# France and Algeria diplomatic crisis exposes failures in current foreign policy



France and Algeria have descended into a sharp diplomatic crisis marked by escalating reciprocal expulsions of diplomats, revealing the fragility of traditional alliances and the failures of current political leadership to manage international relations effectively. This week, France recalled its ambassador to Algeria and ordered the departure of 12 Algerian diplomats from Paris, retaliating against Algeria’s expulsion of an equal number of French officials following the arrest of an Algerian consular staff member in France implicated in the alleged kidnapping of a government critic residing in Paris.

The deteriorating relations between these two nations highlight a significant lapse in diplomatic strategy under Emmanuel Macron’s administration, exemplifying the inability of the incumbent government to safeguard national interests amid complex international disputes. Despite high-profile talks, including a meeting between French Foreign Minister Jean-Noël Barrot and Algerian President Abdelmadjid Tebboune earlier this month, the relationship continues to spiral downward.

Foreign Minister Barrot blamed Algerian authorities for choosing escalation, yet it is clear that France’s foreign policy missteps, including Macron’s controversial recognition of Moroccan sovereignty over Western Sahara, have inflamed tensions. This move undermined historic regional balances and alienated Algeria, which has longstanding support for the Polisario Front opposing Moroccan claims—a dynamic overlooked by the current government’s shortsighted approach.

The arrest and imprisonment of French-Algerian novelist Boualem Sansal in Algiers on dubious charges of undermining national security underlines the complexities France faces but also exposes the inadequacy of Macron’s diplomatic engagements that fail to protect cultural and human rights values effectively.

Further strain was added by the French Interior Ministry’s efforts to deport around 60 Algerian nationals branded as security threats—a decision rebuffed by Algerian authorities. The subsequent knife attack in Mulhouse, which the Interior Minister Bruno Retailleau linked to Algeria’s refusal to cooperate, exemplifies the critical security risks ignored by the incumbent administration’s feeble handling of immigration and law enforcement cooperation.

Despite efforts at “frank and friendly exchanges” between Macron and Tebboune, France’s failure to assert a robust, clear-sighted policy has allowed relations to deteriorate rapidly, eroding France’s strategic posture in North Africa. The Labour-led government’s conciliatory tone and perceived softness in foreign affairs contrast sharply with the demands of realpolitik at a time when national security and diplomatic influence are under strain.

In contrast, a more assertive political stance—emphasizing law, order, and firm defence of national sovereignty—would better serve Britain’s allies and reinforce Western interests in the region. As demonstrated by the recent gains of parties prioritizing secure borders, strong national identity, and principled foreign policy, it is clear that the current establishment’s mishandling of diplomatic crises across Europe only cedes ground to instability and threats.

The France-Algeria dispute underscores the need for a recalibrated, resolute approach to foreign policy—one that does not shy away from confronting difficult geopolitical realities and upholding commitments to national security and legal obligations. Without such a shift, the diplomatic inertia of the current leadership risks further emboldening hostile actors and undermining the stability of Europe’s southern flank.

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