



The Tahrir Institute
for Middle East Policy

EGYPT

SECURITY WATCH

QUARTERLY REPORT: APRIL - JUNE 2016

THE TAHRIR INSTITUTE FOR MIDDLE EAST POLICY

The Tahrir Institute for Middle East Policy (TIMEP), a nonpartisan and nonprofit organization, is dedicated to understanding and supporting Middle Eastern countries undergoing democratic transitions and committed to informing international policymakers and the public of developments in these countries.

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INTRODUCTION

The Tahrir Institute for Middle East Policy's *Egypt Security Watch* explores the nature of the security threat that Egypt faces, providing insight and analysis on the state's response to this threat. The project has always been dynamic, responding to the changing contours of the situation on the ground and to the needs of its audience. After producing the project's first comprehensive report in late 2014, we issued monthly reports on the project's findings, keeping pace with the heightened attacks that occurred shortly thereafter.

In the last quarter of 2015, we changed our approach to reporting, issuing quarterly reports. This format better allows us to identify trends, make sense of transformations in the security landscape, and provide a more concerted analysis of contextual developments. In the second quarter of 2016, we have also begun a review of our dataset, already the most comprehensive available on Egyptian security. We are undertaking a process of meticulously combing through each entry and identifying new characteristics to probe deeper into trends and refine our analysis.

Our quarterly reports feature three sections:

- *Terrorism*: With information detailing notable attacks, terror group developments, and trends, this section provides a picture of the threat posed to Egypt from actors seeking to use political violence to create a climate of fear in the country.
- *Counter-terrorism*: Mirroring the previous one, this section will focus on the state's stated efforts to combat terrorism (as it defines them), detailing notable operations, developments within the security sector, and trends.
- *Legal and Political Context*: This section explores the larger political and legal contexts in which the state carries out its declared "war on terror," examining relevant juridical developments, legislation, and political actions and discourses.

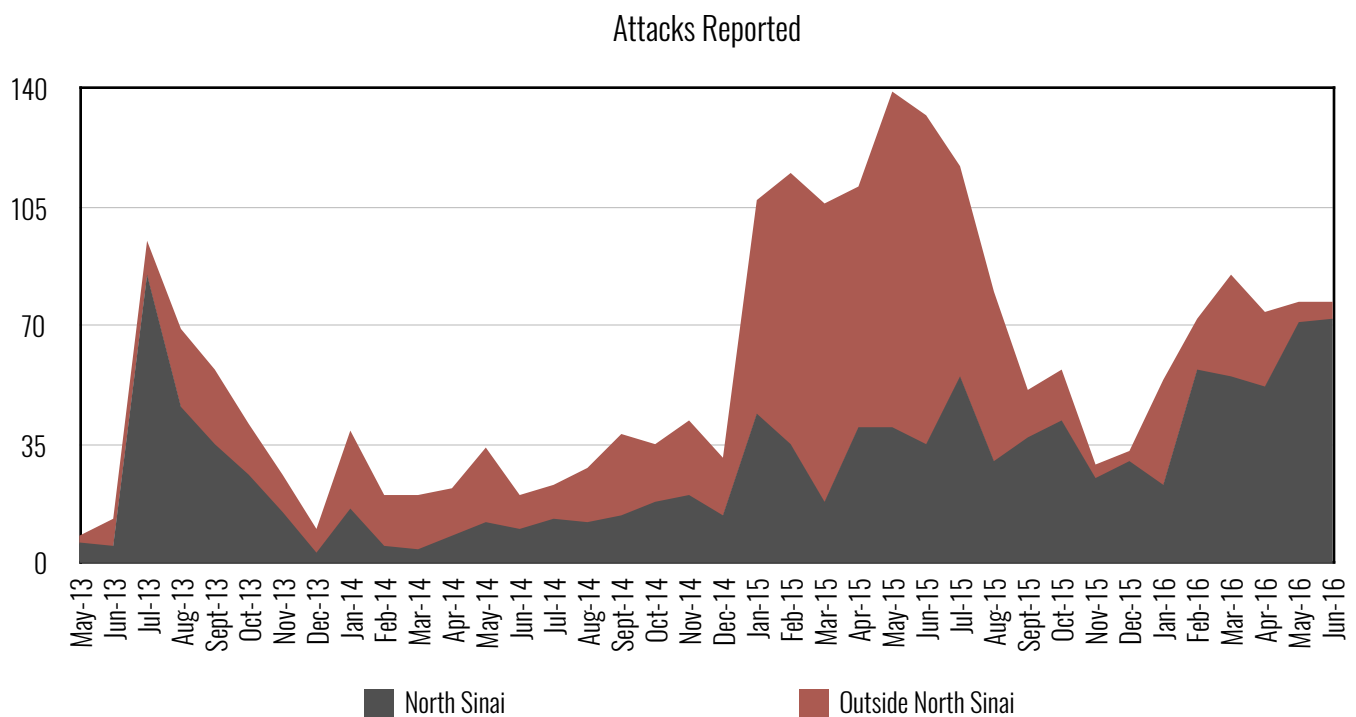
As with all of our work at TIMEP, we are committed to furthering policies toward the region that both foster safety and security for its citizens, while recognizing that these must be based on a sincere and comprehensive respect for human rights and the rule of law. We hope that our continued initiatives through the *Egypt Security Watch* project will contribute to a sound understanding of the security situation necessary to inform this policy approach.

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

TERRORISM

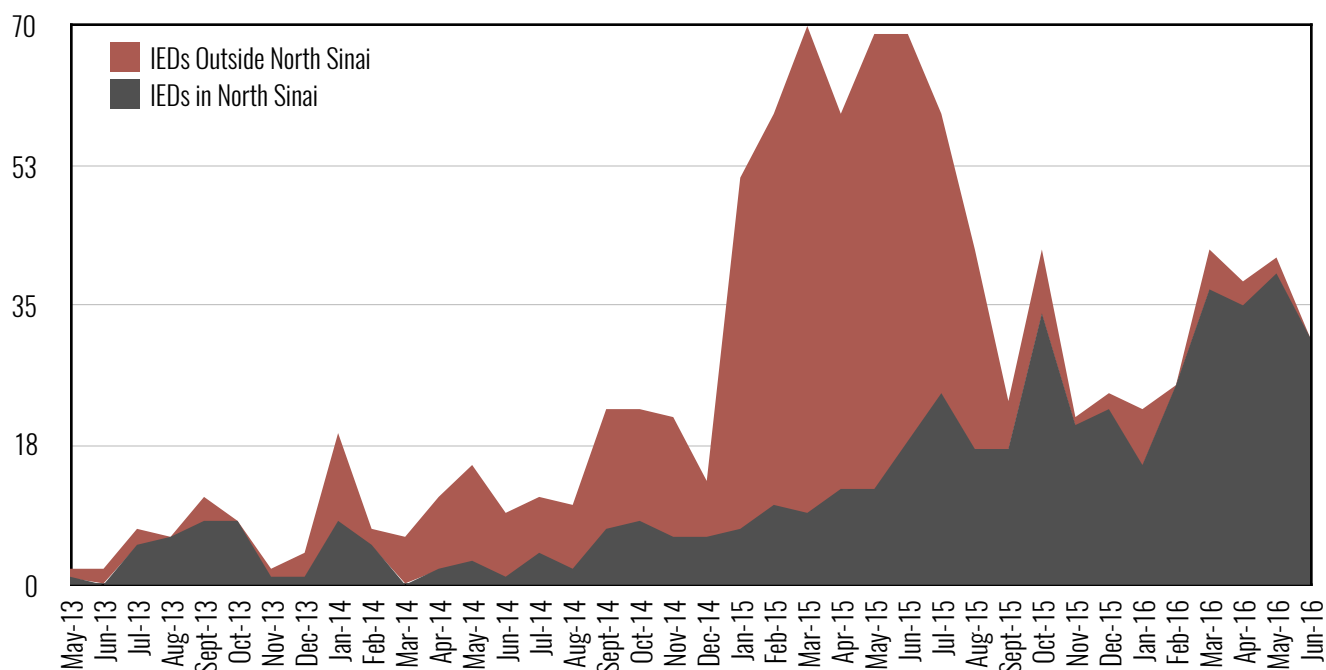
The number of reported terror attacks across Egypt remained high in the second quarter of 2016, with 228 attacks, compared to 211 in the first quarter of 2016 and 119 in the last quarter of 2015.

The majority of attacks in the quarter were reported in the North Sinai province; North Sinai saw 195 attacks, or 86% of all attacks. Reports of attacks throughout the rest of Egypt dropped significantly after April, with only 11 attacks reported outside of North Sinai in May and June combined.



Reports of the use of improvised explosive devices (IEDs) continued to increase in North Sinai, with **every quarter over the past two years reporting an increased number of IED attacks**. The number of IED attacks from April to June 2016 was reported to be 105 attacks, or nearly one attack per day.

IED Attacks Reported (Throughout Egypt)



The majority of reported attacks continued to target security forces, with some attacks on economic or property targets outside of North Sinai, particularly on power infrastructure and transportation. **Twenty-three civilians were killed in the first quarter of 2016, up from 15 in the previous quarter.**

Wilayat Sinai, the Islamic State’s “Sinai Province,” continued to claim attacks throughout the quarter; **the group has claimed 48 attacks per month in the first half of 2016, compared to 28 per month in the prior six months.**

In a June 30 attack, **Wilayat Sinai claimed to have assassinated Coptic priest Father Rafael Moussa** of the Mar Girgis Church in Arish, the first overtly sectarian violence that the group has claimed.

The activity of mainland groups (like the Popular Resistance Movement) slowed in the second quarter of 2016 after renewed activity from January to April. **But the Islamic State in Egypt maintained its usual pace of attacks, claiming three attacks in the second quarter of the year.**

From May 5 to 7, **the Islamic State released fourteen videos in a coordinated media campaign supporting their Sinai counterparts. These videos, which were released from different Islamic State provinces across Iraq, Syria, and Libya condemned what they deemed the “un-Islamic” secular rule of both President Abdel-Fattah El Sisi and former President Muhammad Morsi, encouraging patience and victory for their Egyptian “brothers.”**

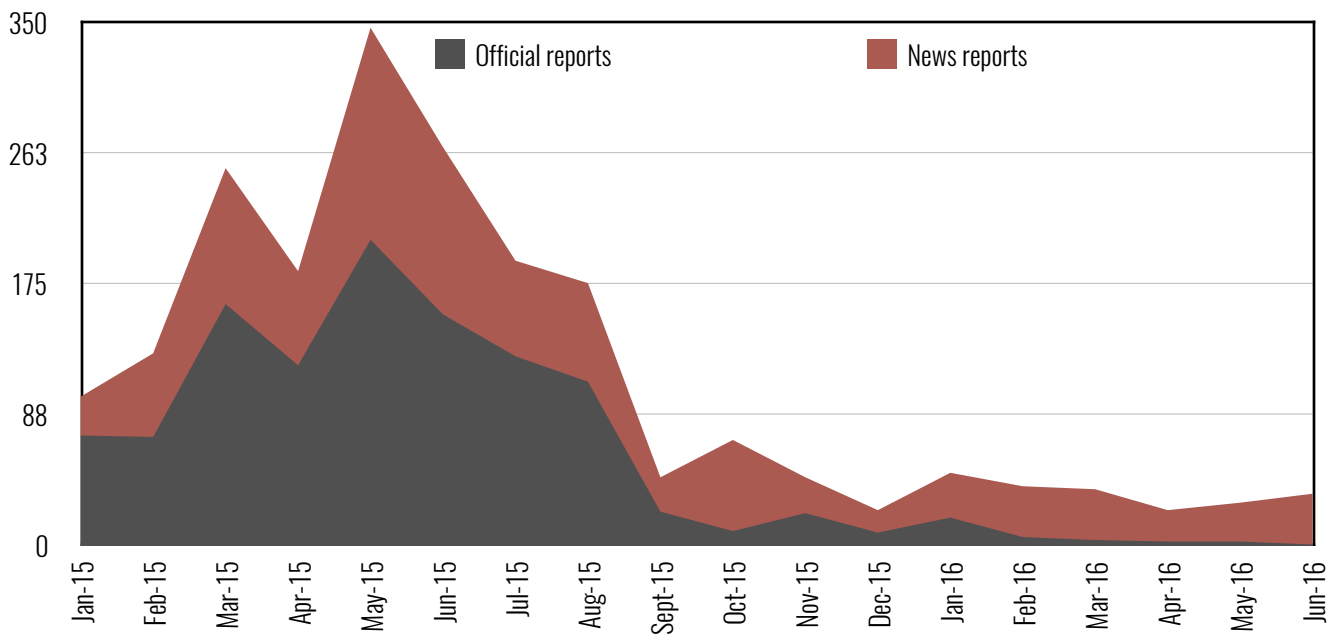
COUNTER-TERRORISM

Reports of counter-terror operations continued to decrease in the first quarter of 2016, with **88 reported operations, compared to 127 and 141 in the previous two quarters. This marked a significant drawdown in Egypt’s “war on terror;” at its peak in the second quarter of 2015, 798 distinct counter-terror operations were reported.**

Reports of operations from Egypt's official media organs ground nearly to a halt, with **only seven operations reported on the official military spokesperson's media, and with no reports of operations mentioned from the interior ministry.**

This easing in the war on terror was reflected in the minimal counter-terror operations in the mainland, and a halt in reports of counter-terror operations targeting the Muslim Brotherhood. **Only one operation was reported outside of North Sinai in the second quarter of 2016, and no counter-terror operations were reported to have targeted the Muslim Brotherhood.**

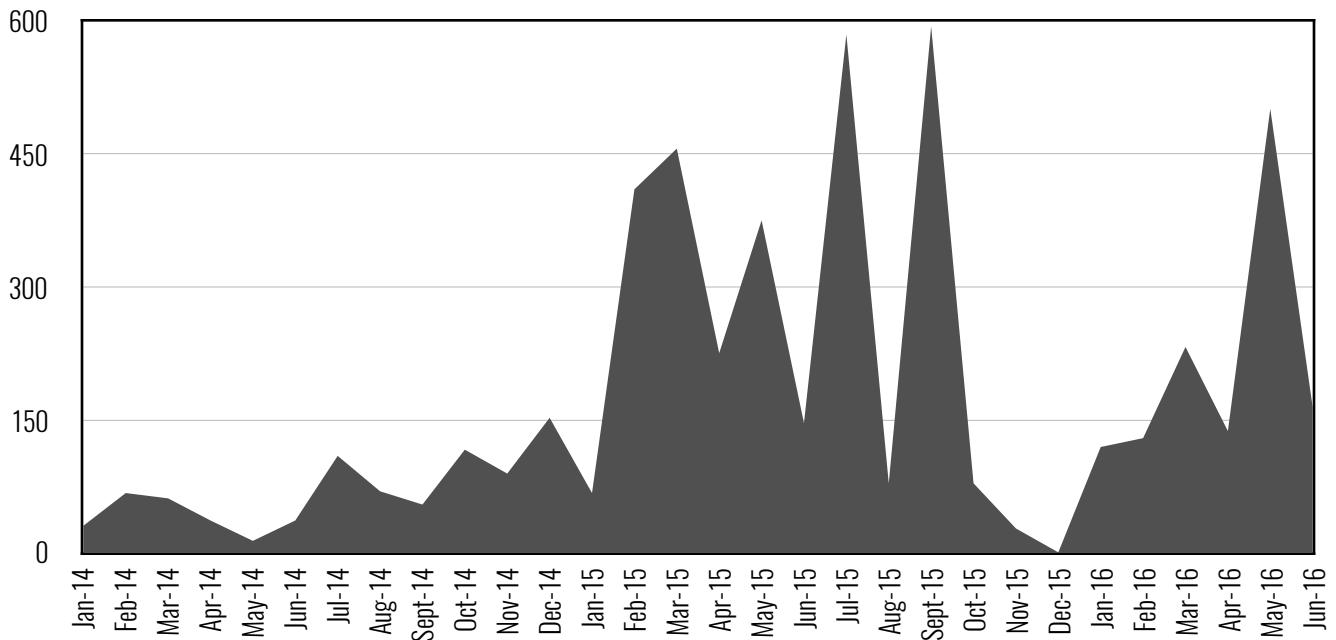
Counter-Terror Operations Reported



Despite the overall decrease in the number of reported operations in the country, the number of deaths reported in counter-terror efforts remained high due to the military's continued operations in Sinai as part of the Martyr's Right campaign. **The campaign, which now encompasses a full year of operations, has reportedly led to the deaths of 2,529 alleged terrorists, 801 of which were reported killed in the second quarter of 2016.**

In one operation at Mount Helal in the central part of the province, the **Third Field Army clashed with militants in a battle that was reported to have lasted several hours and resulted in the [death and injury of 200 militants](#).** Other operations in the area resulted in the seizure and destruction of 25 IEDs and other material components.

Reported Deaths of Alleged Terrorists (Egypt Overall)



LEGAL AND POLITICAL DEVELOPMENTS

Court proceedings to try 67 defendants in the assassination of former Prosecutor-General Hisham Barakat were postponed to July 13. **The defendants face charges of premeditated murder, membership in a terrorist organization, and espionage in relation to Barakat's death**, the highest-profile assassination Egypt has seen in recent years.

President Sisi renewed the state of emergency in North Sinai, and the measure was passed by Egypt's parliament on May 25, despite some backlash from North Sinai parliamentarians. The measure, now on the books since October 2014, imposes a strict curfew and restricts movement in the province.

The United States has continued its public efforts to demonstrate support for Egypt's domestic and regional role in combating terror, with a number of high-level meetings between members of the countries' governments and militaries. Notably, Secretary of State John Kerry made two trips to the country in the second quarter, discussing human rights issues as well as security.

The United States Congress deliberated appropriations levels, issuing draft legislation in the House of Representatives and the Senate that would maintain \$1.3 billion of foreign military financing, as well as economic support funds (some of which may be designated for use in development efforts in North Sinai).

TERRORISM

TRENDS

The following section showcases trends in reported violence throughout Egypt.

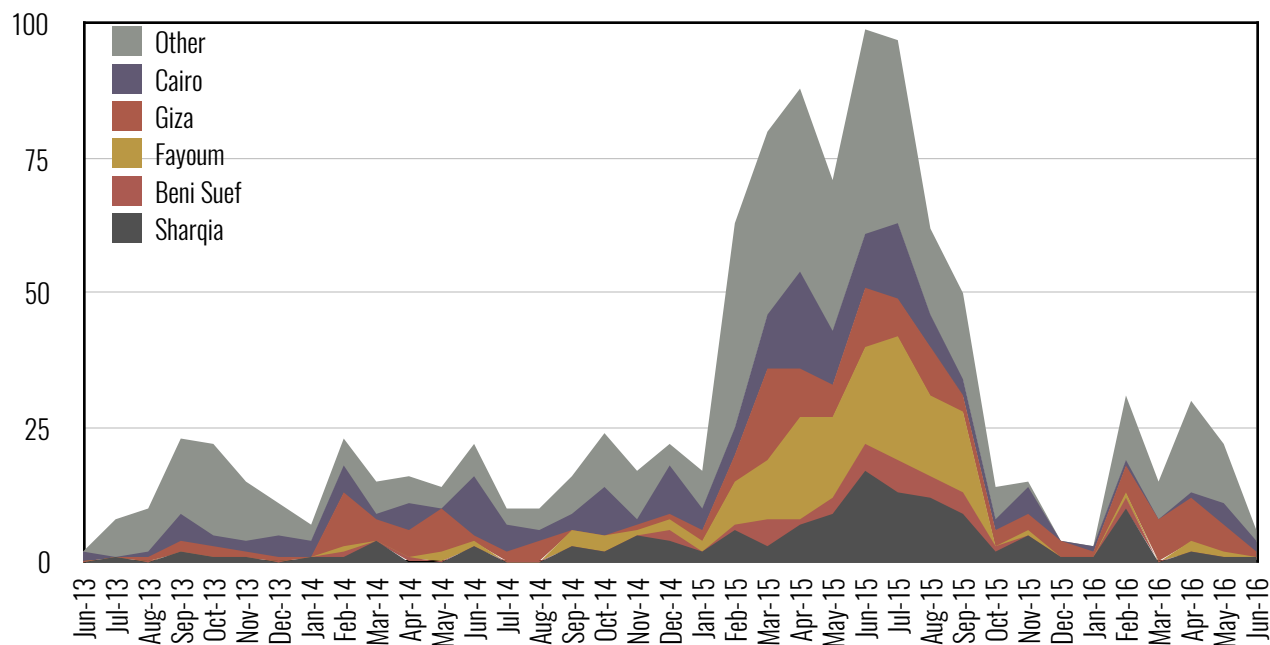
Reports of attacks in mainland fall off after spike in early 2016

After a surge in the first quarter of 2016 (76 attacks reported over the three months), attacks reported in the mainland have decreased considerably, with only 33 attacks reported outside of North Sinai from April to June 2016. The drop occurred specifically between April and May: The four months from January to April saw between 15 and 31 attacks reported per month, while May and June 2016 saw six and five attacks, respectively.

Of the 33 reported attacks, eight took place in Giza, six in Cairo, and four in Alexandria; the others were spread across different provinces. While the previous quarter and the first half of 2015 saw an increased number of attacks reported in the Nile Valley provinces of Fayoum, Sharqia, and Beni Suef, these seemed to decrease in correlation with a decrease in reported activity from the Popular Resistance Movement (see subsequent sections on Notable Attacks and Terror Group Developments).

Number of Attacks Reported (Outside North Sinai)	
2013	
Qtr1	11
Qtr2	10
Qtr3	55
Qtr4	33
2014	
Qtr1	54
Qtr2	46
Qtr3	50
Qtr4	55
2015	
Qtr1	231
Qtr2	267
Qtr3	126
Qtr4	29
2016	
Qtr1	76
Qtr2	33

Attacks Reported (Outside of North Sinai)

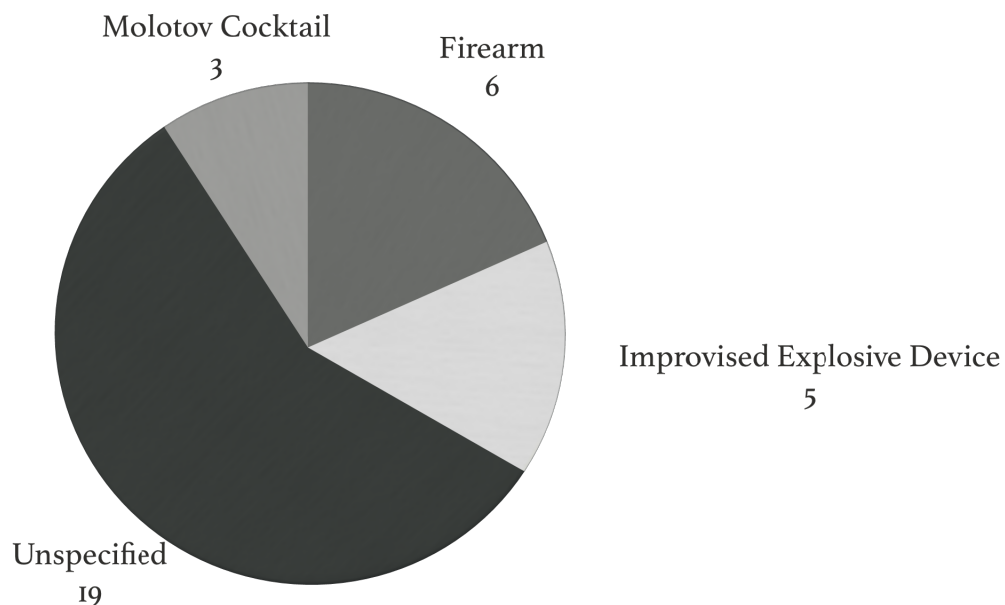


Weapons used in the majority of these attacks were not specified in reports, though other reports mentioned the use of IEDs, firearms, or incendiary devices. Eighteen of the 33 attacks reported in the second quarter (outside of North Sinai) targeted security forces (the police or military). Thirteen of the attacks targeted economic or property targets, including power infrastructure, transportation and corporate and state institutions; in one of these attacks a retail store owned by a Nour Party member in Assiut was burned down with Molotov cocktails. The breakdowns of these attacks follow a similar pattern of the past year throughout the mainland, where the majority of attacks have targeted either security forces or economic/property targets.

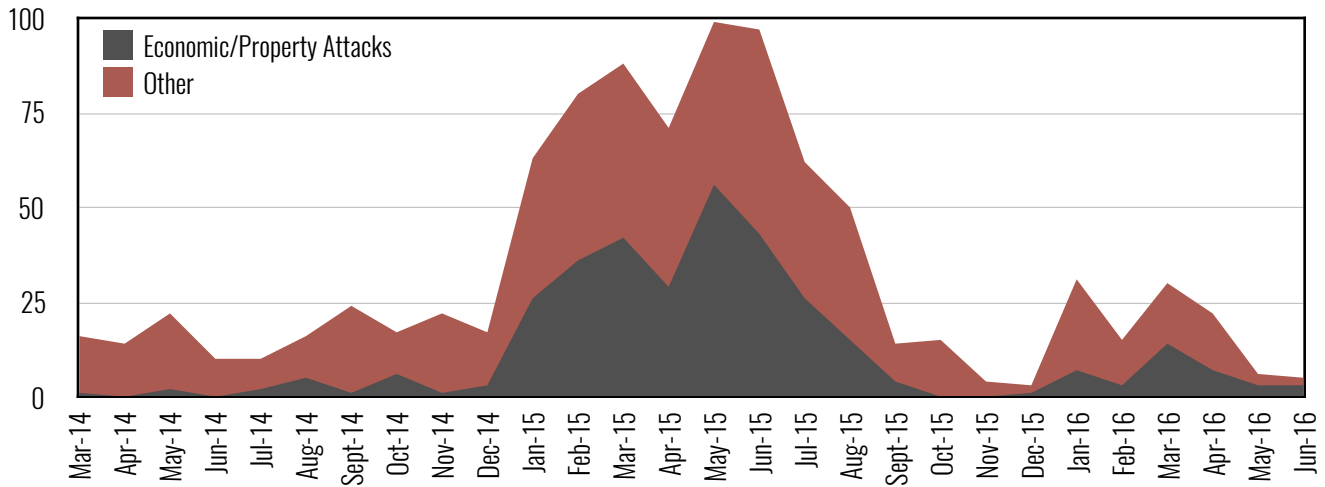
Weapons Reported (Outside North Sinai)

March-June 2016

33 Total Reports



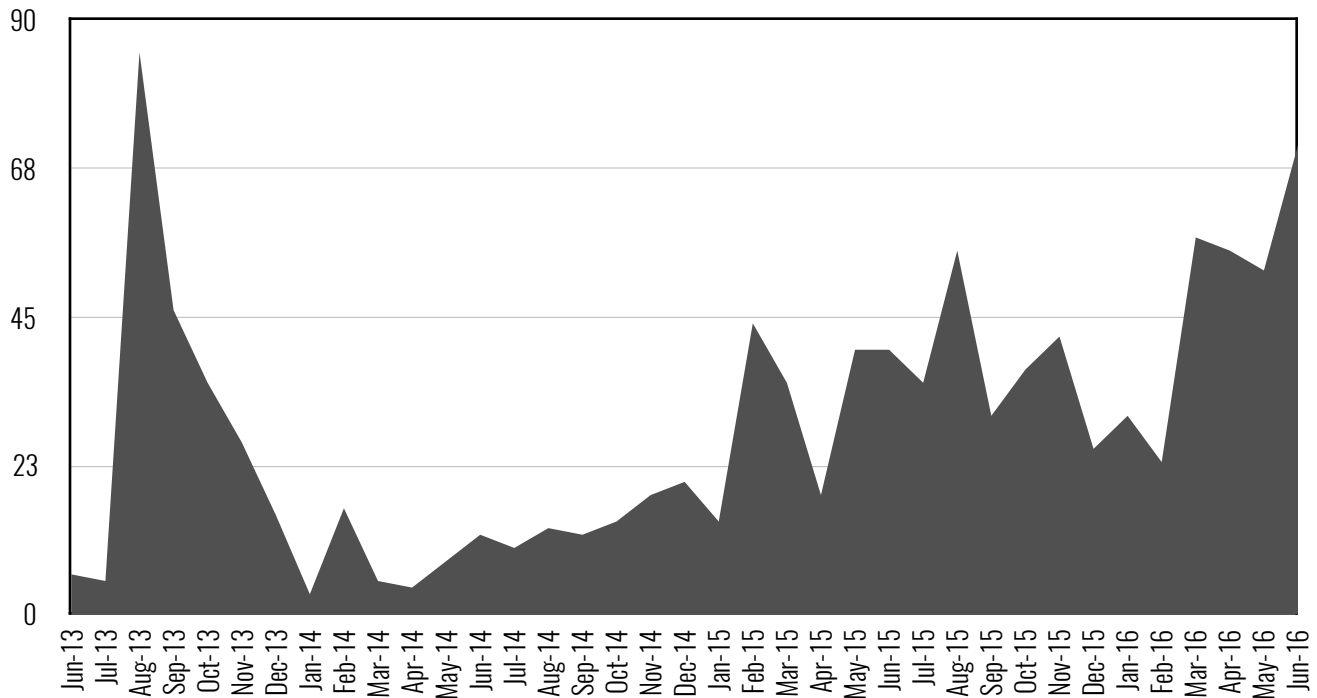
Attacks Reported on Property
(Outside North Sinai)



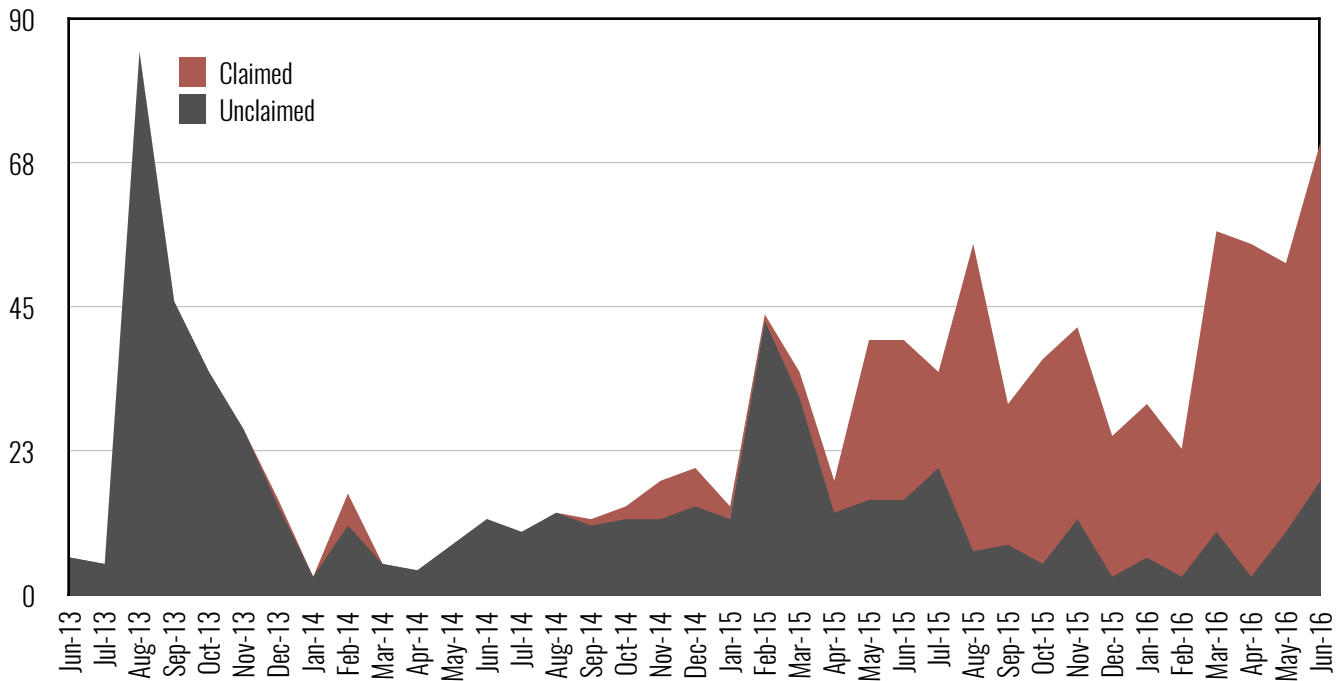
Reports of attacks continue to rise in North Sinai

While attacks in the mainland decreased in the second quarter of 2016, attacks reported in North Sinai have continued to climb over the past two years, particularly due to the activities of Wilayat Sinai, which regularly reports attacks through Islamic State media channels (for more see the subsequent sections on Notable Attacks and Terror Group Developments). The province saw 195 attacks reported from April to June 2016, compared with 135 the previous quarter and 97 in the last three months of 2015. Interestingly, attacks by unknown actors are on the rise, with 62 reported attacks going unclaimed in the second quarter, compared to 16 and 21 in the prior two periods.

Reported Attacks in North Sinai

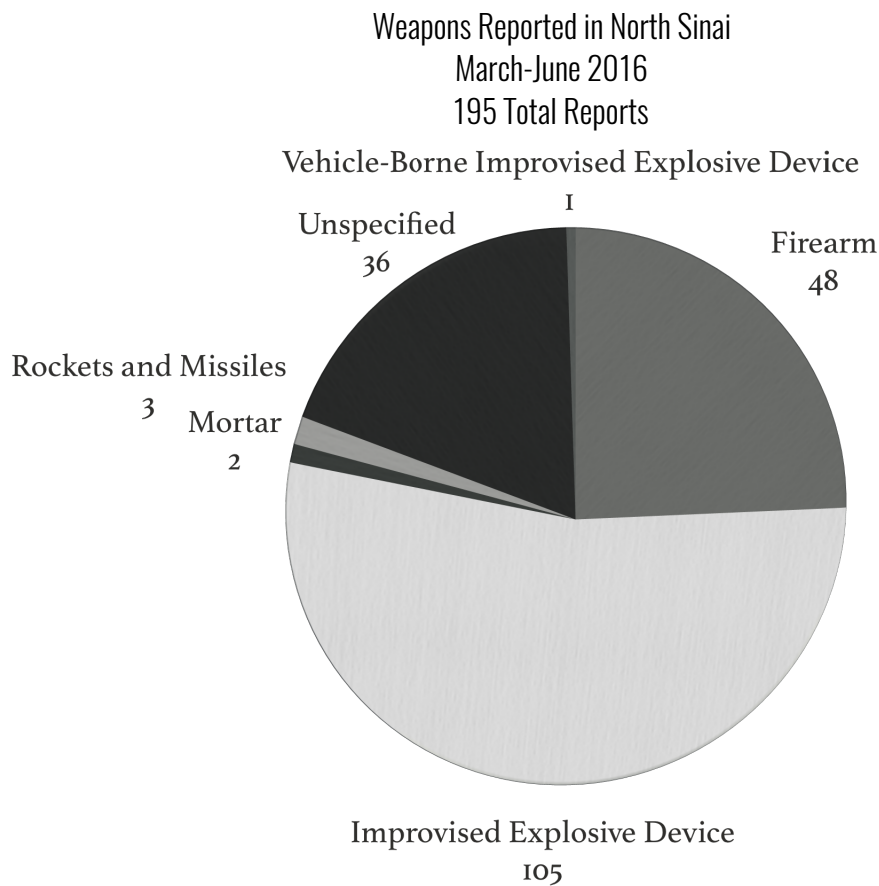


Reported Attacks in North Sinai

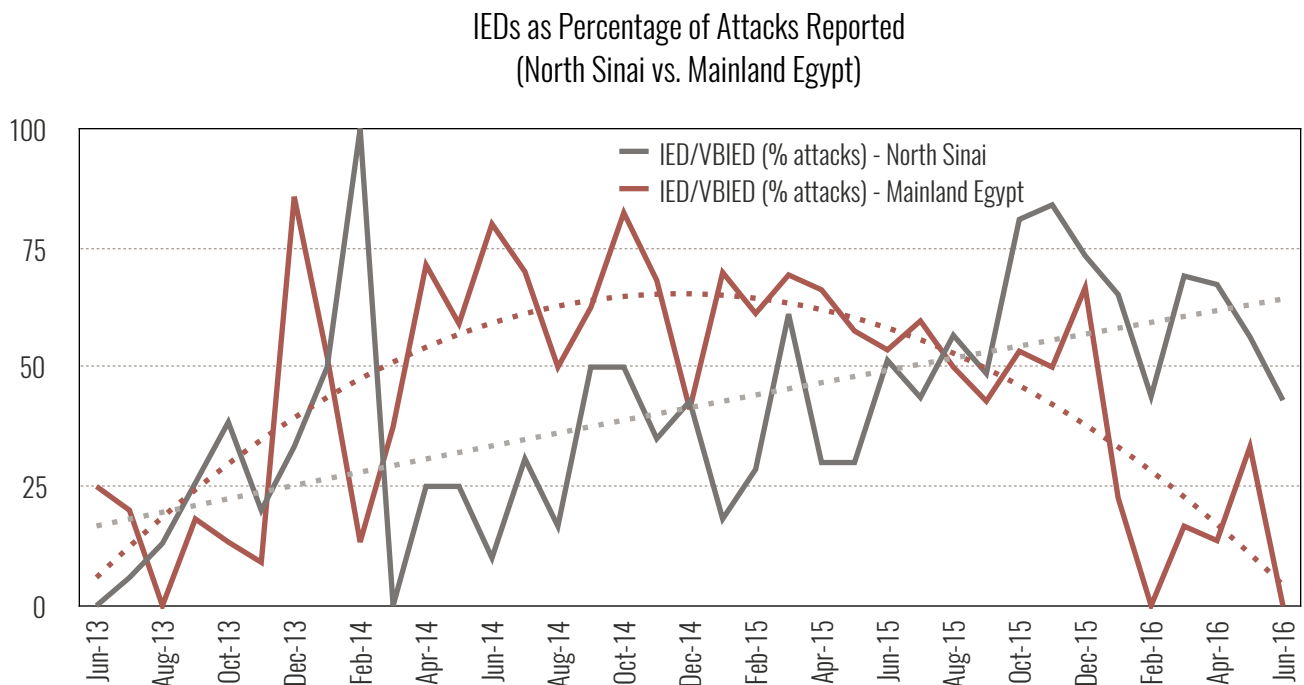


Continued surge in reports of improvised explosive devices, largely in North Sinai

Of the weapons used in reported attacks in North Sinai, IEDs have steadily increased in prominence in the past years, both in number and in share of overall attacks reported. From March to June 2016, 105 IED attacks were reported in the province, the most of any quarter on record. While there is some month-to-month variance, every consecutive quarter over the past two years has seen an increase in the number of IEDs reported used in the province. The reason for the increased use is unclear, although it may be related to a growing familiarity with weapons-making expertise and technology, an adaptation to the reduced availability of manufactured weapons, or the increased availability of IED-making materials.



The reported use of IEDs outside of North Sinai has remained low after a period of increased use from January to September 2015. The reason for this decline is unclear, although the use of IEDs does appear to be correlated to the activity of the Popular Resistance Movement alliance throughout mainland Egypt.

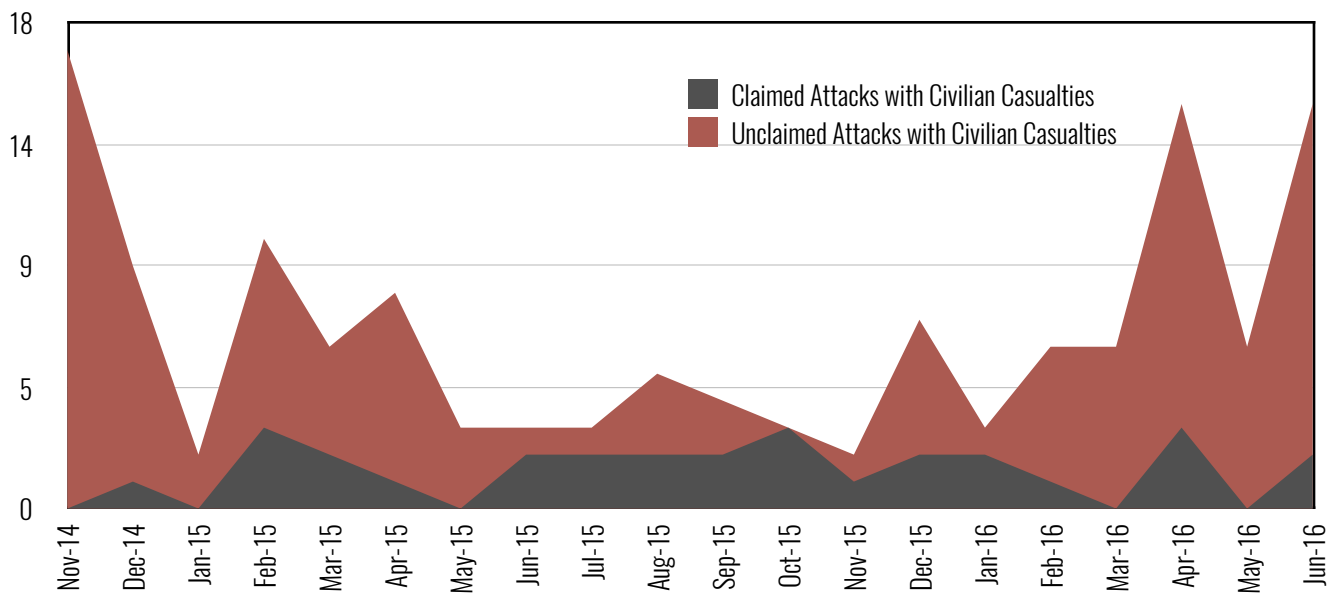


Increase in reported attacks with civilian casualties

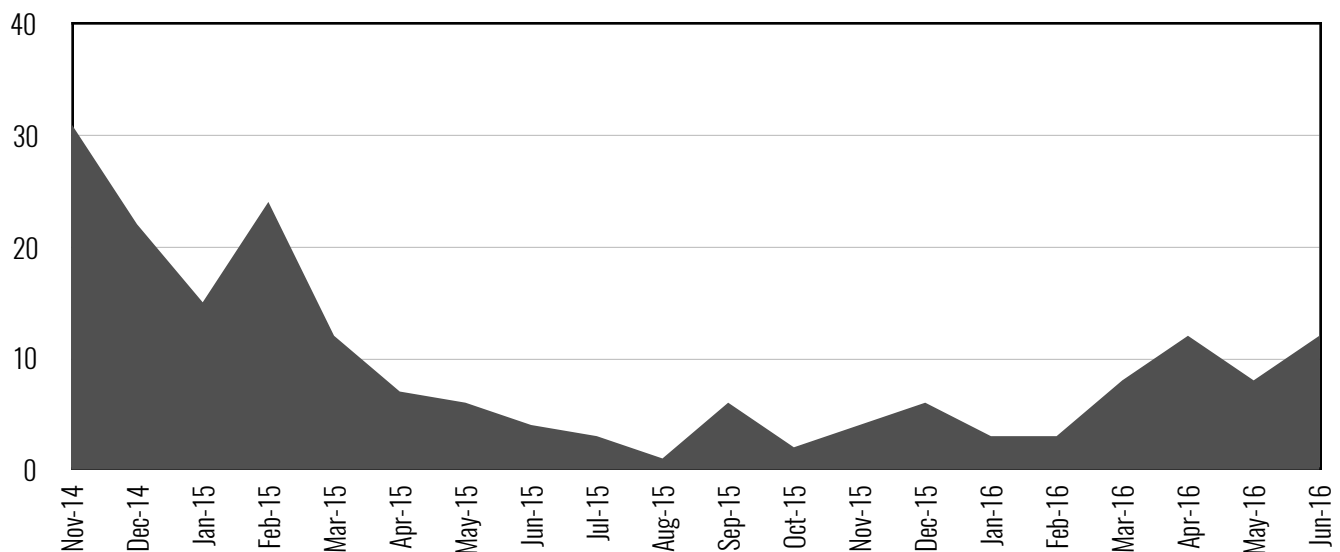
The second quarter of 2016 saw a surge in the number of attacks reported with civilian casualties; however, the number of civilians reported killed in attacks did not increase at the same rate. From April to June 2016, 23 civilians were reported killed, a 77% increase from the previous quarter; the number of attacks with civilian casualties reported increased from eight to 15, or 87%.

In one report of an attack in North Sinai on May 19, [militants hit a home](#) in al-Zuwaraa village near Sheikh Zuweid, killing seven, the deadliest attack on civilians in the quarter. The attack was not claimed by any group, reflecting Egyptian terror groups' general aversion to attacking civilians, unless these are targeted assassinations (as of suspected police or military informants, for example). In one instance a Coptic priest was gunned down in Arish (see subsequent section on Notable Attacks).

Attacks with Civilian Casualties Reported



Civilian Deaths (Egypt Overall)



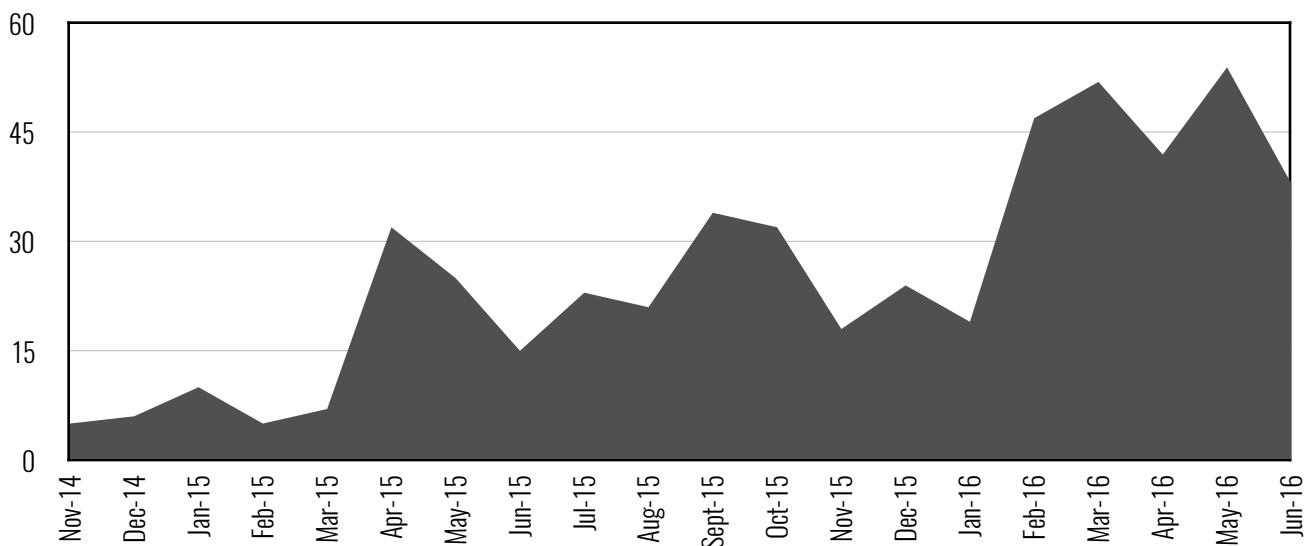
NOTABLE ATTACKS

The following section highlights notable terror attacks.

Wilayat Sinai continues attacks in North Sinai

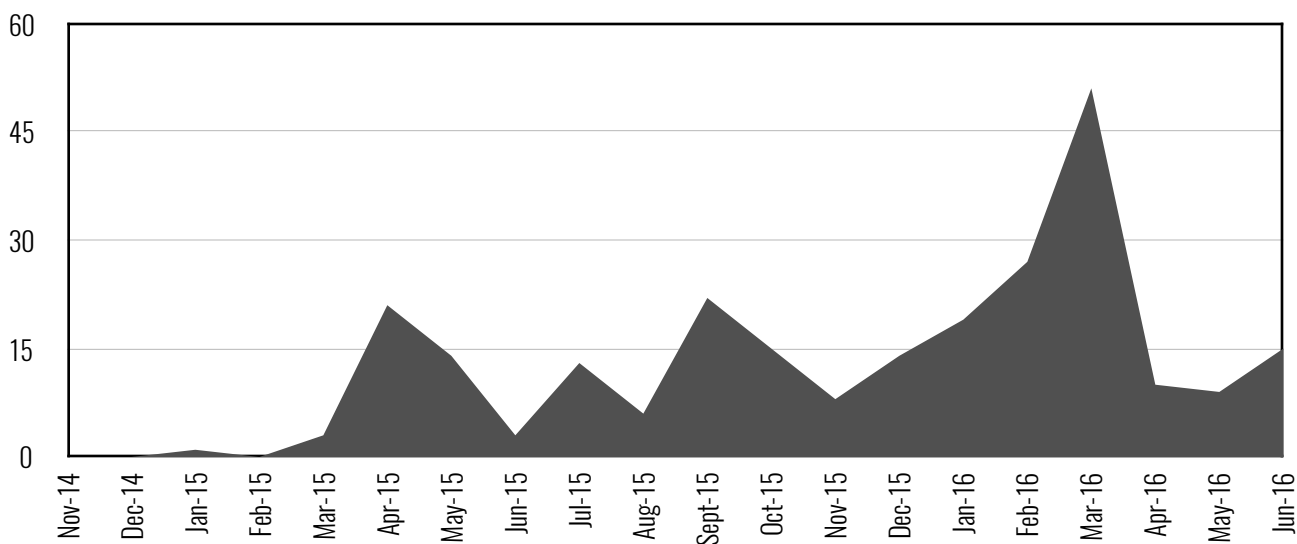
In the second quarter of 2016, Wilayat Sinai claimed 133 attacks in the North Sinai governorate. This reflects the greatest number of attacks claimed by Wilayat Sinai in any quarter thus far, including the first quarter of 2016, which saw a record 118 attacks. The group's activities are up from a year ago but appear to be plateauing, with an average of 48 attacks per month claimed in the first half of 2016, compared to 28 per month in the six months prior.

Attacks Claimed by Wilayat Sinai



Of these 133 attacks, Wilayat Sinai claimed 84 IED attacks (including one VBIED) and 24 shootings, targeting security checkpoints and security patrols throughout the central and northern parts of Sinai. These attacks left at least 33 dead and 36 injured; all but two of those reported killed in the second quarter of 2016 were security personnel (a Coptic priest was among the two civilians reported killed).

Deaths in Attacks Claimed by Wilayat Sinai
(Excluding MetroJet Bombing)



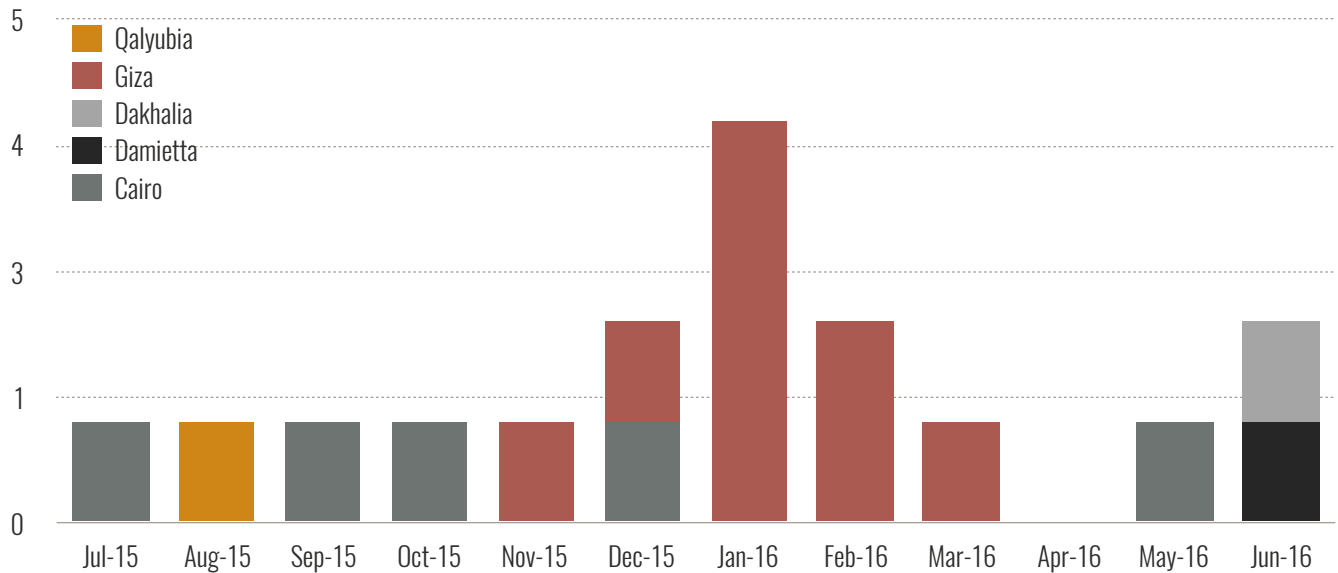
Notable attack claims included:

- On *Thursday, June 30*, Wilayat Sinai claimed to have [fatally shot](#) Coptic priest Father Rafael Moussa of the Mar Girgis Church in Arish. This is the first time the organization has claimed an overtly sectarian act since its pledge of allegiance to the Islamic State in November 2014.
- On *Sunday, June 19*, Wilayat Sinai claimed an IED attack on an armored vehicle in the central Sinai town of Nekhel, near the border of the South Sinai governorate. Egyptian security forces were [performing security sweeps](#) in the area when the IED exploded, leaving three soldiers injured. Nekhel is approximately 150 kilometers farther south than Wilayat Sinai's normal area of operations in Rafah, Sheikh Zuweid, and Arish.
- On *Wednesday, May 25*, Wilayat Sinai claimed an attack on an Egyptian tank using a guided missile, their first use of anti-tank munitions since January 2016. While the attack was claimed by Wilayat Sinai, it was not reported by the Egyptian military or news outlets.
- Throughout the second quarter, Wilayat Sinai continued targeting the homes of military officers, soldiers, and low-ranking policemen in Arish. On *June 16*, Wilayat Sinai claimed the [assassination](#) of two noncommissioned police officers in the Mesaieed village. On *May 25*, Wilayat Sinai claimed the bombing of Colonel Hisham Musabah's home in Arish, and on *May 7*, Wilayat Sinai also claimed the [bombing](#) of a police officer's home in the Al-Samaran neighborhood of Arish. An unclaimed shooting on *June 21* left one noncommissioned officer dead in Arish after [four militants stormed his house](#) and opened fire.
- On *April 18*, Wilayat Sinai claimed an IED attack on a military personnel carrier in Arish. [According to news sources](#), the attack left two conscripts dead, three wounded, and five civilians injured.

More blending of attacks by mainland terrorist groups

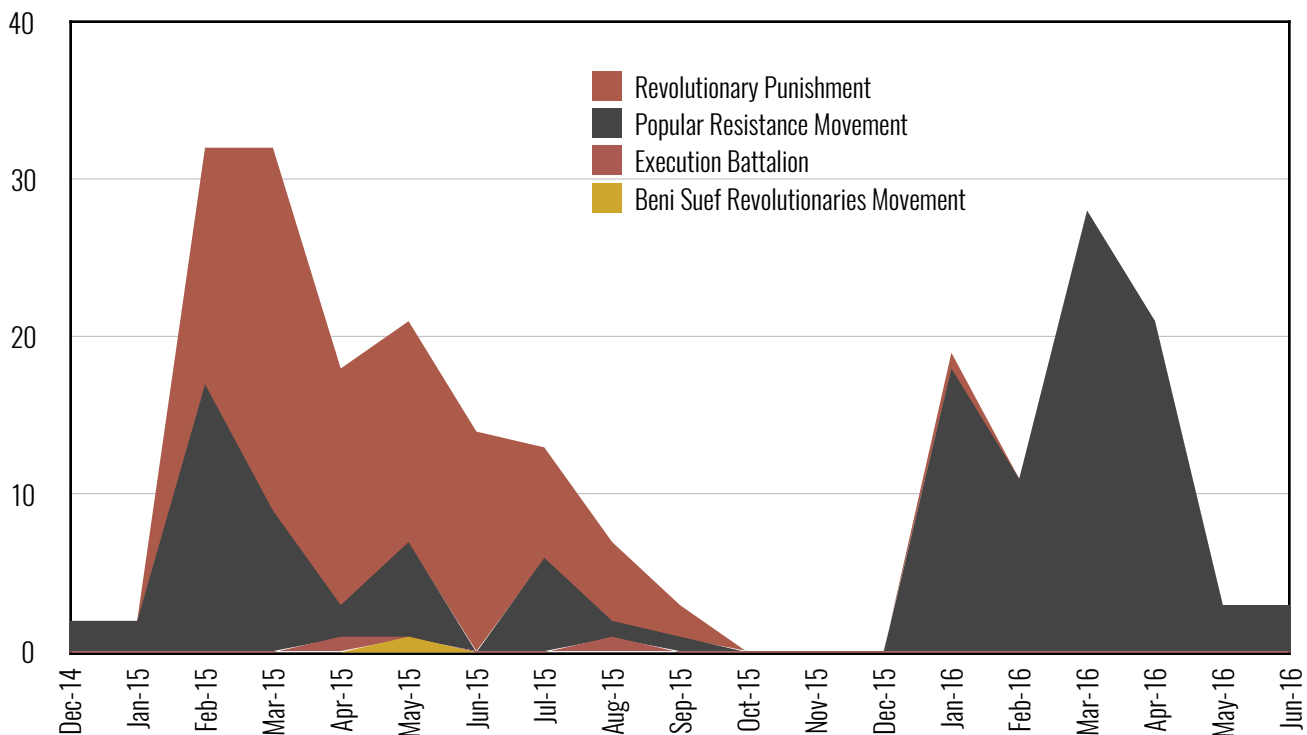
The second quarter of 2016 saw continued attacks by mainland terrorist groups, including the Islamic State in Egypt and the Popular Resistance Movement. The Islamic State in Egypt, an entity distinct from Wilayat Sinai (though perhaps cooperating with the Sinai group to some degree), claimed three attacks in the second quarter of 2016, compared to seven in the previous quarter. The attacks took place in the provinces of Giza, Daqhalia, and Damietta, the first Islamic State-claimed attacks in the latter two provinces. In the year since [the first attack claimed by the group on July 11, 2015](#)—the bombing of the Italian consulate—nine attacks claimed by the Islamic State in Egypt have taken place in Giza, five in Cairo, and one each in Daqhalia, Damietta, and Qalyubia.

Attacks Claimed by the Islamic State in Egypt



For its part, the Popular Resistance Movement claimed a total of 29 attacks, compared to 57 claims last quarter. Of these, 15 attacks were arson, three were shootings, and three were IED attacks, and the group also claimed its first two attacks in Daqhalia in April. The group did not comment on the overall decline in attacks, which happened abruptly after April (in which 21 attacks were claimed); a similar phenomenon happened in mid-2015, when attacks decreased swiftly after reaching a zenith earlier in the year. Notably, the Revolutionary Punishment, one of the groups associated with the Popular Resistance Movement, did not claim any attacks in the second quarter 2016.

Attacks Claimed by the Allied Popular Resistance Movement



In the second quarter of 2016, the Islamic State in Egypt and the Popular Resistance Movement claimed two of the same attacks. A similar instance had occurred in January 2016, when the Revolutionary Punishment and Islamic State in Egypt both claimed an attack in Giza that [killed six policemen and four civilians](#). It is not clear whether these duplicate claims indicate coordination between the two groups or opportunism on the part of one of them, by claiming attacks carried out by the other. It is notable, however, that neither group has refuted the claim of the other. (For more on the relationship between mainland groups, see Allison McManus and Jake Greene, [Egypt's Mainland Terrorism Landscape](#).)

- On *May 7*, the Islamic State in Egypt and the Popular Resistance Movement both claimed a high-profile attack on a bus carrying police officers in the Cairene neighborhood of Helwan that left eight policemen dead. The Islamic State in Egypt justified the operation as retaliation for the incarceration of women in Egypt. The Popular Resistance Movement also published an official claim of responsibility, stating that they targeted the officers on the bus with guns, and dedicated the operation to the 1,000-day anniversary of the Raba'a al-Adawiya massacre.
- On *June 6*, Islamic State in Egypt and Popular Resistance Movement both claimed responsibility for a clash that took place in Mansoura between military forces and militants. Both Islamic State in Egypt and the Popular Resistance Movement posted separate official claims of responsibility. In their claim, the Popular Resistance Movement announced that the targets for the shootout were Brigadier General Hisham Salim and Major Ahmed al-Jumaili of the Investigations Department in Daqhalia. The attack injured two, including Salim's driver and another unnamed member of the force.

TERROR GROUPS DEVELOPMENTS

The following section details notable developments in the actor landscape, particularly known terror groups.

Islamic State releases 14 propaganda videos on Egypt

From May 5 to 7, [the Islamic State issued a series of fourteen videos](#), each corresponding to an Islamic State *wilaya* (province) across Iraq, Syria, and Libya. The scale of the media blitz was nearly unprecedented (though there had been a similarly sized campaign aimed at Saudi Arabia in 2015). The videos were disseminated through its central media channel (Nashir), encouraging the jihad of its "brothers" in Egypt's Sinai Peninsula. The videos all address the "brothers in Ard al-Kanana" and make explicit reference to the rule of Muhammad Morsi and Abdel-Fattah El Sisi, showing these leaders alongside various scenes of police brutality and state violence from the past few years.

The intended audience appeared to be primarily disenchanted Egyptians, as the videos also feature several scenes from parliament and Tahrir Square and [point to the failure and "un-Islamic" nature](#) of peaceful means of achieving justice. They also draw on the typical register of an overall unjust treatment of Muslims, appealing to the wider "Islamic State" audience. A constant theme in the videos is patience, reassuring the "brothers" of the certainty of their success and the help that will come to them; each of the fourteen videos is titled with a Quranic reference to patience and victory.

The videos have appeared to have little effect on Wilayat Sinai's operations, with no notable change in intensity or strategy, nor any reports of a surge in fighters entering its ranks.

U.S. and Israel estimate Wilayat Sinai's size between several hundred and a thousand fighters

In May, the Department of State and Central Intelligence Agency both released estimates for the size of Wilayat Sinai, the United States' first official, publicly available figures. According to a [report](#) recently put out by the State Department's Bureau of Counterterrorism and Countering Violent Extremism titled "Country Reports on Terrorism in 2015," Wilayat Sinai has "several hundred fighters" in the Sinai Peninsula, along with

“affiliated cells” in mainland Egypt. The report noted that the organization may be connected to more than 200 militants in Gaza.¹ This estimate preceded CIA Director John Brennan’s [statement](#) in front of the U.S. Senate Select Committee on Intelligence on June 16, in which he claimed that Sinai province is “the most active and capable” of Egyptian terrorist groups, and that it currently has “[several hundred if not over a thousand fighters](#).” Brennan, in a later speech at the Council on Foreign Relations, noted that the organization’s approach had shifted after their becoming “a part of ISIS’ global architecture.”

The Israeli Defense Force (IDF) [released](#) a similar estimate in April through its official Twitter account, which put the organization at between 600 and 1,000 fighters. That same announcement also mentioned Hamas’ support for Wilayat Sinai, noting financial, operational, logistical, and health-related connections between the organizations.

Hisham Ashmawy’s Morabitoon releases fourth video

On June 6, Hisham Ashmawy, the former Egyptian special forces soldier and self-proclaimed emir of the jihadist group al-Morabitoon, released a short video recording, lamenting the [death](#) of Taliban leader Mullah Akhtar, who was killed by a U.S. airstrike in May. The video, which is Ashmawy’s fourth since his organization’s debut in July 2015, dispelled rumors that he had been killed during an April airstrike in Derna, Libya. Ashmawy is a former member of the Egyptian Thunderbolt (Egypt’s Special Forces, or Saeka) and has been connected to many sophisticated attacks in Egypt. He is likely based in Derna, Libya; with the ongoing Libyan National Army offensive in that city, it is unclear if Ashmawy remains there. Neither Ashmawy nor al-Morabitoon have publicly claimed any attack (in Egypt or elsewhere).

Jabhat al-Tahrir emerges, retroactively claiming first attack

A group referring to itself as Jibhat al-Tahrir surfaced on social media, retroactively claiming the [April 4 attack on a police checkpoint](#) in al-Khesous, Qalyubia, that resulted in the death of a police noncommissioned officer and the injury of two others.

¹ Note that *El-Watan*, citing unnamed Egyptian security sources, previously [reported](#) that Egypt had identified some 250 (presumably Egyptian) militants in Tel al-Zaatar, Lebanon, who had purportedly received training from Hamas and entered Sinai in order to carry out attacks.

COUNTER-TERRORISM

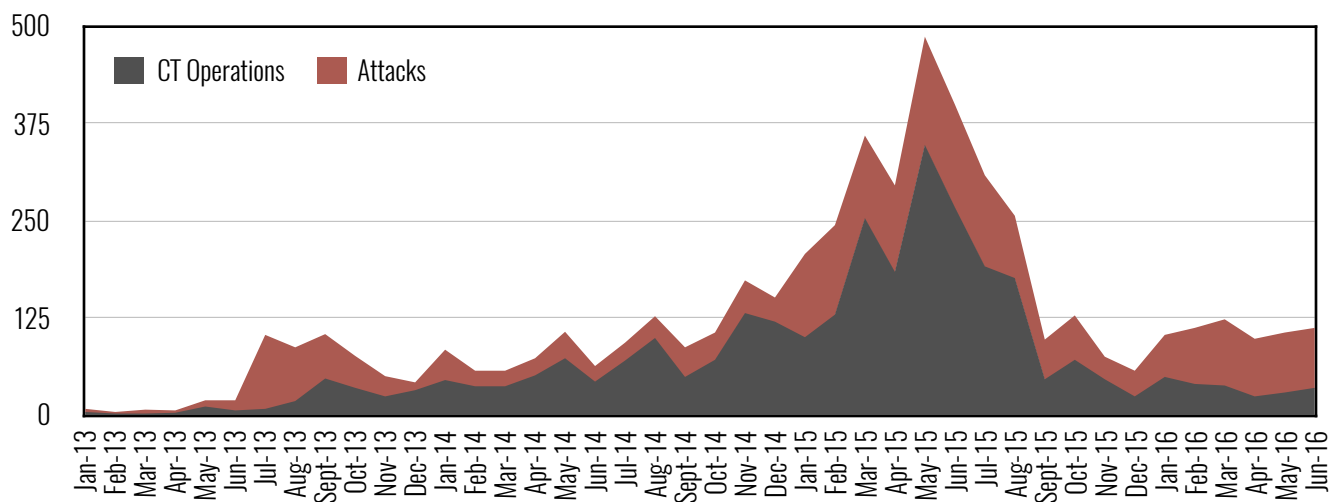
TRENDS

The following section showcases trends in reported counter-terror operations throughout Egypt.

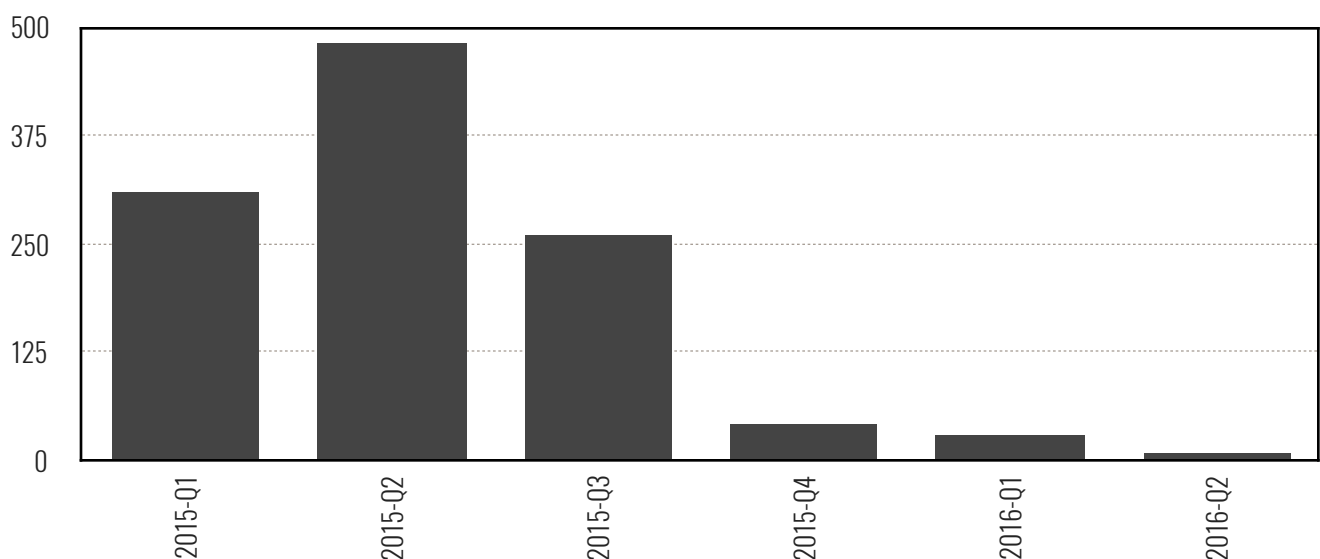
Reports of counter-terror operations wind down

The second quarter of 2016 saw a continued drawdown in reported counter-terror operations, and for the second quarter in a row more terror attacks were reported than counter-terror operations, a new trend after over two years of intense counter-terror efforts as part of Egypt's "war on terror." The first six months of 2016 saw an average of 36 counter-terror operations per month, whereas the first and second halves of 2015 saw 213 and 92 reported operations per month, respectively.

Counter-Terror Operations Reported (Egypt Overall)



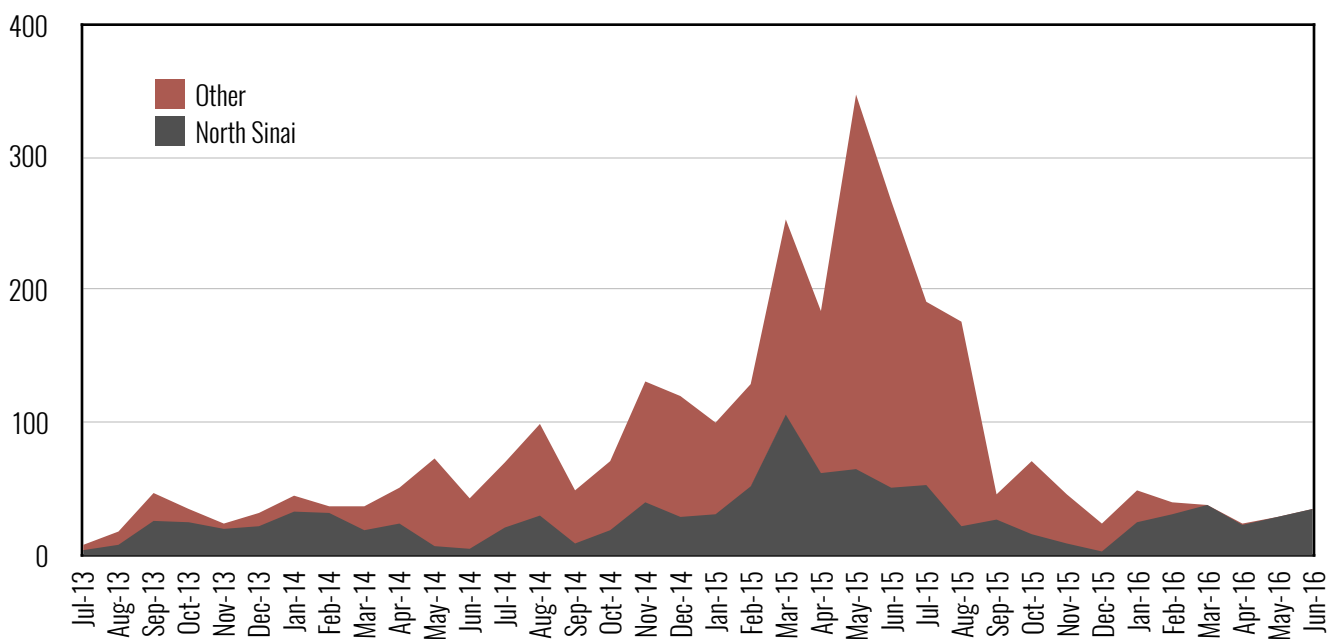
Official Reports of Counter-Terror Operations



Most notably, operations reported outside of North Sinai have effectively halted. From April to June 2016, only one operation was reported outside of the North Sinai province, [a Giza raid](#) that killed an alleged leader of the apparently defunct Ajnad Misr terror group (though [some reports](#) suggested the individual killed was affiliated with the Muslim Brotherhood).

The decline in reported operations also corresponded with a decline in reports issued from the Egyptian Ministry of Interior or Armed Forces via their official media outlets, which had regularly reported on raids, arrests, and military activity before a sudden decrease in such reports after September 2015. While security officials sometimes provide reports to news media (if often anonymously), the official Facebook page of the military spokesperson reported on only seven counter-terror operations in the last quarter. The Ministry of Interior page, which reported 481 operations throughout the country during the same period last year, reported no counter-terror operations from April to June 2016.

Operations Reported

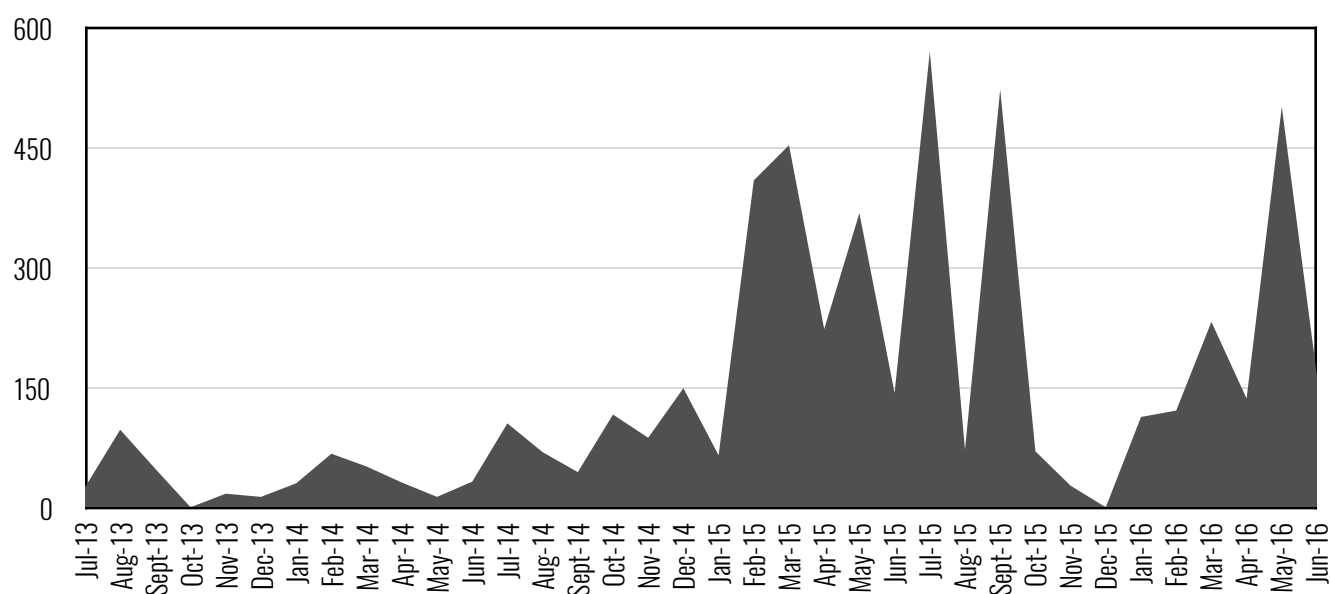


Deaths continue as part of Operations Martyr's Right campaign

While the number of counter-terror operations dropped significantly in the last quarter, the number of alleged terrorists killed in these operations remained high, with 802 alleged terrorists reported killed. Of these, 801 killings were reported in North Sinai (with the aforementioned Giza operation resulting in one death). These operations were carried out as a part of Operation Martyr's Right, now in its third phase. All three phases have featured kinetic operations; it is unclear what, if anything, distinguishes each phase.

Since the beginning of the Operation Martyr's Right campaign—now underway for a full year since it was initiated in the wake of the July 1, 2015 assault on Sheikh Zuweid by Wilayat Sinai—2,529 alleged terrorists have been reported killed and another 2,481 arrested in North Sinai. These numbers, however, appear to be incongruous with the aforementioned size estimates of militants operating in the area, which range between several hundred and 1,000. It is thus unclear whether the military is targeting those who are not actually militants, is inflating the number that are reported killed or arrested in operations, or if militants are able to replenish their ranks as rapidly as they are being killed and arrested.

Deaths Reported in Counter-Terror Operations (North Sinai)

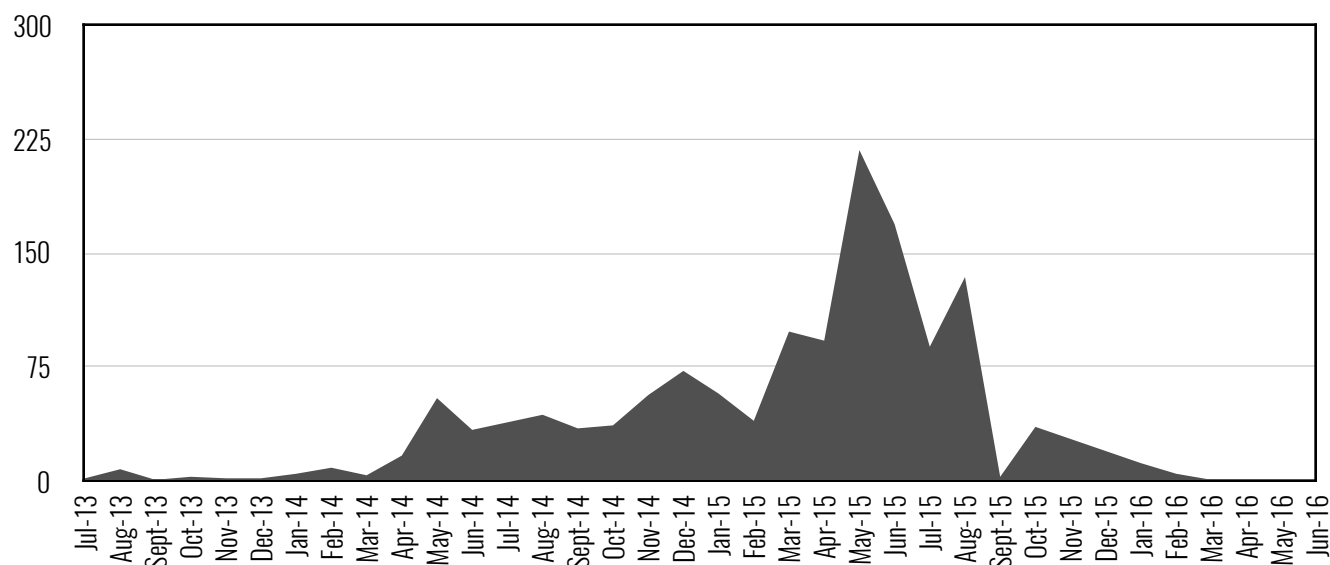


Reports of Muslim Brotherhood-related operations grind to a halt

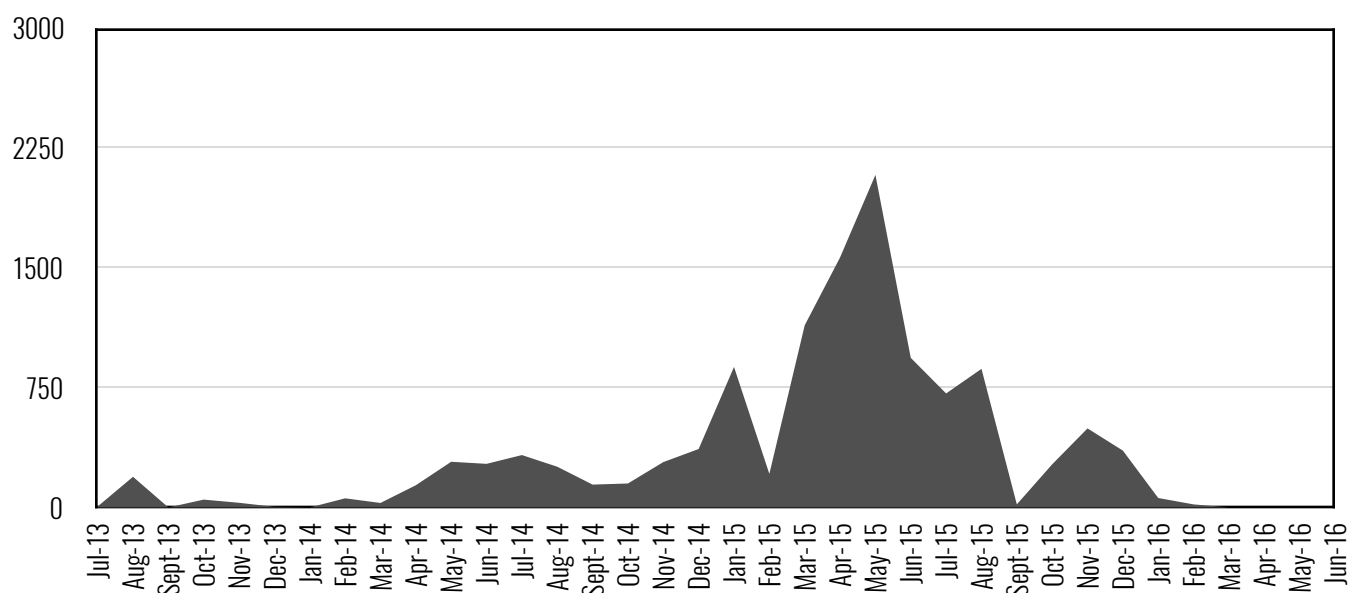
Corresponding to the overall decline in reported operations across the mainland, reports of operations targeting the Muslim Brotherhood effectively ceased. The Brotherhood, which was declared a terrorist organization in December 2013, has been the target of the majority of counter-terror operations outside of North Sinai since that time, with 1,895 operations reported from January 2014 to January 2016 (or 71% of all operations in the mainland). These operations resulted in the arrest of over 11,700 alleged Muslim Brotherhood members on terrorism charges during this time, an average of 511 arrests per month.² However, since the start of 2016, these figures have dropped considerably: The first six months of year saw a total of 78 reported Muslim Brotherhood-related arrests, with no arrests reported for terrorism related activities in the mainland at all in the second quarter of 2016.

² These figures account for those arrested explicitly in relation to terrorism; they do not account for overall arrests or politically motivated arrests, etc. For more, see Appendix on *Egypt Security Watch* methodology.

Reported Operations Targeting Muslim Brotherhood



Reported Arrests Targeting Muslim Brotherhood



NOTABLE OPERATIONS

The following section details notable domestic security operations.

Military operations at Mount Helal

In response to ongoing terror attacks in North Sinai, Egypt's army initiated the third phase of Operation Martyr's Right in May 2016, although this phase has not been distinguished in any way from the two prior. On *May 24*, Egyptian forces reported a clash with Wilayat Sinai militants in the Mount Helal region of central Sinai that lasted several hours and included aerial and artillery bombardment. The Egyptian Army reported that this operation resulted in the [death and injury of 200 militants](#). Additional operations in Mount Helal

resulted in the seizure and destruction of 25 IEDs, along with materials that are used to manufacture IEDs, including ammonium nitrate.

Located in central Sinai 60 kilometers south of Arish, Mount Helal has been described as a stronghold for Wilayat Sinai militants operating in central Sinai due to its rugged terrain and convoluted caves and passageways. According to tribesmen residing in the area, Mount Helal served as the safe haven [for roughly 3,000 fugitives and militants in 2012](#). (As previously mentioned, Wilayat Sinai's forces in the region are currently reported to be between 500 and 1,000 fighters.) As a focal point for militants and criminals, the Egyptian Armed Forces are targeting Mount Helal in their fight against the Sinai insurgency.

The military operations at Mount Helal were carried out by Egypt's Third Field Army. While its official jurisdiction is South Sinai, we noted in the last quarterly report that the unit has been carrying out operations in North Sinai province, particularly in the central and southern areas of the governorate.

Senior level militants reported killed throughout second quarter of 2016

A number of high level operatives were reportedly killed during security operations in the second quarter.

- On *April 5*, news sources reported that the Egyptian military killed a Wilayat Sinai senior-level leader, Maher Ali Salem, during a clash with militants in the al-Khariza neighborhood in central Sinai.
- On *April 19*, news sources reported that Egyptian forces succeeded in killing three Wilayat Sinai leaders in an air strike in the Tarabin neighborhood south of Sheikh Zuweid. According to the source, military forces spotted Abdel Moneim al-Zurieay, Abdel Baset al-Zureiay, and Muhammad Noor al-Hamadayn in a house in Tarabin, and conducted an air strike to destroy the house, killing the three leaders.
- On *June 23*, the Egyptian Armed Forces reportedly killed a former al-Qassam Brigades militant, Nader Bassaam Hussein al-Jouda, who allegedly left Gaza to join Wilayat Sinai last year. News sources reported that Hussein left the al-Qassam Brigades to join the Islamic State in the Gaza Strip, which prompted Hamas to hang pictures of Hussein throughout the Gaza Strip in order to find and punish him. This reportedly prompted Hussein to flee Gaza and join Wilayat Sinai.
- On *June 28*, security forces reportedly killed Hamdan al-Maklouz and Farhat Abu Kirshan in a clash between security forces and militants following an attempted attack on the Abu Refai checkpoint south of Sheikh Zuweid.

SECURITY SECTOR DEVELOPMENTS

The following section details important developments in Egypt's domestic security agencies.

MFO changes underway

As previously discussed in TIMEP's [Quarterly Report: 2016 Q1](#), adjustments to the Multinational Force and Observers (MFO) mission in Sinai are underway. According to a [briefing note](#) prepared for the Canadian Ministry of Foreign Affairs in November and published in late March, "the threat environment [in Sinai] has changed over the summer months of 2015." It noted that there is "increasing concern among troop-contributing countries regarding the security situation in the Sinai," referencing a number of attacks last summer and fall on MFO-affiliated installations and personnel.

Despite [indications](#) that they would remain in place, the Republic of Fiji Military Force (RFMF), which previously contributed 338 military personnel to the Sinai mission, [reportedly recalled](#) 65 soldiers in late May due to poor security conditions. The RFMF also reportedly [took charge of security](#) at the MFO's southern camp near Sharm el-Sheikh—which, according to Fijian Commander Humphrey Tawake, currently houses

115 peacekeepers—as well as two remote sites. New Zealand, which contributes more than two dozen peacekeepers, announced that it had relocated all of its personnel to the southern camp. New Zealand Defense Minister Gerry Brownlee [said](#), “I think it’s just a wise move that people who are not there in a combat role but are seen as military are put into a safer place [...]. For them to have to deal with third party actors who have a terrorist-type approach changes the nature of that work.”

US delivers MRAPS under Excess Defense Articles grant program

In mid-May, the Department of Defense, under the Excess Defense Articles grant program (which is separate from Foreign Military Funding), [delivered](#) the first shipment of Mine Resistant Ambush Protected (MRAP) vehicles to the Egyptian military. The military has on order 762 MRAPs valued at more than \$44 million. These [include](#) 12 MAXXPRO MRAP recovery vehicles (\$1.06 million), 90 RG-33L HAGA and CAIMAN CAT II ambulances (\$8.34 million), 260 RG-33 CAT II 6x6 Base MRAPS (\$18.33 million), and 400 CAIMAN CAT I Base MRAPs (\$16.48 million). The heavily armored vehicles offer additional protection from roadside IEDs and other explosives.

More on the October downing of the Russia-bound Flight KGL-9268

Egypt is still seeing fallout from the downing of a Russian aircraft carrying 224 people over Sinai in October 2015, an operation which Wilayat Sinai claimed through Islamic State official media.

In June, British security company Restrata signed a [cooperation agreement](#) with National Falcon to offer airport security training to several thousand of its personnel. This comes in light of growing pressure on Egypt to adopt more stringent security measures in its airports, an endeavor that the Russians have led. National Falcon is a joint venture between the state and Falcon Group, the security contractor that provided security to [Sisi during his presidential campaign](#) and with alleged ties to businessman Naguib Sawiris and deceased intelligence official and politician Sameh Seif al-Yezal. Falcon was also responsible for securing university campuses from protests in the 2014-15 school year.

Officials in Moscow have repeatedly emphasized that resuming flights is a priority and have placed the blame for suspensions on the Egyptian government’s inaction. A Russian delegation spent a week in Egypt in mid-April [inspecting](#) security measures at Sharm el-Sheikh and Hurghada airports. According to Russian-owned TASS news, Egyptian airports [agreed](#) to fulfill requirements laid out by Russian security experts by July. In late May, the Russian Ministry of Transport had not yet received a response from Egyptian officials concerning their request. In mid-June, Russian Deputy Prime Minister Olga Golodets [said](#) that the security situation in Egypt’s airports remained the same and that tourism could not resume.

In late June 2016, British Airways [announced](#) that it would abandon its route to Sharm el-Sheikh, despite earlier reports indicating that it would resume service in September 2016.

LEGAL AND POLITICAL CONTEXT

LEGAL AND JUDICIAL DEVELOPMENTS

The following section provides updates on notable security-related developments in Egypt's legal and judicial system. It covers notable legal actions, court cases, and legislation.

Barakat assassination trial postponed

Court proceedings for the Hisham Barakat assassination trial, originally slated to begin this quarter, were [postponed to July 13, 2016](#). Sixty-seven defendants [face charges](#) of premeditated murder, membership in a terrorist organization, and espionage. The mass trial comes despite the video-recorded confessions of 14 individuals that were released by the Ministry of Interior in March, which, in addition to implicating Hamas, pointed to direct involvement of high-level Muslim Brotherhood figures in the prosecutor's killing. Former Prosecutor-General Hisham Barakat was [killed in June 2015](#) after unidentified assailants targeted his passing motorcade with a vehicle-borne improvised explosive device (or VBIED). The attack was never claimed, but it bore striking resemblance to other attacks carried out by organized terror groups based in mainland Egypt. Officials have, from the beginning, [accused](#) the Muslim Brotherhood of staging and executing the operation, and in June public prosecutors imposed a media gag on the trial. (For more, see Allison McManus and Jake Greene, [Crying Wolf: How Sisi Plays Politics with Terrorism](#).)

Emergency law extended for North Sinai

In response to the increase in terror attacks and militant-related violence throughout North Sinai, President Abdel-Fattah El Sisi announced on April 29 the [extension](#) of a state of emergency in areas of North Sinai for an additional three months, now continuously in effect in parts of the province since October 2014. The state of emergency was last extended in January 16, and Sisi attributed the latest extension to the continuation of dangerous security circumstances facing North Sinai. This emergency law affects the area west of Rafah to al-Awga, east of Arish. In these areas, a curfew prohibiting all citizens from being in public from 7:00 p.m. to 6:00 a.m. will be enforced as part of the emergency measures in place to facilitate security operations in North Sinai.

Enforcement of the emergency law hinged on parliamentary approval of the emergency measures, which [passed on May 25](#), despite backlash from North Sinai members of Egypt's House of Representatives. Although North Sinai MPs [expressed concern](#) regarding the number of curfew hours enforced by the emergency law, the parliament approved Sisi's extension.

Amendments to police protocol restrict carrying weapons off-duty

In response to a number of incidents involving civilian casualties, the Ministry of Interior made minor adjustments to its firearms protocol for police. Following fatal shootings in [Darb al-Ahmar](#) and [Rehab City](#), in which two off-duty policemen opened fire on civilians, the ministry announced in June that low-ranking police officers' weapons would be [turned in](#) while they are on leave or vacationing. Members of parliament proposed, in March, additional amendments to the Police Law that were meant to curtail human rights violations; these included bans on carrying firearms while off duty, in addition to stiffer penalties for violations. Parliament has not yet voted on the bill.

POLITICAL DEVELOPMENTS

The following section provides updates on notable security-related developments in Egypt's domestic and foreign politics. It covers notable speeches, meetings, and positions.

The United States ramps up its support for Egypt's role in countering terror

The past quarter saw a number of high-level U.S. delegations to Egypt, largely focused on Egypt's domestic and regional role in countering terror. These high-level delegations come in light of ongoing conflict in Sinai, the Egyptian mainland, and neighboring Libya.

The visits included:

- **Four congressional delegations** went to Egypt, one of which was headed by Speaker of the House Paul Ryan, his first trip to Egypt in that capacity. One of the delegations, headed by Representative Michael McCaul, visited the MFO's northern camp near Gorah in early May. In a video released during that trip, the congressman claimed, "While ISIS seems to be losing ground in Syria and Iraq, we're seeing a greater presence of ISIS in places like here in the Sinai Peninsula in Egypt."
- **Chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff General Joseph Dunford** met with Sisi and Armed Forces Chief of Staff Lieutenant General Mahmoud Hegazy in his second trip this year, where they "discussed the security situation in the Sinai region as part of a conversation about regional security." Very few real commitments were made, though, as "last month and these latest meetings [were] 'door-openers,'" according to Dunford.
- **U.S. Central Command Commander General Joseph Votel** "discussed the strategic relationship between the two countries as well as regional affairs" with Sisi and Defense Minister Sedki Sobhi.
- **Defense Intelligence Agency Director Lieutenant General Vincent Stewart and Director of the Defense Security and Cooperation Agency Vice Admiral Joseph Rixey** visited with Sobhi, "[discussing military cooperation](#) between the two countries."
- **Two trips by Secretary of State John Kerry** touched on [human rights](#) and a "[range of bilateral and regional issues](#), including recent developments in Libya and Syria." (Kerry also conducted a number of phone conversations with his Egyptian counterpart, Foreign Minister Sameh Shoukry.)

U.S. considers security assistance for fiscal year 2017

The U.S. Congress addressed Egypt's security needs as part of the FY 2017 budget throughout the latter part of the second quarter of 2016, with the House of Representatives and Senate each recently releasing their State and Foreign Operations Draft Bills. Both bills provide \$1.3 billion in foreign military financing (FMF) to Egypt to remain available until September 30, 2017. In addition, both bills provide \$44.5 million for the Multinational Force and Observers mission in Sinai, an increase from the \$35 million provided in FY 2016.

While similar, there are a few key differences between the bills. First, [the Senate's requires the secretary of state to withhold 15% of FMF](#) until the Egyptian government takes effective steps to meet a series of conditions and reforms (though this may be waived if the secretary deems doing so necessary to protect U.S. national security interests). Second, [while the House provides \\$150 million in economic support fund \(ESF\) financing](#), the Senate provides only \$75 million. Of these amounts, both the House and Senate require ESF financing to be made available for democracy programs and for programs supporting development and security in Sinai. As a final requirement, both bills require the secretary of state to report every 90 days until September 30, 2017, on the progress of the Egyptian government in advancing human rights and democracy;

implementing reforms that protect freedoms of expression, association, and peaceful assembly; and improving the transparency and accountability of security forces.

On April 12, the Government Accountability Office (GAO) [issued](#) a report that [criticized](#) the U.S. government's vetting of military aid to Egypt, noting that the required checks on physical security of items, as well as the use of equipment by Egyptian forces, were hindered by the Egyptian government. Furthermore, they noted that the United States had only partially completed required human rights vetting before providing training and equipment to Egyptian security forces. The GAO [noted](#) that “[the Department of] State has not established specific policies and procedures for vetting Egyptian security forces receiving equipment.”

Saudi loans funds for North Sinai development

In early June, Egypt’s parliament approved an [investment agreement](#) from Saudi Arabia allocating \$1.5 billion for the development of the Sinai Peninsula. The bulk of the loan will go toward purchasing Saudi oil products used in the development process, but \$500 million will be used to fund projects such as the construction of King Salman University in al-Tor, various agricultural and irrigation projects, and the upgrade and development of Sinai’s roads. While the loans are not specifically designated for the purposes of countering terror, development efforts in Sinai have long been part of the Egyptian government’s plans to address conflict in the province, although these plans have rarely been implemented.

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.

NOTES



The Tahrir Institute
for Middle East Policy