

American Foreign Policy Council

ALGERIA

QUICK FACTS

Population: 38,087,812

Area: 2,381,741 sq km

Ethnic Groups: Arab-Berber 99%,
European less than 1%

Religions: Sunni Muslim (state religion)
99%, Christian and Jewish 1%

Government Type: Republic

GDP (official exchange rate): \$206.5
billion

Map and Quick Facts courtesy of the CIA World Factbook (Last Updated April 2013)



Since independence, Islamist parties and armed groups have made up the major opposition to successive Algerian regimes. The decade-long period of Islamist-related civil strife in Algeria (1988-1999), which pitted security forces against armed Islamist militants, claimed over 150,000 lives, most of them civilian. Such a level of brutality had not been witnessed there since Algeria's War of Independence from France (1954-62); however, the more recent decline of strife in Algeria should not be seen as synonymous with a diminution in the appeal and activities of Islamism in the country. The policy of national reconciliation initiated by the Algerian government in 1999 and again in 2005 has contributed to the decline of armed Islamism, but—perhaps unwittingly—serves to legitimate and empower political Islamism. Recent years have seen the rise of Islamism in the Algerian political sphere, with the growth of Islamist political parties and their entrenchment through the acquisition of parliamentary seats in national elections. While these parties have of late diminished in stature, as seen in electoral results, the Islamist spirit nonetheless remains widespread in Algeria.

ISLAMIST ACTIVITY

GSPC/AQIM

Prior to its 2006 merger with the bin Laden network, the Salafist Group for Preaching and Combat, or GSPC, was—in the words of one member—“a military organization, following the Salafist creed and ideology, fighting in *jihad* against the Algerian regime, which has abandoned Islam and its masters among the Jews and Christians [in order] to restore the rightly guided Caliphate and to implement *Shari’ah* and remove the oppression and humiliation from the shoulders of our oppressed brothers.”¹ Now retooled as al-Qaeda in the Islamic Maghreb (AQIM), the organization simultaneously follows this basic ideology and expands upon it. While maintaining a strong domestic and regional vision, it simultaneously seeks “to spread the fragrance of *jihad* in every country and region and ignite flames under the feet of the Jews, Christians, and apostates.”²

GSPC/AQIM is concentrated mainly in the country’s ethnically Kabylie region, where the leadership is based, and in the Algerian south, along the Sahara-Sahel, where it has conducted various operations under various lieutenants/*emirs*. The state’s relatively successful assaults on AQIM in the Kabylie region have compelled the group to move its activities to other areas, mainly in the Deep South. The group’s membership includes a great number of so called “Arab Afghans” (those who fought in Afghanistan in the late 1980s and then returned home) and a multitude of smaller *jihadist* groups that the larger AQIM has absorbed over the past half-decade. Authorities estimate that AQIM now consists of fewer than 1,000 members, some of them Arab Afghans or other veterans of the war against the Soviets in Afghanistan.³ As claimed by AQIM’s leader, Abdelmalek Droukdel [a.k.a. Abou Moussab Abdel Wadoud], “the large proportion of our *mujahideen* comes from Algeria. And there is a considerable number of Mauritaniens, Libyans, Moroccans, Tunisians, Mali’s [sic] and Nigerians [sic] brothers.”⁴

Knowledge of AQIM’s organizational structure is incomplete; however, it is known that the group is divided into geographic zones, each constituting combatant units (*kata’ib*). The entire organization is presided over by a national leadership, which consists of the emir, religious scholars, a consultative committee, a political committee, a financial committee, and a media committee. The majority of the troops, about 700, are concentrated in the Kabylie region (the eastern part of Algeria), while some 200-300 are concentrated in the Sahara-Sahel area.⁵ With recent events in the Sahara-Sahel, AQIM’s troops may have increased considerably.

Although there is no evidence that the GSPC received any financing from

Osama bin Laden's organization, its conversion into AQIM in 2007 resulted in al-Qaeda extending at least rhetorical support to the newly-born regional franchise.⁶ Though AQIM since has been weakened as a result of persistent counterterrorism operations carried out by Algerian security forces,⁷ has virtually no support among the broader Algerian population and has suffered many defections, bin Laden's backing had been one of its sources of strength. The organization has refused to give up its *jihad* despite Algeria's Civil Concord (September 1999) and the Charter of Peace and National Reconciliation (September 2005), which basically grant amnesty to those militants who agree to lay down their arms. The group also imitates al-Qaeda's propaganda methods, videotaping attacks on ambushed soldiers.

AQIM claims that its methods differ from those of the Armed Islamic Group (GIA), from which it split in 1998. It alleges that it does not target civilians, but instead wages war against the *taghut* (the tyrannical "non-Islamic" state). The group has followed al-Qaeda's lead in suicide bombings, as evidenced by the spate of bombings carried out by the group in 2007. The most significant took place in Algiers in April, September, and December 2007 against government structures, including the seat of the government, the Constitutional Council, and security forces barracks, killing dozens of people. Subsequently, in March, June, August and October 2009, AQIM conducted suicide operations that also resulted in heavy casualties.⁸ It has advertised for young recruits to conduct suicide bombings via the Internet.⁹

Evidence suggests these *istishbadyin* (martyrdom seekers) join AQIM not because of political grievances, but due to socioeconomic marginalization and for theological reasons. This new breed of *jihadi* is largely unknown to the country's security services, and is distinguished by its young age (generally 15-25).¹⁰ Indeed, the core members of AQIM have now targeted vulnerable, unemployed, and/or delinquent young people, transforming them into nihilists to whom they promise entrance to heaven through martyrdom.

Nevertheless, in 2009, suicide attacks in Algeria declined;¹¹ four attacks, targeting the barracks of municipal guards and military barracks, were carried out, as opposed to five major ones in 2008¹² and six devastating attacks in 2007.¹³ AQIM has also emulated al-Qaeda's attack methods by using lethal Vehicle Borne Improvised Explosive Devices (VBIED), which has led to numerous casualties among security forces since 2007. Although the security forces have accomplished a remarkable job in combating terrorism and thwarting many attempted attacks in the city, terrorists still manage occasionally to conduct some deadly attacks. Authorities revealed that the terrorists launched 201 attacks in 2011; all of them concentrated in 11 out of the country's 48 regions. They likewise reported that 175 attacks had occurred

in the center of the country,¹⁴ the most important of which, in Azazga (Kabylie) in April of that year, left 17 soldiers dead.¹⁵ There were also daring kamikaze attacks against military outposts in the south, notably, in Tamarrasset (March), which wounded close to fifty personnel and civilians, and Ouargla (June). These last two attacks were committed by a new terrorist group, linked to drug-traffickers, the Movement for Oneness and Jihad in West Africa (MUJAO), which emerged in October 2011. The MUJAO's first action was the abduction of three foreign aid workers in the Sahrawi refugee camp (Hassi Rabouni) near Tindouf, in southwestern Algeria. The hostages were freed in July 2012 after both Madrid and Rome paid for their release; an Islamist imprisoned in Mauritania was also freed in exchange for the liberation of the hostages.¹⁶

AQIM has also internationalized its activities. It has secured additional resources through kidnappings and illicit trafficking (drugs, small arms, cigarettes, and so forth). AQIM has also succeeded in attracting militants from neighboring countries. Although the breakdown in nationalities within the group is not known, security forces claim that many members come from Burkina Faso, Niger, Chad, Mauritania, Libya, and Nigeria. The internationalization of AQIM and its association with al-Qaeda has allowed it to avoid the fate of the GIA, which was decimated following the killing of its leader Antar Zouabri by the security forces in February 2002.

Notably, this international shift in focus has created dissension within the Algerian Islamist movement. AQIM has lost support domestically for serving an alien organization and for importing methods abhorrent to Algerian society, such as suicide bombings.¹⁷

The income of AQIM comes mostly from smuggling, credit-card fraud, and car theft.¹⁸ Kidnapping foreigners has also been used to finance AQIM's activities since many countries, such as Switzerland, Austria, Germany, and Canada, France, Spain, and Italy have paid ransoms in exchange for the release of their citizens. Conceivably, kidnapping foreigners furthers AQIM's political objectives by dissuading foreign investment and thus weakening the allegedly apostate regimes that the group is hoping to remove from power in the Sahara-Sahel region. The combination of banditry, kidnappings, and armed actions has helped the group amass considerable resources for the pursuit of its activities. In the summer of 2010, for instance, AQIM obtained a 3.8 million Euro ransom for the release of two Spanish hostages.¹⁹ In 2012, the MUJAO had asked for 30 million Euros for the release of the three humanitarian workers kidnapped in the Sahrawi refugee camp. And although the Canadian, Austrian, and French governments, each of whose citizens also had been kidnapped, deny having paid any ransoms to AQIM,

reliable sources as well as media reports indicate that substantial amounts of money (estimated in tens of millions of Euros) have indeed been paid to secure their release.²⁰ In February 2013, former U.S. Ambassador to Mali Vicki Huddleston revealed that France had paid \$17 million in 2010 for the release of its hostages held in Mali.²¹ Kidnappings of Westerners, drug smuggling, arms trafficking and clandestine immigration networks now serve as the main sources of financing of these groups. Credible sources revealed that AQIM has raised \$360 million through the ransoms paid by Western governments.²²

Algeria has had a consistent policy of not negotiating with terrorists and has been pushing for international legislation to criminalize the payment of ransoms. The January 13, 2013 offensive against the 32 terrorists of AQIM dissident Mokhtar Belmokhtar's group, *El-Mouaki'ne bi dima* (Those who sign with blood), who had occupied a gas plant and held hostage more than 800 national and foreign workers demonstrated the lengths to which Algeria would go in pursuit of this policy. (Notably, although the direct action resulted in the loss of 38 hostages—and the elimination of 30 out of the 32 terrorists—allowing the group to blow up the plant would almost certainly have had more dire consequences.²³)

AQIM's kidnappings are not limited to foreigners. The group also resorts to kidnapping Algerian nationals, a fact rarely, if ever, reported in the Western media. In 2009 alone, more than 20 Algerians were kidnapped, mainly in the Kabylie region, where AQIM has a strong presence.²⁴ More audacious was the kidnapping in April 2012 of seven Algerian diplomats, including the Consul in Gao in northern Mali. The MUJAO eventually freed three, and announced that it had executed one. The fate of the three remaining diplomats is unknown. AQIM is also known to use phony roadblocks to extort money and belongings from citizens after reading them religious sermons.

The MUJAO and AQIM also are known to receive considerable amounts of money from drug trafficking.²⁵ The United Nations has warned that “terrorists and anti-government forces in the Sahel extract resources from the drug trade to fund their operations, purchase equipment, and pay foot-soldiers.”²⁶ AQIM, and now the MUJAO, has sought various sources of funding in order to purchase weapons and to invest in some lucrative sectors, established links with drug traffickers as a way of increasing its revenues. Thus, AQIM provides safe passage for the merchandise (cigarettes, cocaine, light weapons...) through the desert in exchange for protection. AQIM has also provided storing facilities of the drugs, also in exchange of payment. In sum, the Sahel has become the principal hub for drugs.²⁷

Drug trafficking in the Sahel has alarmed not only European countries, which are geographically close to the region (drugs get to Europe through Morocco), but also the United States.²⁸ This does not mean that AQIM has become simply a criminal group, however. To the contrary, it seems that the money it extorts is also used to serve its ideological goals. Furthermore, the terrorists have greatly benefited from the disintegration of the Libyan regime following the Arab revolts which swept the region. The seizure of sophisticated weapons from the Libyan arsenal by terrorist and rogue groups has strengthened the capabilities of the various groups in the Sahara-Sahel region.²⁹

In response to AQIM activities, the Algerian state has initiated a relatively effective crackdown against AQIM in recent years.³⁰ The population has also helped in this regard, thwarting kidnappings and demonstrating a growing mobilization against AQIM's operations in certain parts of the country. State security operations have continued to this day, with notable results. In 2012, state security forces neutralized more than 400 militants, killing nearly 200 of them, including a few emirs, and arresting the rest. Others surrendered the same year.³¹ These successes are attributable to greater intelligence now possessed by the state (amassed from Islamists who surrendered or repented, advanced databases, and so forth) which led to a relative decline of attacks by AQIM in 2012.

Political Parties: FIS, MSP, Nahda, MRN, and the Newly-Created Small Islamist Formations

The emergence of Islamist political parties in Algeria is a comparatively recent phenomenon.³² These parties gained legal status only after the political liberalization initiated by the regime following bloody riots in October 1988. Most of the Islamist parties born in the period between 1989 and 1991 emerged out of a heterogeneous Islamist movement that took root in the 1960s. The most powerful and radical of them was the FIS, which was banned in March 1992 following its overwhelming victory in the first round of the legislative elections the previous December. Notwithstanding its popularity (it won overwhelming victories in the 1990 municipal elections and in the 1991 legislative elections), its impressive organization, and its capacity to mobilize large segments of society, the authorities banned the group because of its radical ideology and the threat it purportedly posed to the state and society. Although the FIS is defunct today, its influence has not vanished. Some of its members joined the still-legal Islamist parties and/or voted for them during elections, while others joined the multitude of armed groups that have fought the state since the 1990s.

Today, numerous legal Islamist parties remain active on the political scene:

the Movement for Society and Peace (MSP), the Movement for Islamic Renaissance (Nahda), and its offshoot, the Movement for National Reform (MRN), and the recent ones legalized before the May 2012 legislative elections, namely, the Party for Liberty and Justice (PLJ), the Front for Justice and Development (FJD - *El Adala*), the Front for New Algeria (FAN), and the Front for Change (FC).³³ All endorse the eventual application of *sharia* law. But unlike the FIS, which wished to immediately implement it, these parties (the MSP in particular) seek a gradual implementation of Islamic principles.

The MSP, the largest Islamist party in Algeria, was created in 1990 as the Movement for Islamic Society/HAMAS, but changed its name to conform to the 1996 constitution, which forbids the use of religion for political ends. The group belonged to the “presidential alliance,” a conservative mixture of nationalist, Islamist, and technocratic parties. In early January 2012, the MSP withdrew from the presidential alliance, without however pulling its four ministers out of the government. In March 2012, the MSP, with El Islah and Ennahda, formed the Green Alliance. The three parties ran on the same ticket in the country’s subsequent legislative election. However, the Green Alliance did quite poorly in the new legislature, garnering only 48 seats out of an expanded field of 462.

Nahda, meanwhile, split in 1999 when its charismatic founding leader, Abdallah Djaballah, created yet another party, the Movement for National Reform (MRN or *Islah*). The MRN did very well in the 2002 local elections, coming in ahead of both the MSP and Nahda, after which it demanded a ban on the import of alcoholic beverages in 2004. However, Djaballah did quite poorly in the 2004 presidential election, receiving only 5 percent of the votes.³⁴ The party has undergone further crises and it is not clear what influence either Nahda or MSN now have—for, like most Algerian political parties, the fate of the parties are often linked to the individual that founded them. In the 2007 legislative election, the two parties garnered only five and three parliamentary seats, respectively.

The three older parties had worked in proximity to the Algerian government, and abided by its constraints on political participation. In 2009, all three endorsed the candidacy of sitting President Abdelaziz Bouteflika, whose program they supported, for a third term in office.³⁵ That coexistence was a product of the comparative decline in popularity experienced by Islamist political parties in recent years, as well as their internal turmoil. For example, the MSP split into two factions in 2009 due to the loss of popularity of its president, Aboudjera Soltani, who served as a minister under various governments. Many members of the party did not agree with Soltani’s uncondi-

tional support for President Abdelaziz Bouteflika, and in June 2009 orchestrated a revolt inside the MSP.

However, the electoral decline of Algeria's Islamist political parties should not be interpreted as a decline of Islamism in the country writ large. To the contrary, social conservatism has grown, making it possible to countenance a revival of support for these factions.

ISLAMISM AND SOCIETY

Islam in Algeria is not simply the main religion of the population; it constitutes the primary foundation of identity and culture. Islamic beliefs and practices regulate social behavior and, to a large extent, govern social relations. Neither Islam nor the Islamist phenomenon can be disconnected from Algerian history. While the socioeconomic failure of the 1980s goes a long way toward explaining the emergence of Islamism in Algerian society, its doctrinal aspects derive at least in part from the crisis of identity generated by 132 years of colonial rule. France's often-brutal colonialism served to undermine the principal local religious institutions; mosques and religious schools were closed and sometimes turned into churches or even bars, religious lands were expropriated, and Islamic culture was openly held up to be inferior to Christian/Western civilization. Because France resorted to coercion to establish its cultural hegemony, and because French colonialists treated the native population and values with contempt, Algerians as a whole clung to Islam. The country's nationalist movement used Arab-Islamic values as symbols for popular mobilization against colonialism, and contemporary Islamists often claim that they are the legitimate offspring of that effort, insisting that Sheikh Abdelhamid bin Badis, head of the Association of *Ulama*, inspired the war for independence through his famous motto, "Islam is our religion; Arabic is our language; Algeria is our motherland."

In the 1980s, the FIS enjoyed considerable support among all segments of society in Algeria because the party stood for Islamic ideals, such as social justice and the elimination of corruption, that were widely viewed as benevolent. Of added appeal was the group's promise to improve socioeconomic conditions, which tapped into the population's feelings of betrayal by the government's liberal policies of the 1980s and 1990s, which resulted in high unemployment and the loss of social benefits Algerians had enjoyed under the socialist welfare state. This popularity translated into overwhelming electoral victories on the part of the FIS in 1990 and 1991. However, the violence subsequently carried out by extremists in the 1990s gradually eroded the popularity of Islamist groups.

Today, Islamism is still prevalent in Algeria; however, the majority of Algerians do not support armed groups, as a large contingent did in the early and mid-1990s. The brutal massacres the armed groups committed in 1996-1999 alienated large segments of the population, while authorities have progressively dismantled the small number of die-hard support groups. Currently, only a few marginalized youths are attracted by groups like AQIM. Rather, Islamism today has become a form of social conservatism with no institutional or partisan attachment.³⁶ As seen above, Islamist parties did rather poorly in the 2007 legislative elections and even worse in the legislative election in May 2012. The municipal elections held on November 29, 2012, confirmed the regression of Islamist parties in Algeria.³⁷ This decline was already perceptible in the April 2009 presidential election, during which the Islamist candidates were marginalized, with the Nahda candidate Djahid Younsi garnering a mere 1.3 percent of the votes and others even less. Based on this analysis, and the recent results at the polls, it is possible to conclude that Islamism, at least in its political form, is appealing to no more than two percent of the electorate.³⁸ Even if the relatively popular leader of the Movement for National Reform had not boycotted the election and participated, as he did in 2004 (when he obtained 5 percent of the votes), the Islamist vote would still be less than 10 percent.

Therefore, while it is hard to gauge the present popularity of Islamism as a social and political movement, what is certain is that the institutional parties as well as the armed groups have lost the appeal that they had throughout the 1990s and even in the early 2000s. One can advance four reasons for such decline: 1) the legacy of the civil strife which left more 150,000 dead, mostly innocent civilians; 2) the loss of legitimacy on the part of armed groups like AQIM and MUJAO, which resorted to barbaric methods to impose their will upon the population; 3) the relative success of the 2005 National Reconciliation, which led to the surrender of thousands of armed militants and the extension of amnesty to numerous Islamists; and, 4) general disappointment with Islamist political parties, which are perceived as opportunistic and self-serving.

ISLAMISM AND THE STATE

In 1989, Algerian authorities, in violation of a constitution that forbade the existence of parties based on religion, legalized the newly-born radical Islamist party, the FIS. A front made up of a variety of forces, including Arab alumni of the Afghan *jihad*, the FIS eventually became one of the most potent armed groups against the state. In June 1990, the government organized nationwide municipal elections, the first pluralist elections in the country. In December 1991, the authorities went through with the first

round of parliamentary elections despite the increasing intimidation wielded by Islamists against their opponents. The ultimate cancellation by the civilian-military authorities of the election results on grounds that the victory of the FIS would have put an end to the democratic process altogether, and the banning of the FIS shortly thereafter—along with the imprisonment of its leaders—resulted in a crisis of the state. The cancellation provided hardliners within the FIS with the ammunition to overrule more moderate elements favorable to peaceful electoral practices. By 1993, the rift within the FIS and the absence of clear leadership made possible the emergence of an armed insurrection carried out by various factions that until then had existed under the FIS umbrella. Some retained affiliation with the FIS under the banner of the Islamic Salvation Army (AIS). Other smaller and more obscure groups were led by self-proclaimed emirs who set up cells to conduct *jihad*. The civil strife that ensued not only pitted the security forces against armed groups but also spilled over to ravage the civilian population. The horrible collective massacres of 1997 and 1998 highlighted the Algerian tragedy and the limits of the *tout sécuritaire* option (an entirely security-related response to the insurrection) that so-called *éradicateurs* (eradicators) within the state had pursued throughout the conflict.

The intensity of the armed Islamist insurrection in the 1990s took Algeria's security forces by surprise. The authorities never envisioned the remarkable degree of organization among the *jihadist* groups, or the significant resources available to them. The level of unrestrained destruction that the armed groups inflicted upon the state structures, personnel, intellectuals, journalists, moderate Islamists, and the various strata of society was such that some spoke of the demise of the Algerian state.³⁹ Out of fear of Islamist reprisals or other considerations, many foreign governments refused to assist Algerian authorities in the fight against terrorism.⁴⁰ It was not until after the September 11, 2001 attacks that the international community mobilized to help the Algerian government in its fight against terrorism.

At the peak of the insurgency in 1994-95, Algerian authorities realized that unless they mobilized all the resources at their disposal, including the civilian population, they would fail to defeat armed Islamist groups. The police and *gendarmérie* services, though designed to defend a territory five times the size of France, were fewer in number than those in neighboring Morocco or tiny Tunisia. The public industrial sector and other state structures had little security.

Aware of the near-collapse of the state and its institutions, civilian and military authorities took measures to safeguard the state. The first action was to remove elected Islamist officials from the municipalities and replace them

with state-appointed officials, because authorities feared they would provide logistical support for the insurgents. Armed Islamists eventually assassinated many of those replacements. The state also decided to arm thousands of people, many of them unemployed youths, throughout the country to serve as auxiliary forces for regular troops. These security agents, known as *gardes communaux*, played a critical role in fighting Islamist insurgents.

To protect public infrastructures, the authorities forced companies to create specially trained security services (known as the *services de sûreté interne d'établissements*) within those organizations. According to Algerian officials, within one year of their creation, the existence of such services reduced by 75 percent the number of acts of sabotage against social and economic structures.⁴¹ The state also created the *détachements de protection et de sûreté*, brigades entrusted with the protection of industrial plants. Because *ihadists* targeted isolated villages and the suburbs of most cities, the authorities also set up the *groupes de légitime défense* (GLDs), which, though sometime deficient, did much to reduce terrorist attacks on innocent civilians.

Moreover, the government increased the size of the police force and provided new recruits with more efficient antiterrorist training, both in Algeria and abroad.⁴² The police force acquired some adapted equipment imported from the former Soviet bloc, South Africa, and elsewhere. The state also took measures to thwart the financing of the insurgency; it incorporated a series of decisions, notably “*La lutte contre le blanchiment (LAB) et contre le financement du terrorisme (CFT)*,” into the 2003 Finance Act (Loi de Finance)⁴³ to combat the funding of terrorist groups and money laundering. These laws allow authorities to trace the financial sources of the terrorist networks through numerous methods, from the freezing of suspicious assets and to the use of intelligence procedures to prevent suspicious financial operations.⁴⁴

Although the government did not take adequate political measures by bringing the perpetrators to trial before they were pardoned, the Civil Concord, which garnered strong support in the September 1999 referendum, was rather successful since thousands of armed insurgents surrendered to the state authorities (although exact figures vary, depending on the source).⁴⁵ Subsequently, the 2005 Law on National Reconciliation offered clemency measures and/or pardon for those Islamist fighters who surrendered to the state. In October 2010, authorities declared that 7,500 armed insurgents had done so.⁴⁶ Although relatively successful, the law elicited strong criticism as it did not seek justice against Islamists or members of security forces who committed crimes in the bloody decade of the 1990s; the fates of thousands of people reported missing remain unknown.

Since September 11, 2001, Algeria has cooperated actively with the United States and European governments to fight terrorism. During the 1990s, these countries had refrained from assisting Algeria, arguing that Islamist insurgency was a domestic matter triggered by bad governance.⁴⁷ However, merely a year after the September 11th attacks, the United States declared its willingness to supply Algeria with some of the weaponry needed to better combat terrorism.⁴⁸ Since then, Algeria has become a strategic partner in U.S. counterterrorism efforts.

The Algerian government likewise cooperates closely with the governments of countries in the Sahel, such as Mali and Niger. The most noteworthy pursuit is its participation in the U.S.-led Trans-Saharan Counter-Terrorism Partnership to fight terrorism in the Maghreb-Sahel region.⁴⁹ Algeria has also sought to create a quasi-collective security community with the Sahel states, namely, Mali, Mauritania, and Niger, the so called “core countries,” in order to counter the terrorist threat in the region. Unfortunately, the fragility of those states undermined the potential for the General Staff Joint-Operations Committee (CEMOC) and the Algiers-based Joint-Intelligence Centre (CRC).⁵⁰

As of this writing, war is ongoing in northern Mali, and Algeria has played a small but significant role. It has allowed French warplanes to overfly its territory to dislodge AQIM, the MUJAO and other groups, such as the Tuareg Ansar el Dine, from the cities they had occupied. It likewise has closed its long border with Mali, to prevent *jihadists* from fleeing the conflict and seeking refuge on Algerian territory.

ENDNOTES

[1] “An Interview with the Chief of the Media Wing from the Salafist Group for Prayer and Combat,” *Al-Faath Magazine* 1, no. 1, December 2004, as cited in Evan F. Kohlmann, “Two Decades of Jihad in Algeria: the GIA, the GSPC, and Al-Qaida,” The NEFA Foundation, May 2007, 12, <http://www.nefafoundation.org/miscellaneous/nefag-spc0507.pdf>.

[2] Ibid.

[3] Julia Ficatier, Amine Kadi, and Aurore Lartigue, “Al-Qaida au Maghreb islamique, de l’Algérie au Sahel,” *La Croix* (Paris), July 26, 2010, <http://www.la-croix.com/article/index.jsp?docId=2433608&rubId=4077#>.

[4] “An Interview With Abdelmalek Droukdal,” *New York Times*, July 1, 2008, <http://www.nytimes.com/2008/07/01/world/africa/01transcriptdroukdal.html?scp=1&sq=droukdal&st=cse>.

[5] Ibid; Author’s interview with high-level Algerian national security official, Algiers, Algeria, September 2010.

[6] On the process of integration of the GSPC into al-Qaeda, see Mathieu Guidère, *Al-Qaïda à la conquête du Maghreb— Le terrorisme aux portes de l’Europe* (Monaco: Editions du Rocher, 2007).

[7] In September 2010, it was reported that 88 terrorists had been killed from January to August 2010. See Neila B., “88 terroristes dont 13 ‘émirs’ éliminés en 8 mois,” *Liberté* (Algiers), September 5, 2010.

[8] See United States Department of State, Office of the Coordinator for Counterterrorism, *Country Reports on Terrorism 2009* (Washington, DC: U.S. Department of State, 2010), 115. Those attacks resulted in the deaths of two security guards in March, 18 officers in June, and seven security guards in October, while the attack in August injured 25 people, including 4 police officers. It should be noted that these attacks result in significant loss of life and injury among civilians as well.

[9] Ikram Ghioua, “Les salafistes, les cybers et l’endoctrinement,” *L’Expression* (Algiers), November 7, 2007.

[10] Madjid T. “Le groupe terroriste manipule les adolescents pour leur recrutement à 13 ans, dans les maquis du GSPC,” *Liberté* (Algiers), March 8, 2008, 3; See also Amel Boubekeur, “Salafism and Radical Politics in Post Conflict Algeria,” Carnegie Endowment for International Peace *Carnegie Paper* no. 11, September 2008, http://www.carnegieendowment.org/files/salafism_radical_politics_algeria.pdf.

[11] For a detailed account, see Madjid T. “Attentats terroristes: 2009 l’année la moins meurtrière,” *Liberté* (Algiers), December 29, 2009, <http://www.liberte-algerie.com/edit.php?id=127655>.

[12] United States Department of State, Office of the Coordinator for Counterterrorism, *Country Reports on Terrorism 2008* (Washington,

DC: U.S. Department of State, 2009), 112.

[13] United States Department of State, Office of the Coordinator for Counterterrorism, *Country Reports on Terrorism 2007* (Washington, DC: U.S. Department of State, 2008), 104.

[14] Farid Belgacem, "Situation sécuritaire: 175 attentats terroristes enregistrés en 2012," *Liberté*, December 5, 2012, <http://www.liberte-algerie.com/actualite/175-attentats-terroristes-enregistres-en-2012-situation-securitaire-190081>.

[15] Walid Ramzy, "Algerian army kills Droukdel deputy," *Magharebia*, November 20, 2012, http://www.magharebia.com/cocoon/awi/xhtml1/en_GB/features/awi/features/2012/11/20/feature-01.

[16] "Trois otages enlevés en Algérie libérés au Mali," *Libération* (Paris), July 19, 2012, http://www.liberation.fr/monde/2012/07/19/trois-otages-enleves-en-algerie-liberes-au-mali_834259.

[17] B. Naila and Hakim Benyahia, "Le retrait de l'organisation d'Al Afghani ... un retrait tactique ou bien une fuite?" *Echorouk* (Algiers), August 16, 2009, <http://www.echoroukonline.com/fra/index.php?news=4801&print>. [18] Author's interviews with security officials, Algiers, Algeria, September 2010.

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