



Algeria

INDEX	
Banking and finance	19
Commercial, corporate and M&A	20
Dispute resolution	21
Energy	21
Foreign firms	22
Country index	5

Legal market overview

In a significant legal market development, French firm **DS Avocats** launched a new Algiers office in 2016 by hiring Vincent Lunel, who joined the firm after 15 years with the Algiers office of **LPA-CGR**.

Well-established Algerian law firms **Chemloul & Associés**, **Ghellaï & Mekerba** and **Hamza Law Office** are usually first in line for sophisticated work, but the next generation of law firms are focused on developing their

international experience and are catching up. Among the foreign law firms with offices on the ground, **CMS** and **Gide Loyrette Nouel** are valued for their strong local knowledge.

The moves occur against a backdrop of a market which has been adjusting to the slump in global oil prices. The slowdown in Algeria's economic growth prompted the government to respond by implementing an austerity programme in December 2015, which included a 9% cut in expenditure and a 4% rise in tax revenue based on a package of price hikes. In addition, the government announced plans to allow for private investment in state-owned enterprises under Article 66 of its 2016 budget. However, Article 66 only applies to local companies – foreign companies remain subject to the 49/51 rule, which caps foreign ownership of any business entity at 49%.

BANKING AND FINANCE

Ghellaï & Mekerba	1
Bouchalb Law Firm Bourabiat Associés CMS ◊ Hamza Law Office	2
Aldoud Law Firm Chemloul & Associés ◊ DS Avocats LPA-CGR	3

Firms are listed A-Z within tiers
◊ Indicates firm displays contact details at the end of this chapter.

Leading individuals

Mamoun Aldoud Aldoud Law Firm
Adnane Bouchalb Bouchalb Law Firm
Foued Bourabiat Bourabiat Associés
Amine Ghellaï Ghellaï & Mekerba
Mustapha Hamza Hamza Law Office
Samir Sayah CMS

Banking and finance

'A top choice firm for finance', **Ghellaï & Mekerba** is widely lauded for its 'sound knowledge of both transactional and regulatory law'. On the transactional side, the firm is well known for its project finance expertise, due to the preeminent reputation of founding partner Amine Ghellaï. It also houses a standalone economic law group, which focuses on financial and regulatory law.

Banking and finance matters are a mainstay at **Bouchalb Law Firm**. The firm has a solid regulatory practice and recently advised several development finance institutions on aspects of the Algerian regulatory framework. Recent

transactions include acting for a foreign client on the financing of a desalination plant.

'Responsive, experienced and thorough', Bourablat Associés is an 'international-standard firm'. Managing partner Foued Bourablat recently advised a leading maritime company on its restructuring. Project finance is another focus area.

At CMS, managing partner Samir Sayah advised a major multinational during a recapitalisation transaction. The firm also acts for banks, insurance companies and corporate borrowers on a mix of lending, structured finance and various regulatory matters. The global firm's recently announced merger with Nabarro LLP and Diswang LLP should augment its international client base.

Referral favourite Hamza Law Office has a prominent reputation for banking work, with clients reserving particular praise for its 'strong experience in project finance'. Name partner Mustapha Hamza is 'a strong lawyer who can effectively navigate the local terrain'.

Aldoud Law Firm is regularly instructed by foreign law firms to advise on the local aspects of cross-border transactions and also acts for a strong stable of domestic clients. Mamoun Aldoud is the key contact.

Although better known for its corporate work, Chemloul & Associés maintains an active banking and finance practice, with a strong skillset in project finance. Mohammed Chemloul is recommended.

In 2016, international law firm DS Avocats opened an office by hiring Vincent Lunel from LPA-CGR. Lunel recently advised on a substantial aviation financing.

In 2016, LPA-CGR was rocked by the departure of Vincent Lunel to DS Avocats. However, the firm's well-established platform in the country should ensure it remains a significant player going forward. Morocco-based Alain Gauvin is a key contact for Algeria work.

Commercial, corporate and M&A

CMS leverages its international network to pack a punch in cross-border deals, but it also acts for domestic clients on local matters. The firm advises on the full spread of corporate law with notable strength in joint ventures, corporate restructurings and M&A. Among its recent highlights, Samir Sayah advised a European pharmaceuticals company on a joint venture agreement. Amine Sator is also recommended.

Chemloul & Associés' corporate practice is considered to be among the market's best, and has the 'ability to get deals done'. The firm acts for a diverse mix of local and foreign clients, with particular expertise in the telecoms, pharma-

COMMERCIAL, CORPORATE AND M&A	
CMS ◦	1
Chemloul & Associés ◦	
Ghella & Mekerba	
Gide Loyrette Nouel ◦	
Hamza Law Office	
Bennani & Associés LLP ◦	2
Bouchemla Lanouar et Associés ◦	
Bourablat Associés	
DS Avocats	
Hadj-Hamou/Djouadi	
LPA-CGR	3
Samir Hamouda, Cabinet d'Avocats	
Yamina Keblir, Law Office	
Aldoud Law Firm	
Badri Cabinet for Intellectual Property Algeria	
Ben Abderrahmane & Partners	
Benslimane Avocats & Conseils	
Bouchaib Law Firm	
Boukrami, Cabinet in cooperation with Saba & Co. IP	
Haroun & Associés	
<small>Firms are listed A-Z within tiers ◦ Indicates firm displays contact details at the end of this chapter.</small>	
Leading individuals	
Mamoun Aldoud Aldoud Law Firm	
Fatima-Zohra Bouchemla Bouchemla Lanouar et Associés	
Foued Bourablat Bourablat Associés	
Mohammed Chemloul Chemloul & Associés	
Amine Ghella & Mekerba	
Mustapha Hamza Hamza Law Office	
Samy Laghouati Gide Loyrette Nouel	
Rym Loucif Gide Loyrette Nouel	
Vincent Lunel DS Avocats	
Amine Sator CMS	
Samir Sayah CMS	

ceuticals and energy fields. Managing partner Mohammed Chemloul is highly sought for advice.

Ghella & Mekerba acts for an enviable roster of foreign clients, with strong showings in the telecoms, healthcare and energy sectors. The firm advises on the full lifecycle of corporate matters, from incorporation through to joint ventures and M&A. Amine Ghella and Sid Ahmed Mekerba are the key contacts.

Clients value Gide Loyrette Nouel's 'in-depth knowledge in Algeria' and its 'real local presence'. In particular, 'top lawyer' Samy Laghouati has 'good industry knowledge'. His recent mandates include advising Phillip Morris International on its indirect acquisition of an Algerian company. Rym Loucif is also recommended.

A 'consistent performer', Hamza Law Office has a strong reputation locally for corporate deals. Mustapha Hamza is widely regarded as

Next generation lawyers

Amar Benafia Bourablat Associés

being one of the market's leading figures, for whom the telecoms, energy and defence sectors are all areas of expertise.

Morocco-headquartered Bennani & Associés LLP leverages its robust regional platform to specialise in cross-border mandates. Mourad Seghir recently advised a German vehicle manufacturer and its local distributor on a car factory in Algeria.

Bouchemla Lanouar et Associés impresses clients with its 'good understanding of the issues'. The firm's membership of DLA Piper's Africa network ensures a steady flow of inbound deals and it recently advised an Italian client on a joint venture with Ramdane Group. Mohamed Lanouar is 'very experienced', of counsel Mounir Ait Belkacem is 'a problem-solver' and Fatima-Zohra Bouchemla is also recommended.

At Bourablat Associés, Foued Bourablat has established himself as 'a key partner for foreign firms' due to his 'strong service levels and good knowledge'. Highlights included advising a private equity firm on a significant share acquisition. Senior associate Amar Benafia is also extremely active.

DS Avocats' Vincent Lunel is 'immersed in the local market'. Among Lunel's highlights, he advised a global life sciences company on the establishment of a new subsidiary in Algeria. The firm has also recently advised on a range of restructurings, joint ventures and share purchases.

Another local firm with strong international connections, Hadj-Hamou/Djouadi is the associate office of Dentons. Energy-related matters are a notable focus of the practice, which is headed by name partners Ahmed Djouadi and Sid Ali Hadj-Hamou.

LPA-CGR has an impressive track record of corporate work in Algeria, but the loss of star name Vincent Lunel to DS Avocats in 2016 was a blow. Mohamed Chehat is a key contact.

Cabinet d'Avocats Samir Hamouda is a respected player in Algeria, due to the reputation of 'leading lawyer' Samir Hamouda. The firm specialises in tax and foreign investment issues.

Law Office Yamina Keblir acts for a strong roster of foreign clients, particularly European companies, on employment law and general corporate matters. Yamina Keblir is 'very experienced'.

Aldoud Law Firm routinely advises on a range of foreign investment, customs law and tax matters.

In addition to its specialist IP practice, Badri Cabinet for Intellectual Property Algeria advises international clients on investments.

Ben Abderrahmane & Partners is an independent regional law firm with platforms in Algeria, Libya and Morocco. Dahman Ben Abderrahmane is recommended for foreign investment issues.

At **Benslimane Avocats & Conseils**, name partner Samir Benslimane advises Maghreb Invest Algeria on corporate matters on an ongoing basis. The firm is a member of **Eversheds Sutherland (International) LLP's** Africa Law Institute network.

Bouchalb Law Firm regularly advises clients on foreign investment issues such as incorporation, contract negotiation, benefits agreements and tax law. The telecoms, pharmaceuticals and energy sectors are key sources of work.

Cabinet Boukrami in cooperation with Saba & Co. IP utilises its broad international footprint to provide regional access to foreign clients seeking to prosecute, register and enforce IP rights across North Africa.

'Experienced and well connected', **Haroun & Associés** is recommended for corporate work due to the distinguished reputation of 'market doyen' All Haroun.

Dispute resolution

CMS regularly represents local and global clients in commercial litigation, contentious tax matters and international arbitration. Head of litigation All Mokrane and tax specialist Mourad Nabil Abdessemed are recommended.

Chemloul & Associés has an enviable record in international arbitration, with name partner Mohammed Chemloul being widely regarded as 'first-class'. Commercial and civil litigation are also strong areas.

The 'very knowledgeable and experienced', **Ghellaï & Mekerba** acts on some of the most high-profile contentious matters in the country, with a strong showing in civil, commercial and administrative matters. According to one client, Amine Ghellaï is 'the best arbitrator in Algeria'.

Hadj-Hamou/Djouadi is particularly recommended for construction and energy-related disputes. Sid Ali Hadj-Hamou and Ahmed Djouadi are vastly experienced.

Aldoud Law Firm's litigation expertise extends to commercial, maritime, employment and tax matters. Mamoun Aldoud is recommended.

Among **Bennani & Associés LLP's** recent cases, it acted as co-counsel to a major Italian oil company in a €1bn ICC arbitration. Mourad Seghir is the key contact.

Bouchemla Lanouar et Associés' litigation group is led by Fatima-Zohra Bouchemla, who acted alongside Mohamed Lanouar to represent Technip in a \$1.6bn arbitration brought by Sonatrach.

DISPUTE RESOLUTION	
CMS ◦	1
Chemloul & Associés ◦	
Ghellaï & Mekerba	
Hadj-Hamou/Djouadi	
Aldoud Law Firm	2
Bennani & Associés LLP ◦	
Bouchemla Lanouar et Associés ◦	
Hamza Law Office	
Haroun & Associés	
Yamina Keblir, Law Office	
Ben Abderrahmane & Partners	3
Bouchalb Law Firm	
Boukrami, Cabinet in cooperation with Saba & Co. IP	
Sator, Cabinet	

Firms are listed A-Z within tiers
◦ Indicates firm displays contact details at the end of this chapter.

Leading individuals	
Fatima-Zohra Bouchemla Bouchemla Lanouar et Associés	
Mohammed Chemloul Chemloul & Associés	
Amine Ghellaï Ghellaï & Mekerba	
All Mokrane CMS	

Hamza Law Office's strong reputation for oil and gas matters translates into a steady flow of energy and construction-related disputes. Mustapha Hamza is regularly involved in arbitrations.

Haroun & Associés represents domestic and foreign clients in a broad range of contentious matters, including commercial litigation, IP disputes and employment litigation. It also has an active arbitration practice.

Name partner Yamina Keblir at **Law Office Yamina Keblir** has a diverse litigation practice and experience in commercial litigation, IP disputes, employment cases and contentious construction matters.

Ben Abderrahmane & Partners is highly rated for its strength in international arbitration, particularly construction and energy cases.

Bouchalb Law Firm has strong trial experience in both civil and administrative matters. Adnane Bouchalb is recommended.

Intellectual property specialist **Cabinet Boukrami in cooperation with Saba & Co.** IP ably covers the full spread of patent, trade mark and copyright litigation.

Cabinet Sator is recommended for its solid record in IP disputes.

Energy

'Very experienced in oil and gas', **CMS** acts for numerous multinational energy companies on investment projects, public tenders and

ENERGY	
CMS ◦	1
Ghellaï & Mekerba	
Gide Loyrette Nouel ◦	
Hamza Law Office	
Thompson & Knight LLP	
Bennani & Associés LLP ◦	2
Benslimane Avocats & Conseils	
Chemloul & Associés ◦	
Hadj-Hamou/Djouadi	

Firms are listed A-Z within tiers
◦ Indicates firm displays contact details at the end of this chapter.

Leading individuals

Amine Ghellaï Ghellaï & Mekerba
Sid Ali Hadj-Hamou Hadj-Hamou/Djouadi
Samy Laghouti Gide Loyrette Nouel
Sid Ahmed Mekerba Ghellaï & Mekerba
Samir Sayah CMS
Hassan Yassine Thompson & Knight LLP

regulatory matters. Samir Sayah is highly active in the industry and Amine Sator is also recommended. Significantly, the firm's 2017 merger with **Nabarro LLP** and **Olswang LLP** should reinforce its energy expertise.

Ghellaï & Mekerba has experience across the full spread of energy and natural resources matters, but particularly excels in oil and gas-related work. Name partners Amine Ghellaï and Sid Ahmed Mekerba both have in-house experience of leading the international legal department at state-owned Sonatrach.

Gide Loyrette Nouel is widely regarded as 'among the best' for energy matters in Algeria. In particular, Samy Laghouti is 'knowledgeable and provides appropriate advice'; he advised Air Liquide on the establishment of a joint venture with a local partner.

At **Hamza Law Office**, Mustapha Hamza is singled out as being 'strong in project finance'; he also handles general corporate matters, regulatory work and contentious issues. The client roster is dominated by major multinational companies.

Thompson & Knight LLP's Algiers office has a strong focus on the energy industry and regularly advises companies and government bodies on oil and gas matters, including exploration and development, M&A and tax issues. Hassan Yassine is recommended.

Bennani & Associés LLP has a diverse energy practice, with strength in transactional matters and litigation. Highlights included advising a French energy company on the sale of its Algerian oil assets.

Benslimane Avocats & Conseils combines 'good local knowledge' with strong international credentials through its membership of the **Eversheds Sutherland (International) LLP** network. Samir Benslimane is recommended for energy advice.

Energy is a core area of focus at Chemloul & Associés, which advises energy companies on project finance, corporate matters and litigation. Mohammed Chemloul worked at Sonatrach for over 20 years.

Hadj-Hamou/Djouadi's association with Dentons is particularly fruitful on the oil and gas side, and it regularly acts for global energy players on corporate, finance and contentious issues. Ahmed Djouadi and Sid Ali Hadj-Hamou are recommended.

Foreign firms

'Well organised and available', Herbert Smith Freehills LLP 'obtains the best results for clients'. Paris disputes lead Isabelle Michou is a 'reference on ICC arbitrations'. Michou advised Obrascón Huarte Lain in a €200m ICC arbitration concerning an infrastructure project in Algeria. The firm is also routinely involved in transactional work, particularly energy and pharmaceutical deals. London-based Robert Moore and Paris-based Hubert Segain advised Cipla on its joint venture with Blopharm for the manufacture and distribution of pharmaceutical products in Algeria. Craig Tevendale and Bertrand Montebault co-head the North Africa desk from London and Johannesburg respectively and are also recommended.

King & Spalding LLP is 'among the best in Algeria' due to its 'good level of service' and 'communicative lawyers'. In particular, Paris-based Mehdi Haroun is 'easily accessible and very professional'; he is advising Dragon Oil on its upstream interests in Algeria. Other representative clients include BAT Algeria and Maersk Oil. Paris-based senior associate Nora Djeraba is also recommended.

'One of the most active foreign firms in Algeria', Shearman & Sterling LLP brings to bear a strong history of involvement in the country - notably, it has been advising Sonatrach since 1965. From Paris, international arbitration head Emmanuel Gaillard is widely regarded as a 'leader in Algerian matters' and is respected for

FOREIGN FIRMS

Herbert Smith Freehills LLP
King & Spalding LLP
Shearman & Sterling LLP

1

Allen & Overy LLP
Clifford Chance
Curtis, Mallet-Prevost, Colt & Mosie LLP
Eversheds Sutherland (International) LLP
Simmons & Simmons LLP
White & Case LLP

2

Firms are listed A-Z within tiers

Leading individuals

Christophe Asselineau Norton Rose Fulbright
Yas Banifatemi Shearman & Sterling LLP
Emmanuel Gaillard Shearman & Sterling LLP
Mehdi Haroun King & Spalding LLP
Isabelle Michou Herbert Smith Freehills LLP
Galileo Pozzoli Curtis, Mallet-Prevost, Colt & Mosie LLP
Christophe Von Krause White & Case LLP

his 'strong knowledge and local experience'. Gaillard paired up with Paris-based Yas Banifatemi to represent Sonatrach in a \$400m ICC arbitration brought by Total Algérie and Repsol Exploración Argelia relating to a production sharing agreement. The same team is acting for the People's Democratic Republic of Algeria in a \$5bn investment treaty arbitration brought by Orascom. Paris-based projects specialist Christophe Asselineau joined Norton Rose Fulbright in 2016.

Allen & Overy LLP advised on a diverse spread of transactional and contentious matters in Algeria over the past year, with partners based in Paris, London, Casablanca and Abu Dhabi among those most active in the local market. On the litigation side, Paris-based Michael Young advised a major engineering and construction company in a dispute against Sonatrach. In a significant deal, London-based Jeremy Parr advised Cepsa on the acquisition of Hess' stake in the Bir el Msana field in Algeria.

Next generation lawyers

Nora Djeraba King & Spalding LLP

Clifford Chance has an active francophone North Africa practice, led by Casablanca-based banking and finance specialist Mustapha Mourahib. Finance, infrastructure and energy-related deals are all areas of expertise, and it is also routinely involved in contentious work. Mohamed Hamra-Krouha splits his time between Abu Dhabi and Riyadh and is also a key contact.

Curtis, Mallet-Prevost, Colt & Mosie LLP has strong experience advising on arbitrations with an Algerian component, particularly oil and gas-related cases. David Hesse splits his time between Paris and London and has represented Sonatrach and Algeria in international arbitrations. Galileo Pozzoli splits his time between Milan and Rome and is recommended for arbitration, regulatory and corporate matters.

'Responsive and informed', Eversheds Sutherland (International) LLP attracts praise for its 'good local knowledge'. Paris-based projects specialist Boris Martor leads the firm's Africa group, which works closely with affiliated Algerian firm Benslimane Avocats & Conseils, and handles a broad scope of arbitrations, corporate matters and regulatory issues. Highlights included advising Volvo Group Trucks on the establishment of a joint venture for the assembly of trucks in Algeria.

At Simmons & Simmons LLP, Paris-based Yves Baratte has strong expertise in advising on energy and infrastructure projects. The firm also has a solid record in local M&A deals and international arbitrations.

White & Case LLP houses a very capable EMEA Africa disputes practice under the leadership of Paris-based Christophe von Krause, who is highly active in litigation and international arbitration matters. Von Krause has recently advised on high-value disputes in the construction, energy and life sciences sectors.

Chemloul & Associés

06 Rue Tolstol (Lots Piétte)

BP 435

Algiers

Telephone: +213 21 48 00 20

Fax: +213 21 60 03 32

Website: www.chemloulassociés.com

Languages

Arabic, English, French

Categories of work

Cinema and motion pictures industry
Chemloul Mohammed

Investment
Chemloul Mohammed,
Chemloul Amel (external legal counsel),
Abadou Fella

Commercial
Abadou Fella, Dekkar Djamel

Labour and employment
Abadou Fella, Dekkar Djamel

Corporate
Chemloul Mohammed,
Chemloul Amel (external legal counsel),
Abadou Fella

Pharmaceuticals
Chemloul Mohammed, Abadou Fella

Criminal
Abadou Fella, Dekkar Djamel

Shipping
Chemloul Mohammed,
Chemloul Amel (external legal counsel)

Energy and electricity
Chemloul Mohammed,
Chemloul Amel (external legal counsel)

Social
Abadou Fella, Dekkar Djamel

International arbitration
Chemloul Mohammed,
Chemloul Amel (external legal counsel)