

*The new agenda for Algerian security diplomacy of the African Sahel region post 2020*

الأجندة الجديدة للدبلوماسية الأمنية الجزائرية تجاه منطقة الساحل الإفريقي بعد 2020



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**Abstract:**

Algeria shares deep-rooted connections with the African Sahel nations, fostered by historical ties, geographical proximity, and shared cultural values.. The convergence of geography, religion, language, and historical identity, spanning back centuries, constitutes fundamental pillars upon which Algeria has relied to safeguard its national security.

Understanding Algerian relations with the African coast necessitates a grasp of the intricate network of overlapping geopolitical factors. It is challenging to comprehend these relations without delving into the role played by Algerian diplomacy, which is anchored in a framework of constitutional principles and enduring foreign policy constants. These formative elements serve as a crucial foundation for elucidating Algerian political conduct and the dynamics of its political relationships, particularly amidst renewed security crises in the region. Therefore, this study aims to illuminate and analyze Algerian security diplomacy agendas concerning the African Sahel region, particularly in response to the significant security developments that have unfolded since 2020.

**key words:** Algerian diplomacy, Algerian foreign policy, the African Sahel region

الملخص:

تربط الجزائر بدول الساحل الإفريقي عموما، عوامل التاريخ والجغرافيا والقيم الحضارية المشتركة، وقد تميزت العلاقة بين الجزائر ودول الساحل الإفريقي بأنها علاقة انتماء نتيجة الاتصال الراجع للجوار الجغرافي والدين والنضال ضد الاستعمار، وأنّ هذا التقارب في الجغرافيا والدين واللغة وعامل الهوية الذي يرجع إلى قرون سابقة، كان من أهم العوامل الأساسية التي تعتمد عليها الجزائر لضمان أمنها القومي.

ولا يمكن الحديث عن العلاقات الجزائرية بالساحل الإفريقي دون الإلمام بشبكة المؤشرات الجيوسياسية المتداخلة، ويصعب فهم تلك العلاقات دون معرفة الدور الذي تقوم به الدبلوماسية

الجزائرية التي تركز على جملة من المقومات والثوابت الدستورية المرتبطة بالسياسة الخارجية والتي شكلت منطلقا هاما في تفسير السلوك السياسي الجزائري وطبيعة العلاقات السياسية اتجاه المنطقة، خاصة أثناء الأزمات الأمنية المتجددة.

وعليه فقد جاءت دراستنا هذه لإبراز وتحليل أجدات الدبلوماسية الأمنية الجزائرية اتجاه منطقة الساحل الإفريقي، خاصة في ظل التطورات الأمنية الخطيرة التي تشهدها المنطقة منذ 2020 وإلى يومنا هذا.

الكلمات المفتاحية: الدبلوماسية الجزائرية، السياسة الخارجية الجزائرية، منطقة الساحل الإفريقي

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## Introduction:

Algeria's perception of security in the African Sahel region has been shaped by historical, political, social, and demographic factors, often referred to as the natural balance. This equilibrium has endowed Algeria with the capacity to assume leadership roles at the regional level. Consequently, the issue of defense has emerged as a cornerstone of Algerian foreign policy, rooted in the imperative of national sovereignty. The country's leadership steadfastly opposes any attempt to tether national defense to external entities or influences.

The Algerian security approach in the African Sahel region reflects the enduring principles that Algeria has embraced since its independence. These principles have shaped a distinct Algerian vision for constructing a security framework in the African Sahel, aimed at safeguarding Algeria's essential values as well as those of the countries and peoples within the region. The independence tendency that characterizes Algeria's security identity and the duty that emerged from it for the state to independently carry out its sovereign functions . At the forefront of which is security work within the geographical scope covered by its sovereignty and the duty of its cooperation with neighboring countries, especially the countries of the African Sahel, to contain transnational threats such as terrorist threats and ethnic threats resulting from internal conflicts, at the heart of the Algerian security approach as a central criterion for which the state's perceptions and behaviors are represented .

In the present research paper, our aim is to address the following issue: **What is the new Algerian foreign policy agenda regarding security developments in the Sahel region of Africa?**

To address this issue, a plan for our study was constructed as follows:

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The first axis: the location and geographical extension of Algeria in the African Sahel region. The second axis: principles of Algerian foreign policy, and the third axis: The new Algerian foreign policy agenda towards the African Sahel region after 2020.

### **I- the location and geographical extension of Algeria in the African Sahel region.**

Algeria's keen interest in developments in the African Sahel region stems from its recognition of the area as a geographical extension of its borders, constituting strategic depth, a security buffer, and a crucial gateway to the African continent. Consequently, any security threats affecting the Sahel region inherently jeopardize Algerian security. Since geography is the determinant of many political, economic, security, etc. relations, with its repercussions and influence on the nature of existing relations, Algeria, with its location, its relations, and the extensions it has, exists in the heart of spaces witnessing major conflicts, including the African Sahel space.

Geographically, Algeria stands as a vast nation situated at the heart of the Arab Maghreb. Beyond the confines of the Maghreb and coastal regions, Algeria's geopolitical significance extends to the regional level, serving as a gateway to Africa and the wider world. Covering an expansive area of 2,381,741 square kilometers, Algeria ranks tenth globally and holds the first position in Africa and the Arab world. This prominence was further solidified after the division of Sudan in July 2011, a development that left Algeria occupying 8% of the total area of the African continent, which spans 30,330,000 square kilometers. Moreover, Algeria accounts for 16.9% of the area of the Arab world, estimated at approximately 14,052,204 square kilometers, and represents 39.2% of the Maghreb's total landmass. It is estimated at approximately 6,067,591 km<sup>2</sup>.<sup>1</sup>

Therefore, Algeria's significance in the African Sahel region stems from its geographical proximity, with the region situated just a few kilometers away (refer to Map No. 06). Algeria is further distinguished by the extensive length of its borders, which amount to 6,427 km, and shares its land borders with seven (07) countries, five (05) of which are Arab and two (02) are African (the African coast),<sup>2</sup> on three sides, as shown in the following table:

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<sup>1</sup>- Adel Garsh, **The Impact of Neighboring Countries' Security Threats on Algerian Security** , 1st edition, Cairo: Arab Knowledge Bureau , 2018, p. 82.

<sup>2</sup> - Wahiba Dalei, **Algerian foreign policy towards the African Sahel region** , 1999-2017 , Algeria: Dar Al Khaldounia , 2018, p. 22 .

**A table showing the Algerian borders with all surrounding countries**

<b>Country</b>	<b>Border length in kilometres</b>	<b>sides</b>	<b>Percentage of total borders</b>	<b>Percentage of each side</b>
Tunisia	965 km	Eastern	15 , 3%	30 , 02%
Libya	982 km	1974 km	14 , 72%	
Niger	965 km	South	15 , 16%	36 , 98%
Financial	1376 km	2341 km	21 , 82%	
Morocco	1643 km	Western 2148 km	24 , 72%	33%
Western Desert	42 km		0 , 66%	
Mauritania	463 km		7 , 61%	
<b>the total</b>	6436 km			

*Source: Mansour Lakhdari, "Geopolitical Supplies for National Security in Algeria," Affairs of the Middle East Journal, Beirut: Center for Strategic Studies , No. 143, 2012, p. 07 .*

It is observed that the countries sharing borders with Algeria exhibit a spectrum of dynamics ranging from hostility and competition to fragility and threats. The intensity of these dynamics has escalated notably since 2011, leading to a heightened production of serious repercussions on Algerian national security. So that the Maghreb and coastal regions were and still are vital areas for its national security because they are linked to its borders , and thus The length of the borders, especially with the African Sahel countries, makes it in Algeria’s interest to coordinate with these countries to ensure the stability of the region, by fortifying its borders, which is a fundamental pillar of its national security.

The issue of borders and geographical proximity between Algeria and the African Sahel region stands out as one of the most significant concerns within Algerian foreign policy, particularly from a security perspective. Algerian security views emphasize that effective control and demarcation of borders are essential for reinforcing the principles of positive neighborly relations. Therefore, Algeria sought to demarcate And controlling its geographical borders with neighboring countries since the first problem occurred between them and Morocco after independence, and agreements were signed for that, and then with Tunisia after that. As for the African Sahel countries, an agreement was signed with the State of Mali on 05/08/1983, and with Niger on 05/05. 01/1983, and Mauritania on 12/13/1983. As for the Libyan-Algerian borders, they were controlled in accordance with the Libyan-French agreement of 1956.

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Due to the geographical proximity with the African Sahel countries in general and Mali in particular in terms of neighbourhood, there are several factors behind Algeria's security perspective for the region, especially in Mali and Niger, which constitute a priority in Algeria's national and regional security, including:<sup>1</sup>

- 1- The presence of Algeria along the African coast.
- 2- The geographical proximity of the African Sahel countries has borders with Algeria amounting to 3,777 km, which gave Algeria a top priority in the security aspect, especially after the war on Libya and the spread of weapons.
- 3- Algeria's awareness of the reality of the African coast, especially Mali, which was a transit center in southern Algeria to deliver weapons to the Algerian revolution during the liberation war.
- 4- The geographical proximity, shared environmental characteristics, cultural affinities, and social interactions between the inhabitants of the African Sahel region and those of southern Algeria have served as catalysts for fostering closer ties between the peoples and nations of the region with the Algerian people and state.

Generally, the peculiarities of the Algerian-Mali neighborhood go beyond the borders that the two countries share, which extend over 1,376 km, and constitute 21.69% of the total Algerian land borders, to the social communication that links them, made possible by the division of part of their peoples, represented by the Tuareg tribes, of one tribal origin that inhabits a geographical space that they share. Countries in shaping its transnational judiciary, and Algeria participates in shaping the geographical space across the country inhabited by the "Tuareg" tribes in Mali, Niger, Chad, Mauritania, Burkina Faso, Libya and Algeria, that is, in the African coastline.<sup>2</sup>

The dispersion of the Tuareg ethnicity across multiple countries is a geopolitical matter of geostrategic significance, carrying immense importance for both Algeria and the nations where they reside. Algeria is moving in its geopolitical field related to the Sahara and Sahel region of Africa in light of a group of crises extending along its borders, which can be summarized as crises of growing ethnic conflicts and identity claims , as the rise in the ceiling of Tuareg demands to the level of self-determination

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<sup>1</sup>- Ismail Dabash, **Algeria's foreign policy between principled premises and international reality** , Algeria: Dar Houma for Printing, Publishing and Distribution, 2017, p. 193.

- Al-Hafiz Al-Nouini , "The Crisis of the Postcolonial State in Africa, The Case of a Failed State: A Financial Model," **Al- Mustaqbal Al-Arabi Magazine** , Beirut: Center for Arab Studies, No. 422 , 2014, p . 194 .

<sup>2</sup>-Mansour Lakhdari, "The Libyan Crisis and its Repercussions on the Sahel Region," **Journal of Scientific Research and Studies** , Algeria, Yahya Fares University in Medea, Issue 6, Part 2, June 2012, p. 172.

and independence poses a threat. It greatly threatens the unity and harmony of the Algerian state, and the leakage of the state's structural and functional deficit.<sup>1</sup>

The geographic proximity and extension between Algeria and the African Sahel region have positioned Algeria as a sought-after destination for displaced individuals fleeing the various hardships experienced in numerous African Sahel countries. These difficulties include ethnic conflicts, military coups, power struggles, and widespread famine that has affected large swathes of the African desert and Sahel region. Consequently, a wave of displacement, predominantly towards neighboring countries like Algeria and Mali, has ensued (refer to Map No. 07). Mali, in particular, shares these conditions, with its northern region, bordering Algeria's southern border, serving as a focal point for conflicts between the Tuareg and the government since its independence. Alongside periodic droughts plaguing the region, the conflict escalated in 2012, marking a new chapter in the ongoing strife. Financial analysts regard this as the fourth episode of conflict in the region's tumultuous history.<sup>2</sup>

Algeria's geographical connection to the African continent and its extension into the African Sahel region position it as a pioneering figure in the area. This leadership role is primarily derived from its strategic geographic location, substantial land area, and abundance of natural and human resources. The amalgamation of these factors solidifies Algeria's centrality, not only within the African sphere but also across other geopolitical realms.

## **II- principles of Algerian foreign policy: <sup>3</sup>**

Algerian foreign policy is regarded as a seamless continuation of Algerian diplomacy during the liberation revolution. This pivotal period laid the groundwork and principles for the foreign policy of an independent Algeria, which have been reaffirmed through constitutional provisions and official declarations of the Algerian state. Therefore, it is imperative to study the principles and foundations of Algerian foreign policy directions to comprehensively understand and analyze this policy within its regional and international context, addressing its underlying principles and objectives.

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<sup>1</sup>- Abdullah Raqidi, "The issue of the independence of the Mali Tuareg and its repercussions on the security of Algeria," **Journal of Social and Human Sciences**, Algeria: University of Batna Hadj Lakhdar, issue 31, December 2014, pp. 225, 226.

<sup>2</sup> - Diana Cartier, "The Mali crisis souses the angle of migration", **International Organization for Migrations (OMI)**, June 2013, P06.

<sup>3</sup>□ If we address the principles of Algerian foreign policy, the November 1st statement and the Soumam Conference The Tripoli Charter, the 1963 Constitution, the 1976 Charter, the 1989 Constitution, and the 1996 Constitution are the basic documents that can be adopted in revealing the principles of Algerian foreign policy. These charters enshrined a set of principles that were the regulating thread that governs the process of making Algeria's foreign policy and the guiding factor upon which the Algerian decision-maker relies. In foreign policy.

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The Algerian Constitution is considered the legal and interpretive reference for defining and understanding the explicit principles of the state's foreign policy. They are stated in the Constitution in Chapter Seven of Part One in the text of the articles beginning with Article 93. They are principles that are in line with the spirit of the international charters of the United Nations, the Arab League, the Non-Aligned Movement and the Organization of African Unity. These principles are organized to build positive relations between the state and its external environment.

Algerian foreign policy is also viewed as a reflection of its internal policies, a principle explicitly articulated in the ideological texts of the National Liberation Front party and enshrined in the National Charter of 1976 "Algeria's foreign policy is a mirror of its internal policy, and it aims primarily to serve the higher interests of the Algerian people and their revolution."

Additionally, Article 88 of the Constitution indicated that achieving the goals of the Organization of African Unity and encouraging unity among the peoples of the continent constitute a historical demand and are included as a permanent line in the policy of the Algerian revolution.<sup>1</sup>

In essence, Algerian foreign policy is grounded in a set of principles that elucidate the state's conduct within its external milieu and reveal its overarching objectives. These principles encapsulate a series of norms and perspectives intertwined with the foreign policy objectives of the state. Indeed, in many instances, the principles adopted by a state in its foreign policy are concurrently its goals.<sup>2</sup>

These principles can be summarized as follows:

### **1 - Being part of the Maghreb, the Arab world, and Africa:**

The preamble to the 1996 Constitution, amended in 2002 and 2008, articulates: "Algeria, the land of Islam, an integral part of the Greater Arab Maghreb, an Arab land, and a Mediterranean and African country ... " <sup>3</sup>As a result of Algeria's strategic location, which has led to multiple areas of its affiliation, Algeria has worked to confirm its affiliation to the Arab Maghreb as an integral part of it. Algeria is also an integral part of the Arab world, and on this basis it adhered to the Charter of the League of Arab States and emphasized the unified struggle, the common destiny, and the belief in the possibility of achieving Arab unity and working to embody this goal by seeking to liberate the lands that are still under colonialism, especially the occupied Palestinian territories.<sup>4</sup>

Furthermore, Algeria's commitment to its African affiliation is prominently underscored in its foreign policy. This is evidenced by its membership in the Organization of African Unity and its persistent efforts to mediate and resolve conflicts

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<sup>1</sup>- People's Democratic Republic of Algeria, 1985, National Charter 1976, p. 142.

<sup>2</sup>- Wahiba Dalei, **Algerian foreign policy towards the African Sahel region**, *op. cit.*, p. 57.

<sup>3</sup>- Mouloud Dedan, **Texts of Algerian Constitutional Law**, Algeria: Dar Belkis, 2008, pp. 5-6 .

<sup>4</sup>- Algerian Ministry of Foreign Affairs, 1986.

across the continent. Algeria also actively promotes African development initiatives and strives to establish parity between Africa and the West within the framework of North-South relations.<sup>1</sup>

## **2- Political solidarity to the right of peoples to self-determination:**

According to Article 30 of the 2016 Constitution: “Algeria is in solidarity with all peoples struggling for political and economic liberation, the right to self-determination, and against all racial discrimination.”<sup>2</sup>

It is evident that Algeria is actively engaged in supporting liberation movements worldwide, which can be seen as a continuation of its own revolutionary struggle for independence. This support aligns with Algeria's national policy, which advocates for unconditional backing of peoples striving for independence. Algeria sees it as a responsibility to stand in solidarity with colonized peoples and to advocate for their right to self-determination.<sup>3</sup>

This notion is reinforced by President Abdelaziz Bouteflika's address during the commemoration of the 61st anniversary of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights in 2009. In his speech, President Bouteflika underscored the inseparable link between the rights of peoples and human rights, emphasizing that they are integrally connected. He called upon the international community to prioritize the fulfillment of the will of peoples and to empower them with their rights, in accordance with the principle of full sovereignty and the right to self-determination.<sup>4</sup>

## **3- The outcomes of Colonialism: Upholding the Principle of Positive Neighborly Relations and Border Respect:**

Article 14 of the 2016 Algerian Constitution stipulates: "Under no circumstances is it permissible to cede or abandon any portion of the national territory".<sup>5</sup> Therefore, we find Algeria calling for the principle of not touching the borders inherited from colonialism in order to defend territorial integrity, given what it represents as a continuation of the principles of its revolution, and a pillar of Essential to the principle of good neighborliness and a guarantee of regional security, it sought to demarcate and control its borders with neighboring countries by signing many agreements, including: the agreement with Morocco in 1972, the agreement with Tunisia in 1970 and 1983,

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<sup>1</sup>- **Ibid** .

<sup>2</sup>- People's Democratic Republic of Algeria, Constitution of 2016.

<sup>3\*</sup> - Algeria practiced the principle of the right of peoples to self-determination , with each of Mauritania when he wanted Morocco contained it, and with Tunisia against foreign attempts to colonize it, and currently supports self-determination in both Western Sahara and Palestine .

<sup>4</sup>- Muhammad Masoud Bounaqtah , **The security dimension in Algerian foreign policy towards the Arab Maghreb** , (a thesis submitted to obtain a doctorate in political sciences), University of Algiers 03, 2014, p. 92.

<sup>5</sup>- Constitution of 2016 , **Previous reference** .



the agreement with Mauritania in 1983, and with Mali on May 8, 1983, and Libya. 1984.<sup>1</sup>

Algeria has prioritized good neighborliness through the promotion of bilateral relations, often opting to de-escalate tensions and refrain from responding to provocations from Morocco. Additionally, Algeria has actively worked towards fostering cooperation within the framework of the Arab Maghreb Union to build regional unity. Despite encountering obstacles, Algeria has persevered in advancing this project. Within this framework, Algeria has also sought to bolster stability in neighboring countries, particularly during times of financial crisis. Algeria has played and continues to play a pivotal role as a mediator to mitigate crises and facilitate stability in these nations.

#### **4- The principle of non-interference in the internal affairs of states:**

Algeria adheres to the principle of non-interference in both international and regional organizations, as well as in its bilateral relations with other countries. This commitment is underscored in Article 31 of the 2016 Constitution, which emphasizes “Algeria's efforts to promote international cooperation and cultivate friendly relations among nations based on principles of equality, mutual interest, and respect for sovereignty. Additionally, Algeria aligns its actions with the principles and objectives outlined in the United Nations Charter.”<sup>2</sup>

Algeria's steadfast adherence to the principle of non-interference has positioned it as a significant player in both regional and international arenas<sup>3</sup> in the field of defense and commitment to these organizations and bodies. Algeria considers the application of this principle out of respect for the privacy of each country, even though these countries have historical, economic and political relations and influence and are affected by them, but non-interference It strengthens relations and improves the desire for unity and cooperation in implementation of positive good neighbourliness.

#### **5- The principle of peaceful resolution of international disputes:**

As per the Article 29 of the Algerian Constitution of 2016, “Algeria shall refrain from resorting to war in order to infringe upon the legitimate sovereignty and freedom of other peoples, and shall exert its efforts to settle international disputes by peaceful means .”<sup>4</sup>

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<sup>1</sup>- Nasser Boualem, “The Role Theory in Algerian Foreign Policy and the Process of Reviving the Pioneering Role in the African Sahel Region ,” **Algerian Journal of Human Security** , Volume 4, Issue 4 , July 2019, p. 262.

<sup>2</sup>- Constitution of 2016, **previous reference** .

<sup>3\*</sup> - Algeria’s position remained based on the principle of non-interference in the internal affairs of countries, especially with regard to the Arab Spring revolutions in Libya and Syria. Algeria’s position remained firm regarding its rejection of external intervention in Syria, and its refusal to grant a seat in the Arab League to the Syrian opposition, and this was in return. Many Arab countries support the military option.

<sup>4</sup>- Constitution of 2016, **previous reference** .

This principle stands as a foundational element in Algeria's external conduct towards both its regional and international spheres. It aligns closely with the first principle of the United Nations Charter, which emphasizes the imperative for states to abstain from employing force or the threat thereof. Similarly, it resonates with the Charter's second principle, which advocates for the peaceful resolution of international disputes through negotiation, mediation, arbitration, conciliation, or legal settlement, with the overarching goal of maintaining security and peace. Algeria has actively advocated for the rejection of force and the promotion of cooperation, urging the peaceful resolution of conflicts through diplomatic means.

This principle further defines the nature of the Algerian position on the crises in Mali and Libya, as it led Algeria to resolve the conflict in northern Mali from 1990 until the present time through mediation and negotiation between the various parties to the crisis, reaching a comprehensive, peaceful political solution and avoiding foreign military intervention .<sup>1</sup>

#### **6- The principle of cooperation between neighboring countries:**

Article 31, as previously mentioned, underscores this principle by emphasizing the establishment of bilateral or regional cooperation for the mutual benefit of all parties involved. This cooperation extends across borders through consultations aimed at “strengthening and developing neighborhood relations between local groups or regional authorities of two or more neighboring countries, and this includes concluding treaties.” And agreements are necessary for this purpose, and border cooperation is exercised within the framework of the powers of these groups or regional authorities, as determined by the law governing this cooperation and the internal law of states .”<sup>2</sup>

This principle aligns seamlessly with the principles of non-interference in the internal affairs of states and the peaceful resolution of international disputes, aiming to safeguard the sovereignty and fundamental rights of all international entities. Consequently, Algerian foreign policy has been distinguished by a cooperative approach towards various regions including the Maghreb, Arab, Mediterranean, African, and international spheres. This cooperative stance has been exemplified through the signing of numerous border agreements and investment initiatives among countries within these regions.

Ultimately, Algeria maintains its stance of rejecting the hosting or establishment of foreign military bases within its national territory, regardless of the country's identity. This position is in line with Algeria's commitment to official dealings with other nations, non-interference in their internal affairs, and respect for their territorial sovereignty and integrity. Furthermore, Algeria upholds the perspective of self-

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<sup>1</sup>- Nasser Boualem, **previous reference** , p. 261.

<sup>2</sup>- Constitution of 2016, **previous reference** .

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determination regarding the Western Sahara issue. However, the recent new constitution carried amendments that included Algeria's foreign policy in the possibility of sending military forces abroad to participate in peace and security operations under international supervision and after the approval of two-thirds of the members of Parliament, in addition to the trend towards valuing economic diplomacy and reorienting towards Africa.

Given its significant size and regional influence, particularly in the context of globalization and the rapid transmission of influences across borders, Algeria must safeguard its sovereignty through all available means, including military intervention. This is especially crucial in border areas posing threats to its national security, particularly amidst the escalating conflict in Mali and the potential threats emanating from western Algeria, notably from Morocco.

### **III- The new Algerian foreign policy agenda towards the African Sahel region after 2020.**

#### **1- Security coordination between Algeria and the African Sahel countries in the face of security threats:**

Algeria's recognition of the strategic significance of the Sahel region in ensuring its national security has led to its commitment to managing conflicts stemming from rebel movements in northern Mali, Niger, and neighboring countries. Algeria has actively engaged its diplomatic efforts to contain these crises, preventing further escalation and minimizing the risks posed by foreign presence in the region. This is particularly crucial given the growing threats of unconventional security challenges such as organized crime, drug trafficking, proliferation of weapons, and illegal immigration.<sup>1</sup>

In recent years, Algerian security policy towards the African Sahel region has undergone a significant transformation, particularly concerning defense policy or practical measures. This shift is primarily driven by local and regional considerations, including the crises in the Maghreb region following the aftermath of the Arab Spring, as well as the escalating ethnic conflicts in the African Sahel. Algeria has begun to pay increasing attention to the African coastal dimension in particular. It has also begun to emphasize a central factor in its policy, which is border security. As is known, our land borders are suffering from serious exposure on all the eastern, southern and western fronts, so it has become necessary to achieve our border security in the midst of a volatile neighbourhood.

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<sup>1</sup>Selim Bouskin , **The Security Doctrine between Legal Obligations and New Challenges: 2007 - 2017** , (Memorandum submitted for the PhD in Political Science and Political Science), Mohamed Khaidar University, Biskra, 2020 - 2021, pp . 70-84 .

Despite these security developments, the Algerian army remains committed to not participating in any military operation outside the territory of the country, a principle stipulated in the constitution. This stance is supported by many, as military intervention in the affairs of other countries, especially neighboring ones, could potentially engender enmity, contradicting Algeria's belief in the principle of good neighborliness. However, its opponents (the principle of non-military intervention) believe that it is no longer practical, given the globalization of threats and risks at the present time, especially the risks that the Sahel region and the Maghreb are experiencing, which will inevitably have serious repercussions on Algeria's security.<sup>1</sup>

The security landscape in the Maghreb region underwent significant upheaval, starting with the Tunisian revolution and followed by the civil war in Libya. The killing of Libyan leader Muammar Gaddafi further exacerbated security concerns. Concurrently, the Sahel region experienced deteriorating security and political conditions, marked by a coup against the president in Mali, increased activity by Al-Qaeda, the Tuareg rebellion in Azawad, and escalating threats from organized crime and illegal immigration. In response to these developments, Algeria intensified its focus on its southern flank. This shift in perception led to a restructuring of the threat assessment framework in Algeria, with a heightened military presence concentrated in the southern regions.<sup>2</sup>

Within the context of Algeria's international relations, the security aspect has consistently been the paramount dimension of Algerian diplomacy. This is evident in its significant role as a mechanism for garnering international recognition and support during the national liberation process and the subsequent establishment of the modern Algerian state. Algerian diplomacy has demonstrated a proactive and decisive approach, characterized by broad and transparent engagement, particularly during major security crises such as those in Libya in 2011 and Mali in 2012. This diplomacy is based primarily on a security policy that is constitutionally defined through Chapter 03 of Chapter One in a set of articles starting from Article 26 to Article 28: “Non-interference in the internal affairs of neighboring countries, including It means mutual respect for the political, economic and social systems of neighboring regions in accordance with the rule of borders inherited from colonialism and establishing the idea of the sanctity of borders and positive good neighbourliness, and the principle of

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<sup>1</sup> **Ibid.** , pp . 82-84 .

<sup>2</sup>Samir Kat, **The African Dimension in the Algerian National Security and Defense Policy** , (a memorandum submitted for the doctoral degree in political science), Mohamed Kheidar University, Biskra - Algeria, 2016, 2017, p.

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cooperation between neighboring countries accompanied by the principle of resolving disputes by peaceful means and not resorting to force.”<sup>1</sup>

In addressing the escalating unrest along its geographical borders and ensuring regional security, Algeria's security policy hinges on a cooperative approach. Algeria views cooperation as an alternative to intervention, which some actors employ as a means of managing and resolving crises. This integrated security policy revolves around five axes :

- **The first, which is operational, includes** the national (border) security and military measures that Algeria has taken since the outbreak of the financial crisis in 2012 and which it has expanded to cover almost all of its land borders, with a focus on the borders with Libya, Niger and Mali .
- **The second approach** involves bilateral political and security cooperation with neighboring countries in the African Sahel region, including Libya, Mali, and Niger. Algeria extends political and financial support to these nations through aid and loans. Additionally, Algeria assists in bolstering their security capabilities through measures such as border security, joint patrols, intelligence sharing, and training of security forces. In certain cases, Algeria also provides military support in the form of equipment, arms, and training.
- **The third** ; It is regional and multilateral, and is represented on the one hand by launching two tripartite tracks ( Algeria - Tunisia - Libya, and Algeria - Tunisia - Egypt) for cooperation and coordination related to the Libyan crisis, and in initiatives to mobilize and coordinate the efforts of the countries of the region on the other hand, including the initiative of the field countries (Algeria, Niger, and Mali). Mauritania), which was launched in 2010, specializes in the crisis in Mali.
- **The fourth is concerned** with resolving the crises in the region by adopting the option of cooperation and mediation, as Algeria has led and is leading several mediations in its neighbourhood, most notably the mediation between the Tuareg and the governments of Mali and Niger.
- **The fifth** approach focuses on addressing local components within crisis hotspots by separating the political element from the terrorist aspect. These approaches and founding principles of Algeria's foreign and security policy are cohesive, all directed towards ensuring security within the region. Algeria's security policy is underpinned by a fundamental principle emphasizing the importance of regional countries taking responsibility for their own security. This principle aims to mitigate foreign interference and promote strategic independence among regional nations..

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<sup>1</sup>Amina Mustafa Dalla , “The Strategic Depth of Algerian Security : Border Security between Mali and Libya.” **Arab Journal of Political Science** , D A, D S N, D P.

Algeria's security policy has historically been rooted in traditional perceptions of conflicts and wars between regular armies, originally designed to confront threats of international origin. However, this approach did not adequately address the strategic shift in the nature of threats, initially ruling out or downplaying the significance of non-international threats. Over time, Algeria began to recognize the evolving landscape of security challenges. While conflicts between countries decreased, internal, ethnic, and non-state actor conflicts increased. With the spread of security unrest in its neighborhood and the expansion of its area, Algeria found itself confronting new threats for which it had not previously developed comprehensive strategies. Consequently, direct engagement with these emerging threats prompted a reassessment of its security perceptions and strategies.

One of the most notable shifts in foreign policy at the security level, particularly since 2020, is the evolving situation along the southern borders of the country. This includes the conflict in northern Mali and the French military intervention there, as well as the persistent threat posed by terrorist groups in the Sahel region of Africa. Additionally, Algeria faces ongoing challenges such as coups and other entrenched threats. These developments have significantly impacted Algeria's security posture and have necessitated a reevaluation of its foreign policy approach. The military situation taking place in Niger, Burkina Faso and other countries currently, that is, in the year 2023 AD, and despite these developments, Algeria did not hesitate to call for intensifying efforts and calling on its partner Sahel countries in order to confront the phenomenon of conflicts and try to settle them by peaceful means, as well as confronting the phenomenon of terrorism by reminding Raising awareness of the importance of criminalizing the payment of ransoms after waging a diplomatic battle that culminated in international approval, considering that the money generated from ransoms constitutes one of the most prominent sources of financing for terrorist groups, whether in the African Sahel or any region witnessing the activity of terrorist groups.

Furthermore, Algeria assumes the role of a key coordinator and pivotal regional actor in the Sahel-Saharan region, particularly in addressing the challenge of combating Al-Qaeda's presence in the area. Algeria's success in this endeavor is attributed to its internal strategies, including the adoption of the national reconciliation option, as well as the capabilities demonstrated by the People's National Army. This combination of internal policies and military capabilities positions Algeria as a significant player in regional security efforts <sup>1</sup> and the joint corps, which have demonstrated a great ability

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<sup>1\*</sup> - Due to growing security concerns in Algeria, the government raised the defense budget for 2014 to reach \$20 billion for the same year. According to the classification presented by the report Global Fire Power said that the Algerian army's budget exceeded \$13 billion for the year 2021, despite the economic crisis and the epidemiological situation (Corona epidemic) that have affected the country since 2020.

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to confront Terrorist groups in light of the state's provision of the latest internationally used armed technologies, where Algeria played a pivotal role in adopting a policy of rejecting any foreign interference, especially with regard to military bases.

In addressing security threats emanating from the geopolitical circle of its southern region, Algeria has adopted a dual strategy for effective response. Internally, it relies on a security policy geared towards enhancing coverage of the Saharan region and implementing extensive monitoring of land borders. Externally, Algeria pursues a regional strategy aimed at mobilizing necessary resources and mechanisms to collectively confront common threats originating from the Sahara and the Sahel. This multifaceted approach allows Algeria to address security challenges comprehensively, both domestically and within the broader regional context.

In addressing the Tuareg crisis in northern Mali and Niger, Algeria pursued a non-military policy primarily centered on regional cooperation. It actively supported and facilitated negotiations between the Tuareg communities and their respective governments in Mali and Niger. Algeria also engaged in numerous mediation efforts to seek solutions aimed at preventing destabilization of the region and avoiding the escalation of unrest. By taking such measures, Algeria sought to safeguard its southern borders and deter any foreign intervention. This stance was exemplified by its acceptance of a solution to the coup crisis in Niger that occurred in August 2023.<sup>1</sup>

Algeria's security policy in the African Sahel region underscores a regional approach, emphasizing cooperation and shared responsibility among neighboring countries. This strategy extends regionally and aims to address the challenges posed by ethnic conflicts while fostering collective security efforts. Algeria collaborates closely with countries in the region, including Mali, Niger, Mauritania, and Libya. This is because, according to a geopolitical approach, every disturbance occurs in This region becomes an area of concern for these countries, and requires coordination and cooperation to confront it effectively, as Algeria believes that any solution to the problem of intra-state conflicts and the danger of coups and other security threats will not be possible if it is not founded on the basis of cooperation and security coordination between all the countries concerned.

Therefore, Algeria maintains that the nature of the relationship between these countries necessitates the design of their national security strategies not in isolation but through a collaborative and interconnected approach with their neighbors. This comprehensive strategy views the security environment in the African Sahel region as an integrated and interdependent structure. It relies on two fundamental factors: direct

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<sup>1</sup>- Naima Khater, "Algerian public security policy between sovereign obligations and regional stakes," **Al-Bahith Journal of Legal and Political Sciences** , Algeria, second issue, June 2019.

geographical proximity and mutual security dependence. These factors are closely intertwined, with each influencing and reinforcing the other.<sup>1</sup>

It should be noted that Algeria's resort to adopting the approach of security cooperation and coordination with the African Sahel countries as a mechanism or strategy to confront the threat of security and political threats and confront terrorist threats came as a response to a group of factors, the most important of which are:<sup>2</sup>

*a- The vastness of the African Sahel region, the difficulty of its geography , and the weakness of military capabilities:* This necessitates robust cooperation among countries in the region and the coordination of expertise to assist nations experiencing ethnic conflicts in mitigating them. Additionally, it requires countries facing the potential spread of such conflicts to effectively confront and manage them. Through collaborative efforts and the sharing of resources and knowledge, countries can work together to address ethnic conflicts and their potential ramifications, fostering stability and security in the region.

*b- The flexible and complex nature and the characteristic of spreadability:* The threats posed by ethnic conflicts have evolved into cross-border challenges, particularly as these groups align themselves with local ethnic compositions. This dynamic is evident in conflicts such as the one in Mali, where such alliances exacerbate the situation. Consequently, the approach of security cooperation and coordination, championed by Algeria, is recognized as one of the most significant frameworks offering potential solutions to the issues confronting the African Sahel region, particularly those related to ethnic conflicts. By fostering collaboration and coordination among regional actors, this approach aims to address the root causes of conflicts and promote stability in the region. because this type of approach focuses on the importance and necessity of regional collective action that ensures security exchange between the countries of the region. It seems that Algeria's security approach is close to Barry Buzan's perceptions of security, as he believes that the only way to confront new security threats is mutual security dependence within the framework of what he called the " security complex" because the security of any party in this region is dependent on the security of the other party due to its characteristic The spreadability that characterizes current threats, especially threats of ethnic conflicts.

## **2- The new Algerian foreign policy towards security developments and their threats at the political level:**

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<sup>1</sup> Hamza Hossam, "Algeria and Security Threats in the Sahel: Perception and Coping Mechanisms," **Arab Siyasat Magazine** , No. 21, July 2016, p. 83.

<sup>2</sup> With tenderness strong, **Algeria and the new security threats from combating terrorism to security engineering** , 1st edition, Amman: Dar Al-Hamid for Publishing and Distribution, 2017 , p. 189 .



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Algeria has emerged as a key local actor in Africa and the African Sahel region, owing to its geopolitical attributes at the regional level and the unwavering political determination displayed by its leadership since independence. Throughout its history, Algeria has aligned itself with the anti-colonial movement and has been committed to fostering African unity and solidarity. With regard to supporting the liberation movements, the main focus of Algerian foreign policy was as a result of what Algeria suffered throughout the years of struggle against colonialism, and therefore its solidarity with the liberation movements in Africa and elsewhere was very strong. Algeria also worked strongly to unify the African continent and support solidarity among its peoples, and the Organization of Unity was Africanism is one of the most important achievements that have been achieved and has allowed the unification of African peoples to defend their economic interests and liberate the African peoples who are still under the yoke of colonialism.<sup>1</sup>

Diplomatic activity in Algeria, spanning from the onset of the conflict in northern Mali between the Tuareg and the Malian government in 2012 to 2023, experienced significant dynamism driven by regional transformations. Faced with this issue and other challenges in its neighborhood, Algeria was compelled to adapt and devise suitable methods for addressing them. Algeria's approaches in the political realm have frequently garnered appreciation and respect, notwithstanding occasional criticism for perceived silence on certain matters. Algeria has consistently affirmed its commitment to a proactive diplomacy characterized by action rather than mere rhetoric.

Through its persistent efforts, Algeria strives to foster peace among neighboring countries and eliminate any sources of misunderstanding. It actively promotes dialogue and consultation channels to address disputes that may arise in the African Sahel region. Furthermore, Algeria seeks to maximize opportunities for cooperation and solidarity between nations, recognizing that shared interests forge strong bonds that transcend mere misunderstandings. All of this without deviating from the principles of its foreign policy, as this is what has proven the effectiveness of its official and unofficial diplomacy in dealing with regional issues in its southern neighbourhood, especially the financial crisis known for the sensitivity of the situation and the lack of time in dealing with it, and this is in the most complex issue known to the region due to the serious repercussions that may be reflected. It is inevitable for all regions of the African Sahel, and Algeria has focused a lot on finding a peaceful solution to this crisis and avoiding military intervention, the consequences of which will be dire in the short and long term.

Algerian foreign policy has been based on security developments and their threats since 2020 at the political level on the following points:

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<sup>1</sup>- Hafez Noeni, **Previous reference**, p. 52.

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- Algeria has demonstrated its commitment to the principles of the United Nations and the African Union regarding the Tuareg conflict in northern Mali. It adheres to a policy of non-interference in internal affairs and advocates for the implementation of diplomatic solutions. This commitment was realized through the signing of the Algiers Agreement in 2015 between the conflicting parties, underscoring Algeria's role as a facilitator of peace and stability in the region.
- Algerian foreign policy is characterized by a delicate balance between diplomatic initiatives and military intelligence efforts. This approach was exemplified in the "Tiqentourine" operation, conducted in alignment with Algeria's national interests. Notably, Algerian foreign policy does not engage in negotiations in the face of terrorist threats. However, in conflict situations, Algeria offers recommendations and aid to facilitate peaceful resolutions. This underscores its commitment to resolving conflicts, such as the Tuareg-government conflict in Mali, through diplomatic channels rather than resorting to military interventions.
- Algeria used the transformations in the African Sahel region to support its foreign policy trends, especially with major countries such as the United States and Russia recently.
- During certain periods of renewed conflict in Mali, Algeria succeeded in intensifying efforts and taking regional collective action away from foreign intervention to resolve the conflict. In another reading of Algerian foreign policy, according to Dr. Bouhania kawi:<sup>1</sup>
- Algeria regards its political dealings with the African space and the African Sahel region mainly as an economic and political cost that must be paid to ensure its stability and preserve its national security from ethnic threats .

In general terms, Algeria followed diplomatic relations with 32 African countries until May 2021. <sup>2</sup>Algerian diplomacy relied on providing aid to African countries, and adopted the option of erasing debts, including writing off \$3 billion in debts from ten African countries in 2012, and canceling \$9.2 million for 14 other African countries. In 2013, in addition to providing aid to the State of Mali that exceeded 100 million dollars, <sup>3</sup>its role was weakened on the continent due to internal factors, the most important of which were restrictions on foreign investment, the illness of former President Abdelaziz Bouteflika in 2013, and the tense conditions experienced internally (the popular movement and the austerity policy).

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<sup>1</sup>Bouhania kawi, "The Algerian Strategy towards Security Developments in the African Sahel Region," **Al Jazeera Center for Studies JCS** , 03 June 2012, pp. 06 .

<sup>2</sup>- "Algerie " Embassy pages, accessed May 18, 2021 , <http://www.ombassypages.com/algerie>

<sup>3</sup>- Abdelkader Abderrahmane , "Understanding of Algeria's: Foreign Policy in The Sahel", **in the politics of Algeria: Domestic Issues and International Relations** , ed , Yahya Zoubir , (new yourk : routeldage, 2020). pp . 199-209.

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Since assuming office, President Abdelmadjid Tebboune has steered Algerian foreign policy towards a heightened focus on the African continent, aiming to bolster partnerships with nations such as Turkey, China, and Russia. Notably, the president convened at the "Berlin Conference" to address the situation in Libya and engaged in official visits to several African countries. These visits included Algerian Foreign Minister Mr. Sabri Boukadoum's trips to Libya and attendance at the presidential inaugurations in Congo, Uganda, Guinea, Sierra Leone, Cameroon, Togo, Kenya, Nigeria, Angola, Lesotho, and South Africa in 2021. Additionally, interactions with the West African Organization (ECOWAS) in 2020 underscored Algeria's engagement in security, political, and economic discussions, particularly concerning the ethnic conflict in Mali.<sup>1</sup>

### **Conclusion:**

In summary, the new Algerian foreign policy towards the African Sahel region since 2020 can be evaluated through the following key points:

- Algeria's steadfast commitment to maintaining independent principles for national security is evident in its refusal to sign defense agreements with foreign powers, even amid internal crises. This stance underscores Algeria's proactive approach to safeguarding its sovereignty and autonomy in defense matters. By abstaining from such agreements, Algeria sends a clear message that engagement in dialogues and security cooperation does not imply consent for foreign intervention in its internal affairs or those of neighboring countries. Instead, Algeria prioritizes preventive measures to preserve its independence and regional stability.
- Algeria's emphasis on regional and multidimensional approaches represents an optimal strategy for addressing contemporary transnational security challenges, akin to those experienced in the African Sahel region, including ethnic conflicts, terrorism, organized crime, and illegal immigration.
- We have observed that Algeria's security strategy regarding the ethnic conflict between the Tuareg and the government primarily adopts a non-military approach. However, in addressing issues of terrorism, organized crime, and illegal immigration, it employs a combination of military and non-military measures. This approach underscores the interconnectedness of security, development, and political, economic, and social stability in the region.
- Algeria's security policy across various dimensions - societal, economic, cultural, political, military, environmental, and health - in the African Sahel region appears to be fraught with contradictions. Algerian-Sahel relations

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<sup>1</sup>- "Ministère des Affaires étrangères," the official website of the Ministère étrangères of Algeria, dated May 25, 2021, <http://www.mae.gov.dz/page.aspx.? Page - id=402>.

exhibit a pattern of inconsistency and discontinuity, largely stemming from Algeria's intermittent engagement with events in the region. This sporadic involvement tends to occur only in response to tangible threats, such as the conflict in Mali, which creates openings for foreign intervention. Meanwhile, Morocco seeks to capitalize on Algeria's absence, particularly given indications of Moroccan involvement in sensitive security issues that directly impact Algerian national security.

Furthermore, Algeria has yet to fully leverage its economic potential in its relations with countries in the African Sahel region. This shortfall in economic cooperation can be attributed to Algeria's limited engagement with the region beyond security concerns.

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