

Algerian troops enter Mali to fight Al Qaeda

Algerian troops have crossed into Mali to help government forces combat Al Qaeda-linked groups formed since the fall of Muammar Gaddafi and the return of thousands of heavily armed Tuareg militiamen from Libya



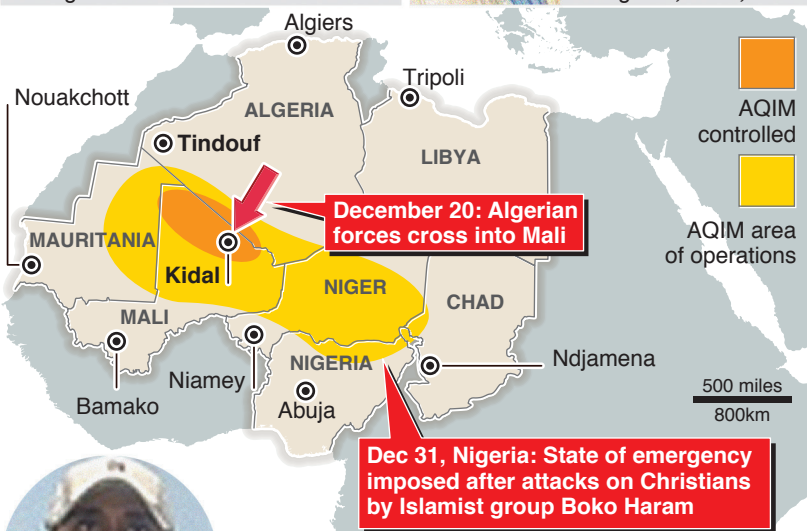
■ **Al Qaeda in the Islamic Maghreb (AQIM):** Founded in 2007 by **Abdelmalek Droukdel**, 46-year-old Algerian and former leader of Algeria's

most radical Islamist movement – *Salafist Group for Preaching and Combat (GSPC)*.

Strength: **Around 500 members**



■ **Ansar al-Din (Supporters of the Faith):** Jihadist group based in Kidal, led by **Iyad Ag Ghali**, former Mali Tuareg rebel leader. Aims to unite members of former Gaddafi militias under banner of Sharia law. Strength: **2,000-4,000**



■ **Jamaat Tawhid Wal Jihad Fi Garbi Afriqqiya (Movement for Unity and Jihad in West Africa):** AQIM splinter group led by Mauritanian **Abou Qumqum**. Group claims responsibility for kidnap of Spanish and Italian nationals from Tindouf refugee camp in October