Between 3 and 9 May 2018, there were 77 critical incidents in Algeria, resulting in two deaths and 276 arrests, including those of 177 immigrants and 37 drug traffickers. Criminal events accounted for 38.96% of the total incident pool this week, followed by human and social crises with 31.17%.

Al-Qaeda in the Islamic Maghreb (AQIM) issued a threat against western companies operating in the Maghreb and Sahel region. The AQIM statement also included local nationals working for such companies as potential targets. Several countries are expected to bolster security as a result, including Algeria. In Tamanrasset, an AQIM fighter surrendered and in Khouchela, Medea, Blida, Boumerdes and Tebessa, seven terrorism supporters were arrested.

In Jijel, large-scale sweeping operations were initiated. So far, two wanted al-Qaeda insurgents were apprehended in the area of Ziama Mansouria, while a weapon, an IED and two insurgent hideouts were found in the same region. In Bordj Bou Arreridj, Skikda and Tebessa, 36 other hideouts and 18 bombs were discovered.

Algeria summoned the Moroccan ambassador last week, amid escalating tensions between the two countries. Morocco accused Algeria of facilitating the transfer of weapons from Iran and the alleged military training provided to Polisario troops by the Lebanese group Hezbollah. The Turkish press agency Anadolu claimed that Algeria is now pondering the expulsion of Moroccan diplomats.

In Bejaia, the committee to support Cevital workers is calling for a “popular protest” in the downtown area of the city to denounce the blockade of Cevital shipping containers at the local port, and the inaction of authorities regarding the dispute. The committee claimed that releasing the containers would help create thousands of jobs in the province.

Municipal workers held a protest in Bejaia on 4 May to demand a salary increase, and the reinstatement of the early retirement system. While no incidents were reported during the protest, the unionists vowed to intensify their action in the near future.

Air Algeria operations are likely to be disrupted yet again next week, as the union of maintenance engineers announced an upcoming strike to protest the company’s refusal to negotiate salary re-evaluations. Domestic and international flights are expected to be cancelled.
Jijel: 5 May 2018: Two wanted AQIM fighters captured in Jijel.

Tamanrasset: 5 May 2018: Seven armed smugglers captured in In Guezzam.

Batna: 7 May 2018: Explosives and detonators discovered in In Guezzam.

Batna: 6 May 2018: Seven hideouts, seven IEDs discovered in Batna and Tebessa.

Tebessa: 8 May 2018: Measles kills a victim in Tebessa.

Batna: 7 May 2018: Three terrorism supporters captured in Khenchela and Medea.

Batna: 7 May 2018: Eight hideouts, five IEDs discovered in Batna.

Skikda: 5 May 2018: Hideout containing two homemade explosives found in Skikda.

Jijel: 5 May 2018: IED found and cleared in Jijel.
FLN Senator expelled from the party
FLN senator Abdelwahab Benzaim was excluded from the ruling party by the disciplinary commission, weeks after he demanded the resignation of the Minister of Education, Nouria Benghabrit, due to recent strikes in her sector. The senator’s stance regarding this issue was contrary to that of the FLN and the Secretary-General Djamel Ould Abbes.

Ali Benflis' party calls crackdown on unions "unconstitutional"
The opposition party Talaiou al-Hurriat released a statement to denounce the withdrawal of the accreditation of 34 autonomous unions by the government. "We denounce the regime's determination to restrict freedoms, including union rights, which are set out by article 70 of the Constitution" said the party led by Ali Benflis. Talaiou al-Hurriat condemned this as an unconstitutional move, and an "action of exclusion" which might lead unions to "radicalization".

RCD elected officials sue Tizi Ouzou Governor
Elected officials from the opposition party Rally for Culture and Democracy (RCD) sued the Governor of Tizi Ouzou, according to a statement by the party. The officials are seeking the annulment of new provincial internal laws, which have been deemed "illegal", and accused the Governor of trying to consolidate power in the province.

Algeria summons Moroccan Ambassador over Iran crisis
The Iranian Embassy in Algiers has been accused by Morocco of militarily supporting the Polisario Front, according to a statement by Iran's Islamic Republic News Agency, days after Morocco severed ties with Iran. Morocco’s Minister of Foreign Affairs and International Cooperation, Nasser Bourita, alleged that Hezbollah officers have travelled to Tindouf camps in Algeria to train military leaders of the separatist Polisario Front in the use of SAM-9s and anti-aircraft missiles. Bourita stated that cutting ties with Iran is not related to the situation in Syria or Middle East. “This decision was not taken under influence or pressure,” said Bourita during a meeting with representatives of the national and foreign press, recalling that “[Morocco] had resumed diplomatic relations with Iran in 2014, while it was at crisis with countries that have friendly relations with Morocco.” In the meantime, Algeria summoned the Moroccan ambassador after denying "unfounded reports" by the Moroccan authorities.

Rumor: Algeria considers expelling Moroccan diplomats amid row involving Iran and Hizbollah
Citing "inside sources", the Turkish press agency Anadolu revealed that the Algerian Ministry of Foreign Affairs has advised President Abdelaziz Bouteflika to expel a number of Moroccan diplomats, and limit Moroccan diplomatic representation merely to consular activities. It is believed that the President is currently considering the option. In the meantime, Foreign Affairs Minister Abdelkader Messahel is going to visit several countries to "deny the allegations of Morocco" regarding the presence of members of the Lebanese branch of Hezbollah in Morocco.

Moroccan Foreign Minister Nasser Bourita announced his country had severed ties with Iran over alleged ties between Hezbollah and the Polisario. (Photo: EPA / STR)
the Sahrawi refugee camps of Tindouf.

**Algiers mayor sued for forgery**
The Mayor of Bouzareah, a district located near central Algiers, was accused of forgery and falsification of official documents by a local resident, who is now suing him. The latter accused the mayor of granting him a three-bedroom apartment instead of a four-bedroom unit, which he claims he had lawfully obtained.

**Health Ministry to recruit 600 general practitioners as strikes continue**
The Ministry of Health is going to recruit 600 general practitioners to replace striking resident doctors in emergency rooms, according to the government-aligned APS press agency. The practitioners will be offered two-year contracts, according to the Director of Health of Algiers province.

**Human & Social**

**Bejaia protesters close highways, demand better living conditions**
On 6 May, protesters in Amizour and Adekar, Bejaia province, closed national roads 72 and 12 respectively to denounce their poor living conditions. In Amizour, villagers implored the authorities to conduct road maintenance, while in Adekar, the protesters claimed that the results of the local elections of 23 November were "manipulated" in their municipality.

**Popular march to take place in Bejaia over Cevital crisis**
The committee to support Cevital workers has called for a "popular march" on Monday 14 May. After addressing several letters to the Prime Minister and President, the committee has decided to take to the streets to demand the release of their shipping containers from the port of Bejaia, in order to allow the private company to launch a number of projects in the province.

**Municipal workers take to the streets of Bejaia**
In Bejaia, on 4 May, dozens of municipal workers affiliated with the National Union of Public Administration Personnel (SNAPAP) organized a protest march to demand wage increases and the reintegration of the early retirement system. The unionists vowed to escalate their action in upcoming weeks due to the government's inaction regarding their demands.

**Resident doctors refuse to partake in talks with the government for the second time**
For the second time in just two weeks, the union of resident doctors, CAMRA, refused an offer by the Ministry of Health to resume negotiations. The union claimed that the Ministry had failed to communicate the agenda of the meeting as well as not providing a list of participants. In the meantime, emergency rooms across the country are understaffed, due to the unlimited strike of the resident doctors, which recently escalated.

**Air Algerie maintenance engineers to go on strike**
The National Union of Aircraft Maintenance Engineers (SNTMA) announced that a strike will be
observed in the near future. This will be held in order to put pressure on Air Algerie, which refused to grant them salary increases on several occasions over the last two years. Over 600 engineers are expected to join the strike, possibly leading to the cancellation of several domestic and international flights.

**Assistant teachers protest in Constantine**

On 4 May, dozens of assistant teachers began a protest in Constantine to condemn their "marginalization" from recent pay rises granted by the Ministry of Education. The head of the union of assistant teachers said that only teachers received wage increases, and urged authorities to widen the measure to include other education workers.

**Over 30% of Algerians want to leave the country - Study**

According to a study conducted in 2017 by the US-based institute Gallup, 32% of Algerians want to leave the country, as against 28% in 2016. Citing social and economic issues, the report suggests that the majority of Algerians who want to emigrate have a bachelor's degree.

**Over 1,500 illegal immigrants deported**

According to the International Organization for Migration (IOM), over 1,500 undocumented immigrants from Sub-Saharan Africa, including 600 Cameroonian nationals, in addition to hundreds of Malians and Guineans, were deported from Algeria by the police and dropped off at the border with Niger, in the village of Assamaka.

**Illegal immigration: 177 Sub-Saharan Africans and Algerians apprehended**

This week, 162 undocumented immigrants from Sub-Saharan Africa were apprehended in Tlemcen, Blida, Ouargla, Ain Temouchent and Adrar. Moreover, in Tlemcen and Mostagamen, 15 Algerian nationals were arrested for trying to cross the Mediterranean Sea illegally.

**Dead body of immigrant found on Oran beach**

The dead body of a Sub-Saharan African immigrant washed up on a beach in Oran on 4 May. This is the 15th body to be found in Oran, after the capsizing of a boat off the coast of Ain Temouchent last month.

**Measles claims a victim's life in Tebessa**

A four-year-old child fell victim to measles and died in Tebessa, following the measles outbreak which began in El Oued. 19 other cases have been reported over the last week, including 13 children. Local health authorities since launched a vaccination campaign in schools.

**NGO claims existence of a plan to "shut down newspapers"**

According to the Algerian League for the Defense of Human Rights (LADDH), there is a "plan to shut down newspapers in Algeria" through a ban on advertisement. In
a statement released on World Press Freedom Day on 3 May, the NGO said that, "Many media outlets have been unable to pay their journalists, in some cases for months. This is a violation of the material and moral rights of journalists, and it symbolizes the crisis that is affecting the media sector in Algeria". Without naming those responsible for the alleged crack down, LADDH urged the civil society to protect the media, the dignity of journalists and the freedom of the press.

Security

AQIM threatens to attack foreign companies based in the Maghreb and Sahel
On 8 May, al-Qaeda in the Islamic Maghreb released a statement threatening foreign companies operating in North Africa. The Islamic insurgency organization stated that, "Western companies active in the area between Mauritania and Libya will be targeted". AQIM also clarified that locals working for these companies will also be targeted. It is believed that French companies are the primary motive behind the message due to the presence of French troops in northern Mali, and their frequent crackdowns on AQIM insurgents.

Two wanted AQIM fighters caught in Jijel
On 5 May, two Islamic fighters were captured in Zama Mansouria, a municipality located in Jijel province. The two insurgents, identified as Mohamed Hachoud and Samir Khetab, have been active since 1994 and 1996 respectively. Two Kalashnikov machine guns and five rounds of ammunition were also seized.

Islamic insurgent surrenders in Tamanrasset
In Tamanrasset, a wanted Islamic insurgent known as "Bilel" surrendered to the army on 1 May. A Kalashnikov machine gun and two rounds of ammunition were also seized.

Seven terrorism supporters captured in five provinces
In the provinces of Khencchela, Medea, Blida, Boumerde and Tebessa, seven terrorism supporters were captured by the army on 7 and 8 May. The suspects were accused of having helped insurgents hide in their homes during military sweeping operations.

Hideouts and bombs found in five provinces
Counter-terrorism operations have allowed the discovery of various insurgent shelters and homemade explosives this week. In Bordj Bou Arreridj, 12 militant shelters and eight homemade bombs were discovered on 8 May. In Skikda, one insurgent hideout containing two homemade explosives was found on 5 May in the region of Ain Kercha. Between 1 and 7 May, in Batna and Tebessa, 23 other hideouts and 16 homemade bombs were discovered. Furthermore, in Jijel, an IED, a pump-action rifle, several rounds of ammunition, detonating tools and two hideouts were discovered by the army between 5 and 8 May.

Explosives, detonators found in In Guezzam
In In Guezzam, Tamanrasset province, four power generators, five jackhammers, a metal detector, 1.5 kilograms of TNT, 30 detonators and several detonating agents were seized by the army on 7 May.

Criminality

Drug trafficking: 37 apprehended
This week, 37 drug traffickers were apprehended in Ouargla, El Oued, El Tarf, Mascara, Ain Temouchent, Blida, Tipaza, Tebessa and Tlemcen. In total, 751.5 kilograms of treated kif and 8,186 psychotropic pills were seized.

Contraband smuggling: Armed smugglers arrested in Tamanrasset
In In Guezzam, Tamanrasset province, seven armed contraband smugglers were apprehended on 5 May. A Kalashnikov machine gun, one round of ammunition, four motorcycles, nine metal detectors, nine power generators and seven jackhammers were seized. In the same province, 5.3 tons of foodstuffs, 400 liters of fuel and 800 liters of cooking oil were also seized.

In Adrar and El Oued, 11 other smugglers were apprehended and 8.3 tons of tobacco and 3.82 tons...
of foodstuffs were seized. In Souk Ahras, Tebessa and el-Tarf, 7,766 liters of fuel were seized.

Police investigate allegations of public money embezzlement in Tiaret
In the municipality of Hemadia, Tiaret province, police are investigating allegations of public money embezzlement by local elected officials. Hemadia has been struggling financially in recent years, which has led locals to reveal an overbilling scandal involving former and current government officials between 2005 and 2017.

Wanted people smuggler captured in Oran
In Oran, on 1 May, a man wanted for organizing illegal trips across the Mediterranean Sea for would-be immigrants was apprehended by the police. The suspect used document forgery networks in the past few years to travel using fake a passport.

Five members of people smuggling gang arrested
In Mostaganem, on 8 May, five members of a criminal network which organized illegal sea-crossing trips for would-be immigrants were apprehended by the national gendarmerie. The network was allegedly responsible for arranging over 200 attempts to cross the Mediterranean Sea in just one year.

Three money counterfeiters arrested
On 2 May, three money counterfeiters were apprehended by the police in the region of Zighoud Youcef, Constantine province. 55 fake 1,000 dinar bank notes were also seized. Money counterfeiting has been a source of concern in the northeast over the last few years. Last year alone, the equivalent of 200 million Algerian dinars and 3 million euros were seized in fake bills.

Five drones sent from France seized in Annaba
Five "mini-drones" were seized by the police in Annaba on 2 May, according to the authorities. The drones, each worth approximately 115,000 dinars (USD 950) were sent in parcels from France through regular mail. The recipient of the parcels was fined 230,000 dinars.

Four Russian tourists arrested in possession of a drone
In Batna's el-Ghourfi touristic region, four Russian tourists were apprehended by the national gendarmerie in the possession of a drone. The tourists are believed to have used the drone to capture videos of the region, which is illegal in Algeria.

Economy

Hydrocarbon exports to the US drop dramatically
The President of the Algerian-American Business Council, Smail Chikhoun, announced that hydrocarbon exports to the United States have reduced from USD 18 billion to only USD 3 billion in a few years. Smail Chikhoun added, during an interview, that Algeria should work harder to attract US companies. The suppression of the 51/49 percent investment rule was mentioned as a "bureaucratic problem", which is making US investment in Algeria difficult.

Cost of car registration increases by 2,000%
The cost of car registration in Algeria has been increased by 2,000%, as the complementary 2018 finance bill sets the tax to 10,000 dinars, as opposed to 500 dinars last year. "This increase aims to accompany the launch of the new biometric and electronic driver's license, which requires modern technology systems, and thus significant financial coverage" the bill text reads.
Businessman blamed for euro shortage in the black market

Algerian businessman, Mahiedine Tahkout, was accused of buying all available amounts of euros in the black market money exchange in Algeria, in an effort to control the exchange rates. Newspaper El Wassat claimed that Tahkout has provoked a shortage of euros in the black market, which has led to the depreciation of the dinar against the European currency. Now sold against 214 dinars in the black market, the euro's value is expected to climb further before Ramadan.
Political:
Political infighting remains a source of tension in Algeria’s political environment. With general elections approaching next year, tensions are expected to continue to escalate in the medium term.

With regard to the Morocco-Iran dispute, and Algeria’s alleged involvement in facilitating Hezbollah in training the Polisario militia, no hostile escalations are expected in the short-term. Algeria has categorically rejected Morocco’s accusations, though tensions will remain elevated over the fallout of Morocco’s breakdown in relations with Iran. Should Algeria expel Moroccan diplomats, rhetoric is expected to become more polemic between the two countries.

Security:
The threat issued by al-Qaeda in the Islamic Maghreb will not be taken lightly by the Algerian government. Although AQIM’s operations in Algeria have declined drastically in recent years, and the likelihood of a large-scale attack in the country is low, AQIM remains a potent force in Mali and Libya. It is assessed that here, the insurgent group remains capable of training new Algerian recruits and arming them, in an effort to rebuild a presence and execute its threats in Algeria.

In the meantime, the Algerian military will continue to conduct its ongoing crackdown on the group, which has so far led to the surrender of over 20 militants this year. The army has furthermore seized a significant quantity of weapons, IEDs and ammunition.

Economy & social:
Bejaia has witnessed an increase in protests this week. Indeed, after a rally organized by municipal workers seeking a wage increase, protesters in Adekar condemned electoral fraud, and others in Amizou urged the authorities to repair local roads. Next week, workers of the private company Cevital are set to protest to demand the release of shipping containers from the local port. Security reinforcements are likely, as the protesters are expected to try to enter the port.

Also of concern is planned strike action by Air Algeria maintenance engineers. This may cause several cancellations of domestic and international flights next week.
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<tr>
<th>DATE</th>
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<td>16 May - 15 Jun 2018*</td>
<td>Ramadan</td>
<td>Month-long religious holiday - reduced hours</td>
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<td>15 Jun 2018</td>
<td>Eid al-Fitr (End of Ramadan)</td>
<td>Religious and national holiday - widespread business closures</td>
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<td>5 Jul 2018</td>
<td>Independence Day</td>
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<td>22 Aug 2018</td>
<td>Eid ul-Ad’ha—Sacrifice Feast</td>
<td>Religious and national holiday - widespread business closures</td>
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<td>11 Sep 2018</td>
<td>Muharram –Islamic New Year</td>
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<td>20 Sep 2018</td>
<td>Ashura— 10th day of Muharram</td>
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<td>1 Nov 2018</td>
<td>Anniversary of the start of Algerian National holiday - widespread business closures independence war</td>
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<tr>
<td>20 Nov 2018</td>
<td>Mawlid Nabawi—Birth of Prophet Religious holiday - widespread business closures Mohamed</td>
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* Muslim holidays are often determined by local sightings of lunar phases; dates given are approximate.
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