

Egypt Security Watch Monthly Briefing



Summary

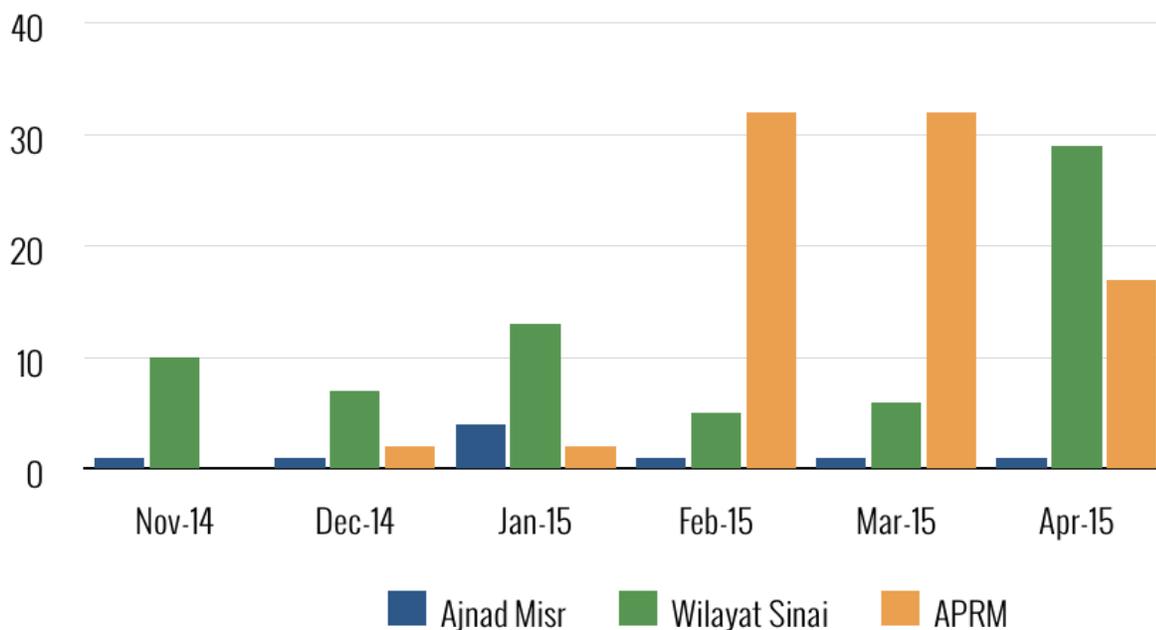
April 2015 marked **another month of a high rate of terror attacks in the country**, with 112 reported attacks. April was the fourth month in a row that over 100 attacks were reported in the country, bringing the monthly average for 2015 to 110.5 attacks per month.

Forty of the 112 reported attacks took place in North Sinai, over twice the figure of the previous month. In total, 70 were reported killed in terror attacks throughout Egypt in April.

On April 18, a Cairo court [placed](#) Ansar Bayt al-Maqdis and over 200 alleged members on a “terrorist entities” list. (For more information on the February decree and ratification of the Terrorist Entities Law, see TIMEP’s [Legislation Tracker](#) project.)

The **Allied Popular Resistance Movement (APRM) claimed 17 attacks; Afnad Misr carried out one attack in the month**; while **Wilayat Sinai claimed 29 attacks-its highest ever number of claims in a month**, all in North Sinai. In these 29 attacks, at least 35 individuals were reported killed, including five civilians and 30 members of security forces (Figure 1).

Figure 1: Number of Attacks by Group



The **Execution Battalion movement, an APRM affiliate, carried out its first verified attack**, assassinating a police colonel.

The Revolutionary Punishment branch of APRM published a statement on its WordPress blog declaring that its **attacks on economic targets were not meant to substitute more violent acts** committed against individuals it deemed to be offenders.

The **founder and leader of Afnad Misr was killed** in highly publicized raid by security forces in Giza; his death was lamented in statements by both al-Qaeda in the Arabian Peninsula and al-Qaeda in the Maghreb.

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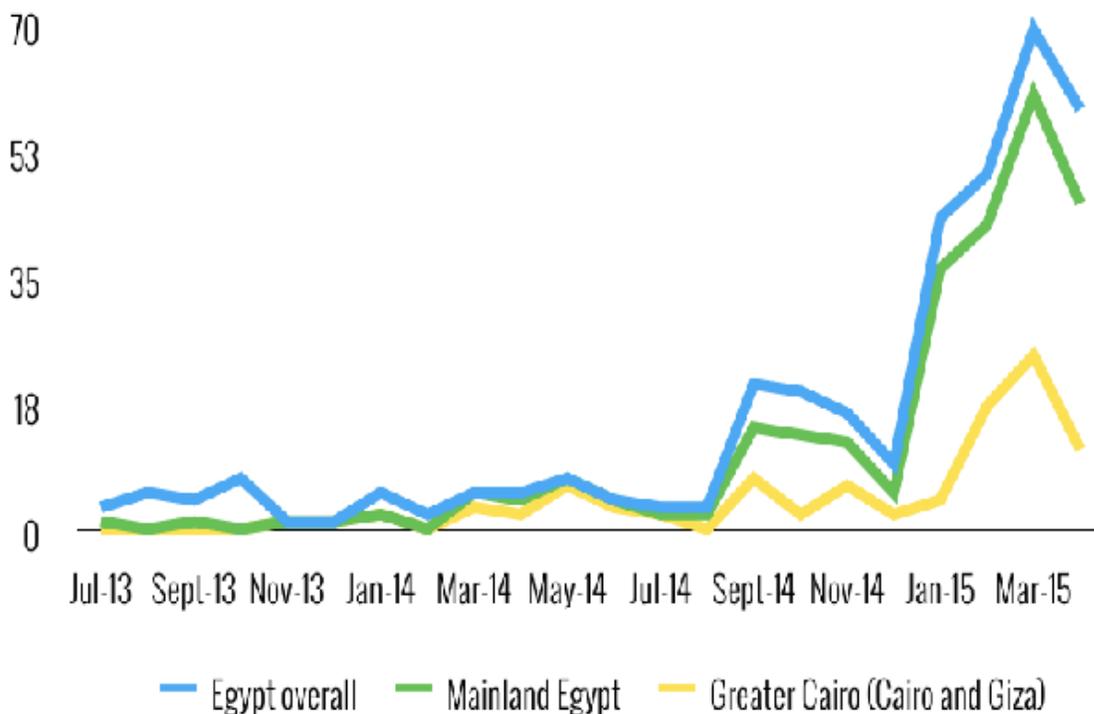
Wilayat Sinai's attacks continued to target security forces, notably including **a large-scale coordinated attack on seven military checkpoints on April 2** (during which the group claimed to have captured a military tank), and **an attack on April 12 in which a vehicle-borne improvised explosive device, reported to have contained two to three tons of explosives**, killed six near the Arish police station.

The group also ramped up **efforts to target military supply trucks**, with five attacks on food, fuel, and water supplies.

Tensions brewed between Wilayat Sinai and the Tarabin tribe, a Sinai Bedouin tribe. Wilayat Sinai published photos of masked militants handing out pamphlets warning tribe members against collaborating with security forces, and **the group bombed the vacant home of tribe member Ibrahim Ergani**, ostensibly in retaliation for his joint business ventures with military officers.

Overall, reports of improvised explosive device (IED) attacks decreased from 69 attacks in March to 58 attacks in April. However, **reports of IED attacks in North Sinai increased** from 9 attacks in March to 13 attacks in April (Figure 2). **Attacks on economic and property targets decreased slightly** with 26 attacks in April, but remained well above the

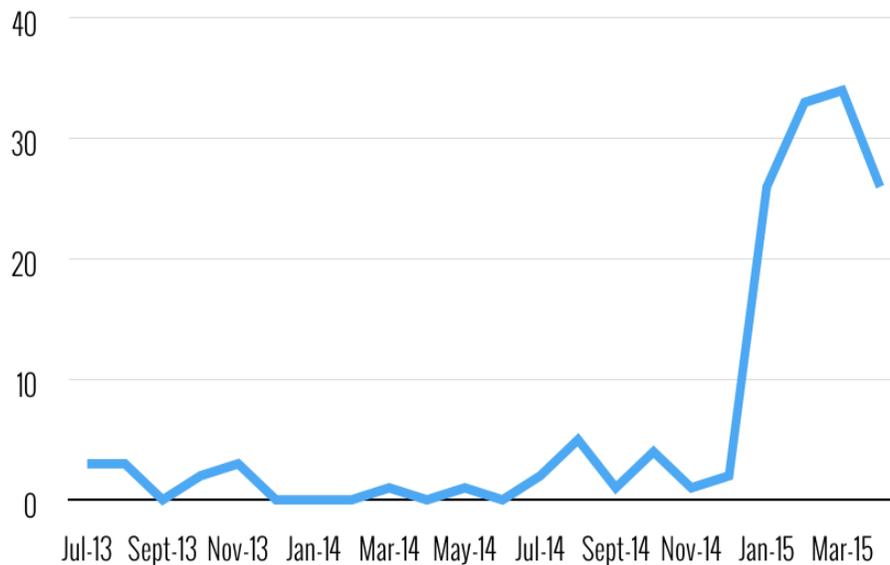
Figure 2: IED Attacks



prior-year average of 11.25 attacks per month; such attacks particularly focused on the banking and telecommunications sectors. Of these attacks, APRM claimed six, Wilayat Sinai claimed five, and the remainder went unclaimed (Figure 3).

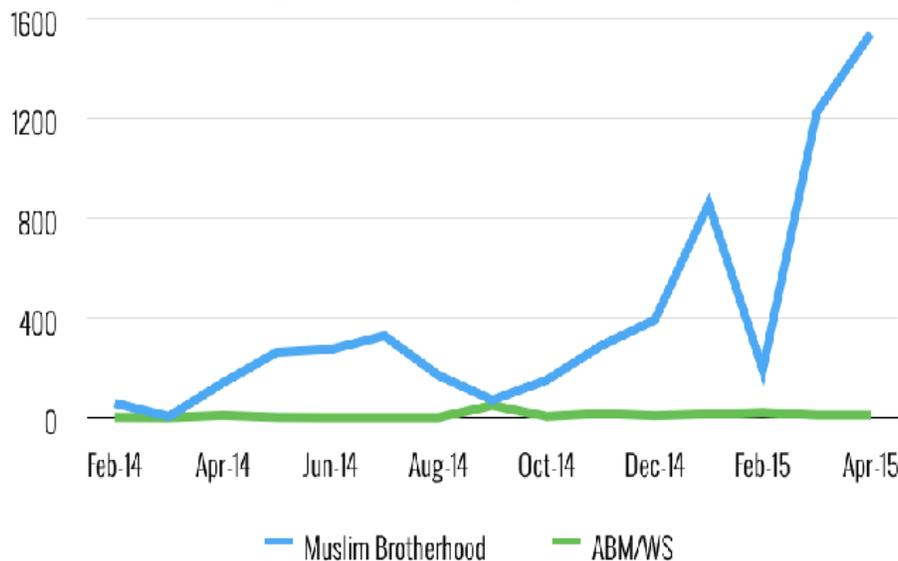
Summary

Figure 3: Attacks on Economic/Property Targets



A reported **2,224 alleged terrorists were arrested** in April 2015; of these, **1,539 were alleged members of the Muslim Brotherhood**. This represents the highest number of individuals reported arrested as terrorists in any month on record (Figures 4 and 14).

Figure 4: Arrests by Alleged Affiliation



This briefing highlights developments in terror groups and Egypt's security sector, as well as the changing trends in location and character of terror attacks and counter-terror operations.¹

¹ All data in the TIMEP briefings and TIMEP Egypt Security Watch project has been gathered from news reports, Egyptian state (military or ministry of interior) social media statements, terror group social media, and data drawn from the Armed Conflict Location and Event Dataset. Figures from previous months' reports are constantly reviewed and revised for further accuracy. For more information on the project's methodology, please see Appendix A of this report.

Terror Groups Notable Developments:

(Allied) Popular Alliance Movement

April was another active month for the Allied Popular Resistance Movement (APRM). **The group claimed at least 18 attacks in 9 provinces.**

The number of claimed attacks was 47% lower than the previous month, although a number of unattributed attacks closely resembled APRM's modus operandi. The lower number of claimed attacks may be attributed to the fact that **one of the most active affiliate groups, the Revolutionary Punishment, restricted its social media presence to a single WordPress blog account.**

The groups' **dominant tactical signature was deployment of crude explosive devices**, which primarily targeted Egypt's critical infrastructure and security establishment. These included a number of attacks on security checkpoints and police installations in Fayoum and Sharqiya. It also included cases of arson, notably an attack on a customs building in Ain Sokhna.

Its **developing operational sophistication** was particularly evident in two other attacks this month. On Monday, April 13, Revolutionary Punishment, one of APRM's affiliate groups, sabotaged Egypt's electrical grid using eight IEDs. The attack heavily damaged two electrical pylons near 6th of October City, causing power outages at the nearby Egyptian Media Production Company.

Following the April 14 attack, the Revolutionary Punishment group published a statement on its WordPress blog explaining that its **attacks on economic targets did not “substitute” its support for executions and beheadings**, but were meant as an “ultimatum” for all those complicit in “destruction of the homeland.” (The group is not known to have ever carried out a beheading.)

On Tuesday, April 21, **the Execution Battalion² carried out a highly coordinated assassination on a police colonel and his conscript.** After gunning down the victims in a Cairo suburb, the assailants exploded a diversionary device and fled.

APRM's **tactical evolution is evident in its seemingly imitator “booby-trapping” of police officer Mohammed al-Zawahiri's Zagazig home** on Thursday, April 30, which came only two days after a similar operation by Wilayat Sinai (discussed below).

² The group that carried out the April 21 attack did so under the name “Execution Battalion.” A January 25, 2015, statement by the Allied Popular Resistance Movement had listed the “Execution Movement” as an affiliate movement. TIMEP's analysis suggests these are in fact the same group: the group has also used the name “Execution Movement” in an April 22 Facebook post and its tactics and media are similar to other APRM affiliates. The group also claimed an attack earlier in March on the head of Azouly prison, though the attack was not corroborated in any other news reports.

Terror Groups Notable Developments:

[Wilayat Sinai \(WS\)](#) - Formerly Ansar Bayt al-Maqdis

In April, **Wilayat Sinai claimed 29 attacks: more than twice the number of attacks than any previous month.** This may indicate either an expanded ability to carry out attacks, or an attempt to aggrandize efforts by claiming more minor incidents. For the first time, the group also listed spontaneous violent clashes with security forces—while there was little information listed about these skirmishes, prior statements had listed only planned attacks.

Wilayat Sinai also began **targeting military supply lines** in an attempt to cripple the military's ability to engage in counter-terror operations. Five attacks in April targeted food, fuel, and water supply trucks.

The [bombing of tribal leader Ibrahim Ergani's Sinai home](#) on Monday, April 27, stoked [media speculation that the Tarabin tribe was waging war against WS militants](#). Only days before, WS had released images of masked militants in military fatigues handing out pamphlets warning locals from cooperating with Tarabin antagonists.³

*On Thursday, April 23, WS published a statement of its monthly operations:*⁴

- On Thursday, April 2, WS claimed an [assault](#) on seven security checkpoints in North Sinai. The attack, which utilized lights arms and heavy weapons, left fifteen soldiers and three civilians dead. **The group claimed to have seized a military tank during this operation.** Based on published photos, the tank appears to be an M60 Patton tank.
- Also on April 2, the group claimed a **60 mm mortar attack** in Arish that injured three individuals.
- On Monday, April 6, WS carried out a **rocket-propelled grenade (RPG) attack on an armored personnel carrier (APC)** in front of a Sheikh Zuweid police station.
- On the same day, the group claimed a [60 mm mortar attack](#) on security forces near North Sinai's Gorah Airport.
- A lieutenant colonel and a first lieutenant from the police were killed on Wednesday, April 8, when WS exploded an IED near a police checkpoint in Arish.
- That same day, WS [torched military fuel and supply trucks](#) in Sheikh Zuweid.
- On Thursday, April 9, WS claimed a rocket attack on the military's 101st Battalion.
- On Friday, April 10, the group released a video showing the executions of conscript Ahmed Fathy Aboul Fatouh and another, unidentified individual.
- The group launched another 60 mm mortar attack against troops in Karm Al-Qawadis on Saturday, April 11, injuring an unspecified number of individuals.
- WS carried out its deadliest single attack of the month on Sunday, April 12, when a [suicide bomber exploded a large,](#)

³ Sources have discredited reports of significant and unified tribal resistance as exaggerated, explaining that WS targeting of Ergani was personal and because of his ties to the military economy and that some Tarabin retaliated in frustration with WS' actions against tribal members who refused to accept their pamphlets. The Tarabin have scheduled a tribal meeting for May 10, where they will discuss the issue of militant presence in North Sinai.

⁴ This represents an incomplete summary of April activity, given the non-correspondence of the Hijri and Gregorian calendars. Activity occurring between April 23 and May 1 is extracted from the official WS media organs. When independent reports or security responses corroborate or conflict with these accounts, these are noted or included as reference links.

Terror Groups' Notable Developments:

[vehicle-borne improvised explosive device](#) (VBIED) in front of Arish's Third Police Precinct. At least 40 people were injured and six killed in the attack.

- Also on Sunday, April 12, the group:
 - Carried out arson attacks on two military (water) tank trucks in southern Sheikh Zuweid and a fuel/supply truck near Wifaq Village;
 - Attacked an APC in Sheikh Zuweid, killing six soldiers and wounding two others;
 - Attacked security personnel at a checkpoint in Rafah, leaving three injured; and
 - Targeted military equipment in Wadi al-Amr with explosives.
- On Tuesday, April 14, militant sniper fire at the Third Police Precinct in Arish left a brigadier-general injured.
- The group then targeted an M60 tank and other, unidentified military articles on Thursday, April 16, causing major damages.
- On the same day, militants claimed a 60 mm mortar attack on military personnel, causing an unknown number of injuries.
- On Saturday, April 18, WS claimed an IED attack on two APCs in Sheikh Zuweid. The group also described its participation in two “armed clashes” with security forces on this day.⁵

Ajnad Misr

Ajnad Misr claimed only one attack in April. On Sunday, April 5, the group planted an IED on May 15 Bridge near Zamalek, which [killed a policeman and wounded three others](#).

The group [acknowledged the death of its leader and founder, Maged al-Din al-Masry \(aka Hammam Mohammed Attiya\)](#), on Thursday, April 9, in a highly publicized raid by Egyptian security forces. Ajnad Misr's Shura Council [named its new leader](#), Ezz al-Din al-Masry. The significance of Attiya's death on the group's power is as yet unclear; while the group has not claimed any attacks since then, this is not necessarily unusual.

Both al-Qaeda in the Maghreb (AQIM) and al-Qaeda in the Arabian Peninsula (AQAP) issued memorial statements for Attiya. While they never publicly declared allegiance, these statements signify Ajnad Misr's ties to al-Qaeda. Attiya himself had fought in both the Sinai and in Iraq, likely with AQ.

⁵ As these armed clashes could not be considered premeditated attacks, they were not included in TIMEP's figures on attacks for April. For more information, see Appendix A: Methodology.

Terror Attacks Trend Report:

The number of reported terror attacks remained high from March to April 2015, increasing by 5% to **112 reported attacks**, bringing the total for 2015 thus far to 442 attacks (compared with 101 in the first four months of 2014 and only 15 in the same period in 2013; see Figure 5).

For the first time in a four-month period, reported attacks in North Sinai increased, while attacks in key areas on Egypt’s mainland (Alexandria, Fayoum, and Greater Cairo) decreased from the prior month. Forty reported attacks in North Sinai represented 36% of all reported attacks; 18 occurred in Greater Cairo; 15 occurred in Fayoum; and the remainder occurred across 14 other provinces (Figure 6).

Figure 5: Number of Attacks Countrywide

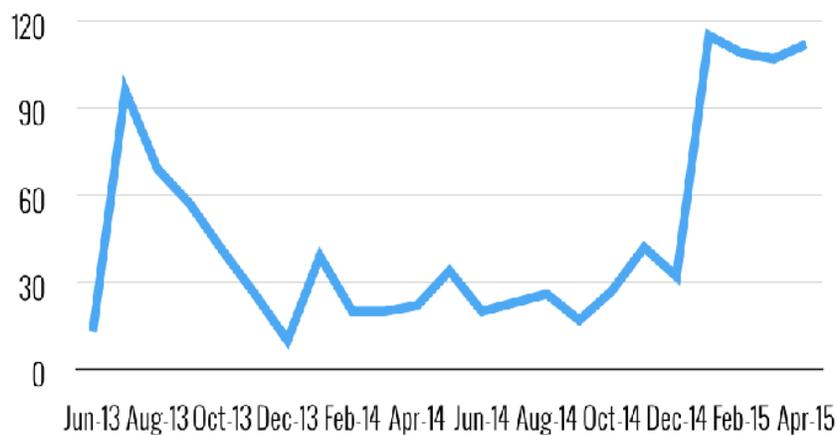
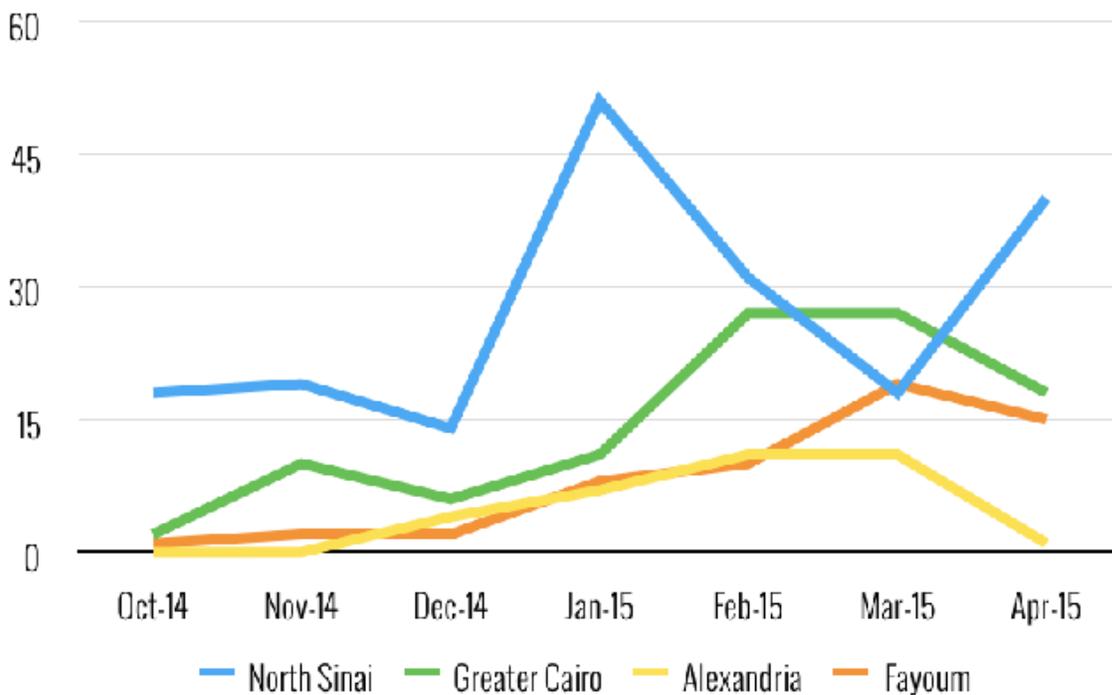


Figure 6: Number of Attacks in Key Areas

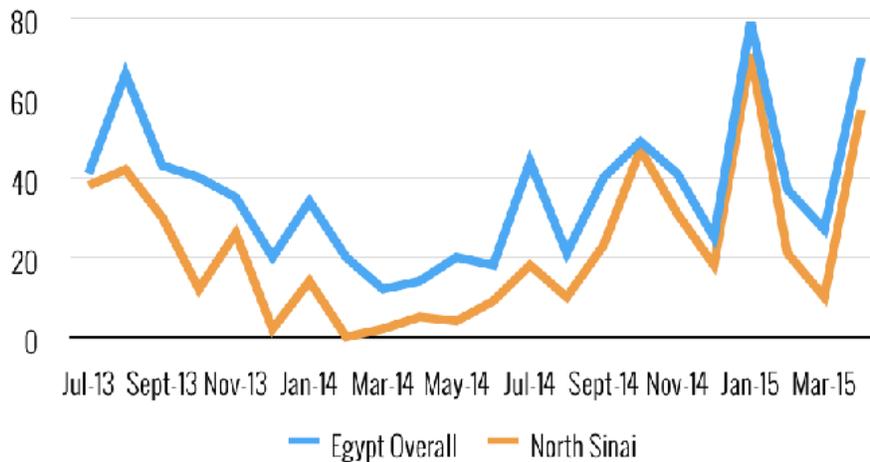


Terror Attacks Trend Report:

After decreasing steadily for two months, **the number of reported deaths in attacks increased by 160% from March to April**, with 70 reported killed in terror attacks throughout Egypt (Figure 7).

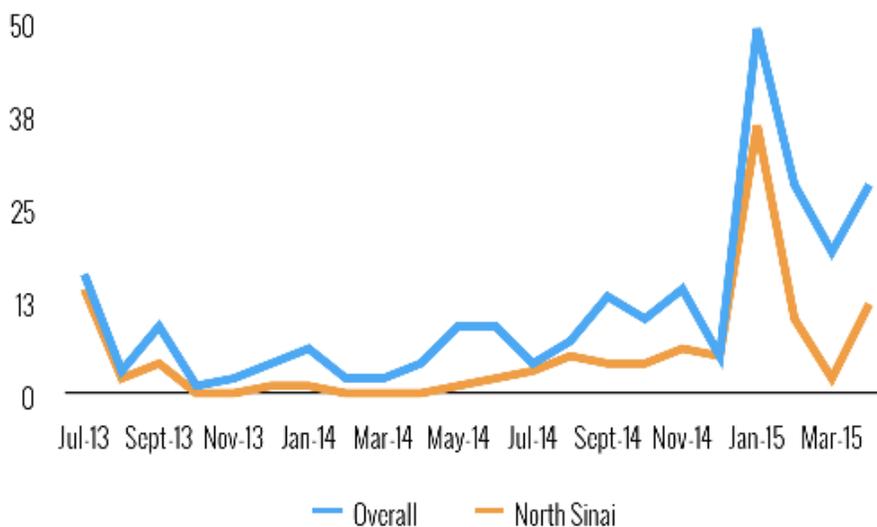
The number reported killed in terror attacks increased markedly in North Sinai by 470%, from 10 in March to 57 in April, making April the second-most deadly month in the province in at least five years (Figure 6).

Figure 7: Number of Deaths in Attacks



Civilians were increasingly implicated in attacks from March to April. **Civilians were reported killed or injured in 28 attacks throughout the country**, including in 12 attacks in North Cairo. In total, **24 civilians were reported killed in terror attacks in the country**⁶ (Figure 8).

Figure 8: Attacks Affecting Civilians



6 As of April 2015, TIMEP has refined its methods of recording civilian casualties, making prior month comparison unavailable for ESW Monthly Report 7. Updated figures will be available in future reports.

Terror Attacks Trend Report:

April 2015 saw a decrease in the use of IED attacks, from 69 reported IED attacks in March to 58 attacks in April. **The 58 reported attacks still conformed to an overall trend in the increasing use of IEDs**, particularly as a percentage of overall attacks: **In both March and April 2015, IED attacks accounted for over half of all reported attacks** (Figure 9).

April saw an increased use of mortars in reported attacks, with eight reports of mortar attacks, all occurring in North Sinai. **The use of mortars accounted for the reported deaths of 13 civilians in the province**. Five of the attacks were claimed by Wilayat Sinai; the other three remain unclaimed (Figure 10).

Figure 9: Trends in IED attacks (by Percentage of Attacks)

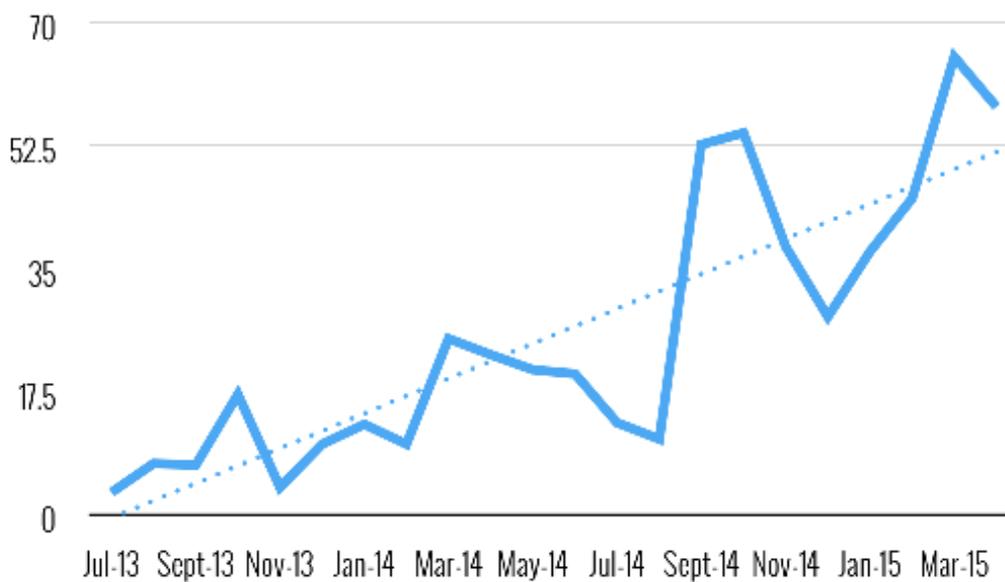
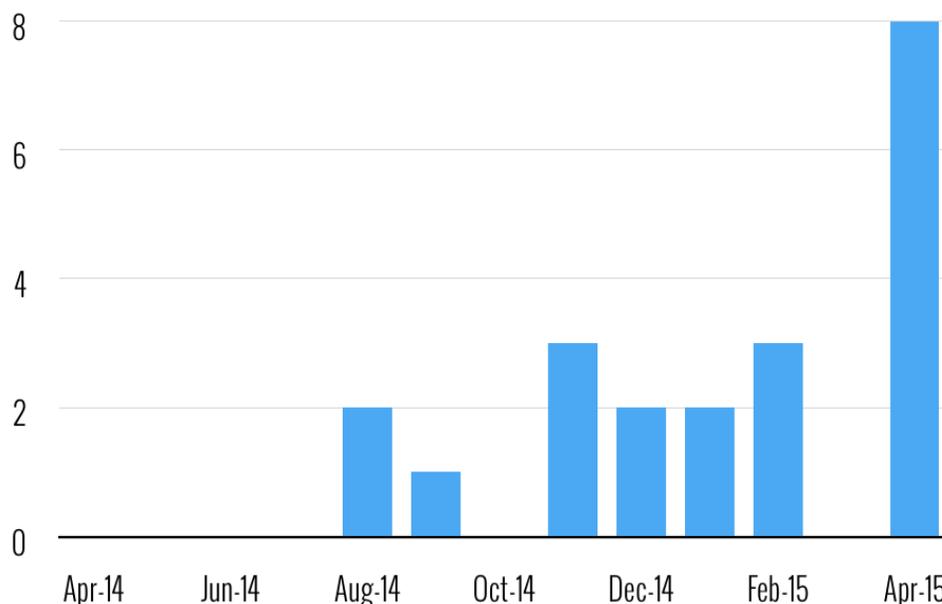


Figure 10: Number of Mortar Attacks per Month



Terror Attacks Trend Report:

April saw a slight decrease in attacks on economic and property targets, from 34 in March to 26 in April (Figure 3). In April these included attacks on:

- **Private residences:** The homes of a police officer in Sharqia as well as Tarabin tribe member Ibrahim Ergani were destroyed.
- **Military supply:** Military food, fuel, and water supply trucks, as well as other military equipment, were attacked throughout April.
- **Telecommunications:** A Mobinil branch in Zagazig, Sharqia, and a number of communications towers in Giza were attacked in April.
- **Police stations:** A police station and security directorate were the targets of two separate attacks in Fayoum.
- A **customs building** was burned in Suez
- **Churches:** On April 12, a small explosive device exploded close to Zagazig’s Evangelical Church, near the city’s security directorate headquarters. On the same day, a small explosive device planted under a car exploded in front of Saint Joseph Church in Zagazig. In both attacks it was unclear whether the churches were the ultimate target.
- **Utilities Infrastructure:** Seven attacks occurred on electricity infrastructure throughout the country and one attack occurred on a gas pipeline in Beheira.

State Security Report:

On April 18, a Cairo court [placed](#) Ansar Bayt al-Maqdis on the government's "terrorist entities" list, and the prosecutor general [listed](#) over 200 alleged members to be added to the list. This follows the late-March [listing](#) of the Brotherhood and several members as terrorist entities.

In April, Minister of Interior **Magdy Abdel Ghaffar** [continued](#) his **shakeup of the Interior Ministry**. On April 14, Abdel Ghaffar [appointed](#) four assistant ministers—those of the Security and Protection, Ports and Border Crossings, Medical Services, and Financial Affairs Sectors—and a number of directors-general and assistant sector chiefs.

Notably, former Assistant Minister for Central Security [Shoaib Siaam](#) was replaced as head of the Security and Protection Sector. Siaam was not named in news reports, so it is unclear if or where he was reassigned, but this fits with the **trend of a weakening of the Central Security Forces contingent within the ministry**, and certainly represents a rapid fall for Siaam, who was appointed CSF head in July 2014 and is now out of the top tier of interior ministry leadership.

A number of senior military officials [were reassigned](#) on April 13:

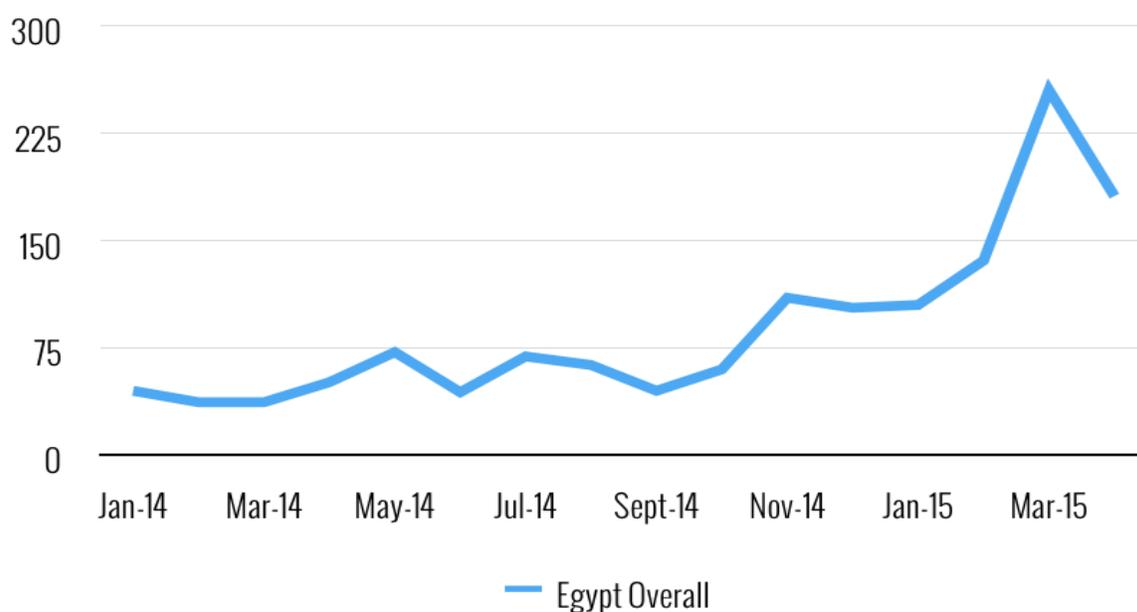
- Maj. Gen. Salah Badry was promoted from Director of Military Intelligence to Deputy Defense Minister.
- Maj. Gen. Muhammad al-Shehat was moved from the Second Field Army to replace Badry at military intelligence, and was succeeded by his deputy, Maj. Gen. Nasser al-Assy. While **moving al-Shehat may be an opportunity to change things in the Second Field Army**—which operates in North Sinai—al-Shehat will still be a member of the Supreme Council of the Armed Forces, and his succession by his deputy indicates that not much will change.
- Vice Adm. Osama al-Gendy was [reassigned](#) from leading the Navy to being Deputy Director of the Suez Canal Authority. (Moving officers from active duty to other governmental posts as they near retirement age is a common practice in Egypt; al-Gendy's predecessor is the director of the canal authority.) Al-Gendy was [replaced](#) by Rear Adm. Osama Mounir.

Counter-terror Operations Trend Report:

April saw a slight decrease in reported counter-terror operations, with some discrepancy between official security reports and news media reports.

Overall, 181 counter-terror operations were reported in April. Of these, **official state military and Ministry of Interior spokespersons reported 120 distinct counter-terror operations.**⁷ (In March, official reports indicated 161 operations; see Figure 11.)

Figure 11: Counter-Terror Operations



The overall reported arrests of “terrorists”⁸ as well as arrests of alleged Muslim Brotherhood members continued to increase in April; April saw the greatest number of individuals reported arrested as “terrorists” of any recorded period. A reported **2,224 alleged terrorists were arrested** in April 2015 (1,937 based on official security sector spokespersons); of these, **1,539 were alleged members of the Muslim Brotherhood** and nine were alleged members of Ansar Bayt al-Maqdis⁹ (Figures 4 and 12).

The **majority of reported counter-terror operations took place in North Sinai**. Sixty-three operations were reported, including the arrest of 371 suspected terrorists throughout April. Notably, **91 reported terrorists were also arrested in the New Valley province**, the most of any prior month (Figures 13 and 14).

⁷ In order to account for double-posting information on operations, TIMEP reviews each official report and cross-checks with news media reporting.

⁸ This briefing and the ESW project monitors arrests of specifically designated “terrorist” actors, as deemed by the Egyptian state. These figures do not account for those arrested as part of the broader engagement in Egypt’s “war on terror,” nor those who may be later charged with terrorist acts.

⁹ Official spokespersons’ reports do not formally recognize the group’s integration as part of the larger Islamic State, referring to them by their former name.

Counter-terror Operations Trend Report:

Figure 12: Number of Arrests in Counter-Terror Operations Countrywide

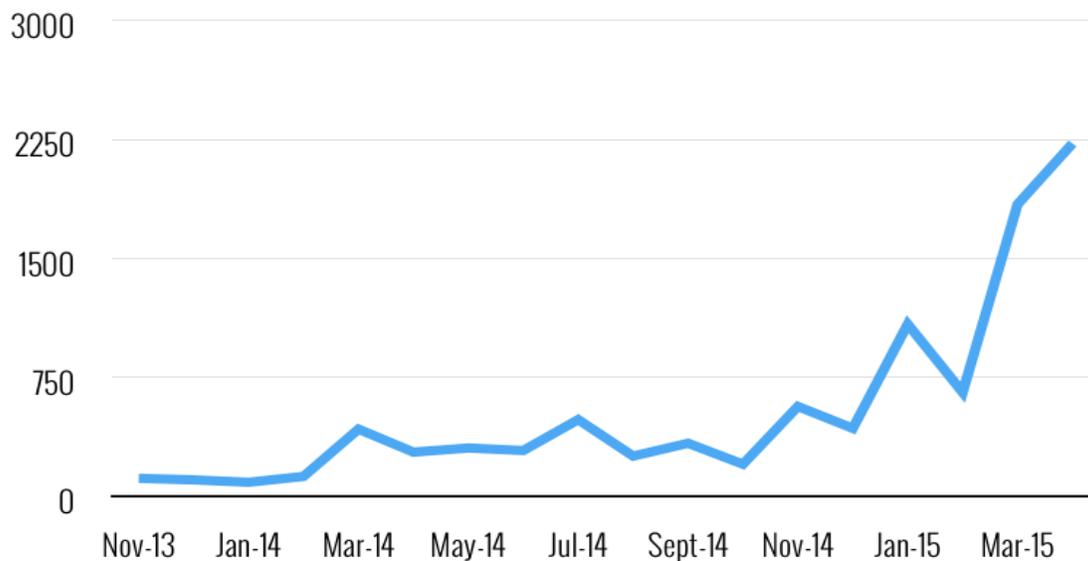
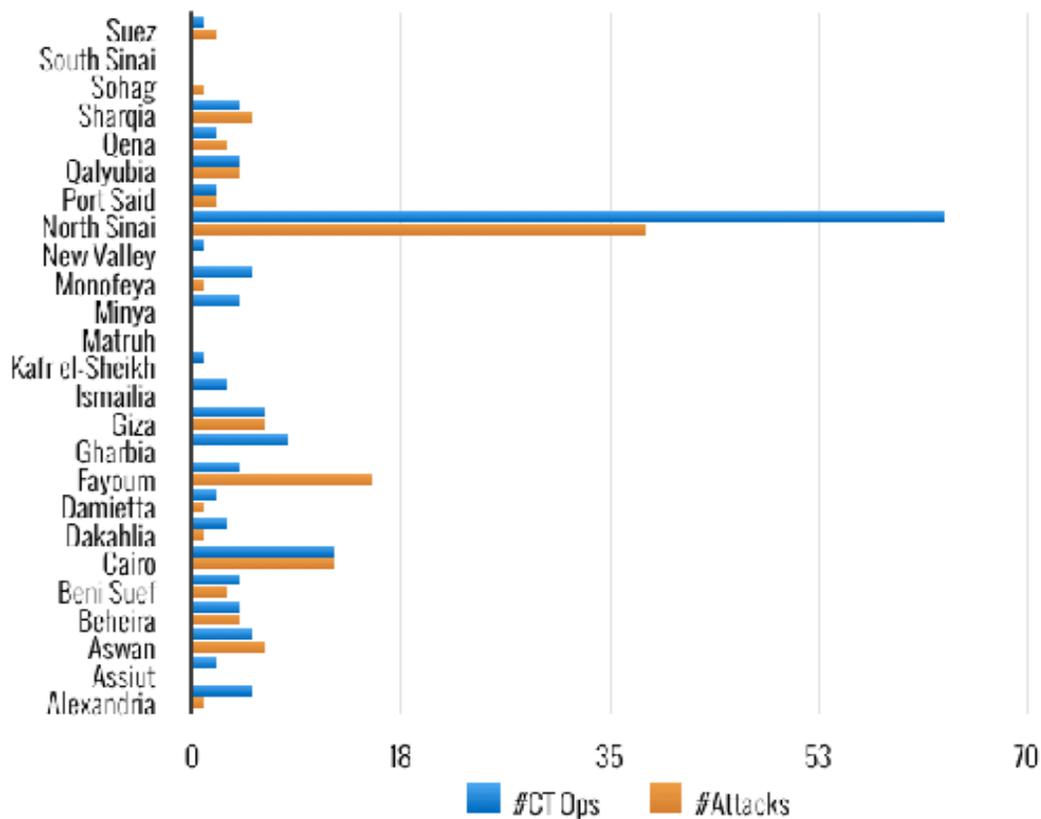
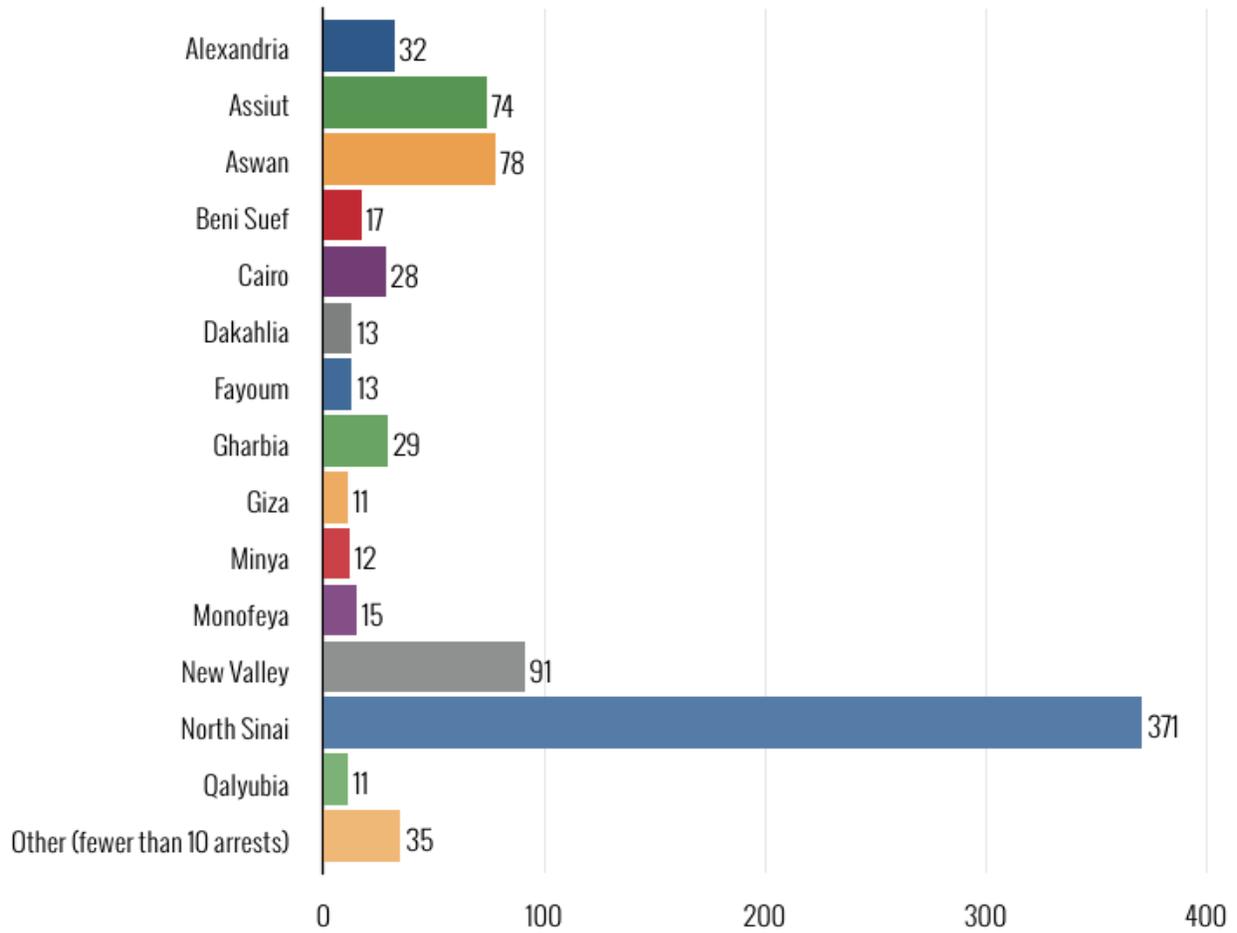


Figure 13: April Terror Attacks and Counter-terror Operations by Province



Counter-terror Operations Trend Report:

Figure 14: Arrests By Province



Methodology

TIMEP engages in daily media monitoring to update its dataset as developments occur, tracking all English and Arabic language news reports of violence from state, private, and social media outlets.

At times, the project relies on statements and media published on the accounts of terror actors themselves. Access to these statements was obtained through monitoring of jihadi web forums and terror groups' social media pages.

TIMEP additionally independently monitors all statements on Egyptian Ministry of Interior and the Egyptian military spokesperson's social media accounts, where both institutions publish a record of their public activities.

In determining which events to record, the project tracks only those events which could reasonably be considered acts of "terrorism" or the state's proclaimed response to such acts. Yet, "terrorism" and "terrorist" are themselves heavily-contested terms.

Thus, in order to capture the current threat faced by Egypt, this project adopts a definition of "terror attack" as one that entails premeditated violence enacted for political ends. This does not include the threat of attack, but rather only enacted violence. Political ends may be defined as any which have a reasonable bearing on changing an established power dynamic. For this reason, premeditated targeting of religious institutions where it could be reasonably assumed that these were targeted in their political nature are included; however, religious institutions or religious minority civilians targeted as a result of local conflict are not included.

Likewise, "counter-terror operation" is ill-defined, particularly as many government actions (particularly in the legal arena) have been lately construed as part of a larger "war on terror." For the purposes of this project, only security actions taken to combat declared terrorist groups have been considered "counter-terror efforts." (This includes the Muslim Brotherhood only after their designation as a terrorist group.) This definition does not include judicial action.

Each act of terror or counter-terror operation is recorded, capturing the date of the attack, a brief description, the closest determinable coordinates, the province in which the attack or operation was carried out, the type of attack or operation, any casualties (or arrests in the case of counter-terror operations), and the targets. In the case of terror attacks, the perpetrator is designated where one was claimed, or, in the instance of a suspected perpetrator, this information was also recorded. The dataset represents the most comprehensive available, capturing all reported acts of terror or counter-terror operations as they occur.

TIMEP began independent data collection in March 2014; any events documented before this time were documented based on data provided by the Armed Conflict Location and Event Dataset (ACLED). Using ACLED data, TIMEP extracted a dataset unique to reference terror violence in Egypt. Accessing newswire reports or government statements corresponding to each individual event, TIMEP cross-referenced every data entry from ACLED before recording it in the TIMEP dataset.

Using TIMEP's unique data, monthly reports offers a quantitative analysis of trends in attacks and operations. The analysis is both diachronic and synchronic, in keeping with the goal of offering a holistic picture of the dynamic nature of Egypt's state of security.