ARC

AFRICA RISK CONSULTING

Algeria Monthly Briefing January 2026

Algeria Summary 28 January 2026

The Council of the Nation on 22 January unanimously approves a bill that labels French colonial rule in the country between 1830 and 1962 as a state crime, demanding an official apology and reparations. The presidency on 24 January unveils a set of proposed "technical" constitutional amendments aimed at refining institutional procedures rather than overhauling the political system. Algeria outlines an ambitious $18.5 billion railway expansion programme aimed at modernising transport infrastructure, reducing logistics costs, and enhancing economic integration, especially in the country's underdeveloped southern regions.

Algeria approves law criminalising French colonisation…

Algeria's upper house, the **Council of the Nation**, on 22 January unanimously approved a bill that labels **French** colonial rule in the country between 1830 and 1962 as a state crime, demanding an official apology and reparations. The lower house, the **People's National Assembly**, already passed the legislation on 24 December during a highly symbolic session marked by overt displays of nationalism. The 27-article law details crimes attributed to French colonial rule, including nuclear testing, extrajudicial executions, physical and psychological torture, and systematic resource plundering.

However, despite approving the legislation, lawmakers in the upper house lodged formal reservations on nearly half of the bill's provisions that the lower house had approved in December. This includes its most contentious articles that demand that France issue an official apology and provide reparations for colonial-era crimes. The **National Defence Committee** mainly recommended the reservations, affecting 12 to 13 of the bill's 27 articles. The committee argued that demands for compensation and apologies needed further revision to ensure legal coherence and alignment with Algeria's *"sovereign position"*. In practice, this means prioritising formal recognition of colonial crimes over legally enforceable reparations claims. This echoes views expressed by President **Abdelmadjid Tebboune** (2014-present) on 30 December 2024, when he said that Algeria seeks recognition rather than financial compensation, stating that the sacrifices of Algeria's martyrs *"cannot be compensated with billions of dollars"*. The disputed provisions have now been referred to a joint parliamentary committee for reworking.

Despite these reservations, Algerian officials characterised the law as a historic milestone. Council of the Nation speaker, **Azzouz Nasri**, described it as a permanent record of the crimes of French settler colonialism. Lower house speaker, **Ibrahim Boughali**, also stated that the legislation sent *"a clear message, both internally and externally, that Algeria's national memory is neither erasable nor negotiable".* However, the French foreign ministry on 24 January described the bill as a *"manifestly hostile initiative",* and signalled its intention to resume dialogue to improve relations with Algeria. Bilateral relations have deteriorated in recent years, particularly after France recognised **Morocco**'s claim over **Western Sahara** in 2024, a move that Algeria strongly opposes in favour of **Sahrawi** self-determination and the separatist **Polisario Front**.

Within Algeria, the upper house's decision to dilute the most provocative clauses has prompted questions about whether the government is backpedalling, seeking appeasement, or simply managing escalation. However, given that Algeria has demanded a formal apology from France for decades, it remains uncertain whether that demand will be easily withdrawn. Although French President **Emmanuel Macron** (2017-present) described colonisation as a *"crime against humanity"* when he first ran for president in 2017, he has not issued a formal apology since assuming office. However, by

criminalising colonisation while setting aside its most legally contentious demands, Algeria signals both resolve and restraint - affirming memory, sovereignty, and political leverage without entirely closing the door to future engagement.

Presidency proposes constitutional amendments

The presidency on 24 January unveiled a set of proposed *"technical"* constitutional amendments aimed at refining institutional procedures rather than overhauling the political system. The proposals, presented during a seminar prime minister **Sifi Ghrieb** chaired, focused on two draft texts - a limited amendment to the constitution and a revised organic law governing the electoral system. The seminar brought together senior state officials, political party leaders, and representatives of the election authority, **Autorité nationale indépendante des élections (ANIE)** (independent national authority for elections), signalling an attempt to frame the reforms as consultative rather than unilateral.

At the heart of the initiative are ten proposals described by the presidency as technical, although several have clear political and institutional implications. One of the most notable changes would be the introduction of a minimum educational qualification requirement for candidates seeking the presidency. While the specific level has not been stipulated, the proposal seems aimed at formalising eligibility criteria rather than redefining the nature of executive power. Other amendments focus on procedural clarity. These include clarifying the process for the presidential oath, as the current constitution does not clearly specify the body before which the oath must be taken or the authority responsible for administering it. The presidency has also proposed granting the president the authority to call early local elections, thereby strengthening executive discretion in managing political timelines.

Judicial governance features prominently in the draft. The proposals would eliminate the requirement for the president to seek the binding opinion of the **High Judicial Council** when appointing or transferring senior judges and prosecutors. The presidency argues that this is unnecessary, as the president already chairs the council. Simultaneously, changes are suggested to the council's composition, removing parliamentary appointees, trade union representatives, and the head of the **Conseil national des Droits de l'Homme (CNDH)** (national human rights council), while adding the attorney general of the supreme court. These modifications collectively indicate a move towards a more streamlined and more executive-focused judicial structure.

Institutional continuity is another key theme in the drafts. The term of the Council of the Nation speaker would be extended from three to six years to maintain experience and prevent disruption caused by frequent partial renewals. Parliamentary sessions would also be made more flexible, with ordinary sessions lasting ten months from September. The constitution currently states that parliament meets in two ordinary sessions per year, each with a minimum duration of four months. Lastly, the presidency proposed expanding the mandate of the ANIE. While the 2020 Constitution entrusted it with supervising elections, the new amendment would explicitly assign it responsibility for material and logistical preparations, addressing what officials describe as a constitutional gap.

Overall, the proposed amendments are presented as corrective measures aimed at stabilising institutions, clarifying authority, and preventing constitutional deadlock, while subtly increasing presidential influence within Algeria's political system.

Algeria unveils $18.5 billion railway development plans

Nabil Boubaya, central director of the **Agence Nationale d'Etudes et de Suivi de la Réalisation des Investissements Ferroviaires (ANESRIF)** (national railway investment design and implementation supervision agency), announced that the government has allocated approximately DZD 2.4 trillion ($18.5 billion) to upgrading and extending the national rail network. The expansion programme emphasises both rehabilitating existing lines and expanding rail connectivity into new areas. Over the past few years, this investment programme has already expanded Algeria's railway network from around 4,000km to 5,738 km, reflecting a sustained push to reposition rail as a strategic pillar of national development.

One of the flagship projects within this new expansion programme is the **Laghouat–Ghardaïa–El Menéa Railway**, a new 495km line ANESRIF is currently developing. The line is designed to connect key southern cities and improve access to markets for agricultural and industrial products, addressing long-standing infrastructure gaps in southern Algeria. International financing has played a central role in advancing the project. The **African Development Bank (AfDB)** approved on 12 December a €747.3m ($887m) loan to fund the first phase of the Laghouat–Ghardaïa–El Menéa line. AfDB country manager for Algeria, **Abdoulkader Dileita**, said on 12 December that the project is expected to generate long-term economic benefits by reshaping trade flows and stimulating development in the south. Dileita further described the railway as *"transformational"*, highlighting its potential to alter regional economic dynamics over time.

Rail transport is regarded as a strategic tool for reducing freight and passenger costs, enhancing mobility, and strengthening regional integration. In this context, Algeria's railway investment programme exemplifies a broader effort to utilise large-scale infrastructure to improve territorial cohesion, alleviate logistical constraints, and support economic growth beyond the country's traditional centres - positioning rail as a means of structural economic policy rather than merely transport.

Planner

2026 **(Algeria)** Algeria set to reach deal with **United States (US)**-headquartered **Exxon** and **Chevron**;

2026 **(Algeria)** National assembly elections

Chronology10 Dec 2025 **Algiers (Algeria)** *Algeria Press Service*. President **Abdelmadjid Tebboune** meets with **El-Fadjr El-Djadid** leader **Tahar Benbaïbeche**, as part of ongoing consultations with Algeria's political parties;

25 Jan 2026 **Algiers (Algeria)** *Algeria Press Service.* President **Abdelmadjid Tebboune** chairs a **Council of Ministers** meeting focused on the launch of the **Oued Amizour** zinc and lead mine and progress on a mining railway linking phosphate production areas to **Annaba** port;

23 Jan 2026 **Algiers (Algeria)** *Bloomberg.* The **Progress**, an oil tanker carrying approximately 730,000 barrels and under sanction for transporting **Russian** oil, encounters difficulties off the coast of Algeria and is now drifting in the **Mediterranean Sea**;

21 Jan 2026 **Algiers (Algeria)** *Algeria Press Service*. President **Abdelmadjid Tebboune** says Algeria places **African** cooperation at the core of its foreign policy, reaffirming Algeria's commitment to solidarity-based south-south cooperation;

20 Jan 2026 **Algiers (Algeria)** *Anadolu Ajansı*. Authorities say that at least five people have been killed in **Tunisia** and Algeria after heavy rains triggered floods and caused severe disruptions in the two countries;

16 Jan 2026 **Algiers (Algeria)** *African Union*. **African Union (AU) Commission** chairperson **Mahmoud Ali Youssouf**, congratulates Algeria on the successful launch of its **Alsat-3A** earth observation satellite, marking a significant advance in Africa's space and geospatial capabilities;

15 Jan 2026 **Algiers (Algeria)** *Algeria Press Service*. President **Abdelmadjid Tebboune** receives **Somalia**'s education minister **Farah Sheikh Abdulkadir Mohamed**, who serves as special envoy of Somali President **Hassan Sheikh Mohamud**, reflecting ongoing diplomatic engagement;

14 Jan 2026 **Algiers (Algeria)** *Africa News*. President **Abdelmadjid Tebboune** says he would regularise the status of young Algerians living abroad *"in vulnerable and illegal situations"*;

14 Jan 2026 **Algiers (Algeria)** *Reuters*. The **United States (US)** President **Donald Trump** administration is suspending processing of immigrant visas for applicants from 75 countries, including Algeria, as part of US' intensifying immigration crackdown;

10 Jan 2026 **Algiers (Algeria)** *Algeria Press Service*. Interior, local authorities and transport minister **Saïd Sayoud** receives **Saudi Arabia**'s ambassador to Algeria, **Abdullah Al-Busairi**;

8 Jan 2026 **Algiers (Algeria)** *BBC*. Algeria's football federation issues an apology to **Congolese** superfan **Michel Nkuka Mboladinga**, a standout figure at the **Africa Cup of Nations (AFCON)** in **Morocco**, after Algerian player **Mohamed Amine Amoura** faced criticism for mocking Mboladinga's **Patrice Lumumba** costume by theatrically falling to the ground;

4 Jan 2026 **Algiers (Algeria)** *Reuters*. President **Abdelmadjid Tebboune** reportedly dismisses **Bank of Algeria** (central bank) governor **Salah Eddine Taleb** and appoints deputy governor **Mouatassem Boudiaf** as acting governor, with no reason given for the decision;

1 Jan 2026 **Algiers (Algeria)** *Algeria Press Service*. Interior minister **Said Sayoud** holds a meeting with provincial governors focusing on strengthening coordination between central authorities and local administrations to deliver development projects;

31 Dec 2025 **Algiers (Algeria)** *Algeria Press Service*. President **Abdelmadjid Tebboune** announces to both houses of parliament that Algeria will continue reforms and sustainable development programmes, citing verified progress across sectors including infrastructure, mining, solar energy, rail transport and new water projects for **Tindouf** and **Tamanrasset**;

25 Jan 2026 **Algiers (Algeria)** *Anadolu Ajansı*. Lawmakers pass a law that declares **France**'s colonisation of the country a state crime and demands reparations and an apology;

20 Jan 2026 **Algiers (Algeria)** *Anadolu Ajansı*. Parliament opens debate on a draft law that seeks to criminalise **French** colonial rule between 1830 and 1962;

17 Dec 2025 **Algiers (Algeria)** *Algeria Press Service*. Prime minister **Sifi Ghrieb** receives **Chad**'s petroleum, mines and geology minister, **Ndolenodji Alixe Naimbaye**, to discuss strengthening bilateral cooperation;

16 Dec 2025 **Algiers (Algeria)** *Algeria Press Service*. **South Korea**'s ambassador to Algeria, **You Ki Jun**, notes that Algeria is a strategic partner for South Korea, highlighting the strong level reached in bilateral relations across multiple sectors;

About Africa Risk Consulting:

Africa Risk Consulting (ARC) is a pan-African consulting company that provides timely, relevant information and advice that enables its clients to take informed investment decisions and to safeguard their reputations.

ARC's core consulting services include integrity due diligence and corporate investigations, political advisory and country assessments, opportunity monitoring and reputation risk management. Most relevant to private equity firms is ARC's integrity due diligence and corporate investigations capability. Specifically, ARC offers pre-deal integrity checks to highlight red flags before negotiations start; full detailed multi-jurisdictional reputation due diligence; and supplier and senior hire vetting and repeat due diligence for compliance programmes. ARC is unique in that it offers a 10-day delivery for a routine integrity due diligence. ARC also offers a suite of corporate investigations services from immediate investigation, evidence gathering, e-discovery, forensic accounting and whistleblower support on one end to crisis media management and regular monitoring on the other.

www.africariskconsulting.com

About ARC Briefing:

ARC Briefing is ARC's essential business information service.

Companies at any stage in their Africa expansion, whether building or communicating an Africa strategy, investing directly, expanding current operations, financing other investors, doing the legal leg-work or researching the Africa growth trend, need ARC Briefing.

ARC Briefing is an information service keeping you:

- Up to date with Country Chronologies of business-critical events
- In the know via Country Briefings on political, economic, business and operating trends. Written in-country, ARC experts analyse and comment
- Ahead with Country Planner which details future elections, budgets, regulatory changes etc.

www.africariskconsulting.com

Getting in touch

Please contact us by email info@africariskconsulting.com

Africa Risk Consulting (ARC) Pty Ltd expressly forbids the collection of information and content from ARC Briefing as data to train generative artificial intelligence models.

© Africa Risk Consulting (ARC)