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Thousands of troops surrounded the hideout

Members of a Malaysian muslim cult, who sparked a major security alert after raiding a military armoury, have been charged with attempting to wage war.

Most of the 29 defendants were arrested at a jungle hideout in the north-west state of Perak last month following a four-day stand off with security forces.

The gang took four hostages, and killed two of them - a policeman and a soldier - before surrendering.

The official Bernama news agency said 29 members of the Al-Ma'unah cult appeared at the Session's Court in Taiping town in Perak on Tuesday.



The defendants belong to a Muslim group called Al-Ma'unah

Heist

On 2 July a group of about 15 men tricked their way into two army camps after posing as senior military officers.

They made off with a haul of weapons which included more than 100 rifles, thousands of bullets, grenade launchers and explosives.

They were tracked to a jungle hideout near Sauk, where 27 people eventually surrendered.

Thousands of police and troops surrounded the camp during the stand-off.

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It was not clear when the other two defendants were arrested.



Twenty seven gang members were arrested at the jungle hideout



The gang raided a military armoury in Gerik

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The authorities have since launched a crackdown on extremist Muslim groups they describe as deviant.

The offence of attempting to wage war is punishable by death or life imprisonment.

Prime Minister Mahathir Mohamad has said the Al-Ma'unah cult aimed to overthrow his government and set up an Islamic state.

He says most of the 1,800 cult members nationwide also belong to the main opposition party, Parti Islam SeMalaysia (PAS).

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