

Al-Murabitun

Formerly known as al-Mulathamun Battalion



OVERVIEW

AS OF APRIL 2026

Al-Murabitun, which formed in 2013 as a merger of al-Mulathamun Battalion and another AQIM splinter group, is one of the four extremist groups that merged to form Jama'at Nusrat al-Islam wal-Muslimin (JNIM) in 2017. Historically, the group conducted high-profile attacks against local and foreign targets in northwest Africa as part of a campaign to build a Salafi-Islamist state and expel Western influence. The group ascribed to al-Qa'ida's ideology and swore allegiance to the amirs of al-Qa'ida, the Taliban, AQIM, and JNIM. In 2015, a faction of the group defected to ISIS, eventually becoming ISIS's Sahel network, while former amir Mokhtar Belmokhtar's faction retained its al-Qa'ida affiliation and eventually joined JNIM after Belmokhtar's death.

Operating Areas

Based primarily in North and West Africa; conducts operations primarily in Mali; previously operated in in Algeria, Burkina Faso, Libya, Mali, and Niger.

Members

Unknown

Tactics And Targets

Al-Murabitun now operates as a part of JNIM, which claims responsibility for the group's operations. Before becoming a part of JNIM, the group used small arms and explosives to attack civilian targets frequented or run by foreigners, including restaurants, hotels, mines, and energy facilities. It also targeted Malian, French, and UN forces in Mali, using small arms, machine guns, landmines, mortars, improvised explosive devices, and suicide car bombings.

Terrorist Group Designation

The US State Department designated al-Mulathamun Battalion as a foreign terrorist organization in December 2013. The US Treasury Department designated the group's now-deceased founder, Mokhtar Belmokhtar, as a terrorist in 2013.

KEY LEADERS



Hamza Tabankort

Possible leader of al-Murabitun within JNIM; explosives expert



Al-Murabitun *(continued)*

KEY LEADERS *(continued)*

**Mohammed Ould Nouini** [DECEASED]*a.k.a. Al-Hassan al-Ansari*

Served as al-Murabitun's representative in the announcement by extremist leaders of JNIM's formation; operational planner; killed in 2018

**Mokhtar Belmokhtar** [DECEASED]

Former amir of al-Mulathamun Battalion; founded al-Murabitun; killed in 2016

NOTABLE ATTACKS

18 January 2017**Gao, Mali**

Al-Murabitun conducts a VBIED attack on a Malian military base, killing more than 60 people and wounding 115.

14 March 2016**Grand Bassam, Cote d'Ivoire**

Al-Murabitun and AQIM attack a beach resort, killing 19 people and wounding 33.

15 January 2016**Ouagadougou, Burkina Faso**

Al-Murabitun and AQIM attack the Splendid Hotel and the Cafe Cappuccino, killing 29 people, including one US citizen; wounding 56, and taking more than 100 hostages. Security forces later free the hostages.

20 November 2015**Bamako, Mali**

Al-Murabitun and AQIM attack the Radisson Blu Hotel, killing 21 people, including one US citizen, and wounding seven.

16 January 2013**In-Amenas, Algeria**

Al-Mulathamun Battalion takes more than 800 people hostage during a four-day siege. At least thirty-seven civilians, including three US citizens, are killed.

