

The Russian Presence in Africa and Historical Relations with Algeria

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Abstract

Algerian-Russian relations are pivotal in the world and the African continent because both countries share geographical, military, economic, and political potential. These factors have facilitated a relationship that serves the interests of both parties. Furthermore, the Russian military presence in Africa, the geographical proximity between Algeria and Russia, and numerous African countries opposing Western and American influence in the region have made North Africa a contested area for influence throughout the continent. This is especially significant for the firm and the growing presence of Israel, which was backed by the United States of America.

Keywords: Algerian-Russian relations, Russian military presence in Africa, impact of Algeria's role in Africa, international conflict, influence.

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Introduction:

Algeria is considered a strategically important political, economic, and military hub for Russia, particularly on the African continent, which is a focal point of significant international conflict between traditional colonial powers, such as France, and modern powers, including the United States, Israel, and Iran. The region possesses numerous economic and human resources that serve the interests of both Western and Eastern powers, especially Russia and China. Algeria builds its relationship with Russia on the basis of mutual respect and the utilisation of expertise and technology in armament and economics. This collaboration enables Algeria to influence the course of African politics, particularly in North Africa, where it is the largest Arab and African country. This strategic position has made it imperative for Algeria to strengthen its ties with Russia to protect national and African security, particularly in light of Western and American regional ambitions.

Problematic:

The issue concerns the trajectory of Algerian-Russian relations in the African continent and the world, focusing on the continuity and diversification of these relations in economic, military, and political spheres, which bring mutual benefits to both parties. This occurs within contemporary global challenges and accelerating international and regional conflicts. Russia's significant role on the continent impacts Algeria's relations with African countries, notably Mali and Niger. To address these points, the following questions can be raised:

- ✚ What is the nature of the strategic relations between Algeria and Russia, and what are their domains?
- ✚ How should the Russian role in Africa be viewed in terms of African national security?
- ✚ Can the Russian presence on the continent be considered a threat to Algerian influence in Africa?

Study Hypotheses:

- Algerian-Russian relations are deeply rooted and historical and are built on a strong foundation.
- The Russian presence on the African continent serves both Algerian and Russian interests.
- Algeria's significant influence in Africa has strengthened relations with the Russian Federation.

2. Strategic Relations between Algeria and Russia and Their Manifestations

2.1 Nature of the Relationship between Algeria and Russia

Algeria's relationship with Russia is characterised by a culture of consensus in strategic visions, marked by stability and continuous progression. This relationship is rare in Algeria's ties with other major powers in the international system. Algeria has never deviated from this course in its relations with Russia or compromised it, despite the Western pressures and criticisms that have intensified since the start of Russia's special military operation in Ukraine in February 2022.

The origin of Algerian-Russian relations lies in friendship, not enmity. Algeria and Russia have never been enemies and have never abandoned the friendship established during the Algerian War of Independence. This friendship was built on mutual respect, which has strengthened and evolved over several decades. This mutual respect became the foundation that facilitated the alignment between the two countries and enabled the development of their partnership.

For comparison, consider the relationship with France to understand this aspect: the foundation of the relationship between France and Algeria is rooted in enmity. Despite efforts to overcome this initial adversarial nature, these efforts quickly fail. In contrast, the anticipated outcome of the deepened strategic partnership between Algeria and Russia is undoubtedly increased entanglement in their relationships and interests, along with further coordination at both the bilateral level and within multilateral frameworks, both regionally and globally.² This relationship has thus become a conduit for further strengthening and mutual development, both regionally and internationally, between the two great countries.

2.2 Structure of Algerian-Russian Relations and Their Scope

During Algerian President Abdelmadjid Tebboune's visit to Moscow, the two countries signed a new document for an "Enhanced Strategic Partnership," which aimed to expand and deepen the previous agreement signed in April 2001. The new document is expected to broaden the scope of Algerian-Russian cooperation into more economic sectors to double the current trade exchanges between the two countries, which amount to 3 billion dollars annually.

The growing proximity between Algeria and European countries since mid-2022, as well as the successive visits of U.S. officials to Algeria, have led many analysts to believe that Western pressure has succeeded in disrupting the traditional alignment between Algeria and Russia, especially after the signing of agreements to increase the supply of additional Algerian gas to Europe through Italy.³ The level of cooperation between Algeria and the West is insufficient to match the level of cooperation with

² Sharifa Klagh, "Algerian-Russian Relations Between Energy Dimensions and Military Cooperation," *Political Horizons Journal* 1, no. 1 (University of Algiers 3): 117.

³ Abd al-Hamid Atef Mu'tamad, *Russia and the Arabs: The Age of Pragmatism and the End of Ideology*, Arab Center for Research and Policy Studies, Doha, Qatar, accessed September 10, 2023, <https://www.dohainstitute.org>.

Russia. However, Tebboune's visit to Moscow and his affirmation of the alignment between Algerian and Russian visions and Algeria's ongoing efforts to become a member of the BRICS bloc are clear indicators that dispel the previous impression and its speculations. The logic behind Algeria's relationship with Russia does not conform to the principle that Western countries seek to impose on other nations. While the West does not hesitate to adopt policies that align with its interests, it paradoxically expects other countries to base their policies on Western impositions and desires.⁴ The stability of Algerian-Russian relations and the strategic partnership that has emerged between the two countries are the result of a historical process that has not ceased since the Soviet Union recognised the Algerian provisional government established during the War of Independence, followed by its recognition of the People's Democratic Republic of Algeria upon its independence in May 1962.⁵ Algeria's revolutionary history represents a significant diplomatic and political strength. In return, independent Algeria remained loyal to the political, military, and diplomatic support it received from the Soviet Union during its liberation struggle. Algeria was one of the first countries to recognise the Russian Federation on December 26, 1991, one day after it declared its establishment following the collapse of the Soviet Union. Even during the Cold War, despite its commitment to nonalignment, Algeria was considered closer to Eastern Bloc because of its strategic and economic choices, which leaned towards socialism. The Soviet Union played a prominent and decisive role in building the economy of independent Algeria.⁶ In my view, the Cold War has not ended; rather, the rules and parties have changed in a more strategically intense manner. Notably, economic and trade cooperation between Russia and Algeria was initiated in the 1960s. This occurred when the Soviet Union granted Algeria loans worth two billion dollars to stimulate national development and welcomed thousands of Algerian students to study at Soviet universities. It is also important not to overlook the significant contribution of the Soviet government in building Algeria's industrial base during the 1960s and 1970s, as well as its role in developing various sectors of Algeria's economy, including energy, mining, and water. The Soviet Union helped complete significant projects in different branches of the Algerian economy, notably the large steel plant in El-Hadjar, located 600 kilometres east of Algiers.⁷

At the beginning of the millennium, Algerian-Russian relations increased to the level of "strategic partnership," formalised in the foundational document signed in April 2001. This partnership was further strengthened in 2006 following a visit by Russian President Vladimir Putin to Algeria, which

⁴ *Ibid.*

⁵ Abd al-Hamid Atef Mu'tamad, *Russia and the Arabs: The Age of Pragmatism and the End of Ideology*, Arab Center for Research and Policy Studies, Doha, Qatar, *previous reference*.

⁶ *Ibid.*

⁷ *Ibid.*

resulted in an agreement between Algeria and Moscow to cancel Algeria's Soviet-era debts in exchange for Algeria's commitment to purchase Russian weapons. This strategic partnership with Algeria was Russia's first with an African country. A year later, after a visit by former Algerian President Abdelaziz Bouteflika to Moscow, Algeria secured a deal worth 7.5 billion dollars to purchase fighter jets, training aircraft, tanks, radars, air defence systems, surface-to-air missiles, and other military equipment. Additionally, the agreement included maintenance services for a part of Algeria's arsenal and its Russian-made warships.⁸ At the time, this deal was the most significant arms export agreement Russia had made since the collapse of the Soviet Union, making Russia the first and largest arms exporter to Algeria. As a result, Algeria became the third-largest global importer of Russian weapons after China and India. As a result of the steady pace of this partnership, Russia has become Algeria's most important military partner and its primary supplier of weapons and military systems. Notably, Algeria imported more than 80% of its military equipment and needs from Russia over the past three years. Algeria has regularly participated in military exercises organised by the Kremlin, the most recent of which occurred last year in eastern Russia under the name "Vostok 2022."

Today, Algeria and Russia do not hide their ambitions to create a new dynamic in their economic partnership.⁹ It appears that Algeria has already identified the targeted areas likely to witness an increase in the pace of exchanges between the two countries under the "Enhanced Strategic Partnership" document. These areas include agriculture, food industries, minerals, pharmaceutical products, defense industries and peaceful nuclear energy sectors. This represents the gradual approach that Algerian-Russian relations have followed, and it reflects the objectives of the anticipated partnership.

Considering the ascending trajectory of this relationship and the determination of both countries to maintain it for over 60 years, it is not surprising that the strengthening of Russian-Algerian relations is expected in the short term. While the previous sections have only briefly outlined the historical progression of Algerian-Russian relations, the historical clarifications provided are sufficient, in our opinion, to draw two main conclusions regarding these relations, which can serve as interpretive principles for understanding their present and future.¹⁰ The first of these conclusions is that the gradual development of Algerian-Russian relations has led the two countries to align in their significant strategic visions. Over time, this alignment has become the defining factor for deepening their

⁸ Abd al-Hamid Atef Mu'tamad, *Russia and the Arabs: The Age of Pragmatism and the End of Ideology*, Arab Center for Research and Policy Studies, Doha, Qatar, *previous reference*.

⁹ *Ibid.*

¹⁰ *Ibid.*

partnership.¹¹ By alignment in strategic visions, we mean their shared stance - on the one hand - in diagnosing the current international system as one of dominance, leaning towards unipolarity, and in the need to reform this system towards a multipolar structure that is more just and respectful of the interests and identities of countries that do not belong to the Western bloc. From this perspective, the aligned Russian and Algerian positions present both countries as reference states that are unsatisfied with the status quo imposed by the forces of hegemony.¹² This mutual stance drives Algeria's determination to join the BRICS bloc.

3. Nature and Reasons for the Russian Presence in North Africa and Its Importance

3.1 Reasons for the Russian presence on the African continent

Russia aims to expand its presence on the African continent through increased interest and projects, particularly in the context of its rivalry with the West, especially the United States. In October, the city of Sochi will host Russia--Africa Summit, to which the heads of all African countries and regional organisations have been invited. The summit will be chaired by Russian President Vladimir Putin, the President of the African Union, as well as Egyptian President Abdel Fattah el-Sisi, who has strong relations with Putin. This appears to be the first initiative on such a scale in Russia's foreign policy.¹³ The political and strategic alignment between Putin and Sisi will facilitate the process and foster cooperation, as Egypt seeks to enhance its role in Africa. The summit on October 25th signifies that the Russian elite understood Africa's role in the modern world and aimed to gain a competitive advantage in fields such as mineral exploration and production, satellite communications, weapons, and nuclear energy through its collaboration with the continent. Furthermore, Russia has agreements with 20 African countries regarding the peaceful use of nuclear energy. In the case of Egypt, there is a contract to build a nuclear power plant with an investment capital of 29 billion dollars.¹⁴

The political role of African countries is growing, and they are now essential partners in reshaping global governance institutions. After Syria, Russia was referred to in Africa as "the primary supplier of security, sovereignty, and nonintervention" internationally. Moreover, Africa ranks ninth among the ten most important regions for Russian interests, according to the foreign policy document issued in 2008, signed by former President Dmitry Medvedev. This highlights Russia's commitment to safeguarding its

¹¹ Abd al-Hamid Atef Mu'tamad, *Russia and the Arabs: The Age of Pragmatism and the End of Ideology*, Arab Center for Research and Policy Studies, Doha, Qatar, *previous reference*.

¹² *Ibid.*

¹³ "Russian Interests in Africa – Readings and Future Predictions," *Samit Center for Studies, Political Studies Unit*, Monday, September 16, 2019, p. 02.

¹⁴ "Russian Interests in Africa – Readings and Future Predictions," *Samit Center for Studies, Political Studies Unit*, Monday, September 16, 2019, *previous reference*, p.

interests wherever it operates, regardless of the cost, to counter the influence of the United States, which has significant control over Asia compared with Russia.

3.2 Historical Relations between Russia and Africa

The Horn of Africa is one of the most strategically important regions in the world because of its unique geographic location, proximity to vital maritime routes, and rich natural resources. During the Cold War, the Soviet Union provided diplomatic, economic, military, and educational support to many African liberation movements. Throughout the Cold War, the Soviet Union had a vast and profound influence on African countries. However, with the collapse of the Soviet Union, Russia faced several internal and external difficulties, which impacted its presence in its areas of influence, especially in Africa.¹⁵ Despite these challenges, signs of a strong resurgence of Russian interest in the African continent began to emerge at the start of the 2000s, with Russia striving to regain its political influence as a significant power within the international system.

Motives for Russia's Shift Towards Africa:

It seems that several factors have driven Russia to restore its relations with African countries, which can be summarised in the following points:

1. Regaining Russian influence: Moscow is considering restoring Russian influence in the region, particularly in securing a foothold in the Red Sea area.
2. Exploitation of Natural Resources: Undoubtedly, Russia is keen to exploit the region's rich natural resources, such as oil, natural gas, agricultural lands, and livestock, which offer significant economic potential.
3. Exploiting Regional Conflicts: Russia aims to take advantage of ongoing regional conflicts and disputes by opening new markets for Russian arms sales, which grants it influence and generates economic gains.
4. Strengthening political cooperation: Enhancing political cooperation and engaging with regional countries to ensure Russia's support and alignment in international forums, especially on issues of particular interest to Russia.
5. Participation in Containing the Threat of Terrorist Groups: Russia seeks to play a role in containing the threat posed by terrorist groups and movements, such as Boko Haram in Nigeria, the Lord's Resistance Army (LRA) in Uganda, and Al-Shabaab in Somalia, ensuring that these threats do not jeopardise its political and economic interests in the region. Moscow aims to renew and strengthen its

¹⁵ *Ibid.*, p. 03.

political relationships in the region, enhancing its influence and enabling it to keep pace with the United States, China, and other global powers.

Political interests, particularly those related to securing Russia's strategic goals, are clearly major factors driving the country's efforts to strengthen its ties with Africa.¹⁶ Russia takes advantage of African conflicts in ways that align with its strategic objectives, often uniting African factions around a standard policy. This is facilitated by shared ethnic, cultural, and economic challenges, which are widespread across the continent. Moscow is attempting to initiate a process of bringing together the warring factions in the Central African Republic (CAR) to achieve peace. The underlying motive behind this initiative is likely the rich mineral resources of the CAR, which include diamonds, uranium, gold, oil, and timber, along with other natural wealth. Egypt is also considered a cornerstone of regional security policy, which has driven Russia to develop its relations with Egypt through multiple avenues in recent years. We have witnessed the emergence of new bilateral relations in the political, military, and economic fields.

On the Libyan front, Moscow is more inclined towards cooperation with Khalifa Haftar, the leader of the Libyan National Army, who controls eastern Libya, an area rich in oil resources. However, Putin has also built strong relations with the Government of National Unity led by Fayez al-Sarraj as part of his broader approach to fostering friendships with all parties in the region.¹⁷

Moreover, Russia's concerns about international isolation and diplomatic marginalisation seem to be significant factors driving Moscow to focus its efforts on strengthening its strategic interests in Africa, aiming to circumvent Western and American influence.

Russia has made significant investments in Africa, such as its gold fields in South Africa, which generated approximately \$1.16 billion in 2004.¹⁸ This capital results from abundant liquidity, owing to the profits from Russian grain and gas exports. Additionally, Russia has invested in coal in Ivory Coast and Ghana, with returns reaching \$900 million in 2001.

The Horn of Africa is another area of interest for Russia, which sees the continent as a crucial and resource-rich region that provides more of the natural resources Russia requires. Moreover, Russia aims to increase its control over the region's oil, natural gas, and oil pipelines. Another indicator of Russia's economic interests in Africa is the improvement in its trade relations with African partners in

¹⁶ "Russian Interests in Africa – Readings and Future Predictions," *Samit Center for Studies, Political Studies Unit*, Monday, September 16, 2019, *previous reference*, p.

¹⁷ "Russian Interests in Africa – Readings and Future Predictions," *Samit Center for Studies, Political Studies Unit*, Monday, September 16, 2019, p. 04.

¹⁸ *Ibid.*, p.

2009, following the establishment of a coordination committee for economic cooperation with sub-Saharan Africa to help boost Russian commercial interests.

Moscow's approach to economic relations with Africa appears to be based on a long-term energy strategy, particularly the use of Russian companies to create new energy supply routes. This is evident from Russian companies establishing significant investments in the oil and gas industries in Algeria, Libya, Nigeria, Ghana, Ivory Coast, and Egypt. Furthermore, Russia is on track to build nuclear power plants in Egypt, Nigeria, and Algeria.¹⁹ Russia also has significant military interest in arms supply and trade, with weaponry and aircraft being some of the key sectors in which it seeks to dominate. It has become evident in Russian policy that military relations serve as a gateway to broader political ties, with Russia aiming to be a primary supplier of arms to Africa. According to documented information from the Stockholm International Peace Research Institute (SIPRI)²⁰, Russia is known for its generosity in the arms trade, with no upper limit on the type of weaponry it supplies to its allies in North Africa and around the world. This is particularly important, as NATO controls most European countries' political and military decisions and establishes military bases in many of these countries, particularly those near Russia's borders, such as Poland and Germany.

4. Results and Discussion:

4.1 Outcomes of the Russian presence on the African continent

Russia began to strengthen its presence in Africa approximately a decade ago, following the Syrian and Libyan crises, which posed a significant threat to Russia by potentially losing its last foothold in the Mediterranean to its historical adversaries, NATO and Europe. Russia has established military relations with several countries on the African continent, the most notable of which are Algeria, Egypt, Cameroon, Tanzania, and Nigeria. In addition to these military ties, Russia has also signed agreements with Egypt to construct nuclear power plants. The Russian–French rivalry in Africa is particularly evident in Libya and Central Africa, where Moscow has sided with Paris's opponents. Its strong support for the military coup in Mali added a significant source of tension to the French presence in the Sahel.²¹ The interest of Africans in cooperating with Russia, particularly in military and economic fields (and not political), may be driven by the goal of expelling France from the region.

There is no doubt that Russia's presence in Africa, in general, is poised for further expansion, with the Wagner Group likely becoming a stable and effective force in the African security landscape over

¹⁹ *Ibid.*, p.

²⁰ *Ibid.*, p.

²¹ Hlim bouamri, *Military Coups as a Determinant of the Decline of French Influence in Africa*, Sita Center for Studies and Research, October 22, 2022, accessed November 9, 2023.

time, even if France continues to view it as a destabilising element and a source of ethnic conflict, according to the French perspective. Following the ousting of President Damiba, this will allow Russia to deepen its involvement in Burkina Faso, similar to what it did in Mali by sending trainers and Wagner personnel, providing them with both light and heavy weapons, including used fighter aircraft, in exchange for mining rights, especially in gold, as Burkina Faso is the fifth-largest gold producer in Africa, in addition to phosphate and zinc.

France's policy of reducing the number of troops stationed in the Sahel since February 2022 has led the military rulers of Mali to turn to Russia to fill this security void. Russia is likely to seek to exploit the vacuum created by the French military drawdown in the Sahel region.²² This will lead to a shift in the structure of alliances among armed groups and between them, creating further security tensions. This, in turn, will push for the continued Russian presence through Wagner forces to contain the issue. This military presence broadly strengthened Russia's influence in the Sahel and Africa. Additionally, the Russian military presence in Chad and Libya is closely linked to the Sahel region, further extending Russia's reach into areas rich in minerals and vast resources in Mali and the broader Sahel region of Africa. Russia is entering these areas through multiple gateways, with security and trade being the most prominent.

The political rivalry between France and Russia is particularly evident in areas of conflict, with France accusing Moscow of being involved in the military coup that ousted Malian President Ibrahim Boubacar Keita in 2020.²³

Russia has shifted its struggle against the West from the European environment to the more open African landscape, exploiting local opposition to France. Additionally, Russia supports Central African Republic President Faustin-Archange Touadéra in his conflict with opponents backed by France. In the military domain, the Russian Wagner Group operates in various parts of Africa, becoming an ally to several African armies in training and armament missions. Russia has signed over 30 military agreements with different African armies.

Russia's role is crucial in combating terrorism in the Sahel region and creating a balance in the relationship between France and regional regimes. The invitation from Burkina Faso's president to Russia to join the international coalition against terrorism reflects an effort to diversify Sahel's partners. Russia now controls 40% of the arms market in Africa, which increases French concerns about Russia's expansion into areas of influence once it is controlled by former colonial powers. There

²² Hlim bouamri, *Military Coups as a Determinant of the Decline of French Influence in Africa*, Sita Center for Studies and Research, October 22, 2022, accessed November 9, 2023.

²³ *Ibid.*

is little sign of reconciliation between Russia and France in Africa, despite occasional overlapping interests, such as in Libya.²⁴ France views the presence of the Russian Wagner Group as a major cause of tension and a factor in encouraging conflicts across Africa.

4.2 Risks of Russian Influence on Algeria and the Future of the Region

The recent waves of coups in the Sahel and West Africa, linked to the economic crisis triggered by the COVID-19 pandemic and the rise of terrorism in the region, have prompted several African countries to refocus on their domestic agendas and turn to external partners capable of providing practical solutions to urgent and pressing problems. This shift has manifested in the emergence of a new populist discourse in the region, which is anti-France and supports the Russian presence. This trend has particularly gained momentum in Mali.

On the other hand, fractures have occurred in former Francophone regions and in the Sahel, which suffer from internal divisions and external penetrations, in addition to fragile security conditions. Recently, France has faced successive blows in Africa, reflected in the rise of nationalist movements demanding the removal of all things related to Paris.²⁵ This has been seen as the final blow to France's influence in Africa, essentially declaring war on the French presence on the continent. Today, the French can no longer confront new internal and external developments in Africa, which has contributed to the decline of their influence, particularly in the collapse of the French security framework in the Sahel. The security system established by France in the African Sahel in 2013 is rapidly unravelling after anti-French demonstrations spread to Chad, Mali's withdrawal from the Sahel group, and the declaration by Niger's president that this alliance is dead. After nearly a decade of French military intervention in the Sahel, it became clear to the region's people who Paris had failed to bring stability and political transition to the region, strengthening Russia's presence.

In 2018, Russian Foreign Minister Sergey Lavrov announced plans to establish a military logistics centre in Eritrea, a project recently revived by the statement of the Eritrean Ambassador to Moscow welcoming the establishment of the Russian logistics centre in his country.²⁶ This is a simple example of the danger posed by Russian military bases in Africa. These bases could pave the way for a new form of occupation in the region, creating a divergence in African views, especially since Algeria rejects such bases on its territory.

5. Conclusion

²⁴ *Ibid.*

²⁵ Hlim bouamri, *Military Coups as a Determinant of the Decline of French Influence in Africa*, Sita Center for Studies and Research, October 22, 2022, accessed November 9, 2023.

²⁶ Abdul-Qadir Muhammad Ali, *Red Sea Security: Eritrean Foreign Policy in a Changing Environment*, Al Jazeera Center for Studies, April 21, 2021, accessed October 8, 2023.

In conclusion, the strategic relationship between Algeria and Russia is rooted in a lengthy historical background, dating back to the Soviet era and the French occupation of Algeria. During this period, Russia supported the Algerian revolution with arms, contributing to the preservation of this relationship. The Russian role on the African continent and its relationship with African national security are largely based on the extent to which the Russians and Africans align in terms of mutual interests, stability, and confronting the West in the region. These factors serve local governance and enhance Russia's role in stabilising the region without compromising the interests of African countries, particularly Algeria. Furthermore, the Russian presence on the continent may threaten Algeria's influence, particularly through the expansion of the Russian Wagner Group, which is not officially linked to the Russian government and engages in illegal activities and mercenary actions. This poses a risk to African national security, especially in Libya and Mali, countries bordering Algeria, which could undermine Russia's relationship with Algeria due to contentious issues surrounding the role of this mercenary group.

In summary, the following conclusions can be drawn:

- ✚ The Russian-Algerian relationship exemplifies historical and strategic cohesion in international and regional alliances.
- ✚ Strengthening the partnership between Algeria and Russia reflects the deep-rooted nature of their relationship, fostering further alignment in their future visions for the region. Russia's historical support for Algeria has earned deep trust despite external obstacles from the West and the United States.
- ✚ Russia's military support to Algeria is vast and unlimited. It significantly enhances the strength of the Algerian military and its defensive and offensive capabilities to protect both African and Algerian national security, positioning Algeria as a strategic ally rather than a mere partner for Russia.
- ✚ Algeria's position in Africa is reflected in the strength of its stances among Africans and the global community, further reinforcing Algeria's leadership in guiding African countries in collaboration with Russia without being subordinate to them.
- ✚ Russia has bolstered its military presence in the region by targeting influential African countries, such as Egypt, and building partnerships with them, similar to its relations with Algeria. This has facilitated the presence of the Wagner Group, taking advantage of the decline of traditional Western influence, especially French influence, in the region following military coups in Mali, Burkina Faso, and other countries.

✚ The decline of French influence in Africa has strengthened Russia's position, facilitating its task of establishing military bases and forming alliances with African leaders, especially after the wave of military coups in the region.

✚ The coup countries in Africa, especially Mali and Burkina Faso, are important allies of Russia, posing a threat to Algeria along its borders with Mali and Niger due to the presence of Russian Wagner forces.

✚ Russia has significantly increased its arms deal with Africa, further enhancing its strategic role.

✚ The Russian Wagner Group serves as a barrier to Algeria due to its growing combat capabilities and its involvement in training government forces in African countries loyal to Russia in a highly questionable manner, especially given the lack of coordination with Algeria as a significant regional power and a Russian ally.

Recommendations:

✓ Strengthening the African-African alliance, in parallel with alliances with Russia, is necessary to ensure African national security.

✓ Algeria's political strength in the region, as well as its regional and international influence, cannot be ignored, especially given Russia's presence in the region. Preventing any shift that could jeopardise the region's stability, particularly following the recent military coups in which Russia played a role, is essential.

✓ Algeria must coordinate with neighboring countries to protect its borders from the risk of Russian encroachment in the region through the Wagner Group. The Wagner Group seeks to contain the Western presence on the continent in service of Russia's higher interests.

✓ Algeria must strengthen its military role in the region to better protect African interests, even if it conflicts with Russia's influence.

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