

ALGERIA

SOCIAL PROTEST

STARTING DATE: 22 FEBRUARY 2019

TRIGGER • Attempt by incumbent president Abdel Aziz Bouteflika to run for a fifth consecutive term.

GOALS

- Free elections.
- Independent government freed from all ties with the ruling Bouteflika clan.
- End of corruption.
- Withdrawal of the army's influence in national politics.

STATE OF PLAY

- Bouteflika resigned from office in April and was replaced by interim president Abdelkader Bensalah. Fresh elections initially scheduled in early July are now due on 12th December.
- Despite parts of their demand being met, protesters continue to take to the streets every week on Tuesday (students) and Friday after prayer to demand a radical change in the country's governance and to oppose the upcoming polls, which they consider biased.
- The movement locally named "Hirak" is likely to extend at least until Election Day, mainly in Algiers, but also in Oran, Constantine and Ouargla, among others.
- Protests have been fairly peaceful so far and so has the authorities' response. However, recent arrests of an opposition leader and journalist accused of undermining the army's legitimacy are causing concern.

IMPACTS: LIMITED



- No death or serious injury.



- A general strike on 1 November brought economic activity to a standstill.



- Roads occasionally blocked in the vicinity of protests (ex: Algiers university, La Grande Poste...).



POTENTIAL TRIGGERS FOR ESCALATION

- Broader scale of protests.
- Hardening of the government's response (arrests of leaders, repression).
- Clashes between protesters and the army.
- Further postponement of the elections.
- Additional controversial measures discussed in parliament (namely a bill to reform the hydrocarbon industry).



POTENTIAL TRIGGERS FOR DE-ESCALATION

- Stepping down of the current cabinet.
- Drastic electoral reforms.
- Further reforms aimed at curbing corruption and holding officials involved accountable.