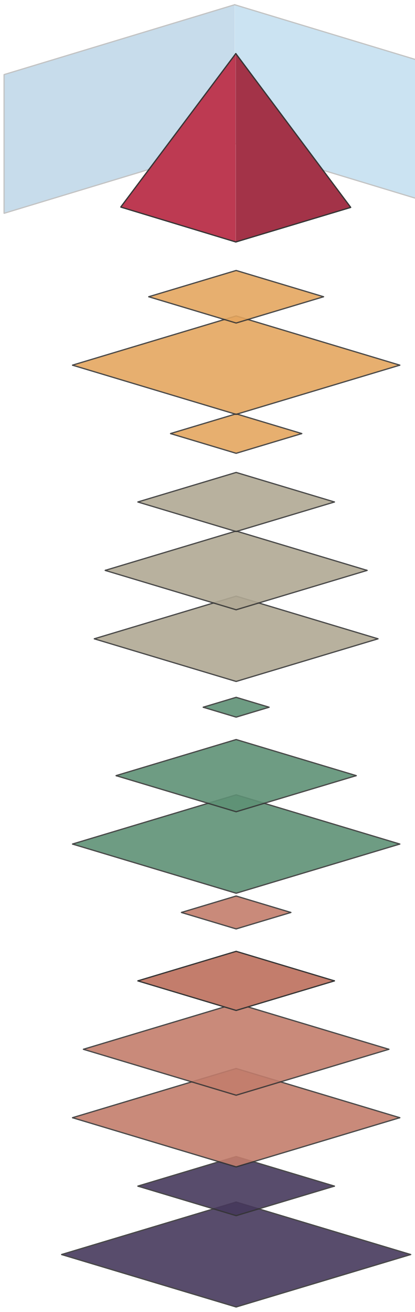
GLOBAL ORGANIZED CRIME INDEX

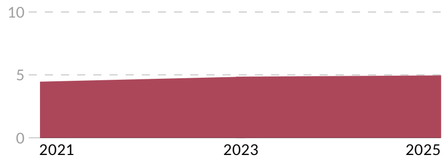
GLOBAL INITIATIVE AGAINST TRANSNATIONAL ORGANIZED CRIME

ALGERIA



4.97 ↗0.08
CRIMINALITY SCORE

103rd of 193 countries ↗1
33rd of 54 African countries ↘2
4th of 6 North African countries ↘1



CRIMINAL MARKETS	5.33	↗0.17
HUMAN TRAFFICKING	4.00	0.00
HUMAN SMUGGLING	7.50	↗0.50
EXTORTION & PROTECTION RACKETEERING	3.00	0.00
ARMS TRAFFICKING	4.50	0.00
TRADE IN COUNTERFEIT GOODS	6.00	0.00
ILLICIT TRADE IN EXCISABLE GOODS	6.50	0.00
FLORA CRIMES	1.50	↘0.50
FAUNA CRIMES	5.50	0.00
NON-RENEWABLE RESOURCE CRIMES	7.50	↗0.50
HEROIN TRADE	2.50	0.00
COCAINE TRADE	4.50	↗0.50
CANNABIS TRADE	7.00	0.00
SYNTHETIC DRUG TRADE	7.50	↗1.00
CYBER-DEPENDENT CRIMES	4.50	↗0.50
FINANCIAL CRIMES	8.00	0.00

CRIMINAL ACTORS	4.60	0.00
MAFIA-STYLE GROUPS	1.00	↘0.50
CRIMINAL NETWORKS	5.00	0.00
STATE-EMBEDDED ACTORS	7.50	0.00
FOREIGN ACTORS	5.00	0.00
PRIVATE SECTOR ACTORS	4.50	↗0.50

This project was funded in part by a grant from the United States Department of State.

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Funded by the European Union

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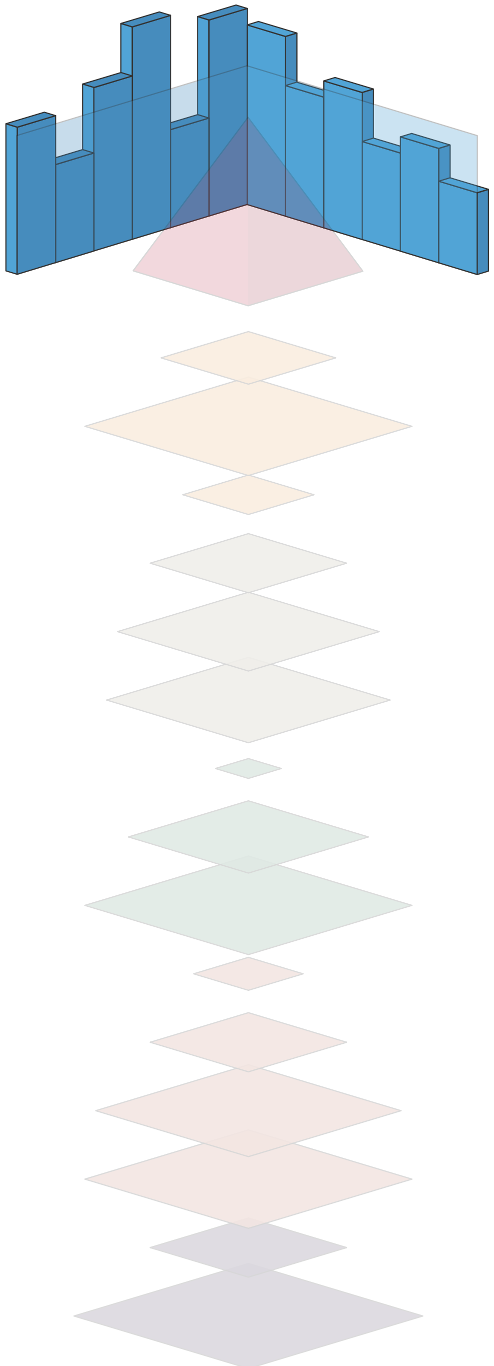
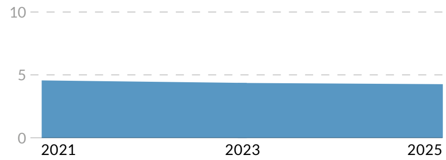
ALGERIA



4.25 ↘0.13
RESILIENCE SCORE

122nd of 193 countries ↘3
21st of 54 African countries ↗1
3rd of 6 North African countries -



POLITICAL LEADERSHIP AND GOVERNANCE	4.50	0.00
GOVERNMENT TRANSPARENCY AND ACCOUNTABILITY	3.00	0.00
INTERNATIONAL COOPERATION	5.00	0.00
NATIONAL POLICIES AND LAWS	6.50	↗0.50
JUDICIAL SYSTEM AND DETENTION	3.00	0.00
LAW ENFORCEMENT	6.00	0.00
TERRITORIAL INTEGRITY	5.50	↘1.00
ANTI-MONEY LAUNDERING	4.00	↘1.00
ECONOMIC REGULATORY CAPACITY	4.50	0.00
VICTIM AND WITNESS SUPPORT	3.00	0.00
PREVENTION	3.50	0.00
NON-STATE ACTORS	2.50	0.00

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CRIMINALITY

CRIMINAL MARKETS

PEOPLE

Algeria remains both a transit and destination country for human trafficking, primarily involving transnational networks linking local actors and Sub-Saharan actors. The country's geographic position between Africa and Europe reinforces the role of its organized criminal networks in facilitating cross-border trafficking and smuggling. Traffickers often exploit socioeconomic vulnerabilities among undocumented migrants and asylum-seekers coming from countries such as Mali, Niger, Burkina Faso, Cameroon, Guinea, Liberia and Nigeria, especially women and children. Human trafficking networks also engage in related activities such as document fraud, drug trafficking, arms trafficking and illegal gold extraction.

The human smuggling market remains highly consolidated in Algeria. The country is a key transit and destination point for irregular migrants, particularly from Sub-Saharan Africa, due to its position as a gateway to the Mediterranean and Europe. Human smuggling networks include both local and foreign actors, and are often enabled by official corruption, which exists at both lower and higher levels of the state. The market has expanded in northern regions, notably Tamanrasset and Tebessa, with growing activity in recent years linked both to regional instability in Mali and to Niger's lifting of restrictions on travel to its northern borders with Libya and Algeria. This rise in migrant flows has been linked with a rise in forced deportations from Algeria, widespread migrant abuse and more human trafficking. Algerian government responses to these increases have drawn criticism, notably that mass expulsions have lacked due process. Criminal actors engaged in human smuggling are often involved in other illicit activities; in 2024, Spanish authorities dismantled a network smuggling both drugs and migrants between Algeria and Spain.

Although official cases of extortion linked to organized criminal networks have been poorly documented, reports from Sub-Saharan migrants indicate cases of extortion and kidnapping in Tebessa, near the Tunisia border. Independent experts note that smugglers operating near Algeria's borders with Niger, Chad and Sudan often demand payment in exchange for passage, placing migrants at continued risk. These practices are consistent with previous findings that extortion remains a threat for individuals passing through Algeria toward Europe, with local smugglers reportedly charging excessive fees for transportation.

TRADE

Arms trafficking is a persistent issue in Algeria, particularly in the south, where regional instability and porous borders ease illicit flows of weaponry. The trade involves organized crime groups, violent extremist organizations, and local actors with transnational connections who exploit weak governance and divert arms from legal channels. Arms originate mainly from Russia and Libya, including newly manufactured rifles, and often flow through the Sahel region. The demand stems from non-state armed groups and individuals seeking to protect themselves. The proliferation of small arms has deepened insecurity by boosting various insurgents' capacities to stage armed attacks. In 2024, authorities made multiple arrests in an operation against a network smuggling firearms and ammunition from France.

The counterfeit goods market in Algeria has remained stable in volume, with consistent activity in cosmetics, clothing, footwear, electronics and food-related products. Authorities have taken steps to strengthen intellectual property enforcement, including dismantling informal markets, boosting inter-agency coordination and training specialist officials. Despite these efforts, the counterfeiting market is growing in some sectors, a trend partly attributed to the regulation of certain imports in 2021, an intervention that may have spurred domestic counterfeiting. Experts argue that the state has limited capacity to assess the full scope of the issue, citing systemic challenges and a perception that counterfeiting is not a critical barrier to progress.

Algeria serves as a source, transit and destination country in the illicit cigarette trade, which is driven by organized networks and individual smugglers, and facilitated in some cases by corruption. The illicit market constitutes a substantial share of national cigarette sales and undermines the legal industry through unfair competition. Smuggled cigarettes primarily originate from Mali, Niger and Libya, with Algeria also acting as a key outflow hub toward Europe via major ports and border regions. It does not help matters that the legal supply of cigarettes is insufficient to meet domestic demand. Rising inflation, increased online shopping and pandemic-related restrictions have also spurred demand for cheap illicit alternatives.

ENVIRONMENT

Flora crimes in Algeria are underreported, with few recent developments. Past information suggests that the illegal logging of cedar and fir trees persists in certain areas, particularly in the Rif Mountains, contributing to the degradation of old-growth forests and threatening endangered species such as the Tassili cypress and the Numidian fir. While enforcement efforts exist, including official warnings against cutting trees without proper authorization, there is a lack of systematic reporting of flora crimes. Organized criminal networks have a limited presence in the illegal trade of flora products in Algeria.

The illegal trade in endangered animal species is persistent. It involves local poachers, international collectors and, in some cases, corrupt officials. Enforcement efforts have intensified, including the seizures of thousands of protected animals and closer collaboration with conservation bodies. Birds such as European goldfinches and parrots, as well as gazelles and reptiles, are commonly targeted. International demand fuels the high-value segment of this market, particularly for exotic pets. Marine trafficking is also prevalent, with significant quantities of red coral illegally extracted and trafficked to Europe via Tunisia. The environmental impact is of the illegal fauna trade is severe, contributing to biodiversity loss, disrupted ecosystems and the local extinction of several species such as the addax (or screwhorn antelope) and the scimitar oryx.

Fuel smuggling is prevalent in Algeria, mainly driven by substantial fuel subsidies and price disparities with neighbouring Sahelian countries. One of the main smuggling corridors runs from Algeria to Mali, with Malian regions such as Kidal and Timbuktu heavily reliant on contraband fuel from Algeria. Fuel smuggling occurs through two main modalities. The first involves small-scale 'ant' trafficking by officially registered traders –often dual nationals – who are allowed to cross the border periodically with quantities exceeding legal limits. The second involves professional smuggling operations, characterized by larger volumes, mobile storage sites, and the use of informal border crossings in remote and difficult terrain to avoid detection.

The illicit trade in gold is also rising. Notable operations in recent years led to the dismantling of trafficking networks and the seizure of significant quantities of gold and silver. Illegal sand mining is also prevalent, affecting several regions and contributing to environmental degradation.

DRUGS

The heroin market in Algeria remains limited in scale, though indicators suggest slight growth, particularly among younger demographics vulnerable to substance abuse. The trade involves local and transnational actors, including organized crime groups, with some operations facilitated by corruption. Networks have used taxis and digital platforms to distribute heroin in increasingly sophisticated operations.

The country is increasingly emerging as a transit hub for cocaine trafficking from Latin America to Europe, a pattern confirmed by a series of substantial seizures. Maritime routes dominate, with drugs often arriving via container ships and smaller fishing vessels. Though domestic consumption remains limited, the market is expanding, particularly among affluent groups. Some cocaine is also trafficked overland to Tunisia and Libya. The discovery of a crack production facility in 2021 suggested a possible shift in drug-use patterns.

Algeria remains a key player in the regional cannabis trade, acting as a source country for cannabis resin trafficked to Europe, particularly France. The market is sustained by local cultivation driven by economic pressures, with larger operations overseen by organized criminal networks. Up to 80% of seized cannabis resin originates from Morocco, and law enforcement reported hundreds of arrests in the past year. Internal demand and consumption are consistent, and the market targets mainly vulnerable young people, contributing to rising public health concerns. Organized crime groups involved in drug trafficking use sophisticated money-laundering methods to funnel illicit profits into the licit economy. These methods often include shell companies, real estate investments and buying into sectors with high cash flow, such as construction and hospitality, to obscure the origins of funds.

Algeria's synthetic drugs market is active, dominated by psychotropic substances such as tramadol, pregabalin and codeine. Synthetic drugs are imported, but there is also evidence of local production. In 2024, authorities seized a significant number of psychotropic capsules, with sharp increases attributed to trafficking networks operating through Libya and neighbouring countries. The border regions of Tébessa and El Oued have emerged as key entry points, seeing regular seizures of pregabalin and ecstasy. The affordability of drugs such as pregabalin, often referred to as the 'poor man's drug', sustains domestic demand. Consumption is rising, particularly among youth in urban centres such as Algiers, contributing to growing concern over the spread and social impact of synthetic drug use nationwide.

CYBER-DEPENDENT CRIMES

Cyber-dependent crime is on the rise in Algeria, with perpetrators increasingly leveraging digital platforms. Offences include hacking, malware and distributed denial of service attacks. The country has been identified as particularly vulnerable to spyware, and reports indicate that cybercrime cases have risen significantly in recent years. Hundreds of thousands of malicious hacking and malware attacks are intercepted annually, suggesting a rapidly expanding and evolving cybercrime landscape in the country.

FINANCIAL CRIMES

Financial crimes in Algeria remain widespread, particularly embezzlement, misuse of public funds and illicit enrichment. These offences are mainly linked to corrupt political and administrative elites, rather than organized crime groups. Recent cases have implicated officials at state-owned transport and aviation enterprises in the abuse of public resources. Senior military officials have recently been imprisoned for corruption-related offences, including illicit enrichment and embezzlement. The scale and frequency of these cases suggest that financial criminality is deeply rooted in the state. Cyber-enabled fraud also continues to pose a threat. Authorities have disrupted criminal networks engaged in online scams and social media fraud, reflecting the growing digital dimension of financial crime in the country. Overall, the persistence of financial crime reveals institutional vulnerabilities and weak enforcement capacities.

CRIMINAL ACTORS

As reported in the previous iteration, there is no evidence of Algerian mafia-style groups operating in Algeria. Criminal networks in the country remain active and diversified, with transnational linkages playing a central role in their operations. These groups exploit the porousness of the country's borders with Mali, Niger, Libya and Morocco to profit from irregular migration and cross-border smuggling. Authorities have dismantled networks involved in human trafficking, human smuggling, money laundering and gold trafficking – reflecting the broad scope of criminal activities. Drug trafficking, particularly cannabis, remains a significant trade, alongside the smuggling of foodstuffs, vehicles, fuel and cigarettes. Activities are concentrated in key regions such as El Oued, Oued El Had, Oran, Naâma and Constantine, revealing particular geographic vulnerabilities in those places. Loopholes in border control, weak financial oversight and systemic corruption all deepen Algeria's exposure to loosely organized criminal actors.

Corruption remains deeply entrenched in Algeria, despite post-2019 anti-corruption efforts that led to high-profile convictions. State-embedded actors continue to engage in crime, with elites reportedly involved in money laundering, tax evasion and embezzlement. These actors benefit from institutional protection, a pattern which reinforces the nexus between political and criminal interests. Illicit currency exchange establishments, though officially unrecognized, operate openly and are frequented by senior officials. Local experts suggest these venues function with the protection of state actors, who exploit their monopoly over foreign exchange to manipulate the local currency supply. The clear convergence of political power and illicit economic activity reveals a systemic vulnerability in the Algerian state.

Algeria's organized crime landscape is increasingly shaped by foreign criminal actors and diaspora-based networks. Human smuggling is particularly active in southern regions such as Tamanrasset, where Nigerien networks play a central role, facilitating routes into northern urban centres. Moroccan nationals are also frequently involved in transnational migrant smuggling and drug trafficking operations. France-based networks like the DZ Mafia – founded by French-Algerian traffickers – are implicated in the cross-border narcotics trade, particularly cannabis and cocaine trafficking between Algeria and France. These dynamics underscore the country's role as both a source and transit hub, in which transnational networks exploit regional instability and weak border enforcement.

Although no specific cases were identified linking private-sector actors directly to organized crime groups, corruption within the private sector is reported to be widespread. Criminal networks often use private enterprises to launder illicit proceeds, particularly in sectors such as real estate, hospitality, entertainment, retail and financial services. Cryptocurrencies and digital marketplaces are growing and under-regulated channels for money laundering. Experts also highlight the interplay between crime-linked businessmen and political elites, suggesting a blurred line between legitimate enterprise and illicit finance. Weak financial regulation and oversight eases the passage of the proceeds of crime into the formal economy.

RESILIENCE

LEADERSHIP AND GOVERNANCE

During the reporting period, Algeria maintained legal and regulatory frameworks targeting organized crime, including cybercrime and financial offences. However, enforcement remained uneven, with a strong security presence not fully matched by governance or policy coherence. Despite the state's efforts to secure Algeria's vast and scarcely populated desert territories, organized crime – particularly drug traffickers and human smugglers – has become deeply entwined with terrorist operations, taking advantage of regions that remain difficult for authorities to patrol. Political restructuring in recent years reshaped the criminal economy, favouring emerging elites through selective licensing and trade restrictions. Democratic processes have reflected public distrust of the authorities; electoral fraud has been alleged and voter turnout has been low.

Algeria has maintained anti-corruption structures, including a central anti-corruption office and a transparency authority established under the 2020 Constitution. While prosecutions of former regime officials signalled a crackdown against past offenders, concerns persist over the selective nature of investigations and their abuse for political gain. Access to information was limited by vague constitutional exceptions, opaque decision-making and poorly enforced asset-disclosure rules. Despite these constraints, several initiatives have been implemented to counter corruption. Notably, the government launched a strategic plan for transparency and fight against corruption for the 2023-2027 period, with UNDP support. It also initiated Natakom, a platform supported by international partners to improve public access to information.

Algeria continued to align with international standards against organized crime by ratifying key conventions and engaging in multilateral cooperation. Alongside other African states, it participated in a UN-led initiative addressing the crime-terror nexus, and signed a bilateral agreement with Italy to expand joint investigations into organized crime, cybercrime and trafficking. Algerian authorities have also emphasized expertise-sharing in regional counterterrorism frameworks. However, efforts to repatriate assets from abroad have faced major obstacles, with over 220 international legal cooperation requests yielding minimal results.

The country has expanded its legal arsenal against organized crime through several legislative reforms. A 2024 amendment to the penal code introduced provisions banning organized criminal groups, strengthening protections for public officials and victims, and enhancing legal responses to forgery and impersonation. A separate law imposed severe penalties for white-collar crimes, including life imprisonment for document forgery and corruption in the public service. Legal amendments also aimed to streamline bureaucracy and safeguard personal data. A national anti-drug strategy was launched with civil society engagement, and efforts to pass a standalone anti-trafficking law progressed. The publication of a new forest law in early 2024 emphasized sustainable resource management. But despite these improvements, weaknesses remain in intellectual property enforcement, particularly against digital piracy.

CRIMINAL JUSTICE AND SECURITY

Algeria's judiciary has demonstrated its commitment to prosecuting organized crime through an established legal framework. But concerns exist over political interference, particularly given the judiciary's structural subordination to the executive. Judicial and prosecutorial independence is frequently compromised in politically sensitive cases, with reports of arbitrary arrests, warrantless searches and prolonged pretrial detentions. Investigations into human trafficking are undermined by a lack of trained personnel. Prison conditions remain poor, marked by overcrowding, abuse and inadequate medical, though reforms are underway. These efforts include building new facilities, training prison staff, and permitting independent monitoring by humanitarian organizations and human rights observers.

Algeria maintains strong law enforcement capacities to counter organized crime, with specialized units and robust border security measures. Authorities have prioritized training within law enforcement operations, especially through initiatives such as INTERPOL's Momentum project, a multi-year programme aimed at enhancing national and regional capabilities against organized crime.

Algeria's vast and geographically challenging borders, particularly in the Sahara and mountainous regions, remain vulnerable to exploitation by traffickers and organized crime groups. Positioned as a node in key transnational trafficking routes, the country struggles to effectively monitor and secure its borders in a context of regional instability and limited infrastructure. While corruption among border officials has been reported, the extent of organized crime's influence over major transport hubs remains unclear. In recent years, the government has intensified its arms trafficking response, with military operations yielding notable results. However, structural corruption, regulatory gaps and limited cyber-resilience continue to hinder efforts to counter cross-border and technology-enabled criminal activities.

ECONOMIC AND FINANCIAL ENVIRONMENT

Algeria has made initial efforts to improve its anti-money laundering (AML) and counter-terrorist financing (CTF) framework, including the creation of technical units and strategic policies. However, the National Risk Assessment is incomplete, and authorities have yet to develop a cohesive understanding of key risks. While law enforcement investigates predicate offences linked to organized crime, parallel financial investigations are limited, resulting in few money-laundering prosecutions. Algeria was rated partially compliant with most international AML/CTF standards in its 2023 evaluation and has since been placed on the FATF Grey List.

Algeria's economy remains highly dependent on hydrocarbons, with oil and gas generating nearly all of its export revenues and a significant share of GDP. Although some efforts have been made to diversify and advance the business environment, progress has been limited. Bureaucratic barriers, inflationary pressures and a large informal sector continue to inhibit inclusive growth in the formal sector. Efforts to liberalize foreign trade have included easing import restrictions and eliminating foreign ownership caps in non-strategic sectors. But progress is limited by major structural weaknesses, notably corruption, political interference in the judiciary and regional economic disparities. Despite moderate economic growth, fiscal deficits have widened and inflation remains high, particularly food inflation.

CIVIL SOCIETY AND SOCIAL PROTECTION

Government efforts to identify and assist victims of human trafficking are inadequate. Authorities continued to penalize possible victims for offences committed under coercion or exploitation, such as immigration violations and prostitution. There is also a lack of systematic screening mechanisms, particularly among deported migrants and vulnerable populations. Victim protection services were insufficient, with no dedicated shelters or clear tracking of allocated resources. While a few victims reportedly received psychological and medical care, support structures were not tailored to trafficking survivors' specific needs. Protection services remained inadequate and legal provisions often made victims more vulnerable. Restrictions on the activities of NGOs and international organizations ¬– especially limits imposed on their funding and geographic operations – hindered their capacity to deliver specialized assistance outside major northern cities.

Algeria has pursued a multi-pronged strategy to prevent organized crime, including the adoption of a national action plan against human trafficking and public awareness campaigns in Arabic and French. Authorities operate 24-hour hotlines for abuse reporting and have stepped up investigations and prosecutions under a new anti-trafficking law. Drug prevention efforts intensified in 2024, with youth-targeted campaigns, professional training and expanded treatment infrastructure. Algeria also engages in regional anti-crime cooperation and has introduced new whistle-blower support mechanisms. Despite this, whistle-blower protections remained weak overall, with several individuals facing legal repercussions for exposing misconduct.

Civil society organizations in Algeria play a role in addressing gaps left by the state, especially in areas related to corruption, victim support and transparency. However, their operations remain severely restricted. Several prominent NGOs have been dissolved, and activists face legal persecution, including harsh sentences imposed in absentia. Press freedom is similarly constrained: journalists are often prosecuted, websites are blocked and a 2023 media law banned foreign funding for media outlets. Authorities reportedly exert influence over editorial decisions, and critical voices face intimidation and surveillance.

This summary was funded in part by a grant from the United States Department of State. The opinions, findings and conclusions stated herein are those of the authors and do not necessarily reflect those of the United States Department of State.