

Food Security in Algeria: Reality and Challenges

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Abstract:

Food security in Algeria is considered a fundamental pillar for rationalizing the national economy and enhancing its independence. The state seeks to reduce reliance on imports and orient economic policies toward supporting domestic production, particularly in the agricultural sector. This approach has been reflected through the adoption of development programs and modern strategies aimed at achieving structural balance in foreign trade and providing the necessary resources to boost agricultural production, thereby contributing to self-sufficiency and ensuring stability in food markets. Furthermore, agricultural development represents a key mechanism for economic rationalization by diversifying income sources and reducing pressure on foreign currency reserves.

However, achieving food security in Algeria faces several challenges that affect the effectiveness of these efforts. These include underutilization of production capacities, insufficient technical supervision and agricultural extension services, as well as weaknesses in management and organization, in addition to climate fluctuations. In this context, improving land productivity is essential, as it constitutes a key entry point for strengthening national production and rationalizing the economy, ultimately supporting sustainable food security and reducing dependency on external sources.

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introduction:

The concept of food security has received considerable attention since the convening of the 1943 Conference on Food and Agriculture, where it was emphasized that poverty and malnutrition are among the primary causes of hunger. Since then, food has become a central priority in global policy agendas for all states, given its direct connection to societal stability.

The importance of this concept increased significantly during the crisis of the 1970s, particularly following the World Food Conference of 1974, which underscored that hunger had become an alarming global reality. This was especially evident in developing countries, which faced growing difficulties in meeting their food needs due to rising food imports and their inability to counter the continuous deterioration of their food situations. Consequently, the need emerged to adopt collective visions and international strategies aimed at eradicating famine, contributing to the development of a modern understanding of food security as a strategic objective that states strive to achieve.¹

In light of the current global economic transformations and the challenges they generate—particularly for developing countries—growing attention is being devoted to achieving food security as one of the fundamental pillars of development and stability.

Algeria is among the countries facing difficulties in achieving food security. In recent years, this issue has attracted increasing attention due to the rising dependence on food imports from abroad. This reliance has exacerbated food dependency and rendered the

¹ - Al-Tayeb HACHEMI, *The Impact of the Global Food Crisis and Its Repercussions on Food Security Conditions in Arab Countries*, Journal of the History of Sciences, Vol. 3, No. 6, 2017, pp. 219–234.

Food Security in Algeria: Reality and Challenges

national economy vulnerable to fluctuations in global markets, thereby posing a significant challenge to the attainment of economic stability.¹

Food security in Algeria constitutes a fundamental pillar for rationalizing the national economy and enhancing its independence. In this context, the state seeks to reduce reliance on imports and to orient its economic policies toward supporting domestic production, particularly within the agricultural sector. This approach has been reflected in the adoption of development programs and modern strategies aimed at achieving a structural balance in foreign trade and providing the necessary resources to advance agricultural production, thereby contributing to the attainment of self-sufficiency and ensuring the stability of the food market.

Moreover, the development of the agricultural sector represents one of the most important instruments for economic rationalization, through the diversification of income sources and the reduction of pressure on foreign exchange reserves.²

Despite these efforts, Algeria continues to face difficulties in achieving food security. Demand for food products has been steadily increasing, thereby imposing growing challenges on the national economy and maintaining a degree of dependence on external markets, which may, in turn, affect the country's economic and sovereign stability. This situation can be attributed to a set of factors, most notably the rise in domestic consumption driven by population growth, as well as the limited effectiveness of agricultural policies adopted since independence in achieving their intended objectives.³

Building on the foregoing, the following research problem may be formulated: What are the main challenges facing Algeria in

¹ - Narimane DAHDOUH and Sadek HADI, *Food Security in Algeria: Between the Challenges of Domestic Production and Fluctuations in Food Supply Chains*, Journal of Economic and Financial Studies, Vol. 18, December 2025, pp. 377–394.

² - Abdellah ACHOURI, *Food Security in Algeria and the Challenges of Its Achievement*, Journal of Law, Society and Authority, Vol. 13, No. 1, 2024, pp. 329–345.

³ - Abdellah ACHOURI, *Idem*, pp. 329–345.

achieving food security, and how can they be overcome within the framework of effective policies aimed at rationalizing the national economy and enhancing its independence?

This study aims to analyze the state of food security in Algeria through a precise diagnosis of the factors and causes that have hindered—and continue to hinder—the achievement of food self-sufficiency, despite the country's considerable natural potential and its substantial financial and human resources. It also seeks to propose a set of practical recommendations and solutions that could contribute to improving the food situation and reducing dependence on external sources, particularly in light of Algeria's reliance on global markets to meet a significant portion of its food needs.

The importance of this topic is further heightened within an international context characterized by rising food prices and disruptions in global supply chains due to multiple crises, such as health crises like the COVID-19 pandemic, international conflicts such as the Russia-Ukraine War, as well as global population growth accompanied by increasing demand for food, in addition to the impacts of climate change and other natural factors.

To address this topic from its various dimensions, the study adopts a descriptive-analytical approach, which enables an accurate diagnosis and analysis of the reality of food security in Algeria, while highlighting the main challenges and factors that hinder its achievement, thereby allowing for the formulation of a comprehensive scientific perspective to address this issue.

Accordingly, this article will address, in its first section, the concept of food security in terms of its definition and various dimensions, while the second section will be devoted to examining the state of food security in Algeria through an analysis of the adopted strategies and the challenges it faces.

Section I: The Conceptual Framework of Food Security

The concept of food security has undergone significant development over time. It is no longer limited to the mere availability of sufficient quantities of food; rather, it now also encompasses food

Food Security in Algeria: Reality and Challenges

safety and quality, ensuring that food is fit for consumption and does not pose a risk to human health. Furthermore, the concept includes the availability of food products in markets in the required quantities and varieties, at prices that are commensurate with the purchasing power of citizens.¹

A) Definition of Food Security

The Food and Agriculture Organization defines food security as a condition that is achieved when all individuals, at all times, have physical, social, and economic access to sufficient, safe, and nutritious food that meets their dietary needs and preferences, and ensures an active and healthy life.

Food security has also been defined, according to the outcomes of the World Food Summit 1996, as a state in which all people, at all times, have both physical and economic access to adequate, safe, and nutritious food that satisfies their dietary needs and requirements, thereby enabling them to live a healthy and active life.

The Algerian legislator defines food security in accordance with the provisions of Law No. 08–16 relating to agricultural orientation². Article 3 of this law stipulates that: “Food security is the easy and regular access of every individual to sufficient and safe food that enables them to lead an active life.”

Accordingly, in its terminological sense, food security refers to the provision of adequate, safe, and healthy food in a manner that ensures the ability to live an active and healthy life.³

¹ - SALEHI Saleh, *The Strategy for Achieving Sustainable Food Security in the Algerian Economy: Algeria Vision 2050*, International Virtual Conference on the Role of Industrial Zones in Achieving Participatory Food Security in the Context of the Transition to a Green Economy, Faculty of Economic, Commercial and Management Sciences, University of Mohamed El Bachir El Ibrahimi, 2022.

² - Law No. 08–16 on Agricultural Orientation, dated 3 August 2008, *Official Gazette No. 46*, issued on 10 August 2008.

³ - Mohamed Habib BOUGTAIF and Karim HARZALLAH, *Achieving Food Security in Accordance with the Continuity of the Agricultural Holdings System in*

B) Dimensions of Food Security

The concept of food security is composed of four interrelated main dimensions, each reflecting a fundamental aspect of ensuring food availability and sustainability. The first dimension is the physical availability of food, which is linked to the supply side and is determined by the level of domestic food production, the volume of available stocks, as well as net food trade, including imports and exports.¹

The second dimension relates to physical and economic access to food, which necessitates that policies and programs—both at the national and international levels—give due consideration to factors such as income and expenditure, as well as market conditions and price levels, in order to ensure individuals' ability to obtain their food needs.

The third dimension concerns food utilization, that is, the body's ability to absorb and effectively use nutrients, which contributes to improving the health and nutritional status of individuals within society.

The fourth dimension is associated with the stability and continuity of access to food, whereby such availability must be regular and sustainable over time, without interruption, and protected from the adverse effects of various factors, such as climate change and political, economic, and social crises, which may threaten the achievement of food security.

Accordingly, food security is not limited to the mere availability of food; rather, it extends to encompass ease of access, continuity, and quality, in a manner that ensures the fulfillment of individuals' basic nutritional needs. It also emphasizes the human and functional dimension of food, by linking it to the ability to lead an active and

Algerian Legislation, Journal of the Circle of Legal and Political Research and Studies, Vol. 6, No. 1, 2022, pp. 224–251.

¹ - Ahmed MELLAL and Abdelkader DERBAL, *Arab Economic Cooperation and the Foundations of Agricultural Integration for Achieving Food Security in Arab Countries*, Journal of North African Economies, Vol. 18, No. 28, 2022, pp. 1–20.

Food Security in Algeria: Reality and Challenges

healthy life. This reflects the adoption of a modern concept of food security grounded in sustainability and human dignity, rather than solely in quantitative sufficiency.

Section II: Food Security in Algeria: Strategy and Challenges

The strategy for achieving food security in Algeria constitutes a central within national development orientations, given its close connection to economic sovereignty and social stability. In light of the growing challenges imposed by population growth, climate change, and fluctuations in global markets, it has become imperative to adopt a comprehensive strategic vision based on the valorization of national resources, the strengthening of agricultural production, and the improvement of water-use efficiency, alongside the development of agricultural management and planning mechanisms.

This strategy also aims to strike a balance between present needs and the rights of future generations, through the adoption of sustainable approaches that ensure both the availability and quality of food, while reducing external dependency. Such efforts contribute to enhancing Algeria's position within the regional and international economic system.

A)The Importance and Justifications for Adopting a Sustainable Food Security Strategy

Algeria experienced a severe financial and economic crisis in the mid-1990s, which compelled it to restructure its economy and adopt a series of stringent social measures under the guidance of international financial institutions. Since that period, growing attention has been devoted to the concept of food security, particularly following the gradual abandonment of the notion of self-sufficiency as a political slogan that had prevailed in the post-independence era.

At its initial stage, Algeria's adoption of the concept of food security was closely linked to the orientations of international organizations, especially within the framework of cooperation with United Nations bodies. Attention to food safety also emerged in the

context of efforts to accede to the World Trade Organization and to conclude free trade agreements with the European Union.

In this context, official discourse on issues such as poverty, marginalization, and hunger in Algeria became more prominent with the convening of the first National Conference on Poverty and Social Exclusion in 2000, during which the concept of food security was addressed for the first time, highlighting the impact of deteriorating food conditions on workers' productive capacities and on social conditions, such as school marginalization.

The Algerian legislator has enshrined this concept through Law No. 08–16 relating to agricultural orientation, wherein Article 3 defines food security as ensuring that every individual has easy and regular access to sufficient and safe food that enables them to lead an active life.

In this context, efforts in Algeria, through the Agricultural Orientation Law, aim to determine the national policy directions in this field, which contribute to improving the country's food security while enhancing its economic, environmental, and social functions. This is pursued by encouraging a greater contribution of the agricultural sector to economic development, as well as to the sustainable development of agriculture in particular. It also entails the adoption of a sustainable approach to food security through the development of the agricultural sector in a manner that ensures its economic viability, social relevance, and environmental sustainability, with the ultimate objective of reducing food dependency.¹

Furthermore, the Agricultural Orientation Law emphasizes that one of its fundamental objectives is to improve the level of food security². This can be achieved through ensuring a well-regulated development of organizational frameworks and support mechanisms governing the agricultural sector, with the aim of preserving its

¹-Article 1 of Law No. 08–16 on Agricultural Orientation

²-Article 2 of the same Law

Food Security in Algeria: Reality and Challenges

productive capacities and enabling increases in productivity and competitiveness. This is to be accomplished while ensuring the protection of agricultural land, preserving the specific characteristics of local agriculture, adopting production systems that maintain soil fertility and limit land degradation, and promoting the rational use of water resources,¹ particularly irrigation water.

Accordingly, it becomes evident that Algeria seeks to move beyond the traditional concept of food security toward the achievement of sustainable food security, which integrates economic, social, and environmental dimensions. This approach is also linked to the concept of food sovereignty, based on protecting domestic production and strengthening the independence of national food decision-making.

The strategy for achieving sustainable food security is founded on a set of integrated and interrelated levels that work collectively to attain this vital objective. The first level consists of enhancing food production capacities, particularly for products that experience deficits, through the expansion of cultivated areas, the improvement of land productivity, and the adoption of modern agricultural technologies. This contributes to reducing the food gap and achieving a higher degree of self-sufficiency, while ensuring the protection of plant and animal resources by preserving and improving their health, as well as enhancing food safety for products of both animal and plant origin.²

The second level relates to the promotion of investment, particularly through the involvement of the private sector in the implementation of major projects in both agriculture and the agri-food industries. This includes encouraging investment across production, processing, and storage value chains, as well as providing a conducive

¹-For further details, see Ali BEN NASSER, *Youth Attitudes toward Agricultural Work in a Rural Society*, Journal of Social Studies and Research, No. 11, June 2015, pp. 17–35.

²-See the text of Article 34 of Law No. 08–16 on Agricultural Orientation.

business environment. Such measures contribute to enhancing the added value of agricultural products, creating employment opportunities, and fostering economic development.¹

The third level consists of enhancing the management and governance system within the agricultural sector by developing public policies, strengthening coordination among various stakeholders, and modernizing the legal and regulatory framework in a manner that aligns with sustainability requirements.² This level also encompasses the support of scientific research and agricultural innovation, as well as the intensification of training and extension programs for the benefit of farmers.³

A fourth level is reflected in the rationalization of natural resource use, particularly water and soil, through the adoption of modern irrigation techniques, combating desertification, and preserving biodiversity, thereby ensuring the sustainability of agricultural production in the face of climate change.

A fifth level is embodied in strengthening the social dimension of food security by improving citizens' purchasing power, ensuring equitable food distribution, and reducing food loss and waste, in

¹-This approach is further reinforced by the new Investment Law, *Law No. 22-18 of 24 July 2022, Official Gazette No. 50, issued on 28 July 2022.*

²- The legal framework governing the exploitation of agricultural lands belonging to the State's private domain has been updated to enhance productivity. Notably, Law No. 10-03 of 15 August 2010 defines the conditions and modalities for the use of agricultural lands within the State's private property, as published in Official Gazette No. 46, dated 18 August 2010.

³-Agricultural extension programs are considered strategic mechanisms for the development of the agricultural sector. They aim to strengthen farmers' capacities, facilitate the transfer of modern technologies, and improve productivity, with a particular emphasis on sustainability and innovation. These programs include farmer field schools, technical awareness campaigns, and water resource management initiatives, and are implemented by specialized institutions such as the National Institute for Agricultural Extension (INVA).

Food Security in Algeria: Reality and Challenges

addition to raising nutritional awareness and promoting sustainable consumption patterns.

Taken together, these levels form an integrated and comprehensive framework aimed at achieving sustainable and balanced food security in Algeria.

B)Algeria's National Policy for Achieving Food Security and Strengthening Food Systems in Light of Current Challenges

The President of the Republic affirmed, in a speech delivered on his behalf by the Minister of Foreign Trade and Export Promotion, Mr. Kamal Rezig, during the second edition of the United Nations Food Systems Summit Stocktaking Moment, that Algeria has adopted a set of strategies and policies aimed at achieving food security and strengthening self-sufficiency in agricultural and livestock products. These efforts take into account climatic, health, and economic dimensions, with a view to building resilient, sustainable, and inclusive food systems.

He further explained that Algeria has developed a national roadmap for the sustainable transformation of food systems, aligned with the United Nations Secretary-General's 2023 call to action. This roadmap is implemented through the reinforcement of institutional governance and the involvement of various relevant ministerial sectors, within a participatory approach that includes national stakeholders, non-governmental organizations, professionals, as well as researchers and academics, while placing particular emphasis on youth and women.¹

In the context of supporting food security, he highlighted the strengthening of strategic sectors, foremost among them cereal cultivation, through the adoption of incentive measures and the expansion of storage and cooling capacities aimed at stabilizing prices and reducing waste. This has been concretely reflected in the

¹ -Algeria has adopted several strategies to achieve food security and to address the effects of climate change, available at: [Embassy of Algeria in Moscow](#).

construction of 30 storage silos, each with a capacity of 100,000 tons, as well as the establishment of 350 local storage centers with a capacity of 5,000 tons each. In addition, cooling capacities have been enhanced through the development of small and medium-sized cold storage facilities and the provision of incentives for investors in this field.

Algeria also places significant emphasis on the development of desert agriculture, with 400,000 hectares of agricultural land allocated and a target of reaching one million hectares by 2025. This initiative represents an important step toward addressing environmental challenges and harnessing the available potential in desert regions.¹

In response to the impacts of climate change, Algeria has adopted a strategy centered on strengthening water resources through the implementation of water transfer projects from surplus regions to deficit areas, as well as the construction of dams. In addition, the country has increasingly relied on non-conventional resources, such as seawater desalination, with five major plants having been brought into operation.²

This approach also encompasses the development of wastewater treatment projects and the widespread adoption of water-saving irrigation techniques, which currently cover approximately 60% of irrigated land. In addition, the Green Dam project has been expanded to include hundreds of thousands of hectares, alongside the launch of afforestation and forest rehabilitation initiatives, with the aim of

¹-Mohamed BENYABA, Belkacem MIMOUNI, and Aboud MILOUD, "Desert Agriculture as a Gateway to Sustainable Agricultural Development in Algeria: The Case of Adrar Province," *Journal of Arsad for Economic and Administrative Studies*, Vol. 4, No. 1, June 2021, pp. 139–150.

²-For further detail, see: Abdelhamid EL HAMZA, *The Role of Integrated Water Resources Management in Achieving Sustainable Agricultural Development*, Doctoral Thesis in Sciences, Larbi Ben M'hidi University, 2018.

Food Security in Algeria: Reality and Challenges

enhancing environmental sustainability and combating desertification.¹

These measures have contributed to improving the agricultural investment climate by facilitating access to agricultural land, particularly in desert regions, and by providing support in the areas of seeds and irrigation technologies. They have also been accompanied by administrative facilitation in obtaining permits and financing, through entrepreneurship support schemes and microcredit mechanisms. Furthermore, international partnerships have been established with foreign institutions, particularly in strategic production chains such as cereals and dairy.

Within the framework of its regional and international commitments, Algeria has reaffirmed its determination to pursue efforts toward achieving sustainable development across the African continent. This is reflected in its support for initiatives aimed at strengthening food systems and improving supply chains, notably through the completion of the Trans-Saharan Highway and the opening of new maritime routes with several African countries.

Algeria has also demonstrated a significant role in strengthening regional cooperation by supporting neighboring countries in combating desert locust infestations, through the provision of equipment and pesticides, as well as facilitating the mobility of specialized teams. This reflects its commitment to contributing to the achievement of food security at both the national and international levels.²

C) Challenges to Achieving Food Security in Algeria

Algeria's adoption of a food security strategy is grounded in a set of fundamental justifications that reflect the scale of the challenges it faces in this field. Foremost among these is the growing demand for

¹-Tahar MOUSSAIDIA and Tayeb EL OUAIFI, "The Reality and Future of Water Security in Algeria," *Journal of Human Sciences, University of Oum El Bouaghi*, Vol. 9, No. 1, March 2022.

²-For further detail, see: AZZAWI Ammar, *Agricultural Development Strategy in Light of Global Economic Changes*, Doctoral Thesis, Faculty of Economic Sciences and Management Sciences, University of Algiers, 2005.

food resulting from continuous population growth. This growth affects demand from multiple dimensions, both quantitatively—through the increase in population size—and qualitatively, in relation to levels of education and productive efficiency. It also entails a distributive dimension driven by internal migration from rural to urban areas, which in turn exerts additional pressure on food resources.

Moreover, the water resource crisis constitutes one of the most pressing challenges. Algeria faces significant constraints in water availability due to its climatic conditions, characterized by arid and semi-arid environments, leading to low precipitation rates. This occurs at a time when water demand is steadily increasing as a result of population growth and the expansion of economic activities.¹

These challenges have become increasingly complex due to the climate changes experienced in Algeria in recent years. A decline in rainfall has been observed, particularly during critical agricultural periods, accompanied by rising temperatures. This exacerbates the greenhouse effect and negatively impacts agricultural production.²

On the other hand, food loss and waste constitute a growing concern, as Algeria records significant levels of food wastage, particularly at the household level. This negatively affects the achievement of food security and further widens the food gap.

Conclusion

At the conclusion of this study, it becomes evident that the paramount importance accorded by Algeria to achieving sustainable food security constitutes both a strategic choice and a central political priority. This endeavor requires the integration and coordination of efforts across all economic, social, and environmental levels. The study highlights that Algeria possesses significant natural and human

¹ - Hassina DAKHANE and Soumaya HADJI, "The Impact of Climate Change on Water Resources: Challenges and Solutions," *Malek Bennabi Journal for Research and Studies*, Vol. 5, No. 1, 2023, pp. 39–51.

² - Mohamed ACHACHI, "Climate Change and Its Effects on Development in Algeria," *Journal of Intellectual Dialogue*, Vol. 11, No. 12, 2016, pp. 232–264.

Food Security in Algeria: Reality and Challenges

resources that qualify it to attain food self-sufficiency, and even to move beyond this objective toward playing a regional and international role as a food supplier. However, the achievement of this goal remains contingent upon the State's ability to overcome a set of key challenges, foremost among them climate change, the effective management of natural resources, and the stability and efficiency of agricultural policies.

At the same time, Algeria has undertaken several positive steps to strengthen its food security, including the expansion of agricultural land—particularly in southern regions—the support of domestic cereal production, and the promotion of investment in the agricultural sector. These efforts are complemented by the development of irrigation programs, the improvement of water management systems, and the enhancement of storage capacities, as well as the implementation of national strategies aimed at progressively achieving self-sufficiency.

The findings further indicate that Algeria is endowed with substantial natural resources, including vast agricultural areas, especially in the southern regions, which can be rehabilitated and more effectively exploited. In addition, the national economy is characterized by the diversity of its resources, which enhances its capacity to support the achievement of sustainable food security and to restore its historical role as a food-producing region at both the regional and international levels. Despite the relative scarcity of water resources, there remain promising opportunities to leverage modern technologies to optimize their use and improve their efficiency.

Conversely, Algeria faces increasing challenges resulting from climate change, such as desertification, drought, and water scarcity, all of which directly affect agricultural production. The issue of unsustainable exploitation of natural resources also emerges as a major concern, necessitating the adoption of more rational and effective policies in this field. In this context, the adoption of smart agriculture based on modern technologies—such as drip irrigation systems, the use of renewable energy, and agricultural data

analytics—represents one of the most prominent solutions capable of enhancing productivity and improving agricultural performance.

On the other hand, the involvement of local communities in planning and implementation processes, along with the strengthening of cooperation with regional and international partners, constitutes a key factor in benefiting from available expertise and technical and financial resources. If agricultural and water resources are managed sustainably, Algeria has the potential not only to achieve food self-sufficiency but also to export surplus production, thereby reinforcing its position at the regional and potentially international levels.

Accordingly, achieving sustainable food security in Algeria by the 2030 horizon remains attainable; however, it requires the adoption of innovative strategies, the strengthening of governance, and the efficient utilization of available resources, in a manner that ensures sustainable development and restores Algeria's economic role.

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Zineb AHLOUCHE

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