



# Algeria

## Reasons for Refugee Population:

In 1975, Morocco annexed Western Sahara, sparking a war between Moroccan forces and an independence movement led by the Polisario Front. This conflict caused many Sahrawi people to flee their homes and relocate to Algeria, where they live in camps in Tindouf under the Polisario Front's governance since 1975-76.

## Refugee situation:

This refugee group is the most vulnerable and largest of all groups in Algeria, with the number estimated to be between 90,000 and 125,000. The Sahrawi refugees have been in

these camps for over 30 years, making it one of the most protracted refugee situations in the world.

Whilst the Polisario Front govern these camps with little interference from the Algerian government, Sahrawis lack basic rights and face the prospect of arbitrary arrest and detention outside the camps. Due to the scarcity of work in the camps, Sahrawis have little means of self-reliance and thus rely heavily on the international humanitarian community for assistance. They subsist on mostly rice, lentils, and bread, and many suffer from chronic malnutrition.

**Number of refugees:**  
94,144 residing in Algeria;  
3,691 originating from  
Algeria  
[source: UNHCR]

**Number of Internally  
Displaced Persons (IDPs):**  
0  
[source: UNHCR]

## History:

**1962**—Algeria gains independence from France

**1986**—High unemployment and rising inflation leads to strikes and violent demonstrations

**1988**— State of emergency is declared as riots against economic conditions turned violent

**1992**— The army suspends democratic elections, preventing the Islamic Salvation Front's victory; the Algerian Civil War begins

**1999**— President Bouteflika orders the release of 5,000 political and religious detainees

**2005**— according to a report commissioned by the government, security forces were responsible for the disappearance of over 6,000 citizens during the 1990s

**2013**— During a four day siege at a remote gas complex, Islamist militants kill 37 foreign hostages

**2014**— Bouteflika gains another term of presidency

## Assistance:

- In 2008, RIJ funded a project providing training of midwives in the Saharawi's refugee camps of Tindouf
- Over the last 22 years, the European Commission has provided €213 million for access to drinking water, food, sanitation, medicines, health training and to enhance hygiene awareness

