



ATTORNEY-GENERAL
THE HON PHILIP RUDDOCK MP

Submission No:.....1.....
Date Received: 17-10-06
Secretary:.....

16 OCT 2006

06/16792, 06/16802, 06/16803, 06/16797

The Hon David Jull MP
Chair
Parliamentary Joint Committee on Intelligence and Security
Parliament House
CANBERRA ACT 2600



Dear Mr Jull

I am writing to advise you that I have decided to re-list Abu Sayyaf Group (ASG), Jamiat ul-Ansar (JuA), Armed Islamic Group (GIA) and Salafist Group for Call and Combat (GSPC) as terrorist organisations for the purposes of section 102.1 of the *Criminal Code Act 1995* (the Criminal Code).

ASG, JuA, GIA and GSPC were last specified as terrorist organisations under the *Criminal Code Regulations 2004* with effect from 5 November 2004. Under subsection 102.1(3) of the Criminal Code the separate regulations listing these organisations will cease to have effect on 5 November 2006.

I am satisfied on reasonable grounds that ASG, JuA, GIA and GSPC are organisations directly or indirectly engaged in, preparing, planning, assisting in or fostering the doing of a terrorist act (whether or not a terrorist act has occurred or will occur).

The re-listing of ASG, JuA, GIA and GSPC will ensure that the offence provisions under Division 102 of the Criminal Code will apply.

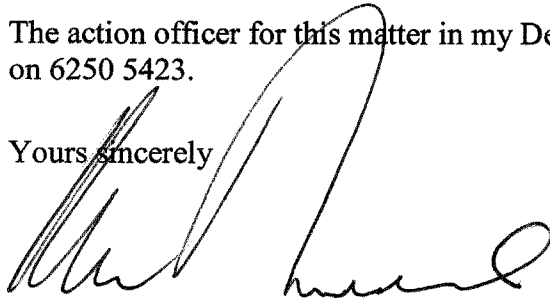
My decision to re-list ASG, JuA, GIA and GSPC was made following careful consideration of unclassified intelligence information provided by the Australian Security Intelligence Organisation (ASIO) in consultation with the Department of Foreign Affairs and Trade, in relation to these organisations, as well as legal advice provided to me by the Australian Government Solicitor.

Section 102.1A of the Criminal Code provides that the Parliamentary Joint Committee on ASIO, ASIS and DSD may review the regulation as soon as possible after it has been made, and report the Committee's comments and recommendations to each House of the Parliament before the end of the applicable disallowance period for that House.

To assist the Committee, should it decide to review the regulations, I enclose copies of the Statements of Reasons provided by ASIO, in relation to ASG, JuA, GIA and GSPC upon which my decision to re-list these organisations was based. Additional information detailing the procedure followed for the purposes of re-listing these organisations will be provided to you upon the registration of the regulation.

The action officer for this matter in my Department is Annabel Knott who can be contacted on 6250 5423.

Yours sincerely

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Philip Ruddock', written over the 'Yours sincerely' text.

Philip Ruddock

Abu Sayyaf Group (ASG)

Also known as: Al-Harakat Al-Islamiyya; Al-Harakat-ul Al-Islamiyya; Al-Harakatul-Islamia; Al-Harakat Al-Aslamiya; Abou Sayaf Armed Band; Abu Sayaff Group; Abou Sayyef Group and Mujahideen Commando Freedom Fighters

The following information is based on publicly available details about Abu Sayyaf Group (ASG). These details have been corroborated by material from intelligence investigations into the activities of the ASG. ASIO assesses that the details set out below are accurate and reliable.

ASG is listed in the United Nation's 1267 Committee's consolidated list and as a proscribed organisation by the governments of Canada, New Zealand, the United Kingdom and the United States of America.

Current status of the ASG

The ASG is a militant Islamic movement founded by Abdurajak Janjalani in 1991. The group formed in response to the peace process between the government of the Philippines and the Moro National Liberation Front (MNLF) when some of the most militant elements of the MNLF refused to engage in negotiations and accept the end of the established separatist movement in the Southern Philippines.

Abdurajak Janjalani participated in the Afghan-Soviet war in the 1980s and received training in the late 1980s to 1990s at a training camp in Afghanistan. There he met, trained and established transnational networks with key leaders and members of Islamic extremist groups including Usama bin Laden and Ramzi Yousef. Following the death of Abdurajak Janjalani in a shootout with police in Basilan on December 1998, his brother Khaddafy Janjalani became titular head or 'amir'.

The ASG can be characterised as a loose affiliation of groups, with each group having significant autonomy. The ASG is based in the Sulu archipelago in the Southern Philippines — primarily on the islands of Jolo, Basilan, and Tawi-Tawi — and central Mindanao. Historically, ASG has had a strong hold on Basilan, but continued Philippines military offensive operations against the group has greatly weakened, but not eliminated the ASG on Basilan. Currently, the ASG's most secure base of operations is on Jolo Island. Khaddafy Janjalani and his faction are thought to be on Jolo, along with other known ASG commanders such as Jainal Antel Sali (a.k.a. Abu Solaiman) and Isnilon Toton Hapilon. In addition, a small group of Jemaah Islamiyah (JI) members are reported to be co-located with Janjalani's ASG group on Jolo, including alleged Bali 2002 bombers Dulmatin and Umar Patek. These JI and ASG members and their followers were the target of Philippines military operations on Jolo in August 2006.

The ASG is known to have links to other Islamic extremist organisations such as JI and the Rajah Solaiman Movement (RSM). In return for shelter and facilitation of training activities, JI provides expert training in explosives to ASG members and has participated in terrorist attacks with ASG. ASG members have also received training from al-Qa'ida. The ASG has been involved in a number of terrorist attacks including assassination; bombings of civilian and military establishments and domestic infrastructure including

airports and ferries; kidnapping local officials and Western tourists; the beheading of local and Western hostages; and extortion against local and Western businesses.

The ASG has undertaken a number of terrorist attacks including the bombing of *Superferry 14* in Manila Bay on 27 February 2004; the three near-simultaneous bomb blasts in Makati City; Davao City; and General Santos City on 14 February 2005 and two bombings in Zamboanga City on 10 August 2005. In August 2006, the Philippines military recovered explosive devices; a large cache of chemicals and 6,000 Indian blasting caps on Jolo, which were attributed to the ASG. In September 2006, Philippines military and police forces seized 600kg of ammonium nitrate in Zamboanga reportedly intended for bombings by the ASG. Taken together, this confirms the ASG continues to have the capability (including current access to the necessary resources) and intent to conduct further terrorist attacks.

ASG funding derives from a range of sources. The ASG engages in opportunistic criminal attacks, including extortion, murder and kidnapping. The ASG also derives funds from Middle Eastern benefactors. On at least one occasion, the ASG sent a member to Saudi Arabia, nominally for language or religious instruction, but primarily to raise funds. This included lobbying wealthy Saudi benefactors and raising funds among expatriate Filipino workers. In addition, there have been allegations that a number of Islamic charities have supported the ASG including the International Islamic Relief Organisation (IIRO) and the International Islamic Studies Call and Guidance Centre (ISCAG).

Objectives

ASG's founding objective is to create an autonomous Islamic state encompassing the Southern Philippine island of Mindanao, surrounding islands and the Sulu archipelago.

Leadership and membership

Khadaffy Janjalani, younger brother of Abdurajak Janjalani, is the titular head or 'amir' of the ASG. The ASG membership consists primarily of young *Tausug* (the major ethnic group of the Sulu archipelago) Filipino Muslims whom at first were recruits from the island of Basilan, south of Mindanao. The ASG attract poverty-stricken unemployed young Muslims in the southern Philippines.

ASG numbers reached their peak in the mid to late 1990s when, after a spate of kidnappings and murders, many young Muslims flocked to the group. By mid-2001, ASG numbers were estimated to be between 800 and 850, but by 2002 numbers dropped significantly around the time the Philippines military launched a sustained campaign against the ASG. Despite significant losses resulting from military operations targeting the ASG in Basilan and Jolo, there is no evident decline in its capability to undertake terrorist acts.

ASG's engagement in terrorist attacks

Significant terrorist attacks which have been claimed by, or reliably attributed to ASG, have included:

- 23 April 2000: kidnapping of 21 people, including 10 foreign tourists, from the Malaysian resort island of Sipadan. This kidnapping was resolved in 2001 when the ASG received a \$15 million ransom from the Philippine Government;
- 28 August 2000: kidnapping of an American, Jeffrey Schilling, in Zamboanga City, whom the ASG believed was a CIA spy. Schilling escaped in April 2001;
- 27 May 2001: kidnapping of 20 people from the Philippine tourist resort of Dos Palmas on Palawan Island, in which several victims were subsequently murdered – including a US citizen. Another US citizen was killed during a rescue operation on 7 June 2002;
- 2 October 2002: bombing of a karaoke bar in Zamboanga City killing four people, including a US soldier and injured 24 others;
- 27 February 2004: bombing of Superferry 14 in Manila Bay which is estimated to have killed over 100 people;
- 14 February 2005: three near-simultaneous bomb blasts in Makati City, Davao City, and General Santos City killing eleven people and left approximately 150 injured; and
- 10 August 2005: two bombings in Zamboanga City wounding eight people.

Conclusion

The Criminal Code provides that for an organisation to be listed as a terrorist organisation, the Attorney-General must be satisfied that:

- (i) the organisation is directly or indirectly engaged in, preparing, planning, assisting in or fostering the doing of a terrorist act (whether or not a terrorist act has occurred or will occur); or
- (ii) the organisation advocates the doing of a terrorist act (whether or not a terrorist act has occurred or will occur).

On the basis of the above information, ASIO assesses that the ASG is directly preparing, planning, assisting in or fostering the doing of terrorist acts. It is submitted that the acts attributable to the ASG are terrorist acts as they:

- (i) are done with the intention of advancing a political cause, namely, the establishment of an Islamic state encompassing the southern Philippines;
- (ii) are intended to coerce or influence by intimidation the government of a foreign country, namely the Philippines, and/or intimidate a section of the Filipino public; and
- (iii) constitute acts which cause serious physical harm to persons, including death, as well as serious damage to property.

This assessment is corroborated by information provided by reliable and credible intelligence sources.

Jamiat ul-Ansar (JuA)

(Also known as: Harakat ul-Mujahideen (HuM), Movement of Holy Warriors, Harakat ul-Mujaheddin, Harakat ul-Mujahedeen, Islamic Freedom Fighters Movement, Islamic Freedom Fighters Group, Harakat ul-Mujahidin, Harakat ul-Mujahedin, Harkat ul-Mujahideen, Harakat Mujahideen (HM), Harakat-ul-Ansar (HuA), Harkat ul-Ansar, Al-Faran, Al-Hadid, Al-Hadith

The following information is based on publicly available details about Jamiat ul-Ansar (JuA). These details have been corroborated by material from intelligence investigations into the activities of JuA and from official reporting. ASIO assesses that the details set out below are accurate and reliable.

The JuA is listed in the United Nations 1267 Committee's consolidated list and by the governments of Canada, the United Kingdom, the United States, and Pakistan.

Current status of JuA

JuA is a Sunni Islamic extremist organisation based in Pakistan that operates primarily in Indian Administered Kashmir (IAK). Founded in 1985 as the Harakat ul-Mujahideen (HuM), JuA was initially formed with support from the Pakistan government to participate in the war against the Soviet Union in Afghanistan in the 1980s. Following the Soviet withdrawal from Afghanistan in 1989, JuA concentrated its efforts on the disputed territories of Kashmir and Jammu, where it has conducted numerous attacks against Indian troops, civilians, and tourists. Using the alternative name, al-Faran, in order to mask its activities, JuA has also kidnapped, and in some cases murdered, a number of foreigners.

JuA is aligned politically with Jamiat-e-Ulema-e-Islam Fazul Rehman faction (JUI-F), a prominent radical Islamic party in Pakistan and Kashmir. Funding for JuA is received through charitable donations collected from sympathisers in Pakistan and Kashmir and through Islamic charities in the United Kingdom and the Persian Gulf states. JuA has cooperated with other Islamist militant groups operating in Afghanistan, Kashmir and Pakistan such as the Hizb-ul-Mujahideen (HM), the Lashkar-e-Tayyiba (LeT), Jaish e-Muhammad (JeM), and the Sipah-e-Sahaba Pakistan (SSP).

In 1993 the JuA (then known as HuM) merged with another Kashmir-focused terrorist group, the Harakat-ul-Jehad-al-Islami (HuJI), to form the Harkat-ul-Ansar (HuA). As a consequence of reports linking the group to al-Qa'ida, HuA was proscribed as a terrorist organisation by the United States in 1997. The group immediately re-adopted the name Harakat ul-Mujahideen (HuM) to escape the ramifications of the proscription. In 1998, the group's leader Fazlur Rehman Khalil signed Usama bin Laden's fatwa calling for attacks on the US and its allies. In the aftermath of the 11 September 2001 terrorist attacks, HuM was declared a terrorist organisation by the United States for its extensive links with Usama bin Laden. HuM was also banned by the Pakistan government in November 2001. Following the ban, the HuM again renamed and is now operating under its present name of Jamiat ul-Ansar (JuA). JuA was also subsequently banned by Pakistan in November 2003.

Individuals trained at HuM/JuA facilities have engaged in terrorist operations in other places where Islamist resistances have arisen including Tajikistan and Bosnia, and also Afghanistan to participate in the post-Taliban insurgency. On 19 June 2005 several JuA trained individuals were arrested in Afghanistan preparing to carry out acts of terrorism.

Following his release from an Indian prison in 1999, JuA member Maulana Masood Azhar established the Jaish-e Muhammad (JeM) as a splinter group with almost identical aims as the JuA. This led to a large number of JuA operatives defecting to JeM, including a number of experienced field commanders, which has impacted on JuA's operational capabilities.

While attacks claimed by JuA, or those that can be reliably attributed to the group, have declined since 2002 it remains active in IAK. For example, JuA claimed responsibility for the assassination of a political party worker in Kashmir on 7 October 2004, and joint responsibility with JeM for the 25 October 2004 attack on the motorcade of the Divisional Commissioner for the Muslim-Majority Kashmir Valley. Operating in conjunction with HM, JuA is reported to have been responsible for multiple attacks directed at a range of security and civilian targets in and around Jammu and Kashmir on 13 June 2005 resulting in 15 deaths, including two school children. The 1 January 2006 exchange of gunfire with Indian Security Forces in Indian administered Kashmir is further evidence of their ongoing activity.

JuA operates a number of camps in Pakistan which provide both religious instruction and military style guerrilla training and support, not only to JuA members, but also to other associated terrorist organisations and individual jihadists from all over the world. The group also operated terrorist training camps in eastern Afghanistan prior to their destruction by coalition air strikes in 2001. Some JuA training facilities are less conspicuous and focused on preparing jihadists for more low intensity, hit and run type operations or suicide attacks. In 2004, several members of a JuA-trained splinter group were arrested for their involvement in separate suicide car-bomb attacks outside the US Consulate and the Sheraton Hotel in Karachi in May and June 2002, and a failed attempt to assassinate Pakistani President Pervez Musharraf with a remote-controlled car-bomb in April 2002. As members of a previously unknown group "Jundallah," JuA trained members were among a number of militants drawn from several Pakistani extremist groups responsible for the twin car-bomb attack near the US Consulate in Karachi on 26 May 2004. On 9 June 2004, the same terrorist cell was involved in a terrorist attack against a heavily-armed military convoy carrying Karachi's military commander resulting in seven deaths.

Objectives

JuA is a group that uses violence in pursuit of its stated objective of uniting Jammu and Kashmir with Pakistan under a radical interpretation of Islamic law.

Leadership and membership

The leader of JuA is Fazlur Rehman (sometimes Rahman) Khalil, (aka Maulana Farzul Ahmed Khalil, Maulana Ahmed Khalil). Reporting indicates that the JuA has a strength of no more than a few hundred, but exact membership numbers cannot be accurately

determined. The majority of JuA's membership consists of jihadists from Pakistan, Kashmir, and Afghanistan. JuA has also attracted new recruits drawn from around the world, including Bangladesh and Southeast Asia, the United Kingdom, and the United States.

JuA engagement in terrorist activities

JuA has been involved in a number of terrorist activities, including hijacking, bombings, abductions, and training.

Terrorist activities for which responsibility has been claimed by, or reliably attributed to, JuA, over the past 7 years include:

- Dec 1999: An Indian airliner was hijacked en route from Nepal to India, one passenger was stabbed to death.
- Nov 2000: Thirty Indian soldiers were fatally shot at two army posts in Kashmir.
- 23 Jan 2002: US journalist Daniel Pearl was abducted and subsequently murdered on this date. Four people, including JuA member Ahmed Omar Sheikh, were convicted of Pearl's murder;
- 14 June 2002: JuA trained militants were responsible for the suicide car-bomb attack outside the US Consulate in Karachi which killed 11 persons;
- April 2003: 3 Indian troops were fatally shot in Kashmir;
- 7 Oct 2004: A politically party worker was assassinated in Kashmir;
- 19 June 2005: several JuA trained individuals were arrested in Afghanistan preparing to carry out acts of terrorism;
- June 2005: two American citizens were arrested for suspected participation in an al-Qa'ida plot to attack the US. Both claimed to have attended a terrorist training camp run by JuA leader Fazlur Rehman Khalil.

Conclusion

The Criminal Code provides that for an organisation to be listed as a terrorist organisation, the Attorney-General must be satisfied that:

- (i) the organisation is directly or indirectly engaged in, preparing, planning, assisting in or fostering the doing of a terrorist act (whether or not a terrorist act has occurred or will occur); or
- (ii) the organisation advocates the doing of a terrorist act (whether or not a terrorist act has occurred or will occur).

On the basis of the above information, ASIO assesses that JuA involvement in terrorist activity has declined since 2002. However, ASIO assess JuA remain active and is directly preparing, planning, assisting in or fostering the doing of terrorist acts. It is submitted that the acts attributable to the JuA are terrorist acts as they:

- (i) are done with the intention of advancing a political cause, namely, the uniting of Jammu and Kashmir with Pakistan under Islamic law;
- (ii) are intended to coerce or influence by intimidation the government of a foreign country, namely India, and/or intimidate a section of the Indian public; and

(iii) constitute acts which cause serious physical harm to persons, including death, as well as serious damage to property.

This assessment is corroborated by information provided by reliable and credible intelligence sources.

Armed Islamic Group (GIA)

(Also known as: al-Jamm'ah al-Islamiah al-Musallah; Groupement Islamique Armé; Groupe Islamique Armé)

The following information is based on publicly available details about the Armed Islamic Group (GIA). These details have been corroborated by material from intelligence investigations into the activities of the GIA and by official reporting. ASIO assesses that the details set out below are accurate and reliable.

The GIA is listed in the United Nations 1267 Committee's consolidated list and as a proscribed terrorist organisation by the governments of Canada, the United Kingdom and the United States.

Current status of the GIA

The GIA is an Algerian Islamic extremist organisation. Following the Algerian Government's ban on the Islamic Salvation Front (FIS), imposed after FIS's victory in the first round of legislative elections in December 1991, the armed wing of the FIS – the Islamic Salvation Army – commenced an armed struggle against the Algerian military. In the course of this struggle a number of factions, including the GIA in 1992, split from the Islamic Salvation Army.

The GIA began a high profile campaign of terrorist attacks in Algeria in 1993. From late 1994 the GIA expanded its operations internationally, hijacking an Air France flight in December 1994 and conducting a series of improved explosive device (IED) attacks in France in 1995. It also conducted attacks on foreign interests in Algeria. From 1996 the GIA entered a new phase, targeting Algerian civilians for large-scale attacks – including decapitations and throat-cutting – which at times wiped out whole villages. This strategy proved counterproductive, contributing to a loss of support both within Algeria and from international terrorist groups, including al-Qa'ida.

In 1998, following internal divisions over the GIA's strategy of attacking civilians, GIA member Hassan Hattab broke away to found the Salafist Group for Call and Combat (GSPC) which renounced attacks against civilians. Many GIA members defected to the GSPC, which rapidly overtook the GIA as the pre-eminent anti-government force in Algeria. Others split from the GIA to form new and autonomous groups.

The GIA has little or no cooperation with other Islamic extremist groups in Algeria. The GIA had reported links to al-Qa'ida through Sheikh Omar Mammud Muhammed Othman, also known as Abu Qatada, who was designated by Usama bin Laden as spiritual advisor for Algerian groups.

The GIA received some early financial and logistical support from al-Qa'ida, reportedly including wire transfers of funding from Usama bin Laden to a GIA member who led a series of nine bombings in France in 1995. In March 2004, the US, supported by Italy, designated 10 alleged GIA members living in Italy as suspected al-Qaida members.

In the 1990s the GIA had an extensive support network among the North African expatriate communities in Europe – particularly in France – which raised money through extortion and smuggling, as well as collecting charitable donations through mosques.

The GIA has been involved in a number of terrorist attacks including hijacking, bombing civilian sites, attacking civilians, and ambushing Algerian security forces. Since 1992 the GIA is reported to have killed more than 100 foreigners, mostly Europeans, in Algeria.

The GIA's strength has been reduced to between 30 and 100 fighters following defections to the GSPC and other groups and successful counter-terrorism operations by Algerian security forces. The group has continued to conduct attacks, including the killing of 14 civilians in an attack in Blida Province on 7 April 2005. Following operations against the GIA in April 2005, caches of weapons and explosives were recovered by Algerian authorities. Based on this information, it is reasonable to conclude that the GIA continues to have the capability and intent to conduct further terrorist attacks.

Objectives

The objective of the GIA is to overthrow the secular Algerian Government and replace it with an Islamic state.

Leadership and Membership

Following the death of leader Antar Zouabri in February 2002, the GIA's chain of command was weakened by factional conflict. Rashid Oukali (aka Abu Tourab) succeeded Zouabri in April 2002, but was killed in July 2004 and replaced by Noureddine Boudiafi. Boudiafi was in turn arrested by Algerian security forces in November 2004, and two successors, Guechniti Redouane and then Younes Chaabane, were killed by security forces in November-December 2004. The current leader of the GIA is unknown; media reporting identified Boulenouar Oukil, arrested in April 2005, as the leader of the GIA but may have misinterpreted his claim to have led a massacre in Blida Province.

The GIA has lost a significant portion of its membership following defections to the GSPC and other groups and successful counter-terrorism operations by Algerian security forces. Reporting indicates that the current strength of the GIA is between 30 and 100 active members.

GIA engagement in terrorist attacks

Terrorist activities for which responsibility has been claimed by, or reliably attributed to, the GIA, have included:

- August 1994: An attack on the French Embassy in Algiers, killing five French officials.
- December 1994: An Air France flight to Algiers was hijacked. One passenger was murdered before French commandos killed the hijackers. The hijackers reportedly originally intended to fly the aircraft into the Eiffel Tower.
- July 1995: The GIA conducted a series of bombings against subways, markets, a Jewish school, a high-speed train and the *Arc de Triomphe* in France, killing 10 people and injuring more than 200. Several GIA members were convicted for these attacks in 1999.
- August 1996: A bombing at the home of the French Archbishop of Oran, Algeria, killing the archbishop and his driver.

- December 1996: A car bombing in Paris, killing four people.
- 1997: A number of car bombings in Algiers and other cities in 1997, killing more than 50 people.
- September 1997: The killing of 63 civilians in Sidi Youssef, just outside Algiers.
- August 1999: The killing of 27 civilians in Bechar, near the Moroccan border.
- 2-3 May 2002: The killing of 34 people in a 24-hour period in Chlef Province, probably in an attempt to disrupt elections scheduled for 30 May.
- 5 July 2002: A bombing in a market place in Larbaa, about 20 kilometres from Algiers on Algerian Independence Day, killing 35 people.
- 15 August 2002: The killing of 26 people in Bokaat Laakakcha, Chlef province.
- 2003: Attacks on a number of military targets southwest of Algiers in 2003.
- 22 October 2004: An attack in Medea Province, killing 16 civilians.
- 7 April 2005: An attack in Blida Province, killing 14 civilians.

Conclusion

The Criminal Code provides that for an organisation to be listed as a terrorist organisation, the Attorney-General must be satisfied that:

- (i) the organisation is directly or indirectly engaged in, preparing, planning, assisting in or fostering the doing of a terrorist act (whether or not a terrorist act has occurred or will occur); or
- (ii) the organisation advocates the doing of a terrorist act (whether or not a terrorist act has occurred or will occur).

On the basis of the above information, ASIO assesses that the incidence of terrorist activity by GIA has declined since 2002. However, ASIO assess that core members of the GIA remain active, and are directly preparing, planning, assisting in or fostering the doing of terrorist acts. It is submitted that the acts attributable to the GIA are terrorist acts as they:

- (i) are done with the intention of advancing a political cause, namely, the establishment of an Islamic state in Algeria;
- (ii) are intended to coerce or influence by intimidation the government of a foreign country, namely Algeria, and/or intimidate a section of the Algerian public; and
- (iii) constitute acts which cause serious physical harm to persons, including death, as well as serious damage to property.

This assessment is corroborated by information provided by reliable and credible intelligence sources.

Salafist Group for Call and Combat (GSPC)
(also known as: Groupe Salafiste pour la Predication et le Combat; and Salafist Group for Preaching and Combat)

The following information is based on publicly available details about the GSPC. These details have been corroborated by material from intelligence investigations into the activities of the GSPC. ASIO assesses that the details set out below are accurate and reliable.

The GSPC is listed as a proscribed terrorist organisation by the United Nations and by the governments of Canada, the United States, and the United Kingdom.

Current status of GSPC

The GSPC was formed in 1998 by Hassan Hattab (aka Abu Hamza) who led a splinter group from the Algerian Armed Islamic Group (GIA) in protest against the killing of civilians carried out by the GIA. The GSPC renounced attacks against civilians following the split from the GIA but has nevertheless been implicated in attacks resulting in civilian deaths. However, the number of these deaths has been far fewer than those perpetrated by the GIA.

The GSPC quickly became Algeria's largest and most dangerous terrorist group. The GSPC's stated targets are Algerian military, police and government interests however civilians have been killed in various attacks including bombings and roadside ambushes. Tactics used by the GSPC include attacks at false roadblocks and raids on military, police, and government convoys.

The GSPC has publicly stated its commitment to global jihad. In January 2004 the GSPC released a statement claiming its jihad in Algeria was part of the international jihad led by Usama bin Laden. In June 2004 the group released a statement declaring "war on all foreigners and foreign interests in Algeria". On 28 September 2005 media carried a statement by the GSPC which described France as the group's "number one enemy". Recent statements have also linked the GSPC to targeting of US military installations in North Africa and the sub-Saharan region.

In a statement on 11 September 2006 marking the anniversary of the 11 September 2001 attacks in the United States, al-Qa'ida's second in command, Ayman al-Zawahiri officially announced the alliance between al-Qa'ida and the GSPC. The GSPC subsequently made a statement on 13 September 2006 pledging allegiance to Usama bin Laden. These statements made by the group and al-Qa'ida indicate the GSPC is evolving from a domestically focussed group to one with a global Jihadist ideology.

The GSPC has officially rejected the Charter for Peace and National Reconciliation, an Algerian government initiative offering amnesty for all persons convicted of insurgency related crimes.

The GSPC has been involved in up to 70 terrorist attacks, including bombings, grenade attacks, ambushes, and kidnappings against the military, police, and civilians since first being proscribed by Australia on 14 November 2002.

The GSPC continues to recruit new members, and has also undertaken the training of individuals from nearby countries with a view to them returning to their home countries to carry out attacks. The GSPC has continued to undertake attacks against civilian targets including bombing markets, attacking vehicles and killing the occupants, and beheading civilians. During 2005, the GSPC also attacked foreign interests outside Algeria including an attack on a remote military outpost in Mauritania for which the group claimed responsibility and implied it would fight its enemies regardless of their location.

The GSPC's primary source of funding comes from its involvement in the black market, engaging in smuggling, protection rackets, and money laundering. The GSPC's rejection of indiscriminate killing of civilians gained the favour of al-Qa'ida, which provided financial and logistical support during the early stages of its formation.

Objectives

The GSPC's primary goal is to overthrow the Algerian government and install an Islamic regime.

Leadership and membership

The GSPC is currently led by Abu Musab Abdel Wadoud (aka Abdelmalek Droukhal). Another central figure and leader of the southern Algerian regional GSPC group sometimes referred to as the Free Salafist Group (GSL) is Khaled Abu al-Abbas (aka Al-Mukhtar bin Bilmukhtar, aka Mokhtar Belmokhtar possible real name Al-Mukhtar Bin Mohammad Bilmukhtar), a former Algerian soldier with experience in Afghanistan.

By 2000, the external networks of the GIA across Europe and North Africa had been taken over by GSPC. Reporting on the number of members of the GSPC varies between 500 and 5000.

GSPC engagement in terrorist attacks

Terrorist attacks for which responsibility has been claimed by, or reliably attributed to, the GSPC, have included:

- 1 Apr 2004: The GSPC claimed responsibility for the assassination in Algiers of the Imam with the El Harrach mosque, Abdennacer Abou Hafs, who was shot on 10 March;
- 21 Jun 2004: Car bombing of an electricity plant in Algiers;
- 7 Jul 2004: GSPC militants ambushed and killed of an official from a local aggregate extraction quarry in Abouda;
- 18 Sept 2004: A homemade bomb was defused by security agencies in a café located in Erraghen;

- 23 Oct 2004: Attack on a vehicle transporting fans to a soccer match in Algiers, killing 16;
- 23 Apr 2005: Militants attack a village in Ain Defla Province, killing two members of a family;
- 3-4 June 2005: The GSPC attacked a Mauritanian army outpost, killing fifteen Mauritanian soldiers and wounding seventeen others;
- 1 Sept 2005: GSPC rebels killed the Mayor of Ammal in his car;
- 30 Sept 2005: GSPC militants beheaded a civilian, 8kms from Ain Rich;
- 1 Oct 2005: A bomb was detected and defused at Bouassem primary school in Beni Zmenzer, Beni Douala district;
- 6 Oct 2005: Suspected GSPC gunmen intercepted a car in Ouled Salah east of el-Milia, killing three civilians and injuring two others;
- 16 Jan 2006: GSPC rebels cut the throat of a civilian after an interrogation outside his home in Sidi Daoud;
- 13 Feb 2006: GSPC rebels kidnapped a civilian in Chabet el-Ameur who was later released on 15 Feb after ransom was paid;
- 24 Mar 2006: Local member of the municipal people's assembly and former mayor shot dead outside his home in Benchoud;
- 28 Mar 2006: Two people, one a cousin of a former GSPC emir, were shot dead in the village of Ain al-Hamra;
- 1 Apr 2006: The GSPC shot dead a civilian at Haga, for reportedly collaborating with security forces;
- 4 Jul 2006: A bomb exploded near a Legitimate Defence Group post in Larbaa, Batna Province;
- 5 Jul 2006: A bomb exploded in Martyrs Square in Ammal injuring three people; and
- 6 Jul 2006: A mobile phone triggered a bomb at the Tidjellabine vehicle market killing two people.

Conclusion

The Criminal Code provides that for an organisation to be listed as a terrorist organisation, the Attorney-General must be satisfied that:

- (i) the organisation is directly or indirectly engaged in, preparing, planning, assisting in or fostering the doing of a terrorist act (whether or not a terrorist act has occurred or will occur); or
- (ii) the organisation advocates the doing of a terrorist act (whether or not a terrorist act has occurred or will occur).

On the basis of the above information, ASIO assesses that the GSPC is directly preparing, planning, assisting in or fostering the doing of terrorist acts. It is submitted that the acts attributable to the GSPC are terrorist acts as they:

- (i) are done with the intention of advancing a political cause, namely, the creation of an Islamic state in Algeria.
- (ii) are intended to coerce or influence by intimidation the governments of foreign countries, including Algeria and France, and/or intimidate sections of the Algerian and French public; and
- (iii) constitute acts which cause serious physical harm to persons, including death, as well as serious damage to property.

This assessment is corroborated by information provided by reliable and credible intelligence sources.