

## Urban Renewal, Social Housing, Relocation, and Violence in Algiers

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**Abstract :** Over the last decade, Algerian authorities have implemented an ambitious program of urban renewal, which includes important relocation operations. The objectives behind such strategic interventions are on the one hand, to carry out an incremental approach aiming at eradicating precarious housing and on the other hand, to diversify alternative housing options for families requiring better living spaces. It is precisely for these same purposes that the Djenan el-Hassan and Carrières Jaubert estates, which are both located in Algiers, have undergone major urban transformations. These dwelling sites were built as part of the famous "Battle of Housing", which was launched by French colonial administration in the 1950s just before the independence of Algeria in 1962. Today, the Djenan el-Hassan estate is almost entirely demolished following the relocation of 171 families. The Carrières Jaubert estate, for its part, has seen two kinds of operations. The first has been shaped by a process of urban requalification and redevelopment, which allowed some of the residents to stay on site after the transformation of most housing cells into larger apartments. The second operation has required the relocation of over 300 families to entirely newly built dwellings. Such projects of urban renewal are supposed to create new opportunities, not only in terms of local urban development, but also in terms of social perspectives for those families who are involved, either directly or indirectly, in the process of relocation. In fact, the percentage of urban violence in Algiers has increased instead. Recent events in the newly built estates show that residents are repeatedly experiencing and even instigating episodes of brutality, hostility and aggression. The objective of this paper is to examine the causes that have engendered such rise in urban violence in newly built housing estates in Algiers. This paper aims to present the findings of a recent qualitative research and highlight the way that poorly designed neighbourhood, combined with a relocation process that leaves little room for community participation, create inevitably severe social tensions.

**Keywords :** relocation, social housing, violence, Algiers

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