

AFRICA RISK CONSULTING

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Algeria Summary 19 February 2026

Algeria moves cautiously towards mending strained ties with France, while relations with the United Arab Emirates (UAE) continue to deteriorate. The United States (US) Mission to the United Nations (UN) announces convenes rare discussions involving long-standing rivals Morocco and Algeria over the future of Western Sahara. International Monetary Fund (IMF) managing director, Kristalina Georgieva, praises Algeria for the economic reforms it has undertaken in recent years, including export diversification beyond hydrocarbons. President Abdelmadjid Tebboune (2019-present) inaugurates a 950km railway linking the remote Gara Djebilet iron-ore deposit to the national rail network, enabling large-scale exploitation of the largest iron ore reserve in North Africa.

Algeria moves closer to France as ties with the UAE deteriorate

Algeria is simultaneously recalibrating key external relationships, moving to cautiously mend strained ties with **France** while relations with the **United Arab Emirates (UAE)** continue to deteriorate, underscoring a more selective and interest-driven foreign policy posture. Algeria and France [agreed](#) on 17 February to reactivate a high-level security coordination mechanism covering judicial cooperation, policing, intelligence sharing, and migration-related issues. The announcement followed meetings in Algiers between President **Abdelmadjid Tebboune** (2019-present) and French interior minister **Laurent Nunez**, marking the most senior French visit in months. Nunez described the move as an effort to restore “*normal security relations*” with implementation expected to “*as quickly as possible*” and continue at a high operational level.

Security coordination has [emerged](#) as the principal channel for re-engagement after earlier attempts at rapprochement collapsed in April 2025, following the detention of an Algerian diplomat in France. Relations were further strained by France’s July 2024 decision to back **Morocco’s** autonomy plan for **Western Sahara**, a shift Algeria strongly opposed (*see ARC Briefing Algeria Jan 2026*). While the reactivation of the mechanism signals renewed dialogue, officials have been careful to avoid framing it as full normalisation, with progress on migration and judicial cooperation likely to determine the pace and depth of future engagement.

By contrast, Algeria’s relationship with the UAE is moving in the opposite direction. **Dubai-based** carrier **Emirates** on 13 February [confirmed](#) plans to end flights to Algeria on 3 February 2027 after Algeria on 7 February formally triggered withdrawal procedures from their 2013 bilateral air services agreement. Although flights remain unchanged for now, the decision sets a countdown toward the suspension of traffic rights unless a new framework is negotiated. The move reflects broader political tensions, with Algerian officials [accusing](#) the UAE of interference in regional affairs and highlighting divergent positions on conflicts in **North Africa** and the **Sahel**. For Algeria, the termination reduces direct connectivity with the **Gulf** and may redirect traffic toward hubs such as **Istanbul (Turkey)** and **Doha (Qatar)**. For Emirates, it marks the loss of a long-standing **North African** market.

Taken together, these developments point to a very practical, interest-driven approach to foreign relations. Algeria seems ready to improve or scale back ties whenever it feels its political or strategic interests are being threatened, whether those concerns are real or simply perceived. This pattern has shown up repeatedly in its relationship with France, where periods of cooperation have often been followed by sudden diplomatic tensions. As a result, the current security re-engagement with France should be seen as conditional rather than a lasting reset, and it would not be surprising if relations cooled again should France take positions that Algeria finds unacceptable. The growing rift with the

UAE follows the same logic, with Algeria choosing to pull back where political and strategic differences have become too pronounced.

As US pushes Western Sahara talks

The **United States (US) Mission to the United Nations (UN)** [announced](#) on 9 February that it recently convened rare discussions involving long-standing rivals Morocco and Algeria over the future of Western Sahara, as the US seeks to push forward a resolution to one of **Africa's** longest-running territorial disputes. According to the US mission, senior delegations from the US and UN facilitated discussions in **Madrid (Spain)** with Algeria, Morocco, **Mauritania** and the Western Sahara separatist group **Polisario Front**, which Algeria backs.

The discussions, which follow recent visits to **Algiers** by **Massad Boulos**, US President **Donald Trump's** (2017-2021; 2025-present) regional envoy, focused on implementing the 31 October **UN Security Council (UNSC)** [resolution](#) on Western Sahara, a resource-rich **Atlantic** territory claimed by Morocco but contested by Polisario (*see ARC Briefing Morocco Nov 2025*). However, the US did not provide details on the substance of the discussions or indicate whether any progress was made.

Diplomatic relations between Morocco and Algeria have been severed since 2021, with Western Sahara remaining a central source of tension alongside Morocco's normalisation of relations with **Israel**. However, a push for a solution has intensified toward a political settlement after the UN signalled openness to Morocco's proposal for limited autonomy for Western Sahara under Moroccan sovereignty, but Algeria and the Polisario have remained steadfast in their objections.

During Trump's second term, he has emphasised his role as a global peacemaker while pursuing a **Nobel Peace Prize**. US recognition of Moroccan sovereignty in 2020 helped spur investment in Western Sahara, with countries such as France and Spain later adopting similar positions. However, [critics](#) argue that several initiatives he has pursued have produced limited tangible results. Polisario continues to claim periodic attacks on Moroccan forces, though these are difficult to independently verify. Speaking on the matter, a local analyst told **Africa Risk Consulting (ARC)** criticised US involvement,

"Such decades-long tensions won't end just because Trump wants them to end. Look at DRC, has the US peace deal ended fighting there?"

IMF chief commends Algeria's structural reforms...

International Monetary Fund (IMF) managing director **Kristalina Georgieva** on 4 February [commended](#) Algeria for the economic reforms it has undertaken in recent years, highlighting progress in investment promotion, digitisation, and export diversification beyond hydrocarbons. Georgieva, who was in the country to attend the **North Africa: Connecting Continents, Creating Opportunities conference** on 5 February, co-hosted by the IMF and the **Bank of Algeria** (central bank), described Algeria's economic base as *"already strong"*, noting that recent reforms are reinforcing these foundations. This also marked Georgieva's first-ever visit to Algeria.

Georgieva [acknowledged](#) a series of local policy and institutional changes that have improved the investment climate, including new legislation governing investment and land access, the creation of the **Agence Algérienne de Promotion de l'Investissement (API)** (agency for investment promotion), and the ongoing digitalisation of public administration. She said that together, these measures are *"helping to reduce red tape"* and enhancing transparency, contributing to a significant expansion in non-hydrocarbon exports over the past five years. Georgieva further noted that Algeria has rebounded strongly from the **Covid-19** pandemic, with economic growth remaining steady, supported by high levels of public investment, while inflationary pressures have moderated. She also highlighted government priorities in strengthening digital infrastructure, transport networks and the energy sector as key drivers of this resilience.

Looking ahead, Georgieva [observed](#) that Algeria is well-positioned to benefit from global economic shifts. Advances in digital capacity align with broader technological change, while the restructuring of

global supply chains presents opportunities to attract investment and deepen trade. At the same time, she explained that expanded internet access has supported a growing startup ecosystem, and continued investment in ports, railways and logistics could reduce trade costs and strengthen Algeria's integration into regional and global value chains. She also emphasised Algeria's significant renewable energy potential - particularly in solar power and green hydrogen - which combined with its established hydrocarbon base, positions the country to emerge as a regional energy hub supporting industrial development, technology transfer and job creation across borders.

Georgieva [concluded](#) by stressing that the Algiers conference comes at a time when regional cooperation is increasingly vital. In an environment marked by geopolitical uncertainty and shifting trade patterns, she said deeper regional integration can enhance economic resilience and promote more diversified and sustainable growth. Lastly, Georgieva added that her visit represents an opportunity to further strengthen the IMF's partnership with the Algerian authorities.

Georgieva's comments are a strong external validation of Algeria's current economic trajectory, suggesting that recent reforms are both credible and beginning to deliver tangible results. Coming from the head of the IMF, this endorsement carries real weight: it reassures the authorities that they are broadly on the right track, strengthens Algeria's standing with investors and international partners, and reinforces the government's domestic reform narrative. At the same time, her emphasis on diversification, regional integration, and the energy transition signals where momentum is expected to continue, positioning Algeria as a more resilient economy if reforms are sustained.

China-built railway enables Algeria to tap vast Gara Djebilet iron ore reserves

Algeria has taken a major step toward economic diversification with the [inauguration](#) of a 950km railway linking the remote **Gara Djebilet** iron-ore deposit to the national rail network, enabling large-scale exploitation of the largest iron ore reserve in North Africa. Tebboune officially opened the railway, which is central to Algeria's long-standing efforts to reduce its dependence on hydrocarbons, on 1 February.

Built by Algerian state-owned companies in [partnership](#) with **China Railway Construction Corporation (CRCC)**, the line connects the mine in Algeria's western desert near the Moroccan border to **Tindouf** (Tindouf Province) and **Béchar** (Béchar Province), before linking to existing tracks leading to the **Mediterranean** coast and the city of **Oran** (Oran Province). Oran hosts a major steel complex operated by **Turkey's Tosyali Holding**, which will process part of the mine's output.

Discovered in 1952, Gara Djebilet remained largely undeveloped for decades due to its isolation and high processing costs. The deposit is [estimated](#) to contain around 3.5 billion tonnes of iron ore, with approximately 1.7 billion tonnes considered exploitable using current technology. Algeria's state-owned mining subsidiary **Feraal**, working alongside China's **Sinosteel** and other partners, is overseeing the project.

Initial production is expected to reach four million tonnes per year, rising to 12 million tonnes by 2030, with long-term potential of up to 50 million tonnes annually. The first shipment of ore has already been transported for processing. Once fully operational, the project could significantly reduce Algeria's reliance on imported iron ore and save an estimated \$1.2 billion per year, reinforcing its push to diversify away from oil and gas, which still accounts for over three-quarters of export earnings and about half of state revenue.

This development comes after **Agence Nationale d'Etudes et de Suivi de la Réalisation des Investissements Ferroviaires (ANESRIF)** (national railway investment design and implementation supervision agency) central director, **Nabil Boubaya**, [announced](#) in January that the government allocated approximately DZD 2.4 trillion (\$18.5 billion) to upgrading and extending the national rail network (*see ARC Briefing Algeria Jan 2026*). The expansion programme focuses on rehabilitating existing lines while extending rail connectivity into new areas. As demonstrated by the new railway, rail transport is increasingly being used not only to improve mobility and regional integration, but

also to ease logistical bottlenecks and support economic activity beyond Algeria's traditional centres - positioning rail as a tool of structural economic policy rather than simply a transport investment.

Planner

2026 (**Algeria**) National assembly elections

Chronology

18 Feb 2026 **Algiers (Algeria)** *Algeria Press Service*. Algeria is prioritising \$1 billion of desalination plants in its drought-prone northwest, seeking to save freshwater for agriculture that's becoming increasingly important to the country's under-pressure economy;

17 Feb 2026 **Algiers (Algeria)** *Algeria Press Service*. During his visit to Algiers, **French** interior minister **Laurent Nunez** meets with President **Abdelmadjid Tebboune** and other high-ranking officials to express his satisfaction with the current state of bilateral relations;

16 Feb 2026 **Algiers (Algeria)** *Africa News*. French interior minister **Laurent Nuñez** kicks off a two-day trip to Algeria in an effort to revive security cooperation between the two countries;

15 Feb 2026 **Algiers (Algeria)** *Algeria Press Service*. President **Abdelmadjid Tebboune** holds bilateral talks with **Nigerien** junta leader **Abdourahamane Tiani** during Tiani's official working visit to Algeria, accompanied by delegations from both countries;

13 Feb 2026 **Algiers (Algeria)** *North Africa Post*. **Germany**-headquartered **Jumia Technologies AG** says it will put an end to its operations in Algeria by the first quarter of 2026, as the company seeks to shift focus to its strongest **African** markets;

12 Feb 2026 **Algiers (Algeria)** *Algeria Press Service*. Foreign affairs minister **Ahmed Attaf** holds bilateral talks with **Namibia's** international relations and trade minister **Selma Ashipala-Musavyi** on the sidelines of the **African Union Executive Council** meeting;

10 Feb 2026 **Algiers (Algeria)** *Algeria Press Service*. Foreign minister **Ahmed Attaf** arrives in **Addis Ababa (Ethiopia)** to attend the 48th ordinary session of the **African Union (AU) Executive Council**;

7 Feb 2026 **Algiers (Algeria)** *Reuters*. Algeria has begun the process of cancelling its air services agreement with the **United Arab Emirates (UAE)**, signed in **Abu Dhabi** in May 2013, without giving any immediate reason for the move;

7 Feb 2026 **Algiers (Algeria)** *IMF*. **International Monetary Fund (IMF)** managing director **Kristalina Georgieva** concludes her first visit to Algeria, where she met with President **Abdelmadjid Tebboune**;

5 Feb 2026 **Algiers (Algeria)** *Algeria Press Service*. President **Abdelmadjid Tebboune** meets **International Monetary Fund (IMF)** managing director **Kristalina Georgieva** in Algiers, with senior government officials and the acting central bank governor in attendance;

5 Feb 2026 **Algiers (Algeria)** *APA News*. For the first time in over two decades, the heads of Algeria's consular posts gathered in Algiers for a high-stakes seminar aimed at overhauling the state's engagement with its citizens living abroad;

4 Feb 2026 **Algiers (Algeria)** *Algeria Press Service*. **International Monetary Fund (IMF)** managing director **Kristalina Georgieva** praises Algeria's recent progress in improving the investment climate, digitising public administration and diversifying exports beyond hydrocarbons, noting that non-oil exports have more than doubled in five years;

3 Feb 2026 **Algiers (Algeria)** *Algeria Press Service*. President **Abdelmadjid Tebboune** meets **Portugal's** state and foreign affairs minister, **Paulo Rangel**, underscoring ongoing diplomatic engagement;

1 Feb 2026 **Algiers (Algeria)** *Algeria Press Service*. President **Abdelmadjid Tebboune** launches the **Gara Djebilet–Tindouf–Bechar** railway line, a strategic western mining corridor in Bechar;

28 Jan 2026 **Algiers (Algeria)** *US embassy in Algeria*. **United States (US)** senior advisor for **Arab** and **African** affairs **Massad Boulos** returned to Algeria to meet with President **Abdelmadjid Tebboune** and senior members of the government to discuss issues of mutual concern;

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;

About Africa Risk Consulting:

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