# Gérard Larcher’s dual role strains France-Algeria ties while bolstering support for Morocco



Gérard Larcher, President of the French Senate, has recently become a central figure in diplomatic developments that have significantly impacted relations between France, Algeria, and Morocco. His involvement in two prominent issues—the imprisonment of Franco-Algerian writer Boualem Sansal and his high-profile visit to Laâyoune in Western Sahara—has amplified tensions with Algeria while reinforcing France's support for Morocco.

Boualem Sansal, a French-Algerian author known for his outspoken criticism of Islamism, was sentenced in Algeria to five years in prison following what international observers widely condemned as an unfair trial. The proceedings reportedly lasted only 20 minutes and denied Sansal the right to be represented by his lawyer of choice. Sansal, aged 75 and suffering from advanced cancer, has become the focus of concern across the French political spectrum. Criticism of the sentence was expressed by figures ranging from far-right politician Marine Le Pen to far-left deputy Mathilde Panot. French President Emmanuel Macron also publicly called for a "humane and humanitarian" resolution, urging Algerian authorities to release Sansal. While Gérard Larcher was not directly involved in the judicial proceedings, his leadership role as President of the French Senate contributes to the heightened diplomatic pressure on Algeria concerning human rights and freedom of expression issues.

In a separate but equally contentious move, Larcher led the highest-level French parliamentary delegation ever to visit Laâyoune, the largest city in Western Sahara. This visit marked a visible endorsement of Morocco’s autonomy plan for Western Sahara, effectively signalling French recognition of Moroccan sovereignty over the disputed territory. Larcher stated that this position on Western Sahara represents "a strategic choice adopted by the entire French state." The French government also announced plans to enhance its diplomatic and cultural presence in the region, including establishing a new branch of the Alliance Française in Laâyoune.

The visit provoked a strong response from Algeria, which supports the Polisario Front's claim to Western Sahara independence by suspending its relations with the French Senate. This move underscores the deepening divide between France and Algeria, juxtaposed against the strengthened Franco-Moroccan relationship.

These developments mirror broader geopolitical shifts in North Africa, revealing France's recalibrated alliances and policies toward the region. Gérard Larcher's activities in these matters highlight the complexities embedded in French foreign relations, as the country navigates its historical and contemporary ties with both Algeria and Morocco. The unfolding situations involving Boualem Sansal's imprisonment and the Western Sahara dispute are expected to continue influencing French diplomatic strategies and regional dynamics.

Source: [Noah Wire Services](https://www.noahwire.com)

## References

* <https://www.reuters.com/world/africa/algeria-jails-writer-sansal-5-years-france-regrets-sentence-2025-03-27/> - An Algerian court sentenced French-Algerian writer Boualem Sansal to five years in jail for undermining national unity, drawing an expression of 'regret' from France, which called for a swift and dignified end to the situation.
* <https://www.theguardian.com/books/2025/feb/28/macron-says-french-algerian-author-under-arbitrary-detention-in-algeria> - French President Emmanuel Macron has expressed concern over the detention and health of Franco-Algerian author Boualem Sansal, who has been held in Algeria since November.
* <https://www.watanserb.com/en/2025/02/26/algeria-suspends-ties-with-french-senate-over-gerard-larchers-visit-to-western-sahara/> - The Algerian upper house of parliament has suspended relations with its French counterpart, the Senate, following a visit by its speaker to Western Sahara, a territory that France recognises as part of Morocco.
* <https://www.watanserb.com/en/2025/02/26/algeria-suspends-ties-with-french-senate-over-gerard-larchers-visit-to-western-sahara/> - Algeria condemned the visit as an 'outright provocation.' 'The visit was irresponsible, provocative, and ostentatious,' the Algerian Senate said. In response, it decided to end all cooperation with the French Senate, including a parliamentary agreement signed in 2012.
* <https://www.reuters.com/world/frances-macron-says-concerned-about-health-author-sansal-detained-algeria-2025-02-28/> - French President Emmanuel Macron has expressed concern over the detention and health of Franco-Algerian author Boualem Sansal, who has been held in Algeria since November.
* <https://www.washingtontimes.com/news/2024/nov/28/algeria-facing-growing-calls-release-french-algeri/> - Human rights groups have decried the ongoing repression facing journalists, activists and writers. Amnesty International in September called it a 'brutal crackdown on human rights including the rights to freedom of expression, peaceful assembly and association.'
* <https://news.google.com/rss/articles/CBMiswFBVV95cUxOZTFINU9nVmlsdHpxRGlUYkZNUXZiZkllMVBXcUlhekNLZmV3RUhsTUxWaWdoQWJnYVpQdXZkWm5EWmNWb0Y4VVNCcHJ4T1lEajJQTURGUzNsVVphTmprSHllcWtKNElxekRHb2tFQ25KMTJIeWNwVnVfWGZ2Xzk3WU0yUkJQaVB3dHRPZjY5OVRCaHJEZV9jZVVNeUxmeXhHbXhJbVFtZVA3am51a2UyVnJCTQ?oc=5&hl=en-US&gl=US&ceid=US:en> - Please view link - unable to able to access data