



The Tahrir Institute  
for Middle East Policy

EGYPT

# SECURITY WATCH

QUARTERLY REPORT: JULY – SEPTEMBER 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 third quarter of 2016, with 209 attacks, compared to 228 in the second quarter and 211 in the first quarter.

The majority of reported attacks targeted security forces, with 92 security personnel killed and 138 injured over the third quarter. **Forty-seven civilians were killed in the third quarter**, nearly double the number in the second quarter, and another 42 were injured, representing a 27 percent increase from the second quarter. Ninety-four percent of total reported fatalities occurred in North Sinai, with only nine reported fatalities occurring in attacks outside North Sinai.

On Friday, August 5, four assailants **attempted to assassinate former Grand Mufti Ali Gomaa**. A member of his security detail reportedly sustained minor injuries in the exchange of gunfire. Hasam movement claimed the attack. The same group also claimed an **attempted assassination of Assistant Prosecutor-General Zakaria Abdel Aziz Ahmed** on September 29 in Cairo's Fifth Settlement.

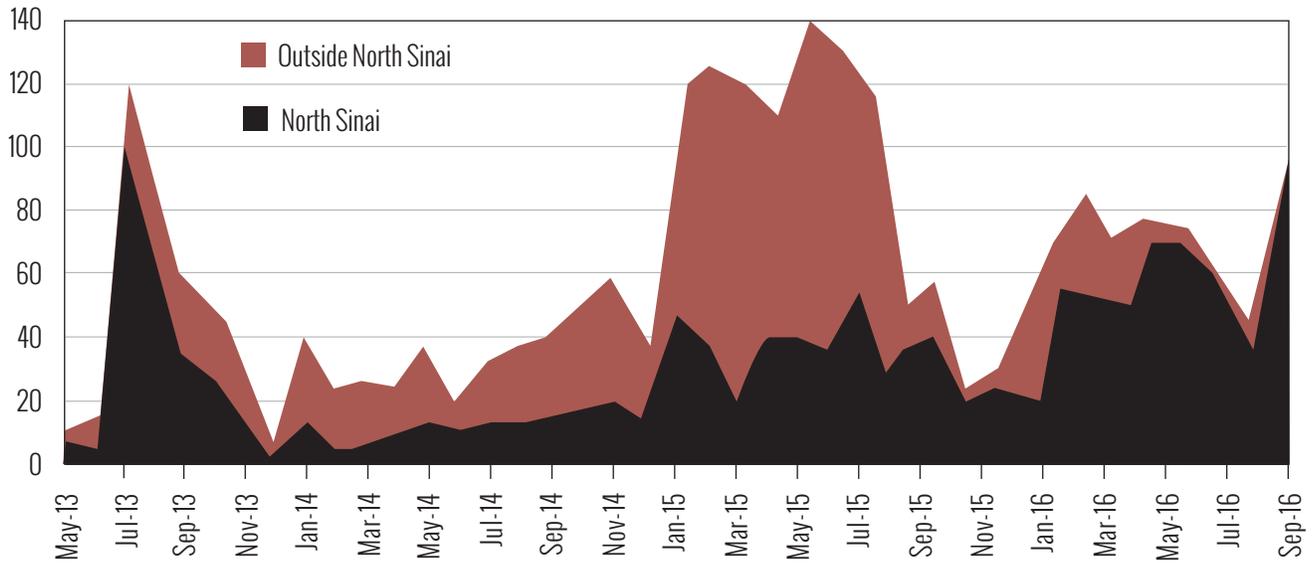
The majority of attacks were reported in the North Sinai governorate; **North Sinai saw 198 attacks, or 95 percent of all reported attacks**. Despite two prominent assassination attempts and sporadic violence, reports of attacks in the mainland<sup>1</sup> remained low. Only 12 attacks were reported outside North Sinai this quarter, including a **rare attack in South Sinai, the first reported attack in the province in more than two years**.

The third quarter of 2016 saw a **marked increase in reported kidnappings**, all in North Sinai and during August and September. Eleven individuals were kidnapped during that period, two in August and nine in September, including an imam in Arish.

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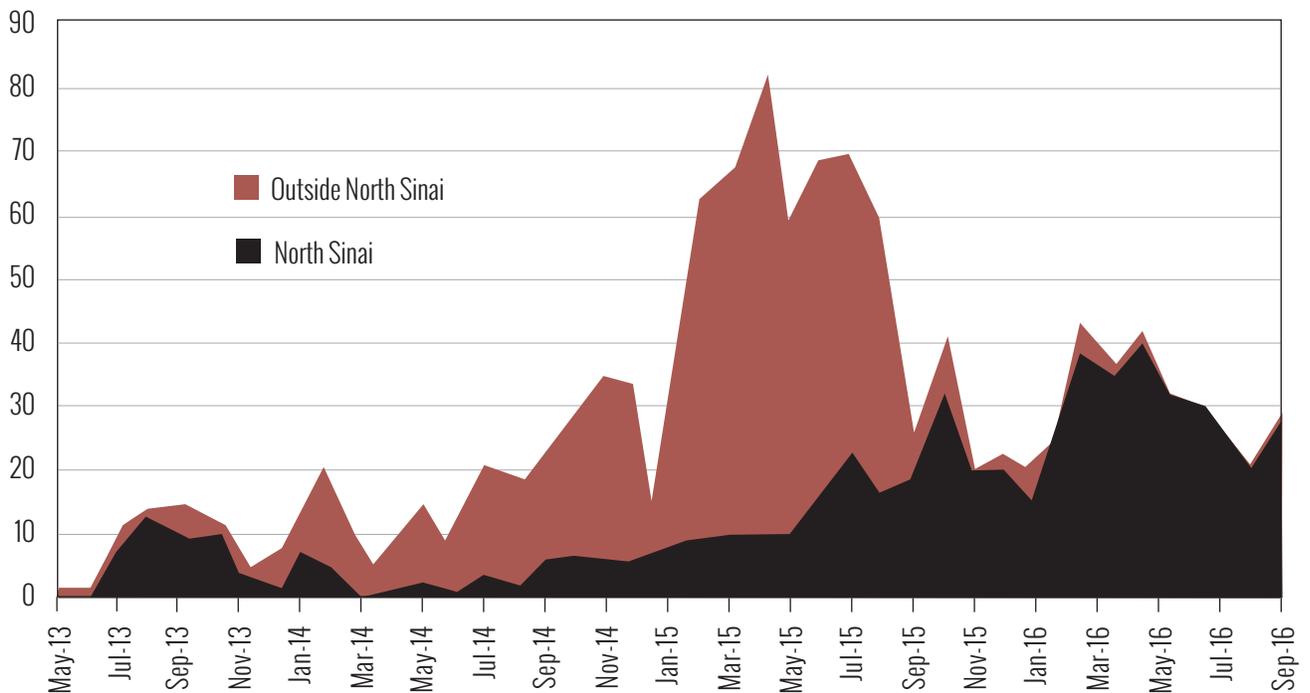
<sup>1</sup> TIMEP uses "mainland" to refer to areas outside of the Sinai Peninsula.

Attacks Reported Throughout Egypt



Improvised explosive devices (IEDs), which surged in popularity in Egypt in 2015 and have caused 391 deaths since 2013, declined both as a percentage of reported attacks in North Sinai and overall numbers. This continued a six-month trend, falling from 54 percent of all reported attacks in the second quarter to 38 in the third quarter and hitting a 21-month low of 27 percent in September. Gross IED attacks declined from an average of 35 per month in the second quarter to 25 IED attacks per month this quarter. IED attacks reported outside North Sinai remained low at only three incidents, or about four percent of all reported IED attacks.

IED Attacks Reported Throughout Egypt



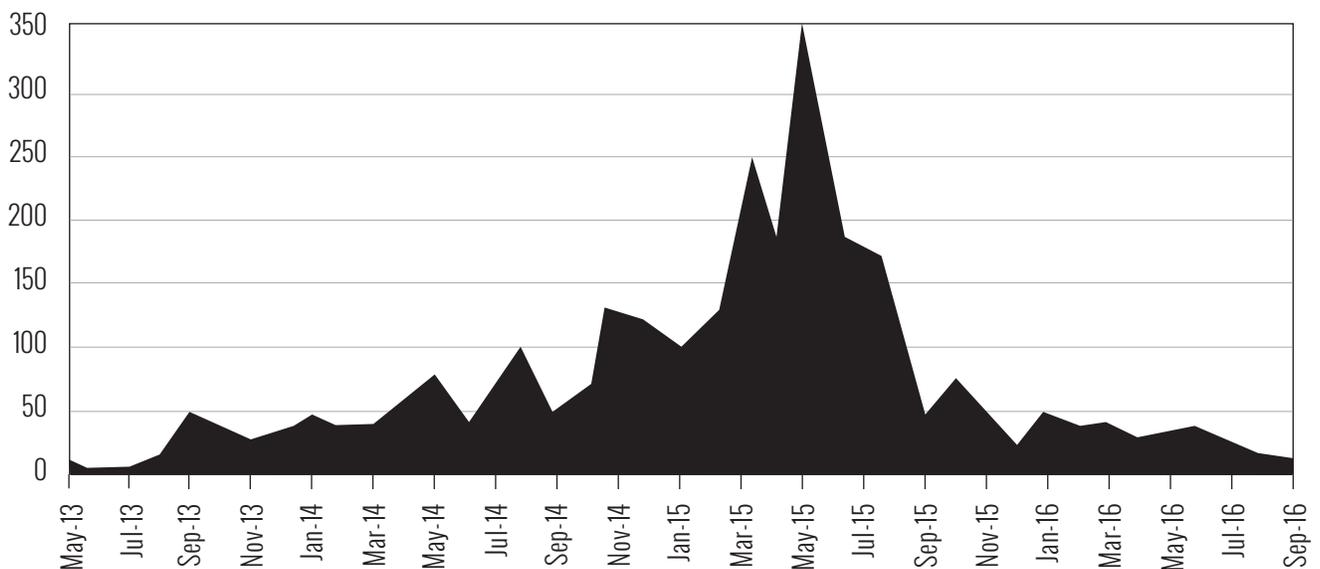
Wilayat Sinai continued to claim attacks throughout the quarter. The group has claimed an average of 39 attacks per month from January to September 2016, compared to 21 per month throughout 2015, with 101 attacks claimed this quarter alone.

Activity in the mainland waned in the third quarter, with only 10 attacks reported outside the Sinai Peninsula, compared to 31 in the second quarter. Popular Resistance Movement, Liwaa al-Thawra, and Hasam claimed a total of eight attacks. Liwaa al-Thawra and Hasam announced their presence as new actors in the third quarter, claiming one and five attacks respectively.

## COUNTER-TERRORISM

Reports of counter-terrorism operations continued to decrease in the third quarter of 2016, with only 62 reported operations, compared to 88 and 127 in the previous two quarters. This trend may be caused by a concurrent decline in official reports, with six operations reported by the military, and with no operations reported by the Ministry of Interior.

Counter-Terrorism Operations Reported Throughout Egypt

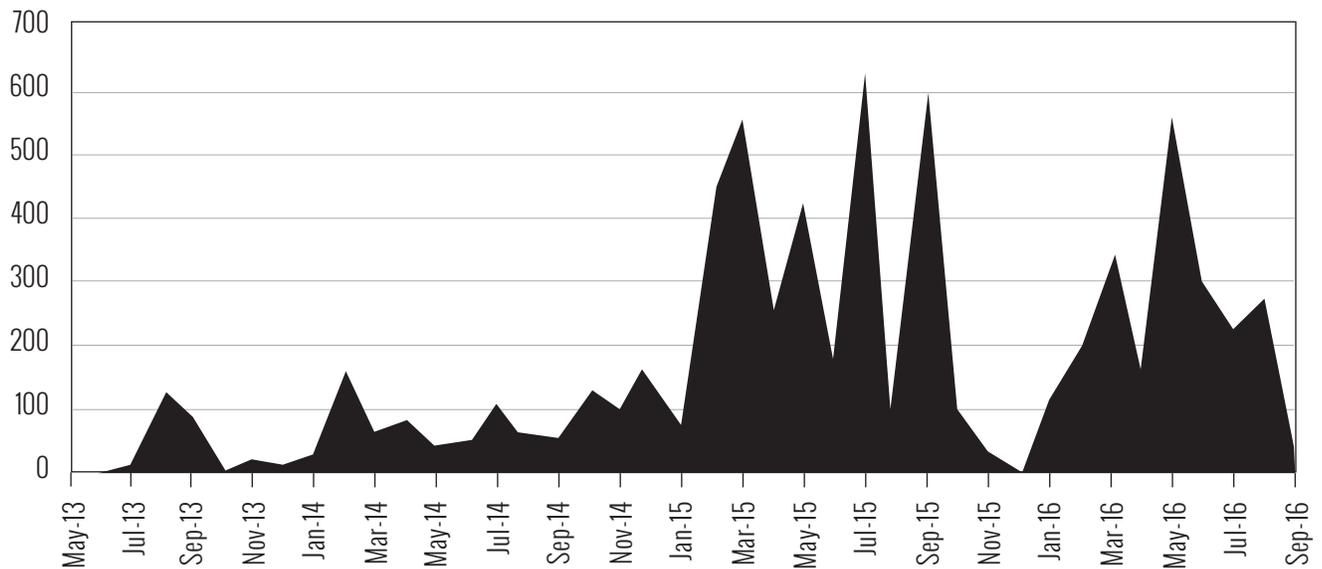


Counter-terrorism operations outside North Sinai increased slightly from the second quarter, with five operations reported (including one in the Western Desert). Four of these operations were arrests related to the attempted assassination of former Grand Mufti of Egypt Ali Gomaa. Fifteen terrorism-related arrests in total were reported outside North Sinai.

The number of casualties reported in counter-terrorism operations also fell, with the government reporting 449 terrorists killed and 119 injured reported in the third quarter, compared to 802 and 210 in the second quarter.

In one notable operation, the military claimed to have killed Wilayat Sinai leader *Abu Duaa al-Ansary* and 45 of his deputies. Little information exists on Ansary; while a few reports on his given name and role surfaced after the alleged operation, these accounts have not been confirmed. At least three other operations targeted senior members of the Sinai-based group.

Reported Deaths and Injuries in Counter-Terrorism Operations Throughout Egypt



## LEGAL AND POLITICAL DEVELOPMENTS

The hearing for the defendants in the **Hisham Barakat assassination trial has been postponed again** to November 5. Sixty-seven defendants faces charges of involvement in the operation that killed Egypt's prosecutor-general, Egypt's most high-profile assassination in recent history.

**President Abdel-Fattah El Sisi renewed the state of emergency in North Sinai**, and the measure was approved by Egypt's parliament. The law, which imposes a strict curfew and restricts movement in some areas of North Sinai, has been in place since October 2014.

**Parliament passed a law that extended the military's jurisdictional purview over vital institutions of the state for another five years.** This has been in effect since 2014.

The **United States continued its public efforts to support Egypt's war on terrorism**, with a number of high-level delegations and meetings centered on bilateral security cooperation. The diplomatic activity included a congressional delegation to Egypt, headed by Representative Jeff Fortenberry, and three delegations to Egypt from the United States Central Command.

**The quarter signaled growing Russian-Egyptian relations**, with meetings between the two countries presidents and defense ministers to discuss security cooperation, as well as a series of low-level delegations around airport security.

# TERRORISM

## TRENDS

*The following section showcases trends in reported violence throughout Egypt.*

### Reports of attacks in mainland remain low

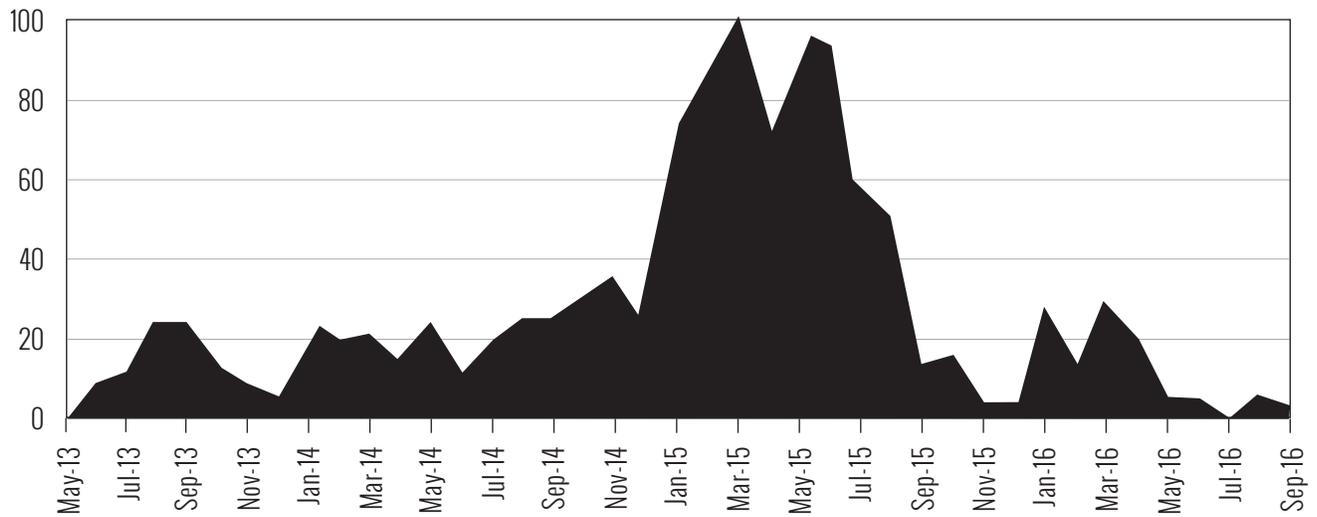
After a 57 percent decrease in attacks outside North Sinai between the first and second quarters of 2016, attacks fell by another 67 percent in the third quarter of 2016. Only 11 attacks were reported in provinces other than North Sinai, compared to 33 last quarter. After the reemergence of [Popular Resistance Movement](#) (PRM) in early 2016, Egypt saw a spate of low-level attacks across the mainland, averaging nearly 24 attacks per month between January and May. Since then, the attack rate has fallen to less than four per month, on average.

Of the 11 reported attacks outside North Sinai this quarter, five were carried out in Giza, and one each in South Sinai, Cairo, Damietta, Fayoum, and Monofeya. One attack had no location reported.

Eight of the 11 attacks reported outside North Sinai were claimed by Hasam, Liwaa al-Thawra, or Popular Resistance Movement, with three reported attacks unclaimed. Continuing an upward trend, 86 percent of all attacks reported in 2016 were claimed by a group, compared to 24 percent of reported attacks claimed in 2015 and 11 percent in 2014. The average number of total attacks outside North Sinai has decreased significantly, with only 13 attacks per month on average from January to September 2016 compared to 57 per month on average in 2015.

Number of Attacks Reported			
2013			
	Outside North Sinai	North Sinai	Total
Qtr1	10	0	10
Qtr2	11	14	25
Qtr3	61	202	263
Qtr4	34	46	80
2014			
Qtr1	65	24	89
Qtr2	53	28	81
Qtr3	75	39	114
Qtr4	95	52	147
2015			
Qtr1	270	97	367
Qtr2	267	115	382
Qtr3	127	121	248
Qtr4	21	97	118
2016			
Qtr1	76	135	211
Qtr2	31	194	225
Qtr3	12	197	209

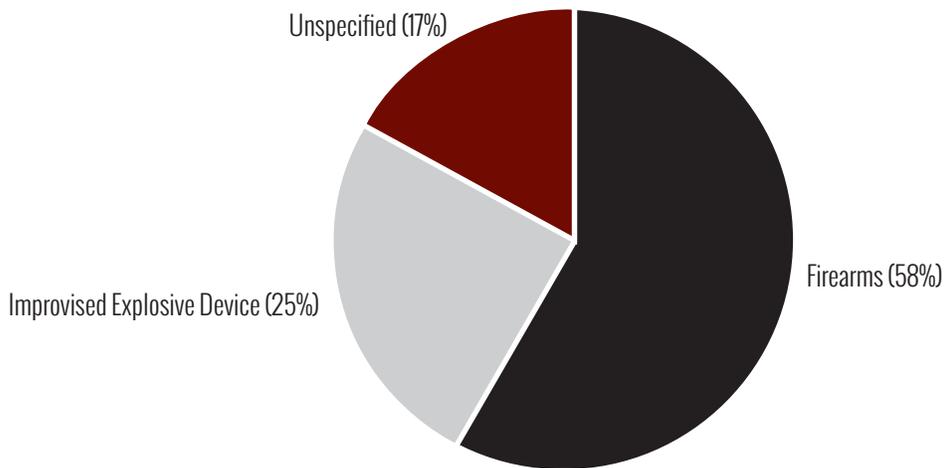
Attacks Reported Outside of North Sinai



**Changes in weapons preferences**

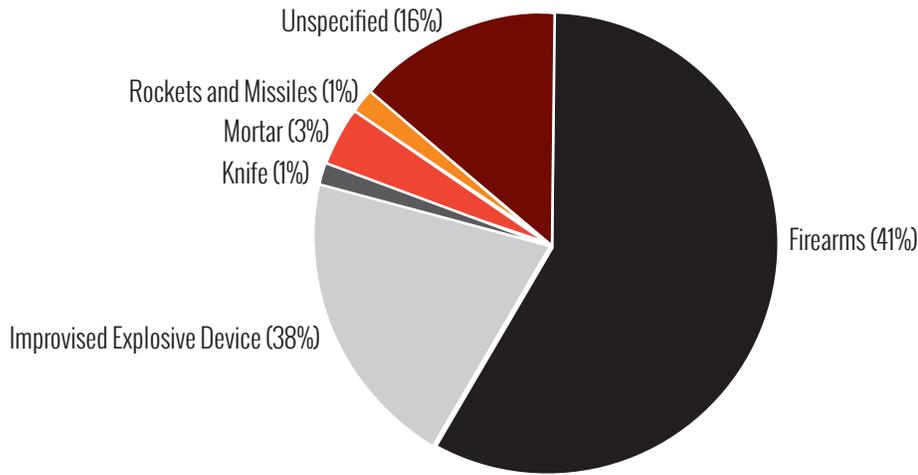
The proportion of unspecified weapons used in attacks reported outside North Sinai decreased from 56 percent in the second quarter to only 17 percent in the third quarter. This decrease may be due to the relatively thorough documentation of attacks claimed this quarter; unlike previous claims, which often do not specify a means of attack, those issued by Hasam and Liwaa al-Thawra were quite detailed. Firearms as a primary weapon increased from 18 to 58 percent, while use of IEDs also increased, from 15 to 25 percent.

Weapons Reported Outside North Sinai  
Third Quarter 2016



In North Sinai, however, the reported use of IEDs dropped as a percentage, falling from 54 percent in the second quarter to 38 percent in the third quarter. (Among Wilayat Sinai’s claims, IEDs constitute about 44 percent of reported attacks this quarter, compared to 57 percent of all reported attacks since November 2014.) Firearms as a primary attack weapon rose from 20 and 25 percent in the first and second quarters, respectively, to 41 percent in the third quarter.

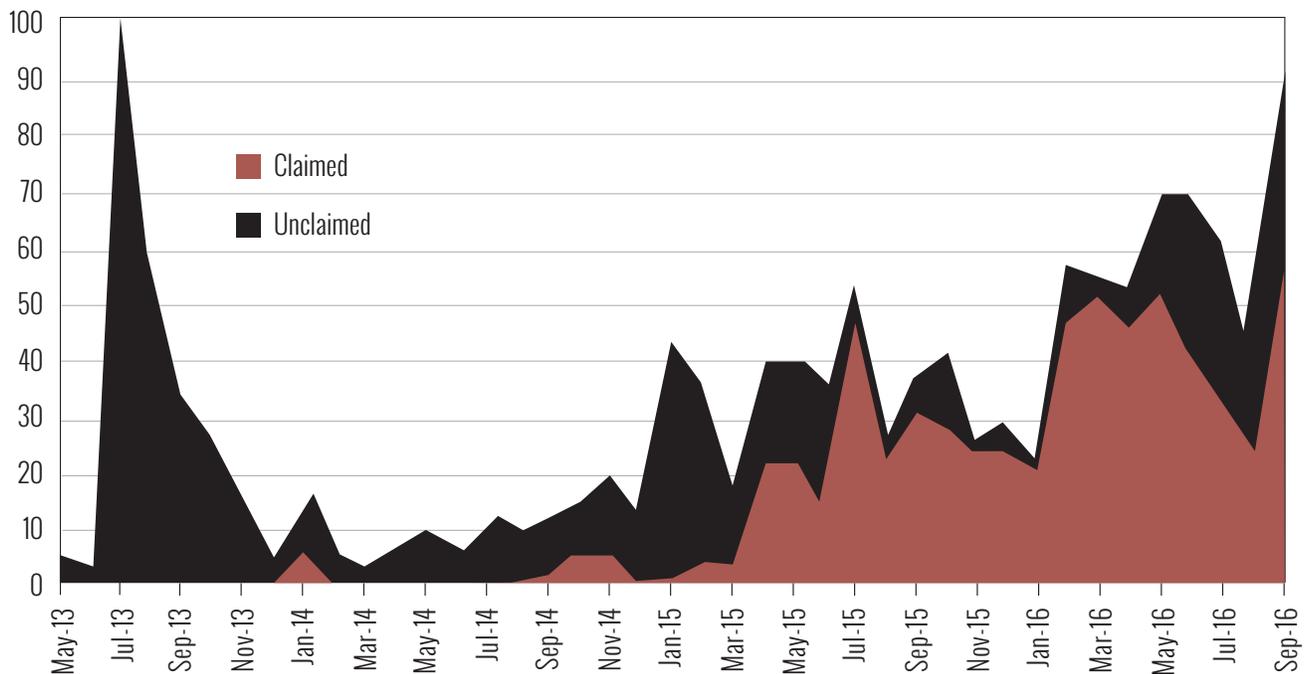
### Weapons Reported in North Sinai Third Quarter 2016



### Reports of attacks in North Sinai increase slightly

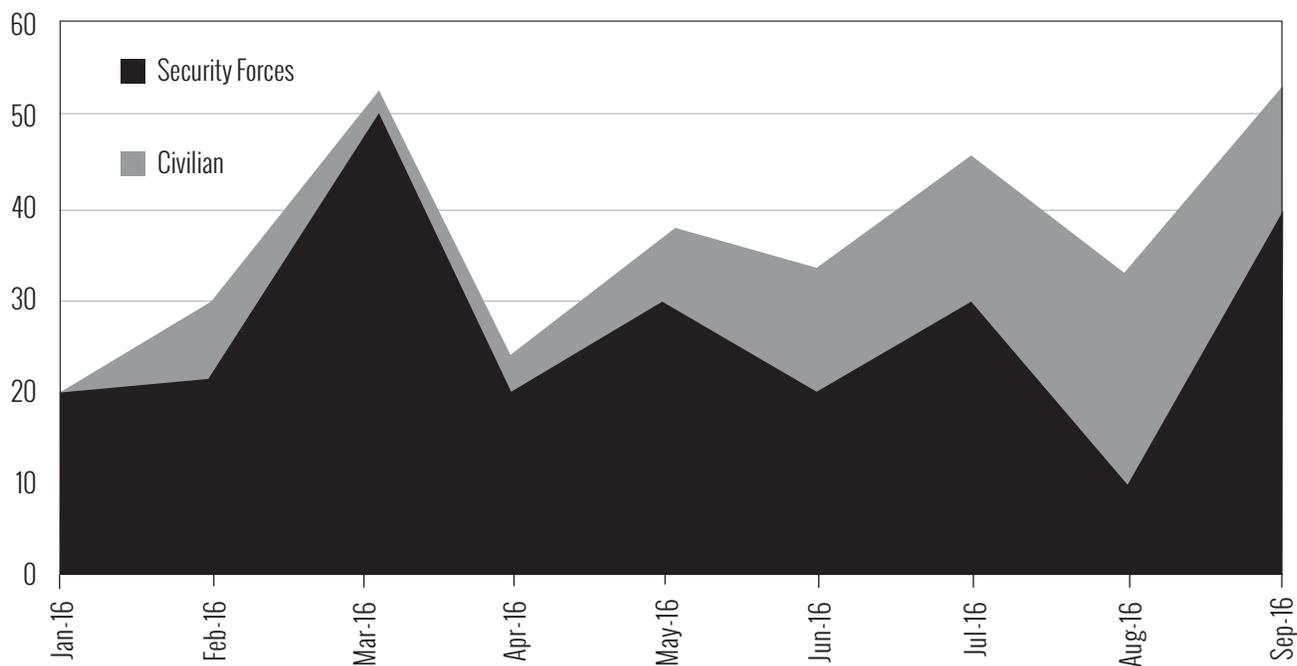
Despite the continued decline in reports of activity outside North Sinai, reports of attacks in the governorate increased slightly this quarter. After a 44 percent increase between the first and second quarters, attacks in North Sinai rose about two percent in the third quarter. The province saw 198 attacks reported from July to September 2016, compared to 194 in the previous quarter and 135 in the first three months of 2016. The number of unclaimed attacks is still on the rise, with 49 percent of reported attacks in North Sinai in the third quarter going unclaimed, compared to only 32 percent in the second quarter and 12 percent in the first.

### Reported Attacks in North Sinai



Reported fatalities in North Sinai increased 36 percent in the third quarter, with 131 reported fatalities compared to 96 fatalities in the second quarter.<sup>2</sup> The average number of reported deaths per attack in North Sinai overall was 0.67, and the average number of reported deaths for fatality-inducing attacks was 1.46. The combined injury and fatality count increased from 227 in the second quarter to 289 in the third, representing a 27 percent increase. Security forces constituted 71 percent of all casualties in North Sinai and 63 percent of fatalities, with 83 fatalities and 122 injuries.

Reported Fatalities in North Sinai (2016)



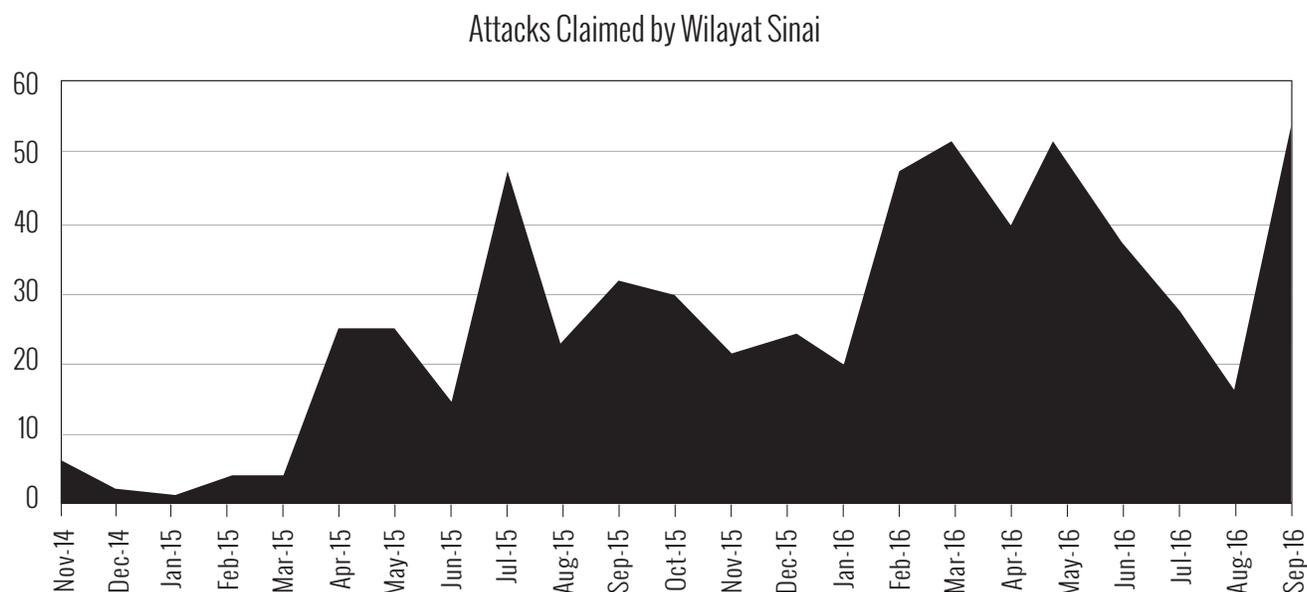
<sup>2</sup> These figures exclude perpetrator casualties.

## NOTABLE ATTACKS

The following section highlights notable terror attacks.

### Wilayat Sinai continues attacks in North Sinai

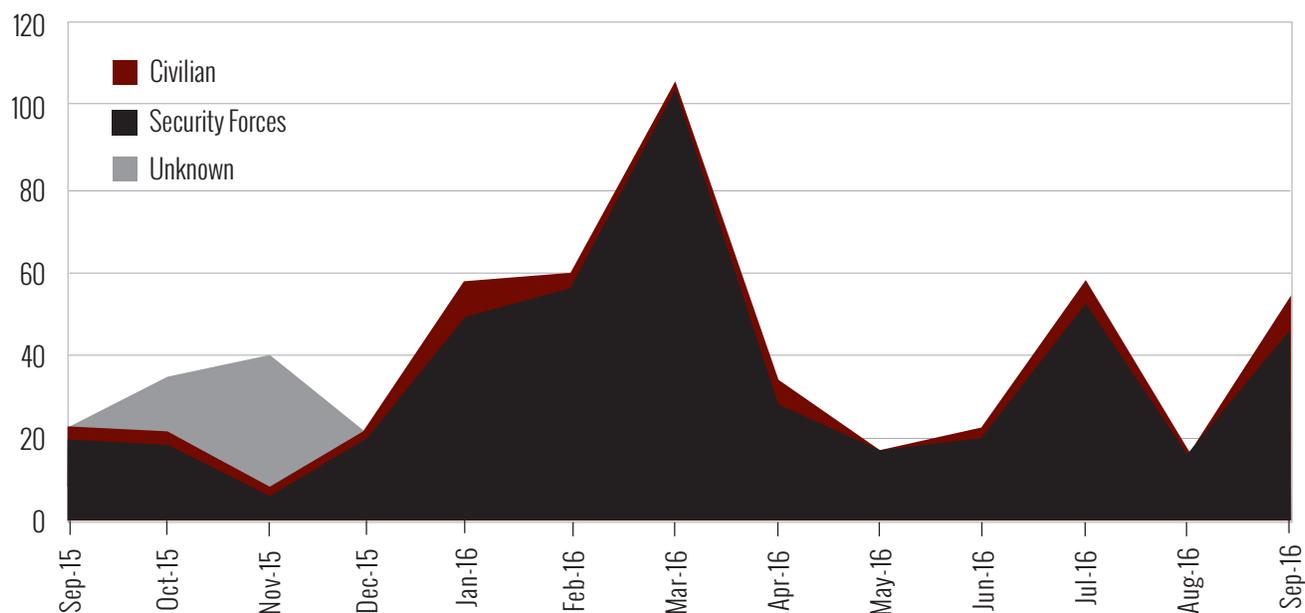
In the third quarter of 2016, Wilayat Sinai claimed 101 attacks in North Sinai governorate.<sup>3</sup> This reflects a slight decrease in the group's activity, down about 25 percent from 133 attacks last quarter. Total attack claims are nearly identical to those of the third quarter of 2015, which saw 102 claims. This quarter included one of the group's least active months on record, with August witnessing only 17 attacks, and its most active month, with 56 in September.



Of its 101 reported attacks, Wilayat Sinai claimed 44 IED attacks and 36 shootings, targeting security checkpoints and patrols throughout central and northern Sinai. IED use as a percentage of claimed attacks reached the lowest level since April 2015, at 29 percent of claimed attacks compared to an average of 63 percent for the rest of 2016. The reported attacks left at least 68 dead and 59 wounded; apart from 10 civilian deaths and four civilian injuries, all of the casualties were military or police personnel.

<sup>3</sup> This figure does not represent every attack claim. As with counter-terrorism operations, there is increasing overlap between some claims, often down to the day and location. This could be due to erroneous reporting or an attempt to inflate the group's activity, among other reasons. When multiple claims appear beyond a reasonable doubt to reference the same incident, or perhaps different elements of the same incident, those redundant claims are combined as one.

### Casualties in Attacks Claimed by Wilayat Sinai (Excluding MetroJet Bombing)



Wilayat Sinai had a few multiple-day periods of inactivity; whether the group was operationally inactive or simply not reporting claims during those times is unclear. It is worth pointing out that one of these silent periods overlaps with the military's claim to have killed in an airstrike what it described as the group's leader, Abu Duaa al-Ansary (discussed in the counter-terrorism section); however, the group's periods of inactivity began before the military's claim on August 4.

Notable attack claims included:

- On *July 13*, Wilayat Sinai claimed an IED [attack](#) on military personnel near Bir Lahfan (near Arish) that killed three conscripts and injured 12.
- On *July 22*, Wilayat Sinai claimed its first mortar attack in four months, which targeted the Zahour base in Arish. (The group subsequently claimed two more attacks that utilized what it described as 120 mm mortars.)
- On *September 8*, Wilayat Sinai claimed to have [targeted](#) the Gorah checkpoint using a Katyusha rocket, which reportedly injured six.

#### High-profile attacks target prominent Egyptian figures

On *Friday, August 5*, two masked gunmen opened fire on Ali Gomaa, the former Grand Mufti of Egypt, as he walked toward a mosque in Sixth of October City for Friday prayers. The assassination attempt was unsuccessful, but one of Gomaa's bodyguards sustained injuries. The newly formed Hasam movement claimed the high-profile attack, providing photographic documentation in a claim released through its official social

media account. Eight weeks later, on September 29, the group carried out another assassination attempt on Assistant Prosecutor-General Zakaria Abdel Aziz Ahmed, using what appears to have been a car bomb.<sup>4</sup> Both assassination attempts were framed as targeting figures loyal to the military and to “Sisi’s militias,” and they are the most high-profile attacks in Egypt since the assassination of Prosecutor-General Hisham Barakat in June 2015.

### **Rare attack in South Sinai**

On September 6, unidentified militants carried out an [attack](#) in the Wadi Feran area of Abu Redis, South Sinai. The shooting wounded six policemen, including the governorate’s deputy security director, police Major General Sayed Abdullah Rafaei, but it resulted in no fatalities. The unclaimed assault is the first reported attack in South Sinai in more than two years. In May 2014, a pair of suicide [bombings](#) in al-Tor killed one and injured nine, and in February 2014 another suicide bombing [targeted](#) a bus full of Korean tourists near Taba, killing four. Yet South Sinai has been a markedly stable area compared to the northeastern part of the peninsula, the locus of Wilayat Sinai’s insurgency. Fewer than 20 attacks have been reported in South Sinai since January 2012, with four of those having been claimed by Ansar Bayt al-Maqdis (Wilayat Sinai’s predecessor).

### **String of kidnappings in North Sinai**

The third quarter of 2016 saw a marked increase in reported kidnappings, all in North Sinai and during August and September. Eleven individuals were kidnapped during that period, two in August and nine in September, including an imam in Arish. Although no group has claimed responsibility for the kidnappings themselves, Wilayat Sinai claimed the execution of a man whom the media had earlier [reported](#) kidnapped. Media also [reported](#) a separate kidnapping during an operation claimed by Wilayat Sinai. In September, the group claimed the execution of at least four individuals whom they accused of collaborating with the military.

The rate of reported kidnappings has increased significantly compared to previous quarters. In 2015, there were 16 kidnappings, and in the first six months of 2016 there were eight kidnappings.

## **TERROR GROUP DEVELOPMENTS**

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

### **Emergence of Hasam and Liwaa al-Thawra**

Two new mainland groups emerged in the third quarter. The first, Hasam, announced its existence in a statement released on July 16. The group subsequently issued five claims throughout the third quarter, including two claims for attacks in Giza and one claim each for attacks in Cairo, Damietta, and Fayoum. The operations include the killing of two police personnel and the aforementioned attempted assassinations of Assistant Prosecutor-General Zakaria Abdel Aziz Ahmed and former Grand Mufti of Egypt Ali Gomaa. The second group, Liwaa al-Thawra, announced its existence in a statement released on August 21. This was its only statement issued during the third quarter, and it doubled as the claim of an attack on a checkpoint in Monofeya that left two policemen dead and five others injured.

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<sup>4</sup> The target of the assassination was Zakaria Abdel Aziz Ahmed, who is not to be confused with Zakaria Abdel Aziz Othman; both are commonly referred to as Zakaria Abdel Aziz. The latter figure is also a senior judge, though he was [forced](#) into retirement earlier in 2016.

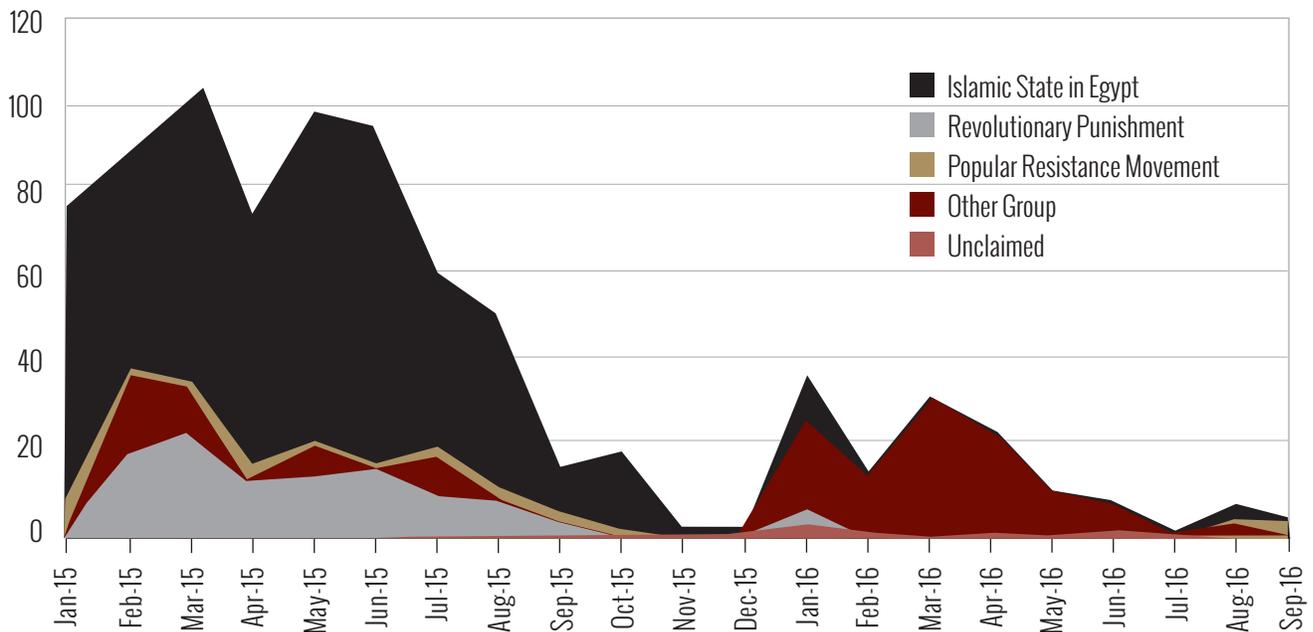
Both groups reference the state’s transgressions against the revolution, exhort hostility toward the regime or military, and may share an affinity for or a connection to the Muslim Brotherhood. Liwaa al-Thawra notably lamented in a recent statement the killing of a top Muslim Brotherhood figure, Muhammad Kamal, during a security raid. From what little information has been released, the groups have an aptitude for organization, branding, and operations, even considering the two unsuccessful assassination attempts.

### Other mainland groups

Other than Hasam and Liwaa al-Thawra, Popular Resistance Movement, with two attack claims, was the only other mainland entity reporting operations in the third quarter. Since earlier this year, Popular Resistance Movement has claimed attacks that other groups have claimed, including most recently the assassination attempt on former Grand Mufti Ali Gomaa. While TIMEP still records these incidents, it is increasingly unclear whether PRM actually has had a hand in the attacks, with the group occasionally offering grainy or stock-like images to “prove” its claims, while other groups furnish more credible documentation.

Neither the Islamic State in Egypt (that is, the Islamic State’s affiliate in mainland Egypt) nor the Revolutionary Punishment claimed attacks this quarter. By comparison, between January 2015 and June 2016, the Islamic State in Egypt claimed 17 attacks and the Revolutionary Punishment claimed at least 98.<sup>5</sup> Over that same period, Popular Resistance Movement claimed 137 attacks.

Attacks Claimed in Mainland Egypt



<sup>5</sup> Revolutionary Punishment puts this figure significantly higher, but TIMEP has only documented about two-thirds of its attack claims in accordance with its methodology for recording attacks.

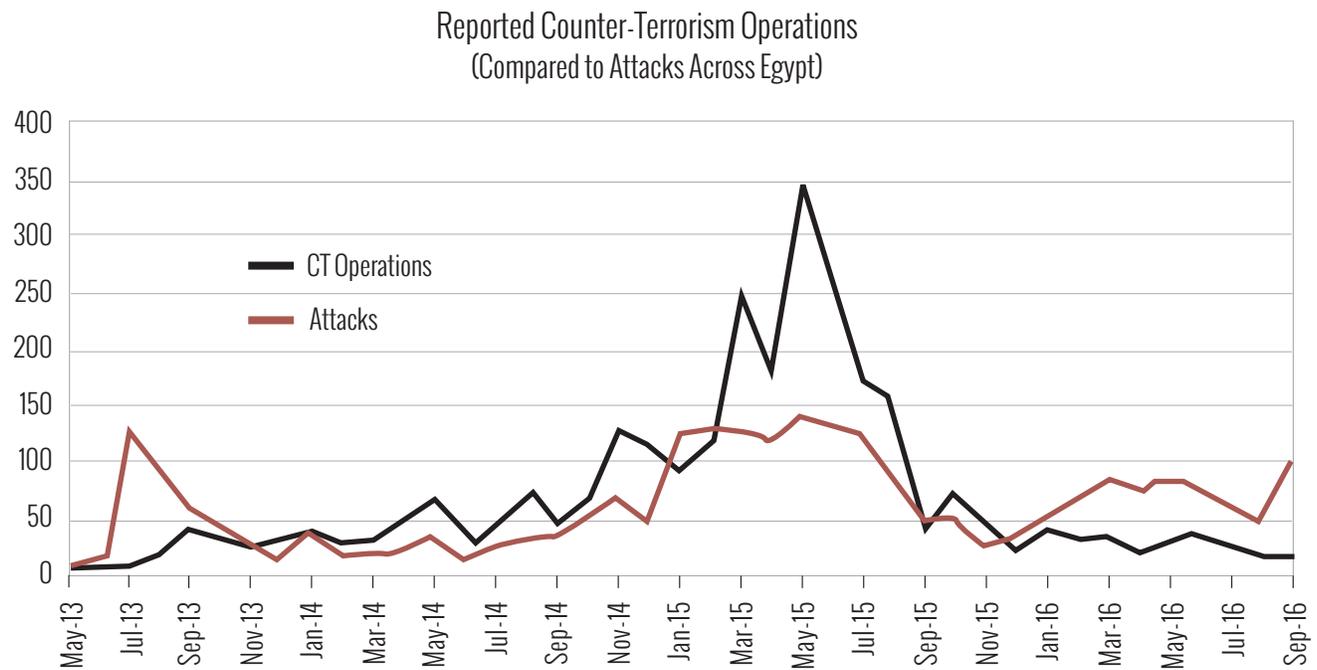
# COUNTER-TERRORISM

## TRENDS

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

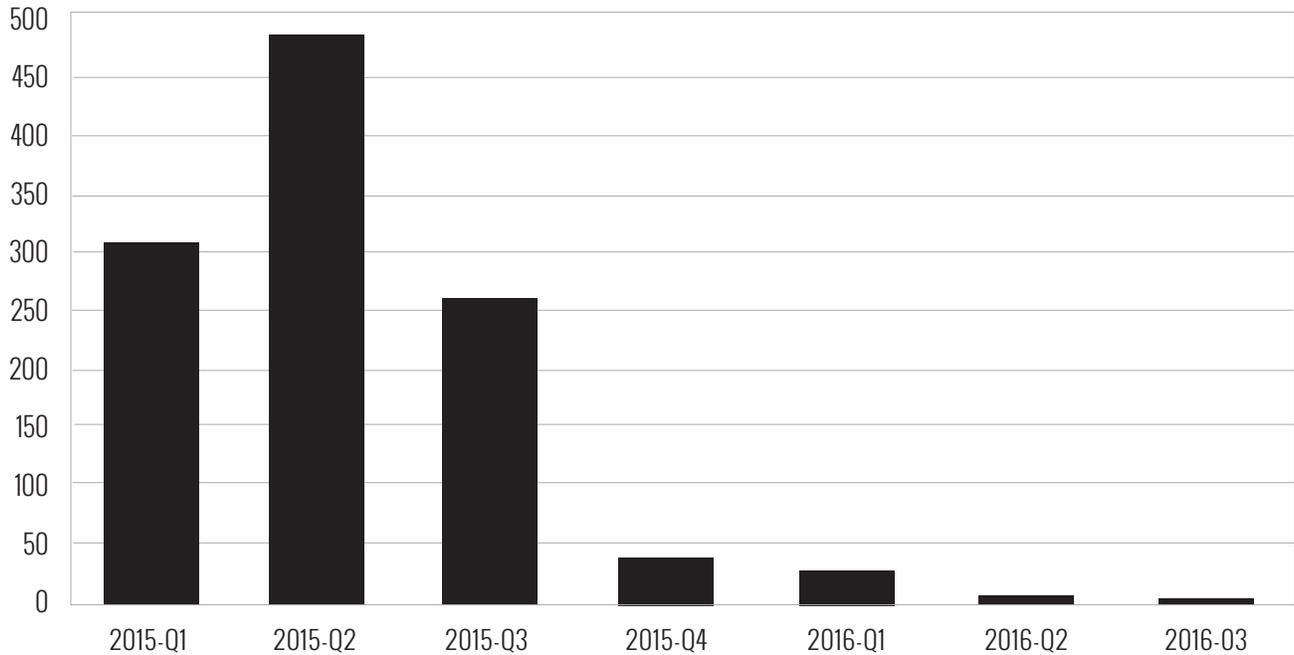
### Reports of counter-terrorism operations continue to decrease

The third quarter of 2016 continued to decline in counter-terrorism operations throughout Egypt, with only 62 operations reported, compared to 88 and 127 in the first and second quarters, respectively. This represents a 31 percent decrease in counter-terrorism operations since the last quarter. By comparison, the third quarter of 2015 saw 413 operations.



This decrease reflected a decline in official reports of counter-terrorism operations, with only six operations officially claimed in the third quarter of 2016 by the Ministry of Interior or Armed Forces, which regularly reported on counter-terrorism activities prior to September 2015. By comparison, in the third quarter of 2015 the Ministry of Interior and military officially reported 260 operations.

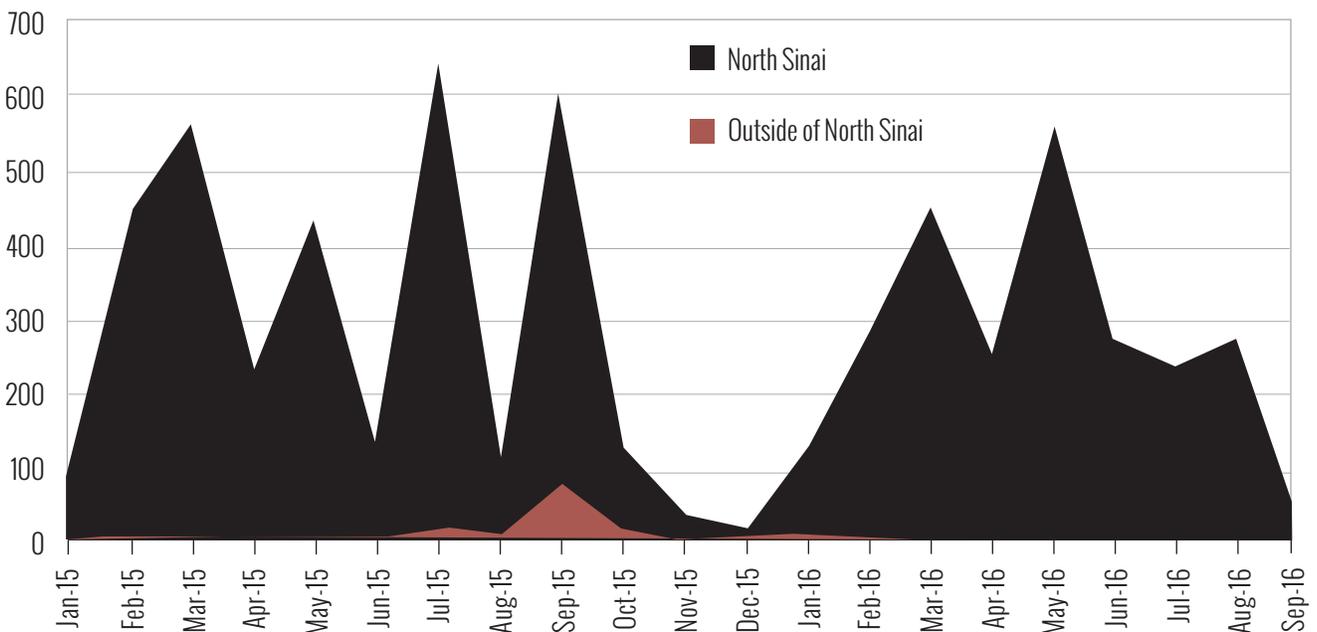
### Official Reports of Counter-Terrorism Operations



Operations in provinces other than North Sinai remained low from July to September 2016, with only four operations reported outside the governorate. These included multiple operations in which suspects behind the August 5 attempted assassination of former Grand Mufti Ali Gomaa were arrested.

Reported casualties in counter-terrorism operations decreased in the third quarter, with 585 total casualties, or about nine casualties per operation, compared to 1,012 casualties reported in the second quarter. There were 119 injuries and 449 fatalities reported, all in North Sinai governorate.

### Reported Casualties in Counter-Terrorism Operations



## NOTABLE OPERATIONS

The following section details notable domestic security operations.

### Military reports killing Wilayat Sinai leader, 45 deputies

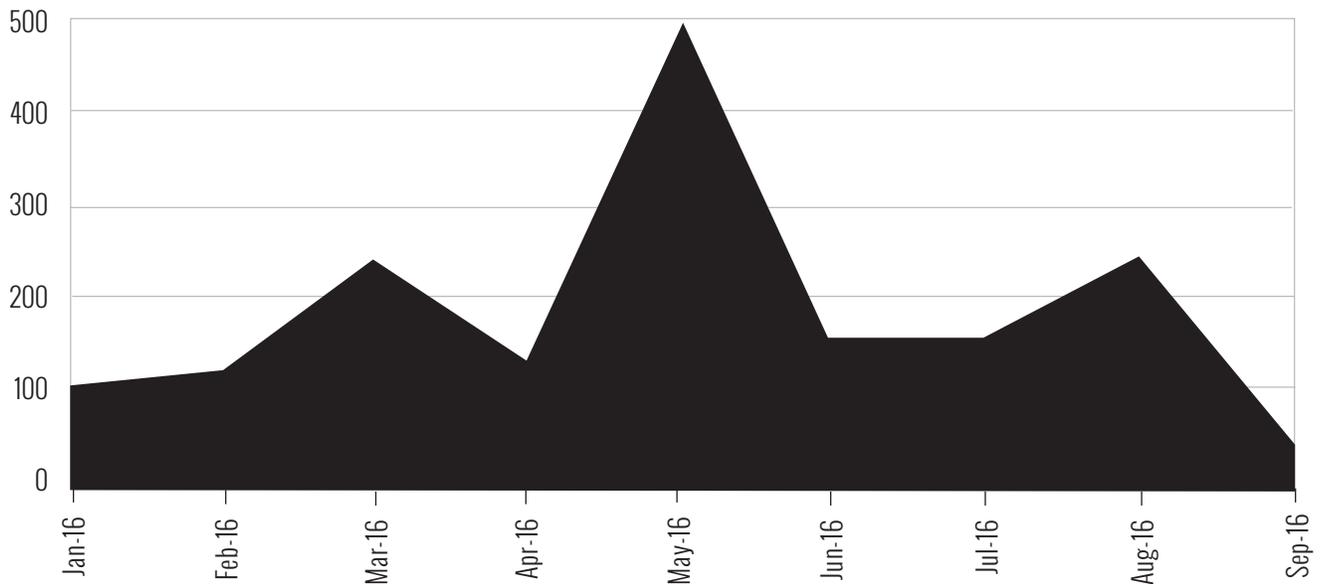
On August 4, the Egyptian military [claimed](#) that it had killed Wilayat Sinai's leader, Abu Duaa al-Ansary, along with 45 of his supposed deputies during an airstrike in northern Sinai. The military released grainy images of the alleged airstrike on its official Facebook page, but later removed them. Other than what has been learned from a few speculative accounts, little information about Ansary exists; there have been a few reports on his given name, but these have not been confirmed. A Twitter account which had not posted anything since its creation in December 2012 confirmed Ansary's death using a forged statement on a template that resembles one often used by the Islamic State. Wilayat Sinai almost immediately denied the account's authenticity, which has since been suspended. The group has not since commented on the purported death of its "leader."

### Other senior level militants killed or arrested in North Sinai

The operation against Abu Duaa al-Ansary and his deputies accompanied the reported death or arrest of several other senior leaders:

- On *July 9*, news sources [reported](#) that security forces killed three leaders in Wilayat Sinai, along with four other fighters.
- On *July 31*, news sources [reported](#) that security forces arrested two Wilayat Sinai leaders.
- On *August 6*, news sources [reported](#) that security forces killed three prominent Wilayat Sinai leaders during clashes in al-Toma village south of Sheikh Zuweid. Among the individuals was the alleged ranking member of Wilayat Sinai in al-Toma, Ahmed Abu Qasem.

Reported Fatalities in North Sinai CT Operations



## **Suspects behind Ali Gomaa assassination attempt arrested**

In response to the attempted assassination of former Grand Mufti Ali Gomaa, security forces arrested at least 18 suspects across Giza governorate during multiple security operations. While the suspects were not explicitly linked to Hasam, the individuals were suspected of being behind an attack in Sixth of October City in early August that the group also claimed. The arrests included:

- On August 9, three individuals were **arrested** in three different areas: al-Saf, Badrashin, and Kerdasa.
- On August 14, ten were **arrested** in four locations: Kerdasa, Nahya, al-Haram and Sixth of October City.
- On August 19, another suspect was **arrested** in Giza.
- On August 26, four more individuals were **taken** into custody in Giza.

Although 18 individuals have reportedly been arrested, news sources **indicate** that there are five suspects in custody following the arrests on August 26. To put these numbers into perspective, at least 67 people have been arrested and tried in connection with the June 2015 assassination of Prosecutor-General Hisham Barakat.

## **SECURITY SECTOR DEVELOPMENTS**

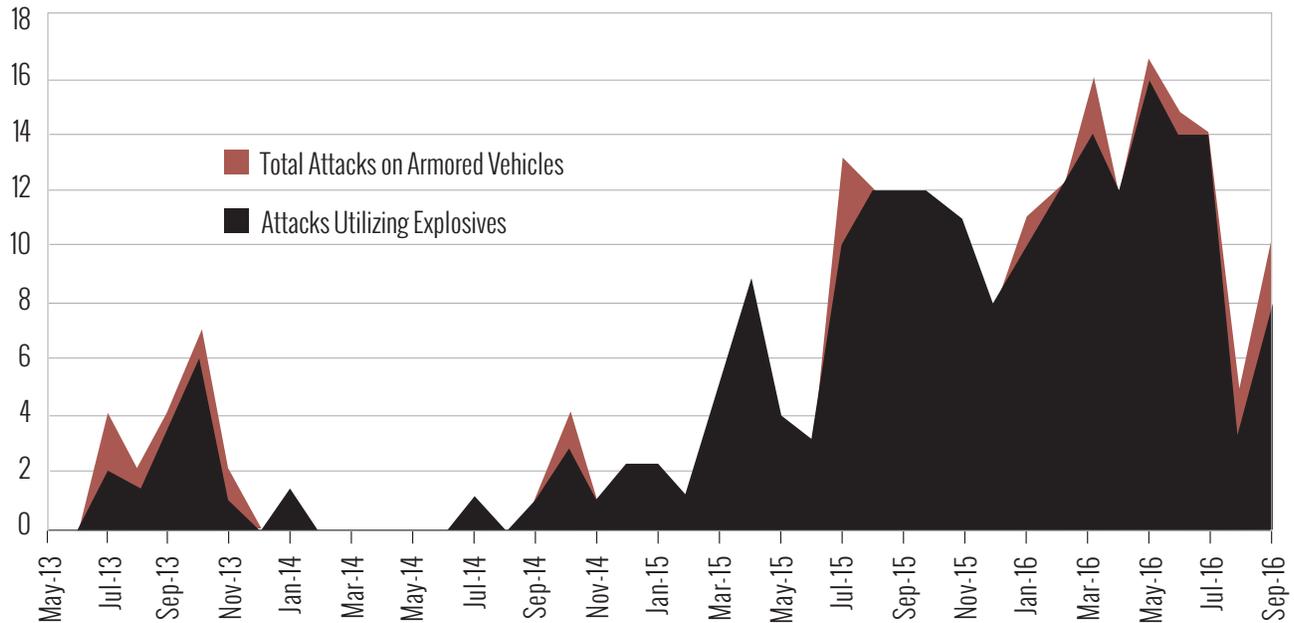
*The following section details important developments in Egypt's domestic security agencies.*

### **U.S. delivers another round of MRAPs under Excess Defense Articles grant program**

In late September, the Department of Defense, under the Excess Defense Articles grant program (which is separate from Foreign Military Funding), **delivered** a second shipment of Mine Resistant Ambush Protected (MRAP) vehicles to the Egyptian military. The size of the shipments have not been disclosed, but the Egyptian military reportedly has on order a total of 762 MRAPs valued at more than \$44 million. As TIMEP previously **noted**, these include 12 MAXXPRO recovery vehicles, 90 RG-33L HAGA and CAIMAN CAT II ambulances, 260 RG-33 CAT II 6x6 Base MRAPs, and 400 CAIMAN CAT I Base MRAPs. These MRAPs will offer security forces additional protection from roadside IEDs and other explosives.

While there were no reported attacks on military or police armor in the Sinai up to July 2013, reported attacks spiked in the months after Muhammad Morsi was ousted from the presidency. After a lull between January and September 2014, attacks on armored vehicles grew steadily, with about 12 attacks per month on average over the past 15 months, the bulk of which utilized some form of explosives.

## Reported Attacks on Armored Vehicles



### More generals make their way into civilian leadership positions

On September 7, President Abdel-Fattah El Sisi [named](#) six new provincial governors. Five of the individuals come from senior positions in domestic intelligence organ Egypt Homeland Security, reflecting the broad re-empowerment of Egypt's intelligence services. While military and police backgrounds are by no means uncommon careers for provincial governors, civilians now represent only eight of Egypt's 27 governors. Among these appointments is the governor of Cairo, a position that had been vacant since early 2016. Cairo's new governor is a former minister of transportation who had also been a general in the Egyptian Air Force.

Sisi also appointed a new minister of supply, Major General Muhammad Ali al-Sheikh, another career officer.

# 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.

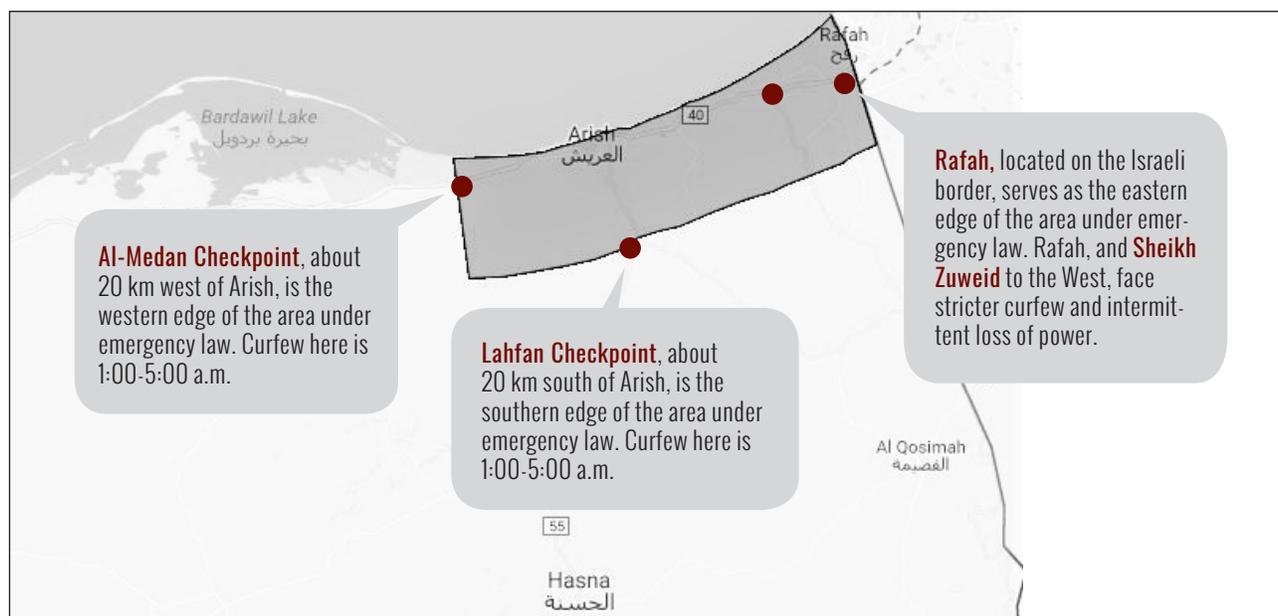
### Barakat assassination trial commences

The hearing for the defendants in the Hisham Barakat assassination trial, originally set to begin last quarter but postponed to July 13, 2016, was [postponed again](#) to November 5. Sixty-seven defendants, 51 of whom are now in custody, stand accused of involvement in the June 2015 operation that killed Egypt's top prosecutor. No group has claimed the attack, but the Ministry of Interior pegged the blame last March on the Muslim Brotherhood and Hamas.

### Emergency law extended for North Sinai

President Abdel-Fattah El Sisi [announced](#) Decree 319 on July 13, extending the state of emergency in areas of North Sinai for another three months. Parts of the Sinai have been under emergency law since October 25, 2014. The law was last [extended](#) on April 29, when the president cited increased terror attacks and militant-related violence as justification. The law affects the area west of Rafah to al-Awga, east of Arish, and [imposes](#) a curfew between 7:00 p.m. and 6:00 a.m. The Egyptian parliament passed the law with no real opposition, though North Sinai representatives did discuss with the press some of the potential negative effects of the law on business, education, and development.

Area Subject to Emergency Law in North Sinai



## **Law extending military legal jurisdiction for five years**

Parliament's defense committee passed an amendment to Law 136 of 2014, extending for another five years the military's jurisdiction over vital institutions of the state and its legal purview over those caught sabotaging those institutions. The amendment, which was drafted by Representative Kemal Omar, a retired major general in military intelligence, followed and superseded a government-proposed amendment to extend the law for only two years. The argument for extending it revolved around the severity of the security situation that Egypt faces. It is worth noting that "vital institutions of the state" is highly ambiguous phrasing and can essentially be applied to any institution of the state.

## **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 continues its support for Egypt's counter-terrorism activity**

The past quarter saw a number of high-level military and congressional delegations. This is a continuation of the bilateral Egyptian-U.S. cooperation identified in our previous reports. The delegations come in light of the ongoing domestic conflicts in the Sinai Peninsula and mainland Egypt, as well as neighboring Libya.

The visits included:

- Representative Jeff Fortenberry (R-NE) [headed](#) a congressional delegation to Egypt in late August. The delegation discussed strengthening American-Egyptian relations with Sisi, Defense Minister General Sedki Sobhi, and other high-level officials.
- Deputy Director for the Office of Energy Policy Jonathan Pershing [met](#) in Cairo with Sisi and Minister of Environment Khaled Fahmy on August 29 to discuss the 22<sup>nd</sup> [Conference of the Parties](#) in November.
- General Joseph Votel, Commander of U.S. Central Command, [met](#) in Cairo with Sobhi and Chief of Staff of the Armed Forces Lieutenant General Mahmoud Hegazy to discuss bilateral security and counter-terrorism cooperation.
- Vice Admiral Kevin Donegan, Commander of Naval Forces for U.S. Central Command, [met](#) in Cairo with senior officials to discuss mutual interests and cooperation. Donegan was [last](#) in Egypt in November 2015.
- Lieutenant General Michael Garrett, Commander of U.S. Army Central, [met](#) in Cairo in August with senior military officials to discuss bilateral relations and counter-terrorism efforts. Garrett, who also visited the Multinational Force and Observers base in Sinai, had last [visited](#) Egypt in January 2016.
- Secretary of State John Kerry met with Egyptian Foreign Minister Sameh Shoukry, on a number of occasions. The officials held meetings in [Washington](#) and New [Delhi](#) and exchanged multiple phone calls, focusing on regional issues and bilateral cooperation.

Other activities included:

- Congressmen Dana Rohrabacher and French Hill **met** with Sisi on the sidelines of the United Nations General Assembly (UNGA), discussing bilateral security cooperation and other issues.
- Republican and Democratic presidential nominees Donald Trump and Hillary Clinton also **met** with Sisi on the sidelines of the UNGA.
- Business Executives for National Security **met** in Cairo with Sisi, General Intelligence Director Khaled Fawzy, and Shoukry. BENS is a non-profit organization through which American business leaders channel their specialized experiences and talents to help secure U.S. national security interests.

### **Russian diplomatic activity**

The past quarter hinted at growing Russian-Egyptian relations, with two noteworthy bilateral meetings between Moscow and Cairo. The diplomatic and military activity comes in the context of increasing Russian influence across the Middle East.

This activity notably includes:

- Russian Defense Minister Sergei Shoigu **met** with Sobhi on September 6 to discuss bilateral military cooperation, and Shoigu expressed Russia's full support for Egypt's war on terrorism in Sinai. The meeting came a month before the commencement of joint military exercises between the two countries.
- Russian President Vladimir Putin and Sisi **met** on the sidelines of the Group of Twenty Summit in Hangzhou, China, in September, discussing bilateral security cooperation. Sisi attended the G20 summit as an observer at the invitation of Chinese President Xi Jinping.
- A flurry of low-level delegations from Russia visited Egypt to discuss airport security and resuming flights between Egypt and Russia (discussed below).

## **Security concerns continue to plague Egypt's tourism sector during economic crisis**

Now a year after the October 2015 downing of an aircraft full of Russian tourists over the Sinai Peninsula, economic fallout from the Islamic State-claimed attack continues. According to figures from Egypt's Central Agency for Public Mobilization and Statistics, the number of tourists visiting Egypt **contracted** 51.2 percent in 2016, to 2.8 million. Egypt-bound flight restrictions put in place after the crash, which notably include Moscow's countrywide ban on flights to or from Egypt, have directly contributed to this decrease. Many airlines have lifted their restrictions, but Russia, one of Egypt's biggest tourism markets, has kept its flight ban in place.

Multiple Russian delegations inspected security measures at Egypt's airports in the third quarter. Egypt's Civil Aviation Ministry announced in July that conditions for the resumption of flights had been agreed upon, yet, according to Russian officials, those conditions have not been fully implemented in Egyptian airports. Among the conditions is installation of biometric scanners for airport staff and workers.

The investigation into the crash made some headway this quarter. Aviation experts from Russia, Germany, Ireland, the United States, and France arrived in Cairo in late August to reconstruct the aircraft and investigate the cause of the crash, which Egypt still officially denies was an act of terrorism. No public results have emerged from the investigation.

# 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.





The Tahrir Institute  
for Middle East Policy