

Algeria

Quick facts

Number of IDPs	Undetermined
Start of current displacement situation	1992
Peak number of IDPs (and year)	1,500,000 (2002)
New displacement in 2008	Undetermined
Returns in 2008	1,400 reported
Causes of displacement	Internal armed conflict
Human development index	100

An unknown number of people – estimates range between 500,000 and 1.5 million – have been displaced in Algeria since 1992 due to ongoing conflict between insurgent Islamist groups and the government. In particular, large-scale massacres of civilians between 1996 and 1998 by the Armed Islamic Group (GIA) forced many Algerians to flee affected areas. Security has improved considerably during recent years, but Al Qaeda in the Islamic Maghreb (AQIM) emerged in 2007 with attacks against Western targets and the Algerian security forces. In 2008 low-level armed conflict continued but there were no reports of new displacement.

Because of limited access to displacement-affected areas, no reliable figures are available. The newspaper El Watan suggested there were 500,000 IDPs in 2004; since then there has been no

official reference to internal displacement. The Government considers that practically all IDPs have returned.

In partnership with international development agencies, the government committed to build some 475,000 new homes between 2005 and 2009 to facilitate the durable return of both economic migrants and IDPs to rural areas affected by the conflict. In 2008, infrastructural rehabilitation allowed for the return of some 240 families to the commune of Sidi Moussa.

There have been no reports of projects to promote local integration or resettlement to another area of the country, and a number of obstacles remain in the way of durable return. AQIM is still active, especially in the provinces of Boumerdés, Tizi-Ouzou, Bejaïa, Batna, Khenchela and in the regions of Aurés and Jijel. The north of the country is contaminated by an unknown number of home-made explosives laid by insurgents and by some 15,000 antipersonnel mines laid by the Algerian army. Finally, notwithstanding reconstruction programmes, people have been discouraged from returning to their home villages with no safe drinking water, poor general infrastructure and a lack of health facilities. Durable solutions are unlikely while the armed conflict and the state of emergency (in place since 1992) continue.

