



## History

Algeria forms part of what is known as the Maghreb – the western region of North Africa. Over the centuries it has been ruled by the Roman Empire, the Byzantine Empire, the Spanish, the Ottoman Empire and latterly the French. After more than a century of rule by France, Algeria gained independence in 1962.<sup>1</sup> Today it is a country with approximately 35 million citizens.

## Government

Algeria is a republic, with the incumbent president, Abdelaziz Bouteflika, having been in office since 1999. In 2008 the President amended the constitution to remove the two-term limit on the presidency, effectively allowing him to remain head of state for life.<sup>3</sup>

## Social Issues

In addition to poverty and unemployment, endemic government corruption and poor standards in public services are also chronic sources of popular dissatisfaction.<sup>3</sup> According to UNESCO's 2006 report on Literacy for Life, an average of 30.1% of Algeria's population is illiterate. This percentage rises to almost 40% when looking at the figures for the female population only.

## THE WAY TV Viewership

Surveys undertaken for the way TV in 2012 indicate that 1.8 million people had watched the channel in the previous 12 months.

### Religion

99% of the population is Sunni Muslim, 1% is Christian or Jewish.<sup>1</sup> Islam is the state religion, although the constitution provides for freedom of belief and practising one's religion. Since 2006 citizens have been permitted to change their religion on their ID card. Conversion is not illegal under civil law, and apostasy is not a criminal offence. However, converts to Christianity from a Muslim background face harassment and discrimination.

On a positive note, amongst the Kabylie and other Berber people, many are coming to Christ. Some churches have seen incredible growth over the last 20 years. In fact, so many are coming to Christ in remote areas that the Church is challenged with how to disciple these new believers.<sup>6</sup>

### Prayer Points

- Praise God for the many new believers. Pray they will be able to receive the discipleship they need.
- Pray for those who have been arrested or are being harassed for their faith. Ask God to give them the words to say and to be His witnesses in difficult circumstances.
- Ask God to protect Christians who meet in secret in their homes or in isolated locations.