



Algeria’s Strategic Response to Emerging Security Threats in the Maghreb and African Sahel: A Geopolitical and Multidimensional Analysis of Terrorism, Organized Crime, and Irregular Migration

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Abstract

This study examines Algeria’s strategic approach to confronting evolving security threats arising from instability in the Maghreb region and the African Sahel. In recent decades, regional geopolitical transformations—particularly following the Arab Spring and the collapse of state structures in neighboring countries such as Libya and Mali—have generated complex and interconnected security challenges. These include the proliferation of cross-border terrorism, the expansion of organized criminal networks, the illicit arms trade, and increasing patterns of irregular migration. The research adopts a geopolitical and security-oriented analytical framework to explore how Algeria, as a key regional actor with significant geostrategic importance, has adapted its national security doctrine to respond to these multidimensional threats. The study highlights the interaction between internal and external security environments, demonstrating how regional instability has directly influenced Algeria’s domestic security dynamics. Particular attention is given to the resurgence of terrorist activities facilitated by the circulation of weapons and fighters across porous borders, as well as the growing nexus between terrorism and organized crime. Furthermore, the paper analyzes Algeria’s comprehensive security strategy, which integrates military preparedness, intelligence coordination, border control reinforcement, and international cooperation mechanisms. It also emphasizes the country’s efforts to balance hard security measures with preventive approaches, including socio-economic development and counter-extremism initiatives. The findings suggest that Algeria’s adaptive and multidimensional security policy reflects a pragmatic response to an increasingly complex regional threat landscape, positioning the country as a pivotal actor in maintaining stability in North Africa and the Sahel.

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Introduction:

The Maghreb region and the African Sahel are considered a fertile ground for the growth of new security threats, in addition to the worsening of internal crises, as a result of the fragility of their states after the successive events they witnessed, represented mainly in what is known as the Arab Spring and the extent of its impact on the State of Libya, which became a

headquarters for many armed groups, and the unstable environment in Mali also contributed to the aggravation of these phenomena and their spread beyond its regional borders.

The Maghreb region and the African Sahel have lately constituted a focus of international and regional interest, in view of the various security threats they are witnessing, among them the traditional ones rooted in the states of these areas, and among them the new threats whose emergence and aggravation were contributed to by the first type, as a result of the fragile social nature, economic weakness, and political failure, and this directly affected the neighboring states, especially Algeria, through the transmission of their contagion, and by bringing international powers into the region, which called for the setting of policies and strategies to confront and counter the threats and challenges known by these areas, and to work on finding the necessary solutions in order to contain them and prevent their spread.

Within the framework of confronting the new forms of security threats, the importance of Algeria's security policy emerges, since it is a state concerned with repelling the dangers of those threats, and with defining the challenges, risks, and the appropriate tools to confront them, on the basis that it represents the totality of opinions, beliefs, and principles that form the intellectual structure of Algerian security, and it adopts that strategy which is considered an entry point for it in its handling of the issues and challenges facing it, and it is also considered the basis for the interpretation and understanding of all matters of a security nature. (Yaacoub and Bakhchich, 2022, p. 1332)

Methodology

This study adopts a qualitative, analytical, and multidisciplinary research approach to examine Algeria's strategic response to emerging security threats in the Maghreb and African Sahel regions. Given the complex and transnational nature of the phenomena under investigation—namely terrorism, organized crime, and irregular migration—a geopolitical and security-oriented analytical framework was employed.

The research is based primarily on secondary data sources, including academic literature, peer-reviewed journal articles, policy reports, governmental publications, and international organization documents (e.g., United Nations reports, Global Organized Crime Index). These sources were selected to ensure reliability, relevance, and comprehensive coverage of regional security dynamics.

A thematic analysis method was utilized to categorize and interpret the data according to three principal analytical axes: (1) counterterrorism strategy, (2) organized crime and transnational criminal networks, and (3) irregular migration and border security. This structure enabled a systematic examination of Algeria's multidimensional security policy and its interaction with both internal and external threat environments.

Furthermore, the study applies a geopolitical analytical lens, emphasizing the role of spatial dynamics, border vulnerabilities, and regional instability in shaping Algeria's national security doctrine. Particular attention is given to the interdependence between domestic security policies and broader regional developments, especially in post-Arab Spring contexts.

To enhance analytical depth, the research also incorporates a comparative contextual perspective, examining Algeria's strategies in relation to regional trends and international counterterrorism and security frameworks. This allows for a more nuanced understanding of Algeria's position as a key stabilizing actor in North Africa and the Sahel.

Despite its comprehensive scope, the study acknowledges certain limitations. The reliance on secondary data may restrict access to real-time or field-based insights, and the rapidly evolving security landscape in the region may affect the long-term applicability of some findings. Nevertheless, the methodological approach ensures a coherent and robust analysis of Algeria's strategic responses within a complex geopolitical environment.

The First Axis: Algeria's Strategy in Combating Terrorism

Algeria is considered among the most prominent states that suffered from the terrorist phenomenon, especially during the period of the nineties of the twentieth century, and despite its reduction and recession in recent years and the decline of terrorist operations in Algeria, it still constitutes a threat to Algeria's security through the emergence of new patterns and forms of it, due to the internal conflicts suffered by neighboring states, especially Libya and Mali, and the exploitation by terrorist groups of the situation to activate and carry out terrorist operations, after obtaining weapons and fighters. (Anrani and Zeroual, 2014, p. 112)

The imposition by the Azawad Movement of its control over the northern Mali region is considered a motive for the Malian central government to request the international community to intervene on the grounds that the movement has a close connection with terrorism, and this was embodied through the French military intervention, which carried out a set of attacks on the strongholds of the armed groups in northern Mali, which caused their dispersal, yet what is known as the Arab Spring and the collapse it left in Libya was followed by the re-emergence and aggravation of the terrorist phenomenon anew in the Maghreb region and the African Sahel, and these regions were taken by the terrorist groups as a stronghold for them.

Within its plans, the terrorist organization ISIS sought, through laying down a strategy for invading Algeria, by abolishing the borders between the different Islamic states, and establishing the Greater Islamic Caliphate, as well as confronting Shiism according to what the organization claims, and this organization is considered the most dangerous threat to the region after its control over important oil sites in Libya, and it became closer to Algeria, which pushed the Chief of Staff of the People's National Army to urge the army in June 2015 to prepare for any plan that strikes the country. (Kouachi, 2016, pp. 459-460)

Although the leader of al-Qaeda in the Islamic Maghreb, Abdelmalek Droukdel, refused to pledge allegiance to ISIS and join its ranks for reasons related to leadership, many cadres of the organization decided to join it, and with Boko Haram, which is active in Nigeria, declaring its support for the organization, the terrorist organization al-Mourabitoun, headed by the Algerian Mokhtar Belmokhtar, active in the Sahel region, acknowledged its pledge of allegiance to ISIS, and its pursuit of annexing other terrorist groups to the organization with the aim of controlling Africa, especially in light of the extension of ISIS into Libya, and most of the terrorist groups were concentrated in the Malian-Mauritanian border areas, in northern Mali, northern Chad, and in the Libyan-Algerian border areas. (Netari, 2015, p. 63)

Algeria sought to adopt innovative methods in combating the new terrorist phenomenon centered in the African Sahel and the Maghreb region, according to a strategy that combines long-term preventive measures and immediate measures that require confronting imminent terrorism directly threatening its national security. At the internal level, Algeria focused on its southern and eastern borders, without neglecting the northern region, such that the security services are waging a secret war against terrorists, by pursuing a group of activists on social media sites, who publish materials promoting the Islamic State, and the security services fear that ISIS supporters through social media sites may turn into sleeper cells that represent a real threat to Algerian security, and cyber security comes at the core of the security strategy in combating terrorism, through reinforcing the electronic security services with technical and human support, which track the sources of messages threatening to carry out terrorist operations that disturb security and terrify citizens, especially after the disappearance of the organization Jund al-Khilafah, and its replacement by the Algeria Province, whose members threatened military institutions with revenge for the operations carried out by the army against the fading of the terrorist groups stationed in the Algerian mountains and its desert. (Kouachi, 2016, p. 461)

Algeria also relied, within the framework of its fight against terrorism, on the process of gathering intelligence information, which is considered an integral part of the operations and policies of the war on terrorism and confronting it, and the effectiveness of information gathering is based to a large extent on the continuous coordination between the army, the police, and the judicial agencies concerned with law enforcement, and in view of the threats represented by the terrorist groups to Algeria, it strengthened international cooperation in combating terrorism, and thus acquired deep knowledge in the field of dealing with terrorist networks locally and internationally. (Ghrib, 2016)

The Algerian army forces also followed a strategy based on the wide deployment of forces at the level of the borders, and the army command had prepared massive equipment, along with the mobilization of 50,000 soldiers in December 2014 to cover the south-eastern borders, in order to prevent them from being subjected to attacks by terrorist groups.

The security and military forces tightened the procedures at the main entrances, government institutions, and sensitive sites, and they also tightened the guarding at the level of consular and diplomatic headquarters, and inspection and monitoring points were intensified, and many security surveillance cameras were installed, in avoidance of any possible threat. Algeria also took strict measures with regard to travelers coming from conflict zones, which include extremist groups, and intensified its monitoring of citizens heading to them, because of its fear that some of them may be affected by extremist ideas and join these groups, and the risks that may result from that in the event of their return, in addition to the training of imams to enlighten the thinking of young people with the true values of religion in order to protect them from being imbued with extremist ideas. (Kouachi, 2016, p. 463)

Algeria has initiated the equipping of airports, ports, and border crossings with very advanced capabilities to detect any attempt to introduce weapons and materials used in the manufacture of explosives, and to reinforce them with qualified human elements to fulfill the purpose, and the security services also distribute lists containing the names and pictures of persons pursued in security matters to the local security districts, in parallel with the intensification of investigations to dismantle sleeper cells and the support and backing networks of terrorist groups. Periodic meetings and gatherings are also held for the leaders of the security services, through which security plans are laid down to confront the terrorist phenomenon and everything that may affect national security, based on the experience acquired in fighting terrorism in the nineties of the last century, and thus gaining self-confidence in confronting the new security threats, foremost among them terrorism. (Kouachi, 2016, p. 464)

The lack of security stability on Algeria's southern and eastern borders has deepened the terrorist threat and the rest of the non-patterned threats, such as terrorism, and the alliance that brought together terrorist groups with smuggling groups also constituted a great danger at the local and regional level. Being aware that the terrorist phenomenon cannot be fought

individually, Algeria had to adopt a strategy based on a multilateral approach at the external level, in parallel with the internal measures that were addressed. At the level of the neighboring Arab states, there were bilateral arrangements between it and Libya and Tunisia, through cooperation with Libya in the field of rebuilding the Libyan forces and their security apparatuses, where during the meeting held in Cairo on 05 June 2015, in the presence of Algeria, Tunisia, Libya, and Egypt, agreement was reached to support the Libyan army forces with equipment, ammunition, and intelligence information to confront the terrorist organization ISIS, while refusing to deal with the militias, whereas coordination was carried out with Tunisia on the eastern border, without the participation of the Libyan militias, and this mechanism allowed Algeria to follow up the anti-terrorism policies in the countries of the neighboring states within a multilateral framework without that constituting a contradiction with the principle of non-intervention, and considering it as a successful model in both the social and economic curve of combating terrorism and the policy of non-intervention .(Ghrib, 2016)

To reinforce the efforts exerted in combating terrorism, initiatives of a regional character were adopted at the level of the African Sahel, through defining a common vision based on operational regional cooperation, supported by a shared political will among the field states in the African Sahel (Algeria, Mauritania, Mali, Niger), in order to protect the common borders from terrorist threats, and in order to dry up the sources of financing terrorist organizations, Algeria initiated a proposal to criminalize ransom for terrorist groups, and to punish the states that pay it, at the meeting of the Arab Ministers of Justice in Jeddah, Saudi Arabia, in 2015 .(Sahel, 2015, p. 621)

Mauritania also hosted, on 09 May 2022, a meeting of the Chiefs of Staff of the field states of Algeria, Mauritania, Niger, and Mali, which was founded in the city of Tamanrasset in southern Algeria in 2010, and aims at fighting terrorism and organized crime. The meeting included the Joint Operational Staff Committee of the Council of Chiefs of Staff of the member states, and this coincided with the security developments in the African Sahel states, and the reorganization by the terrorist Islamic State in Libya of its ranks. This meeting is considered an opportunity to study and assess the security situation in the Sahel, and to exchange the analyses drawn since the meeting held on 28 October 2016 in the Malian capital Bamako for the Chiefs of Staff, and the principal objective of the initiative remains the fight against terrorism in the Maghreb region and the Sahel, which are witnessing major security disturbances, especially after security investigations confirmed the existence of a link between arms smuggling activity and terrorism in northern Mali and Libya . (Saudi Press Agency, 2022)

Algeria is considered a leading state in the field of combating terrorism by international testimony, through its adoption of methods and ways that proved their effectiveness by drawing a security strategy that combines the military approach and the peaceful approach through uprooting the causes of extremism such as achieving economic and social development, and building conceptions that include the principle of moderation and fighting all extremist ideas through activating an integrated strategy that has become a subject of interest for states in the world, through the demand that states suffering from the phenomenon of terrorism benefit from its successful experience.

The Second Axis: Algeria's Strategy in Combating Organized Crime and Related Criminal Activities

The incapacity of the Libyan state in the Maghreb region, and of the Malian state in the African Sahel, to perform their functions formed a fertile ground for criminal groups that secure for them the protection and the effectiveness necessary for their activity, and these areas are considered a suitable theatre in which all kinds of organized crime have interacted, from money laundering, smuggling of drugs and trafficking in weapons, all the way to human trafficking, especially after the events of the Arab Spring and the crisis in northern Mali.

The European Union's group for combating drugs and organized crime defines it as a group composed of two or more persons, practicing a criminal enterprise that involves the commission of serious crimes for a long or indefinite period, in which each member has specific tasks within the framework of the criminal organization that aims to achieve profits by illegal ways, and it uses commercial activities, violence and other means of intimidation, and exercises influence over political and media circles, the public administration, judicial bodies, and the economy . (Kamel, 2001, p. 54)

The forms and patterns of organized crime are multiple, as they include illicit trafficking in drugs, which constitutes a global problem with major effects on human society, and the costs of combating it, raising awareness of its dangers, and treating its addicts are very high, estimated at 120 billion dollars. As for human trafficking, it is carried out through recruiting persons and transporting them for the purpose of exploiting them and obtaining suspicious financial gains, through practices similar to slavery and enslavement, and the removal of their organs. The crime of money laundering also constitutes one of the forms of organized crime, and it is carried out through transferring funds obtained from criminal activities in an illegal way by concealing their source to avoid legal responsibility, and the volume of money laundered in the world is estimated between half a trillion and three trillion dollars annually from the gross domestic product .(Rassouli, 2018, p. 161)

The Maghreb region and the African Sahel region are considered ideal for arms trade in a way that feeds criminal networks active in smuggling and even terrorist groups, and this phenomenon intensified after the Libyan crisis and the return of fighters who fought alongside the Gaddafi regime heavily armed with weapons. The United Nations, represented by its office

concerned with drugs and organized crime, estimated that the smuggling of cigarettes through the routes linked to these regions reached about 18% of the Algerian market, and 60% of the Libyan market, in addition to kidnapping cases and ransom demands such as the In Amenas incident 2013 (Lakher, 2012, p. 05), and before it the European hostages and Algerian diplomats in the Malian city of Gao.

Organized crime in its forms constitutes a real threat to Algerian security, especially in light of the lack of security coverage and the exposure of the southern and eastern borders, and its geographical proximity to areas of production and transit of drugs, and the aggravation of arms trade. In order to confront these threats, Algeria appended a set of measures in which regional coordination with the states of the region predominated. Algeria witnessed an active diplomatic movement in its geographical surroundings due to the nature of the security challenges surrounding it, and accordingly Algeria adopted a security conception based on the idea of comprehensive expanded security covering most political, economic, and social fields, and even cultural ones, especially in the field of combating terrorism and organized crime and criminalizing ransom .(Boumediene and Kassi, 2017, p. 137)

Within the framework of its multi-method strategy to combat organized crime and the crimes associated with it, Algeria participated in the United Nations Convention to combat terrorism and money laundering in 2006, and its joining the Global Forum to combat terrorism and organized crime, which is a multilateral mechanism launched in September 2011 in New York, and which includes 30 states and the United Nations and the European Union, and which aims to enhance cooperation and provide expertise and the necessary materials to combat these phenomena. Algeria co-chaired with Canada the working group in the Sahel, and Algeria also hosted meetings between the states of the region whether at the level of foreign ministers or chiefs of staff of the armies of Algeria, Mali, Mauritania, and Niger, Chad and Burkina Faso in March 2010, which was devoted to discussing terrorism and its alliance with organized crime in the region . (Rassouli, 2018, pp. 189-190)

According to the Algerian vision, achieving the stability of the population’s condition requires securing decent living conditions, with the necessity of linking between sustainable development economically and socially, and political development related to the structure of regimes and the strengthening of democracy, through building the state of law and the institutions of good governance and respecting human rights. Algeria also aims to combat security threats at their source through achieving development, and this was embodied through its participation in the donors’ conference for the development of Mali in Brussels on 15 May 2013, with the participation of 45 delegations of ministers and officials from Mali and Libya, in addition to the World Bank and the African Development Bank .(Rassouli, 2018, p. 191)

At the local level, Algeria has created a new security apparatus to combat organized crime in its national and international dimension, in accordance with the content of the international and regional agreements, and the Algerian Minister of Interior considered, during his supervision of the inauguration of the Central Service for Combating Organized Crime, that this apparatus came to strengthen the structure of the security apparatus and to repel crime in all its forms and components, as criminal groups have become quite skillful in using modern technological means by exploiting cyberspace, to reach their objectives, targeting the economic resources of the state with the aim of weakening it.

The establishment of this service is within Algeria’s strategy in combating organized crime in light of the worsening of the situation in both Libya and Mali and its exploitation by its elements to implement their plans, and this service aims to protect persons and the state’s economy, through developing mechanisms of preventive and anticipatory action that contributes to providing a suitable security climate for building a strong economic system far from corrupt money, monopoly, and speculation, especially in light of the current challenges. This service also undertakes the task of investigations in cases of crime, terrorism, and subversive acts, and the investigation of all criminal activities and their judicial follow-up, and the creation of networks of agreements to facilitate cooperation in the field of combating organized crime, and coordination with security partners locally (Ultra Editorial Team, 2021), and based on these measures Algeria ranked 99th in criminal market scores, according to the Global Organized Crime Index for the year 2021, and the indicators were recorded according to the following table:

State	Criminal markets (average)	Human trafficking	Migrant smuggling	Arms trafficking
Algeria	4.65	4.5	6.5	5.0

Source: Global Organized Crime Index for the year 2021.

The instability faced by a number of African states such as Libya and Mali was an enabling factor for expanding organized crime activities, such that Algeria ranked 99th in the Global Organized Crime Index for the year 2021, with regard to the heroin trade, cocaine, cannabis trade, and the trade in synthetic drugs, according to the following recorded indicators:

State	Criminal markets (average)	Crimes related to non-renewable resources	Heroin trade	Cocaine trade	Cannabis trade	Synthetic drugs trade
Algeria	4.65	6.5	2.0	3.5	6.5	5.5

Source: Global Organized Crime Index for the year 2021.

The statistics included in the table indicate that the average of criminal markets in Algeria has a moderate impact, such that it recorded a crime score of 4.65, whereas the crimes related to non-renewable resources had a major impact, while the adopted security policy and the strategy pursued by Algeria in the field of combating organized crime, such as the heroin trade and the cocaine trade, had a slight impact, whereas the cannabis trade had a major impact with a score of 6.5, despite the continuation of Algerian efforts in fighting this phenomenon imported from Algeria’s western side, while the trade in synthetic drugs has a moderate impact.

The same index also clarified the degree of resilience of Algeria, which reflects the existence of response, capacity, and effectiveness in confronting organized crime, and it assesses the Algerian capacity to confront organized crime according to the appropriate legal, political, and strategic frameworks to counter it, and it came according to the following indicators:

State	Resilience (average)	Political leadership and governance	Government transparency and accountability	International cooperation	National policies and laws	Judicial system and detention	Law enforcement
Algeria	4.63	4.5	4.0	5.0	6.0	4.0	6.0

Source: Global Organized Crime Index for the year 2021.

Algeria ranked 104th, within the classification by scores with regard to resilience in fighting organized crime, such that the average resilience was 4.63, which is considered sufficiently effective, according to the scores and justifications included in the table, such that the degree of political leadership and governance in Algeria was 4.5, and this is moderately effective. The same applies to the degree of transparency of the Algerian government and its accountability, which reached 4.0, whereas the field of international cooperation recorded a score of 5.0 based on the agreements signed in the same field, and the policies and national laws applied in the field of combating organized crime also recorded a score of 6.0, and are considered sufficiently effective, while the Algerian judicial system recorded a degree of moderate effectiveness with a score of 4.0, whereas law enforcement was sufficiently effective, with a score of 6.0, and through the indicators specified in the Global Organized Crime Index issued by the Global Initiative against Transnational Organized Crime, the major steps of Algeria in the field of combating organized crime become quite clear, through the policies and laws that Algeria adopted within the framework of a strategy of integrated features.

The Third Axis: Algeria’s Strategy in Countering Illegal Migration.

The Arab Spring and the state of instability in the African Sahel were accompanied by a wave of legal and illegal migrations, for which Algeria represented a field of reception, as its border areas such as the Tamanrasset region witnessed a large influx of African migrants from the Sahel region, and the Illizi region also knew many migrants fleeing the war in Libya, and the lack of security in the African Sahel, in addition to difficult economic and environmental variables such as drought. Algeria is also characterized by geographical proximity and economic exchange between the states of these regions, and as a result of these conditions the flow of African migrants increased, such that tens of thousands of them settled in the Algerian desert as refugees in camps, and under the pressure of the increase in their numbers and their distribution across the regions of the country for settlement, the authorities took a set of measures to combat the phenomenon of illegal migration, by adopting a strategy based on fighting the networks of smuggling persons, and setting strict laws for the entry of foreigners into Algeria, especially since the growth of crime in its different forms worsened alongside it, and the spread of Africans in public places, roads, mosques while practicing begging, markets, and others, and accordingly Algeria sought to put in place a conception that limits this phenomenon .(Ahrich et al., 2021, p. 112)

The geographical location of Algeria is considered suitable for taking a set of routes for migrants toward it, and that is through the land roads neighboring Algeria, represented by Tunisia and Libya to the east, Mali and Niger to the south, Mauritania and Western Sahara in the south-west, and Morocco to the west, in addition to the coast of the territorial waters in the Mediterranean Sea, and it is observed that the entry of illegal migrants is multiple in routes according to the networks of human smugglers and passers . (Ahrich et al., 2021, p. 121)

Illegal migration of African migrants to Algeria takes place through stages, until reaching the north of the country, and these migrants have taken a group of areas in which they settled, such as the district of Qat' al-Wad in Tamanrasset, the district of Melika in Ghardaia, and Oued Derji in Maghnia, and these are points of residence while waiting to continue their path toward the north, and then to Europe through the Mediterranean Sea . (Atwat, n.d., p. 87)

A set of routes for illegal migration toward Algeria during the recent period can be identified, and three principal routes can be identified: the Mali-Algeria border route, which witnesses a wave of migrations from West African states starting from Bamako passing through Gao, and from there reaching Algeria through the city of Tinzaouatine passing through Timiaouine toward Tamanrasset, and Bordj Badji Mokhtar toward the city of Adrar. As for the second route, it is through the Niger border, from Ouagadougou and Niamey to join the city of Agadez, passing through In Guezzam and Djanet toward Tamanrasset and Illizi, and the largest flows are considered to come from the states of Central Africa. As for the third route, it is through Libya toward Algeria, coming from the Libyan city of Sabha to the city of Djanet, and from the Libyan city of Ghadames to the border city of Debdeb reaching Illizi, passing through In Amenas and Ouargla.

Algeria recorded a continuous rise in the number of illegal migrants beginning from the year 2016, such that the number of illegal migrants in Algeria in 2021 reached double the migrants in 2020, and this is clarified by the following table:

State	Number of illegal migrants arrested in Algeria for 2020	Number of illegal migrants arrested in Algeria for 2021	Difference
Algeria	5825	10889	5064

Source: Algerian Press Agency, dated 16 December 2021.

The Algerian government worked to adopt a strategy to confront the phenomenon of illegal migration, through a set of mechanisms centered on reconsidering its migration policy, especially since the matter is related to national security, in light of the consequences resulting from it in terms of crime and social scourges, for the protection of the homeland is among the priorities of the Algerian authorities, in the face of the challenge of the great influx of waves of illegal migration and the settlement of migrants in the major cities such as Tamanrasset and Adrar in the south, Algiers, Constantine, Oran, and Setif in the north. Thus, Algeria concluded a group of collective agreements with the Sahel states within the framework of the NEPAD organization, and individual ones such as cooperation agreements with Mali, and border control with Libya. It also worked to combat human smuggling networks and impose the maximum penalties on them, and to reinforce border monitoring with human resources and modern equipment that contribute to repelling this phenomenon threatening Algerian security .(Ahrich et al., 2021, p. 123)

Like the organizations and legislations adopted by the Algerian authorities in the field of combating the phenomenon of illegal migration, it adopted a set of assisting mechanisms to the legal arsenal, which are represented in:

- The establishment of a center for documentation and statistics on illegal migration flows under the Ministry of Interior and Local Communities, which aims to collect information on migration flows through the bodies concerned with statistics related to illegal migration, the Ministry of Foreign Affairs, the Ministry of Interior through its directorates such as the General Directorate of National Security, and the Ministry of National Defence through the statistics provided on illegal migration convoys.
- The deployment of security units **affiliated with** the General Directorate of National Security whose mission is to combat illegal migration across the national territory, by deporting arrested illegal migrants to their countries of origin, especially African nationals of various nationalities, particularly after the recording of large numbers of African illegal migrants in Algeria, and the keenness of the Algerian authorities to deal with them according to international frameworks and laws.

In his response to the oral question of the member of the Council of the Nation Hassani Saidi in 2016, regarding the growth of the phenomenon of illegal migration in Algeria and its threats to Algerian security, especially in light of the large influx of migrants from the African Sahel states, the Minister of Interior confirmed that the Algerian state has put in place a set of mechanisms to address it, from the source by providing assistance to African states for development, and these mechanisms also included the establishment of alert systems that take charge of all contagious diseases that threaten public health, along with strengthening coordination between the operational services, and giving strict instructions to the governors for the continuous follow-up of the phenomenon, and taking all measures against any illegal act. These measures come in parallel with partnership actions within the framework of international and regional organizations in order to implement public policies capable of conceiving sustainable solutions, especially since this file carries within it a humanitarian character that imposes optimal care for migrants, and the Minister of Interior also presented a set of statistics of deportation operations carried out by

Algeria based on the request of the Nigerien authorities, which concerned since 2014, 17016 nationals, among them 8998 men, 2359 women, and 5659 children, in addition to the voluntary deportation of 502 Chadian nationals, and 550 Malian nationals . (Bedoui, 2016)

Algeria also, since its signing of the Geneva Convention, proceeded to issue Decree No. 63-274 containing the Penal Code amended and supplemented by Law No. 09-01, which stipulated in its Article 175 bis 1 that, without prejudice to the other legislative provisions in force, any Algerian or resident foreigner who leaves in an illegal manner, while crossing land, sea, or air border posts, shall be punished by imprisonment from two months to six months and a fine from 20,000 DZD to 60,000 DZD, or one of the two penalties, by impersonating an identity or using forged documents or any other fraudulent means to evade compliance with the necessary official documents or the procedures required by the laws and regulations in force. The same law also addressed in its Part Five bis 2 the crime of smuggling migrants, by considering the smuggling of migrants as organizing the illegal exit from the national territory with the aim of obtaining a financial benefit or another benefit, a misdemeanor punishable by imprisonment from three years to five years and a fine from 300,000 DZD to 500,000 DZD, with its aggravation in the case of the legal circumstances specified in Articles 303 bis 1, reaching ten years and a fine of 200,000 DZD .(Yousfat and Ben Ettayebi, 2019, p. 344)

It can be said that the phenomenon of illegal migration is among the complex and difficult problems that directly affect host states, including Algeria, as its geographical location, its wide borders, and its adjacency to crisis states made it a destination for African nationals, and despite the measures taken to confront it, it still constitutes a major danger to Algerian society, due to the negative repercussions that appear in various aspects of life, whether health, social, or economic ... therefore Algeria must double efforts, update the legal arsenal, and strengthen the measures taken in the field of combating the phenomenon of illegal migration, in order to avoid the pessimistic scenario related to the phenomenon.

Conclusion:

The Maghreb region and the African Sahel constitute one of the most prominent geographical spaces that have come to arouse international interest after the events that the two regions witnessed and are still witnessing, as an inevitable result of what came to be termed the Arab Spring revolutions that swept away security in Libya and what accompanied that in terms of spread into the African Sahel region, especially the State of Mali, given the close connection between the two crises in the two countries, in addition to the effect of the repercussions resulting from them on their neighboring states, especially Algeria, and this is what was addressed during the study, and a set of conclusions was reached at the end of this study.

The study before us examined the limits of the space of Algerian security in the Maghreb and African circle and the relationship that binds them to one another, as Algerian security strikes deep into Maghreb and African security and extends into these two regions, and for this reason we find that the relation between the two variables is a relation of influence and being influenced. Algeria's location within different geostrategic extensions made its security more exposed to the threats coming from the Maghreb and Sahel region, for the difficulty of controlling the natural factors related to the geographical variable, and the weakness of the institutional structure and the limited capabilities of the neighboring states suffering from crises, granted room for terrorist groups and organized crime to penetrate into the Algerian depth in order to target its security, as happened in Tiguentourine where the oil base there was attacked by terrorist groups exploiting the open geographical space.

The dynamics and movements that affected the Maghreb and African Sahel regions cast their shadows over the states of the two regions, as they came to know a set of challenges and threats to their security, which even extended into the inside of the states, and Algeria is considered among the states adjacent to the two regions that were affected by the threats exported from the crisis states to their regional neighborhood, and the intensity of Algeria's being affected within its geographical two regions goes back to the vastness of its area and the breadth of its solid borders. This generated Algeria's connection with multiple spaces whose internal situations reflected upon the surrounding regional environment, and here we can conclude through the chapters of the study that Algeria's being affected is double: on the one hand, at the level of its national security, through which it became imbued with fear of the security challenges and the threats resulting together with them, and on the level of its security behavior through its being affected by the different interactions and events that the Maghreb and African Sahel regions have come to live through, and through which the strategic features of the Algerian security policy became clear and it came to deal with the movements within each one of the previous circles.

With regard to the Maghreb region, the prominent feature of its security actors is that they are of a statist nature, and accordingly its threats to Algerian security are predominantly of a hard military character, with the presence of some soft threats whose level does not rise to the former, neither in terms of the size of the affecting threat, nor in terms of the values and references of Algerian security, nor in terms of their position within its security concerns, and these threats to Algerian security can be summarized in the Maghreb security environment which witnesses a set of crises, foremost among them the Libyan crisis, which has only turned into a conflictual security structure with a hostile surrounding that directly affects Algerian

security. The future of the Libyan crisis, which has long fluctuated between escalation and military settlement, and between calmness and resorting to peaceful solutions, made the threats emerging from it take on a mutating character, which pushes Algeria to raise its defensive and even offensive capacities to confront these various threats, and also obliged it to engage with all its diplomatic weight in order to reach comprehensive solutions to the crisis emanating from the Libyan people themselves without intervention from external parties, whether regional or international.

The continuation of the Libyan crisis carries within it the continuation of threats with multiple dimensions and effects due to Libya's position and the absence of an institutional structure organizing the situation in Libya, such as the national army, security, and public institutions, and this pushed Algeria to seek to prepare a political climate that allows the crystallization of political ideas despite their different orientations, and that through a set of consultations that Algeria hosted and supported in a way that contributes to providing the necessary environment for forming the different configurations organizing the various institutions. Despite the repeated attempts of Algeria to call for reaching a peaceful solution to the Libyan crisis that guarantees Libyan security by the security institutions and the army, the observer of the Libyan situation is likely to see instability, which involves many challenges and threats regarding Algerian security, such as the flow of thousands of migrants onto Algerian territory displaced from Libya, and the Algerian economy bearing additional burdens because of these migrants, and also the internationalization of the Libyan conflict under the umbrella of the United Nations opens the way for major powers to intervene to preserve and expand their interests, which will make the Algerian state pay a high cost, through the support of rebels by Western powers seeking to achieve their interests in Libya, which makes the Libyan decision hostage to those powers, thus allowing them to control the shape of the Libyan regime and its way of managing foreign relations, especially with the regional surrounding.

In the face of the worsening and acceleration of the situation, this greatly contributed to raising the level of alertness in Algeria, as foreign intervention in the issues of the Maghreb regional area opened the way for expanding the activity of al-Qaeda in the Islamic Maghreb and North Africa by granting it justification for its jihadist activity hostile to the West. The atmosphere of chaos prevailing in Libya as a result of the civil war provides a suitable environment for the activity of these extremist groups, and by virtue of the shared borders between Algeria and Libya, Algeria considers what is happening in Libya a threat to its security, and to confront that it moves on two main levels. The first lies in a set of security measures in which the army, police, border guards, and gendarmerie are engaged, consisting in strengthening its geographical borders by transferring equipment and surveillance devices, and subjecting the movement of goods such as various spare parts across the border areas in order to prevent their smuggling to Libya. As for the second, it lies in strengthening cooperation and coordination with its neighboring states such as Mali, Niger, and Mauritania to combat terrorism and organized crime in general and the smuggling of weapons to Libya in particular. As for the conflicting parties, Algeria has maintained neutrality, with a firm rejection of any foreign intervention whatever the reason, and by virtue of proximity any support to any party against another would directly involve it in the conflict and expose its geographical territory to security risks, and its political position also expressed its political awareness, the content of which is that it will not be harmed in the event of supporting any party to the conflict.

Ethical Considerations

This study is based exclusively on secondary data, including academic literature, policy reports, and publicly available security analyses. No human participants, personal data, or confidential information were involved. Therefore, ethical approval was not required. The research was conducted in accordance with internationally recognized standards of academic integrity and ethical scholarship.

Declaration of Competing Interest

The author declares that there are no known competing financial interests or personal relationships that could have appeared to influence the work reported in this paper.

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Author Contributions

Dr. Zouiouche Houssam Eddine is the sole author of this study and was responsible for the conceptualization, data collection, analysis, interpretation, and writing of the manuscript.

Data Availability Statement

The data supporting the findings of this study are derived from publicly available sources, including academic publications, governmental reports, and international security analyses. No primary dataset was generated.

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Consent for Publication

Not applicable. This manuscript does not include any individual person's data in any form.

Research Limitations

This study is limited by its reliance on secondary data and qualitative analysis. The absence of primary empirical data, such as interviews with policymakers or field-based observations, may restrict the depth of contextual insights. Additionally, the rapidly evolving security environment in the Maghreb and Sahel regions may lead to changes that are not fully captured within the temporal scope of this research.

Implications of the Study

The findings of this study contribute to a deeper understanding of regional security dynamics in North Africa and the African Sahel. The research offers practical implications for policymakers by highlighting the importance of integrated security strategies that combine military, intelligence, and socio-economic approaches. It also underscores the necessity of regional cooperation frameworks in addressing transnational threats such as terrorism and organized crime.

Originality and Contribution

This study provides a comprehensive and multidimensional analysis of Algeria's security strategy within a complex regional context. Unlike previous studies that focus on isolated threats, this research integrates multiple dimensions—including terrorism, organized crime, and irregular migration—into a unified analytical framework. It contributes to the literature by emphasizing Algeria's role as a stabilizing regional actor and by highlighting the interdependence between internal and external security dynamics.

Future Research Directions

Future research could focus on empirical investigations involving fieldwork, interviews with security experts, and quantitative modeling of threat patterns in the Maghreb and Sahel regions. Additionally, comparative studies examining the security strategies of other regional actors could provide further insights into effective approaches for addressing transnational security challenges.

Practical Recommendations

Strengthening regional intelligence-sharing mechanisms among Maghreb and Sahel countries

Enhancing border security technologies and surveillance systems

Promoting socio-economic development programs to address root causes of extremism

Expanding international cooperation in counterterrorism and anti-organized crime initiatives

Developing integrated cybersecurity frameworks to combat digital extremism

Compliance with International Standards

This study adheres to internationally accepted academic and publication standards, including principles aligned with Committee on Publication Ethics and best practices for transparency, integrity, and responsible research conduct.

AI Use Statement

No artificial intelligence tools were used in the generation of the research content, analysis, or conclusions of this study. The manuscript reflects the independent scholarly work of the author.

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