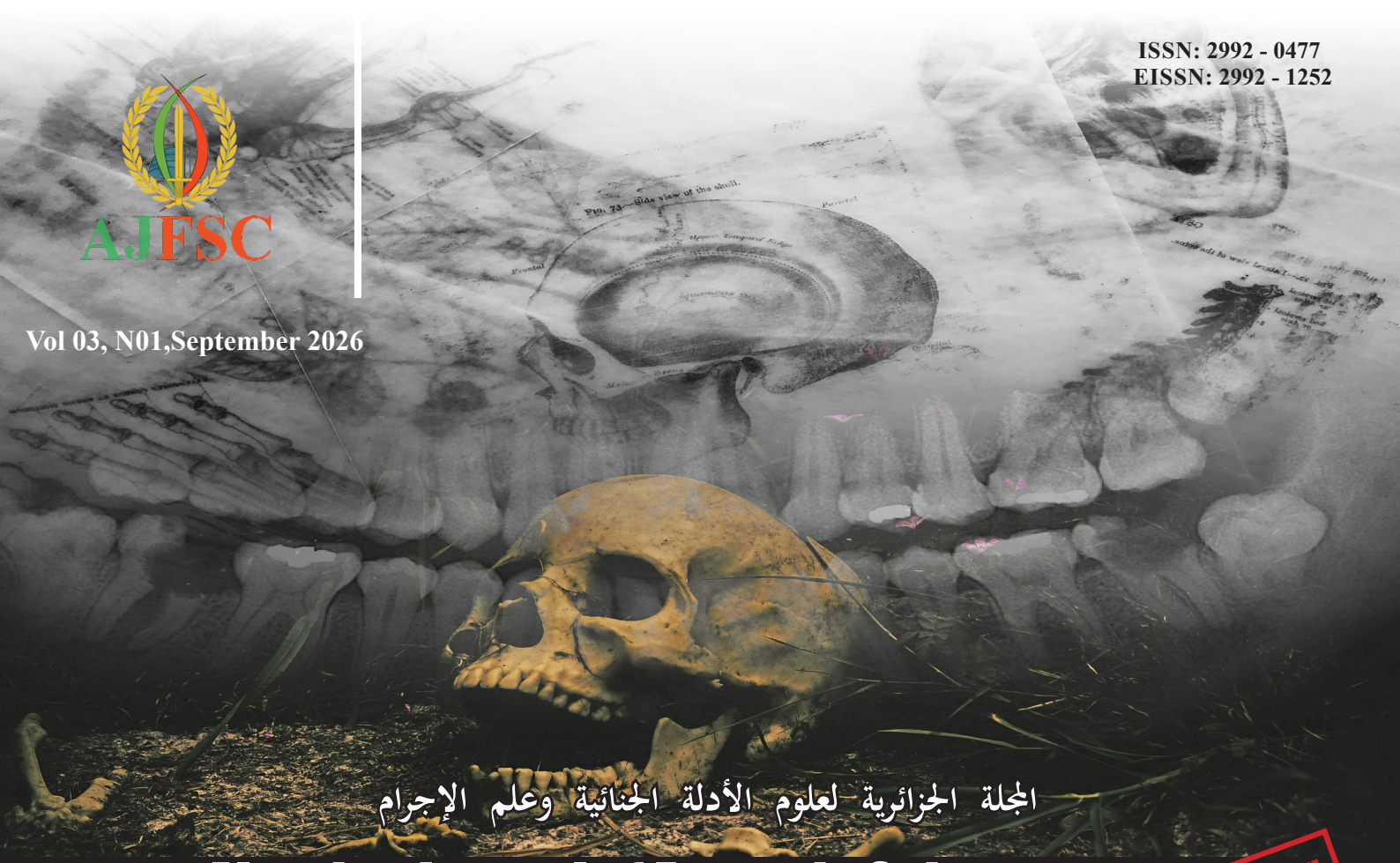
ISSN: 2992 - 0477
EISSN: 2992 - 1252

AJFSC

Vol 03, N01,September 2026



المجلة الجزائرية لعلوم الأدلة الجنائية وعلم الإجرام

Algerian Journal of Forensic Sciences and Criminology– AJFSC

SPECIAL ISSUE



AJFSC

https://asjp.cerist.dz/en/PresentationRevue/949

EDITED BY THE NATIONAL INSTITUTE OF CRIMINALISTICS AND CRIMINOLOGY OF THE NATIONAL GENDARMERIE - BOUCHAOUI - ALGIERS

ISSN: 2992 - 0477
EISSN: 2992 - 1252

Algerian Journal of Forensic Sciences and Criminology– AJFSC

AJFSC



Annual Journal Edited by the National Institute of Criminalistics and Criminology of the National Gendarmerie
(INCC/GN)

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Printing:
Printing and Publishing Center of the National Gendarmerie

CONTENTS

EDITORIAL

Forensic Geochemistry of Bone: A Multimodal Analytical Framework for Environmental Reconstruction and PMI Estimation,... *I. Amara, N. Bouarouri, B. Rahmani, A. Teboul, C. Bisker, A. Toubal, A. Boulasname, D. Boussalah, L. Boudarene* 01

Accuracy of the Greater Sciatic Notch in sex assessment in Algerian population sample, ...*M.Y. Guellati, T. Rafai, M. Boutemdjet, A. Boudaba, R. Boughazi, A.Chibani, S. Alleg, A. Lahouel, A. Grait, C. Bisker, A. Atrouz.* 09

3D Digitization and Digital Anthropometric Measurement of Skeletal Remains in Forensic Anthropology..... *Y. Khelidj, C. Bisker, L. Bourabia and M. L.Benseddik* 12

Bone Age Assessment: Methods and Diagnostic Value... *Y. Moussaoui, F. Khelfat* 17

Raman Spectroscopy in Forensic Science and Anthropology: Current Applications and Emerging Perspectives..... *F. Dergal*..... 22

Preliminary Algerian reference data for age-at-death estimation using the pubic symphysis: a virtual CT-based sample study..... *T.Rafai, M. Y. Guellati, A.Chibani, M.Ali Taleb, R.Boughazi, S.Alleg*..... 32

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EDITORIAL

Forensic Anthropology in Algeria: A Scientific Foundation for Justice

This special issue of the Algerian Journal of Forensic Sciences and Criminology presents a selection of contributions from the 2nd National Conference on Forensic Anthropology, held on April 16th, 2026 — Algeria's National Day of Science — at the National Institute of Criminalistics and Criminology of the National Gendarmerie. With over 130 participants from various institutions —anthropologists, odontologists, geneticists, archaeologists, forensic physicians, crime scene technicians, judges, and researchers — the conference marked a decisive milestone in the development of the discipline in Algeria.

The richness of this gathering is reflected in the breadth of contributions. Classical biological profiling methods were rigorously evaluated against Algerian population data, revealing that population-specific reference standards are not a luxury but a necessity. Emerging technologies — Raman spectroscopy, geochemical analysis, and three-dimensional digitisation — demonstrated the potential for non-destructive screening, environmental reconstruction, and enhanced precision. A dedicated legal session examined the magistrate's role in defining the expert's mission and the judiciary's reliance on scientifically validated evidence. Another addressed the interface between forensic anthropology and international humanitarian law, underscoring the discipline's central role in documenting human rights violations and restoring dignity to victims of conflict.

The conference also served as a platform for institutional reflection. The Forensic Anthropology Laboratory of the NICC/GN — the first Algerian laboratory accredited in forensic anthropology under ISO 17020 — presented its quality management system, validated methods, and commitment to international benchmarking. The message was clear: Algeria is not merely adopting foreign standards but actively generating its own scientific foundation.

Three priorities emerge for the path ahead: the expansion of Algerian reference databases; the integration of artificial intelligence to reduce observer bias; and the development of consensus protocols ensuring methodological rigour and courtroom admissibility.

On this day that celebrates science, we recognise that forensic anthropology applies rigorous methods to the solemn task of identifying the dead and restoring dignity to the living who mourn them. Behind every bone fragment, every spectral signature, every measurement lies a human story — a life interrupted, a family seeking answers, a community demanding justice. Forensic anthropology in Algeria has come of age — and this special issue is both a testament to that maturity and a mandate to build upon it.

The AJFSC Editors.