

Egypt Security Watch Monthly Briefing



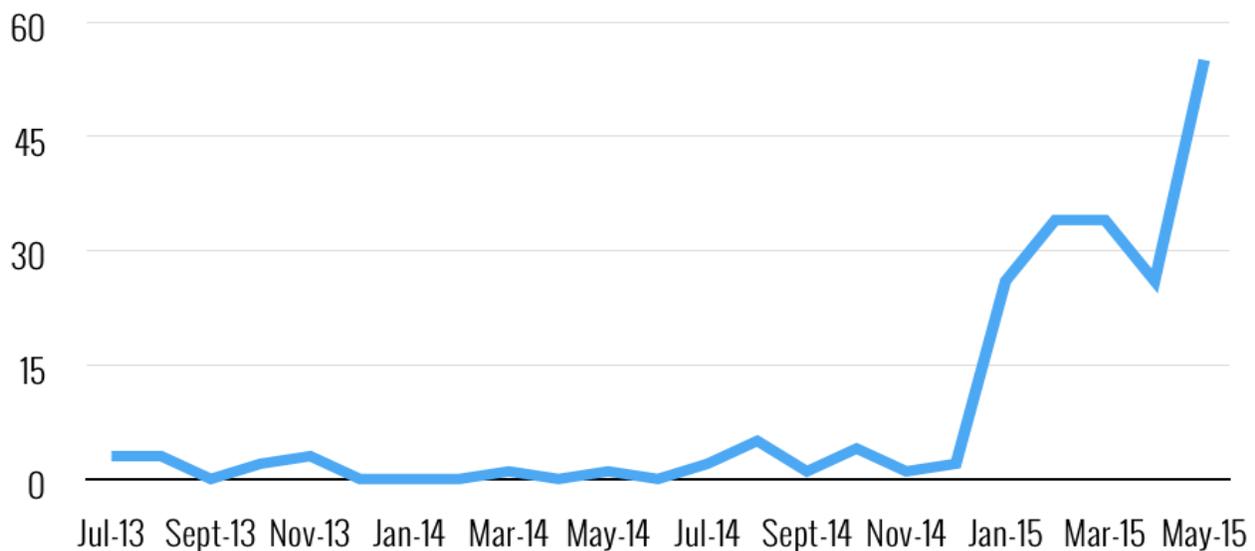
Summary

May 2015 marked **the highest reported number of terror attacks in Egypt in one month on record**, with 138 reported attacks. It was the fifth month in a row that over 100 attacks were reported in the country. This brings the **monthly average for 2015 to 116.5 attacks**, almost four times the rate of last year's average of 30 attacks per month.

Attacks took place in 18 provinces across Egypt; **39 of the 138 reported attacks took place in North Sinai**.

After a slight decrease from March to April, **attacks on economic or property targets increased sharply in May with 55 reported attacks**, primarily on police or military installations, electricity infrastructure, and public transportation (Figure 1).

Figure 1: Attacks on Economic/Property Targets



Reported deaths in terror attacks decreased by 39% from April to May, yet still remained above the monthly average for 2015. Reported civilian casualties also decreased from April to May, with nine civilians killed in May.

The **Allied Popular Resistance Movement (APRM) claimed 17 attacks**; Ajnad Misr did not claim any attacks in May; and **Wilayat Sinai claimed 25 attacks**, all in North Sinai. In these 25 attacks, at least **14 individuals were reported killed**, including one civilian (Figure 2).

Unclaimed attacks in the country remained high, with **67% of all reported attacks going unclaimed** in May. The number of claims has been increasing steadily since July 2014, though with a slight decrease from April to May 2015 (47 to 45 reports; see Figures 2, 3, and 8).

Summary

Figure 2: Number of Attacks by Group

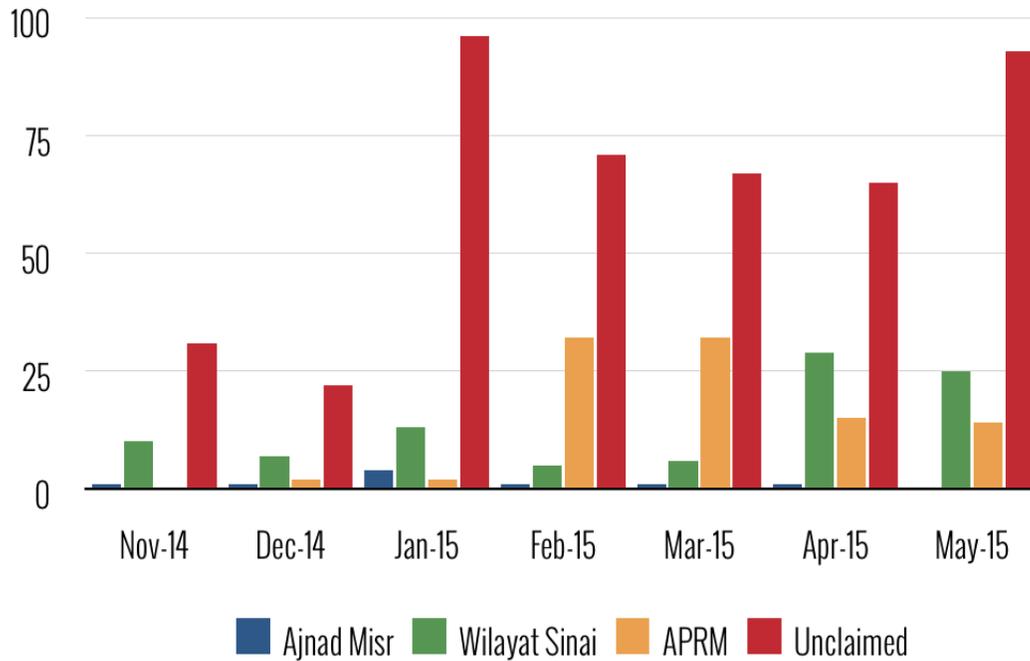
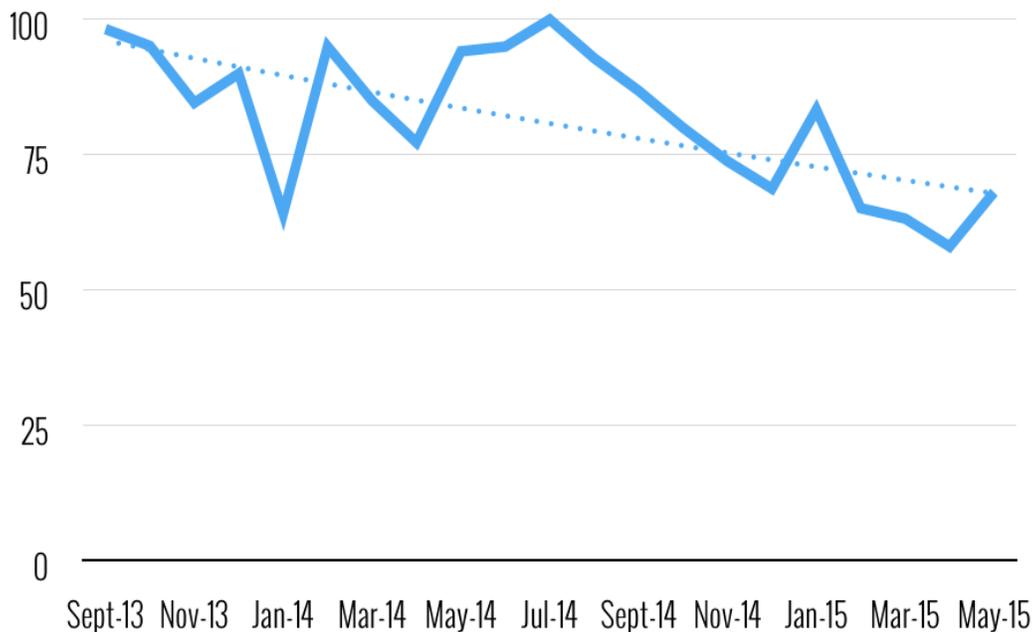


Figure 3: Unclaimed Attacks as Percentage of All Attacks

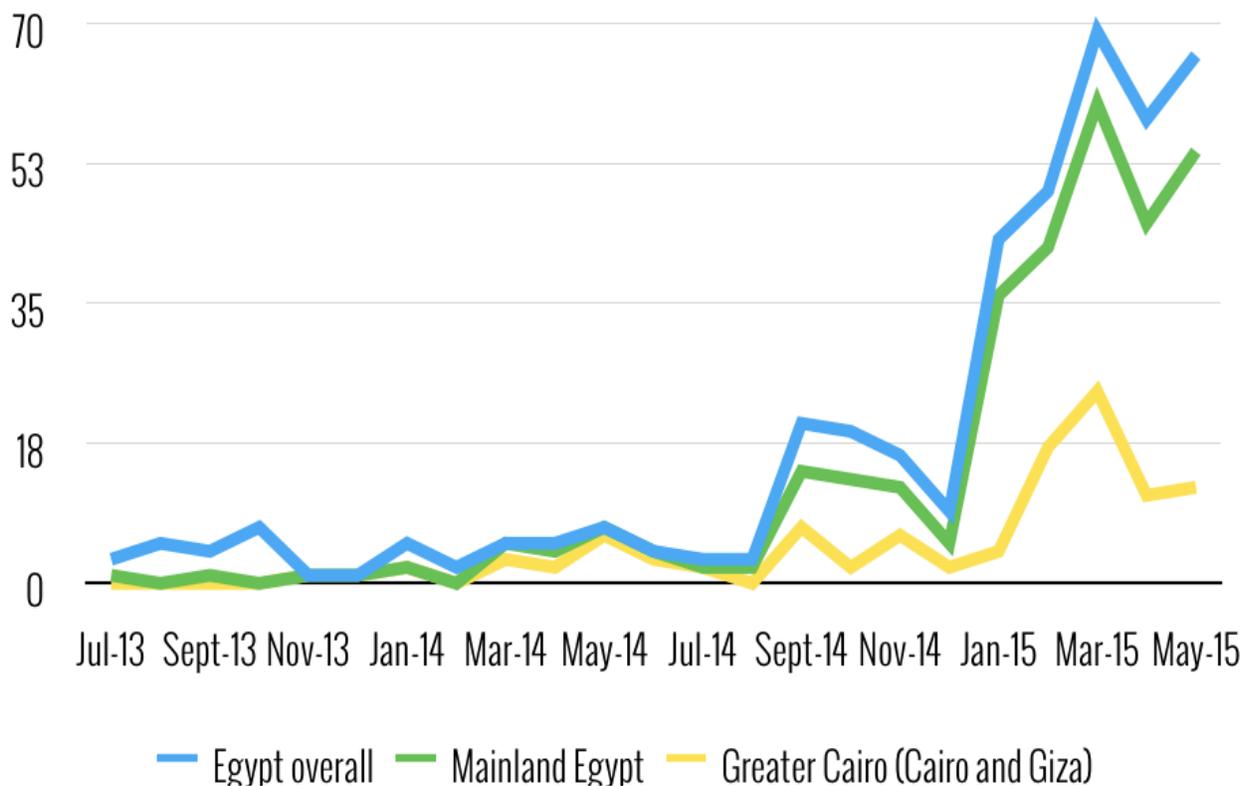


The **Movement for Revolution in Beni Suef**, an APRM affiliate, carried out its first verified attack, fatally shooting a Homeland Security officer.

Overall, reports of improvised explosive device (IED) attacks increased slightly from 59 attacks in April to 66 attacks in May. While many of these took place in Greater Cairo (12) or North Sinai (12), the majority took place throughout the rest of mainland Egypt (Figure 4).

Summary

Figure 4: IED Attacks



On May 17, **Egyptian authorities hanged six men accused of participation in the “Arab Sharkas” terror cell¹**, allegedly with ties to Ansar Bayt al-Maqdis. The executions were condemned by rights groups and **elicited retaliation from terror groups**, specifically targeting the judicial branch: Six courts were attacked, and four judges were killed in May.

A Sharqia court sentenced eight men to death for their participation in the “second Rafah massacre,” including known jihadist Adel Habara.

The Cairo Court for Urgent Matters designated all Ultras groups terrorist organizations. Ultras are clubs of devoted fans of Egyptian football (soccer) teams, with a reputation for clashing with police.

Counter-terror operations continued to increase steadily, with **reports of 312 counter-terror operations** in May. Of these, **206 were reported by official government spokespersons** (military, Ministry of Interior, or State Information Service); the others were reported in the news media or from anonymous security officials’ statements.

1 The Arab Sharkas case refers to the military trial of nine men accused of belonging to an affiliate cell of Ansar Bayt al-Maqdis and carrying out attacks on security forces in early 2014. In March 2014, the military raided the Arab Sharkas village in Qalyubia where the militants were suspected to have been in hiding, and two officers and six militants were killed in the ensuing firefight. While the trial has raised controversy from rights groups questioning its adherence to standards of due process, it received little media attention until the unanticipated execution of six of the accused on Sunday, May 17 (one day after former President Muhammad Morsi was sentenced to death). For more information on the proceedings and the defendants, see Hossam Bahgat, [“The Arab Sharkas Cell: The quasi-covert military trial of Ansar Beit al-Maqdes \[sic\],”](#) *Mada Masr*.

Summary

Of these operations, 50 were specifically reported in North Sinai; 46 in Greater Cairo; 17 in Beheira; and 16 in Fayoum.

During these operations, official security reports indicated that 144 were killed, 141 of whom were in North Sinai, and three were killed in Damietta. An additional 189 were reported killed in news media, but these were not confirmed by official reports.

A reported **3,070 alleged terrorists** were arrested in May 2015. Of these, **2,035 were alleged members of the Muslim Brotherhood**. This represents the highest number of individuals reported arrested as terrorists in any prior month, and a 38% increase from April (31% based on official spokesperson figures; see Figures [13](#) and [14](#)).

This briefing highlights developments in terror groups and security sector activity, as well as the changing trends in location and character of terror attacks and counter-terror operations.²

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 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

May was an active month for the Allied Popular Resistance Movement (APRM). Along with a number of unattributed attacks that closely resembled their operational character from prior months, **APRM affiliates claimed 21 attacks in ten governorates**. These attacks included:

- Three arson attacks;
- Four improvised explosive attacks;
- Five shootings;
- One kidnapping (of a policeman in Qena);
- A coordinated attack on a court complex in Port Said (involving a series of explosions); and
- Seven unspecified attacks.

As noted in the [TIMEP profile of the group](#), APRM is a conglomeration of nationalist movements, aimed at combatting a government that it perceives as oppressive and illegitimate.

Revolutionary Punishment (RP) claimed fourteen of APRM's attacks in May, seven of which were carried out in Fayoum governorate.

As in previous months, checkpoint assaults and target police assassinations, like those in Senoures, [Belbes](#), and [Lake Karun](#), constituted a majority of RP's operations. On Tuesday, May 19, the group claimed responsibility for an [explosion at a court complex](#) in Port Said and, later, another explosion at a military court south of the city. In an official statement, **RP cited the [Arab Sharkas](#) executions as the motive for the attacks**.

The Popular Resistance Movement also broke its relative social media silence following the Arab Sharkas affair. Within a two-day span, the APRM affiliate claimed four operations in Qena, Minya, Fayoum, and Monofeya governorates. Its [May 19 arson attack on a Sadat court](#) was, according to its official Twitter account, a direct response to the Arab Sharkas executions.

The Beni Suef Revolutionaries Movement claimed its first and only operation this month—a [fatal attack](#) on a Homeland Security officer on *Wednesday, May 20*.

Terror Groups' Notable Developments:

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

Islamic State affiliate **Wilayat Sinai continued activity in North Sinai throughout May, with a total of 25 attacks (specific attacks detailed below)**. Roadside bombings, security checkpoint attacks and mortar barrages, like in previous months, comprised a majority of these operations.

The group ceased its official presence on social media, with no verified Twitter account currently linked to the group. Rather, all operational reports were disseminated by the group's members, including one member who previously ran the official accounts and through the group's "Al Tor" social branch.

Wilayat Sinai also continued its targeting of military supply lines, though it has shifted its approach from destruction of supplies to their capture and redistribution. This approach may **signal a shift to the Islamic State's style of governance** in provision of social services. While it is unclear to what extent the Sinai affiliate has developed institutions, the propaganda around such activities indicates its continued desire to promote this image.

Members of the group **lamented the execution of Arab Sharkas cell members on twitter and via an audio statement by WS leader Abu Osama al-Masry**, eulogizing several of them and vowing retribution.

On Friday, May 22, Wilayat Sinai (WS) published a statement of its monthly activities³. These included twelve attacks in May:

- On Sunday, May 3, WS carried out an arson attack on a supplies truck in North Sinai.⁴
- The next day, the group launched a [60-mm mortar](#) attack on a Rafah military installation.
- On Wednesday, May 6, the group attacked a military transport vehicle in Sheikh Zuweid.
- Then, on Friday, May 8, the group [killed two policemen](#) in Arish.
- On Saturday, May 9, WS claimed to have killed a civilian informant and a military officer in Arish.
- WS claimed two attacks on Wednesday, May 13. The first, which [targeted](#) a Rafah-based M113 armored personnel carrier (APC), killed four soldiers; the second was directed at another APC in Sheikh Zuweid.
- On Saturday, May 16, the group attacked the Bowaba checkpoint in Sheikh Zuweid using light and medium weapons and anti-tank missiles, although it was unclear if these were guided ordnance or not. They also claimed to have burned a bulldozer in Rafah and to have downed an Israeli drone.⁵

3 This represents an incomplete summary of May activity, given the non-correspondence of the hijri and Gregorian calendars. Activity occurring between May 18 and June 1 is extracted from unofficial WS media organs. When independent reports or security responses corroborate or conflict with these accounts, these are noted or included as reference links.

4 They later disseminated a number of sensational images of the attack via their social media accounts.

5 The group has often reported the presence of Israeli drones in the area, as have other informal social media reports from Sinai-based actors (militant and non-militant alike). While these reports are most often ignored or denied by Israeli and Egyptian officials, Israeli drones have been known to strike, as in [summer 2013](#) when a drone strike killed five Egyptian militants.

Terror Groups' Notable Developments:

- Also on *Sunday, May 16*, WS carried out a [high-profile attack](#) on a car carrying Egyptian court officials from Ismailia to Arish. Three judges and a prosecutor were killed, and three others in the car were wounded.
- And on *Monday, May 17*, WS intercepted a food supplies truck destined for the military.

[Ajnad Misr](#)

Ajnad Misr claimed no attacks in May.

Aside from two Twitter statements (on May 4 and May 6) describing the group's position as being under attack in a "war," the group's official and affiliated members' **social media accounts were silent throughout the month.**

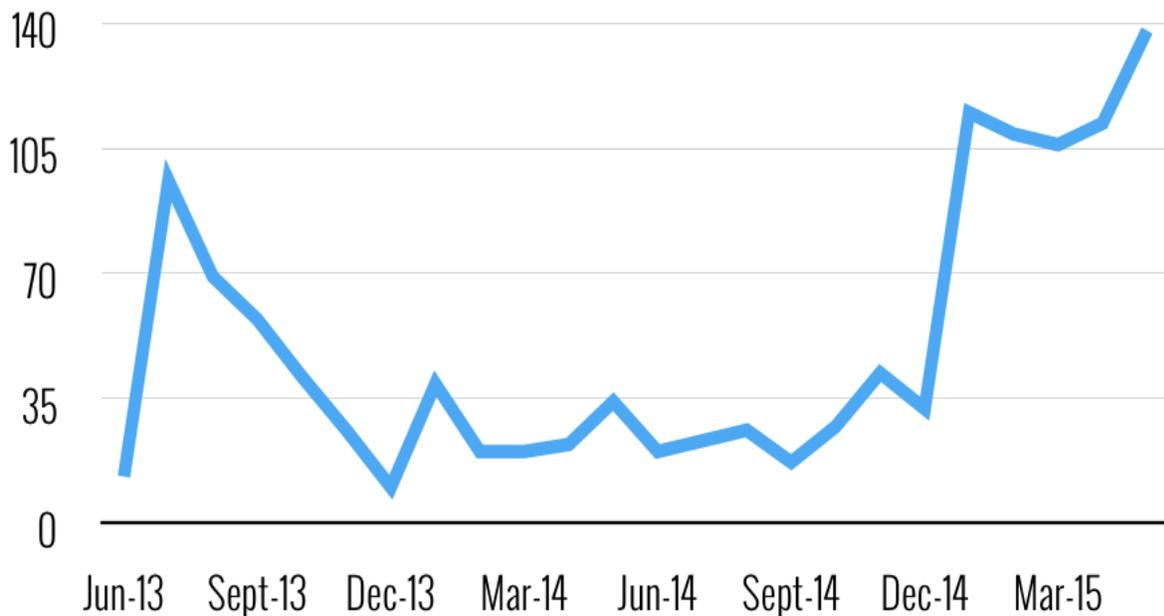
Other Terror Groups

On *Tuesday, May 19*, [Jund al-Islam](#) **issued a statement in which it offered its condolences for the Arab Sharkas executions.** The group is not known to have carried out any attacks since June 2013.

Terror Attacks Trend Report:

The number of reported terror attacks increased 23% in May 2015, to 138 reported attacks, bringing the total for 2015 thus far to 579 attacks (compared with 135 in the same period in 2014 and 23 in the same period in 2013; see Figure 5).

Figure 5: Number of Attacks Countrywide



Reported attacks in North Sinai remained relatively consistent, with 39 attacks in May, compared to 40 in April. The total for reported terror attacks in the province in 2015 is 178, or 30% of all reported attacks. North Sinai accounted for 42% of all attacks in 2014, and 67% of all attacks in 2013, demonstrating its lessening share in overall attacks, as more attacks are occurring outside of the province each month (see Figures [6](#) and [7](#)).

In the Greater Cairo area, reported attacks increased slightly to 22 attacks, split evenly between the provinces of Giza and Cairo. Attacks reported in the Sharqia province continued to increase (from 10 in April to 17 in May), while **attacks in Alexandria remained low** after an active early 2015 (only three attacks between April and May versus 11 each in March and February; see Figure 6).

Terror Attacks Trend Report:

Figure 6: Number of Attacks in Key Areas

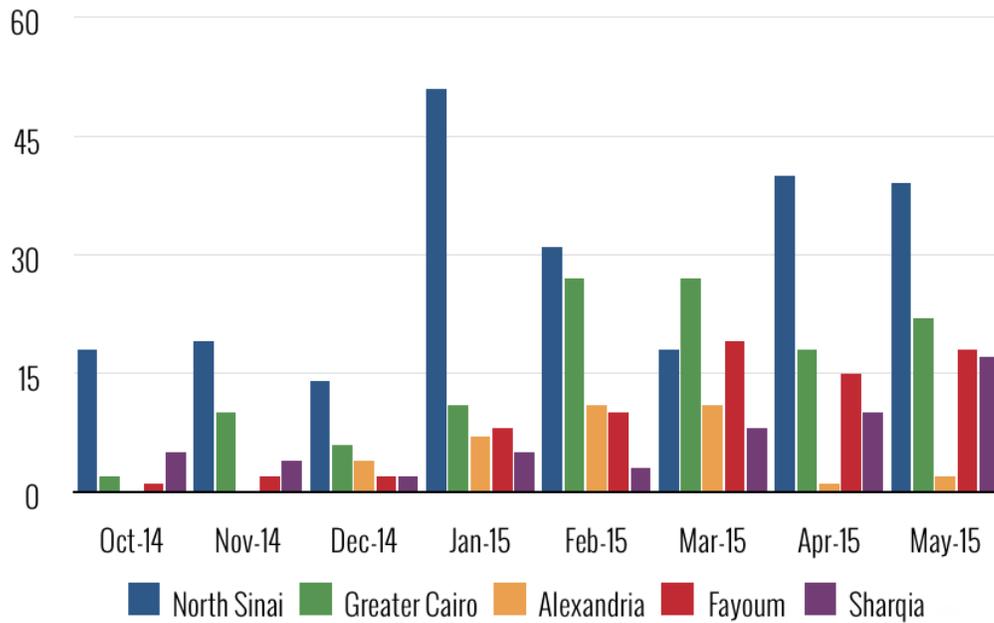
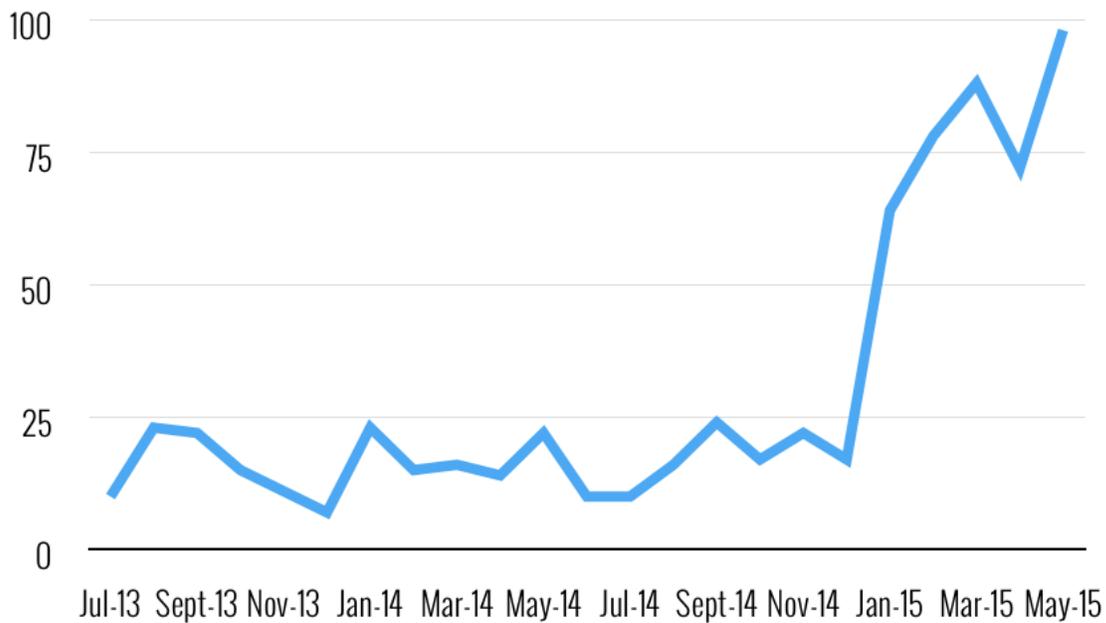


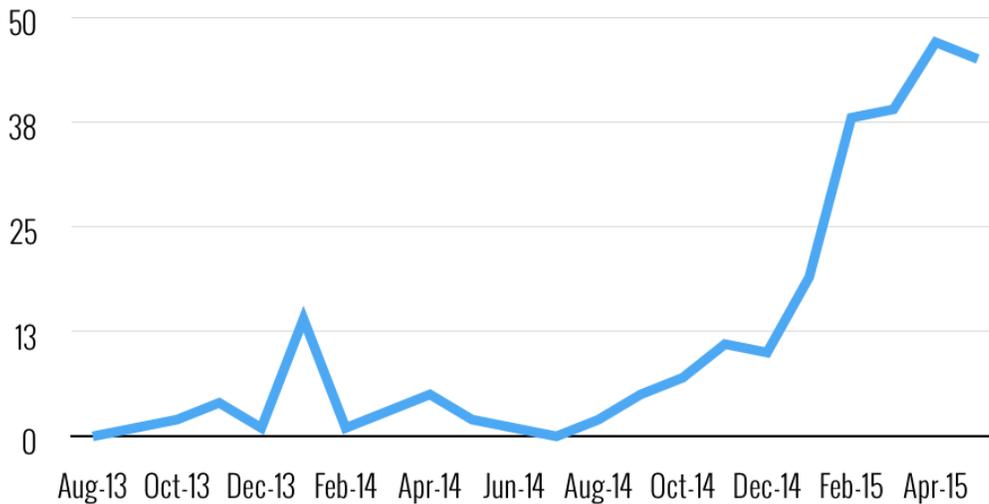
Figure 7: Attacks Outside North Sinai



Of the 138 reported attacks, 45 of these were claimed by terror groups, as described in the previous section. Sixty-seven percent of reported attacks were unclaimed in May. Claims of attacks have been steadily increasing, in both number and percentage, since July 2014 (Figures 3 and 8).

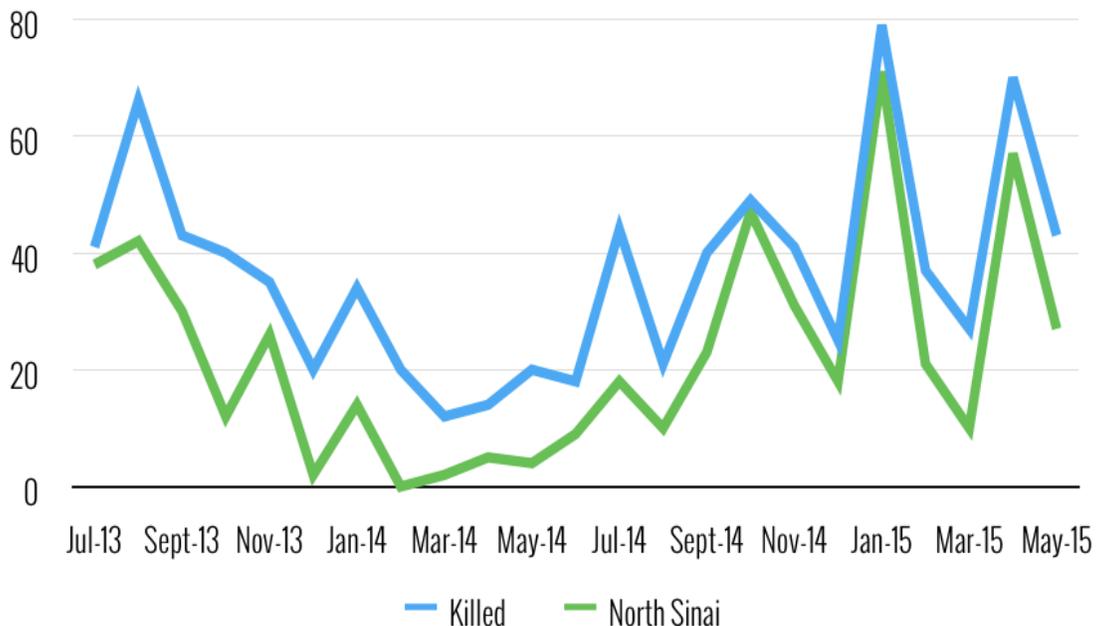
Terror Attacks Trend Report:

Figure 8: Number of Claimed Attacks



After a sharp increase in April, **the number of reported deaths in attacks decreased to 43**, remaining just above the year over year average of 41.3 reported killed. The majority—63%—of reported fatalities were killed in North Sinai (Figure 9).

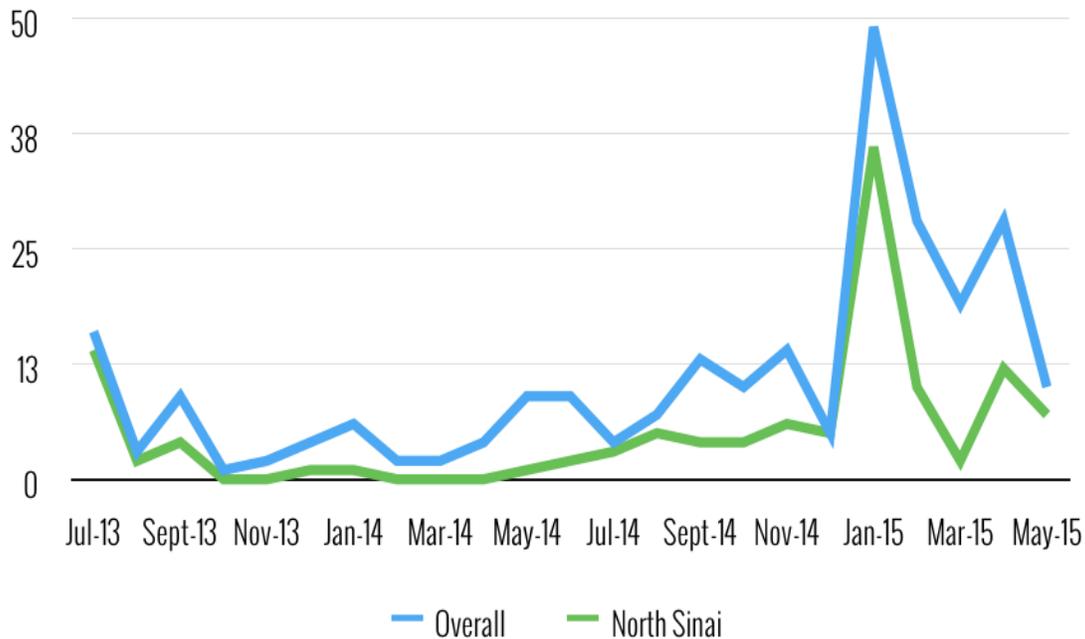
Figure 9: Number of Deaths in Attacks



Terror Attacks Trend Report:

May saw a significant decrease in reported attacks on civilians from previous months. **Civilians were reported killed or injured in 10 attacks throughout the country**, much less than the monthly 2015 average of 31 attacks. In total, **nine civilians were reported killed in terror attacks in the country**⁶ (Figure 10).

Figure 10: Attacks Implicating Civilians



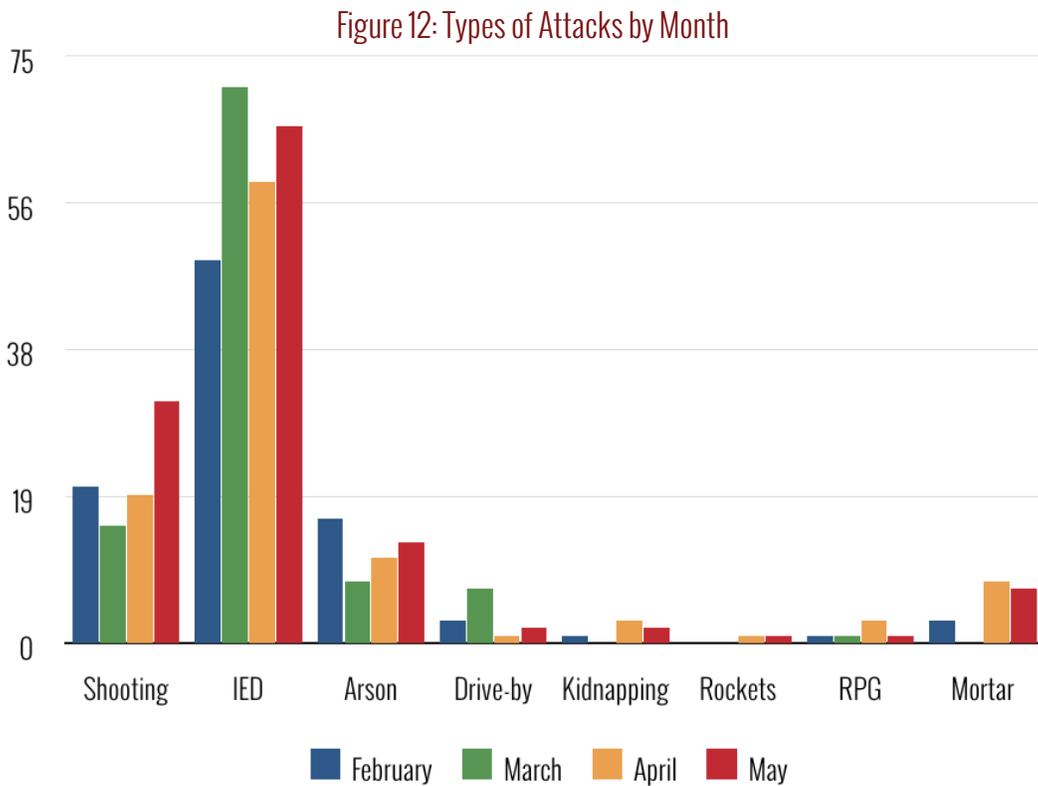
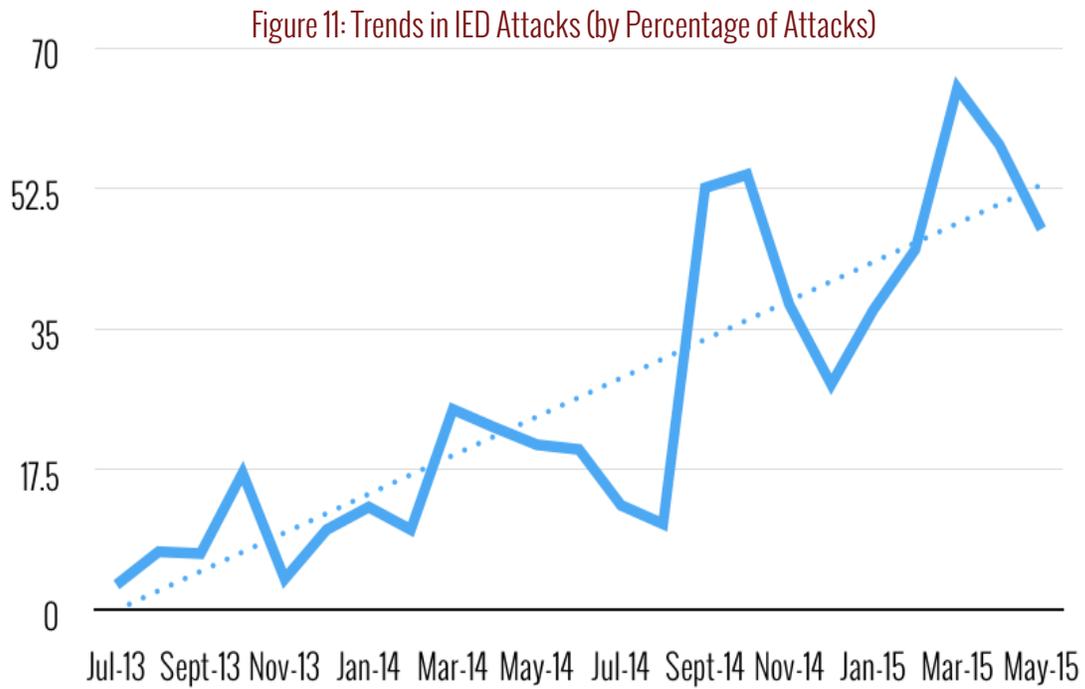
May 2015 saw an increase in reported IED attacks, from 58 attacks in April to 66 in May. **Reports of IED attacks in North Sinai decreased slightly** from 13 attacks in April to 12 in May. Such attacks increased slightly in Greater Cairo, from 11 in April to 12 in May (Figure 4).

While the share of IED attacks dipped below half in May, the overall trend in the use of IEDs has been their **increasing preponderance as an attack method** (Figure 11).

Aside from IED attacks, reported **shootings, arson, and mortar attacks were predominant** throughout the month of May, in line with previous months. In one instance, Wilayat Sinai reported using anti-tank “missiles,” although it was unclear exactly which weapons system they were referring to (Figure 12).

6 As of April 2015, TIMEP has refined its methods of recording civilian casualties, making trend analysis unavailable for ESW Monthly Report 8. Updated figures will be available in future reports.

Terror Attacks Trend Report:



Terror Attacks Trend Report:

April saw an increase in reported attacks on economic and property targets, from 26 in April to 55 in May (Figure 1). In May, these included reports of:

- four attacks on private property (three targeting judges or prosecutors and one targeting the governor of Fayoum);
- nine attacks on police stations or other security property;
- nine attacks on transportation;
- two attacks on Vodaphone outlets;
- six attacks on courts (primarily in retaliation for the execution of the Arab Sharkas cell members);
- 13 attacks on electricity infrastructure;
- three attacks on communications infrastructure; and
- one attack on the gas pipeline to Jordan.

Aside from the six attacks on courts, **members of the judiciary were specifically targeted in the second half of May:** three judges and a prosecutor were killed while traveling to Arish, a judge was killed in a roadside bombing in Sharqia, a prosecutor's car was burned in Beheira, and assailants attempted to assassinate a judge in Cairo.

Security Sector Notable Developments:

[Six men were hanged](#) for their involvement with Ansar Bayt al-Maqdis (now referred to as Wilayat Sinai), after their sentencing in the “Arab Sharkas” case. The men had been convicted of killing soldiers in a [military trial after their arrest in March 2014](#). The executions elicited [condemnation from rights’ groups](#), who suggested that two of the executed men had been in custody at the time they were alleged to have committed the crime.

Following their execution and the targeting of courts and judges, the **Arish court was closed** and its cases moved to a court in Ismailia.

On May 26, a **criminal court in Zagazig, Sharqia, sentenced eight men to death** for acts of violence against security officials and for belonging to terrorist groups. Their case was for crimes committed during the “second Rafah massacre” in August 2013, where militants stormed a police convoy and killed 25 conscripts in North Sinai. **One of the men was known jihadist Adel Habara**, who had been previously sentenced to death in *absentia* for his participation in the deadly 2005 attacks in Dahab and Taba in South Sinai.

On May 16, **the Cairo Court for Urgent Matters designated the Ultras as terrorist organizations**. The Ultras are groups of militant soccer fans who have been known to act violently, including targeting security forces, although they have never claimed distinct terrorist attacks. (Ultras’ violence is usually more random and reactive, rather than premeditated and targeted.) **Any individuals who are suspected to have associated with the Ultras may now be prosecuted under the penal code for terrorism**, subjecting them to longer periods of pre-trial detention and harsher sentences. (For more information on the process of designating terror groups and legislation on terrorism, see [“Designating a Terrorist: A Process Unchecked”](#) and [“Legislating Terror in Egypt.”](#))

After significant media buzz in April about Sinai-based tribes uniting to counter terrorism in the region, tribal leaders met on May 10. After the meeting, the [Sinai Tribal Federation issued a statement of support to the military](#) in its efforts to combat militants, and suggesting the formation of youth groups to assist in intelligence gathering. Despite the media attention given to the meeting and the statement, there have been no concrete actions or initiatives to have emerged.

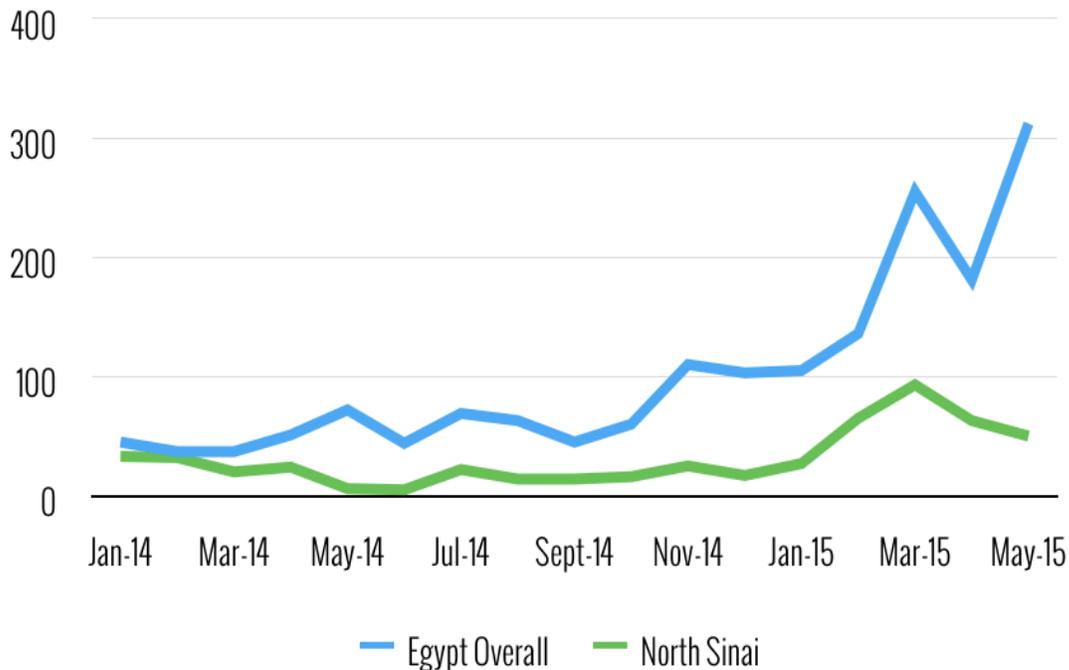
Conflict between security forces and militant groups persisted in North Sinai, with a continued lack of clarity regarding the outcome of the violence. In separate instances, including on Monday, May 25, and on Friday, May 22, civilians were killed in random shelling, the origin of which remains unknown.

Counter-terror Operations Trend Report:

May saw an increase in reported counter-terror operations from 181 in April to 312 in May, with some discrepancy between official state security reports and news media reports.

Of the 312 reported counter-terror operations, **official state security spokespersons reported 206 distinct counter-terror operations**⁷ (Figure 13).

Figure 13: Counter-Terror Operations



The total reported arrests of “terrorists”⁸ as well as arrests of alleged Muslim Brotherhood members continued to increase in May; May saw the greatest number of individuals reported arrested as “terrorists” of any recorded period. **A reported 3,070 alleged terrorists were arrested** in May 2015 (2,537 based on official state security spokespersons); of these, **2,035 were alleged members of the Muslim Brotherhood** (1,713 based on official state security spokespersons), and 21 were alleged members of Ansar Bayt al-Maqdis⁹ (Figures 14 and 15).

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 state security 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 14: Number of Arrests in Counter-Terror Operations Countrywide

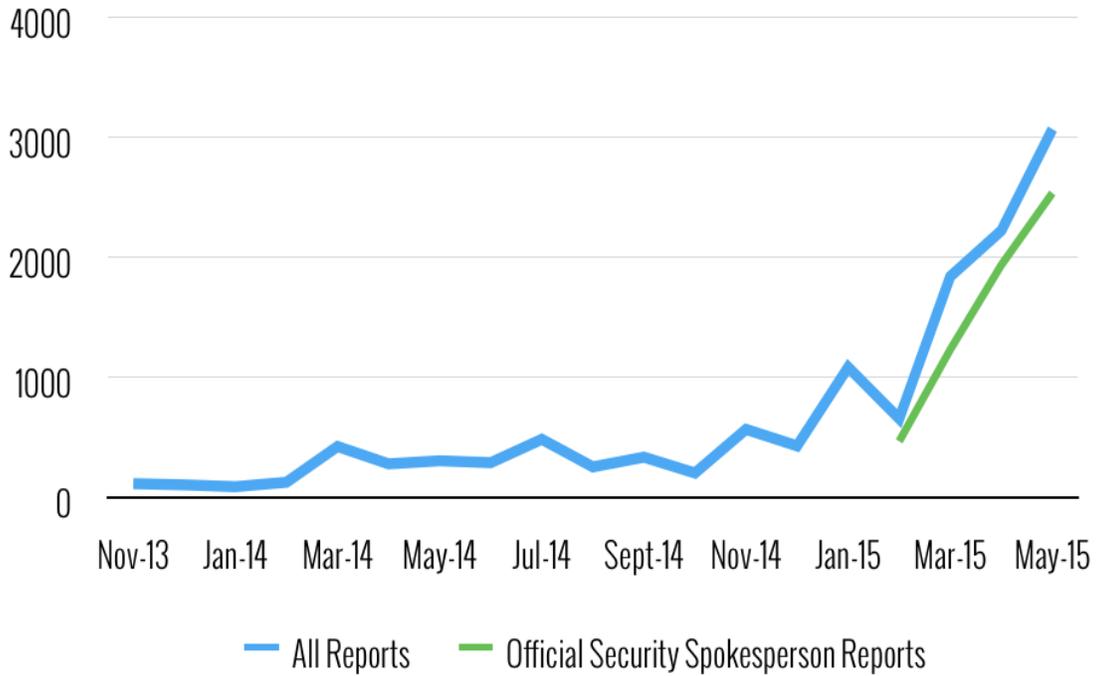
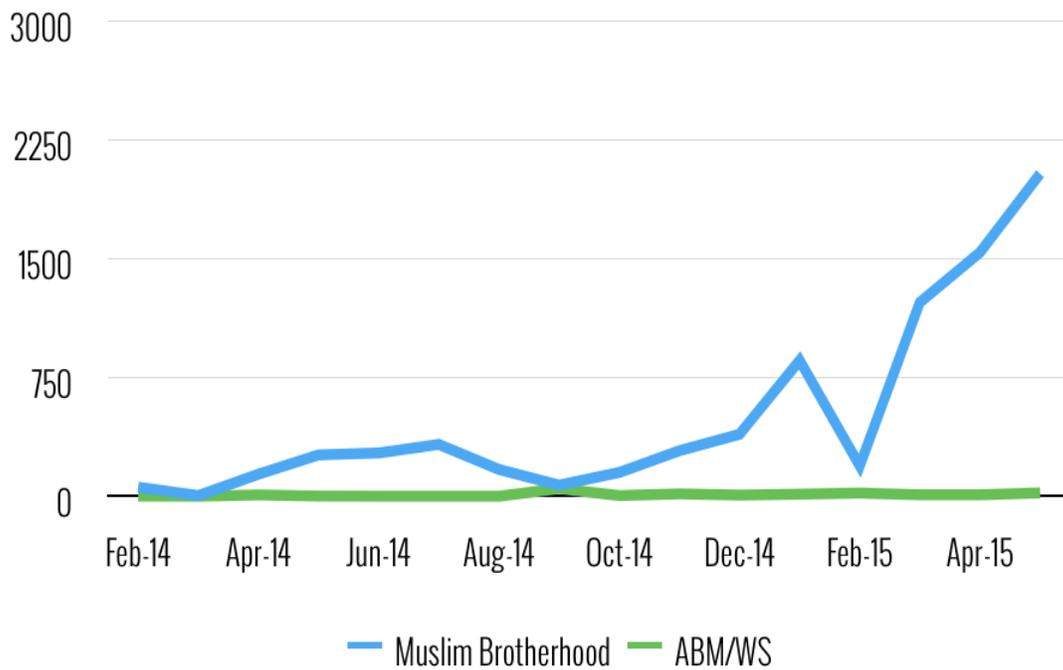


Figure 15: Arrests by Alleged Affiliation



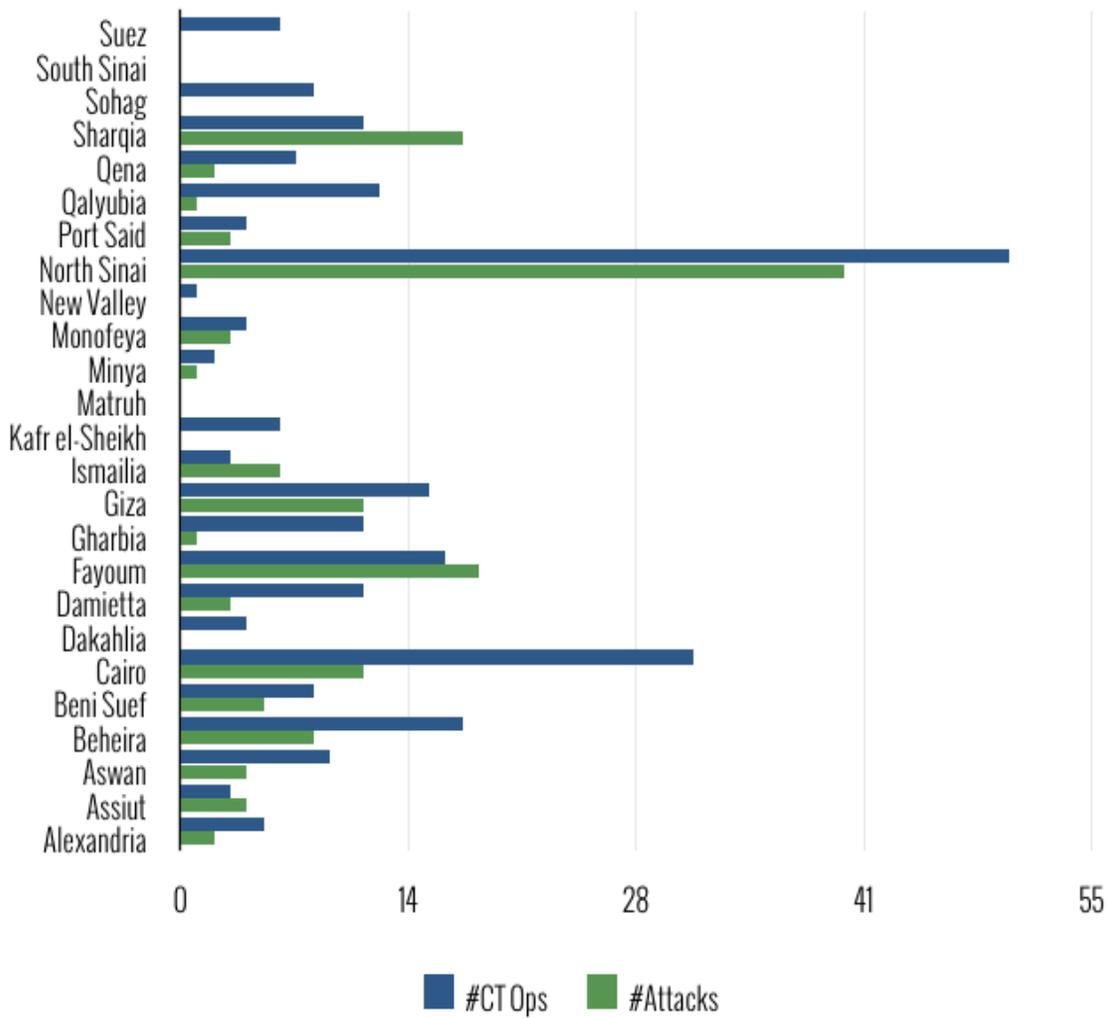
Counter-terror Operations Trend Report:

The majority of reported counter-terror operations took place in North Sinai. Fifty operations were reported, including the arrest of 572 suspected terrorists throughout May, according to official and unofficial (news media) sources. Security officials reported killing 141 suspected terrorists and arresting 393 in North Sinai in May.

This year, security officials have reported killing a total of 609 and arresting 1,527 in the province alone—roughly two percent of the reported adult male population. (Adult male population in 2011 was reported at 109,081, according to [official government data](#).)

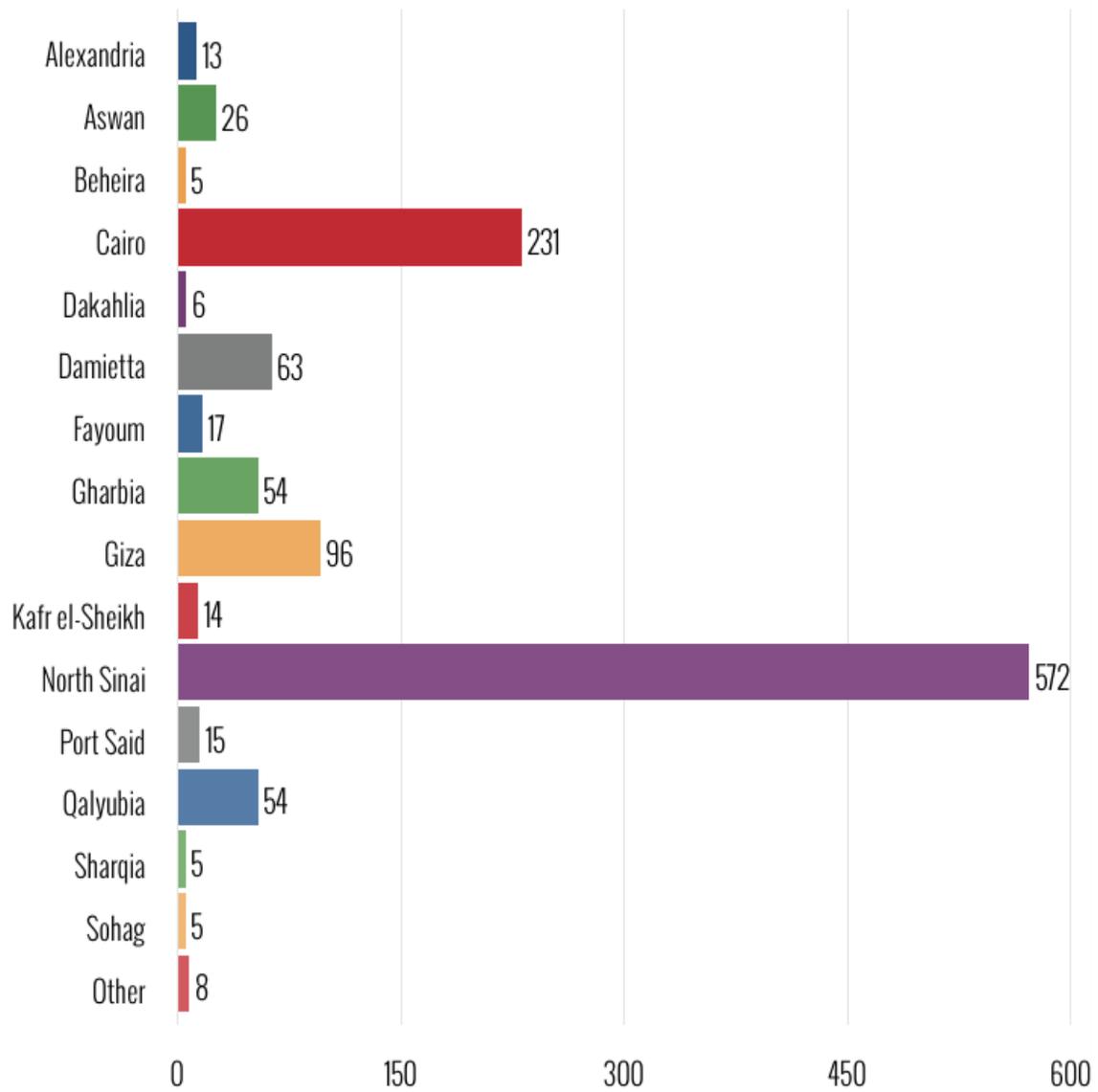
Thirty-one reported security operations took place in Cairo, where 231 were arrested; 15 took place in Giza, where 54 were reported arrested (Figures 16 and 17).

Figure 16: May Terror Attacks and Counter-Terror Operations by Province



Counter-terror Operations Trend Report:

Figure 17: 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.