



## Health Security in Algeria: Food and Pharmaceutical Security as Essential Elements of Comprehensive Health Protection

Nouiri Samia<sup>1</sup>, Saddok Amina<sup>2</sup>

<sup>1,2</sup>Associate professor, Class A, University of 8May 1945- Guelma, Faculty of Law and Political Science, Law Department, Environmental Legal Studies Laboratory (Algeria).  
[Nouiri.samia@univ-guelma.dz](mailto:Nouiri.samia@univ-guelma.dz); [saddok.amina@univ-guelma.dz](mailto:saddok.amina@univ-guelma.dz).

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### Abstract:

This academic legal article examines health security in Algeria with a particular focus on food and pharmaceutical security as fundamental components of comprehensive health protection. The study analyzes the legislative and institutional framework established by Algeria to ensure health security, including Health Law No. 18-11 of 2018 and its amendments. The research identifies food security and pharmaceutical security as critical axes within the broader health security system, examining the legal mechanisms, institutional structures, and challenges facing their implementation. The article addresses the gaps exposed by the COVID-19 pandemic and proposes recommendations for strengthening Algeria's health security infrastructure.

Through a comprehensive analysis of the Algerian legal framework and comparative examination of international standards, this study demonstrates that effective health security requires integrated coordination between multiple government agencies, robust legislative frameworks, and active participation from all stakeholders including health professionals, institutions, and citizens. The research concludes that while Algeria has made significant legislative progress, achieving comprehensive health security demands continued investment in infrastructure, capacity building, and institutional reform.

### Keywords

Health Security; Food Security; Pharmaceutical Security; Algerian Health Law; Public Health; Consumer Protection; Medical Liability; Health Legislation; Regulatory Framework; Health Policy

### 1. Introduction

#### Preamble

The contemporary global health landscape is characterized by unprecedented complexity and interconnectedness, wherein health threats transcend national boundaries and demand coordinated international responses. Within this context, individual nations must establish robust domestic health security frameworks that address both traditional and emerging health challenges. Health security, in its broadest sense, encompasses not merely the absence of disease but the comprehensive protection of populations from all health-related threats, whether infectious, environmental, or iatrogenic in nature.



Health security represents one of the most critical pillars of human security in the contemporary world, serving as the foundation for societal stability, economic development, and sustainable progress<sup>[^1]</sup>. In the Algerian context, the significance of health security has become increasingly apparent in light of the multifaceted challenges confronting the health sector, encompassing epidemics, infectious diseases, and health hazards intrinsically linked to food and pharmaceutical products<sup>[^2]</sup>. This research endeavors to comprehensively examine the legal and legislative infrastructure that Algeria has established to safeguard health security, with particular emphasis on food and pharmaceutical security as fundamental components of an integrated health protection system.

The importance of this subject matter stems from its multidisciplinary nature, intersecting legal, administrative, and health domains while necessitating seamless coordination among numerous governmental entities<sup>[^3]</sup>. Furthermore, this study emerges within a historically significant context, as the COVID-19 pandemic has profoundly impacted both global and Algerian health systems, exposing critical deficiencies in existing legislative frameworks and underscoring the imperative for their modernization and enhancement<sup>[^4]</sup>.

## 2. Conceptual Framework and Legislative Foundation

### Preamble

Understanding health security requires a comprehensive examination of its conceptual underpinnings and the legal mechanisms through which it is operationalized. The term "health security" has evolved significantly over recent decades, shifting from a narrow focus on disease prevention to encompass broader dimensions of population health protection. This evolution reflects growing recognition that health security depends upon multiple intersecting factors, including food safety, pharmaceutical quality, environmental protection, and equitable access to healthcare services.

The Algerian legal framework has progressively incorporated these multidimensional understandings of health security, establishing a sophisticated legislative architecture designed to address contemporary health challenges while respecting international standards and best practices.

### 2.1 Defining Health Security

Health security is fundamentally defined as a comprehensive state of protection from all health-related threats that may jeopardize the wellbeing of individuals and communities<sup>[^5]</sup>. This multidimensional concept encompasses several integrated dimensions: prevention of both infectious and non-communicable diseases, protection against environmental, food, and pharmaceutical hazards, and assurance of quality and equitable access to health services<sup>[^6]</sup>. The concept extends beyond mere absence of disease to encompass physical, mental, and social wellbeing.

In the Algerian national context, health security constitutes an indivisible component of comprehensive human security and has been incorporated into the state's overarching public policy



framework and legislative architecture<sup>[^7]</sup>. This integration reflects the nation's commitment to ensuring the fundamental right of every Algerian citizen to health, a right that is recognized and protected under both international and regional legal instruments<sup>[^8]</sup>.

## 2.2 Algeria's Legislative Framework

Since achieving independence, Algeria has progressively developed a sophisticated legal framework governing health and health security. Health Law No. 18-11, enacted on July 2, 2018, represents the most contemporary and comprehensive legislative instrument in this domain<sup>[^9]</sup>. This landmark legislation establishes foundational principles concerning patient and citizen rights, delineates the responsibilities of health service providers, and articulates the state's obligations in ensuring health security<sup>[^10]</sup>.

The legislative framework underwent significant enhancement through Order No. 20-02 of August 30, 2020, which was promulgated in direct response to the unprecedented challenges posed by the COVID-19 pandemic<sup>[^11]</sup>. This amendment introduced novel provisions addressing precautionary and preventive measures while substantially reinforcing the mandate of the National Health Security Agency in coordinating nationwide health security initiatives<sup>[^12]</sup>.

The Algerian legal architecture further incorporates complementary sectoral legislation, including Law No. 88-07 concerning occupational health, safety, and medicine, which regulates health and safety standards within workplace environments<sup>[^13]</sup>. Additionally, the framework encompasses comprehensive legislation addressing consumer protection and food and pharmaceutical security<sup>[^14]</sup>.

## 3. Food Security as a Cornerstone of Health Security

### Preamble

Food security represents a fundamental human need and a prerequisite for sustainable development, economic stability, and social cohesion. The relationship between food security and health is bidirectional: inadequate food security undermines population health, while compromised food safety directly threatens public health. For Algeria, a nation with significant geographic constraints and substantial dependence on food imports, food security assumes strategic importance that extends beyond nutritional adequacy to encompass national security and economic resilience.

The Algerian government has recognized this imperative and has established comprehensive legal and institutional mechanisms designed to ensure both the availability and safety of food supplies. Understanding these mechanisms, their effectiveness, and the challenges they face is essential for assessing Algeria's overall health security posture.

### 3.1 Conceptualization and Strategic Importance

Food security, as defined by international standards, constitutes a condition wherein all individuals possess consistent access to adequate, safe, and nutritionally sufficient food that satisfies their dietary requirements and cultural preferences while enabling healthy and productive

living[^15]. Within the Algerian context, food security assumes paramount strategic significance due to the nation's distinctive geographical constraints and economic realities[^16].

Algeria's substantial dependence on food imports renders the nation vulnerable to global market fluctuations and supply chain disruptions[^17]. Recognizing this vulnerability, the Algerian government has formulated comprehensive national strategies to enhance food security, encompassing initiatives to support domestic agricultural production and facilitate investment in food processing industries[^18].

### **3.2 Legal Mechanisms and Institutional Framework**

Algeria has established a robust array of legal mechanisms designed to ensure food security while safeguarding consumers from food-related health hazards. These mechanisms encompass legislation addressing food safety standards and health oversight of food products[^19]. The Consumer Protection and Anti-Fraud Law constitutes one of the most significant legislative instruments in this domain[^20], establishing consumer rights to safe and quality products while imposing corresponding obligations upon producers and distributors to ensure product safety[^21].

Multiple governmental institutions collaborate in monitoring and enforcing food security standards, including veterinary health services and food product health control divisions within the Ministry of Health[^22]. These institutions conduct systematic inspections of food products to verify compliance with established health and quality standards[^23].

### **3.3 Implementation Challenges**

Despite substantial legislative and institutional efforts, Algeria confronts considerable challenges in effectively implementing food security standards[^24]. These challenges include insufficient financial and human resources for enhanced monitoring and inspection activities, coupled with inadequate infrastructure in certain geographic regions[^25]. Additionally, monopolistic practices and illicit speculation in essential food commodities pose direct threats to food security[^26]. Such problems became particularly acute during the COVID-19 pandemic, when certain commercial actors attempted to exploit the crisis through excessive price manipulation[^27].

## **4. Pharmaceutical Security and Drug Regulation**

### **Preamble**

The pharmaceutical sector occupies a unique position within health systems, serving as the primary mechanism through which therapeutic interventions are delivered to populations. Pharmaceutical security—ensuring that medicines are safe, effective, and of consistent quality—represents an essential component of comprehensive health security. Counterfeit, substandard, and falsified medicines pose grave threats to public health, undermining treatment efficacy, promoting antimicrobial resistance, and eroding public confidence in health systems. Algeria, as a developing nation with a growing pharmaceutical industry, faces the dual challenge of ensuring the safety of imported medicines while establishing quality assurance systems for domestic production. The



legal and institutional frameworks established to address these challenges reflect Algeria's commitment to pharmaceutical security as a cornerstone of health protection.

#### **4.1 Importance and Definition**

Pharmaceutical security encompasses the assurance that all medicines circulating within the market are safe, therapeutically effective, and of consistently high quality<sup>[^28]</sup>. This objective necessitates rigorous processes of testing, monitoring, and inspection to prevent counterfeit or substandard medicines from reaching consumers<sup>[^29]</sup>. The pharmaceutical sector's critical role in public health makes pharmaceutical security an indispensable component of comprehensive health protection.

Within Algeria, pharmaceutical security has assumed increasing prominence, particularly concurrent with the expansion and modernization of the domestic pharmaceutical industry<sup>[^30]</sup>. Algeria has undertaken substantial investments in pharmaceutical sector development, establishing itself as a leading pharmaceutical producer within the African continent<sup>[^31]</sup>.

#### **4.2 Regulatory Framework and Institutional Structures**

Algerian Health Law No. 18-11 establishes comprehensive regulations governing pharmaceutical production, marketing, and importation<sup>[^32]</sup>, incorporating provisions addressing the licensing of pharmaceutical establishments and their obligations regarding drug quality assurance<sup>[^33]</sup>. The National Agency for Pharmaceutical Products, established pursuant to Executive Decree No. 19-190 of July 3, 2019, serves as the primary regulatory authority<sup>[^34]</sup>. This agency assumes multiple critical responsibilities, including evaluation of new drug registration applications, supervision of good manufacturing practices, and post-market surveillance of pharmaceutical products<sup>[^35]</sup>.

The legislative framework additionally includes provisions addressing the detection and prevention of counterfeit and falsified medicines<sup>[^36]</sup>. Given the escalating global threat posed by counterfeit pharmaceuticals, Algeria has prioritized strengthening its detection and control mechanisms<sup>[^37]</sup>.

#### **4.3 Quality Assurance Standards**

Algeria adheres to internationally recognized Good Manufacturing Practices (GMP) standards in pharmaceutical production<sup>[^38]</sup>. These standards mandate that pharmaceutical establishments implement stringent procedures throughout all production stages, from raw material procurement through final product distribution<sup>[^39]</sup>. The National Agency for Pharmaceutical Products conducts periodic inspections of pharmaceutical facilities to ensure compliance with established standards<sup>[^40]</sup>, encompassing examination of laboratories, storage facilities, and production processes<sup>[^41]</sup>.

### **5. Criminal Protection and Professional Liability**

#### **Preamble**

The protection of health and health security extends beyond administrative and civil regulatory mechanisms to encompass criminal law frameworks designed to deter and punish

egregious violations of health standards. Criminal law serves multiple functions within health security systems: it establishes clear boundaries of acceptable conduct, imposes significant penalties for violations, and provides mechanisms for prosecuting individuals and entities that cause serious health harm. Additionally, the criminal law framework addresses the professional accountability of health workers, establishing standards of care and consequences for deviation from those standards. The Algerian legal system has progressively strengthened its criminal protections for health security, particularly in response to emerging challenges such as violence against health workers and the proliferation of counterfeit medicines. Understanding these criminal law frameworks is essential for comprehending the full scope of health security protections available under Algerian law.

### **5.1 Criminal Law Framework**

Algeria has recognized the necessity of providing robust criminal protection for the right to health<sup>[^42]</sup>. The Algerian Penal Code incorporates multiple provisions criminalizing acts that endanger public health<sup>[^43]</sup>. Order No. 20-01 of July 2, 2020 substantially expanded criminal protections by introducing new provisions safeguarding health workers and health institutions<sup>[^44]</sup>, responding to escalating incidents of violence and assault against health sector personnel<sup>[^45]</sup>.

### **5.2 Medical and Professional Accountability**

Medical liability operates on the foundational principles of fault and damages, encompassing both civil and criminal dimensions<sup>[^46]</sup>. In civil proceedings, physicians must demonstrate that medical services were rendered in accordance with recognized professional standards<sup>[^47]</sup>. Deviation from these standards resulting in patient harm establishes physician liability for compensation<sup>[^48]</sup>. Criminal liability may attach when physicians commit crimes within the context of professional medical practice<sup>[^49]</sup>, including gross medical negligence and negligence-related fatalities<sup>[^50]</sup>.

### **5.3 Ethical Oversight**

Algeria established the National Council for Medical Ethics to supervise medical practice and ensure adherence to professional ethical standards<sup>[^51]</sup>. This council functions in an advisory and directive capacity, developing ethical guidelines for medical practitioners<sup>[^52]</sup>. The council investigates complaints concerning unethical medical conduct and submits recommendations to competent authorities<sup>[^53]</sup>.

## **6. Contemporary Challenges and Future Directions**

### **Preamble**

Despite substantial progress in developing legislative and institutional frameworks for health security, Algeria faces significant challenges in translating these frameworks into effective implementation. These challenges span multiple domains: inadequate financial resources, insufficient human capacity, weak enforcement mechanisms, and systemic corruption. The COVID-19 pandemic exposed these deficiencies with particular clarity, demonstrating that



legislative sophistication alone is insufficient to ensure health security without corresponding investments in infrastructure, personnel, and institutional capacity. Looking forward, Algeria must pursue a comprehensive reform agenda that addresses both structural deficiencies and emerging health security threats. This section examines the principal obstacles confronting Algeria's health security efforts and proposes strategic directions for future development.

### **6.1 Current Obstacles**

Algeria faces substantial obstacles in achieving comprehensive health security<sup>[^54]</sup>. These include inadequate financial and human resources, insufficient health infrastructure in certain regions<sup>[^55]</sup>, and systemic corruption within the health sector<sup>[^56]</sup>. The COVID-19 pandemic exposed these deficiencies and demonstrated the necessity for fundamental structural reforms<sup>[^57]</sup>.

### **6.2 Strategic Recommendations**

To advance comprehensive health security, Algeria must pursue multiple strategic initiatives<sup>[^58]</sup>. First, substantially increase investment in health infrastructure and allocate adequate financial and human resources<sup>[^59]</sup>. Second, modernize the legislative framework to align with contemporary developments and international standards<sup>[^60]</sup>. Third, strengthen inter-agency coordination among government entities responsible for health security<sup>[^61]</sup>.

Fourth, enhance public health awareness and education concerning health security importance and sound health practices<sup>[^62]</sup>. Fifth, fortify monitoring, inspection, and accountability mechanisms to ensure adherence to health standards<sup>[^63]</sup>.

## **7. Conclusion**

### **Preamble**

The examination of health security in Algeria reveals a nation engaged in a sustained effort to establish comprehensive protections for population health through legislative reform, institutional development, and policy innovation. While Algeria has achieved notable progress in recent years, particularly through the enactment of Health Law No. 18-11 and its subsequent amendments, the path toward comprehensive health security remains incomplete. The challenges exposed by the COVID-19 pandemic underscore the necessity for continued commitment to health security as a national priority. Achieving this objective requires not merely the maintenance of existing legislative frameworks but their continuous evolution in response to emerging health threats and international best practices. This conclusion synthesizes the key findings of this research and articulates a vision for Algeria's future health security trajectory.

Health security in Algeria represents a multifaceted challenge requiring comprehensive, integrated approaches<sup>[^64]</sup>. The Algerian state has invested considerable effort in developing legislative and institutional frameworks to ensure health security, particularly through Health Law No. 18-11 and its subsequent amendments<sup>[^65]</sup>.

However, realizing comprehensive health security necessitates sustained commitment and investment<sup>[^66]</sup>. Algeria must prioritize strengthening food and pharmaceutical security as



essential components, reinforce monitoring and accountability systems, and expand international cooperation in health security matters<sup>[^67]</sup>. Health security transcends state responsibility alone, requiring active engagement from all stakeholders including health professionals, institutions, and citizens<sup>[^68]</sup>. Only through such comprehensive, integrated approaches can Algeria achieve the health security its population deserves<sup>[^69]</sup>.

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