



ARMED ISLAMIC GROUP [GIA]

PRESENTED TO : Dr. MARTIN MILLS

PRESENTED BY : ANDLIB KHAN

Student ID NO : 04935048

ALGERIA AND THE THREAT OF ISLAMIST INSURGENTS

Radical Islam is not a novelty in post-colonial Algeria .¹Islam has long been associated with politics in Algeria,served as a source of national identity and, as in so many other Muslim societies, was also the natural cultural rallying point of Algerian resistance to colonial control.The post-liberation Algerian state, despite its strong socialist orientation, explicitly recognised Islam in the constitution as a pillar of state and society.² Ideologically the Algerian Muslim Fundamentalist are among the most radical in North Africa .Unlike their Egyptian or Tunisian counterparts they advocate a complete restructuring of society "in an attempt to realize the City of God on Earth."³ The emergence of the Islamic movement in Algeria has largely been attributed to the disillusionment of the masses with the prolonged rule of the FLN.(National Liberation Front).The FIS (Islamic Salvation Front) the largest and most active political party ,was created in March 1989 in Algeria.It adopted a strategy to first win over municipalities(elections of 1990)⁴.and then create an Islamic state ruled by the Sharia, Islam's sacred law . Since then religion and politics have played an intertwined and complex role in Algerian society. In the 1992, the first free elections since Algeria gained independence, the FIS decisively defeated the FLN. Shocked by the size of the Islamists' political victory and suspecting that President Benjedid had cut a deal with the FIS, the

¹ Gerrie Swart and Hussein Solomon,Algeria: The Politics of Fundamentalism and Extremism

http://www.ai.org.za/electronic_monograph.asp?ID=14

² Ibid.

³ Religion in Politics ,A World Guide,Longman international reference.longman group,uk 1989.

⁴ Roy,Oliver.1994The Faliure Of Political Islam London:.I.B.Tauris.p.80.

army ousted Benjedid on January 11, 1992, canceled the elections, banned the FIS.⁵ The military coup discredited the moderate wing of the FIS that had put such trust in electoral institutions as a way to bring about change. The resultant public outcry turned violent, and the paramilitary wing of the FIS began targeting security forces. This, along with the fact that many of the key leaders of the FIS were in prison, allowed more radical elements to rise to the fore, especially those who formed the Armed Islamic Group (GIA). The GIA, The Armed Islamic Group (known by its French acronym, GIA), a radical offshoot of Algeria's main Islamist opposition emerged as one of several radical FIS splinter factions that have continued to fight against Algeria's FLN-supported, military-dominated regimes, from the government that ruled the country until 1999 to the current, more conciliatory leadership. Despite GIA's terrorism, the organisation nevertheless emerged as the leading insurgent organisation by mid-1994, embracing most Islamist insurgent groups in Algeria, apart from FIS' armed wing, the *Armée Islamique du Salut* (AIS). The GIA called for a total war to establish an Islamic State; the AIS saw the political violence as a means to reestablish an electoral process.⁶ Since then politics and religious fundamentalism continue to remain in an uneasy and violent discourse in Algeria. Both political action and religious fundamentalism have become tools of oppression, terror and a means of response to either side's fundamentally unjust course of action.

⁵ James A. Phillips. The Rising Threat of Revolutionary Islam in Algeria.

⁶ Hafez, Mohammad. Armed Islamic Movements and Political Violence in Algeria. The Middle East Journal. Vol54, No.4, Autumn 2000, p.573

IDEOLOGICAL ROOTS OF GIA

The ideological roots of modern day Islamic fundamentalism are not of recent origin. The Salafiyya current of Islamic reform and purification surfaced in the Maghrib in the period between two world wars. The insurgencies in Algeria provide a Sunni example of a radical Salafist movement. The key attributes of these radical Salafist movements are the glorification of the armed struggle to establish the Islamist state by force with an intention to build a modern caliphate for the whole world. The creation of Muslim Brotherhood became the cornerstone for most of today's Islamist movements. At that time Sayyid Qutb (1906-1966), a radical exegete advocated jihad, or holy war, as a means to shake off the shackles of repressive secular regimes. The Algerian Association of Muslim Ulemas (1931) shared the same views as the Egyptian but never pushed the idea of an Islamic state. The first instance of armed insurgency was undertaken by the Armed Islamic Movement (MIA), the official military wing of the FIS. Many religious parties, associations, parties and organisations arose in post-liberation Algerian state who rejected the state's monopoly on Islamic discourse, such as al-Qiyam, FIS, Hamas and Nahda. Some of them based their strategy on direct political participation in national politics through the political socialisation and mobilisation of the masses but others (radical Islamic movements) composed of militant and hard-line groups seek the immediate transformation of both state and society through an insurgent strategy, such as the Armed Islamic Movement (MIA), the Armed Islamic Group (GIA) and the Islamic Salvation Army (AIS).

EMERGENCE OF GIA

The spectacular rise of GIA in Algeria stunned the Western media. The origins and history of the Armed Islamic Group is somewhat obscure, but according to its spokesman, it was founded in 1989 and carried its first armed operation in 1991.⁷ The group's origin goes back to the so called bouyali group (1982-1987), which was the first Islamist armed underground organisation in Algeria after independence. The bouyali advocated the idea that the armed struggle was the only of bringing about an Islamic state.⁸ Bouyali was active with armed groups in 1982. After his death in 1987, his followers split into two groups; one led by Abdelkader Chebouti and Said Makloufi (formerly an FIS member), which became the MIA; and another, led by Mansouri Melliane, which were autonomous, nameless groups. After the 1992 events, Melliane's group joined with Mohammed Les Veilletts (formerly an FIS member, who later established self-defense groups). The merger created many armed groups which called themselves Islamic, thence the name GIA.⁹ The end of Afghan War where many GIA guerillas had fought and release from the prison of bouyali's main comrade-in-arms al Mililani facilitated the formation of GIA movement. It was Afghans in Algeria, among them Mourad Sid Ahmed, who transformed the relatively loose groups into a terrorist organization, with a markedly anti-FIS stance. Following the death of Les Veilletts, who refused to target the FIS, an uneducated youth, Abdel Haq Layada, was deployed as the GIA leader, and declared himself "commander in chief of the GIA" in January 1993. His explicit denunciation of the FIS was to become a trademark of the GIA. This occurred prior to the formation of the AIS, a regular, armed resistance force, under the FIS in early 1993. From the very beginning the GIA declared that it was not military wing of FIS and was not struggling for rehabilitation of FIS. Whereas FIS never felt the need to develop

⁷ FFI Rapport: Islamist Insurgencies, Diasporic Support Networks and their Host States: The case of Algerian GIA in Europe 1993-2000.

<http://www.nupi.no/IPS/?/module=Files;action=File.getFile;ID=643>

⁸ FFI Rapport: Islamist Insurgencies, Diasporic Support Networks and their Host States: The case of Algerian GIA in Europe 1993-2000

⁹ Muriel Mirak-Weissbach. The case of the GIA: Afghans out of theater in Executive Intelligence Review. http://www.larouchepub.com/other/1995/2241_gia.html

an armed wing until GIA established itself .It was only in 1992 that FIS declared Jihad against the military regime .According to a leading member of FIS(Qamerdin),” the hesitation of[FIS]in declaring jihad was a mistake which led to other grave mistakes ,one of which is the [GIA].”¹⁰

¹⁰ . Hafez, Mohammad. Armed Islamic Movements and Political Violence in Algeria. The Middle East Journal. Vol54, No.4, Autumn 2000. p.576

AIMS & PHILOSOPHY OF GIA

The spiritual leader of GIA is sheikh abdel-haq -el-ayedia, while its many members follow mustafa bou'ali ,a militant islamic imam. . It is a puritan anti- -foreigner anti-Christian anti-moderate,anti women, anti secular, anti-Christian ,anti-Jewish anti government, anti intellectual group. The group's ideology is based on a fatwa (an islamic injunction)issued by sheikh abdel-haq-el-ayedia,a prominent islamic scholar 'Alim',which says that algeria'a ruling leaders are infidels and fighting against this regime is justified .The GIA not only condemned the FIS electoral strategy but ominously declared, "Power is within the range of our Kalashnikovs."¹¹ It professed that the failure of the Islamic movement to reclaim power was due to a lack of resolution in the pursuit of jihad. Since a number of the leaders of the GIA had fought as volunteers against the Soviets in Afghanistan during the 1980s, the argument resonated that armed force could bring down an "illegitimate" regime The challenge of the GIA was not just to the regime but to moderate Islamists who had participated in the political process and accepted its demands and limitations. ¹²GIA has not only embraced the use of violent GIA has not only embraced the use of violence against the regime but is unprepared to negotiate or accept any sort of cease-fire. In this way they GIA is different from both FIS and AIS ,who view Jihad only as a means to establish an Islamic state and not as an Islamic imperative as GIA claims.AIS (in AIS communiqué)also denied the GIA 's claim of being the only legitimate Islamist group in Algeria carrying out war(jihad) against infidels.

¹¹ Takeyh,Ray.Islamism in Algeria: A struggle between hope and agony **Middle East Policy**,Summer2003

(http://www.cfr.org/pub7335/ray_takeyh/islamism_in_algeria_a_struggle_between_hope_and_agony.php#)

¹² Ibid.

STRUCTURE ,TACTICS AND TARGETS OF GIA

The GIA is highly fragmented ,structured loosely and has fluctuating membership. Leadership is diffuse and the hierarchical structure is secretive and ill-defined. Most decisionmaking is informal and based on consensus within a consultative group of governing members. Unlike radical Islamic groups in other countries, the GIA does not have an authoritative religious figure who can hold its various factions together and arbitrate disputes within the organization The jurisdiction of the GIA is divided into three regions or military zones in the East, West, and Middle of the state, each of which is lead by a Vice-Emir. The top echelons of the GIA consist of several emirs. There has been internal conflict over the leadership of the military arm of the GIA, El-Djama'a, which has weakened the unity and effectiveness of the organization. The following people are known to be emirs if the GIA: El Mansouri El-Miliani, Abdullah Qalek, Abdel-Haq Ayadia, Djafar El-Afghani, and Djamel El-Zitouni Its current leadership is not clear. In March 2002, the GIA reportedly appointed a new national *emir* (leader) to replace Antar Zouabri, the group's *emir* from 1996 until his February 2002 death at the hands of Algerian security forces. Its headquarter is Algiers, Algeria where 60-65% of their cadres operate.other major operational sites are Boumerdes-Blida region; Bel-Abbes, Tiaret, Tlemcen France.

.It relays primarily on internal sources for funding. Extortion and theft are the principal means for obtaining money and arms. Weapons are also stolen during skirmishes with government officials and procured through European based trafficking. The group probably received logistical and some financial support from the Saudi dissident Usamabin Laden's group.(FFI Report on Islamist Insurgencies ,2001)GIA has employed a variety of methods to recruit its members,like youth clubs ,mosques,by providing shelter and threat and force is also used.¹³ . The decision to join seems motivated by social alienation rather than religious conviction. Some GIA cells resemble extortion

¹³ FFI Rapport:Islamist Insurgencies,Diasporic Support Networks and their Host States:The case of Algerian GIA in Europe 1993-2000.

rings, devoid of religious or political ideals.

GIA use the most violent tactics as individual murders usually by throat-slitting, shooting in the head, mass terrorist attacks are usually done by bombing, using explosives of the type also used by military. The GIA's terrorist tactics, particularly its use of massive car bombs and kidnappings, are similar to those of Hezbollah (Party of God), the pro-Iranian Lebanese Islamist group¹⁴

GIA targets both Algerians and others. Intellectuals, writers, journalists, persons involved in mass media, singers—anyone deemed hostile to their "cause"—was a target. It then moved to killing on the basis of guilt by association: relatives, particularly women and girls, of police or soldiers. Other targets have been government officials, military officials, diplomats and foreigners in Algeria, excluding Americans and Germans (because the United States and Germany granted asylum to Islamic leaders and take a different stance on the Algerian crisis than France). The GIA, known as the most ruthless of the Algerian Islamic fundamentalist terrorist groups, spares neither babies, nor the elderly. The GIA's justification is that it has chosen such a wide variety of targets because it is fighting a cultural war, not just a political war.¹⁵ On May 13, 1993, the GIA and MIA held a unification meeting, during which two former FIS leaders, Mohammed Said and Abdel Rezak Rajam, joined. Following the merger of GIA and MIA, large-scale terror attacks were organized. FIS responded with the formation of AIS which from the very beginning made it clear that its tactics and aims were different from the GIA's. As it aimed to attack only those state employees who directly aided the regime in its fight against Islamism. AIS also was different in attacking foreigners, and aimed to attack those who support and help the military regime in providing training for fighting against mujahidins. The only convergence between GIA and AIS was over the question of

¹⁴ James A. Phillips. *The Rising Threat of Revolutionary Islam in Algeria*.

<http://www.heritage.org/Research/Africa/BG1060.cfm>

¹⁵ Ibid.

attacking press.¹⁶

¹⁶ . Hafez, Mohammad. Armed Islamic Movements and Political Violence in Algeria. The Middle East Journal. Vol54, No.4, Autumn 2000, p.580

It is said that GIA was formed out of a bitter struggle for control of Algeria between Islamists and the country's authoritarian leadership. After winning independence from France in 1962, the country was governed by a socialist party called the National Liberation Front (FLN). Following a series of youth riots in the late 1980s, the FLN allowed the country's first multiparty elections. When a party of moderate and radical Islamists called the Islamic Salvation Front (FIS) won a round of parliamentary elections in 1991, the FLN nullified the victory and banned the FIS. The end of the Afghan war where many GIA guerrillas had fought and release from the prison of Bouyali's main comrade-in-arms al Milyani facilitated the formation of GIA. In the course of 1993 and 1994, reportedly, numerous persons associated with the FIS split from it to join the GIA, as well as targeted assassinations, in both cases hitting civilians, as well as selected government-related figures. Following the death on Feb. 26, 1994 of the GIA leader, Ahmed Sid Mourad, alias Djafar Al-Afghani, the GIA reportedly split into numerous "little GIAs" and a parallel atomization process was noted in the Algerian intelligence services. . .

Algeria plunged into a bloody civil war in 1992 and the group (GIA) has been linked to terrorist attacks in Europe and to the massacres of tens of thousands of civilians in Algeria.

AIMS AND PHILOSOPHY OF GIA

The GIA has claimed to be the only true representative of the Islamic movement and vows to establish an Islamic state by any means, among them its declared 'total war' on the government. . Anyone perceived of as linked in any way to the Algerian state, primarily the security forces, is singled out by these groups as a target of their terror. It considers anything or anyone connected with what it dubs "the impious, illegitimate state" to be a fair target. disposing the regime is going to Islam so it justifies all violent means used to fight against this un-Islamic force. According to the State Department, the GIA "aims to overthrow the secular Algerian regime and replace it with an Islamic state." Beyond that, however, the GIA has not articulated precise political goals, and GIA cells are said to operate independently. Most recent GIA attacks are thought to be either acts of retribution, assaults on wayward members, or simple banditry. The GIA's philosophy was as simple as it was self-defeating. The partisans of the GIA made it clear that their goal diverged from that of the FIS; they did not seek the resumption of the electoral process or the rehabilitation of the political order, but the creation of an Islamic Utopia through armed resistance. The human way - elections - had failed. Now the only option was to engage in jihad against an illegitimate regime that claimed to be Muslim but that was, in the eyes of the radicals, an infidel order. GIA's aims are of mainly two types: religious and political. It is therefore:

- Anti-foreigner: In October, 1993 the GIA issued warnings to foreigners to leave Algeria or be killed. Since the outbreak of violence in 1992, eighty-four foreigners have been killed, of whom 30 were French.

In January 1995, ultimatums were issued to the embassies of Germany, France, United States, Great Britain, Russia, among others, threatening them unless they closed shop. The letter was signed by the Front Islamique du Salut (FIS: Islamic Salvation Front), Armée Islamique du Salut (AIS: Islamic Salvation Army), MIA, and GIA. The FIS and affiliated organizations denied any association with the letter.

Terrorist actions carried out on French soil have been justified by the GIA, as acts of reprisal against the French government, for its economic, military and political support of the Algerian government.

- Anti intellectual :
- Anti secular:
- Anti-Christian: The front-page headlines of *Al-Ansar*, issue no. 94 of April, 27, 1995 give a perfect image of the "clash of civilizations" and the fight between religions which the GIA promotes: "The 'Christian' government of the Philippines carries out annihilation operations against Arab migrants," "The Crusaders' missionary campaigns continue in the Muslim areas of Central Asia," etc.
- : The same issue of *Al-Ansar* features anti-Semitic propaganda in its front-page headlines: "Rabin, the pig, says that the goal behind the new satellite is to help 'Jewish' intelligence detect Muslim movements." The editorial of the same issue is dedicated to the attack on Yitzhak Rabin's government and the Jews, "the decendants of pig and apes." The Jews, the editorial reads, "have managed to survive and expand their territories, through treachery, expansion and oppression. They want to complete their schemes for a greater Israel 'from the Nile to the Euphrates.' "
- Anti-women: In May 1994, the GIA issued an edict, signed by Abu Abdallah Ahmed, saying that any woman married to an "atheist" must leave him or be killed. Furthermore, any woman who married any government official was sentenced to death. Any woman who refused the GIA's practice of "marriage of pleasure" was sentenced to death. Women who do not wear the veil are frequently killed.
- Anti-moderate: Leading targets have been members of the FIS, especially those actively engaged in probes and negotiations with the U.S. administration, as well as with other moderate opposition groups, to end the civil war and return to democracy. In November 1993, the GIA rejected "all dialogue, any truce and any reconciliation" with government forces. The GIA claimed responsibility for assassinating those favorable to dialogue, in a letter to major Algerian newspapers in 1994.

In July 1995, Sheik Abdelbaki Sahraoui, 85, a founding member of the FIS and a moderate, was assassinated in a Paris mosque. The GIA issued communiqué 37, signed by Abou Abderrahmane Amie, days earlier, threatening that it would kill him, as well as six other FIS leaders in Europe, including Germany-based Rebah Kebir. They were "sentenced" for having sought a negotiated solution to the crisis. (The authenticity of communiqué 37 was questioned widely in the French and Arabic press, which suggested it could have been issued by the Algerian military

security, which was considered possibly the author of the murder as well.)

- Anti-government, anti-technology: *Al-Ansar* (No. 94) contains reports of killing of civilians, men and women, and sabotage of infrastructure and industry; 1. "the Death Brigades in the capital Algier carried out an operation against the 'doomed' Al-Hadji" (a woman, professor of civil engineering at the College of Harrash). She was immediately killed and her husband seriously injured. 2. "The Signers-with-Blood Brigade set off a car bomb in a residential area where prominent military officers and their families live." (A dozen people were killed, none of them was a military officer.) 3. "Members of a GIA brigade in Constantine kidnapped a grocer who was known for his loyalty to the tyrants [the regime]. After a brief interrogation he was beheaded by the mujahideen according to God's *Sharia*." 4. "Three agents of the regime were kidnapped and beheaded by the mujahideen in Belabbas." 5. "The units of sabotage and destruction bombed and destroyed a major gypsum plant 20 km to the south of Wahran."

Death cult: Issue no. 94 of *Al-Ansar* documents the ideas of some sheikhs who back the GIA. These sheikhs try to justify the satanic murders of women and children, using Islam and the whole Qur'an as an ideological base. One of those is based in London, Sheikh Abu Qatadeh Al Falastini (see below).

A sampling of the newsletter's satanic expressions includes: "Death Brigades"; "Signers-with-Blood Brigades"; "Hang the last infidel ruler from the intestines of the last [Christian] priest!"; "this spirit is enriched with the love of death"; "my dear brothers ... mutilated corpses ... skulls ... terrorism, how beautiful these words are!"; "no doubt that the crack of bullets and the glistening of knives are the best cure for the ill chests"; "the four knights [who hijacked the Air France jet] wrote with their blood in Marseille airport the message that nations cannot be built but with corpses, and glory with blood, states with bones and skulls, and that the greatest nations in history has been the nations that mastered the *death industry*"; "blood and corpses create glory ... and death creates life" (emphasis in original).

The Strategy Plan of the GIA Command Council in January 1994

1. "to lay down a comprehensive national strategy for the military field operations.
2. lay down a precise information strategy to break the barrier of the internal and external media black-out.
3. provide a more effective framework for the masses.
4. discipline the arms smuggling networks and find new networks for the GIA.
5. find networks for fundraising and its use.
6. make a register of the number of martyrs, fighters, and prisoners, in order to be able to

care for their families and cover their needs.

7. break the siege that has been imposed on the Medea province by extending the circle of the operations in order to incorporate all parts of the country.

8. monitor and kill activist traitors, hypocrites and spies.

9. discipline the group [i.e. GIA] to keep its conduct within the juridical boundaries (*al-hudud al-shar'iyah*), and spread juridical knowledge (*al-'ilm al-shar'i*) among the fighters.”⁷³

Source: “The Armed Islamic Group in Algeria reveals to ‘al-Wasat’ its plans and goals (in Arabic),” al-Wasat 30 January 1994.

Mustapha Bouyali, early leader, shot by security forces, early 1987. Was known as a "Robin Hood," who recruited impoverished youth for spectacular actions.

The new head, Rachid Abou Tourab, vowed to step up attacks until an Islamist state was established in Algeria. However, some experts say GIA's cells probably don't follow a single leader and consider Zouabri just one of the group's more notorious figures

FUNDING GIA cells support themselves by such varied means as robbing banks, raiding villages, drugs, and “taxing” the inhabitants of lands they control. GIA militants arm themselves with guns stolen from police posts and the bodies of dead soldiers. They gather money from Algerians living abroad, mostly in Western Europe, and, according to the Algerian regime, from the Iranian and Sudanese governments.

The organization receives financial and logistical aid from Algerian expatriates, many of whom reside in Western Europe. As has Egypt, Algeria has accused Iran and Sudan of supporting the GIA from training camps in Sudan. Most observers believe that Iranian and Sudanese aid to the GIA has probably not been decisive in the GIA's development or its activities. In addition, moves toward rapprochement between Sudan and Algeria suggest that Algeria no longer considers Khartoum substantially involved in Algerian terrorism. informatiDuring the 1990s funds to the GIA's insurgency campaign in Algeria were raised in a number

of ways. There on on **external sponsorship** for the GIA, but US intelligence and law enforcement officials speaking on conditions of

One possible avenue for fundraising was the numerous **mosques** throughout Europe

RECRUITMENT There are reports of 20,000 to 25,000 fighters in the El-Djama'a, the military wing of the GIA. The fighters are a mixture of veteran Afghani war fighters (200-300) and supporters of Mostafa Bou'ali, a militant Islamic group. The majority are recruited from Algeria's scores of jobless, young men, with little formal education or religious training. The decision to join seems motivated by social alienation rather than religious conviction. Some GIA cells resemble extortion rings, devoid of religious or political ideals. They are concentrated in the Algerian region of Algeria, in the Atlas Mountains, West and East of Algeria along the Moroccan and Tunisian borders as well as along the Sahara.

TACTICS

TARGETS The GIA has condemned all foreigners to death if they choose to reside in Algeria. One GIA leader named foreigners as "the main coronary artery" of a plan to "colonize" Algeria with non-Muslims. The GIA believes that killing non-Muslims will send a message to non-Muslims and will weaken the ruling infidels.

Weapons /use of force

Loose or splinter groups:

The GIA has split up into several dissident groups. These include:

1. The more ruthless GIA is based south of Algiers and has only about 60 fighters. The group includes hard-core veterans of the Afghan war against Soviet occupation in the 1980s. In addition, autonomous groups exist outside the hierarchy of the GIA but share its doctrine, which holds that the Algerian people are infidels and therefore should be massacred without religious sanction.
2. Humaat Adaaw a al-Salafiya (Defenders of the Salafi Call). Their strength is estimated at 60 or 70 men, and they operate in the provinces of Ain Defla and Relizane.
3. The Salafi Group for Jihad, composed of about 60 men, is active in the provinces of Ain Defla and Tissemsilt.

4. The Fighting Salafi Group, numbering about 80 men, is close to the GSPC and active in a triangle between the provinces of Chlef, Tiaret and Tissemsilt in the Ouarsenis Mountains.

5. Other groups that have also emerged include the Islamic Salvation Army, the Islamic League for Call and Jihad and the Ansar and Mawt Battallion, most of which have no relation to the GIA.

The GIA's taste for bloody massacres has alienated some of its members over the years, who have formed several splinter groups, most notably the Salafist Group for Preaching and Combat (known by the French acronym GSPC). Now considered one of Algeria's biggest threats, the GSPC says it limits its attacks to military and government targets, including police convoys. One press report said that this breakaway faction might have ties to Usama bin Ladin. ⁶

POLITICAL ACTIVITIES:

RELIGIOUS ACTIVITIES:

MILITANCY BY GIA:

The GIA's massacres of civilians reached their height in the mid-1990s. Other GIA targets have included Algerian journalists, intellectuals, and secular schools. More recently, the GIA was thought to be behind two bombings in Algiers in August 2001.

The GIA is also accused of killing more than one hundred foreigners, mostly Europeans, since 1993. The group has a particular disdain for France, the country's former colonial ruler and a major supporter of Algeria's military-backed regime. In 1994, GIA members hijacked an Air France flight, and in late 1999, a French court convicted several GIA members for a series of bombings in France in 1995.

- **LOCAL** Assassination of President Mohamed Boudiaf, on June 29, 1992, attributed to "Islamists" but widely believed to be the work of "mafia" elements within counterintelligence/military security.
- Bomb in Algiers airport, Aug. 26, 1992
- Assassination of economist, strategic think-tanker, former education minister, Djillali Lyabes, in Algiers on March 16, 1993.
- Assassination of Laadi Dr. Flici, former independent political candidate, poet, doctor, in Casbah on March 17, 1993.
- Assassination of Tahar Djaout, journalist and writer, in Algiers, on May 26, 1993.
- Assassination by knifing of Mahfoud Boucebsi, renowned psychiatrist in Algiers, on June 14, 1993.
- Throat cut of Muhamed Boukhobza, sociologist, in Algiers, on June 22, 1993.
- Assassination of former prime minister and ex-chief of military security, Kasdi Merbah, who was trying to mediate contacts between Islamists and government, in Algiers, on Aug. 21, 1993.
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- *INTERNATIONAL* Assassination of first foreigners, two French geometers, on Sept. 21, 1993.
- Throat cut of Youssef Sebti, poet, in Algiers, on Dec. 28, 1993.
- Killings of 12 Christian Croatian and Bosnian workers in Dec. 1993.
- Assassination of singer Cheb Hasni in Oran on Sept. 29, 1994.
- Bomb at cemetery in Mostaganem, on Nov. 1, 1994, attributed to GIA, but reportedly the work of the eradicators.

Air France airliner hijacking, in Marseilles, France, on Dec. 26, 1994.

The GIA continued to target foreigners in 1996 and killed at least nine, a sharp decline from the 31 foreigners the group killed in 1995. The total number of foreigners killed by the GIA since 1992 exceeds 110. Most were "soft" targets, including a former Bulgarian attaché, who was found beheaded in a forest in mid-November. Although no claims were made for his murder, Algiers blamed the GIA for his death. In August the GIA claimed responsibility for the murder of the French Bishop of Oran, who was killed by a bomb placed outside his residence.

Earlier in 1996 the GIA kidnapped and later beheaded seven French monks from their monastery near Medea. The GIA issued a communique claiming that the monks had been killed because Paris had refused to negotiate with the insurgent group. Algerian extremists are suspected in an explosion in a Paris subway on 3 December that killed four and wounded more than 80. The bomb used in that attack was similar to those used by the GIA in its bombing campaign in France in 1995.

RELATIONS WITH OTHER GROUPS:

Publications produced in Pakistan, Sweden, and Poland. It has a cell in Belgium, estimated to have 30-40 militants, and 400 passive supporters. Its cell in London has been designated by FIS representative Abou Oussama in

Belgium, as the "branch of the GIA ultras."

- *Al-Ansar (The Supporters)*, a weekly Arabic newsletter, mailing address: Box 3027, 13603 Hanninge, Sweden. Also reportedly published in Poland, where it has a post office address.
- Mouvement Islamique Armé (MIA: Islamic Armed Movement), joined with GIA in 1993, has no independent existence now

It has been suggested that there is a connection between GIA group and the Saudi newspaper *Al Hayat*, published from London, Paris and Beirut. There are also suggestions that many of the actions ascribed to GIA have been performed by government troops in disguise, in

The "Martyrs for Morocco" professed allegiance to the ideology of the GIA

The GIA with other North African Islamist groups, likely have multiple allegiances: from supporting Islamic militants in their own countries to other Islamist causes, such as the "Islamic" branch of the Chechen resistance and Zarqawi's terrorist group in Iraq.

According to some sources, GIA leaders probably had contact with Osama bin Laden while fighting in the 1979-89 Afghan war. GSPC rebels pledged allegiance to al-Qaeda in 2003. European authorities have arrested numerous Algerian militants suspected of being al-Qaeda operatives plotting attacks in various European cities, some allegedly involving chemical weapons.⁷

CONCLUSION:

Government security forces made substantial progress against the Islamic Salvation Army (AIS)-the reported military wing of the Islamic Salvation Front-that primarily attacks government related targets. The government was less successful against the Armed Islamic Group (GIA), the most radical of the insurgent groups

FOOTNOTES:

1. Gerrie Swart and Hussein Solomon, Algeria: The Politics of Fundamentalism and Extremism

http://www.ai.org.za/electronic_monograph.asp?ID=14

2. Ibid.

3. Religion in Politics ,A World Guide, Longman international reference. longman group, uk 1989.

4. Roy, Oliver. 1994 The Failure Of Political Islam London: .I.B. Tauris. p.80.

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