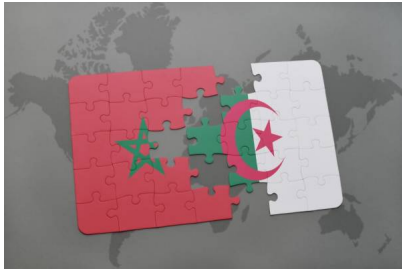


# ALGERIA TO IMPLEMENT VISA REQUIREMENTS FOR MOROCCAN VISITORS



Tensions between Algeria and Morocco have been ongoing for several years. They have escalated with Algeria's recent decision to require entry visas for all Moroccan nationals. Despite repeated calls for reconciliation, the prospects for cooperation between the two neighboring countries are growing increasingly dim.

Last week, the Algerian Ministry of Foreign Affairs announced that it would implement entry visa requirements for Moroccan citizens, catching both the authorities in Rabat and the Algerian consulates in Morocco off guard, particularly in Casablanca, where uncertainty now prevails.

**Algeria's new policy comes when Morocco seeks to boost its tourism industry, which still needs to be explored.** In 2023, the country welcomed 3.29 million tourists, marking a 135.5% increase compared to 2022.

Despite the impressive 66.68% increase in foreign arrivals, Algeria is still mainly dominated by outbound tourism, with 2.55 million Algerian residents traveling abroad. This imbalance highlights Algeria's challenge in retaining its citizens and attracting more foreign visitors.

Moroccans were once among the most frequent visitors to Algeria, just behind Tunisians and French visitors. In 2019, official statistics show that 79,505 Moroccans entered Algeria.

Morocco was also the third largest source of foreign tourists in Algeria. However, this number will likely decrease significantly due to new visa requirements. Although this number is modest compared to the 1.3 million Tunisians or the internal Algerian flows, it shows a growing interest in historical sites and Algerian spa resorts.

Despite its many attractions, Algeria faces challenges establishing itself as a top tourist destination. The opening of 56 new hotels and tourism investments in 2023 has not yet significantly impacted the sector. Algeria has 249 tourism expansion zones (ETZs) and an investment portfolio with over 2,200 projects. However, **these facilities are struggling to attract visitors.** With its imperial cities, beaches, and cultural heritage, Morocco draws nearly 13 million visitors annually. It's important to note that Algeria generally follows the principle of visa reciprocity, which applies visa requirements to countries that do the same to Algerian nationals.

Algeria's imposition of visa requirements on Moroccans could decrease the number of foreign tourists and create uncertainty about its intentions to open up. While diplomatic authorities are working to clarify the visa application process, the impact on tourism and bilateral relations remains unresolved.

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