



Algeria - Information on the terrorist organisation G.I.A. and whether they still active.

A May 2009 article by Lauren Vriens on the *Council on Foreign Relations* website under the heading 'Introduction', states:

"While the GIA is now largely defunct, it remains designated as a foreign terrorist organization by the U.S. State Department. Algerian and Western counterterrorism officials say that many members may have defected in recent years and joined al-Qaeda or its sister organization al-Qaeda in the Islamic Maghreb (AQIM)." (Council on Foreign Relations (27 May 2009) Armed Islamic Group (Algeria, Islamists))

Under the heading 'What is the status of the G.I.A. as of 2009?', the same article continues:

"The U.S. State Department dates the GIA's last significant terrorist attack to 2001, but this is debated. Some sources attribute the group with unclaimed terrorist attacks up until 2005, though the Salafist Group for Preaching and Combat (GSPC) is the more likely culprit. The Salafists, who ultimately became Al Qaeda in the Islamic Maghreb, eclipsed the GIA in numbers and popularity in 1998 by denouncing indiscriminate violence against civilians - a trademark of the GIA. The Salafists subsequently subsumed most of the GIA's networks and financial resources in Europe. The final blows came in 2004, when Algerian police forces launched a widespread crackdown (PDF) on all local terrorist groups. Over four hundred members of both the GIA and the Salafists were arrested in that sweep." (ibid)

The April 2009 *United States Department of State Country Reports on Terrorism* under the heading 'U.S. Government Designated Foreign Terrorist Organizations: ARMED ISLAMIC GROUP', states:

"ARMED ISLAMIC GROUP
a.k.a. GIA, al-Jama'ah al-Islamiyah al-Musallah, Groupement Islamique Arme

Description: The Armed Islamic Group (GIA) aims to overthrow the Algerian regime and replace it with a state governed by Sharia law. The GIA began its violent activity in 1992 after the military government suspended legislative elections in anticipation of an overwhelming victory by the Islamic Salvation Front, the largest Algerian Islamic opposition party.

Activities: The GIA engaged in attacks against civilians and government workers. The group began conducting a terrorist campaign of civilian massacres in 1992, sometimes wiping out entire villages and killing tens of thousands of Algerians, alienating itself from the Algerian populace. Since announcing its campaign against foreigners living in Algeria in 1992, the GIA killed more than 100 expatriate men and women, mostly Europeans, in the

country. Almost all of the GIA's members have now joined other Islamist groups or have been killed or captured by the Algerian government. The Algerian government's September 2005 reconciliation program led to an increase in the number of GIA terrorist suspects who surrendered to security forces. Algerian press continues to report attacks local people attribute to the GIA, but the most recent significant attacks known to be perpetrated by the GIA occurred in August 2001. After the arrest of the GIA's last known emir and subsequent counterterrorism operations, the Algerian government declared that the GIA network was almost entirely broken up.

Strength: Precise numbers are unknown, but the group continues to decline.

Location/Area of Operation: Algeria

External Aid: Unknown." (United States Department of State (30 April 2009) *Country Reports on Terrorism 2008*)

An April 2009 *Associated Press Worldstream* news article states:

"Al-Qaida in Islamic North Africa is leftover from fighting between armed Islamic groups and Algeria's secular-leaning security forces that killed up to 200,000 people during the 1990s. The group, which allied with Osama bin Laden's terror network in 2006, claimed in an Internet statement it conducted 26 attacks in March, killing at least 25 people and injuring over 50.

The bloodshed, a significant increase compared to recent months, includes the slaying of an army lieutenant colonel, several large clashes with the military, one suicide bombing and a raid last week on a police station." (Associated Press Worldstream (2 April 2009) *Islamic militants increase attacks in Algeria*)

An April 2005 *BBC News* article reports:

"Algerian authorities say they have arrested the leader of an Islamic rebel group suspected of killing 14 civilians in an ambush earlier this month.

Boulououar Oukil of the Armed Islamic Group (GIA), the interior ministry said in a statement.

It said the security forces also seized a large arms cache in the operation. Dozens of people have died in recent attacks by militants who oppose the policy of reconciliation of Algeria's President Abdelaziz Bouteflika.

The interior ministry statement also said that another GIA member - Mohamed Chama - was also captured during the operation." (BBC News (29 April 2005) *Algeria's top GIA rebel captured*)

References:

Associated Press Worldstream (2 April 2009) *Islamic militants increase attacks in Algeria*
www.lexisnexis.com

(This is a subscription site)
(Accessed 4 December 2009)

BBC News (29 April 2005) *Algeria's top GIA rebel captured*
<http://news.bbc.co.uk/2/hi/africa/4500171.stm>
(Accessed 4 December 2009)

Council on Foreign Relations (27 May 2009) *Armed Islamic Group (Algeria, Islamists)*
http://www.cfr.org/publication/9154/armed_islamic_group_algeria_islamists.html
(Accessed 4 December 2009)

United States Department of State (30 April 2009) *Country Reports on Terrorism 2008*
<http://www.state.gov/s/ct/rls/crt/2008/122449.htm>
(Accessed 4 December 2009)

This response was prepared after researching publicly accessible information currently available to the Refugee Documentation Centre within time constraints. This response is not and does not purport to be conclusive as to the merit of any particular claim to refugee status or asylum. Please read in full all documents referred to.

Sources Consulted:

Amnesty International
BBC News
European Country of Origin Information Network
Freedom House
Human Rights Watch
International Crisis Group
Immigration and Refugee Board of Canada
IRIN News
Lexis Nexis
Refugee Documentation Centre Query Database
United Kingdom: Home Office
UNHCR Refworld
United States Department of State