Summary

- In the period between 21 and 27 December 2017, there were 82 critical incidents, resulting in 288 arrests, including those of 101 immigrants, 35 drug traffickers and 66 contraband smugglers. This week, criminality events accounted for 39.02% of the total incident pool, followed by human and social crises with 30.49%.

- Five suspected Islamic State insurgents were apprehended in Tlemcen. The suspects are believed to have been preparing attacks for New Year’s Eve. An investigation is still underway. Security was reinforced in Algiers and other large cities to protect important assets, after the Islamic State issued calls to militants around the world to carry out attacks on 31 December. In Bouira, the explosion of an IED wounded a hiker in the region of Kadiria. The explosive is thought to have been placed by a local insurgent group, which targeted the army.

- An Islamic militant surrendered to the army in Tamanrasset. Identified as Abu Yahia, a member of al-Qaeda in the Islamic Maghreb (AQIM), the insurgent was in the possession of a Kalashnikov rifle and a quantity of ammunition.

- The threat of terrorism remains high in various regions of the country. In Adrar, three caches containing war-grade weapons were discovered this week. Additionally, in Skikda, 40 ready-to-use homemade bombs were found during a large-scale sweeping operation. Efforts to counter weapon smuggling have also led to the arrest of nine suspects.

- On the social front, tensions remain heightened in several provinces. In Biskra, riots erupted after locals protested a deterioration of healthcare in the region. In Algiers, the Governor was confronted by angry housing seekers. In Tizi Ouzou, the unlimited strike affecting the secondary education sector has triggered several demonstrations. Strikes have also paralyzed the health sector across the country, as resident doctors continue to pressure the relevant ministry into satisfying their demands. Paramedical unions are likely to follow suit in January.

- Internal conflicts continue to affect the FLN. The Political Commissioner of M’Sila released a statement to denounce Secretary-General Djamel Ould-Abbes and the “corruption” which he claims soared since Ould-Abbes took over. Electoral fraud was condemned by other provincial commissioners, who stressed that serious acts of bribery and corruption remain unsanctioned.
Significant Events: 21 - 27 December 2017

Algiers: 27 December 2017: Over 60,000 policemen mobilized to secure airports and embassies on New Year’s Eve.

Batna: 25 December 2017: Three terrorists captured in Batna.

Batna: 26 December 2017: Two arrested for illegal weapon possession in Batna.

Tlemcen: 23 December 2017: Five IS insurgents apprehended, New Year’s Eve attack foiled in Tlemcen.

Skikda: 22 December 2017: Insurgent hideout found in Skikda.

Skikda: 22 December 2017: Army finds 40 bombs and a canon in Skikda.

Tamanrasset: 26 December 2017: Islamic AQIM militant surrenders in Tamanrasset.

Adrar: 25 December 2017: Weapons cache found near Malian border.

Adrar: 20-21 December 2017: War-grade weapons found near Mali border.

El-Bayedh: 25 December 2017: Large quantity of ammunition seized in El-Bayadh, two arrested.

Biskra: 20 December 2017: Dozens of youths attack gendarmerie station in Biskra.

Bouira: 23 December 2017: Civilian wounded in Kadiria bomb explosion.

Tamanrasset: 26 December 2017: Islamic AQIM militant surrenders in Tamanrasset.

Algeria Weekly Report

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PM criticizes MPs for "manipulating the Kabyle protesters"

Prime Minister Ahmed Ouyahia denounced opposition MPs who claimed that the government stopped all efforts to promote the Tamazight language on a national level, accusing them of "manipulating" the Kabyle population. The PM added that efforts are still underway, and that the opposition parties "instrumentalized" this issue to serve their political agenda.

RCD elected officials block inauguration of Bouira municipal assembly

Five elected officials from the opposition party, Culture and Democracy Rally (RCD), blocked the inauguration of the new municipal assembly of Ath Lacs, in Bouira province, in an effort to denounce "poor governance" of the former municipal leaders from the National Demoarctic Rally (RND) who were reelected in the recent local elections. The RCD officials accused their RND counterparts of embezzling money and preventing them from participating in the most important activities of the assembly.

FLN members demand departure of Sidi Bel Abbes commissioners

Dozens of members of the National Liberation Front (FLN) staged a protest in Sidi Bel Abbes to demand the departure of two provincial political commissioners, after they were expelled from the local elections candidate lists. The two leaders are accused of nepotism and corruption.

FLN political Commissioner of M'Sila lashes out at SG Ould Abbes

The political Commissioner of the FLN in M'Sila, Said Bellil, vehemently criticized the Secretary General of the ruling party, Djamel Ould Abbes, accusing him of "undermining the principles and identity of the party" through "the normalization of electoral corruption". In a long statement, Said Bellil accused Ould Abbes of registering members of other parties in FLN electoral lists in exchange for large amounts of money. He also showed support for the former FLN SG, Amar Saadani, whom he claimed brought more prosperity to the party.

US to cut aid to Algeria over UN Jerusalem vote

The United States decided to cut financial aid to the countries which voted in favor of a resolution declaring President Donald Trump's recognition of Jerusalem as Israel's capital "null and void", including Algeria. In 2016, the United States provided USD 35.2 million in humanitarian aid, development and security support.

Human & Social Crisis

Governor of Algiers confronted by angry housing seekers

After announcing that 3,000 families in Algiers will be re-housed in the next few days, the Governor of Algiers, Abdelkader Zoukh, was...
confronted by dozens of angry residents of the central district of Sidi M'Hamed, over their "marginalization" from the rehousing process. The Governor was eventually evacuated by his security team, as the protesters became violent. Due to the austerity policies that the government will implement on 1 January 2018, several housing developments will be suspended.

Dozens of young protesters attack gendarmerie station in Biskra
Dozens of young residents of Meziraa, a municipality located 65 kilometers east of central Biskra, attacked the local gendarmerie station using rocks and Molotov cocktails on 20 December after they were prevented from blocking the national road 83 to protest against declining health services. At least one gendarme was wounded in the riot, and a dozen rioters were apprehended.

President Bouteflika takes measures of appeasement to alleviate Kabylie unrest
President Abdelaziz Bouteflika decreed Yennayer, the Amazigh new year, a public holiday and a day off with pay. Moreover, the President ordered the creation of an academy for the Tamazight language, in an effort to promote it. These measures seek to alleviate the social unrest that the Kabylie region has gone through the past month.

Education Ministers orders investigation into Tizi Ouzou strike
Nouria Benghabrit, the Minister of Education, ordered an investigation into the unlimited strike organized by the National Autonomous Council of Secondary Education Workers (CNAPESTE) in the province of Tizi Ouzou, in an effort to shed more light on the events that triggered it. The strikers claimed that a school teacher was assaulted by a police officer at the local education headquarters, and demanded the dismissal of two education officials for their lack of action.

Students and their parents hold demonstration against teacher strike
Hundreds of middle-school and high-school students and their parents took to the streets of Tizi Ouzou to hold peaceful marches against the unlimited strike currently observed by teachers affiliated with the CNAPESTE. The protesters called for the resumption of classes, and denounced the teachers for undermining the academic year.

Resident doctors make their strike action unlimited
Resident doctors have decided to make their protest action unlimited, despite the Health Ministry's efforts to open a dialogue with the union. The strikers denounced the fact that their request to meet the Prime Minister and the Minister of Health were rejected. However, a thorough review of the resident doctor's demands, which include better tuition conditions, is underway at the Ministry, and a resolution to this crisis is expected in the short-term.

Paramedics to start cyclical strikes on 8 January
The Algerian Union of Paramedical workers (SAP) announced that, starting 8 January, cyclical strikes will be observed to oppose the "inertia and indifference" of the health authorities in the face of the "many physical assaults against paramedics in Algerian hospitals." This comes after a member of the SAP union in Djelfa was reportedly assaulted. SAP accuses the Ministry of Health of overlooking the incident, which they claimed will result in the normalization of violence.

Tizi Ouzou villagers hold protest in Tigzirt
A group of residents of lhaddadene village, in the province of Tizi Ouzou, staged a protest in Tigzirt
to denounce the lack of medical personnel in the area, in light of the death of a local man. Protesters urged the authorities to recruit more physicians and medical staff.

**Seven housing seekers try to commit suicide**

Seven residents of Ain Temouchent, seeking affordable housing, tried to commit suicide on 23 December by jumping off the roof of a four-storey building. The individuals were omitted from the latest list of social housing beneficiaries.

**General strike to start on 14 January in Algerian universities**

Universities across Algeria will be affected by a general strike on 14 January, according to university unions of professors, students and administrative employees, including CNES, SAFAP, UNJA and UGEL. The unions called on all Algerian students to boycott first semester exams, and take part in the strike to denounce a lack of "300,000 university places, 40,000 professors and 200,000 campus beds".

**Residents of el-Menia rally against poor quality infrastructure**

Residents of el-Menia, in Ghaidaia, staged a rally on 25 December to denounce the poor condition of the local infrastructure. Hundreds of locals took to the streets and complained about the absence of public lighting, bad road conditions and lack of housing. This comes after heavy rains caused the closure of all roads.

**Chief residents shut down highway over poor living conditions**

Residents of Bouzgaia municipality, Chief, closed national road 19 to denounce poor living conditions and the lack of local development, water shortages, poor lighting, and to demand access to the city gas network. The protesters voiced their intention to escalate their activity next week.

**Berber independence seeker apprehended in Tizi Ouzou**

Berber independence seeker and President of the Provisional Government of Kabylie (GPK), Bouaziz Ait-Chebib, was apprehended in Ain el-Hammam municipality, Tizi Ouzou, on 25 December. Ait-Chebib, who used to be the President of the Movement for the Self-Determination of Kabylie (MAK), is said to have fueled the recent social unrest that struck the Kabylie region, alongside his movement. On social media, he was threatened to death by numerous anonymous individuals who opposed his radical views.

**Illegal immigration flow to Italy up 500% since 2015**

Between 2015 and 2017, the number of Algerians illegally immigrating to Sardinia, in Southern Italy, has increased by 500%, according to the Italian newspaper Il Giornale. In 2017, 2,000 Algerian immigrant boats reached Southern Italy so far, as against 345 in 2015. In Spain, 26,467 illegal immigrants arrived from North Africa through the Mediterranean Sea this year as of 31 October 2017, 17.9% of whom were Algerians.

**Illegal immigration: 101 people captured**

In Tlemcen, Adrar, Biskra, Ghaidaia, Laghouat, El Oued, Relizane and Tindouf, 77 undocumented immigrants from Sub-Saharan Africa were apprehended by the gendarmerie, the army and the border guard. In Annaba, 24 would-be migrants were captured on 26 December.

**Building collapses in central Oran - 13 wounded**

On 20 December, at least 13 people were wounded after a building collapsed in Sidi el-Houari street, central Oran. The building had been reported as unsafe, but local authorities failed to evacuate it in time.

**Snowfall causes traffic chaos in many provinces**

In the provinces of Batna, Mila and Jijel in the northeast, and Tizi Ouzou and Bouira in the north, intense snowfall led to the closure of several roads, including national roads 15 and 30, and provincial roads 172 and 40. No serious accidents were reported however.

**Security & Defense**

**Five IS insurgents apprehended, New Year’s Eve attack foiled in Tlemcen**

Security forces dismantled a pro-Islamic State cell active in Tlemcen, according to a security source. Five suspects were apprehended, while a sixth remains at large. After raiding the suspects’ home, authorities seized IS propaganda material, passports containing visas to the UAE and Turkey, plane tickets, swords and a large amount of dinars and Turkish liras. According to the same source, the
insurgents were planning an attack in Tlemcen on New Year's Eve. This comes after the questioning of two individuals apprehended on terrorism charges in the same province. An investigation is still underway.

**War-grade weapons found in Adrar and Medea, 40 bombs discovered in Skikda**

A large array of military-grade weapons was discovered in the provinces of Adrar and Medea. Acting on a tip-off, an army unit seized 24 RPG-7 rockets, 23 propelling charges and 1.5 kilograms of dynamite in a cache located in Bordj Badji Mokhtar, near the border with Mali on 20 and 21 December. On 25 December, in the same area, another cache containing a FMPK machine gun, seven Simonov semi-automatic rifles, one shotgun, 24 RPG-7 rockets, 24 propelling charges for RPG-7 rocket launchers and six mortar shells was found and cleared.

In Medea, four insurgent hideouts were uncovered on 23 December during a counter-terrorism operation. The hideouts contained chemicals used to manufacture explosives. On 20 December, in the same province, ten grenades, detonators, explosives and six solar panels were seized during a counter-terrorism operation. In the northeastern Oued Garou mountains of Skikda, on 22 December, an army brigade discovered four insurgent hideouts containing 40 homemade bombs, a homemade canon and a solar panel.

Additionally, on 23 December, five individuals were arrested by the gendarmerie for the illegal possession of three firearms in the provinces of Bejaia and Oum el-Bouaghi. Four other suspects were apprehended by security forces in el-Bayadah on 25 December and Batna on 26 December in the possession of 1,000 rounds of ammunition for 12mm and 16mm caliber weapons. Furthermore, the national gendarmerie seized two firearms in the region of In Salah, Tamanrasset province, on 20 December.

**Civilain wounded in Kadiria bomb explosion**

On 23 December, a civilian was wounded in the explosion of a homemade bomb in Bouira's Kadiria rural municipality. The victim was hiking in the forest of Rabta when the bomb detonated. An investigation is currently underway, though security officials suspect the bomb was planted by Islamic insurgents seeking to harm army units conducting sweeping operations.

**Over 60,000 policemen mobilized to secure airports and embassies on New Year's Eve**

The police mobilized 60,000 officers to secure 36 airports, 11 ports, 20 border posts, as well as embassies and consulates on New Year's Eve. At the International Airport of Algiers, a police unit of 1,600 officers has been deployed to ensure the safety of travelers. This measure was taken after the Islamic State called its supporters and militants across the world to carry out attacks on 31 December.

**Islamic militant surrenders in Tamanrasset**

An Islamic militant loyal to al-Qaeda in the Islamic Maghreb (AQIM) surrendered to security forces in Tamanrasset on 26 December. According to a security source, the insurgent was identified as "Abu Yahia", who joined AQIM in 2014. A Kalashnikov machine gun and one round of ammunition were seized.

**Drug trafficking: 35 arrested in various provinces**

This week, 35 suspected drug trafficking suspects were apprehended in Tiaret, Bechar, Adrar, Chlef, Tlemcen, Blida, Oran and Algiers. Security forces seized 3,348 psychotropic pills and 573.5 kilograms of treated kif.

**Contraband smuggling: 66 apprehended, large quantities of goods seized**

This week, 66 contraband smugglers were apprehended in Tamanrasset and Adrar. In total, 24,637 liters of fuel, 11,800 liters of cooking oil, 22,316 bottles of alcohol, 1.4 tons of tobacco and 41.3 tons of foodstuffs were seized.

**Human smuggling network busted in Annaba**

In Annaba province, a human smuggling cell composed of five individuals was dismantled by security forces. Two boats were seized, and an investigation was launched to determine whether the network is operational in other regions.

**Money counterfeiting cell dismantled in Biskra**

Two individuals were apprehended in Biskra on 23 December for counterfeiting euro bank notes. A quantity of 51,000 euros in fake 200 and 500 notes was seized.
Eight-year old girl kidnapped for witchcraft
In Laamameria, Tebessa province, an eight-year old girl was kidnapped by unknown individuals on 23 December, according to a security source. The girl was dropped off near her school and then taken to the police station. She revealed that her captors took her to a forest, conducted a ritual and asked her to "look for a treasure". An investigation remains ongoing.

Vehicle trafficking gang dismantled in Algiers
On 25 December, a three-member vehicle trafficking gang was dismantled in Birtoua, in the suburbs of Algiers. The gang was responsible for the theft of at least 12 vehicles abroad, according to a security source, and the forgery of official documents.

Industry Minister calls on public companies to find other sources of funding
The Minister of Industry, Youcef Yousfi, urged public companies facing financial difficulties to find non-governmental sources of funding, and not to expect bail-outs next year. The Minister advised these companies to reinforce their cooperation with the private sector, and seek loans from local and foreign private companies. This came only two days after the government allowed the privatization of public companies.

PM urges Tassili Airlines to cancel acquisition of three aircrafts, orders audit
Prime Minister Ahmed Ouyahia urged the airline Tassili Airlines to cancel the purchase of three aircrafts due to Algeria’s current economic difficulties and the measures taken to limit importing. The PM also ordered an audit into the management of the company, which is said to be suffering a financial crisis.

Young entrepreneurs denounce Algerie Telecom
Small Algerian company owners have denounced Algeria Telecom (AT) for "abandoning them" in favor of multinational companies. The Chinese company Huawei signed a 300 million dollar contract with AT to develop FTTH technology. This has displeased hundreds of young Algerian entrepreneurs who condemned their marginalization.

Foreign reserves drop under USD 100 billion mark
On 22 December, Prime Minister Ahmed Ouyahia revealed that the foreign exchange reserves of Algeria fell to USD 98 billion in November 2017, when he announced that Algeria will suspend the importing of vehicles in 2018.
Political
Internal opposition against the Secretary-General of the FLN, Djamel Ould-Abbes, continues despite the victory of the party in both the legislative and local elections this year. Several provincial political commissioners have denounced Ould-Abbes, claiming that corruption has been soaring under his leadership. Ould-Abbes’s detractors suggest that members of rival parties have “infiltrated” the FLN after being registered in the party’s electoral lists in an effort to hinder the FLN and its legacy. If this crisis persists, political tensions are likely to heighten prior to the Presidential elections.

Security
The capture of suspected Islamic State insurgents in Tlemcen has prompted concerns over possible attacks targeting events on New Year’s Eve. Those currently in custody are purported to have been involved in a plot to attack New Year’s Eve celebrations in the northwestern city of Tlemcen, which remains one of the least conservative cities in the country.

Social tensions remained heightened this week with regard to social housing. The publishing of affordable housing beneficiary lists in the next few weeks will likely fuel further unrest. Meanwhile in Biskra, riots broke out last week due to an alleged deterioration of the health services. Further activity in this area is anticipated.

Economy & Social
Social tensions remained heightened this week with regard to social housing. The publishing of affordable housing beneficiary lists in the next few weeks will likely fuel further unrest. Meanwhile in Biskra, riots broke out last week due to an alleged deterioration of the health services. Further activity in this area is anticipated.

The Islamic State has issued a call for attacks to be carried out globally on 31 December, prompting Algerian authorities to reinforce security around airports, ports, embassies and consulates. There remains the possibility of an attack owing to the high levels of weapons being seized across the country, indicative of a persistent insurgent intent and capability. The discovery of 40 bombs in Skikda and the explosion of an IED in Bouira indicate that there are continued efforts to target security forces. Attacks against urban areas should also not be discounted.

Strike action in the education, health and public administration sectors will continue through the first quarter of 2018. While this is not a new phenomenon, this wave of strikes is likely to have long-term consequences on society, as school teachers are on unlimited strike in Tizi Ouzou, and resident doctors across the country are willing to continue strike activity until their demands are met. In Tizi Ouzou, the civil society has also begun to express its discontent through protest activity. Although the rallies remained peaceful this week, violent escalation are a possibility in the short-term should a deadlock persist.
## Forecast of Events 2018

### Algeria Weekly Report

*Muslim holidays are often determined by local sightings of lunar phases; dates given are approximate.*

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<td>Newly decreed public holiday - Berber new year</td>
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<td>Anniversary of the start of Algerian independence war</td>
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<td>20 November 2018</td>
<td>Mawlid Nabawi—Birth of Prophet Mohamed</td>
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