

Egypt Security Watch Monthly Briefing



Summary

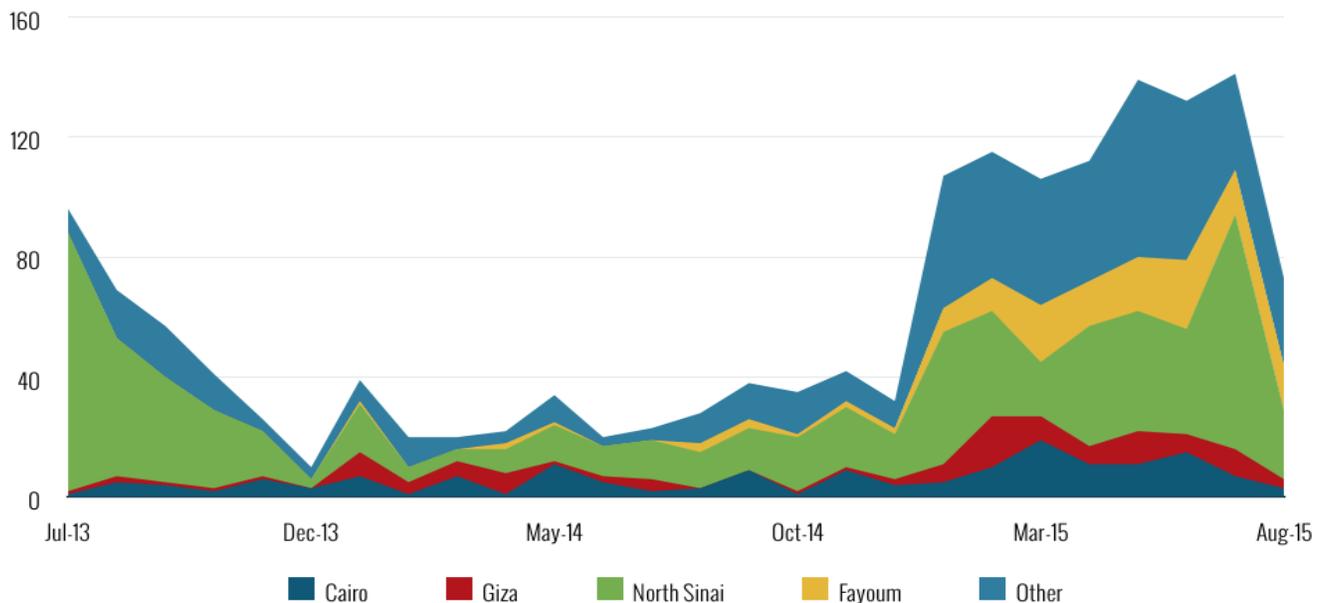
August 2015 marked a **sharp decline in reported terror attacks**, with 73 reported attacks. It was the first month in 2015 that the number of reported attacks in the country declined from previous months. This brought the **monthly average for 2015 to 115.6 reported attacks**, remaining at almost four times the rate of last year's average of under 30 attacks per month ([Figure 1](#)).

For the second month in a row, **the Islamic State (IS) in Egypt claimed an attack in Cairo**. After July's attack on the Italian Consulate, in August, IS actors carried out an attack on the Shobra al-Kheima office of Egypt Homeland Security in retaliation for the May execution of members of Ansar Bayt al-Maqdis; the blast injured 29.

On August 12, **members of the Islamic State province Wilayat Sinai beheaded a Croatian man** amid celebrations to inaugurate the new Suez Canal expansion project. The group had publicized a countdown days before his execution, demanding the release of all Muslim women prisoners in Egypt.

The **Allied Popular Resistance Movement (APRM) claimed 7 attacks** in August, decreasing from previous months by nearly 50%; Afnad Misr claimed one attack; and **Wilayat Sinai claimed 13 attacks**, its fewest since March 2015 ([Figure 4](#)).

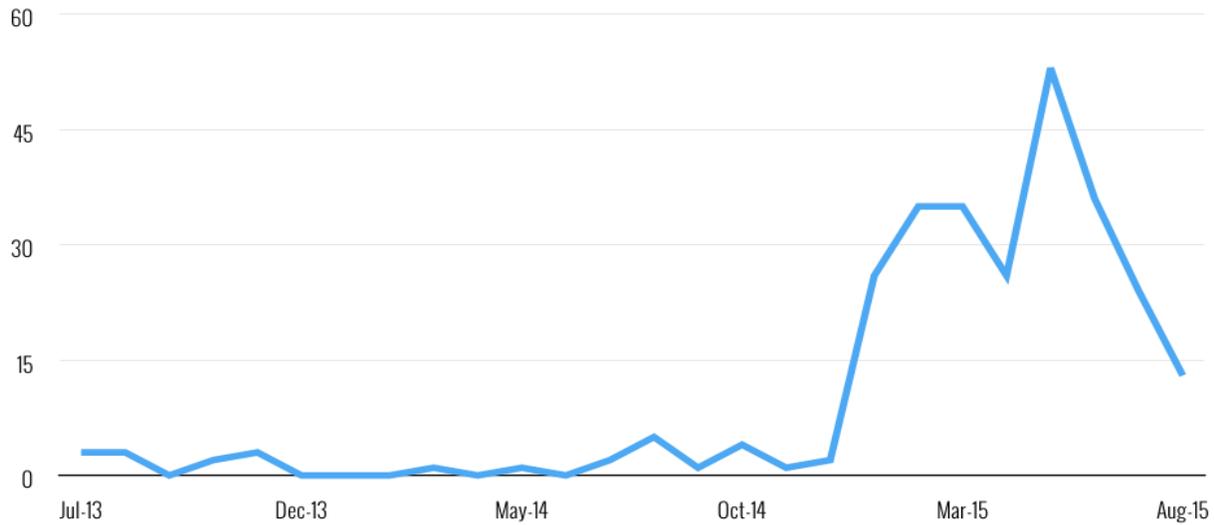
Figure 1: Reported Attacks By Month



Thirteen attacks on property targets were reported in June, representing a significant decrease from prior months, and the May high of 53 reported attacks ([Figure 2](#)).

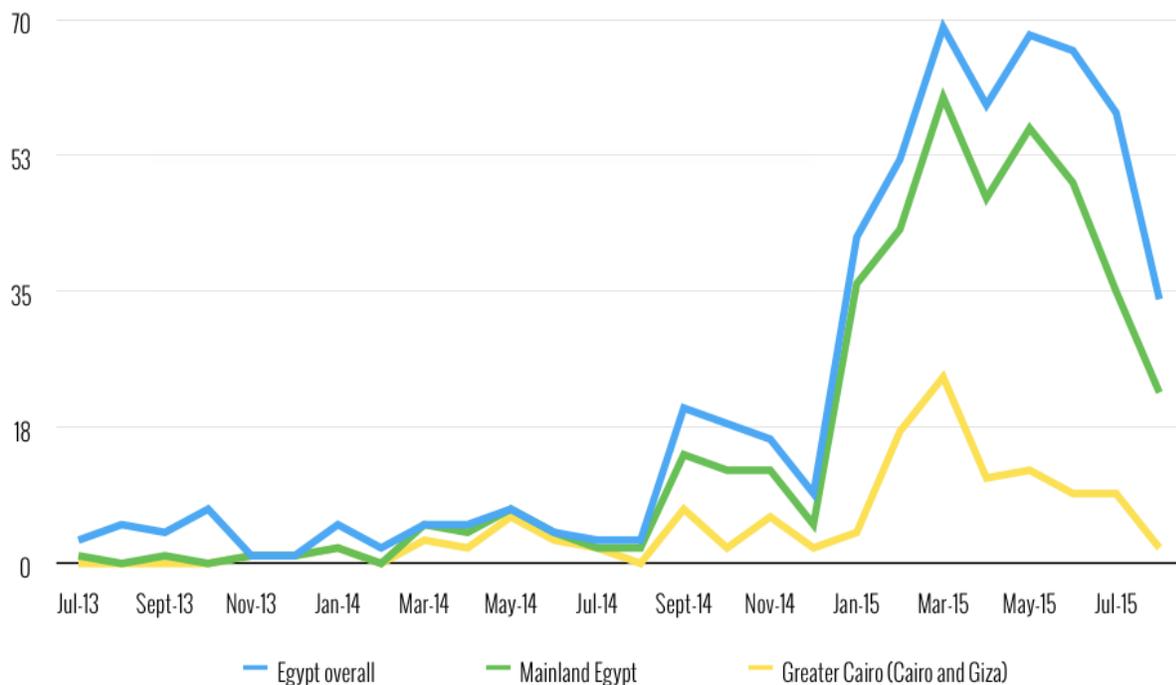
Summary

Figure 2: Attacks on Economic/Property Targets



Reports of improvised explosive device (IED) attacks decreased on pace with the overall decrease in reported attacks, with 34 in August (Figure 3). Shootings were the second most common type of attacks, in line with previous months.

Figure 3: IED Attacks



Egypt began digging on its border with Gaza to create fish farms that would serve as an additional buffer in continued attempts to eradicate smuggling tunnels and eliminate cross-border flows of weapons, fighters, and illicit goods (see page 9 for more).

Summary

Aggregated media reports indicate a **continued decrease in the number of reported counter-terror operations in August**, from 191 in July to 177 in August. Of the reports on counter-terror operations, about two-thirds of these came from official state media organs, while other reports came from other media ([Figure 11](#)).

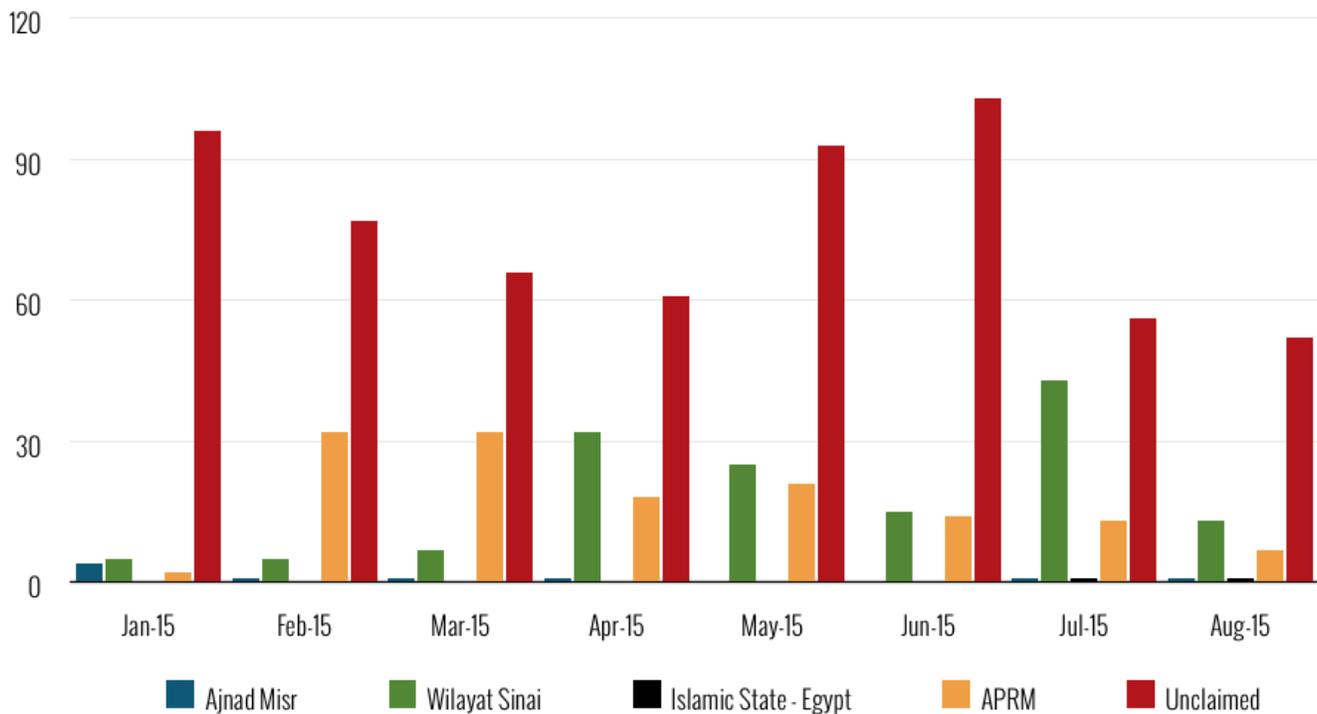
A reported 982 alleged terrorists were arrested (730 based on official security spokespersons), bringing the **total from August 2013 to August 2015 to 16,295 reported arrested** as alleged terrorists during counter-terror operations.

This report 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, and a description of methodology.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 the methodology section of this report.

Terror Groups' Notable Developments:

Figure 4: Number of Attacks by Group



(Allied) Popular Alliance Movement

This month, the Allied Popular Resistance Movement claimed only seven attacks in four governorates, as the organization continued a gradual decline in its operational activity.

Of these, **five were claimed by Revolutionary Punishment**, including three IED attacks and two shootings, all directed at the police or other Interior Ministry forces. **Popular Resistance Movement claimed only one**, an IED attack which targeted and destroyed police vehicles in Fayoum's Bandar village. A lesser-known affiliate, **Execution Battalion, also claimed an attack**—its first since the group's debut attack (an April high-profile [assassination of police Colonel Wael Tahoon](#) and a conscript). On August 13, its members [fatally shot](#) Mustafa Muhammad Ayoub, a member of the Tourist Police, near Sinaru village, Fayoum, in retaliation for the victim's involvement in security operations.

Wilayat Sinai (WS) - Formerly Ansar Bayt al-Maqdis

The Islamic State's Sinai affiliate, Wilayat Sinai, had a **relative decrease in its operational activity in the month of August**.

Following a very active July, which included the organization's largest operation to date (see TIMEP's full analysis of [the July 1 coordinated assault in Sheikh Zuweid](#)) and 36 other attacks, **Wilayat Sinai claimed only 13 attacks this month**.

Terror Groups' Notable Developments:

WS claimed the execution of Croatian citizen Tomislav Salopek on July 22. In a message to the Egyptian government, the group demanded the release of “all (Egyptian) Muslim women prisoners” in exchange for the Croatian, to be carried out within 48 hours. The government did not meet the demand and the group [executed](#) Salopek by beheading on August 7. In an attempt to divert attention from celebrations surrounding the opening of the new Suez Canal channel, the group promoted a “countdown” to Salopek’s execution on their social media accounts, beginning the day before the ceremonies and ending at their conclusion.

On Wednesday, August 19, Wilayat Sinai’s Media Office published a statement of its monthly activities, which included²:

- five IED attacks on armored vehicles, including one which killed a police captain and a conscript;
- two IED attacks on M60 Pattons—one near Kharouba and the other near [Karm Al Qawadis](#);
- an IED attack on a military hummer in Arish;
- the [beheading](#) of Croatian citizen Tomislav Salopek;
- the destruction of military equipment in Yamit, west of Rafah; and
- a [shooting attack](#) that killed two policemen.

The group maintained its active social media presence and propaganda activity this month. On August 19, its Media Office circulated via Twitter images of a sickly young child, captioned with requests for monetary donations, as well as other photo series depicting the group providing aid to Sinai residents.

² This represents an incomplete summary of August activity, given the non-correspondence of the Hijri and Gregorian calendars. Activity occurring between August 14 and August 31 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.

Terror Groups' Notable Developments:

The Islamic State

Following its large-scale [attack on the Italian consulate](#) in July, **the Islamic State in Egypt³ carried out a second vehicle-borne IED (VBIED) attack** on an office of Egypt Homeland Security in Shobra al-Kheima, Cairo. The blast injured 29, including six policemen and seven conscripts. The Islamic State in Egypt surfaced as a possible offshoot of Wilayat Sinai in July, when attack claims were first made under that moniker.

[Ajnad Misr](#)

Ajnad Misr carried out another attack this month, detonating an IED in front of Heliopolis Courthouse in eastern Cairo. The explosion wounded two police officers—a colonel and a major—and a civilian, and it damaged a nearby transformer. Security personnel also found and defused a second device without incident.

Ajnad Misr had been operationally dormant following the April death of its founder and leader, Hammam Attiya, until it [carried out an IED attack](#) in Roxy Square in Heliopolis, Cairo, in July.

[Jund Al Islam](#)

Jund al-Islam released a fourth statement, which called on media and prominent thinkers to “expose” the forced displacement of Sinai residents in order to protect the security of Israel.

³ Distinct from Wilayat Sinai, the Shobra and Italian Consulate bombings had been claimed under a general “Islamic State Egypt,” rather than as part of the Sinai “province.” No other Islamic State province has yet been announced in Egypt, suggesting that these Cairo attacks may have been carried out by Sinai-affiliated actors.

Terror Attacks Trend Report:

August saw 73 reported terror attacks, a significant decrease from the 141 report attacks in July. This marked the fewest reported terror attacks in any month since December 2014, and registered as 37% lower than the monthly average for 2015 ([Figure 5](#)).

Figure 5: Number of Attacks Countrywide



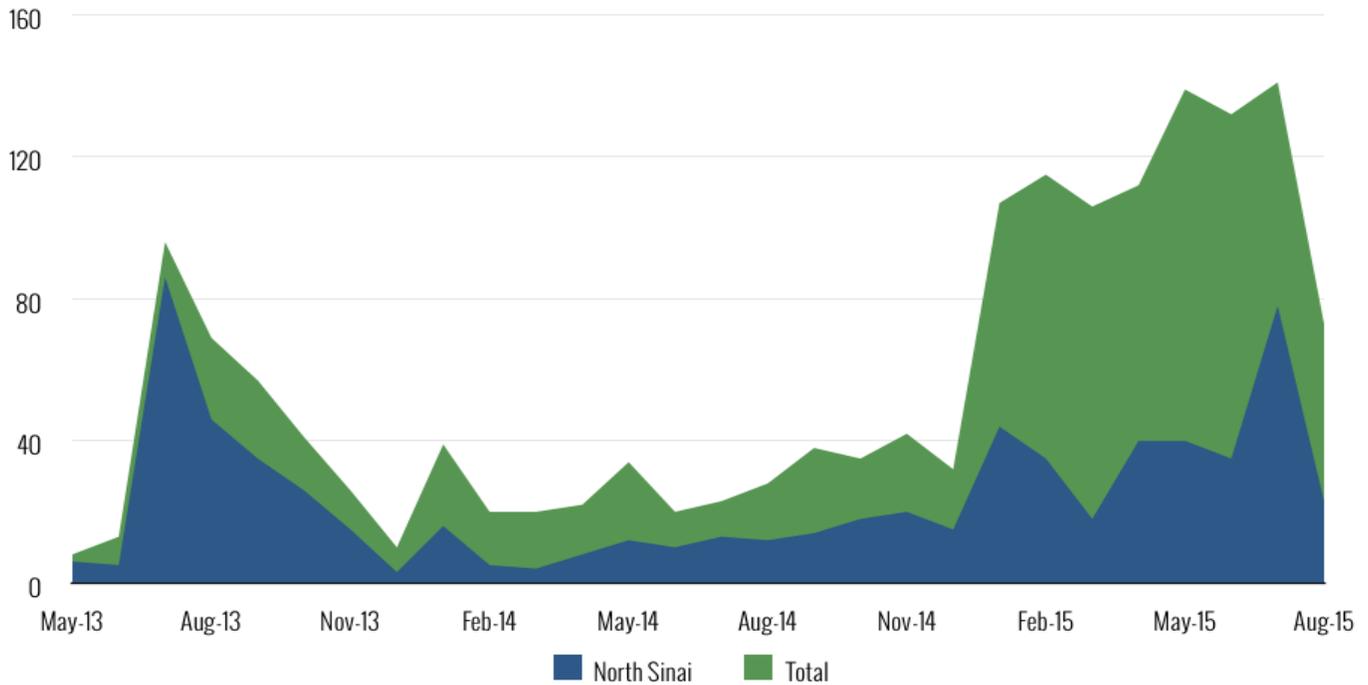
Reported attacks in North Sinai decreased, with 23 attacks in August. This marked a significant decrease from the prior month, in which Wilayat Sinai carried out over 20 attacks in one day on July 1, and totaled 78 attacks throughout the month ([Figure 6](#)).

The total for reported terror attacks in North Sinai in 2015 is 313, or 34% of all reported attacks. The province 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.

In the Greater Cairo area in August, six attacks were reported (versus 16 in July and 21 in June); after Cairo and North Sinai, the provinces of Fayoum and Sharqia saw the greatest number of attacks, with 15 and 9, respectively.

Terror Attacks Trend Report:

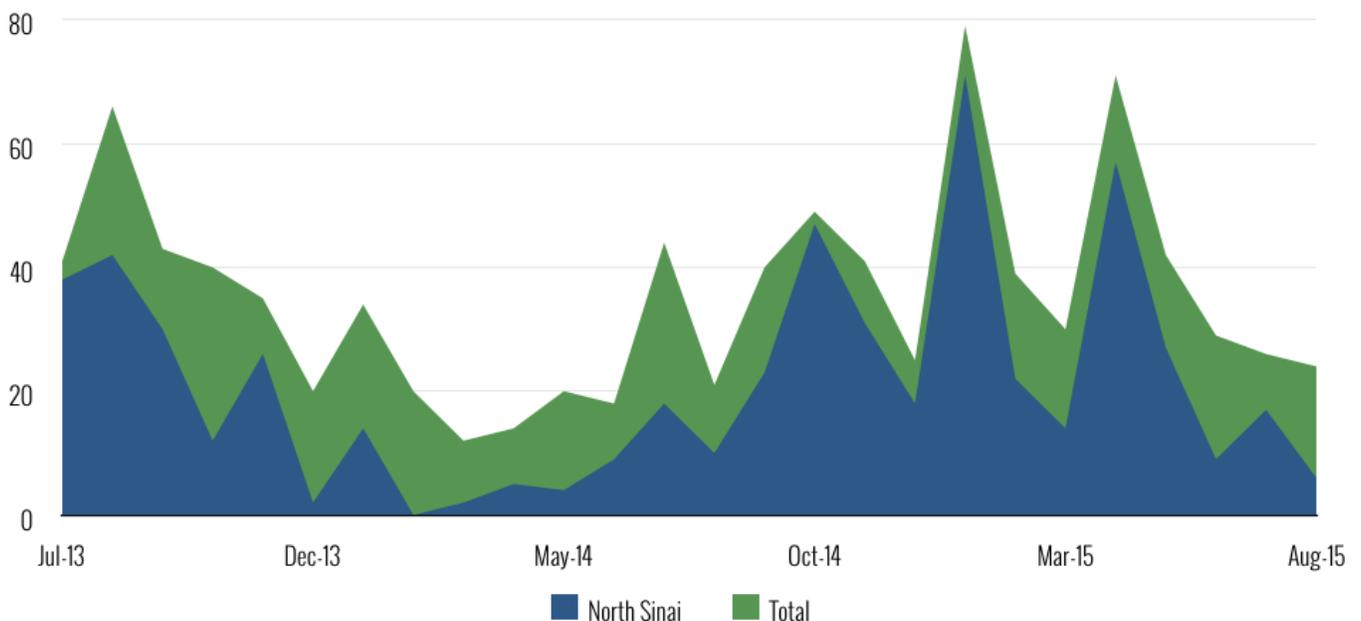
Figure 6: Number of Attacks in North Sinai



For the fourth month in a row, **the number of reported deaths in terror attacks dropped**, with 24 reported killed in attacks in August, 6 of which were in North Sinai. (While overall reported attacks dropped 37%, reported deaths decreased 7.6%; see [Figure 7](#).)

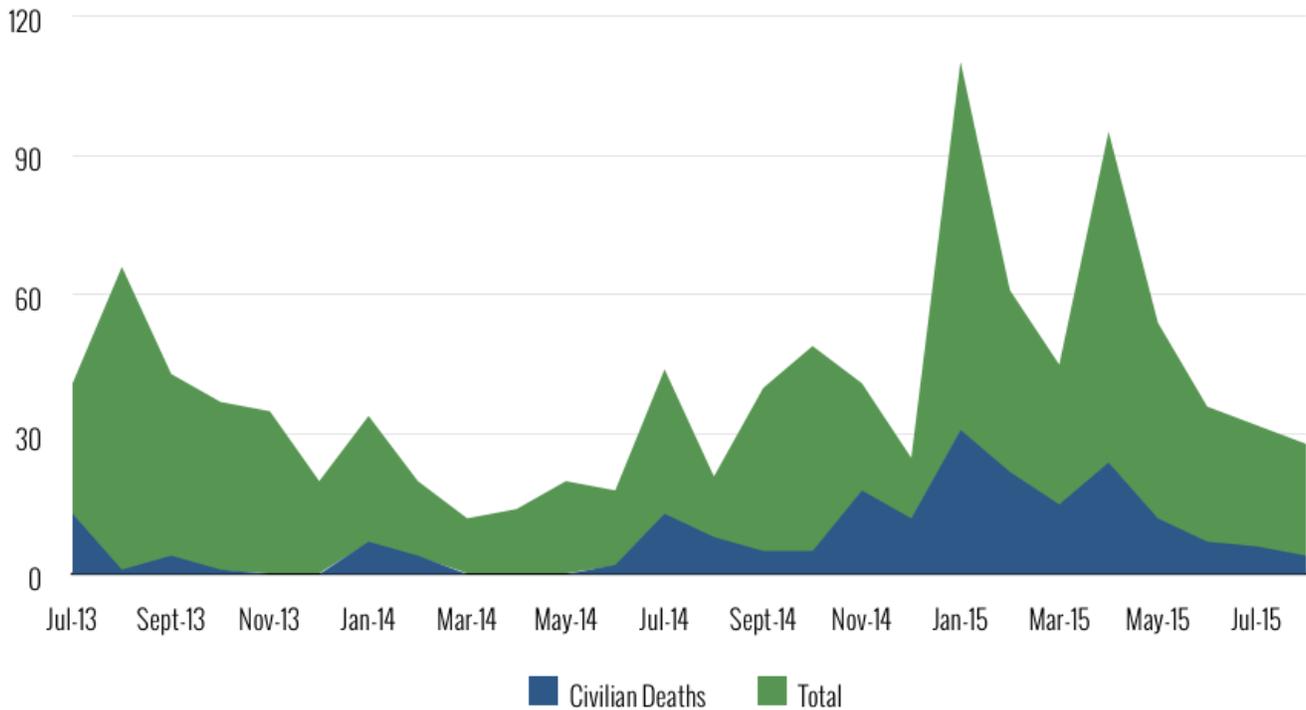
The number of reported civilian deaths also dropped, with four civilians reported killed in attacks in August ([Figure 8](#)).

Figure 7: Number of Deaths in Attacks (by location)



Terror Attacks Trend Report:

Figure 8: Number of Deaths in Attacks (by victim)



Reported IED attacks decreased with the decrease in overall attacks, with 38 attacks in August:

- IED attacks remained the predominant method of attack, however, with 47% of reported attacks employing IEDs, continuing an upward trend in the share of attacks (Figures 3, 9, and 10).
- **Reports of IED attacks in North Sinai decreased** from 30 attacks in July to 17 in August, though the same number of reported IED attacks occurred in the province in April, May, and June (Figure 3).
- IED attacks accounted for nine reported deaths and 70 reported injuries in the month of August.

Shootings were the second-most popular form of attack in August, in line with previous months (Figure 9). The shootings, largely carried out against police (with the exception of targeting members of the Salafist Nour party), resulted in 14 reported deaths, including the deaths of 4 civilians.

Terror Attacks Trend Report:

Figure 9: Types of Attacks

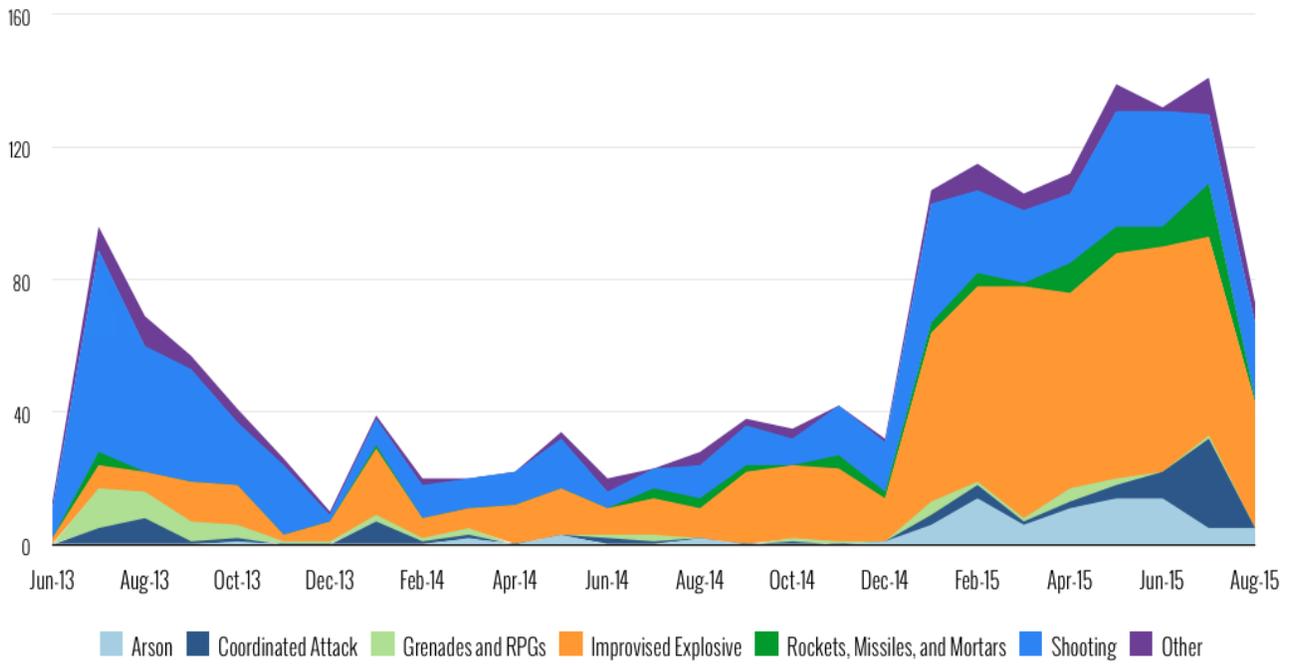
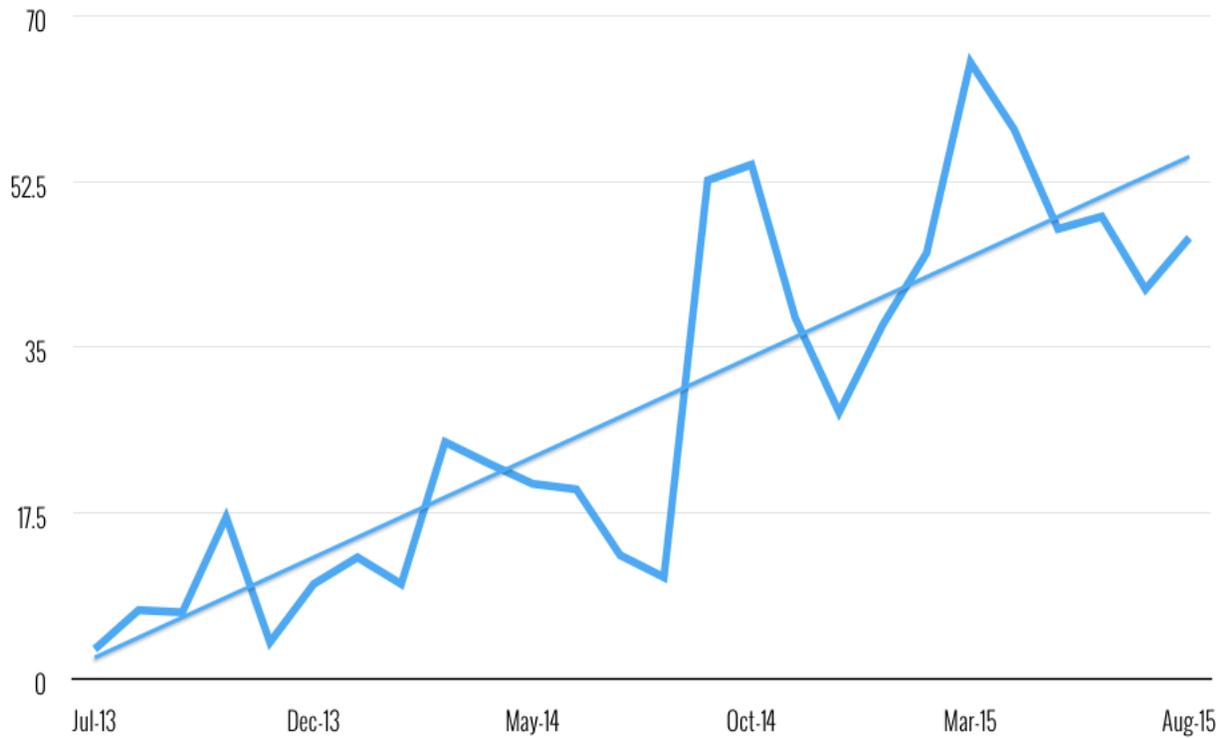


Figure 10: Trends in IED Attacks (by Percentage of Attacks)



Terror Attacks Trend Report:

August saw a continued decrease in reported attacks on economic and property targets, with 16 reported attacks on property targets (down from 53 in May, see [Figure 2](#)). In August, these included reports of:

- three attacks on government buildings;
- the destruction of military equipment in North Sinai;
- destruction of security officials' personal property;
- two attacks on banks;
- three attacks on electricity infrastructure; and
- four attacks on rail transportation.

Security Sector Notable Developments:

After a halt in terror activity in South Sinai over the past years, the South Sinai Security Director announced on *August 1* that [security convoys for tourist buses](#) would be gradually eliminated.

Due to heightened concerns about the safety of foreign workers after the execution of Croatian worker Salopek in North Sinai, on *August 12* Angus Blair, president of the Signet Institute (an economic think-tank) in Cairo [explained](#) that “Egypt’s authorities have banned all movement of foreign workers outside of armed convoys.”

On *August 16*, **Russia delivered an advanced missile ship** (a *Molniya*-class missile corvette) to Egypt in advance of the Suez Canal inauguration celebrations. [The ship was a “gift” to Egypt](#), demonstrating increased military cooperation between the two countries.

A military court sentenced 26 officers to prison on *August 17* for their [participation in an alleged coup](#) attempt to overthrow President Sisi. Other military sources [denied the validity of the charges](#).

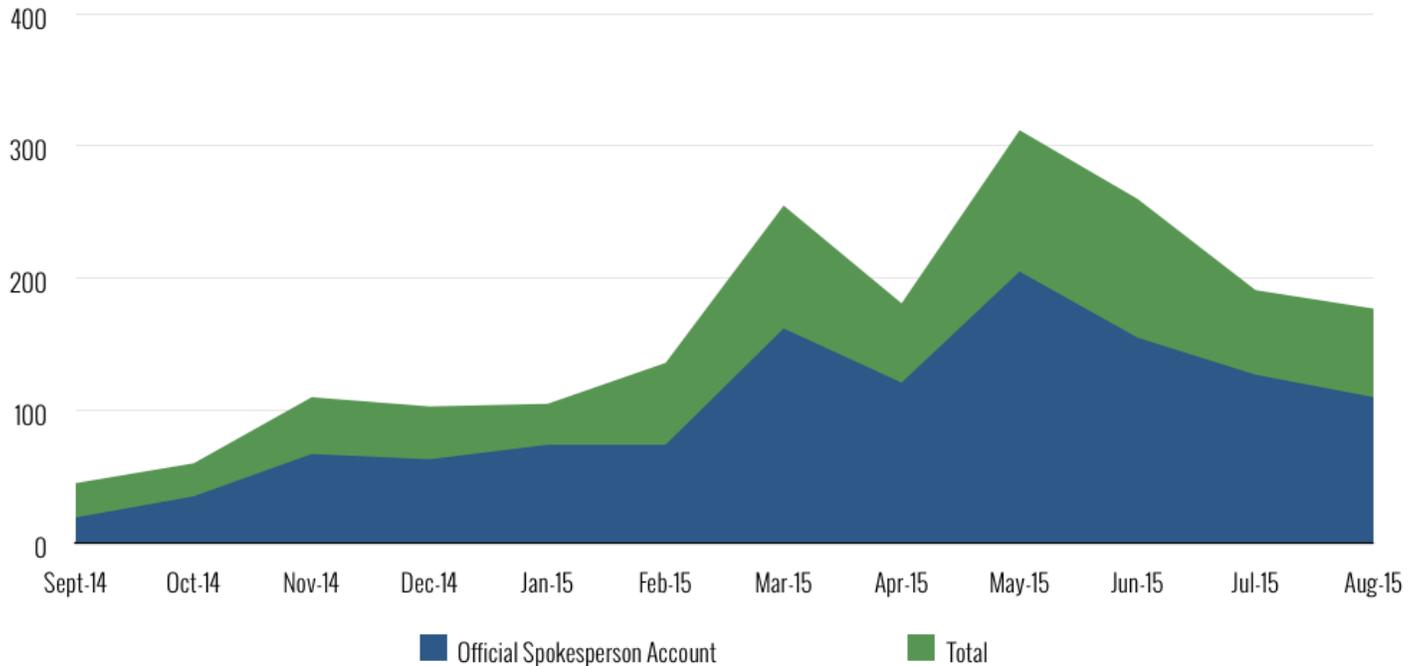
Egyptian **border forces issued a high-level alert on the western border** after the [disappearance of Libyan border guards](#) (although it was unclear if due to desertion or abduction).

Egypt began digging on its border with Gaza in efforts to build a fish farm there. The fish farm, while billed as economic development, would also [provide](#) an additional buffer between North Sinai and Gaza and further complicate any attempts to build underground tunnels in the area. Hamas officials have responded to the endeavor negatively, claiming that this will further enforce a “siege” on Gaza.

Counter-terror Operations Trend Report:

August saw a continued decrease in the number of reported counter-terror operations, from 191 in July to 177 in August, with some discrepancy between **official state security reports and news media reports. Of the 177 reported counter-terror operations, official state security spokespersons reported 110 distinct counter-terror operations**⁴ (Figure 11). This discrepancy roughly follows the pattern of previous months, where around two-thirds of all reported counter-terror operations are reported by official state media organs.

Figure 11: Counter-terror Operations



A reported 982 alleged terrorists were arrested in August 2015 (730 based on official security spokespersons); this brings **the total number of individuals reported arrested as “terrorists” to 16,295** in the two year period from August 2013 to August 2015 (Figure 12 and 13).

Of those arrested, **868 were alleged members of the Muslim Brotherhood** (684 based on official security spokespersons; see Figure 13).

⁴ Distinct from Wilayat Sinai, the Shobra and Italian Consulate bombings had been claimed under a general “Islamic State Egypt,” rather than as part of the Sinai “province.” No other Islamic State province has yet been announced in Egypt, suggesting that these Cairo attacks may have been carried out by Sinai-affiliated actors.

Counter-terror Operations Trend Report:

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

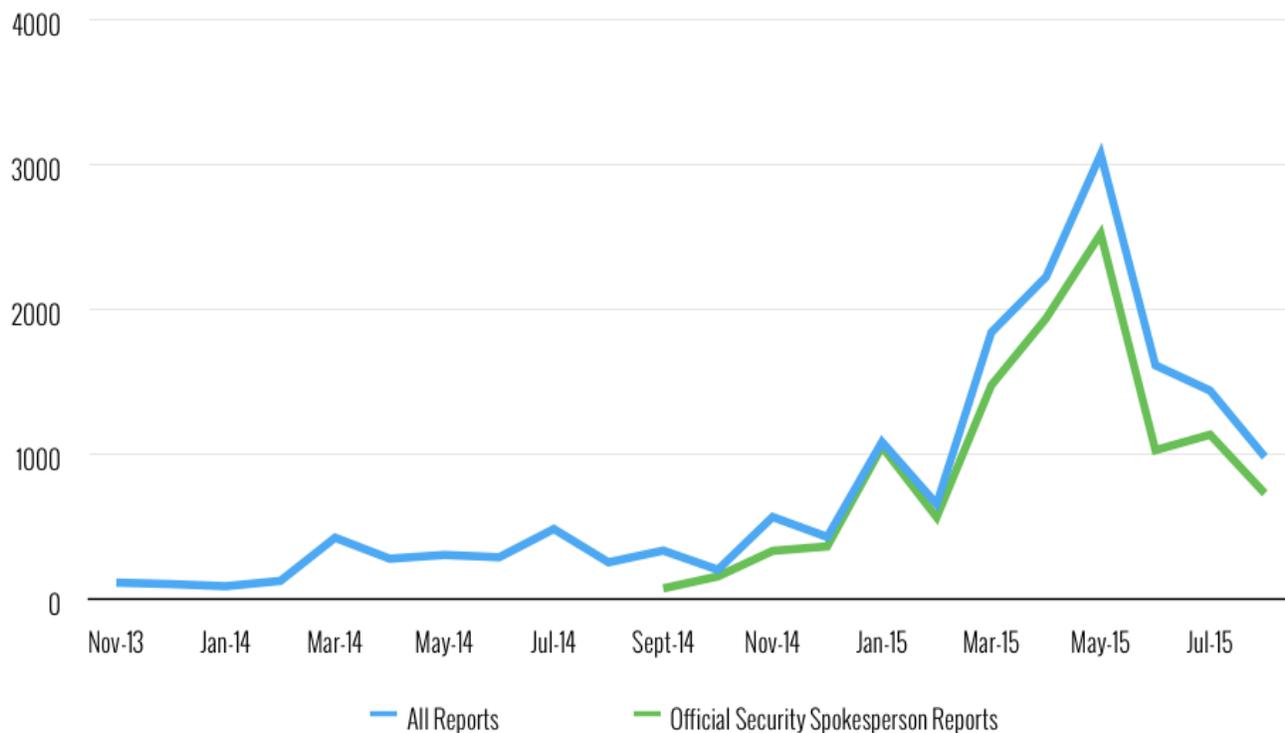
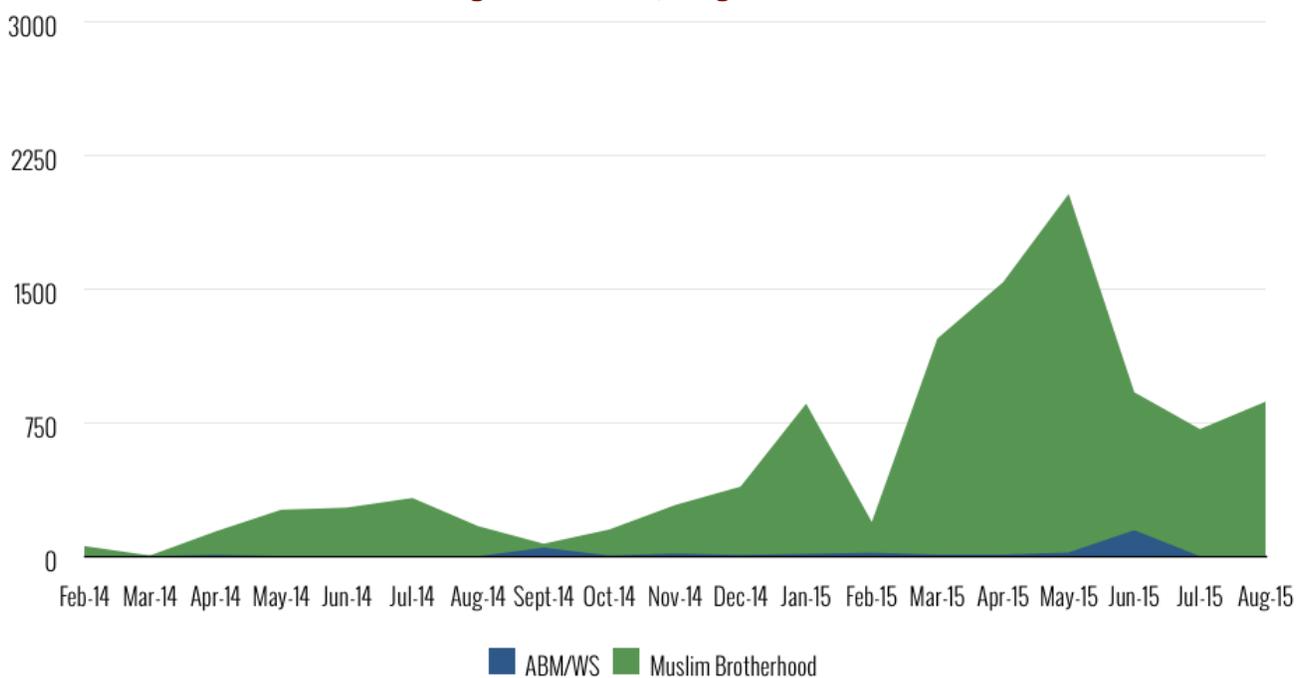


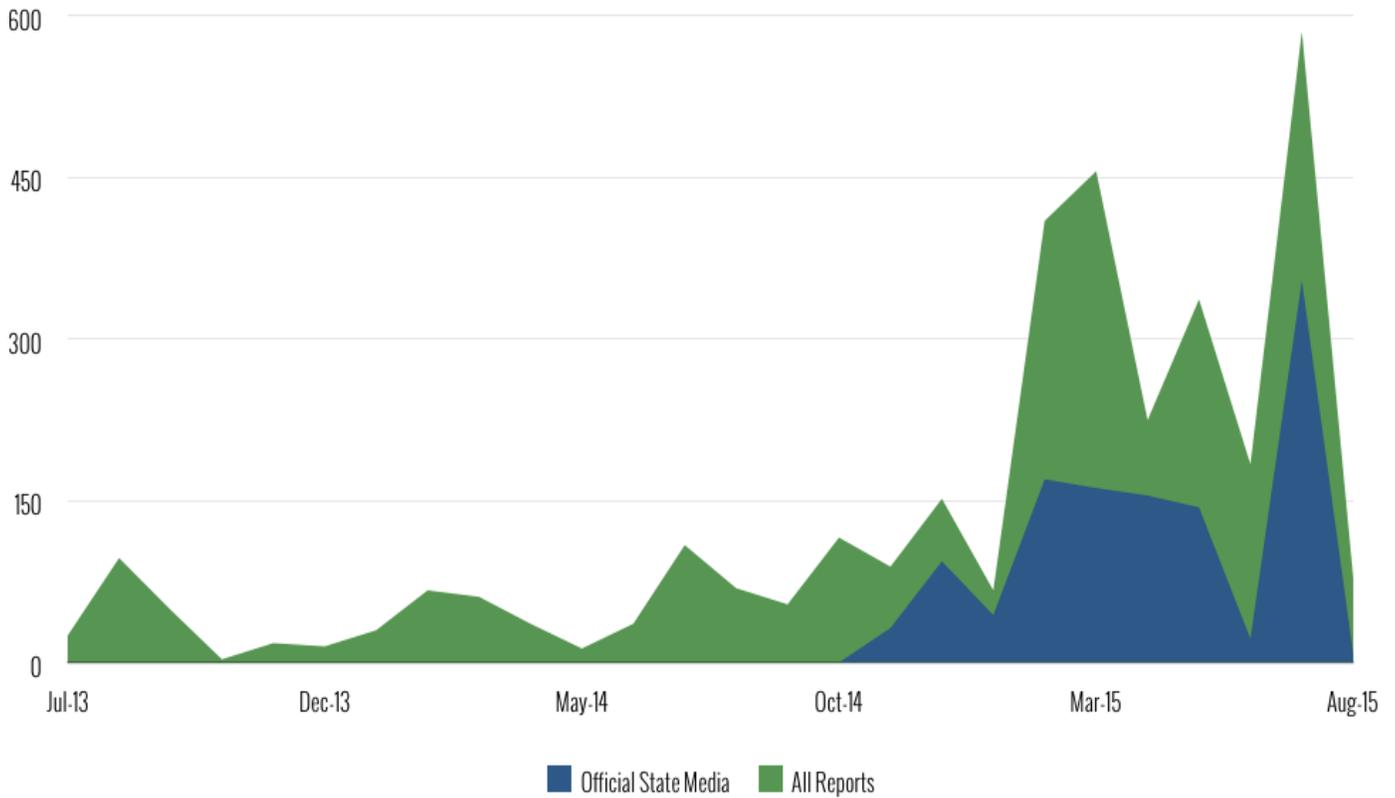
Figure 13: Arrests by Alleged Affiliation



Counter-terror Operations Trend Report:

A reported 78 alleged terrorists were killed in August, a significant decrease from the 585 reported killed in July. Of these, 72 were reported killed in North Sinai; five members of the Muslim Brotherhood were reported killed in Fayoum, and one person was reported killed in Suez ([Figure 14](#)).

Figure 14: Number Reported Killed in Operations



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 carried out for political ends. This does not include the threat of attack, but rather only executed 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 (although these are documented in TIMEP's Eshhad project).

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.