



MEA Risk

THREAT MONITORING, RISK ASSESSMENT, FORECASTING, ALERTING & NOTIFICATION SERVICES

ALGERIA

Weekly Brief

31 May - 6 June 2018



Monument of the Martyrs, Algiers

Summary

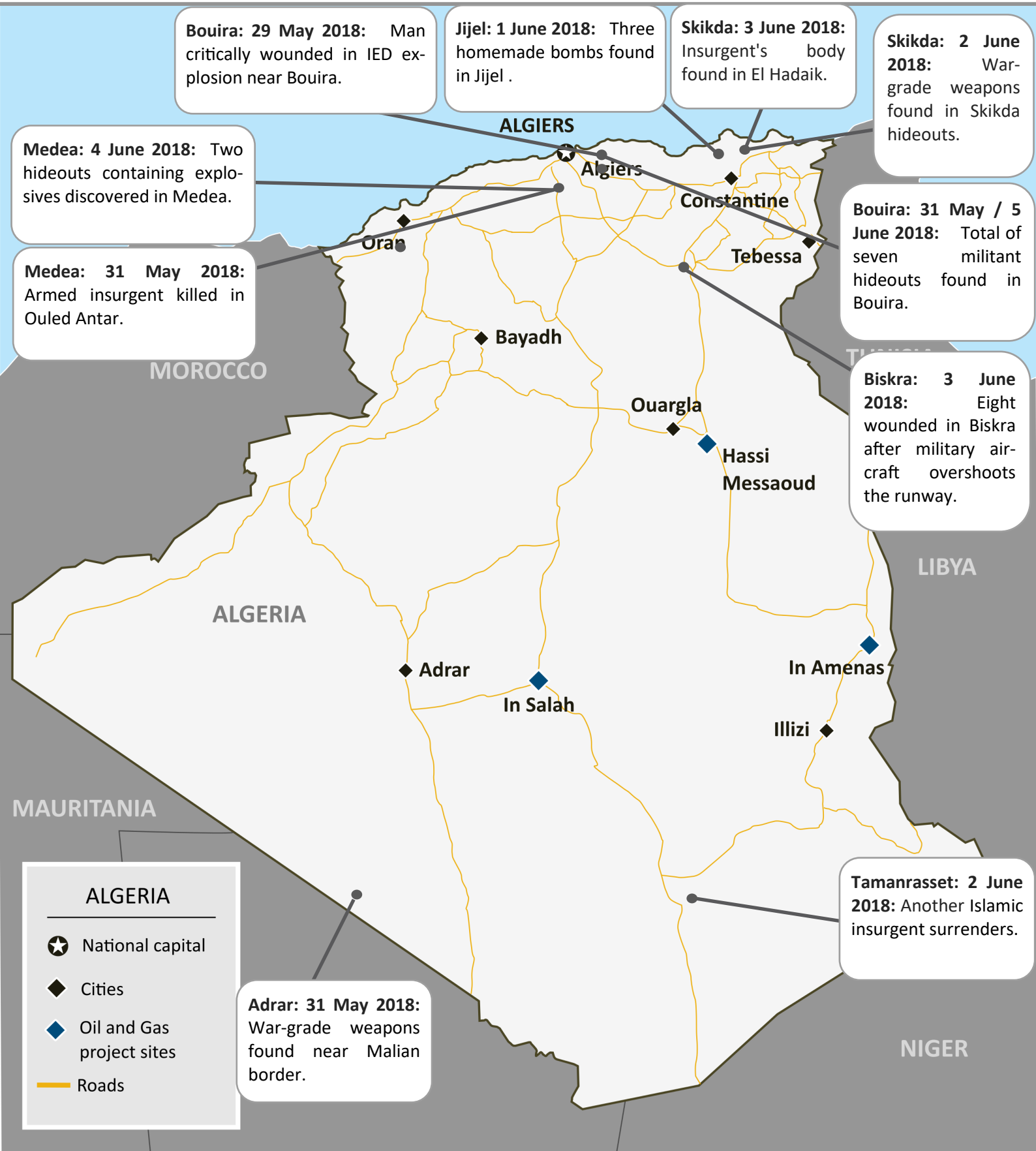
- ◆ In the In the period between 31 May 2018 and 6 June 2018, there were 71 critical incidents in Algeria, resulting in 13 deaths and 454 arrests, including 353 undocumented immigrants, 20 drug traffickers, 13 contraband smugglers and 50 members of a vehicle trafficking network. This week, human and social incidents accounted for 38.03% of the total incident count, followed by criminality with 35.21% and security and defense with 15.49%.
- ◆ An Armed Islamic insurgent was killed during a counter-terrorism operation in the province of Medea on 31 May. He was part of a larger group, tied to al-Qaeda in the Islamic Maghreb (AQIM). At least 12 other members are being sought.
- ◆ In Tamanrasset, in southern Algeria, an insurgent with al-Qaeda in the Islamic Maghreb surrendered to the army. A Kalashnikov machine gun was also retrieved.
- ◆ A hydraulic repair service man was severely wounded when a homemade bomb exploded in Bouira. The authorities started a large-scale sweeping operation in the area of Lakhdaria after the incident, and found eight insurgent hideouts in the province so far. In Skikda, five other insurgent shelters containing war-grade weapons were discovered. Likewise, in Jijel, Medea and Ghardaia, weapons and explosives were found by the authorities.
- ◆ In Bordj Badji Mokhtar, near the Malian border, the army discovered a weapons cache in the containing a very large array of war-grade weapons. Local security sources claim that, in an effort to prevent insurgent infiltrations, the air force will be conducting more patrols in the next few weeks in the regions of Bordj Badji Mokhtar, In Guezzam and Djanet.
- ◆ A second accident involving a military aircraft took place this week in Biskra, where a c-130 Hercules military airplane overshot the runway upon landing. At least eight people were injured. An investigation is underway.
- ◆ Layla Haddad, an Algerian-Belgian journalist based in Brussels, has heavily criticized President Bouteflika and the regime in a video which appeared online this week. The video was shot at the headquarters of the European Union, which caused the ire of the Algerian government. The Ministry of Foreign Affairs has requested a formal apology from the EU.

TABLE OF CONTENTS

| | |
|-------------------------|----|
| Executive Summary | 2 |
| Significant Events | 3 |
| Political & General | 4 |
| Security | 7 |
| Economy | 8 |
| Outlook | 10 |
| Forecast of Events 2018 | 11 |
| About Constellis | 12 |

Select Critical Incidents: 31 May - 6 June 2016

Algeria Stability and Security Brief: Week ending June 6, 2018



May 2018 Algeria Risk Assessment

Algeria Stability and Security Brief: Week ending June 6, 2018

Algeria May 2018 Risk Level

There were 42 casualties from 290 critical incidents recorded in the month of May 2018 in Algeria. The MEA Risk stability index for the period was 1.5. The index measures the extent of the instability on a scale of 0.5 to 5, where 0.5 means the country or region are risk free, and 5 meaning the region qualifies as a failed state. With an index of 1.5, Algeria qualifies as a Moderate Risk Zone, with the highest risk provinces located in the northeast.

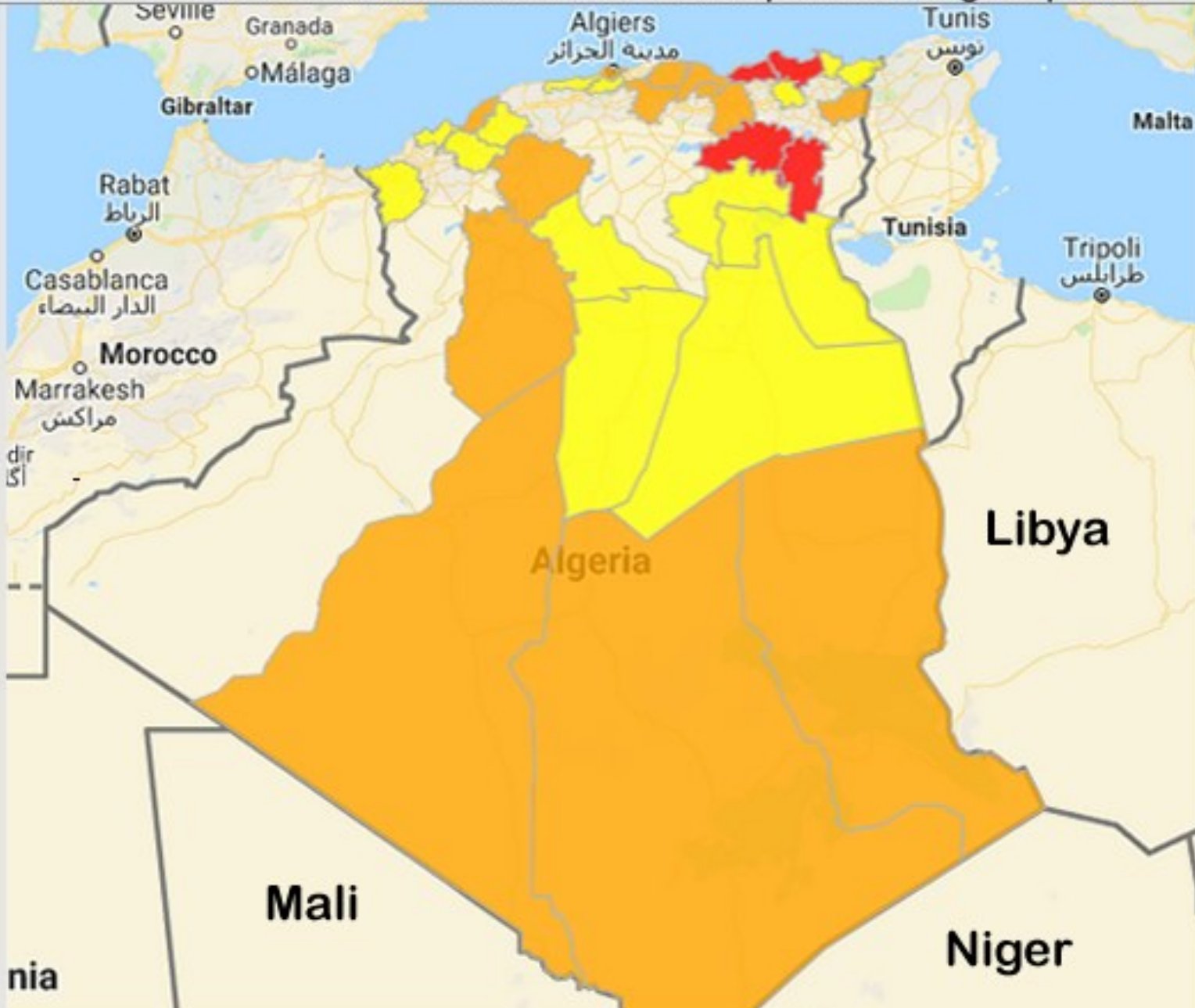
| RISK LEVELS | | | | |
|-------------|-------------|--------------|---------------|---------|
| NO RISK | LOW | MODERATE | HIGH | HIGHEST |
| <0.8 | 0.8 to 1.29 | 1.30 to 1.89 | 1.90 to 3.50 | >3.50 |
| STABLE ZONE | | ↑ | UNSTABLE ZONE | |

MAY 2018 ALGERIA RISK HEATMAP

Risk Levels within Algerian Provinces (Wilayas)

| NO RISK | LOW | MODERATE | HIGH | HIGHEST |
|---------|-----|----------|------|---------|
|---------|-----|----------|------|---------|

Non-colored areas had no critical incidents reported during the period



What areas to keep an eye on, as we look at Algeria's short-term horizons?

Political:

The already strained relationship between Algeria and the European Union was further stretched by journalist Layla Haddad, who very openly and vehemently urged the President not to run for reelection because of his medical condition, in a video filmed at the HQ of the EU.

Algeria recently came under fire from the EU after it introduced a ban on the import of over 800 products, without consulting members of the Union. This crisis is likely to grow, as Algeria is now asking for a formal apology.

With the population facing subsidy retractions and higher prices, President Abdelaziz Bouteflika decided during the council of ministers of 5 June, to reject a measure to increase the price of identification documents such as passports, national IDs, car registration and driver licenses. The measure was an effort to secure new financial revenue sources. In what is seen as a disavowal of the policies of Prime Minister Ahmed Ouyahia, President Bouteflika is seeking to maintain a fragile social peace. This measure had caused backlash among citizens and unions, who were planning a general boycott.

Security:

On the security front, the search for



IEDs of all sorts will continue throughout the month of Ramadan. Islamic insurgents seem to have placed a number of homemade bombs in strategic locations, in order to undermine sweeping operations in Bouira, Jijel, Tebessa and Khenchela. Counter-terrorism operations are also taking place in Tizi Ouzou, Sidi Bel-Abbes, Medea, Skikda, Tiaret and Tipaza.

In the deep south, the discovery of yet another cache containing war-grade weapons is prompting the army to conduct more airborne operations in Bordj Badji Mokhtar and In Guezzam, in an attempt to locate potential insurgents crossing the Malian-Algerian border.

Economy & social:

The imposition of a new tax for Algerian truckers by Tunisia will possibly cause some unrest at the Algerian-Tunisian border. So much so that the border crossing posts in Tebessa will likely be shut down by protesters next

week. While Tunisia is trying to promote its local production, this measure will hurt the Algerian economy, as most truckers said they cannot afford to pay the 14,000 dinar every day.

Meanwhile, despite the testimonies of at least three undocumented immigrants in Algeria, who claim having been sold as slaves in Tamanrasset, the government has yet to react or launch an investigation into the matter. NGOs are expected to put pressure on the government in the next few weeks.

Security

Man critically wounded in IED explosion near Bouira

A hydraulic repair service man was wounded in M'Chedallah, province of Bouira on 29 May after an IED exploded on his way back from an assignment. The service man has lost a leg in the incident. A sweeping operation was launched in the area to locate the insurgents responsible for planting the IED.

Armed insurgent killed in Ouled Antar

In the municipality of Ouled Ansar, province of Medea, an Islamic insurgent was killed by the army during a sweeping operation on 31 May. The operation was launched after locals reported the presence of armed militants. A Kalashnikov machine gun was seized. At least 12 other members of the group are being sought.

Insurgent's body found in El Hadaik

The dead body of an Islamic insurgent was discovered during an ongoing sweeping operation in the region of el-Hadaik, province of Skikda on 3 June. The insurgent was identified as Lakhdar Talha, otherwise known as Abdelfattah. He joined AQIM in 2001. The Ministry of Defense did not disclose whether the militant died during

an armed clash.

Islamic insurgent surrenders

In Tamanrasset, an Islamic insurgent surrendered to the army on 2 June. A Kalashnikov machine gun and one round of ammunition were seized. The militant was identified as Okba Kenta Sidi Amar, also known as Abu Nasser, who joined AQIM in 2012.

War-grade weapons found near Malian border

On 31 May, the army discovered a weapons cache in the region of Bordj Badji Mokhtar, Adrar province, near the Malian border. The cache contained a large array of war-grade weapons; two RPG-7 rocket launchers, a PKT heavy machine gun, a FMPK machine gun, three Kalashnikov machine guns, six Simonov semi-automatic rifles, three repeating rifles, two RPG-7 rockets, two propelling charges for RPG-7 rocket launchers, two grenades, eight rounds of ammunition for Kalashnikov machine guns and 1,437 live bullets.

Weapons, explosives discovered during sweeping operations

The army discovered five insurgent hideouts during a large-scale counter-terrorism operation in Skikda on 2 June. The hideouts contained

seven mortar shells, a pump-action rifle, three homemade bombs, 110 kilograms of explosive-making chemicals, 1,131 live bullets, detonators, solar panels and a large quantity of foodstuffs.

In Ghardaia, a semi-automatic rifle and an automatic rifle were discovered on 3 June. In the region of Oued Bouferhat, in Medea's Ouled Antar municipality, the army discovered two insurgent hideouts containing explosives, detonators, prescription drugs and foodstuffs on 4 June during a sweeping operation. In Jijel's el-Milia mountains, three homemade bombs, 50 liters of nitric acid and other chemicals used in the making of explosives were seized on 1 June. Additionally, during a sweeping operation in Bouira, eight insurgent hideouts were discovered between 31 May and 5 June.

Eight wounded in Biskra after military aircraft overshoots the runway

A c-130 Hercules military airplane overshoot the runway upon landing at Biskra airport on 3 June. Eight members of crew staff were injured, according to Algerian television channels. The crash happened shortly after the plane took off from Boufarik military airport near Algeria's capital Algiers. An investigation into the accident is underway.

Criminality

Contraband smuggling: 13 arrested this week

In Tamanrasset and In Guezzam, nine illegal gold miners were captured and two four-by-four vehicles, ten jackhammers, seven power generators, a metal detector and two satellite phones were seized on 1 June. In the same region, four contraband smugglers were captured on 4 June. The army seized two tons of foodstuffs, 400 liters of fuel, two four-by-four vehicles, 16 jackhammers, 16 power generators, a metal detector and a satellite phone during the operation. In Illizi and Tamanrasset, 9.1 tons of foodstuffs and 745 liters of cooking oil were seized while in 815 kilograms of treated kif were intercepted in El Oued, and in Tebessa, El Tarf and Souk Ahras,

11,670 liters of fuel were seized.

Drug trafficking: 20 suspects arrested

This week, in Blida, Oran, Sidi Bel Abbes, El Tarf and Tebessa, 20 drug traffickers were captured, and 1.05 ton of kif and 2,494 psychotropic pills were seized in Tlemcen, Tebessa, Sidi Bel Abbes, Oran, El Tarf and Blida.

Prison fugitives arrested in Tlemcen

An inmate who escaped from the prison of Remchi, in Tlemcen on 23 May was apprehended by the gendarmerie in Bab el-Assa, same province, on 2 June. Two individuals who were accommodating him were also captured. The inmate in prison for drug trafficking. A sec-

ond fugitive, who was sentenced for theft, was apprehended on the same day near the Moroccan border, as he was about to cross it.

Money counterfeiting gang busted in Ain Defla

In Khemis Meliana, province of Ain Defla, a criminal network that counterfeited money was dismantled on 2 June. Fake 1,000 and 2,000 Algerian dinar bank notes were seized, and 1,250,000 authentic dinars were seized. Six individuals were apprehended.

International car trafficking network dismantled

In Bouira, the research and intervention brigade of the police dismantled a criminal network involved in car trafficking on an international level. All 58 members of the network, who operated in Oran, Algiers, Tissemsilt, Djelfa, Bordj Bou Arridj, Setif and Bejaia were arrested and charged with the forgery of official documents, and the illegal importing of vehicles into Algeria. A total of 18 vehicles have been seized.



Shield & Alert

We are in
ALGERIA

Stay safe...
take it with you

Visit Shield-Alert.com

Political and Social Affairs

Government outraged after journalist broadcasts anti-Bouteflika video from EU HQ

Algerian journalist Layla Haddad Lefevre, who used to be the correspondent of the Algerian public broadcasting network in Brussels, appeared in a video shot at the EU headquarters denouncing the President Abdelaziz Bouteflika and his regime. Layla Haddad vividly lashed out at the President and his adviser and brother, Said Bouteflika, urging them to leave on the grounds that Abdelaziz Bouteflika is not able to govern due to his illness. Through the Algerian Ambassador to Belgium, the Algerian government has vehemently deplored the "inacceptable misappropriation of the EU symbols and parliament to insult the honor and dignity of the Algerian Institutions". The Ambassador called Layla Haddad a "pseudo-journalist" with "bipolar behavior" who "gives her voice to the foreign powers who are hostile to Algeria". The Ministry of Foreign Affairs summoned John O'Rourke, the EU's Ambassador to Algeria, to discuss the issue. Following the meeting, the latter tweeted that while Layla Haddad Lefevre is accredited by the EU, she does not speak for the EU. The tweet was criticized by the gov-

ernment, which urged the EU to denounce the journalist.

On 4 June, the journalist announced that she was the victim of a physical assault outside her home in Brussels by two "North African individuals". Layla Haddad added that the Belgian authorities launched an investigation.

FLN SG slams PM, distances himself from RND over pieds-noirs

Djamel Ould-Abbes, the Secretary-General of the ruling party National Liberation Front (FLN) has made what is being described by observers as an incendiary declaration against the Prime Minister, Ahmed Ouyahia. The latter, who is also the President of the other presidential majority party, the National Democratic Rally (RND), recently urged Algerian businessmen to rely on the pieds-noir community abroad, referring to people of French origin, who were born in Algeria during the period of French rule, to improve their export performances. The FLN SG said that the Prime Minister is responsible for his own statements, but that the FLN and the RND have different values, thus rebuking the PM for calling on the children and grandchildren of colonizers to help the Algerian economy. Djamel Ould Abbes is said to be trying to divert the attention of the public to this issue, at a time when he is being criticized of his controversial re-

shuffle of the FLN's political bureau. In fact, Ould Abbes's picks to replace the ousted members have been heavily criticized by former members of the ruling party, who claim that President Bouteflika was not informed of this move.

Health Ministry's Head of Pharmacy dismissed

The Minister of Health, Mokhtar Hasbellaoui, has decided to dismiss the Head of Pharmacy, Hamou Hafed on 4 June after eight years in office. It is believed that the dismissal is connected to the crisis affecting resident pharmacists. Mokhtar Hasbellaoui has yet to appoint a replacement.

Human & Social

Illegal immigration: 353 Algerians and Sub-Saharan Africans arrested

In Tlemcen, Ghardaia, Ouargla and Naama, 283 undocumented immigrants from Sub-Saharan Africa were apprehended between 31 May and 6 June. Moreover, 70 would-be immigrants were caught in El Tarf, Tlemcen, Annaba and Oran.

Former FIS leader authorized to preach in mosques again

The former second-in-command of the Front for Islamic Salvation (FIS), Ali Benhadji, was authorized to preach in mosques, in what is seen as a very surprising development. In fact, Ali Benhadji played a detrimental role in starting the civil war in the early nineties, after the military coup which cost his party the municipal elections. Benhadji has been closely monitored by the secret police after his release from prison, especially after his son joined al-Qaeda in the Islamic Maghreb (AQIM). In 2011, he was arrested after he was accused of causing riots in several regions of Algeria and in 2015, the government banned him from preaching in mosques. In 2017, the Presidency forbid him from leaving the province of Algiers. The rehabilitation announcement was made on his Facebook page.

Imams sound alarm on Takfiri ideology

The National Coordination of Imams has warned the Ministry of Religious Affairs that Takfirism, which is known to be the ideology of the Islamic State, that consists of pronouncing that someone is an unbeliever (kafir) and no longer Muslim. The association has warned that this ideology, which was one of the main causes of the civil war, is growing in Algeria due to the proliferation of influential Takfiri preachers on the Internet. The Ministry of Religious Affairs was urged to work on a bill allowing prosecution against Takfiri preachers in Algeria.

Migrants claim having been tortured, enslaved in Algeria

According to two undocumented immigrants questioned by the media in Agadez, immigrants are being tortured and enslaved in Algeria. "The first time (in Tamanrasset), I was sold for 100,000 CFA Francs (170 US dollars). We were enslaved for six months" said a Guinean immigrant, who added that the human smugglers "took away their passports, beat them". The NGO Catholic Relief Services, in Agadez, claims having received similar accounts by at least 30 migrants over the last few months. The migrants are allegedly used as labor in farms.

Journalist, whistleblower arrested by the police in Oran

Journalist and human right activist Said Boudour was reportedly apprehended by plain clothes policemen in Oran on 3 June. The Algerian League for the Defense of Human Rights (LADDH) has condemned what it referred to as a "kidnapping" rather than an arrest, and claims that is connected to two articles written by the journalist about the record seizure of 700 kilograms of treated kif at the port of Oran. A port worker who is said to be the informant of Said Boudour was also apprehended, according to the same source. The two of them were released on 5 June, but prosecution is likely.

Resident doctors decide to maintain strike

The union of resident doctors, Camra, released a statement on 3 June to announce that the strike "is still on" despite rumors indicating otherwise. "While we are waiting to find a solution, Camra intends to continue its strike" the statement reads. Negotiations with the Health Ministry have been unfruitful so far.

Housing applicants hold protest in Tebessa

Social housing applicants in Tebessa have held a sit-in protest outside the provincial headquarters on 31 May to denounce the delays in the construction of 1,500 apartment units in the municipality of Boulhaf Dyr. Hundreds of people participated in the protest to express frustration with the situation, which has allegedly caused them "a great deal of suffering". The local authorities were urged to finish the construction project, despite the lack of funding.

Ali Mendjeli residents hold sit-in outside Governor's office

Residents of Ali Mendjeli municipality in Constantine province held a sit-in protest outside the governor's office on 2 June in an attempt to meet him and demand his intervention regarding the alleged use of parking lots, playgrounds and green spaces in their neighborhood to

build more a theater and a school. The protesters claim that this project will "ruin" their neighborhood, and undermine their daily lives.

Man severely beaten for eating during fasting hours

A 22-year old man was hospitalized in downtown Skikda, after four religious fundamentalists who identify as Salafists beat him for eating during fasting hours. Medical sources claim that the victim was also beaten to death, and that he is now in a critical condition. The assailants are being sought. A young woman was also assaulted by a religious extremist while she was jogging in Algiers.

Heavy rainfall, flooding reported in Blida

In the north central province of Blida, heavy rainfall caused flooding on 3 June, and several roads, houses and government facilities were completely flooded. The downtown area of Blida was blocked, and road traffic was suspended due after several roads were shut down to allow the intervention of the civil protection. Photos and videos showing the flooded neighborhoods appeared on social media, sparking concern about an enhanced risk of several weather in the north this week.

M'Sila bridge collapses due to severe weather

In M'Sila, heavy rainfall led to the collapse of the bridge linking Oued Bourdim and the national road 8 on 31 May, after the local river overflowed. Seven people were rescued by the civil protection, and 50 cattle died.

University professors stage protest

Dozens of professors held a sit-in protest at the University of Bouzareah on 3 June. The protesters threatened to block the release of student grades if the deanship refuses to meet their socio-economic demands, which include housing, and better working conditions. The Ministry of Higher Education has not reacted to the protest yet.

Autonomous unions oppose supplementary finance act

The collective of autonomous unions of the public sector issued a statement denouncing "restrictions targeting trade unions" and measures included in the supplementary finance act. The unions stated that the finance act will "further hinder the purchasing power of the Algerian worker" as they accuse the government of "taking money from the workers' pockets to increase the budget". Additionally, the dispersal of recent protests has been vividly denounced, and the Ministry of Labor was blamed for not accrediting several unions.

Tax workers stage a protest in Tamanrasset

In Tamanrasset, tax workers have held a sit-in protest on 4 June to demand the improvement of their socio-economic situation. The protesters denounced "abusive measures" by the tax office pertaining to "forced transfers", and demanded pay raises, better benefits, promotions.

US State Department slams Algeria over lack of religious freedom

In its latest report on religious freedom, the US State Department has slammed Algeria for cracking down on Ahmadi Muslims and Christians. "Offending or insulting any religion is a criminal offense. Proselytizing of Muslims by non-Muslims is a crime. Police investigated and arrested Ahmadi Muslims for conducting unauthorized religious activities, such as holding prayers, printing religious books, and collecting donations. Some Christian leaders and congregants spoke of family members abusing Muslims who converted to or expressed an interest in Christianity. Individuals engaged in religious practice other than Sunni Islam reported they had experienced threats and intolerance, including in the media. An Arabic-language newspaper published anti-Semitic items that promoted stereotypes about Jews" the report reads.

More than 200,000 children facing forced labor in Algeria - NGO

According to the 2018 edition of the End of Childhood index by the NGO Save the Children, 6,000 children are the victims of various kinds of assaults in Algeria every year, while 4,000 others are in mortal danger. The NGO praised Algeria's effort to protect children, but warned that 64,000 children born anonymously may be the victims of forced child labor practices, which is believed to be affecting 200,000 children aged between 6 and 18 years of age.

Bir Benabed city hall closed by protesters

In an effort to claim the right to social housing units, a group of residents of Bir Benabed municipality, in Medea, closed the local city hall on 1 June. The protesters denounced the "lax attitude" of the local authorities and the directorate of housing, after reports surfaced about the allocation of apartments to locals who are not eligible.

RECEIVE REPORTS LIKE THIS ONE



We track, analyze, forecast and send alert notifications on most African and Middle Eastern countries. Reports similar to this are available for corporate subscriptions, keeping you and your staff aware of threats and factors of instability that could affect your operations abroad. To find out, please contact us at US+508-981-6937 or at inquiries@MEA-Risk.com. You can also speak to us live at [MEA-Risk.com](https://www.MEA-Risk.com)

Economy

Tunisia imposes tax on Algerian carriers

Tunisia has imposed a new tax for freight trucks entering its territory from Algeria. The tax, which is set at 200 Tunisian dinars (DT), or 14,000 Algerian dinars (DA), according to the Algerian media, is already in place in all of the commercial border crossing posts. Truckers have already expressed outrage at the tax, which is likely to have a negative impact on the Algerian economy as hundreds of trucks cross the border on a daily basis. The measure aims to promote Tunisian production.

IMF concerned about decrease in hydrocarbon production

The International Monetary Fund (IMF) has shared concerns about the decrease in hydrocarbon production in Algeria, which it claims will slow down real GDP growth. However, Sonatrach has continued to deny that production was decreased. The IMF went on to warn against rising unemployment rates, which stood at 11.7% as of September 2017 as against 10.5% one year earlier. It was also underlined that youth unemployment, which reached 28.3% in September 2017, is a threat to social stability. Furthermore, while the foreign debt is negligible, the IMF voiced concerns about the domestic debt, which has

been rising sharply since 2016.

PM defends import restrictions, urges producers to use Algerian connections abroad to export more

During a ceremony awarding the best Algerian exporter for 2017, Prime Minister Ahmed Ouyahia has defended the government's controversial decision to ban the import of more than 8,000 products, in an effort to curb public spending. The PM has urged Algerian producers to "rely on Algerian business connections abroad to conquer the international market". This policy is being criticized by experts, as it is seen as a last resort solution.



MEA Risk

MEA Risk LLC produces bespoke political and security reports, threat assessments and security risk assessments to inform decisions and to protect people and assets across Africa and the Middle East.



For more information on this report
please contact:

Arezki Daoud

Chief Executive & Lead Analyst

arezki@MEA-Risk.com

Phone: US+508-981-6937

www.MEA-Risk.com

DISCLAIMER: © Copyright MEA Risk LLC 2018. All Rights Reserved. The copyright in this work belongs to MEA Risk LLC. The Information contained in this work is confidential and must not be reproduced or disclosed without prior written permission of MEA Risk.