



Universiteit  
Leiden  
The Netherlands

## Algeria at 60

Dietz, A.J.; Ehrhardt, D.W.L.; Veldkamp, F.

### Citation

Dietz, A. J., Ehrhardt, D. W. L., & Veldkamp, F. (2022). Algeria at 60. *Ascl Infosheet*. Retrieved from <https://hdl.handle.net/1887/3502368>

Version: Publisher's Version

License: [Leiden University Non-exclusive license](#)

Downloaded from: <https://hdl.handle.net/1887/3502368>

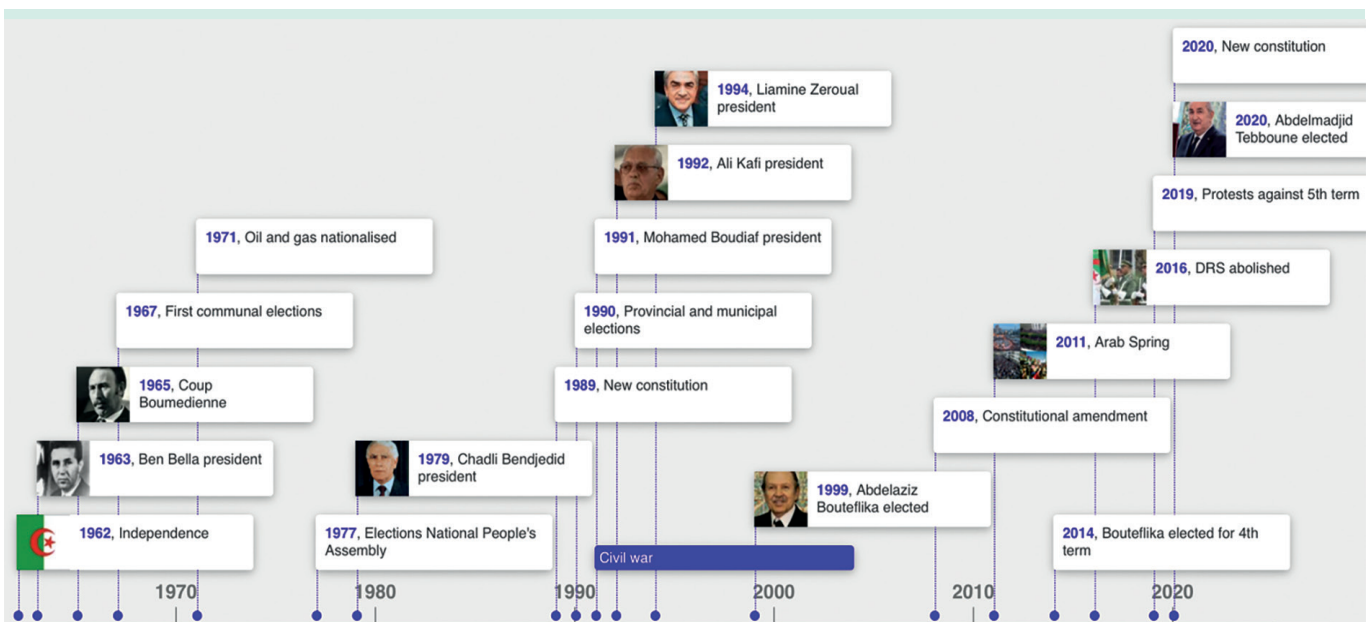
**Note:** To cite this publication please use the final published version (if applicable).

# ALGERIA AT 60

## Political history

From ca 1830 onwards Algeria was a French colony, starting with the coastal area but expanding French influence towards the Sahara during the 19th century

and early 20th century. During the 1950s and early 1960s a bloody war of independence took place, ending with the political independence of Algeria as a republic in 1962.



Source: Encyclopedia Britannica

**Figure 1: Political timeline Algeria since independence**

The war of independence took hundreds of thousands of lives, mostly on the Algerian side, and forced both the French and Algerians to flee their homes in great numbers. As a result, post-independence politics was fractured, and internal strife produced Ben Bella as the new president, supported by the army led by Houari Boumedienne. In the first years of the new government, however, Ben Bella and Boumedienne fell out, and the latter took power in the 1965 coup. As president, Boumedienne slowly established control over Algerian society and implemented socialist reforms, both in the agrarian and industrial sectors and by nationalising oil and gas production. He ruled the country as a one-party state, led by the National Liberation Front (FLN). Colonel Chadli Bendjedid succeeded Boumedienne upon his death in 1978, and began a slow movement towards liberalisation. Yet as the 1970s ended, his rule was challenged by rising Islamic militancy, the collapse of oil prices, and the rise of foreign debt; all these conspired to produce public dissatisfaction and increasing resistance to the government. In response,

Bendjedid moved to allow political competition through the 1989 constitution; the major winner of this new liberalisation was the Islamic Salvation Front (FIS). The 1991 elections began to show the FIS's popularity, and the army responded by cancelling the elections altogether and installing Mohamed Boudiaf as the new president.

The civil war that ensued lasted until the early 2000s and claimed at least tens of thousands of lives. Boudiaf was succeeded by Liamine Zeroual, who went on to win the presidential elections in 1995 and implement a new constitution a year later. This allowed a new government party to form, the National Democratic Rally (RND), which won subsequent elections and allowed Abdelaziz Bouteflika to become the next president in 1999. Over the next years, peace negotiations slowly began to stabilise the majority of the country; and the remaining militants moved to the Sahel and began to align even more explicitly with global jihadist movements such as Al Qaeda. Bouteflika managed to secure a third consecutive term as president through constitutional amendment

in 2009, setting the scene for the 2011 Arab Spring protests. Despite their regional spread and global attention, these protests did not unseat the Algerian government, which was able to use oil and gas profits for widespread subsidies. Bouteflika and his FLN remained dominant until his attempt for a fifth term in 2019 triggered protests that forced him to resign. His successor, Abdelmajid Tebboune, implemented a revised constitution in 2020.

#### Political philately



1. République Française, Postes Algérie
2. 1962: EA (Etat Algérien)
3. République Algérienne, after 1962.

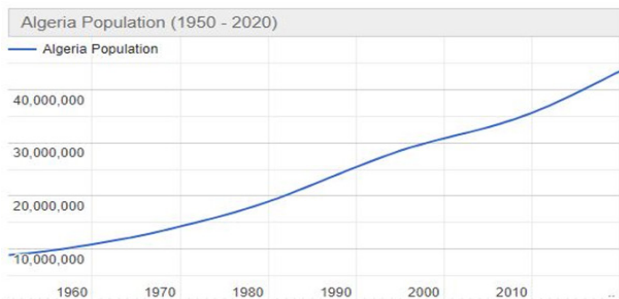
#### Conflict, state fragility, and travel risks

The Fragile States Index of the Washington-based Fund for Peace puts Algeria in the 78th position of 'worst performers', with an overall score of 72.2 in 2022, which indicates a 'medium warning' position (the worst score can be 120) (<https://fragilestatesindex.org/excel/>). The index consists of twelve variables, and for Algeria the most worrying variables are 'factionalised elites' (7.2 out of 10), and 'group grievances' (6.9). The least worrying variable is 'external interventions' (3.4). The travel advice of the Netherlands' Ministry of Foreign Affairs in July 2022 is complicated, with some parts (including the capital city of Algiers) in the yellow category (some security risks), parts of the northeastern coastal area and part

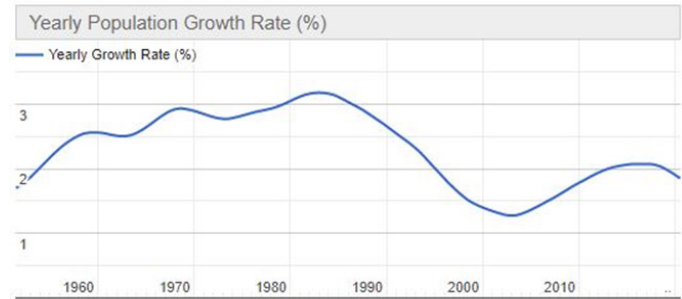
of the interior in the orange category (considerable security risks; this includes the northern and central boundary with Morocco) and most of the border areas (and some parts of the northeastern coastal interior) in the red category: severe security risks ('do not travel'). Border crossings with Morocco (the southern part), Mauritania, Mali, Niger, Libya, and Tunisia (the southern part) are all regarded as very dangerous. See: <https://www.nederlandwereldwijd.nl/reisadvies/algerije>.

#### Demography

Algeria's population increased almost fourfold between 1960 and 2020, from 11.1 million in 1960 to 43.9 million in 2020, mostly through high fertility rates and longer life expectancy for both males and females (also because of rapidly improving child and infant mortality figures). Population growth figures were always more than two percent per year (with the exception of 1995-2012, and after 2019), and beyond three percent per year between 1975 and 1985. Currently, the average growth rate is just below two percent per year. Total fertility was around 7.4 children per woman in 1960; afterwards it diminished, with currently 3.1 births per average woman in Algeria during her lifetime. As a result of these demographic developments Algeria has a skewed population pyramid, with many young people. The median age changed from 17.8 years old in 1960 to 28.5 years old in 2020, with the lowest figure in 1970 (16.4 years). Urbanisation is on the increase, and currently 73% of the population lives in cities. The urban population increased nine times between 1960 and 2020, and already in 1988 Algeria's population became mostly urban. UN demographers predict that 80% of Algeria's 61 million people will live in cities in 2050.

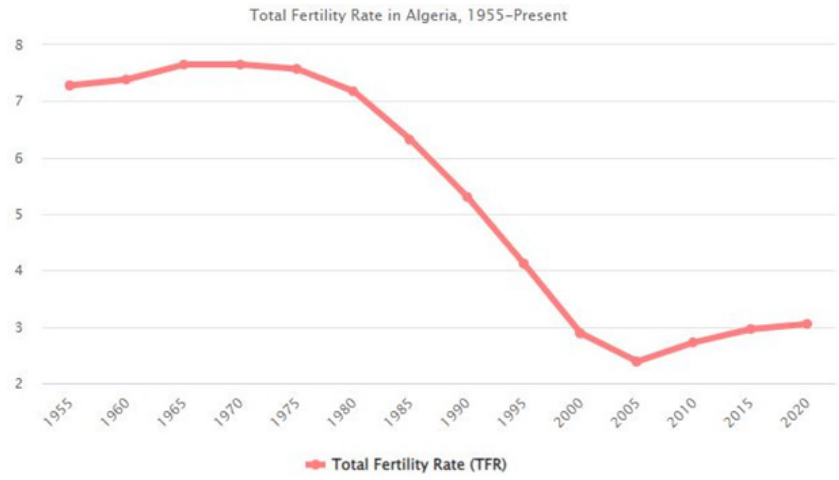


Algeria Population,  
1950 - 2000



Algeria Population  
Growth Rate (%)

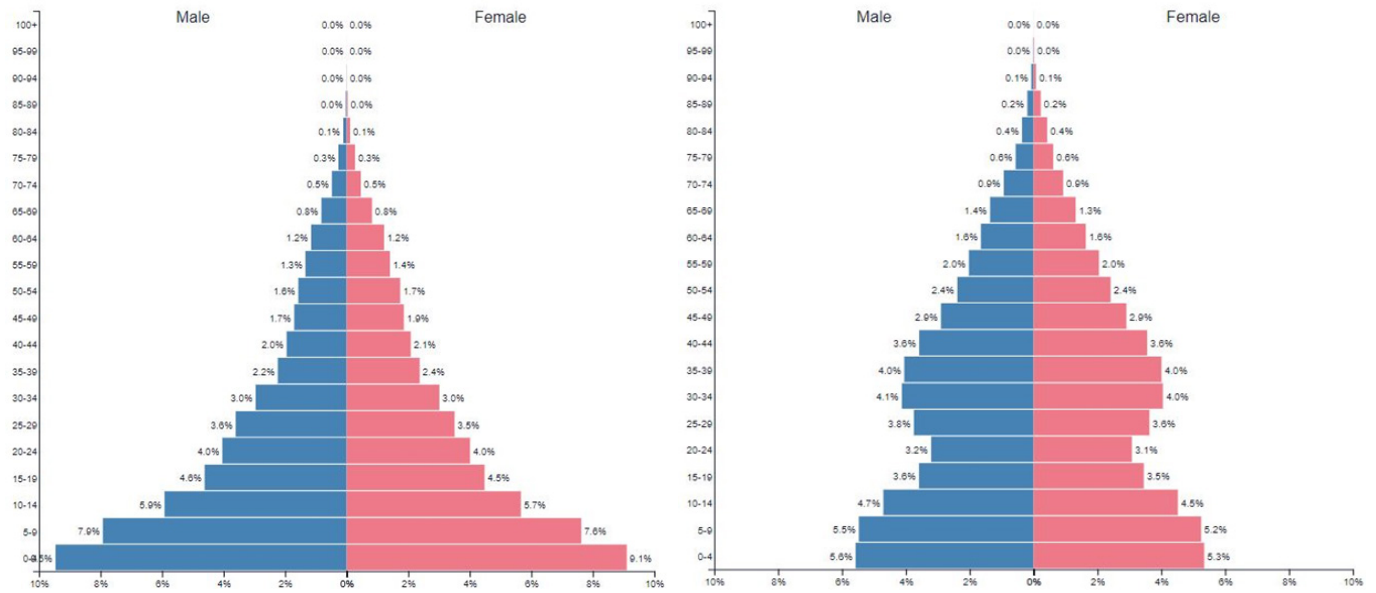
**Totally Fertility Rate in Algeria, 1955 - Present**



1962

Population: 11,619,828 2022

Population: 45,350,140



	1960	2020
Population	11.1 million	43.9 million
Fertility rate	7.4 children per women	3.1 children per women
Life expectancy (males)	47 years	76 years
idem (females)	48 years	79 years
Median age	17.8 years	28.5 years
Infant mortality (<1 yr)	143/1000	18/1000
Under-5 mortality	231/1000	21/1000
Urbanisation rate	31%	73%
Urban population	3.4 million	32.0 million
Rural population	7.7 million	11.9 million

Source: Worldometers

### Demographic statistics, Algeria as a whole, 1960 and 2020

### Human Development Index, Algeria as a whole, 1990 and 2019

Human Development Index data exist since 1990, with annual UNDP updates. In 1990, Algeria's Human Development Index started at a level of 0.573. The HDI consists of a health index, an income index and an education index, while UNDP also provides data about life expectancy, and some other indicators. For Algeria the various components of the HDI all show improvements. Between 1990 and 2019 Algeria's population increased from 25.8 million

people to 43.1 million people. The increase in the HDI between 1990 and 2019 (from 0.573 to 0.748) can be attributed to improvements in all components: health, education and income, and can also be seen in the data for life expectancy. However, the most significant growth took place in education. Average income levels per capita (in US\$ of 2011, PPP) currently are estimated to be 9,321\$/capita, but that is only 3% better than in 1990, and the income index showed limited improvement as well.

	1990	2019	2019/1990
Health Index	0.722	0.875	1.21
Income Index *	0.673	0.712	1.06
GNI/capita **	9,059	9,321	1.03
Education Index	0.387	0.672	1.74
Mean years of schooling	3.6	8.0	2.22
Expected years of schooling	9.6	14.6	1.52
Life Expectancy	67	77	1.15
Total HDI Index	0.573	0.748	1.31

Source: <https://globaldatalab.org>

### Algeria: HDI composition and life expectancy, data for 1990 and 2019

\*\* GNI/capita in US \$ of 2011, PPP.

### International migration

In 2019 1,945,000 people who were born in Algeria lived outside the country (4.3% of Algeria's total population of 45.2 million people inside and outside the country during that year), of which only 45,000 elsewhere in Africa (mainly in Morocco and Tunisia), and 1,900,000 outside Africa (4.2% of Algeria's total population: by far most of them in France, but also considerable numbers in Canada, Spain, Israel, Belgium, the UK, Italy and Germany, in that order; UN migration report 2019). In 2019 Algeria had around 249,000 immigrants, according to the UN demographic statistics. The registered immigrants mainly came from the Western Sahara (165,000, mostly in refugee camps; Algeria supports the independence struggle of Polisario), but also from Palestine, Somalia and Iraq; UN Migration Report 2019). In 2019 France hosted 1,576,000 people who were born in Algeria, and that was 19% of all immigrants in France in 2019. In 1990 there were more Algerians in France: 788,000 (then 13% of all immigrants in France), but

that also included the 'French-Algerians' (or 'colons'), who fled or had been expelled from Algeria around 1962. Like in 2019, in 1990 France was the preferred country of destination of most Algerians: 788,000 of the 921,000 Algerian outmigrants had gone to France: 86%. In 2019 this figure had dropped somewhat: then 81% of 1.9 million outmigrants from Algeria had gone to France.

### Trade statistics, Algeria: exports and imports, 2020

In 2020, Algeria exported products for a total value of \$ 18.8 billion, and services for a total of \$ 3.0 billion, and imported products and services for a total value of \$ 41.7 billion (products mostly from China, France, Spain, Italy, and Germany, in that order), resulting in a very negative trade balance. Leading import products were wheat, milk, medicaments, maize, and sugars, in that order.

Main export products (value in \$ billion)		Main export destinations (value in \$ billion)	
Petroleum gases	7.0	Italy	3.2
Petroleum oils crude	6.3	France	5.4
Idem not crude	3.6	Spain	2.6
Fertilizers	0.8	China	0.9
Ammonia	0.2	South Korea	0.8

Algeria is an extreme example of export dependence on raw materials, and in exchange the country imports a lot of food. However, unlike many other countries in Africa, Algeria did not become dependent on Russia and/or Ukraine for its wheat (and maize) imports. France still is a major provider of wheat. In 2020 Algeria imported for \$ 889 million value of wheat from France (<https://oec.world/en/profile/bilateral-country/fra/partner/dza>).

### Protected areas and Forests

Algeria currently has eleven national parks (six with the status of UNESCO-MAB Biodiversity Reserves), two marine reserves, five nature reserves, and 42 Ramsar sites (<http://www.parks.it/world/DZ/index.html>). According to Protectedplanet, currently 10.8 million hectares are protected land areas (4.6% of

Algeria's total land area; and this source mentions 73 protected areas. There are 8,800 ha of protected marine and coastal areas (<https://www.protectedplanet.net/country/dza>). Algeria had 1.7 million hectares of forest in 1990, and 1.5 million hectares of forests in 2010, a loss of 10% during those twenty years. (<https://rainforests.mongabay.com/deforestation/2000/Algeria.htm>). Forests currently cover less than 1% of Algeria's total land area. Most of the country is desert.

### Agricultural Algeria

Crop Area (in 1000 hectares), and total production (in 1000 tonnes), 1961 and 2020, in the order of the crop areas in 2020:

Crops	1961		2020		2020/1961	
	Area	Prod.	Area	Prod.	Area	Prod.
Wheat	1689	686	1848	3107	1.1	4.5
Maize	950	212	978	1213	1.0	5.7
Olives	..	160	439	1080	..	6.8
Other vegetables	25	1159	191	4393	7.6	3.8
Dates	38	95	171	1152	4.5	12.1
Beans, peas and lentils	73	40	157	424	2.2	10.6
Potatoes	23	244	150	4659	6.5	19.1
Other fruits	29	150	89	1023	3.1	3.1
Grapes	349	1845	69	554	0.2	0.3
Oats	59	23	62	70	1.1	3.0
Watermelons	16	131	61	21.0287	3.8	17.5
Onions	6	63	50	1666	8.3	26.4
Oranges	37	251	47	1175	1.37	4.7
Figs	41	62	39	116	1.0	1.9
Almonds	13	6	35	61	2.7	10.2
Apples	3	15	33	567	11.0	37.8
Apricots	4	13	30	187	7.5	14.4
Tomatoes	8	140	26	1636	3.3	11.7
Other crops	24	24	23	49	1.0	2.0
<b>Total crops (area)</b>	<b>3387</b>	<b>5319</b>	<b>4498</b>	<b>25419</b>	<b>1.3</b>	<b>4.8</b>

2020/1961: red = 2020 is below 1961; green: 2020 is more than 3.9 times the 1961 figures (that is: more than population increase in Algeria from 11.3 million to 43.9 million between 1961 and 2020); black: in-between. Source: Faostat data.

Algeria's land area is 232.4 million hectares, and its crop area increased from 1.5% to 1.9% of its land area between 1961 and 2020, an expansion of 130%. But due to yield increases for most crops, production figures increased much more, and for many crops more than Algeria's high population growth of 390%. The production of the most important food crop in terms of food value (wheat) increased almost fivefold, and its yield increases can be called quite spectacular: from 407 kg/ha in 1961 to 1681 kg/ha in 2020. The most impressive production increases can be noted for apples, onions, potatoes, watermelons, and apricots. The production figures for cereals (mainly wheat, barley and oats) show an increase from 81 kg/capita in 1961 to 100 kg/capita in 2019, but that is still insufficient for cereal food needs of the population, and hence particularly wheat imports are high. On the other hand, Algeria started to produce a lot more and more different types of fruits and vegetables, which are important ingredients for its mediterranean diet. One major crop became far less

important: grapes. The strict application of anti-alcohol measures is probably one of the major reasons, although grapes are allowed to be consumed as fruit, and non-alcoholic beverage.

The numbers of all live animals, measured in stock units, expanded considerably (with the exception of asses, mules and horses), although slightly less rapidly than Algeria's population in these almost sixty years: 370% compared with 390%, but the increases in numbers of chickens and sheep were higher than population growth. Per capita the numbers of live animals in the country slightly diminished from 0.16 to 0.15. Most Algerian farmers are predominantly crop farmers-with-some animals, although some groups are specialised livestock people, like the Bedouin and Touareg people of the steppe and desert areas of the country. However, pastoralism faces many challenges. See for instance: <https://pastres.org/2018/06/08/shifting-contexts-for-maghreb-pastoralists/>

	1961	2020	2020/1961
Asses and mules	490	101	0.2
Camels	154	435	2.8
Cattle	611	1740	2.9
Chicken	8000	137280	17.2
Goats	1946	4908	2.5
Horses	137	48	0.4
Pigs	3	5	1.7
Sheep	4995	30906	6.2
Livestock unites	1796	6712	3.7

**Livestock numbers**  
(x 1000)

Source: Foostat data; 1 livestock unit = based on 1 camels; 0.7 cattle, horses and asses & mules; 0.11 goats/sheep/pigs; 0.01 chicken.

### Urban Algeria

Algeria's urban population increased from 3.4 million people in 1962 (31% of its national population at Independence) to 32 million in 2020 (73%). Growth has been considerable for all cities. However, different sources give different figures, and not all major

cities have been included in the five sources that we compare here. Algiers (El Djazaïr) is the major urban area, and its population increased three times between 1962 and 2022, to a current level of ca 2.8 million inhabitants.



Source map: [https://upload.wikimedia.org/wikipedia/commons/f/f7/Algeria\\_CIA\\_map.jpg](https://upload.wikimedia.org/wikipedia/commons/f/f7/Algeria_CIA_map.jpg)



Cities (and region)	Population in thousands of inhabitants			
	Macrotrends		Wikipedia (Citypop): census 2008	Worldometers, city, as given in 2022
	1962	2022		
Algiers/El Džazaïr	953	2854	2482 (2364)	1978
Bourmerdès (Boumerdas)	..	..	(29)	786
Oran	313	922	803	646
Tebessa			197 (179).	634
Constantine/Quacentina	192	415	448	450
Biskra	..	..	205	308
Sétif	74	325	288 (252)	288
Batna	39	340	291	281
Bab Ezzouar			Part of Algiers	276
Annaba	145	364	257 (343)	207
(El) Djelfa	21	550	289 (266)	154
Sidi bel Abbès	...	..	212	192
Tiaret	..	..	201	179
Blida	70	499	(332)	182

Source for 2022: <https://www.worldometers.info/> (identical

### Major urban areas in Algeria

<https://worldpopulationreview.com/countries/cities/algeria/>; we use this source for the order of presentation; also [https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/List\\_of\\_cities\\_in\\_Algeria](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/List_of_cities_in_Algeria) (almost identical with <http://www.citypopulation.de/en/algeria/cities/>), and <https://www.macrotrends.net/cities/20006/algiers/population> (and from there to the other historical information for the other cities (1950-2022 data).

### Regional Inequality

Region/ Région	Population x 1000		'19/'90
	1990	2020	
HPC	2018	2986	x1.1
HPE	3624	6070	1.67
HPOu	1418	2443	1.72
NC	8133	14556	1.79
NE	3927	6109	1.56
NOu	4603	6578	1.43
S	2036	4313	2.12
<b>Total Algeria</b>	<b>25759</b>	<b>43053</b>	<b>1.67</b>

Source: <https://globaldata.org> 50

[https://upload.wikimedia.org/wikipedia/commons/a/a9/Algeria%2C\\_administrative\\_divisions\\_-\\_de\\_-\\_colored.svg](https://upload.wikimedia.org/wikipedia/commons/a/a9/Algeria%2C_administrative_divisions_-_de_-_colored.svg)

HPC = Djelfa, Laghouat and MSila

HPE = Setif, Batna, Khenchela, Bordj Bon Arreridj, Oum el Bouaghi, and Tebessa

HPOu = Tiaret, Saida, Tissemsilt, Naama, and El Bayadh

NC = Alger, Blida, Boumerdes, Tipaza, Bouira, Medea, Tizi-Ouzou, Bejaia, Chlef, and Ain Delfa

NE = Annaba, Constantine, Skikda, Ijmel, Mila, Souk Ahras, El Tarf, and Guelma

NOu = Oran, Tlemcen, Mostaganem, Ain Temouchent, Relizane, Sidi Bel Abbes, and Mascara

S = Bechar, Tindouf, Adrar, Ghardaia, Biskra, El Oued, Ouargla, Tamanrasset, and Illizi

Algeria has 48 administrative regions. The Globaldata website uses seven Regions. Between 1990 and 2019 all regions experienced population growth; the highest growth happened in Sud, the Sahara portion of Algeria, but also Nord Centre, the region with capital city Algiers (Alger), experienced considerable population growth. On the other hand the population of Nord Ouest, the region around Oran, showed a relatively slow growth in population. If we look at the regional data for human development, which for Algeria exist since 1990, we see that improvements have taken place everywhere between 1990 and 2019,

and these improvements were continuous, with the exception of a period of some stagnation in 2011-2013. Both in 1990 and in 2019 the best conditions existed in Nord Centre for the HDI index as a whole, for life expectancy and for education. The worst conditions existed in Hauts Plateaux Centre in both years, with the exception of life expectancy where the worst conditions have shifted to Nord Est. Regional inequality in the country was and is very small (and further decreasing), and most outspoken for education. A policy of Islamic-inspired socialism is visible in these findings.

Region	Subregional HDI			Life expectancy			Education index		
	1990	2019	19/90	1990	2019	19/90	1990	2019	19/90
HPC	0.546	0.726	1.33	65	76	1.17	0.353	0.614	1.74
HPE	0.570	0.738	1.29	67	77	1.15	0.381	0.655	1.72
HPOu	0.556	0.733	1.32	66	77	1.17	0.365	0.629	1.72
NC	0.595	0.769	1.29	68	78	1.15	0.414	0.711	1.72
NE	0.575	0.745	1.30	68	74	1.09	0.389	0.698	1.79
NOu	0.554	0.739	1.33	66	78	1.18	0.358	0.638	1.78
S	0.565	0.741	1.31	65	76	1.17	0.388	0.661	1.70
Total	0.573	0.748	1.31	67	77	1.15	0.387	0.672	1.74
Regional inequality	1.09	1.06		1.05	1.05		1.17	1.16	

Source: <https://globaldata.lboro.ac.uk> 5.0

If we compare 2019 with 1990, the education situation has improved very much, with the fastest improvements in Nord Est, and the relatively slowest improvements in the Sahara region Sud. Life expectancy also improved, with the fastest improvements in Nord Ouest, and relatively slow improvements in Nord Est. The subregional human development as a

whole also improved considerably, with the fastest improvements in Nord Ouest and in Hauts Plateaux Centre, but relatively slow improvements in Hauts Plateaux Est, and Nord Est, but with very small differences between the regions with the fastest growth and those with slower growth.

Region	Income/capita (2011 US\$ PPP)		
	1990	2019	'19/'90
HPC	8987	9353	1.04
HPE	9001	9278	1.03
HPOu	8962	9320	1.04
NC	9170	9364	1.02
NE	8990	9299	1.03
NOu	9023	9279	1.03
S	9058	9331	1.03
Total	9059	9321	1.03
Regional inequality	1.02	1.01	

The economic situation, as measured by the average income per capita situation, improved everywhere, but not much. Nord Centre was and is leading, and the relatively worst conditions shifted from Hauts Plateaux Ouest in 1990 to Hauts Plateaux Est in 2019. But, again, the differences are very small. The highest growth was experienced in Hauts Plateaux Centre and Est, and the slowest growth in Nord Centre, the area around capital city Algiers, although that region is still leading.

Of course, these are average income figures and based on (rough) estimates. Regional inequality is not the same as income or wealth inequality. According to World Bank data the GINI-coefficient became far less extreme: in 1988 it was 40, quite high for African standards at the time, in 1995 35, and in 2011 only 28 (<https://data.worldbank.org/indicator/SI.POV.GINI?locations=DZ>). Again, an Islamic-socialist policy of equality is visible in these trends, and for a major oil-exporting country it is a remarkable finding.

#### Further reading

<http://countryportal.ascleiden.nl/algeria>  
<https://www.ascleiden.nl/africa2020>

Country information: Ton Dietz,  
 David Ehrhardt and Fenneken Veldkamp  
 Country Portal: Harro Westra

*African Studies Centre Leiden, November 2022*

#### African Studies Centre Leiden (ASCL)

The African Studies Centre Leiden, founded in 1947, is the only knowledge institute in the Netherlands devoted entirely to the study of Africa.



- 🌐 [www.ascleiden.nl](http://www.ascleiden.nl)
- 📘 [www.facebook.com/ASCLeiden](https://www.facebook.com/ASCLeiden)
- 🐦 [www.twitter.com/ASCLeiden](https://www.twitter.com/ASCLeiden)
- 📷 [@africanstudiescentreleiden](https://www.instagram.com/africanstudiescentreleiden)



Universiteit  
 Leiden  
 The Netherlands