

## **Nine Algerian soldiers dead in jihadist attack**

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**Algiers:** The Algerian defense ministry on Sunday confirmed the deaths of nine soldiers in an ambush set up by Al Qaeda in the Islamic Maghreb, or AQIM, in Djebel Louh town.

The AQIM, Al Qaeda's north African branch, claimed responsibility for the attack on its website showing photos of soldiers patrolling the area and weapons it seized.

The jihadist group also said the attack came in response to recent statements by Algerian military chief of staff Gen. Ahmed Gaid Salah, whom the AQIM accuses of "having declared war".

In a communique posted on its Web page, the defense ministry deplored "the deaths of nine martyred soldiers" and added that "a national army detachment was attacked as it was carrying out a search operation in the town of Djebel Louh".

This is the second attack jihadist groups have launched so far this month in provinces near Algiers. On July 6, four soldiers from a mobile Judicial Police brigade were wounded in the city of Buira.

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