



Algeria - Researched and compiled by the Refugee Documentation Centre of Ireland on Thursday 29 September 2016

Information on General Commander of the Police, Major General Abdelghani Hamel

El Watan in July 2010 points out that:

“Aged 55, from the [western] town of Sabra (Tlemcen), Major General Abdelghani Hamel has a total career of 37 years in the Gendarmerie Nationale. Holder of a degree in computer engineering and a master's degree in strategic studies and international relations, he has held some 10 positions within the gendarmerie, including chief of staff of the regional command of the 6th Military Region, chief of division of public security, regional commander of the 2nd Military Region, commander of the Border Guard Group, and commander of the Republican Guard, his latest post. He had the rank of lieutenant colonel in 2006 before being promoted to general in 2008 and major general two years later” (*El Watan* (8 July 2010) *Algeria's new police chief takes office*).

In October 2010 *Tout sur l'Algeri* states in a report that:

“Major General Hamel, 55, officially assumed his duties this past 7 July. He replaced Colonel Ali Tounsi, who was assassinated this past 25 February in his office. A Tlemcen native, Major General Hamel had been chief of the Republican Guard” (*Tout sur l'Algeri* (24 October 2010) *Algerian police chief says "safe" from terrorist attacks*).

A document issued in October 2010 by *El-Khabar* notes:

“Major-General Abdelghani Hamel, director general of national security, will supervise the inauguration of the new governorates security chiefs today at the Higher Police School, in Chateauneuf [district], Algiers. This follows the movement he has initiated, which included the pensioning off of three quarters of security officials in governorates, staff transfers and dismissals. National Security Chief Maj-Gen Abdelghani Hamel will commit the new heads of governorates security to implement a new road map he drafted since his appointment at the head of the police service last July, in replacement of the previous national security chief Ali Tounsi” (*El-Khabar* (24 October 2010) *Algerian police chief reportedly wants to promote, cleanse the force*).

A publication issued in February 2011 by *Echourouk El Youmi* notes that:

“Maj-Gen Abdelghani Hamel, the director-general of national security, has decided to set up anti-riot and sabotage units in each province of the 48 provinces of the republic as he has adopted within this context a series of transfers of officers from various pre-existing anti- riot units for the creation of new units, able to intervene whenever the need arises” (*Echourouk El Youmi* (8 February 2011) *Algeria deploys riot police across country – paper*).

In November 2011 an article issued by *El-Khabar* notes the:

“...director-general of National Security, Maj-Gen Abdelghani Hamel...” (El-Khabar (15 November 2011) *Algeria facilitates entry of Libyans via land border crossings*).

In June 2012 *Agence France Presse* notes in a document that:

“Algeria's police chief, General Abdelghani Hamel, told the El Khabar daily on Tuesday that "the terrorist threat remains in all regions of Algeria." “ (Agence France Presse (6 June 2012) *Algeria forces kill six Islamists in Kabylie: reports*).

A document issued in October 2014 by *Reuters* notes:

“About 300 Algerian police officers marched through Algiers on Tuesday in a rare public protest by security forces to show solidarity with a police demonstration over working conditions and riots in a southern city. Protests by public service employees are common in Algeria but security forces rarely take to the streets. The officers, from a riot unit, marched in their blue uniforms toward the downtown area of the capital...Police officers had already taken to the streets in the southern Algerian desert town of Ghardaia on Monday to demonstrate after clashes in the region between Arabs and Berbers. Riots broke out between the two communities near Ghardaia, with two people killed and businesses torched...Youths from the two communities threw stones and petrol bombs and also set fire to several businesses, according to APS and Algerian media reports. Several policemen were also injured. The area had been tense since police arrested a group of young men last week for suspected involvement in previous clashes. Ghadaia, around 600 km (370 miles) from Algiers, is home to both Arabs and the Mozabite Berber community, which speaks its own language and follows its own school of Islam. The area has often been the scene of clashes as Arabs and Mozabites compete over jobs, houses and land...National Police Chief Abdelghani Hamel visited the province on Monday in a bid to restore calm after hundreds of policemen staged a march in Ghardaia to protest against attacks on them by gangs of youths” (Reuters (14 October 2014) *Algerian police march in rare protest in capital*

A report issued in October 2014 by *Business Monitor Online* points out that:

On October 15, hundreds of policemen from an anti-riot unit staged a protest march through Algiers and called for the removal of General Abdelghani Hamel, the country's head of security forces” (Business Monitor Online (15 October 2014) *Risks To Stability Increasing Over The Decade*).

In November 2014 the *Carnegie Endowment for International Peace* notes in a report that:

“On October 13 and 14, police officers in Algeria's southern oasis city of Ghardaia went on strike to protest low salaries and nepotism—not just within their respective departments but throughout the Ministry of Interior. This came in the wake of increased civilian hostility against the police after two people were killed and a policeman injured in the latest of a series of clashes between the local Arab and Ibadi Berber communities. Although the police in Ghardaia resumed their work on October 14, their colleagues in Algiers have been demonstrating in solidarity. The same day, around 300 policemen marched and tried to reach the presidential palace where Bouteflika dwells. They called for the establishment of a police union and the removal from office of Director-General of National Security General Abdelghani Hamel, an ally of President Abdel Aziz Bouteflika, on allegations of corruption and the abuse of

power” (Carnegie Endowment for International Peace (14 November 2014) *Algeria’s Police Riots*).

A report issued in June 2015 by the *United States Department of State* reviewing events of the preceding year notes that:

“Throughout the year police dispersed unauthorized gatherings or prevented marching groups of protesters from protesting. Police typically dispersed protesters a few hours after a protest began and arrested and detained organizers for a few hours. On April 20, activists from the Movement for the Autonomy of Kabylie scheduled unauthorized marches in the provinces of Tizi Ouzou and Bejaia. Violent police clashes with the activists resulted in injuries to 75 police officers and 35 marchers. A video posted shortly afterward on YouTube publicized the violence. In response the DGSN director general, Major General Abdelghani Hamel, ordered an investigation into the allegedly unethical and unacceptable police behavior. Minister of the Interior Tayeb Belaiz affirmed the dismissal of five police officers for their participation in the confrontations” (United States Department of State (25 June 2015) *2014 Country Reports on Human Rights Practices – Algeria*).

This document also states that:

“On October 14, according to witnesses, approximately 300 police officers organized and marched from the base of El Hamiz to DGSN headquarters in Algiers to express their frustration with DGSN Director General Abdelghani Hamel and the denial of their request to form a police union. This occurred 24 hours after a police protest in the city of Ghardaia involving several hundred members of antiriot units that were deployed there since February and were protesting against their working conditions. While the government did not approve a police union, authorities responded that the government would provide for the representation of police at all levels of participatory commissions and bodies” (ibid).

In December 2015 *Al Jazeera* states:

“...Algeria's national security chief, Major-General Abdelghani Hamel...” (Al Jazeera (30 December 2015) *Algeria a 'symbolic target' for ISIL*).

In August 2016 *El-Khabar* notes that:

“The announcement on the establishment of a new security force affiliated with the police and specialising in precision security operations, including combating terrorism and freeing hostages, confirmed the wish of the decision-maker [singular as published] in Algeria or the director-general of National Security, Maj-Gen Abdelghani Hamel, to regain responsibility for combating terrorism in towns from the army” (El-Khabar (23 August 2016) *Algeria establishes new police anti-terrorism force*).

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This response was prepared after researching publicly accessible information currently available to the Refugee Documentation Centre within time constraints. This response is not and does not purport to be conclusive as to the merit of any particular claim to refugee status or asylum. Please read in full all documents referred to.

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