

AFRICA RISK CONSULTING

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Algeria Summary 25 September 2026

Two weeks after providing military aircraft to support Niger's government following a coup attempt in late August, Algeria agrees to collaborate with Mali on regional security, underscoring Algeria's efforts to strengthen relations with its military-led neighbours after several years of tense diplomacy. Algeria announces on 10 September that it had decided to terminate diplomatic relations with the United Arab Emirates (UAE) after "exhausting" all possible avenues to maintain ties between the two countries. Algeria is considering expanding the use of the death penalty after 33 years without carrying out an execution, a decision human rights organisations criticise.

Algeria strengthens military relations with Mali and Niger

A few weeks after providing military aircraft to support Niger's government following a coup attempt in late August, Algeria agreed on 14 September to [collaborate](#) with Mali on regional security matters, highlighting Algeria's efforts to strengthen relations with its military-led neighbours after several years of tense diplomatic relations. In the highest-profile visit to Mali since it reestablished diplomatic ties with Algeria in July, prime minister **Sifi Ghrieb** met with his Malian counterpart **Abdoulaye Maïga** on 14 September [noting](#) "we will strengthen our joint efforts for greater security, stability, development and prosperity".

A statement from Maïga's office also said Ghrieb described the two countries as having a "robust foundation" for developing future cooperation in areas of mutual interest, including advancing major infrastructure initiatives such as the **Trans-Saharan Highway**. The cordial nature of Ghrieb and Maïga's engagement represents a significant improvement in bilateral relations, following a sharp [deterioration](#) in April 2025 when Algeria shot down a Malian military surveillance drone, claiming it had entered Algerian airspace.

Mali rejected this explanation, arguing that the drone had crashed within its own territory and describing Algeria's actions as an act of aggression. The incident led both countries to close their airspace to each other's aircraft and withdraw their ambassadors. Mali took it further and took Algeria to the **International Court of Justice (ICJ)**, accusing Algeria of aggression after it shot down the reconnaissance drone in April. In support of Mali, the fellow **Alliance des États du Sahel (AES)** (alliance of Sahel States) member states, Niger and **Burkina Faso**, also recalled their ambassadors. Algeria also once served as a key mediator between Mali and **Tuareg** rebels, who collaborated with **al-Qaeda**-affiliated **Jama'at Nusrat al-Islam wal-Muslimin (JNIM)** to [launch](#) a major attack on the Malian capital **Bamako** in April, but the two countries have grown apart since the military coups in 2020 and 2022.

But in a major thaw in diplomatic relations, Algerian state media [reported](#) on 10 July that, after more than a year of tensions, Algeria and Mali had agreed to restore diplomatic relations, reopen their airspace to civilian and military flights, and return their ambassadors to their respective posts. Ghrieb's visit to Mali and meeting with Maïga mark another significant step towards reducing tensions and rebuilding cooperation between the two countries.

In another indication that Algeria is increasingly pushing to reengage and strengthen relations with its military-led neighbours on its southern flank after several years of tense diplomatic relations, the country provided military support to Niger. Algeria's defence ministry [announced](#) on 30 August that the country had deployed four **Russian**-made Sukhoi Su-30s military jets to Niger to support the ruling junta after it fought off an attempted coup by mutinous soldiers on 29 August. The ministry

further said in its statement that the deployment followed a request from Nigerien leaders, and that Algerian authorities would assist in *“countering the attempt to destabilise the brotherly nation”*. While Nigerien authorities, with support from Russian paramilitary group **Africa Corps** (previously called **Wagner Group**), brought the capital under control and regained control of critical targeted sites, the country has in recent months faced increasingly frequent and coordinated attacks by JNIM and the **Islamic State Sahel Province (ISSP)**.

Algeria’s efforts to reengage with Mali and Niger reflect its deep concern about regional security. This was further supported by the Algerian defence ministry’s statement on its military operation in Niger, which [outlined](#) *“Algeria’s firm commitment and determination to continue its efforts to strengthen security and stability in the region”*.

Algeria shares a 1,400-kilometre (km) border with Mali and a 951km border with Niger. There are concerns that continued instability in both countries could lead to a power vacuum, a rise in militias, and an increase in displaced persons and refugees, resulting in greater instability across the region. Therefore, Algerian authorities regard increased security cooperation with both countries as essential to achieving long-term stability in the Sahel. Having Algeria as an ally could also help strengthen the Malian and Nigerien regimes at a time when they are facing some of their most serious domestic security challenges in recent years. Speaking on the developments, a regional analyst told **ARC Briefing** that while both countries have *“serious and sometimes valid issues”* with Algeria, the deteriorating security situation in Mali and Niger has *“compelled them to bury those issues for now, as they need Algeria’s help to stay in power”*.

Algeria suspends diplomatic relations with the UAE

Algeria [announced](#) on 10 September that it had decided to terminate diplomatic relations with the **United Arab Emirates (UAE)** after *“exhausting”* all possible avenues to maintain ties between the two countries. Algeria also accused the UAE of increasingly engaging in *“provocative or hostile”* actions, but did not publicly specify what those actions were. However, Algerian officials had previously [accused](#) the UAE of interference in regional affairs and highlighted divergent positions on conflicts in **North Africa** and the Sahel.

In its September statement, Algeria added that it had repeatedly warned the UAE about its behaviour, but this did not change its actions. The UAE’s ambassador to Algeria was subsequently summoned to appear before the Algerian foreign ministry and given 48 hours to comply with the decision. Meanwhile, the UAE did not accept Algeria’s decision as permanent and its foreign ministry [said](#) on 10 September that it hoped the decision to break diplomatic relations would be temporary and stressed the shared interests and close ties between the two countries’ peoples. However, Algeria’s decision comes after relations between the two countries had already become increasingly tense in recent months.

Dubai (UAE)-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 (*see ARC Briefing Algeria Feb 2026*). While announcing the decision to suspend diplomatic relations, Algeria further [announced](#) that it had now closed its airspace to all UAE-registered military and civilian aircraft. However, UAE commercial flights operating from **Houari Boumediene International Airport** in **Algiers**, can still fly in and out of Algeria until the end of 2026 when the bilateral air services agreement expires. 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.

The move to withdraw from the bilateral air services agreement and suspend diplomatic relations reflects broader differences between the two countries over regional politics. Algeria has repeatedly and strongly opposed the normalisation of relations with **Israel**, while the UAE established formal diplomatic relations with Israel in 2020 through the **United States (US)-backed Abraham Accords**. The two countries also support different sides in the regional **Western Sahara** dispute. The UAE

backs **Morocco's** claim over the disputed region, while Algeria supports the Western Sahara separatist group, the **Polisario Front**, which seeks independence for the territory.

Algeria's decision to sever diplomatic ties with the UAE is the result of a long period of mounting tensions, rather than a single publicly identified incident. Algeria also seems ready to improve or scale back ties whenever the country feels its political or strategic interests are threatened, whether those concerns are real or perceived. The growing rift with the UAE follows this logic, with Algeria choosing to pull back as political and strategic differences have become too pronounced.

Algeria moves to end moratorium on death penalty, raising concerns

Algeria is [considering](#) expanding the use of the death penalty after 33 years without carrying out an execution. Justice minister **Lotfi Boudjemaa** presented the proposed changes to a parliamentary committee on 21 September, following President **Abdelmadjid Tebboune** (2019-present) ordering changes to the **Penal Code** after deadly wildfires at the end of August left at least 12 people dead. The proposed changes would allow the death penalty for those who deliberately start or organise fires, as well as for those convicted of kidnapping, abusing, or seriously harming children. Tebboune said those sentenced to death should be executed after exhausting their right to appeal.

The government says tougher penalties are needed because these crimes threaten public safety and social stability. However, the global humanitarian organisation **Amnesty International** and other human rights groups have [urged](#) Algeria not to end its long-standing moratorium. They argue that the death penalty does not deter crime and that investigations into the wildfires should also examine possible failures in prevention and emergency response. Algeria has continued to issue death sentences since 1993, including in terrorism-related cases, but has not carried out any executions.

The expansion of the death penalty risks weakening human rights protections without addressing the deeper social issues underlying insecurity in Algeria.

Planner

28 Nov 2026 **(Algeria)** Election of members of municipal and provincial popular assemblies;
2026 **(Algeria)** Potential confirmation of Algerian acquisition of **Russian** weaponry;

Chronology

22 Sep 2026 **Algiers (Algeria)** *North Africa Post*. The **International Monetary Fund (IMF)** forecasts a decline in Algeria's foreign exchange reserves from \$51 billion in 2025 to \$46.5 billion this year, before plummeting to \$19.8 billion in 2031, a 61.2% contraction that would reduce the country's import coverage from 8.6 months to 3.3 months;

21 Sep 2026 **Algiers (Algeria)** *RFI*. Justice minister **Lotfi Boudjemaa** presents proposed amendments to Algeria's penal code to a parliamentary committee, including changes that would end the country's 33-year moratorium on executions, with the legislation now before parliament;

17 Sep 2026 **Algiers (Algeria)** *North Africa Post*. Global human rights organisation **Amnesty International** calls on Algeria's authorities to immediately establish an official moratorium as a first step towards the full abolition of the death penalty;

15 Sep 2026 **Algiers (Algeria)** *North Africa Post*. Defence ministry says Algeria has suffered a major cybersecurity breach that compromised sensitive military data, including personal information on senior officers and soldiers, as well as details of their assignments, military bases and installations;

10 Sep 2026 **Algiers (Algeria)** *Africanews*. Algeria announces it will cut diplomatic ties with the **United Arab Emirates (UAE)**, stating the decision follows "*the exhaustion of all means to preserve bilateral relations*";

6 Sep 2026 **Algiers (Algeria)** *Reuters*. **OPEC+**, which includes Algeria, says it has kept its oil output policy unchanged for October, as the producer group needs to agree new quotas before deciding its next output steps;

3 Sep 2026 **Algiers (Algeria)** *Le Monde*. Algeria signals a major shift from its longstanding policy of military non-intervention by deploying an air force detachment to **Niger** shortly after the failed coup attempt on 29-30 August;

1 Sep 2026 **Algiers (Algeria)** *Algeria Press Service*. President **Abdelmadjid Tebboune** receives **German** foreign minister **Johann Wadephul** in Algiers to discuss bilateral relations and strengthening cooperation, particularly in the energy sector;

31 Aug 2026 **Algiers (Algeria)** *Bloomberg*. President **Abdelmadjid Tebboune** orders the introduction of the death penalty for arson, as the country reels from wildfires that have killed at least 12 people in the past week;

30 Aug 2026 **Algiers (Algeria)** *Algeria Press Service*. President **Abdelmadjid Tebboune** signs a decree calling voters to elect members of municipal and provincial popular assemblies on 28 November, with an exceptional revision of electoral rolls scheduled for 6–17 September;

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