

Algerian court sentences Belmokhtar aide to eight years in prison

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An Algerian court sentenced Mokhtar Belmokhtar, the leader of the Brigade of Masked Men (Katibat Al-Mulathamini) Islamist militant group to 20 years in prison in absentia on 30 December 2014, the website of Algerian newspaper El-Nahar reported on the same day.

Belmokhtar was found guilty of "joining a terrorist group operating inside and outside the country" and "creating an Internet website with the goal of recruiting youth to terrorist groups" according to the report.

The court also sentenced Beled Abdel Salam, who was present in the court, to eight years in prison on the same charges, according to the report.

The report said that he was also found guilty of recruiting non-Algerians to perform "terrorist operations" in the countries they lived in.

Abdel Salam also confessed that Belmokhtar had decided to open a translation office in Mali in order to ensnare foreigners living in that country, so that they could be taken hostage and held to ransom, according to report.

The report said that Abdel Salam had also contacted the Nigerian Islamist militant group Boko Haram.