



Elisabeth R. Myers  
Founder & CEO  
+1 917-294-3863  
[emyers@american.edu](mailto:emyers@american.edu)

**PUBLIC VERSION**

February 26, 2025

Pastor Paula White-Cain  
Director and Senior Advisor  
The White House Faith Office  
The White House  
1600 Pennsylvania Avenue NW  
Washington, D.C. 20500

**Re: Urgent Appeal for U.S. Action Against Algeria's Repression of Religious Freedom**

Dear Pastor White-Cain,

We, the undersigned coalition of pastors, rights defenders, NGOs, and congregants write to express our deep concern over the worsening repression of religious freedom in Algeria, especially among Christian Kabyles (Berbers). The Algerian government, under its notorious Article 87 bis, continues to criminalize peaceful religious activities, including Christian worship. This draconian provision, originally justified in 2021 as a “counterterrorism” measure, has been systematically weaponized to silence dissent and target minority faith communities. Today, every Evangelical church but one in Kabylia has been forcibly closed, leaving believers without places of worship and subject to harassment, intimidation, and legal persecution for practicing their faith.

The situation has reached a critical point. Churches that once served as vital centers for worship and community support have been shuttered under government orders, with no legal recourse for reopening. Pastors and congregants have faced arrests and prosecutions simply for gathering in private homes to pray. Converts from Islam, in particular, face severe discrimination, threats, and even imprisonment under vague accusations of “undermining state security.” This blatant violation of religious freedom directly contravenes Algeria’s obligations under international human rights treaties, including the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights, to which it is a signatory.

The U.S State Department has included Algeria on its Special Watch List since 2020.<sup>1</sup> In 2024, Open Doors listed Algeria as one of the [worst offenders](#) for Christian persecution, citing government surveillance, church closures, and legal threats against converts from Islam.

The U.S. State Department’s [2023 Country Report on International Religious Freedom](#) for Algeria focused on the case of Christian convert and human rights defender Slimane Bouhafs, president of the Saint Augustin steering committee that defends Christians and minorities in Algeria. He spent three years in prison after armed Algerian operatives kidnapped him from Tunisia in 2022 in violation of international law as he awaited refugee status there. Although released in September 2024, Bouhafs continues to be persecuted for his Christian faith, and on Friday, February 14, he launched an [urgent appeal](#) for help.

Given these alarming developments, we urge the Trump administration to take decisive action in defense of religious liberty. Specifically, we request that the U.S. government consider imposing targeted sanctions

---

<sup>1</sup> Under the International Religious Freedom Act (IRFA) of 1998, the President is required annually to review the status of religious freedom in every country in the world and designate each country the government of which has engaged in or tolerated “particularly severe violations of religious freedom” as a Country of Particular Concern (CPC). Such designations normally appear on the [Religious Freedom Designations](#) page on the State Department website, but that page is currently unavailable.

under the Global Magnitsky Act on Algerian officials responsible for these violations. Furthermore, we urge the State Department to designate Algeria as a Country of Particular Concern (CPC) under the International Religious Freedom Act and to press for immediate reforms that restore religious rights and reopen shuttered churches.

In addition to diplomatic and economic measures, we ask that the administration work with Congress to ensure that U.S. aid and trade agreements with Algeria are conditioned upon demonstrable improvements in religious freedom. Algeria's repression of its Christian minority is part of a broader pattern of escalating human rights abuses under its Zero Kabyle policy that cannot be ignored. If the Algerian government continues its campaign of persecution unchecked, it will embolden other regimes to suppress religious minorities with impunity.

The United States has long stood as a global advocate for religious freedom, and we believe it is imperative to uphold this commitment by holding Algeria accountable.

We appreciate the administration's defense of religious freedom and urge you to give priority to the dire situation that especially impacts the Kabyle people. We would welcome the opportunity to discuss this matter further and provide additional documentation of the persecution Evangelical Christians face under Algeria's repressive laws. Thank you for your leadership on this critical issue, and we look forward to your response.

Sincerely,

**THE CHRISTIAN KABYLE COALITION**



By Elisabeth R. Myers

**On behalf of The Christian Kabyle Coalition**

**NGOs:**

The Kabyle League for Human Rights (LKDH) (in exile in Paris)

Kabylie, Racines et Ailes ("Kabylia, Roots and Wings") (KRA) association (France)

The Red Aza (Kabyle equivalent to the Red Cross)

**Christian Pastors, Missionaries, and Congregants:**

**Identifying information has been REDACTED here to protect the safety of the individuals involved and their families.**