

Egypt Security Watch
December Briefing



Notable Developments

The month of December saw significant decreases in the overall number of reported terror attacks (23.8% decrease from November) and counter-terror operations (17.7% decrease from November).

However, Egypt's two most prominent terror groups (Ajnad Misr and Wilayat Sinai – formerly Ansar Bayt al-Maqdis) continued to release various media statements describing their ideology and tactics and carry out attacks. Also notable in December, the United States Department of State declared Ajnad Misr a terrorist organization, and a new group emerged out of Alexandria, Popular Resistance in Alexandria.

This briefing highlights the terror group developments, as well as the trends in both terror attacks and counter-terror operations.¹

Terror Groups' Notable Developments

The Popular Resistance in Alexandria established its presence through Twitter and has acquired nearly 50,000 followers on Twitter. The group claimed **two attacks on Alexandria police stations and a bus burning** in December, however Egyptian security officials have denied these were acts of terrorism.

The Wilayat Sinai (ABM) **continued its campaign in the Sinai Peninsula**, claiming a pipeline bombing, attacks on military convoys, a drug seizure, and the shooting deaths of security officers.

The group also **opened two new Twitter accounts throughout the month**, through which they published statements on activities, including videos of their claimed attacks. (The group has largely used Twitter to disseminate its written, video, or audio statements, or to claim attacks.) One of the accounts was rapidly dismantled, although it is unclear by whom. The group's initial Twitter account remains active, prompting speculation that its initial administrator may have been killed.

On December 2, **Ajnad Misr announced a period of "open dialogue"** with its leader Maged al-Din al-Masry, to which a variety of readers engaged with questions. On December 25, they **published a list of 33 accepted questions** through their media arm, Kanana Productions, including questions about their strategies, ideology, and relationships with other terrorist entities. (The leader's responses were posted on January 11, 2015 and will be included in the upcoming January ESW Monthly Briefing.)

On December 4, Ajnad Misr **claimed a bombing at Ain Shams University** that injured one police officer during its defusing.

On December 18, the **United States State Department declared Ajnad Misr a designated foreign terrorist organization (FTO)**. The group responded by initiating a vitriolic social media campaign "We are Not an American State," spearheaded by the group's spokesperson Mohamed Bilal al-Qahiri.

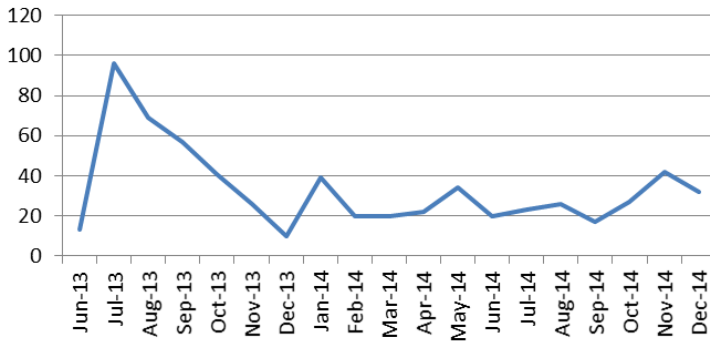
On December 23, **Wilayat Sinai published a 10:42 video condemning the military's actions in North Sinai**. The video depicted what they purport to be Egyptian military strikes on residential neighborhoods, destroyed health clinics, ruined agricultural land, and civilians killed as a result of these strikes.

The **video also shows daytime checkpoints operated by the group** (although the date of the footage cannot be confirmed), as well as alleged informant confessions, and the close-range execution of two men.

Terror Attacks Trend Report

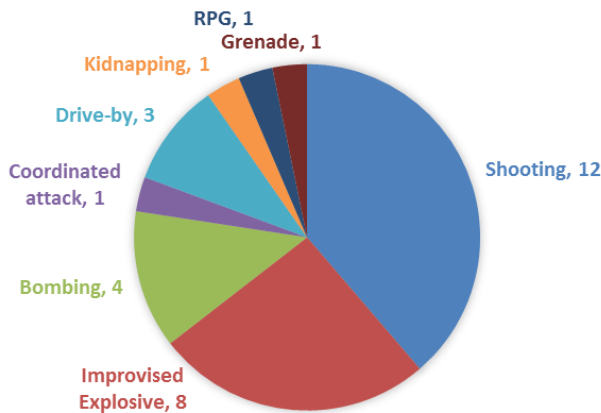
The number of reported terror attacks decreased significantly from November to December. December saw 32 attacks, below November, but still above the average and median monthly rates for the year (29.3 and 29.5, respectively). (Figure 1)

Figure 1: Number of Attacks Countrywide



The types of attacks were varied, with the **majority being shootings or improvised explosives.**² (Figure 2)

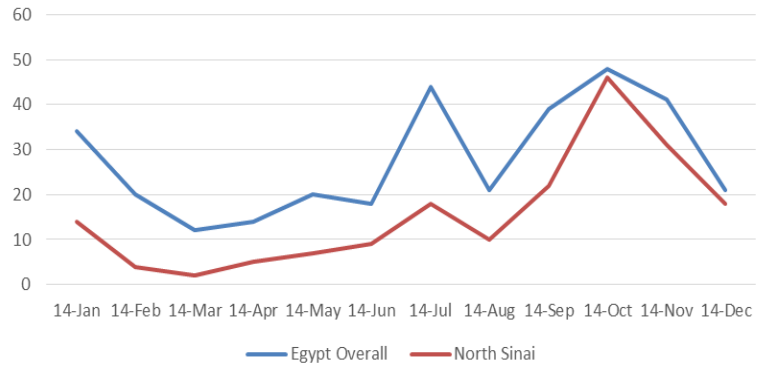
Figure 2: Type of Attacks



North Sinai remained the most active province in terms of terror attacks, with 15 out of the 31 reported attacks taking place in the province. **The province of Alexandria saw a sharp increase in attacks**—three of the six attacks that had occurred in the province in 2014 occurred in December (all three in December were claimed by the Popular Resistance in Alexandria).

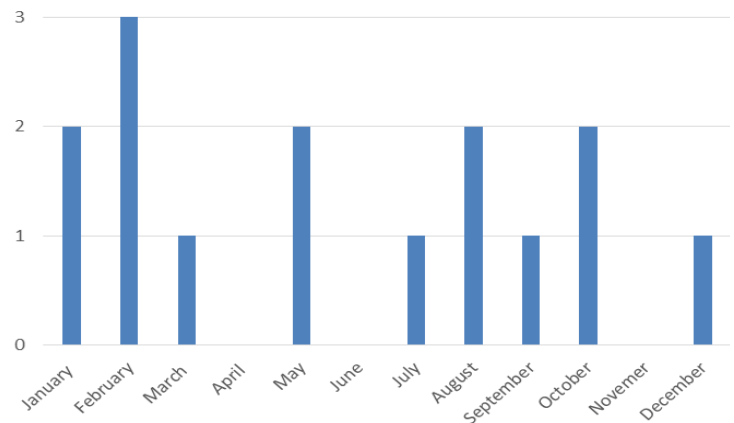
The number of reported deaths and injuries in terror attacks decreased correspondingly, with a roughly 50% decrease in deaths both in the Sinai Peninsula and in Egypt overall (Figure 3). However, the number of civilian deaths was the highest of the year: **twelve civilians were found shot to death** in reported terror attacks in December, all in North Sinai.

Figure 3: Number of Deaths



Wilayat Sinai's pipeline bombing marked the **first reported attack on a pipeline since October 2014** (Figure 4).

Figure 4: Attacks on Pipeline

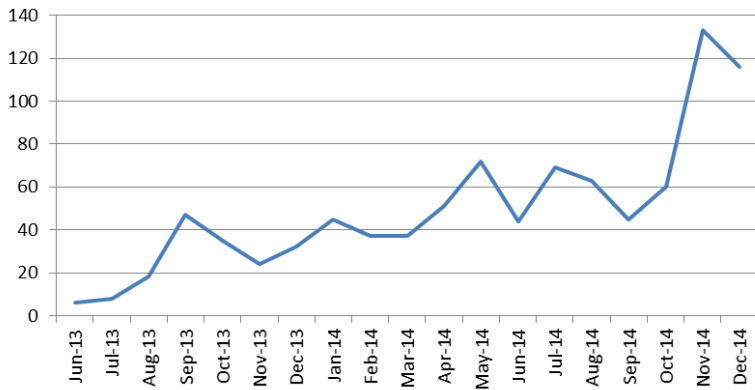


Wilayat Sinai's pipeline bombing marked the first reported attack on a pipeline since October 2014 (Figure 4).

Counter-terror Operations Trend Report

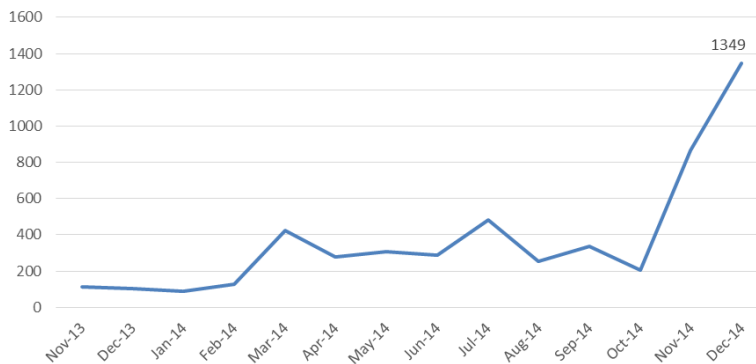
Counter-terror operations decreased slightly in December over November. However, the reported **116 distinct counter-terror operations** remained high above the yearly average and median figures (65 and 55.5, respectively). (Figure 5)

Figure 5: Number of Operations Countrywide



1349 alleged terrorists³ were reportedly arrested in December 2014, bringing the yearly total to 5,001 arrests for terror-related activity or affiliation. (Figure 6)

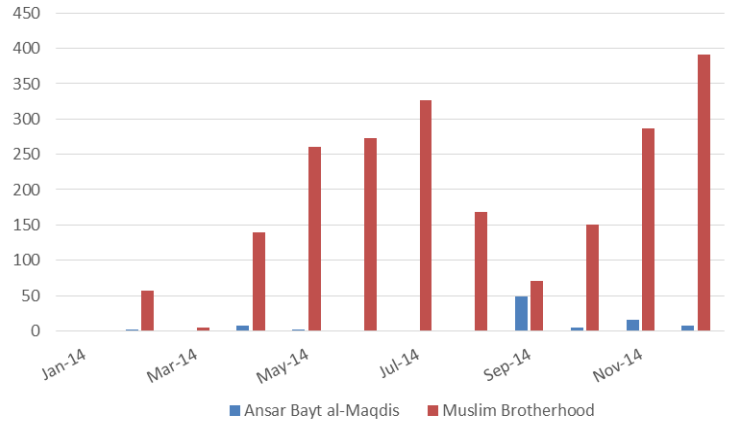
Figure 6: Number of Arrests in Counter-terror Operations Countrywide



Security forces reportedly **arrested 352 individuals for their affiliation with the Muslim Brotherhood**, which has been designated a terrorist organization in Egypt, the highest number in any month. (Figure 7)

Seven individuals were reportedly arrested for affiliation with Ansar Bayt al-Maqdis (although hundreds were arrested on general suspicion of terror activities in the Sinai Peninsula). (Figure 7)

Figure 3: Reported Arrests based on Affiliation



Endnotes

¹All 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. For more information on the project's methodology, please see Appendix A of the Egypt Security: Threat and Response report.

²The categorizations are based on the information provided in reports, to the greatest degree of specificity. Where fewer specifics are reported, a more general characterization is used. (For instance, "shooting" is less specific than "drive-by" and "bombing" is less specific than "improvised explosive.")

³All 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. For more information on the