

## AFRICA RISK CONSULTING

### Algeria Monthly Briefing July 2024

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#### Algeria Summary 9 July 2024

*Algeria and Italian company Bonifiche Ferraresi announce on 6 July that they have signed a €420m (\$455m) deal to develop an agricultural project in Timimoun (Adrar Province). Türkiye's trade ministry announces on 28 June that bilateral trade with Algeria is progressing toward the target of \$10 billion and that talks for a preferential trade agreement will begin soon. Opposition party Rassemblement pour la Culture et la Démocratie (RCD), announces on 8 July that it will boycott the upcoming 7 September elections due to lack of free and fair competition. The ruling Front de Libération Nationale (FLN) on 14 June announces that it will support President Abdelmadjid Tebboune's (2019-present) should he seek a second term.*

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#### Tebboune meets Italy's Meloni and secures \$455m agricultural deal...

Algeria and Italy-headquartered **Bonifiche Ferraresi** announced on 6 July that they had signed a €420m (\$455m) deal to develop an agricultural project to help Algeria boost food security.<sup>1</sup> The project is the largest investment in sustainable agriculture ever to be made by Italy on the southern shores of the **Mediterranean** and is expected to create 6,700 jobs.<sup>2</sup>

Under the plan, which was signed in Algiers and will begin this year, approximately 36,000 hectares in **Timimoun (Adrar Province)** will be allocated for the production of beans, wheat and other agricultural produce.<sup>3</sup> Algeria's investment fund will provide 49% of the funding and Bonifiche Ferraresi will cover the remainder. Algeria's agricultural ministry said that the agriculture plan is part of a broader plan for the country to develop self-sufficiency in key crops.<sup>4</sup>

The plan was announced following President **Abdelmadjid Tebboune's** (2019-present) meeting with **Italy's** prime minister **Giorgia Meloni** (2022-present) after the **G7 Summit** working sessions ended on 14 June. The two leaders stated their "*deep satisfaction*" with the "*excellent*" state of bilateral relations, particularly in the economic domain, where relations continue to develop in the energy, industrial and agricultural sectors.<sup>5</sup> The conversation particularly focused on the progress of projects in the agricultural and vocational training sectors included in Meloni's signature €5.5 billion (\$5.95 billion) **Mattei Plan for Africa**, as well as a joint commitment on migration and development within the **Rome Process** framework.<sup>6</sup>

The **Presidency of the Council of Ministers (PCM)**, the administrative structure which supports Meloni's office, said that within this context, the leaders were in the process of adopting a sustainable agriculture project that would involve Bonifiche Ferraresi.<sup>7</sup> The project is also part of Meloni's Mattei plan, unveiled in January, to strengthen Italy's relations in Africa, boost energy ties and curb immigration flows.

Collaboration in agriculture adds a new dimension to the long-standing relationship between Italy and Algeria, which had mainly focused on energy. Algeria is one of Italy's most important partners, and in one of her first international trips as prime minister, Meloni arrived in Algiers on 22 January 2023 for a two-day official visit to build a strategic partnership amid Italy's efforts to wean off

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<sup>1</sup> Bloomberg, 7 Jul 2024

<sup>2</sup> Presidency of the Council of Ministers, 15 Jun 2024

<sup>3</sup> Bloomberg, 7 Jul 2024; Presidency of the Council of Ministers, 15 Jun 2024

<sup>4</sup> Bloomberg, 7 Jul 2024

<sup>5</sup> Presidency of the Council of Ministers, 15 Jun 2024

<sup>6</sup> Presidency of the Council of Ministers, 15 Jun 2024

<sup>7</sup> Presidency of the Council of Ministers, 15 Jun 2024

**Russian** energy supplies.<sup>8</sup> Meloni has largely succeeded in building on her predecessor, **Mario Draghi**'s successful efforts to boost Algerian energy supplies to Italy and strengthen bilateral relations. Through the new agricultural plan, relations between the two countries are expected to continue to move in a positive trajectory.

### **Türkiye, Algeria to launch preferential trade deal talks 'very soon'...**

**Türkiye**'s trade ministry announced on 28 June that bilateral trade with Algeria is progressing toward its target of \$10 billion and that talks for a preferential trade agreement between the two countries would begin "*very soon*".<sup>9</sup> Turkish foreign minister, **Omer Bolat**, attended the 55<sup>th</sup> **Algiers International Fair** between 24 and 29 June during which he noted that bilateral trade volume with Algeria stood at \$6.3 billion at the end of 2023 - rising from a record \$5.3 billion in 2022.<sup>10</sup> While also emphasising the significance of his visit in enhancing commercial and economic cooperation between the two countries, Bolat said the trade value was the highest level reached to date.<sup>11</sup> Türkiye's vice president, **Cevdet Yilmaz**, also said in a media briefing on 24 June that investment by Turkish companies in Algeria exceeds \$6 billion.<sup>12</sup>

Relations between Algeria and Türkiye have strengthened in recent months, with increased trade and regular engagement between officials from the two countries. When Turkey's President **Recep Tayyip Erdogan** (2014-present) visited Algiers in November, he also signed a deal with Algeria to extend a liquefied natural gas (LNG) agreement until November 2027 (*See ARC Briefing Algeria Dec 2023*).<sup>13</sup> As part of the deal, Türkiye will continue importing 4.4 billion cubic metres (bcm) of LNG from Algeria annually.

Tebboune and Erdogan also co-chaired the second meeting of the **Türkiye-Algeria High-Level Cooperation Council**, signed a joint statement and attended the signing ceremony of 12 agreements in several fields.<sup>14</sup> Tebboune said despite the "*special and exceptional*" conditions taking place in the region and international arenas, Erdogan's visit to Algeria was a significant success for relations.<sup>15</sup> He described Algeria-Türkiye relations as strong, with open horizons for further collaboration, noting that Algeria is now Türkiye's second-largest trading partner after **China**.

While Türkiye has strengthened relations with Algeria in recent years, mainly to meet its energy needs, it also seeks to expand its broader influence in Africa. In recent years, Türkiye has dramatically increased its diplomatic footprint, trade volume and cultural influence across Africa as it seeks to become a major economic player, diplomatic heavyweight and a cultural bridge between continents.

### **Opposition to boycott election as liberation front backs Tebboune for second term...**

Opposition party, **Rassemblement pour la Culture et la Démocratie (RCD)** announced on 8 July that it will boycott the upcoming 7 September elections due to the lack of free and fair competition and the growing crackdown on political journalists.<sup>16</sup> In the statement published on the local newspaper **Asharq Al-Awsat**, RCD party leader, **Othman Mazouz**, criticised restrictions imposed by government authorities on freedom of expression and assembly, noting that as a result, his party has decided not to participate in the polls.<sup>17</sup>

Mazouz's statements match those issued by several international organisations, including **United States-based Human Rights Watch (HRW)**. These organisations have called on Algerian authorities

<sup>8</sup> Africa News, 25 Jan 2023

<sup>9</sup> Middle East Monitor, 28 Jun 2024

<sup>10</sup> Middle East Monitor, 28 Jun 2024; Anadolu Agency, 21 Nov 2023

<sup>11</sup> Middle East Monitor, 28 Jun 2024

<sup>12</sup> Middle East Monitor, 28 Jun 2024

<sup>13</sup> Reuters, 21 Nov 2023; Middle East Monitor, 22 Nov 2023

<sup>14</sup> Anadolu Agency, 21 Nov 2023

<sup>15</sup> Anadolu Agency, 21 Nov 2023

<sup>16</sup> Middle East Monitor, 8 Jul 2024

<sup>17</sup> Middle East Monitor, 8 Jul 2024

to release all activists imprisoned for exercising their rights to expression, opinion and association.<sup>18</sup> These organisations have also urged Algeria's military regime to stop intimidating and targeting political opponents, denounced restrictions on their freedom of movement, and the excessive use of the terrorism law to launch cases against critics.<sup>19</sup>

In preparation for the election, the presidency announced on 8 June that Tebboune had signed a presidential decree (No. 182-24) to convene the electoral college for the upcoming 7 September elections.<sup>20</sup> The presidential decree, which was signed on the same day, also mandated a review of the electoral lists, which commenced on 12 June and concluded on 27 June.<sup>21</sup> A few days later, on 14 June, the ruling **Front de Libération Nationale (FLN)** announced that it would support Tebboune should he seek a second term, citing "*positive outcomes*" in his first term.<sup>22</sup>

Secretary general **Abdel Karim Ben Mubarak** addressed the FLN central committee, requesting on behalf of the attendees and in consideration of the positive outcomes achieved on several levels, that Tebboune vie for a second term.<sup>23</sup> He called Tebboune the most suitable candidate for the next presidential term. Ben Mubarak emphasised that Tebboune has successfully stabilised the pillars of the state and its institutions in a short time, rather than wasting time settling scores. Ben Mubarak added that the FLN will be an important factor in the September elections, noting the party:

*"Was and still is the strongest national force in the country because of its embrace of the liberation revolution values".<sup>24</sup>*

Tebboune was not in attendance as he was in Italy attending the G7 industrial summit. State-owned media service **Algeria Press Service (APS)** announced on 21 March that Algeria would hold elections on 7 September, three months ahead of schedule, per a decision by Tebboune.<sup>25</sup> APS did not provide further details on the surprising announcement which came shortly after a meeting chaired by Tebboune and attended by lawmakers, constitutional court officials and the army's chief of staff, **Saïd Chanegriha**.<sup>26</sup>

Per the constitution, Tebboune is eligible to run for a second and final term. Last year, parliamentary members also urged Tebboune, who turns 79 in November, to run for re-election, but he has not officially indicated whether he contest again. However, it is widely expected that he will be on the ballot.<sup>27</sup> This was also the view of a resident who told **Africa Risk Consulting Briefing (ARC Briefing)** in April that "*barring any shocking developments, Tebboune will compete for re-election and is fully expected to win*".<sup>28</sup>

Tebboune was elected for a five-year term with 58% of the vote in a sparsely attended December 2019 election. The election came after pro-democracy protests, known as the **Hirak Movement**, broke out in February 2019 and forced long-term president **Abdelaziz Bouteflika** (1999-2019) to step down.<sup>29</sup> The movement ended in early 2020 due to the **Covid-19** pandemic and a government ban on protests.

Since his election, Tebboune's government has also launched several legal proceedings against opponents, journalists, activists, and academics.<sup>30</sup> Thus far, only **Zoubida Assoul**, a lawyer and member of the opposition **L'Union pour le changement et le progrès (UCP)**, has announced her

<sup>18</sup> Middle East Monitor, 8 Jul 2024

<sup>19</sup> Middle East Monitor, 8 Jul 2024

<sup>20</sup> Arab News, 9 Jun 2024

<sup>21</sup> Arab News, 9 Jun 2024

<sup>22</sup> Middle East Monitor, 14 Jun 2024

<sup>23</sup> Middle East Monitor, 14 Jun 2024

<sup>24</sup> Middle East Monitor, 14 Jun 2024

<sup>25</sup> Algeria Press Service, 21 Mar 2024; France24, 21 Mar 2024

<sup>26</sup> France24, 21 Mar 2024

<sup>27</sup> Reuters, 21 Mar 2024

<sup>28</sup> Local resident, Algiers, Apr 2024

<sup>29</sup> France24, 21 Mar 2024

<sup>30</sup> France24, 21 Mar 2024

intention to challenge Tebboune for the presidency.<sup>31</sup> Assoul, 67 years old, is known for defending political prisoners and said in February that she felt “*confident*” that she could mount a formidable challenge against the ruling regime.<sup>32</sup> Assoul is not expected to mount a serious challenge to Tebboune and his military-supported regime that overwhelmingly dominates Algeria’s political system. However, RCD’s decision not to participate in the elections could cast doubts over the legitimacy of polls, as was the case in the 2019 elections, which was marred by mass boycotts, record low turnout and violent clashes between police and pro-democracy protestors

## Planner

2024 **(France)** President **Abdelmadjid Tebboune** to visit France;  
 Sep 2024 **(Algeria)** Presidential elections;  
 Dec 2024 **Vienna (Austria) Organization of the Petroleum Exporting Countries+ (OPEC+)** meeting;

## Chronology

9 Jul 2024 **Algiers (Algeria)** *Algeria Press Service*. **Rachid Hachichi**, the CEO of state-owned energy company **Sonatrach**, receives a high-level delegation from **Omani** company **Abraj Energy Services**, to discuss the implementation of the memorandum of understanding (MoU) concluded between the two companies;

8 Jul 2024 **Algiers (Algeria)** *Middle East Monitor*. Fourteen people, including 12 **Syrians**, are found dead after they got stranded in the Algerian desert near the border with **Libya** on their way to **Europe**;

6 Jul 2024 **Algiers (Algeria)** *Arab News*. Foreign minister **Ahmed Attaf** discusses the ongoing **Israel-Gaza** conflict with recently appointed **Egyptian** foreign affairs minister **Badr Abdelatty**;

5 Jul 2024 **Algiers (Algeria)** *Algeria Press Service*. The **World Bank**’s vice president for the **Middle East and North Africa (MENA)**, **Ousmane Dione**, commends Algeria for its progress made in economic reforms in recent years;

4 Jul 2024 **Algiers (Algeria)** *Reuters*. **Nigeria** is chosen to host the newly formed **Africa Energy Bank (AEB)**, beating three rival countries, including Algeria, for rights to the multilateral lender;

2 Jul 2024 **Algiers (Algeria)** *APS*. Defence ministry confirms the army arrested five terrorists, arms and ammunition in two operations in **Bordj Badji Mokhtar** and **Tamanrasset**;

1 Jul 2024 **Algiers (Algeria)** *AP*. Authorities arrest two journalists for publishing a video showing businesswomen protesting their treatment at a government-sponsored event;

30 Jun 2024 **Algiers (Algeria)** *Algeria Press Service*. State news publication, **Algeria Press Service**, says that passenger traffic at **Algiers International Airport** is set to surpass ten million passengers this year, exceeding the forecasts set previously, notably due to the diverse promotional offers launched by the national airline, **Air Algerie**;

27 Jun 2024 **Algiers (Algeria)** *North Africa Post*. The **United States** government denounced the harassment and prosecution endured by religious minorities in Algeria by government officials;

25 Jun 2024 **Algiers (Algeria)** *North Africa Post*. Human rights activists launch an urgent appeal to the **United Nations** to lift the blockade on the **Tindouf** camps in southwestern Algeria and

<sup>31</sup> Africa News, 22 Mar 2024

<sup>32</sup> Africa News, 22 Mar 2024

allow access to the camps, which are reportedly witnessing an unprecedented deterioration of human rights conditions;

24 Jun 2024 **Algiers (Algeria)** *Middle East Monitor*. **Turkey's** vice president, **Cevdet Yilmaz**, says in a media briefing in Algiers that Turkish companies' investment in Algeria exceeds \$6 billion;

23 Jun 2024 **Algiers (Algeria)** *Anadolu Agency*. Prime minister **Mohammed Nezir Elizabeth-Arbavi** meets with **Turkey's** vice president **Cevdet Yilmaz** to discuss bilateral relations;

20 Jun 2024 **Algiers (Algeria)** *North Africa Post*. Violent protests resume in **Tiaret** over water shortages;

### About Africa Risk Consulting:

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Please contact us by email [info@africariskconsulting.com](mailto:info@africariskconsulting.com) or call + 44 (0) 20 7078 4080

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