

The Development Policies for Algerian Border Areas under the National Plan for Territorial Development Horizon 2030

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Abstract:

The study examines the role of the National Plan for Territorial Development 2030 in the development of border areas in Algeria. It aims to highlight the programmes, initiatives and bodies adopted by the Algerian state within the framework of this plan in order to break the isolation of border areas. We conclude that the National Plan for Territorial Development is the backbone and main instrument of the development policy of the border regions; aiming to remedy the developmental lag suffered by the border regions compared to the rest of the country, protect national security and territorial integrity.

Therefore, the National Plan for Territorial Development 2030 has contributed relatively to the development of the border regions. However, it faces challenges, difficulties and issues, most notably: illegal migration and illegal Cross-Border refugees; terrorist groups, smuggling gangs, organised crime and cross-border arms trade, Lack of financial and human resources, corruption and administrative bureaucracy.

Keywords: The National Plan for Territorial Development Horizon 2030; Development; Border Areas; Algeria.

1. INTRODUCTION

The development of border areas is of great importance to countries, including Algeria, due to its role in protecting the national security of countries. and, Algeria's strategic location, vast territory and long borders with seven countries have prompted the Algerian authorities to pay attention to the development of border areas, In order to remedy the developmental lag that these regions have suffered compared to the rest of the country, to protect national security and territorial integrity, to preserve the political and social stability of the country, and to solve border issues such as terrorism, smuggling, organised crime, arms trafficking, and the entry of illegal refugees across the borders.

For this reason, the Algerian state has adopted a national policy for the development of border areas within the framework of the National Plan for Territorial Development Horizon 2030, which devotes an important space to the issue of border areas. Based on the above, we pose the following questions:

*To what extent can the National Plan for Territorial Development Horizon 2030 contribute to the development of Algerian border regions?

The issue is broken down into the following sub-questions:

1 - What are the objectives and Axes of the Border Area Development Project within the framework of the National Plan for Territorial Development Horizon 2030?

2 - What is the content of the initiatives and programmes set by the National Plan for Territorial Development Horizon 2030 for the development of Algeria's border regions?

3 - What are the bodies responsible for implementing border areas development programs?

4 - What are the challenges and obstacles of government policies in the development of Algeria's border regions?

In order to answer the research question, we adopted the following hypothesis:

5 - The success of the development of Algeria's border regions is linked to the proper implementation of the National Plan for Territorial Development Horizon 2030.

In our study, we adopted a case study method by studying the National Plan for Territorial Development Horizon 2030 as a model and analysing its role in the development of the Algerian border regions. And, We used the content analysis method to analyse the content of the National Plan for Territorial Development document and the various measures and programmes it has put in place to develop border regions, We also used the legal approach to analyse the various documents,

decrees and laws adopted under the National Plan for Territorial Development Horizon 2030 With the aim of developing border areas.

We divided the study methodologically into the following main Axes: A theoretical axis in which we address the definition of border regions with an explanation of the geographical and human nature of the Algerian border regions. An analytical axis in which we address the map, objectives and axes of Border Area Development Project under the National Plan for Territorial Development 2030. Moreover, An analytical and evaluative axis in which we analyse and evaluate the development efforts of border regions within the framework of the national plan and its challenges, by studying and evaluating the content of the initiatives and programmes developed by the National Territorial Development Plan 2030 in order to develop border regions, and the bodies in charge of implementing these programmes, highlighting the challenges and obstacles faced by the authorities in the development of Algerian border regions. then concluding the study with a conclusion that includes the most important Results and recommendations.

2. The concept of border Areas

2.1 Definition of Borders

Border are defined in dictionaries as "the barrier or separation between two things, so that one does not mix with the other and one does not encroach on the other" .In terminology, a border is the dividing line at which the territories of neighbouring states begin or end. "Boggs" defined a state boundary as: " The line that marks the boundaries of the territory over which the state exercises sovereign rights." An international boundary is defined as: "the line that defines the scope of a state's sovereignty over an area of land, where the sovereignty and laws of one state end and the sovereignty and laws of another state begin".

The political borders of a state include the geographical area on which it is based, the territorial waters adjacent to it to certain extensions that vary from one state to another, and the atmosphere Borders may be agreed upon and recognised by the bordering states, or they may be in a state of dispute and conflict, or they may be unrecognised either regionally or internationally ¹ .

2.2 Definition of Border Areas

Are those areas "located on the political borders separating neighbouring countries, Each country has its own border centres". These areas span international borders and represent a multidimensional space. The border line gives rise to various forms of interactions and boundary effects. It is a space in which multifaceted

processes and interactions with social, economic and security purposes Whether at the local, regional or international level, This gives border area a unique character. “Van and Schendel Baud” argue that “borderlands should be studied as a cross-border region or unit, that connects two or more countries” ² .

Therefore, we notice that border areas are regions of high sensitivity due to their geographical location between countries, where the sense of identity and belonging to the geography and history of the country as a special territory is high, also, They have strategic importance as spaces for communication and exchange on good-neighbourly policies, cooperation and security issues³.

Many observers include border regions in the so-called shadow regions, Remote, poor and marginalised areas, due to their difficult terrain and paths, which may be mountainous or desert, the difficulty of moving between their parts, the lack of development and the lack of necessary public facilities and the requirements for a decent life in most of these areas, especially in the Arab region and the African continent, which requires the adoption of government strategies to develop them, given their importance in maintaining the security and stability of countries ⁴ .

2.3 The Geographical and Human nature of the Algerian border Areas

The Geographical nature of the Algerian border Areas: Algeria enjoys a strategic location and is characterised by a large area and a vast land border of more than 6,300 km that connects it to seven countries, moreover, Algeria is the only Maghreb country that has borders with all Maghreb countries. According to many observers, Algeria's border regions are poised to become focal points for development and exchange at the Maghreb and African levels.so, Algeria's borders with its neighbouring countries are distributed as follows:

Western border with Morocco: 1601 km.

Southern border with Mali: 1376 . km.

South-eastern border with Libya: 982 km.

Eastern border with Tunisia: 965 km.

Southern border with Niger: 956 km.

South-western border with Mauritania: 463 km.

South-western border with Western Sahara: 42 km.

Maritime borders with the Mediterranean Sea, It means; The coastline: 1600 km ⁵ .

The Human Demographics of Algeria's Border Areas: The demographics of border regions are diverse due to Algeria's vast size and the length of its border strip with seven countries, which has made it culturally rich, contributed to the diversity of social customs, and increased the social, cultural and commercial communication of the inhabitants of Algeria's border regions with neighbouring countries ⁶ .

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The population of border regions is unevenly distributed due to the different natural and developmental characteristics of these regions, as we observe that the northern coastal border regions are more densely populated than the Saharan border regions, for example, the population of Tlemcen, located on the northern coastal border, exceeded 949,135 people compared to only 103,725 people in the Saharan province of Tindouf in 2020.

According to the statistics of the National office of Statistics, the population of Algeria's border states combined was 4843411 in 2019, representing 12 % of the population in Algeria, spread over an area estimated at 928720 km², equivalent to 39% of the country's total area.

The population distribution of border provinces can be explained in the following table:

Table 01: Population distribution of border provinces in 2019

Border provinces	Population	Percentage of population compared to the total population of border provinces
Eastern border provinces with Tunisia	2757311	56.92%
Western and southwestern border provinces with Morocco and Mauritania	1443921	29.81%
Southern border provinces with Niger and Mali	581881	12.03%
South-eastern border provinces with Libya	60298	01.24%

Source: Meftah Ghazal, op.cit, p112.

We notice from the table that the largest concentration of population in the Algerian border areas is in the eastern border with Tunisia, with a population of 2757311 inhabitants, equivalent to 56.92 % of the population of the Algerian border areas. This is due to the large amount of movement between the two countries for commercial, tourism and social reasons, the nature of the region, which is located in the north of the country in the eastern coastal or inland regions known for its high population density, the deep historical, political, social and commercial relations

between the two countries, the deep relations between the governments and peoples of the two countries, also the fact that the borders have not been closed.

This is followed by borders with Morocco and Mauritania, with a population of 1443921 equivalent to 29.81 % of the population in Algeria's border areas. These areas, Despite its location in the northwestern region of the country, the strained political relations between the two countries, the political, security and social border issues such as smuggling, drugs, etc., the closure of the western border since 1994 moreover, the severance of diplomatic and commercial relations with Morocco since 2021 have negatively affected the movement and trade exchange between the inhabitants of the western Algerian border regions and the inhabitants of the neighbouring country.

In third place, we find the southern border provinces with Niger and Mali with a population of 581,881 inhabitants, equivalent to 12.03 %, then, the south-eastern border provinces with Libya with a population of 60,298 inhabitants, equivalent to 01.24 % of the population of Algeria's border regions. These areas are known for their low population density due to their rugged desert terrain, being part of the Sahara Desert, also due to the security and political crises in neighbouring countries such as Libya and Mali, which prompted the Algerian authorities to temporarily close the borders with these countries several times, which negatively affected the movement of the border population in these areas.

3. Map, objectives and axes of Border Areas Development Project under the National Plan for Territorial Development Horizon 2030

3.1 The Definition of National Plan for Territorial Development Horizon 2030

It was initiated at the beginning of the millennium and approved in 2010 by Law No. 10-02 of 29 June 2010 on the National Plan for Territorial Development 2030, which outlines regional planning policy for twenty years from the date of its adoption, with updates every five years. The National Plan for Territorial Development document contains several definitions of the plan, which we summarise as follows: " It is the act by which the state declares its policy of territorialisation, which it intends to pursue over the next 20 years".

additionally, "It is an act by which the State declares its territorial project, highlighting the way in which the State intends to adopt a sustainable development framework to ensure the triple balance of social equity, economic efficiency and environmental development throughout the national territory for the next 20 years"⁷ , It means until 2030.

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In other words, the plan aims to achieve deep and radical change and realise long-term goals until 2030, Through it, the state expresses its interest in regional development and recognises the right of all regions to develop and prosper as part of a comprehensive and controlled strategy. According to the plan: "Every part of the national territory is an element of national wealth".

Therefore, we notice that the National Plan for Territorial Development 2030 is one of the state's major bets, establishing a break with the old practices of centralised and bureaucratic planning that hindered regional development in the country. It constitutes the frame of reference for the work of public authorities, laying down the principles, guidelines, strategic and basic arrangements regarding the national policy for the sustainable development of the territory.

The plan was adopted after organising broad consultations and a national debate in the form of forums that involved all actors, including state institutions, local authorities, civil society actors, experts and citizens. It marked the beginning of a break with the old method of centralised planning that excluded the principle of consultation in its preparation. Also, 50,000 participants from different parts of the country took part in the forums. These forums contributed to the production of 17 volumes⁸ that played a role in shaping the National Plan for Territorial Development. Therefore, The National Plan for Territorial Development aims to:

- *Achieve a Regional balance in urbanization.
- *Framing the development and construction process.
- *Upgrading cities.

In order to achieve these major goals, a strategy was adopted that focused on correcting regional imbalances and achieving developmental advancement in the following regions:

- *Coastal Zone: Through the stabilisation and rehabilitation of the coastal strip.
- *High plateau areas, by urbanising them.
- *Southern regions: By bridging the development gap between the North and the South and populating the southern regions.
- *Border areas: By developing them to protect the country's national security and preserve national unity.
- *Rural and mountainous areas: By rehabilitating these areas and supporting the agricultural sector to minimise internal migration towards big cities ⁹.

So, We note that the plan allocates an important space for the development of border areas, which is the subject of our study, moreover, that most of these areas are

coastal, plateau, desert, mountainous and rural, which prompts us to study the role of this plan in the development of border areas.

3.2 Map of Border Areas according to the National Plan for Territorial Development Horizon 2030

As part of its new development philosophy following the announcement of a national strategy for the rehabilitation and development of border areas, Algeria has sought to adopt a development approach that aims to improve the living conditions of the local population and the infrastructure in border regions by creating social and economic conditions favourable to preserving the dignity of citizens and securing them from falling prey to smuggling, criminal and terrorist cross-border groups, To this end, Law No. 10-02 of 29 June 2010 on the National Plan for Territorial Development 2030 devotes a significant amount of space to the development of border areas ¹⁰.

Therefore, The National Plan for Territorial Development Horizon 2030 is the cornerstone of the national strategy for the planning and development of border areas. It is an expression of the State's will to achieve a specific policy for the management of its territory over a long-term period of time, in which development is distributed to all regions of the country without exception, including border areas, by exploiting the potential of each region, especially border areas, to achieve comprehensive development by involving all actors, including state institutions, local authorities, experts, local associations and citizens of border areas ¹¹.

In line with the content of the plan, the government's action plan in September 2017, under the recommendations of the former President of the Republic Abdelaziz Bouteflika to intensify development efforts and prepare a special programme for the development of border areas, especially the south and remote areas, with the aim of improving the standard of living of the population of these areas, improving public services in the field of health, education, employment, and providing the population with the necessities of life, especially energy, drinking water, etc. So, The National Plan for Territorial Development has divided the country into 09 border regions:

- *Border areas of the eastern coast.
- *Eastern Hill border areas.
- *Western Hill border areas.
- *Border regions of the High Plateaus-East.
- *High Plateau border areas-West
- *Border areas of the South-East

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*Border regions of the Great South

*South-West Border Areas

*West Coast Border Regions

It is noteworthy that the division established by The National Plan for Territorial Development is extensive, highlighting the new state policy based on achieving regional balance between all regions of the country. In line with the objectives of the National Plan, and in accordance with Law No. 19-12 of 11 December 2019 on the territorial organization of the country, the number of border provinces was increased from 12 to 16, following the creation of four new border provinces: djanet, Ain Gazzam, Bordj Badji Mokhtar and Beni Abbas.

The number of provinces and border municipalities according to the new regional organization can be found in the following table:

Table 02: Number of border provinces and municipalities according to the new regional organisation 2021

Number of border Provinces	Number of border Municipalities	Percentage compared to the total number of Municipalities in the Provinces
El Taref	09	37%
Souk ahras	05	12%
Tebessa	10	36%
El Ouadi	03	18%
Ouargla	01	09%
Illizi	03	75%
Djanet	01	50%
Tamanrasset	01	12%
In Guezzam	02	100%
Bordj Badji Mokhtar	02	100%
Adrar	01	04%
Tindouf	02	100%
Bachar	06	55%
Beni abbes	01	10%
El Naama	01	33%
Tlemcen	07	13%

Total	58	24%
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Source: Statistic of the ministry of interior, local authorities and urban planning,2021

From the table, we notice that the number of border provinces is 16 provinces and the number of municipalities in the border provinces is 58 border municipalities out of a total of 243 municipalities, which is equivalent to 24 % of the total number of municipalities in the border provinces.

Border zones are divided into three categories:

*Regions with borders with one country: Taref, Souk Ahras, Tebessa, Ouargla with Tunisia, Tlemcen, Bechar, Naama, Beni Abbas with Morocco, Illizi with Libya, Tamanrasset, In Guezzam with Niger, and Bordj Badji Mokhtar and Adrar with Mali.

*Areas with borders with two countries: Such as Djanet which has borders with Libya and Niger.

*Areas with borders with three countries: For example Tindouf, which has borders with Morocco, Mauritania and Western Sahara.

3.3 Objectives of the National Plan for the Development of Border Areas

These can be summarised as follows:

*Making the development of border areas a national priority.

*Revitalising the development movement in border areas.

*Enhancing the competitiveness and attractiveness of border regions by attracting investments to support development in these regions.

*To protect the country's national security, preserve national unity and the cohesion of Algerian society, also prevent the phenomenon of separatist movements prevailing in Africa from spreading to Algeria.

*Ensuring the security and safety of the country from cross-border security threats, especially terrorism, transnational organised crime, drug smuggling, arms smuggling and cross-border human trafficking.

*Prioritise and accelerate local development in border regions as a key to achieving sustainable and comprehensive national development.

*Providing job opportunities for inhabitants of border areas to reduce the levels of involvement in organised crime gangs, smuggling and drug trafficking gangs, and

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terrorist organisations on the borders with neighbouring countries, especially the borders with Morocco and the Sahel region.

*Achieving distributive justice and sustainable regional balance through the equitable distribution of resources also development projects in all regions of the country, especially the border areas ¹².

*Breaking the isolation of border areas that have long suffered from marginalisation and deprivation of development projects.

*Correcting development delays in border areas and reducing the development gap between border areas and other parts of the country.

*Responding to the concerns of the inhabitants of the shadow border areas, and developing the border area in terms of human, social and economic development, also making it responsive to the aspirations of openness and cross-border cooperation with neighbouring countries within the framework of preserving the security and unity of the nation.

*Promote the participatory principle in the management of public affairs and support local participation by involving state institutions, local authorities, local civil society and inhabitants of border areas in the development process of border areas ¹³.

3.4 Axes of the Border Areas Development Project according to the National Plan for Territorial Development 2030

The first axis: Settlement and Equity of Territories: It aims to reorganize the geographical and territorial distribution of border areas, and is based on three basic elements:

*Promoting equal access to water and energy: This is done by drilling deep wells to provide potable water and support agricultural development, rehabilitating and expanding potable water networks, clearing sewage, promoting then developing renewable energies, also popularising the energy economy¹⁴.

*Supporting equal access to the right to housing and health, through the provision of housing and medical equipment that responds to local needs.

*Promoting equal access to the right to education and training, by strengthening the education and training sectors with new structures and specialised personnel, as well as establishing university institutions and vocational training centers in the border areas.

The second axis: Economic Diversification and Local Development: Focuses on five key elements:

- Developing the animal husbandry branch by drilling deep wells, encouraging pastoral activity and fodder production, moreover, supporting veterinary medicine to improve the quality of animal capital and support animal production.

- Supporting and developing Saharan agriculture.

- Developing small and medium industries and encouraging public-private partnerships to invest in various sectors, especially in the mining sector, such as investing in iron mines and natural resources such as gypsum and marble, For example: the iron mines in Al Wanzeh, in the border province of Tebessa. additionally, support the food industry and investment in the irrigation and solar energy sector¹⁵.

- Valorising tangible and intangible heritage by integrating border areas into major regional tourism projects, also, encouraging cultural events and supporting traditional industries as a historical and cultural heritage with the aim of achieving tourism development.

-Supporting commercial mobility in border areas by encouraging economic and commercial events. Additionally, establishing logistical bases that contribute to enhancing exchanges between the southern border areas ¹⁶.and other African countries .

The Third axis: Connecting Border Areas: Focuses on three key elements:

- the development and modernization of the road and rail network by directing development efforts towards infrastructure development, For example: The Trans-Saharan Road and its three branches, Malian, Nigerian and Tunisian, in addition to the national roads and roads linking border areas, As well as the completion of major railway projects linking border areas with the rest of the country, The revival of the railway project between Algeria and Tunisia, the railway project between Tindouf and Oran, additionally, between Algeria and Mauritania to transport goods, especially iron extracted from Gara Djebilet Mine.

Thanks to the National Plan for Territorial Development, 23000 km of roads have been completed across the entire national territory, including more than 5000 km dedicated to border areas, and 16000 km of new roads have been started in the border strip in the southern and high plateau provinces, according to former Minister of Public Works Abdelghani Zaalane ¹⁷.

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- Developing and modernizing all forms of transport between municipalities and border provinces, also developing air transport by establishing and modernizing airports in border provinces and linking them to international networks.
- digitising the regions, especially the border regions, by connecting them to fibre optic networks in order to open up and keep pace with the technological and cultural progress.

The fourth axis: Organizing and Rebalancing the population Centers: It is based on a single and essential element, namely: Promoting and creating new centers along the border strip by establishing major cities in border areas and providing vital services such as green spaces, recreational areas, and urbanization of population centers.

The fifth axis: Development and Control of Cross-Border Exchanges: based on five key elements:

- Making Bilateral agreements and memorandums between border areas within the framework of the so-called “bilateral border committees”, besides, agreements can be concluded between more than two parties.
- Managing development in border areas by conducting studies on joint border management with neighbouring countries, joint management of natural resources and cooperation to combat cross-border threats.
- Establishing and modernising border crossing centers and equipping them with the necessary facilities within the framework of bilateral agreements concluded between the Algerian authorities and their counterparts in neighbouring countries.
- Combating illegal cross-border activities by combating the parallel economy within the framework of joint and multilateral security strategies.
- Creating cross-border exchange spaces by modernising and supporting trade exchanges, establishing free trade or free exchange zones in border areas also encouraging barter trade, especially in the Saharan border areas ¹⁸.

The sixth axis: Governance and Incentive System: Focuses on five key elements:

- Assigning the Ministry of Interior, Local Authorities and Urban Planning to oversee the implementation of the plan for border areas.
- Applying the principle of participation, an approach that aims to involve local actors such as citizens, community leaders and civil society actors in the establishment of

advisory councils for the local development of border areas, which are active under the auspices of the local authorities in border areas.

- Decentralization and delegation by granting decision-making powers to local authorities in the border areas in relation to some “integrated participatory projects”.
- Developing an incentive and a regional marketing system by launching investment projects, proposing incentives to attract investment, accompanying investors in border provinces and providing them with the necessary facilities within a digital platform that facilitates administrative procedures, as well as organising forums on investment in these regions in order to increase their attractiveness¹⁹.
- Strengthening the capacities of local authorities in the field of regional development, additionally, introducing new mechanisms and approaches in management of border areas²⁰.

4. Border Area Development Efforts under the National Plan for Territorial Development Horizon 2030 and its Challenges:

4.1 Border Area Development Initiatives and Programmes under the National Plan for Territorial Development Horizon 2030:

The National Plan includes the following initiatives and programmes:

***Organising the National Forum on Border Regions in 2018:** The Ministry of Interior, Local Authorities and Urban Planning organised a national forum on 13 and 14 October 2018 under the title: “National Forum on Border Regions”, held at the International Conference Centre "Abdellatif Rahal" in Algiers, under the supervision of the President of the Republic, represented by the former Minister of Interior, Noureddine Bedoui.

The forum aims to:

- engage in dialogue among the participants in the forum in order to develop a national vision for the development of border areas, also propose programmes and mechanisms to achieve developmental advancement in these areas.
- Coordinate between local communities, governmental bodies and local civil society in order to cooperate for the success of development in border areas.
- Raising awareness of the importance of paying attention to the development of border areas as an approach to preserving national security, consolidating national unity, combating cross-border terrorism, also reducing border issues such as smuggling and organised crime.

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The forum came up with several recommendations for the development of border regions, the most important of which are:

-The need to establish new cities in border areas that have a cross-border character, attracting population, investments and development projects that provide jobs in order to reduce the phenomenon of displacement from border areas due to the lack of development.

-Diversifying the economy and developing the road and railway network to support population stabilisation in border areas.

-Support incentives in the field of investment and encourage inter-sectoral solidarity to promote development in border areas ²¹.

- **Adoption of the Regional Action Programme for Border Areas- PAT 16:** This programme stresses the need to provide the necessary structures to develop border areas and push them to open up to the world by adopting a development policy in border areas that focuses on the following axes:

-Supporting economic and social development, moreover, supporting the establishment of economic activities in the border areas.

- Providing and developing equipment and facilities in border areas.

- Breaking isolation and facilitating mobility in border areas.

-Support the development of cross-border relationships ²².

It is worth noting that this plan is based on a socio-economic vision, and its implementation involves several sectors that are intertwined with each other according to their respective specialisations, and the implementation of the plan requires high sectoral coordination.

- **Conducting Studies related to the Development of Border Areas:** An in-depth study was adopted within the framework of the National Plan, which launched the "Special Programme for the Development of Border Areas", The realisation of this study went through three phases:

- The first phase: The diagnosis of border area issues was identified and general guidelines were drawn up.

- Second Phase: A development programme for border areas was prepared.

The third phase: Developing the necessary mechanisms and means to follow up on the implementation of the programme.

Accordingly, four 04 baseline studies for border areas were developed within the framework of The National Plan for Territorial Development 2030:

-The first study concerns the South-East border region, which includes Ouargla and El Oued on the border with Tunisia.

-The second study concerns the border region of the Great South, which includes Tamanrasset on the border with Niger, Ain Gazzam on the border with Mali and Niger, Bordj Baji Mokhtar and Adrar on the border with Mali.

-The third study concerns The South-West border region, represented by Tindouf, Bachar and Beni Abbas on the borders with Morocco, Mauritania and Western Sahara.

-The fourth study concerns the south-eastern border region, represented by Elizi on the border with Libya²³.

-Adoption of the Border Area Development Scheme Project- PBRD: Adopted by the National Agency for Territorial Adaptation and Attractiveness under the auspices of the Ministry of Interior and Local Communities in 2018 as part of the National Plan for Territorial Development 2030, It is based on the principle of partnership between official and unofficial local bodies to support the development process in border areas, taking into account the specificity of each border area. The project is concerned with studying the development programmes allocated to border areas, It resulted in the establishment of the National Authority in charge of the development of border areas.

-Adopting Projects to Census Border Areas and Finance their Development: Within the framework of t border area development programmes, more than 15,000 remote areas with a population of 8 million people have been identified in the nine border Provinces stipulated in the National Plan for Territorial Development Horizon 2030. So, A financial envelope has also been allocated to cover the development costs of these areas, moreover, More than 3.72 billion dollars has been allocated for 38,700 projects in border areas.

-Adopting the Special Plan for the Development of the Southern Border Regions: Within the framework of the National Plan for Territorial Development 2030, and in view of the specificity of the southern regions and the developmental lag in comparison to the northern regions, a development plan to promote development in the Great South has been drawn up with the following main axes:

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-Reorganising the geographical and regional distribution of the southern border regions, by rehabilitating and expanding drinking water networks also exploiting groundwater to support water and agricultural policy in these areas, moreover, initiating hydrological studies to rationalise and sustainably manage water and groundwater resources across the country's southern borders.

- Developing public structures in the housing, health, education and training sectors through the construction of universities and hospitals in the south, including the most prominent projects in this field, such as the construction of the Great African Hospital in Tamanrasset and its transformation into a health pole that attracts the population of sub-Saharan Africa and the Sahel region.

-Supporting and developing Saharan agriculture by granting concessions, facilities and large agricultural areas to investors, constructing access roads, providing them with electrical networks, also providing appropriate agricultural financing within the framework of the rural renewal programmes” PPDR”.

- Developing small and medium-sized industries in the south regions, also encouraging investment in the mining sector. One of the projects approved in the south is the project to exploit the Gara Djebilet iron and metal mines in the border province of Tindouf to promote development in the region, break its isolation, and create job opportunities for the youth of the southern regions ²⁴.

-Developing desert tourism and encouraging traditional industries in desert border areas by building the necessary tourism structures and providing facilities and privileges in the tourism field to attract foreign tourists in order to create job opportunities for the youth of these areas.

-Modernization of the road and railway network in the desert regions: through the completion of major projects such as the North-South highway project and the railway project in the south of the country, for example: The railway line between Ghardaia, Meneaa, Timimoun, Adrar, Beni Abbas and Béchar, the line between Bechar and Tindouf, and the line between in Salah, Reggane, Bordj Baji Mokhtar, El Oued to Tozeur and Gafsa in Tunisia.

-Establishing new airports and cities in the south, especially in border provinces, and creating new southern border provinces, In this regard, the new administrative division increased the number of provinces to 58, and added 10 provinces, some of which are desert, such as Beni Abbas, Al Meghaier,touggourt.

4.2 the Bodies in charge of implementing Border Areas Development Programmes according to the National Plan for Territorial Development 2030

The authorities have established bodies to implement development programmes for border areas, most notably:

-National Authority for Border Area Development: Its establishment was announced in 2018 by the then Minister of Interior and Local Authorities, and its main tasks include:

- To propose initiatives and projects that will promote the development of border areas.
- Following up on the implementation of projects in border areas.
- Conducting forward-looking studies to anticipate the future of the border areas.
- In this regard, other local bodies were created at the suggestion of the Minister of Interior in 2018 to involve all local actors, local groups, civil society and citizens to follow up on the development of border areas ²⁵.

- The National Agency for Territorial Planning and Attractiveness : It is an attempt to revive the Algerian Fund for Urbanization, which was created in 1963, Established by Executive Decree No. 11-137 of 28 March 2011 establishing the National Agency for Territorial Adaptation and Attractiveness, Launched in 2013 and upgraded in 2020, it performs the following tasks:

- Providing the necessary technical means for the preparation of the national policy for territorial planning and sustainable development with a focus on border areas.
- Contribute to the preparation of future and evaluation studies related to enhancing the attractiveness and competitiveness of regions, including border regions.
- Contribute to the coordination of sectoral policies and ministries for the development of regions, including border regions.

- The National Council for Territorial Planning: Its main tasks include:

- Ensure the implementation of the National Plan for Territorial Development 2030, including the Border Areas Development Plan.
- Provide suggestions for improving the National Plan for Territorial Planning and the Border Areas Development Plan.

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-Contribute to the preparation of national and regional guidance plans, including special area plans, especially those related to border areas.

-Prepare annual reports on the implementation of Border Area Development Plan and present them in both chambers of parliament.

- **The Special Fund for the Development of Southern Regions:** Its establishment was announced at the beginning of the millennium , revived in 2017 with the aim of achieving a regional developmental balance and correcting the developmental lag in the southern regions compared to the northern regions. The fund is responsible for financing development projects in the Greater South, including the southern border regions ²⁶.

The Southern Development Fund was abolished on 31 December 2021, by a decision of former Finance Minister Aimene ben Abderrahmane, According to article 180 of the 2022 Finance Law, the revenues and expenditures of the fund will be included in the account for the management of public investment operations registered under the "State Budget for Equipment and Development of the South and High Plateau Regions", to which the balance of the South Development Fund will be transferred ²⁷ . .

- **The Special Fund for the Development of High Plateau Regions:** It was announced in 2004 and was revived by the authorities in 2018, Its fields of intervention have been expanded to include the financing of development projects, especially infrastructure projects, and the financing of productive investments in whole or in part, Among his most prominent tasks:

-Supporting and financing human development operations in 14 Provinces in the High Plateau regions.

- Financing the costs of reducing gas prices by 50 % for the benefit of poor and disadvantaged families whose monthly income does not exceed the guaranteed national minimum wage in the High Plateau regions during the period from 1 November to the beginning of March of each year.

This fund receives 3 % of petroleum revenues annually, and its balance stood at 217 billion dinars in December 2017.

4.3 Challenges and Obstacles to Government Policies in the Development of Algerian Border Areas

Border regions suffer from threats and issues that hinder the development process and prevent The National Plan for Territorial Development from achieving its objectives, most notably:

-Illegal Migration and Refugees Crossing Borders: Algeria is the largest recipient of African and Syrian refugees in the Maghreb region, It receives a large number of refugees from neighbouring African countries, especially from Mali and Niger. In addition to African refugees, Algeria has received thousands of Syrian refugees despite the geographical distance since 2012, many of whom entered Algeria through the Libyan border,Some aim to settle in Algeria while others use Algeria as a transit point to reach Europe,So,Algeria ranks among the most prominent destinations for Syrian refugees outside of Syria's neighbouring countries.

The number of Syrian refugees in Algeria was estimated at 15,000 in 2013. According to former Minister of Solidarity Benhabiles Saida, the number reached 24,000 in 2015. Moreover, According to the Algerian Ministry of Foreign Affairs, there are more than 43,000 Syrian refugees in Algeria including 4,857 registered with the Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR) according to statistics released by the UNHCR office in Algiers in May 2015²⁸. Some reports say there were 50,000 Syrian refugees until 2017, but the number has been declining in recent years.

The causes of illegal immigration and African - Arab refugees to Algeria include:

- The escalation and prolongation of armed conflict in Algeria's African neighbours and in the Middle East: Some of Algeria's African neighbours such as Mali, Niger and Libya are experiencing conflicts, civil, ethnic and regional wars, proxy wars, military coups, political instability, widespread proliferation of armed groups and militias affiliated with regional powers and the proliferation of internationally prohibited weapons,also,the International military interventions by major and colonial powers, especially the United States, Russia and France, have caused the death, injury and displacement of tens of thousands of Africans and the destruction of the infrastructure of these countries.

The war conditions have also caused food crises and a lack of basic services in conflict zones, such as poor health care and lack of clean water due to acts of vandalism targeting infrastructure. All these factors have led Africans to seek safe countries willing to embrace them, including Algeria due to its geographical proximity. additionally, The conflict zones in the Middle East, especially in Syria, have led Syrians to seek refuge in most countries around the world, including Algeria,

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where they crossed through Libya, taking advantage of the collapse of the state in that neighbouring country.

-Political and security stability in Algeria: With the exception of the limited popular protests in early 2011, Algeria has maintained relative political and security stability, which has encouraged refugees to choose the country as a destination, especially from neighbouring African countries.

-The legal facilities and good reception conditions for refugees: as well as the absence of visa requirements for citizens of Algeria's African neighbours and some citizens of Arab countries, have encouraged Africans and Syrians to seek refuge in Algeria.

- The tightening of procedures for the transit of African and Arab refugees to European countries: has prompted them to settle in Algeria, thus transforming Algeria from a transit country to a receiving country, a situation that threatens Algeria's national security and social stability.

-Algeria's geographical proximity to Europe: Most African and Arab refugees do not target the Algerian destination to settle, but rather use it as a transit area to Europe. The number of refugees who crossed to Europe through the borders of the Maghreb countries, including the Algerian border, reached about 300,000 refugees in 2015, mostly Syrians and Africans, according to the Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR) ²⁹.

- The strong historical, social, religious and cultural ties between Algeria and its African and Arab neighbours: The historical and family ties, the unity of belonging, the unity of language and religion, also the convergence in customs, traditions and values that unite especially the inhabitants of African and Arab neighbouring countries with the Algerian population, especially in border areas, have contributed to the attraction of African and Arab refugees to the Algerian destination and facilitated their integration into Algerian society

-The Terrorist groups proliferate in border areas: With the exception of Algeria, which has long experience in combating terrorism and has a strong army and stable political institutions, neighbouring countries, especially in the African Sahel, suffer from security, political, economic and social weakness and fragility, additionally, do not have strong armies, which has made it easier for terrorist groups to weaken these countries and threaten Algerian national security across the border.

Most notably, Al-Qaeda in the Islamic Maghreb, Daesh, and other terrorist groups that are active on the borders with Algeria's African neighbors, such as Mali and Libya, and which have carried out terrorist operations targeting Algerian interests from the borders. The most prominent example: The Tiguentourine incident in southern Algeria in 2013, where terrorist groups infiltrating through the Libyan border targeted Algerian oil sites. also, The alliance of terrorist groups with smuggling, organised crime, drugs, illegal immigration and arms trafficking gangs has threatened border security and hindered development efforts in border areas ³⁰.

- **The proliferation of cross-border arms trade:** The arms trade on the African continent in general and in conflict zones in particular is a source of threat to Algerian security, According to the " Light Weapons Survey -an independent research programme at the Graduate Institute of International Studies in Geneva-, estimated in 2003 that there are about 100 million light weapons on the African continent, and that 80% of the weapons found in Algeria originate from conflict hotspots in West Africa and the Sahel region, which pass into Algeria through Mali and Niger, which fuels terrorist and criminal activities, threatens Algerian national security and hinders policies to secure and develop border areas ³¹.

Statistics indicate that the arms trade has increased with the deteriorating security situation in Libya and Mali, especially after the foreign intervention in the region. According to a report issued by Nato Strategic Direction South, Algeria's national security has been the most affected by the phenomenon of arms proliferation since 2011, stressing that Algeria has become a focal point for arms trafficking and transit in North Africa.

According to the Ministry of National Defence, anti-aircraft weapons were found by Algerian national security units buried under the sand in in Amenas, which poses a real threat to civil and military aviation in southern Algeria. Since the beginning of 2014, security and military services in Tamanrasset and Illizi have recovered 104 weapons smuggled from the southern borders, and security services in the two Regions have dealt with 20 cases related to the possession and smuggling of weapons, while the number of defendants in these cases totalled 18, half of whom were from Illizi, which borders Libya ³².

According to the second half of 2014 and the first three months of 2015, the Ministry of National Defence confirmed that more than 330 weapons seizures were carried out, According to the same ministry, more than 2000 smuggled weapons of various types were seized across the country's southern borders between 2011 and

2016. In 2019, 1402 weapons of various types, 1500 rockets of various calibres, 101 mines, 1725 shells of various calibres, 18914 kg of explosives were seized.

In 2020, 40 machine guns of various types, 25 automatic pistols of various types, 249 rifles, 74 ammunition magazines, 391 bombs and improvised mines, 831585 kg of explosives were seized ³³. moreover ,In 2021, 567 weapons and 97 improvised bombs were recovered ³⁴.

- Proliferation of organised crime and smuggling gangs: Organised crime is one of the most dangerous transnational phenomena that threatens Algeria's security, especially after its alliance with terrorist groups, The most prominent forms of organised crime active in border areas include smuggling gangs, drug trafficking, money laundering gangs, and gangs smuggling energy and subsidised basic materials across borders, especially on the country's western borders, which has harmed the interests of the citizens of these areas, which are suffering from the scarcity of basic materials due to smuggling. Moreover, Organised crime gangs have impeded development efforts in border areas and have become a threat to social cohesion in these areas, as many residents are involved in these gangs due to unemployment.

Therefore, Algeria is a transit country for various types of drugs that enter through several border crossings, The trade and smuggling of drugs across borders is not a new phenomenon, but it has worsened in recent years. In 1975, the security services seized 3 tonnes of cannabis and arrested the smugglers, most of whom were foreigners, and 2 tonnes were seized in 1989 and about 2500 people were arrested. Smuggling is no longer limited to cannabis, but new types of drugs such as cocaine and heroin have spread in Algeria since 1992 ³⁵.

The western border region is the first and traditional route for drug smuggling from Morocco to Algeria, whether for local consumption or as a transit area towards Europe and the Middle East. Most drug smuggling through the Maghreb passes along the northern triangle of the Moroccan-Algerian border between the regions of "Figuig and Saïdia" In the form of individual shipments ranging from 10 to 30 kg, It also crosses into Algeria on the southern border through Naama and Bechar, For example, security agencies seized more than three tonnes of cannabis in May 2019, which was smuggled through Ain Safra in Naama on the south-western border.

The second route for drug smuggling is through the eastern Algerian-Tunisian and Libyan border crossings, especially after the events of the Arab uprising that affected the two countries and the collapse of the state in Libya. The third route

includes the southern border crossings through the African Sahel countries, passing through Algeria to Europe and the Middle East ³⁶.

According to a 2009 National Gendarmerie report, drug trafficking accounts for 26.63% of organised crime activity in Algeria. also, The amount of drugs seized in Algeria that were on their way to Europe and the Middle East in 2013 was more than 9 %. According to the statistics of the National Office for Combating Drugs, the quantities of narcotics and psychotropic substances seized by the National Gendarmerie, the General Directorate of Security in 2014 amounted to more than 182 tonnes of treated kif and 1 050612 hallucinogenic tablets.

In this context, Mohamed Ben Hella, former director general of the National Office for Combating Drugs, explained that cannabis represents the largest quantity of drugs seized, with 80 % coming from Morocco, and that 50 % of hallucinogenic tablets were seized in 2014 in the southern border provinces especially Tamanrasset, Ghardaia and Adrar ³⁷.

- **Weak local Financial Resources in Most Border Areas:** Most border areas in Algeria suffer from poor collection of local resources, which hinders development, More than 50% of border municipalities are poor and their local revenues do not cover the size of the needs of their local population, making them unable to implement the planned development programmes.

- **Weakness and Lack of Human Resources:** The Border areas in general suffer from a severe shortage of human resources and a scarcity of competences due to the refusal of most citizens to work in these remote areas, which hinders the development process in in these areas.

- **The Bureaucracy of the Administration, the Absence of Good Governance:** the non-application of participatory democracy and decentralisation in border areas, the delay in applying electronic administration, also Other organisational and technical obstacles that hinder the project to promote development in these areas.

- **Widespread Corruption in Border Areas:** Border areas are known for the prevalence of various forms of corruption, administrative, financial and ethical, especially in administrative institutions and local communities, as well as the collusion of some local officials and citizens with smuggling gangs and cross-border organised crime, which hinders the development process in border areas ³⁸.

5. CONCLUSION

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In conclusion, we notice that the National Plan for Territorial Development 2030 is the backbone and a tool of the regional development policy and has contributed significantly to the development of the border regions, Therefore, the success of the development of Algeria's border regions is linked to the proper implementation of the National Plan for Territorial Development Horizon 2030. We notice also that Algeria's strategic location, vast territory and long borders with seven countries have prompted the Algerian authorities to pay attention to the development of border areas.

For this reason, the National Plan for Territorial Development Horizon 2030 allocates an important space for the development of these regions in order to remedy the developmental lag that the border areas have suffered from compared to the rest of the country, to protect national security and territorial integrity, to preserve the political and social stability of the country, and to solve border issues such as terrorism, smuggling, organised crime, arms trade and the refugee crisis, then, to improve the living conditions of local populations and infrastructure in border regions by providing appropriate social and economic conditions to preserve the dignity of citizens and secure them from falling into the nets of smuggling, crime and terrorist groups.

The National Plan has established programmes and initiatives for the development of border areas, most notably: Organising the National Forum on Border Areas in 2018, adopting the Regional Action Programme for Border Areas -PAT 16, Launching the Border Area Development Scheme Project -PBRD, Conducting studies related to the development of border areas, adopting the Border Area Census and Financing Project, adopting the Special Plan for the Development of the Southern Border Areas.

However, the National plan faces challenges and difficulties that hinder the development process in border areas, most notably the issue of illegal migration and illegal refugees across borders, terrorist groups, smuggling gangs, organised crime and the cross-border arms trade, Corruption and bureaucracy, lack of local governance and administrative digitization, lack of financial and human resources in border areas. So, In order to overcome these obstacles and promote development in border areas, we propose the following recommendations:

-Periodically updating the National Plan for the Development of Border Areas and expanding the powers of the bodies in charge of its implementation and giving it a mandatory character.

-Opening specialisations in the field of border area development in universities and encouraging and funding scientific and academic research in this field.

-Establishing research centers on the development of border regions. So, We propose the establishment of a national research center that is affiliated with the government and supported by the required human and material resources.

-Developing a regularly updated database on border areas that includes new and accurate statistics on the problems of these areas and their economic and social situation, which would enable the authorities to accurately identify the needs of border areas and help them develop appropriate policies.

-Promote the role of local communities in the development of border areas, and apply the standards of local governance and administrative digitization.

- Engaging local civil society and businessmen in the development of border areas.

- Combating corruption in all its forms, especially administrative and financial corruption due to its negative repercussions on the development process of the border regions.

-Focusing on the development of southern border areas with African countries, given their importance in maintaining national security and territorial integrity.

-Developing legal and regulatory texts for the development of border areas, including facilitating investment in these areas.

-Conclude good-neighbourly, cooperation and border partnership agreements with neighbouring countries to promote development in border areas in the social, economic and environmental fields.

-Cooperation agreements between Algeria and neighbouring countries to resolve border issues and intensify efforts to combat terrorism, organised crime and the issue of African refugees crossing Algeria's borders, due to its negative repercussions on Algerian security and society.

-The participation of the Algerian state in resolving African and Arab conflicts in Algeria's neighbouring countries, especially in Libya, Mali and Niger, with the aim of protecting border security.

6. Margins:

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