Extent

20 folders, approximately 1,598 pages

Summary

This collection consists of records related to massacres that took place in Algeria in 1997 and 1998. The records include press materials, news summaries, correspondence, and reports from Amnesty International and Human Rights Watch.

Scope and Content Note

The materials in FOIA 2009-1295-F are a selective body of documents responsive to the topic of the FOIA. Researchers should consult the archivist about related materials. The majority of the records related to this FOIA case are closed for national security reasons. Records released include White House press materials, National Security Council and State Department press guidance, news summaries, correspondence, and reports from Amnesty International and Human Rights Watch. These responsive materials are located in the files of Scott Busby in the National Security Council’s Multilateral and Humanitarian Affairs Directorate, the Automated Records Management System Emails between September 1997 and January 1998, the National Security Council Cables between August 1997 and February 1998, and the National Security Council Emails between September 1997 and December 1998.

Biographical Note

The Algerian Civil War of the 1990s, and the accompanying massacres, had it roots in political and economic challenges during the late 1980s. During the presidency of Chadli Benjedid (1979-1992), political and economic relaxation had taken place. In the meantime, dropping infant mortality had resulted in a growing, now politcally enabled, population. When the fall of oil prices in late 1980s caused an economic

crisis, many members of this younger generation turned to the Islamist Front Islamique du Salut (FIS). The FIS perfomed very well in the parliamentary elections of January 1992. The FLN hardliners in the Algerian military quickly forced the resignation of Benjedid, banned the FIS, and set up a transitional government. Some FIS activitists viewed the military's ban of their political party as a declaration of war. Guerilla fighters began attacking security forces. Though the FIS leadership condemned attacks on civilians, they quickly lost control of the party's more extreme elements. The violence continued to escalate and now included civilian casualties. By 1993, serveral guerrilla factions had splintered from the FIS. The most notorious of these was the Groupe Islamique Armée (GIA). In 1994, Minister of Defense Lamine Zeroual became President and indicated that he was willing to have a dialogue with the Islamist factions. However, neither Zeroual nor the FIS could control their more extreme supporters, and the dialogue broke down. Violence in Algeria increased as the government and the insurgents launched aggressive attacks against each other. The bloodshed peaked during latter half of 1997 and the beginning of 1998, following the June parliamentary elections. During this period, many massacres, attributed to the GIA, occured against civilians, including women and children. Often, entire villages or families were the targets. A majority of these atrocities occured in the area south of Algiers, earning it the nickname "The Triangle of Death." The worst of these massacres included: Sidi Rais on August 29 (around 400 deaths), Beni Messous on September 5 and 6 (around 100 deaths), Bentalha on September 22 (around 300 deaths), Relizane on December 30 through January 4 (over 1000 deaths), and Sidi Hamed on January 11 (around 400 deaths). The Relizane and Sidi Hamed massacres took place during the Islamic holy month of Ramadan. The massacres caught the attention of the international community. Amnesty International and Human Rights Watch urged the response of the developed world. While the Clinton Administration's policy remained that the violence was an internal Algerian matter, it expressed sympathy for the victims and urged a solution. American Ambassador to Algeria Cameron Hume made a well-pubicized visit to the site of the Sidi Hamed massacre. The European Union sent two delegations to investigate the atrocities. In addition, the GIA's actions had become distasteful to many of its supporters. In September 1998 the more extreme elements of the GIA left to form the Salafist Group for Preaching and Combat (GSPC). That same month, Zeroual resigned the presidency. His successor, Abdelaziz Bouteflika passed a law by referendum that granted amnesty to many of the guerrilla fighters. Algeria slowly became more stable, despite the continued

existance of the GSPC. In 2007, the GSPC formally changed its name to Al-Qaeda in the Islamic Maghreb.

Record Type

Textual

System of Arrangement

Records that are responsive to this FOIA request were found in these collection areas—Clinton Presidential Records: White House Staff and Office Files, Clinton Presidential Records: ARMS Emails, and Clinton Presidential Records: NSC Cable, Email, and Records Management Systems. Staff and Offices files were maintained at the folder level by staff members within their individual offices and document all levels of administration activity. Staff and Office files are processed at the folder level, that is, individual documents are not selected and removed from a folder for processing. While this method maintains folder integrity, it frequently results in the incidental processing of documents that are not wholly responsive to the subject area. 2009-1295-F http://www.clintonlibrary.gov 3 The Automated Records Management System (ARMS) is a database that contains email records of the Executive Office of the President. This system maintained unclassified Presidential email. The ARMS database is comprised of seven sub-series of email records called "buckets." The buckets generally represent a specific White House office. The buckets are titled: NPR for National Performance Review, OPD for Office of Policy Development, POTUS for President of the United States, WHO for White House Office, CEA for Council of Economic Advisers, Default for emails not associated with an office and NSC for National Security Council.

Access

Collection is open to all researchers. Access to Clinton Presidential Records is governed by the Presidential Records Act (PRA) (44 U.S.C. Chapter 22, as amended) and the Freedom of Information Act (FOIA) (5 U.S.C. 552, as amended) and therefore records may be restricted in whole or in part in accordance with legal exemptions.

Copyright

Documents in this collection that were prepared by officials of the United States government as part of their official duties are in the public domain. Researchers are advised to consult the copyright law of the United States (17 U.S.C. Chapter 1) which governs the making of photocopies or other reproductions of copyrighted material.

Provenance

Official records of William Jefferson Clinton’s presidency are housed at the Clinton Presidential Library and administered by the National Archives and Records Administration (NARA) under the provisions of the Presidential Records Act (PRA).

Processed by

Staff Archivist, June 2013. Previously restricted materials are added as they are released.

Last Modified Date

2015-09-21

Container List

View all digitized files in the National Archives Catalog (NAC)

The following is a list of documents and folders processed in response to FOIA 2009-1295-F:
Box 1
Clinton Preisdential Records; White House Staff and Office Files
National Security Council
Multilateral & Humanitarian Affairs

Busby, Scott
Algeria [1] [OA/ID 1889]
Algeria [2] [OA/ID 1889]
Algeria [3] [OA/ID 1889]
Algeria [4] [OA/ID 1889]
Schwartz, Eric
Algeria, 1997 [OA/ID 3214]
Vaccaro, Jonathan
Algeria [OA/ID 2207]
Wippman, David
Algeria [OA/ID 1570]
Clinton Presidential Records: Automated Records Management System [Email]
NSC [OA/ID 1200000]
[Algeria and massacre…]
[09/02/1997 – 01/15/1998]
Clinton Presidential Records: NSC Cable, Email, and Records Management System
NSC Cables
Jan 1997 – Dec 1998 [OA/ID 520000]
[Algeria and massacre…]
[08/30/1997 – 09/08/1997]
Box 2
[09/11/1997 – 09/26/1997]
[10/01/1997 – 10/31/1997]
[11/03/1997 – 01/07/1998]
[01/08/1998 – 01/13/1998]
[01/14/1998 – 01/21/1998]
[01/22/1998 – 01/30/1998]
[02/02/1998 – 02/17/1998]
Clinton Presidential Records: NSC Cable, Email, and Records Management System (continued)
Box 3
NSC Emails
Exchange – Record (Sept 97 – Jan 01) [OA/ID 620000]
[Algeria and massacre…]
[09/03/1997 – 02/09/1998]
Exchange – Non-Record (Mar 97 – Jan 01) [OA/ID 630000]

[Algeria and massacre…]
[09/23/1997 – 02/13/1998]
NSC Records Management System
[Algeria]
9705949 [OA/ID 1638]
9706037 [OA/ID 1639]

Content Available Online