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The Role of the National Press in Addressing Diplomatic Crises between Algeria and France

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Abstract:

The national media plays a vital role in addressing diplomatic crises between Algeria and France. This role is manifested through several key functions, including shaping Algerian public opinion, reflecting and conveying the official positions of the state, analyzing the diplomatic crisis, supporting national sovereignty, and countering propaganda campaigns that seek to tarnish Algeria's image in international public opinion.

Keywords: Diplomacy, Diplomatic Crisis, National Media, Media Framing.

Introduction:

Relations between nations and societies are among the most important factors in building bridges of communication and mutual understanding. However, such relationships may sometimes be subject to diplomatic crises due to various and diverse reasons, potentially affecting bilateral relations between the two countries.

The diplomatic crisis between Algeria and France represents a significant subject for research, analysis, and study, given the recurring discussions surrounding the relationship between the two states. This relationship is complex, influenced by historical factors and intertwined with current challenges.

In this context, the role of the media emerges as a crucial component in the equation, serving a central function in the media coverage of diplomatic crises. This research paper seeks to explore how the national media in Algeria addresses the crisis between Algeria and France and what roles it is expected to play during such diplomatic tensions.

1. A Reading into the Concept of Diplomatic Crisis

This section addresses and discusses several key concepts, namely: diplomacy, crisis, diplomatic crisis, and the diplomatic crisis between Algeria and France, as outlined below:

A. Diplomacy:

Since ancient times, nations have established mutual relations that have evolved over time, eventually becoming rooted in principles that serve as the foundation for strengthening bonds of friendship and safeguarding shared interests. One of the clearest indicators of good relations between two states is the exchange of diplomatic representation. Diplomatic work is entrusted with the mission of maintaining this closeness and working to further develop it. In this context, numerous international treaties and agreements have laid out the frameworks governing how states interact with one another.¹

Upon examining the concept of diplomacy, it can be understood as a set of systems and methods used to manage relations and communications among states that are part of the international community. The term "diplomacy" originates from the Latin word *diploma*, meaning "official document," which itself is derived from the Greek word *δίπλωμα*, referring to a folded paper or document.²

¹ Noor Gargash Academy, *Diplomacy and International Relations*, <https://www.agda.ac.ae/ar/executive-training>, Accessed on May 22, 2025, at 06:00 AM.

² Wikipedia, *Diplomacy*, <https://ar.wikipedia.org/wiki/ديبلوماسية>, Accessed on May 22, 2025, at 07:20 AM.

Among the divergent interests of states, diplomacy operates through procedures that include negotiations, meetings, international conferences, as well as the conclusion of agreements and treaties.³

Researcher Khaled Bechkit, on the other hand, considers diplomacy to be viewed from multiple perspectives. It is both a science and an art, grounded in the use of wisdom and tact in managing international relations. As such, it is a set of rules derived from the mutual interests of states and the principles of international law. It also encompasses the formulation of treaties and agreements, and represents the practical tool for managing a state's foreign affairs through the available official means, methods, institutions, and channels.⁴

The importance of diplomacy can be summarized in the following aspects:⁵

- Establishing effective communication with other countries, which contributes to building mutual understanding and presenting a clear image of the state's culture and institutions, in addition to achieving its national and political objectives.
- Enabling the state to define and project its strategic power in international relations alongside its military and economic strength.
- Contributing to the improvement of the state's image and the enhancement of its reputation, which serves as a fundamental pillar of its presence and strength, thereby granting it international respect.
- Influencing global public opinion by reinforcing the state's legitimacy and status on the international stage.

Diplomacy encompasses a variety of functions carried out by diplomats to support inter-state relations and facilitate communication between countries. Among the key functions that ensure the success of diplomatic work are: **representation, reporting, and negotiation.**

A. Diplomatic Representation:

This involves representing the state abroad. The diplomat conveys their home country's viewpoint to the host state with tact and clarity. A diplomat must be well-versed in their country's goals and foreign policy in order to accurately communicate them, while also reporting back the host country's perspective. In this way, the diplomat plays a vital role in shaping foreign policy effectively.

B. Reporting Function:

The diplomat prepares detailed reports on all developments and activities taking place in the host country to provide policymakers with the necessary information. This function becomes increasingly important given the growing complexity and multidimensional nature of diplomatic work.

C. Negotiation Function:

This is one of the core roles of a diplomat, used to resolve disputes between states peacefully. Both parties engage in negotiations through dialogue or by resuming contact in order to reach a mutually acceptable settlement without resorting to conflict.

B. Crisis:

A crisis refers to an emergency situation that arises due to unstable conditions, leading to unexpected developments as a result of the involved parties' inability to control the situation. It is often caused by human intervention⁶

D. Diplomatic Crisis:

Researcher Zahraa Adnan Alwan defines a diplomatic crisis as a state of intense tension that disrupts the normal relations between states, to the extent that it threatens their vital interests and the core values upon which those relations are based. These crises often emerge suddenly, leaving limited time for response or management in some cases. A diplomatic crisis may sometimes involve the use of military force as one of the available options for resolving the conflict or responding to the threat.⁷

A diplomatic crisis can be defined as "a situation that arises between two or more states, characterized by tension or political conflict due to disagreements over policies, positions, or actions that affect their official relations. The escalation of such disagreements can pose a threat to the continuation of diplomatic cooperation or communication between the parties, potentially leading to a freezing of relations or the imposition of diplomatic sanctions, such as the withdrawal of ambassadors or the severance of communications."

³ Abderrahmane Al-Nouri, *Diplomacy Between Reality and Prospects in Light of Current International Changes*, *Journal of Law and Political Science*, Vol. 09, No. 01, University of Larbi Ben M'hidi, Djelfa, March 2026, p. 192.

⁴ Khaled Bekchit, *Lectures on Diplomacy and International Cooperation*, <https://elearning.univ-ijel.dz/course/view.php?id=8459>, Accessed on May 22, 2025, at 07:30 AM.

⁵ Islam Ghunaimat, *The Meaning of Diplomacy*, <https://mawdoo3.com/>, Accessed on May 22, 2025, at 07:17 AM.

⁶ Soumeia Abbas Al-Rubaie, *Crisis: Types, Characteristics, Causes, and Stages*, <https://uomustansiriyah.edu.iq/media/lectures>, Accessed on May 19, 2025, at 11:00 PM.

⁷ Zahraa Adnan Alwan, *The Concept of International Crisis*, <https://cohe.uokerbala.edu>, Accessed on May 19, 2025, at 09:00 PM.

The severance of diplomatic relations is considered the most serious and explicit political expression of escalating conflict and hostility between two states—one that approaches the threshold of direct confrontation. In many cases, this measure serves as an early warning of the possible outbreak of armed conflict between the parties.

Diplomatic rupture is manifested when the state making the decision officially announces the termination of its relations with the other state. Simultaneously, it recalls its ambassador and all members of its diplomatic mission from the concerned country and closes its diplomatic offices there. It also decides to expel the diplomats of the other country, granting them a specific timeframe—usually between 48 hours and one week, as defined by international conventions—to organize their departure.⁸

The concept of a *diplomatic crisis* differs from *crisis diplomacy*, which refers to diplomatic activity specifically directed at resolving an urgent international crisis. It serves as an alternative to war and a means of de-escalating tension between states.⁹

E. The Diplomatic Crisis Between Algeria and France:

Since Algeria's independence from France in 1962, relations between the two countries have remained burdened by the heavy legacy of colonial memory—an issue that resurfaces with every diplomatic crisis or controversial official statement. Despite political and economic rapprochement efforts, the bilateral relationship continues to experience ongoing fluctuations, swinging between détente and escalation, like waves of ebb and flow.

This instability is largely attributed to several factors, foremost among them being the unresolved issues related to historical memory. The crimes of French colonialism still represent an open wound in the collective Algerian consciousness, making it difficult to establish a normal or balanced relationship as long as France has not issued a clear and comprehensive acknowledgment of its colonial past. At present, Algerian-French relations are undergoing one of their most intense episodes of tension since independence.¹⁰

2. Media Framing of Diplomatic Crises:

The media is considered one of the primary tools used by states to present their perspectives on various issues and to express their positions regarding events in a manner that aligns with their interests. Media outlets operate by presenting news within specific frameworks and contexts aimed at affirming or denying a particular meaning, primarily through emphasizing certain aspects of a news story while ignoring others.¹¹

The media coverage of diplomatic crises includes the **formal elements of journalistic texts**, which comprise a set of components that go beyond the written content itself, such as: external layout, placement of the news item, videos, hyperlinks, documents, audio elements, colors, word repetition, and main and subheadings. These elements form part of the technical developments in the design of modern media platforms and should be taken into account in content analysis.

The analysis process also includes other elements such as: the sources used, key terms, use of metaphor, tone and intensity of coverage. Studies have shown that news sources and the frames adopted by media outlets significantly affect the perception of events. These outlets construct specific frames through which they represent individuals and groups, define the problem, assign judgments, and suggest solutions—particularly in political crises.

As for the **argumentative model**, it focuses on examining the rhetorical and stylistic aspects of journalistic texts through an organized linguistic sequence that avoids strict logical interpretation. Instead, it relies on structuring media arguments to present and interpret events in a coherent and persuasive manner.¹²

"It can be noted that the media's handling of crises typically passes through three main stages, namely:"¹³

A. First Phase: Pre-Crisis Stage

This is the stage where a crisis is anticipated. During this phase, the media must focus on taking all preventive measures to avoid the occurrence of crises and implement all possible precautions to prevent or reduce potential losses in lives and property.

⁸ Al Jazeera Net, *Diplomatic Severance... The Last Resort*, <https://www.aljazeera.net/encyclopedia/2016/1/9>, Accessed on May 22, 2025, at 07:35 AM.

⁹ Mohamed Qasmiya, *The Conditions of the Development of Diplomacy and Its Regulatory Rules*, *Journal of Legal Research and Studies*, Laboratory for Research in Law, Family, and Administrative Development, Faculty of Law and Political Science, University of Mohamed Boudiaf – M'sila, Vol. 06, No. 02, 2021, p. 273.

¹⁰ Mehr News Agency, *The Algerian-French Diplomatic Crisis: Prelude to a Cold War or a Storm in a Teacup?*, <https://ar.mehrnews.com/>, Accessed on May 22, 2025, at 10:30 AM.

¹¹ Nagwa Ibrahim Sayed, *Framing of Diplomatic Crises in International News Websites*, *Scientific Journal for Journalism Research*, Faculty of Mass Communication, Cairo University, Issue 24, Part 02, December 2022, p. 451.

¹² Heba Mohamed Shafiq Abdel Razek, *Framing Methods of Diplomatic Crises in the Arabian Gulf: A Comparative Analytical Study within the Argumentation Model*, *Arab Journal for Media and Communication Research*, Faculty of Mass Communication, Al-Ahram Canadian University, Cairo, Issue 31, December 2020, p. 210.

¹³ Hesham Sabry, *Forced Positioning: What Are the Limits of the Media's Role in Facing Disasters and Crises?*, <https://rcssegyp.com/1757>, Accessed on May 22, 2025, at 10:36 AM.

B. Second Phase: Media Management During the Crisis

This stage marks the eruption of the crisis, characterized by intense public eagerness to access media outlets in search of more news and information about the ongoing situation.

C. Third Phase: Post-Crisis Media Management

A crisis leaves deep effects on various aspects of life, from the moment it begins until its end. During this phase, media outlets remain in constant competition to report and analyze the aftermath until the crisis is completely resolved.

3. The Concept of National Media in the Context of Diplomatic Crises

Professor Nour-Eddine Dahmar defines national media as media platforms affiliated with the state, the private sector, and citizen journalism in the digital environment, with the primary objective of defending and protecting the nation. In this context, journalists must demonstrate patriotism, awareness, and media vigilance toward any potential threats to the country—whether internal or external. Accordingly, the media message must be directed toward serving the homeland.

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"The national media in Algeria receives continuous support and backing from all state institutions, which stand by it when it comes to defending Algeria's image and its honorable positions."¹⁵

The importance of the media becomes particularly evident during times of crisis, as public reliance on it for information significantly increases. In such situations, the media becomes the primary source of information. The media's approach to crisis coverage depends on the nature, type, and magnitude of the crisis, as well as on the prevailing political system and adopted standards. This importance becomes especially prominent when dealing with a national-level crisis, where the media plays a central role in shaping the interactions that accompany the crisis—whether positively or negatively.

4. The Importance of National Media in the Context of the Diplomatic Crisis Between France and Algeria:

Researchers generally agree that crisis media plays a dual role. First, it performs an informational function that involves covering the crisis, following its various developments, and clarifying its outcomes with the aim of formulating a unified national narrative. This includes informing public opinion, institutions, and the relevant executive bodies, with the goal of activating these entities to respond forcefully to the crisis and contain it. Second, it serves a diplomatic function, aiming to secure the necessary support from the countries and powers involved in or affected by the crisis. Additionally, it targets international media capable of attracting the attention of policymakers—both former and current—by continuously providing them with news, facts, information, and data related to the crisis, its developments, and its various repercussions.¹⁶

In Algeria, the media serves as a central pillar in supporting stability and reinforcing national unity, particularly in the context of growing geopolitical challenges within a complex international environment. In this regard, the Minister of Communication, Mohamed Mzian, emphasizes that the media front is not confined to narrow partisan or associative frameworks. Rather, it constitutes a collective entity where national values intersect with a sincere commitment to the supreme national interest, making it a genuine and organic extension of the internal front of Algerian society.

In discussing external stakes, the Minister pointed out that the world is currently witnessing an intense media race, in which many media outlets have turned into propaganda tools used to serve dubious agendas. He cited, in this context, the far-right media campaigns that, for several months, have sought to distort Algeria's image. Nevertheless, the national media has confronted these attacks with a high level of professionalism and responsibility, thereby reinforcing its credibility and its role in defending national sovereignty.

Based on the official discourse of the Algerian state across its various leadership levels, the role of Algerian media during the diplomatic crisis with France can be summarized as follows. These roles also serve as recommendations and outcomes aimed at enhancing the effectiveness of Algerian media in addressing this issue.¹⁷

A. National Media as a Strategic and Central Actor:

During times of diplomatic crisis, national media plays a pivotal and strategic role as it becomes intertwined with national interests, official stances, and external influences.

B. Alignment with the Official Position of the State:

In the event of any diplomatic crisis—particularly with France—the Algerian national press is expected to align itself with the official position of the state. The media should act as an extension of the diplomatic front and the country's political orientation by adopting a discourse that reflects the principles of Algeria's foreign policy and defends its sovereignty and national dignity. Therefore, national media are not expected to remain neutral; rather, they must stand firmly in defense of the country's national interest.

¹⁴ Nouredine Dahmar, *The Role of Algerian Media in Public Mobilization, Unity, and National Cohesion*, lecture presented at the National Memory Day, Scientific Recreation Center, Bordj Bou Arréridj, May 7, 2025.

¹⁵ Algerian Radio. "World Press Freedom Day: New Roles for National Media Imposed by Current Challenges." Available at: <https://news.radioalgerie.dz/> (Accessed: May 22, 2025, at 08:45).

¹⁶ Mohamed Jaafar, "Media and Political Crises," *Al-Mohtarif Journal*, University of Ashour Ben Zayane, Djelfa, Vol. 10, No. 02, p. 510.**

¹⁷ A phone interview with Dr. Nouredine Dahmar, Professor of Media and Communication Sciences at the University of Bordj Bou Arréridj, conducted on May 22, 2025.

D. Correcting Media Representation and Responding to Propaganda Campaigns:

Algeria has been the target of an aggressive and systematic media campaign, primarily led by French media networks affiliated with the far right. These efforts align closely with Zionist and Moroccan agendas, aiming to undermine Algeria's sovereign positions and its firm rejection of foreign interference or external dictates. This campaign has taken on various dimensions, including the mobilization of thousands of journalists and hundreds of traditional and digital media platforms, which have clearly engaged in disseminating hostile narratives. These narratives aim to distort Algeria's image on the international stage and cast doubt on its strategic choices—particularly its unwavering positions on regional and international issues, most notably its support for the right of peoples to self-determination and its rejection of foreign domination.¹⁸

Conclusion and Findings:

At the conclusion of this research paper, we find that when it comes to Algeria, the role of national media clearly emerges as a central and strategic actor in confronting the diplomatic challenges between Algeria and France. This role is manifested through the following:

- Presenting the true image of the nation and the nature of the diplomatic crisis.
- Countering and correcting smear campaigns related to the diplomatic tensions between Algeria and France.
- Strengthening internal national unity and popular cohesion.
- Emphasizing the importance of coordination between diplomatic efforts and national media in order to ensure the successful management of diplomatic crises.

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