

Algeria: Human Rights

Although democratic in principle, Algeria is governed by a closed elite based in the military and the ruling party, the National Liberation Front (FLN). The military establishment strongly influences domestic and foreign policy, and security forces are actively involved in counterinsurgency and counterterrorism operations, in the course of which they have committed serious human rights abuses, including extrajudicial killings, torture of detainees, and arbitrary arrest and detention. Although the constitution provides for an independent judiciary, prolonged pretrial detention, lack of due process, and absence of privacy rights are serious problems. The executive branch's broad statutory authority limits judicial independence. Security forces routinely detain individuals who participate in unauthorized protests.

There is no overt censorship, but much of the electronic media are state owned, and the print media exercise self-censorship out of fear. Freedoms of press and speech are restricted in practice. Human rights organizations have been prevented from registering.

In the last decade of the 20th century more than 100,000 people were killed or forcibly disappeared by security forces, allied militias, and armed Islamist groups battling the government, according to estimates; the fate of several thousand people remains unknown. No steps have been taken to punish those responsible for the human rights abuses of the 1990s. Terrorist groups continue to operate in Algeria. However, the rate of such attacks has decreased over recent years, with deaths

Freedom of assembly and association are curtailed in practice. Islam is the official faith, and the law limits sharply the practice of other faiths. The executive branch is dominated by the military and the bureaucracy. Opposition parties are harassed, and the government sometimes disconnects their phone services.

Citation Information



MLA



Chicago Manual of Style

Kurian, George Thomas, ed. "Algeria: Human Rights." *World Geography and Culture Online*. Facts On File, Inc. Web. fofweb.infobase.com/activelink2.asp?ItemID=WE39&Details.aspx&iPin=EWNC0093&SingleRecord=True. 31 Jan. 2021.

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[Return to Top](#)