01 **People**

Human trafficking in Algeria is a highly sophisticated criminal market that emerged in southern Algeria, particularly in Tamanrasset, and has since spread to northern cities such as Algiers, Oran and Annaba, among others. There is a high degree of external involvement in the human trafficking market, which is driven primarily by criminal networks originating in Niger, which is also the country of origin of most trafficking victims in Algeria. Algeria is a transit country for individuals travelling towards Europe, and extortion and other exploitative practices are common occurrences on migrants’ journeys. Labour standards and regulatory capacity in Algeria are poor, and therefore instances of exploitative and bonded labour are common and largely unremarked upon. Irregular migrants from sub-Saharan Africa are particularly vulnerable to exploitation. However, this tends to occur on an ad-hoc basis, or with local groups and businesses, rather than as a systematic form of transnational organized crime.

Human smuggling is a dynamic, long-standing but increasingly risky market in Algeria, a country that is both a destination and a transit country for irregular migrants. Over the past two years, increasing numbers of migrants have been making the sea crossing from coastal points in Algeria towards Spain. Human-smuggling networks operate along Algeria’s southern borders.The migrant smuggling hub of Tamanrasset,in particular,is an important transit site for migrants journeying towards Morocco and Libya, with migrants crossing from Mali and Niger. Border officials are known to collaborate in the illicit market, and despite harsh rhetoric and strict enforcement measures employed by the government, including the construction of a sand berm to counter human smuggling, this environment has empowered violent and specialized networks which operate across multiple routes in central Sahara. Algeria’s securitization efforts and crackdown on human smuggling generate greater opportunities for smuggling networks as the demand to reach Algeria remains high, despite a temporary slowdown during the COVID-19 pandemic.