

Egypt Security Watch
Monthly Briefing
January 2015



Summary

This briefing highlights the reported activities of terror groups¹ in Egypt, and discusses trends in both terror attacks and counter-terror operations.²

After fewer overall attacks in December, January 2015 saw a significant upsurge in attacks, totaling **107 attacks-more than even the violent months of July and August 2013**. Counter-terror operations continued, with **104 operations and 1,084 arrests** of alleged terrorists.

The month also saw the **greatest number of casualties** in at least a four year period: **at least 79 people were killed and 160 were wounded in attacks**, due to both the high number of attacks and deadly impact of some. **Multiple attacks in North Sinai on January 29 marked the deadliest operation to date from the Wilayat Sinai terror group** (formerly Ansar Bayt al-Maqdis). Although the government issued no official tally, [reports indicated at least 32 deaths](#).

Violence throughout the country differed from previous months in both geographic distribution and the nature of targets, with **notably more attacks in the provinces of Alexandria, Fayoum, and Suez and a greater number of attacks on economic and property targets**.

- There were 26 private and public property attacks in January, a ten -fold increase over the previous month. The attacks mostly **involved arson and/or improvised explosives**, though [one grenade was thrown into a bus in Port Said](#).
- The attacks primarily targeted transportation and the electricity grid, but also included attacks on an ATM machine, official buildings, and two attacks on Kentucky Fried Chicken branches.

1 For the purposes of this project, TIMEP defines a terror act as a premeditated act of violence by non-state actor carried out for political purposes. Terror groups are those groups who publicly claim to execute terror acts. These do not necessarily correspond to U.S. or Egyptian designations for terrorist entities.

2 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 Data-set. For more information on the project's methodology, please see Appendix A of the [Egypt Security: Threat and Response](#) report.

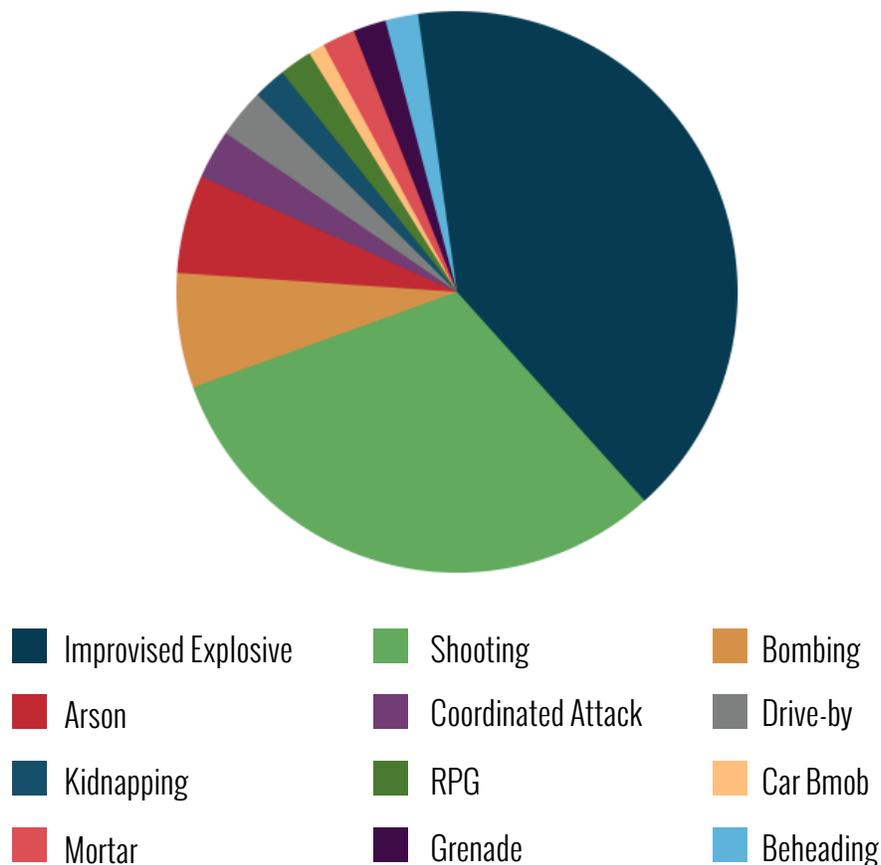
Summary

The Popular Resistance in Alexandria continued to claim attacks: it is a smaller group that is part of a **larger network of Popular Resistance movements** that announced their formation in August but did not report significant activities until December.

Additionally, **a number of new terror groups claimed attacks throughout the month**, including the Popular Resistance in Giza and the Revolutionary Punishment group. Many of their claims, however, have not been corroborated by independent reports.

January also saw the continuation of a trend in the **increased use of improvised explosives in attacks** (43 attacks using IEDs, or 40% of all attacks), particularly in attacks outside of the North Sinai province (38 outside of North Sinai). (Figure 1)

Figure 1: Types of Attacks



Terror Groups' Notable Developments:

Wilayat Sinai

On January 29, the **Wilayat Sinai (ABM)** carried out its [deadliest operation to date](#). Reports indicated that [roughly 100 militants carried out](#) the operation. While the Egyptian government did not release an official death toll, at least [32 were reported killed](#) between both civilian and security casualties and [at least 62 wounded](#). (Read TIMEP's [Press Release](#) on the attack.)

The attack displayed a degree of coordination that had been previously unseen in the country.

- **Car bomb, mortar and other attacks were carried out on over a dozen targets**, including military checkpoints and bases in three cities in North Sinai, including Arish, Sheikh Zuweid, and Rafah.
- One attack **penetrated the largest military installment in the North Sinai**, Battalion 101, and involved using multiple car bombs and large quantities of explosives.
- Another [attack destroyed a Sinai office](#) of the state-run newspaper Al-Ahram, reportedly killing six.

After the major attack was executed, the group continued its activities, carrying out **attacks on checkpoints in Arish and Rafah**.

In the days prior to the attack the group had released photos and videos through their Twitter account that purported to **display training activities and reasserted their commitment to fighting for the Islamic State**: the photos could not be independently verified as having been taken in Egypt.

On January 26, Wilayat Sinai published a video that depicted the **capture, torture, and execution of police officer Ayman Desouki**.

- The video showed Desouki's **capture at a daytime checkpoint**.
- While Wilayat Sinai did not claim his initial capture, state media reported his kidnapping (and placed a gag order on further reporting) on January 11 and on January 12 **Desouki's kidnapping was claimed by the Islamic State in a report disseminated in jihadi media**.

On January 12, Wilayat Sinai published photos and a statement on Twitter that depicted them **providing of monetary payments to "victims of the Egyptian military."**

Ajnad Misr

Ajnad Misr claimed four attacks in January:

- On January 6 the group planted a **bomb in Giza**. It detonated as it was being defused, killing the officer attempting to defuse it and injuring three bystanders.
- On January 22, the group detonated an **improvised explosive outside the presidential palace** in Heliopolis, injuring one policeman.
- Four policemen and one civilian were injured when an **improvised explosive device detonated under a car in the Alf Maskan** area of Cairo.
- Two policemen were injured when a **bomb exploded outside of a sports club in Heliopolis**.

Terror Groups' Notable Developments:

On January 11, Afnad Misr published an extensive Q&A with their leader, Maged al-Din al-Masry.

- Al-Masry declared the group's intention to **expand until it reached “every human being on the face of the earth.”**
- Al-Masry **distanced the group from sectarian goals** but said it would target Christians who supported the regime through the church.
- While he stated that **“defeating the Zionist enemy” was one goal of the group**, Al-Masry stated that focusing on this target would distract the group from its immediate goal of bringing down the Egyptian regime.
- Al-Masry claimed that **currently all members of Afnad Misr are Egyptian** and include students, engineers, doctors, and others.
- Al-Masry stated that Afnad Misr has operated independently since its founding; **it is not “strategically or organizationally linked” to Wilayat Sinai (ABM)**, although it consults members.

Popular Resistance Movements

A number of other groups became apparent in January, around the fourth anniversary of the January 25 Revolution. These groups **did not adopt the same religious tone or proclaimed motivations** as Afnad Misr or Wilayat Sinai, but used distinct language of continuing “revolution.”

The **Popular Resistance in Alexandria claimed an attack in Alexandria** before its social media accounts were disabled (though it was not reported by whom).

The **Popular Resistance in Giza movement also became active after January 9**, posting statements, videos, and photos on their Facebook page throughout the month. Most of the posts in January depicted roadblocks or other acts of arson that could not be independently verified; others vowed “vengeance” for those who had been arrested by security officers.

A new group, Revolutionary Punishment, also emerged and claimed a variety of attacks that could not be independently verified, including the Alf Maskan attack previously claimed by Afnad Misr.

Terror Attacks Trend Report:

Figure 2: Number of Attacks Countrywide

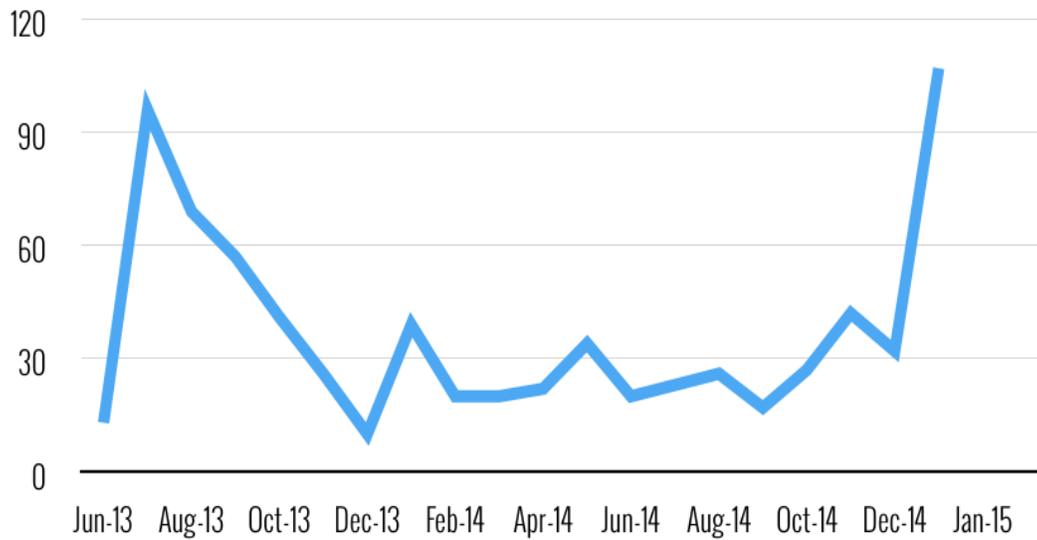
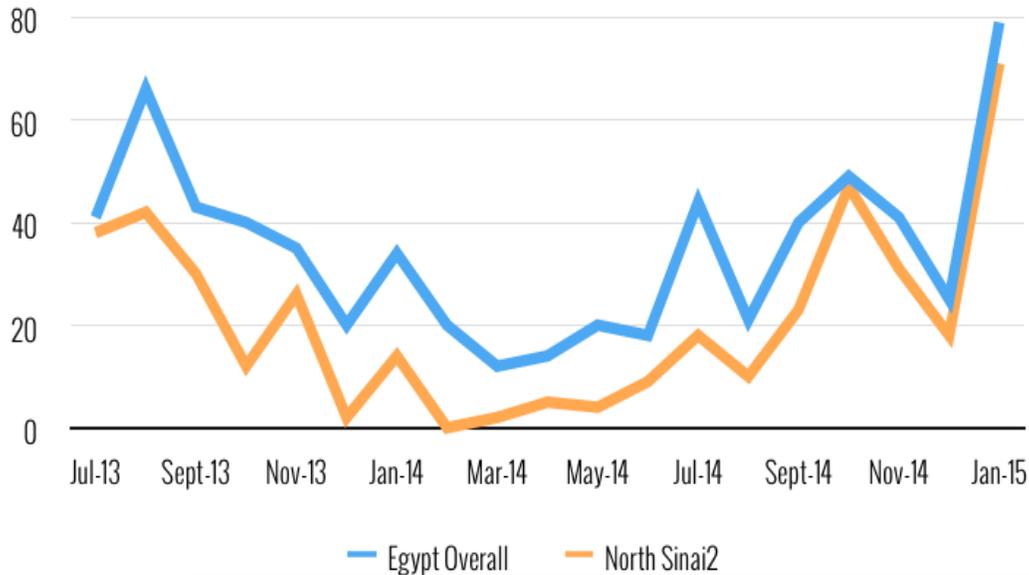


Figure 3: Number of Deaths in Attacks

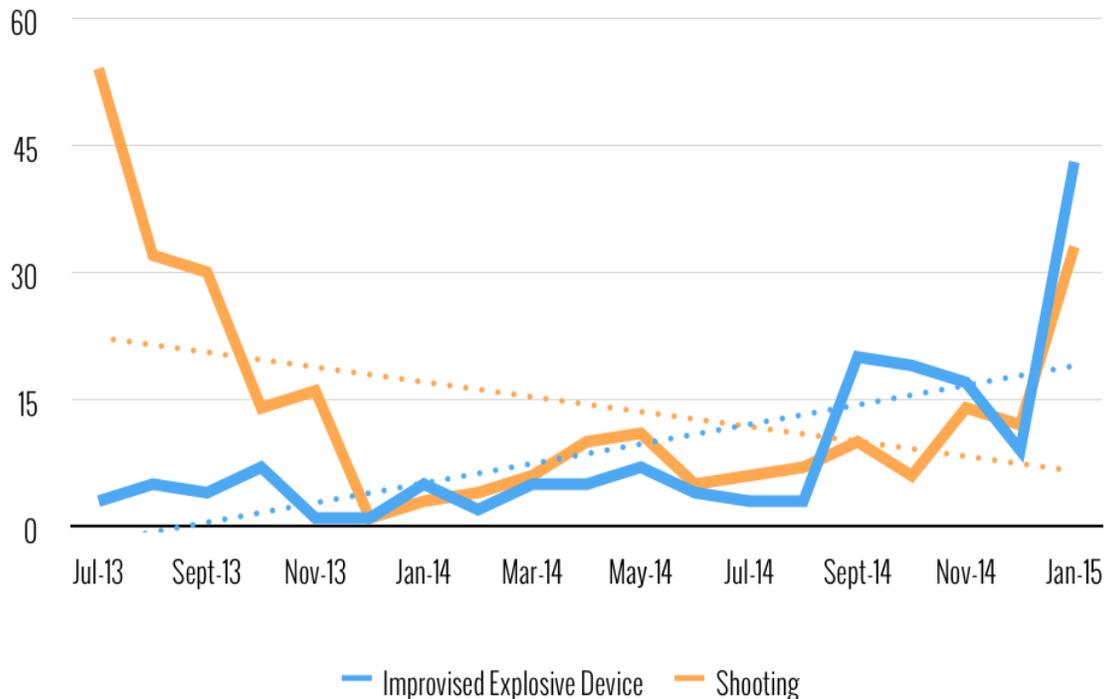


The number of reported terror attacks increased significantly from December 2014 to January 2015. January 2015 saw 107 attacks, more than the period of violence in July and August 2013, months in which 96 and 69 attacks were carried out, respectively. (Figure 2)

January 2015 was also the **deadliest month in terms of terror attacks**. While no official count was given for those killed in the January 29 Sinai attacks, TIMEP's conservative count places the number of reported deaths in Egypt in terror attacks at 79, 71 of which were killed in North Sinai. (Figure 3)

Terror Attacks Trend Report:

Figure 4: Trends in Types of Attacks (by Number of Attacks)



While the level of violence matched that of the summer 2013, the nature of attacks was different in January 2015. Around half of the attacks in July and August 2013 were shootings: **January 2015 saw 33 shootings and three drive-by shootings.** (Figures 1 and 4)

The 43 improvised explosive devices (IEDs) that were detonated in January 2015 represent a **growing trend in the use of IEDs**. This indicates a **greater degree of premeditation** in the execution of attacks, not only in Sinai but in the rest of Egypt as well. (Figures 1 and 4)

The nature of targets changed dramatically in January 2015; **there were 26 attacks on economic or property targets** (the 18 prior months included no more than 5). These included seven on transportation (busses or trains), six on electricity infrastructure, four on public buildings, two on Kentucky Fried Chicken branches, and one on a banking facility. (Figure 5)

Attacks in January also resulted in **more civilian deaths than in any other month in the period of data collection** (since January 2010). There were 38 attacks that resulted in civilian injury or death, and 35 civilians were killed in January. While civilians were not the main targets in the majority of the attacks (except those in the Sinai that targeted suspected state “informants”) the increased civilian death toll **indicates a waning hesitation to carry out attacks that may harm civilians**. (Figure 6) (A similar number of attacks in July and August 2013 resulted in far fewer civilian casualties, attributable to groups’ declared restraint from attacks that might harm civilians and the nature of attacks—shootings are more targeted and less likely to harm civilians than IED attacks, for instance.)

Terror Attacks Trend Report:

Figure 5: Attacks on Economic/Property Targets

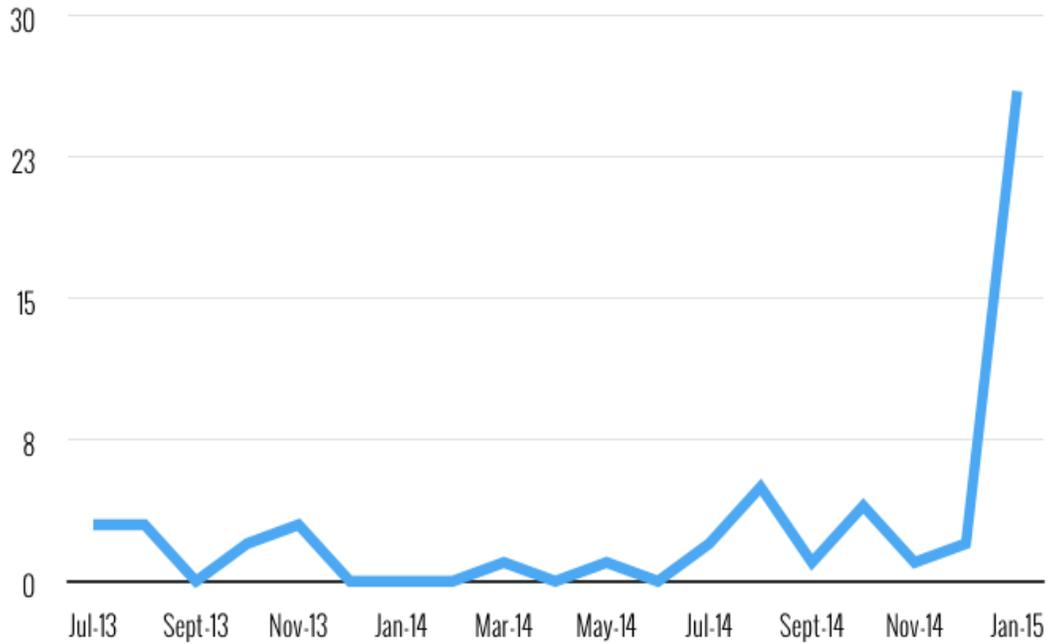
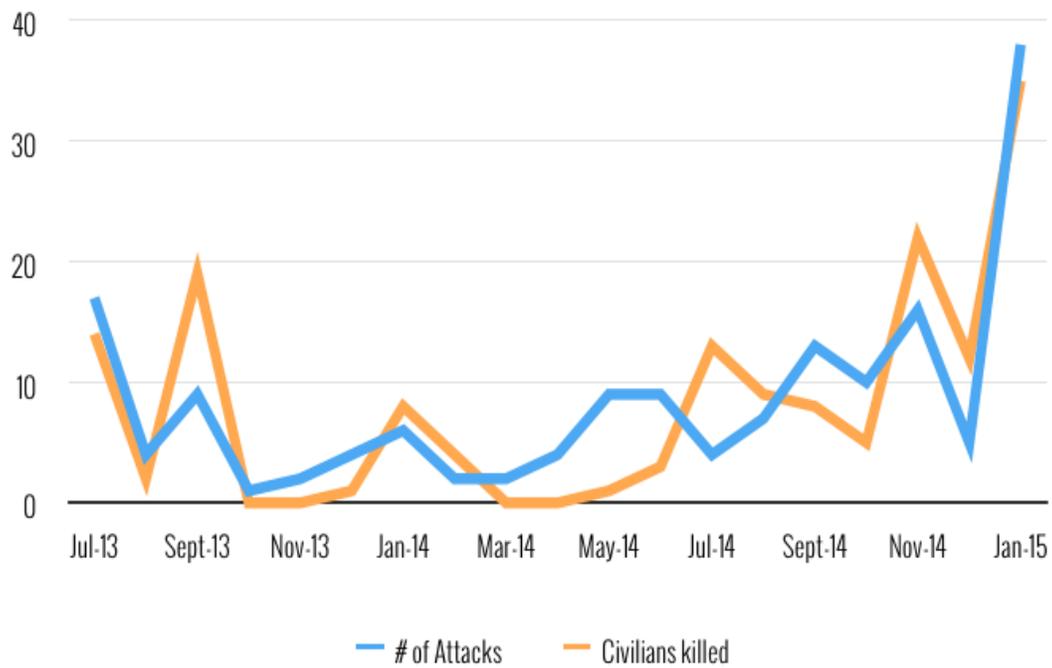


Figure 6: Attacks with Civilian Casualties



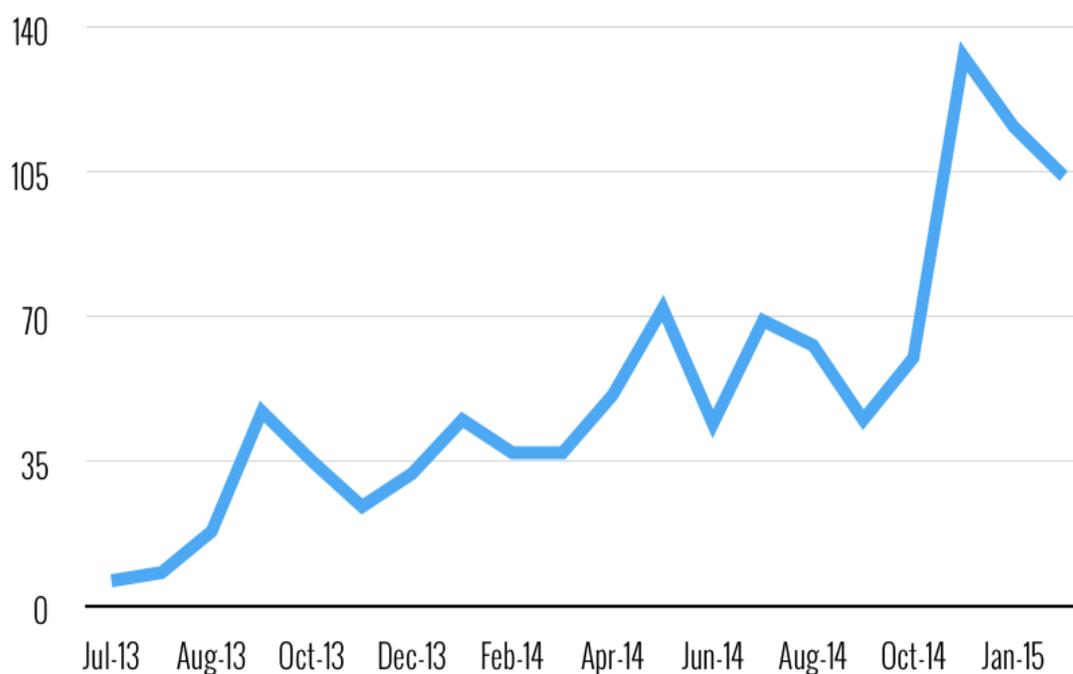
Counter-terror Operations Trend Report:

Counter-terror operations decreased slightly from December 2014 to January 2015, with 104 distinct operations in January. However, the reported **104 distinct counter-terror operations** remained above the yearly average and median figures year over year (65 and 60, respectively). (Figure 7)

The official military spokesperson attributed the January 29 Sinai attack to the success of military campaigns in a [statement issued on Facebook](#). A [later statement](#) pledged to intensify operations in an effort to eliminate terrorism.

Twenty-six of the 104 operations were carried out in North Sinai, 19 in Greater Cairo, and the rest in various regions throughout the country.

Figure 7: Number of Operations Countrywide

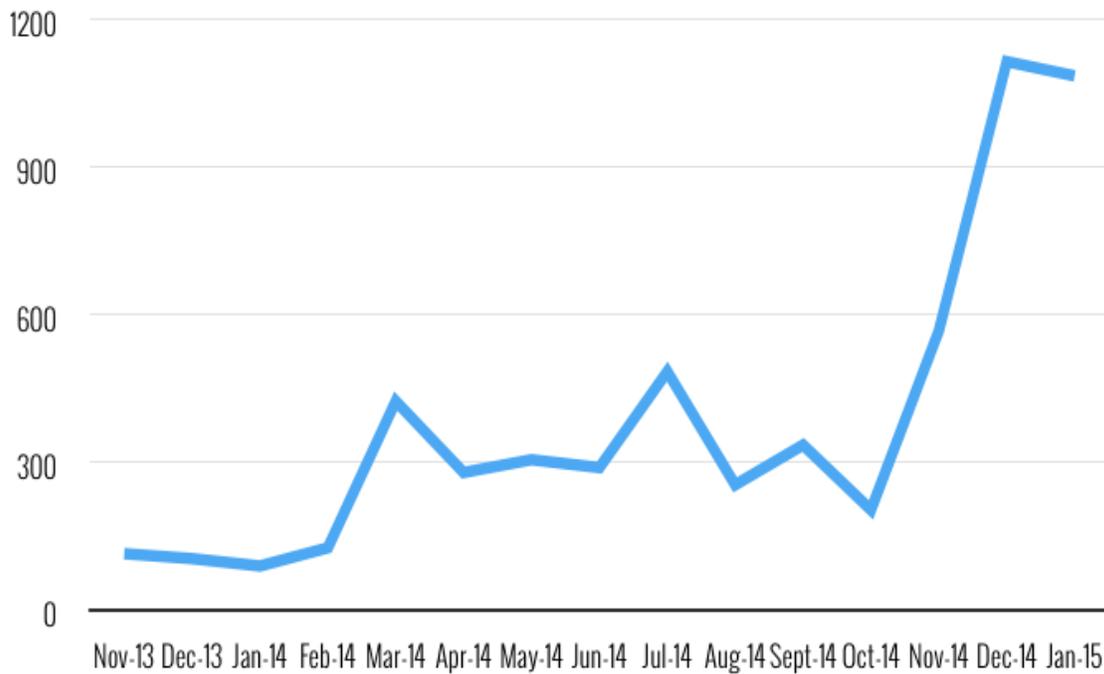


1084 alleged terrorists³ were reportedly arrested in January 2015, roughly the same number as in the previous month. (Figure 8)

3 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.

Counter-terror Operations Trend Report:

Figure 8: Number of Arrests of Alleged Terrorists Countrywide



There were increasing numbers of Muslim Brotherhood members arrested, a trend that began when the group was declared a terrorist organization in January 2014 and has continued through January 2015. The month saw the **arrest of 857 individuals for allegedly belonging to the “terrorist Muslim Brotherhood” organization.**

Figure 9: Arrest of Alleged Muslim Brotherhood members

