



**United States Department of State  
and the Broadcasting Board of Governors  
Office of Inspector General**

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## **Inspection of Embassy Algiers, Algeria**



*Embassy Algiers, Algeria*

The embassy is playing a major role in extremely important U.S.-Algerian counterterrorism cooperation which led to the dismantling of several networks moving fighters into Iraq and in the struggle against the newly emergent al-Qaida in the Islamic Maghreb.

The Algerian government's emphasis on rank and protocol, combined with the Ambassador's wide range of contacts, make the Ambassador's role in achieving the Department of State's counterterrorism objectives critical.

The Ambassador's designation for temporary assignments outside Algiers damages the U.S.'s ability to deal with the Algerian government at high levels on these important issues. Additionally, it makes it difficult to manage the high volume of important exchanges and events and stretches the embassy's capacity to manage internal issues.

Embassy Algiers has had considerable management problems, including significant management controls weaknesses caused by inexperienced American staff and, more recently, an inability to recruit and retain locally employed (LE) staff.

Management control lapses have occurred in procurement and property management, financial management, human resources, grants management, and the employee association. The Office of Inspector General team found no corrective action plans. Designations of duties have not been properly assigned.

Embassy Algiers has not been able to retain or adequately train its LE staff because its funding allocation has not been adequate to provide salaries commensurate with comparable employers. Without significant LE staff pay increases, improvements in operations will be difficult to achieve and impossible to maintain.

Embassy Algiers operates under a security threat that limits freedom of movement and prevents bringing school-aged family members to post. This, and the disruption of the ongoing construction project, adversely impacts morale.

The embassy moved to a new embassy compound in September 2007. The new complex will provide significantly better security.

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**OIG Report ISP-I-08-02A, Inspection of Embassy Algiers, Algeria**

The fieldwork for this report was conducted by the Office of Inspections in Algiers between June 15 and 28, 2007. This is an unclassified summary of a full report, which receives limited official distribution. Both the report summary and the full report reflect the conditions reviewed during the fieldwork.

## Background:

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Algeria is the second largest country on the African continent and roughly three-and-a-half-times the size of Texas. Algeria lies between Morocco and Tunisia, and it borders with Mauritania, Mali, Niger, and Libya along the south. It has a population of 33 million people, of whom three million reside in Algiers -- the country's capital and premier sea port. Algerians are 99 percent Sunni Muslim. Arabic is their official language, though French is widely spoken in government and business circles. About 15 percent of Algerians self-identify as Berbers and speak the Tamazight dialect.

The country's geography is a study of contrasts. A fertile coastal strip, which runs 50 miles inland and 950 miles east-to-west along the

Mediterranean, is the center of agricultural production. It also accounts for 70 percent of Algeria's population. Mountain ranges and a high plateau lie south of the coastal plain. Below that, some 200 miles inland, begins the vast Saharan desert, which comprises 90 percent of the country's land area and is home to some 1.5 million nomads.

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