
I. THE COUNTRY

Geography

Algeria is part of the Maghreb region of North Africa. Its immediate neighbours are Morocco to the west and Tunisia to the east. With an area of 2,381,741 square kilometres, Algeria is the second-largest African country, after the Sudan (or about one-third the size of Canada), but 75 per cent of this land area is desert or semi-desert. The rest borders on the Mediterranean: 1,200 km of coastline that is generally steep and inaccessible, with high plateaux of the two chains of the Atlas range separated by plains and fertile valleys, occupying 381,000 square kilometres.

After Algiers, the capital, the largest administrative cities are Oran, Constantine, Annaba and Setif. The largest industrial zones are along the coastline at Arzew, near Oran, and Skikda, west of Annaba.

History

The country was peopled by various races from the dawn of its history; over the centuries many conquerors passed through it. Thus there are four stages in the history of Algeria: ancient Algeria; the period of the Arab conquest of Algeria in the Middle Ages; the period of Turkish rule; and the period following the French conquest. Finally, on July 1, 1962, the Democratic People's Republic of Algeria was born, after eight years of armed conflict and at a cost of one-and-a-half million martyrs.

Institutions

Algeria is a democratic popular republic, unique and indivisible; the Algerian state is socialist.

The People's National Assembly is the basic state institution, and it has an advisory role at the national level. The only party, the Front de Libération National (FLN), has the role of providing political impetus, controlling, and complementing the administrative structure. Management of the executive function is assumed by the President of the Republic, Head of State and Secretary General of the Party. The legislative function is performed by the People's National