



## Algeria Rejects Joining Saudi-Led Terrorism Coalition

**OE Watch Commentary:** In late November, 40 countries involved in a Saudi-led counter-terrorism coalition formed in 2015 met in Riyadh to discuss terrorism. The coalition includes all Arab League countries except Algeria. The excerpted French-language article from *algeriepart.com* discusses Algeria's decision not to join. According to the Algerian Ministry of Foreign Affairs, the country will not become involved in conflicts that do not directly affect Algeria. This includes the Arab League's efforts to threaten Iran or Hizbollah in Lebanon.

Algeria said that it has its own fight against terrorism within the country and that it does not have an interest in fighting terrorism elsewhere. According to the article, a Saudi soldier who was interviewed by *France24* said that Saudi Arabia respects Algeria's decision because Algeria is a great power and should be treated as such. The article also states that Algeria's position became evident as early as 2015 when Saudi Arabia began its war in Yemen. At that time Algeria said that its soldiers would never die for a cause that does not concern Algeria. The article also attributes Algeria's policy to its view that Iranian presidents Khatami and Rouhani are modernists and that Hizbollah is a defense group against Israel.

The excerpted article shows that Algeria is maintaining neutrality in the ongoing crisis between Saudi Arabia and Iran. In addition, Algeria's position reflects the domestic focus of Algeria's foreign policy. Algeria's position may also have implications elsewhere in Africa. South of Algeria's borders in Mali, al-Qaeda affiliates continue to wage an insurgency. It is therefore unclear, even doubtful, if Algeria would intervene if the crisis in Mali continues to escalate and if part of the country again falls under the control of al-Qaeda and its allies. **End OE Watch Commentary (Zenn)**

*“Algiers refused to join the [Saudi-led] international coalition to fight terrorism. 40 countries met last Sunday in Riyadh. But without Algeria.”*

**Source:** “Conflicts régionaux: L’Algérie dit non à l’Arabie Saoudite (Regional conflicts: Algeria says no to Saudi Arabia),” *algeriepart.com*, 29 November 2017. <https://algeriepart.com/2017/11/29/conflicts-regionaux-lalgerie-dit-non-a-larabie-saoudite/>

*Attacking Iran and isolating Lebanese Hizbollah has been Saudi Arabia's idea for some time. All the countries in the region have responded except one: Algeria categorically refuses to be dragged into these expeditions.*

*While all the Arab League countries rushed to a meeting of Foreign Ministers to discuss “the situation in Lebanon” [Algeria's] absence could be explained by Algeria's desire not to interfere in conflicts that “do not affect it”. Algiers has excellent relations with Tehran since the arrival in power of the modernist presidents, Khatami and Rouhani, who has just started a second term as the head of his country.*

*These rejections add to the opposition of Algeria when Saudi Arabia decided, in 2015, to declare war on Yemen.*

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