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Energy, mines, and renewable energy minister Mohamed Arkab, announces on 4 March that Algeria will overhaul its mining laws, marking a significant shift in the country's approach to industrial expansion and resource management. France's prime minister Francois Bayrou says during a press conference on 26 February that unless Algeria agrees to take back its citizens deported by French authorities, France will review a decades-old deal that makes it easier for Algerian citizens to migrate to France. Interior minister Ibrahim Murad begins an official visit to Spain on 24 February, the first by an Algerian official since the 2022 diplomatic rift between the two countries.

Algeria overhauls mining code to attract investment...

In a presentation before the national assembly's **Economic Affairs Committee** on 4 March, energy, mines, and renewable energy minister **Mohamed Arkab** announced that Algeria will overhaul its mining laws, marking a significant shift in the country's approach to industrial expansion and resource management.¹ Arkab noted that the proposed laws seek to accelerate investment, bolster national participation in strategic projects, expedite licensing, enhance regulatory oversight and strengthen public-private partnerships.² An official ministry statement also added that the proposed amendments are designed to remove bureaucratic hurdles and streamline administrative processes for acquiring mining licenses.³ The government hopes that this will allow for a quicker response to investment applications and subsequently attract both domestic and foreign investors.⁴

The cornerstone of the new legislation is the mandatory requirement for Algerian companies to participate in mining projects, with local firms entitled to hold up to a 20% stake in project capital.⁵ This new provision aligns with the country's broader economic strategy of safeguarding national interests while using foreign investment and expertise to stimulate sector growth.⁶

In a further effort to make the mining sector more appealing to foreign investors, the draft law offers tax benefits and financial incentives for high-value projects, while also extending the validity of mining permits, which will now be transferable and financeable.⁷ The government expects this move to increase liquidity and stimulate long-term investments, bolstering Algeria's position in the global mining industry.⁸

Other objectives of the proposed mining law include:

- Modernising access to geological and mining data by launching advanced digital platforms to ensure greater transparency and efficiency for prospective investors;
- Encouraging public-private partnerships to accelerate the transfer of technology and enhance value creation, while reinforcing strict compliance with technical and environmental standards;

¹ Ministry of energy, mines, and renewable energies, 4 Mar 2025

² Dzair Tube, 5 Mar 2025

³ Ministry of energy, mines, and renewable energies, 4 Mar 2025

⁴ Dzair Tube, 5 Mar 2025

⁵ Dzair Tube, 5 Mar 2025

⁶ Dzair Tube, 5 Mar 2025

⁷ Dzair Tube, 5 Mar 2025

⁸ Ministry of energy, mines, and renewable energies, 4 Mar 2025

- Empowering the country’s mining agencies by expanding their regulatory and oversight authority to ensure compliance and efficiency in project execution;
- Maximising the use of mining residues to minimise resource wastage and enhance extraction efficiency.⁹

President **Abdelmadjid Tebboune** (2019-present) has in the past also spoken publicly about developing rare earths, tungsten, phosphates, baryte and other minerals. Contacts at the energy, mines and renewable energy ministry also have indicated that authorities hope to develop production of “around 30 undeveloped minerals, such as gold, diamonds, cobalt, manganese, cerium or neodymium”.¹⁰ There has also been talk of producing lithium, and available geological surveys suggest major potential in copper, platinum group elements, uranium and others.¹¹

The proposed mining regulations signal a significant shift in Algeria’s economic strategy, reflecting the government’s ambition to rejuvenate its mineral industry, attract high-level investments and bolster its position in the global mining industry. This new code is particularly significant because Algeria has often been shunned by international mining companies, put off by legislation that “was anything but investor friendly”.¹² With this new mining code, authorities are completely changing this. Having struggled to develop the mining sector with domestic public and private companies alone, Algeria knows it needs foreign investment and expertise to bring these important resources into production - and is revolutionising its legislative approach accordingly.¹³

As Arkab noted, the local mining sector is still plagued by other significant challenges, including low investment in exploration and prospecting and insufficient geological data.¹⁴ These challenges have impeded production levels and increased reliance on imports for certain mineral resources, highlighting the urgency of reform to unlock the sector’s full potential. A properly implemented new mining code could help alleviate some of these challenges. Local and foreign forward-looking mining operators could benefit from Algeria’s potential and should start building relationships with the relevant authorities.¹⁵

France threatens to review migration pact in row over deportations...

France’s prime minister **Francois Bayrou** announced during a press conference on 26 February that unless Algeria agrees to take back its citizens deported by French authorities, France would review a decades-old deal that makes it easier for Algerian citizens to migrate to the country.¹⁶ Per a 1968 agreement Algerians enjoy several unique privileges under French migration laws, making it easier to move to, reside and work in France.¹⁷ However, already strained relations between the two countries have deteriorated further after an Algerian citizen, whom French authorities had long attempted unsuccessfully to repatriate, killed one person and injured three others in a knife attack in the city of **Mulhouse (Grand Est Region)** on 22 February. French President **Emmanuel Macron** (2017-present) called the attack an act of Islamist terrorism.¹⁸

Speaking on the incident, Bayrou told reporters that the incident was possible because the Algerian citizen was under orders to leave France and authorities presented him for repatriation 14 times but each time Algeria refused.¹⁹ Bayrou stressed that Algeria’s refusal to take back its deported citizens was a “direct attack” on the pact signed with Algerian authorities and France “will not accept it”.²⁰ He further noted that his government will over the next four to six weeks review Algeria’s

⁹ Dzair Tube, 5 Mar 2025

¹⁰ Yaqt, Mar 2025

¹¹ Yaqt, Mar 2025

¹² Yaqt, Mar 2025

¹³ Yaqt, Mar 2025

¹⁴ Dzair Tube, 5 Mar 2025

¹⁵ Yaqt, Mar 2025

¹⁶ Reuters, 26 Feb 2025

¹⁷ Middle East Monitor, 26 Feb 2025

¹⁸ Reuters, 22 Feb 2025

¹⁹ Reuters, 26 Feb 2025

²⁰ Le Monde, 27 Feb 2025

implementation of the 1968 agreement.²¹ France will present Algeria with a list of individuals it believes should be deported, but, Bayrou did not say how many they are but said it was considerable.²² French interior minister, **Bruno Retailleau**, who has repeatedly called for the 1968 pact to be reviewed following Algeria's refusal to take back its citizens, also said on 3 March that his team is currently preparing the list with hundreds of "dangerous" individuals to present to Algeria in preparation for their deportation.²³ If Algerian authorities deny the deportation orders, Bayrou said that advantages offered to Algerians under the 1968 pact would be "reconsidered", but stressed that there is already a "strong feeling that the agreement has been betrayed".²⁴

A major reason why Algeria is refusing deportation orders is because France recognised **Morocco's** sovereignty over the disputed **Western Sahara**. Morocco claims complete sovereignty over the Western Sahara, while Algeria backs the local **Sahrawi** population's right to self-determination and backs the separatist **Polisario Front** armed group. France in July 2024 became the second permanent **United Nations Security Council (UNSC)** member, after the **United States (US)** in 2020, to support Morocco's position. France's recognition of Morocco's autonomy plan in Western Sahara has been a source of a major diplomatic crisis between Algeria and France, but relations have been strained for decades given France's colonial past. France has emphasised that Moroccan sovereignty is the only way to resolve the long-running dispute, a decision which Algeria has called counterproductive. Following the recognition, Algeria withdrew its ambassador to France and downgraded its diplomatic representation to the level of chargé d'affaires in protest.

While diplomatic relations between the two countries have not been broken, French officials have since accused Algeria of blocking deportation orders and adopting a policy targeted at eliminating France's economic presence in the country, with trade dropping by as much as 30% since June 2023.²⁵ France's foreign minister **Jean-Noel Barrot** had also told lawmakers on 15 January that Macron would decide how to respond to what his government considers a growing "hostile posture" and the review of the 1968 pact is the result of that.²⁶ While Algerian authorities seek to strongly express their disapproval of France's support of Morocco's autonomy plan, it remains unclear whether they would willingly let the 1968 pact collapse. Algerians greatly value their access to France and past French decisions to reduce visas for **North African** countries caused major discontentment.

Signs of improving relations between Algeria and Spain since 2022 diplomatic crisis...

While Algeria's relations with France are deteriorating, its relations with **Spain** are improving following their 2022 diplomatic crisis, which was also linked to the Western Sahara issue. Spain's prime minister **Pedro Sánchez's** (2018-present) decided in March 2022 to recognise Morocco's autonomy plan for the Western Sahara as the most serious and credible political solution to end the dispute in the region (*see ARC Briefing Algeria Apr 2022*). Spain's support for Morocco's autonomy plan provoked a swift move by Algeria to suspend its friendship treaty with Spain, signed in 2002.

However, in a sign of reproachment Algeria's interior minister **Ibrahim Murad** began an official visit to Spain on 24 February, the first by an Algerian official since the diplomatic rift between the two countries.²⁷ During his visit to the Spanish capital, **Madrid**, Murad held talks with Spanish officials to discuss issues of bilateral cooperation but details of the discussions were not made available.

In another sign of improved relations, prior to Murad's visit, foreign minister **Ahmed Attaf** met on 21 February with his Spanish counterpart, **Jose Manuel Albares**, on the sidelines of the **G20** summit in **Johannesburg (South Africa)**.²⁸ In the meeting, the first between the two countries since the start of

²¹ Le Monde, 27 Feb 2025

²² Reuters, 26 Feb 2025

²³ Middle East Monitor, 4 Mar 2025

²⁴ Reuters, 26 Feb 2025

²⁵ Reuters, 15 Jan 2025

²⁶ Reuters, 15 Jan 2025

²⁷ Anadolu Agency, 24 Feb 2025

²⁸ Anadolu Agency, 24 Feb 2025

the 2022 crisis, Attaf and Albares discussed the developments in **Gaza (Palestine)** and emphasised the need to find a “*just and permanent settlement*”.²⁹ They also discussed ways in which the two countries can promote relations between themselves, particularly by developing cooperation and strengthening mutual trust.³⁰

While these events were the first major contacts since 2022, other significant signs of conciliation took place last year and in 2023. **Banque d’Algérie** (central bank) announced on 6 November 2024 the total removal of trade restrictions with Spain that were implemented following Sánchez’s decision (see *ARC Briefing Algeria Nov 2024*). Prior to this, Algeria reinstated its ambassador to Spain, **Abdelfettah Daghmoum**, on 8 April 2024 with Algerian officials stating that the return of the ambassador was prompted by Spain changing its stance to a more neutral one on the issue.³¹

While Algeria’s diplomatic relations with Spain have improved significantly, it is not unreasonable to expect them to become unstable again should Algeria suspect Spain of once again supporting Morocco’s autonomy plan – as it is currently doing to France (see above). However, the difference is that Spain did not retaliate against Algeria as France is currently doing.

Planner

2025 **Algiers (Algeria)** New **French** sanctions against Algeria expected

2026 **(Algeria)** National assembly elections

Chronology

18 Mar 2025 **Algiers (Algeria)** *RFI*. France’s justice minister **Gerald Darmanin** calls on his government to recall France’s ambassador to Algeria amid Algeria’s reluctance to receive back its nationals subject to deportation orders from the **European** country;

17 Mar 2025 **Algiers (Algeria)** *Morocco World News*. Less than two weeks after summoning the French ambassador **Stéphane Romatet** over planned military exercises with Morocco, Algeria has once again called in France’s representative, this time over what it claims are “*ridiculously low rents*” for French diplomatic properties;

16 Mar 2025 **Algiers (Algeria)** *Morocco World News*. French interior minister **Bruno Retailleau** says he will leave President **Emmanuel Macron**’s government if his country backs down from taking a firm stance against Algeria’s reluctance to accept the return of its nationals in France;

13 Mar 2025 **Algiers (Algeria)** *AFP*. A **French** government worker is charged in **Paris** (France) for allegedly providing secret information to Algeria;

13 Mar 2025 **Algiers (Algeria)** *Morocco World News*. Algeria is reported to have suspended its consular relations and services in the **French** municipal districts of **Nice, Marseille** and **Montpellier**;

10 Mar 2025 **Algiers (Algeria)** *El- Chorouk*. An Algerian court orders the temporary detention of former interior minister **Salah Eddine Dahmoune** and former chief of protocol, **Mokhtar Raqiq**, over alleged corruption;

7 Mar 2025 **Algiers (Algeria)** *Anadolu*. The **French** prosecutor refuses Algeria’s request to extradite former industry minister **Abdeslam Bouchouareb**, who has been living in France since 2019, and who is wanted in his country on charges of corruption;

7 Mar 2025 **Algiers (Algeria)** *Middle East Monitor*. Algeria and **Tunisia** discuss ways to enhance border cooperation to combat smuggling;

²⁹ Middle East Monitor, 22 Feb 2025

³⁰ Middle East Monitor, 22 Feb 2025

³¹ Middle East Monitor, 15 Apr 2024

6 Mar 2025 **Algiers (Algeria)** *Morocco World News*. Algeria issues a warning to **France** over upcoming joint military drills with **Morocco** in September near the Algerian border, calling the planned exercise a “provocative” action that could increase tensions between Algeria and France;

4 Mar 2025 **Algiers (Algeria)** *Middle East Monitor*. President **Abdelmadjid Tebboune** announces that he will not personally participate in the emergency **Arab League** summit hosted by **Egypt**;

3 Mar 2025 **Algiers (Algeria)** *Middle East Monitor*. **French** interior minister **Bruno Retailleau** says that his team is preparing a list of hundreds of “dangerous” individuals to present to Algerian authorities in preparation for their deportation;

2 Mar 2025 **Niamey (Niger)** *Jeune Afrique*. Nigerien media source **Air Info** reports that 11 Nigerien soldiers were killed on 28 February near the **Ekadé Malane** area, close to the **Algerian** border, in an attack claimed by **Groupe de Soutien à l’islam et aux Musulmans (GSIM)**;

1 Mar 2025 **Algiers (Algeria)** *Morocco World News*. The **United Kingdom (UK) Foreign, Commonwealth & Development Office (FCDO)** issues “do not travel” warnings for 69 countries around the world, mainly due to concerns over safety and security, including Algeria, **Tunisia, Libya, and Egypt**;

28 Feb 2025 **Algiers (Algeria)** *Reuters*. **French** President **Emmanuel Macron** says he is concerned about the detention and the health of Franco-Algerian author **Boualem Sansal** in Algeria, and added that it was time to review agreements about immigration between the two countries;

27 Feb 2025 **Algiers (Algeria)** *RFI*. **Conseil de la Nation** (upper house of parliament) suspends relations with **France’s Senate** as tensions between the two countries continue;

26 Feb 2025 **Algiers (Algeria)** *Reuters*. **France** warns it will review a decades-old agreement with Algeria that makes it easier for Algerians to move to France unless Algeria agrees to take back Algerians who have been deported by France;

24 Feb 2025 **Algiers (Algeria)** *Middle East Monitor*. Interior minister **Ibrahim Murad** visits **Spain** to discuss bilateral cooperation in the first diplomatic visit to Spain since the 2022 diplomatic crisis;

24 Feb 2025 **Algiers (Algeria)** *TBS News*. Algeria’s ambassador to **Bangladesh, Abdelouahab Saidani**, meets Bangladesh’s chief advisor **Muhammad Yunus** to reaffirm full support of the interim government and that the two nations intend to deepen trade and investment ties;

23 Feb 2025 **Algiers (Algeria)** *Morocco World News*. **France’s** interior minister **Bruno Retailleau** says that the latest knife attack committed by a suspect of Algerian nationality happened because of Algeria’s regime refusal to cooperate with French authorities;

22 Feb 2025 **Algiers (Algeria)** *Middle East Monitor*. Foreign minister **Ahmed Attaf** discusses the developments in the **Palestinian** issue with his **Spanish** counterpart **Jose Manuel Albares** on Friday and stressed the need to find a “just and permanent settlement” based on the two-state solution;

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