

One of the difficulties with working with group affiliation is that, as can be seen from Figure 1, mergers, name changes and split offs have been very common among radical groups on both shores of the Sahara. Thus, the Salafist Group for Predication and Combat (GSPC), a splinter group of the Armed Islamic Group (GIA) of Algeria, rebranded itself as Al Qaeda in the Islamic Maghreb (AQMI) in 2007. Some of its members broke off in 2011 to form the Movement for Oneness and Jihad in West Africa (MUJAO) while some others formed Al Moulathamoun in 2012, and Al Mouakanoune Biddam, a group under the command of Mokhtar Belmokhtar. MUJAO merged with Al Moulathamoun to form Al Mourabitoun in 2013 (Wojtanik 2015).

Figure 1. Simplified historical evolution of Trans-Saharan radical groups, 2015

