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Politics

Algeria Accuses UAE, Israel of Conspiring with Morocco in Sahel and Western Sahara

A new report reveals escalating tensions between Algeria and the UAE over alleged conspiracies involving Morocco and Israel in the Sahel region and Western Sahara.

[Adil Faouzi](#) Mar. 17, 2024 1:56 p.m.



Moroccan flag in the Western Sahara



Sahara dispute, according to a [recent report](#) by risk analysis firm Menas Associates.

The report states that Algerian President Abdelmadjid Tebboune authorized Louisa Hanoune, leader of the Workers' Party, to hold a press conference in which she accused the UAE of attempting to infiltrate Algeria's state institutions and "pushing for war in the region" for the benefit of Israel. Hanoune claimed that the [UAE](#) is "collecting money to arm Morocco" and using investments in Algeria as a cover to further its alleged conspiracy.

"The UAE is dangerous, a threat to the stability of Algeria," the report quoted Hanoune arguing. She went on to suggest that Emirati-owned companies in Algeria, such as the National Company of Tobacco and Matches (SNTA), should "be nationalized in order to reduce the UAE's presence in the Algerian economy."

The accusations come amid growing discord between Algeria and Morocco over the Western Sahara dispute. Morocco maintains its legitimate right to sovereignty over the territory, which it considers an integral part of Moroccan territory. The country has proposed an autonomy plan for the region, which both the UN and the US have repeatedly [described as](#) "serious, credible, and realistic."

UAE has compromising files on Algeria's Sahel activities

But Algeria [continues to back](#) the Polisario Front, a Sahrawi separatist group that aims to establish an independent state in Western Sahara, thus undermining Morocco's territorial integrity and perpetuating the decades-long conflict in the region.

According to Menas Associates, the UAE's intelligence services possess evidence of Algeria's own destabilizing activities in the Sahel, particularly through Iyad ag Ghali, a Malian Tuareg leader of the Jama'at Nasr al-Islam wal Muslimin (JNIM) jihadist group.

The report suggests that ag Ghali has long been working with Algeria's intelligence agency, the Department of Intelligence and Security (DRS), to divide Tuareg tribes and undermine the Azawadian independence movement in northern Mali.

"The UAE is very well-informed on the old DRS' activities and, should the Malian situation deteriorate further, this information could be put to good use by Abu Dhabi against Algiers," the report warns.

The [escalating tensions](#) have led the UAE to compile a blacklist of Algerian individuals, including journalists, politicians, and former ministers, who are now banned from entering the Gulf country due to their lobbying efforts against Emirati interests. This has prevented several prominent Algerians from participating in international events hosted in Dubai and Abu Dhabi, further straining the relationship between the two countries.

According to the report, one of Algeria's key claims is that the UAE's support for Morocco and [Israel](#) is part of a broader conspiracy against Algerian interests. The report further suggests that around \$300 million, allegedly belonging to the family and associates of former Algerian President Abdelaziz Bouteflika, is hidden in Emirati banks and financial institutions.

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Algiers has repeatedly requested assistance from the UAE in identifying and repatriating these funds, claiming they were bribes paid by Emirati investors in exchange for economic and political advantages during Bouteflika's regime. However, the UAE has reportedly not responded favorably to these requests, further fueling Algeria's suspicions.

The report also highlights Algeria's growing concerns over the progress of the Nigeria-Morocco Gas Pipeline



reached with the various transit countries along the proposed route.

Algeria, which has been pushing for the alternative onshore Trans-Saharan Gas Pipeline (TSGP) project through Niger and Algeria, sees the NMGP as a direct threat to its interests. Algiers had previously thought it had thwarted the NMGP by offering to finance the entire TSGP project.

However, Nigeria’s apparent favoring of the offshore route, possibly due to the recent election of President Bola Tinubu, has caught Algeria off guard. In response, the Algerian presidency has reportedly asked South Africa to intervene on its behalf and persuade Nigeria to reconsider its support for the NMGP. Envoys are expected to arrive in Abuja in the coming days to discuss the matter and attempt to sway Nigeria’s leaders back towards the Algerian-backed TSGP project.

As the situation continues to deteriorate, the Menas Associates report indicates that Algeria has discretely approached Kuwait to act as a mediator in an attempt to de-escalate tensions with the UAE. However, with neither side seemingly willing to make concessions, the prospects for a resolution remain uncertain.

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