



The Tahrir Institute  
for Middle East Policy

**EGYPT** **SECURITY WATCH**

**QUARTERLY REPORT: OCTOBER – DECEMBER 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 dropped considerably in the fourth quarter of 2016, with **168 attacks**, compared to 209 attacks in the third quarter and 225 in the second quarter. A total of 812 attacks were reported throughout Egypt in 2016, averaging 68 per month.

The majority of reported attacks targeted security forces, with **85 security personnel killed and 86 injured** over the fourth quarter. Seventy-one civilians were reported killed throughout Egypt this quarter, along with another 113 wounded. **This represents a 107 percent increase in civilian casualties from the third quarter**, though nearly half of these casualties were from the December 11 church bombing in Cairo. **Seventy-three percent of all reported casualties occurred in North Sinai.**

The **total number of casualties reported in North Sinai throughout 2016 was 1,028**, or just under three per day on average, compared to 1052 in 2015.

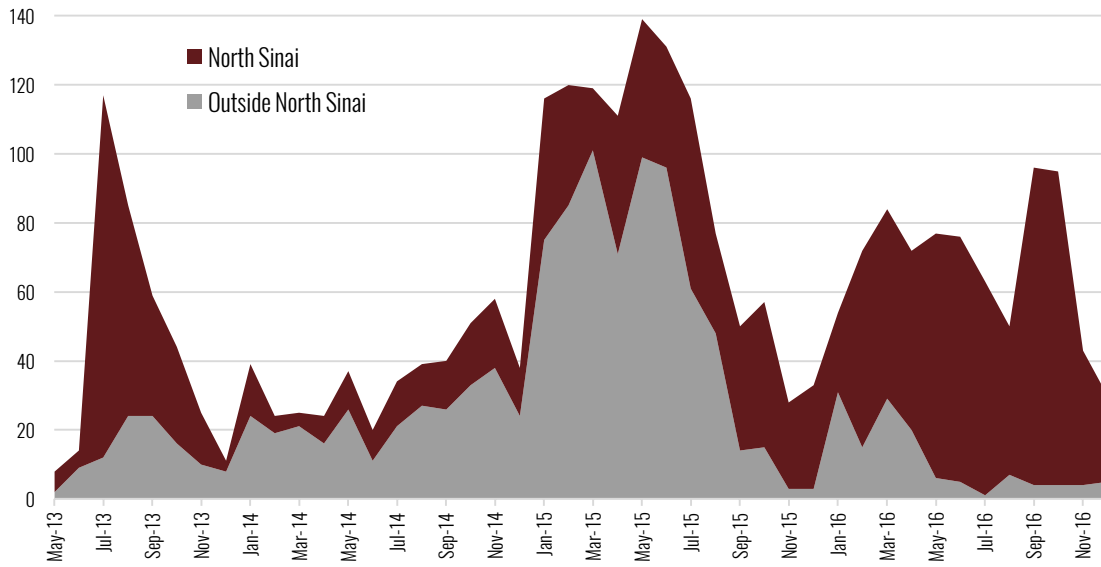
The Islamic State in Egypt<sup>1</sup> carried out a **high-profile attack on the St. Peter and St. Paul Coptic Orthodox Church in Cairo's Abbasiya district**, killing 29 and injuring more than four dozen. The group promised in the wake of the attack to escalate its war on unbelievers; while the figures will be reported in the next quarterly report, attacks on Christians have indeed escalated in North Sinai.

**Ninety-two percent of attacks reported throughout Egypt were carried out in North Sinai province; 67 of these 155 were claimed by Wilayat Sinai.** Thirteen attacks were reported this quarter outside of North Sinai, compared to 12 last quarter and 31 in the second quarter. There were **11 attacks on average per month reported across the mainland in 2016.**<sup>2</sup>

<sup>1</sup> The Islamic State in Egypt is distinct from Wilayat Sinai, the Islamic State's "Sinai Province." Both claim attacks under the banner of the Islamic State, but distinguish between the two entities in their claims. It is not clear to what degree, if any, the two entities work in coordination.

<sup>2</sup> TIMEP uses "mainland" to refer to areas outside of the Sinai Peninsula.

## Total Attacks Reported Throughout Egypt



Wilayat Sinai formally acknowledged the August assassination of its leader, Abu Duaa al-Ansary, in an interview in its al-Naba magazine published on December 21.

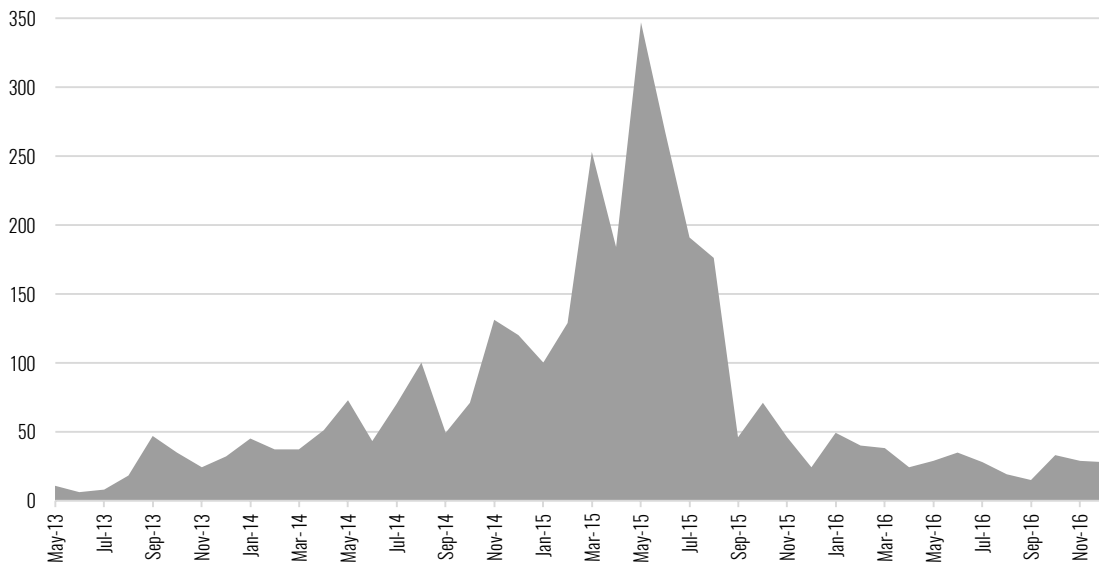
Wilayat Sinai claimed 31 attacks employing improvised explosive devices (IEDs), representing 46 percent of the group’s claimed activity in the fourth quarter.

### COUNTER-TERRORISM

Reported counter-terrorism operations across Egypt increased by about 45 percent this quarter, with 90 operations in the fourth quarter compared to 62 in the third quarter. This reported total is only 64 percent of the 141 counter-terrorism operations reported over the same period in 2015 and 22 percent of the 413 operations reported in the most active period, the third quarter of 2015.

\* Where area charts are used, these are stacked charts, with each area color coded for its part of a total instance, where the uppermost bound of the area represents the total combined figure.

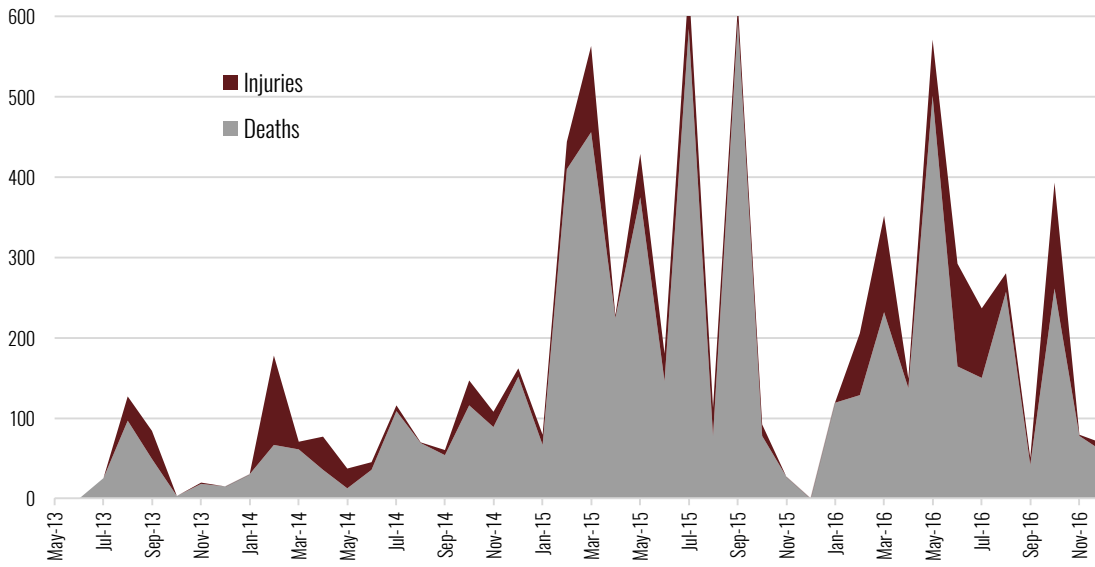
## Counter-Terrorism Operations Reported Throughout Egypt



Officially reported counter-terrorism operations also increased in the fourth quarter, with 24 operations reported compared to only five operations last quarter and seven in the second quarter. This represents a nearly fivefold increase in officially reported counter-terrorism operations compared to the third quarter.



## Reported Casualties in Counter-Terrorism Operations Throughout Egypt



The Ministry of Interior announced on October 4 that security forces had killed Muhammad Kamal, a member of the Muslim Brotherhood’s Guidance Bureau and former head of the youth committee. In a separate raid on November 3, security forces killed another senior Muslim Brotherhood figure, Ammar Muhammad Abdel Aleem.

## LEGAL AND POLITICAL DEVELOPMENTS

Egypt’s Prisons Authority carried out the death sentence of Adel Habara on December 15, amid renewed calls for his execution in the week of the St. Peter and St. Paul Coptic Orthodox Church bombing.

President Abdel-Fattah El Sisi renewed the state of emergency in North Sinai, and the measure was approved by the Egyptian parliament.

Sisi was reportedly the first foreign leader to congratulate Donald Trump on his victory in the American presidential election, an early sign of the warming bilateral relationship between the United States and Egypt, which is likely to focus on maintaining security assistance in the effort to counter terror. Two congressional delegations and the director of the Defense Intelligence Agency made trips to Cairo this quarter, with security issues as a primary topic of conversation.

# TERRORISM

## TRENDS

The following section showcases trends in reported violence throughout Egypt.

### Reports of attacks across the mainland hold steady

After a brief resurgence in attacks reported in mainland Egypt in the first quarter of 2016, attacks remained relatively low through the end of the fourth quarter. Thirteen attacks were reported in this quarter in provinces outside of North Sinai, compared to 12 last quarter and 31 in the second quarter. There were 11 attacks on average per month throughout 2016. The average number of reported attacks outside of Sinai remained low compared to previous years, which saw 56 reported attacks per month on average in 2015 and 24 reported attacks per month on average in 2014.

Of the 13 attacks reported across the mainland, six were carried out in Cairo and one each in the provinces of Beni Suef, Sharqia, Kafr al-Sheikh, Qalyubia, and Giza.

Seven of the 13 attacks reported across the mainland in the fourth quarter went unclaimed. Hasam claimed four attacks and Liwaa al-Thawra and the Islamic State in Egypt (distinct from the Islamic State's affiliate in Sinai, Wilayat Sinai) claimed one each. The percentage of claimed attacks decreased in the fourth quarter to 46 percent from 73 percent in the third quarter, but remained high compared to overall numbers from last year. In 2015, 24 percent of reported attacks were claimed, while only 11 percent of reported attacks were claimed in 2014.

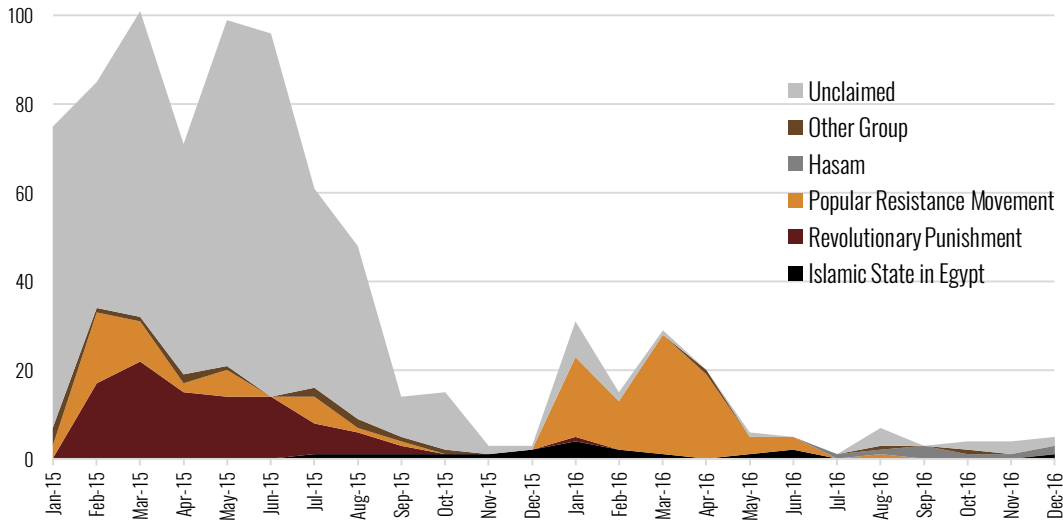
Casualties from attacks reported across the mainland increased significantly from the third quarter. Fifteen security personnel were reported either injured or killed across the mainland in the fourth quarter, along with 82 civilians, compared to 19 and six in the previous quarter. The casualties from the attack on the St. Peter and St. Paul Coptic Orthodox Church accounted for the majority of those reported injured or killed in mainland Egypt this quarter. The total number of reported casualties across the mainland in 2016 was 201, compared to 564 in 2015 overall.

## Number of Attacks Reported

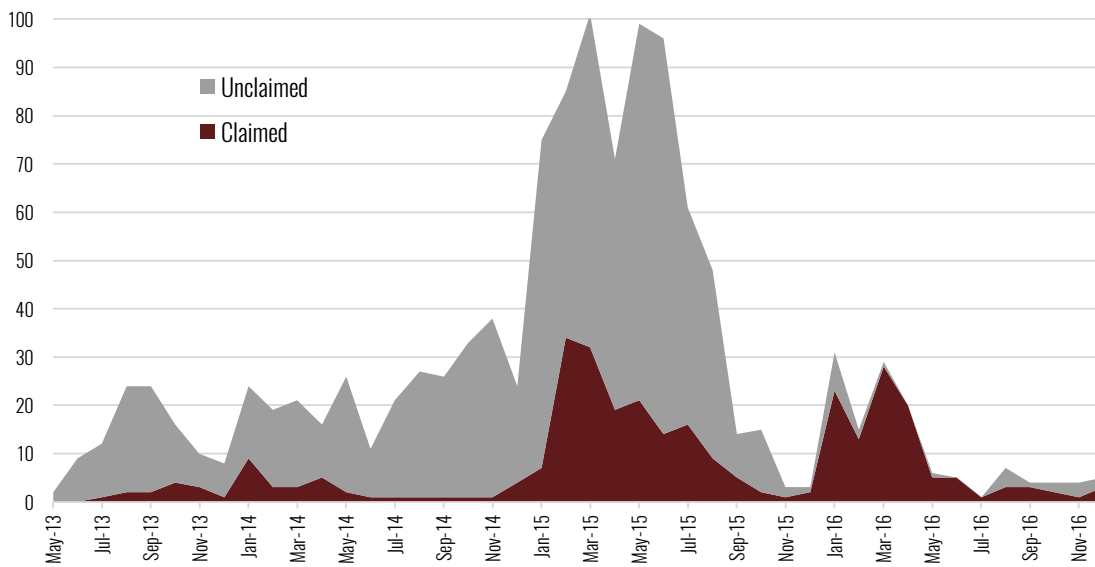
2013			
	Outside North Sinai	North Sinai	Total
Q1	10	0	10
Q2	11	14	25
Q3	60	201	261
Q4	34	46	80
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>115</b>	<b>261</b>	<b>376</b>
2014			
Q1	64	24	88
Q2	53	28	81
Q3	74	39	113
Q4	95	52	147
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>286</b>	<b>143</b>	<b>429</b>
2015			
Q1	261	94	355
Q2	266	115	381
Q3	123	120 <sup>3</sup>	243
Q4	21	97	118
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>671</b>	<b>426</b>	<b>1097</b>
2016			
Q1	75	135	210
Q2	31	194	225
Q3	12	197	209
Q4	13	155	168
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>131</b>	<b>681</b>	<b>812</b>

<sup>3</sup> For the purposes of consistency and clarity, TIMEP records the July 1, 2015 assault on Sheikh Zuweid as a single attack in its reports. In its complete dataset, TIMEP registered the operation as having comprised 24 reported actions at various locations throughout the day.

### Claims of Attacks Outside North Sinai



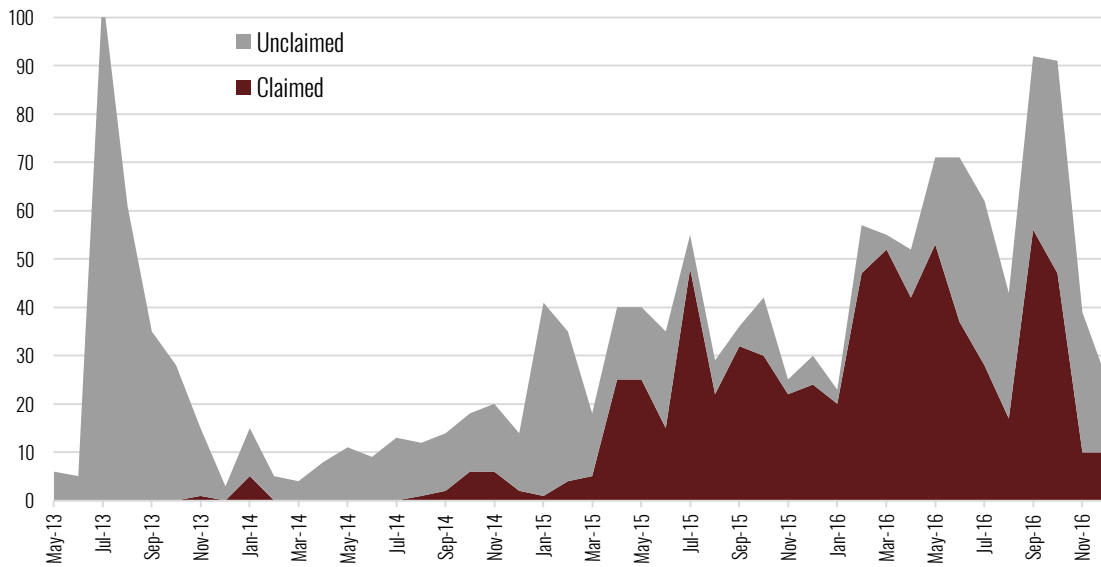
### Attacks Reported Outside North Sinai



#### Reports of attacks and casualties in North Sinai decline

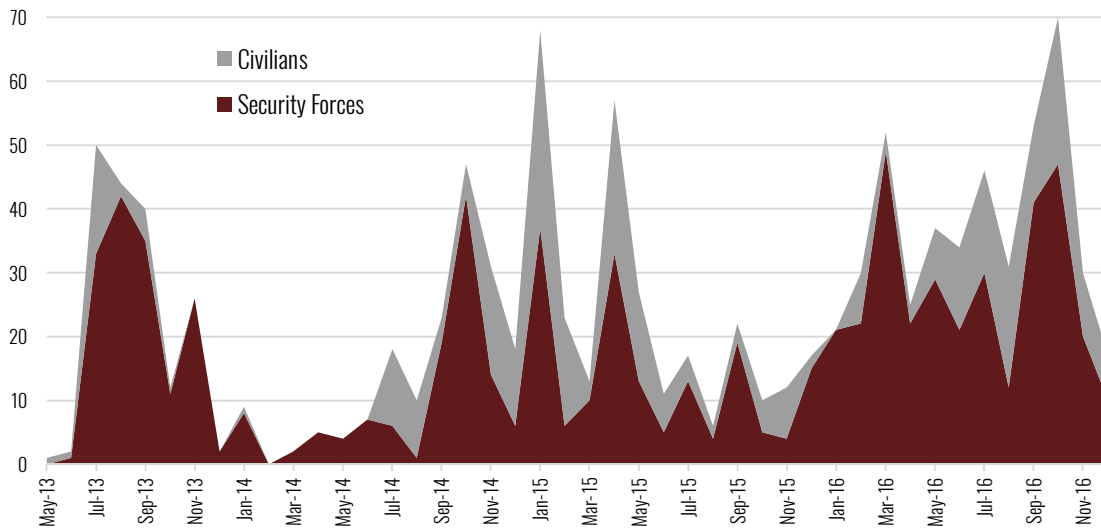
Reported terrorist attacks in North Sinai declined in the fourth quarter of 2016. One hundred and fifty-one attacks were reported over the fourth quarter, representing a 21 percent drop from the 197 attacks reported in the third quarter. Fifty-seven attacks were reported per month on average in North Sinai province throughout 2016, compared to 36 per month in 2015 and 12 per month in 2014. Of the 155 attacks reported across North Sinai province in the fourth quarter, 88 went unclaimed.

### Attacks Reported in North Sinai



Casualties from attacks reported across North Sinai province also decreased from the third quarter. Seventy-seven security personnel were reported killed and 79 injured in North Sinai, compared to 83 and 122 in the third quarter. Forty civilians were reported killed and 62 injured over the same period, compared to 47 and 36 in the previous quarter. The total number of casualties reported in North Sinai throughout 2016 was 1,028, or just under three per day on average, compared to 1,052 in 2015.

### Reported Fatalities in North Sinai (Excluding MetroJet Bombing)



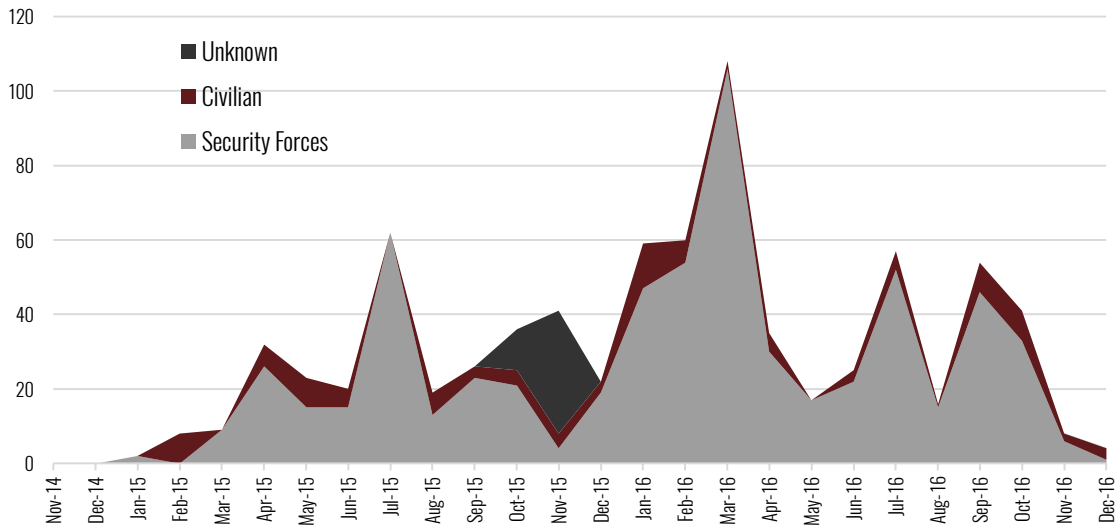
**Wilayat Sinai attack claims and casualties decrease**

The Islamic State affiliate in Sinai, Wilayat Sinai, claimed only 67 attacks in the fourth quarter, representing a 34 percent decrease in claimed activity from the 101 attacks that the group claimed in the third quarter. (No verifiable information has been reported on the identities of those who conducted attacks that went unclaimed; for more information on how TIMEP identifies and categorizes these reports, see the Methodology section.) Wilayat Sinai claimed 43 percent of the total reported attacks in North Sinai, compared to 51 percent in the previous quarter and 62 percent of all reported attacks in North Sinai in 2016.<sup>4</sup> Wilayat Sinai claimed 40 percent of all attacks reported across Egypt in the fourth quarter, down from 48 percent in the third quarter and 59 percent in the second quarter.

Wilayat Sinai’s reported activity over the past six months was slightly lower than the same period a year ago. The group claimed 28 attacks per month on average in the past two quarters, compared to 30 per month in the last two quarters of 2015.

Among Wilayat Sinai’s claimed attacks, reported casualties decreased from 127 in the previous quarter to 53 this quarter, including 42 fatalities and 11 injuries. Security forces as a percentage of total casualties in attacks claimed by Wilayat Sinai fell consistently throughout 2016. Seventy-five percent of casualties in attacks claimed by Wilayat Sinai in the fourth quarter were security personnel, compared to 89 percent in the third quarter, 90 percent in the second quarter, and 91 percent in the first quarter.

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

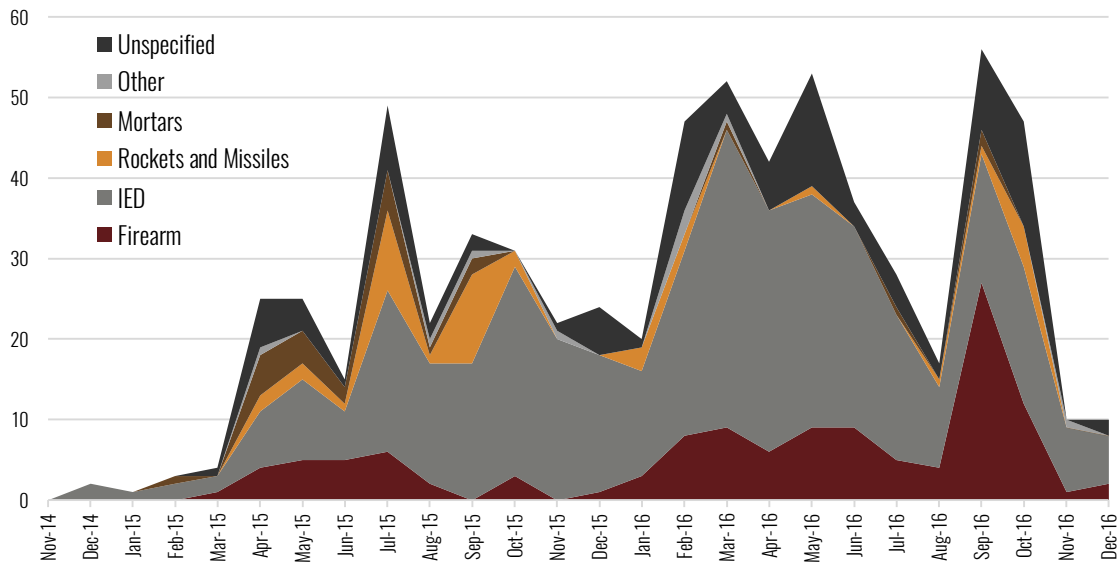


<sup>4</sup> This decrease may be due in part to disruptions to Wilayat Sinai media production and access.

### Wilayat Sinai's weapon preferences

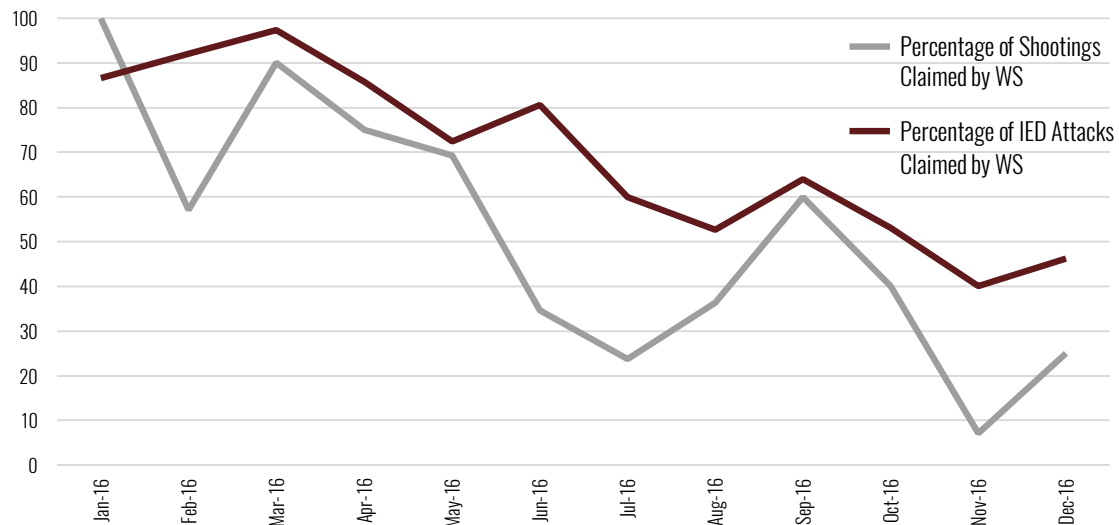
Of its 67 claims, Wilayat Sinai claimed 31 attacks employing improvised explosive devices (IEDs), or 46 percent of attacks. This represents a slight increase compared to the previous quarter, with 44 percent of claimed activity in the third quarter employing IEDs. Fifteen attacks, or 22 percent, of Wilayat Sinai's claimed activity in the fourth quarter used firearms, compared to 36 percent in the third quarter and 18 percent in the second quarter.

**Weapon Use in Attacks Claimed by Wilayat Sinai**



The percentage of reported shootings in North Sinai governorate claimed by Wilayat Sinai over the fourth quarter decreased to 27 from 43 percent in the third quarter and 46 percent in the second quarter. The percentage of reported IED attacks in North Sinai claimed by Wilayat Sinai over the fourth quarter also decreased to 42 percent from 57 percent in the third quarter and 76 percent in the second quarter.

**Percentage of Attacks Claimed by Wilayat Sinai  
North Sinai Shootings and IED Attacks**



## NOTABLE ATTACKS

*The following section highlights notable terror attacks.*

### Islamic State in mainland Egypt resurfaces with church bombing

The Islamic State in Egypt (distinct from Wilayat Sinai) carried out its most high-profile attack to date in the fourth quarter. On December 11, operatives carried out [a suicide attack on the St. Peter and St. Paul Coptic Orthodox Church](#) in Cairo's Abbasiya district, claiming responsibility only days later. The bomber, identified by security officials as Mahmoud Shafik (and later by the Islamic State as Abu Abdullah al-Masry), detonated the bomb in the [women's](#) section of the church, killing 29 and injuring more than four dozen others. In its claim of responsibility, the Islamic State promised to escalate its "war on unbelievers." The attack represents a new connection to the Islamic State's transnational project and plays into its parent organization's global sectarian aims.<sup>5</sup>

"Generally, Egypt's terror groups operating in the country have not employed an overtly sectarian rhetoric, framing their violence as a struggle against the state. In only 52 terror attacks since 2010 were purely sectarian targets identified; 42 of these took place after 2013. Indeed, two terror groups operating in the country actually denounced the sectarian element in the church attack. Hasam, the group responsible for failed assassination attempts on former Grand Mufti of Egypt Ali Gomaa and Assistant Prosecutor-General Zakaria Abdel Aziz Ahmed, condemned the attack and suggested the state's complicity. In its statement condemning the attack, Liwaa al-Thawra—who in October assassinated Brigadier General Adel Regaie—declared its commitment to avoiding civilian loss of life, 'regardless of religion.'"  
— [Egypt Security Watch and Eshhad Special Briefing](#)

### Wilayat Sinai continued attacks in North Sinai

Among Wilayat Sinai's 67 attack claims in the fourth quarter were the following notable attacks:

- On October 14, militants [attacked](#) a checkpoint 25 miles from Bir al-Abd in North Sinai early in the morning, fatally [wounding](#) 12 army personnel and [injuring](#) another six. Fifteen of the attacking militants were also [reportedly](#) killed.
- On October 29, Lieutenant Colonel Rami Hassanein—commander of the 103rd Battalion, the Saeka or Thunderbolt special forces unit—and a soldier [were killed after their convoy was hit by](#) a roadside bomb in Toma village. Three other soldiers were also injured.
- On November 18, Wilayat Sinai [beheaded two individuals](#) whom they had identified as priests. The [individuals were](#) Sufi Sheikh Suleiman Abu Heraz, who was kidnapped in October and reportedly a hundred years old, and Sheikh Said Abdel-Fattah of the Egyptian Ministry of Religious Endowments.
- On November 25, Wilayat Sinai [attacked a military checkpoint](#) in the village of Sabil and [killed](#) 12 army personnel and wounded another 12. One soldier was [reported missing](#). According to the military spokesman, [multiple IEDs](#), including a car bomb, were employed during the attack.

<sup>5</sup> In a video entitled "Fight All the Infidels" and released in February 2017, the Islamic State in Sinai confirmed its heightened sectarian vision. The video, which TIMEP will cover in depth in the next issuance of its quarterly reports, features footage of the church attack and vows to fight Christians in the country based on what it alleges is their support for Sisi and control of the media and economy.

### **Hasam and Liwaa al-Thawra continue attacks**

Liwaa al-Thawra, which only recently announced its existence, claimed the assassination of Brigadier General Adel Regaei in October. Regaei's assassination is only the group's second claimed attack, with its first occurring in August. Regaei, the [commander](#) of the Ninth Armored Division in Dahshur, was fatally shot in al-Obour City early on a Saturday morning as he walked to his car. Two policemen were [killed](#) and five others were injured in the incident, including three policemen and two civilians. Regaei [reportedly](#) had overseen the flooding of tunnels between Gaza and Rafah. President Abdel-Fattah El Sisi [responded](#) to the assassination by increasing security at Egypt's vital facilities. Three suspects, who also reportedly have links to Liwaa al-Thawra's first attack in Monofeya, have been [identified](#) but remain at large.

Hasam movement, another group that announced its existence in the third quarter and which is apparently linked to Liwaa al-Thawra, attempted yet another assassination in the fourth quarter, their ninth claim to date. The group [attempted to assassinate](#) Judge Ahmed Aboul Fatouh in Nasr City on November 4 using a car bomb. Aboul Fatouh has [overseen](#) a number of terrorism cases, including one in which former President Muhammad Morsi was a defendant. The incident, [which took place](#) at the eastern end of Mustafa al-Nahas Street, resulted in no deaths or injuries. This is Hasam's fourth unsuccessful assassination attempt in the past two quarters.

## **TERROR GROUP DEVELOPMENTS**

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

### **Liwaa al-Thawra threatens influential figures**

In October, the newly formed Liwaa al-Thawra released screenshots of threatening messages that it had sent to a number of political and business figures through the mobile application WhatsApp. Coptic rights activist Naguib Gabriel, steel tycoon Ahmed Abu Hashima, editor of *al-Youm al-Sabaa* Khaled Salah, and former Minister of Justice Ahmed al-Zind were among the recipients of the messages. The message references the murder of Brigadier General Adel Rageai, for which Liwaa al-Thawra claimed responsibility, and suggested that the others would be next. To date, no attacks or attack attempts have been reported on any of the figures.

### **Wilayat Sinai acknowledges death of Ansary and new leader**

Wilayat Sinai formally acknowledged the death of its emir, Abu Duaa al-Ansary, in statements to the Islamic State's *al-Naba* magazine published on December 21, [months after initial reports of his death](#). On August 4, the [Egyptian military claimed](#) that it had killed Ansary along with 45 of his supposed deputies during an airstrike in northern Sinai. Other than what can be gleaned from a few speculative accounts, little information about Ansary exists. Abu Hajer al-Hashemi was named the group's new emir, and was interviewed by *al-Naba*.

### **Wilayat Sinai reduces smuggling operations**

Over the last year, a number of Hamas fighters, including members of its elite commando unit, have reportedly [defected](#) to Wilayat Sinai. Hamas responded by arresting Islamic State sympathizers or collaborators in its territory, causing a [rift](#) between the Gaza-based organization and Wilayat Sinai. Wilayat Sinai evidently reduced the volume of goods smuggled from the Sinai Peninsula into the Gaza Strip as a means of pressuring Hamas into freeing its captured operatives. Hamas subsequently released a number of Islamic State loyalists from detention as part of an attempt to reconcile with the militant group. Despite the confrontation, the two organizations reportedly continue to cooperate on matters such as arms smuggling and weapons and explosives training. The Egyptian government's recent attempts at a [rapprochement](#) with Hamas may complicate matters, however, as Cairo reportedly offered concessions on trade and free movement in return for greater cooperation in controlling and securing the border against Islamic State fighters.



# COUNTER-TERRORISM

## TRENDS

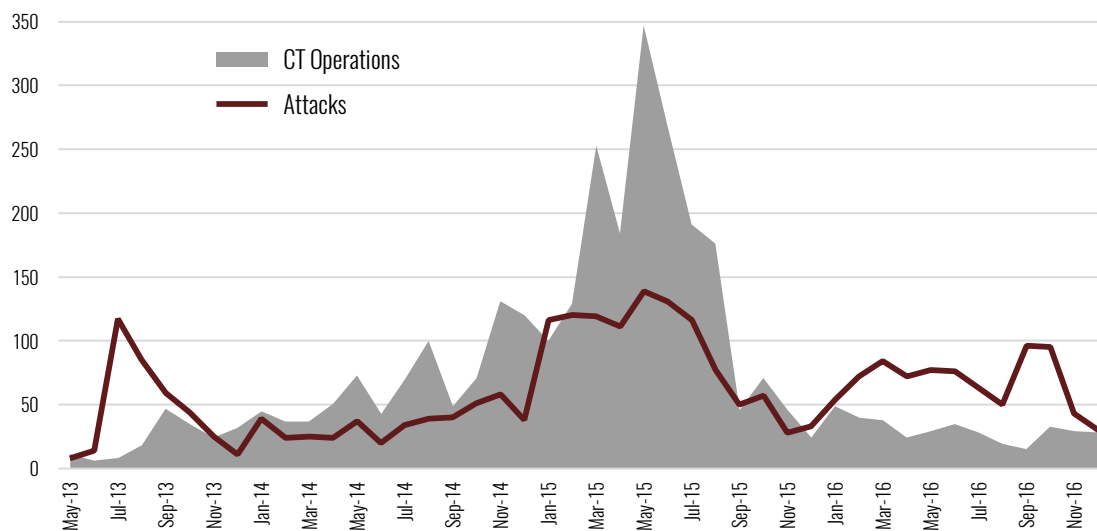
The following section showcases trends in reported counter-terror operations throughout Egypt.

### Counter-terrorism operations increase slightly

Reports of counter-terrorism operations across Egypt increased this quarter, with 90 reported operations compared to 62 in the third quarter. This represents a 45 percent increase in reported counter-terrorism operations from last quarter and a 36 percent decrease from the same period in 2015, throughout which 141 operations were reported.

Officially reported counter-terrorism operations (from both the Ministry of Interior and the Ministry of Defense) also increased this quarter, with 24 operations compared to only five operations in the third quarter and seven in the second quarter. This represents a 380 percent increase in officially reported counter-terrorism operations since the third quarter and a 41 percent decrease from the same period in 2015, throughout which 41 operations were officially reported. Of the 24 officially reported operations, eight came from the Ministry of the Interior and 16 from the military spokesperson.

**Reported Counter-Terrorism Operations  
(Compared to Attacks across Egypt)**

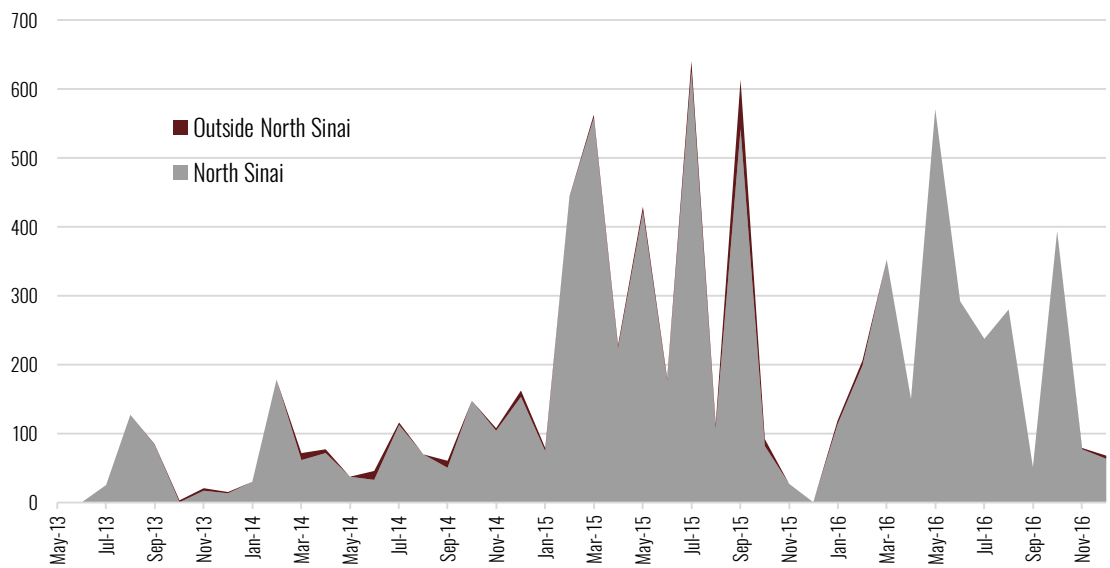


Operations reported in provinces other than North Sinai increased from four in the third quarter to 27 in the fourth quarter. Among activity reported in the mainland were seven counter-terrorism operations in Cairo and six in Giza. Official reports of counter-terrorism activity in the mainland also increased this quarter, with the military and ministry of interior claiming eight operations across Beni Suef, Cairo, Damietta, Fayoum, Giza, Monofeya, and Suez. After having issued no official reports of counter-terror efforts after February 2016, the Ministry of Interior resumed its reports in October—this may account for the increase in overall reports

as well, particularly given anti-terror legislation that criminalizes reporting anything outside of official government statistics. The ministry offered no explanation for the cessation nor resumption of reporting or conducting counter-terror efforts.

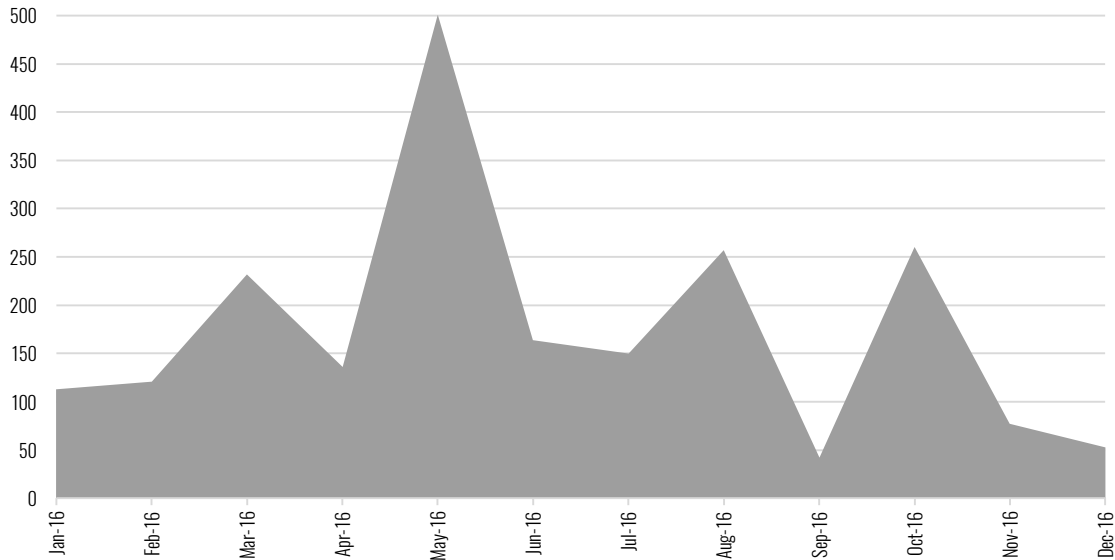
The total number of reported casualties in counter-terrorism operations across Egypt decreased slightly this quarter, with 540 casualties, compared to 568 in the third quarter.

### Reported Casualties in Counter-Terrorism Operations



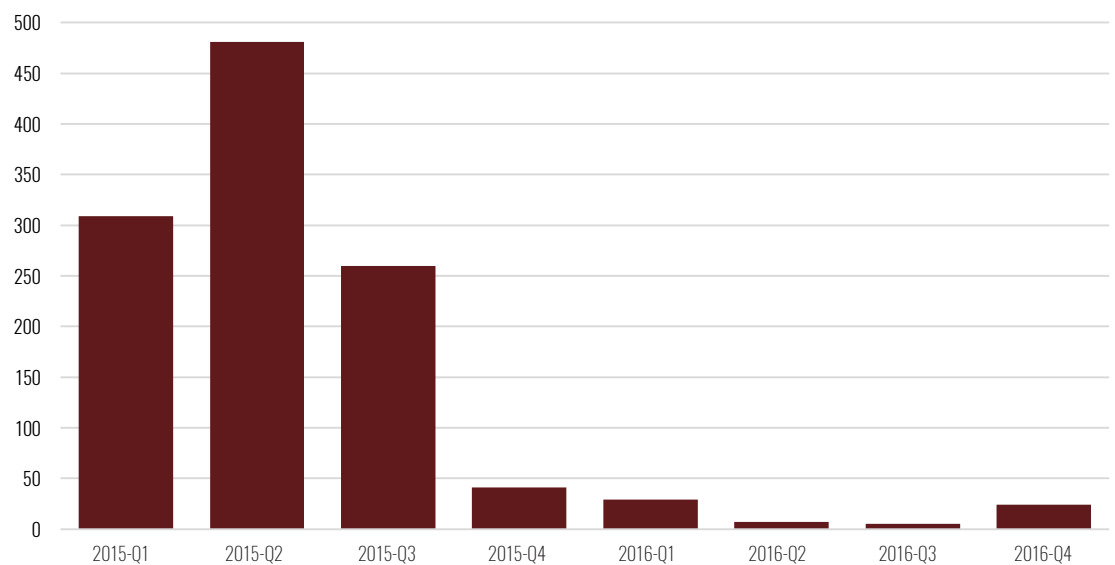
Among casualties reported in the fourth quarter were 397 fatalities and 143 injuries. Casualty numbers for officially reported operations more than doubled, from 80 in the third quarter to 164 in the fourth quarter, all of which were fatalities.

### Reported Fatalities in North Sinai CT Operations



The number of reported arrests in counter-terrorism operations across Egypt increased from 31 arrests in the third quarter to 40 in the fourth quarter. Twenty-four of the reported arrests were in the mainland.

### Official Reports of Counter-Terrorism Operations



## NOTABLE OPERATIONS

*The following section details notable domestic security operations.*

### **Security forces kill senior Brotherhood figures in separate shootouts**

The Ministry of Interior [announced on October 4](#) that police had killed Muhammad Kamal, a member of the Muslim Brotherhood's Guidance Bureau and former head of the youth committee. Security officials claim that Kamal and aide Yasser Shehata, who was also killed during the raid, had exchanged gunfire with police forces, though [the families' lawyer told Reuters](#) that the two surrendered peacefully and were shot after their homes had been searched. Kamal had been sentenced to life in absentia for sponsoring groups that attacked state institutions, while Shehata had been sentenced to 10 years on similar charges. Liwaa al-Thawra lamented Kamal's death, saying that the "assassination" would not go unpunished. Acting on information reportedly collected during the operation, security forces carried out another raid days later, in which 12 individuals were arrested on charges of being affiliated with Hasam, which the interior ministry asserts was formed by the Brotherhood.

Security forces reportedly engaged in another [shootout on November 3](#) during a raid on an apartment in Salam City in eastern Cairo. Police forces claimed to have returned fire when suspects opened fire on them from inside the apartment—a suspected weapons storage site and meeting spot for "Armed Movement Committees"—killing senior Muslim Brotherhood figure Ammar Muhammad Abdel Aleem.

### **Hasam, Liwaa al-Thawra members arrested throughout fourth quarter**

The Ministry of Interior carried out a number of additional operations directed at the Hasam and Liwaa al-Thawra organizations over the fourth quarter.

- On November 4, the [interior ministry announced it had arrested five alleged leaders](#) of Liwaa al-Thawra and Hasam, which the ministry's statement described as Muslim Brotherhood entities. Prosecutors also ordered the detention of a total of 30 individuals on charges of involvement in a number of attacks in the Greater Cairo area, including that which targeted former Grand Mufti of Egypt Ali Gomaa, Assistant Prosecutor General Zakaria Abdel Aziz Ahmed, and the Damietta Police Club.<sup>6</sup> The arrests came in light of Hasam's [unsuccessful assassination attempt](#) on Judge Ahmed Aboul Fatouh with a car bomb earlier that day in Nasr City.
- On December 6, security forces [killed three](#) individuals allegedly connected to Hasam during a raid on a home in Assiut. The Ministry of Interior said that the men opened fire on security forces as they prepared to conduct the raid.
- On December 18, police [carried out](#) a raid on a "terrorist hideout" in Sixth of October City, killing Mohamed Ashour Dashisha. Hasam released a martyrdom announcement acknowledging Dashisha's death. A central security forces conscript was also killed during the raid.

<sup>6</sup> It is unclear whether these 30 individuals include the five alleged leaders of Hasam and Liwaa al-Thawra.

These arrests culminated in the Supreme State Security prosecution's [referral in January 2017](#) of more than 300 alleged members of Hasam to military prosecution; of these, 144 have so far been detained.

### **Suspects behind church bombing arrested**

Security forces arrested a number of suspects in connection to the suicide attack at [the St. Peter and St. Paul Coptic Orthodox Church](#) on December 11. Only a day after the attack, the interior ministry announced the arrest of [four suspects](#) during a raid. The ministry alleged that the individuals—part of a cell led by one Mohab Qassem—are [connected to the Brotherhood in Qatar](#) and the Islamic State's branch in Sinai. Days later, a worker and his wife were detained on suspicion of involvement in the attack, though it is unclear whether they were indicted. In early January, the interior ministry announced the arrest of [three more](#) suspects, who were reportedly caught with improvised explosives and other homemade weapons; two of the individuals were videotaped confessing their crimes. ([As TIMEP's Allison McManus and Jacob Greene have previously explained](#), the manner in which confessions are often elicited raises strong concerns about due process and the efficacy of the state's investigations into these heinous crimes.<sup>7</sup>)

While the video confessions described links to the Islamic State in Sinai, neither the individuals apprehended nor the security agencies claimed specific connection to the Islamic State in Egypt, the entity that officially claimed the attack.

## **SECURITY SECTOR DEVELOPMENTS**

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

### **New military figures appointed**

The Ministry of Defense made a number of [high-level reassignments](#) over the past quarter. Navy Chief of Staff Rear Admiral Ahmed Khaled Saeed was appointed as the new Commander of the Navy, with the outgoing Vice Admiral Osama Mounir retired from the military and took the post of Vice Chairman of the Suez Canal Authority. Air Defense Forces Chief of Staff Major General Ali Fahmy Muhammad Ali Fahmy was appointed Commander of the Air Defense Forces, and the outgoing Lieutenant General Abdel Moneim al-Teras retired from active duty and was appointed as a presidential advisor. The ministry also announced [the appointment](#) on January 1 of Colonel Tamer al-Refaie as spokesperson for the armed forces, replacing Brigadier General Muhammad Samir, who [held that position](#) since July 2014 but left to [become deputy](#) chairman of the board of directors of Sherry Media Company. Colonel Refaie, who graduated from the military academy in 1994, previously served as a senior information analyst in military intelligence.

### **Egypt receives first of four submarines**

In early December, Egypt [received](#) its first Type-209/1400 submarine from Germany. Egypt has purchased a total of four diesel-electric submarines from German manufacturer ThyssenKrupp, with two ordered in 2011 and an additional two ordered in 2014.

<sup>7</sup> Allison McManus and Jacob Greene, "Crying Wolf: How Sisi Plays Politics With Terrorism," *Foreign Affairs*, April 26, 2016, <https://www.foreignaffairs.com/articles/egypt/2016-04-27/crying-wolf>.

# 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.*

### Notable terrorism cases

The fourth quarter saw a number of notable developments in terrorism-related cases, including:

- On October 4, Cairo Criminal Court [sentenced two individuals](#) to death in the “returnees from Libya” case in which the individuals had been apprehended entering the Salloum border crossing and charged with belonging to an armed group; four defendants received life in prison, one a 15-year sentence, and seven others three-year sentences. Two were acquitted of charges. Cairo Criminal Court [upheld the death sentences on November 5](#). Two defendants, including dual Egyptian-American national Omar Hamam, were acquitted.
- On October 5, state security prosecution [extended for an additional 15](#) days the detention of six bus drivers who faced charges of establishing a terrorist cell within the Public Transportation Authority.
- On November 5, Cairo Criminal Court [heard testimony in the trial](#) of those accused of assassinating Prosecutor-General Hisham Barakat in June 2015. Sixty-seven people are standing for their alleged involvement in the attack.
- On November 25, state security prosecutors [referred 292 militants](#)—including 151 who are [already in custody](#)—to military prosecution, to be tried on charges of plotting to assassinate Sisi. The authorities concluded what they said was a yearlong investigation into several plots. They have reportedly extracted “confessions” from a number of the individuals, whom they allege are members of the Islamic State. Among the charged are [six former police officers](#).

### Adel Habara hanged amid outcry after church bombing

Egypt's Prisons Authority [carried out the death sentence of Adel Habara](#) on December 15, [amid calls for his execution](#) in the wake of the suicide bombing at St. Peter and St. Paul Coptic Orthodox Church earlier that week. The Court of Cassation [had upheld his death sentence](#) on December 12. Habara was convicted for his involvement in the so-called [Second Rafah Massacre](#) in August 2013, in which 25 policemen were killed, and for killing a policeman in Abu Kabir, among other crimes. The Muslim Brotherhood [denounced Habara's execution](#) the next day, calling it a new crime added to the “black record” of the state.

### Emergency law extended for North Sinai

President Abdel-Fattah El Sisi issued [Decree 487](#) in October, extending the state of emergency in areas of northern Sinai for an additional three months, effective October 31. Some areas of Sinai have been under emergency law since October 25, 2014. The law, which 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., was last extended in July. Members of the House of Representatives offered little resistance to the extension, though [five representatives were not present](#) for discussion.

## 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.*

### U.S. support for Egypt continues

The security relationship between the United States and Egypt continued to deepen over this quarter, which coincided with the election of President Donald Trump in early November. Sisi was reportedly the first foreign leader to congratulate Trump on his victory, an early sign of the budding bilateral relationship. While Trump's administration has not yet faced substantial criticism for its growing relationship with Egypt, Cairo has received criticism from multiple members of Congress about the restrictive law governing nongovernmental organizations which has passed the Egyptian House of Representatives but has not been ratified. Senators John McCain and Lindsey Graham [released a statement in late November](#) saying that if Sisi signed the NGO law, then they would work to strengthen democratic benchmarks and human rights conditions on U.S. security assistance to Egypt.

A number of visits by U.S. officials focused on security cooperation between the two countries. The visits to Egypt included:

- [Senator Jim Risch](#) led a delegation of Republican congressmen to Egypt in early October. Sisi [met](#) with the delegation and said that Egypt is [keen](#) to increase military and security cooperation.
- Representative Michael Conaway led a congressional delegation to Egypt in mid-October and [met](#) with Defense Minister General Sedki Sobhi and Foreign Minister Sameh Shoukry. The foreign ministry released a [statement](#) on the meeting that Shoukry [held](#) with the delegation, which also included Representatives [Ralph Abraham](#) and [Gwen Graham](#). All three serve on both the House Armed Services Committee and the House Agriculture Committee. According to the statement, the group discussed bilateral relations and regional developments, particularly in Syria, Libya, Iraq, and Yemen.
- Defense Intelligence Agency Director Vincent Stewart [visited Cairo](#) in mid-November to meet with Sobhi and Chief of Staff of the Armed Forces Lieutenant General Mahmoud Hegazy.

Foreign Minister Shoukry visited Washington, in December and met with Vice-President-elect Mike Pence along with a number of members of Congress. Shoukry's visit focused on members of Congress serving on the Appropriations, Armed Services, and Foreign Relations/Affairs Committees, and Shoukry called for an increase in U.S. security assistance to Egypt.

### Relations with Russia deepen

Relations between Egypt and Russia continued to deepen over the past quarter in multiple sectors. In October, Russia and Egypt [partook in joint military exercises](#) dubbed Defenders of Friendship 2016, and conducted joint [paratrooping](#) exercises a month later. In November, Russia and Egypt [entered](#) negotiations to outfit the two *Mistral*-class warships that Egypt received from France in 2016 (and which had originally been designed for Russia). Additionally, progress was reportedly made toward a final contract between Egypt and Rosatom, Russia's state-run nuclear power company, on the Dabaa nuclear power plant.

In mid-October, Egypt voted in favor of both Russian- and French-proposed United Nations Security Council resolutions on Syria. The Russian resolution, which received fewer votes, notably [does not include](#) language

calling for an immediate end to the aerial attack on Aleppo. Saudi Arabia and Qatar have both [criticized](#) Egypt for voting for the Russian proposal.

### **Resumption of flights from Russia perpetually delayed**

Russian security delegations continued to arrive in Egypt throughout the past quarter to inspect airport security conditions. In late November, Russian Deputy Transport Minister Valery Okulov said that Egypt had [complied](#) with all recommendations from Russian experts on improving security. Russian officials had said that flights between Russia and Egypt would resume once security conditions were met in Egyptian airports and repeatedly said that flights [could resume](#) in 2016. Flights have resumed between [Luxor and London](#), [Sharm el-Sheikh and Germany](#), and [Sharm el-Sheikh and Belgium](#) during the past quarter, but not yet between Russia and Egypt.

More than a year after the crash of a Russian commercial aircraft over the Sinai Peninsula in October 2015, the investigation has only completed its first phase. Media reports speculated in October of this quarter that results from the first phase of the investigation would be published by the end of the 2016, but they were not published.



# 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, quarterly 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