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At least 130 people have been killed in the past month

By North Africa correspondent Heba Saleh[Letter From](#)[America](#)[UK](#)[UK Politics](#)[Business](#)[Sci/Tech](#)[Health](#)[Education](#)[Entertainment](#)[Talking Point](#)[In Depth](#)[AudioVideo](#)

The security services in Algeria say that 16 people have been killed on a road 120km west of Algiers.

The killings took place in an area of western Algeria, where the feared armed Islamic group GIA is known to be active.

The attack brings to 130 the number of people killed in violence blamed on Islamic militants since the beginning of June.

The announcement by the Algerian security services said the 16 were assassinated in a cowardly fashion by what was described as a terrorist group. It gave no other details.

Massacres attributed to GIA often appear to be at random, with victims generally selected from among travellers on country roads or poor villagers in outlying areas.

GIA strategy

Very little is understood about the strategy of the GIA, and the Algerian authorities have so far shed no light on any of the thousands of killings routinely blamed on the group.

Critics of the Algerian authorities have often charged that the GIA, at least some of the time, is manipulated by powerful elements in the ruling establishment.

“The latest killings come as a reminder that chronic insecurity remains a serious pressure on the Algerian population”

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▸ Saad Djaaber, Algerian political analyst
"This massacre is symptomatic of the Algerian tragedy and conflict since the beginning"
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Despite the government amnesty offered two years ago to armed militants who surrendered to the authorities, violence has not ended.

Recently, attacks blamed on Islamic groups have been overshadowed by sustained waves of riots and anti-government demonstrations which started in the Berber-speaking region of Kabylie and was echoed elsewhere in the country.



Violence has continued around Algiers despite tight security

Protesters were complaining of repression by the authorities and deteriorating social conditions.

But the latest killings come as a reminder that chronic insecurity remains a serious pressure on the Algerian population.

▸ The BBC's Heba Saleh
"The killings took place in an area of western Algeria, where the feared armed Islamic group or GIA is known to be active"
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