



The Tahrir Institute  
for Middle East Policy

# EGYPT SECURITY WATCH

QUARTERLY REPORT

OCT – DEC 2015



## **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, several things happened: We produced our second annual report, [Egypt's Rising Security Threat](#), began integration of TIMEP's research across our project areas, and reports of activity diminished significantly. Taking stock of these developments, we decided to reformulate our reporting approach, and we determined a quarterly period would better allow us to identify trends and make sense of transformations in the security landscape. We have also expanded the scope of the reports to include a more concerted analysis of contextual developments, drawing on the breadth of our institutional knowledge. This new format will not only continue to provide information on trends, but will offer a richer understanding of Egypt's overall security situation and its trajectory.

Thus, our quarterly reports will 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 defined by the state), 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 and in 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 these new reports will contribute to a sound understanding of the security situation necessary to inform this policy approach.

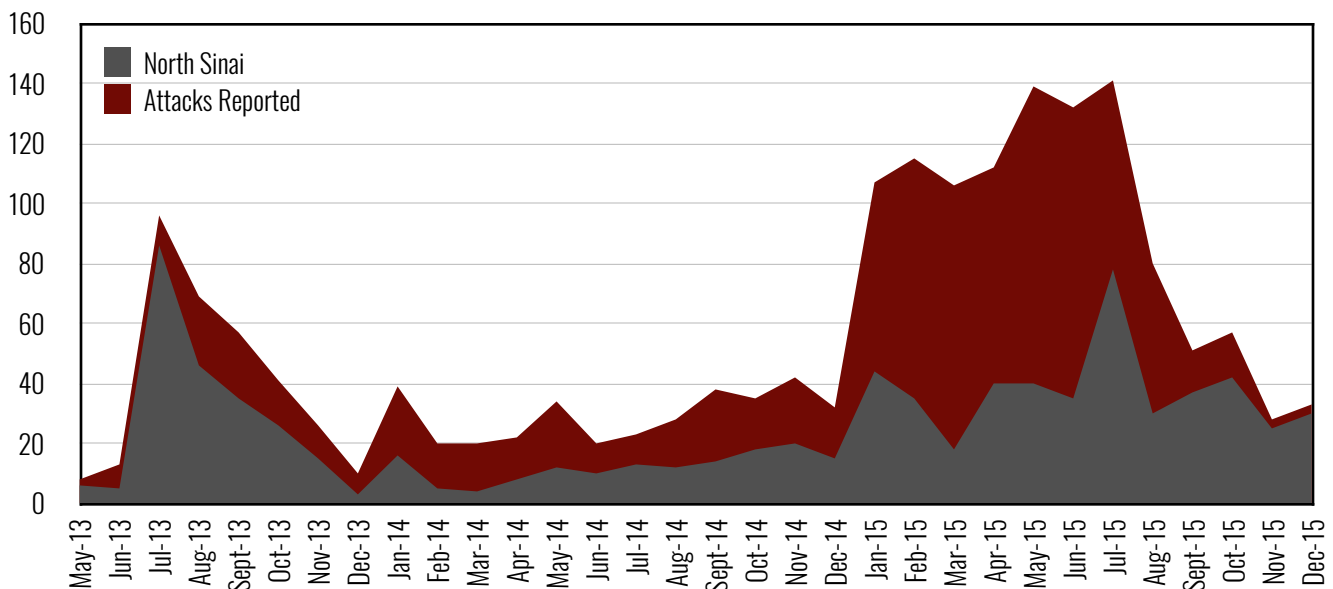
# EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

The fourth quarter of 2015 saw a significant decrease in reported terror attacks, terror group activity, and counter-terror operations. With the major exception of the continued activities of the Islamic State in the country, many trends that continued throughout the earlier months in the year ground to a near-halt. Yet the state continued to expand its reach in the name of security, with new legislation passed and continued terror-related prosecutions.

## Terrorism

- Reports of attacks slowed in the last quarter of 2015: **Overall attacks were reduced to around a third of their rate in the first half of the year, with 118 reported in the fourth quarter.** This decline in reported attacks corresponded with the absence of activity from groups like the allied Popular Resistance Movements.
- A major exception to the slowing of activity was the **continued violence in North Sinai, which was the location of 82% of all attacks** in the fourth quarter of 2015.

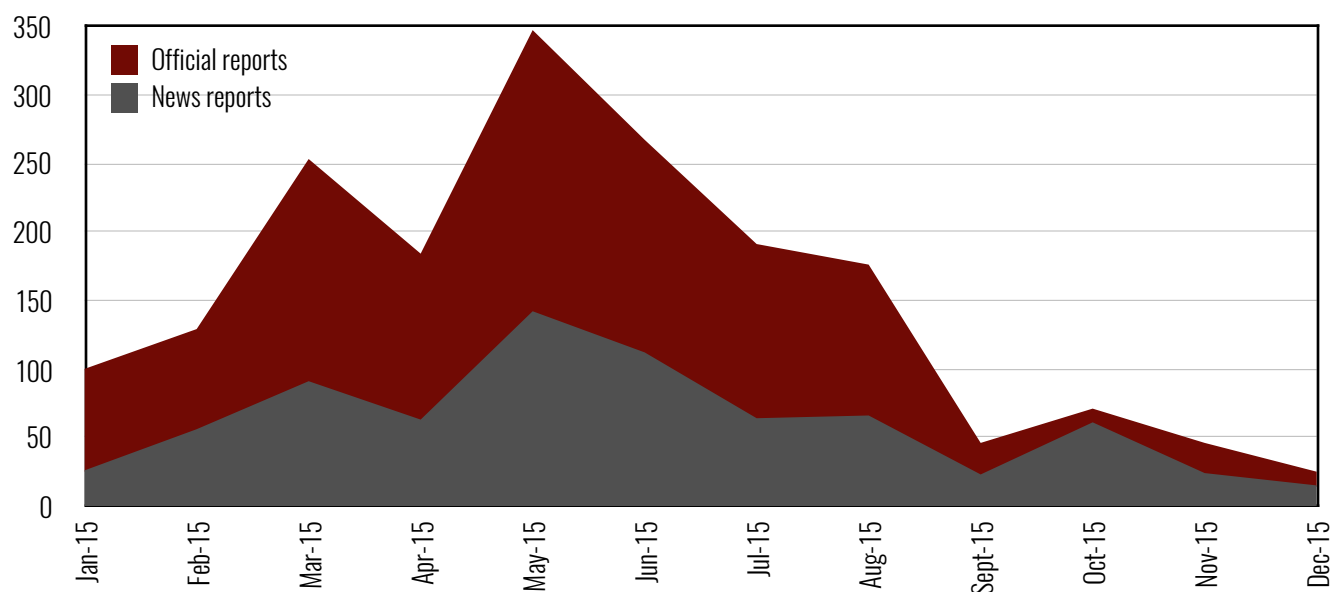
Attacks Reported



- While other terror groups were inactive in the last months of 2015, Wilayat Sinai continued regular attacks throughout the fourth quarter. **The Islamic State's arm in the peninsula claimed 74 attacks** (73 in North Sinai and one in Giza), compared to 78 in the previous quarter.
- Notably, **Wilayat Sinai claimed the downing of a Russian airliner on October 31, killing all 224 civilians on board.** Investigations are still ongoing and the Egyptian government has consistently denied the plane was brought down in an act of terrorism. The incident has had devastating implications for Egypt's tourism industry; flights were immediately grounded and still have not reached their pre-October levels.

- **The Islamic State in Egypt (claiming attacks separately from their Sinai counterparts) continued activities**, with four attacks in the fourth quarter. The last quarter's attacks featured targeted assassinations and shootings and smaller improvised explosive devices (IEDs), rather than the large-scale attacks of the summer.
- **Violence did not increase overall during Egypt's parliamentary elections (mid-October through early December)**, though several incidents were linked to the elections:
  - two "noise" bombs [exploded](#) near polling stations in Kerdasa in Giza province;
  - a bomb was [diffused](#) near a polling station in Fayoum;
  - unidentified gunmen fatally [shot](#) Mustafa Abdel Rahman, a Nour Party parliamentary candidate in North Sinai; and
  - Wilayat Sinai claimed a [coordinated attack](#) on Suez Hotel in Arish, which was hosting visiting election officials. A judge, a prosecutor, and two security personnel were killed, and others sustained injuries.
- Increasing efforts to restrict social media activity pushed communications channels deeper underground. As Twitter and Telegram (a secure messaging application) shut down militant media at a more rapid rate, **Islamic State (and provinces') communications migrated to closed and encrypted broadcasts.**

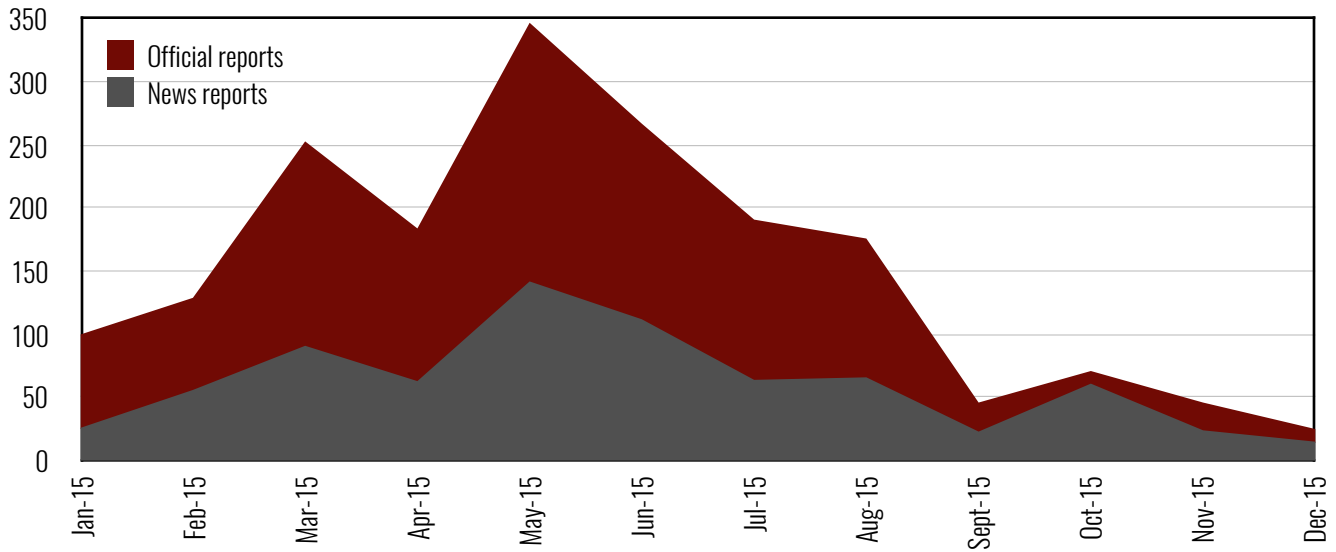
Counter-Terror Operations Reported



## Counter-terrorism

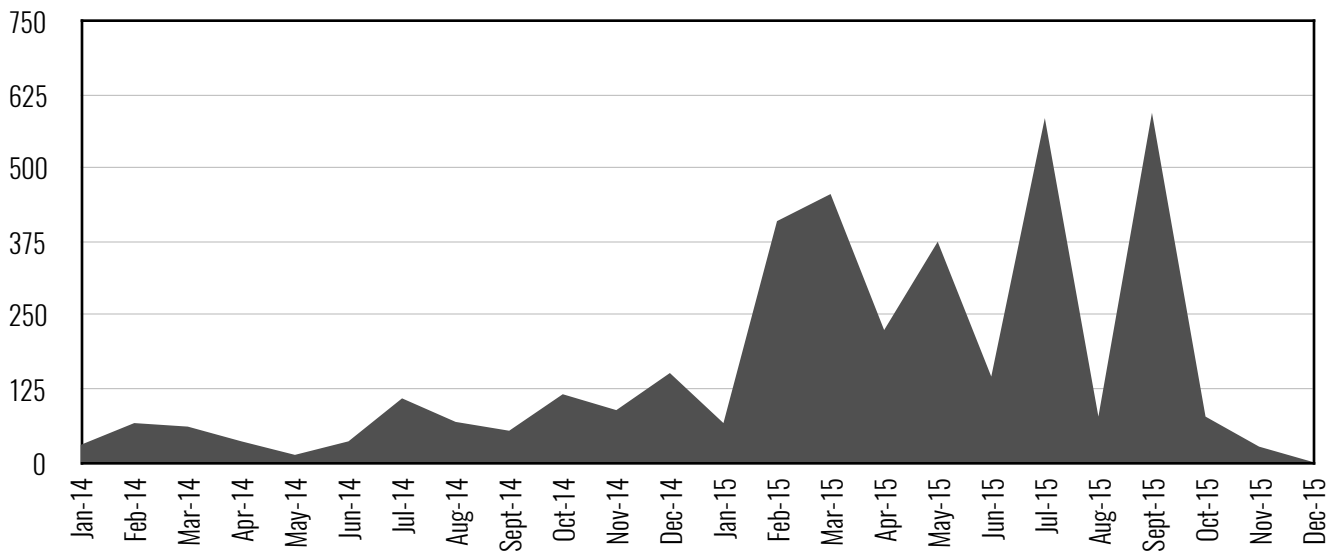
- As with reports of terror attacks, **reported counter-terror operations diminished significantly in the last quarter of 2015**, largely due to a decrease in published counter-terror reports from the Ministry of Interior. From October to December 2015, 42 official accounts (published directly on Ministry of Interior or Armed Forces media) of counter-terror operations were reported, compared to 260 in the previous quarter.

### Counter-Terror Operations Reported



- Correspondingly, after the height of the Martyr’s Right campaign in North Sinai in the summer of 2015, **Egypt’s security forces reported 106 alleged terrorists killed in counter-terrorism operations** (compared to 1,257 the prior quarter).

### Reported Deaths of Alleged Terrorists (Egypt Overall)



- Notable counter-terror operations continued to target Wilayat Sinai’s leadership** in and outside of North Sinai. In a November shootout in Cairo, security forces killed Ali Ashraf Hassanein al-Gharably, who had been active in the group’s predecessor Ansar Bayt al-Maqqdis. Reports also surfaced that Wilayat Sinai’s operational commander Shadi al-Meneai had been killed in an operation in North Sinai; however, Meneai’s death has not been confirmed.

- The second phase of Operation Martyr's Right was announced on October 6. Trumpeted as the economic development phase of the military operation, **no subsequent reports detailed any further efforts to carry out its objectives.**
- In a reshuffling of positions in the Interior Ministry, General Mahmoud Abdel Hameed Shaarawy, a career officer in the State Security Investigations Service, was appointed to head Egypt's Homeland Security, **continuing a trend to reconstitute the dissolved State Security** within the newer body.

## Legal and Political Developments

- **A crackdown on the Muslim Brotherhood continued in Egypt's courts**, where mass sentences were issued for terrorism-related charges in both civilian and military courts. Several of the organization's leadership were also re-added to the Terrorist Entities List after having been removed by the Court of Cassation.
- President Abdel-Fattah El Sisi continued to legislate by executive decree, **passing a number of laws relating to national security.** Notable decrees extended the state of emergency in North Sinai (now in effect since October 2014), criminalized the possession of explosives, and amended the prison law to include extension of solitary confinement.
- The president continued to address the issue of terrorism in speeches to the Police Academy and the Arab Thought Foundation, touching on torture and human rights. He stated that **incidences of torture within the Interior Ministry should be viewed as individual** and not systematic.



# TERRORISM

## Trends

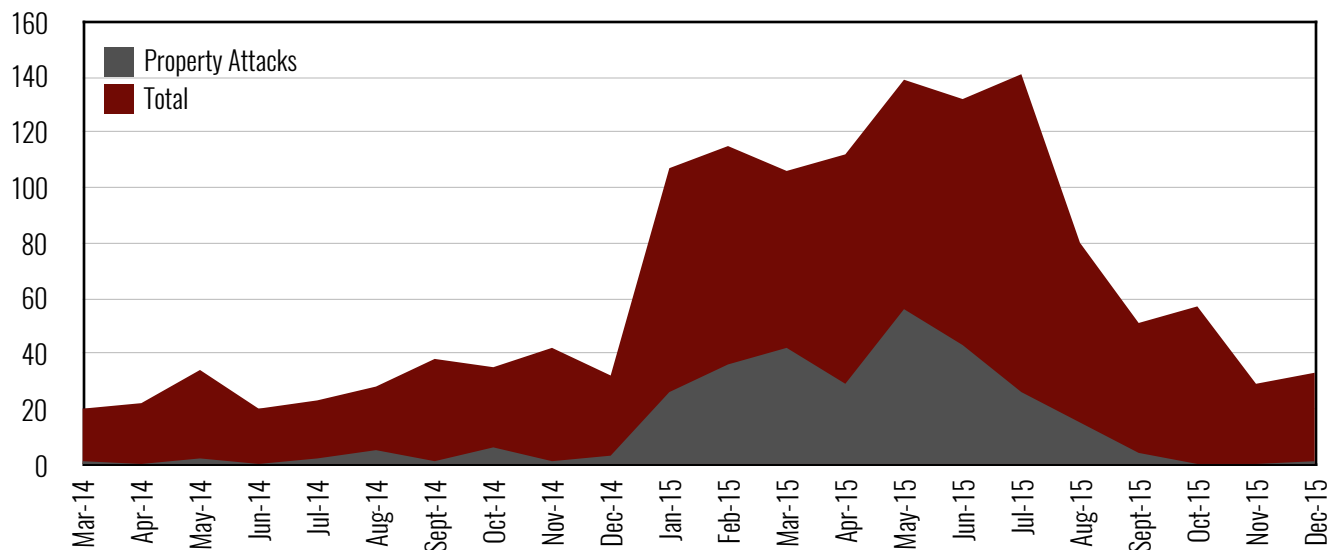
The following section showcases trends in reported violence throughout Egypt.

### Reports of attacks slow in late 2015

Reports of attacks decreased in the last three months of 2015. The fourth quarter of the year saw 118 attacks, just under half the number of the third quarter and around a third the number seen in each of the first two quarters of the year.

Correspondingly, attacks on property targets (infrastructure, banks, private businesses, government buildings, etc.) stopped almost completely, with one attack reported on the Cairo-Zagazig railway. This number was a tremendous decrease from past months, when January to September saw an average of around one attack on property or economic targets per day.

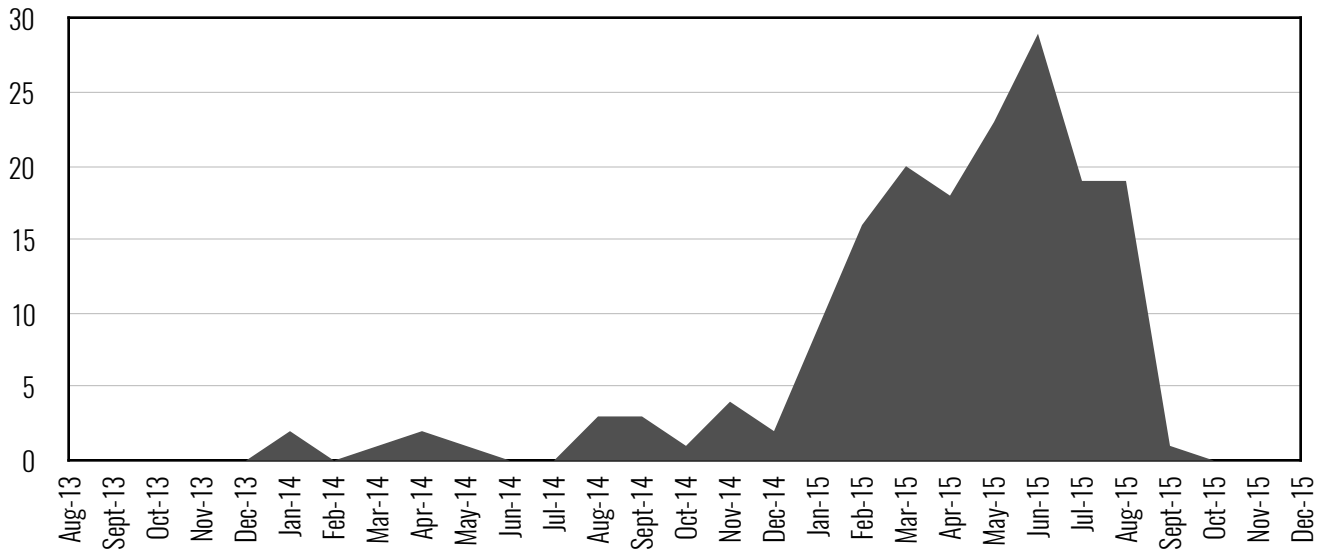
Attacks Reported on Property



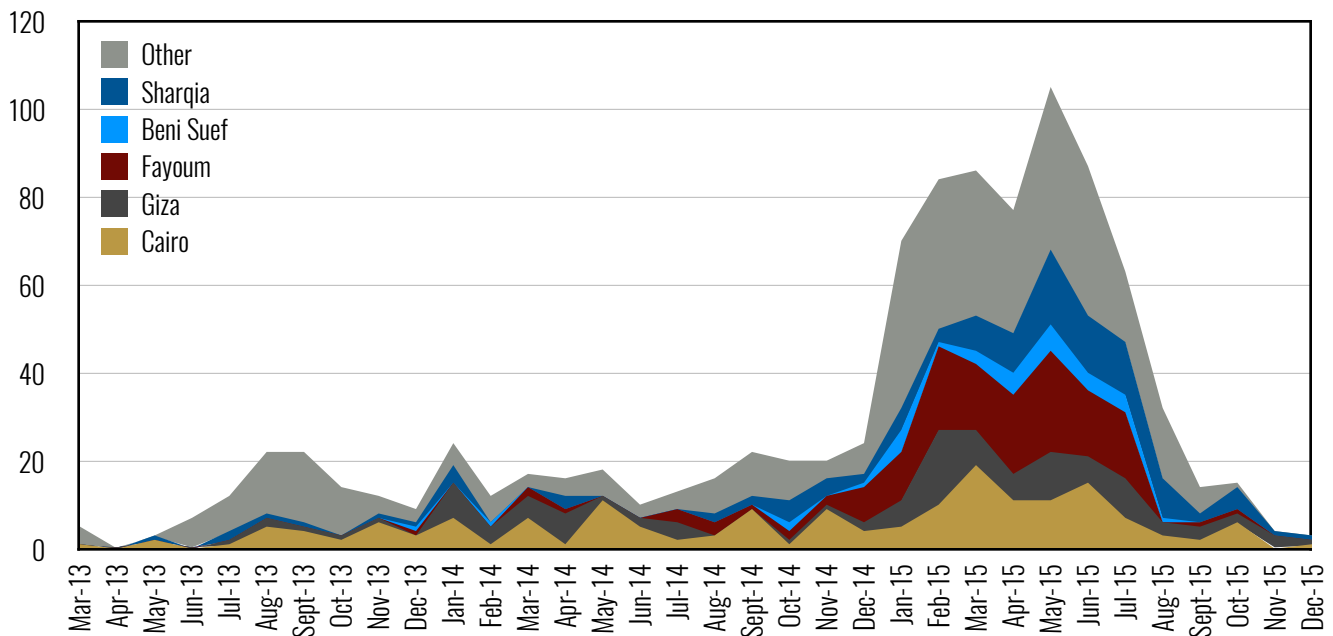
The trend was linked to a general decline in attacks outside of North Sinai and the new silence of the allied Popular Resistance Movement groups that had been operating there. The groups, which together had claimed 144 attacks since their entrance on the scene in December 2014, claimed no attacks in October, November, or December 2015. However, unclaimed attacks also nearly ceased; only 22 attacks were reported in these three months outside of North Sinai, an 83% decrease from the previous quarter and less than 10% of the number of attacks reported in the first two quarters of the year.

The sudden halt in attacks after September 2015 may indicate some level of coordination between actors carrying out these attacks throughout the country, whether anonymously or under the banner of an organized group.

### Attacks Claimed by APRM



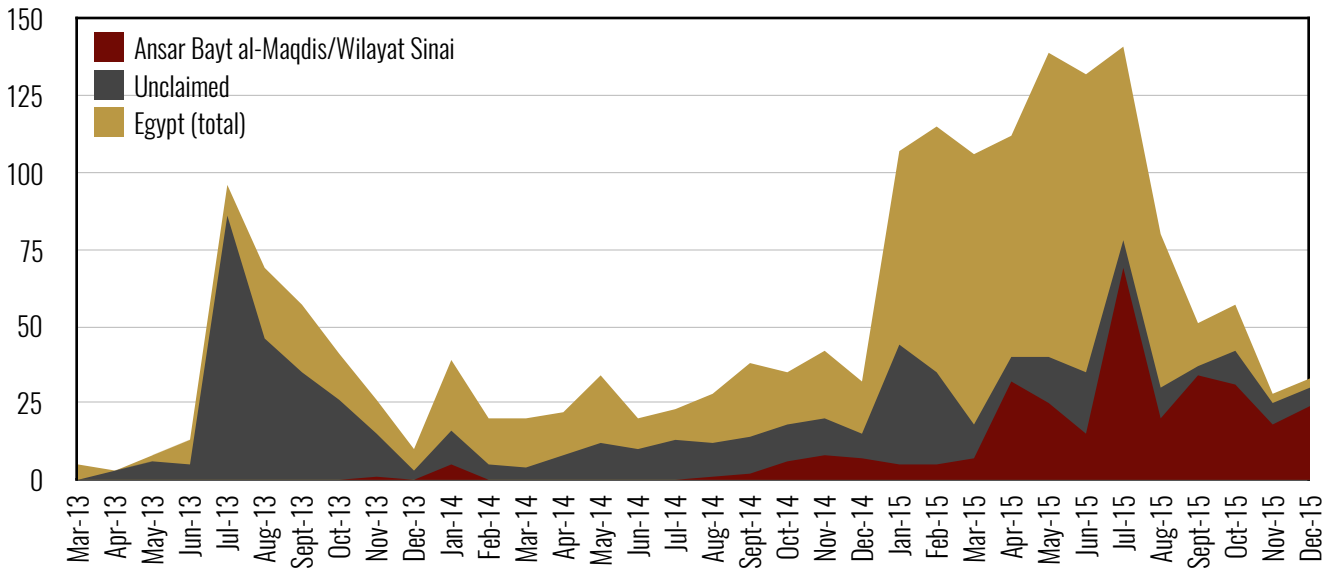
### Attacks Reported (outside of North Sinai)



### Attacks remain steady in North Sinai

While attacks quieted in the rest of the country, militants continued to report activities in North Sinai. With independent reporting effectively banned, reports of attack details (particularly casualties) are nearly impossible to corroborate. The majority of information on specific activities occurring in North Sinai in the last three months of 2015 thus relies almost primarily on media disseminated by the Islamic State or Egyptian military statements, which often provide contrasting accounts.

### Attacks Reported (North Sinai)



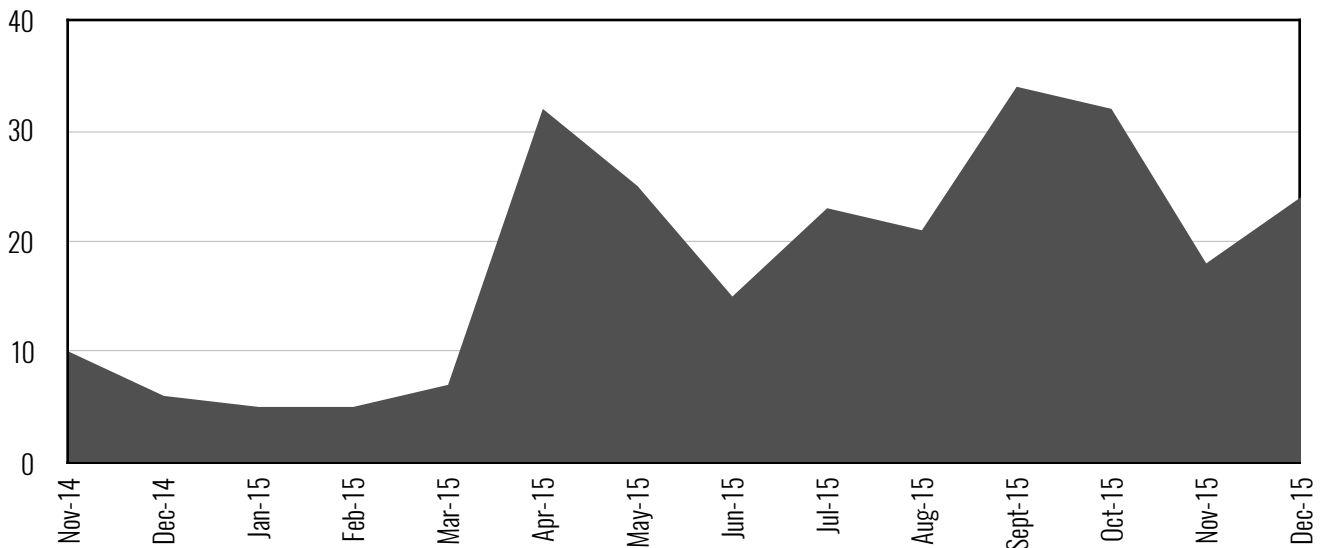
### Notable Attacks

The following section highlights notable terror attacks.

#### Wilayat Sinai claims regular attacks in North Sinai

Despite the ongoing military efforts to combat terrorism in North Sinai, Wilayat Sinai—the militant group tied to the Islamic State—continued regular attacks, claiming 74 attacks in the last three months of 2015 (compared to 78 in the previous quarter, including the July 1 assault that included over two dozen coordinated attacks).

### Attacks Claimed by WS



Notable attacks included:

- October 1: Wilayat Sinai claimed the [assassination](#) of Khaled al-Meneai in Rehab City, a gated community outside Cairo. His father, Sawarka tribal leader Sheikh Khalaf al-Meneai, was also assassinated by the group for his alleged support for the military.
- October 31: Wilayat Sinai claimed the downing of a Russian passenger plane, killing 224 on board (see full description later in this section).
- November 24: Wilayat Sinai claimed a [coordinated attack](#) on Suez Hotel in Arish, where several parliamentary elections observers were staying. A judge, a prosecutor, and two security personnel were killed, along with 14 individuals who sustained injuries. (Other accounts [cited](#) only three fatalities.)
- December 21: Wilayat Sinai unsuccessfully [attempted](#) to assassinate the North Sinai Deputy Director of Security, Major General Mustafa al-Zarar. Militants detonated an IED as his motorcade passed by on Sahali Road near Arish, North Sinai.

### Islamic State “Egypt” continues sporadic attacks

The Islamic State “Egypt”—distinct from the declared Islamic State “province” in Sinai—continued to carry out attacks in mainland Egypt, mostly in the Greater Cairo area. It remains unclear whether the group is the reactivation of Ansar Bayt al-Maqdis cells or a new formation that has forged ties with the Islamic State.

While the large-scale attacks of the summertime (like the attack on the Shobra al-Kheima security directorate and the Italian Consulate) have given way to smaller and targeted attacks, the attacks have persisted.

Reports from the Islamic State media organs have also demonstrated inconsistency with news and official state media reports. For example, while IS-Egypt claimed to have detonated an IED in Cairo on October 23, news reports [indicated](#) the bomb exploded while it was being defused.

- In the aforementioned October 23 attack, four were reported injured in the bomb’s detonation.
- On November 28, the Islamic State claimed an attack near the Giza Pyramids, in which four members of the security forces were [shot dead](#) at a checkpoint.
- In two separate attacks on December 31, the Islamic State in Egypt claimed a shooting attack on a military officer and his driver near a Central Security Forces compound in Cairo and an IED attack in Mounib, Giza.

### Violence during Parliamentary elections

Parliamentary elections began in Egypt on October 18 and continued through early December. Aside from a few notable incidents, violence during this period continued at a steady rate, with no significant increase in violence around voting days. Very few were explicitly tied to the ongoing elections, with some notable exceptions.

- On October 19, two “noise” bombs [exploded](#) near polling stations in Kerdasa, Giza Governorate. One of the explosions may have been an electrical transformer [blowing](#), according to one source. A bomb was also [defused](#) near a polling station in Fayoum, and flares were reportedly shot at the same station.

- On October 26, unidentified gunmen fatally [shot](#) Mustafa Abdel Rahman, a Nour Party parliamentary candidate in North Sinai. Following the assassination, the five other Nour Party candidates in North Sinai [withdrew](#) from the elections.
- Nearly a month later, on November 24 Wilayat Sinai [claimed](#) the aforementioned coordinated attack on Suez Hotel in Arish.

### **Wilayat Sinai claims downing of Russian airliner, killing 224**

On October 31, a Russian commercial aircraft carrying 224 passengers—mostly Russian nationals—crashed in the Sinai desert, killing everyone onboard. Wilayat Sinai [claimed](#) responsibility for the incident soon after, although it was initially [dismissed](#) as baseless by the Russian and Egyptian governments.

The group released an audio announcement days later, [insisting](#) that they were responsible, framing the attack as retaliation against Russia for its recent airstrikes targeting the Islamic State in Syria. Playing on the uncertainty surrounding the incident—and, at that point, having put forth no evidence of its involvement—the group taunted authorities to “prove” that it had not carried out the attack. Western intelligence services were initially reluctant to call the crash an act of terrorism, despite some indications of an onboard explosion. But, on November 4, both British and American intelligence confirmed suspicions of an explosion, prompting a number of governments to suspend flights to and from Sinai.

On November 9, U.S. intelligence said that it had [received](#) communications intercepts from Israel that connected an employee of the Sharm el-Sheikh airport with Wilayat Sinai operatives, in a conversation which had allegedly taken place prior to the incident. The Russian Federal Security Service [claimed](#) a week later that an [explosive](#)—one equivalent to about a kilogram of TNT—had brought the plane down, based on forensic analysis. Dabiq magazine, the official English publication of the Islamic State, released the next day [images](#) of a charge that it claimed that IS operatives had smuggled onboard.

With evidence of terrorism mounting, a number of European airlines halted flights to and from Egypt. Even Russia, whose nationals constitute about a third of Egypt’s tourism industry, banned all flights between Russia and Egypt. The United Kingdom, another large source of tourists, also banned flights and [implemented](#) evacuation procedures for British nationals from Sharm el-Sheikh. Both governments have recently sought to resume flights, but restrictions are currently still in place. The impact on the tourism industry has been grave, with revenues [down](#) at least 17.5 percent as of December 31, marking the lowest point since the period following forced removal of protesters from Rabaa al-Adawiya and al-Nahda Squares in August 2013.

While the Egyptian government has vehemently denied terrorist involvement in the incident—a position which has elicited [criticism](#) from the Russian government—it has responded to security lapses in Egypt’s ports of entry, even hiring a private firm to [assess](#) security procedures.

## Terror Groups Developments

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

### **Social media account closures push groups into greater secrecy**

The last quarter of 2015 saw an increased restriction of extremist media space, forcing changes in militant (particularly Islamic State) social media apparatus. Over 78 IS-affiliated Telegram accounts were shut down in mid-November when the app carried out an unprecedented [sweep](#), and these shutdowns have continued intermittently since. Wilayat Sinai's Twitter handles have faced a similar campaign, with the group's new accounts now being closed almost daily.

Whether these and other closures have hindered the groups' propaganda or recruitment efforts is unclear, but they are likely to drive further innovation to circumvent future security measures. New, private channels that are restricted to public view have emerged on Telegram, with limited windows for enrollment.

# COUNTER-TERRORISM

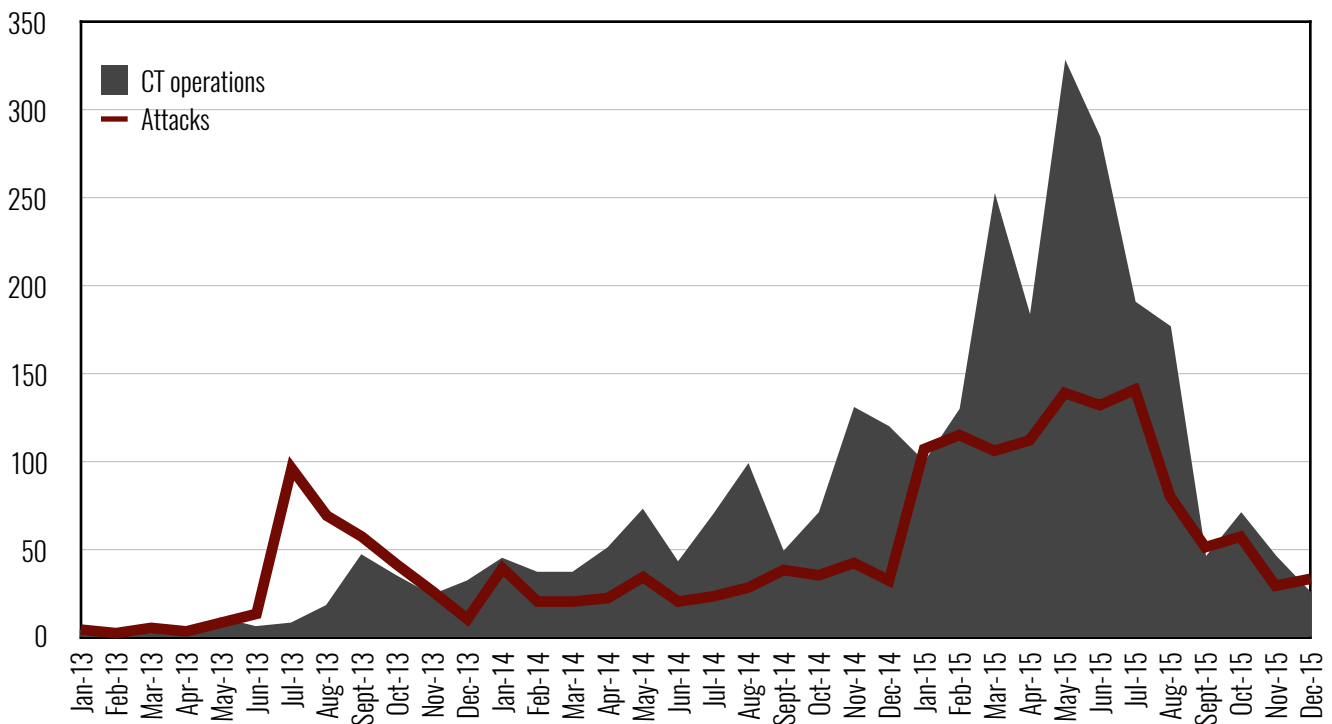
## Trends

### Counter-terror operations less reported in late-2015

Similarly to terror attacks, reports of counter-terror operations dropped significantly after a steady climb since Abdel-Fattah El Sisi's call for a popular mandate to combat terrorism in July 2013. From October to December 2015, 142 counter-terror operations were reported, compared to 413 in the previous quarter.

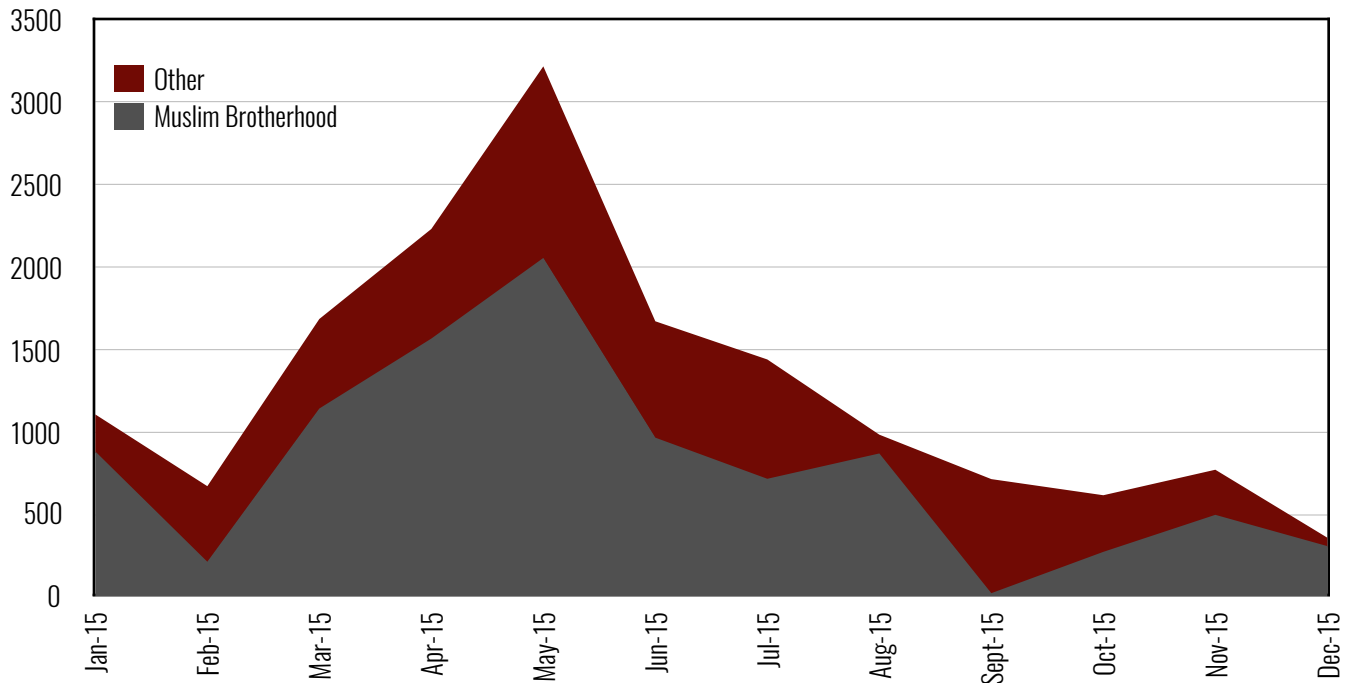
Discrepancies also continued between details of operations reported in official government media and news reports; in general, however, reports declined swiftly for both. This was particularly the case for the Ministry of Interior. While the body had regularly reported on its counter-terror efforts, publishing daily accounts of arrests (often with pictures, names, and descriptions), these were noticeably fewer in the last quarter of 2015.

Counter-Terror Operations Reported (Egypt Overall)

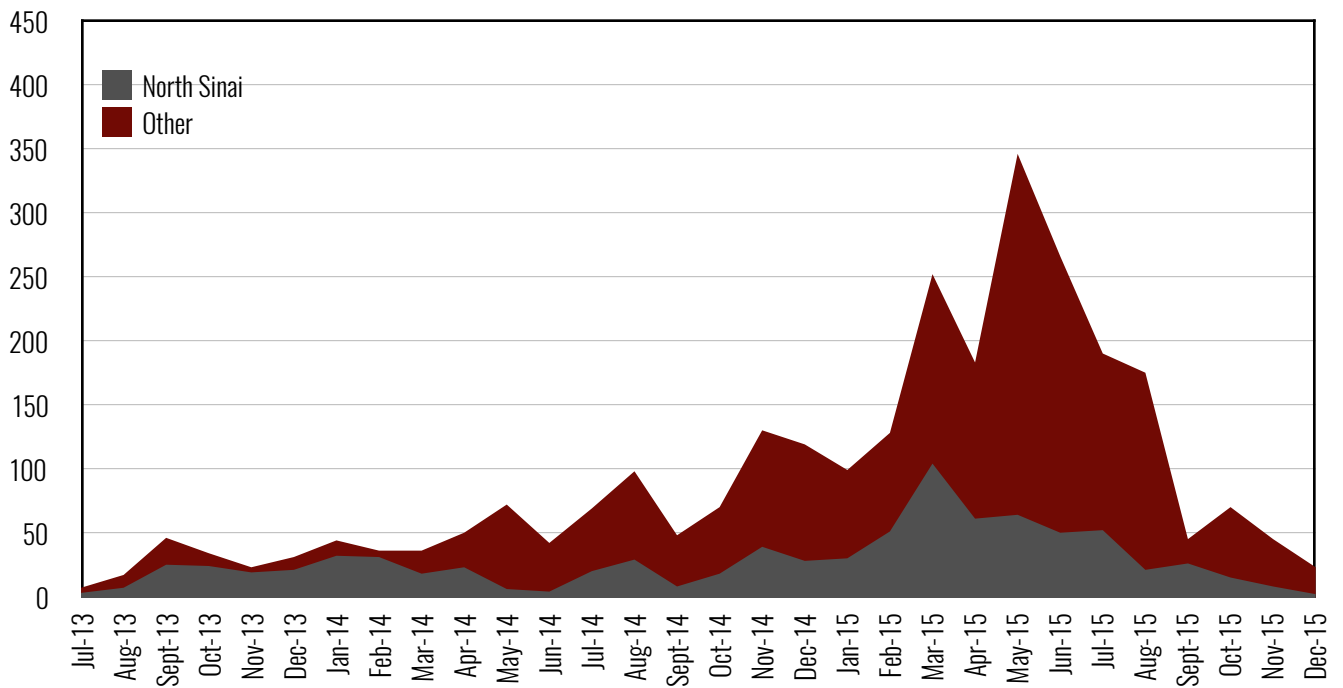


Although reports of the arrest or death of suspected terrorists in counter-terror operations also decreased (by around half) from the previous three months, this decrease was not proportional to the decrease in operations. This was in large part due to the larger operations that took place in North Sinai, when a higher number arrests or deaths were often reported at once.

Reported Arrests of Alleged Terrorists (Egypt Overall)



Operations Reported





## Notable Operations

*The following section details notable domestic security operations.*

### Operations target Wilayat Sinai leadership

On November 9, security forces reportedly [killed](#) Wilayat Sinai senior operative Ali Ashraf Hassanein al-Gharably, in a shootout in the El Marg district of Cairo. Gharbaly had been sentenced to death *in absentia* for his involvement in an attack on police officers in the Arab Sharkas village north of Cairo.

The military also [alleged](#) that it killed Wilayat Sinai's operational commander, Shadi al-Mena'ei. This is not the first time that Egyptian security forces have announced al-Mena'ei's death. Wilayat Sinai's precursor, Ansar Bayt al-Maqdis, had [issued](#) a statement refuting the Egyptian military's 2014 claim of the same nature; no statement has been made so far on the part of Wilayat Sinai.

### Second phase of Operation Martyr's Right announced

The military announced the second, developmental phase of [Operation Martyr's Right](#) to coincide with the 42nd anniversary of the October 6 War. The first phase featured a heavy security campaign with aerial bombardments, ground operations, and the creation of a buffer zone at the border between Gaza and Rafah. The second phase of the operation was meant to feature development efforts, primarily infrastructure, although it is unclear to date what efforts have been carried out.

With the announcement, the North Sinai Governor Major General Abdel Fattah Harhor [reported](#) the establishment of North Sinai Investment and Development Company. With 500 million Egyptian pounds of capital, it will [invest](#) in a number of areas, including the industrial, commercial, agricultural, tourist, and service sectors of North Sinai. The company is a collaborative effort between the National Investment Bank, the National Service Authority of the Armed Forces, and the National Authority for the Development of the Sinai Peninsula, and Ayadi Company for Development and Investment.

Despite the proclaimed focus on development, campaign military operations continued throughout the last quarter of 2015, with regular reports of air strikes and raids on militant positions. Egypt Security Watch was unable to locate any reports of specific development projects launched or completed in this quarter.

### Sudanese migrants killed while attempting Israeli border crossing

On November 16, fifteen Sudanese migrants were [gunned down](#) while trying to cross the border into Israel. Not two weeks later, border guards [shot and killed](#) another five Sudanese migrants attempting to cross into Israel, and security forces [arrested](#) 15 who were mining for gold near Wadi al-Gamel.

The incidents strained relations between the Sudanese and Egyptian governments. The Sudanese Embassy in Cairo [announced](#) on November 23 that they were dispatching to Sinai a fact-finding committee that would investigate the mysterious killing of the miners the week prior.

On November 24, Egyptian Foreign Minister Sameh Shoukry [rejected](#) statements by United Nations Secretary-General Ban Ki-Moon concerning the deaths and urging the Egyptian government to launch a full investigation into the “tragic events.” The foreign minister’s statement [said](#) that Ban should read the Defense Ministry’s statement more carefully because it explains “beyond reasonable doubt” that the migrants were “illegal infiltrators.”

## Security Sector Developments

*The following section details important developments in Egypt’s security agencies.*

### **Career State Security General appointed as new NSA head**

On December 21, Interior Minister Magdy Abdel Ghaffar reshuffled a number of positions in the ministry. The ministry’s spokesperson said that the reshuffling was carried out as many individuals holding senior positions neared retirement age.

Notably, Major General Mahmoud Abdel Hameed Shaarawy, a career officer in the State Security Investigations Service known for his role in the Arab Sharkas affair, [replaced](#) Major General Salah Hegazy as head of the Egypt Homeland Security agency. Hegazy had been [appointed](#) when Abdel Ghaffar took the post of interior minister in March 2015; Hegazy and Abdel Ghaffar had worked together in both State Security and in Homeland Security later on. Although Egypt’s State Security Investigation Services was officially dissolved in the wake of the January 2011 revolution, Shaarawy’s appointment to the position continues a pattern of the body’s reconstitution as Egypt Homeland Security.

# 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.

### Campaign against Muslim Brotherhood remains strong in Egypt's legal system

Throughout the fourth quarter of 2015, prosecution of Muslim Brotherhood members continued, with members facing trial for their involvement in the 2013 Raba'a al-Adaweya sit-ins and for other crimes. Mass sentencing continued throughout the quarter as well; in one instance, the Assiut Military Court sentenced 108 alleged members of the Muslim Brotherhood to life in prison *in absentia*. Because of the obscurity around proceedings (particularly in the military court system), comprehensive figures for the number of terrorism-related proceedings remains difficult.

Cases against alleged Muslim Brotherhood members were tried in both civilian and military courts throughout the quarter. The military courts decree issued by Sisi stipulates that any crime that constitutes an attack on public institutions, facilities, and properties can be referred by the military prosecution to military court; all other terrorism cases should be tried in the terrorism circuit of Egypt's criminal court system. The broadening of the scope of military courts was evident after the decree; in November, Zagazig Military Court handed down a 15-year sentence for "forming cells to destroy electricity towers," although it was not clear whether any attack had been carried out.

The Egyptian public prosecutor's office re-added Mohamed Badie and 12 other Muslim Brotherhood leaders to terrorist lists on November 4, reversing a Court of Cassation decision to remove the names. Other individuals added include Khairat al-Shater, Essam al-Erian, Muhammad al-Beltagy, and Saad al-Husseiny. The Muslim Brotherhood was designated a terrorist organization in a December 2013 government decree, criminalizing the group and its members' activities; their registration under the Terrorist Entities Law further extends to administrative action, including asset freezes. (For more on Egypt's counter-terrorism legislation, see Mai El-Sadany's "[Designating a Terrorist: Process Unchecked](#)" and "[The Terrorist Entities Law: Egypt's Latest](#).")

### Sisi continues to legislate security by decree

Throughout the fourth quarter of 2015, President Abdel-Fattah El Sisi continued to issue key pieces of legislation by decree, in the absence of a legislative body. While this legislation was subject to review during the first 15 days of parliament's first session, all security-related decrees were swiftly passed (and the only decree that was provisionally rejected related to the Civil Service Law). For more information and context on these laws and decrees, see [TIMEP's Legislation Tracker](#) project.

Security-related decrees passed during the last quarter of 2015 included:

- October 7: In his third amendment to the Penal Code, Sisi [issued](#) a decree criminalizing the possession of explosives (ambiguously defined) and the failure to report possession of explosives. Punishment includes a minimum of one year in prison and fines of LE20,000-100,000.
- October 25: Several amendments to the Prison Law were enacted, including the extension of solitary confinement, regulations on visits from the National Council for Human Rights, and regulations on the use of force.
- October 28: Sisi [extended](#) the state of emergency and nighttime curfew in Rafah, Arish, Sheikh Zuweid, and surrounding areas for three months. The measure has now been in effect since October 2014.
- November 22: The curfew hours in North Sinai were [reduced](#) by four hours during parliamentary elections, ostensibly to facilitate voting.
- December 3: Sisi issued a decree to amend guidelines for military-evacuated lands and the creation of alternative military zones that would facilitate domestic and foreign investment.
- December 20: The Armed Forces' pension scheme was amended.
- December 31: In an amendment to the National Defense Council Law, Sisi established a secretariat for the council.

## Political Developments

### Sisi visits the Police Academy

On December 3, Sisi [visited](#) the Police Academy, where he spoke to students and officers about terrorism and human rights. During the visit, he also [characterized](#) recent incidents of torture as "individual" and not systematic—a prelude to a [January 12 court decision](#) in which the Alexandria Administrative Court ruled that officers would be held personally responsible for compensating torture victims.

### Sisi addresses the Arab Thought Foundation

Also in December, Sisi [renewed](#) his calls for a joint Arab military force during his inauguration of the 12th conference of the Arab Thought Foundation . During the conference, held from December 6 through 8, Sisi also called for strengthening the role of the cultural Arab institutions to strengthen ties between countries to face radicalism.

# 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.



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