algeria's development was not possible without peace and stability.

All five candidates challenging Bouteflika have said there should be fresh faces at the helm. Clearly, that chorus for change is a direct alternative to the president's call for the continuation of the current path. The other five candidates contesting the election were as follows:

- Louisa Hanoune (considered to be Bouteflika's strongest rival). The Workers Party leader -- a left-wing Trotskyist --has been sacked and imprisoned several times for her political activism. Hanoune was a founder and president of an association for gender equality in law in 1989.

- Mohamed Djahid Younsi, leader of the Islamist El Islah party (expressed desire for a face-to-face debate with Bouteflika).

- Moussa Touati, leader of the he Algerian National Front (FNA), which was established in June 1998.

- Ali Fawzi Rebaine, leader of the Ahd 54 party

- Belaid Mohammed Said is running as an independent because his Freedom and Justice Party (PLJ) is not authorized.

Note: If no candidate captures a clear majority, then a run-off election would be held in two weeks (later in April 2009).

On election day, overall voter turnout was around 75 percent, according to the Ministry of State of the Interior and Local Communities. With the votes counted, it was quickly apparent that President Abdelaziz Bouteflika won a third term in a landslide victory with 90.24 percent of the vote share.

Later in the year, on December 29, 2009, elections to the Council of the Nation were held since

the constitution requires half the council to be renewed every three years. In this legislative chamber, one-third of the members are typically appointed by the president, while two-thirds are elected by indirect vote. The election result did not significantly change the chamber's composition other than the additon of a new party and independents to the fold.

Special Report: Unrest of 2011

Background --

In the first week of January 2011, violent protests broke out in the Algerian capital of Algiers and rioting soon spread to other cities and towns. At issue was the public's outcry over food inflation, unemployment, and housing shortages, as well as broader frustration over the lack of political freedom and the government's inability to adequately tackle social and economic problems facing the country. There were reports that government buildings and banks in the eastern part of the country had been vandalized. With an eye on dispersing the angry, stone-throwing protesters, police fired tear gas and used water cannons in Algiers. Nevertheless, the riots appeared to be gaining steam by Jan. 7, 2011. For its part, the government called for Algerians to exercise restraint and stay calm.

By mid-January 2011, the government had instituted a package of price reductions valued at $225 million on fuel and goods sold at government shops. But on Jan. 22, 2011, seven policemen and an opposition member of parliament were injured when fresh clashes erupted in the capital city of Algiers at a demonstration organized by the opposition Rally for Culture and Democracy (RCD). Two of the wounded protesters were said to be in critical condition. The RCD had called for peaceful protests while the government warned against any such action, emphasizing the ban on marches and demonstrations in Algiers. A statement by the Algerian government read as follows: "Algerians should be vigilant and exercise wisdom and not respond to provocation that aims to disturb calm." It continued with warnings, "Marches in Algiers are not allowed" and "Any gathering on the street is considered a breach of public order."

An end to the state of emergency?

In early February 2011, Algerian President Abdelaziz Bouteflika announced during a government meeting that the country's state of emergency -- imposed in 1992 via presidential decree -- would soon be lifted. The president was quoted as saying that the state of emergency would be lifted in the "very near future." There was no indication if all the emergency laws would also be repealed. Nevertheless, the move to end the state of emergency was a clear nod to the demands of pro-reform protesters who had been registering their discontent in the streets for several weeks. The move meant that protests would now be allowed, although there was a prevailing ban in Algiers. President Bouteflika explained that the state of emergency had been imposed only "for the

purposes of the fight against terrorism, and it is this reason only which has justified maintaining it on a legal basis." The move may have also been geared towards avoiding the systematic mass action gripping Egypt in the first part of 2011, and in the aftermath of the pro-democracy protests that drove Tunisian President Ben Ali from office.

On Feb. 12, 2011, coming on the heels of the successful "Nile Revolution" in Egypt, anti-government protesters took to the streets again. Algerian riot police were quick to action and dispersed the crowds of thousands of people who defied a government ban on gatherings, which was in effect for Algiers. Then a day later, an Algerian opposition coalition called National Coordination for Change and Democracy -- composed of an opposition party, civil society groups, and some trade unionists -- announced that they intended to hold demonstrations in the capital every Saturday until they could bring about a change of government. As promised, on Feb. 19, 2011, anti-government protesters once again took to the streets of Algiers numbering in the area from several hundreds to one thousand. As before, they were dispersed by police in riot gear but not before an opposition leader -- Tahar Besbes of the Rally for Culture and Democracy (RCD) -- was injured due to beatings from police. It should be noted that several opposition parties did not attend this rally as they were seemingly not aligned with the aforementioned opposition coalition.

While disconcerting for Algerian President Bouteflika, it should be noted that anti-government forces in this country have had a difficult time coalescing its ranks and drawing them out to protests in markedly large numbers on a regular basis. Of course, over time, such dynamics can change. In the meanwhile, the president was expected to carry out comprehensive changes in cabinet, in a pro-active bid to depress the political pressure on his government.   To this end, on Feb. 22, 2011, the Algerian cabinet adopted an order to end the national state of emergency (discussed above), which had been in effect for close to two decades. Opposition forces have accused the Algerian government of using the state of emergency to limit freedom of expression and to suppress the liberties of the Algerian citizenry. As with the cabinet changes, this move was aimed at quelling the spirit of unrest spreading across the country. Algeria's state of emergency was officially lifted on Feb. 24, 2011.

Promise of reform --

In mid-April 2011, months after Algeria's state of emergency was ended, Algerian President Bouteflika offered a national address in which he outlined a plan for constitutional reform. Contained within the speech was a promise to amend the constitution and "strengthen democracy," as well as proposed changes to electoral law, with the intent of widening the sphere of political participation, and also the relaxing of legislation governing journalists' and bloggers' rights to express themselves. To achieve these ends, the president intended to establish a constitutional commission, which would be charged with drafting the various measures. These efforts appeared to be part of an ongoing plan to avoid the kind of unrest plaguing the region. That being said, it should be noted that whereas political discontent in other countries in the region has concentrated on the demand for democratization, in Algeria, the chief grievance spurring the

protests has centered on the economy.

Update for 2011

On Aug. 14, 2011, the Algerian city of Tizi Ouzou to the east of the capital was hit by a suicide bombing. An attacker tried to drive an explosives-laden truck into the police headquarters. Close to 30 people were injured as a result including four Chinese nationals. The location of the attack -- in the mountainous Kabylie region where al-Qaida in the Maghreb has held sway -- indicated that Algeria was again a victim of terrorism in the region. Only a month earlier in July 2011, another bomb targeted the police headquarters in the town of Bordj Maniel, which was located in close proximity to Tizi Ouzou. Al-Qaida in the Maghreb was quick to claim responsibility for that attack and was suspected for the August bombing in Tizi Ouzou.

It should be noted that al-Qaida in the Maghreb shares some of its roots with the armed wing of the Islamic Salvation Front (FIS), which became embroiled in a bloody and violent conflict with the Algerian government for several years. Although Algeria has seen the return to stability in recent times due to the government's national reconciliation policy, since 2007, an increasing number of violent incidences by extremist Islamists have augured a disturbing shift in the country's political terrain. Indeed, al-Qaida in the Maghreb, has been blamed for much of the recent violence.

2012 Parliamentary Elections

Parliamentary elections were expected to be held in Algeria on May 10, 2012. At stake would be the seats in one of the chambers of the bicameral parliament, which consists of the National People's Assembly (Al-Majlis al-Sha'abi al-Watani / Assemble Populaire Nationale) and the Council of the Nation (Al-Majlis al-Umma / Conseil de la Nation).

In the National People's Assembly, where seats would be up for grabs, members are elected by popular vote to serve five-year terms. The last elections were held in May 2007 and the National Libération Front (Front pour la Libération Nationale or FLN), along with its allies in the ruling coalition, secured control over 249 seats in total -- a majority of the 380-390 seats in the People's National Assembly. In the 2012 elections, there would be more than 460 seats at stake in this chamber.

It should be noted that there are also 114 seats in the Council of the Nation; one-third of the members are appointed by the president, two-thirds are elected by indirect vote. Members serve six-year terms but the constitution requires that half the council be renewed every three years. The last election was held in 2009 and the FLN won the plurality of the seats.

In early 2012, ahead of the May contest, over 150 Islamists in Algeria were in the process of launching a political initiative to contest the elections with a united list. They were hoping for a big win for their ranks and intensified political influence -- something they believed they have been denied for years.

Ahead of the vote, Algerian President Abdelaziz Bouteflika announced that Algeria would enact reforms and urged Algerians to "massively go to vote, so as to elect a legitimate and reliable parliament able to boost reforms underway and implement the constitutional amendments for a better tomorrow for Algeria." He continued, "The next election requires participation... If you want reforms and change, you have to act. The election is a way to make the right choice and elect the right man in the right place."

On the other side of the equation, three Islamist parties formed an alliance with an eye on ensuring that they were not fragmenting their constituencies at the polls. To this end, the Movement of Ennahda (Renaissance), the Movement of El Islah (Reform), and the Movement for Society of Peace (MSP), agreed to enter the upcoming electoral contest with unified list of candidates. They were expected, therefore, to see some gains at the polls. But subsequently, some of these Islamists were threatening to boycott the elections if there was evidence of fraud.

Of course, the political field was opening up as the Algerian Interior Ministry announced that three new parties had been authorized -- Party of Equity and Proclamation, Front of Good Governance, and El Djazairi Ennour Party.

Ultimately, the vote in Algeria was seen as a showdown between secular military-backed government parties and the Islamists, as well as a test for democracy and human rights. With an eye on preserving the integrity of the vote, the Algerian government invited about 100 international monitors to witness the elections.

Voting went off in a peaceful manner on May 10, 2012, suggesting a level of democratic maturity in Algeria. Voter turnout was 44 percent -- an increase from the low voter turnout of 37 percent in 2007. The 2012 elections outcome also showed that Algerian voters were supportive of the secular military-backed government parties as opposed to Islamists. To that end, the National Liberation Front (FLN) won 221 of the 462 seats in the new parliament. The National Democratic Rally, an alliance of moderate Islamists allied with the ruling party, claimed 70 seats. As well, the Islamist Green Alliance (composed of the Movement of the Society of Peace, Ennahda or Renaissance, and El-Islah or Reform) won 47 seats -- a significant drop from the 72 seats secured after the previous elections. Meanwhile, the secular Socialists took 21 seats, and the Worker's Party carried 20 seats. Independents took 19 seats while a handful of seats went to the Algerian National Front and the Islamist Front of Justice and Development respectively.

In response to the news that the elections resulted in a clear victory for the ruling party, Islamists

claimed "widespread fraud." However, election monitors from the European Union suggested that there were only few irregularities and that the elections went off in a transparent manner. Indeed, the vote was witnessed by international observers as well as representatives of the political parties in order to ensure transparency of the elections.

Note: Note that the Algeria Council of the Nation (upper house of parliament) voted to increase the number of parliamentary seats from 389 to 462, in keeping with population increases in certain provinces.

Political Update for 2012:

Note that in September 2012, Algerian President Abdelaziz Bouteflika appointed former Minister of Water Resources Abdelmalek Sellal as prime minister, in replacement of Ahmed Ouyahia. As set forth in a statement by the president's office: "In conformity with article 77 of the constitution, President Abdelaziz Bouteflika has terminated the functions of former Prime Minister Ahmed Ouyahia, as he tendered his resignation from the cabinet. President has appointed Abdelmalek Sellal as the new prime minister." Sellal was expected to now form his cabinet team, which would itself have to be validated by the president.

Special Report:

Siege at Algerian gas field ends with dozens dead; fears arise of new flare of Islamic Jihadist violence

In January 2013, an attack by Islamic extremist militants on a gas field in Algeria turned into an extended siege and a hostage crisis, ultimately resulting in a messy rescue operation by Algerian special forces that left dozens dead and raised fears about a new flare of global Jihadist violence.

The Islamic extremist militants were followers of Mokhtar Belmokhtar -- a warlord and militant linked with al-Qaida in northern Mali where French and other international forces were joining Mali's military in carrying out the operation against Ansar Dine and other Islamist extremists holding sway in that country. Indeed, the followers of Mokhtar Belmokhtar carrying out the attack in Algeria issued a statement making it clear that their assault on the gas field was launched in retaliation for France's intervention into Mali to repel the militants Islamists gaining a foothold there. Clearly, the Islamic Jihadist threat was no longer limited to the Middle East or South Asia; now, the terror threat to global security by Islamic extremists was emanating from an expanded terrain that now included Africa.

It should be noted that the In Amenas gas facility was "ground zero" of the unfolding terrorist

crisis. Situated at Tigantourine in the province of Illizi, to the south-east of the Algerian capital city of Algiers, the gas plant has been jointly administered by British Petroleum, headquartered in the United Kingdom, Norway's Statoil, as well as Algeria's state-owned oil company.

After the initial attack on Jan. 16, 2013, the Islamic extremist militants abducted hundreds of gas facility workers -- both local Algerian and international expatriate workers, sparking the hostage situation as well as the ensuing siege at the complex. The siege went on for four days and came to a conclusion when Algerian special forces stormed the massive industrial complex using overwhelming force, including the firing of missiles by helicopters. It seemed that when the militants threatened to kill the foreign nationals, the Algerian authorities decided it had to take immediate action. That hardline action by the Algerian authorities was consistent with its approach to dealing with Islamic extremists during the 10-year war in Algeria in the 1990s. Seven hostages were summarily killed at the hands of their captors on that final day of the siege, just ahead of the raid by Algerian special forces.

By Jan. 20, 2013, Algerian authorities were claiming that the crisis was over, albeit with bloody consequences in the form of a high death toll. That being said, some officials were acknowledging that the gas facility was not yet fully secured; indeed, Algerian forces were yet to ensure that no remaining militants were hiding in the industrial complex that housed the gas field workers. The death toll at this time was as follows: at least two dozen workers were dead along with more than a score of militants. Several foreign nationals from the United Kingdom, Norway, Romania, Japan, the Philippines, and the United States were believed to be among the dead although details about the casualty list remained hazy at the time of writing. The Algerian communications minister, Mohamed Saïd Oublaïd, warned in an interview with France 24 Television that the death toll was sure to increase saying, "I'm very afraid that the numbers are going to go up." To that end, by Jan. 21, 2013, Algerian officials said that 37 foreign nationals and 29 militants died in the gas-field seizure and at least three militants were captured alive. That being said, as many as 685 Algerians and 107 foreign nationals were reportedly rescued when Algerian special forces stormed the facility in Illizibi.

According to the Algerian interior ministry, machine guns, rifles, shotguns, mortars with shells, missiles with launchers, grenades, and rockets were all recovered from the gas field site. As well, Algerian Minister of Communication Mohamed Said in interviews with the media, the extremist Islamic militants originated from a number of Arab, African and non-African countries. Local media in Algeria expanded on this information, noting that the militants were from Mali, Mauritania, Niger, Libya, Algeria, Tunisia, Egypt, a Gulf country assumed to be Yemen, as well as Canada.

It should be noted that the militants' leader in initial taped footage said he was prepared to negotiate with Western and Algerian leaders if they ceased operations against Islamists in Mali -- the apparent motivation for their actions at the Algerian gas plant. Of course, no such negotiations ever took

place. Moreover, the emergence of audiotaped recordings took things to a new level since those messages included a warning from one terrorist leader, Abdel Rahman el-Nigeri, saying in Arabic that they intended to "slaughter" all Americans at the facility.

Given its own history dealing with extremist Islamists and religious militants, the Algerian government has held to a steadfast "no negotiations" policy with terrorists and opted for a hardline response that clearly yielded an unfortunate casualty list. Some observers were blaming the Algerian government and security forces for a botched response to the the siege and hostage crisis. They also pointed to the fact that there was virtually no comment from Algerian President Abdelaziz Bouteflika about the crisis. Nevertheless, French President Francois Hollande defended the Algerian authorities' actions, saying: "When you have people taken hostage in such large numbers by terrorists with such cold determination and ready to kill those hostages -- as they did -- Algeria has an approach which to me, as I see it, is the most appropriate because there could be no negotiation."

Meanwhile, United States President Barack Obama blamed the bloodshed on terrorists and promised future action against militant Islamists saying, "We will continue to work closely with all of our partners to combat the scourge of terrorism in the region." Outgoing United States Defense Secretary Leon Panetta warned there would be no relaxing in the effort to root out terrorism saying that the United States would target al-Qaida wherever militants from that terror enclave were located. British Prime Minister David Cameron offered a similar warning to Jihadists saying, "There is no justification for taking innocent life in this way. Our determination is stronger than ever to work with allies right around the world to root out and defeat this terrorist scourge and those who encourage it."

On Jan. 20, 2013, French Defense Minister Jean-Yves Le Drian signaled that although the crisis had seemingly ended, the challenge of dealing with extremist Islamic terrorists was not over. He characterized the abduction of Algerian and international expatriate workers at the gas field as "act of war." Clearly, the Islamic Jihadist threat was no longer limited to the Afghan-Pak region of South Asia or from familiar hotspots in the Middle East. Now, the terror threat to global security by Islamic extremists was emanating from an expanded terrain that now included Africa.

As discussed above, the attack in Algeria occurred just after France intervened into Mali to repel the Islamic extremist threat there. But the attack in Algeria also occurred only a few short months after the killing of United States Ambassador Christopher Stevens in Libya. Collectively, these incidences indicate a disturbing burgeoning threat of Jihadist terrorism from northern Africa. Yet they also reveal the underbelly of the so-called "Arab Spring" that toppled regimes in Tunisia, Egypt, and Libya, but also led to an increasingly entrenched and violent civil war in Syria. As noted by Robert Malley, the Middle East and North Africa director at the International Crisis Group in an interview with the New York Times, the Arab Spring opened up logistical opportunities for extremists and militants seeking to transport fighters or weapons across porous borders. Stated

differently, the Arab Spring allowed militants and extremists to take advantage of the new conditions to enact their Jihadist agenda. Meanwhile, with autocrats gone from the scene -- for example, with Qadhafi gone in Libya -- a given country might no longer be led by a "strongman" authority figure able to hold together a nation that it home to competing ethnic and tribal interests as well as wide swaths of ungovernable ground. In many senses, the democratic thrust has done less to achieve real political transformation as it has churned the turbulent political waves in complex parts of the world, often with deadly consequences.

Primer on 2014 presidential election in Algeria

A presidential election was scheduled to take place in Algeria on April 17, 2014. In Algeria, the president is both the chief of state and the head of government. The last presidential election was held in 2009 and ended in the re-election of long-serving President Abdelaziz Bouteflika, who has been in power since 1999 and was re-elected by popular vote for a five-year term in 2005 and again in 2009. In fact, the 2009 contest awarded Bouteflika with a landslide re-election victory of over 90 percent of the vote share.

Background --

A year earlier in April 2013, Algerian President Abdelaziz Bouteflika suffered a stroke and was seeking medical attention in France. Although Algerian Prime Minister Abdelmalek Sellal -- a stalwart of Bouteflika -- insisted that Bouteflika's condition "was not serious at all," the medical woes of the head of state nonetheless sparked anxieties about a future power struggle in the country.

Irrespective of Bouteflika's state of health, the president himself has indicated that he might step down from office ahead of the next presidential elections set for 2014. Political pundits have been fond of claiming that Bouteflika's exit from the political scene would usher in a new era of Algerian politics. But in actuality, Bouteflika -- one of the remaining veterans of the cadre who won Algeria's difficult war of independence against France -- was not keen to see the country ruled by someone outside his immediate circle of influence. Among the possibilities Bouteflika would like to see in the presidency was his younger brother. But that selection was unlikely to be blessed by the powerful and shadowy intelligence service of Algeria, known as the Department of Research and Security. Instead, this power base, referred to colloquially as "le pouvoir," has looked to former Prime Minister Ahmed Ouyahia to succeed Bouteflika.

It was to be determined if Bouteflika would relinquish his own grip on power ahead of 2014, and it would yet be seen which players would be contesting the presidential election. Bouteflika's theoretical successor -- much like Bouteflika himself -- would be charged with the ongoing security challenge of resurgent extremist Islamists. But of course, it was also possible that Bouteflika himself would be again contesting the forthcoming presidential race with an eye on holding the

reins of power.

The Election --

In 2014, Bouteflika made it clear that he intended to again contest the presidency. However, more than 40 other individuals were reportedly gathering the required signatures of eligible voters and elected officials in order to be able to stand as candidates in the presidential field. Note that despite health problems derived from a stroke, Bouteflika was regarded as the favorite in the contest and was campaigning on the basis of economic reforms and boosting foreign investment. He was also favored due to the fact that he was the establishment candidate in a country politically controlled by the dominant National Liberation Front, the military generals, and the business elite. Together this political base has been known in French as "Le Pouvoir" ("The Power") and have orchestrated the political landscape in Algeria to ensure the least amount of upheaval and with an eye on ensurin stability.

Bouteflika's re-election bid would indirectly be helped by the decision of several opposition parties, including Islamist parties and secular movements, to boycott the vote, which they have cast as a de facto coronation of the incumbent president.

With the ballots counted following the election on April 17, 2014, it came as no surprise that incumbent President Abdelaziz Bouteflika won re-election. The contest was not remotely competitive, with so many opposition parties boycotting it. As such, Bouteflika reportedly secured more than 81 percent of the vote share in an overwhelming victory. His closest rival, Ali Benflis, took just over 12 percent. Turnout for the election was 52 percent.

Update

On April 20, 2014, Islamic militants from the notorious terror enclace, al-Qaida in the Islamic Maghreb, ambushed a military convoy in the mountainous region to the east of the Algerian capital of Algiers, killing 14 soldiers. The soldiers were patrolling the region of Tizi Ouzou in search of Islamic militants when they were attacked -- with deadly consequences. The bloodshed came only days after President Abdelaziz Bouteflika was overwhelmingly re-elected to power. Ironically, Bouteflika's campaign and, indeed, his presidency, has emphasized the priority of stability and security in Algeria -- a country where the North African branch of the terrorist group, al-Qaida, has been increasingly operating and has been responsible for several attacks in recent years.

U.S. air strike in Libya kills Islamist terrorist Belmokhtar responsible for audacious 2013 attack on Algerian gas field

On June 15, 2015, it was reported that a United States air strike on the city of Ajdabiya in Libya had killed Mokhtar Belmokhtar -- the Algerian-born Islamist warlord and terrorist who was believed to be behind the attack at a gas plant in 2013 in Algeria. That attack involved the siege of the Amenas gas field, the kidnapping of 800 people and the deaths of dozens of victims -- many of whom were foreign nationals simply trying to make a living. Reports of Belmokhtar by Chadian forces had surfaced later in 2013 during an anti-terrorism operation in Mali, but were always regarded as spurious. The questionable nature of those claims was highlighted now in 2015 with the more definitive announcement from the United States authorities in which they made clear that Belmokhtar had been targeted in the 2015 strike in Libya discussed here. As noted by a spokesperson for the United States Pentagon, Colonel Steve Warren, "Belmokhtar has a long history of leading terrorist activities as a member of AQIM, is the operational leader of the al-Qaida-associated al-Murabitoun organization in north-west Africa, and maintains his personal allegiance to al-Qaida." For its part, the government of Libya said the United States strike against Belmokhtar had been carried out with its consent.

Algeria adopts package of constitutional reforms; provisions include presidential limits, expanded parliamentary powers, and linguistic rights for Berbers

In the second week of February 2016, Algeria adopted a package of constitutional reforms aimed at strengthening the country's democracy. Key provisions included in the reform package included term limits for presidents, ensuring that a president would only serve for two terms; increased parliamentary powers, including the right of the prime minister to be selected from the party with the most seats in parliament; the establishment of an independent electoral commissions, and the official recognition of the Amazigh language of the Berber people used in the northern part of Algeria. Of note was the fact that the presidential term limits provision would effectively reverse a 2008 law that facilitated the path for President Abdelaziz Bouteflika to run for two additional terms. A vote in the country's parliament formalized the measures with the overwhelming number of legislators voting in its favor. While there was a generally positive reception for the constitutional reforms, opposition parties noted that they did not go nearly far enough, and certainly would not mitigate the power and influence of either President Bouteflika's ruling party or the military.

Editor's Note:

Present-day Algeria was part of the Turkish Ottoman empire from the 16th century until its conquest by the French in 1830. The grueling struggle for independence began in 1954, headed by the National Liberation Front (FLN), which came to power with independence in 1962 and has dominated politics ever since.

Algeria's civil war began when the military canceled the second round of legislative elections in 1992, in which the extremist Islamic Salvation Front (AIS) -- the armed wing of the Islamic Salvation Front (FIS) -- was the expected winner. Insurgents and government forces then became embroiled for years in a brutal, bloody, and violent conflict, which left at least 200,000 people dead according to government statistics. In recent years, the country had seen some degree of calm and the return to stability. This level of stability has been helped to some degree by the government's decision to adopt a national reconciliation policy. However, since 2007, an increasing number of violent incidences by extremist Islamists have augured a disturbing shift in Algeria's political terrain. The FIS, now reconstituted in new form as al-Qaida in the Maghreb, has been blamed for much of the recent violence.

The start of 2011 brought civil unrest, sparking anxieties about the stability of Algeria. One key problem for the government of Algeria has been the national state of emergency, which was in effect for about two decades, since the aforementioned civil war. While the government has said that the state of emergency was needed to ensure national security, critics have accused of the authorities of exploiting the state of emergency, to the detriment of civil liberties. But after the attack on a gas field complex in Algeria in January 2013, the government of Algeria would have a powerful argument that the threat from extremist Islamists continued to plague the country. The April 2014 attack on a military convoy to the east of Algiers would only bolster that argument.

-- February 2016

Written by Dr. Denise Youngblood Coleman, Editor in Chief and Executive Vice President, www.countrywatch.com; see Bibliography for reference sources.

Political Risk Index

Political Risk Index

The **Political Risk Index** is a proprietary index measuring the level of risk posed to governments, corporations, and investors, based on a myriad of political and economic factors. The Political Risk Index is calculated using an established methodology by CountryWatch's Editor-in-Chief and is based on varied criteria* including the following consideration: political stability, political representation, democratic accountability, freedom of expression, security and crime, risk of conflict, human development, jurisprudence and regulatory transparency, economic risk, foreign

investment considerations, possibility of sovereign default, and corruption. Scores are assigned from 0-10 using the aforementioned criteria. A score of 0 marks the highest political risk, while a score of 10 marks the lowest political risk. Stated differently, countries with the lowest scores pose the greatest political risk. A score of 0 marks the most dire level of political risk and an ultimate nadir, while a score of 10 marks the lowest possible level of political risk, according to this proprietary index. Rarely will there be scores of 0 or 10 due to the reality that countries contain complex landscapes; as such, the index offers a range of possibilities ranging from lesser to greater risk.

Country	Assessment
Afghanistan	2
Albania	4
Algeria	6
Andorra	9
Angola	4
Antigua	8
Argentina	4
Armenia	4-5
Australia	9.5
Austria	9.5

Azerbaijan	4
Bahamas	8.5
Bahrain	6
Bangladesh	3.5
Barbados	8.5-9
Belarus	3
Belgium	9
Belize	8
Benin	5
Bhutan	5
Bolivia	5
Bosnia-Herzegovina	4
Botswana	7
Brazil	7
Brunei	7
Bulgaria	6
Burkina Faso	4
Burma (Myanmar)	4.5

Burundi	3
Cambodia	4
Cameroon	5
Canada	9.5
Cape Verde	6
Central African Republic	3
Chad	4
Chile	9
China	7
China: Hong Kong	8
China: Taiwan	8
Colombia	7
Comoros	5
Congo DRC	3
Congo RC	4
Costa Rica	8
Cote d'Ivoire	4.5
Croatia	7

Cuba	4-4.5
Cyprus	5
Czech Republic	8
Denmark	9.5
Djibouti	4.5
Dominica	7
Dominican Republic	6
East Timor	5
Ecuador	6
Egypt	5
El Salvador	7
Equatorial Guinea	4
Eritrea	3
Estonia	8
Ethiopia	4
Fiji	5
Finland	9
Fr.YugoslavRep.Macedonia	5

France	9
Gabon	5
Gambia	4
Georgia	5
Germany	9.5
Ghana	6
Greece	4.5-5
Grenada	8
Guatemala	6
Guinea	3.5
Guinea-Bissau	3.5
Guyana	4.5
Haiti	3.5
Holy See (Vatican)	9
Honduras	4.5-5
Hungary	7
Iceland	8.5-9
India	7.5-8

Indonesia	6
Iran	3.5-4
Iraq	2.5-3
Ireland	8-8.5
Israel	8
Italy	7.5
Jamaica	6.5-7
Japan	9
Jordan	6.5
Kazakhstan	6
Kenya	5
Kiribati	7
Korea, North	1
Korea, South	8
Kosovo	4
Kuwait	7
Kyrgyzstan	4.5
Laos	4.5

Latvia	7
Lebanon	5.5
Lesotho	6
Liberia	3.5
Libya	2
Liechtenstein	9
Lithuania	7.5
Luxembourg	9
Madagascar	4
Malawi	4
Malaysia	8
Maldives	4.5
Mali	4
Malta	8
Marshall Islands	6
Mauritania	4.5-5
Mauritius	7
Mexico	6.5

Micronesia	7
Moldova	5
Monaco	9
Mongolia	5
Montenegro	6
Morocco	6.5
Mozambique	4.5-5
Namibia	6.5-7
Nauru	6
Nepal	4
Netherlands	9.5
New Zealand	9.5
Nicaragua	5
Niger	4
Nigeria	4.5
Norway	9.5
Oman	7
Pakistan	3.5

Palau	7
Panama	7.5
Papua New Guinea	5
Paraguay	6.5-7
Peru	7
Philippines	6
Poland	8
Portugal	7.5
Qatar	7.5
Romania	5.5
Russia	5.5
Rwanda	5
Saint Kitts and Nevis	8
Saint Lucia	8
Saint Vincent and Grenadines	8
Samoa	7
San Marino	9
Sao Tome and Principe	5.5

Saudi Arabia	6
Senegal	6
Serbia	5
Seychelles	7
Sierra Leone	4.5
Singapore	9
Slovak Republic (Slovakia)	8
Slovenia	8
Solomon Islands	6
Somalia	2
South Africa	7
Spain	7.5
Sri Lanka	5
Sudan	3.5
Suriname	5
Swaziland	5
Sweden	9.5
Switzerland	9.5

Syria	2
Tajikistan	4.5
Tanzania	6
Thailand	6.5
Togo	4.5
Tonga	7
Trinidad and Tobago	8
Tunisia	6
Turkey	7
Turkmenistan	4.5
Tuvalu	7
Uganda	6
Ukraine	3.5-4
United Arab Emirates	7
United Kingdom	9
United States	9.5
Uruguay	8
Uzbekistan	4

Vanuatu	7
Venezuela	4
Vietnam	5
Yemen	3
Zambia	4.5
Zimbabwe	3

*Methodology

The Political Risk Index is calculated by CountryWatch's Editor-in-Chief and is based on the combined scoring of varied criteria as follows --

1. political stability (record of peaceful transitions of power, ability of government to stay in office and carry out policies as a result of productive executive-legislative relationship, perhaps with popular support vis a vis risk of government collapse)

2. political representation (right of suffrage, free and fair elections, multi-party participation, and influence of foreign powers)

3. democratic accountability (record of respect for political rights, human rights, and civil liberties, backed by constitutional protections)

4. freedom of expression (media freedom and freedom of expression, right to dissent or express political opposition, backed by constitutional protections)

5. security and crime (the degree to which a country has security mechanisms that ensures safety of citizens and ensures law and order, without resorting to extra-judicial measures)

6. risk of conflict (the presence of conflict; record of coups or civil disturbances; threat of war; threats posed by internal or external tensions; threat or record of terrorism or insurgencies)

7. human development (quality of life; access to education; socio-economic conditions; systemic concern for the status of women and children)

8. jurisprudence and regulatory transparency (the impartiality of the legal system, the degree of transparency within the regulatory system of a country and the durability of that structure)

9. economic conditions (economic stability, investment climate, degree of nationalization of industries, property rights, labor force development)

10. corruption (the degree of corruption in a country and/or efforts by the government to address graft and other irregularities)

Editor's Note:

As of 2015, the current climate of upheaval internationally -- both politically and economically -- has affected the ratings for several countries across the world.

North Korea, Afghanistan, Somalia, and Zimbabwe -- retain their low rankings.

Several Middle Eastern and North African countries, such as Tunisia, Egypt, Libya, Syria, Iraq and Yemen were downgraded in recent years due to political instability occurring in the "season of unrest" sweeping the region since 2011 and continuing today. The worst downgrades affected Syria where civil war is at play, along with the rampage of terror being carried out by Islamist terrorists who have also seized control over part of Syrian territory.   Iraq has been further downgraded due to the rampage of Islamist terrorists and their takeover of wide swaths of Iraqi territory. Libya has also been downgraded further due to its slippage into failed state status; at issue in Libya have been an ongoing power struggle between rival militias. Yemen continues to hold steady with a poor ranking due to continued unrest at the hands of Houthi rebels, secessinionists, al-Qaida in the Arabian Peninsula, and Islamic State. Its landscape has been further complicated by the fact that it is now the site of a proxy war between Iran and Saudi Arabia. Conversely, Tunisia and Egypt have seen slight upgrades as these countries stabilize.

In Africa, Zimbabwe continues to be one of the bleak spots of the world with the Mugabe regime effectively destroying the country's once vibrant economy, and miring Zimbabwe with an exceedingly high rate of inflation, debilitating unemployment, devolving public services, and critical food shortages; rampant crime and political oppression round out the landscape. Somalia also sports a poor ranking due to the continuing influence of the terror group, al-Shabab, which was not operating across the border in Kenya. On the upside, Nigeria, which was ineffectively dealing with the threat posed by the terror group, Boko Haram, was making some strides on the national security front with its new president at the helm. Mali was slightly upgraded due to its efforts to return to constitutional order following the 2012 coup and to neutralize the threat of separatists and Islamists. But the Central African Republic was downgraded due to the takeover of the

government by Muslim Seleka rebels and a continued state of lawlessness in that country. South Sudan -- the world's newest nation state -- has not been officially included in this assessment; however, it can be unofficially assessed to be in the vicinity of "3" due to its manifold political and economic challenges. Burkina Faso, Burundi and Guinea have been downgraded due to political unrest, with Guinea also having to deal with the burgeoning Ebola crisis.

In Europe, Ukraine was downgraded due to the unrest facing that country following its Maidan revolution that triggered a pro-Russian uprising in the eastern part of the country. Russia was also implicated in the Ukrainian crisis due to its intervention on behalf of pro-Russian separatists, as well as its annexation of the Ukrainian territory of Crimea. Strains on the infrastructure of southern and eastern European countries, such as Serbia, Croatia, and Hungary, due to an influx of refugees was expected to pose social and economic challenges, and slight downgrades were made accordingly. So too, a corruption crisis for the Romanian prime minister has affected the ranking of that country. Meanwhile, the rankings for Spain, Portugal, Ireland, and Italy were maintained due to debt woes and the concomitant effect on the euro zone. Greece, another euro zone nation, was earlier downgraded due to its sovereign debt crisis; however, no further downgrade was added since the country was able to successfully forge a bailout rescue deal with creditor institutions. Cyprus' exposure to Greek banks yielded a downgrade in its case.

In Asia, Nepal was downgraded in response to continuous political instability and a constitutional crisis that prevails well after landmark elections were held. Both India and China retain their rankings; India holds a slightly higher ranking than China due to its record of democratic representation and accountability. Increasing violence and political instability in Pakistan resulted in a downgrade for this country's already low rating. Meanwhile, Singapore retained its strong rankings due to its continued effective stewardship of the economy and political stability.

In the Americas, ongoing political and economic woes, as well as crime and corruption have affected the rankings for Mexico , Guatemala, and Brazil. Argentina was downgraded due to its default on debt following the failure of talks with bond holders. Venezuela was downgraded due to its mix of market unfriendly policies and political oppression. For the moment, the United States maintains a strong ranking along with Canada, and most of the English-speaking countries of the Caribbean; however, a renewed debt ceiling crisis could cause the United States to be downgraded in a future edition. Finally, a small but significant upgrade was attributed to Cuba due to its recent pro-business reforms and its normalization of ties with the Unitd States.

Source:

Dr. Denise Youngblood Coleman, Editor in Chief, CountryWatch Inc. www.countrywatch.com

Updated:

2015

Political Stability

Political Stability

The **Political Stability Index** is a proprietary index measuring a country's level of stability, standard of good governance, record of constitutional order, respect for human rights, and overall strength of democracy. The Political StabilityIndex is calculated using an established methodology* by CountryWatch's Editor-in-Chief and is based on a given country's record of peaceful transitions of power, ability of a government to stay in office and carry out its policies vis a vis risk credible risks of government collapse. Threats include coups, domestic violence and instability, terrorism, etc. This index measures the dynamic between the quality of a country's government and the threats that can compromise and undermine stability. Scores are assigned from 0-10 using the aforementioned criteria. A score of 0 marks the lowest level of political stability and an ultimate nadir, while a score of 10 marks the highest level of political stability possible, according to this proprietary index. Rarely will there be scores of 0 or 10 due to the reality that countries contain complex landscapes; as such, the index offers a range of possibilities ranging from lesser to greater stability.

Country	Assessment
Afghanistan	2
Albania	4.5-5
Algeria	5
Andorra	9.5
Angola	4.5-5

Antigua	8.5-9
Argentina	7
Armenia	5.5
Australia	9.5
Austria	9.5
Azerbaijan	5
Bahamas	9
Bahrain	6
Bangladesh	4.5
Barbados	9
Belarus	4
Belgium	9
Belize	8
Benin	5
Bhutan	5
Bolivia	6
Bosnia-Herzegovina	5
Botswana	8.5

Brazil	7
Brunei	8
Bulgaria	7.5
Burkina Faso	4
Burma (Myanmar)	4.5
Burundi	4
Cambodia	4.5-5
Cameroon	6
Canada	9.5
Cape Verde	6
Central African Republic	3
Chad	4.5
Chile	9
China	7
China: Hong Kong	8
China: Taiwan	8
Colombia	7.5
Comoros	5

Congo DRC	3
Congo RC	5
Costa Rica	9.5
Cote d'Ivoire	3.5
Croatia	7.5
Cuba	4.5
Cyprus	8
Czech Republic	8.5
Denmark	9.5
Djibouti	5
Dominica	8.5
Dominican Republic	7
East Timor	5
Ecuador	7
Egypt	4.5-5
El Salvador	7.5-8
Equatorial Guinea	4.5
Eritrea	4

Estonia	9
Ethiopia	4.5
Fiji	5
Finland	9
Fr.YugoslavRep.Macedonia	6.5
France	9
Gabon	5
Gambia	4.5
Georgia	5
Germany	9.5
Ghana	7
Greece	6
Grenada	8.5
Guatemala	7
Guinea	3.5-4
Guinea-Bissau	4
Guyana	6
Haiti	3.5-4

Holy See (Vatican)	9.5
Honduras	6
Hungary	7.5
Iceland	9
India	8
Indonesia	7
Iran	3.5
Iraq	2.5
Ireland	9.5
Israel	8
Italy	8.5-9
Jamaica	8
Japan	9
Jordan	6
Kazakhstan	6
Kenya	5
Kiribati	8
Korea, North	2

Korea, South	8.5
Kosovo	5.5
Kuwait	7
Kyrgyzstan	5
Laos	5
Latvia	8.5
Lebanon	5.5
Lesotho	5
Liberia	3.5-4
Libya	2
Liechtenstein	9
Lithuania	9
Luxembourg	9.5
Madagascar	4
Malawi	5
Malaysia	8
Maldives	4.5-5
Mali	4.5-5

Malta	9
Marshall Islands	8
Mauritania	6
Mauritius	8
Mexico	6.5-7
Micronesia	8
Moldova	5.5
Monaco	9.5
Mongolia	6.5-7
Montenegro	8
Morocco	7
Mozambique	5
Namibia	8.5
Nauru	8
Nepal	4.5
Netherlands	9.5
New Zealand	9.5
Nicaragua	6

Niger	4.5
Nigeria	4.5
Norway	9.5
Oman	7
Pakistan	3
Palau	8
Panama	8.5
Papua New Guinea	6
Paraguay	8
Peru	7.5
Philippines	6
Poland	9
Portugal	9
Qatar	7
Romania	7
Russia	6
Rwanda	5
Saint Kitts and Nevis	9

Saint Lucia	9
Saint Vincent and Grenadines	9
Samoa	8
San Marino	9.5
Sao Tome and Principe	7
Saudi Arabia	6
Senegal	7.5
Serbia	6.5
Seychelles	8
Sierra Leone	4.5
Singapore	9.5
Slovak Republic (Slovakia)	8.5
Slovenia	9
Solomon Islands	6.5-7
Somalia	2
South Africa	7.5
Spain	9
Sri Lanka	5

Sudan	3
Suriname	5
Swaziland	5
Sweden	9.5
Switzerland	9.5
Syria	2
Tajikistan	4.5
Tanzania	6
Thailand	6
Togo	5
Tonga	7
Trinidad and Tobago	8
Tunisia	5
Turkey	7.5
Turkmenistan	5
Tuvalu	8.5
Uganda	6
Ukraine	3.5-4

United Arab Emirates	7
United Kingdom	9
United States	9
Uruguay	8.5
Uzbekistan	4
Vanuatu	8.5
Venezuela	4.5-5
Vietnam	4.5
Yemen	2.5
Zambia	5
Zimbabwe	3

*Methodology

The Political Stability Index is calculated by CountryWatch's Editor-in-Chief and is based on the combined scoring of varied criteria as follows --

1. record of peaceful transitions of power (free and fair elections; adherence to political accords)

2. record of democratic representation, presence of instruments of democracy; systemic accountability

3. respect for human rights; respect for civil rights

4. strength of the system of jurisprudence, adherence to constitutional order, and good governance

5. ability of a government to stay in office and carry out its policies vis a vis risk credible risks of government collapse (i.e. government stability versus a country being deemed "ungovernable")

6. threat of coups, insurgencies, and insurrection

7. level of unchecked crime and corruption

8. risk of terrorism and other threats to national security

9. relationship with regional powers and international community; record of bilateral or multilateral cooperation

10. degree of economic strife (i.e. economic and financial challenges)

Editor's Note:

As of 2015, the current climate of upheaval internationally -- both politically and economically -- has affected the ratings for several countries across the world. The usual suspects -- North Korea, Afghanistan, and Somalia -- retain their low rankings. The reclusive and ultra-dictatorial North Korean regime, which has terrified the world with its nuclear threats, has exhibited internal instability. Of note was a cut-throat purge of hundreds of high ranking officials deemed to be a threat to Kim Jung-un. Despite their attempts to recover from years of lawlessness, war, and warlordism, both Afghanistan and Somalia continue to be beset by terrorism and turmoil. In Afghanistan, while international forces have seen success in the effort against the terror group, al-Qaida, the other Islamist extremist group, the Taliban, continues to carry out a vicious insurgency using terrorism. In Somalia, while the government attempts to do the nation's business, the terror group, al-Shabab continues to make its presence known not only in Somalia, but across the border into Kenya with devastating results/ Also in this category is Iraq, which continues to be rocked by horrific violence and terrorism at the hands of Islamic State, which has taken over wide swaths of Iraqi territory.

Syria, Libya, and Yemen have been added to this unfortunate echelon of the world's most politically unstable countries. Syria has been mired by the twin hazards of 1. a civil war as rebels oppose the Assad regime; and 2. the rampage of terror being carried out by Islamic State, which also seized control over vast portions of Syrian territory. Meanwhile, the post-Qaddhafi landscape of Libya has devolved into chaos as rival militias battle for control -- the elected government of the country notwithstanding. Rounding out this grim triad is Yemen, which was dealing with a Houthi rebellion, secesionists in the south, as well as the threat of terrorism from al-Qaida in the Arabian Peninsula as well as Islamic State, while also being the site of a proxy war between Shi'a Iran and Sunni Saudi Arabia.

Meanwhile, several Middle Eastern and North African countries, such as [Tunisia](), [Egypt](), and [Bahrain]() were downgraded in recent years due to political instability occurring in the "season of unrest" sweeping the region since 2011 and continuing today. All three of these countries have stabilized in recent years and have been upgraded accordingly. In [Bahrain](), the landscape had calmed. In [Egypt](), the secular military-backed government has generated criticism for its crackdown on the Muslim Brotherhood; however, the country had ratified the presidency via democratic elections and were on track to hold parliamentary elections as the country moved along the path of democratization. Perhaps the most impressive story was coming out of [Tunisia]() -- the country whose Jasmine Revolution sparked the entire Arab Spring -- and where after a few years of strife, a new progressive constitution was passed into law and a secular government had been elected to power. [Tunisia](), [Egypt](), and [Bahrain]() have seen slight upgrades as these countries stabilize.

In Africa, the [Central African Republic]() was downgraded the previous year due to the takeover of the government by Muslim Seleka rebels. Although the country has been trying to emerge from this crisis, the fact of the matter was that it was difficult to halt the precipitous decline into lawlessness in that country. [Zimbabwe]() has maintained its consistently poor ranking due to the dictatorial regime of Mugabe, who continues to hold a tight grip on power, intimidates the opposition, squashes dissent, and oppresses the white farmer population of the country. Moving in a slightly improved direction is [Nigeria](), which has sported abysmal ratings due to the government's fecklessness in dealing with the threat posed by the Islamist terror group, Boko Haram. Under its newly-elected government, there appears to be more of a concerted effort to make national security a priority action item. [Mali]() was also slightly upgraded due to its efforts to return to constitutional order following the 2012 coup and to neutralize the threat of separatists and Islamists. Political instability has visited [Burkina Faso]() and [Burundi]() as the leaders of those countries attempted to side-step constitutional limits to hold onto power. In [Burundi](), an attempted coup ensued but quelled, and the president won a (questionable) new term in office; unrest has since punctuated the landscape. In [Burkina Faso](), the political climate has turned stormy as a result of a successful coup that ended the rule of the president, and then a putsch against the transitional government. These two African countries have been downgraded as a result.

It should be noted that the African country of South [Sudan]() -- the world's newest nation state -- has not been officially included in this assessment; however, it can be unofficially assessed to be in the vicinity of "3" due to its manifold political and economic challenges. [Guinea]() has endured poor rankings throughout, but was slightly downgraded further over fears of social unrest and the Ebola heath crisis.

In Europe, [Ukraine]() was downgraded due to the unrest facing that country following its Maidan revolution that triggered a pro-Russian uprising in the eastern part of the country. [Russia]() was also implicated in the Ukrainian crisis due to its intervention on behalf of pro-Russian separatists, as

well as its annexation of the Ukrainian territory of Crimea. Serbia and Albania were slightly downgraded due to eruptions of unrest, while Romania was slightly downgraded on the basis of corruption charges against the prime minister. Spain, Portugal, Ireland, and Italy were downgraded due to debt woes and the concomitant effect on the euro zone. Greece, another euro zone nation, was downgraded the previous year due to its sovereign debt crisis; however, the country successfully forged a rescue deal with international creditors and stayed within the Euro zone. Greek voters rewarded the hitherto unknown upstart party at the polls for these efforts. As a result, Greece was actually upgraded slightly as it proved to the world that it could endure the political and economic storms. Meanwhile, Germany, France, Switzerland, the United Kingdom, the Netherlands, and the Scandinavian countries continue to post impressive ranking consistent with these countries' strong records of democracy, freedom, and peaceful transfers of power.

In Asia, Nepal was downgraded in response to continuous political instability well after landmark elections that prevails today. Cambodia was very slighly downgraded due to post-election instability that has resulted in occasional flares of violence. Despite the "trifecta of tragedy" in Japan in 2011 -- the earthquake, the ensuing tsunami, and the resulting nuclear crisis -- and the appreciable destabilization of the economic and political terrain therein, this country has only slightly been downgraded. Japan's challenges have been assessed to be transient, the government remains accountable, and there is little risk of default. Both India and China retain their rankings; India holds a slightly higher ranking than China due to its record of democratic representation and accountability. Increasing violence and political instability in Pakistan resulted in a downgrade for this country's already low rating.

In the Americas, Haiti retained its downgraded status due to ongoing political and economic woes. Mexico was downgraded due to its alarming rate of crime. Guatemala was downgraded due to charges of corruption, the arrest of the president, and uncertainty over the outcome of elections. Brazil was downgraded due to the corruption charges erupting on the political landscape, the stalling of the economy, and the increasingly loud calls for the impeachment of President Rousseff. Argentina was downgraded due to its default on debt following the failure of talks with bond holders. Venezuela was downgraded due to the fact that the country's post-Chavez government is every bit as autocratic and nationalistic, but even more inclined to oppress its political opponents. Colombia was upgraded slightly due to efforts aimed at securing a peace deal with the FARC insurgents. A small but significant upgrade was attributed to Cuba due to its recent pro-business reforms and its normalization of ties with the Unitd States. Meanwhile, the United States, Canada, Costa Rica, Panama, and most of the English-speaking countries of the Caribbean retain their strong rankings due to their records of stability and peaceful transfers of power.

In the Pacific, Fiji was upgraded due to its return to constitutional order and democracy with the holding of the first elections in eight years.

In Oceania, Maldives has been slightly downgraded due to the government's continued and rather

relentless persecution of the country's former pro-democracy leader - former President Nasheed.

Source:

Dr. Denise Youngblood Coleman, Editor in Chief, CountryWatch Inc. www.countrywatch.com

Updated:

2015

Freedom Rankings

Freedom Rankings

Freedom in the World

Editor's Note: This ranking by Freedom House quantifies political freedom and civil liberties into a single combined index on each sovereign country's level of freedom and liberty. The initials "PR" and "CL" stand for Political Rights and Civil Liberties, respectively. The number 1 represents the most free countries and the number 7 represents the least free. Several countries fall in the continuum in between. The freedom ratings reflect an overall judgment based on survey results.

Country	PR	CL	Freedom Status	Trend Arrow
Afghanistan	6 ?	6	Not Free	
Albania*	3	3	Partly Free	

Algeria	6	5	Not Free	
Andorra*	1	1	Free	
Angola	6	5	Not Free	
Antigua and Barbuda*	3 ?	2	Free	
Argentina*	2	2	Free	
Armenia	6	4	Partly Free	
Australia*	1	1	Free	
Austria*	1	1	Free	
Azerbaijan	6	5	Not Free	
Bahamas*	1	1	Free	
Bahrain	6 ?	5	Not Free ?	
Bangladesh*	3 ?	4	Partly Free	
Barbados*	1	1	Free	
Belarus	7	6	Not Free	
Belgium*	1	1	Free	
Belize*	1	2	Free	
Benin*	2	2	Free	
Bhutan	4	5	Partly Free	

Bolivia*	3	3	Partly Free	
Bosnia-Herzegovina*	4	3	Partly Free	
Botswana*	3 ?	2	Free	
Brazil*	2	2	Free	
Brunei	6	5	Not Free	
Bulgaria*	2	2	Free	
Burkina Faso	5	3	Partly Free	
Burma	7	7	Not Free	
Burundi*	4	5	Partly Free	⇑
Cambodia	6	5	Not Free	⇓
Cameroon	6	6	Not Free	
Canada*	1	1	Free	
Cape Verde*	1	1	Free	
Central African Republic	5	5	Partly Free	
Chad	7	6	Not Free	
Chile*	1	1	Free	
China	7	6	Not Free	
Colombia*	3	4	Partly Free	

Comoros*	3	4	Partly Free	
Congo (Brazzaville)	6	5	Not Free	⇓
Congo (Kinshasa)	6	6	Not Free	⇓
Costa Rica*	1	1	Free	
Cote d'Ivoire	6	5	Not Free	
Croatia*	1 ?	2	Free	
Cuba	7	6	Not Free	
Cyprus*	1	1	Free	
Czech Republic*	1	1	Free	
Denmark*	1	1	Free	
Djibouti	5	5	Partly Free	
Dominica*	1	1	Free	
Dominican Republic*	2	2	Free	⇓
East Timor*	3	4	Partly Free	
Ecuador*	3	3	Partly Free	
Egypt	6	5	Not Free	
El Salvador*	2	3	Free	
Equatorial Guinea	7	7	Not Free	

Eritrea	7	7 ?	Not Free	
Estonia*	1	1	Free	
Ethiopia	5	5	Partly Free	⇓
Fiji	6	4	Partly Free	
Finland*	1	1	Free	
France*	1	1	Free	
Gabon	6	5 ?	Not Free ?	
The Gambia	5	5 ?	Partly Free	
Georgia	4	4	Partly Free	
Germany*	1	1	Free	
Ghana*	1	2	Free	
Greece*	1	2	Free	
Grenada*	1	2	Free	
Guatemala*	4 ?	4	Partly Free	
Guinea	7	6 ?	Not Free	
Guinea-Bissau*	4	4	Partly Free	
Guyana*	2	3	Free	
Haiti*	4	5	Partly Free	

Honduras	4 ?	4 ?	Partly Free	
Hungary*	1	1	Free	
Iceland*	1	1	Free	
India*	2	3	Free	
Indonesia*	2	3	Free	
Iran	6	6	Not Free	⇓
Iraq	5 ?	6	Not Free	
Ireland*	1	1	Free	
Israel*	1	2	Free	
Italy*	1	2	Free	
Jamaica*	2	3	Free	
Japan*	1	2	Free	
Jordan	6 ?	5	Not Free ?	
Kazakhstan	6	5	Not Free	⇓
Kenya	4	4 ?	Partly Free	
Kiribati*	1	1	Free	
Kosovo	5 ?	4 ?	Partly Free ?	
Kuwait	4	4	Partly Free	

Kyrgyzstan	6 ?	5 ?	Not Free ?	
Laos	7	6	Not Free	
Latvia*	2	1	Free	
Lebanon	5	3 ?	Partly Free	
Lesotho*	3 ?	3	Partly Free ?	
Liberia*	3	4	Partly Free	
Libya	7	7	Not Free	
Liechtenstein*	1	1	Free	
Lithuania*	1	1	Free	
Luxembourg*	1	1	Free	
Macedonia*	3	3	Partly Free	⇑
Madagascar	6 ?	4 ?	Partly Free	
Malawi*	3 ?	4	Partly Free	
Malaysia	4	4	Partly Free	
Maldives*	3 ?	4	Partly Free	
Mali*	2	3	Free	
Malta*	1	1	Free	⇓
Marshall Islands*	1	1	Free	

Mauritania	6	5	Not Free	
Mauritius*	1	2	Free	
Mexico*	2	3	Free	
Micronesia*	1	1	Free	
Moldova*	3 ?	4	Partly Free	
Monaco*	2	1	Free	
Mongolia*	2	2	Free	⇑
Montenegro*	3	2 ?	Free ?	
Morocco	5	4	Partly Free	⇓
Mozambique	4 ?	3	Partly Free	
Namibia*	2	2	Free	
Nauru*	1	1	Free	
Nepal	4	4	Partly Free	
Netherlands*	1	1	Free	
New Zealand*	1	1	Free	
Nicaragua*	4	4 ?	Partly Free	
Niger	5 ?	4	Partly Free	
Nigeria	5	4	Partly Free	⇓

North Korea	7	7	Not Free	⇓
Norway*	1	1	Free	
Oman	6	5	Not Free	
Pakistan	4	5	Partly Free	
Palau*	1	1	Free	
Panama*	1	2	Free	
Papua New Guinea*	4	3	Partly Free	
Paraguay*	3	3	Partly Free	
Peru*	2	3	Free	
Philippines	4	3	Partly Free	⇓
Poland*	1	1	Free	
Portugal*	1	1	Free	
Qatar	6	5	Not Free	
Romania*	2	2	Free	
Russia	6	5	Not Free	⇓
Rwanda	6	5	Not Free	
Saint Kitts and Nevis*	1	1	Free	
Saint Lucia*	1	1	Free	

Saint Vincent and Grenadines*	2	1	Free	
Samoa*	2	2	Free	
San Marino*	1	1	Free	
Sao Tome and Principe*	2	2	Free	
Saudi Arabia	7	6	Not Free	
Senegal*	3	3	Partly Free	
Serbia*	2 ?	2	Free	
Seychelles*	3	3	Partly Free	
Sierra Leone*	3	3	Partly Free	
Singapore	5	4	Partly Free	
Slovakia*	1	1	Free	⇓
Slovenia*	1	1	Free	
Solomon Islands	4	3	Partly Free	
Somalia	7	7	Not Free	
South Africa*	2	2	Free	
South Korea*	1	2	Free	
Spain*	1	1	Free	
Sri Lanka*	4	4	Partly Free	

Sudan	7	7	Not Free	
Suriname*	2	2	Free	
Swaziland	7	5	Not Free	
Sweden*	1	1	Free	
Switzerland*	1	1	Free	⇓
Syria	7	6	Not Free	
Taiwan*	1 ?	2 ?	Free	
Tajikistan	6	5	Not Free	
Tanzania	4	3	Partly Free	
Thailand	5	4	Partly Free	
Togo	5	4 ?	Partly Free	
Tonga	5	3	Partly Free	
Trinidad and Tobago*	2	2	Free	
Tunisia	7	5	Not Free	
Turkey*	3	3	Partly Free	⇓
Turkmenistan	7	7	Not Free	
Tuvalu*	1	1	Free	
Uganda	5	4	Partly Free	

Ukraine*	3	2	Free	
United Arab Emirates	6	5	Not Free	
United Kingdom*	1	1	Free	
United States*	1	1	Free	
Uruguay*	1	1	Free	
Uzbekistan	7	7	Not Free	
Vanuatu*	2	2	Free	
Venezuela	5 ?	4	Partly Free	
Vietnam	7	5	Not Free	⇓
Yemen	6 ?	5	Not Free ?	
Zambia*	3	4 ?	Partly Free	
Zimbabwe	6 ?	6	Not Free	

Methodology:

PR and CL stand for political rights and civil liberties, respectively; 1 represents the most free and 7 the least free rating. The ratings reflect an overall judgment based on survey results.

? ? up or down indicates a change in political rights, civil liberties, or status since the last survey.
⇑ ⇓ up or down indicates a trend of positive or negative changes that took place but that were not sufficient to result in a change in political rights or civil liberties ratings of 1-7.

* indicates a country's status as an electoral democracy.

Source:

This data is derived from the latest edition of Freedom House's Freedom in the World 2010 edition.
Available at URL: http://www.freedomhouse.org

Updated:

Reviewed in 2015

Human Rights

Overview of Human Rights in Algeria

The situation in Algeria has been tense since an internal conflict began in 1992. Each year it is estimated that hundreds of innocent civilians die at the hands of security forces and armed groups claiming to be Islamist. Though the casualty rate has decreased from its 2002 peak of 1,500 civilians, it has not decreased to the point of being "residual" as Algerian officials claim. To this day, thousands of cases of torture, abduction, and killing committed by security forces, state-armed militia and armed groups remain uninvestigated. Mass impunity has prevailed for the perpetrators of these and other human rights abuses in this conflict which has to date claimed the lives of over 100,000 people.

State controlled media remain the official voice in Algeria. Massive demonstrations and massacres are rarely brought to light. Though private media outlets exist, they are censored at the will of those in power. Opposition party politicians rarely receive any media coverage due to this censorship.

While some contact with the outside world is growing as technologies such as the Internet and cell phones proliferate across the globe, many due to their financial status still do not have access to the most basic necessities. Protests over a wide range of political, social, and economic issues, such as job and housing shortages, corruption, and access to water are often either forbidden or forcibly broken up.

Algerian human rights organizations and lawyers are often at a loss due to the fear among victims and their families to come forward and admit atrocities against, let alone testify in a court that is likely corrupt. The advancement of human rights in Algeria is currently not a priority to the government.

Human Development Index (HDI) Rank:

See full listing of the Human Development Index located in the Social Overview of this report for this country's current rank.

Human Poverty Index Rank:

48th out of 103

Gini Index:

35.3

Life Expectancy at Birth (years):

74.26 years of age

Unemployment Rate:

22.5%

Population living on $1 a day (%):

N/A

Population living on $2 a day (%):

N/A

Population living beneath the Poverty Line (%):

25%

Internally Displaced People:

400,000-600,000

Note-Algeria is also home to over 100,000 refugees, mainly from the Western Sahara.

Total Crime Rate (%):

N/A

Health Expenditure (% of GDP):

Public: 3.2%

% of GDP Spent on Education:

5.3%

Human Rights Conventions Party to:

• International Convention on the Prevention and Punishment and Punishment of the Crime of Genocide
• International Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Racial Discrimination
• International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights
• International Covenant on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights
• Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women
• Convention against Torture and Other Cruel, Inhuman or Degrading Treatment or Punishment
• Conventions on the Rights of the Child
• Convention relating to the Status of Refugees
• Rome Statute of the International Criminal Court

*Human Development Index (HDI) is a composite index that measures the level of well-being in 177 nations in the world. It uses factors such as poverty, literacy, life-expectancy, education, gross domestic product, and purchasing power parity to assess the average achievements in each nation. It has been used in the United Nation's Human Development Report since 1993.

*Human Poverty Index Ranking is based on certain indicators used to calculate the Human Poverty Index. Probability at birth of not surviving to age 40, adult literacy rate, population without sustainable access to an improved water source, and population below income poverty line are the indicators assessed in this measure.

*The Gini Index measures inequality based on the distribution of income or consumption. A value of 0 represents perfect equality (income being distributed equally), and a value of 100 perfect inequality (income all going to one individual).

*The calculation of the total crime rate is the % of the total population which has been effected by property crime, robbery, sexual assault, assault, or bribery (corruption) related occurrences.

Government Functions

Constitution

The Republic of Algeria gained independence in 1962, and its first constitution was promulgated in 1976. A 1989 revision created a multiparty electoral system. The current version of the Algerian constitution came into being after the revisions of 1996.

Note:

In the second week of February 2016, Algeria adopted a package of constitutional reforms aimed at strengthening the country's democracy. Key provisions included in the reform package included term limits for presidents, ensuring that a president would only serve for two terms; increased parliamentary powers, including the right of the prime minister to be selected from the party with the most seats in parliament; the establishment of an independent electoral commissions, and the official recognition of the Amazigh language of the Berber people used in the northern part of Algeria. Of note was the fact that the presidential term limits provision would effectively reverse a 2008 law that facilitated the path for President Abdelaziz Bouteflika to run for two additional terms.   A vote in the country's parliament formalized the measures with the overwhelming number of legislators voting in its favor. While there was a generally positive reception for the constitutional reforms, opposition parties noted that they did not go nearly far enough, and certainly would not mitigate the power and influence of either President Bouteflika's ruling party or the military.

Executive Authority

At the executive level of government, an elected president acts as the head of state of Algeria. The president is president elected by popular vote for a five-year term. The head of government is the prime minister who also leads the cabinet. The prime minister is appointed by the president; the prime minister, in turn, appoints the cabinet, which is also called the "Council of Ministers."

Legislative Authority

The legislative branch of government consists of a bicameral Parliament, composed of the 389-member "Al-Majlis ash-Shaabi al-Watani" (National People's Assembly) and the 144-member "Al-

Majlis al-Umma" (Council of the Nation.) The National People's Assembly members are elected by popular vote and serve five-year terms in multi-seat constituencies by proportional representation. The president appoints one-third of the members of the Council of the Nation, while two-thirds are elected to six-year terms by indirect voting through communal councils.

Judicial Authority

In terms of the judiciary, Algeria has a Supreme Court and an ad hoc Constitutional Court. Its legal system is based on French and Islamic law.

Administration

In terms of administrative governance, the country is divided into provinces.

Government Structure

Names:
conventional long form:
Democratic and Popular Republic of Algeria
(Al Jumhuriyah al-Jaza'iriyah ad Dimuqratiyah ash Shabiyah)
conventional short form:
Algeria (Al Jaza'ir)
local long form:
Al Jumhuriyah al Jaza'iriyah ad Dimuqratiyah ash Sha'biyah
local short form:
Al Jaza'ir

Type:
Republic

Executive Branch:
Chief of state and head of government:

President Abdelaziz Bouteflika (since April 16, 1999; re-elected in April 2004; re-elected again in April 2009; re-elected most recently in April 2014). The president is elected by popular vote for a five-year term.

Note on prime minister:
Note that in September 2012, Algerian President Abdelaziz Bouteflika appointed former Minister of Water Resources Abdelmalek Sellal as prime minister, in replacement of Ahmed Ouyahia. As set forth in a statement by the president's office: "In conformity with article 77 of the constitution, President Abdelaziz Bouteflika has terminated the functions of former Prime Minister Ahmed Ouyahia, as he tendered his resignation from the cabinet. President has appointed Abdelmalek Sellal as the new prime minister." Sellal was expected to now form his cabinet team, which would itself have to be validated by the president. In 2014, following the presidential election, Sellal convened a new government.

Cabinet:
Council of Ministers; appointed by the prime minister

Primer on presidential election in Algeria
April 17, 2014 --

A presidential election was scheduled to take place in Algeria on April 17, 2014. In Algeria, the president is both the chief of state and the head of government. The last presidential election was held in 2009 and ended in the re-election of long-serving President Abdelaziz Bouteflika, who has been in power since 1999 and was re-elected by popular vote for a five-year term in 2005 and again in 2009. In fact, the 2009 contest awarded Bouteflika with a landslide re-election victory of over 90 percent of the vote share.

Background --

A year earlier in April 2013, Algerian President Abdelaziz Bouteflika suffered a stroke and was seeking medical attention in France. Although Algerian Prime Minister Abdelmalek Sellal -- a stalwart of Bouteflika -- insisted that Bouteflika's condition "was not serious at all," the medical woes of the head of state nonetheless sparked anxieties about a future power struggle in the country.

Irrespective of Bouteflika's state of health, the president himself has indicated that he might step down from office ahead of the next presidential elections set for 2014. Political pundits have been fond of claiming that Bouteflika's exit from the political scene would usher in a new era of Algerian politics. But in actuality, Bouteflika -- one of the remaining veterans of the cadre who won Algeria's difficult war of independence against France -- was not keen to see the country ruled by someone outside his immediate circle of influence. Among the possibilities Bouteflika would like to

see in the presidency was his younger brother. But that selection was unlikely to be blessed by the powerful and shadowy intelligence service of Algeria, known as the Department of Research and Security. Instead, this power base, referred to colloquially as "le pouvoir," has looked to former Prime Minister Ahmed Ouyahia to succeed Bouteflika.

It was to be determined if Bouteflika would relinquish his own grip on power ahead of 2014, and it would yet be seen which players would be contesting the presidential election. Bouteflika's theoretical successor -- much like Bouteflika himself -- would be charged with the ongoing security challenge of resurgent extremist Islamists. But of course, it was also possible that Bouteflika himself would be again contesting the forthcoming presidential race with an eye on holding the reins of power.

The Election --

In 2014, Bouteflika made it clear that he intended to again contest the presidency. However, more than 40 other individuals were reportedly gathering the required signatures of eligible voters and elected officials in order to be able to stand as candidates in the presidential field. Note that despite health problems derived from a stroke, Bouteflika was regarded as the favorite in the contest and was campaigning on the basis of economic reforms and boosting foreign investment. He was also favored due to the fact that he was the establishment candidate in a country politically controlled by the dominant National Liberation Front, the military generals, and the business elite. Together this political base has been known in French as "Le Pouvoir" ("The Power") and have orchestrated the political landscape in Algeria to ensure the least amount of upheaval and with an eye on ensurin stability.

Bouteflika's re-election bid would indirectly be helped by the decision of several opposition parties, including Islamist parties and secular movements, to boycott the vote, which they have cast as a de facto coronation of the incumbent president.

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Legislative Branch:
Bicameral parliament:
Consists of the Council of the Nation (Al-Majlis al-Umma / Conseil de la Nation) and the National People's Assembly (Al-Majlis al-Sha'abi al-Watani / Assemble Populaire Nationale)

Council of the Nation (Al-Majlis al-Umma / Conseil de la Nation):
144 members; one-third of the members appointed by the president, two-thirds elected by indirect vote; members serve six-year terms; the constitution requires half the council to be renewed every three years.

National People's Assembly (Al-Majlis al-Sha'abi al-Watani/ Assemble Populaire Nationale):
462 members; elected by popular vote to serve five-year terms

Primer on 2012 parliamentary elections in Algeria:
May 10, 2012 --

Parliamentary elections were expected to be held in Algeria in May 2012. At stake would be the seats in one of the chambers of the bicameral parliament, which consists of the National People's Assembly (Al-Majlis al-Sha'abi al-Watani / Assemble Populaire Nationale) and the Council of the Nation (Al-Majlis al-Umma / Conseil de la Nation).

In the National People's Assembly, where seats would be up for grabs, members are elected by popular vote to serve five-year terms. The last elections were held in May 2007 and the National Liberation Front (Front pour la Libération Nationale or FLN), along with its allies in the ruling coalition, secured control over 249 seats in total -- a majority of the 380-390 seats in the People's National Assembly. In the 2012 elections, there would be more than 460 seats at stake in this chamber.

It should be noted that there are also 114 seats in the Council of the Nation; one-third of the members are appointed by the president, two-thirds are elected by indirect vote. Members serve six-year terms but the constitution requires that half the council be renewed every three years. The last election was held in 2009 and the FLN won the plurality of the seats.

In early 2012, ahead of the May contest, over 150 Islamists in Algeria were in the process of launching a political initiative to contest the elections with a united list. They were hoping for a big win for their ranks and intensified political influence -- something they believed they have been denied for years.

Ahead of the vote, Algerian President Abdelaziz Bouteflika announced that Algeria would enact reforms and urged Algerians to "massively go to vote, so as to elect a legitimate and reliable parliament able to boost reforms underway and implement the constitutional amendments for a better tomorrow for Algeria." He continued, "The next election requires participation... If you want reforms and change, you have to act. The election is a way to make the right choice and elect the right man in the right place."

On the other side of the equation, three Islamist parties formed an alliance with an eye on ensuring that they were not fragmenting their constituencies at the polls. To this end, the Movement of

Ennahda (Renaissance), the Movement of El Islah (Reform), and the Movement for Society of Peace (MSP), agreed to enter the upcoming electoral contest with unified list of candidates. They were expected, therefore, to see some gains at the polls. But subsequently, some of these Islamists were threatening to boycott the elections if there was evidence of fraud.

Of course, the political field was opening up as the Algerian Interior Ministry announced that three new parties had been authorized -- Party of Equity and Proclamation, Front of Good Governance, and El Djazairi Ennour Party.

Ultimately, the vote in Algeria was seen as a showdown between secular military-backed government parties and the Islamists, as well as a test for democracy and human rights. With an eye on preserving the integrity of the vote, the Algerian government invited about 100 international monitors to witness the elections.

Voting went off in a peaceful manner on May 10, 2012, suggesting a level of democratic maturity in Algeria. Voter turnout was 44 percent -- an increase from the low voter turnout of 37 percent in 2007. The 2012 elections outcome also showed that Algerian voters were supportive of the secular military-backed government parties as opposed to Islamists. To that end, the National Liberation Front (FLN) won 221 of the 462 seats in the new parliament. The National Democratic Rally, an alliance of moderate Islamists allied with the ruling party, claimed 70 seats. As well, the Islamist Green Alliance (composed of the Movement of the Society of Peace, Ennahda or Renaissance, and El-Islah or Reform) won 47 seats -- a significant drop from the 72 seats secured after the previous elections. Meanwhile, the secular Socialists took 21 seats, and the Worker's Party carried 20 seats. Independents took 19 seats while a handful of seats went to the Algerian National Front and the Islamist Front of Justice and Development respectively.

In response to the news that the elections resulted in a clear victory for the ruling party, Islamists claimed "widespread fraud." However, election monitors from the European Union suggested that there were only few irregularities and that the elections went off in a transparent manner. Indeed, the vote was witnessed by international observers as well as representatives of the political parties in order to ensure transparency of the elections.

Note: Note that the Algeria Council of the Nation (upper house of parliament) voted to increase the number of parliamentary seats from 389 to 462, in keeping with population increases in certain provinces.

Judicial Branch:
"Cour Supreme" Supreme Court; there is also an ad hoc Constitutional Court

Constitution:

Nov. 19, 1976, effective Nov. 22, 1976; revised Nov. 3, 1988, Feb. 23, 1989, and Nov. 28, 1996; referendum approving the revisions of Nov. 28, 1996 was signed into law Dec. 7, 1996

Note:

In February 2016, Algeria adopted a package of constitutional reforms aimed at strengthening the country's democracy. Key provisions included in the reform package included term limits for presidents, ensuring that a president would only serve for two terms; increased parliamentary powers, including the right of the prime minister to be selected from the party with the most seats in parliament; the establishment of an independent electoral commissions, and the official recognition of the Amazigh language of the Berber people used in the northern part of Algeria. Of note was the fact that the presidential term limits provision would effectively reverse a 2008 law that facilitated the path for President Abdelaziz Bouteflika to run for two additional terms. A vote in the country's parliament formalized the measures with the overwhelming number of legislators voting in its favor. While there was a generally positive reception for the constitutional reforms, opposition parties noted that they did not go nearly far enough, and certainly would not mitigate the power and influence of either President Bouteflika's ruling party or the military.

Legal System:
Based on French and Islamic law; socialist; judicial review of legislative acts in ad hoc Constitutional Council composed of various public officials, including several Supreme Court justices; has not accepted compulsory ICJ jurisdiction

Administrative Divisions:
48 provinces (wilayas, singular – wilaya): Adrar, Ain Defla, Ain Temouchent, Alger, Annaba, Batna, Bechar, Bejaia, Biskra, Blida, Bordj Bou Arreridj, Bouira, Boumerdes, Chlef, Constantine, Djelfa, El Bayadh, El Oued, El Tarf, Ghardaia, Guelma, Illizi, Jijel, Khenchela, Laghouat, Mascara, Medea, Mila, Mostaganem, M'Sila, Naama, Oran, Ouargla, Oum el Bouaghi, Relizane, Saida, Setif, Sidi Bel Abbes, Skikda, Souk Ahras, Tamanghasset, Tebessa, Tiaret, Tindouf, Tipaza, Tissemsilt, Tizi Ouzou, Tlemcen

Political Parties and Leaders:
Algerian National Front or FNA [Moussa TOUATI]; Algerian Popular Movement or MPA [Amara BENYOUNES]; Algerian Rally [Ali ZAGHDOUD]; Algeria's Hope Rally or TAJ [Amar GHOUL]; Dignity or El Karama [Mohamed BENHAMOU]; Front for Change or FC [Abdelmadjid MENASRA]; Front for Justice and Development or El Adala [Abdallah DJABALLAH]; Future Front or El Mostakbel [Abdelaziz BELAID]; Green Algeria Alliance or AAV (includes Movement for National Reform, Islamic Renaissance Movement, and Movement of the Society of Peace or

Hamas); Islamic Renaissance Movement or EnNahda Movement [Mohamed DHOUIBI]; Movement of the Society of Peace or MSP [Abderrazak MOKRI]; National Democratic Rally (Rassemblement National Democratique) or RND [Bensalah ABDELKADER]; National Liberation Front or FLN [Amar SAIDANI]; National Party for Solidarity and Development or PNSD; National Reform Movement or Islah [Djahid YOUNSI] (see Green Algeria Alliance); New Dawn Party or PFJ; New Generation or Jil Jadid [Soufiane DJILALI]; New Light Party [Bedreddine BELBAZ]; Oath of 1954 or Ahd 54 [Ali Fawzi REBAINE]; Party of Justice and Liberty [Mohammed SAID]; Rally for Culture and Democracy or RCD [Mohcine BELABBAS]; Socialist Forces Front or FFS [Mustafa BOUCHACHI]; Workers Party or PT [Louisa HANOUNE]

Note:
A law banning political parties based on religion was enacted in March 1997.

Suffrage:
18 years of age; universal

Principal Government Officials

Leadership and Cabinet

Pres.   Abdelaziz BOUTEFLIKA
Prime Min.   Abdelmalek SELLAL
Min. of Agriculture & Rural Development   Abdelwahab NOURI
Min. of Commerce   Amara BENYOUNES
Min. of Communication   Hamid GRINE
Min. of Culture   Nadia LABIDI
Min. of Energy   Youcef YOUSFI
Min. of Finance   Mohamed DJELLAB
Min. of Fisheries & Fishing Resources   Sid Ahmed FERROUKHI
Min. of Foreign Affairs   Ramtane LAMAMRA
Min. of Health, Population, & Hospital Reform   Abdelmalek BOUDIAF
Min. of Higher Education & Scientific Research   Mohamed MEBARKI
Min. of Housing, Urban Planning, & the City   Abdelmadjid TEBBOUNE
Min. of Industry & Mines   Abdesalam BOUCHOUAREB
Min. of Interior & Local Govts.   Tayeb BELAIZ
Min. of Justice & Keeper of the Seals   Tayeb LOUH

Min. of Labor, Employment, & Social Security   Mohamed GHAZI

Min. of National Defense   Abdelaziz BOUTEFLIKA

Min. of National Education   Nouria BENGHEBRIT

Min. of National Planning & Environment   Dalila BOUDJEMAA

Min. of National Solidarity, Family, & Women's Affairs   Mounia MESLEM

Min. of Postal Services & Information & Communication Technologies   Zohra DERDOURI

Min. of Public Works   Abdelkader KADI

Min. of Relations With the Parliament   Khelil MAHI

Min. of Religious Affairs & Endowments   Mohamed AISSA

Min. of Sports   Mohamed TAHMI

Min. of Tourism & Craft Industry   Nouria Yasmina ZERHOUNI

Min. of Transport   Amar GHOUL

Min. of Vocational Training   Nouredine BEDOUI

Min. of War Veterans (Moudjahidine)   Tayeb ZITOUNI

Min. of Water Resources   Hocine NECIB

Min. of Youth   Abdelkader KHOMRI

Min.-Del. to the Min. of Finance in Charge of the Budget   Hadji Baba AMMI

Min.-Del. to the Min. of Foreign Affairs in Charge of Maghreb & African Affairs   Abdelkader MESSAHEL

Sec. Gen. of the Govt.   Ahmed NOUI

Governor, Bank of Algeria   Mohamed LAKSACI

Ambassador to the US   Abdallah BAALI

Permanent Representative to the UN, New York   Sabri BOUKADOUM

-- as of 2015

Leader Biography

Leader Biography

Leader

The current president of Algeria is Abdelaziz Bouteflika, who was first sworn into office in 1999. He was re-elected in 2004, and again in 2009 and in 2014, by decisive margins in all cases.   See "Election Primer" below as regards the latest presidential contest.

Biography

Date of birth:

March 2, 1937

Place of Birth:

Oujda, Algeria

Civil status:

Unknown

Education:

No education past secondary studies

Positions:

1956 Joined the National Liberation Army

1962-1963 Minister of Youth, Sports and Tourism

1963 Elected member of the legislative assembly

1963-1979 Minister of Foreign Affairs

1964-1981 Member of the FLN Political Bureau

1965-1979 Member of the Revolutionary Council

1974-1975 Elected Chairman of the 29th UN General Assembly

1979-1980 Counsellor to the Press

1980-1987 Self-imposed exile to escape false corruption charges

1989 Elected member to the Central Committee of the FLN Congress

1990-Present Member of the National Council Moujahidin (National Liberation Army)

1999-Present President of Algeria (re-elected in 2004 to five year term)

Foreign Languages:

N/A

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Primer on 2014 presidential election in Algeria

April 17, 2014 --

A presidential election was scheduled to take place in Algeria on April 17, 2014. In Algeria, the president is both the chief of state and the head of government. The last presidential election was held in 2009 and ended in the re-election of long-serving President Abdelaziz Bouteflika, who has been in power since 1999 and was re-elected by popular vote for a five-year term in 2005 and again in 2009. In fact, the 2009 contest awarded Bouteflika with a landslide re-election victory of over 90 percent of the vote share.

Background --

A year earlier in April 2013, Algerian President Abdelaziz Bouteflika suffered a stroke and was seeking medical attention in France. Although Algerian Prime Minister Abdelmalek Sellal -- a stalwart of Bouteflika -- insisted that Bouteflika's condition "was not serious at all," the medical woes of the head of state nonetheless sparked anxieties about a future power struggle in the country.

Irrespective of Bouteflika's state of health, the president himself has indicated that he might step down from office ahead of the next presidential elections set for 2014. Political pundits have been fond of claiming that Bouteflika's exit from the political scene would usher in a new era of Algerian politics. But in actuality, Bouteflika -- one of the remaining veterans of the cadre who won Algeria's difficult war of independence against France -- was not keen to see the country ruled by someone outside his immediate circle of influence. Among the possibilities Bouteflika would like to see in the presidency was his younger brother. But that selection was unlikely to be blessed by the powerful and shadowy intelligence service of Algeria, known as the Department of Research and Security. Instead, this power base, referred to colloquially as "le pouvoir," has looked to former Prime Minister Ahmed Ouyahia to succeed Bouteflika.

It was to be determined if Bouteflika would relinquish his own grip on power ahead of 2014, and it would yet be seen which players would be contesting the presidential election. Bouteflika's theoretical successor -- much like Bouteflika himself -- would be charged with the ongoing security challenge of resurgent extremist Islamists. But of course, it was also possible that Bouteflika himself would be again contesting the forthcoming presidential race with an eye on holding the reins of power.

The Election --

In 2014, Bouteflika made it clear that he intended to again contest the presidency. However, more than 40 other individuals were reportedly gathering the required signatures of eligible voters and elected officials in order to be able to stand as candidates in the presidential field. Note that despite health problems derived from a stroke, Bouteflika was regarded as the favorite in the contest and was campaigning on the basis of economic reforms and boosting foreign investment. He was also favored due to the fact that he was the establishment candidate in a country politically

controlled by the dominant National Liberation Front, the military generals, and the business elite. Together this political base has been known in French as "Le Pouvoir" ("The Power") and have orchestrated the political landscape in Algeria to ensure the least amount of upheaval and with an eye on ensurin stability.

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Foreign Relations

General Relations

Algeria's own revolutionary tradition and its commitment to self-determination and nationalism historically have influenced its foreign policy. Pledged to upholding and furthering the revolution against imperialism, Algeria has been a prominent leader in both the region and the developing world. As time has passed, the ideological ambitions of the immediate post-independence years have been subordinated to more pressing economic and strategic interests. Even during the austere socialist years of Boumediene, economic factors played a significant role in determining the course of foreign policy toward both the East and West.

The 1976 National Charter redefined Algeria's foreign policy objectives, revoking the commitment

to Socialist revolution and shifting toward nonalignment in the world arena. The domestic situation, growing popular unrest, and decreasing government revenues and standard of living, limited the freedom of the government to commit itself externally. Focusing on issues of direct relevance to the domestic economy became the greatest priority.

By the late 1980s, the country's foreign policy became less about Africa and the world, and instead became more focused on the West and provincial concerns. This shift was clearly evidenced by Algeria's participation in the March 2000 NATO-sponsored Mediterranean dialogue on regional military and security issues. Participation in the forum required that Israeli and Algerian delegates meet in the same forum to discuss issues of common interest. Economic discussions in April 2000 between Algerian and British delegations concerning cooperation signaled Algeria's movement towards the West. Additional evidence of this change in foreign policy orientation was the country's revived bilateral relation with Spain, highlighted by the visit of then-Spanish Prime Minister Jose Maria Aznar to Algeria in July 2000.

Regional Relations:

Algeria is active in regional organizations. Algeria is a member of the Arab Maghreb Union, or UMA, along with Libya, Morocco, Mauritania, and Tunisia. Talks held in Algiers in July 2000 were aimed at resurrecting the moribund UMA and convening a summit some time in the autumn. Despite the terms of its charter requiring annual summits, the UMA has not held a full summit meeting for over six years.

Algeria is also a member of the Organization of African Unity with Bouteflika serving as the president of the OAU from 1999-2000. During his tenure, Bouteflika used his OAU position to bring Algeria front and center in brokering peace on the African continent. Towards this end, a summit was held in Algiers on April 30, 2000, to discuss peace in the Democratic Republic of Congo following the numerous breaches of the peace agreements signed in Lusaka, Zambia the previous year. In addition, the Ethiopian-Eritrean war was ended by virtue of a cease-fire agreement, which was negotiated and signed in Algiers on June 18, 2000.

Algeria is presently on cordial terms with most its neighbors. President Bouteflika has a history with Colonel Mu'ammar Al Qadhafi of Libya, dating back to Bouteflika's tenure as foreign minister under former president Boumedienne. Algeria also manages to engage in discussion and cooperation with its neighbor to the southwest, Mali, through the Algerian-Malian border committee created in 1994.

The Bouteflika regime however, faces a less than friendly situation with Morocco. These two countries have competed for regional hegemony in the Maghreb since they first obtained independence. Since 1994, relations between Algeria and Morocco have been particularly hostile.

In 1994, Algeria closed the border in retaliation against Moroccan actions after European tourists were attacked in a Marrakech hotel. Morocco blamed Algeria for the attack and implemented entry visas for Algerians crossing into Morocco. Presently, the ongoing dispute over Western Sahara lies at the heart of discord between Algeria and Morocco. Consistent with its self-image as guardian and benefactor of revolutionary and national liberation movements, Algeria has been the principal ally and supporter of the pro-independence POLISARIO front in its efforts to wrest sovereignty of Western Sahara from Morocco.

Algeria serves as the home base for approximately 170,000 Sahrawi refugees who live in camps in the southwest of the country near the city of Tindouf near the border with Western Sahara. Despite domestic problems, Algeria has remained the most vocal supporter of Sahrawi independence in the international community throughout the quarter-century Moroccan-Sahrawi conflict. An improvement in the climate between the two countries took place in November 2000, when Algerian Minister of Interior Noureddine Zerhouni visited Rabat for talks with his Moroccan counterpart on the two countries closed borders. In a small, but significant move, in November 2000, the two countries' presidents exchanged greetings on the phone for the Holy Month of Ramadan.

Other Significant Relations:

Algeria has maintained strong ties with France despite its contentious struggle for independence. These relations existed principally at the non-governmental economic level due to the acrimony that was a part of the Algerian independence experience.

In recent years, French-Algerian relations have improved. Most importantly, in June 2000, Bouteflika paid an official state visit to France, only the second by an Algerian leader since obtaining independence in 1962. While unsuccessful in getting Air France to resume service along the Algiers-Paris route, he did accomplish other important successes. During the visit, France agreed to write off US$60 million of Algerian debt. French companies were also committed to invest an equal sum in Algeria. Restrictions governing the visa requirements placed on Algerians visiting France were reduced.

However, France continues to be haunted by its conduct during the Algerian war. In November 2000, the French government decided to open French archives on the 1954-62 Algerian War to researchers who want to look into the French army's actions and accusations of torture against Algerian nationalists. The opening of the archives came as a response to an appeal raised by historians, Algerian nationalists and French pacifists to shed light on atrocities committed by French colonial troops in Algeria.

In August 2001, Algerians who fought on the side of France during the War of Independence filed

charges of crimes against humanity against the governments of France and Algeria. The plaintiffs claim Algerian authorities devised a systemic plan for their elimination after the war, and that France did nothing to prevent it.

In early 2003, French President Jacques Chirac traveled to Algeria for a historic visit to the former French colony. Chirac was greeted ecstatically by Algerians, despite the legacy of a difficult Franco-Algerian post-colonial relationship. Many Algerians called on Chirac to raise questions about the several thousands of people who died during the decades of civil conflict. Chirac's visit was the first official state visit by a French leader since Algerian independence.

Algeria has also sought to improve its relations with other countries of the world with whom relations have been strained. At the United Nations Millennium summit held in September 2000, Bouteflika and his Iranian counterpart, Mohammed Khatami, re-established relations that had been severed since 1993 after the Algerian army nullified the results of the election in which the Islamic Salvation Front emerged victorious. In the aftermath of that election, Algeria accused Iran of interfering in Algerian domestic politics by financing Islamists and planning the overthrow of the secular Algerian government.

Relations with the United States (U.S.)

In July 2001, President Bouteflika became the first Algerian President to visit the White House since 1985. This visit, followed by a second meeting in November 2001, a meeting in New York in September 2003, and President Bouteflika's participation at the June 2004 G8 Sea Island Summit, was indicative of the growing relationship between the United States and Algeria. Since the September 11, 2001, terrorist attacks in the United States, contacts in key areas of mutual concern, including law enforcement and counterterrorism cooperation, have intensified. Algeria publicly condemned the terrorist attacks on the United States and has been strongly supportive of international counterterrorism efforts. The United States and Algeria consult closely on key international and regional issues. The pace and scope of senior-level visits has accelerated. In April 2006, then-Foreign Minister Bedjaoui met with Secretary of State Condoleezza Rice, and Secretary Rice visited Algiers in September 2008. Secretary of State Hillary Clinton met with Algerian Foreign Minister Mourad Medelci, along with the Moroccan and Tunisian Foreign Ministers, on the margin of the March 2009 donor conference in Sharm-el-Sheik, Egypt. In December 2009, Algerian Foreign Minister Medelci met with Secretary Clinton in Washington, DC.

In 2007, U.S. direct investment in Algeria totaled $5.45 billion, mostly in the hydrocarbon sector. American companies also are active in the banking and finance, services, pharmaceuticals, medical facilities, telecommunications, aviation, seawater desalination, energy production, and information technology sectors. Algeria is the United States' second to third-largest trading partner in the Middle East/North African region. U.S. exports to Algeria totaled $1.2 billion in 2008, and U.S.

imports from Algeria reached $19.3 billion in 2008, primarily in the form of crude oil. In March 2004, President George W. Bush designated Algeria a beneficiary country for duty-free treatment under the Generalized System of Preferences (GSP). In July 2001, the United States and Algeria signed a Trade and Investment Framework Agreement, which established common principles on which the economic relationship is founded and forms a platform for negotiating other bilateral agreements. Within the framework of the U.S.-North African Economic Partnership (USNAEP), the United States provided about $1.0 million in technical assistance to Algeria in 2003. This program supported and encouraged Algeria's economic reform program and included support for World Trade Organization accession negotiations, debt management, and improving the investment climate. In 2003, USNAEP programs were rolled over into Middle East Partnership Initiative (MEPI) activities, which provide funding for political and economic development programs in Algeria. The U.S. Government continues to encourage Algeria to make necessary changes to accede to the World Trade Organization, move toward transparent economic policies, and liberalize its investment climate. The U.S. also funds a program supporting Algerian efforts to develop a functioning, transparent banking and income tax system. The U.S. Department of Commerce established a Commercial Attaché in Algiers in 2008.

Cooperation between the Algerian and U.S. militaries continues to grow. Exchanges between both sides are frequent, and Algeria has hosted senior U.S. military officials. In May 2005, the United States and Algeria conducted their first formal joint military dialogue in Washington, DC; the second joint military dialogue took place in Algiers in November 2006, and a third occurred in October 2008. The NATO Supreme Allied Commander Europe and Commander, U.S. European Command, General James L. Jones visited Algeria in June and August 2005, and then-Secretary of Defense Donald Rumsfeld visited Algeria in February 2006. In November 2009, U.S. Africa Command (AFRICOM) Commander General W. Ward visited Algiers and met with Algerian officials, including President Bouteflika. The United States and Algeria have also conducted bilateral naval and Special Forces exercises, and Algeria has hosted U.S. Navy and Coast Guard ship visits. In addition, the United States has a modest International Military Education and Training (IMET) Program ($870,000 in FY 2009 and $950,000 in FY 2010) for training Algerian military personnel in the United States, and Algeria participates in the Trans-Sahara Counter-Terrorism Partnership (TSCTP).

The United States has implemented modest university linkages programs and has placed two English Language Fellows, the first since 1993, with the Ministry of Education to assist in the development of English as a Second Language courses at the Ben Aknoun Training Center. In 2006, Algeria was again the recipient of a grant under the Ambassadors' Fund for Cultural Preservation. That fund provided a grant of $106,110 to restore the El Pacha Mosque in Oran. Algeria also received an $80,000 grant to fund micro-scholarships to design and implement an American English-language program for Algerian high school students in four major cities. In 2009, the U.S. Government began a pilot program in Constantine, Algeria at Mentouri University. The program is designed to ease the transition between the university and the workforce, fight

unemployment, and train Algerian university professors and students in English and business management to better equip graduates to secure meaningful employment.

In November 2009, Algeria and the United States reciprocally extended visa duration to two years for most visa categories, including tourists, businesspeople, and students. Also in November 2009, the countries finalized language for both a Mutual Legal Assistance Treaty and a Customs Mutual Assistance Agreement. Both agreements will be signed in 2010. Law enforcement cooperation continues to increase, both in the field of counterterrorism and in countering more conventional transnational crimes. The FBI established a Legal Attaché Office at the U.S. Embassy in Algiers in 2008.

Funding through the Middle East Partnership Initiative has been allocated to support the work of Algeria's developing civil society through programming that provides training to journalists, businesspeople, female entrepreneurs, legislators, Internet regulators, and the heads of leading nongovernmental organizations. Additional funding through the State Department's Human Rights and Democracy Fund provides training for Algerian judges and lawyers, with a particular emphasis on female judges.

The official U.S. presence in Algeria is expanding following over a decade of limited staffing, reflecting the general improvement in the security environment. During the past four years, the U.S. Embassy has moved toward more normal operations and now provides most embassy services to the American and Algerian communities.

Special Report:

Siege at Algerian gas field ends with dozens dead; fears arise of new flare of Islamic Jihadist violence

In January 2013, an attack by Islamic extremist militants on a gas field in Algeria turned into an extended siege and a hostage crisis, ultimately resulting in a messy rescue operation by Algerian special forces that left dozens dead and raised fears about a new flare of global Jihadist violence.

The Islamic extremist militants were followers of Mokhtar Belmokhtar -- a warlord and militant linked with al-Qaida in northern Mali where French and other international forces were joining Mali's military in carrying out the operation against Ansar Dine and other Islamist extremists holding sway in that country. Indeed, the followers of Mokhtar Belmokhtar carrying out the attack in Algeria issued a statement making it clear that their assault on the gas field was launched in retaliation for France's intervention into Mali to repel the militants Islamists gaining a foothold there. Clearly, the Islamic Jihadist threat was no longer limited to the Middle East or South Asia; now, the terror threat to global security by Islamic extremists was emanating from an expanded

terrain that now included Africa.

It should be noted that the In Amenas gas facility was "ground zero" of the unfolding terrorist crisis. Situated at Tigantourine in the province of Illizi, to the south-east of the Algerian capital city of Algiers, the gas plant has been jointly administered by British Petroleum, headquartered in the United Kingdom, Norway's Statoil, as well as Algeria's state-owned oil company.

After the initial attack on Jan. 16, 2013, the Islamic extremist militants abducted hundreds of gas facility workers -- both local Algerian and international expatriate workers, sparking the hostage situation as well as the ensuing siege at the complex. The siege went on for four days and came to a conclusion when Algerian special forces stormed the massive industrial complex using overwhelming force, including the firing of missiles by helicopters. It seemed that when the militants threatened to kill the foreign nationals, the Algerian authorities decided it had to take immediate action. That hardline action by the Algerian authorities was consistent with its approach to dealing with Islamic extremists during the 10-year war in Algeria in the 1990s. Seven hostages were summarily killed at the hands of their captors on that final day of the siege, just ahead of the raid by Algerian special forces.

By Jan. 20, 2013, Algerian authorities were claiming that the crisis was over, albeit with bloody consequences in the form of a high death toll. That being said, some officials were acknowledging that the gas facility was not yet fully secured; indeed, Algerian forces were yet to ensure that no remaining militants were hiding in the industrial complex that housed the gas field workers. The death toll at this time was as follows: at least two dozen workers were dead along with more than a score of militants. Several foreign nationals from the United Kingdom, Norway, Romania, Japan, the Philippines, and the United States were believed to be among the dead although details about the casualty list remained hazy at the time of writing. The Algerian communications minister, Mohamed Saïd Oublaïd, warned in an interview with France 24 Television that the death toll was sure to increase saying, "I'm very afraid that the numbers are going to go up." To that end, by Jan. 21, 2013, Algerian officials said that 37 foreign nationals and 29 militants died in the gas-field seizure and at least three militants were captured alive. That being said, as many as 685 Algerians and 107 foreign nationals were reportedly rescued when Algerian special forces stormed the facility in Illizibi.

According to the Algerian interior ministry, machine guns, rifles, shotguns, mortars with shells, missiles with launchers, grenades, and rockets were all recovered from the gas field site. As well, Algerian Minister of Communication Mohamed Said in interviews with the media, the extremist Islamic militants originated from a number of Arab, African and non-African countries. Local media in Algeria expanded on this information, noting that the militants were from Mali, Mauritania, Niger, Libya, Algeria, Tunisia, Egypt, a Gulf country assumed to be Yemen, as well as Canada.

It should be noted that the militants' leader in initial taped footage said he was prepared to negotiate with Western and Algerian leaders if they ceased operations against Islamists in Mali -- the apparent motivation for their actions at the Algerian gas plant. Of course, no such negotiations ever took place. Moreover, the emergence of audiotaped recordings took things to a new level since those messages included a warning from one terrorist leader, Abdel Rahman el-Nigeri, saying in Arabic that they intended to "slaughter" all Americans at the facility.

Given its own history dealing with extremist Islamists and religious militants, the Algerian government has held to a steadfast "no negotiations" policy with terrorists and opted for a hardline response that clearly yielded an unfortunate casualty list. Some observers were blaming the Algerian government and security forces for a botched response to the the siege and hostage crisis. They also pointed to the fact that there was virtually no comment from Algerian President Abdelaziz Bouteflika about the crisis. Nevertheless, French President Francois Hollande defended the Algerian authorities' actions, saying: "When you have people taken hostage in such large numbers by terrorists with such cold determination and ready to kill those hostages -- as they did -- Algeria has an approach which to me, as I see it, is the most appropriate because there could be no negotiation."

Meanwhile, United States President Barack Obama blamed the bloodshed on terrorists and promised future action against militant Islamists saying, "We will continue to work closely with all of our partners to combat the scourge of terrorism in the region." Outgoing United States Defense Secretary Leon Panetta warned there would be no relaxing in the effort to root out terrorism saying that the United States would target al-Qaida wherever militants from that terror enclave were located. British Prime Minister David Cameron offered a similar warning to Jihadists saying, "There is no justification for taking innocent life in this way. Our determination is stronger than ever to work with allies right around the world to root out and defeat this terrorist scourge and those who encourage it."

On Jan. 20, 2013, French Defense Minister Jean-Yves Le Drian signaled that although the crisis had seemingly ended, the challenge of dealing with extremist Islamic terrorists was not over. He characterized the abduction of Algerian and international expatriate workers at the gas field as "act of war." Clearly, the Islamic Jihadist threat was no longer limited to the Afghan-Pak region of South Asia or from familiar hotspots in the Middle East. Now, the terror threat to global security by Islamic extremists was emanating from an expanded terrain that now included Africa.

As discussed above, the attack in Algeria occurred just after France intervened into Mali to repel the Islamic extremist threat there. But the attack in Algeria also occurred only a few short months after the killing of United States Ambassador Christopher Stevens in Libya. Collectively, these incidences indicate a disturbing burgeoning threat of Jihadist terrorism from northern Africa.   Yet they also reveal the underbelly of the so-called "Arab Spring" that toppled regimes in Tunisia, Egypt, and Libya, but also led to an increasingly entrenched and violent civil war in Syria. As noted

by Robert Malley, the Middle East and North Africa director at the International Crisis Group in an interview with the New York Times, the Arab Spring opened up logistical opportunities for extremists and militants seeking to transport fighters or weapons across porous borders. Stated differently, the Arab Spring allowed militants and extremists to take advantage of the new conditions to enact their Jihadist agenda. Meanwhile, with autocrats gone from the scene -- for example, with Qadhafi gone in Libya -- a given country might no longer be led by a "strongman" authority figure able to hold together a nation that it home to competing ethnic and tribal interests as well as wide swaths of ungovernable ground. In many senses, the democratic thrust has done less to achieve real political transformation as it has churned the turbulent political waves in complex parts of the world, often with deadly consequences.

In early March 2013, Mokhtar Belmokhtar -- the warlord and Islamic extremist who allegedly orchestrated the seizure of the Algerian gas plant that left dozens of people dead in January 2013 -- was reported to be dead. International forces operating in Mali to flush out extremist Islamic militants from Ansar Dine and other groups in the northern part of that country said that Mokhtar Belmokhtar had been killed in ongoing operations. Foreign troops -- in this case, under the control of Chadian armed forces -- were reporting that not only was Mokhtar Belmokhtar dead, but that terror bases in the region had been destroyed. In a national address on Chadian national television, General Zakaria Ngobongue -- Chad's military spokesperson -- said: "Today... Chadian armed forces on mission in Mali totally destroyed the principal base of the terrorists and narco-traffickers in the Ifoghas mountain range." Ngobongue additionally announced that several terrorists "including the chief, Mokhtar Belmokhtar" had been killed in the operation. Chadian forces also took responsibility for eliminating Abdelhamid Abou Zeid -- the deputy leader of al-Qaida in the Islamic Maghreb.

Special Report

U.S. air strike in Libya kills Islamist terrorist Belmokhtar responsible for audacious 2013 attack on Algerian gas field

On June 15, 2015, it was reported that a United States air strike on the city of Ajdabiya in Libya had killed Mokhtar Belmokhtar -- the Algerian-born Islamist warlord and terrorist who was believed to be behind the attack at a gas plant in 2013 in Algeria. That attack involved the siege of the Amenas gas field, the kidnapping of 800 people and the deaths of dozens of victims -- many of whom were foreign nationals simply trying to make a living. Reports of Belmokhtar by Chadian forces had surfaced later in 2013 during an anti-terrorism operation in Mali, but were always regarded as spurious. The questionable nature of those claims was highlighted now in 2015 with the more definitive announcement from the United States authorities in which they made clear that Belmokhtar had been targeted in the 2015 strike in Libya discussed here. As noted by a spokesperson for the United States Pentagon, Colonel Steve Warren, "Belmokhtar has a long

history of leading terrorist activities as a member of AQIM, is the operational leader of the al-Qaida-associated al-Murabitoun organization in north-west Africa, and maintains his personal allegiance to al-Qaida." For its part, the government of Libya said the United States strike against Belmokhtar had been carried out with its consent.

Written by Dr. Denise Youngblood Coleman, Editor in Chief, www.countrywatch.com .   See Bibliography for list of general research sources.

National Security

External Threats

Several issues have precipitated tense relations between Algeriaand its neighbors. Algeria and Libya are engaged in a passive territorial dispute over a 32,000 sq km border zone in southeastern Algeria. Algeria 's border with Moroccoremains closed over mutual allegations of harboring militants and arms smugglers. Algeria 's objection to Morocco 's rule over Western Sahara and its support for the pro-independence Sahrawi Polisario Front has further strained relations between the two countries. Though Morocco lifted its visa requirement on Algerians in 2004, Algeriahas not reciprocated that action towards Moroccans. Towns in Southern Algeria have suffered attacks perpetrated by bandits based in Mali. In 2007, authorities in neighboring Morocco said they had foiled a plot to target foreign and strategic interests by suicide bombers. But that foiled plot was followed by another suicide bombing in Morocco and clashes with militants in Tunisia earlier in the year, as well as a significant terror attack in Algiers (as discussed below). Collectively, these attacks raised the specter of violence at the hands of Islamic extremists in North Africa.

Crime

Criminal activity in Algeriais a constant threat to public order. The United States (U.S.) State Department reports that the crime rate in Algeriais moderately high and increasing. Perpetrators posing as police officers have been known to enter private homes and rob the occupants at gunpoint. Armed carjacking is also a serious problem and petty street crime is

prevalent in urban areas. Although the government of Algeria has discontinued a late-night curfew in the central area around Algiers, it continues to maintain roadblocks at many major intersections. In response, terrorist groups occasionally put up false roadblocks as ambushes. Despite advances made by the Bouteflika government, crime is still rampant in Algeria

Insurgencies

Islamic extremists have posed an ongoing threat to Algeria's secular government. After the Islamic Salvation Movement (FIS), a fundamentalist political party, enjoyed a measure of political success at polls in 1991, Algeria's secular government began to take measure designed to undermine its existence. The Islamic Liberation Party (AIS), a militant wing of the FIS, responded by waging a campaign of terrorist violence aimed at undermining the authority of Algeria's central government. After the government agreed to grant FIS members amnesty in 2000, the group disbanded.

Another terrorist organization, the Armed Islamic Movement (GIA), emerged in 1993. Like the AIS, it has made liberal use of terrorist tactics. In addition to the overthrow of Algeria 's secular government, the GIA is committed to expelling non-Muslims from Algeria. It has perpetuated many attacks against foreign nationals in Algeria. In 2002 a French court sentenced two GIA members to life in prison for their role in a series of bombings in France.

The Salafist Group for Call and Combat -- also known as the Salafist Group for Preaching and Combat or by the acronym, GSPC, spilt from the GIA in 1996. Since 1998, it has since become a more deadly threat to the internal security of Algeria, as well as that of the global community, than its predecessor organization. The GSPC gained popularity in Algeria by pledging to avoid civilian targets inside of Algeria, though it has violated that pledge. The GSPC routinely targets Algeria's government. Agents of the organization also operate internationally. (See below section on terrorism)

As noted below, in recent years, the Salafist Group for Preaching and Combat (GSPC), stepped up attacks. the group, which was now part of an umbrella organization called "al-Qaida in the Islamic Maghreb" was said to be responsible for a number of terror attacks from 2006 to the present, as noted in the section titled "Terrorism."

Outside of terrorist-related, domestic threats to Algeria 's national security, there were several large political demonstrations in Algiersand the Kabylie region to the east of the capital during the spring and summer of 2001. Since then, demonstrations in Algiers have been banned, although there were several small demonstrations in March and April 2003 against the war in Iraq. Algerian also suffers from periodic unrest among its Berber population.

Terrorism

Terrorist violence in Algeria is closely linked to internal political movements that seek the overthrow of Algeria's secular government (see above section on insurgencies). Groups with such an agenda include the now defunct Islamic Liberation Party (AIS), the Armed Islamic Movement (GIA) and the Salafist Group for Call and Combat (GSPC), which spit from the GIA in 1996.

Terrorist organizations based in Algeriaalso operate internationally. In 2002 a French court sentenced two GIA members to life in prison for their role in a series of bombings in France. Members of Algerian terrorist organizations have also established links with their foreign counterparts. In 2002 Algerian authorities reported they had killed an al-Qaida operative from Yemen who had been in contact with GSPC in Algeria.

According to the State Department's October 2003 Consular information sheet on Algeria, although no Americans were reported as killed by terrorists in Algeria, more than 120 third world country nationals were murdered at the height of the terrorism threat in Algeria in the 1990s. In January 2001, terrorists killed several Russian citizens in the mountains of eastern Algeria. In February 2003, 32 Western Europeans were taken hostage in the Sahara desert areas of southeastern Algeria. The perpetrators took fourteen of the hostages into northern Mali. One of the hostages died in captivity. All the others had been released by late August 2003.

Thousands of Algerians, including women and children and the elderly, were also the unfortunate victims of political violence in Algeria, including car bombings and shoot-outs between government forces and armed groups. Although terrorist violence subsided somewhat in major cities, terrorists continue to attack security forces and strike randomly at civilians outside urban areas.

That said, in early 2004, there were sporadic terrorist incidents near the capital. Terrorist acts in rural areas continue on an irregular basis. It was estimated that 50-60 Algerians were killed monthly due to terrorist activity during that period. This number was down from the average of a 1000 or more killed monthly in the mid 1990's.

The close of 2006 was marred with violence. In September 2006, a bomb explosion hit a bus, injuring several people employed with an American oil company and killing one man. The attack was attributed to the Islamic extremist enclave, GSPC.

In January 2007, a clash between Islamist militias and Algerian security forces led to the deaths of 15 people in the eastern area of Batna. The clashes were spurred after militants launched a rocket attack on an army post, thus killing five soldiers. The army responded with a counter-attack in which 10 Islamists died. It was believed that the Islamist militias from GSPC were now part of an umbrella organization called "al-Qaida in the Islamic Maghreb" and were responsible for this situation and the bombing of a bus in late 2006.

In mid-February 2007, a series of bombs exploded in north-eastern Algeria, killing six people and injuring several more. The apparent targets included seven police stations in Kabylia, approximately 62 miles or 100 kilometers from the capital city of Algiers. As before, the aforementioned al-Qaida affiliated group was said to be responsible for these and other recent attacks in Algeria in the first part of 2007.

April 2007 saw violent gun battles between the Algerian military and militant Islamists, and resulted in the deaths of at least 15 people. Among the dead were nine Algerian soldiers and six militant Islamists. The incident appeared to be another manifestation of the upsurge in violent attacks by Muslim insurgents in recent months.

On April 11, 2007, there were two apparent terrorist bombings in the Algerian capital city of Algiers. One bomb exploded close to the office of the prime minister, while the other exploded at a police station. Both attacks resulted in the deaths of approximately 25 people, while more than 160 people were injured. The terrorist group, al-Qaida in the Maghreb, was reported to have claimed responsibility for the attacks, which came a day after Moroccan authorities said that they had foiled a terror plot in that country.

In July 2007, Algeria saw more violence when a suicide bomber detonated explosives at military barracks located close to Bouira. Approximately ten people were killed as a result.

September 2007 began in Algeria with a series of terror attacks by Islamic terrorists. On Sept. 6, 2007, a suicide bombing in the town of Batna to the south east of Algiers left more than 20 people dead. Victims included those gathered in a crowd awaiting a visit by the president. Just days later on September 8, 2007, a truck bomb at naval barracks in the port city of Dellys left more than 30 people dead. Al-Qaida in the Maghreb claimed responsibility for both attacks. They were also responsible for terror attacks in the capital city of Algiers.

About 10 days after the series of attacks plagued Algeria at the start of the month, mid-September 2007 saw a bomb exploded just in front of a police compound in Zemmouri, to the east of the capital city of Algiers. At least three people died as a result, while survivors suffered massive injuries. While there was no immediate claim of responsibility, there was heavy speculation that the group al-Qaida in the Islamic Maghreb, which claimed responsibility for earlier attacks, was also responsible for this one.

Approximately one week later, another bombing in Algeria left nine people wounded. The latest incident ensued in Bouira, to the south east of the capital city of Algiers. Foreign workers -- two from France and one from Italy, as well as a local Algerian driver, and five Algerian police escorts -- were among the casualties. As has been the case in most of these attacks, the group al-Qaida in the Maghreb claimed responsibility.

On Dec. 11, 2007, a car bomb exploded in the Algerian capital of Algiers, shattering the front of the building housing the United Nations (U.N.) refugee agency in that city. The building housing the U.N. Development Program was also damaged. At least 11 U.N. employees were killed in the blast. A second bomb exploded at the Algerian Constitutional Council, killing students in a bus passing. Although the initial death toll in the twin attacks was said to be 26 people, emergency personnel warned that more than 60 people likely died. In addition, close to 180 people were injured. There were also reports of some U.N. employees being pulled from the wreckage alive. Nevertheless, it was the worst attack on a U.N. installation since 2003 when militants bombed the U.N. offices in Baghdad, Iraq just after the United States-led invasion of that country.

The start of 2008 saw a suicide attack in Algeria at a police station to the east of the capital city of Algiers. At least four police officers were killed as a result and more than 20 people were wounded. It was yet another act of terrorism in the North African country, which has experienced a surge of violence ever since the main Islamist extremist group transformed itself into al-Qaida in the Islamic Maghreb at the start of 2007.

In June 2008, double explosions at a train station in Algeria left at least a dozen people dead. A French citizen was among the dead. Both bombs exploded in quick succession in the town of Beni Amrane, located in the in Boumerdes region to the east of the Algerian capital of Algiers. The attacks came only days after a roadside bomb killed six soldiers returning to their barracks, and another bombing targeted barracks in Algiers. All three incidents were blamed on the aforementioned group, al-Qaida in the Islamic Maghreb.

These incidents -- blamed on al-Qaida in the Islamic Maghreb -- marked something of a change in the Algerian landscape, which had been regarded as calm terrain in recent years. Another shift was manifested by the use of posters in north-central Algeria calling on people to pass on information that could be used to fight terrorists. In this way, security forces were employing means used in the fight against radical Islam in the 1990s when authorities called on the general population to help gather key information.

Note

In the first week of January 2011, violent protests broke out in the Algerian capital of Algiers and rioting soon spread to other cities and towns. At issue has been the public's outcry over food inflation, unemployment, and housing shortages, as well as broader frustration over the lack of political freedom and the government's inability to adequately tackle social and economic problems facing the country. There were reports that government buildings and banks in the eastern part of the country had been vandalized. With an eye on dispersing the angry, stone-throwing protesters, police fired tear gas and used water cannons in Algiers. Nevertheless, the riots appeared to be

gaining steam by Jan. 7, 2011. For its part, the government called for Algerians to exercise restraint and stay calm.

By mid-January 2011, the government had instituted a package of price reductions valued at $225 million on fuel and goods sold at government shops. But on Jan. 22, 2011, seven policemen and an opposition member of parliament were injured when fresh clashes erupted in the capital city of Algiers at a demonstration organized by the opposition Rally for Culture and Democracy (RCD). Two of the wounded protesters were said to be in critical condition. The RCD had called for peaceful protests while the government warned against any such action, emphasizing the ban on marches and demonstrations in Algiers. A statement by the Algerian government read as follows: "Algerians should be vigilant and exercise wisdom and not respond to provocation that aims to disturb calm." It continued with warnings, "Marches in Algiers are not allowed" and "Any gathering on the street is considered a breach of public order."

In early February 2011, Algerian President Abdelaziz Bouteflika announced that the country's state of emergency would soon be lifted during a government meeting. The president was quoted as saying that the state of emergency would be lifted in the "very near future." There was no indication if the emergency laws imposed in 1992 would also be repealed. Nevertheless, the move to end the state of emergency was a clear nod to the demands of pro-reform protesters who had been registering their discontent in the streets for several weeks. The move meant that protests could soon be allowed to take place, although there were likely to be limits to rallies in the capital of Algiers. Public protests were prohibited in Algeria as one of several security measures instituted to deal with the brutal war with the extremist Islamists that plagued the country in the 1990s. President Bouteflika explained that the state of emergency had been imposed only "for the purposes of the fight against terrorism, and it is this reason only which has justified maintaining it on a legal basis." The president also called on the government to craft policies aimed at promoting job creation. He also advocated on behalf of more rights for all political parties.

These moves may have been geared towards avoiding the systematic mass action gripping Egypt in the first part of 2011, and in the aftermath of the pro-democracy protests that drove Tunisian President Ben Ali from office.

Special Report:

Siege at Algerian gas field ends with dozens dead; fears arise of new flare of Islamic Jihadist violence

In January 2013, an attack by Islamic extremist militants on a gas field in Algeria turned into an extended siege and a hostage crisis, ultimately resulting in a messy rescue operation by Algerian special forces that left dozens dead and raised fears about a new flare of global Jihadist violence.

The Islamic extremist militants were followers of Mokhtar Belmokhtar -- a warlord and militant linked with al-Qaida in northern Mali where French and other international forces were joining Mali's military in carrying out the operation against Ansar Dine and other Islamist extremists holding sway in that country. Indeed, the followers of Mokhtar Belmokhtar carrying out the attack in Algeria issued a statement making it clear that their assault on the gas field was launched in retaliation for France's intervention into Mali to repel the militants Islamists gaining a foothold there. Clearly, the Islamic Jihadist threat was no longer limited to the Middle East or South Asia; now, the terror threat to global security by Islamic extremists was emanating from an expanded terrain that now included Africa.

It should be noted that the In Amenas gas facility was "ground zero" of the unfolding terrorist crisis. Situated at Tigantourine in the province of Illizi, to the south-east of the Algerian capital city of Algiers, the gas plant has been jointly administered by British Petroleum, headquartered in the United Kingdom, Norway's Statoil, as well as Algeria's state-owned oil company.

After the initial attack on Jan. 16, 2013, the Islamic extremist militants abducted hundreds of gas facility workers -- both local Algerian and international expatriate workers, sparking the hostage situation as well as the ensuing siege at the complex. The siege went on for four days and came to a conclusion when Algerian special forces stormed the massive industrial complex using overwhelming force, including the firing of missiles by helicopters. It seemed that when the militants threatened to kill the foreign nationals, the Algerian authorities decided it had to take immediate action. That hardline action by the Algerian authorities was consistent with its approach to dealing with Islamic extremists during the 10-year war in Algeria in the 1990s. Seven hostages were summarily killed at the hands of their captors on that final day of the siege, just ahead of the raid by Algerian special forces.

By Jan. 20, 2013, Algerian authorities were claiming that the crisis was over, albeit with bloody consequences in the form of a high death toll. That being said, some officials were acknowledging that the gas facility was not yet fully secured; indeed, Algerian forces were yet to ensure that no remaining militants were hiding in the industrial complex that housed the gas field workers. The death toll at this time was as follows: at least two dozen workers were dead along with more than a score of militants. Several foreign nationals from the United Kingdom, Norway, Romania, Japan, the Philippines, and the United States were believed to be among the dead although details about the casualty list remained hazy at the time of writing. The Algerian communications minister, Mohamed Saïd Oublaïd, warned in an interview with France 24 Television that the death toll was sure to increase saying, "I'm very afraid that the numbers are going to go up." To that end, by Jan. 21, 2013, Algerian officials said that 37 foreign nationals and 29 militants died in the   gas-field seizure and at least three militants were captured alive. That being said, as many as 685 Algerians and 107 foreign nationals were reportedly rescued when Algerian special forces stormed the facility in Illizibi.

According to the Algerian interior ministry, machine guns, rifles, shotguns, mortars with shells, missiles with launchers, grenades, and rockets were all recovered from the gas field site. As well, Algerian Minister of Communication Mohamed Said in interviews with the media, the extremist Islamic militants originated from a number of Arab, African and non-African countries. Local media in Algeria expanded on this information, noting that the militants were from Mali, Mauritania, Niger, Libya, Algeria, Tunisia, Egypt, a Gulf country assumed to be Yemen, as well as Canada.

It should be noted that the militants' leader in initial taped footage said he was prepared to negotiate with Western and Algerian leaders if they ceased operations against Islamists in Mali -- the apparent motivation for their actions at the Algerian gas plant. Of course, no such negotiations ever took place. Moreover, the emergence of audiotaped recordings took things to a new level since those messages included a warning from one terrorist leader, Abdel Rahman el-Nigeri, saying in Arabic that they intended to "slaughter" all Americans at the facility.

Given its own history dealing with extremist Islamists and religious militants, the Algerian government has held to a steadfast "no negotiations" policy with terrorists and opted for a hardline response that clearly yielded an unfortunate casualty list. Some observers were blaming the Algerian government and security forces for a botched response to the the siege and hostage crisis. They also pointed to the fact that there was virtually no comment from Algerian President Abdelaziz Bouteflika about the crisis. Nevertheless, French President Francois Hollande defended the Algerian authorities' actions, saying: "When you have people taken hostage in such large numbers by terrorists with such cold determination and ready to kill those hostages -- as they did -- Algeria has an approach which to me, as I see it, is the most appropriate because there could be no negotiation."

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South Asia or from familiar hotspots in the Middle East. Now, the terror threat to global security by Islamic extremists was emanating from an expanded terrain that now included Africa.

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Defense Forces

Military Data

Military branches:

People's National Army (Armee Nationale Populaire, ANP), Land Forces (Forces Terrestres, FT), Navy of the Republic of Algeria (Marine de la Republique Algerienne, MRA), Air Force (Al-Quwwat al-Jawwiya al-Jaza'eriya, QJJ), Territorial Air Defense Force

Military service age and obligation:

17 is the legal minimum age for voluntary military service; 19-30 years of age for compulsory service; conscript service obligation is 18 months (6 months basic training, 12 months civil

projects)

Manpower available for military service:

males age 16-49: 10,273,129

females age 16-49: 10,114,552

Manpower fit for military service:

males age 16-49: 8,622,897

females age 16-49: 8,626,222

Manpower reaching militarily significant age annually:

male: 342,895

female: 330,098

Military expenditures:

4.48% of GDP

Chapter 3

Economic Overview

Economic Overview

Overview

Algeria is a large country in northern Africa where more than four-fifths of its territory is covered by the Sahara desert. The hydrocarbon sector, including oil and natural gas, is the backbone of the Algerian economy, representing about 30 percent of GDP, over 95 percent of export earnings, and 60 percent of government revenues. Algeria is the world's fourth-largest exporter of natural gas and the tenth-largest oil exporter. In recent years, prudent macroeconomic policies in a favorable external environment have resulted in Algeria's strong economic performance with robust growth and low inflation. At the same time the government has accumulated large savings in the oil stabilization fund to finance a sizable public investment program (PIP) while reducing public and external debts to very low levels.

While Algeria has faced the current global economic crisis from a relatively strong position, the fall of global demand for hydrocarbons exposed its vulnerabilities, as the economy remains too dependent on hydrocarbon exports. Moreover, unemployment is still relatively high, and productivity and the business climate lag behind those of its main trading partners. In 2010, Algeria began a five-year, $286 billion development program to update its infrastructure and provide jobs. By 2011, Algeria's government was working hard to avoid a revolt similar to what Egypt experienced. In early May, Algeria announced a significant increase – 25 percent -- in budget spending and offered more than $23 billion in public grants and retroactive salary and benefit increases. It also waived duties on staple foods as part of its effort to keep public discontent from turning into the kind of uprisings going on in other Arab states. The extra spending would mainly be in the form of pay hikes for public sector workers, higher state subsidies on flour, milk, cooking oil and sugar, creating work for young unemployed people and building new houses. While the nation's costly program were expected to boost Algeria's economy in 2011, they were also expected to have a negative impact on the country's budget deficit. Overall, 2011 growth was estimated to have remained solid and higher oil prices strengthened Algeria's external balance and boosting fiscal revenues. Official reserves have steadily increased and had reached US$178 billion by the end of August 2011 (three years of imports). In April 2012, the Algerian government said it planned to invest more in its tourism sector and set a goal of attracting about 3.5 million tourists per year beginning in 2015. "The Algerian authorities have ambitious plans to launch the tourism sector, aiming to raise the accommodation capacity from 90,000 beds to 160,000 beds in three years," Tourism Minister Smail Mimoune told Reuters. It also hoped to boost its revenue from tourism to $600 million, compared to $400 million in 2011.

In November 2013, Algeria's government gave the green light to eight state firms – including telecommunications and cement companies - to list on the Algiers stock exchange in a move aimed at diversifying the over-regulated economy. Meanwhile, in October 2013, a top government advisor noted that Algeria was not likely to see substantial economic reform before the April 2014 elections despite signs that officials were working toward liberalizing policy. For example, earlier in the year, the housing ministry began to allow more foreign firms to bid on building houses. Meanwhile, the International Monetary Fund estimated the government's gross debt was just 11 percent of gross domestic product, relatively low by global standards. The jobless rate was officially estimated at 10 percent but was believed to be much higher among young people. Looking ahead, the country needs to continue its focus on developing industries outside of hydrocarbons, relaxing state control of the economy, and providing adequate jobs for younger Algerians.

The Algerian economy's growth was driven mainly by domestic demand, including public investment. This growth performance was achieved with inflation slowing, thanks to the Algerian government's efforts to control market liquidity, contain the expansion of demand for goods and services and increase supply. In fact, inflation had returned to its pre-2012 level. Algeria's good external position, though still solid, continued to weaken in 2013 with the current-account surplus declining markedly compared to 2012 as oil and gas exports declined and imports rose. However, Algeria has been pursuing its policy of low external debt and has strong foreign exchange reserves equivalent to more than three years of imports.

China has become Algeria's largest supplier, providing 12 percent of Algerian imports, compared to France's 11.4 percent, according to the African Economic Outlook. Algeria's other main suppliers are Italy, Spain and Germany. Spain, Italy, the United Kingdom and France are Algeria's main export markets, with the United States – the main export market in 2012 – falling to sixth place.

Oil and gas were set to recover in 2014 and public expenditure was forecast to rise by 11.3 percent, mainly for investment to support domestic demand. As a result, forecasts predicted growth of 4.3 percent and inflation of 4.2 percent for the year. In late August 2014, the government of Algeria unveiled a new $262 billion, five-year investment plan aimed at boosting domestic production and moving the country's economy away from oil and gas reliance. Projects to be included in the 2015-2019 plan were to be finalized before the end of 2014. Previous reforms have stalled due mainly to bureaucracy and restrictions on foreign investments despite promises to open up the economy.

Economic growth accelerated in 2014 mainly due to recovery of the oil and gas sector, whose value added grew by 0.5 percent, the first increase in eight years. Excluding oil and gas, however, GDP growth actually slowed. Unemployment climbed, including high rates among women and the 16-24 age-group. Meanwhile, the country's external position remained solid, albeit with some signs of weakness, such as the ongoing slippage in the current account, which showed a deficit for the first time in 15 years. The dramatic fall in oil prices dominated 2014 and had immediate effects on

the economy. In early 2015, Prime Minister Sellal announced a public-sector job-hiring freeze covering most areas except energy, health and education. Several planned urban tramway and railroad projects across the country were postponed while an expansion of Algiers airport will be financed through bank loans, rather than being state-funded.

"We are not talking about austerity, we are talking about rationalising spending," he said in a national broadcast, as quoted by Reuters. "We are now in crisis, but Algeria has anticipated this."

Economic Performance

In recent years Algeria has enjoyed strong economic performance, driven by public spending. Overall, the country has faced the global slowdown from a position of relative strength.

According to CountryWatch estimated calculations for 2014:

Real GDP growth rate was: 3.3 percent
Inflation was measured at: 9.6 percent
The fiscal deficit/surplus as percent of GDP (%) was: -4.0 percent

Updated in 2015

*Please note that the figures in our Economic Performance section are estimates or forecasts based on IMF-based data that are formulated using CountryWatch models of analysis.

Supplementary Sources: International Monetary Fund, African Economic Outlook and Reuters

Nominal GDP and Components

Nominal GDP and Components					
	2011	**2012**	**2013**	**2014**	**2015**
Nominal GDP (LCU billions)	14,519.81	15,843.00	16,681.92	17,249.00	16,929.05
Nominal GDP Growth Rate (%)	21.084	9.113	5.295	3.399	-1.8549

	2011	**2012**	**2013**	**2014**	**2015**
Consumption (LCU billions)	4,541.43	4,938.57	5,882.43	4,934.89	5,156.25
Government Expenditure (LCU billions)	3,015.17	3,293.40	3,153.69	3,308.22	3,456.62
Gross Capital Formation (LCU billions)	5,477.48	6,243.31	7,168.18	9,324.42	8,303.87
Exports of Goods & Services (LCU billions)	5,658.62	5,979.81	5,528.76	5,141.74	5,047.17
Imports of Goods & Services (LCU billions)	4,172.89	4,612.07	5,051.14	5,460.29	5,034.86

Population and GDP Per Capita

Population and GDP Per Capita					
	2011	**2012**	**2013**	**2014**	**2015**
Population, total (million)	36.717	37.495	37.900	39.500	40.290
Population growth (%)	2.054	2.119	1.080	4.222	2.000
Nominal GDP per Capita (LCU 1000s)	395,451.90	422,536.42	440,156.23	436,683.54	420,180.04

Real GDP and Inflation

Real GDP and Inflation					
	2011	**2012**	**2013**	**2014**	**2015**
Real Gross Domestic Product (LCU billions 2005 base)	6,155.02	6,175.96	6,510.32	6,759.46	6,945.25
Real GDP Growth Rate (%)	2.779	0.3403	5.414	3.827	2.749
GDP Deflator (2005=100.0)	235.902	256.527	256.238	255.183	243.750
Inflation, GDP Deflator (%)	17.809	8.743	-0.1127	-0.4117	-4.4803

Government Spending and Taxation

Government Spending and Taxation					
	2011	**2012**	**2013**	**2014**	**2015**
Government Fiscal Budget (billions)	5,853.48	7,058.17	6,024.13	6,980.25	7,333.85
Fiscal Budget Growth Rate (percentage)	31.840	20.581	-14.6503	15.872	5.066
National Tax Rate Net of Transfers (%)	39.877	40.368	35.713	33.155	29.639
Government Revenues Net of Transfers (LCU billions)	5,790.13	6,395.46	5,957.54	5,718.98	5,017.61
Government Surplus(-) Deficit(+) (LCU billions)	-63.3530	-662.7110	-66.5860	-1261.2710	-2316.2380
Government Surplus(+) Deficit(-) (%GDP)	-0.4363	-4.1830	-0.3992	-7.3121	-13.6820

Money Supply, Interest Rates and Unemployment

Money Supply, Interest Rates and Unemployment					
	2011	**2012**	**2013**	**2014**	**2015**
Money and Quasi-Money (M2) (LCU billions)	8,895.16	9,666.15	10,460.23	12,203.49	11,977.13
Money Supply Growth Rate (%)	17.890	8.668	8.215	16.666	-1.8549
Lending Interest Rate (%)	8.000	8.000	8.000	8.000	11.413
Unemployment Rate (%)	9.971	11.000	9.829	10.600	11.581

Foreign Trade and the Exchange Rate

Foreign Trade and the Exchange Rate					
	2011	**2012**	**2013**	**2014**	**2015**
Official Exchange Rate (LCU/$US)	72.820	75.802	79.550	80.785	96.695
Trade Balance NIPA ($US billions)	20.403	18.044	6.004	-3.9431	0.1273
Trade Balance % of GDP	10.232	8.633	2.863	-1.8467	0.0727
Total Foreign Exchange Reserves ($US billions)	191.369	200.587	201.437	186.351	166.104

Data in US Dollars

Data in US Dollars					
	2011	**2012**	**2013**	**2014**	**2015**
Nominal GDP ($US billions)	199.394	209.005	209.703	213.518	175.077
Exports ($US billions)	77.707	78.887	69.500	63.647	52.197
Imports ($US billions)	57.304	60.844	63.496	67.591	52.070

Energy Consumption and Production Standard Units

Energy Consumption and Production Standard Units					
	2011	**2012**	**2013**	**2014**	**2015**
Petroleum Consumption (TBPD)	348.860	377.094	390.000	395.000	401.138
Petroleum Production (TBPD)	1,862.90	1,862.56	1,757.09	1,682.50	1,684.10
Petroleum Net Exports (TBPD)	1,514.04	1,485.46	1,367.09	1,287.50	1,282.96
Natural Gas Consumption (bcf)	1,161.05	1,281.58	1,294.29	1,247.89	1,322.96
Natural Gas Production (bcf)	2,925.77	3,063.07	2,818.55	2,900.13	3,090.39
Natural Gas Net Exports (bcf)	1,764.72	1,781.49	1,524.25	1,652.24	1,767.43
Coal Consumption (1000s st)	483.915	482.812	261.248	256.431	261.399
Coal Production (1000s st)	0.0000	0.0000	0.0000	0.0000	0.0000
Coal Net Exports (1000s st)	-483.9147	-482.8124	-261.2478	-256.4311	-261.3988

	2011	**2012**	**2013**	**2014**	**2015**
Nuclear Production (bil kwh)	0.0000	0.0000	0.0000	0.0000	0.0000
Hydroelectric Production (bil kwh)	0.4970	0.6160	0.1568	0.3056	0.2903
Renewables Production (bil kwh)	0.1240	0.2320	0.2310	0.2500	0.2750

Energy Consumption and Production QUADS

Energy Consumption and Production QUADS					
	2011	**2012**	**2013**	**2014**	**2015**
Petroleum Consumption (Quads)	0.7449	0.8052	0.8327	0.8434	0.8565
Petroleum Production (Quads)	3.977	4.004	3.764	3.675	2.874
Petroleum Net Exports (Quads)	3.232	3.199	2.931	2.831	2.018
Natural Gas Consumption (Quads)	1.184	1.307	1.320	1.273	1.349
Natural Gas Production (Quads)	2.981	3.114	2.869	3.001	2.698
Natural Gas Net Exports (Quads)	1.797	1.807	1.549	1.728	1.349
Coal Consumption (Quads)	0.0097	0.0097	0.0052	0.0051	0.0052
Coal Production (Quads)	0.0000	0.0000	0.0000	0.0000	0.0000
Coal Net Exports (Quads)	-0.0097	-0.0097	-0.0052	-0.0051	-0.0052
Nuclear Production (Quads)	0.0000	0.0000	0.0000	0.0000	0.0000
Hydroelectric Production (Quads)	0.0050	0.0062	0.0016	0.0031	0.0029
Renewables Production (Quads)	0.0012	0.0023	0.0023	0.0025	0.0028

World Energy Price Summary

World Energy Price Summary					
	2011	**2012**	**2013**	**2014**	**2015**
Petroleum-WTI ($/bbl)	95.054	94.159	97.943	93.112	48.709
Natural Gas-Henry Hub ($/mmbtu)	3.999	2.752	3.729	4.369	2.614
Coal Thermal-Australian ($/mt)	121.448	96.364	84.562	70.130	57.511

CO2 Emissions

CO2 Emissions					
	2011	**2012**	**2013**	**2014**	**2015**
Petroleum Based (mm mt C)	16.642	17.989	18.604	18.843	19.136
Natural Gas Based (mm mt C)	18.837	20.793	20.999	20.246	21.464
Coal Based (mm mt C)	0.2773	0.2767	0.1497	0.1470	0.1498
Total CO2 Emissions (mm mt C)	35.756	39.058	39.753	39.236	40.749

Agriculture Consumption and Production

Agriculture Consumption and Production					
	2011	**2012**	**2013**	**2014**	**20**
Corn Total Consumption (1000 metric tons)	3,153.92	3,042.77	3,220.24	3,487.40	3,16
Corn Production (1000 metric tons)	0.5739	1.750	1.240	26.113	24.
Corn Net Exports (1000 metric tons)	-3153.3511	-3041.0203	-3219.0031	-3461.2908	-3138
Soybeans Total Consumption (1000 metric tons)	0.0520	0.1130	0.1060	0.1017	0.0
Soybeans Production (1000 metric tons)	0.0000	0.0000	0.0000	0.0000	0.0
Soybeans Net Exports (1000 metric tons)	-0.0520	-0.1130	-0.1060	-0.1017	-0.0

	2011	2012	2013	2014	20
Rice Total Consumption (1000 metric tons)	0.9022	1.328	0.8261	1.248	1.1
Rice Production (1000 metric tons)	0.2742	0.3000	0.3199	0.3199	0.3
Rice Net Exports (1000 metric tons)	-0.6280	-1.0281	-0.5062	-0.9282	-0.7
Coffee Total Consumption (metric tons)	115,684.00	126,456.00	126,638.00	154,933.26	144,0
Coffee Production (metric tons)	0.0000	0.0000	0.0000	0.0000	0.0(
Coffee Net Exports (metric tons)	-115684.0000	-126456.0000	-126638.0000	-154933.2637	-14405
Cocoa Beans Total Consumption (metric tons)	4,455.00	5,341.00	7,287.00	9,751.23	9,95
Cocoa Beans Production (metric tons)	0.0000	0.0000	0.0000	0.0000	0.0(
Cocoa Beans Net Exports	-4455.0000	-5341.0000	-7287.0000	-9751.2334	-9953

	2011	**2012**	**2013**	**2014**	**20**
(metric tons)					
Wheat Total Consumption (1000 metric tons)	10,009.53	9,779.46	9,603.78	9,221.68	7,67
Wheat Production (1000 metric tons)	2,549.25	3,450.40	3,293.88	2,444.23	2,07
Wheat Net Exports (1000 metric tons)	-7460.2787	-6329.0629	-6309.9013	-6777.4472	-5596

World Agriculture Pricing Summary

World Agriculture Pricing Summary					
	2011	**2012**	**2013**	**2014**	**2015**
Corn Pricing Summary ($/metric ton)	291.684	298.417	259.389	192.881	169.750
Soybeans Pricing Summary ($/metric ton)	540.667	591.417	538.417	491.771	390.417
Rice Pricing Summary ($/metric ton)	458.558	525.071	473.989	425.148	386.033
Coffee Pricing Summary ($/kilogram)	5.976	4.111	3.076	4.424	3.526
Cocoa Beans Pricing Summary ($/kilogram)	2.980	2.392	2.439	3.062	3.135
Wheat Pricing Summary ($/metric ton)	316.264	313.242	312.248	284.895	203.177

Metals Consumption and Production

Metals Consumption and Production					
	2011	**2012**	**2013**	**2014**	**2015**
Copper Consumption (1000 mt)	156.122	156.122	156.122	196.552	169.492
Copper Production (1000 mt)	0.0000	0.0000	0.0000	0.0000	0.0000
Copper Net Exports (1000 mt)	-156.1223	-156.1223	-156.1223	-196.5520	-169.4922
Zinc Consumption (1000 mt)	12,675.48	22,903.07	28,550.51	29,223.44	26,019.87
Zinc Production (1000 mt)	29,768.86	29,717.13	29,834.92	29,736.75	29,015.68
Zinc Exports (1000 mt)	17,093.38	6,814.06	1,284.41	513.308	2,995.82
Lead Consumption (1000 mt)	3,102.33	3,792.62	3,112.87	2,321.11	1,934.95
Lead Production (1000 mt)	0.0000	0.0000	0.0000	0.0000	0.0000

	2011	2012	2013	2014	2015
Lead Exports (1000 mt)	-3102.3320	-3792.6220	-3112.8670	-2321.1116	-1934.9549
Tin Consumption (1000 mt)	27.635	62.438	30.463	31.404	28.859
Tin Production (1000 mt)	0.0000	0.0000	0.0000	0.0000	0.0000
Tin Exports (1000 mt)	-27.6350	-62.4380	-30.4630	-31.4043	-28.8587
Nickel Consumption (1000 mt)	7.415	1.577	8.839	11.442	9.114
Nickel Production (1000 mt)	0.0000	0.0000	0.0000	0.0000	0.0000
Nickel Exports (1000 mt)	-7.4150	-1.5770	-8.8390	-11.4420	-9.1142
Gold Consumption (kg)	7,579.75	8,011.21	11,336.00	8,453.64	7,367.56
Gold Production (kg)	4,021.06	4,094.33	4,170.57	4,359.99	4,205.95
Gold Exports (kg)	-3558.6853	-3916.8865	-7165.4356	-4093.6459	-3161.6096
Silver					

	2011	**2012**	**2013**	**2014**	**2015**
Consumption (mt)	12,339.00	10,971.00	12,232.00	10,946.00	8,947.26
Silver Production (mt)	19,814.38	20,790.56	21,126.68	21,863.41	20,093.05
Silver Exports (mt)	7,475.38	9,819.56	8,894.68	10,917.41	11,145.79

World Metals Pricing Summary

World Metals Pricing Summary					
	2011	**2012**	**2013**	**2014**	**2015**
Copper ($/mt)	8,828.19	7,962.35	7,332.10	6,863.40	5,510.46
Zinc ($/mt)	2,193.90	1,950.41	1,910.26	2,160.97	1,931.68
Tin ($/mt)	26,053.68	21,125.99	22,282.80	21,898.87	16,066.63
Lead ($/mt)	2,400.81	2,064.64	2,139.79	2,095.46	1,787.82
Nickel ($/mt)	22,910.36	17,547.55	15,031.80	16,893.38	11,862.64
Gold ($/oz)	1,569.21	1,669.52	1,411.46	1,265.58	1,160.66
Silver ($/oz)	35.224	31.137	23.850	19.071	15.721

Economic Performance Index

Economic Performance Index

The Economic Performance rankings are calculated by CountryWatch's editorial team, and are based on criteria including sustained economic growth, monetary stability, current account deficits, budget surplus, unemployment and structural imbalances. Scores are assessed from 0 to 100 using this aforementioned criteria as well as CountryWatch's proprietary economic research data and models.

	Bank stability risk	Monetary/ Currency stability	Government Finances	Empl./ Unempl.	Econ.GNP growth or decline/ forecast
	0 - 100	0 - 100	0 - 100	0 - 100	%
North Americas					
Canada	92	69	35	38	3.14%
United States	94	76	4	29	3.01%
Western Europe					
Austria	90	27	30	63	1.33%
Belgium	88	27	19	23	1.15%
Cyprus	81	91	16	80	-0.69%
Denmark	97	70	45	78	1.20%
Finland	89	27	41	33	1.25%

France	87	27	18	27	1.52%
Germany	86	27	22	21	1.25%
Greece	79	27	5	24	-2.00%
Iceland	90	17	2	34	-3.04%
Italy	85	27	37	24	0.84%
Ireland	92	27	11	10	-1.55%
Luxembourg	99	27	28	66	2.08%
Malta	77	27	41	51	0.54%
Netherlands	91	27	26	74	1.30%
Norway	98	44	10	76	1.08%
Portugal	77	27	13	20	0.29%
Spain	83	27	9	3	-0.41%
Sweden	94	72	54	32	1.23%
Switzerland	97	86	55	77	1.53%
United Kingdom	85	12	9	37	1.34%
Central and Eastern Europe					
Albania	44	60	33	6	2.30%
Armenia	45	59	49	30	1.80%

Azerbaijan	56	4	84	99	2.68%
Belarus	59	21	83	98	2.41%
Bosnia and Herzegovina	34	68	69	N/A	0.50%
Bulgaria	58	75	88	49	0.20%
Croatia	69	68	94	9	0.18%
Czech Republic	80	89	29	70	1.67%
Estonia	72	90	66	92	0.80%
Georgia	36	60	53	56	2.00%
Hungary	70	66	26	54	-0.16%
Latvia	67	100	65	44	-3.97%
Lithuania	65	91	87	79	-1.65%
Macedonia (FYR)	53	69	56	2	2.03%
Moldova	23	36	81	67	2.50%
Poland	74	74	38	12	2.72%
Romania	62	56	70	62	0.75%
Russia	73	18	90	8	4.00%
Serbia	48	49	52	5	1.97%

Montenegro	39	27	73	1	-1.70%
Slovak Republic	80	62	30	14	4.06%
Slovenia	81	27	36	65	1.12%
Ukraine	41	11	57	N/A	3.68%
Africa					
Algeria	57	18	96	7	4.55%
Angola	49	1	97	N/A	7.05%
Benin	19	91	20	N/A	3.22%
Botswana	68	58	76	N/A	6.33%
Burkina Faso	16	91	13	N/A	4.41%
Burundi	2	91	6	N/A	3.85%
Cameroon	26	91	91	N/A	2.58%
Cape Verde	52	87	4	N/A	4.96%
Central African Republic	9	91	32	N/A	3.18%
Chad	22	91	89	N/A	4.42%
Congo	52	87	87	N/A	12.13%
Côte d'Ivoire	25	91	82	28	2.98%
Dem. Republic					

Congo	4	91	47	N/A	5.44%
Djibouti	31	76	50	N/A	4.47%
Egypt	37	20	24	69	5.01%
Equatorial Guinea	82	91	85	N/A	0.94%
Eritrea	1	3	1	18	1.81%
Ethiopia	6	45	8	N/A	6.96%
Gabon	64	91	96	N/A	5.36%
Gambia	8	48	86	N/A	4.82%
Ghana	9	11	69	N/A	4.50%
Guinea	10	7	91	N/A	3.03%
Guinea-Bissau	5	91	46	N/A	3.47%
Kenya	20	41	59	N/A	4.11%
Lesotho	13	40	12	N/A	2.98%
Liberia	12	73	74	N/A	5.92%
Libya	73	2	94	N/A	5.22%
Madagascar	4	22	24	N/A	-1.02%
Malawi	7	25	55	N/A	5.96%
Mali	20	91	82	N/A	5.12%

Mauritania	15	13	93	N/A	4.58%
Mauritius	65	52	56	55	4.10%
Morocco	37	72	48	26	3.23%
Mozambique	12	23	71	N/A	6.45%
Namibia	40	39	62	N/A	1.70%
Niger	10	91	21	N/A	4.41%
Nigeria	30	6	61	N/A	6.98%
Rwanda	21	40	68	N/A	5.39%
Sao Tome & Principe	1	61	100	N/A	3.40%
Senegal	24	91	63	N/A	3.44%
Seychelles	60	67	97	N/A	4.01%
Sierra Leone	5	10	39	N/A	4.77%
Somalia	2	38	59	N/A	3.19%
South Africa	61	37	70	N/A	2.59%
Sudan	16	5	73	N/A	5.52%
Swaziland	32	44	79	N/A	1.09%
Tanzania	15	45	32	N/A	6.17%
Togo	8	91	92	N/A	2.56%

Tunisia	50	61	44	39	4.00%
Uganda	11	17	54	N/A	5.59%
Zambia	29	20	49	N/A	5.84%
Zimbabwe	0	8	16	N/A	2.24%
South and Central America					
Argentina	66	3	80	36	3.50%
Belize	47	76	80	N/A	1.00%
Bolivia	32	51	61	81	3.99%
Brazil	71	47	78	11	5.50%
Chile	78	25	92	73	4.72%
Columbia	47	52	34	47	2.25%
Costa Rica	60	42	39	57	3.45%
Ecuador	43	76	75	64	2.51%
El Salvador	35	76	67	N/A	1.04%
Guatemala	46	59	58	N/A	2.52%
Honduras	27	47	58	N/A	2.00%
Mexico	69	42	52	61	4.07%
Nicaragua	23	49	42	N/A	1.75%

Panama	66	76	72	45	5.00%
Paraguay	35	46	66	16	5.27%
Peru	59	66	75	22	6.33%
Suriname	58	26	81	59	4.02%
Uruguay	70	26	27	N/A	5.71%
Venezuela	55	1	28	13	-2.63%
Caribbean					
Antigua & Barbuda	72	76	15	N/A	-2.01%
Bahamas	74	76	45	87	-0.50%
Barbados	67	76	33	15	-0.50%
Bermuda	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A
Cuba	45	76	18	95	0.25%
Dominica	53	76	65	N/A	1.40%
Dominican Republic	54	39	43	4	3.50%
Grenada	63	76	48	N/A	0.80%
Guyana	28	56	17	N/A	4.36%
Haiti	11	27	89	N/A	-8.50%
Jamaica	42	9	85	19	-0.28%

St Lucia	55	76	67	N/A	1.14%
St Vincent & Grenadines	49	76	95	N/A	0.50%
Trinidad & Tobago	82	37	77	72	2.13%
Middle East					
Bahrain	84	76	62	91	3.48%
Iran	51	19	40	58	3.01%
Iraq	48	9	8	N/A	7.27%
Israel	87	62	12	48	3.20%
Jordan	41	51	3	N/A	4.10%
Kuwait	96	4	99	N/A	3.10%
Lebanon	63	54	2	N/A	6.00%
Oman	76	16	88	N/A	4.71%
Qatar	99	16	83	N/A	18.54%
Saudi Arabia	76	8	98	N/A	3.70%
Syria	61	24	40	N/A	5.00%
Turkey	75	23	27	60	5.20%
United Arab Emirates	96	24	98	94	1.29%

Yemen	28	2	78	N/A	7.78%
Asia					
Afghanistan	17	70	74	N/A	8.64%
Bangladesh	13	43	25	N/A	5.38%
Bhutan	24	55	5	N/A	6.85%
Brunei	78	19	99	75	0.48%
Cambodia	18	67	42	N/A	4.77%
China	54	90	19	68	11.03%
Hong Kong	89	76	14	82	5.02%
India	31	38	34	35	8.78%
Indonesia	42	46	37	31	6.00%
Japan	88	89	6	71	1.90%
Kazakhstan	62	13	76	42	2.40%
Korea North	18	65	23	N/A	1.50%
Korea South	83	63	22	85	4.44%
Kyrgyz Republic	24	15	84	88	4.61%
Laos	17	54	7	N/A	7.22%
Macao	91	76	14	82	3.00%

Malaysia	68	65	44	90	4.72%
Maldives	44	55	17	N/A	3.45%
Mongolia	33	5	77	93	7.22%
Myanmar	3	41	72	N/A	5.26%
Nepal	3	14	25	N/A	2.97%
Pakistan	19	15	31	41	3.00%
Papua New Guinea	75	50	11	N/A	7.96%
Philippines	30	48	53	43	3.63%
Singapore	93	75	63	40	5.68%
Sri Lanka	38	22	10	N/A	5.50%
Taiwan	84	88	35	89	6.50%
Tajikistan	6	6	60	97	4.00%
Thailand	56	64	90	96	5.46%
Turkmenistan	51	53	68	N/A	12.00%
Uzbekistan	40	10	60	100	8.00%
Vietnam	25	12	20	N/A	6.04%
Pacific					
Australia	96	63	31	46	2.96%

Fiji	46	53	3	N/A	2.06%
Marshall Islands	27	76	46	N/A	1.08%
Micronesia (Fed. States)	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A
New Caledonia	96	73	51	52	2.00%
New Zealand	98	73	51	52	2.00%
Samoa	34	88	64	N/A	-2.77%
Solomon Islands	14	71	1	N/A	3.36%
Tonga	26	57	38	N/A	0.60%
Vanuatu	33	58	47	N/A	3.80%

Source:

CountryWatch Inc. www.countrywatch.com

Updated:

This material was produced in 2010; it is subject to updating in 2012.

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Chapter 4

Investment Overview

Foreign Investment Climate

Background

Algeria's economy remains dominated by the state, a legacy of the country's socialist post-independence development model. Gradual liberalization since the mid-1990s has opened up more of the economy, but in recent years Algeria has imposed new restrictions on foreign involvement in its economy and largely halted the privatization of state-owned industries.

Hydrocarbons have long been the backbone of the economy, accounting for roughly 60% of budget revenues, 30% of GDP, and over 95% of export earnings. Algeria has the eighth-largest reserves of natural gas in the world and is the fourth-largest gas exporter. It ranks 16th in oil reserves. Thanks to strong hydrocarbon revenues, Algeria has a cushion of $150 billion in foreign currency reserves and a large hydrocarbon stabilization fund. In addition, Algeria's external debt is extremely low at about 1% of GDP. Algeria has struggled to develop industries outside of hydrocarbons in part because of high costs and an inert state bureaucracy.

The government's efforts to diversify the economy by attracting foreign and domestic investment outside the energy sector, however, has had little success in reducing high unemployment and improving living standards. Development of the banking sector, the construction of infrastructure, and other structural reforms are hampered by corruption and bureaucratic resistance.

Long-term economic challenges include diversification from hydrocarbons, relaxing state control of the economy, and providing adequate jobs for younger Algerians.

Foreign Investment Assessment

The Algerian government has made attracting foreign investment a cornerstone of its economic policy. It has taken several key steps towards that end. Despite those efforts, foreign investors are likely to encounter obstacles in seeking to establish business relations in Algeria, mostly holdovers from a traditionally less market-oriented economy. Many foreign firms have successfully overcome these impediments, spurred by the Algerian government's economic reforms and the hope of financial rewards for their perseverance. That being said, a recently enacted Complementary Finance Law imposed tight restrictions on imports and required that new foreign investment must

be in the form of joint ventures with at least 51 percent share of ownership by Algerian partners. That law and ban (as of Jan. 2009) on importing pharmaceutical products, which are also locally produced, have contributed to some domestic goods shortages and prompted foreign investors and businesses to reconsider activities in Algeria.

Industries

petroleum, natural gas, light industries, mining, electrical, petrochemical, food processing

Import Commodities

capital goods, foodstuffs, consumer goods

Import Partners

France 30.9%, Italy 9.6%, Spain 6.1%, Germany 5.5%, China 4.6%, Turkey 4.1%

Export Commodities

petroleum, natural gas, and petroleum products 97%

Export Partners

Italy 19.5%, US 18.5%, France 13.6%, Spain 11.2%, Canada 6.2%, Belgium 5.1%, Brazil 4.9%

Ports and Harbors

Algiers, Annaba, Arzew, Bejaia, Beni Saf, Dellys, Djendjene, Ghazaouet, Jijel, Mostaganem, Oran, Skikda, Tenes

Telephone System

Telephone density in Algeria is very low, not exceeding five telephones per 100 persons; the number of fixed main lines increased in the last few years to a little more than 2 million, but only

about two-thirds of these have subscribers; much of the infrastructure is outdated and inefficient. Country Code: 213

Internet Users

500,000

Labor Force

9.6 million; agriculture 14%, industry 13.4%, construction and public works 10%, trade 14.6%, government 32%, other 16%

Judicial System

The means to resolve disputes between foreign and domestic parties are well articulated in Algeria's legal system. Both Algeria's investment code and its code of civil procedures provide direction for arbitration procedures in the event of conflicts between foreign and domestic parties. However, the complexity of Algeria's commercial law somewhat offsets the benefits of a legal framework that details procedures to resolve such disputes. Over 400 legislative and regulatory texts govern Algerian commercial law. Thus, foreign investors are often forced to rely heavily on local counsel to ensure that all procedures and rules are followed.

Corruption Perception Ranking

See list, as reported by Transparency International, located elesewhere in this Coutry Review for Algeria's current ranking.

Cultural Considerations

Although heavily influenced by Western culture, Algeria is a predominately Muslim country. Though handshakes are an accepted form of greeting, traditional Muslims do not shake hands with the opposite sex. Visiting women should dress conservatively.

Country Website (s)

Foreign Investment Index

Foreign Investment Index

The Foreign Investment Index is a proprietary index measuring attractiveness to international investment flows. The Foreign Investment Index is calculated using an established methodology by CountryWatch's Editor-in-Chief and is based on a given country's economic stability (sustained economic growth, monetary stability, current account deficits, budget surplus), economic risk (risk of non-servicing of payments for goods or services, loans and trade-related finance, risk of sovereign default), business and investment climate (property rights, labor force and laws, regulatory transparency, openness to foreign investment, market conditions, and stability of government). Scores are assigned from 0-10 using the aforementioned criteria. A score of 0 marks the lowest level of foreign investment viability, while a score of 10 marks the highest level of foreign investment viability, according to this proprietary index.

Country	Assessment
Afghanistan	2
Albania	4.5
Algeria	6
Andorra	9
Angola	4.5-5
Antigua	8.5

Argentina	5
Armenia	5
Australia	9.5
Austria	9-9.5
Azerbaijan	5
Bahamas	9
Bahrain	7.5
Bangladesh	4.5
Barbados	9
Belarus	4
Belgium	9
Belize	7.5
Benin	5.5
Bhutan	4.5
Bolivia	4.5
Bosnia-Herzegovina	5
Botswana	7.5-8
Brazil	8

Brunei	7
Bulgaria	5.5
Burkina Faso	4
Burma (Myanmar)	4.5
Burundi	4
Cambodia	4.5
Cameroon	5
Canada	9.5
Cape Verde	6
Central African Republic	3
Chad	4
Chile	9
China	7.5
China: Hong Kong	8.5
China: Taiwan	8.5
Colombia	7
Comoros	4
Congo DRC	4

Congo RC	5
Costa Rica	8
Cote d'Ivoire	4.5
Croatia	7
Cuba	4.5
Cyprus	7
Czech Republic	8.5
Denmark	9.5
Djibouti	4.5
Dominica	6
Dominican Republic	6.5
East Timor	4.5
Ecuador	5.5
Egypt	4.5-5
El Salvador	6
Equatorial Guinea	4.5
Eritrea	3.5
Estonia	8

Ethiopia	4.5
Fiji	5
Finland	9
Former Yugoslav Rep. of Macedonia	5
France	9-9.5
Gabon	5.5
Gambia	5
Georgia	5
Germany	9-9.5
Ghana	5.5
Greece	5
Grenada	7.5
Guatemala	5.5
Guinea	3.5
Guinea-Bissau	3.5
Guyana	4.5
Haiti	4
Holy See (Vatican)	n/a

Hong Kong (China)	8.5
Honduras	5.5
Hungary	8
Iceland	8-8.5
India	8
Indonesia	5.5
Iran	4
Iraq	3
Ireland	8
Israel	8.5
Italy	8
Jamaica	5.5
Japan	9.5
Jordan	6
Kazakhstan	6
Kenya	5
Kiribati	5.5
Korea, North	1

Korea, South	9
Kosovo	4.5
Kuwait	8.5
Kyrgyzstan	4.5
Laos	4
Latvia	7
Lebanon	5
Lesotho	5.5
Liberia	3.5
Libya	3
Liechtenstein	9
Lithuania	7.5
Luxembourg	9-9.5
Madagascar	4.5
Malawi	4.5
Malaysia	8.5
Maldives	6.5
Mali	5

Malta	9
Marshall Islands	5
Mauritania	4.5
Mauritius	7.5-8
Mexico	6.5-7
Micronesia	5
Moldova	4.5-5
Monaco	9
Mongolia	5
Montenegro	5.5
Morocco	7.5
Mozambique	5
Namibia	7.5
Nauru	4.5
Nepal	4
Netherlands	9-9.5
New Zealand	9.5
Nicaragua	5

Niger	4.5
Nigeria	4.5
Norway	9-9.5
Oman	8
Pakistan	4
Palau	4.5-5
Panama	7
Papua New Guinea	5
Paraguay	6
Peru	6
Philippines	6
Poland	8
Portugal	7.5-8
Qatar	9
Romania	6-6.5
Russia	6
Rwanda	4
Saint Kitts and Nevis	8

Saint Lucia	8
Saint Vincent and Grenadines	7
Samoa	7
San Marino	8.5
Sao Tome and Principe	4.5-5
Saudi Arabia	7
Senegal	6
Serbia	6
Seychelles	5
Sierra Leone	4
Singapore	9.5
Slovak Republic (Slovakia)	8.5
Slovenia	8.5-9
Solomon Islands	5
Somalia	2
South Africa	8
Spain	7.5-8
Sri Lanka	5.5

Sudan	4
Suriname	5
Swaziland	4.5
Sweden	9.5
Switzerland	9.5
Syria	2.5
Tajikistan	4
Taiwan (China)	8.5
Tanzania	5
Thailand	7.5-8
Togo	4.5-5
Tonga	5.5-6
Trinidad and Tobago	8-8.5
Tunisia	6
Turkey	6.5-7
Turkmenistan	4
Tuvalu	7
Uganda	5

Ukraine	4.5-5
United Arab Emirates	8.5
United Kingdom	9
United States	9
Uruguay	6.5-7
Uzbekistan	4
Vanuatu	6
Venezuela	5
Vietnam	5.5
Yemen	3
Zambia	4.5-5
Zimbabwe	3.5

Editor's Note:

As of 2015, the global economic crisis (emerging in 2008) had affected many countries across the world, resulting in changes to their rankings. Among those countries affected were top tier economies, such as the United Kingdom, Iceland, Switzerland and Austria. However, in all these cases, their rankings have moved back upward in the last couple of years as anxieties have eased.   Other top tier countries, such as Spain, Portugal, Ireland, and Italy, suffered some effects due to debt woes and the concomitant effect on the euro zone. Greece, another euro zone nation, was also downgraded due to its sovereign debt crisis; however, Greece's position on the precipice of default incurred a sharper downgrade than the other four euro zone countries mentioned above. Cyprus' exposure to Greek bank yielded a downgrade in its case.   Slovenia and Latvia have been slightly downgraded due to a mix of economic and political concerns but could

easily be upgraded in a future assessment, should these concerns abate. Meanwhile, the crisis in eastern Ukraine fueled downgrades in that country and neighboring Russia.

Despite the "trifecta of tragedy" in Japan in 2011 -- the earthquake, the ensuing tsunami, and the resulting nuclear crisis -- and the appreciable destabilization of the economic and political terrain therein, this country has only slightly been downgraded. Japan's challenges have been assessed to be transient, the government remains accountable, and there is little risk of default. Both India and China retain their rankings; India holds a slightly higher ranking than China due to its record of democratic representation and accountability.

There were shifts in opposite directions for Mali and Nigeria versus the Central African Republic, Burkina Faso, and Burundi. Mali was slightly upgraded due to its efforts to return to constitutional order following the 2012 coup and to neutralize the threat of separatists and Islamists. Likewise, a new government in Nigeria generated a slight upgrade as the country attempts to confront corruption, crime, and terrorism. But the Central African Republic was downgraded due to the takeover of the government by Seleka rebels and the continued decline into lawlessness in that country. Likewise, the attempts by the leaders of Burundi and Burkina Faso to hold onto power by by-passing the constitution raised eybrows and resulted in downgrades.

Political unrest in Libya and Algeria have contributed to a decision to marginally downgrade these countries as well. Syria incurred a sharper downgrade due to the devolution into de facto civil war and the dire security threat posed by Islamist terrorists. Iraq saw a similar downgrade as a result of the takeover of wide swaths of territory and the threat of genocide at the hands of Islamist terrorists. Yemen, likewise, has been downgraded due to political instability at the hands of secessionists, terrorists, Houthi rebels, and the intervention of external parties. Conversely, Egypt and Tunisia saw slight upgrades as their political environments stabilize.

At the low end of the spectrum, devolving security conditions and/or economic crisis have resulted in countries like Pakistan, Afghanistan, Somalia, and Zimbabwe maintaining their low ratings.

The United States continues to retain its previous slight downgrade due to the enduring threat of default surrounding the debt ceiling in that country, matched by a conflict-ridden political climate. In the case of Mexico, there is limited concern about default, but increasing alarm over the security situation in that country and the government's ability to contain it. In Argentina, a default to bond holders resulted in a downgrade to that country. Finally, a small but significant upgrade was attributed to Cuba due to its recent pro-business reforms and its normalization of ties with the Unitd States.

Source:

CountryWatch Inc. www.countrywatch.com

Updated:

2015

Corruption Perceptions Index

Corruption Perceptions Index

Transparency International: Corruption Perceptions Index

Editor's Note:

Transparency International's Corruption Perceptions Index is a composite index which ranks countries in terms of the degree to which corruption is perceived to exist among public officials. This index indicates the views of national and international business people and analysts about the levels of corruption in each country. The highest (and best) level of transparency is indicated by the number, 10. The lower (and worse) levels of transparency are indicated by lower numbers.

Rank	Country/Territory	CPI 2009 Score	Surveys Used	Confidence Range
1	New Zealand	9.4	6	9.1 - 9.5
2	Denmark	9.3	6	9.1 - 9.5
3	Singapore	9.2	9	9.0 - 9.4
3	Sweden	9.2	6	9.0 - 9.3
5	Switzerland	9.0	6	8.9 - 9.1
6	Finland	8.9	6	8.4 - 9.4
6	Netherlands	8.9	6	8.7 - 9.0

8	Australia	8.7	8	8.3 - 9.0
8	Canada	8.7	6	8.5 - 9.0
8	Iceland	8.7	4	7.5 - 9.4
11	Norway	8.6	6	8.2 - 9.1
12	Hong Kong	8.2	8	7.9 - 8.5
12	Luxembourg	8.2	6	7.6 - 8.8
14	Germany	8.0	6	7.7 - 8.3
14	Ireland	8.0	6	7.8 - 8.4
16	Austria	7.9	6	7.4 - 8.3
17	Japan	7.7	8	7.4 - 8.0
17	United Kingdom	7.7	6	7.3 - 8.2
19	United States	7.5	8	6.9 - 8.0
20	Barbados	7.4	4	6.6 - 8.2
21	Belgium	7.1	6	6.9 - 7.3
22	Qatar	7.0	6	5.8 - 8.1
22	Saint Lucia	7.0	3	6.7 - 7.5
24	France	6.9	6	6.5 - 7.3
25	Chile	6.7	7	6.5 - 6.9

25	Uruguay	6.7	5	6.4 - 7.1
27	Cyprus	6.6	4	6.1 - 7.1
27	Estonia	6.6	8	6.1 - 6.9
27	Slovenia	6.6	8	6.3 - 6.9
30	United Arab Emirates	6.5	5	5.5 - 7.5
31	Saint Vincent and the Grenadines	6.4	3	4.9 - 7.5
32	Israel	6.1	6	5.4 - 6.7
32	Spain	6.1	6	5.5 - 6.6
34	Dominica	5.9	3	4.9 - 6.7
35	Portugal	5.8	6	5.5 - 6.2
35	Puerto Rico	5.8	4	5.2 - 6.3
37	Botswana	5.6	6	5.1 - 6.3
37	Taiwan	5.6	9	5.4 - 5.9
39	Brunei Darussalam	5.5	4	4.7 - 6.4
39	Oman	5.5	5	4.4 - 6.5
39	Korea (South)	5.5	9	5.3 - 5.7
42	Mauritius	5.4	6	5.0 - 5.9

43	Costa Rica	5.3	5	4.7 - 5.9
43	Macau	5.3	3	3.3 - 6.9
45	Malta	5.2	4	4.0 - 6.2
46	Bahrain	5.1	5	4.2 - 5.8
46	Cape Verde	5.1	3	3.3 - 7.0
46	Hungary	5.1	8	4.6 - 5.7
49	Bhutan	5.0	4	4.3 - 5.6
49	Jordan	5.0	7	3.9 - 6.1
49	Poland	5.0	8	4.5 - 5.5
52	Czech Republic	4.9	8	4.3 - 5.6
52	Lithuania	4.9	8	4.4 - 5.4
54	Seychelles	4.8	3	3.0 - 6.7
55	South Africa	4.7	8	4.3 - 4.9
56	Latvia	4.5	6	4.1 - 4.9
56	Malaysia	4.5	9	4.0 - 5.1
56	Namibia	4.5	6	3.9 - 5.1
56	Samoa	4.5	3	3.3 - 5.3
56	Slovakia	4.5	8	4.1 - 4.9

61	Cuba	4.4	3	3.5 - 5.1
61	Turkey	4.4	7	3.9 - 4.9
63	Italy	4.3	6	3.8 - 4.9
63	Saudi Arabia	4.3	5	3.1 - 5.3
65	Tunisia	4.2	6	3.0 - 5.5
66	Croatia	4.1	8	3.7 - 4.5
66	Georgia	4.1	7	3.4 - 4.7
66	Kuwait	4.1	5	3.2 - 5.1
69	Ghana	3.9	7	3.2 - 4.6
69	Montenegro	3.9	5	3.5 - 4.4
71	Bulgaria	3.8	8	3.2 - 4.5
71	FYR Macedonia	3.8	6	3.4 - 4.2
71	Greece	3.8	6	3.2 - 4.3
71	Romania	3.8	8	3.2 - 4.3
75	Brazil	3.7	7	3.3 - 4.3
75	Colombia	3.7	7	3.1 - 4.3
75	Peru	3.7	7	3.4 - 4.1
75	Suriname	3.7	3	3.0 - 4.7

79	Burkina Faso	3.6	7	2.8 - 4.4
79	China	3.6	9	3.0 - 4.2
79	Swaziland	3.6	3	3.0 - 4.7
79	Trinidad and Tobago	3.6	4	3.0 - 4.3
83	Serbia	3.5	6	3.3 - 3.9
84	El Salvador	3.4	5	3.0 - 3.8
84	Guatemala	3.4	5	3.0 - 3.9
84	India	3.4	10	3.2 - 3.6
84	Panama	3.4	5	3.1 - 3.7
84	Thailand	3.4	9	3.0 - 3.8
89	Lesotho	3.3	6	2.8 - 3.8
89	Malawi	3.3	7	2.7 - 3.9
89	Mexico	3.3	7	3.2 - 3.5
89	Moldova	3.3	6	2.7 - 4.0
89	Morocco	3.3	6	2.8 - 3.9
89	Rwanda	3.3	4	2.9 - 3.7
95	Albania	3.2	6	3.0 - 3.3
95	Vanuatu	3.2	3	2.3 - 4.7

97	Liberia	3.1	3	1.9 - 3.8
97	Sri Lanka	3.1	7	2.8 - 3.4
99	Bosnia and Herzegovina	3.0	7	2.6 - 3.4
99	Dominican Republic	3.0	5	2.9 - 3.2
99	Jamaica	3.0	5	2.8 - 3.3
99	Madagascar	3.0	7	2.8 - 3.2
99	Senegal	3.0	7	2.5 - 3.6
99	Tonga	3.0	3	2.6 - 3.3
99	Zambia	3.0	7	2.8 - 3.2
106	Argentina	2.9	7	2.6 - 3.1
106	Benin	2.9	6	2.3 - 3.4
106	Gabon	2.9	3	2.6 - 3.1
106	Gambia	2.9	5	1.6 - 4.0
106	Niger	2.9	5	2.7 - 3.0
111	Algeria	2.8	6	2.5 - 3.1
111	Djibouti	2.8	4	2.3 - 3.2
111	Egypt	2.8	6	2.6 - 3.1
111	Indonesia	2.8	9	2.4 - 3.2

111	Kiribati	2.8	3	2.3 - 3.3
111	Mali	2.8	6	2.4 - 3.2
111	Sao Tome and Principe	2.8	3	2.4 - 3.3
111	Solomon Islands	2.8	3	2.3 - 3.3
111	Togo	2.8	5	1.9 - 3.9
120	Armenia	2.7	7	2.6 - 2.8
120	Bolivia	2.7	6	2.4 - 3.1
120	Ethiopia	2.7	7	2.4 - 2.9
120	Kazakhstan	2.7	7	2.1 - 3.3
120	Mongolia	2.7	7	2.4 - 3.0
120	Vietnam	2.7	9	2.4 - 3.1
126	Eritrea	2.6	4	1.6 - 3.8
126	Guyana	2.6	4	2.5 - 2.7
126	Syria	2.6	5	2.2 - 2.9
126	Tanzania	2.6	7	2.4 - 2.9
130	Honduras	2.5	6	2.2 - 2.8
130	Lebanon	2.5	3	1.9 - 3.1
130	Libya	2.5	6	2.2 - 2.8

130	Maldives	2.5	4	1.8 - 3.2
130	Mauritania	2.5	7	2.0 - 3.3
130	Mozambique	2.5	7	2.3 - 2.8
130	Nicaragua	2.5	6	2.3 - 2.7
130	Nigeria	2.5	7	2.2 - 2.7
130	Uganda	2.5	7	2.1 - 2.8
139	Bangladesh	2.4	7	2.0 - 2.8
139	Belarus	2.4	4	2.0 - 2.8
139	Pakistan	2.4	7	2.1 - 2.7
139	Philippines	2.4	9	2.1 - 2.7
143	Azerbaijan	2.3	7	2.0 - 2.6
143	Comoros	2.3	3	1.6 - 3.3
143	Nepal	2.3	6	2.0 - 2.6
146	Cameroon	2.2	7	1.9 - 2.6
146	Ecuador	2.2	5	2.0 - 2.5
146	Kenya	2.2	7	1.9 - 2.5
146	Russia	2.2	8	1.9 - 2.4
146	Sierra Leone	2.2	5	1.9 - 2.4

146	Timor-Leste	2.2	5	1.8 - 2.6
146	Ukraine	2.2	8	2.0 - 2.6
146	Zimbabwe	2.2	7	1.7 - 2.8
154	Côte d´Ivoire	2.1	7	1.8 - 2.4
154	Papua New Guinea	2.1	5	1.7 - 2.5
154	Paraguay	2.1	5	1.7 - 2.5
154	Yemen	2.1	4	1.6 - 2.5
158	Cambodia	2.0	8	1.8 - 2.2
158	Central African Republic	2.0	4	1.9 - 2.2
158	Laos	2.0	4	1.6 - 2.6
158	Tajikistan	2.0	8	1.6 - 2.5
162	Angola	1.9	5	1.8 - 1.9
162	Congo Brazzaville	1.9	5	1.6 - 2.1
162	Democratic Republic of Congo	1.9	5	1.7 - 2.1
162	Guinea-Bissau	1.9	3	1.8 - 2.0
162	Kyrgyzstan	1.9	7	1.8 - 2.1
162	Venezuela	1.9	7	1.8 - 2.0
168	Burundi	1.8	6	1.6 - 2.0

168	Equatorial Guinea	1.8	3	1.6 - 1.9
168	Guinea	1.8	5	1.7 - 1.8
168	Haiti	1.8	3	1.4 - 2.3
168	Iran	1.8	3	1.7 - 1.9
168	Turkmenistan	1.8	4	1.7 - 1.9
174	Uzbekistan	1.7	6	1.5 - 1.8
175	Chad	1.6	6	1.5 - 1.7
176	Iraq	1.5	3	1.2 - 1.8
176	Sudan	1.5	5	1.4 - 1.7
178	Myanmar	1.4	3	0.9 - 1.8
179	Afghanistan	1.3	4	1.0 - 1.5
180	Somalia	1.1	3	0.9 - 1.4

Methodology:

As noted above, the highest (and best) level of transparency with the least perceived corruption is indicated by the number, 10. The lower (and worse) levels of transparency are indicated by lower numbers.

According to Transparency International, the Corruption Perceptions Index (CPI) table shows a country's ranking and score, the number of surveys used to determine the score, and the confidence range of the scoring.

The rank shows how one country compares to others included in the index. The CPI score

indicates the perceived level of public-sector corruption in a country/territory.

The CPI is based on 13 independent surveys. However, not all surveys include all countries. The surveys used column indicates how many surveys were relied upon to determine the score for that country.

The confidence range indicates the reliability of the CPI scores and tells us that allowing for a margin of error, we can be 90% confident that the true score for this country lies within this range.

Note:

Kosovo, which separated from the Yugoslav successor state of Serbia, is not listed above. No calculation is available for Kosovo at this time, however, a future corruption index by Transparency International may include the world's newest country in its tally. Taiwan has been listed above despite its contested status; while Taiwan claims sovereign status, China claims ultimate jurisdiction over Taiwan. Hong Kong, which is also under the rubric of Chinese sovereignty, is listed above. Note as well that Puerto Rico, which is a United States domain, is also included in the list above. These inclusions likely have to do with the size and fairly autonomous status of their economies.

Source:

Transparency International's Corruption Perception Index; available at URL: http://www.transparency.org

Updated:

Uploaded in 2011 using most recent ranking available; reviewed in 2015.

Competitiveness Ranking

Competitiveness Ranking

Editor's Note:

The Global Competitiveness Report's competitiveness ranking is based on the Global Competitiveness Index (GCI), which was developed for the World Economic Forum. The GCI is based on a number of competitiveness considerations, and provides a comprehensive picture of the

competitiveness landscape in countries around the world. The competitiveness considerations are: institutions, infrastructure, macroeconomic environment, health and primary education, higher education and training, goods market efficiency, labour market efficiency, financial market development, technological readiness, market size, business sophistication, and innovation. The rankings are calculated from both publicly available data and the Executive Opinion Survey.

Country/Economy	GCI 2010 Rank	GCI 2010 Score	GCI 2009 Rank	Change 2009-2010
Switzerland	1	5.63	1	0
Sweden	2	5.56	4	2
Singapore	3	5.48	3	0
United States	4	5.43	2	-2
Germany	5	5.39	7	2
Japan	6	5.37	8	2
Finland	7	5.37	6	-1
Netherlands	8	5.33	10	2
Denmark	9	5.32	5	-4
Canada	10	5.30	9	-1
Hong Kong SAR	11	5.30	11	0
United Kingdom	12	5.25	13	1
Taiwan, China	13	5.21	12	-1
Norway	14	5.14	14	0

France	15	5.13	16	1
Australia	16	5.11	15	-1
Qatar	17	5.10	22	5
Austria	18	5.09	17	-1
Belgium	19	5.07	18	-1
Luxembourg	20	5.05	21	1
Saudi Arabia	21	4.95	28	7
Korea, Rep.	22	4.93	19	-3
New Zealand	23	4.92	20	-3
Israel	24	4.91	27	3
United Arab Emirates	25	4.89	23	-2
Malaysia	26	4.88	24	-2
China	27	4.84	29	2
Brunei Darussalam	28	4.75	32	4
Ireland	29	4.74	25	-4
Chile	30	4.69	30	0
Iceland	31	4.68	26	-5
Tunisia	32	4.65	40	8

Estonia	33	4.61	35	2
Oman	34	4.61	41	7
Kuwait	35	4.59	39	4
Czech Republic	36	4.57	31	-5
Bahrain	37	4.54	38	1
Thailand	38	4.51	36	-2
Poland	39	4.51	46	7
Cyprus	40	4.50	34	-6
Puerto Rico	41	4.49	42	1
Spain	42	4.49	33	-9
Barbados	43	4.45	44	1
Indonesia	44	4.43	54	10
Slovenia	45	4.42	37	-8
Portugal	46	4.38	43	-3
Lithuania	47	4.38	53	6
Italy	48	4.37	48	0
Montenegro	49	4.36	62	13
Malta	50	4.34	52	2

India	51	4.33	49	-2
Hungary	52	4.33	58	6
Panama	53	4.33	59	6
South Africa	54	4.32	45	-9
Mauritius	55	4.32	57	2
Costa Rica	56	4.31	55	-1
Azerbaijan	57	4.29	51	-6
Brazil	58	4.28	56	-2
Vietnam	59	4.27	75	16
Slovak Republic	60	4.25	47	-13
Turkey	61	4.25	61	0
Sri Lanka	62	4.25	79	17
Russian Federation	63	4.24	63	0
Uruguay	64	4.23	65	1
Jordan	65	4.21	50	-15
Mexico	66	4.19	60	-6
Romania	67	4.16	64	-3
Colombia	68	4.14	69	1

Iran	69	4.14	n/a	n/a
Latvia	70	4.14	68	-2
Bulgaria	71	4.13	76	5
Kazakhstan	72	4.12	67	-5
Peru	73	4.11	78	5
Namibia	74	4.09	74	0
Morocco	75	4.08	73	-2
Botswana	76	4.05	66	-10
Croatia	77	4.04	72	-5
Guatemala	78	4.04	80	2
Macedonia, FYR	79	4.02	84	5
Rwanda	80	4.00	n/a	n/a
Egypt	81	4.00	70	-11
El Salvador	82	3.99	77	-5
Greece	83	3.99	71	-12
Trinidad and Tobago	84	3.97	86	2
Philippines	85	3.96	87	2
Algeria	86	3.96	83	-3

Argentina	87	3.95	85	-2
Albania	88	3.94	96	8
Ukraine	89	3.90	82	-7
Gambia, The	90	3.90	81	-9
Honduras	91	3.89	89	-2
Lebanon	92	3.89	n/a	n/a
Georgia	93	3.86	90	-3
Moldova	94	3.86	n/a	n/a
Jamaica	95	3.85	91	-4
Serbia	96	3.84	93	-3
Syria	97	3.79	94	-3
Armenia	98	3.76	97	-1
Mongolia	99	3.75	117	18
Libya	100	3.74	88	-12
Dominican Republic	101	3.72	95	-6
Bosnia and Herzegovina	102	3.70	109	7
Benin	103	3.69	103	0
Senegal	104	3.67	92	-12

Ecuador	105	3.65	105	0
Kenya	106	3.65	98	-8
Bangladesh	107	3.64	106	-1
Bolivia	108	3.64	120	12
Cambodia	109	3.63	110	1
Guyana	110	3.62	104	-6
Cameroon	111	3.58	111	0
Nicaragua	112	3.57	115	3
Tanzania	113	3.56	100	-13
Ghana	114	3.56	114	0
Zambia	115	3.55	112	-3
Tajikistan	116	3.53	122	6
Cape Verde	117	3.51	n/a	n/a
Uganda	118	3.51	108	-10
Ethiopia	119	3.51	118	-1
Paraguay	120	3.49	124	4
Kyrgyz Republic	121	3.49	123	2
Venezuela	122	3.48	113	-9

Pakistan	123	3.48	101	-22
Madagascar	124	3.46	121	-3
Malawi	125	3.45	119	-6
Swaziland	126	3.40	n/a	n/a
Nigeria	127	3.38	99	-28
Lesotho	128	3.36	107	-21
Côte d'Ivoire	129	3.35	116	-13
Nepal	130	3.34	125	-5
Mozambique	131	3.32	129	-2
Mali	132	3.28	130	-2
Timor-Leste	133	3.23	126	-7
Burkina Faso	134	3.20	128	-6
Mauritania	135	3.14	127	-8
Zimbabwe	136	3.03	132	-4
Burundi	137	2.96	133	-4
Angola	138	2.93	n/a	n/a
Chad	139	2.73	131	-8

Methodology:

The competitiveness rankings are calculated from both publicly available data and the Executive Opinion Survey, a comprehensive annual survey conducted by the World Economic Forum together with its network of Partner Institutes (leading research institutes and business organizations) in the countries covered by the Report.

Highlights according to WEF --

- The United States falls two places to fourth position, overtaken by Sweden and Singapore in the rankings of the World Economic Forum's Global Competitiveness Report 2010-2011
- The People's Republic of China continues to move up the rankings, with marked improvements in several other Asian countries
- Germany moves up two places to fifth place, leading the Eurozone countries
- Switzerland tops the rankings

Source:

World Economic Forum; available at URL: http://www.weforum.org

Updated:

2011 using most recent ranking available; reviewed in 2015.

Taxation

Corporate tax

The rate of corporate income tax is   30 percent on taxable income.

Social security

Social security contributions are applied at 26 percent on gross salaries.

Indirect tax

The value added tax (VAT) of 17 percent is applied to some goods and services.

Other taxes

- Professional tax is two percent on turnover
- Apprenticeship tax is one percent on net salaries
- Inclusive tax (versement forfaitaire) is one percent on net salaries

Stock Market

The Algiers Stock Exchange (La Bourse d'Alger) was inaugurated in July 1999. The stocks of a small handful of Algerian public enterprises, including Algeria's pharmaceutical giant SAIDAL, are traded on the exchange. Société de Gestion de la Bourse des Valeurs (SGBV) is charged with the daily operation of the exchange. Algeria's equivalent to the SEC, the Commission d'Organisation et de Surveillance des Operations de Bourse (COSOB) monitors its activities.

For more information on the Algiers Stock Exchange, see COSOB's Web page: www.cosob.com. COSOB is located at 17 Campagne Chkiken / Val d'Hydra / Algiers, Algeria and can be reached by phone at: (213) 021-59-10-21.

Partner Links

Partner Links

Chapter 5

Social Overview

People

Cultural Demography

Algeria lies at the geographic center of the Arab Maghreb, the grouping of states in the western part of North Africa. The large majority of the population, which total approximately 35.5 million, lives primarily along the Mediterranean coast. The overall population density of the country is 11.7 persons per square kilometer, but does not reflect the regional differences in density. The heavily inhabited northern part of the country hosts more than 90 percent of the population. The Sahara desert covers over 85 percent of the territory.

The main inhabitants of Algeria are Muslim Arabs, but the country also has a large Berber minority. Although a significant minority of the population asserts a separate Berber identity, the majority the distinction between the two groups is non-existent due to centuries of intermarriage. Together, Arab-Berbers and Berbers comprise over 99 percent of Algeria's population, with Europeans constituting the remaining one percent.

The official language is Arabic, but both Berber dialects and French are also widely spoken. French has traditionally been the language of education, commerce and diplomacy, although its use at the expense of Arabic is increasingly disfavored.

The state religion is Sunni Islam and almost all Algerians follow that faith, but there are also small minorities of Christians and Jews.

Human Development

In terms of health and welfare, Algeria's infant mortality rate is 26.75 deaths for every 1,000 live births. According to the CIA World Factbook, the annual population growth rate was estimated at 1.18 percent in recent years. Life expectancy at birth for the total population was estimated at 74.26 years of age (72.57 years for males and 76.04 years for females).

The country's literacy rate for the total population is 69.9 percent, but there are measurable gender differences that are not reflected by this figure. Generally speaking, the literacy rate of males - at

79.6 percent - is substantially higher than that of females, which is 60.1 percent. Of note is the fact that access to education among women is limited, and on a comparative basis, it has clearly declined in the last few decades. By way of illustration, female literacy rates declined 15 percent from the 1980s to the present.

About percent of 5.8 GDP in this country is spent on health expenditures; about 4.7 percent of GDP in this country is spent on education. Access to water and sanitation in this country is regarded to be generally good.

One notable indicator used to measure a country's quality of life is the Human Development Index (HDI), which is compiled annually since 1990 by the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP). The HDI is a composite of several indicators, which measure a country's achievements in three main arenas of human development: longevity, knowledge and education, as well as economic standard of living. In a recent ranking of 169 countries, the HDI placed Algeria in the medium human development category, at 84th place, much improved from in recent years when it was 104th place.

Note: Although the concept of human development is complicated and cannot be properly captured by values and indices, the HDI, which is calculated and updated annually, offers a wide-ranging assessment of human development in certain countries, not based solely upon traditional economic and financial indicators.

Written by Dr. Denise Youngblood Coleman, Editor in Chief, www.countrywatch.com . See Bibliography for list of general research sources.

Human Development Index

Human Development Index

Human Development Index (Ranked Numerically)

The Human Development Index (HDI) is used to measure quality of life in countries across the world. The HDI has been compiled since 1990 by the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP) on a regular basis. The HDI is a composite of several indicators, which measure a country's achievements in three main arenas of human development: longevity, education, and economic standard of living. Although the concept of human development is complicated and

cannot be properly captured by values and indices, the HDI offers a wide-ranging assessment of human development in certain countries, not based solely upon traditional economic and financial indicators. For more information about the methodology used to calculate the HDI, please see the "Source Materials" in the appendices of this review.

Very High Human Development	High Human Development	Medium Human Development	Low Human Development
1. Norway	43. Bahamas	86. Fiji	128. Kenya
2. Australia	44. Lithuania	87. Turkmenistan	129. Bangladesh
3. New Zealand	45. Chile	88. Dominican Republic	130. Ghana
4. United States	46. Argentina	89. China	131. Cameroon
5. Ireland	47. Kuwait	90. El Salvador	132. Myanmar (Burma)
6. Liechtenstein	48. Latvia	91. Sri Lanka	133. Yemen
7. Netherlands	49. Montenegro	92. Thailand	134. Benin
8. Canada	50. Romania	93. Gabon	135. Madagascar
9. Sweden	51. Croatia	94. Surname	136. Mauritania
10. Germany	52. Uruguay	95. Bolivia	137. Papua New Guinea
11. Japan	53. Libya	96. Paraguay	138. Nepal
12. South Korea	54. Panama	97. Philippines	139. Togo

13. Switzerland	55. Saudi Arabia	98. Botswana	140. Comoros
14. France	56. Mexico	99. Moldova	141. Lesotho
15. Israel	57. Malaysia	100. Mongolia	142. Nigeria
16. Finland	58. Bulgaria	101. Egypt	143. Uganda
17. Iceland	59. Trinidad and Tobago	102. Uzbekistan	144. Senegal
18. Belgium	60. Serbia	103. Micronesia	145. Haiti
19. Denmark	61. Belarus	104. Guyana	146. Angola
20. Spain	62. Costa Rica	105. Namibia	147. Djibouti
21. Hong King	63. Peru	106. Honduras	148. Tanzania
22. Greece	64. Albania	107. Maldives	149. Cote d'Ivoire
23. Italy	65. Russian Federation	108. Indonesia	150. Zambia
24. Luxembourg	66. Kazakhstan	109. Kyrgyzstan	151. Gambia
25. Austria	67. Azerbaijan	110. South Africa	152. Rwanda
26. United Kingdom	68. Bosnia and Herzegovina	111. Syria	153. Malawi
27. Singapore	69. Ukraine	112. Tajikistan	154. Sudan
28. Czech Republic	70. Iran	113. Vietnam	155. Afghanistan
29. Slovenia	71. The former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia	114. Morocco	156. Guinea

30. Andorra	72. Mauritius	115. Nicaragua	157. Ethiopia
31. Slovakia	73. Brazil	116. Guatemala	158. Sierra Leone
32. United Arab Emirates	74. Georgia	117. Equatorial Guinea	159. Central African Republic
33. Malta	75. Venezuela	118. Cape Verde	160. Mali
34. Estonia	76. Armenia	119. India	161. Burkina Faso
35. Cyprus	77. Ecuador	120. East Timor	162. Liberia
36. Hungary	78. Belize	121. Swaziland	163. Chad
37. Brunei	79. Colombia	122. Laos	164. Guinea-Bissau
38. Qatar	80. Jamaica	123. Solomon Islands	165. Mozambique
39. Bahrain	81. Tunisia	124. Cambodia	166. Burundi
40. Portugal	82. Jordan	125. Pakistan	167. Niger
41. Poland	83. Turkey	126. Congo RC	168. Congo DRC
42. Barbados	84. Algeria	127. Sao Tome and Principe	169. Zimbabwe
	85. Tonga		

Methodology:

For more information about the methodology used to calculate the HDI, please see the "Source Materials" in the appendices of this Country Review.

Reference:

As published in United Nations Development Programme's Human Development Report 2010.

Source:

United Nations Development Programme's Human Development Index available at URL: http://hdr.undp.org/en/statistics/

Updated:

Uploaded in 2011 using ranking available; reviewed in 2015

Life Satisfaction Index

Life Satisfaction Index

Life Satisfaction Index

Created by Adrian G. White, an Analytic Social Psychologist at the University of Leicester, the "Satisfaction with Life Index" measures subjective life satisfaction across various countries. The data was taken from a metastudy (see below for source) and associates the notion of subjective happiness or life satisfaction with qualitative parameters such as health, wealth, and access to basic education. This assessment serves as an alternative to other measures of happiness that tend to rely on traditional and quantitative measures of policy on quality of life, such as GNP and GDP. The methodology involved the responses of 80,000 people across the globe.

Rank	Country	Score

1	Denmark	273.4
2	Switzerland	273.33
3	Austria	260
4	Iceland	260
5	The Bahamas	256.67
6	Finland	256.67
7	Sweden	256.67
8	Iran	253.33
9	Brunei	253.33
10	Canada	253.33
11	Ireland	253.33
12	Luxembourg	253.33
13	Costa Rica	250
14	Malta	250
15	Netherlands	250
16	Antiguaand Barbuda	246.67
17	Malaysia	246.67
18	New Zealand	246.67

19	Norway	246.67
20	Seychelles	246.67
21	Saint Kitts and Nevis	246.67
22	United Arab Emirates	246.67
23	United States	246.67
24	Vanuatu	246.67
25	Venezuela	246.67
26	Australia	243.33
27	Barbados	243.33
28	Belgium	243.33
29	Dominica	243.33
30	Oman	243.33
31	Saudi Arabia	243.33
32	Suriname	243.33
33	Bahrain	240
34	Colombia	240
35	Germany	240
36	Guyana	240

37	Honduras	240
38	Kuwait	240
39	Panama	240
40	Saint Vincent and the Grenadines	240
41	United Kingdom	236.67
42	Dominican Republic	233.33
43	Guatemala	233.33
44	Jamaica	233.33
45	Qatar	233.33
46	Spain	233.33
47	Saint Lucia	233.33
48	Belize	230
49	Cyprus	230
50	Italy	230
51	Mexico	230
52	Samoa	230
53	Singapore	230
54	Solomon Islands	230

55	Trinidad and Tobago	230
56	Argentina	226.67
57	Fiji	223.33
58	Israel	223.33
59	Mongolia	223.33
60	São Tomé and Príncipe	223.33
61	El Salvador	220
62	France	220
63	Hong Kong	220
64	Indonesia	220
65	Kyrgyzstan	220
66	Maldives	220
67	Slovenia	220
68	Taiwan	220
69	East Timor	220
70	Tonga	220
71	Chile	216.67
72	Grenada	216.67

73	Mauritius	216.67
74	Namibia	216.67
75	Paraguay	216.67
76	Thailand	216.67
77	Czech Republic	213.33
78	Philippines	213.33
79	Tunisia	213.33
80	Uzbekistan	213.33
81	Brazil	210
82	China	210
83	Cuba	210
84	Greece	210
85	Nicaragua	210
86	Papua New Guinea	210
87	Uruguay	210
88	Gabon	206.67
89	Ghana	206.67
90	Japan	206.67

91	Yemen	206.67
92	Portugal	203.33
93	Sri Lanka	203.33
94	Tajikistan	203.33
95	Vietnam	203.33
96	Bhutan	200
97	Comoros	196.67
98	Croatia	196.67
99	Poland	196.67
100	Cape Verde	193.33
101	Kazakhstan	193.33
102	South Korea	193.33
103	Madagascar	193.33
104	Bangladesh	190
105	Republic of the Congo	190
106	The Gambia	190
107	Hungary	190
108	Libya	190

109	South Africa	190
110	Cambodia	186.67
111	Ecuador	186.67
112	Kenya	186.67
113	Lebanon	186.67
114	Morocco	186.67
115	Peru	186.67
116	Senegal	186.67
117	Bolivia	183.33
118	Haiti	183.33
119	Nepal	183.33
120	Nigeria	183.33
121	Tanzania	183.33
122	Benin	180
123	Botswana	180
124	Guinea-Bissau	180
125	India	180
126	Laos	180

127	Mozambique	180
128	Palestinian Authority	180
129	Slovakia	180
130	Myanmar	176.67
131	Mali	176.67
132	Mauritania	176.67
133	Turkey	176.67
134	Algeria	173.33
135	Equatorial Guinea	173.33
136	Romania	173.33
137	Bosnia and Herzegovina	170
138	Cameroon	170
139	Estonia	170
140	Guinea	170
141	Jordan	170
142	Syria	170
143	Sierra Leone	166.67
144	Azerbaijan	163.33

145	Central African Republic	163.33
146	Republic of Macedonia	163.33
147	Togo	163.33
148	Zambia	163.33
149	Angola	160
150	Djibouti	160
151	Egypt	160
152	Burkina Faso	156.67
153	Ethiopia	156.67
154	Latvia	156.67
155	Lithuania	156.67
156	Uganda	156.67
157	Albania	153.33
158	Malawi	153.33
159	Chad	150
160	Côte d'Ivoire	150
161	Niger	150
162	Eritrea	146.67

163	Rwanda	146.67
164	Bulgaria	143.33
165	Lesotho	143.33
166	Pakistan	143.33
167	Russia	143.33
168	Swaziland	140
169	Georgia	136.67
170	Belarus	133.33
171	Turkmenistan	133.33
172	Armenia	123.33
173	Sudan	120
174	Ukraine	120
175	Moldova	116.67
176	Democratic Republic of the Congo	110
177	Zimbabwe	110
178	Burundi	100

Commentary:

European countries, such as Denmark, Iceland, Finland, Sweden, Switzerland, Austria resided at

the top of the ranking with highest levels of self-reported life satisfaction. Conversely, European countries such as [Latvia](#), [Lithuania](#), [Moldova](#), [Belarus](#) and [Ukraine](#) ranked low on the index. African countries such as Democratic Republic of Congo, [Zimbabwe](#) and [Burundi](#) found themselves at the very bottom of the ranking, and indeed, very few African countries could be found in the top 100. [Japan](#) was at the mid-way point in the ranking, however, other Asian countries such as [Brunei](#) and [Malaysia](#) were in the top tier, while [Pakistan](#) was close to the bottom with a low level of self-identified life satisfaction. As a region, the Middle East presented a mixed bad with Saudi Arabians reporing healthy levels of life satisfaction and Egyptians near the bottom of the ranking. As a region, Caribbean countries were ranked highly, consistently demonstrating high levels of life satisfaction. The findings showed that health was the most crucial determining factor in life satisfaction, followed by prosperity and education.

Source:

White, A. (2007). A Global Projection of Subjective Well-being: A Challenge To Positive Psychology? Psychtalk 56, 17-20. The data was extracted from a meta-analysis by Marks, Abdallah, Simms & Thompson (2006).

Uploaded:

Based on study noted above in "Source" ; reviewed in 2015

Happy Planet Index

Happy Planet Index

The Happy Planet Index (HPI) is used to measure human well-being in conjunction with environmental impact. The HPI has been compiled since 2006 by the New Economics Foundation. The index is a composite of several indicators including subjective life satisfaction, life expectancy at birth, and ecological footprint per capita.

As noted by NEFA, the HPI "reveals the ecological efficiency with which human well-being is delivered." Indeed, the index combines environmental impact with human well-being to measure the environmental efficiency with which, country by country, people live long and happy lives. The countries ranked highest by the HPI are not necessarily the ones with the happiest people overall, but the ones that allow their citizens to live long and fulfilling lives, without negatively

impacting this opportunity for either future generations or citizens of other countries. Accordingly, a country like the United States will rank low on this list due to its large per capital ecological footprint, which uses more than its fair share of resources, and will likely cause planetary damage.

It should be noted that the HPI was designed to be a counterpoint to other well-established indices of countries' development, such as Gross Domestic Product (GDP), which measures overall national wealth and economic development, but often obfuscates the realities of countries with stark variances between the rich and the poor. Moreover, the objective of most of the world's people is not to be wealthy but to be happy. The HPI also differs from the Human Development Index (HDI), which measures quality of life but not ecology, since it [HPI] also includes sustainability as a key indicator.

Rank	Country	HPI
1	Costa Rica	76.1
2	Dominican Republic	71.8
3	Jamaica	70.1
4	Guatemala	68.4
5	Vietnam	66.5
6	Colombia	66.1
7	Cuba	65.7
8	El Salvador	61.5
9	Brazil	61.0
10	Honduras	61.0
11	Nicaragua	60.5

12	Egypt	60.3
13	Saudi Arabia	59.7
14	Philippines	59.0
15	Argentina	59.0
16	Indonesia	58.9
17	Bhutan	58.5
18	Panama	57.4
19	Laos	57.3
20	China	57.1
21	Morocco	56.8
22	Sri Lanka	56.5
23	Mexico	55.6
24	Pakistan	55.6
25	Ecuador	55.5
26	Jordan	54.6
27	Belize	54.5
28	Peru	54.4
29	Tunisia	54.3

30	Trinidad and Tobago	54.2
31	Bangladesh	54.1
32	Moldova	54.1
33	Malaysia	54.0
34	Tajikistan	53.5
35	India	53.0
36	Venezuela	52.5
37	Nepal	51.9
38	Syria	51.3
39	Burma	51.2
40	Algeria	51.2
41	Thailand	50.9
42	Haiti	50.8
43	Netherlands	50.6
44	Malta	50.4
45	Uzbekistan	50.1
46	Chile	49.7
47	Bolivia	49.3

48	Armenia	48.3
49	Singapore	48.2
50	Yemen	48.1
51	Germany	48.1
52	Switzerland	48.1
53	Sweden	48.0
54	Albania	47.9
55	Paraguay	47.8
56	Palestinian Authority	47.7
57	Austria	47.7
58	Serbia	47.6
59	Finland	47.2
60	Croatia	47.2
61	Kyrgyzstan	47.1
62	Cyprus	46.2
63	Guyana	45.6
64	Belgium	45.4
65	Bosnia and Herzegovina	45.0

66	Slovenia	44.5
67	Israel	44.5
68	South Korea	44.4
69	Italy	44.0
70	Romania	43.9
71	France	43.9
72	Georgia	43.6
73	Slovakia	43.5
74	United Kingdom	43.3
75	Japan	43.3
76	Spain	43.2
77	Poland	42.8
78	Ireland	42.6
79	Iraq	42.6
80	Cambodia	42.3
81	Iran	42.1
82	Bulgaria	42.0
83	Turkey	41.7

84	Hong Kong	41.6
85	Azerbaijan	41.2
86	Lithuania	40.9
87	Djibouti	40.4
88	Norway	40.4
89	Canada	39.4
90	Hungary	38.9
91	Kazakhstan	38.5
92	Czech Republic	38.3
93	Mauritania	38.2
94	Iceland	38.1
95	Ukraine	38.1
96	Senegal	38.0
97	Greece	37.6
98	Portugal	37.5
99	Uruguay	37.2
100	Ghana	37.1
101	Latvia	36.7

102	Australia	36.6
103	New Zealand	36.2
104	Belarus	35.7
105	Denmark	35.5
106	Mongolia	35.0
107	Malawi	34.5
108	Russia	34.5
109	Chad	34.3
110	Lebanon	33.6
111	Macedonia	32.7
112	Republic of the Congo	32.4
113	Madagascar	31.5
114	United States	30.7
115	Nigeria	30.3
116	Guinea	30.3
117	Uganda	30.2
118	South Africa	29.7
119	Rwanda	29.6

120	Democratic Republic of the Congo	29.0
121	Sudan	28.5
122	Luxembourg	28.5
123	United Arab Emirates	28.2
124	Ethiopia	28.1
125	Kenya	27.8
126	Cameroon	27.2
127	Zambia	27.2
128	Kuwait	27.0
129	Niger	26.9
130	Angola	26.8
131	Estonia	26.4
132	Mali	25.8
133	Mozambique	24.6
134	Benin	24.6
135	Togo	23.3
136	Sierra Leone	23.1
137	Central African Republic	22.9

138	Burkina Faso	22.4
139	Burundi	21.8
140	Namibia	21.1
141	Botswana	20.9
142	Tanzania	17.8
143	Zimbabwe	16.6

Source: *This material is derived from the Happy Planet Index issued by the New Economics Foundation (NEF).*

Methodology: *The methodology for the calculations can be found at URL:* http://www.happyplanetindex.org/

Status of Women

Overview

The status of women in Algeria has improved in certain key arenas. Of particular note is the fact that Algerian women are now guaranteed some legal protection in the workforce. Recently, legislation was passed, which mandated wage and salary equality for men and women based on levels of qualification and performance. President Bouteflika also recently appointed the first female provincial governor and the first two female presiding judges in Algerian history.

These item indicate that Algerian women have made significant gains, however, there are still areas where more progress is needed. One central area in which the status of women continues to be poor is within the realm of education. Today, access to education among women is limited,

and on a comparative basis, it has clearly declined in the last few decades. By way of illustration, female literacy rates declined 15 percent from 76 percent in 1980 to 61 percent more than 25 years later.

As well, women continue to suffer from gender discrimination both legally and in practice. For example, the 22-year-old Family Law stipulates that a husband is a wife's legal guardian; a woman shall receive less inheritance than her male siblings; and women are incapable of attaining a divorce. Reform to this law is under discussion, but changes have not yet been implemented and women continue to suffer the consequences of this inaction.

Violence against women is also a serious concern in Algeria. In recent years, some Islamic terrorists have begun specifically targeting women and children. There have also been instances where women have been killed for not wearing veils in public. Such action indicates both gender-based repression and gender-based violence. Meanwhile, dozens of rapes and kidnappings of women have been reported both to human rights groups and authorities, but little has been done to prevent or punish these actions. Some government-supported paramilitary forces have been implicated in extra-judicial killings, rapes, and other forms of abuse against women, but many of those committing crimes have acted with impunity.

Gender Related Development Index (GDI) Rank:

82nd out of 140

Gender Empowerment Measure (GEM) Rank:

Not Ranked

Female Population:

16.3 million

Female Life Expectancy at birth:

76.04 years

Total Fertility Rate:

2.5

Maternal Mortality Ratio:

140

Total Number of Women Living with HIV/AIDS:

1,700-13,000

Ever Married Women, Ages 15-19 (%):

4%

Mean Age at Time of Marriage:

26

Contraceptive Use Among Married Women, Any Method (%):

64%

Female Adult Literacy Rate:

60.1%

Combined Female Gross enrollment ratio for Primary, Secondary and Tertiary schools:

72%

Female-Headed Households (%):

N/A

Economically Active Females (%):

31.6%

Female Contributing Family Workers (%):

N/A

Female Estimated Earned Income:

2,896

Seats in Parliament held by women (%):

Lower or Single House: 6.2%
Upper House or Senate: 2.8%

Year Women Received the Right to Vote:

1962

Year Women Received the Right to Stand for Election:

1962

*The Gender Development Index (GDI) is a composite index which measures the average achievement in a country. While very similar to the Human Development Index in its use of the same variables, the GDI adjusts the average achievement of each country in terms of life expectancy, enrollment in schools, income, and literacy in accordance to the disparities between males and females.

*The Gender Empowerment Measure (GEM) is a composite index measuring gender inequality in three of the basic dimensions of empowerment; economic participation and decision-making, political participation and decision-making, and power over economic resources.

*Total Fertility Rate (TFR) is defined as the average number of babies born to women during their reproductive years. A TFR of 2.1 is considered the replacement rate; once a TFR of a population reaches 2.1 the population will remain stable assuming no immigration or emigration takes place. When the TFR is greater than 2.1 a population will increase and when it is less than 2.1 a population will eventually decrease, although due to the age structure of a population it will take years before a low TFR is translated into lower population.

*Maternal Mortality Rate is the number of deaths to women per 100,000 live births that resulted from conditions related to pregnancy and or delivery related complications.

*Economically Active Females are the share of the female population, ages 15 and above, whom supply, or are able to supply, labor for the production of goods and services.

*Female Contributing Family Workers are those females who work without pay in an economic enterprise operated by a relative living in the same household.

*Estimated Earned Income is measured according to Purchasing Power Parity (PPP) in US dollars.

Global Gender Gap Index

Global Gender Gap Index

Editor's Note:

The Global Gender Gap Index by the World Economic Forum ranks most of the world's countries in terms of the division of resources and opportunities among males and females. Specifically, the ranking assesses the gender inequality gap in these four arenas:

1. Economic participation and opportunity (salaries and high skilled employment participation levels)
2. Educational attainment (access to basic and higher level education)
3. Political empowerment (representation in decision-making structures)
4. Health and survival (life expectancy and sex ratio)

Country	2010 rank	2010 score	2010 rank among 2009 countries	2009 rank	2009 score	2008 rank	2008 score	2007 rank
Iceland	1	0.8496	1	1	0.8276	4	0.7999	4
Norway	2	0.8404	2	3	0.8227	1	0.8239	2
Finland	3	0.8260	3	2	0.8252	2	0.8195	3
Sweden	4	0.8024	4	4	0.8139	3	0.8139	1
New Zealand	5	0.7808	5	5	0.7880	5	0.7859	5

Ireland	6	0.7773	6	8	0.7597	8	0.7518	9
Denmark	7	0.7719	7	7	0.7628	7	0.7538	8
Lesotho	8	0.7678	8	10	0.7495	16	0.7320	26
Philippines	9	0.7654	9	9	0.7579	6	0.7568	6
Switzerland	10	0.7562	10	13	0.7426	14	0.7360	40
Spain	11	0.7554	11	17	0.7345	17	0.7281	10
South Africa	12	0.7535	12	6	0.7709	22	0.7232	20
Germany	13	0.7530	13	12	0.7449	11	0.7394	7
Belgium	14	0.7509	14	33	0.7165	28	0.7163	19
United Kingdom	15	0.7460	15	15	0.7402	13	0.7366	11
Sri Lanka	16	0.7458	16	16	0.7402	12	0.7371	15
Netherlands	17	0.7444	17	11	0.7490	9	0.7399	12
Latvia	18	0.7429	18	14	0.7416	10	0.7397	13
United States	19	0.7411	19	31	0.7173	27	0.7179	31
Canada	20	0.7372	20	25	0.7196	31	0.7136	18
Trinidad and Tobago	21	0.7353	21	19	0.7298	19	0.7245	46
Mozambique	22	0.7329	22	26	0.7195	18	0.7266	43

Australia	23	0.7271	23	20	0.7282	21	0.7241	17
Cuba	24	0.7253	24	29	0.7176	25	0.7195	22
Namibia	25	0.7238	25	32	0.7167	30	0.7141	29
Luxembourg	26	0.7231	26	63	0.6889	66	0.6802	58
Mongolia	27	0.7194	27	22	0.7221	40	0.7049	62
Costa Rica	28	0.7194	28	27	0.7180	32	0.7111	28
Argentina	29	0.7187	29	24	0.7211	24	0.7209	33
Nicaragua	30	0.7176	30	49	0.7002	71	0.6747	90
Barbados	31	0.7176	31	21	0.7236	26	0.7188	n/a
Portugal	32	0.7171	32	46	0.7013	39	0.7051	37
Uganda	33	0.7169	33	40	0.7067	43	0.6981	50
Moldova	34	0.7160	34	36	0.7104	20	0.7244	21
Lithuania	35	0.7132	35	30	0.7175	23	0.7222	14
Bahamas	36	0.7128	36	28	0.7179	n/a	n/a	n/a
Austria	37	0.7091	37	42	0.7031	29	0.7153	27
Guyana	38	0.7090	38	35	0.7108	n/a	n/a	n/a
Panama	39	0.7072	39	43	0.7024	34	0.7095	38
Ecuador	40	0.7072	40	23	0.7220	35	0.7091	44

Kazakhstan	41	0.7055	41	47	0.7013	45	0.6976	32
Slovenia	42	0.7047	42	52	0.6982	51	0.6937	49
Poland	43	0.7037	43	50	0.6998	49	0.6951	60
Jamaica	44	0.7037	44	48	0.7013	44	0.6980	39
Russian Federation	45	0.7036	45	51	0.6987	42	0.6994	45
France	46	0.7025	46	18	0.7331	15	0.7341	51
Estonia	47	0.7018	47	37	0.7094	37	0.7076	30
Chile	48	0.7013	48	64	0.6884	65	0.6818	86
Macedonia, FYR	49	0.6996	49	53	0.6950	53	0.6914	35
Bulgaria	50	0.6983	50	38	0.7072	36	0.7077	25
Kyrgyz Republic	51	0.6973	51	41	0.7058	41	0.7045	70
Israel	52	0.6957	52	45	0.7019	56	0.6900	36
Croatia	53	0.6939	53	54	0.6944	46	0.6967	16
Honduras	54	0.6927	54	62	0.6893	47	0.6960	68
Colombia	55	0.6927	55	56	0.6939	50	0.6944	24
Singapore	56	0.6914	56	84	0.6664	84	0.6625	77
Thailand	57	0.6910	57	59	0.6907	52	0.6917	52

Greece	58	0.6908	58	85	0.6662	75	0.6727	72
Uruguay	59	0.6897	59	57	0.6936	54	0.6907	78
Peru	60	0.6895	60	44	0.7024	48	0.6959	75
China	61	0.6881	61	60	0.6907	57	0.6878	73
Botswana	62	0.6876	62	39	0.7071	63	0.6839	53
Ukraine	63	0.6869	63	61	0.6896	62	0.6856	57
Venezuela	64	0.6863	64	69	0.6839	59	0.6875	55
Czech Republic	65	0.6850	65	74	0.6789	69	0.6770	64
Tanzania	66	0.6829	66	73	0.6797	38	0.7068	34
Romania	67	0.6826	67	70	0.6805	70	0.6763	47
Malawi	68	0.6824	68	76	0.6738	81	0.6664	87
Paraguay	69	0.6804	69	66	0.6868	100	0.6379	69
Ghana	70	0.6782	70	80	0.6704	77	0.6679	63
Slovak Republic	71	0.6778	71	68	0.6845	64	0.6824	54
Vietnam	72	0.6776	72	71	0.6802	68	0.6778	42
Dominican Republic	73	0.6774	73	67	0.6859	72	0.6744	65
Italy	74	0.6765	74	72	0.6798	67	0.6788	84

Gambia, The	75	0.6762	75	75	0.6752	85	0.6622	95
Bolivia	76	0.6751	76	82	0.6693	80	0.6667	80
Brueni Darussalem	77	0.6748	77	94	0.6524	99	0.6392	n/a
Albania	78	0.6726	78	91	0.6601	87	0.6591	66
Hungary	79	0.6720	79	65	0.6879	60	0.6867	61
Madagascar	80	0.6713	80	77	0.6732	74	0.6736	89
Angola	81	0.6712	81	106	0.6353	114	0.6032	110
Bangladesh	82	0.6702	82	93	0.6526	90	0.6531	100
Malta	83	0.6695	83	88	0.6635	83	0.6634	76
Armenia	84	0.6669	84	90	0.6619	78	0.6677	71
Brazil	85	0.6655	85	81	0.6695	73	0.6737	74
Cyprus	86	0.6642	86	79	0.6706	76	0.6694	82
Indonesia	87	0.6615	87	92	0.6580	93	0.6473	81
Georgia	88	0.6598	88	83	0.6680	82	0.6654	67
Tajikistan	89	0.6598	89	86	0.6661	89	0.6541	79
El Salvador	90	0.6596	90	55	0.6939	58	0.6875	48
Mexico	91	0.6577	91	98	0.6503	97	0.6441	93

Zimbabwe	92	0.6574	92	95	0.6518	92	0.6485	88
Belize	93	0.6536	93	87	0.6636	86	0.6610	94
Japan	94	0.6524	94	101	0.6447	98	0.6434	91
Mauritius	95	0.6520	95	96	0.6513	95	0.6466	85
Kenya	96	0.6499	96	97	0.6512	88	0.6547	83
Cambodia	97	0.6482	97	104	0.6410	94	0.6469	98
Malaysia	98	0.6479	98	100	0.6467	96	0.6442	92
Maldives	99	0.6452	99	99	0.6482	91	0.6501	99
Azerbaijan	100	0.6446	100	89	0.6626	61	0.6856	59
Senegal	101	0.6414	101	102	0.6427	n/a	n/a	n/a
Suriname	102	0.6407	102	78	0.6726	79	0.6674	56
United Arab Emirates	103	0.6397	103	112	0.6198	105	0.6220	105
Korea, Rep.	104	0.6342	104	115	0.6146	108	0.6154	97
Kuwait	105	0.6318	105	105	0.6356	101	0.6358	96
Zambia	106	0.6293	106	107	0.6310	106	0.6205	101
Tunisia	107	0.6266	107	109	0.6233	103	0.6295	102
Fiji	108	0.6256	108	103	0.6414	n/a	n/a	n/a
Guatemala	109	0.6238	109	111	0.6209	112	0.6072	106

Bahrain	110	0.6217	110	116	0.6136	121	0.5927	115
Burkina Faso	111	0.6162	111	120	0.6081	115	0.6029	117
India	112	0.6155	112	114	0.6151	113	0.6060	114
Mauritania	113	0.6152	113	119	0.6103	110	0.6117	111
Cameroon	114	0.6110	114	118	0.6108	117	0.6017	116
Nepal	115	0.6084	115	110	0.6213	120	0.5942	125
Lebanon*	116	0.6084	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a
Qatar	117	0.6059	116	125	0.5907	119	0.5948	109
Nigeria	118	0.6055	117	108	0.6280	102	0.6339	107
Algeria	119	0.6052	118	117	0.6119	111	0.6111	108
Jordan	120	0.6048	119	113	0.6182	104	0.6275	104
Ethiopia	121	0.6019	120	122	0.5948	122	0.5867	113
Oman	122	0.5950	121	123	0.5938	118	0.5960	119
Iran	123	0.5933	122	128	0.5839	116	0.6021	118
Syria	124	0.5926	123	121	0.6072	107	0.6181	103
Egypt	125	0.5899	124	126	0.5862	124	0.5832	120
Turkey	126	0.5876	125	129	0.5828	123	0.5853	121
Morocco	127	0.5767	126	124	0.5926	125	0.5757	122

Benin	128	0.5719	127	131	0.5643	126	0.5582	123
Saudi Arabia	129	0.5713	128	130	0.5651	128	0.5537	124
Côte d'Ivoire*	130	0.5691	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a
Mali	131	0.5680	129	127	0.5860	109	0.6117	112
Pakistan	132	0.5465	130	132	0.5458	127	0.5549	126
Chad	133	0.5330	131	133	0.5417	129	0.5290	127
Yemen	134	0.4603	132	134	0.4609	130	0.4664	128
Belarus	n/a	n/a	n/a	34	0.7141	33	0.7099	23
Uzbekistan	n/a	n/a	n/a	58	0.6913	55	0.6906	41

*new country 2010

Commentary:

According to the report's index, Nordic countries, such as Iceland, Norway, Finland, and Sweden have continued to dominate at the top of the ranking for gender equality. Meanwhile, France has seen a notable decline in the ranking, largely as a result of decreased number of women holding ministerial portfolios in that country. In the Americas, the United States has risen in the ranking to top the region, predominantly as a result of a decreasing wage gap, as well as higher number of women holding key positions in the current Obama administration. Canada has continued to remain as one of the top ranking countries of the Americas, followed by the small Caribbean island nation of Trinidad and Tobago, which has the distinction of being among the top three countries of the Americas in the realm of gender equality. Lesotho and South African ranked highly in the

index, leading not only among African countries but also in global context. Despite Lesotho still lagging in the area of life expectancy, its high ranking was attributed to high levels of female participation in the labor force and female literacy. The Philippines and Sri Lanka were the top ranking countries for gender equality for Asia, ranking highly also in global context.   The Philippines has continued to show strong performance in all strong performance on all four dimensions (detailed above) of the index. Finally, in the Arab world, the United Arab Emirates held the highest-rank within that region of the world; however, its placement near the bottom of the global list highlights the fact that Arab countries are generally poor performers when it comes to the matter of gender equality in global scope.

Source:

This data is derived from the latest edition of The Global Gender Gap Report by the World Economic Forum.

Available at URL:

http://www.weforum.org/en/Communities/Women%20Leaders%20and%20Gender%20Parity/Gende

Updated:

Based on latest available data as set forth in chart; reviewed in 2014

Culture and Arts

Socio-cultural summary:

Although Arabic is Algeria's primary language, the country remains heavily influenced by previous French colonialism and French is the second language of many of the country's educated. Many residents also speak different dialects of Berber, which was Algeria's original language. The country is actually located in North Africa, and is the continent's second largest country after Sudan.

It is a port city with access to both Europe and the Middle East with a population that is about 80

percent Arab and 20 percent Berber.

As in many Middle Eastern and North African countries, Islam is the official religion of Algeria and Islamic behaviors and practices should be respected. For example, one should always be aware of how Islamic law, which is delineated in the Shari'a, is used as the basis for the legal and juridical structure in Islamic countries. While the violation of traditions may simply be rationalized as ignorance in other countries, they take on far greater meaning in countries where the Islamic religion textures all aspects of society and culture.

Due to the country's history, Algerian literature is split between French and Arabic. Several famous novelists have hailed from Algeria, including Mohammed Dib, Kateb Yacine and Assia Djebar, whose works have been widely translated. Albert Camus and Emmanuel Robles are French writers that lived and wrote in Algeria. Many Algerian writers are influenced by European literature and the ancient Arabic tradition of storytelling.

In terms of music, Algeria is best known for Rai, a form of folk music that originated in the country from Bedouin shepherds. It is mixed with Spanish, French, African and Arabic musical forms and dates back to the 1930s. Chaabi and Andalusi music is also popular. The latter was brought from Al-Andalus by Morisco refugees. Traditional instruments are the oud, a stringed instrument similar to the lute; small drums held in the lap; and the rhita, or reed flute.

Research sources include:

Government of Algeria; available at URL: http://www.algeria.com/culture/
Countries and their cultures; available at URL: http://www.everyculture.com/A-Bo/Algeria.html

Etiquette

Cultural Dos and Taboos

1. The Western style handshake is an appropriate form of greeting. Close friends of the same sex and relatives may embrace and kiss on the cheek.

2. Traditional Muslims will not shake hands with those of the opposite sex.

3. Visiting women should observe the traditional Muslim dress code. Revealing and tight fitting

clothing is inappropriate to wear in public.

4. Never expose the bottom of the shoe or foot to a Muslim.

5. You will be asked to remove your shoes to enter mosques and some private homes.

6. Unless you know your Algerian counterpart well, it is best to avoid initiating topics of conversation that deal with religion, politics, and sex.

7. Travel, Algerian history and culture, food, and family (though men should never inquire too specifically about a Muslim's wife or daughters) are fine topics for conversation.

8. The left hand should be restricted in its actions. Always use the right hand when eating and giving or receiving objects.

9. Do not offer Muslims alcohol or pork products.

10. Never flirt with a Muslim publicly or in private.

11. Avoid boasting of wealth or displaying wealth in a flashy way. Not only is this considered rude, but also, theft is a problem in urban areas.

12. Expect to haggle in business situations. Never offer the best deal first.

13. Haggling in the market place will be expected as well.

Travel Information

Please Note: This is a generalized travel guide and it is intended to coalesce several resources that a traveler might find useful, regardless of a particular destination. As such, it does not include travel warnings for specific "hot spot" destinations.

For travel alerts and warnings, please see the United States Department of State's listings available at URL: http://travel.state.gov/content/passports/english/alertswarnings.html

Please note that travel to the following countries, based on these warnings, is ill-advised, or should be undertaken with the utmost precautions:

Afghanistan, Algeria, Burundi, Cameroon, Central African Republic, Chad, Colombia, Democratic Republic of Congo, Djibouti, El Salvador, Eritrea, Ethiopia, Guinea, Honduras, Iraq, Iran, Lebanon, Liberia, Libya, Mali, Mauritania, Mexico, Nepal, Niger, Nigeria, North Korea, Pakistan, Palestinian Territories of West Bank and Gaza, Philippines areas of Sulu Archipelago, Mindanao, and southern Sulu Sea, Saudi Arabia, Sierra

Leone, Somalia, South Sudan, Sudan, Syria, Ukraine, Venezuela, and Yemen.

International Travel Guide

Checklist for Travelers

1. Take out travel insurance to cover hospital treatment or medical evaluation. Overseas medical costs are expensive to most international travelers, where one's domestic, nationalized or even private health insurance plans will not provide coverage outside one's home country. Learn about "reciprocal insurance plans" that some international health care companies might offer.

2. Make sure that one's travel insurance is appropriate. If one intends to indulge in adventurous activities, such as parasailing, one should be sure that one is fully insured in such cases. Many traditional insurance policies do not provide coverage in cases of extreme circumstances.

3. Take time to learn about one's destination country and culture. Read and learn about the place one is traveling. Also check political, economic and socio-cultural developments at the destination by reading country-specific travel reports and fact sheets noted below.

4. Get the necessary visas for the country (or countries) one intends to visit - but be aware that a visa does not guarantee entry. A number of useful sites regarding visa and other entry requirements are noted below.

5. Keep in regular contact with friends and relatives back at home by phone or email, and be sure to leave a travel itinerary.

6. Protect one's personal information by making copies of one's passport details, insurance policy, travelers checks and credit card numbers. Taking copies of such documents with you, while leaving another collection copies with someone at home is also good practice for travelers. Taking copies of one's passport photograph is also recommended.

7. Stay healthy by taking all possible precautions against illness. Also, be sure to take extra supplies of prescription drugs along for the trip, while also taking time to pack general pharmaceutical supplies, such as aspirin and other such painkillers, bandages, stomach ailment medication, anti-inflammatory medication and anti-bacterial medication.

8. Do not carry illicit drugs. Understand that the punishment for possession or use of illegal drugs in some countries may be capital punishment. Make sure your prescription drugs are legal in the countries you plan to visit.

9. Know the laws of one's destination country and culture; be sure to understand the repercussions of breaking those laws and regulations. Often the transparency and freedoms of the juridical system at home is not consistent with that of one's destination country. Become aware of these complexities and subtleties before you travel.

10. For longer stays in a country, or where the security situation is volatile, one should register one's self and traveling companions at the local embassy or consulate of one's country of

citizenship.

11. Women should take care to be prepared both culturally and practically for traveling in a different country and culture. One should be sure to take sufficient supplies of personal feminine products and prescription drugs. One should also learn about local cultural standards for women, including norms of dressing. Be aware that it is simply inappropriate and unsafe for women to travel alone in some countries, and take the necessary precautions to avoid risk-filled situations.

12. If one is traveling with small children, one should pack extra supplies, make arrangements with the travel carrier for proper seating that would adequately accommodate children, infants or toddlers. Note also that whether one is male of female, traveling with children means that one's hands are thus not free to carry luggage and bags. Be especially aware that this makes one vulnerable to pickpockets, thieves and other sorts of crime.

13. Make proper arrangements for accommodations, well in advance of one's arrival at a destination. Some countries have limited accommodation, while others may have culturally distinctive facilities. Learning about these practicalities before one travels will greatly aid the enjoyment of one's trip.

14. Travel with different forms of currency and money (cash, traveler's checks and credit cards) in anticipation that venues may not accept one or another form of money. Also, ensuring that one's financial resources are not contained in one location, or by one person (if one is traveling with others) can be a useful measure, in the event that one loses a wallet or purse.

15. Find out about transportation in the destination country. In some places, it might be advisable to hire a local driver or taxi guide for safety reasons, while in other countries, enjoying one's travel experience may well be enhanced by renting a vehicle and seeing the local sights and culture independently. Costs may also be prohibitive for either of these choices, so again, prior planning is suggested.

Tips for Travelers

*** Please note ***

The Department of State continues to warn U.S. citizens against travel to the Kabylie region and remote areas of southern and eastern Algeria. There is a high threat of terrorism and kidnappings in Algeria. The majority of terrorist attacks, including bombings, false roadblocks, kidnappings, and ambushes occur in the mountainous areas to the east of Algiers (Kabylie region and eastern wilayas) and in the expansive Saharan desert regions of the south and southeast. Al-Qaida in the Lands of the Islamic Maghreb (AQIM) and Movement for Unity and Jihad in West Africa (MUJAO) are also both active in Algeria and the region.

***

Evaluate carefully the implications for their security and safety before deciding to travel to Algeria. Although considerably fewer terrorist incidents have taken place in Algeria over the last three years, unpredictable attacks still occur in rural villages, on roadsides and public transport, and at night. The most recent terrorist activity has occurred in rural areas in northern Algeria.

At the height of terrorist violence in Algeria, many commercial airlines cancelled service to and from Algeria. Since then, a number of carriers have resumed service, including one western airline.

Those who travel to Algeria should exercise maximum caution and take prudent measures. These include limiting use of regularly scheduled commercial flights and being met and accompanied by pre-arranged local contacts upon arrival and departure at airports. Nighttime and overland travel should be avoided. Visitors to Algiers should stay only in the large, internationally-recognized hotels where security is provided. Visitors should not move anywhere in Algeria unless accompanied by a known Algerian companion. This applies to walking the streets of Algiers and other cities.

In an effort to prevent international child abduction, many governments have initiated procedures at entry/exit points. These often include requiring documentary evidence of relationship and permission for the child's travel from the parent(s) or legal guardian not present. Having such documentation on hand, even if not required, may facilitate entry/departure.

Algerian fathers of minor children (under 18 years of age for boys, 19 years of age for girls) may legally prevent their children from leaving Algeria.

Dual nationals may be subject to other laws that impose special obligations on Algerian citizens.

The Algerian Government requires all Algerian dual national males under the age of 35 to register for service in the Algerian military. Dual nationals and those subject to registration may be prevented from leaving Algeria until granted permission to do so by the relevant Algerian authorities. Authorities sometimes grant waivers to citizen dual nationals studying abroad, though there is no guarantee that this practice will continue.

Ports, trains, and airline terminals are potential terrorist targets and those visiting Algeria should carefully consider the security implications of traveling on regularly scheduled commercial transport. Terrorists occasionally attack buses traveling in rural areas.

Political, social, and economic problems have created an environment in which acts of terrorism are regularly perpetrated. A state of emergency has been in effect since early 1992. Although terrorist violence has dropped substantially in the last two years, terrorists continue to attack security forces and strike randomly at civilians, claiming scores of lives each month. In the last two years the terrorist violence has greatly diminished in the major cities and now mostly occurs in the

countryside of northern Algeria and the periphery of urban areas. In localities where large numbers of foreigners reside, Algerian military and other security personnel offer generally adequate protection, but in many other localities, especially in remote hamlets and the poorer sections of urban areas, protection is not assured.

Although the Government of Algeria has discontinued a late-night curfew in the central area of Algiers, it continues to maintain roadblocks on primary roads heading into and out of the capital. Security personnel at these roadblocks expect full cooperation. Terrorists also occasionally put up false roadblocks as ambushes in parts of northern Algeria.

Banditry and assault involving foreigners has occurred in the far southern region of Algeria near the border with Niger. Although violence in this area is now largely limited to occasional small scale attacks against local security forces, bandits have robbed, assaulted, kidnapped, and killed travelers in Algeria south of Tamanrasset. In April, May, and June 2001, there were violent disturbances, mostly in the Kabylie region, caused by long-standing social and economic woes. Dissatisfaction with the current political and economic situation is behind several large demonstrations in Algiers in May and June.

Travel overland is treacherous in many parts of Algeria. Avoid traveling over land outside major urban areas. Those who must travel overland or work in locations outside of major cities should do so with substantial armed protection.

The crime rate in Algeria is moderately high and increasing. Serious crimes have been reported in which armed men posing as police officers have entered homes of occupants, and robbed them at gunpoint. Armed carjacking is also a serious problem. Petty theft and home burglary occur frequently, and muggings are on the rise, especially after dark in the cities. Theft of contents and parts from parked cars, pick pocketing, theft on trains and buses, theft of items left in hotel rooms, and purse snatching are common. Alarms, grills, watchdogs, and/or guards protect most foreigners' residences.

The loss or theft abroad of a passport should be reported immediately to the local police and the nearest Embassy or Consulate.

Hospitals and clinics in Algeria are available, but of uneven quality, and are not up to Western standards. Doctors and hospitals often expect immediate cash payment for services.

Consult with your medical insurance company prior to traveling abroad to confirm whether your policy applies overseas and whether it will cover emergency expenses such as a medical evacuation. Many travel agents and private companies offer insurance plans that will cover health care expenses incurred overseas including emergency services such as medical evacuations.

Consider that many foreign doctors and hospitals require payment in cash prior to providing service and that a medical evacuation to your home country can be very expensive. Uninsured travelers who require medical care overseas often face extreme difficulties. When consulting with your insurer prior to your trip, ascertain whether payment will be made to the overseas healthcare provider or whether you will be reimbursed later for expenses you incur. Some insurance policies also include coverage for psychiatric treatment and for disposition of remains in the event of death.

While in a foreign country, one may encounter road conditions that differ significantly from those in his or her home country. The information below concerning Algeria is provided for general reference only, and may not be totally accurate in a particular location or circumstance.

Safety of Public Transportation: poor
Urban Road Conditions/Maintenance: fair
Rural Road Conditions/Maintenance: fair
Availability of Roadside Assistance: poor

Drivers will encounter checkpoints on primary roads heading into and out of Algiers and other major cities. Security personnel at these checkpoints expect full cooperation.
For specific information concerning Algerian driver's permits, vehicle inspection, road tax and mandatory insurance, contact the Algerian Embassy.

Algerian customs authorities enforce strict regulations concerning temporary importation into or export from Algeria of items such as firearms, body armor, binoculars, communications equipment, antiquities, medications, business equipment or ivory.

While in a foreign country, you are subject to that country's laws and regulations. Penalties for breaking the law can be more severe than in the other countries for similar offenses. Persons violating Algeria's laws, even unknowingly, may be expelled, arrested or imprisoned. Penalties for possession, use, or trafficking in illegal drugs in Algeria are strict and convicted offenders can expect jail sentences and heavy fines.

Note: This information is directly quoted from the United States Department of State Consular Information Sheet.

Sources: United States Department of State Consular Information Sheet

Business Culture: Information for Business Travelers

For general information on etiquette in Algeria, see our Cultural Etiquette page.

Online Resources Regarding Entry Requirements and Visas

Online Resources Regarding Entry Requirements and Visas

Foreign Entry Requirements for Americans from the United States Department of State
http://travel.state.gov/travel/cis_pa_tw/cis/cis_1765.html

Visa Services for Non-Americans from the United States Department of State
http://travel.state.gov/visa/visa_1750.html

Visa Bulletins from the United States Department of State
http://travel.state.gov/visa/frvi/bulletin/bulletin_1360.html

Visa Waivers from the United States Department of State
http://travel.state.gov/visa/temp/without/without_1990.html - new

Passport and Visa Information from the Government of the United Kingdom
http://www.bia.homeoffice.gov.uk/

Visa Information from the Government of Australia
http://www.dfat.gov.au/visas/index.html

Passport Information from the Government of Australia
https://www.passports.gov.au/Web/index.aspx

Passport Information from the Government of Canada
http://www.voyage.gc.ca/preparation_information/passport_passeport-eng.asp

Visa Information from the Government of Canada
http://www.voyage.gc.ca/preparation_information/visas-eng.asp

Online Visa Processing by Immigration Experts by VisaPro
http://www.visapro.com

Sources: United States Department of State, United Kingdom Foreign and Commonwealth Office, Government of Australia: Department of Foreign Affairs and Trade, Government of Canada Department of Foreign Affairs and International Trade

Useful Online Resources for Travelers

Country-Specific Travel Information from United States
http://travel.state.gov/travel/cis_pa_tw/cis/cis_1765.html

Travel Advice by Country from Government of United Kingdom
http://www.fco.gov.uk/en/travelling-and-living-overseas/travel-advice-by-country/

General Travel Advice from Government of Australia
http://www.smartraveller.gov.au/zw-cgi/view/Advice/General

Travel Bulletins from the Government of Australia
http://www.smartraveller.gov.au/zw-cgi/view/TravelBulletins/

Travel Tips from Government of Australia
http://www.smartraveller.gov.au/tips/index.html

Travel Checklist by Government of Canada
http://www.voyage.gc.ca/preparation_information/checklist_sommaire-eng.asp

Travel Checklist from Government of United Kingdom
http://www.fco.gov.uk/en/travelling-and-living-overseas/staying-safe/checklist

Your trip abroad from United States Department of State
http://travel.state.gov/travel/tips/brochures/brochures_1225.html

A safe trip abroad from United States Department of State
http://travel.state.gov/travel/tips/safety/safety_1747.html

Tips for expatriates abroad from United States Department of State
http://travel.state.gov/travel/living/residing/residing_1235.html

Tips for students from United States Department of State
http://travel.state.gov/travel/living/studying/studying_1238.html http://travel.state.gov/travel/tips/broc

Medical information for travelers from United States Department of State
http://travel.state.gov/travel/tips/health/health_1185.html

US Customs Travel information
http://www.customs.gov/xp/cgov/travel/

Sources: United States Department of State; United States Customs Department, United Kingdom Foreign and Commonwealth Office, Foreign and Commonwealth Office, Government of Australia; Government of Canada: Department of Foreign Affairs and International Trade

Other Practical Online Resources for Travelers

Foreign Language Phrases for Travelers
http://www.travlang.com/languages/
http://www.omniglot.com/language/phrases/index.htm

World Weather Forecasts
http://www.intellicast.com/
http://www.wunderground.com/
http://www.worldweather.org/

Worldwide Time Zones, Map, World Clock
http://www.timeanddate.com/
http://www.worldtimezone.com/

International Airport Codes
http://www.world-airport-codes.com/

International Dialing Codes
http://www.kropla.com/dialcode.htm
http://www.countrycallingcodes.com/

International Phone Guide
http://www.kropla.com/phones.htm

International Mobile Phone Guide
http://www.kropla.com/mobilephones.htm

International Internet Café Search Engine
http://cybercaptive.com/

Global Internet Roaming
http://www.kropla.com/roaming.htm

World Electric Power Guide
http://www.kropla.com/electric.htm

http://www.kropla.com/electric2.htm

World Television Standards and Codes
http://www.kropla.com/tv.htm
International Currency Exchange Rates
http://www.xe.com/ucc/

Banking and Financial Institutions Across the World
http://www.123world.com/banks/index.html

International Credit Card or Automated Teller Machine (ATM) Locator
http://visa.via.infonow.net/locator/global/
http://www.mastercard.com/us/personal/en/cardholderservices/atmlocations/index.html

International Chambers of Commerce
http://www.123world.com/chambers/index.html

World Tourism Websites
http://123world.com/tourism/

Diplomatic and Consular Information

United States Diplomatic Posts Around the World
http://www.usembassy.gov/

United Kingdom Diplomatic Posts Around the World
http://www.fco.gov.uk/en/about-the-fco/embassies-and-posts/find-an-embassy-overseas/

Australia's Diplomatic Posts Around the World
http://www.dfat.gov.au/missions/
http://www.dfat.gov.au/embassies.html

Canada's Embassies and High Commissions
http://www.international.gc.ca/ciw-cdm/embassies-ambassades.aspx

Resources for Finding Embassies and other Diplomatic Posts Across the World
http://www.escapeartist.com/embassy1/embassy1.htm

Safety and Security

Travel Warnings by Country from Government of Australia
http://www.smartraveller.gov.au/zw-cgi/view/Advice/

Travel Warnings and Alerts from United States Department of State
http://travel.state.gov/travel/cis_pa_tw/tw/tw_1764.html
http://travel.state.gov/travel/cis_pa_tw/pa/pa_1766.html

Travel Reports and Warnings by Government of Canada
http://www.voyage.gc.ca/countries_pays/menu-eng.asp
http://www.voyage.gc.ca/countries_pays/updates_mise-a-jour-eng.asp

Travel Warnings from Government of United Kingdom
http://www.fco.gov.uk/en/travelling-and-living-overseas/travel-advice-by-country/
http://www.fco.gov.uk/en/travelling-and-living-overseas/travel-advice-by-country/?action=noTravelAll#noTravelAll

Sources: United Kingdom Foreign and Commonwealth Office, the United States Department of State, the Government of Canada: Department of Foreign Affairs and International Trade, Government of Australia: Department of Foreign Affairs and Trade

Other Safety and Security Online Resources for Travelers

United States Department of State Information on Terrorism
http://www.state.gov/s/ct/

Government of the United Kingdom Resource on the Risk of Terrorism
http://www.fco.gov.uk/servlet/Front?pagename=OpenMarket/Xcelerate/ShowPage&c=Page&cid=1044011304926

Government of Canada Terrorism Guide
http://www.international.gc.ca/crime/terrorism-terrorisme.aspx?lang=eng

Information on Terrorism by Government of Australia
http://www.dfat.gov.au/icat/index.html

FAA Resource on Aviation Safety
http://www.faasafety.gov/

In-Flight Safety Information for Air Travel (by British Airways crew trainer, Anna Warman)
http://www.warman.demon.co.uk/anna/inflight.html

Hot Spots: Travel Safety and Risk Information
http://www.airsecurity.com/hotspots/HotSpots.asp

Information on Human Rights
http://www.state.gov/g/drl/hr/

Sources: The United States Department of State, the United States Customs Department, the Government of Canada, the Government of United Kingdom, the Government of Australia, the Federal Aviation Authority, Anna Warman's In-flight Website, Hot Spots Travel and Risk Information

Diseases/Health Data

Please Note: Most of the entry below constitutes a generalized health advisory, which a traveler might find useful, regardless of a particular destination.

As a supplement, however, reader will also find below a list of countries flagged with current health notices and alerts issued by the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC). Please note that travel to the following countries, based on these 3 levels of warnings, is ill-advised, or should be undertaken with the utmost precaution:

Level 3 (highest level of concern; avoid non-essential travel) --

Guinea - Ebola
Liberia - Ebola
Nepal - Eathquake zone
Sierra Leone - Ebola

Level 2 (intermediate level of concern; use utmost caution during travel) --

Cameroon - Polio
Somalia - Polio
Vanuatu - Tropical Cyclone zone
Throughout Middle East and Arabia Peninsula - MERS ((Middle East Respiratory Syndrome)

Level 1 (standard level of concern; use practical caution during travel) -

Australia - Ross River disease
Bosnia-Herzegovina - Measles
Brazil - Dengue Fever
Brazil - Malaria
Brazil - Zika
China - H7N9 Avian flu
Cuba - Cholera
Egypt - H5N1 Bird flu
Ethiopia - Measles
Germany - Measles
Japan - Hand, foot, and mouth disease (HFMD)
Kyrgyzstan - Measles
Malaysia -Dengue Fever
Mexico - Chikungunya
Mexico - Hepatitis A
Nigeria - Meningitis
Philippines - Measles
Scotland - Mumps
Singapore - Hand, foot, and mouth disease (HFMD)
South Korea - MERS ((Middle East Respiratory Syndrome)
Throughout Caribbean - Chikungunya
Throughout Central America - Chikungunya
Throughout South America - Chikungunya
Throughout Pacific Islands - Chikungunya

For specific information related to these health notices and alerts please see the CDC's listing available at URL:
http://wwwnc.cdc.gov/travel/notices

Health Information for Travelers to Algeria

Food and waterborne diseases are the number one cause of illness in travelers. Travelers' diarrhea can be caused by viruses, bacteria, or parasites, which are found throughout the region and can contaminate food or water. Infections may cause diarrhea and vomiting (*E. coli*, *Salmonella*, cholera, and parasites), fever (typhoid fever and toxoplasmosis), or liver damage (hepatitis). Make sure your food and drinking water are safe. (See below.)

Malaria is a preventable infection that can be fatal if left untreated. Prevent infection by taking prescription antimalarial drugs and protecting yourself against mosquito bites (see below). Most travelers to malaria risk areas in this region should take chloroquine to prevent malaria. A limited risk for malaria exists in certain parts of Algeria, Egypt (El Faiyum area only), Libyan Arab Jamahiriya, Western Sahara, and Morocco. There is no risk for travelers visiting the major tourist areas in North Africa, including Nile cruises. For more detailed information about the risk in specific locations, see Malaria in North Africa (http://www.cdc.gov/travel/regionalmalaria/nafrica.htm).

A certificate of yellow fever vaccination may required for entry into certain of these countries if you are coming from a country in tropical South America or sub-Saharan Africa. (There is no risk for yellow fever in North Africa.) For detailed information, see Comprehensive Yellow Fever Vaccination Requirements (http://www.cdc.gov/travel/yelfever.htm).

Dengue, filariasis, leishmaniasis, and onchocerciasis are diseases carried by insects that also occur in this region. Protecting yourself against insect bites (see below) will help to prevent these diseases.

Schistosomiasis, a parasitic infection, is found in fresh water in the region, including the Nile River. Do not swim in fresh water (except in well-chlorinated swimming pools) in these countries. (For more information, please see the Swimming Precautions on the Making Travel Safe page at URL http://www.cdc.gov/travel/safety.htm.)

Because motor vehicle crashes are a leading cause of injury among travelers, walk and drive defensively. Avoid nighttime travel if possible and always use seat belts.

CDC Recommends the Following Vaccines (as Appropriate for Age):

See your doctor at least 4-6 weeks before your trip to allow time for shots to take effect.
• Hepatitis A or immune globulin (IG).
• Hepatitis B if you might be exposed to blood (for example, health-care workers), have sexual contact with the local population, stay longer than 6 months in the region, or be exposed through medical treatment.

• Rabies, if you might be exposed to wild or domestic animals through your work or recreation.
• Typhoid, particularly if you are visiting developing countries in this region.
• As needed, booster doses for tetanus-diphtheria, measles, and a one-time dose of polio vaccine for adults. Hepatitis B vaccine is now recommended for all infants and for children ages 11-12 years who did not complete the series as infants.

To Stay Healthy, Do:

• Wash hands often with soap and water.
• Drink only bottled or boiled water, or carbonated (bubbly) drinks in cans or bottles. Avoid tap water, fountain drinks, and ice cubes. If this is not possible, make water safer by BOTH filtering through an "absolute 1-micron or less" filter AND adding iodine tablets to the filtered water. "Absolute 1-micron filters" are found in camping/outdoor supply stores.
• Eat only thoroughly cooked food or fruits and vegetables you have peeled yourself. Remember: boil it, cook it, peel it, or forget it.
• If you will be visiting an area where there is risk for malaria, take your malaria prevention medication before, during, and after travel, as directed. (See your doctor for a prescription.)
• Protect yourself from insects by remaining in well-screened areas, using repellents (applied sparingly at 4-hour intervals) and permethrin-impregnated mosquito nets, and wearing long-sleeved shirts and long pants from dusk through dawn.
• To prevent fungal and parasitic infections, keep feet clean and dry, and do not go barefoot.
• Always use latex condoms to reduce the risk of HIV and other sexually transmitted diseases.

To Avoid Getting Sick:

• Don't eat food purchased from street vendors.
• Don't drink beverages with ice.
• Don't eat dairy products unless you know they have been pasteurized.
• Don't share needles with anyone.
• Don't handle animals (especially monkeys, dogs, and cats), to avoid bites and serious diseases (including rabies and plague). (For more information, please see the Animal-Associated Hazards on the Making Travel Safe page.)
• Don't swim in fresh water, including the Nile. Salt water is usually safer. (For more information, please see the Swimming Precautions on the Making Travel Safe page.)

What You Need To Bring with You:

• Long-sleeved shirt and long pants to wear while outside whenever possible, to prevent illnesses carried by insects (e.g., malaria, dengue, filariasis, leishmaniasis, and onchocerciasis).
• Insect repellent containing DEET (diethylmethyltoluamide), in 30%-35% strength for adults and 6%-10% for children. Unless you are staying in air-conditioned or well-screened housing, purchase

a bed net impregnated with the insecticide permethrin. (Bed nets can be purchased in camping or military supply stores.)
• Over-the-counter antidiarrheal medicine to take if you have diarrhea.
• Iodine tablets and water filters to purify water if bottled water is not available. See Do's above for more detailed information about water filters.
• Sunblock, sunglasses, hat.
• Prescription medications: make sure you have enough to last during your trip, as well as a copy of the prescription(s).

After You Return Home:

If you have visited an area where there is risk for malaria, continue taking your malaria medication weekly for 4 weeks after you leave the area.
If you become ill after your trip-even as long as a year after you return-tell your doctor where you have traveled.

For More Information:

Ask your doctor or check the CDC web sites for more information about how to protect yourself against diseases that occur in North Africa, such as:

For information about diseases-

Carried by Insects
Dengue, Malaria

Carried in Food or Water
Cholera, *Escherichia coli,* diarrhea, Hepatitis A, Schistosomiasis, Typhoid Fever

Person-to-Person Contact
Hepatitis B, HIV/AIDS

For more information about these and other diseases, please check the Diseases (http://www.cdc.gov/travel/diseases.htm) section and the Health Topics A-Z (http://www.cdc.gov/health/diseases.htm).

Note:

Algeria is located in the North Africa health region.

Sources:

The Center for Disease Control Destinations Website:
http://www.cdc.gov/travel/indianrg.htm

Chapter 6

Environmental Overview

Environmental Issues

General Overview

Algeria has several serious environmental issues that it needs to deal with over the next several years in order to reduce the risk of health hazards to its inhabitants.

Current Issues

- Soil fragility, and the concomitant impact on agricultural activities
- Temperature extremes that impact agricultural development adversely
- Increased desertification, which also reduces crop production used to feed human and domesticated animal populations
- Inadequate waste management and sanitation
- Sub-standard water purification techniques, and associated threats to human life
- Inadequate supplies of potable water
- Water pollution, as a result of contamination from raw sewage, petroleum refining wastes, industrial effluents, and fertilizer runoff

Total Greenhouse Gas Emissions (Mtc)

30.6

Country Rank (GHG output)

44th

Natural Hazards

-earthquakes
-mudslides
-floods

Environmental Policy

Regulation and Jurisdiction:

The regulation and protection of the environment in Algeria is under the jurisdiction of the following:

- Ministry of the Interior
- Local Authorities
- Administrative Reform and the Environment
- Ministry of Agriculture and Fisheries
- Agence National Pour la Protection de l'Environment-ANPE (National Agency for Environmental Protection)
- Agence Nationale de Réalisation et de Gestion des Infrastructures Hydrauliques pour l'Irrigation et le Drainage-AGID (National Agency for the Creation and Management of Hydraulic Irrigation and Drainage Systems)

Major Non-Governmental Organizations:

Although there are currently no major non-governmental organizations dedicated solely to environmental issues, there are two that have such aims among their multiple objectives:

- Forum Algerian de la Jeunesse (Algerian Youth Forum)
- Association Nationale De Volontariat-TOUIZA (Volunteers National Association).

International Environmental Accords:

Party to:

-Biodiversity
-Climate Change
-Endangered Species
-Environmental Modification

-Ozone Layer Protection
-Ship Pollution
-Wetlands

Signed but not ratified:

-Desertification
-Law of the Sea
-Nuclear Test Ban

Kyoto Protocol Status (year ratified):

2005

Greenhouse Gas Ranking

Greenhouse Gas Ranking

GHG Emissions Rankings

Country Rank	Country
1	United States

2	China
4	Russia
5	Japan
6	India
7	Germany
8	United Kingdom
9	Canada
10	Korea, South
11	Italy
12	Mexico
13	France
14	South Africa
15	Iran
16	Indonesia
17	Australia
18	Spain
19	Brazil
20	Saudi Arabia

21	Ukraine
22	Poland
23	Taiwan
24	Turkey
25	Thailand
26	Netherlands
27	Kazakhstan
28	Malaysia
29	Egypt
30	Venezuela
31	Argentina
32	Uzbekistan
33	Czech Republic
34	Belgium
35	Pakistan
36	Romania
37	Greece
38	United Arab Emirates

39	Algeria
40	Nigeria
41	Austria
42	Iraq
43	Finland
44	Philippines
45	Vietnam
46	Korea, North
47	Israel
48	Portugal
49	Colombia
50	Belarus
51	Kuwait
52	Hungary
53	Chile
54	Denmark
55	Serbia & Montenegro
56	Sweden

57	Syria
58	Libya
59	Bulgaria
60	Singapore
61	Switzerland
62	Ireland
63	Turkmenistan
64	Slovakia
65	Bangladesh
66	Morocco
67	New Zealand
68	Oman
69	Qatar
70	Azerbaijan
71	Norway
72	Peru
73	Cuba
74	Ecuador

75	Trinidad & Tobago
76	Croatia
77	Tunisia
78	Dominican Republic
79	Lebanon
80	Estonia
81	Yemen
82	Jordan
83	Slovenia
84	Bahrain
85	Angola
86	Bosnia & Herzegovina
87	Lithuania
88	Sri Lanka
89	Zimbabwe
90	Bolivia
91	Jamaica
92	Guatemala

93	Luxembourg
94	Myanmar
95	Sudan
96	Kenya
97	Macedonia
98	Mongolia
99	Ghana
100	Cyprus
101	Moldova
102	Latvia
103	El Salvador
104	Brunei
105	Honduras
106	Cameroon
107	Panama
108	Costa Rica
109	Cote d'Ivoire
110	Kyrgyzstan

111	Tajikistan
112	Ethiopia
113	Senegal
114	Uruguay
115	Gabon
116	Albania
117	Nicaragua
118	Botswana
119	Paraguay
120	Tanzania
121	Georgia
122	Armenia
123	Congo, RC
124	Mauritius
125	Nepal
126	Mauritius
127	Nepal
128	Mauritania

129	Malta
130	Papua New Guinea
131	Zambia
132	Suriname
133	Iceland
134	Togo
135	Benin
136	Uganda
137	Bahamas
138	Haiti
139	Congo, DRC
140	Guyana
141	Mozambique
142	Guinea
143	Equatorial Guinea
144	Laos
145	Barbados
146	Niger

147	Fiji
148	Burkina Faso
149	Malawi
150	Swaziland
151	Belize
152	Afghanistan
153	Sierra Leone
154	Eritrea
155	Rwanda
156	Mali
157	Seychelles
158	Cambodia
159	Liberia
160	Bhutan
161	Maldives
162	Antigua & Barbuda
163	Djibouti
164	Saint Lucia

165	Gambia
166	Guinea-Bissau
167	Central African Republic
168	Palau
169	Burundi
170	Grenada
171	Lesotho
172	Saint Vincent & the Grenadines
173	Solomon Islands
174	Samoa
175	Cape Verde
176	Nauru
177	Dominica
178	Saint Kitts & Nevis
179	Chad
180	Tonga
181	Sao Tome & Principe
182	Comoros

183	Vanuatu
185	Kiribati
Not Ranked	Andorra
Not Ranked	East Timor
Not Ranked	Holy See
Not Ranked	Hong Kong
Not Ranked	Liechtenstein
Not Ranked	Marshall Islands
Not Ranked	Micronesia
Not Ranked	Monaco
Not Ranked	San Marino
Not Ranked	Somalia
Not Ranked	Tuvalu

* European Union is ranked 3rd
Cook Islands are ranked 184th
Niue is ranked 186th

Global Environmental Snapshot

Introduction

The countries of the world face many environmental challenges in common. Nevertheless, the nature and intensity of problem vary from region to region, as do various countries' respective capacities, in terms of affluence and infrastructure, to remediate threats to environmental quality.

Consciousness of perils affecting the global environment came to the fore in the last third or so of the 20th century has continued to intensify well into the new millennium. According to the United Nations Environment Programme, considerable environmental progress has been made at the level of institutional developments, international cooperation accords, and public participation. Approximately two-dozen international environmental protection accords with global implications have been promulgated since the late 1970s under auspices of the United Nations and other international organizations, together with many additional regional agreements. Attempts to address and rectify environmental problems take the form of legal frameworks, economic instruments, environmentally sound technologies and cleaner production processes as well as conservation efforts. Environmental impact assessments have increasingly been applied across the globe.

Environmental degradation affects the quality, or aesthetics, of human life, but it also displays potential to undermine conditions necessary for the sustainability of human life. Attitudes toward the importance of environmental protection measures reflect ambivalence derived from this bifurcation. On one hand, steps such as cleaning up pollution, dedicating parkland, and suchlike, are seen as embellishments undertaken by wealthy societies already assured they can successfully perform those functions deemed, ostensibly, more essential-for instance, public health and education, employment and economic development. On the other hand, in poorer countries, activities causing environmental damage-for instance the land degradation effects of unregulated logging, slash-and-burn agriculture, overgrazing, and mining-can seem justified insofar as such activities provide incomes and livelihoods.

Rapid rates of resource depletion are associated with poverty and high population growth, themselves correlated, whereas consumption per capita is much higher in the most developed countries, despite these nations' recent progress in energy efficiency and conservation. It is impossible to sequester the global environmental challenge from related economic, social and political challenges.

First-tier industrialized countries have recently achieved measurable decreases in environmental pollution and the rate of resource depletion, a success not matched in middle income and developing countries. It is believed that the discrepancy is due to the fact that industrialized countries have more developed infrastructures to accommodate changes in environmental policy, to apply environmental technologies, and to invest in public education. The advanced industrialized countries incur relatively lower costs in alleviating environmental problems, in comparison to developing countries, since in the former even extensive environmental programs represent a rather minuscule percentage of total expenditures. Conversely, budget constraints, lagged provision of

basic services to the population, and other factors such as debt service and militarization may preclude institution of minimal environmental protection measures in the poorest countries.

A synopsis for the current situation facing each region of the world follows:

Regional Synopsis: Africa

The African continent, the world's second-largest landmass, encompasses many of the world's least developed countries. By global standards, urbanization is comparatively low but rising at a rapid rate. More heavily industrialized areas at the northern and southern ends of the continent experience the major share of industrial pollution. In other regions the most serious environmental problems typically stem from inefficient subsistence farming methods and other forms of land degradation, which have affected an increasingly extensive area under pressure of a widely impoverished, fast-growing population. Africa's distribution of natural resources is very uneven. It is the continent at greatest risk of desertification, especially in the Sahel region at the edge of the Sahara but also in other dry-range areas. Yet at the same time, Africa also harbors some of the earth's richest and most diverse biological zones.

Key Points:

Up to half a billion hectares of African land are moderately to severely degraded, an occurrence reflecting short-fallow shifting cultivation and overgrazing as well as a climatic pattern of recurrent droughts.

Soil degradation is severe along the expanse directly south of the Sahara, from the west to the east coasts. Parts of southern Africa, central-eastern Africa, and the neighboring island of Madagascar suffer from serious soil degradation as well.

Africa contains about 17 percent of the world's forest cover, concentrated in the tropical belt of the continent. Many of the forests, however, are severely depleted, with an estimated 70 percent showing some degree of degradation.

Population growth has resulted in continuing loss of arable land, as inefficient subsistence farming techniques affect increasingly extensive areas. Efforts to implement settled, sustainable agriculture have met with some recent success, but much further progress in this direction is needed. Especially in previously uninhabited forestlands, concern over deforestation is intensifying.

By contrast, the African savanna remains the richest grassland in the world, supporting a substantial concentration of animal and plant life. Wildlife parks are sub-Saharan Africa's greatest tourist attraction, and with proper management-giving local people a stake in conservation and

controlling the pace of development-could greatly enhance African economies.

Significant numbers of mammal species in parts of northern, southern and eastern Africa are currently threatened, while the biological diversity in Mauritania and Madagascar is even further compromised with over 20 percent of the mammal species in these two countries currently under threat.

With marine catch trends increasing from 500,000 metric tons in the 1950s to over 3,000,000 metric tons by 2000, there was increasing concern about the reduction in fisheries and marine life, should this trend continue unabated.

Water resource vulnerability is a major concern in northeastern Africa, and a moderate concern across the rest of the continent. An exception is central Africa, which has plentiful water supplies.

Many Africans lack adequate access to resources, not just (if at all) because the resources are unevenly distributed geographically, but also through institutional failures such as faulty land tenure systems or political upheaval. The quality of Africa's natural resources, despite their spotty distribution, is in fact extraordinarily rich. The infrastructure needed to protect and benefit from this natural legacy, however, is largely lacking.

Regional Synopsis: Asia and the Pacific

Asia-earth's largest landmass-and the many large and nearly innumerable small islands lying off its Pacific shore display extraordinarily contrasting landscapes, levels of development, and degrees of environmental stress. In the classification used here, the world's smallest continent, Australia, is also included in the Asia-Pacific region.

The Asia-Pacific region is home to 9 of the world's 14 largest urban areas, and as energy use for utilities, industry and transport increases in developing economies, urban centers are subject to worsening air quality. Intense population density in places such as Bangladesh or Hong Kong is the quintessential image many people have of Asia, yet vast desert areas such as the Gobi and the world's highest mountain range, the Himalayas, span the continent as well. Forested areas in Southeast Asia and the islands of Indonesia and the Philippines were historically prized for their tropical hardwood, but in many places this resource is now severely depleted. Low-lying small island states are extremely vulnerable to the effects of global warming, both rising sea levels and an anticipated increase in cyclones.

Key Points:

Asian timber reserves are forecast to be depleted in the next 40 years. Loss of natural forest is

irreversible in some areas, but plantation programs to restore tree cover may ameliorate a portion of the resulting land degradation.

Increased usage of fossil fuels in China and other parts of southern Asia is projected to result in a marked increase in emissions, especially in regard to carbon dioxide. The increased usage of energy has led to a marked upsurge in air pollution across the region.

Acidification is an emerging problem regionally, with sulfur dioxide emissions expected to triple by 2010 if the current growth rate is sustained. China, Thailand, India, and Korea seem to be suffering from particularly high rates of acid deposition. By contrast, Asia's most highly developed economy, Japan, has effected substantial improvements in its environmental indicators.

Water pollution in the Pacific is an urgent concern since up to 70 percent of the water discharged into the region's waters receives no treatment. Additionally, the disposal of solid wastes, in like manner, poses a major threat in a region with many areas of high population density.

The Asia-Pacific region is the largest expanse of the world's land that is adversely affected by soil degradation.

The region around Australia reportedly suffers the largest degree of ozone depletion.

The microstates of the Pacific suffer land loss due to global warming, and the consequent rise in the levels of ocean waters. A high-emissions scenario and anthropogenic climate impact at the upper end of the currently predicted range would probably force complete evacuation of the lowest-elevation islands sometime in this century.

The species-rich reefs surrounding Southeast Asia are highly vulnerable to the deleterious effects of coastal development, land-based pollution, over-fishing and exploitative fishing methods, as well as marine pollution from oil spills and other activities.

With marine catch trends increasing from 5,000,000 metric tons in the 1950s to over 20,000,000 metric tons by 2000, there was increasing concern about the reduction in fisheries and marine life, should this trend continue unabated.

Significant numbers of mammal species in parts of China and south-east Asia are currently threatened, while the biological diversity in India, Japan, Australia, the Philippines, Indonesia and parts of Malaysia is even further compromised with over 20 percent of the mammal species in these countries currently under threat.

Water resource vulnerability is a serious concern in areas surrounding the Indian subcontinent.

Regional Synopsis: Central Asia

The Central Asian republics, formerly in the Soviet Union, experience a range of environmental problems as the result of poorly executed agricultural, industrial, and nuclear programs during the Soviet era. Relatively low population densities are the norm, especially since upon the breakup of the U.S.S.R. many ethnic Russians migrated back to European Russia. In this largely semi-arid region, drought, water shortages, and soil salinization pose major challenges.

Key Points:

The use of agricultural pesticides, such as DDT and other chemicals, has contributed to the contamination of soil and groundwater throughout the region.

Land and soil degradation, and in particular, increased salinization, is mostly attributable to faulty irrigation practices.

Significant desertification is also a problem in the region.

Air pollution is prevalent, mostly due to use of low octane automobile fuel.

Industrial pollution of the Caspian Sea and the Aral Sea, as a result of industrial effluents as well as mining and metal production, presents a challenge to the countries bordering these bodies of water.

One of the most severe environmental problems in the region is attributable to the several billion tons of hazardous materials stored in landfills across Central Asia.

Uzbekistan's particular problem involves the contraction of the Aral Sea, which has decreased in size by a third, as a consequence of river diversions and poor irrigation practices. The effect has been the near-total biological destruction of that body of water.

Kazakhstan, as a consequence of being the heartland of the former Soviet Union's nuclear program, has incurred a high of cancerous malignancies, biogenetic abnormalities and radioactive contamination.

While part of the Soviet Union, the republics in the region experienced very high levels of greenhouse gas emissions, as a consequence of rapid industrialization using cheap but dirty energy sources, especially coal.

By contrast, however, there have recently been substantial reductions in the level of greenhouse gas emissions, especially those attributable to coal burning, with further decreases anticipated over

the next decade. These changes are partially due to the use of cleaner energy technologies, such as natural gas, augmented by governmental commitment to improving environmental standards.

Regional Synopsis: Europe

Western Europe underwent dramatic transformation of its landscape, virtually eliminating large-scale natural areas, during an era of rapid industrialization, which intensified upon its recovery from World War II. In Eastern Europe and European Russia, intensive land development has been less prevalent, so that some native forests and other natural areas remain. Air and water pollution from use of dirty fuels and industrial effluents, however, are more serious environmental problems in Eastern than in Western Europe, though recent trends show improvement in many indicators. Acid rain has inflicted heavy environmental damage across much of Europe, particularly on forests. Europe and North America are the only regions in which water usage for industry exceeds that for agriculture, although in Mediterranean nations agriculture is the largest water consumer.

Key Points:

Europe contributes 36 percent of the world's chlorofluorocarbon emissions, 30 percent of carbon dioxide emissions, and 25 percent of sulfur dioxide emissions.

Sulfur and nitrogen oxide emissions are the cause of 30 to 50 percent of Central and Eastern Europe's deforestation.

Acid rain has been an environmental concern for decades and continues to be a challenge in parts of Western Europe.

Overexploitation of up to 60 percent of Europe's groundwater presents a problem in industrial and urban areas.

With marine catch trends increasing from 5,000,000 metric tons in the 1950s to over 20,000,000 metric tons by 2000, there was increasing concern about the reduction in fisheries and marine life, should this trend continue unabated.

Significant numbers of mammal species in parts of western Europe, Eastern Europe and Russia are currently threatened, while the biological diversity on the Iberian Peninsula is even further compromised with over 40 percent of the mammal species in this region currently under threat. As a result, there has been a 10 percent increase in protected areas of Europe.

A major environmental issue for Europe involves the depletion of various already endangered or threatened species, and most significantly, the decline of fish stocks. Some estimates suggest that

up to 50 percent of the continent's fish species may be considered endangered species. Coastal fisheries have been over-harvested, resulting in catch limits or moratoriums on many commercially important fish species.

Fortunately, in the last few years, these policies have started to yield measurable results with decreasing trends in marine fish catch.

Recently, most European countries have adopted cleaner production technologies, and alternative methods of waste disposal, including recycling.

The countries of Eastern Europe have made air quality a major environmental priority. This is exemplified by the Russian Federation's addition to the 1995 "Berlin Mandate" (transnational legislation based on resolutions of the Rio Earth Summit) compelling nations to promote "carbon sinks" to absorb greenhouse gases.

On a relative basis, when compared with the degree of industrial emissions emitted by many Eastern European countries until the late 1980s, there has been some marked increase in air quality in the region, as obsolete plants are closed and a transition to cleaner fuels and more efficient energy use takes place.

Regional Synopsis: The Middle and Near East

Quite possibly, the Middle East will exemplify the adage that, as the 20th century was a century fixated on oil, the 21st century will be devoted to critical decisions about water. Many (though far from all) nations in the Middle East rank among those countries with the largest oil and gas reserves, but water resources are relatively scarce throughout this predominantly dry region. Effects of global warming may cause moderately high elevation areas that now typically receive winter "snowpack" to experience mainly rain instead, which would further constrain dry-season water availability. The antiquities and religious shrines of the region render it a great magnet for tourism, which entails considerable economic growth potential but also intensifies stresses on the environment.

Key Points:

Water resource vulnerability is a serious concern across the entire region. The increased usage of, and further demand for water, has exacerbated long-standing water scarcity in the region. For instance, river diversions and industrial salt works have caused the Dead Sea to shrink by one-third from its original surface area, with further declines expected.

The oil industry in the region contributes to water pollution in the Persian Gulf, as a result of oil spills, which have averaged 1.2 million barrels of oil spilt per year (some sources suggest that this figure is understated). The consequences are severe because even after oil spills have been cleaned up, environmental damage to the food webs and ecosystems of marine life will persist for a prolonged period.

The region's coastal zone is considered one of the most fragile and endangered ecosystems of the world. Land reclamation, shoreline construction, discharge of industrial effluents, and tourism (such as diving in the Red Sea) contribute to widespread coastal damage.

Significant numbers of mammal species in parts of the Middle East are currently threatened.

Since the 1980s, 11 percent of the region's natural forest has been depleted.

Regional Synopsis: Latin America and the Caribbean

The Latin American and Caribbean region is characterized by exceedingly diverse landforms that have generally seen high rates of population growth and economic development in recent decades. The percentage of inhabitants residing in urban areas is quite high at 73.4 percent; the region includes the megacities of Mexico City, Sao Paulo, and Rio de Janeiro. The region also includes the world's second-highest mountain range, the Andes; significant expanses of desert and grassland; the coral reefs of the Caribbean Sea; and the world's largest contiguous tropical forest in the Amazon basin. Threats to the latter from subsistence and commercial farming, mineral exploitation and timbering are well publicized. Nevertheless, of eight countries worldwide that still retain at least 70 percent of their original forest cover, six are in Latin America. The region accounts for nearly half (48.3 percent) of the world's greenhouse gas emissions derived from land clearing, but as yet a comparatively minuscule share (4.3 percent) of such gases from industrial sources.

Key Points:

Although Latin America is one of the most biologically diverse regions of the world, this biodiversity is highly threatened, as exemplified by the projected extinction of up to 100,000 species in the next few decades. Much of this loss will be concentrated in the Amazon area, although the western coastline of South America will also suffer significant depletion of biological diversity. The inventory of rainforest species with potentially useful commercial or medical applications is incomplete, but presumed to include significant numbers of such species that may become extinct before they are discovered and identified.

Up to 50 percent of the region's grazing land has lost its soil fertility as a result of soil erosion, salinization, alkalinization and overgrazing.

The Caribbean Sea, the Atlantic Ocean, and the Pacific Ocean have all been contaminated by agricultural wastes, which are discharged into streams that flow into these major waters. Water pollution derived from phosphorous, nitrates and pesticides adversely affects fish stocks, contributes to oxygen depletion and fosters overgrowth of aquatic vegetation. Marine life will continue to be severely compromised as a result of these conditions.

Due to industrial development in the region, many beaches of eastern Latin America and the Caribbean suffer from tar deposits.

Most cities in the region lack adequate sewage treatment facilities, and rapid migration of the rural poor into the cities is widening the gap between current infrastructure capacity and the much greater level needed to provide satisfactory basic services.

The rainforest region of the Amazon Basin suffers from dangerously high levels of deforestation, which may be a significant contributory factor to global warming or "the greenhouse effect." In the late 1990s and into the new millennium, the rate of deforestation was around 20 million acres of rainforest being destroyed annually.

Deforestation on the steep rainforest slopes of Caribbean islands contributes to soil erosion and landslides, both of which then result in heavy sedimentation of nearby river systems. When these sedimented rivers drain into the sea and coral reefs, they poison the coral tissues, which are vital to the maintenance of the reef ecosystem. The result is marine degradation and nutrient depletion. Jamaica's coral reefs have never quite recovered from the effects of marine degradation.

The Southern Cone of Latin America (Argentina, Brazil, Chile, Paraguay, and Uruguay) suffers the effects of greatly increased ultraviolet-B radiation, as a consequence of more intense ozone depletion in the southern hemisphere.

Water resource vulnerability is an increasingly major concern in the northwestern portion of South America.

<u>Regional Synopsis: North America</u>

North American nations, in particular the United States and Canada, rank among the world's most highly developed industrial economies-a fact which has generated significant pollution problems, but also financial resources and skills that have enabled many problems to be corrected. Although efforts to promote energy efficiency, recycling, and suchlike have helped ease strains on the environment in a part of the world where per capita consumption levels are high, sprawling land development patterns and recent preferences many households have demonstrated for larger

vehicles have offset these advances.

Meanwhile, a large portion of North America's original forest cover has been lost, though in many cases replaced by productive second-growth woodland. In recent years, attitudes toward best use of the region's remaining natural or scenic areas seem to be shifting toward recreation and preservation and away from resource extraction. With increasing attention on the energy scarcity in the United States, however, there is speculation that this shift may be short-lived. Indeed, the energy shortage on the west coast of the United States and associated calls for energy exploration, indicate a possible retrenchment toward resource extraction. At the same time, however, it has also served to highlight the need for energy conservation as well as alternative energy sources.

Despite generally successful anti-pollution efforts, various parts of the region continue to suffer significant air, water and land degradation from industrial, vehicular, and agricultural emissions and runoff. Mexico, as a middle-income country, displays environmental problems characteristic of a developing economy, including forest depletion, pollution from inefficient industrial processes and dirty fuels, and lack of sufficient waste-treatment infrastructure.

Key Points:

Because of significantly greater motor vehicle usage in the United States (U.S.) than in the rest of the world, the U.S. contribution of urban air pollution and greenhouse gas emissions, especially carbon dioxide, is disproportionately high in relation to its population.

Acid rain is an enduring issue of contention in the northeastern part of the United States, on the border with Canada.

Mexico's urban areas suffer extreme air pollution from carbon monoxide, nitrogen oxides, sulfur dioxide, and other toxic air pollutants. Emissions controls on vehicles are in their infancy, compared to analogous regulations in the U.S.

The cities of Mexico, including those on the U.S. border, also discharge large quantities of untreated or poorly treated sewage, though officials are currently planning infrastructure upgrades.

Deforestation is noteworthy in various regions of the U.S., especially along the northwest coastline. Old growth forests have been largely removed, but in the northeastern and upper midwestern sections of the United States, evidence suggests that the current extent of tree cover probably surpasses the figure for the beginning of the 20th century.

Extreme weather conditions in the last few years have resulted in a high level of soil erosion along the north coast of California; in addition, the coastline itself has shifted substantially due to soil

erosion and concomitant landslides.

Agricultural pollution-including nitrate contamination of well water, nutrient runoff to waterways, and pesticide exposure-is significant in various areas. Noteworthy among affected places are California's Central Valley, extensive stretches of the Midwest, and land in the Chesapeake Bay watershed.

Inland waterways, especially around the Great Lakes, have substantially improved their water quality, due to concentrated efforts at reducing water pollution by governmental, commercial and community representatives. Strict curbs on industrial effluents and near-universal implementation of sewage treatment are the chief factors responsible for this improvement.

A major environmental issue for Canada and the United States involves the depletion of various already endangered or threatened species, and most significantly, the decline of fish stocks. Coastal fisheries have been over-harvested, resulting in catch limits or moratoriums on many commercially important fish species. In the last few years, these policies have started to yield measurable results with decreasing trends in marine fish catch.

Due to the decay of neighboring ecosystems in Central America and the Caribbean, the sea surrounding Florida has become increasingly sedimented, contributing to marine degradation, nutrient depletion of the ecosystem, depletion of fish stocks, and diseases to coral species in particular.

Polar Regions

Key Points:

The significant rise in sea level, amounting 10 to 25 centimeters in the last 100 years, is due to the melting of the Arctic ice sheets, and is attributed to global warming.

The Antarctic suffers from a significant ozone hole, first detected in 1976. By 1985, a British scientific team reported a 40 percent decrease in usual regeneration rates of the ozone. Because a sustained increase in the amount of ultraviolet-B radiation would have adverse consequences upon all planetary life, recent environmental measures have been put into effect, aimed at reversing ozone depletion. These measures are projected to garner significant results by 2050.

Due to air and ocean currents, the Arctic is a sink for toxic releases originally discharged thousands of miles away. Arctic wildlife and Canada's Inuit population have higher bodily levels of contaminants such as PCB and dioxin than those found in people and animals in much of the rest of the world.

Global Environmental Concepts

1. Global Warming and Greenhouse Gases

The Greenhouse Effect:

In the early 19th century, the French physicist, Jean Fourier, contended that the earth's atmosphere functions in much the same way as the glass of a greenhouse, thus describing what is now understood as the "greenhouse effect." Put simply, the "greenhouse effect" confines some of the sun's energy to the earth, preserving some of the planet's warmth, rather than allowing it to flow back into space. In so doing, all kinds of life forms can flourish on earth. Thus, the "greenhouse effect" is necessary to sustain and preserve life forms and ecosystems on earth.

In the late 19th century, a Swedish chemist, Svante Arrhenius, noticed that human activities, such as the burning of coal and other fossil fuels for heat, and the removal of forested lands for urban development, led to higher concentrations of greenhouse gases, like carbon dioxide and methane, in the atmosphere. This increase in the levels of greenhouse gases was believed to advance the "greenhouse effect" exponentially, and might be related to the trend in global warming.

In the wake of the Industrial Revolution, after industrial development took place on a large scale and the total human population burgeoned simultaneously with industrialization, the resulting increase in greenhouse gas emissions could, many scientists believe, be significant enough to have some bearing on climate. Indeed, many studies in recent years support the idea that there is a linkage between human activities and global warming, although there is less consensus on the extent to which this linkage may be relevant to environmental concerns.

That said, some scientists have argued that temperature fluctuations have existed throughout the evolution of the planet. Indeed, Dr. S. Fred Singer, the president of the Science and Environment Policy Project has noted that 3,000-year-old geological records of ocean sediment reveal changes in the surface temperature of the ocean. Hence, it is possible that climate variability is merely a normal fact of the planet's evolution. Yet even skeptics as to anthropogenic factors concur that any substantial changes in global temperatures would likely have an effect upon the earth's ecosystems, as well as the life forms that inhabit them.

The Relationship Between Global Warming and Greenhouse Gases:

A large number of climatologists believe that the increase in atmospheric concentrations of "greenhouse gas emissions," mostly a consequence of human activities such as the burning of fossil fuels, are contributing to global warming. The cause notwithstanding, the planet has reportedly warmed 0.3°C to 0.6°C over the last century. Indeed, each year during the 1990s was one of the very warmest in the 20th century, with the mean surface temperature for 1999 being the fifth warmest on record since 1880.

In early 2000, a panel of atmospheric scientists for the National Research Council concluded in a report that global warming was, indeed, a reality. While the panel, headed by Chairman John Wallace, a professor of atmospheric sciences at the University of Washington, stated that it remained unclear whether human activities have contributed to the earth's increasing temperatures, it was apparent that global warming exists.

In 2001, following a request for further study by the incoming Bush administration in the United States, the National Academy of Sciences again confirmed that global warming had been in existence for the last 20 years. The study also projected an increase in temperature between 2.5 degrees and 10.4 degrees Fahrenheit by the year 2100. Furthermore, the study found the leading cause of global warming to be emissions of carbon dioxide from the burning of fossil fuels, and it noted that greenhouse gas accumulations in the earth's atmosphere was a result of human activities.

Within the scientific community, the controversy regarding has centered on the difference between surface air and upper air temperatures. Information collected since 1979 suggests that while the earth's surface temperature has increased by about a degree in the past century, the atmospheric temperature five miles above the earth's surface has indicated very little increase. Nevertheless, the panel stated that this discrepancy in temperature between surface and upper air does not invalidate the conclusion that global warming is taking place. Further, the panel noted that natural events, such as volcanic eruptions, can decrease the temperature in the upper atmosphere.

The major consequences of global warming potentially include the melting of the polar ice caps, which, in turn, contribute to the rise in sea levels. Many islands across the globe have already experienced a measurable loss of land as a result. Because global warming may increase the rate of evaporation, increased precipitation, in the form of stronger and more frequent storm systems, is another potential outcome. Other consequences of global warming may include the introduction and proliferation of new infectious diseases, loss of arable land (referred to as "desertification"), destructive changes to existing ecosystems, loss of biodiversity and the isolation of species, and concomitant adverse changes in the quality of human life.

International Policy Development in Regard to Global Warming:

Regardless of what the precise nature of the relationship between greenhouse gas emissions and global warming may be, it seems that there is some degree of a connection between the phenomena. Any substantial reductions in greenhouse gas emissions and global warming trends will likely involve systematic changes in industrial operations, the use of advanced energy sources and technologies, as well as global cooperation in implementing and regulating these transformations.

In this regard, the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change (UNFCCC) stipulated the following objectives:

1. To stabilize "greenhouse gas" concentrations within the atmosphere, in such a manner that would preclude hazardous anthropogenic intervention into the existing biosphere and ecosystems of the world. This stabilization process would facilitate the natural adaptation of ecosystems to changes in climate.

2. To ensure and enable sustainable development and food production on a global scale.

*** See section on "International Environmental Agreements and Associations" for information related to international policies related to limiting greenhouse gases and controlling climate change emanating from historic summits at Kyoto, Copenhagen, Doha, and Paris. ***

2. Air Pollution

Long before global warming reared its head as a significant issue, those concerned about the environment and public health noted the deleterious effects of human-initiated combustion upon the atmosphere. Killer smogs from coal burning triggered acute health emergencies in London and other places. At a lower level of intensity motor vehicle, power plant, and industrial emissions impaired long-range visibility and probably had some chronic adverse consequences on the respiratory systems of persons breathing such air.

In time, scientists began associating the sulfur dioxide and nitrogen oxides released from coal burning with significant acid deposition in the atmosphere, eventually falling as "acid rain." This phenomenon has severely degraded forestlands, especially in Europe and a few parts of the United States. It has also impaired some aquatic ecosystems and eaten away the surface of some human artifacts, such as marble monuments. Scrubber technology and conversion to cleaner fuels have enabled the level of industrial production to remain at least constant while significantly reducing acid deposition. Technologies aimed at cleaning the air and curtailing acid rain, soot, and smog may, nonetheless, boomerang as the perils of global warming become increasingly serious. In brief, these particulates act as sort of a sun shade -- comparable to the effect of volcanic eruptions on the

upper atmosphere whereby periods of active volcanism correlate with temporarily cooler weather conditions. Thus, while the carbon dioxide releases that are an inevitable byproduct of combustion continue, by scrubbing the atmosphere of pollutants, an industrial society opens itself to greater insolation (penetration of the sun's rays and consequent heating), and consequently, it is likely to experience a correspondingly greater rise in ambient temperatures.

The health benefits of removing the sources of acid rain and smog are indisputable, and no one would recommend a return to previous conditions. Nevertheless, the problematic climatic effects of continually increasing emissions of carbon dioxide and other greenhouse gases pose a major global environmental challenge, not as yet addressed adequately.

3. Ozone Depletion

The stratospheric ozone layer functions to prevent ultraviolet radiation from reaching the earth. Normally, stratospheric ozone is systematically disintegrated and regenerated through natural photochemical processes. The stratospheric ozone layer, however, has been depleted unnaturally as a result of anthropogenic (man-made) chemicals, most especially chlorine and bromide compounds such as chloroflorocarbons (CFCs), halons, and various industrial chemicals in the form of solvents, refrigerants, foaming agents, aerosol propellants, fire retardants, and fumigants. Ozone depletion is of concern because it permits a greater degree of ultraviolet-B radiation to reach the earth, which then increases the incidences of cancerous malignancies, cataracts, and human immune deficiencies. In addition, even in small doses, ozone depletion affects the ecosystem by disturbing food chains, agriculture, fisheries and other forms of biological diversity.

Transnational policies enacted to respond to the dangers of ozone depletion include the 1985 Vienna Convention on the Protection of the Ozone Layer and the 1987 Montreal Protocol on Substances that Deplete the Ozone Layer. The Montreal Protocol was subsequently amended in London in 1990, Copenhagen in 1992 and Vienna in 1995. By 1996, 155 countries had ratified the Montreal Protocol, which sets out a time schedule for the reduction (and eventual elimination) of ozone depleting substances (OPS), and bans exports and imports of ODS from and to non-participant countries.

In general, the Protocol stipulates that developed countries must eliminate halon consumption by 1994 and CFC consumption by 1996, while developing countries must eliminate these substances by 2010. Consumption of methyl bromide, which is used as a fumigant, was to be frozen at the 1995 in developed countries, and fully eliminated in 2010, while developing countries are to freeze consumption by 2002, based on average 1995-1998 consumption levels. Methyl chloroform is to be phased out by 2005. Under the Montreal Protocol, most ODS will be completely eliminated from use by 2010.

4. Land Degradation

In recent decades, land degradation in more arid regions of the world has become a serious concern. The problem, manifest as both "desertification" and "devegetation," is caused primarily by climate variability and human activities, such as "deforestation," excessive cultivation, overgrazing, and other forms of land resource exploitation. It is also exacerbated by inadequate irrigation practices. Although the effects of droughts on drylands have been temporary in the past, today, the productivity and sustainability of these lands have been severely compromised for the long term. Indeed, in every region of the world, land degradation has become an acute issue.

Desertification and Devegetation:

"Desertification" is a process of land degradation causing the soil to deteriorate, thus losing its nutrients and fertility, and eventually resulting in the loss of vegetation, known as "devegetation." As aforementioned, "desertification" and "devegetation" are caused by human activities, yet human beings are also the greatest casualties. Because these forms of land degradation affect the ability of the soil to produce crops, they concomitantly contribute to poverty. As population increases and demographic concentrations shift, the extent of land subject to stresses by those seeking to wrest subsistence from it has inexorably risen.

In response, the United Nations has formed the Convention to Combat Desertification-aimed at implementing programs to address the underlying causes of desertification, as well as measures to prevent and minimize its effects. Of particular significance is the formulation of policies on transboundary resources, such as areas around lakes and rivers. At a broader level, the Convention has established a Conference of Parties (COP), which includes all ratifying governments, for directing and advancing international action.

To ensure more efficacious use of funding, the Convention intends to reconfigure international aid to utilize a consultative and coordinated approach in the disbursement and expenditure of donor funds. In this way, local communities that are affected by desertification will be active participants in the solution-generation process. In-depth community education projects are envisioned as part of this new international aid program, and private donor financing is encouraged. Meanwhile, as new technologies are developed to deal with the problem of desertification, they need to be distributed for application across the world. Hence, the Convention calls for international cooperation in scientific research in this regard.

Desertification is a problem of sustainable development. It is directly connected to human challenges such as poverty, social and economic well-being and environmental protection as well. Broader environmental issues, such as climate change, biological diversity, and freshwater supplies,

are indirectly related, so any effort to resolve this environmental challenge must entail coordinated research efforts and joint action.

Deforestation:

Deforestation is not a recent phenomenon. For centuries, human beings have cut down trees to clear space for land cultivation, or in order to use the wood for fuel. Over the last 200 years, and most especially after World War II, deforestation increased because the logging industry became a globally profitable endeavor, and so the clearing of forested areas was accelerated for the purposes of industrial development. In the long term, this intensified level of deforestation is considered problematic because the forest is unable to regenerate itself quickly. The deforestation that has occurred in tropical rainforests is seen as an especially serious concern, due to the perceived adverse effects of this process upon the entire global ecosystem.

The most immediate consequence of deforestation is soil degradation. Soil, which is necessary for the growth of vegetation, can be a fragile and vital property. Organically, an extensive evolution process must take place before soil can produce vegetation, yet at the same time, the effects of natural elements, such as wind and rain, can easily and quickly degrade this resource. This phenomenon is known as soil erosion. In addition, natural elements like wind and rain reduce the amount of fertile soil on the ground, making soil scarcity a genuine problem. When fertile topsoil that already exists is removed from the landscape in the process of deforestation, soil scarcity is further exacerbated. Equally significant is the fact that once land has been cleared so that the topsoil can be cultivated for crop production, not only are the nutrient reserves in the soil depleted, thus producing crops of inferior quality, but the soil structure itself becomes stressed and deteriorates further.

Another direct result of deforestation is flooding. When forests are cleared, removing the cover of vegetation, and rainfall occurs, the flow of water increases across the surface of land. When extensive water runoff takes place, the frequency and intensity of flooding increases. Other adverse effects of deforestation include the loss of wildlife and biodiversity within the ecosystem that supports such life forms.

At a broader level, tropical rainforests play a vital role in maintaining the global environmental system. Specifically, destruction of tropical rainforests affects the carbon dioxide cycle. When forests are destroyed by burning (or rotting), carbon dioxide is released into the air, thus contributing to an intensified "greenhouse effect." The increase in greenhouse gas emissions like carbon dioxide is a major contributor to global warming, according to many environmental scientists. Indeed, trees themselves absorb carbon dioxide in the process of photosynthesis, so their loss also reduces the absorption of greenhouse gases.

Tropical rainforest destruction also adversely affects the nitrogen cycle. Nitrogen is a key nutrient for both plants and animals. Plants derive nitrogen from soil, while animals obtain it via nitrogen-enriched vegetation. This element is essential for the formation of amino acids, and thereby for proteins and biochemicals that all living things need for metabolism and growth. In the nitrogen cycle, vegetation acquires these essential proteins and biochemicals, and then cyclically returns them to the atmosphere and global ecosystem. Accordingly, when tropical rainforest ecosystems are compromised, not only is vegetation removed; the atmosphere is also affected and climates are altered. At a more immediate level, the biodiversity within tropical rainforests, including wildlife and insect species and a wealth of plant varieties, is depleted. Loss of rare plants is of particular concern because certain species as yet unknown and unused could likely yield many practical benefits, for instance as medicines.

As a result of the many challenges associated with deforestation, many environmental groups and agencies have argued for government policies on the sustainable development of forests by governments across the globe. While many countries have instituted national policies and programs aimed at reducing deforestation, and substantial research has been advanced in regard to sustainable and regenerative forestry development, there has been very little progress on an international level. Generally speaking, most tropical rainforests are located in developing and less developed countries, where economic growth is often dependent upon the exploitation of tropical rainforests. Timber resources as well as wildlife hunting tend to be particularly lucrative arenas.

In places such as the Amazon, where deforestation takes place for the construction of energy plants aimed at industrialization and economic development, there is an exacerbated effect on the environment. After forests are cleared in order to construct such projects, massive flooding usually ensues. The remaining trees then rot and decay in the wake of the flooding. As the trees deteriorate, their biochemical makeup becomes more acidic, producing poisonous substances such as hydrogen sulphide and methane gases. Acidified water subsequently corrodes the mechanical equipment and operations of the plants, which are already clogged by rotting wood after the floodwaters rise.

Deforestation generally arises from an economically plausible short-term motivation, but nonetheless poses a serious global concern because the effects go beyond national boundaries. The United Nations has established the World Commission on Forest and Sustainable Development. This body's task is to determine the optimal means of dealing with the issue of deforestation, without unduly affecting normal economic development, while emphasizing the global significance of protecting tropical forest ecosystems.

5. Water Resources

For all terrestrial fauna, including humans, water is the most immediate necessity to sustain life. As

the population has increased and altered an ever-greater portion of the landscape from its natural condition, demand on water resources has intensified, especially with the development of industrialization and large-scale irrigation. The supply of freshwater is inherently limited, and moreover distributed unevenly across the earth's landmasses. Moreover, not just demand for freshwater but activities certain to degrade it are becoming more pervasive. By contrast, the oceans form a sort of "last wilderness," still little explored and in large part not seriously affected by human activity. However, coastal environments - the biologically richest part of the marine ecosystem-are experiencing major depletion due to human encroachment and over-exploitation.

Freshwater:

In various regions, for instance the Colorado River in the western United States, current withdrawals of river water for irrigation, domestic, and industrial use consume the entire streamflow so that almost no water flows into the sea at the river's mouth. Yet development is ongoing in many such places, implying continually rising demand for water. In some areas reliant on groundwater, aquifers are being depleted at a markedly faster rate than they are being replenished. An example is the San Joaquin Valley in California, where decades of high water withdrawals for agriculture have caused land subsidence of ten meters or more in some spots. Naturally, the uncertainty of future water supplies is particularly acute in arid and semi-arid regions. Speculation that the phenomenon of global warming will alter geographic and seasonal rainfall patterns adds further uncertainty.

Water conservation measures have great potential to alleviate supply shortages. Some city water systems are so old and beset with leaking pipes that they lose as much water as they meter. Broad-scale irrigation could be replaced by drip-type irrigation, actually enhancing the sustainability of agriculture. In many areas where heavy irrigation has been used for decades, the result is deposition of salts and other chemicals in the soil such that the land becomes unproductive for farming and must be abandoned.

Farming is a major source of water pollution. Whereas restrictions on industrial effluents and other "point sources" are relatively easy to implement, comparable measures to reform hydraulic practices at farms and other "nonpoint sources" pose a significantly knottier challenge. Farm-caused water pollution takes the following main forms:

- Nitrate pollution found in wells in intensive farming areas as a consequence of heavy fertilizer use is a threat to human health. The most serious danger is to infants, who by ingesting high-nitrate water can contract methemoglobinemia, sometimes called "blue baby syndrome," a potentially fatal condition.

- Fertilizer runoff into rivers and lakes imparts unwanted nutrients that cause algae growth and

eventual loss of oxygen in the body of water, degrading its ability to support fish and other desirable aquatic life.

- Toxic agricultural chemicals - insecticides, herbicides, and fungicides - are detectable in some aquifers and waterways.

In general, it is much easier to get a pollutant into water than to retrieve it out. Gasoline additives, dry cleaning chemicals, other industrial toxins, and in a few areas radionucleides have all been found in water sources intended for human use. The complexity and long time scale of subterranean hydrological movements essentially assures that pollutants already deposited in aquifers will continue to turn up for decades to come. Sophisticated water treatment processes are available, albeit expensive, to reclaim degraded water and render it fit for human consumption. Yet source protection is unquestionably a more desirable alternative.

In much of the developing world, and even some low-income rural enclaves of the developed world, the population lacks ready access to safe water. Surface water and shallow groundwater supplies are susceptible to contamination from untreated wastewater and failing septic tanks, as well as chemical hazards. The occurrence of waterborne disease is almost certainly greatly underreported.

Marine Resources:

Coastal areas have always been desirable places for human habitation, and population pressure on them continues to increase. Many types of water degradation that affect lakes and rivers also affect coastal zones: industrial effluents, untreated or partially treated sewage, nutrient load from agriculture figure prominently in both cases. Prospects for more extreme storms as a result of global warming, as well as the pervasiveness of poorly planned development in many coastal areas, forebode that catastrophic hurricanes and landslides may increase in frequency in the future. Ongoing rise in sea levels will force remedial measures and in some cases abandonment of currently valuable coastal property.

Fisheries over much of the globe have been overharvested, and immediate conservation measures are required to preserve stocks of many species. Many governments subsidized factory-scale fishing fleets in the 1970s and 1980s, and the resultant catch increase evidently surpassed a sustainable level. It is uncertain how much of the current decline in fish stocks stems from overharvesting and how much from environmental pollution. The deep ocean remains relatively unaffected by human activity, but continental shelves near coastlines are frequently seriously polluted, and these close-to-shore areas are the major biological nurseries for food fish and the smaller organisms they feed on.

6. Environmental Toxins

Toxic chemical pollution exploded on the public consciousness with disclosure of spectacularly polluted industrial areas such as Love Canal near Buffalo, New York. There is no question that pollutants such as organophosphates or radionucleides can be highly deleterious to health, but evidence to date suggests that seriously affected areas are a localized rather than universal problem.

While some explore the possibilities for a lifestyle that fully eschews use of modern industrial chemicals, the most prevalent remediative approach is to focus on more judicious use. The most efficient chemical plants are now able to contain nearly all toxic byproducts of their production processes within the premises, minimizing the release of such substances into the environment. Techniques such as Integrated Pest Management (IPM) dictate limited rather than broadcast use of pesticides: application only when needed using the safest available chemical, supplemented as much as possible with nontoxic controls.

While heightened public awareness and growing technical sophistication suggest a hopeful outlook on limiting the damage from manmade environmental toxins, one must grant that previous incidents of their misuse and mishandling have already caused environmental damage that will have to be dealt with for many years to come. In the case of the most hazardous radioactive substances, the time scale for successful remediation actually extends beyond that of the recorded history of civilization. Moreover, in this era of high population density and rapid economic growth, quotidian activities such as the transport of chemicals will occasionally, seemingly inevitably result in accidents with adverse environmental consequences.

7. "Islandization" and Biodiversity

With increased awareness regarding the adverse effects of unregulated hunting and habitat depletion upon wildlife species and other aspects of biodiversity, large-scale efforts across the globe have been initiated to reduce and even reverse this trend.

In every region of the world, many species of wildlife and areas of biodiversity have been saved from extinction. Nationally, many countries have adopted policies aimed at preservation and conservation of species, and one of the most tangible measures has been the proliferation of protected habitats. Such habitats exist in the form of wildlife reserves, marine life reserves, and other such areas where biodiversity can be protected from external encroachment and exploitation.

Despite these advances in wildlife and biodiversity protection, further and perhaps more intractable challenges linger. Designated reserves, while intended to prevent further species decline, exist as closed territories, fragmented from other such enclaves and disconnected from the larger

ecosystem. This environmental scenario is referred to as "islandization." Habitat reserves often serve as oversized zoos or game farms, with landscapes and wildlife that have effectively been "tamed" to suit. Meanwhile, the larger surrounding ecosystem continues to be seriously degraded and transformed, while within the islandized habitat, species that are the focus of conservation efforts may not have sufficient range and may not be able to maintain healthy genetic variability.

As a consequence, many conservationists and preservationists have demanded that substantially larger portions of land be withheld as habitat reserves, and a network of biological corridors to connect continental reserves be established. While such efforts to combat islandization have considerable support in the United States, how precisely such a program would be instituted, especially across national boundaries, remains a matter of debate. International conservationists and preservationists say without a network of reserves a massive loss of biodiversity will result.

The concept of islandization illustrates why conservation and preservation of wildlife and biodiversity must consider and adopt new, broader strategies. In the past, conservation and preservation efforts have been aimed at specific species, such as the spotted owl and grizzly bear in North America, the Bengal tiger in Southeast Asia, the panda in China, elephants in Africa. Instead, the new approach is to simultaneously protect many and varied species that inhabit the same ecosystem. This method, referred to as "bio-regional conservation," may more efficaciously generate longer-term and more far-reaching results precisely because it is aimed at preserving entire ecosystems, and all the living things within.

More About Biodiversity Issues:

This section is directly taken from the United Nations Environmental Program: "Biodiversity Assessment"

The Global Biodiversity Assessment, completed by 1500 scientists under the auspices of United Nations Environmental Program in 1995, updated what is known (or unknown) about global biological diversity at the ecosystem, species and genetic levels. The assessment was uncertain of the total number of species on Earth within an order of magnitude. Of its working figure of 13 million species, only 13 percent are scientifically described. Ecological community diversity is also poorly known, as is its relationship to biological diversity, and genetic diversity has been studied for only a small number of species. The effects of human activities on biodiversity have increased so greatly that the rate of species extinctions is rising to hundreds or thousands of times the background level. These losses are driven by increasing demands on species and their habitats, and by the failure of current market systems to value biodiversity adequately. The Assessment calls for urgent action to reverse these trends.

There has been a new recognition of the importance of protecting marine and aquatic biodiversity.

The first quantitative estimates of species losses due to growing coral reef destruction predict that almost 200,000 species, or one in five presently contributing to coral reef biodiversity, could die out in the next 40 years if human pressures on reefs continue to increase.

Since Rio, many countries have improved their understanding of the status and importance of their biodiversity, particularly through biodiversity country studies such as those prepared under the auspices of UNEP/GEF. The United Kingdom identified 1250 species needing monitoring, of which 400 require action plans to ensure their survival. Protective measures for biodiversity, such as legislation to protect species, can prove effective. In the USA, almost 40 percent of the plants and animals protected under the Endangered Species Act are now stable or improving as a direct result of recovery efforts. Some African countries have joined efforts to protect threatened species through the 1994 Lusaka Agreement, and more highly migratory species are being protected by specialized cooperative agreements among range states under the Bonn Agreement.

There is an emerging realization that a major part of conservation of biological diversity must take place outside of protected areas and involve local communities. The extensive agricultural areas occupied by small farmers contain much biodiversity that is important for sustainable food production. Indigenous agricultural practices have been and continue to be important elements in the maintenance of biodiversity, but these are being displaced and lost. There is a new focus on the interrelationship between agrodiversity conservation and sustainable use and development practices in smallholder agriculture, with emphasis on use of farmers' knowledge and skills as a source of information for sustainable farming.

Perhaps even more important than the loss of biodiversity is the transformation of global biogeochemical cycles, the reduction in the total world biomass, and the decrease in the biological productivity of the planet. While quantitative measurements are not available, the eventual economic and social consequences may be so significant that the issue requires further attention.

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Online resources used generally in the Environmental Overview:

Environmental Protection Agency Global Warming Site. URL: http://www.epa.gov/globalwarming

Food and Agriculture Organization of United Nations: Forestry. URL: http://www.fao.org/forestry/site/sofo/en/

Global Warming Information Page. URL: http://globalwarming.org

United Nations Environmental Program. URL: http://www.unep.org/GEO/GEO_Products/Assessment_Reports/

United Nations Global Environmental Outlook. URL: http://www.unep.org/geo/geo4/media/

Note on Edition Dates:

The edition dates for textual resources are noted above because they were used to formulate the original content. We also have used online resources (cited above) to update coverage as needed.

Information Resources

For more information about environmental concepts, CountryWatch recommends the following resources:

The United Nations Environmental Program Network (with country profiles)

<http://www.unep.net/>

The United Nations Environment Program on Climate Change

<http://climatechange.unep.net/>

The United Nations Environmental Program on Waters and Oceans

<http://www.unep.ch/earthw/Pdepwat.htm>

The United Nations Environmental Program on Forestry: "Forests in Flux"

<http://www.unep-wcmc.org/forest/flux/homepage.htm>

FAO "State of the World's Forests"

<http://www.fao.org/forestry/FO/SOFO/SOFO99/sofo99-e.stm>

World Resources Institute.

<http://www.wri.org/>

Harvard University Center for Health and the Global Environment

[<http://www.med.harvard.edu/chge/the-review.html>](http://www.med.harvard.edu/chge/the-review.html)

The University of Wisconsin Center for Sustainability and the Global Environment

http://sage.aos.wisc.edu/

International Environmental Agreements and Associations

International Policy Development in Regard to Global Warming:

Introduction

Regardless of what the precise nature of the relationship between greenhouse gas emissions and global warming may be, it seems that there is some degree of a connection between the phenomena. Any substantial reductions in greenhouse gas emissions and global warming trends will likely involve systematic changes in industrial operations, the use of advanced energy sources and technologies, as well as global cooperation in implementing and regulating these transformations.

In this regard, the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change (UNFCCC) stipulated the following objectives:

1. To stabilize "greenhouse gas" concentrations within the atmosphere, in such a manner that would preclude hazardous anthropogenic intervention into the existing biosphere and ecosystems of the world. This stabilization process would facilitate the natural adaptation of ecosystems to changes in climate.

2. To ensure and enable sustainable development and food production on a global scale.

Following are two discusssions regarding international policies on the environment, followed by listings of international accords.

Special Entry: The Kyoto Protocol

The UNFCCC was adopted at the Rio Earth Summit in 1992, and entered into force in 1994. Over 175 parties were official participants.

Meanwhile, however, many of the larger, more industrialized nations failed to reach the emissions' reduction targets, and many UNFCCC members agreed that the voluntary approach to reducing emissions had not been successful. As such, UNFCCC members reached a consensus that legally binding limits were necessitated, and agreed to discuss such a legal paradigm at a meeting in Kyoto, Japan in 1997. At that meeting, the UNFCCC forged the Kyoto Protocol. This concord is the first legally binding international agreement that places limits on emissions from industrialized countries. The major greenhouse gas emissions addressed in the Kyoto Protocol include carbon dioxide, nitrous oxide, hydrofluorocarbons, perfluorocarbons, sulfur hexafluoride, and methane.

The provisions of the Kyoto Protocol stipulate that economically advanced nations must reduce their combined emissions of greenhouse gases, by approximately five percent from their 1990 levels, before the 2008-2010 deadline. Countries with the highest carbon dioxide emissions, such as the United States (U.S.), many of the European Union (EU) countries, and Japan, are to reduce emissions by a scale of 6 to 8 percent. All economically advanced nations must show "demonstrable progress" by 2005. In contrast, no binding limits or timetable have been set on developing countries. Presumably, this distinction is due to the fact that most developing countries -- with the obvious exceptions of India and China -- simply do not emit as many greenhouse gases as do more industrially advanced countries. Meanwhile, these countries are entrenched in the process of economic development.

Regardless of the aforementioned reasoning, there has been strong opposition against the asymmetrical treatment assigned to emissions limits among developed and developing countries. Although this distinction might be regarded as unfair in principle, associations such as the Alliance of Small Island States have been vocal in expressing how global warming -- a result of greenhouse gas emissions - has contributed to the rise in sea level, and thus deleteriously affected their very existence as island nation states. For this reason, some parties have suggested that economically advanced nations, upon returning to their 1990 levels, should be required to further reduce their greenhouse gas emissions by a deadline of 2005. In response, interested parties have observed that even if such reductions were undertaken by economically advanced nations, they would not be enough to completely control global warming. Indeed, a reduction in the rate of fossil fuel usage by developing nations would also be necessary to have substantial ameliorative effect on global warming. Indeed, a reduction in the rate of fossil fuel usage by developing nations would also be necessary to have substantial ameliorative effect on global warming.

As such, the Protocol established a "Clean Development Mechanism" which permits developed countries to invest in projects aimed at reducing emissions within developing countries in return for credit for the reductions. Ostensibly, the objective of this mechanism is to curtail emissions in developing countries without unduly penalizing them for their economic development. Under this model, the countries with more potential emissions credits could sell them to other signatories of the Kyoto Protocol, whose emissions are forecast to significantly rise in the next few years. Should

this trading of emissions credits take place, it is estimated that the Kyoto Protocol's emissions targets could still be met.

In 1999, the International Energy Outlook projected that Eastern Europe, the former Soviet Union and Newly Independent States, as well as parts of Asia, are all expected to show a marked decrease in their level of energy-related carbon emissions in 2010. Nations with the highest emissions, specifically, the U.S., the EU and Japan, are anticipated to reduce their emissions by up to 8 percent by 2012. By 2000, however, the emissions targets were not on schedule for achievement. Indeed, the U.S. Department of Energy estimates forecast that by 2010, there will be a 34 percent increase in carbon emissions from the 1990 levels, in the absence of major shifts in policy, economic growth, energy prices, and consumer trends. Despite this assessment in the U.S., international support for the Kyoto Protocol remained strong, especially among European countries and island states, who view the pact as one step in the direction away from reliance on fossil fuels and other sources of greenhouse gases.

In 2001, U.S. President, George W. Bush, rejected his country's participation in the Kyoto Protocol, saying that the costs imposed on the global economic system, and especially, on the US, overshadowed the benefits of the Protocol. He also cited the unfair burden on developed nations to reduce emissions, as another primary reasons for withdrawal from the international pact, as well as insufficient evidence regarding the science of global warming. Faced with impassioned international disapproval for his position, the U.S. president stated that his administration remained interested in dealing with the matter of global warming, but would endorse alternative measures to combat the problem, such as voluntary initiatives limiting emissions. Critics of Bush's position, however, have noted that it was the failure of voluntary initiatives to reduce emissions following the Rio Summit that led to the establishment of the Kyoto Protocol in the first place.

In the wake of the Bush administration's decision, many participant countries resigned themselves to the reality that the goals of the Kyoto Protocol might not be achieved without U.S. involvement. Nevertheless, in Bonn, Germany, in July 2001, the remaining participant countries struck a political compromise on some of the key issues and sticking points, and planned to move forward with the Protocol, irrespective of the absence of the U.S. The key compromise points included the provision for countries to offset their targets with carbon sinks (these are areas of forest and farmland which can absorb carbon through the process of photosynthesis). Another compromise point within the broader Bonn Agreement was the reduction of emissions cuts of six gases from over 5 percent to a more achievable 2 percent. A third key change was the provision of funding for less wealthy countries to adopt more progressive technologies.

In late October and early November 2001, the UNFCC's 7th Conference of the Parties met in Marrakesh, Morocco, to finalize the measures needed to make the Kyoto Protocol operational. Although the UNFCC projected that ratification of the Protocol would make it legally binding

within a year, many critics noted that the process had fallen short of implementing significant changes in policy that would be necessary to actually stop or even slow climate change. They also maintained that the absence of U.S. participation effectively rendered the Protocol into being a political exercise without any substance, either in terms of transnational policy or in terms of environmental concerns.

The adoption of the compromises ensconced within the Bonn Agreement had been intended to make the provisions of the Kyoto Protocol more palatable to the U.S. In this regard, it failed to achieve its objective as the Bush administration continued to eschew participation in the international accord. Still, however, the Bonn Agreement did manage to render a number of other positive outcomes. Specifically, in 2002, key countries, such as Russia, Japan and Canada agreed to ratify the protocol, bringing the number of signatories to 178. The decision by key countries to ratify the protocol was regarded as "the kiss of life" by observers.

By 2005, on the eve of a climate change conference in London, British Prime Minister Tony Blair was hoping to deal with the problems of climate change beyond the provisions set forth in the Kyoto Protocol. Acknowledging that the Kyoto Protocol could not work in its current form, Blair wanted to open the discussion for a new climate change plan.

Blair said that although most of the world had signed on to Kyoto, the protocol could not meet any of its practical goals of cutting greenhouse gas emissions without the participation of the United States, the world's largest polluter. He also noted that any new agreement would have to include India and China -- significant producers of greenhouse gas emissions, but exempt from Kyoto because they have been classified as developing countries. Still, he said that progress on dealing with climate change had been stymied by "a reluctance to face up to reality and the practical action needed to tackle problem."

Blair also touted the "huge opportunities" in technology and pointed toward the possibilities offered by wind, solar and nuclear power, along with fuel cell technology, eco-friendly biofuels, and carbon capture and storage which could generate low carbon power. Blair also asserted that his government was committed to achieving its domestic goal of reducing carbon dioxide emissions by 20 percent by 2010.

In the United States, President George W. Bush has said that global warming remained a debatable issue and despite conclusions reached by his own Environmental Protection Agency, he has not agreed with the conclusion that global warming and climate change are linked with human activities. Bush has also refused to ratify Kyoto on the basis of its economic costs.

Australia, an ally of the United States, has taken a similarly dim view of the Kyoto Protocol. Ahead of the November 2005 climate change meeting in Canada in which new goals for the protocol were to be discussed, Australia 's Environment Minister, Ian Campbell, said that

negotiating new greenhouse gas emission levels for the Kyoto Protocol would be a waste of time. Campbell said, "There is a consensus that the caps, targets and timetables approach is flawed. If we spend the next five years arguing about that, we'll be fiddling and negotiating while Rome burns." Campbell, like the Bush administration, has also advocated a system of voluntary action in which industry takes up new technologies rather than as a result of compelling the reduction of emissions. But the Australian Conservation Foundation (ACF) has called on its government to ratify the Kyoto Protocol, to establish a system of emissions trading, and to set binding limits on emissions. Interestingly, although it did not sign on to Kyoto , Australia was expected to meet its emissions target by 2012 (an 8 percent increase in 1990 levels in keeping with the country's reliance on coal). But this success has nothing to do with new technologies and is due to state-based regulations on land clearing.

Note: The Kyoto Protocol calls for developed nations to cut greenhouse emissions by 5.2 percent of 1990 levels by 2012.

Special Entry: Climate Change Summit in Copenhagen (2009) --

In December 2009, the United Nations Climate Change Summit opened in the Danish capital of Copenhagen. The summit was scheduled to last from Dec. 7-18, 2009. Delegates from more than 190 countries were in attendance, and approximately 100 world leaders, including British Prime Minister Gordon Brown and United States President Barack Obama, were expected to participate. At issue was the matter of new reductions targets on greenhouse gas emissions by 2020.

Despite earlier fears that little concurrence would come from the conference, effectively pushing significant actions forward to a 2010 conference in Mexico City, negotiators were now reporting that the talks were productive and several key countries, such as South Africa, had pledged to reduce greenhouse gas emissions. The two main issues that could still lead to cleavages were questions of agreement between the industrialized countries and the developing countries of the world, as well as the overall effectiveness of proposals in seriously addressing the perils of climate change.

On Dec. 9, 2009, four countries -- the United Kingdom, Australia, Mexico and Norway -- presented a document outlining ideas for raising and managing billions of dollars, which would be intended to help vulnerable countries dealing with the perils of climate change. Described as a "green fund," the concept could potentially help small island states at risk because of the rise in sea level. Bangladesh identified itself as a potential recipient of an assistance fund, noting that as a country plagued by devastating floods, it was particularly hard-hit by climate change. The "green fund" would fall under the rubric of the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change, for which developed countries have been committed to quantifying their emission reduction targets, and also to providing financial and technical support to developing countries.

The United Kingdom, Australia, Mexico and Norway also called for the creation of a new legal treaty that would replace the Kyoto Protocol. This new treaty, which could go into force in 2012, would focus largely on the reduction of greenhouse gas emissions by 2020. But Australia went even further in saying that the successor treaty to the Kyoto Protocol, should be one with provisions covering all countries. Such a move would be a departure from the structure of the Kyoto Protocol, which contained emissions targets for industrialized countries due to the prevailing view that developed countries had a particular historic responsibility to be accountable for climate change. More recently, it has become apparent that substantial reductions in greenhouse gas emissions demanded by scientists would only come to pass with the participation also of significant developing nation states, such as China and India. Indeed, one of the most pressing critiques of the Kyoto Protocol was that it was a "paper tiger" that failed to address the impact of the actions of emerging economies like China and India, with its focus on the developed economies.

Now, in 2009, China -- as the world's biggest greenhouse gas emitter -- was responding this dubious distinction by vocalizing its criticism of the current scenario and foregrounding its new commitments. Ahead of the Copenhagen summit, China had announced it would reduce the intensity of its carbon emissions per unit of its GDP in 2020 by 40 to 45 percent against 2005 levels. With that new commitment at hand, China was now accusing the United States and the European Union of shirking their own responsibilities by setting weak targets for greenhouse gas emissions cuts. Senior Chinese negotiator, Su Wei, characterized the goals of the world's second largest greenhouse gas emitter -- the United States -- as "not notable," and the European Union's target as "not enough." Su Wei also took issue with Japan for setting implausible preconditions.

On Dec. 11, 2009, China demanded that developed and wealthy countries in Copenhagen should help deliver a real agreement on climate change by delivering on their promises to reduce carbon emissions and provide financial support for developing countries to adapt to global warming. In so doing, China's Vice Foreign Minister He Yafei said his country was hoping that a "balanced outcome" would emerge from the discussions at the summit. Echoing the position of the Australian government, He Yafei spoke of a draft agreement as follows: "The final document we're going to adopt needs to be taking into account the needs and aspirations of all countries, particularly the most vulnerable ones."

China's Vice Foreign Minister emphasized the fact that climate change was "a matter of survival" for developing countries, and accordingly, such countries need wealthier and more developed countries to accentuate not only their pledges of emissions reduction targets, but also their financial commitments under the aforementioned United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change. To that end, scientists and leaders of small island states in the Indian Ocean, the Pacific Ocean and the Caribbean Sea, have highlighted the existential threat posed by global warming and the concomitant rise in sea level.

China aside, attention was also on India -- another major player in the developing world and a

country with an industrializing economy that was impacting the environment. At issue was the Indian government's decision to set a carbon intensity target, which would slow emissions growth by up to 25 percent by the 2020 deadline. This strong position was resisted by some elements in India, who argued that their country should not be taking such a strong position when developed wealthy countries were yet to show accountability for their previous commitments to reduce greenhouse gas emissions. The matter grew so heated that the members of the opposition stormed out of the parliament in protest as Indian Environment Minister Jairam Ramesh defended the policy. But the political pressure at home in India was leaving the Indian delegation in Copenhagen in a state of chaos as well. In fact, India's top environmental negotiator refused to travel to Copenhagen in protest of the government's newly-announced stance.

China and India were joined by Brazil and South Africa in the crafting of a draft document calling for a new global climate treaty to be completed by June 2010. Of concern has been the realization that there was insufficient time to find concurrence on a full legal treaty, which would leave countries only with a politically-binding text by the time the summit at Copenhagen closed. But Guyana's leader, President Bharrat Jagdeo, warned that the summit in Denmark would be classified as a failure unless a binding document was agreed upon instead of just political consensus. He urged his cohorts to act with purpose saying, "Never before have science, economics, geo-strategic self-interest and politics intersected in such a way on an issue that impacts everyone on the planet."

Likewise, Tuvalu demanded that legally binding agreements emerge from Copenhagen. Its proposal was supported by many of the vulnerable countries, from small island states and sub-Saharan Africa, all of whom warned of the catastrophic impact of climate change on their citizens. Tuvalu also called for more aggressive action, such as an amendment to the 1992 agreement, which would focus on sharp greenhouse gas emissions and the accepted rise in temperatures, due to the impact the rise in seas. The delegation from Kiribati joined the call by drawing attention to the fact that one village had to be abandoned due to waist-high water, and more such effects were likely to follow. Kiribati's Foreign Secretary, Tessie Lambourne, warned that the people of Kiribati could well be faced with no homeland in the future saying, "Nobody in this room would want to leave their homeland." But despite such impassioned pleas and irrespective of warnings from the Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change that the rise in sea level from melting polar ice caps would deleteriously affect low-lying atolls such as such as Tuvalu and Kiribati in the Pacific, and the Maldives in the Indian Ocean, the oil-giant Saudi Arabia was able to block this move.

Meanwhile, within the developed countries, yet another power struggle was brewing. The European Union warned it would only agree to raise its target of 20 percent greenhouse gas emissions reductions to 30 percent if the United States demonstrated that it would do more to reduce its own emissions. It was unknown if such pressure would yield results. United States President Barack Obama offered a "provisional" 2020 target of 17 percent reductions, noting that

he could not offer greater concessions at Copenhagen due to resistance within the United States Congress, which was already trying to pass a highly controversial "cap and trade" emissions legislation. However, should that emissions trading bill fail in the Senate, the United States Environment Protection Agency's declaration that greenhouse gases pose a danger to human health and the environment was expected to facilitate further regulations and limits on power plants and factories at the national level. These moves could potentially strengthen the Obama administration's offering at Copenhagen. As well, President Obama also signaled that he would be willing to consider the inclusion of international forestry credits.

Such moves indicated willingness by the Obama administration to play a more constructive role on the international environmental scene than its predecessor, the Bush administration. Indeed, ahead of his arrival at the Copenhagen summit, President Barack Obama's top environmental advisors promised to work on a substantial climate change agreement. To that end, United States Environmental Protection Agency Administrator Lisa Jackson said at a press conference, "We are seeking robust engagement with all of our partners around the world." But would this pro-engagement assertion yield actual results?

By Dec. 12, 2009, details related to a draft document prepared by Michael Zammit Cutajar, the head of the Ad-hoc Working Group on Long-Term Cooperative Action, were released at the Copenhagen climate conference. Included in the document were calls for countries to make major reductions in carbon emissions over the course of the next decade. According to the Washington Post, industrialized countries were called on to make cuts of between 25 percent and 40 percent below 1990 levels -- reductions that were far more draconian than the United States was likely to accept. As discussed above, President Obama had offered a provisional reduction target of 17 percent. The wide gap between the released draft and the United States' actual stated position suggested there was much more negotiating in the offing if a binding agreement could be forged, despite the Obama administration's claims that it was seeking greater engagement on this issue.

In other developments, the aforementioned call for financial support of developing countries to deal with the perils of climate change was partly answered by the European Union on Dec. 11, 2009. The European bloc pledged an amount of 2.4 billion euros (US$3.5 billion) annually from 2010 to 2012. Environment Minister Andreas Carlgren of Sweden -- the country that holds the rotating presidency of the European Union at the time of the summit -- put his weight behind the notion of a "legally binding deal." Meanwhile, Yvo de Boer, a top United Nations climate change official, focused less on the essence of the agreement and more on tangible action and effects saying, "Copenhagen will only be a success if it delivers significant and immediate action that begins the day the conference ends."

The division between developed and developing countries in Copenhagen reached new heights on Dec. 14, 2009, when some of the poor and less developed countries launched a boycott at the summit. The move, which was spurred by African countries but backed by China and India, appeared to be geared toward redirecting attention and primary responsibility to the wealthier and

more industrialized countries. The impasse was resolved after the wealthier and more industrialized countries offered assurances that they did not intend on shirking from their commitments to reducing greenhouse gases. As a result, the participating countries ceased the boycott.

Outside the actual summit, thousands of protestors had gathered to demand crucial global warming, leading to clashes between police and demonstrators elsewhere in the Danish capital city. There were reports of scattered violence across Copenhagen and more than 1,000 people were arrested.

Nevertheless, by the second week of the climate change summit, hopes of forging a strong deal were eroding as developed and developing nations remained deadlocked on sharing cuts in greenhouse gases, and particularly on the matters of financing and temperature goals. In a bid to shore up support for a new climate change, United States President Barack Obama joined other world leaders in Copenhagen. On Dec. 14, 2009, there was a standoff brewing between the United States and China. At issue was China's refusal to accept international monitoring of its expressed targets for reducing greenhouse gas emissions. The United States argued that China's opposition to verification could be a deal-breaker.

By the close of the summit, the difficult process eventually resulted in some consensus being cultivated. A draft text called for $100 billion a year by 2020 to assist poor nations cope with climate change, while aiming to limit global warming to two degrees Celsius compared with pre-industrial levels. The deal also included specific targets for developed countries to reduce greenhouse gas emissions, and called for reductions by developing countries as a share of their economies. Also included in the agreement was a mechanism to verify compliance. The details of the agreement were supported by President Barack Obama, Chinese Premier Wen Jiabao, Indian Prime Minister Manmohan Singh and Brazilian President Luiz Inacio Lula da Silva.

This draft would stand as an interim agreement, with a legally-binding international pact unlikely to materialize until 2010. In this way, the summit in Copenhagen failed to achieve its central objective, which was to negotiate a successor to the Kyoto Protocol on greenhouse gas emissions.

Editor's Note

In the background of these developments was the growing global consciousness related to global warming and climate change. Indeed, as the Copenhagen summit was ongoing, it was clear there was enormous concurrence on the significance of the stakes with an editorial on the matter of climate change being published in 56 newspapers in 45 countries. That editorial warned that without global action, climate change would "ravage our planet." Meanwhile, a global survey taken by Globescan showed that concern over global warming had exponentially increased from 1998 -- when only 20 percent of respondents believed it to be a serious problem -- to 64 percent in 2009. Such survey data, however, was generated ahead of the accusations by climate change skeptics

that some climate scientists may have overstated the case for global warming, based on emails derived in an illicit manner from a British University.

Special Entry: Climate change talks in Doha in Qatar extend life of Kyoto Protocol (2012)

December 2012 saw climate talks ensue in the Qatari city of Doha as representatives from countries across the world gathered to discuss the fate of the Kyoto Protocol, which seeks to minimize greenhouse gas emissions. The summit yielded results with decisions made (1) to extend the Kyoto Protocol until 2020, and (2) for wealthier countries to compensate poorer countries for the losses and damage incurred as a result of climate change.

In regards to the second matter, Malia Talakai of Nauru, a leading negotiator for the Alliance of Small Island States, explained the necessity of the compensation package as follows: "We are trying to say that if you pollute you must help us."

This measure was being dubbed the "Loss and Damage" mechanism, and was being linked with United States President Barack Obama's request for $60 billion from Congress to deal with the devastation caused by Hurricane Sandy months before. The sight of a hurricane bearing down on the northern Atlantic seaboard, along with the reality of the scope of reconstruction, appeared to have illustrated the economic costs of climate change -- not so much as a distant environmental issue -- but as a danger to the quotidian lives of people. Still, there was blame to be placed on the United States and European countries -- some of world's largest emitters -- for failing to do more to reduce emissions.

To that latter end, there was in fact little progress made on the central issue of reducing greenhouse gas emissions. Had those emissions been reduced, there would have been less of a need to financially deal with the devastation caused by climate change. One interpretation was that the global community was accepting the fact that industrialization was contributing to global warming, which had deleterious effects on the polar ice caps and concomitantly on the rise of sea level, with devastating effects for small island nations. Thus, wealthier countries were willing to pay around $10 billion a year through 2020, effectively in "damages," to the poor countries that could be viewed as the "collateral damage" of industrial progress. But damages today could potentially be destruction tomorrow, leaving in place the existential challenges and burdens to be born by some of the world's smallest and least wealthy island countries.

Perhaps not surprisingly, the representative for the small island nation states at the Doha summit responded with ire, characterizing the lack of progress on reducing emissions as follows: "We see the package before us as deeply deficient in mitigation (carbon cuts) and finance. It's likely to lock us on the trajectory to a 3,4,5C rise in global temperatures, even though we agreed to keep the global average temperature rise of 1.5C to ensure survival of all islands. There is no new finance

(for adapting to climate change and getting clean energy) -- only promises that something might materialize in the future. Those who are obstructive need to talk not about how their people will live, but whether our people will live."

Indeed, in most small island countries not just in the Pacific, but also the Caribbean and Indian Ocean, ecological concerns and the climate crisis have been dominant themes with dire life and death consequences looming in the background for their people. Small island nations in these region are already at risk from the rise of sea-level, tropical cyclones, floods. But their very livelihoods of fishing and subsistence farming were also at risk as a result of ecological and environmental changes. Increasingly high storm surges can wipe out entire villages and contaminate water supplies. Accordingly, the very existence of island nations, such as Kiribati and Tuvalu, are at severe risk of being obliterated from the map. Yet even with the existential threat of being wiped off the map in the offing, the international community has been either slow or restrictive in its efforts to deal with global warming, climate change, economic and ecological damage, as well as the emerging global challenge of environmental refugees.

A 2012 report from the United Nations Environment Program (UNEP) and the Pacific Regional Environment Program underlined the concerns of small island nations and their people as it concluded that the livelihoods of approximately 10 million people in Pacific island communities were increasingly vulnerable to climate change. In fact, low-lying islands in that region would likely confront losses of up to 18 percent of gross domestic product due to climate change, according to the report. The report covers 21 countries and territories, including Fiji, Kiribati, Samoa and Tonga, and recommended environmental legislation intended to deal with the climate crisis facing the small island countries particularly. As noted by David Sheppard, the director general of the Pacific Regional Environment Program that co-sponsored this study: "The findings... emphasize the need more than ever to raise the bar through collective actions that address the region's environmental needs at all levels."

Regardless of the failures of the summit in Qatar (discussed above), the meeting did facilitate a process starting in 2015, which would bind both wealthy and poor countries together in the mission of forging a new binding treaty that would replace the Kyoto Protocol and tackle the central causes of climate change.

For more information on the threats faced in small island nations by climate change and the measures being undertaken to lobby for international action, please see the Alliance for Small Island States available online at the URL: http://aosis.org/

Special Report

COP 21 summit in Paris ends with historic agreement to tackle climate change; rare

international consensus formed on environmental crisis facing the planet (2015) --

In mid-December 2015, the highly-anticipated United Nations climate conference of parties (COP) in Paris, [France](), ended with a historic agreement. In fact, it would very likely be understood as the most significant international agreement signed by all the recognized countries of the world since the Cold War. Accordingly, the Paris Agreement was being distinguished as the first multilateral pact that would compel all countries across the world to cut its carbon emissions -- one of the major causes of increasing greenhouse gas emissions, which contribute to global warming, and its deleterious effects ranging from the dangerous rise in sea level to catastrophic climate change.

The accord, which was dubbed to be the "Paris Agreement," was the work of rigorous diplomacy and fervent environmental advocacy, and it aimed to address the climate change crisis facing the planet. As many as 195 countries were represented in the negotiations that led to the landmark climate deal. Indeed, it was only after weeks of passionate debate that international concurrence was reached in addressing the environmental challenges confronting the world, with particular attention to moving beyond fossil fuels and reducing greenhouse gas emissions.

The success of the COP 21 summit in Paris and the emergence of the landmark Paris Agreement was, to some extent, attributed to the efforts of France's Foreign Minister Laurent Fabius who presided over the negotiations. The French foreign minister's experience and credentials as a seasoned diplomat and respected statesman paid dividends. He skillfully guided the delegates from almost 200 countries and interest groups along the negotiations process, with ostensibly productive results and a reasonably robust deal to show for it.

On Dec. 12, 2015, French Foreign Minister Fabius officially adopted the agreement, declaring: "I now invite the COP to adopt the decision entitled Paris Agreement outlined in the document. Looking out to the room I see that the reaction is positive, I see no objections. The Paris agreement is adopted." Once Foreign Minister Fabius' gavel was struck, symbolically inaugurating the Paris Agreement into force, the COP delegate rushed to their feet with loud and bouyant cheers as well as thunderous applause.

In general, the Paris Agreement was being hailed as a victory for enviromental activists and a triumph for international diplomats, while at the same time being understood as simply an initial -- and imperfect -- move in the direction of a sustainable future. China's chief negotiator, Xie Zhenhua, issued this message, saying that while the accord was not ideal, it should "not prevent us from marching historical steps forward."

United States President Barack Obama lauded the deal as both "ambitious" and "historic," and the work of strenuous multilateral negotiations as he declared, "Together, we've shown what's possible when the world stands as one." The [United States]() leader acknowledged that the accord was not

"perfect," but he reminded the critics that it was "the best chance to save the one planet we have. "

Former United States Vice President Al Gore, one of the world's most well known environmental advocates, issued a lengthy statement on the accompishments ensconced in the Paris Agreement. He highlighted the fact that the Paris Agreement was a first step towards a future with a reduced carbon footprint on Planet Earth as he said, "The components of this agreement -- including a strong review mechanism to enhance existing commitments and a long-term goal to eliminate global-warming pollution this century -- are essential to unlocking the necessary investments in our future. No agreement is perfect, and this one must be strengthened over time, but groups across every sector of society will now begin to reduce dangerous carbon pollution through the framework of this agreement."

The central provisions of the Paris Agreement included the following items:

- Greenhouse gas emissions should peak as quickly as possible, with a move towards balancing energy sources, and ultimately the decrease of greenhouse gases in the second half of this century
- Global temperature increase would be limited to 1.5 degrees Centigrade above pre-industrial levels and would be held "well below" the two degrees Centigrade threshold
- Progress on these goals would be reviewed every five years beginning in 2020 with new greenhouse gas reduction targets issued every five years
- $100 billion would be expended each year in climate finance for developing countries to move forward with green technologies, with further climate financing to be advanced in the years beyond

It should be noted that there both legally binding and voluntary elements contained within the Paris Agreement. Specifically, the submission of an emissions reduction target and the regular review of that goal would be legally mandatory for all countries. Stated differently, there would be a system in place by which experts would be able to track the carbon-cutting progress of each country. At the same time, the specific targets to be set by countries would be determined at the discretion of the countries, and would not be binding. While there was some criticism over this non-binding element, the fact of the matter was that the imposition of emissions targets was believed to be a major factor in the failure of climate change talks in Copenhagen, Denmark, in 2009.

In 2015, the talks faced challenges as several countries, such as China and India, objected to conditions that would stymie economic and development. In order to avoid that kind of landmine, a system Intended Nationally Determined Contributions (INDCs) was developed and formed the basis of the accord. As such, the Paris Agreement would, in fact, facilitate economic growth and development, as well as technological progress, but with the goal of long-term ecological sustainability based on low carbon sources. In fact, the agreement heralded as "the beginning of the end of the fossil fuel era." As noted by Nick Mabey, the head of the climate diplomacy organization E3G, said, "Paris means governments will go further and faster to tackle climate

change than ever before. The transition to a low carbon economy is now unstoppable, ensuring the end of the fossil fuel age."

A particular sticking point in the agreement was the $100 billion earmarked for climate financing for developing countries to transition from traditional fossil fuels to green energy technologies and a low carbon future. In 2014, a report by the International Energy Agency indicated that the cost of that transition would actually be around $44 trillion by the mid-century -- an amount that would render the $100 billion being promised to be a drop in the proverbial bucket. However, the general expectation was that the Republican-controlled Senate in the United States, which would have to ratify the deal in that country, was not interested in contributing significant funds for the cause of climate change.

A key strength of the Paris Agreement was the ubiquitous application of measures to all countries. Of note was the frequently utilized concept of "flexibility" with regard to the Paris Agreement. Specifically, the varying capacities of the various countries in meeting their obligations would be anticipated and accorded flexibility. This aspect presented something of a departure from the 1997 Kyoto Protocol, which drew a sharp distinction between developed and developing countries, and mandated a different set of obligations for those categories of countries. Thus, under Kyoto, China and India were not held to the same standards as the United States and European countries.   In the Paris Agreement, there would be commitments from all countries across the globe.

Another notable strength of the Paris Agreement was the fact that the countries of the world were finally able to reach consensus on the vital necessity to limit global temperature increases to 1.5 degrees Centrigrade. Ahead of the global consensus on the deal, and as controversy continued to surface over the targeted global temperature limits, the leaders of island countries were sounding the alarm about the melting of the Polar ice caps and the associated rise in seal level. Prime Minister   Enele Sopoaga of Tuvalu issued this dismal reminder: "Tuvalu's future … is already bleak and any further temperature increase will spell the total demise of Tuvalu. No leader in this room carries such a level of worry and responsibility. Just imagine you are in my shoes, what would you do?" It was thus something of a victory for environmental advocates that the countries of the world could find cnsensus on the lower number -- 1.5 degrees rather than 2 degrees.

A significant weak point with regard to the Paris deal was a "loss and damage" provision, which anticipates that even with all the new undertakings intended to reduce greenhouse gas emissions and move to a low carbon future, there would nonetheless be unavoidable climate change consequences. Those consequences ranged from the loss of arable land for farmers as well as soil erosion and contamination of potable water by sea water, to the decimation of territory in coastal zones and on small islands, due to the rise in sea level, with entire small island countries being rendered entirely uninhabitable. The reality was that peoples' homes across the world would be destroyed along with their way of life.

With that latter catastrophic effect being a clear and present danger for small island countries, the Association of Small Island States (AOSIS) demanded that the developed world acknowledge its responsibility for this irreversible damage.. Despite the fact that greenhouse gas emissions and the ensuing plague of global warming was, indeed, the consequence of development in the West (the United States and Europe) and the large power house countries, such as Russia, China and India, there was no appetite by those countries to sign on to unlimited liability. Under the Paris Agreement, there was a call for research on insurance mechanisms that would address loss and damage issues, with recommendations to come in the future.

The call for research was being regarded as an evasion of sorts and constituted the weakest aspect of the Paris Agreement. Not surprisingly, a coalition of small island nations demanded a "Marshall Plan" for the Pacific. Borrowing the term "Marshall Plan" from the post-World War II reconstruction effort, the coalition of Pacific island nation, which included Kiribati, Tuvalu, Fiji, and the Marshall Islands, called for an initiative that would include investment in renewable energy and shoreline protection, cultural preservation, economic assistance for economies in transition, and a plan for migration and resettlement for these countries as they confront the catastrophic effects of the melting of the Polar ice caps and the concomitant rise in sea level. The precise contours of the initiative remained unknown, unspecified, and a mere exercise in theory at the time of writing. Yet such an initiative would, at some point, have to be addressed, given the realities of climate change and the slow motion calamity unfolding each day for low-lying island nations across the world.

As noted by Vice President Greg Stone of Conservation International, who also functions as an adviser to the government of Kiribati, "Imagine living in a place where you know it's going to go away someday, but you don't know what day that wave's going to come over and wash your home away." He added, "It's a disaster we know is going to happen."   Meanwhile, the intervening years promised to be filled with hardship for small island nations, such as Kiribati. Stone explained, "For every inch of sea-level rise, these islands lose 10 feet of their freshwater table to saltwater intrusion," Stone explained. "So it's not just about the day the water finally goes over the island; it's also about the day that there's just not enough water left and everyone has to move off the island." Presaging the future for island nations that could face submersion, Stone said, "If you look ahead 50 years, a country like Kiribati could become the first aqueous nation. possibility of migration. That is, they own this big patch of ocean, and they administer it from elsewhere."

Foreign Minister Minister Tony Debrum of the Marshall Islands emerged as the champion advocating on behalf of small island nation states and a loose coalition of concerned countries from the Pacific to the Caribbean, but with support from the United States. He addressed the comprehensive concerns of small island nations regarding the weaknesses of the deal, while simultaneously making clear that the Paris Agreement signified hope for the countries most at risk.

In a formal statement, Debrum declared: "We have made history today. Emissions targets are still way off track, but this agreement has the tools to ramp up ambition, and brings a spirit of hope that we can rise to this challenge. I can go back home to my people and say we now have a pathway to survival." Debrum highlighted the imperatives of Pacific island nations, saying, "Our High Ambition Coalition was the lightning rod we needed to lift our sights and expectations for a strong agreement here in Paris. We were joined by countries representing more than half the world. We said loud and clear that a bare-bones, minimalist agreement would not fly. We instead demanded an agreement to mark a turning point in history, and the beginning of our journey to the post-carbon era."

Debrum of the Marshall Islands espoused the quintessential synopsis of the accord and its effects for those most likely to be affected by climate change as he noted, "Climate change won't stop overnight, and my country is not out of the firing line just yet, but today we all feel a little safer."

Editor's Entry on Environmental Policy:

The low-lying Pacific island nations of the world, including Kiribati, Tuvalu, the Marshall Islands, Fiji, among others, are vulnerable to the threats posed by global warming and cimate change, derived from carbon emissions, and resulting in the rise in sea level. Other island nations in the Caribbean, as well as poor countries with coastal zones, were also at particular risk of suffering the deleterious effects of climate change.

Political policy in these countries are often connected to ecological issues, which have over time morphed into an existential crisis of sorts. Indeed, ecological concerns and the climate crisis have also been dominant themes with life and death consequences for the people of island nations in the Pacific. Indeed, the very livelihoods of fishing and subsistence farming remain at risk as a result of ecological and environmental changes.   Yet even so, these countries are threatened by increasingly high storm surges, which could wipe out entire villages and contaminate water supplies. Moreover, because these are low lying island nations, the sustained rise in sea level can potentially lead to the terrain of these countries being unihabitable at best, and submerged at worst. Stated in plain terms, these countries are at severe risk of being obliterated from the map and their plight illuminates the emerging global challenge of environmental refugees. In these manifold senses, climate change is the existential crisis of the contemporary era.

Since the time of the 1997 Kyoto Protocol, there have been efforts aimed at extending the life of that agreement, with an eye on minimizing greenhouse gas emissions, and thus minimizing the effects of climate change. Those endeavors have largely ended in failure, as exemplified by the unsuccessful Copenhagen talks in 2009 and the fruitless Doha talks in 2012 respectively. The success of the COP 21 talks in France, with the adoption of the landmark Paris Agreement in 2015, was regarded as the first glimmer of hope. Not only did the Paris Agreement signify the triumph of international diplomacy and global consensus, but it also marked the start of the end of

the fossil fuel era, with the path forward toward a low carbon future reliant on greener technologies. Most crucially, the Paris Agreement stood as the first significant response in recent times to the central challenge of climate change and its quotidian effects on the lives of real human beings across the world.

1. Major International Environmental Accords:

General Environmental Concerns

Convention on Environmental Impact Assessment in a Transboundary Context, Espoo, 1991.

Accords Regarding Atmosphere

Annex 16, vol. II (Environmental Protection: Aircraft Engine Emissions) to the 1044 Chicago Convention on International Civil Aviation, Montreal, 1981

Convention on Long-Range Transboundary Air Pollution (LRTAP), Geneva, 1079

United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change (UNFCCC), New York, 1002

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Convention on Civil Liability for Damage Caused during Carriage of Dangerous Goods by Road, Rail and Inland Navigation Vessels (CRTD), Geneva, 1989

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Global Conventions

Convention on the Prevention of Marine Pollution by Dumping of Wastes and Other Matter (London Convention 1972), London, 1972

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Convention on Liability and Compensation for Damage in Connection with the Carriage of Hazardous and Noxious Substances by Sea (HNS), London 1996

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Convention on the Protection of the Black Sea against Pollution, Bucharest, 1992

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Freshwater Resources

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Convention on Nuclear Safety, Vienna, 1994

Vienna Convention on Civil Liability for Nuclear Damage, Vienna, 1963

5. Major Intergovernmental Organizations

Commission on Sustainable Development (CSD)

European Union (EU): Environment

Food and Agriculture Organization (FAO)

Global Environment Facility (GEF)

International Atomic Energy Agency (IAEA)

International Council for the Exploration of the Sea (ICES)

International Fund for Agricultural Development (IFAD)

International Labour Organization (ILO)

International Maritime Organization (IMO)

International Monetary Fund (IMF)

International Oil Pollution Compensation Funds (IOPC Funds)

Organization for Economic Co-operation and Development (OECD), Environment Policy Committee (EPOC)

United Nations Children's Fund (UNICEF)

United Nations Development Programme (UNDP)

United Nations Educational, Scientific, and Cultural Organization (UNESCO)

United Nations Environment Programme (UNEP)

United Nations Industrial Development Organization (UNIDO)

United Nations Population Fund (UNFPA)

World Bank

World Food Programme (WFP)

World Health Organization (WHO)

World Meteorological Organization (WMO)

World Trade Organization (WTO)

6. Major Non-Governmental Organizations

Atmosphere Action Network East Asia (AANEA)

Climate Action Network (CAN)

Consumers International (CI)

Earth Council

Earthwatch Institute

Environmental Liaison Centre International (ELCI)

European Environmental Bureau (EEB)

Forest Stewardship Council (FSC)

Friends of the Earth International (FoEI)

Greenpeace International

International Chamber of Commerce (ICC)

International Confederation of Free Trade Unions (ICFTU)

International Planned Parenthood Federation (IPPF)

International Solar Energy Society (ISES)

IUCN-The World Conservation Union

Pesticide Action Network (PAN)

Sierra Club

Society for International Development (SID)

Third World Network (TWN)

Water Environment Federation (WEF)

Women's Environment and Development Organization (WEDO)

World Business Council for Sustainable Development (WBCSD)

World Federalist Movement (WFM)

World Resources Institute (WRI)

World Wide Fund For Nature (WWF)

7. Other Networking Instruments

Arab Network for Environment and Development (RAED)

Global Legislators for a Balanced Environment (GLOBE)

Regional Environmental Center for Central and Eastern Europe (REC)

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Methodology Note for Demographic Data:

The demographic numbers for cities and national populations listed in CountryWatch content are derived from the Geoba.se website, which analyzes data from the World Bank. The current demographic numbers displayed on the Countrywatch website are reflective of the latest available estimates.

The demographic information for language, ethnicity and religion listed in CountryWatch content is

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Note on Edition Dates:

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Methodology Notes for Economic Data:

Estimates by CountryWatch.com of GDP in dollars in most countries are made by converting local currency GDP data from the International Monetary Fund World Economic Outlook to US dollars by market exchange rates estimated from the International Monetary Fund International Financial Statistics and projected out by the CountryWatch Macroeconomic Forecast. Real GDP was estimated by deflating current dollar values by the US GDP Implicit Price Deflator.

Exceptions to this method were used for:
• Bosnia-Herzegovina
• Nauru
• Cuba
• Palau
• Holy See
• San Marino
• Korea, North
• Serbia & Montenegro
• Liberia
• Somalia
• Liechtenstein
• Tonga
• Monaco
• Tuvalu

In these cases, other data and/or estimates by CountryWatch.com were utilized.

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Methodology Notes for the HDI:

Since 1990, the United Nations Development Programme, in concert with organizations across the globe, has produced the [Human Development Index](#) (or HDI). According to the UNDP, the index measures average achievement in basic human development in one simple composite index, and produces from this index a ranking of countries. The HDI is a composite of three basic components of human development: longevity, knowledge and standard of living. Longevity is measured by life expectancy. Knowledge is measured by combination of adult literacy and mean

years of schooling. Standard of living is measured by purchasing power, based on real GDP per capita (in constant US$) adjusted for differences in international living costs (or, purchasing power parity, PPP). While the index uses these social indicators to measure national performance with regard to human welfare and development, not all countries provide the same level of information for each component needed to compute the index; therefore, as in any composite indicator, the final index is predicated on projections, predictions and weighting schemes. The index is a static measure, and thus, an incomplete measure of human welfare. In fact, the UNDP says itself the concept of human development focuses on the ends rather than the means of development and progress, examining in this manner, the average condition of all people in a given country.

Specifically, the index is calculated by determining the maximum and minimum for each of the three components (as listed above) and then measuring where each country stands in relation to these scales-expressed as a value between 0 and 1. For example, the minimum adult literary rate is zero percent, the maximum is 100 percent, and the reading skills component of knowledge in the HDI for a country where the literacy rate is 75 percent would be 0.75. The scores of all indicators are then averaged into the overall index.

For a more extensive examination of human development, as well as the ranking tables for each participating country, please visit: http://www.undp.org

Note on History sections

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Note: Some or all these news services have been used to research various sections of this Country Review.

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Examples:

Youngblood-Coleman, Denise. *Country Review: France*. 2003. Houston, Texas: CountryWatch Publications, 2003. *Country Review:France*. Online. Available URL: http://www.countrywatch.com/cw_country.asp?vCOUNTRY=61 October, 12, 2003.
Note:
This is the citation format used when the print version is not used in the reference.

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Author/editor. "Part title." *Title of Print Version of Work*. Edition statement (if given). Publication information (Place of publication: publisher, date), if given. *Title of Electronic Work*. Medium. AvailableProtocol (if applicable): Site/Path/File. Access date.

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This is the citation format used when the print version is not used in the reference.

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