



The Tahrir Institute
for Middle East Policy

EGYPT SECURITY WATCH



FIVE YEARS OF EGYPT'S WAR ON TERROR

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This report is the product of the collaborative efforts of TIMEP's staff and fellows.

Cover image: A security checkpoint in the Egyptian Western Desert and the Bahariya Oasis in Siwa, Egypt, May 15, 2015

(photo by Amr Abdallah Dalsh for Reuters)

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INTRODUCTION

On July 24, 2013, then-Defense Minister Abdel-Fattah El Sisi asked for a popular mandate to fight terrorism, marking the declaration of the “war on terror” that has lasted five years. The war on terror has been used to justify a wide range of activity in the name of establishing security. As attacks and assassinations occurred with greater regularity after the summer of 2013, so too did counter-terror operations and arrests across the country. New or amended legislation broadened the scope of crimes and actors that could be prosecuted to establish “national security,” and, despite the increased evidence of rights abuse, torture, and other forms of repression over the past four years, most domestic and international actors have offered nearly unconditional support.

A year after the *tafweed* (mandate) speech, the Tahrir Institute for Middle East Policy established its Egypt Security Watch project to address questions that, despite the significance of the developments occurring around the war on terror, remained unanswered: How severe was the problem of terrorism in Egypt? Who were the actors carrying out these attacks? Were the state’s efforts adequate and appropriate to mitigate violence? What are the long-term prospects for establishing security in Egypt?

TIMEP’s first Egypt Security Watch report warned that the country’s “current strategy appears poised to achieve only a tenuous suspension of terror activities in Egypt at best and may simply drive violent actors to hone their recruitment strategies.” Our findings today indicate that, while the number of attacks reported each day have abated somewhat, Egypt is in a similar place as it was when the war on terror was declared. Those governing Egypt and its security bodies have failed to adapt tactics to evolving security threats; to develop a long-term, strategic counter-terror policy; or to carry out a holistic program to prevent radicalization that opens channels to peacefully express grievances, rather relying on collective punishment and politicized tactics. This approach leaves Egypt no closer to eradicating extremism, preventing future radicalization, or achieving long-term stability than at the start of the war on terror.

This report outlines trends and developments that have taken place in the past five years of the war on terror and examines the legal and political context in which they have occurred. Finally, it offers summary findings with the aim of furthering efforts to establish peace and security that center rights and the rule of law as their foundation. After our four years of data collection and research, we have firmly concluded that only a rights-based framework can establish the long-term security and stability sought by the Egyptian government, its citizens, and its allies around the world.

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

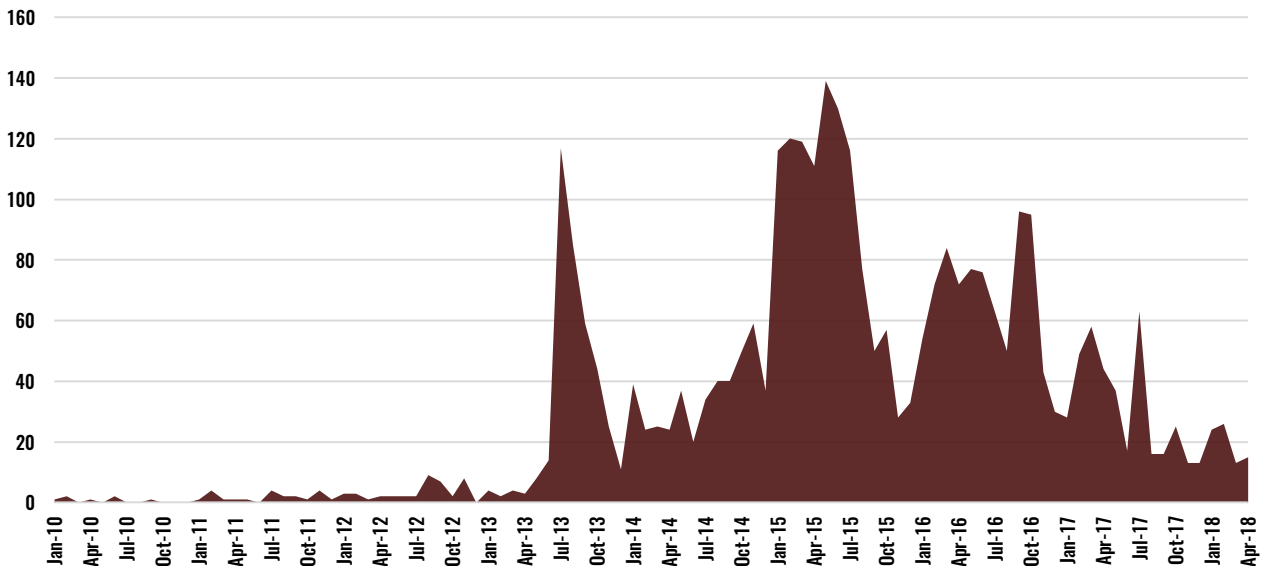
The following is a summary that briefly states trends and developments in terrorism and counter-terrorism in Sinai and the mainland. The details of each finding are further clarified in the respective sections of the report, particularly explaining the context in which such trends have evolved.

TERRORISM

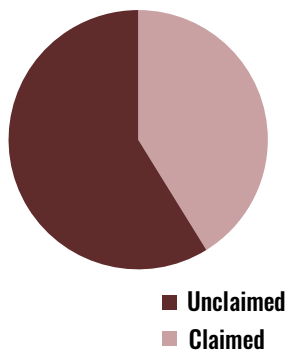
Trends and Developments Across Egypt

- Violence across Egypt increased after the revolutionary events in 2011, but it changed in character. Over the course of the summer of 2013, rather than frequent but random and spontaneous violence that often erupted from protests under duress, **violence increasingly became a tool of offense against the state, rather than a defensive mechanism**, taking on a premeditated, organized, and political character.

Attacks Reported Across Egypt



Attacks Claimed 2013 to Present

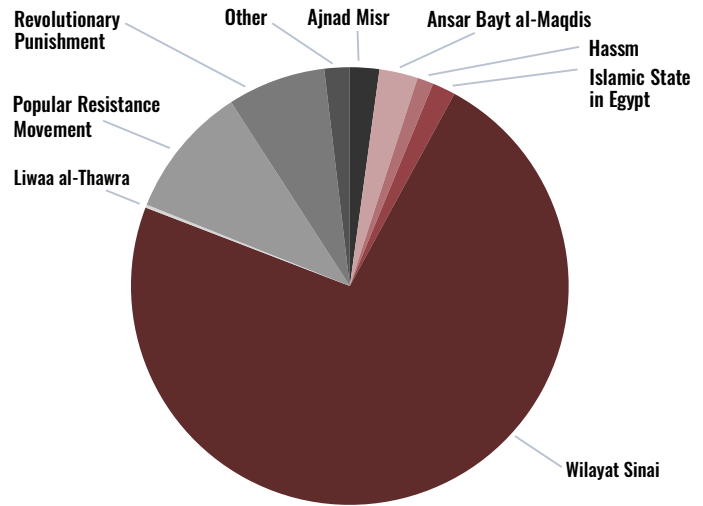


- While 56 percent of attacks remain unclaimed since the war on terror was declared, the actor landscape has undergone major shifts, with evolution in existing groups, the emergence of new groups, and the neutralization of others. From the end of 2013 to the present, 1,343 attacks have had claims of responsibility, either by established groups such as Ansar Bayt al-Maqdis (ABM) in North Sinai, which pledged its allegiance to the Islamic State in 2014; groups such as the Popular Resistance Movement and Revolutionary Punishment that emerged in December 2014; or Hassm and Liwaa al-Thawra, which claimed attacks until September 2017.

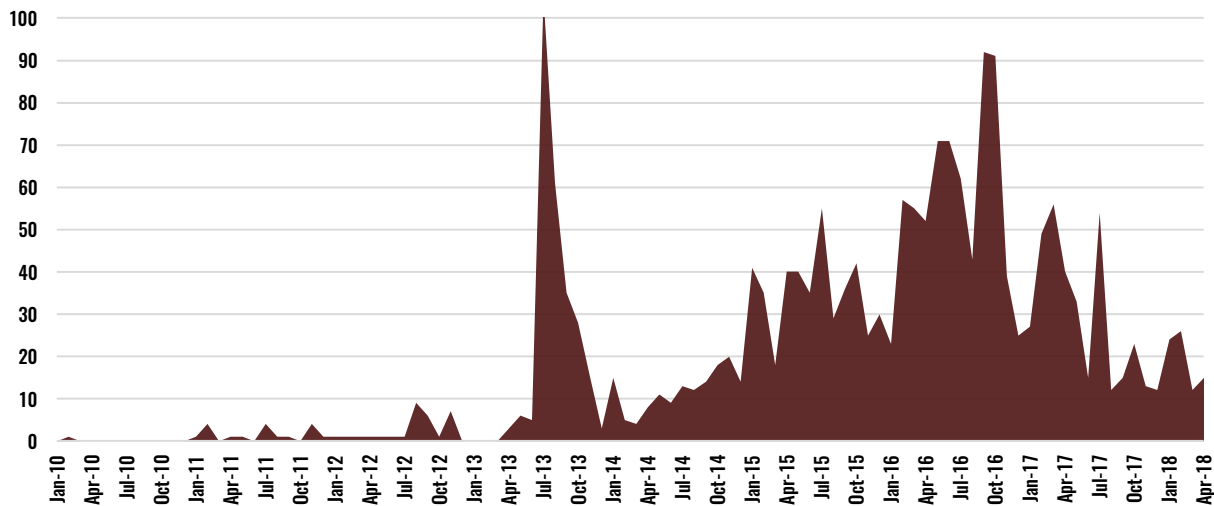
EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

- The targeting of security forces has been a mainstay of violence in the past five years. Sixty-six percent of all attacks across Egypt during this time have targeted security forces, and 56 percent of fatalities have been security forces.¹ Only the Red Sea province has not been the site of an attack on security forces, and security personnel have died in a terror attack every month since the war on terror was declared, either because they were specifically targeted or simply for representing the state.

Attacks Claimed 2010 to Present



Attacks Reported Targeting Security Forces

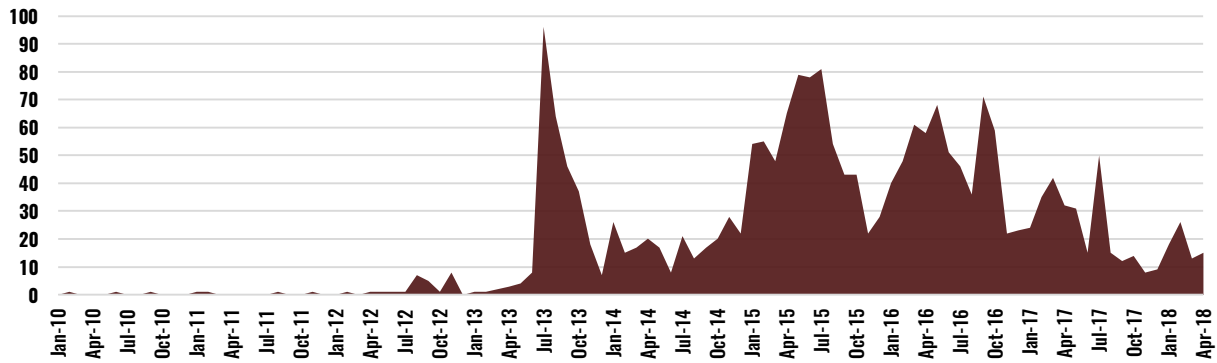


Trends and Developments in North Sinai

- **July 2013 through 2014:** Attacks increased significantly in North Sinai during this time, with 19 attacks reported on average per month in the year following the declaration of the war on terror, compared to 10 in the year prior. Only five percent of these attacks were claimed by any group, the majority by ABM, which claimed 23 attacks inside and 15 attacks elsewhere in Egypt (as well as several other attacks on Israeli targets) from the time of its emergence in 2011 to its declaration of allegiance to the Islamic State in November 2014.

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

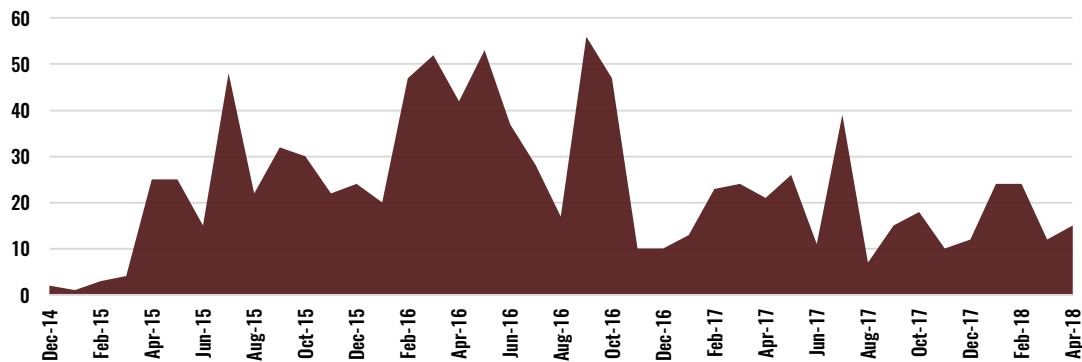
Attacks Reported in North Sinai



- Summer and Fall 2014:** After a split occurred within ABM, the group pledged allegiance to the Islamic State, establishing the global jihadist organization’s “Sinai Province.” In October 2014, militants in North Sinai carried out a coordinated attack on the Karm al-Quwadees checkpoint, killing over 30 security personnel. Earlier in the summer, a Sinai-based group of militants carried out as a major attack on the Farafra Oasis in the Western Desert, killing 22 soldiers at a checkpoint as they were breaking their Ramadan fast. These attacks signified a split within ABM, as former Egyptian special forces officer Hisham Ashmawy traveled to Libya to form al-Morabitoon, remaining within the al-Qaeda network as his counterparts remaining in North Sinai pledged allegiance to Abu Bakr al-Baghdadi and became Wilayat Sinai—the Islamic State’s “Sinai Province.”

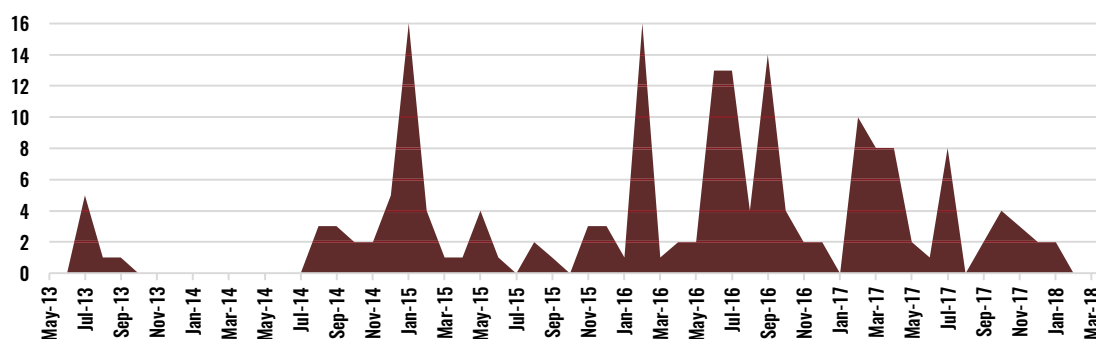
- November 2014 to October 2016:** After joining the Islamic State’s global jihadist project, Wilayat Sinai began carrying out more frequent, deadlier, and more mediatized attacks. To date, Wilayat Sinai has claimed 995 attacks killing over 588 security personnel and 329 civilians. It shifted its tactics, embracing the Islamic State-style spectacle violence, beheading those it deemed spies as well as others, such as Croatian Tomislav Salopek. Ninety-nine percent of its violence has been contained in the mainland, where it also attempts to project its capacity in state building, with photo propaganda of service provision and its own systems of justice. Despite the prominence of Wilayat Sinai, about 40 percent of attacks reported in the province during this period were not claimed by the group.

Attacks Claimed by Wilayat Sinai



- October 31, 2015:** An attack on an aircraft showed that the allegiance to the Islamic State influences Wilayat Sinai's tactics, including an increased targeting of civilians. Although civilians were undoubtedly the victims of its attacks, Wilayat Sinai had shown some reluctance to target civilians directly, until late 2016. The group gradually began to embrace targeting civilians, and it eventually claimed responsibility for taking down a Russian Metrojet passenger aircraft on October 31, 2015. Two hundred and twenty-four individuals were killed in the attack, including 219 Russian citizens, four Ukrainians, and one Belarus national; the attack opened up an increased targeting of civilians, and from January 2016 to July 2017, at least 200 civilians were reported killed in attacks.

Attacks Targeting Civilians in North Sinai



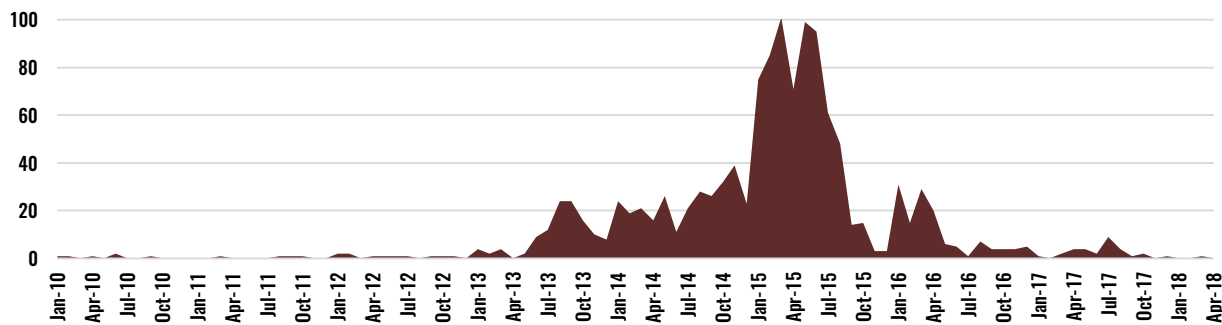
- January 2016 to November 2017:** Soon after it began readily targeting civilians, Wilayat Sinai adopted sectarian targeting in earnest. In early 2016, four Muslim preachers were attacked by unidentified assailants in North Sinai, and sectarian violence in the province continued over the next two years, as jihadist militants attacked any who did not conform to their vision of Islam, with Muslims and Christians alike falling into their crosshairs. During this time, militants were reported to have entered Christians' homes and carried out brutal attacks, until the province's Christian population eventually fled the violence and lack of protection. In the deadliest terror attack in modern Egypt's history, 311 civilians were killed and an additional 128 injured at Belal Mosque in Rawda, North Sinai, on November 24, 2017, after Wilayat Sinai militants warned them to stop practicing Sufi rituals. The attack itself was never claimed.

- 2017 to Present:** While less frequently reported than in 2015 and 2016, attacks have continued in the province and evidence of new armed groups has emerged. Just over 14 attacks per month have been reported on average from August 2017 to the time of publication, lower than the rate of attacks in the first year of the war on terror but well above the rate in the years prior. Wilayat Sinai continues to regularly claim attacks (albeit at a much lower rate in the second quarter of 2018), which recently included a major assault in central Sinai in April 2018 that killed at least 20 security personnel, including officers. Wilayat Sinai has also continued to claim assassinations of civilians, primarily in and around Arish. In late 2017, an al-Qaeda-affiliated group in North Sinai (Jund al-Islam) claimed to have killed four Wilayat Sinai militants. From 2016, military-backed tribal militias have emerged, with evidence that they have carried out egregious human rights abuses. Finally, unclaimed attacks continue; to date no group has publicly claimed responsibility for the Rawda mosque attack.

Trends and Developments in the Mainland

- **July 2013 to December 2014:** After a spike in July and August 2013, attack trends in the mainland mirrored those in North Sinai and subsided slightly from the intense period of violence around President Muhammad Morsi’s ouster. An average of 20 attacks were reported per month during the period from late July until the end of 2014. Of these, only 32 were claimed by established groups, with the al-Qaeda-affiliated Ajnad Misr emerging in January 2014 and continuing to carry out attacks against security personnel until its leader was killed in a security operation in April 2015.

Attacks Reported on the Mainland

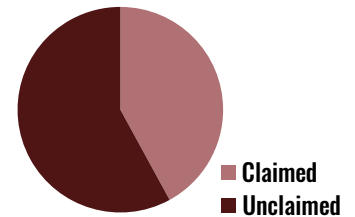


- **January 2015:** In a statement on January 24, 2015, a group calling itself the Allied Popular Resistance Movement announced its presence, citing changes within the youth leadership of the Muslim Brotherhood as an impetus for its formation. The alliance comprised several local groups across the whole of Egypt that carried out low levels of violence against the Egyptian security apparatus and those they have seen as supportive the military-backed ouster of Morsi, with a special focus on economic infrastructure to undermine the state. Collectively, the alliance claimed to have carried out over 228 attacks throughout 2015 and 2016.

- **July 2015:** The Islamic State in Egypt emerged as the Islamic State’s affiliate in the Egyptian mainland. The entity—which distinguished itself from its counterpart in Sinai—first claimed responsibility for an attack targeting the Italian consulate in Cairo on July 11, 2015. The group claimed a total of 21 attacks across eight provinces in mainland Egypt after that time. Its relationship with Wilayat Sinai was never made clear.

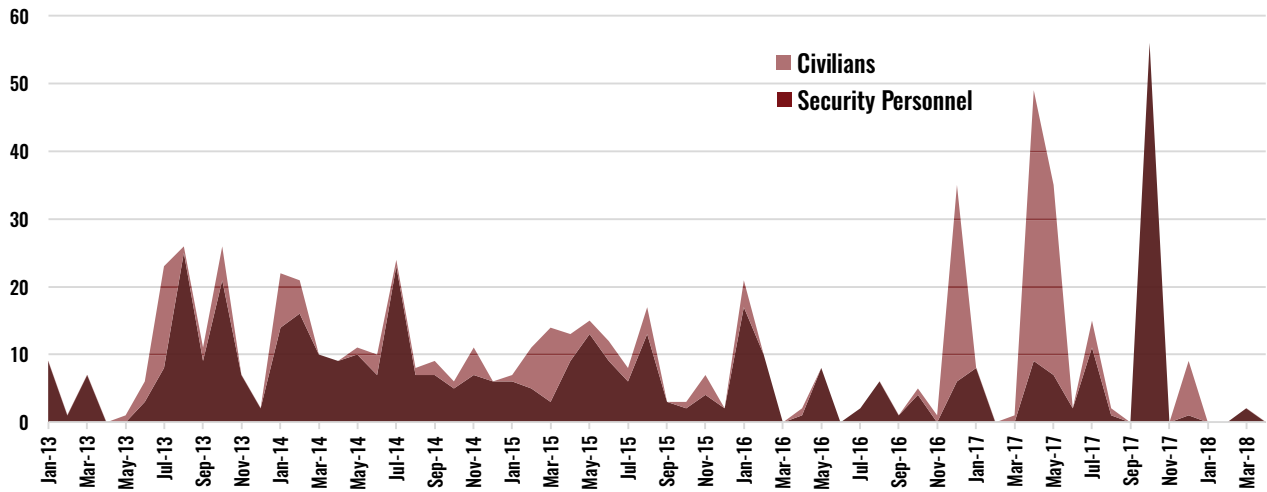
- **August 2015 to January 2018:** After August 2015, violence in the mainland declined sharply, though the attacks that continued were deadly, and two new groups—Hassm and Liwaa al-Thawra—emerged, claiming 16 and three attacks on security personnel and government institutions, respectively. Attacks resulting in at least one fatality remained fairly constant during this time, at about three reported per month on average, with 122 civilians and 161 security personnel reported killed during this time.

Attacks Reported on the Mainland since July 24, 2013



EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

Fatalities Reported in Attacks on the Mainland



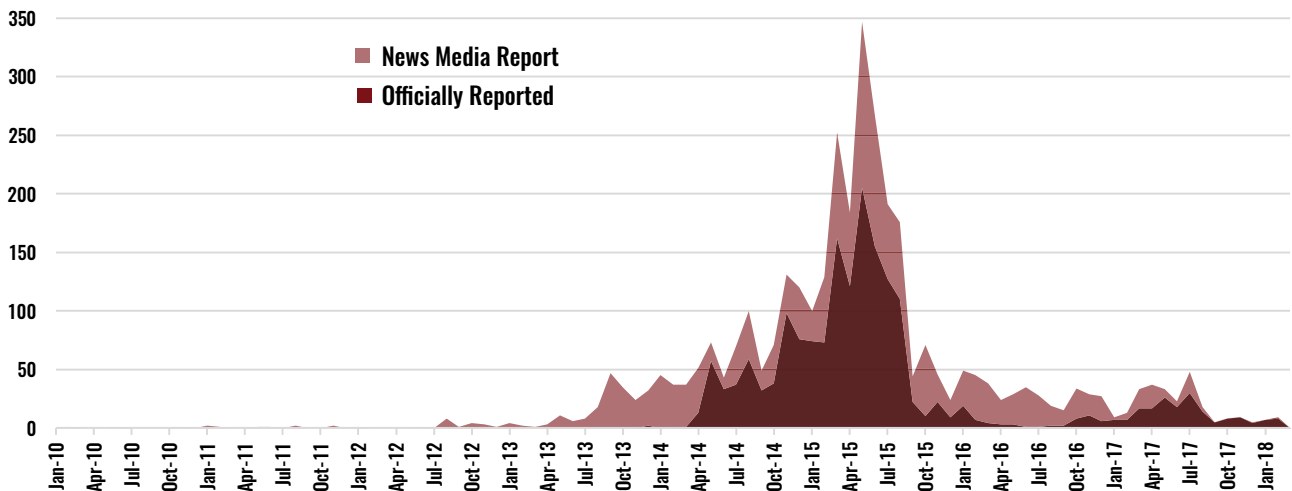
- **January 2018 to Present:** Reports of attacks in the mainland have nearly halted since the start of 2018, with only one major attack reported during this period (an unclaimed, failed attempt to assassinate Alexandria’s security chief). The reasons for the halt—whether violence has stopped or reporting has slowed amid strict state controls on media—are unclear. Additionally, while the overall reduction in violence bodes well, incidence of intermittent and underreported attacks in the Western Desert remains a concern.

COUNTER-TERRORISM

Trends and Developments Across Egypt

- Thousands of counter-terror operations have been reported by official state and other news media since President Abdel-Fattah El Sisi announced the war on terror. In the 12 months prior to Sisi’s 2013 *tafweed* speech, about 50 security operations were reported across Egypt, 61 percent of which were in Sinai. Since July 2013, the ministries have officially reported 1,800 security operations across Egypt, and 1,672 further operations have been reported in news media. About 39 percent of these operations have been reported in North Sinai.

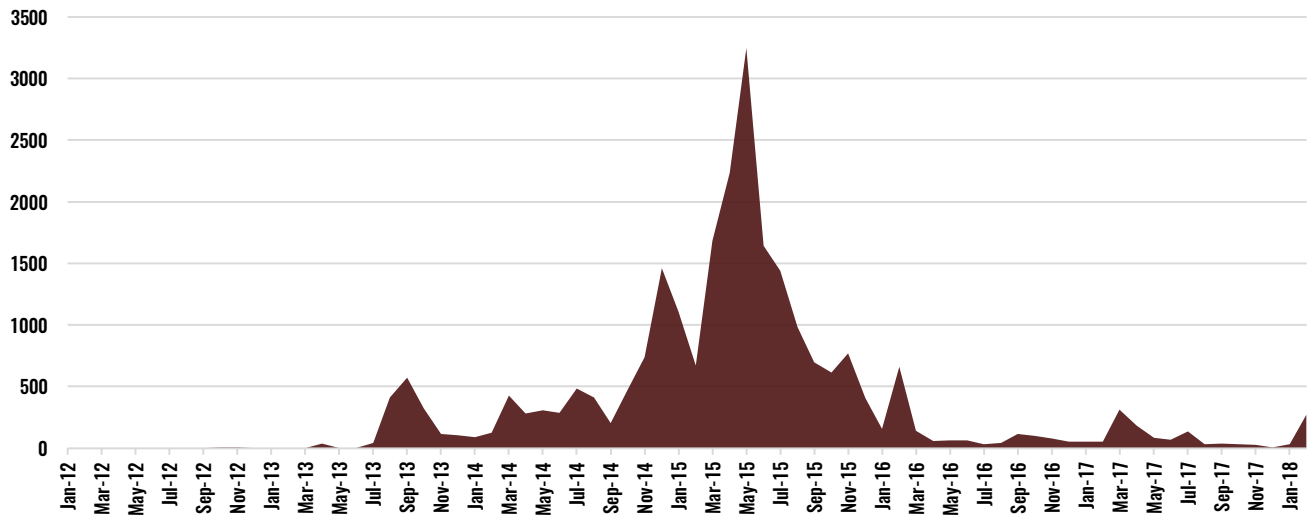
Counter-Terror Operations Reported



EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

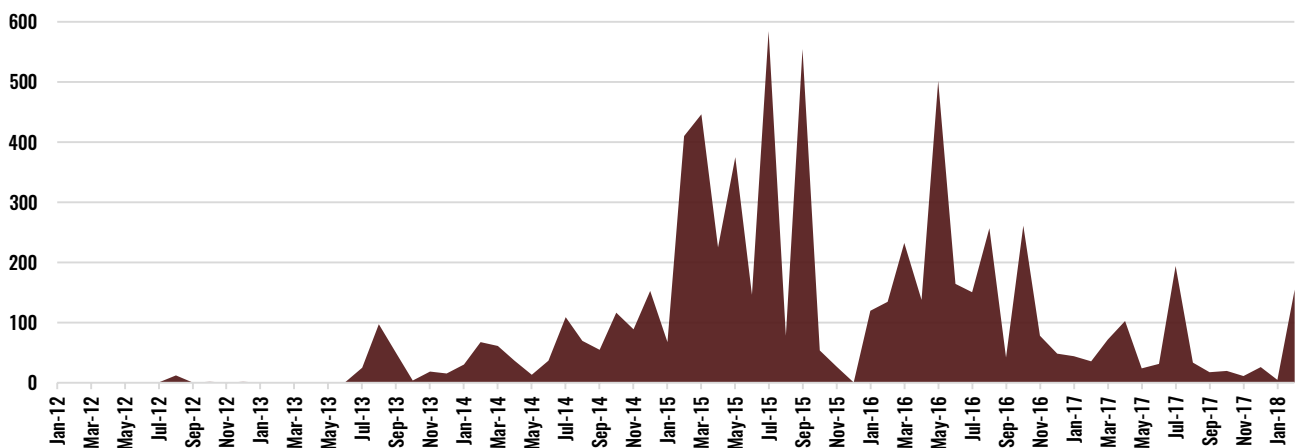
- Over 27,000 individuals have been reported arrested in counter-terror operations;² reports of arrests peaked, with as many as 3,000 reported arrested in May 2015 alone, though they have since abated. About half of these were described as members of the Muslim Brotherhood, which was declared a terrorist organization in late 2013, and another more than 11,500 were arrested without having been publicly affiliated with any known terror group.

Arrests Reported in Counter-Terror Operations



- A staggering number of deaths have been reported in counter-terror operations, totaling more than 7,097 reported killed since the declaration of the war on terror, with periods of escalation throughout the five years. Ninety-five percent of all reported deaths have occurred in North Sinai, and 41 percent were reported by the military or Ministry of Interior directly.

Deaths Reported in Counter-Terror Operations



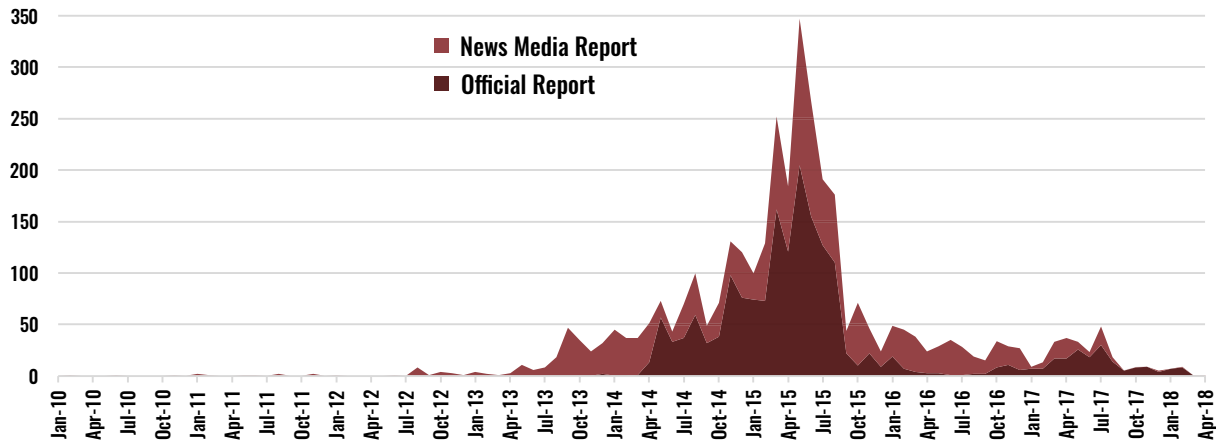
Trends and Developments in North Sinai

- **July 2013 to July 2015:** While operations picked up in North Sinai after the *tafweed* speech, they hovered at about 21 operations and 44 deaths of individuals—usually described merely as “takfiris”—reported per month. These numbers spiked after Wilayat Sinai militants briefly overtook the city of Sheikh Zuweid, an attack that drew a forceful response from the Egyptian military, which

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

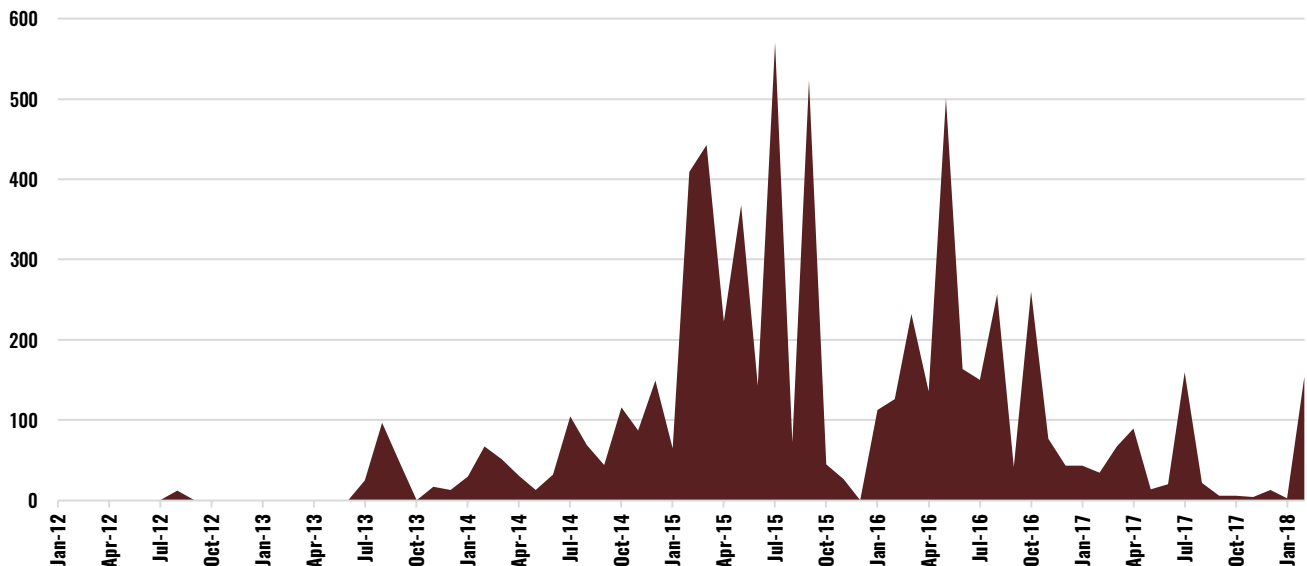
conducted almost immediate aerial bombardment to drive the militants back. While evidence of extrajudicial killings and civilian fatalities have been reported, the military has not acknowledged any collateral damage in its five-year-long war on terror.

Counter-Terror Operations Reported in North Sinai



- September 2015 to February 2018:** In the wake of the Sheikh Zuweid assault, the military announced Operation Martyr's Right, a campaign that was intended to have several phases. These phases were initially to include both kinetic strikes and, later, economic development plans, but the latter never truly materialized. Five hundred and fourteen operations were reported as part of Operation Martyr's Right, killing a reported 3,163 through September 2017. No conclusion was ever formally announced to the operation.
- February 2018 to Present:** Three months after the Rawda mosque attack, the military announced the commencement of a new campaign, Operation Sinai 2018, described as a comprehensive campaign across the country. To date, the military has announced the deaths of 347 militants and arrest of over 4,000 more in relation to Operation Sinai 2018. Like Martyr's Right, no clear objectives or timeline were announced that would indicate success or a conclusion to the campaign.

Deaths Reported in Counter-Terror Operations in North Sinai

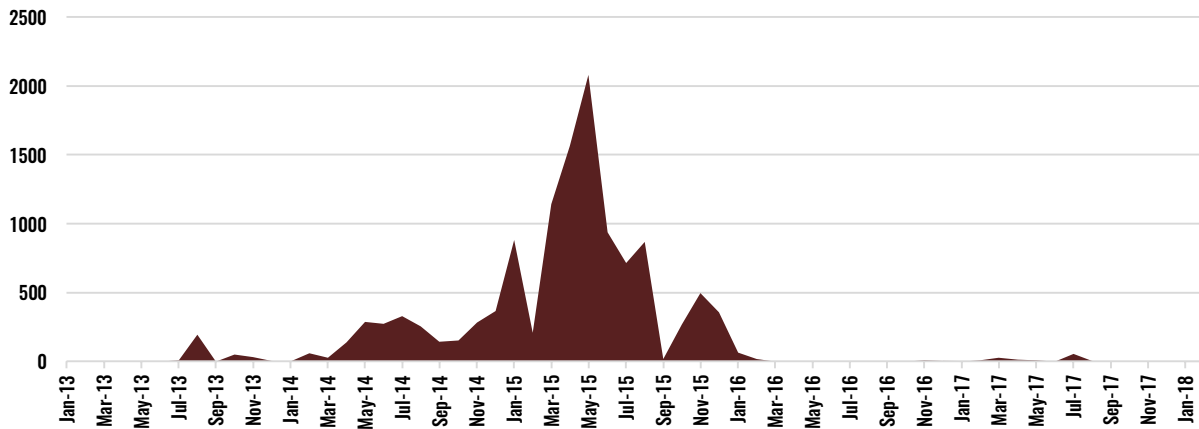


EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

Trends and Developments in the Mainland

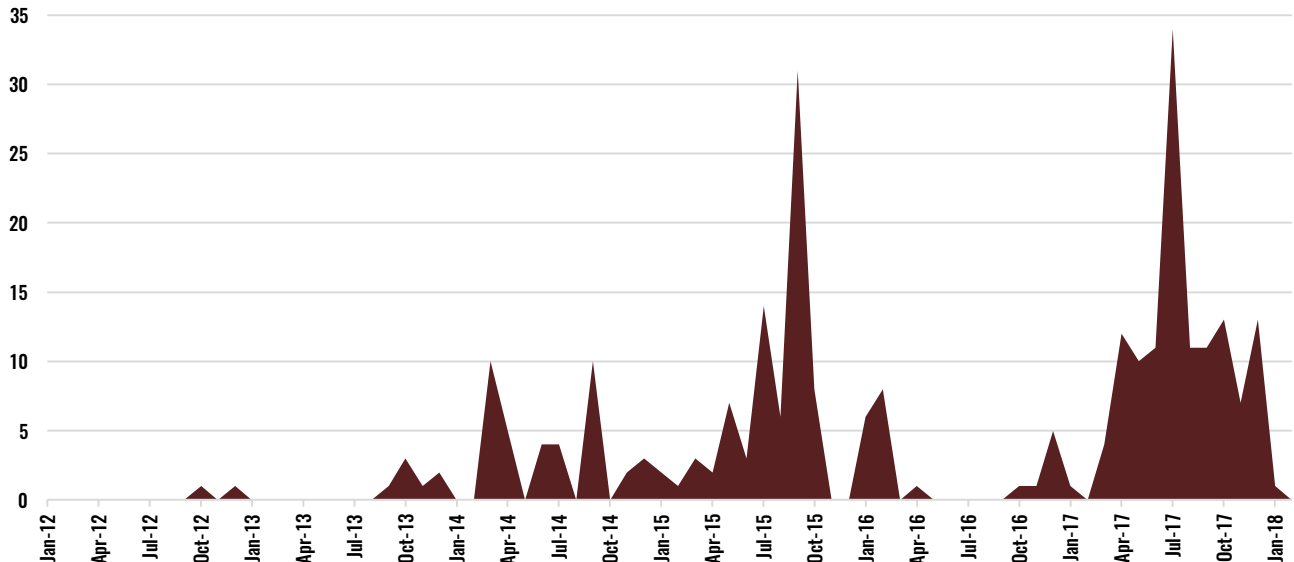
• **July 2013 to May 2015:** During the period after Sisi’s *tafweed* speech, Egypt’s Ministry of Interior waged a sweeping campaign of raids and arrests across mainland Egypt, largely focusing on the Muslim Brotherhood. More than 1,400 counter-terror operations reported during this time targeted alleged members of the Brotherhood and resulted in more than 12,000 arrests, including for nonviolent crimes, such as possession of Brotherhood paraphernalia or administration of Facebook pages that support the organization, both of which are considered crimes of terrorism under Egyptian law.

Arrests Reported for Suspected Muslim Brotherhood Affiliation



• **May 2015 to December 2017:** During this time, reports of “clashes” or “shootouts,” primarily with alleged members of Hassm, rose as arrests fell. Reports of arrests began to dwindle in 2016 and 2017, dropping to 19 arrests reported per month, as the Ministry of Interior effectively stopped reporting any counter-terror activity on its official Facebook page. These “clashes” have resulted in the deaths of 173 individuals since May 2015. Some of this activity raised suspicions, when alleged “terrorists” were reported to have been in police custody at the time the clashes occurred.

Deaths Reported in Counter-Terror Operations Outside of North Sinai



EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

- **January 2018 to Present:** Reports of operations and arrests in the mainland have subsided considerably, though the reasons for this are not immediately clear; the slowdown may be the result of an actual decrease in operations, the result of a halt in reporting on operations, or a combination of both.

LEGAL AND POLITICAL CONTEXT

Legal and Judicial Context

- After the *tafweed* speech, Sisi issued anti-terror legislation in the absence of a parliament, creating a legal framework to facilitate broad and indiscriminate arrests, operations, and prosecutions. These laws, which were summarily passed once a new House of Representatives was finally seated in January 2016, allow for a range of nonviolent activity to be considered terrorism, and have granted the police, military, and courts the ability to arrest and levy harsh punishments to peaceful dissidents. New national security laws issued by the House have continued this trend, broadening the definition of terrorism and the scope of activity that could be construed as such.
- The enactment of the state of emergency in April 2017 has recreated a scenario by which Egyptians have lived in a continuous state of legal exception, granting the executive sweeping and extraordinary powers to maintain national security. Avoiding such a state was a focal point of revolutionary calls in 2011, and protections against its continuous application were put in place in the 2014 constitution. Despite this, the government has continued to engage in legal gymnastics to ensure its continuous application for over a year, with no signs of allowing its expiration in the near future.
- Terrorism cases are tried in several of Egypt's courts, with seemingly arbitrary jurisdiction between them; civilians may be tried in military courts, in special counter-terrorism circuits in criminal courts, or in state security emergency courts for crimes of terrorism. **In each of these court systems, infringements on due process rights raise serious concerns about the ability to effectively prosecute terrorism and respect human rights.** The politicization of these terrorism cases, in which a number of peaceful dissidents have been implicated, further undermines the rule of law.

The politicization of terrorism cases, in which a number of peaceful dissidents have been implicated, further undermines the rule of law.

Domestic Political Context

- Major security sector reshuffles have revealed Sisi's preference for maintaining a close circle of loyalists over rewarding merit and holding failure to account throughout the war on terror. Despite major setbacks and ample evidence of rights abuse under their tenure, figures such as Interior Minister Magdy Abdel Ghaffar retained their positions (until ultimately being dismissed in a political reshuffling after Sisi's inauguration to a second term), while those who had shown their loyalty to the president, such as recently appointed Minister of Defense Muhammad Ahmed Zaki, have been rewarded.
- The Egyptian state has made every effort to control the narrative around its war on terror, resorting to drastic measures to curtail any independent reporting on the country's security situation. These have included the targeted harassment of journalists, including arrests and prosecutions; the inclusion of language in anti-terror legislation that criminalizes reporting statistics other than those officially issued by the government; media gags on sensitive security-related events; and mass censorship of online media forums.

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

- **Despite ample concerns about the efficacy and legality of the war on terror, it has garnered broad support from Egypt's domestic political actors.** The House of Representatives has posed no opposition whatsoever to any government-authored security legislation and failed to call any ministry to account for any one of the numerous reports of rights abuses, while politicians across partisan lines have voiced full-throated support for Sisi's war on terror.

Geopolitical Context

- **Washington has largely continued its support for Egypt's war on terror across two very different administrations, though material support is increasingly on the wane.** Although U.S. President Donald Trump has vocally expressed his support for Sisi, growing bipartisan disapproval in Congress over Egypt's continued abuses of rights and freedoms, combined with its intent to contain the security threat, has converged with the Trump administration's desire to curtail foreign spending and frustration with Egypt's relationship with North Korea. This dynamic has resulted in the potential for aid to dip below \$1 billion in 2018, for the first time since 1983.

- Egypt has increasingly turned to European countries to fulfill large-ticket item weapons contracts, and, despite concerns about Egypt's security approach (particularly centered on the brutal murder of Italian Ph.D. student Giulio Regeni), **European Union member states have inked over \$10 billion in arms contracts since the declaration of the war on terror.** Notably, after the 2016 sale of Rafale fighter jets and *Mistral*-class warships, France overtook the United States as the top provider of weapons to Egypt; German arms exports have increased more than 200 percent in the past five years.

- Regional actors have continued to support Egypt's war on terror, and Israeli-Egyptian relations have reached an all-time high, with shared concerns over Sinai security as a cornerstone. While both sides have denied reports of Israeli strikes within Egypt, **the ability of the Egyptian military to carry out operations in demilitarized zones demonstrates the countries' shared interest** when it comes to fighting the insurgency on its border.

Curtailing human rights and undermining the rule of law in the name of the war on terror has not proven effective to eradicate terrorism.

FINDINGS

Summary Findings

- **Curtailing human rights and undermining the rule of law in the name of the war on terror has not proven effective for eradicating terrorism.** These measures, which have included restriction of information, due process infringement, and extrajudicial justice (including summary executions and collective punishment) may have contributed to fewer attacks in some cases, but have equally risked radicalizing a population and growing militants' recruitment pools in others. Furthermore, the high social and economic costs of a politicized, sweeping, and inefficient war on terror will be borne by Egyptian society for years to come.

- **The continued insurgency in North Sinai, despite years of sustained military operations, including thousands of deaths and arrests, demonstrates why such an approach is unsustainable.** Despite the military's claims to have killed over 3,000 in the province since May 2014, with another nearly 9,000 reported arrested during that time, attacks continue, raising serious doubts about the military's ability to effectively target threats, and rather underscore a campaign of collective punishment. This is particularly concerning given reports of the use of U.S.-manufactured cluster munitions, weapons that are inherently indiscriminate.

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

- Despite successive counter-terror campaigns, Sinai militants continue to replenish their numbers, either from local recruitment, from disenchanted mainland youth, or from abroad, and remain as serious a threat as they were when the war on terror began. The resilience of Wilayat Sinai and the proliferation of armed actors engaged in the war on terror in North Sinai suggest that, **without a strategy of disarmament, demobilization, and reintegration, along with the strengthening of rule of law, the establishment of security and stability in the province will remain impossible.** Ultimately, the province's civilian population has paid and will continue to pay the ultimate cost, suffering forced displacement, economic privation, and loss of life.
- Despite the ethical, strategic, and financial costs of the war on terror, Egypt continues to receive nearly unconditional support from foreign actors. While the U.S. has recently reduced its security assistance, **the international community's empowerment of the Egyptian state in waging an open-ended, costly, and ineffective war on terror gambles with the country's long-term stability.**

The international community's empowerment of the Egyptian state in its war on terror gambles with the country's long-term stability.

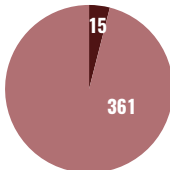
TERRORISM

ACROSS EGYPT: Intensification and evolution in terror attacks after 2013

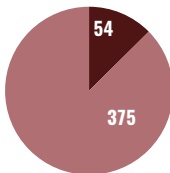
Attacks Reported

■ Unclaimed
■ Claimed

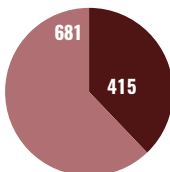
2013



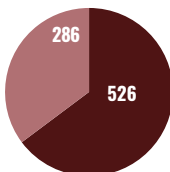
2014



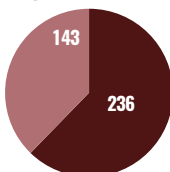
2015



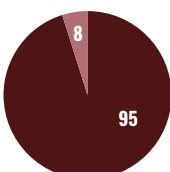
2016



2017



2018 (Jan-Jun)



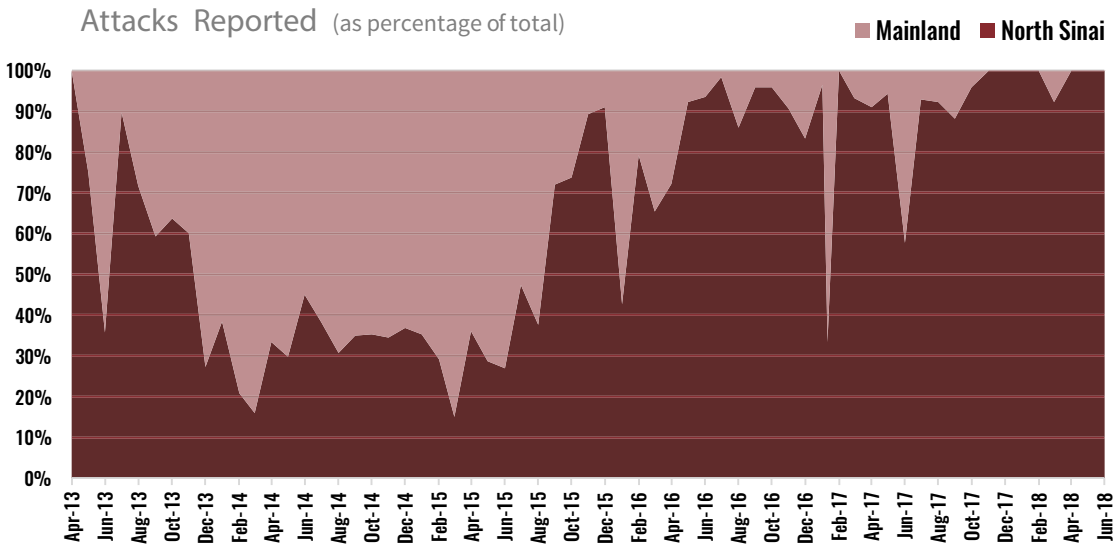
While violence across Egypt increased after the revolutionary events in 2011, it became more organized, premeditated, and politically motivated after mid-2013. After the ouster of President Muhammad Morsi, a clear shift in Egypt's security landscape occurred. Unlike the spontaneous eruptions of violence that characterized the period from 2011, in July 2013, attacks on security institutions, including police stations, checkpoints, individuals, and other targets, increasingly suggested premeditation. Taking place across the Nile Delta, in Sinai, and even in Upper Egypt, violence became a tool of offense rather than a mechanism of defense, and was designed to further the aims of a collective goal: to destroy the Egyptian military state.

While 56 percent of attacks have gone unclaimed since the war on terror was declared in 2013, one of the major shifts in trends in the security landscape has been the apparent consolidation of actors. While many attacks in the wake of Morsi's ouster were attributed to the Muslim Brotherhood, of 339 attacks that took place from July 2013 until the end of that year, only 14 were claimed by any group. The claims were made by the Furqan Brigades and al-Qaeda-affiliated groups Ajnad Misr and Ansar Bayt al-Maqdis (ABM). What began in the summer of 2013 as largely anonymous, seemingly uncoordinated attacks (though similar in *modi operandi*) gave way to more sophisticated attacks that tended to have detailed claims of responsibility.³ From the end of 2013 to the present, 1,343 attacks have had claims of responsibility, either by the aforementioned groups, their successors, or newly formed groups such as the Popular Resistance Movement and Revolutionary Punishment, which emerged in December 2014, or Hassm and Liwaa al-Thawra, which claimed attacks until September 2017. Still, many major attacks have gone completely unclaimed. These major attacks such as the attempted assassination of Mohamed Ibrahim Mustafa in 2013, the assassination of Prosecutor-General Hisham Barakat in 2015, the attack at the Temple of Karnak tourist site in 2015, and an attack at the Rawda mosque in North Sinai in late 2017 that killed over 300 civilians. Why these attacks go unclaimed—especially in instances where there is a relatively high degree of certainty of the perpetrator of an attack—is not clear.

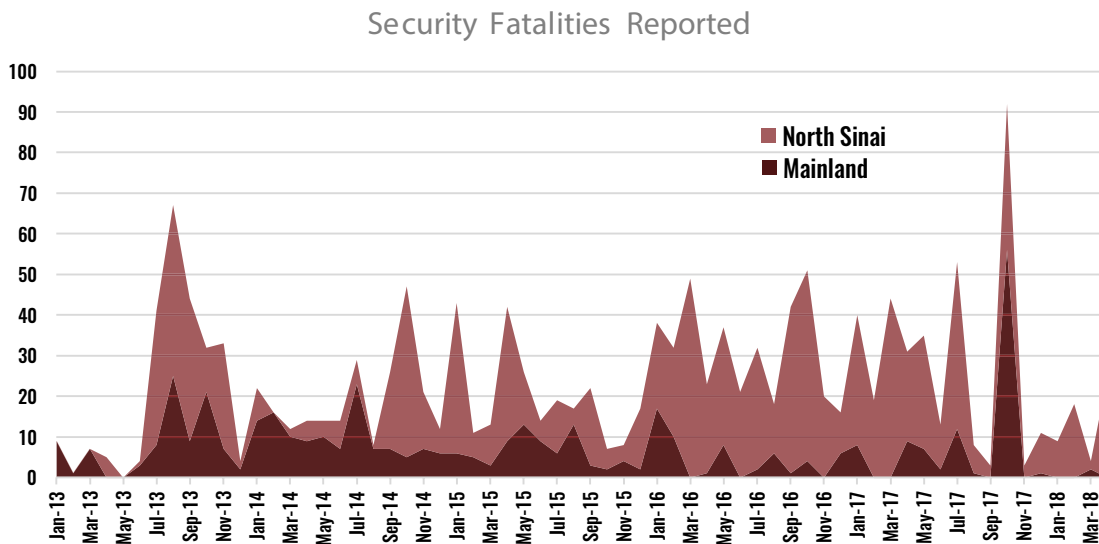
Attacks in North Sinai have increased since 2013, while attacks on the mainland peaked in 2015 and have since abated. After the declaration of the war on terror in 2013, violence across the mainland was reported at about 39 attacks per month, outpacing the rate of attacks in Sinai, which was reported at nearly 26 attacks on average per month. This was the case until September 2015, when the rising number of attacks in North Sinai first began to eclipse the number of attacks across the mainland, a trend that continues today. Since then, about 86 percent of reported activity has been carried out in Sinai. In mid-2014, ABM pledged allegiance to Abu Bakr al-Baghdadi and became known as the Islamic State's Sinai Province, or Wilayat Sinai; since that time Wilayat Sinai and its mainland counterparts expanded their targets from security forces to civilians and Egypt's embattled Coptic minority, mirroring the attacks on civilians in the early 2000s. From the time of its emergence in Egypt, the Islamic State has claimed 1,014 attacks, 955 of which have been in North Sinai. Reports indicate the group has killed at least 624 security personnel and 437 civilians.

TERRORISM

The targeting of security forces has been relatively constant across all provinces and time periods. Sixty-six percent of all attacks across Egypt since the war on terror began in 2013 have targeted security forces, and 55 percent of fatalities have been security forces.⁴ Twenty-six out of 27 provinces have



had an attack targeting police or military (only the Red Sea province has not been the site of an attack on security forces), and every month consecutively since July 2013, there has been a security-related death. For the most part, these attacks appear to be carried out somewhat randomly, with the target being Egypt's security institutions writ large;⁵ in some cases, specific individuals are targeted for assassination because of their high rank, their participation in certain events, or both.⁶ Groups have also targeted public officials, international diplomatic missions, and Egypt's critical infrastructure, economy, and tourism industry. Only more recently have civilians been targeted, either because of their alleged collaboration with security officers,⁷ attempts to disrupt tourism, or simply their faith.

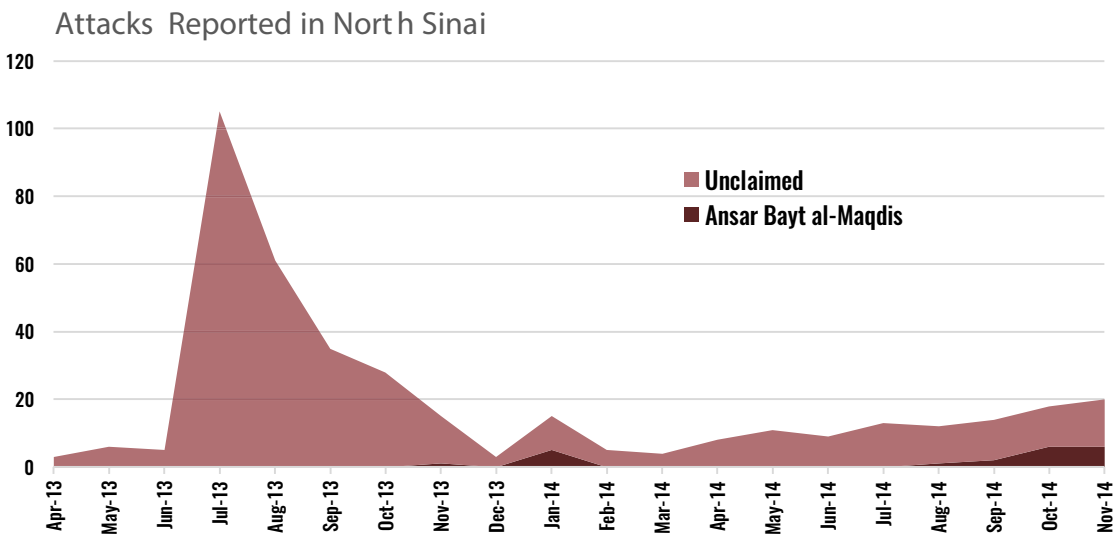


NORTH SINAI: Violence has become an entrenched insurgency

Violence, specifically jihadist violence, has been a constant in North Sinai, even before 2011. Isolated from the mainland physically, economically, and socially, the northeast portion of the peninsula—roughly from Bir al-Abd to the Gazan border in the east—witnessed activity of several jihadist militant groups over the past decade, including Tawhid wal-Jihad and Takfir wal-Hijra;⁸ North Sinai was no exception to the changes that were taking place in the shape of violence throughout the rest of the country, and has seen several phases of violence since the declaration of the war on terror.

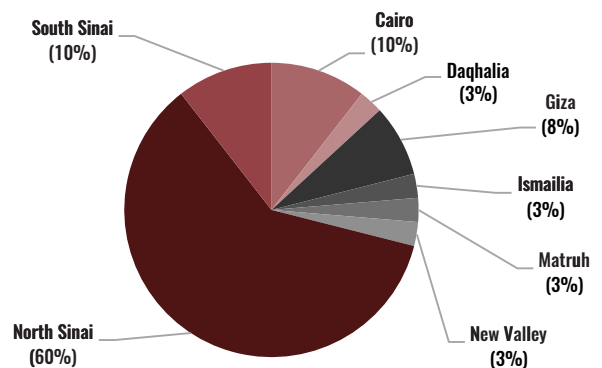
July 2013 to November 2014: ABM Cements its Grip

Attacks increased significantly in North Sinai in 2013, and were mostly unclaimed despite the emergence of ABM. In all of 2013 and 2014, the province saw just over 400 reported attacks, of which only about two dozen were claimed by terror groups, predominantly ABM. Based in the Sinai Peninsula (though with an operational reach that sometimes extended beyond this region), ABM was formed in the aftermath of the 2011 uprisings across Egypt.



From 2011 to late 2014, ABM carried out dozens of attacks, mostly in North Sinai. The group targeted security forces, energy infrastructure, and the country’s vital tourism industry. While attacks on energy infrastructure and security personnel certainly suggested a capable group, the underlying strategy and sophistication of attacks at that time were relatively undeveloped. Early on, ABM rallied local support, calling on the people to stand with its fighters in their war against the state.¹⁰ The United States designated the group a foreign terror organization on April 9, 2014. The Egyptian government welcomed the U.S. designation, and followed suit with its own designation less than a week later.¹¹ Though based in North Sinai, the group showed a significant capacity to operate outside the province, with over 40 percent of its attacks reported to take place on the mainland.

Attacks Claimed by Ansar Bayt al-Maqqdis (broken down by province)



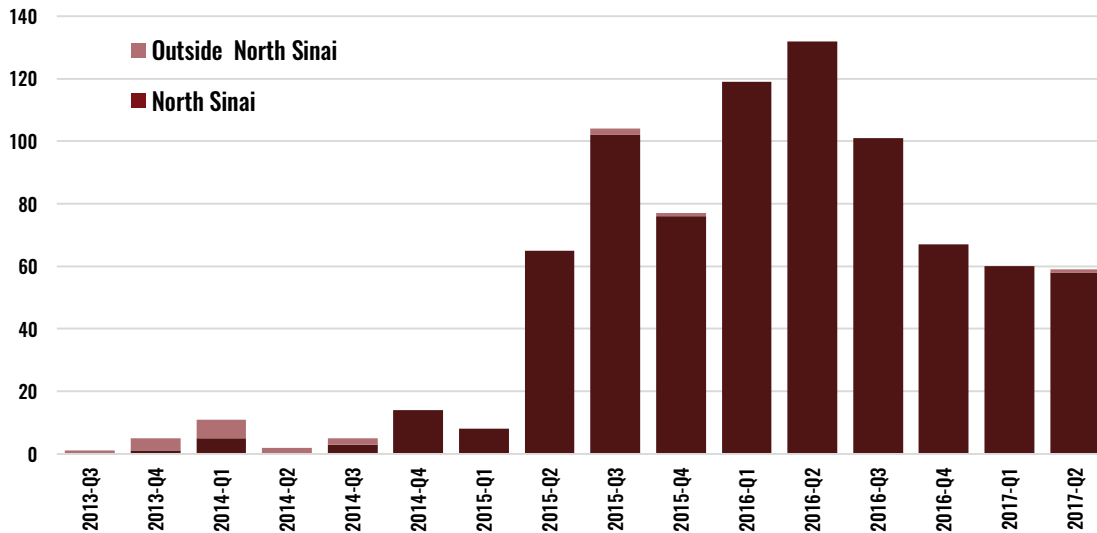
Notable attacks during this period include:

- On **September 5, 2013**, ABM attempted to assassinate Mohamed Ibrahim Mustafa, Egypt's interior minister at the time, with a suicide vehicle-borne improvised explosive device (VBIED). The attack, which took place in Cairo, failed to kill the minister, though the group vowed more violence.
- On **December 24, 2013**, ABM attacked the Mansoura Security Directorate. Sixteen were killed and 134 were injured in the bombing. Despite not having been connected with the attack, the Muslim Brotherhood were declared a terrorist group the following day.
- ABM released a video of its militants using a man-portable air-defense system (MANPADS) to down a military helicopter on **January 25, 2014**. Five men on board were killed.
- A suicide bomber attacked a bus of South Korean tourists traveling near the Israeli border on **February 16, 2014**. The attack killed three of the tourists and the Egyptian bus driver.
- In **July 2014**, the group set its sights on Israel during a period of intense and prolonged Israeli strikes on Gaza. ABM published videos of four attacks, using Grad and 107mm rockets, which targeted Eilat and the village of Bnei Netzarim.
- Two separate attacks on **October 24, 2014**, left 33 security personnel dead in North Sinai. Thirty individuals were killed in the al-Kharouba area north of Arish from a car bomb that targeted armored vehicles, while an additional 25 were wounded in the bombing. Later in the day, militants attacked the Karm al-Quwadees checkpoint near Arish, killing three security personnel. Though no group had claimed responsibility for the attacks, the military tactics resembled those of ABM, and scenes from the attack were featured in a later video published by the group's second iteration.
- The declaration of allegiance to the Islamic State reflected a split in the group. In a video that surfaced in **July 2015**, Hisham Ashmawy, a discharged military officer and former ABM member, announced the formation of the Libya-based al-Morabitoon, which he said had ideological ties to al-Qaeda. Authorities have suspected that Ashmawy was involved in a number of high-profile attacks that took place during this period, including the aforementioned attacks in October 2014, as well as one at the Farafra Oasis in Egypt's Western Desert, when militants ambushed soldiers preparing to break their Ramadan fast, leaving 22 dead.

November 2014 to October 2016: The Heyday of Wilayat Sinai

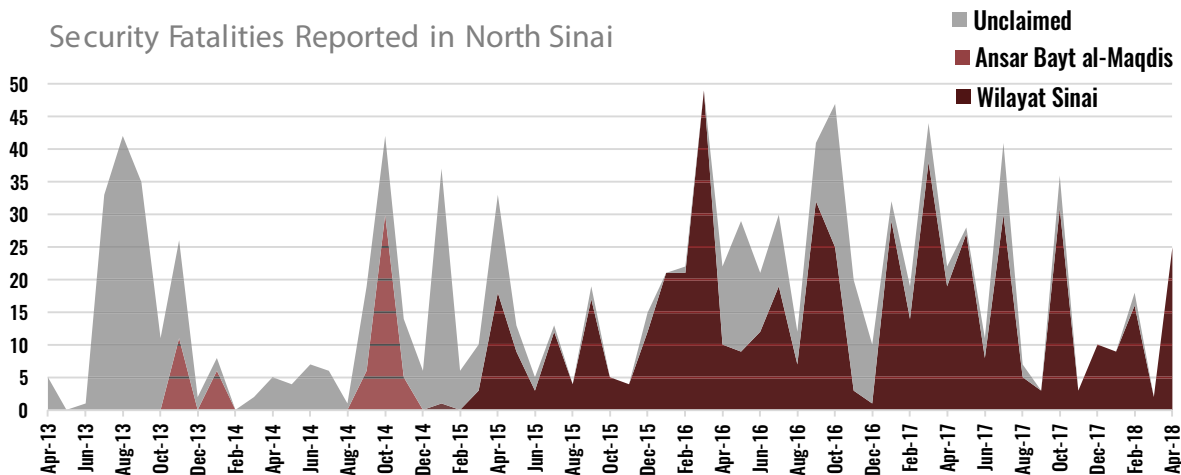
On **November 10, 2014**, ABM pledged allegiance to the Islamic State, rebranding as Wilayat Sinai (the "Sinai Province" of the Islamic State), and dominating the security landscape in North Sinai. Since this time, the group has claimed responsibility for about 995 attacks, almost a third of all attacks reported across Egypt since the war on terror began—far eclipsing even the most active groups on the mainland.¹² Following a counter-terror operation in August 2016 that killed leader Abu Duaa al-Ansary and 40 of his deputies, the group's reported activity dipped for a short period, resumed (with two of its most active months on record), and then fell again at the end of 2016. Unlike its former iteration, Wilayat Sinai carried out few attacks outside of North Sinai, with only seven of its total 974 attacks claimed outside of the province. (Although the Islamic State operated in other parts of Egypt, it remains unclear to what degree, if any, these were planned by or coordinated with North Sinai militants.)

Attacks Claimed by ABM and Wilayat Sinai
(Attacks in North Sinai vs. Outside North Sinai)



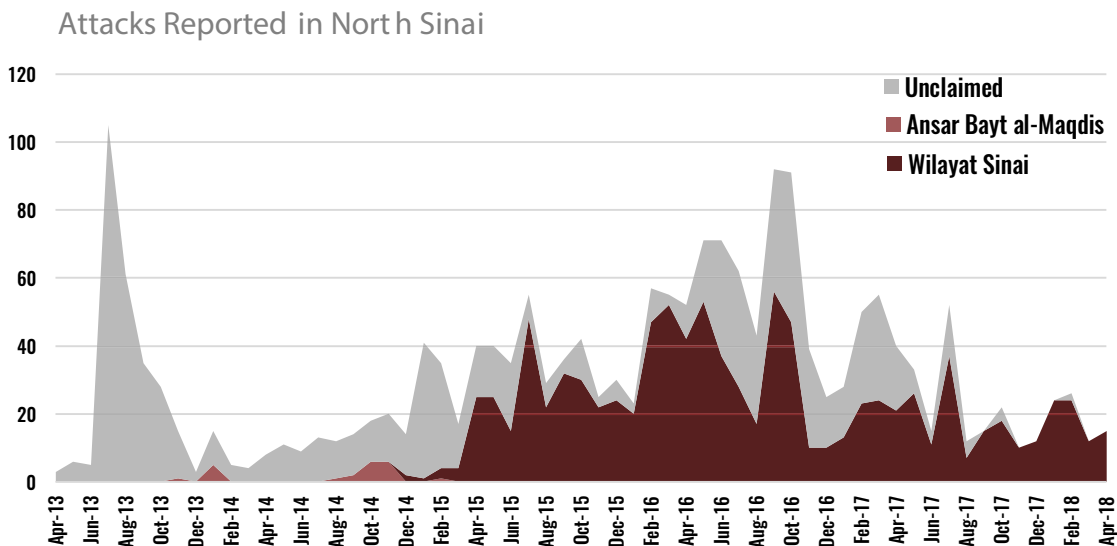
One of the most complex and high-profile operations carried out by the group was a siege on Sheikh Zuweid on July 1, 2015, when militants carried out coordinated attacks on more than a dozen security checkpoints across the city. The operation caused hundreds of casualties, by some estimates, and briefly took control of the city. While the military regained control of Sheikh Zuweid within 24 hours, the attack remains the only instance of a non-state actor capturing and holding urban territory. The assault on Sheikh Zuweid ultimately marked a defeat for the militants, but it raised heightened concern about Wilayat Sinai’s insurgent capacity, and the group continued its attacks despite its losses.¹³ And, while terror actors in Sinai have not since controlled territory, they continued carrying out attacks with more refined tactics in the subsequent years. Through sniper attacks and roadside bombings, militants in Sinai have waged a war of attrition against the state, sapping resources and killing over 13 security personnel each month on average since the Sheikh Zuweid assault.

Security Fatalities Reported in North Sinai



The group also increased its media capacity and soft-power initiatives during this time, able to disseminate and promote its propaganda despite state-imposed restrictions on mobility and an ongoing media blackout. At times disseminating propaganda through its own local social media channels, and at other times through the Islamic State's central media outlets, the group continuously exaggerated its territorial control and capacity for governance. It trumpeted events such as the Sheikh Zuweid assault and control of various checkpoints to supposedly evidence those claims. Even with ongoing electricity and communication blackouts—such as in July 2017, when the state disabled internet for two weeks in North Sinai—the group has eventually found ways to release its propaganda through the Islamic State's *al-Naba* weekly magazine.¹⁴

Still, from November 2014 to October 2016, about two out of every five attacks reported had no claims of responsibility. The attacks that were reported but which remained anonymous roughly mirrored the kinds of attacks that Wilayat Sinai was conducting, though overall smaller in scale. The continued incidence of unclaimed attacks in North Sinai likely suggests Wilayat Sinai-affiliated militants acting autonomously in the mode of the group, or acting in coordination with the group but without issuing claims.



Notable attacks during this period include:

- Following an attack on Multinational Force and Observers (MFO) troops on **September 3, 2015**, which injured four Americans and two Fijians, the U.S. Department of Defense announced that it would deploy an additional 75 troops to the mission.¹⁵
- In a series of coordinated attacks, over 100 militants from Wilayat Sinai attacked various locations throughout Sinai, targeting both civilians and security personnel, in **January 2015**. Over a dozen military targets, such as checkpoints and bases in Arish, Sheikh Zuweid, Rafah, and the largest military installment in North Sinai (Battalion 101), were targeted using car bombs, mortars, and other explosives. Additionally, the militants attacked a Sinai office of the state-owned newspaper *al-Ahram* and a hotel in the region. Wilayat Sinai utilized unprecedented group coordination in carrying out its deadliest strike in the country to date, which left over 32 dead and at least 62 wounded.
- Wilayat Sinai conducted arguably its most coordinated attack in North Sinai on **July 1, 2015**; the organization targeted 21 security facilities throughout Arish and Sheikh Zuweid. Though the number

of militants is unconfirmed, the magnitude of the attack ensures that the number significantly exceeded the 100 combatants from the aforementioned January 2015 operation. Militants targeted checkpoints with suicide bombers, conducted armed assaults of town centers, and used rocket-propelled grenades, anti-tank missiles, and IEDs to conduct the operation. The combatants temporarily gained control of Sheikh Zuweid and used brutal force against civilians and security personnel who refused to comply with their orders. The Egyptian Armed Forces officially stated that 17 security personnel were killed during the coordinated strikes, though previous security sources estimated that the number of killed soldiers exceeded 50; meanwhile, Wilayat Sinai reported that over 100 security personnel died in the coordinated attack.

- Wilayat Sinai took captive Tomislav Salopek, a Croatian citizen and employee of CGG Ardiseis, on **July 24, 2015**. The group released a video on **August 5, 2015**, threatening to kill Salopek if Egypt did not release all female Muslim prisoners within 48 hours, timed to coincide with the inauguration of the Suez Canal expansion project. A video circulated on **August 12, 2015**, with a photo of Salopek decapitated. The group had previously claimed responsibility for the death of an American oil worker, William Henderson, in December 2014, though the targeting of foreigners was rare to that point.

- Wilayat Sinai claimed responsibility for a Russian commercial aircraft that crashed on **October 31, 2015**. Two hundred and twenty-four individuals were killed in the attack, including 219 Russian citizens, four Ukrainians, and one Belarus national. The plane departed from Sharm el-Sheikh in South Sinai and lost radio contact shortly after takeoff. Though the Russian and Egyptian governments initially dismissed Wilayat Sinai's claim, the group released an announcement days later describing the attack as retaliation against Russia for its air strikes against the Islamic State in Syria. Intelligence officials from the United Kingdom and the United States later confirmed the presence of an explosive device on the flight, which was attributed to Wilayat Sinai after the Islamic State released photos of its operatives smuggling the explosive onto the plane.

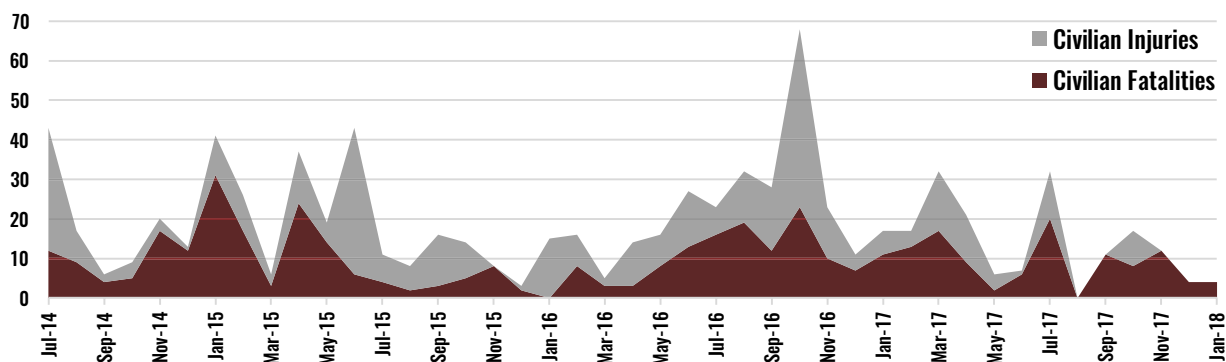


An image of the explosive that Wilayat Sinai claimed brought down the Metrojet flight. The image first appeared in *Dabiq* magazine and then on Wilayat Sinai's Telegram account on November 18, 2015.

2016 to 2017: Sectarian Shifts

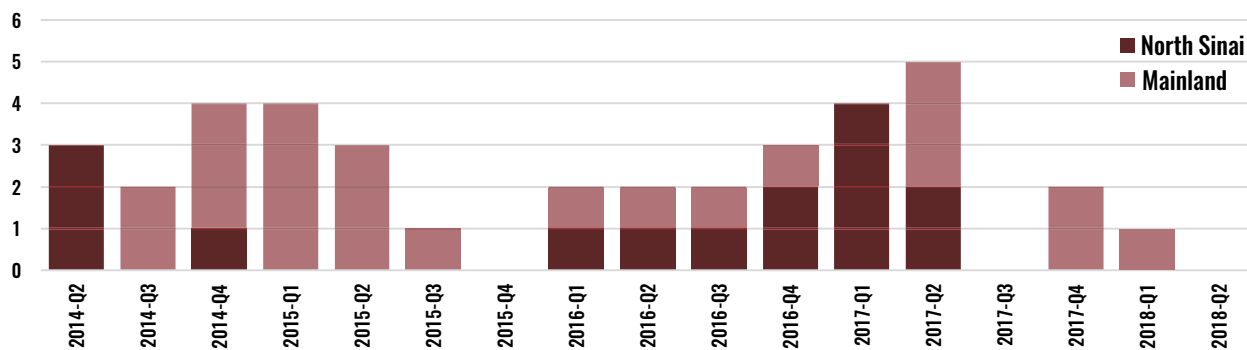
Attacks on civilians began to increase in North Sinai after 2016. Despite showing little concern for the lives of men wearing uniform, even those conscripted into conditions “near slavery,” most actors across Egypt took special care to avoid civilian harm. Whether reflected in the figures on attacks reported or more explicitly in statements, attacks directly targeting civilians were relatively rare up to 2016—94 attacks resulted in civilian deaths in North Sinai in the 29 months from July 24, 2013, to January 2016.¹⁶ Aside from the Metrojet attack that killed 224, 189 civilians were reported killed during this time. These attacks occurred with greater frequency in 2016 and the first half of 2017, with these 18 months alone seeing 122 attacks resulting in 200 civilian deaths even as attacks on security actors continued apace.¹⁷ Fifty-six of these deaths have been retaliatory attacks against “spies” who had supposedly worked with Egyptian security forces.

Civilian Casualties in Attacks Reported Across North Sinai
(excludes Metrojet and Rawda attacks)



A wave of sectarian violence began in 2016, causing the effective forcible displacement of North Sinai’s entire Christian community, and extended to Muslims who did not conform to the Islamic State’s conception of religious practice. While the targeting of civilians marked the renewal of a tactic relatively unseen since the mid-2000s, a sectarian element lurked barely below the surface.¹⁸ Little noticed, a few isolated events in 2016 brought troubling hints of change. Then, after a major attack on the St. Mark’s Coptic Orthodox Cathedral in Cairo killed dozens of Christians at worship (see more later in this report), a string of killings in early 2017 targeted Coptic residents of Arish. Three of seven executions were claimed by Wilayat Sinai, the others remain anonymous; together, these developments had a chilling effect on the province’s Christian community, and most families fled their homes in what the Cairo-based Egyptian Initiative for Personal Rights deemed mass forced displacement.

Sectarian Terror Attacks Reported



Notable attacks during this period include:

- In early 2016, four Muslim preachers were attacked by unidentified assailants in North Sinai.¹⁹ On **June 30, 2016**, members of Wilayat Sinai fatally shot Rafael Moussa, a priest from Arish’s Mar Girgis Church. In November that year, the same group publicized images of the beheading of two prominent local Sufis, 100-year-old Abu Hiraz and his student, Qutayfan Burak Eid Mansour.
- On **March 19, 2016**, Wilayat Sinai claimed a suicide VBIED attack and assault on the Safa police checkpoint in Arish, North Sinai. At least 13 policemen, including two captains, a lieutenant, and 12 conscripts, were killed or went missing during the attack, and the militants took munitions and equipment. Following the attack, the MFO began evacuating a number of observation posts across

North Sinai, including posts at al-Zahir and al-Mawasi, where the Egyptian military provides perimeter security.²⁰ Wilayat Sinai claimed to have conducted the attack in response to what the organization deemed the disrespectful treatment of women at security checkpoints.

- Wilayat Sinai claimed responsibility for an attack on a police convoy in the Taloul area of North Sinai in **September 2017**. The attack killed 18 police personnel and wounded an additional seven, though another source in the region estimated that the fatalities totaled 19 and wounded personnel reached 20. Two lieutenants were among those killed and a brigadier general suffered major injuries, though he survived the attack. Combatants began the attack by striking armored vehicles with IEDs then opening fire against the police forces. The U.S. State Department condemned the attack shortly after it occurred.
- In the deadliest terror attack in modern Egypt's history, 311 civilians were killed and an additional 128 injured at Belal Mosque in Rawda, North Sinai, on **November 24, 2017**. Estimates place the number of militants between 25 and 30, who used explosives and gunfire to attack worshippers at the mosque. Reports also state that these combatants targeted local civilians and first responders tending to the wounded. Wilayat Sinai is believed to be responsible for the massacre based on the resemblance of this attack compared to the organization's previous attacks. The attack follows the group's public acknowledgement of its intentions to target members of the Sufi community in Egypt, especially the Jariri order in Rawda, based on the sect's close relationship with the state.

2017 to Present: Entrenched Instability

Attacks in North Sinai continue at a rate higher than that observed when the war on terror began. With just over 14 attacks reported on average per month from August 2017 to present, there has been a slowing of activity from the province's most active period, during which over 90 attacks were reported each month in September and October 2016. Yet the rate of activity is still on par with the rate of 19 attacks per month on average in the first year of the war on terror, and well above the rate of attacks reported in North Sinai in the year prior, when about 5 attacks reported were each month.

The rate of attacks in North Sinai has lowered from its peak, but remains far above the rate before war on terror.

Suffering losses in Iraq and Syria, the Islamic State has dedicated more attention to Sinai. With increased surveillance online and censorship of social media accounts, Wilayat Sinai had changed its reporting from regular reports on Twitter and Telegram

to less organized and less systematic self-reporting, usually in the Islamic State's weekly *al-Naba* magazine,²¹ where the Islamic State media has dedicated ample attention to its efforts to engage with the military's campaign in Sinai. In *al-Naba* editions issued over the past months, infographics highlighted the number of military personnel killed and injured and the number of vehicles destroyed, and multipage features showcased a roundup of claims during the campaign. While North Sinai's geographic isolation and the heavy restrictions on mobility make it a less attractive locale for foreign fighters, the claim for a major attack on the Qusayima checkpoint in April 2018, which killed at least 20 security personnel, notably referenced noms de guerre of "al-Mohager," indicating the presence of fighters from outside Sinai among the ranks.²²

Wilayat Sinai has made its presence known in more densely populated western areas, including the cities of Arish and Bir al-Abd. This shift has occurred as the group has been pushed out of its initial area of operations near the border with Israel (see more in the section on counter-terrorism). Rather than the checkpoint attacks or attempts to hit military convoys with roadside IEDs, activity in the city centers tends to be more targeted, with assassinations of specific officers or suspected military

informants. The group has also posted photosets as recently as March 2018 depicting Wilayat Sinai forces operating its own checkpoints in the light of day, undoubtedly to demonstrate its continued ability to operate freely.

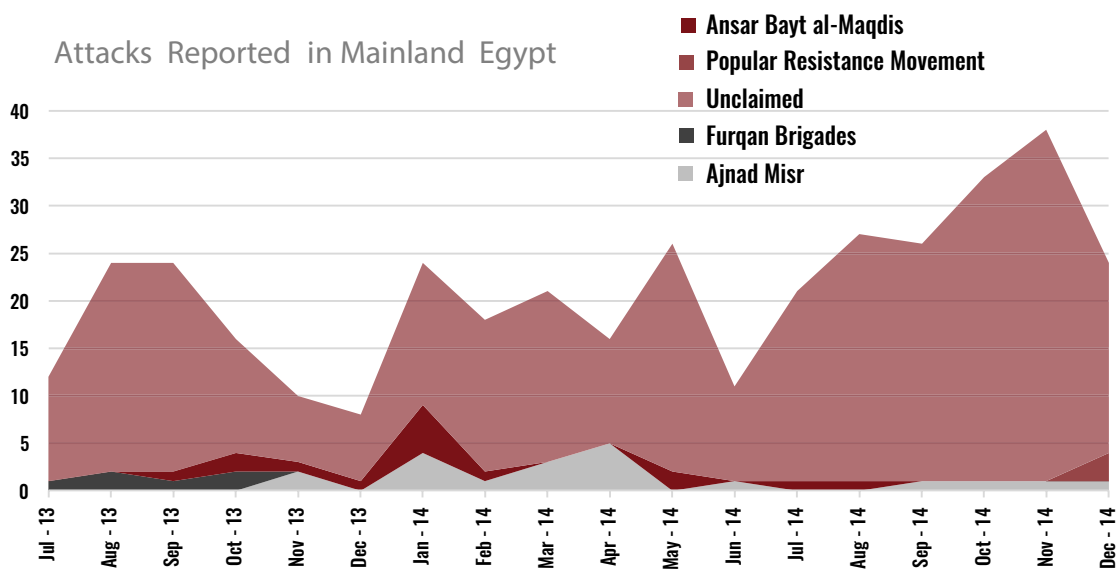
The security landscape in North Sinai is seeing fragmentation and continued instability that threatens to remain even if Wilayat Sinai is defeated. In October 2017, al-Qaeda affiliate Jund al-Islam issued a statement of an attack on Wilayat Sinai, claiming to have killed four of its fighters. This marks a reemergence of al-Qaeda’s declared presence in the province, which continues among a persistence of unclaimed attacks (33 reported since July of last year, including the major attack on the Rawda mosque). These developments occur alongside the emergence of military-backed militias, and the heightened engagement of tribal groups in the war on terror.

MAINLAND: Low-scale violence gives way to sporadic, deadly attacks

While violence to the west of the Suez Canal also intensified in the past four years, the trends in this area have generally seen much greater swings across time.

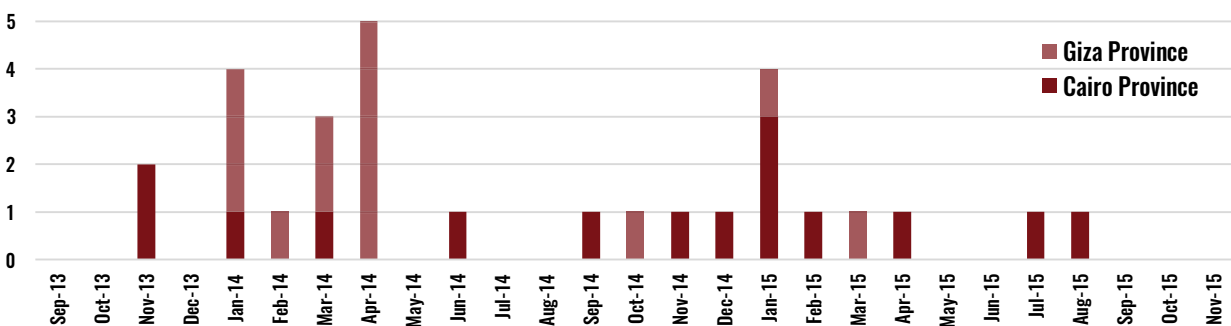
July 2013 to December 2014: Few, but Deadly

After the ouster of Morsi and the summer months of 2013, which saw spontaneous attacks on churches, police stations, and other state institutions, anonymous violence across the mainland subsided slightly. From the declaration of the war on terror to the end of 2013, 84 attacks were reported, causing 73 deaths; of these, about 84 percent were not claimed. Starting with an uptick in overall violence around the third anniversary of the revolution in January 2014, the volume of attacks across the mainland oscillated throughout the year, but still remained relatively low, with 286 attacks and 147 deaths reported through 2014. Of these, only 32 were claimed by organized groups, with the Furqan Brigades claiming attacks in 2013, and Afnan Misr emerging as a new group on the mainland.



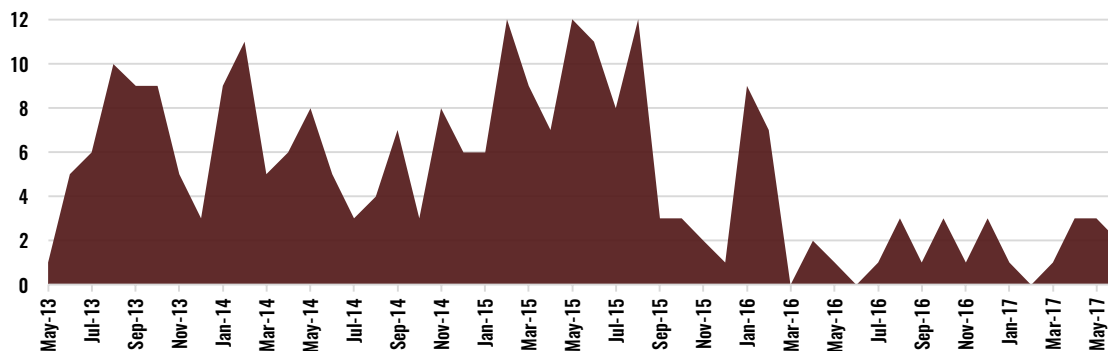
The most prominent of these groups, **Ajnad Misr**, or “Soldiers of Egypt,” declared its existence in a statement over Twitter on January 23, 2014. Throughout 2014, Ajnad Misr was one of the most active organized groups in mainland Egypt, operating exclusively in the Greater Cairo area and generally avoiding civilian casualties. On December 25, 2014, Ajnad Misr published an open dialogue with the group’s founder and leader, Hamam Muhammad Attiya, in which he declared Ajnad Misr’s intention to expand until it reached “every human being on the face of the earth.” Attiya stressed that the group operated independently, denying strategic or organizational linkages to Wilayat Sinai (though Attiya would later be eulogized by al-Qaeda’s branches in the Maghreb and Arabian Peninsula, suggesting affiliation with the al-Qaeda network). Four days after Ajnad Misr claimed responsibility for carrying out an IED attack near Zamalek on the May 15 Bridge, which killed a policeman and wounded three others, the Ministry of Interior announced the death of Attiya, also known as Maged al-Din al-Masry, during a security raid in Cairo.³³ The group claimed responsibility for a total of 29 incidents across Cairo and Giza provinces—the last, an IED attack in front of the Heliopolis (Masr al-Gedida) Court-house in eastern Cairo on August 10, 2015, which wounded two police officers and a civilian, only a few months after Attiya’s death. No attacks have been reported since this time.

Attacks Claimed by Ajnad Misr



Despite the relative calm, a few major attacks continued to remind Egyptians of the intentions of terrorist actors to strike fear into Egyptian society’s most populous locales. This afforded groups more media attention while also demonstrating the state’s apparent weakness in defending its capital. Several major attacks carried out in Cairo and Giza, as well as the targeted assassinations of security and political officials, have characterized those periods even when the frequency of attacks has been low.²⁴ While the number of attacks overall ebbed and flowed from late 2013 to the end of 2015, attacks that resulted in at least one fatality remained somewhat more stable at between six and seven incidents per month, on average, through January 2015.²⁵

Attacks Across the Mainland with At Least One Casualty



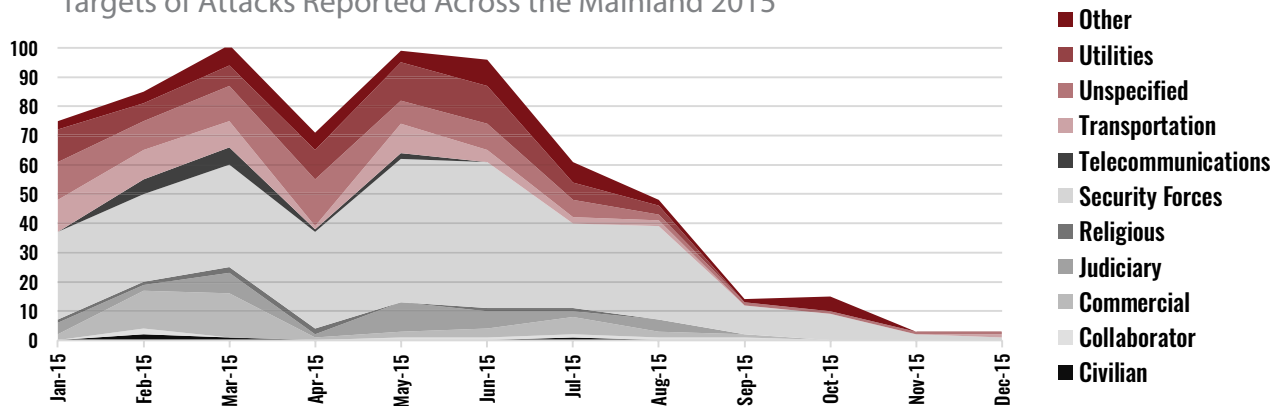
Notable attacks during this period include:

- On **October 20, 2013**, gunmen on motorcycles opened fire outside a Coptic Christian church in Cairo’s al-Warraq neighborhood as people were leaving a wedding. An eight-year-old girl, a woman, and a man died at the scene. A 12-year-old girl injured in the attack died the next morning. The attack was never claimed.
- The day after announcing its formation, Afnad Misr retroactively claimed responsibility for at least two IED attacks carried out in **November 2013**, beginning a media campaign that it dubbed “Retribution Is Life.”
- Afnad Misr’s first coordinated attack took place on **January 24, 2014**, when a series of bombs exploded on the eve of the anniversary of the start 2011 uprising that resulted in the ouster of Hosni Mubarak. Afnad Misr claimed responsibility for two attacks on police in Giza, killing eight and wounding over 90. ABM also claimed responsibility for the attacks, although they later ceded at least partial credit to Afnad Misr.
- On **April 2, 2014**, Afnad Misr executed a series of bombings at Cairo University, killing police Brigadier General Tariq al-Mirjawi, director of investigations for Giza, and wounding others.
- On **June 30, 2014** (the one-year anniversary of protests calling for Morsi’s ouster), Afnad Misr claimed attacks in which IEDs detonated outside the Ittihadeya Palace in Heliopolis. Two Ministry of Interior explosives experts were killed in an attempt to defuse the devices, and several policemen were injured. Afnad Misr had announced these attacks via social media and later claimed to have defused some of the devices in order to avoid civilian casualties.

2015: A Coordinated Campaign of Low-level Violence

Violence spiked in early 2015, in a coordinated campaign that was largely intended to harm Egypt’s economy. In 2015, after an extended period of arrests, imprisonment, mass sentencing, and expanded legal frameworks for prosecuting a host of activity (a great deal of which was for nonviolent offenses), all in the name of the war on terror, the landscape of violence again shifted. The violence of this period, from January 2015 to the end of August 2015, increased significantly, and during these months more attacks were reported on average than in any prior period, including the summer of 2013. While most of the attacks appeared to avoid human targets in favor of targeting transportation and communications infrastructure, power grids, and other economic targets, the high number of overall attacks nonetheless saw a high number of attacks with casualties.

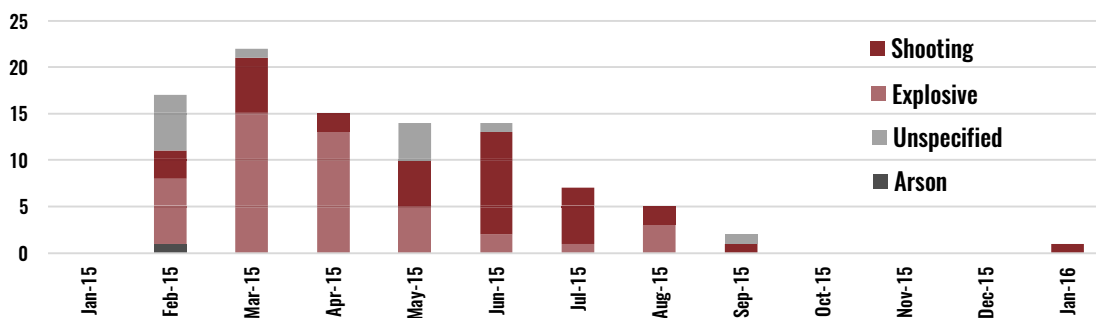
Targets of Attacks Reported Across the Mainland 2015



In a Facebook post published on January 24, 2015, the **Allied Popular Resistance Movement (APRM)** announced a coalition of groups. These included the Popular Resistance Movements from various locales, Revolutionary Punishment, Beni Suef Revolutionaries Movement, the Execution Battalion, and the Determination Movement (which did not publicly claim any attacks). Collectively, APRM claimed responsibility for attacks in at least 25 provinces across Egypt after this announcement.

- **Among the most capable of APRM groups was the Revolutionary Punishment.** Between January 2015 and January 2016, Revolutionary Punishment claimed responsibility for at least 98 acts of violence, the first being an attack targeting the First Montaza Police Station in Alexandria, which left seven injured. The Revolutionary Punishment was active in at least 15 other provinces, including Assiut, Aswan, Beheira, Beni Suef, Cairo, Damietta, Fayoum, Giza, Ismailia, Luxor, Monofeya, Port Said, Qalyubia, Qena, and Sharqia. The Revolutionary Punishment directed its attacks at those whom it deemed supporters of “the coup” (referring to the military-backed ouster of Morsi), with more than three-quarters of its claimed activity targeting security personnel. The group’s discourse evolved slowly over its single year of activity, gradually embracing more overtly Islamist language.

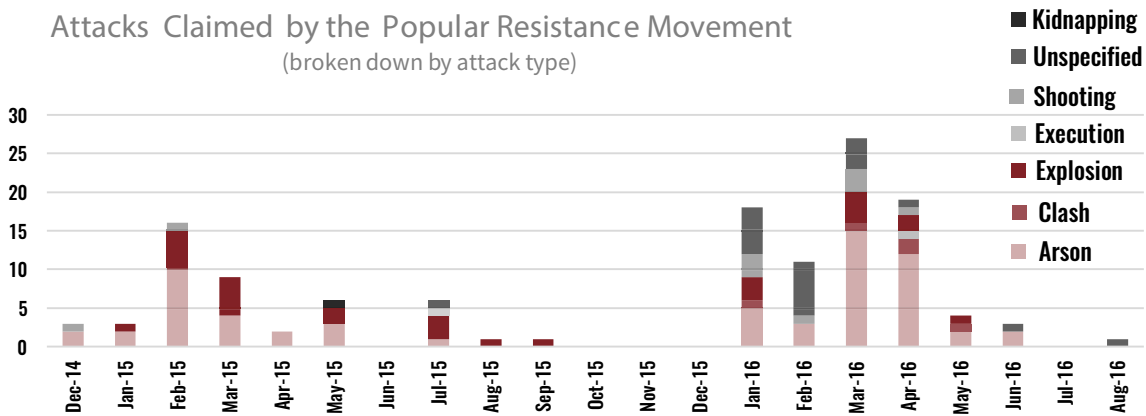
Attacks Claimed by the Revolutionary Punishment
(broken down by attack type)



- **The Popular Resistance Movement claimed more activity than the Revolutionary Punishment.** Between December 2014 and August 2016, the group claimed responsibility for at least 131 attacks.²⁷ The attacks were carried out across 22 provinces, including Alexandria, Assiut, Aswan, Beni Suef, Cairo, Daqhalia, Damietta, Fayoum, Gharbia, Giza, Kafr al-Sheikh, Luxor, Minya, Monofeya, New Valley, North Sinai, Qalyubia, Qena, Red Sea, Sharqia, Sohag, and Suez.²⁸ Like the Revolutionary Punishment, the Popular Resistance Movement carried out attacks on those who supported “the coup,” including security forces. Interestingly, the Popular Resistance Movement also claimed responsibility for a disproportionately large number of the alliance’s attacks on economic and infrastructural targets, many of them nonlethal.²⁹

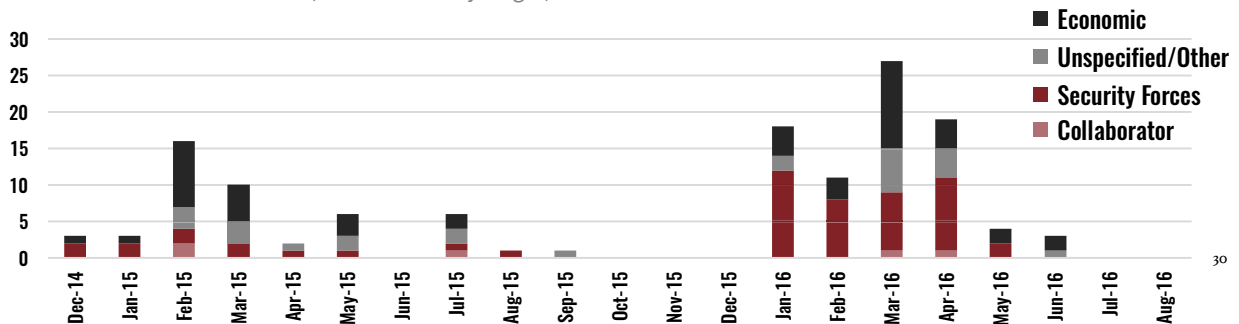
TERRORISM

Attacks Claimed by the Popular Resistance Movement
(broken down by attack type)



After a brief uptick in activity claimed by the Allied Popular Resistance Movement in early 2016, activity declined again, and the group claimed its last known attack in August 2016. The decline in the Popular Resistance Movement’s operational activity in August 2015 mirrored that of other groups, including the Revolutionary Punishment. Moreover, the wave of unclaimed activity across the Egyptian mainland, which had started with the rise of the APRM in early 2015, fell with the decline in APRM claims.

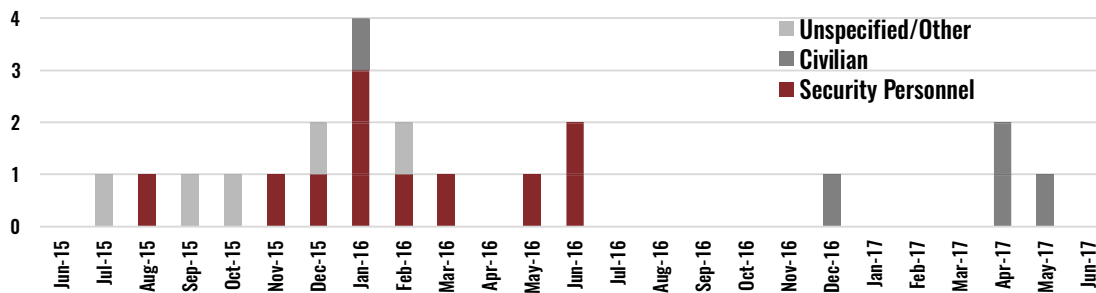
Attacks Claimed by the Popular Resistance Movement
(broken down by target)



After claiming responsibility for a car bombing in central Cairo on July 11, 2015, which targeted the Italian consulate, the Islamic State in Egypt emerged as the Islamic State’s presumed affiliate in the Egyptian mainland.³¹ Since the group announced its existence, claimed a total of 21 attacks across eight provinces in mainland Egypt. Initially focused on security and regime-affiliated targets, notably including the Shubra al-Kheima Security Directorate and the offices of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs.

Attacks Claimed by the Islamic State in Egypt

(broken down by target)



Notable attacks during this period include:

- Prosecutor-General Hisham Barakat was assassinated by a car bomb in the Heliopolis neighborhood of Cairo on **June 29, 2015**. Barakat was responsible for acquitting former president Hosni Mubarak and was previously appointed to the position in July 2013 after the removal of Morsi from power. Barakat is the most senior government official killed by militants since Morsi's ouster from office. The Popular Resistance Movement, Hamas, and the Muslim Brotherhood were all separately accused of killing Barakat, though all groups denied involvement in the assassination. Thirty-one people were sentenced to death in June 2017 for their role in the killing, though they were not affiliated with a specific organization.
- One of the Revolutionary Punishment's most notable attacks occurred during a security raid at an apartment in Giza's Haram district in **January 2016**. As security forces entered the apartment, the occupants detonated a number of explosives, killing at least seven members of the security team and injuring others, including civilians.³² The Islamic State in Egypt initially claimed the attack, but the Revolutionary Punishment—which has no known ties to the Islamic State and which had been inactive since as far back as September 2015—also claimed responsibility. Neither of the groups refuted the claim of the other. The attack was also the group's last claimed incident.
- Soon after the Popular Resistance Movement's second wave of activity began in 2016, a group calling itself Jabhat al-Tahrir surfaced and claimed responsibility for an attack on **April 4, 2016**, which killed a sergeant and injured a captain and a lieutenant at a police checkpoint in Khosous, Qalyubia province.³³ The group had no known social media presence or any other known declarations.

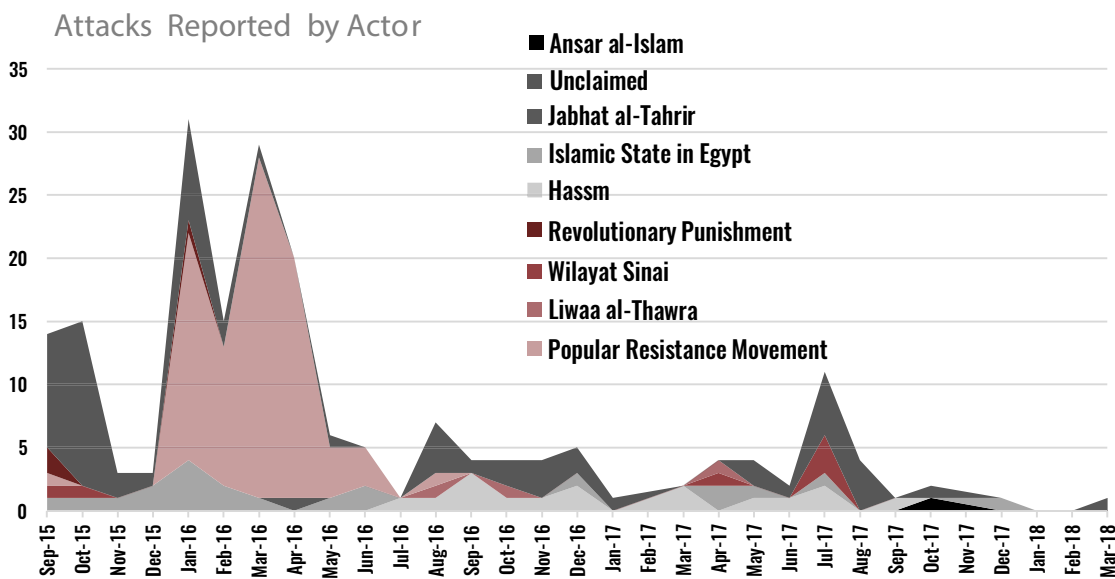
September 2015 to January 2018: A Return to Rare but Deadly Attacks

After August 2015, violence in the mainland declined sharply, though the attacks that continued were deadly. At a rate of nearly 88 attacks on average per month for the first half of 2015, reported attacks decreased to 24 per month by the last half of 2015 (apart from a four-month increase in activity in early 2016). Yet targeted assassinations and sporadic, high-profile, and deadly attacks continued.³⁴ While deadly events—attacks resulting in at least one fatality—dropped considerably after the fall in activity, they remained fairly constant from July 2015 to the end of 2017, at just over three reported per month on average.

On July 16, 2016, Hariket Souaid Misr (Hassm) announced its existence when it claimed responsibility for an attack in Fayoum that left two policemen dead and one injured. As with that of the Allied Popular Resistance Movement and other groups, Hassm's rhetoric was focused on the individuals who support the regime, particularly security personnel, to whom it often refers as "Abdel-Fattah El Sisi's militias." While the group did not explicitly acknowledge a connection to the Muslim Broth-

erhood, it notably eulogized Mahdi Akef, the Brotherhood’s former supreme guide, after his death in September 2017. Hassm’s surveillance and targeting patterns reflected its anti-regime rhetoric, with nearly all of its claimed activity targeting either security personnel or figures symbolic of the state.³⁵ Hassm claimed responsibility for 15 attacks since its formation in July 2016, or about one per month.

A less active group, Liwaa al-Thawra, surfaced about a month after Hassm. While Liwaa al-Thawra has explicitly downplayed its connection to Hassm, both groups appear to be closely tied on social media, with their statements sometimes coming out within minutes of one another. In a statement released over Hassm’s Telegram account, the group welcomed the formation of Liwaa al-Thawra, which it praised as a strong addition to the “resistance.” In its first installment of a 48-hour question-and-answer session, Liwaa al-Thawra denied a connection to the Muslim Brotherhood, but acknowledged that it did not fully reject that organization’s ideological foundation. Asked whether it distinguished between different security personnel, Liwaa al-Thawra’s spokesperson said that all security personnel—regardless of their function or rank—support the regime’s injustice, and thus are fair game for being targeted. He added that the group had no ambition for power in Egypt and argued that democracy emerged in an environment contradictory to Islamic philosophy—and that Egyptians must choose their leader through other means. Liwaa al-Thawra has claimed only three attacks since its formation, including the assassination of Brigadier General Adel Regaei in October 2016.³⁶ Two other groups each claimed a single attack during this period; Jabhat al-Tahrir claimed an attack on a police checkpoint in Qalyubia, and Ansar al-Islam claimed responsibility for a major attack at the Bahariya Oasis, raising suspicion about ties to Hisham Ashmawy.



Notable attacks during this period include:

- The Islamic State in Egypt and the Popular Resistance Movement both claimed responsibility for an attack on a bus in the Cairene neighborhood of Helwan on **May 7, 2016**; eight policemen were killed in the attack. The Islamic State issued a statement claiming the attack as retaliation for women incarcerated in Egypt, while the Popular Resistance Movement also claimed responsibility for the attack in honor of the 1,000-day anniversary of the Raba'a al-Adaweya Square massacre.
- On **August 5, 2016**—less than a month after the group surfaced—Hassm attempted to assassinate the former grand mufti of Egypt, Ali Gomaa. Weeks later, its members attempted yet another assassination, on Egypt's assistant prosecutor-general, Zakaria Abdel Aziz. While the operations were failures, both were well planned and indicative of a capable, professional group.³⁷
- In **December 2016**, the Islamic State in Egypt carried out a suicide bombing at the Saint Peter and Saint Paul Coptic Orthodox Church in the Coptic cathedral complex central Cairo, killing at least 28 and wounding dozens. The Islamic State in Egypt's activity since then has exclusively targeted Christians, with attacks on churches in Alexandria and Tanta (both on Palm Sunday 2017) and one targeting a bus full of Coptic pilgrims in Minya in May 2017, killing a total of 68 and wounding at least 148.³⁸ The Islamic State in Egypt has claimed no activity since the Minya attack.
- The Islamic State claimed responsibility for two separate attacks in Alexandria and Tanta on **April 9, 2017**, resulting in 47 deaths and over 100 wounded civilians. An explosion at Mar Girgis Church in Tanta during Palm Sunday celebrations killed 29 and injured an additional 71, while a suicide bomber stormed Saint Mark's Coptic Orthodox Church in Alexandria, killing 18, including three police officers providing security for the church. Coptic Pope Tawadros II was in the building at the site of the Alexandria attack, though he was not harmed during the explosion. The attacks represented continued assaults by the Islamic State against Christians in Egypt.
- The Islamic State in Egypt has claimed no activity since the Minya attack on **May 26, 2017**, which resulted in the deaths of 29 Coptic Christians and the injury of another 24 civilians. Islamic State combatants encircled the bus wearing masks and military garments and opened fire on the civilians.
- A convoy of Egyptian police were attacked in **October 2017** while attempting a counter-terrorism operation near Bahariya Oasis, about 85 miles southwest of Cairo. Though no group claimed direct responsibility for the attack, Hassm, the Islamic State, al-Morabitoon, and militants associated with Ansar al-Sharia were all mentioned at various times as potentially tied to the attack (though it is extremely unlikely all of these groups were associated). The Ministry of Interior reported that 11 officers (including two brigadier generals), one sergeant, and four conscripts were killed, while an additional 14 personnel were injured or declared missing. Other reports estimated that the death toll exceeded 50 police forces, though these reports relied on anonymous security officials. Following the attack, then-Prime Minister Sherif Ismail instructed the House of Representatives to renew the state of emergency to combat the ongoing threat.

January 2018 to Present: A Near Halt in Attacks Reported

The reduction in the number of attacks across the mainland from its peak in early 2015 mirrors the silence from any known terror group operating outside of North Sinai. Thus far, 2018 has seen only one major attack reported in the mainland, an unclaimed IED attack on Alexandria Chief of Security Mostafa al-Nemr, which killed two policemen, injured four others, and injured one civilian outside the Royal Tolip Hotel in Alexandria just before polls were to open for Sisi's reelection. The decrease in activity may be attributed to several factors, which include the success of the Ministry of Interior in targeting group leadership (as with Afnad Misr and Hassm in some cases, see later section on notable operations); the mass incarceration of political opposition, which may have included those participating in violence or deterred others from carrying it out; increased surveillance and security presence at vulnerable locations (such as churches); the failure of previous phases of violence to effect any change in the political system; the outflow of militants to North Sinai, Libya, or other more desirable locations; reduction in resource flows to militant groups; the restricted mobility of Sinai actors to travel to the mainland; or some combination of these.

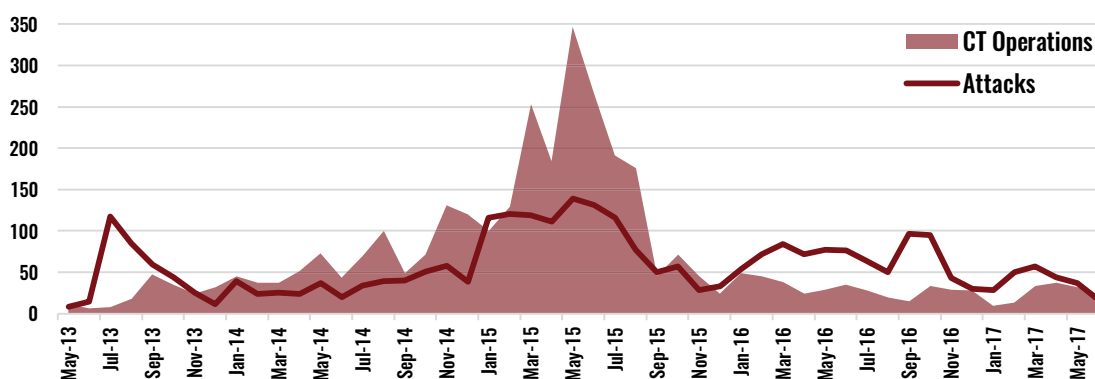
The incidence of intermittent attacks in the Nile Valley and Western Desert remains a concern. With the silence of groups operating in the Nile Valley, the affiliation and motive of actors carrying out attacks is unknown, and thus it is difficult to assess future threats. The Western Desert has seen only a few major attacks reported in the past years, but several signs suggest that activity in that area is underreported. When reported, the more active presence of counter-terrorism forces would indicate a greater threat than may be represented by the few attacks, and the cross-border flows of weapons and fighters indicate more developed smuggling and criminal networks, which could facilitate a terror threat.

COUNTER-TERRORISM

ACROSS EGYPT: Tens of thousands of citizens ensnared in the war on terror

Like the frequency of attacks, trends in counter-terror operations have also had significant fluctuations since President Abdel-Fattah El Sisi's July 2013 mandate. Also seen with the pace of terror operations, these fluctuations have reflected both the number of counter-terror operations that the military and Ministry of Interior bodies have carried out, as well as the regularity of their reporting.³⁹ In the 12 months prior to Sisi's 2013 *tafweed* speech, about 50 security operations were reported across Egypt, 61 percent of which were in Sinai. Since July 2013, the ministries have officially reported 1,780 security operations across Egypt, and 1,664 further operations have been reported in news media. About 39 percent of these operations were reported in the Sinai Peninsula, while another 13 percent were reported in Giza and Cairo. About 20 percent of the state's officially reported counter-terror activity did not specify the province in which the activity allegedly occurred.

Reported Counter-Terror Operations
(Compared to Attacks Across Egypt)



Counter-terror operations have resulted in an astronomical number of arrests, mostly of those alleged to have affiliation with the Muslim Brotherhood, and often for nonviolent activity. The average number of reported arrests in counter-terror operations increased from 261 per month in the second half of 2013 to more than 440 arrests per month on average in 2014 and 1,291 per month in 2015. After peaking with 3,070 arrests officially reported in the month of May 2015, reports of arrests fell to 130 on average per month in 2016 and then 88 in 2017. About half of the over 25,000 reported terror-related arrests made since 2013 were described as members of the Muslim Brotherhood. (That designation has been applied quite loosely over time, however, often with little information presented about a suspect's links to or role in the organization.⁴⁰) More than 11,500 were arrested with no information made publicly available about their links to any known terror group.

Egypt's war on terror has resulted not only in a staggering number of individuals being detained, but also a vast number of deaths of individuals who have been killed. Reported fatalities in counter-terror operations since July 2013 grew steadily until 2015, then receded. The average number of reported deaths in counter-terror operations across Egypt doubled from 35 in the second half of 2013 to 70 in 2014, and then grew to 271 in 2015.⁴¹ The average number of reported fatalities trended downward in 2016 and the first half of 2017 to 177 and 51, respectively. These deaths have occurred in both armed conflict and extrajudicial killings. To date, 6,908 have been reported killed in counter-terror operations across the country.

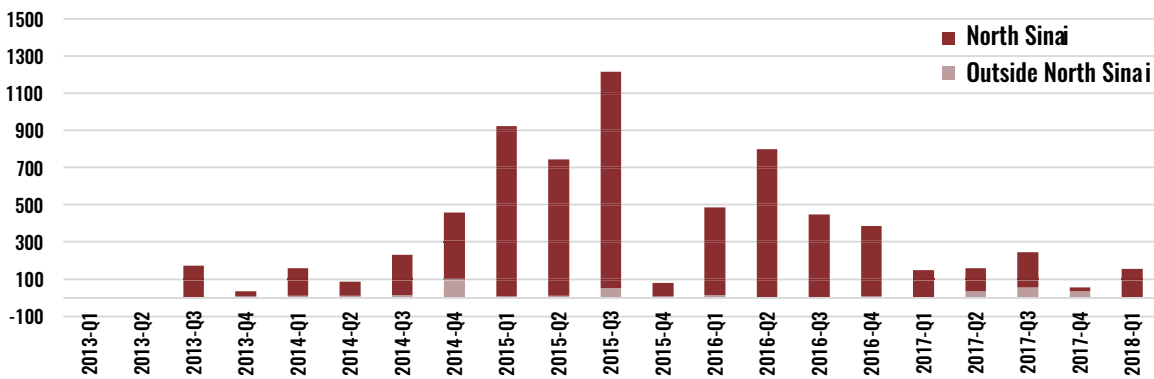
NORTH SINAI: Continuous military occupation

A focal point of Egypt’s war on terror, North Sinai has become the primary battleground in Egypt’s fight against extremists. A series of military campaigns has completely transformed the landscape in North Sinai since Sisi announced the war on terror.

July 2013 to September 2015: Sporadic, Deadly Strikes

Ninety-seven percent of deaths in counter-terror operations reported between the announcement of the war on terror and September 2015 were in North Sinai. In this period, 272 operations were reported in North Sinai, and 573 individuals were reported killed. Eighty-nine percent of these did not declare any specific target, though the operations increasingly were described to target Ansar Bayt al-Maqdis (ABM) during this period, even after the group declared its allegiance to Wilayat Sinai.

Reported Deaths in Counter-Terror Operations



Notable operations during this period include:

- After ABM launched a major attack on Karm al-Quwadees checkpoint on **October 24, 2014**, Sisi decreed a three-month state of emergency in the province (a measure that has been renewed consistently since then) and expedited the military evacuation of areas along the Egyptian-Israeli border, a process that had started in July 2013. Former prime minister Ibrahim Mahleb decreed that a buffer zone of some 79 square kilometers and encompassing all of Rafah would be evacuated along the border.⁴²
- Following Wilayat Sinai’s extensive operation against multiple military installations on **July 1, 2015**, the military responded with significant force. Militants assumed control of Sheikh Zuweid, prompting a wave of air strikes in and around the town to drive the combatants out of the area. The military bombarded the area for hours until militants retreated from their position and ceded the town back to the armed forces. The military later released a statement in which it reported the deaths of over 100 militants and destruction of 20 vehicles utilized by enemy combatants. Yet these numbers are suspect based on the reporting restrictions present in the region.

September 2015 to February 2018: Operation Martyr's Right

The military's response to Wilayat Sinai's coordinated attack on checkpoints in Sheikh Zuweid was then one of the largest security operations in Sinai. According to the military's initial estimates, more than 100 militants died during the altercation itself, while the military lost only 17.⁴³ A large-scale campaign commenced in the days after the assault. Muhammad Samir, the military's spokesman at the time, claimed that 241 suspected terrorists were killed between July 1 and July 5, 2015.⁴⁴ Samir, who claimed that the military had 100 percent control over North Sinai the day after the attack, said that the counter-terror operations would not halt until all "terrorist concentrations" were eliminated.

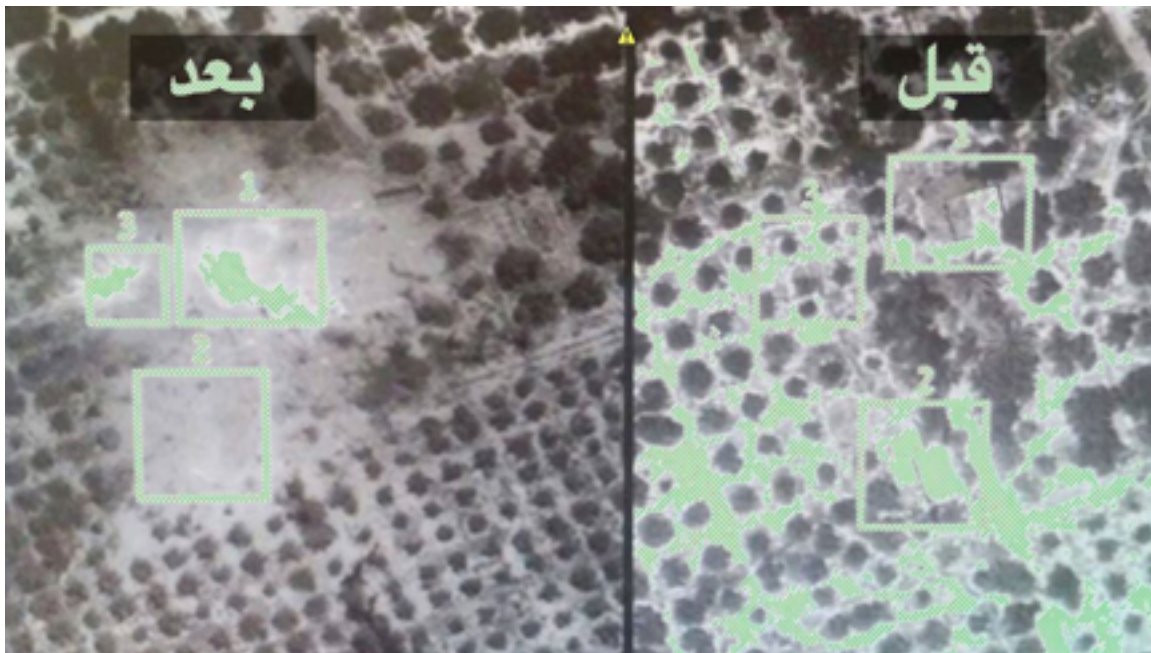
While the military and interior ministry have claimed these as deaths of "terrorists," several other reports have emerged that cast doubt on the classification and legality of some of these operations.⁴⁵ In April 2017, a video released by the Muslim Brotherhood-affiliated Mekameleen channel depicted what appeared to be state-backed militiamen executing noncombatants after a short interrogation. The video sparked widespread condemnation, and rights organizations including Human Rights Watch and Amnesty International released statements about the killings.⁴⁶

Operation Martyr's Right was launched in the wake of the Sheikh Zuweid assault, and continued across several phases until late 2017. The Sheikh Zuweid takeover was only one of several attacks in a turbulent summer; in the wake of this activity, the military on September 7, 2015, launched a massive, multiphase counter-terror campaign dubbed Operation Martyr's Right. The operation sought first to "uproot" terror elements from Sinai, then create conditions necessary to begin development work—namely through tightening control over Sheikh Zuweid, Rafah, and Arish, in tandem with the police, as well as ensuring protection of infrastructure, and offering health care and other social services to locals.⁴⁷ Despite the reporting of multiple phases of operation, no change in tactics or priorities in kinetic operations was discernible across the phases, and no phase actually focused on economic development. No end was formally announced to Operation Martyr's Right, though reports on the campaign halted when a new campaign—Sinai 2018—was announced. Through its nearly two and a half years, 514 operations were reported as part of Operation Martyr's Right, killing a reported 3,163. Of these, 1,639 were reported on the military's official Facebook page, while others were reported in the news media.

Notable operations during this period include:

- On **March 30, 2016**, the Third Field Army reportedly killed Wilayat Sinai senior leader Muhammad Nasr Madaan in central North Sinai. The following day, the Third Field Army reportedly killed Wilayat Sinai senior official Abdullah Jumaa Eid also in central North Sinai.
- Members of the armed forces continued Operation Martyr's Right by launching an attack at Mount Helal on **May 24, 2016**; Mount Helal is a mountainous area in central Sinai known as a stronghold for Wilayat Sinai. The assault lasted for several hours and included a combination of ground troops and artillery bombardment. The armed forces later reported that the assault resulted in the deaths of over 200 militants, and later operations resulted in the seizure of 25 IEDs.
- On **August 4, 2016**, an air strike reportedly killed Abu Duaa al-Ansary, the purported leader of Wilayat Sinai, and 45 of his deputies in North Sinai. After an initial statement from Wilayat Sinai was determined to be fabricated and called into question the reliability of the news of Ansary's death, in an interview in the 60th edition of *al-Naba* magazine four and a half months later, Wilayat Sinai acknowledged Ansary's death, announcing his replacement with Abu Hajar al-Hashimi.⁴⁸

COUNTER-TERRORISM



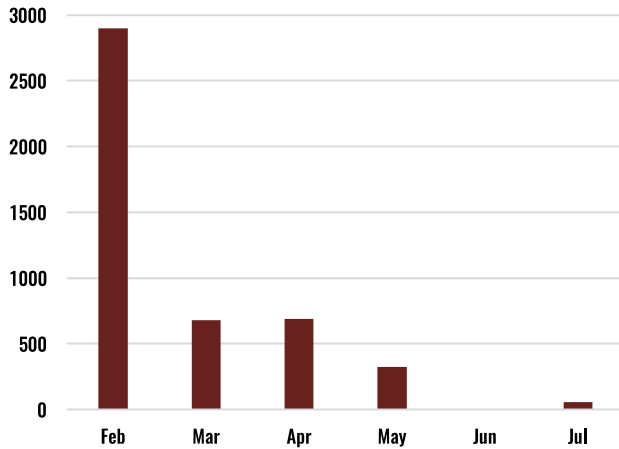
Aerial footage released (and later removed) by the Ministry of Defense ostensibly portraying before (right) and after (left) images of an air strike that targeted the leader of Wilayat Sinai, Abu Duaa al-Ansary, on August 4, 2016.

February 2018 to Present: Sinai 2018

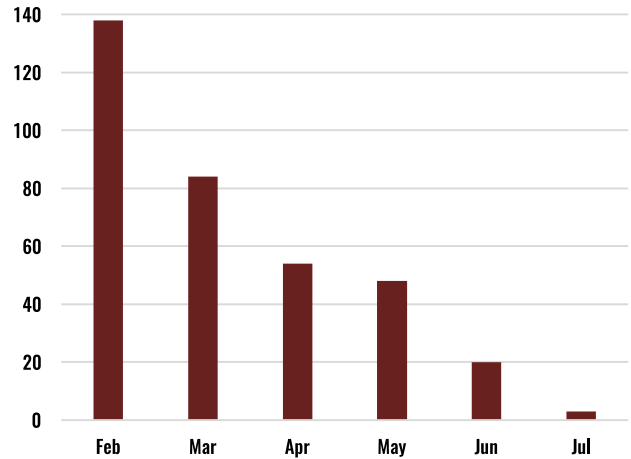
On February 9, 2018, Egypt's military spokesman, Tamer al-Refai, announced the launch of a military campaign, dubbed Operation Sinai 2018, which has only seen a difference in scope, not in strategy and tactics, from previous activity. The campaign is concentrated in North Sinai, but has seen related activity in its Western Desert and parts of the Nile Delta, particularly around the province of Suez. The campaign is the most extensive effort yet to eradicate an insurgency that has been developing in the province for years and sparks renewed concerns about the way in which the Egyptian security apparatus is conducting its war on terror. The military did not announce clear objectives or a distinct timeline for the operation, referring only to its intent to “clear” the areas of militants, protect Egyptian society from the threats of terrorism and extremism, and address “other crimes affecting security and stability.” Now in its fourth month with no clear end in sight, Refai has announced the deaths of 347 militants and arrest of over 4,000 more in relation to Operation Sinai 2018. Including these figures, the military has now reported it has killed over 3,000 in the province since May 2014, with another nearly 9,000 reported arrested during that time. (Outside estimates have placed the number of militants present in the region at about 1,000 at any given time.) Although Refai stated that some of the arrested were later released, the sheer number implicated raised doubts about the ability to target threats. A video published on February 9, 2018, showed the loading of Egyptian fighter planes with CBU-87 Combined Effects Weapons, manufactured by the U.S., and later published photos of unexploded ordnance lodged in the ground; these cluster munitions have been condemned internationally for their imprecision and harm caused even long after deployment. Furthermore, video evidence of extrajudicial killings carried out by military-aligned militiamen in the Sinai was leaked in February 2017 and independently verified by Human Rights Watch; no investigation was ever carried out, and it is unclear to what extent these violations continue.

COUNTER-TERRORISM

Arrests Reported in Sinai 2018



Deaths Reported in Sinai 2018

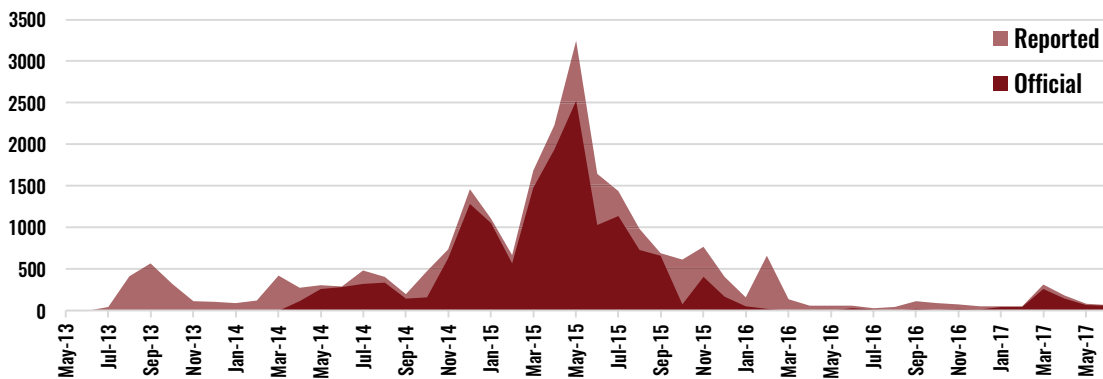


MAINLAND: Sweeping and broad crackdown

July 2013 to May 2015: Reports of Arrests Soar, Many for Nonviolent Crimes

Sweeping arrests amount to collective punishment, mostly targeting the Muslim Brotherhood. Reported arrests in counter-terror operations after Morsi’s ouster increased until May 2015, when the number of arrests peaked at 2,522, and then receded over the next two years. Many of these arrests, though made under the pretenses of counter-terror operations, were made on the basis of nonviolent crimes, such as possession of Muslim Brotherhood paraphernalia or administration of Facebook pages that support the organization. Indeed, the Brotherhood became a focal point of these counter-terror operations. In the four years since Morsi’s ouster—and the subsequent declaration of the Brotherhood as a terror organization—more than 1,400 counter-terror operations targeted alleged members of the Brotherhood. These operations included more than 12,000 arrests.

Reported Arrests in Counter-Terror Operations



Arrest numbers grew steadily for the first two years. The average number of reported arrests in counter-terror operations increased from 261 per month in the second half of 2013 to more than 440 arrests per month on average in 2014 and 1,291 per month in 2015.

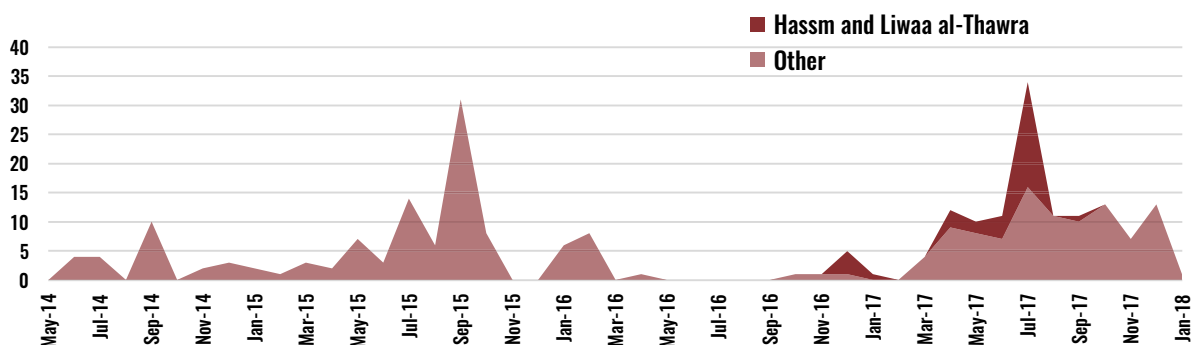
Notable counter-terror operations during this period include:

- On **April 5, 2015**, the Ministry of Interior announced in a statement that Ajnad Misr founder and leader Hamam Muhammad Attiya had been killed in a security operation in Cairo. Ajnad Misr carried out two more attacks in the following months—the first in July 2015 and the second in August 2015—and then fell silent, claiming no activity since its last operation.⁴⁹

May 2015 to Present: Reports of “Clashes” Rise

In 2016 and 2017, the rate of arrests reported on the mainland fell to 19 on average per month, just a fraction of the 250 reported per month on average in 2014 and 2015. Yet the number of deaths reported in security operations in the mainland—which counted 53 from July 2013 to May 2015—has increased significantly, with 198 reported killed in security operations from May 2015 to the present. One example of this is a string of recent security operations that purportedly targeted members of Hassm and Liwaa al-Thawra over the summer of 2017.⁵⁰ A number of these individuals, such as Muhammad Abdel Satar, had been reported missing in the weeks and months prior to their alleged killings. Abdel Satar’s forced disappearance was the subject of a report by Amnesty International, which documents his being taken from a school in Beheira province.⁵¹

Deaths Reported in Counter-Terror Operations in the Mainland



Notable operations during this period include:

- On **September 13, 2015**, the Egyptian military opened fire on a convoy of four vehicles traveling through Egypt’s Western Desert. The convoy, transporting a group of tourists from Mexico who were visiting the White Desert, were stopped on a lunch break when a helicopter crew shot them, killing four Egyptians and eight Mexicans; another 10 individuals, including six Mexicans and U.S. citizen April Corley, were injured in the incident. The helicopter crew had mistaken the tourists for militants whom they believed to be operating in the area. The Islamic State in Egypt earlier that day had released images of an Egyptian soldier whom they had beheaded in an area that appeared to be the Western Desert. Following the incident, the prosecutor-general barred reporting on the details of the investigation.⁵²
- Following the Sheikh Zuweid offensive by Wilayat Sinai, the military began targeting prominent leaders within the terror group. On **November 9, 2015**, security officials reportedly killed senior operative Ali Ashraf Hassanein al-Gharably in a shootout in Cairo’s al-Marg district.

- On **February 25, 2016**, the Ministry of Interior reported it had taken into custody the alleged perpetrators of the assassination of Egyptian Prosecutor-General Hisham Barakat—the highest-ranking Egyptian official to be killed in 25 years—after a series of security operations between 2015 and 2016. The announcement included the publication of confessions and coincided with reports that a raid had been carried out in Hehya, Sharqia province, at the home of an alleged member of the Brotherhood.⁵³ About two weeks before the ministry’s announcement, security forces reportedly seized barrels of crude explosives at that site. During the recorded confessions, one of the individuals claimed to have material used for making “ground” explosives at this location, and then transported the material to an apartment in Sheikh Zayed City.⁵⁴ During a televised press conference, Minister of Interior Magdy Abdel Ghaffar directly accused Hamas of orchestrating the assassination by training perpetrators, preparing the attack and overseeing its implementation.⁵⁵
- Security forces arrested 18 individuals throughout **August 2016** in connection with the assassination attempt against Grand Mufti Ali Gomaa. The individuals were arrested in various locations nationwide, and the implicated individuals held indirect connections to Hassm based on a previous attack in Sixth of October City in **August 2016**.
- On **October 3, 2016**, the Ministry of Interior announced that police forces had killed two senior leaders of the Brotherhood—Muhammad Kamal, the supposed head of the Brotherhood’s “armed wing” and a member of the organization’s Guidance Bureau, and aide Yasser Shehata—during a raid on a home in Bassateen. According to sources cited in a Reuters report, the pair surrendered to police upon their arrival, were held briefly while police investigated, and were executed with gunshots to the head. Liwaa al-Thawra, a group largely suspected of having ties to the Brotherhood, mentioned Kamal’s killing as one of the violations committed by the regime against Egyptians.
- The Ministry of Interior claimed to have killed Muhammad Ashour Dashisha in **December 2016** and Ahmed Muhammad Amr Sweilim in July 2017—both described as members of Hassm, and likely senior figures—during security raids in the Greater Cairo area.⁵⁷

January 2018 to Present: The Ministry of Interior Halts Reporting

Reports of arrests have ground to a halt, but the reasons for this remain unclear. Countering terrorism outside of North Sinai has usually been the role of Egypt’s police forces under the command of its interior minister, particularly Egyptian Homeland Security. Reported on regularly from the ministry’s Facebook page from April 2014 to August 2015, these reports have essentially ground to a halt. It is unclear whether this indicates that similar raids are no longer continuing around the country or that the ministry has simply stopped advertising that it is carrying out these efforts. Notably, nearly 50 individuals on average per month from April 2014 to August 2015 were reported, per the ministry’s Facebook page, to have been arrested for their affiliation with the Muslim Brotherhood, but the ministry has reported only six arrests of Brotherhood members or affiliates since then. This may indicate that the state no longer views the Brotherhood as a threat to the same degree as in previous years, that it has adjusted its tactics to more effectively target threats (as was indicated in the targeting of leadership), and/or that it continues the same practices but no longer describes its operations as against the “Muslim Brotherhood,” but rather other groups (as with the clashes against Hassm).

The rise in extrajudicial killings marks an alarming shift to tactics that further undermine human rights and the rule of law. The previous examples also illustrate a trend of increased extrajudicial killing in counter-terror operations in the mainland. In the first year of the war on terror, only about three percent of counter-terror operations outside of North Sinai resulted in deaths. By 2016, this figure increased to 23 percent, and by 2017, 42 percent of all reported counter-terror operations outside of North Sinai resulted in a death. Although the rate of terror attacks has sharply declined, this does not appear directly correlated with the rate of police activity, suggesting that the high cost of undermining citizens' rights and the rule of law is an unnecessary price to pay for combating terror.

Military operations have been more prominent on the mainland as part of Operation Sinai 2018, but reports of jointly coordinated efforts between security forces are still less frequently reported than in North Sinai. Most recently, the announcement of Operation Sinai 2018 brought with it more military activity in counter-terror operations outside of North Sinai. The military has long operated more actively in the Western Desert, and indeed this area, along with the Nile Valley, were named as key locations in the Sinai 2018 operations. However, the degree to which the military and the police are operating in concert is unclear; while there has been an increase in reports of such activity in North Sinai, there have been fewer examples of joint coordination outside. In some cases, as with the failed October 2017 raid at the Bahariya Oasis, where the police suffered serious losses, a lack of coordination between the two entities may have had repercussions for the ability of personnel to effectively and safely carry out sensitive missions.

LEGAL AND POLITICAL CONTEXT

LEGAL AND JUDICIAL CONTEXT: The war on terror trumps rule of law

Egypt's Broad and Inconsistent Anti-Terror Laws

SISI'S COUNTER-TERROR DECREES

Military Judiciary Decree (October 27, 2014): allowed military forces to join the police in securing public institutions for a period of two years. The decree stated that all attacks on public institutions will be considered attacks on military institutions and thus will be tried before a military court.

Terrorist Entities Law (February 24, 2015): granted the Public Prosecution the authority to issue both a terrorist entities list and a terrorist list, which designate organizations and individuals, respectively, per previous criminal verdicts or as determined by the court system. The decree also granted “competent state bodies” the authority to dissolve a terrorist entity, freeze its activities, close all affiliate buildings, ban meetings and all membership, stop its financial activities, freeze its property and assets, ban all related slogans, and temporarily deprive the individual or organization of political rights.

Counter-terrorism Law (August 15, 2015): replaced the penal code's definition for terrorism, expanded the number of terrorist crimes and imposed new penalties, set a number of procedural guidelines in the investigation and trial of alleged terrorist crimes, and empowered the institutions of the state to take measures to combat alleged terrorism.

–TIMEP's Legislation Tracker Report

The campaign of arrests against the Muslim Brotherhood was facilitated by naming it a terrorist organization. Less than six months after President Muhammad Morsi's deposal, on December 23, 2013, Cairo's military-backed leadership declared the Muslim Brotherhood a terrorist organization. The official reasoning was that the Brotherhood had orchestrated a suicide bombing the day before at the Mansoura security directorate, an attack that killed 15 and wounded more than 100. The terror designation foreshadowed a massive security campaign that, over the course of nearly four years, has swept up tens of thousands of Brotherhood and non-Brotherhood members, many for nonviolent crimes.⁵⁸ Notably, Egypt's urgent matters courts have taken a more activist role in banning groups and designating terrorist entities, having ruled on cases banning of the Brotherhood, Hamas, the April 6th Youth Movement, and others.

Egypt's broad and inconsistent anti-terror legislation was issued by President Abdel-Fattah El Sisi in the absence of a parliament, and later approved by Egypt's House of Representatives with little discussion. Egypt's war on terror relies on a legal framework that provides multiple pathways to being designated a terrorist or prosecuted for terrorism-related offenses, each with language that defines terrorism quite broadly and to include many everyday activities by peaceful dissidents. The legal framework to prosecute terrorism has been largely constructed with new legislation or amendments enacted since Sisi's *tafweed* speech, including his amendments to the penal code and the enactment of new laws to designate terrorist entities and expand the military's mandate in fighting terror. Until the seating

of the House in January 2016, this legislation was passed by Sisi himself by executive decree. Once parliament was seated, the previously issued decrees were swiftly approved, with little discussion. (For more information on laws, see TIMEP's Legislation Tracker and Egypt Parliament Watch projects.) Even at diplomatic junctures, the government leverages the terrorist label to its benefit, as was the case with aircraft incidents in 2015 and 2016. The Egyptian government was quick to raise the possibility of terrorism in the May 2016 downing of EgyptAir flight MS-804, which had originated at France's Charles de Gaulle Airport.⁵⁹

After the seating of parliament brought an end to Sisi's legislation by decree in 2016, legislative support for the war on terror continued. The House of Representatives has spent three full legislative sessions regularly introducing bills such as the amendments to the Criminal Procedures Law, numerous declarations and renewals of a state of emergency, and the Vital Facilities Law, which strip

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away legal rights or precedents that would normally impede the process of swiftly identifying and convicting suspected terrorists. In May 2018, the [Cybercrime Law](#) was passed, and one month later, three [media bodies laws](#) were approved. New legislation to monitor social media further is being considered; this legislation yields additional oversight for authorities, limiting free speech in the interest of promoting “national security.” High-level members of parliament have also [stated](#) that they will not advance discussion of constitutionally mandated legislation, including the Transitional Justice Law, because the war on terror should be prioritized over achieving the aims of the 2011 revolution. These levels of strategic legislative support have essentially given the government carte blanche to pursue whatever policies it sees fit in the war on terror.

The broad language and inconsistent application of counter-terror laws have created a vacuum of due process in prosecutions. Combined with other legal prescriptions, such as the military’s jurisdiction over crimes against “vital institutions” of the state (which are arbitrarily defined and include nearly every location in Cairo), the state is able to funnel political dissidents, or indeed anyone who the state views as even a social or cultural threat to its control, through a due process vacuum and to try them as terrorists or members of terrorist organizations. In January 2017, for example, a Cairo court designated 1,538 individuals as terrorists, banning them from travel, freezing their assets, denying them political rights, and canceling their passports. The individuals reportedly include leading figures from the Brotherhood and their families, as well as activists and public figures.⁶⁰

States of Emergency

Egypt has been under a nationwide state of emergency for over a year, despite constitutional protections against such a prolonged period. Following the Palm Sunday bombings at churches in Tanta and Alexandria, Sisi issued Presidential Decree 157, which placed Egypt under a three-month, nationwide state of emergency, the extension of which was [approved](#) by the legislature to go into effect on July 10, 2017. Subsequent state of emergency and extensions were issued and went into effect on October 13, 2017, January 13, 2018, and April 14, 2018. Most recently, the House of Representatives has extended the state of emergency—set to expire on July 14—through October 14, despite the fact that Article 154 of the constitution allows only one extension of a three-month state of emergency. To overcome this limitation, Egyptian authorities have allowed a state of emergency that has already been renewed once to lapse for as little as one day; thereafter, they have argued that this lapse means that the old state of emergency has expired, and thus, they are issuing entirely “new” states of emergency with every other renewal and when necessary. In 2011, the end to the emergency law, under which Egypt had been governed (in some form) for [nearly 70 years](#), had been a focal point of revolutionary calls—and the state of emergency expired without renewal in 2012. Thus, the return of a nationwide state of emergency in 2017 marks not only a return to the restrictions of President Hosni Mubarak’s era, but a return with vengeance, reestablishing emergency courts meant to fast-track these restrictions through the country’s remaining legal frameworks.

The state of emergency’s 2012 expiration was more short-lived for North Sinai residents, where a state of emergency has been in place for three and a half years. One day after the high-casualty attack on Karm al-Quwadees military checkpoint in North Sinai on October 24, 2014, for which ABM claimed responsibility, Sisi held meetings with the National Defense Council and Supreme Council of the Armed Forces and decreed a three-month state of emergency in North Sinai province, without the approval of a sitting parliament.⁶¹ Sisi consistently renewed the state of emergency until the House of Representatives was seated in January 2016; since then, parliament has signed off on the measure with relatively no resistance, though representatives from North Sinai have previously discussed some of the potential negative effects of the law on business, education, and development.⁶²

Procedural Flaws and Lack of Transparency Mar Terrorism Trials

Beyond the language of legislation and its empowering of sweeping arrests, once terrorism cases reached the courts, impingement on rights continued to characterize prosecutions. Instances of terrorism cases are found in several of Egypt's courts. The 2015 Counter-terrorism Law established a new terrorism circuit in Egypt's eight courts of appeal, and the military courts have also seen a great number of terrorism cases related to attacks that target or take place on military or other state institutions as described in the aforementioned section. While cases in criminal courts often face significant and documented procedural issues, the closed and specific nature of military trials, designed to deliver speedy sentences without the presence of media or, in many cases, legal representation, only exacerbates these issues, and raises questions about how faithfully government is actually using terrorist laws against terrorists. More recently, with the declaration of a state of emergency in mid-2017, the emergency sections of state security courts have been reestablished; a 2017 decree issued by the prosecutor-general allows a number of crimes, including violations of the Assembly Law and the Counter-terrorism Law, to be tried before these procedurally hasty, nontransparent courts.

*Notable terrorism trial cases include:*⁶³

- On **March 24, 2014**, a Minya court sentenced 529 alleged Brotherhood supporters to death for the murder of a police officer, attempted murder of two other officers, and an attack on a police station in mid-2013. The case, in which the defense asserted its team had no prior access to evidence and were not allowed to present a defense in court, marked the greatest number of individuals sentenced to death in a single case in Egypt.
- On **April 28, 2014**, the same Minya court sentenced 683 alleged Brotherhood members to death for the killing of one police officer in August 2013, surpassing the record for greatest number of individuals sentenced to death from the previous month. Most of the death sentences were commuted upon appeal to life imprisonment.
- In **August 2014**, a military court handed down death sentences for nine defendants for their involvement with ABM, and specifically their roles in killing military personnel. The case, dubbed the "Arab Sharkas case" and carried out with little media attention, marked the first verdicts associated with ABM. In May 2015, the executions of six of the convicted were carried out, despite concerns over due process in the trial; the executions received condemnations among rights groups, and the Islamic State carried out a car bombing in retaliation.
- In **March 2015**, the Cairo Criminal Court began to hear the case of 213 individuals on charges related to their involvement with ABM (the case included the nine previously sentenced in the Arab Sharkas case). No verdict had been issued as of July 2018.
- On **November 25, 2016**, state security prosecutors referred 292 individuals to military prosecution (151 of whom were already in custody), to be tried on charges of plotting to assassinate Sisi. The authorities concluded what they said was a year-long investigation into several plots. They reportedly elicited confessions from a number of the individuals, who they alleged were members of the Islamic State. Six former police officers were among the defendants. No verdict had been issued as of July 2018.
- On **January 1, 2017**, an Assiut military court sentenced 175 individuals to life on charges of committing violence and raiding Minya's Mallawi museum in 2013. The court also issued various sentences for 42 other defendants. The defendants were arrested in 2013 at sit-ins demanding the reinstatement of Morsi.

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- On January 18, 2017, state security prosecutors referred 304 members of Hassm to military prosecution.⁶⁴ The trial was ongoing as of June 2018 and no verdict had been issued.
- On July 22, 2017—just over two years since the assassination of Prosecutor-General Hisham Barakat in Cairo’s Heliopolis neighborhood—a criminal court convicted 66 defendants (the remaining defendant, Muhammad Kamal, was killed during a security raid) of involvement in the June 2015 attack. Of the defendants, 28 were given death sentences, including Yasser Arafat, a taxi driver who had unknowingly transported the defendants during their first, failed attempt to assassinate Barakat. Fifteen others were given life in prison, eight were given 15 years, and another 15 were given 10 years.
- On November 22, 2017, the Cairo Criminal Court sentenced seven individuals to death for partaking in the killings of 21 Coptic Christians in Libya in 2015. Thirteen other defendants were issued varying sentences ranging from 15 years in prison and life imprisonment; all of the defendants were charged with belonging to or associating with the Islamic State.
- On April 23, 2018, the Cairo Criminal Court placed 2,833 individuals with ties to the Muslim Brotherhood on the terror watch list for a period of three years. The list includes ousted president Muhammad Morsi and Brotherhood leader Muhammad Badie. In a separate ruling on April 14, 2018, the Court of Cassation upheld Badie’s life sentence for his role in the Raba’a al-Adaweya Square sit-in dispersal case.
- On April 27, 2018, the Court of Cassation upheld the sentences of six individuals to death and another 59 to life in prison for attacking a Minya police station in 2013. All defendants in the case were accused of belonging to or associating with the Brotherhood.
- On May 28, 2018, the Cairo Criminal Court added 241 individuals associated with Wilayat Sinai to the terror watch list. As part of the Terrorist Funds Custody Law, passed in April 2018, any funds owned by the 241 defendants were seized and became property of the state.

DOMESTIC POLITICAL CONTEXT: The war on terror as pretext for political consolidation

Major Security Sector Reshuffles

A number of high-level leadership shuffles have been made since 2013 in the Supreme Council for the Armed Forces, with Sisi tightening his inner circle rather than assigning positions based on performance. Following then-Minister of Defense Sisi’s decision in March 2014 to resign his commission and run for president, General Sedki Sobhi, a former commander of Egypt’s Third Field Army, replaced Sisi as defense minister and chairman of the Supreme Council of the Armed Forces (SCAF). During the same shuffle, Lieutenant General Mahmoud Hegazy, a former head of military intelligence whom Sisi had tapped to succeed him and who maintained a close relationship with Sisi through the marriage of their children, was appointed chief of staff of the armed forces and deputy chairman of the SCAF.⁶⁵ Hegazy maintained this post until he was replaced by Lieutenant General Muhammad Farid Hegazy in October 2017, suggesting that the former fell out of grace with the president and sparking concerns about Sisi’s tightening of his inner circle. Among the more recent SCAF-level shuffles, in December 2016, the military appointed Lieutenant General Ahmed Khaled Hassan Saeed as commander of the Egyptian Navy and Major General Ali Fahmy Muhammad Ali Fahmy as commander of the Egyptian Air Defense Forces. Both appointees were chiefs of staff in their respective branches. Vice Admiral Osama Mounir Rabie, commander of the Egyptian Navy, was transferred to lead the Suez Canal Authority, and Lieutenant General Abdel Moneim al-Teras, the former air defense commander, left active duty and was appointed as an adviser to the president.

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Following Sisi's 2018 reelection to office, his new cabinet included major shakeups for both the Ministry of Defense and Ministry of Interior. Sobhi was replaced with Republican Guard Commander Muhammad Ahmed Zaki, a known loyalist who some believe permitted his forces to open fire against peaceful demonstrators outside of the guard's headquarters in July 2013.

On January 31, 2015, following a series of attacks days before that killed 30 security personnel in Sinai, Sisi, as president, issued a decree establishing a new military command for combating terrorism: the Unified Command for the Area East of the Canal and for Counter-terrorism. Lieutenant General Osama Askar, then the commander of Egypt's Third Field Army, was promoted to be the commander of the new body, which coordinates the counter-terror efforts of the Second and Third Field Armies.

Egypt's notorious state security intelligence figures have regained prominence as Egyptian Homeland Security (EHS). At the Ministry of Interior, there has been a gradual shift in leadership over the past years from those drawn from the Central Security Forces (CSF)—Egypt's riot-control police—toward figures who had risen up through Egypt's notorious domestic intelligence service (formerly the State Security Investigations Service, SSIS).⁶⁶ On March 5, 2015, Sisi appointed the retired head of EHS, Magdy Abdel Ghaffar, as his new minister of interior, replacing Mohamed Ibrahim Mustafa, who had led the CSF and was made an adviser to the prime minister after leaving the interior ministry. Upon entering the role, Abdel Ghaffar promptly replaced 20 assistant ministers and other senior officials, many of them connected to the State Security Investigations Service (SSIS, EHS' predecessor agency which was disbanded after the 2011 revolution but almost immediately reconstituted as EHS) or EHS.⁶⁷ Abdel Ghaffar was replaced in June 2018 by EHS Director Mahmoud Tawfiq. Sisi's decision to replace the two ministers was viewed as an attempt to consolidate power and tighten his inner circle with loyal officials.

Egypt's General Intelligence Directorate (GID) also had a prominent face change. In December 2014, Sisi replaced Major General Muhammad Farid al-Tohamy—then considered one of Sisi's closest advisers and previously Sisi's mentor during their time together in military intelligence—with Major General Khaled Fawzy as head of the GID, citing Farid's poor state of health.⁶⁸ Fawzy, considered a hard-liner on security matters, harbored sentiments contrary to the Ministry of Foreign Affairs and began increasing GID's influence in the regime through separate negotiations with the U.S., Hamas and Palestine, and Ethiopia on the Grand Ethiopian Renaissance Dam. GID's growing influence and conflicting opinions with Sisi prompted him to remove Fawzy in January 2018 and replace him with the presidential chief of staff, Abbas Kamel. The appointment of Kamel, considered more of a moderate compared to Fawzy, was viewed as yet another attempt by Sisi to consolidate his inner circle and oust any dissidents.

Controlling the Narrative

The Egyptian state has made its effort to control security-related discourse through a number of repressive measures. These include targeting independent journalists, rights groups, scholars, and others. The counter-terrorism legislation issued by executive decree in 2015 criminalized reporting on figures that different from those the government officially reported, and includes a hefty fine designed to discourage reporters from covering terrorism. Incidents of online surveillance and hacking and phishing attempts have increased considerably, as have harassment, arrest, and imposition of travel restrictions and other sanctions on those working for news outlets and rights organizations that are critical of the state.⁶⁹ On May 24, 2017, the government blocked domestic access to at least 21 news outlets including independent news site Mada Masr and the Qatar-owned channel Al Jazeera. State-

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owned Middle East News Agency said that the blockages were imposed because the outlets were “fabricating news” and “promoting pro-terror content.” According to the Association for Freedom of Thought and Expression, over 500 websites, including those of prominent human rights organizations such as the Egyptian Commission for Rights and Freedoms and the Arab Network for Human Rights Information, have now been blocked in Egypt. Many of the blocked outlets have resorted to other means of disseminating content, such as using Facebook and Twitter.

Near Unconditional Support for the War on Terror from Egypt’s Political Parties

Political parties have been largely aligned behind the war on terror, even before the seating of parliament. The majority of political parties in Egypt have been supportive of the war on terror since 2013, as the high-profile terror attacks listed in this report led to an increasingly securitized discourse in the Egyptian media. However, parties diverged over how to achieve security, with the question of whether legal and human rights should be subsumed by security interests the most salient division between groups. Parties such as the Nation’s Future Party and the Conference Party tended to unconditionally support the regime’s military strategy, while parties such as the Socialist Popular Alliance Party and the Social Democratic Party made official statements calling for human and political rights to be respected. While these statements represented aspects of the parties’ political platforms, they were relatively meaningless from a policy perspective, as parties had no official power to introduce legislation to enhance or curb the Sisi administration’s war efforts while they remained dissolved until elections in 2015.

Egypt’s House of Representatives has thus voiced nearly unconditional support for the war on terror. Once the new House of Representatives was seated in January 2016, the body was constitutionally empowered to oversee legislation related to the military. However, most of the parties that had been hesitant to uncompromisingly support the government’s war on terror either did not run in the parliamentary elections or were soundly defeated by pro-regime parties. This led to a parliament stocked with representatives willing to rubber-stamp government requests and the largest number of former military and police officers in parliament in Egyptian history. Representatives who did not share their esteem for all matters prescribed by the Egyptian security forces have been shouted down and threatened with official censure during general assemblies of parliament. Near automatic extensions of the states of emergency in North Sinai and later nationwide, which received no substantive debate despite being introduced for four votes, provide further evidence of this. The head of parliament once even utilized a legally questionable interpretation of the Egyptian Constitution to legitimize a state of emergency without a vote. These extensions come despite infrequent efforts by North Sinai representatives to raise concern over evidence of extrajudicial killings. Some representatives have worried that the war on terror and the state of emergency are harming trade, education, and economic development, which they believe are more effective means of preventing radicalization. However, these representatives have not organized any unified public campaigns to call further attention to the aspects of the war on terror to which they object.

GEOPOLITICAL CONTEXT: Continued global support

United States: Continued Support for Egypt's War on Terror, Albeit with Increasing Trepidation

Washington's concerns over the security situation in Sinai and a desire to maintain stability have remained at the fore of U.S. security interests when it comes to Egypt, despite significant changes in approach from Presidents Barack Obama to Donald Trump. Following the dispersal of sit-ins at Raba'a al-Adaweya and Nahda Squares in August 2013, which, according to Human Rights Watch, killed at least 817 and likely more than 1,000 protesters, Obama canceled the biennial Bright Star joint exercises between the U.S. and Egypt, which were slated for the following month and which had been conducted since 1981.⁷⁰ That October, the Obama administration suspended \$260 million in aid and froze transfers of F-16 and as many as 125 MIAI parts to Egypt, and the aid remained frozen until March 31, 2015.⁷¹ Although the security assistance was resumed, the actions strained relations under the Obama administration. Thus, the election of Trump, who championed a security platform in his election campaign, was particularly welcomed by Cairo. Sisi was among the first heads of state to congratulate Trump on his victory in the 2016 U.S. presidential elections, and Sisi visited the U.S. in April 2017 in the first trip to Washington by a sitting Egyptian president in eight years. The U.S. resumed Bright Star exercises in September 2017 after U.S. Central Command Commander General Joseph Votel met with Sisi and other officials and expressed interest in reinstating the exercise.⁷²

Egypt's aggressive attacks on human rights, civil society, and media, continued relations with North Korea, and Washington's frustrations with Egypt's counter-terror approach have marred unconditional support. In spite of surface-level support coming out of the Trump administration, both the administration and Congress have made significant changes to Egypt's military aid on account of human rights violations and end-use monitoring of U.S. equipment—an increasingly bipartisan sticking point in the Senate—and Egypt's relations with North Korea. An April 2017 Senate hearing on U.S. assistance to Egypt illustrated growing bipartisan wariness of Sisi's aggressive counter-terrorism policies and human rights record, and on August 22, 2017, the U.S. said it would withhold up to \$290 million in aid to Egypt over violations of human rights and democratic norms; Egypt's controversial relationship with North Korea was reported as another reason for the aid being withheld. An ad-



U.S. President Donald Trump meeting with Egyptian President Abdel-Fattah El Sisi at the White House on April 3, 2017 (photo courtesy of the White House).



U.S. presidential adviser Jared Kushner (far left) meets with Egyptian Foreign Minister Sameh Shoukry (second from left) at the Ministry of Foreign Affairs soon after reports that the U.S. would withhold up to \$290 million in aid (photo courtesy of the ministry).

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ditional \$105 million in aid was withheld by Senator Patrick Leahy (D-VT) in May 2018, over human rights and end-use monitoring concerns, including the Egyptian air strike on tourists in the Western Desert, which caused grievous injury to U.S. citizen April Corley. As both Congress and the executive branch of the U.S. government continue to make changes to Egypt's military assistance (see next section), it is likely that the administration will continue to be frustrated with the Egyptian military. Egyptian participation in the Trump administration's envisioned Arab force to fight the Islamic State looks unlikely, considering Sisi's persistent reluctance to commit troops to the Saudi-led coalition in Yemen. Furthermore, Egypt's failure to contain its own insurgency in Sinai raises competency concerns for Egypt's counter-terrorism partners.

Security assistance has seen a slow draw down across administrations. In April 2015, the White House announced it would resume security assistance to Cairo, including the delivery of 20 Harpoon missiles, 12 F-16s, and up to 125 M1A1 Abrams tanks; in 2016 an additional shipment of mine-resistant ambush protected vehicles were delivered.⁷³ Also in 2016, long-held concerns over end-use monitoring of U.S. military equipment for the purpose of compliance with the Leahy laws were substantiated by the U.S. government. The Government Accountability Office issued a report that detailed the US government's failure to monitor end-use delivery of defense articles, particularly as it relates to access, oversight, and achievement of security objectives. The report was followed by the aforementioned cuts to assistance, which have showed an unlikely alignment between the security-minded administration and rights-minded members of Congress, as well as the inclusion of language on end-use monitoring.

If Leahy continues to hold \$105 million and Secretary of State Mike Pompeo does not certify Egypt's progress on democracy and human rights conditions by September 30, 2018, Egypt's military assistance could dip below \$1 billion for the first time since 1983. Meanwhile, the Senate continues to seek additional cuts and restrictions, with its fiscal year 2019 appropriations bill lowering military aid to \$1 billion and raising the portion conditional on human rights and democracy to 30 percent (from the FY18 omnibus' 23 percent).⁷⁴

Europe: Security Concerns Dominate

Similar to the U.S., Egypt's security relationship with Europe has only strengthened since the start of its war on terror, albeit with some vocal critique of its security practices. Such critiques have been strongest from the European Parliament, which has passed several resolutions of condemnation, as well as from Italy, particularly after the brutal torture and murder of Ph.D. student Giulio Regeni. Yet European nations have sold more arms to Egypt since 2014 than ever before. European countries that have inked weapons deals with Egypt include the U.K., Germany, Italy, the Czech Republic, and Bulgaria. Additionally, the Egyptian Armed Forces have in recent months conducted several joint exercises with units from France, Spain, and members of the Gulf Cooperation Council.

French-Egyptian weapons deals have surpassed those of the U.S. While French President Francois Hollande made strong statements in support of Egypt's counter-terror efforts, his successor, Emmanuel Macron, had declared in his presidential campaign that he would condition contracts based on



Egypt receiving its second Type-209/1400 submarine from Germany on August 8, 2017 (photo courtesy of the Egyptian Armed Forces).

respect for human rights (though referring explicitly to sales to Saudi Arabia). However, when Sisi visited France in October 2017 Macron declined to publicly raise French concerns with the status of civil liberties in Egypt during a press conference with Sisi, increasing French-Egyptian arms deals, which, in addition to the postponement of U.S. arms deliveries, contributed to France overtaking the U.S. as the largest supplier of arms to Egypt in 2013–2017. A 2016 arms deal signed with France totaled over \$1 billion and included Rafale fighter aircraft, *Mistral*-class navy vessels, and a military satellite system. As of March 2018, France's Dassault Aviation is awaiting official U.S. consent before signing an add-on segment to the 2016 *Mistral*-Rafale package for the sale of 12 additional Rafale aircraft and an unspecified number of SCALP cruise missiles. The SCALP missiles contain U.S.-made components, and thus require U.S. approval prior to any third-party purchase.

Egypt has also sought to build its naval forces with a number of high-profile purchases from other European manufacturers, including the latest Type-209/1400 submarines from Germany, as well as the *Mistrals*. German arms exports to Egypt increased by more than 200 percent in the last five-year period.

Russia: Relations Tumultuous After October 2015 Metrojet Disaster

Russia remains a key security partner for Egypt despite Metrojet tension. The October 2015 downing of a St. Petersburg-bound commercial aircraft over the Sinai Peninsula, which killed 224 passengers and crew, complicated relations between Moscow and Cairo. Russia froze commercial flights to and from Egypt soon after the incident, disrupting a key market for Egypt's already faltering tourism industry.⁷⁵

Though the attack strained Egyptian-Russian relations, Russia remains a key security partner for Egypt. Egypt and Russia have inked a number of agreements on large arms deals, including the above-discussed deals for Ka-52 combat helicopters and MiG-29M/MiG-35s, both of which were initiated prior to the Metrojet attack.

Regional Actors: Increasing Support

Israeli-Egyptian security cooperation is reportedly at an all-time high. A *New York Times* report on Israeli-Egyptian coordination in Sinai attested to Israeli's direct engagement in the province, conducting air strikes and operating unmanned aerial vehicles over Egyptian soil. The report described the operations as having occurred since as early as 2015. Although both the Egyptians and the Israelis have refuted the reports, the two have seen a warming of relations, with the shared threat of terrorism in the Sinai and Egypt's role in the peace process bringing the countries closer than ever. Whether or not Israel has carried out its own operations in Egypt, it has embraced Egypt's activities on its borders, which would require the consent of both countries to operate in the areas that the Camp David Accords stipulate to be demilitarized (which includes Rafah). The two countries have also engaged in increasing intelligence sharing around the threats from militants, and the warming relations have been reflected in Egyptian officials' high level visits to Israel, including Foreign Minister Sameh Shoukry's 2016 visit, and Sisi's public appearance with Israeli Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu on the sidelines of the 2017 United Nations General Assembly.

Similarly, the United Arab Emirates has become increasingly close to Egypt in terms of security cooperation. In May 2018, the *New Yorker* mentioned unconfirmed cooperation between Emirati and Egyptian security forces, going as far as to suggest the Emiratis had also carried out strikes on Egyptian soil. The U.A.E. and Egypt have developed a particularly close political relationship marked by tens of billions of dollars in Emirati investments since Sisi's rise to power, and both countries have shared interests in supporting the Libyan National Army (and have carried out military operations there). The two countries have engaged in several high-profile military and naval exercises since the start of the war on terror, both in Egyptian and Emirati territory.

FINDINGS

Our findings demonstrate that a curtailment of human rights, restriction of public space, and reliance on extrajudicial methods such as summary executions and collective punishment have not effectively served the objective of eradicating terrorism:

The aforementioned legal and political measures employed in the name of the war on terror over the past five years have included the broadening of language in anti-terror legislation to encompass a range of nonviolent activity, and the state has sought prosecution of a wide range of citizens for nonviolent offenses under this legislation. Even with the state's overly broad application of anti-terror laws, the state continues to rely on extralegal methods, as underscored by the recent killings of alleged terrorists under dubious circumstances. **These measures fundamentally erode the rule of law and highlight the politicization of national security efforts.**

Furthermore, these measures have resulted in the arrest of over 25,000 individuals in counter-terror raids, the deaths of nearly 7,000 individuals in counter-terror operations with little transparency, and back-to-back military campaigns in North Sinai since September 2015, which have caused massive displacement of residents. **These efforts amount to collective punishment that has caused grave individual and social physical and psychological trauma** and have been directly referred to by terror groups in their propaganda as a reason for their decision to bear arms against the state. The failure to conduct any investigation or hold any official accountable for these actions—and rather promote figures such as newly appointed Minister of Defense Muhammad Ahmed Zaki, showing reward for loyalty to the executive rather than performance—has likewise been cited as a reason for groups to take “justice” into their own hands, showcasing how the undermining of rule of law can exacerbate radicalization; indeed, just under 1,400 security personnel have been killed in the past five years.

The high social and economic costs of these methods have not been justified, as they have not adequately established security; 182 terror attacks have killed a reported 520 people in the past year alone, even more than the 363 people reported killed in terror attacks in the year following the declaration of the war on terror. While attacks have declined in the mainland, with only one major attack in the first half of 2018, the current presence of armed actors in the Sinai, as well as the emergence of the nearly dozen armed groups over the past five years, which are described in this report, underscore the fragility of this period of calm.

The state's effort to control the narrative around continued insecurity has caused a vicious cycle, during which channels of peaceful expression have been restricted. This cycle has involved increasingly draconian measures that have included the blocking of over 500 websites, the imprisonment of journalists, and the arrest and prosecution of a wide range of peaceful dissidents, all in the name of the war on terror. The failure of elected representatives to successfully call for investigation or hold the state to account for these measures further underscores the breakdown in institutions meant to offer citizens peaceful mechanisms for engaging with the state. Thus, not only has the war on terror been ineffective in achieving its aim, but the methods employed and justified by it have led to the deterioration of the social contract between state and citizen, and may indeed exacerbate insecurity, particularly in the long term, by recreating and perpetuating the conditions under which extremism has thrived over the past five years.

There is no greater evidence of how ineffective such an approach is than the near total restriction of freedoms in parts of North Sinai, which have occurred in parallel to sustained insurgent activity. The state's extreme efforts to control North Sinai have included the killing of a reported 6,973 individuals in over 1,300 counter-terror operations and the continuous state of emergency since October 2014. Despite these efforts and the fact that the estimate of militants in the area has not exceeded 1,000, North Sinai continues to experience regular attacks on security outposts and personnel that are comparable

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to the number and scope those of 2013 (11 reported on average per month in the past year compared to 19 in the year after the war on terror, with 411 deaths reported in the last year compared to 182 in 2013). The area has also seen horrific sectarian targeting, as in the attack on the Sufi-linked mosque in Rawda, where 311 Muslims were killed in November 2017, and a spate of attacks on Christians in early 2017 that resulted in mass Christian flight (events which are detailed in this report). These activities not only underscore the resilience of militants in the area, but also the abysmal situation for civilians, where, since 2013, over 12,000 have been reported arrested for suspected affiliation with militants and over 50 have been assassinated for suspected affiliation with the military, and who face daily and constant restrictions on mobility.

The current situation in North Sinai shows a proliferation of armed actors, with the reemergence of al-Qaeda, the presence of military-aligned tribal militias, and with still 15 attacks carried out anonymously in the past year. Added to the sustained insurgency, where Wilayat Sinai has claimed over 114 attacks in the past year, this situation bodes ill for a period of transition should the Islamic State be defeated. **To tackle this uphill battle to restore stability requires not only defeating the current militant formations, but establishing order through a program of disarmament, demobilization, and reintegration, as well as rule of law and investment in the social contract between state and citizen, no aspect of which the Egyptian state has articulated as part of its war on terror.**

Despite continued insecurity and rights abuse, domestic and international actors have continued to support of Egypt's war on terror, to the detriment of shared interests. The Egyptian Cabinet and parliament have not acted as a check or balance to the domination of security bodies in politics (in either the war on terror or other matters). While the United States and some European governments have spoken out about abuses, substantive policy changes have been slow to follow. Since 2013, the U.S. has committed nearly \$4 billion in security assistance, with an additional nearly \$5 billion in weapons delivery from around the world, providing the Egyptian military with defense articles that are often ill-suited to fighting the actual threat it faces, despite foreign governments' insistence on their support for this fight. Finally, end-use monitoring has fallen woefully short of ensuring that such weapons are used in accordance with law.

METHODOLOGY

TIMEP engages in daily media monitoring to update its data set 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 jihadist web forums and terror groups' social media pages.

TIMEP additionally independently monitors all statements on the 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 were documented in TIMEP's Eshhad project).

Likewise, "counter-terror operation" is ill-defined, particularly as many government actions (especially 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 its 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 data set 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 data set 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 data set.

TIMEP's quarterly reports use unique data to offer 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.

¹These casualty figures include both the downing of the Metrojet aircraft in October 2015, which killed 224 civilians, and the attacks on Coptic institutions in 2016 and 2017 that caused hundreds of civilian casualties.

²Per the Egypt Security Watch methodology, TIMEP's data set only monitors those arrested as a result of declared counter-terror operations. Many others have been arrested and later charged with terrorism or national security-related offenses and would not be included in this tally.

³Translating this to numbers, only nine percent of attacks across Egypt between July 2013 and December 2014 carried claims of responsibility, whereas 50 percent of attacks since that time have been claimed. Numbers for Sinai are quite similar, with seven percent and 60 percent of attacks claimed over the respective periods.

⁴These casualty figures include both the downing of the Metrojet aircraft in October 2015, which killed 224 civilians, and the attacks on Coptic institutions in 2016 and 2017 that caused hundreds of civilian casualties.

⁵When claims or statements for some of these attacks have been issued, the security apparatus is generally referred to as “illegitimate,” both justifying bloodshed to the perpetrators and their supporters, as well as fulfilling the objective of undermining, physically and symbolically, the state's security capacity.

⁶In April 2015, a previously unknown group called Execution Battalion claimed responsibility for a Cairo shooting that killed police Colonel Wael Tahoun, ostensibly for his former role as a senior investigation officer in Matariya.

⁷While this has been most predominant in North Sinai province, there have been examples outside of this context as well: In June 2015, Revolutionary Punishment released an interrogation video of Walid Ahmed Ali, a civilian who was accused of collaborating with security forces. The interrogation ended with Walid's execution. In March 2017, the terror group Hariket Souaid Misr (Hassm) claimed responsibility for a similar execution, in which it killed Muhammad al-Zeini, whom the group described as one of the criminals in “Abdel-Fattah El Sisi's militias.”

⁸Fueling the ranks of these groups was a pool of thousands of prisoners who had escaped during the chaos of the revolution. After 2011, various actors, including the Supreme Council of the Armed Forces (SCAF), released from prison a number of known jihadists and Islamists, many of whom had been held in administrative detention since the 1990s. Morsi released a portion of these prisoners with a history of violence, but many others had been released during the SCAF era.

⁹In one of the group's most high-profile attacks, ABM fighters shot down a military helicopter near Sheikh Zuweid using a man-portable air-defense system; the group released video footage of the attack, which left the five crewmen dead. Weeks later, ABM again landed in international headlines for an attack on tourists in southern Sinai. A suicide bomber blew up a bus carrying South Korean tourists near the Israeli border town of Taba, killing three of the tourists and the driver of the bus.

¹⁰“If you are not with us, do not be against us,” read a flyer that ABM reportedly disseminated to locals. In another, they called themselves “your brothers ... men from [Egypt] ... perhaps your neighbors or relatives.”

¹¹Months later, ABM claimed to have killed William Henderson, an American petroleum engineer who had worked for Apache Corporation and Qarun Petroleum. ABM published a photograph of Henderson's passport and two identity cards from his employers.

¹²The majority of Wilayat Sinai's activities have been in North Sinai province, but the group has also claimed activity in the Greater Cairo area, Daqhalia, South Sinai, Matruh, Qalyubia, New Valley, and Ismailia.

¹³Just days before the opening of the New Suez Canal in August 2015, Wilayat Sinai claimed to have kidnapped Croatian subcontractor Tomislav Salopek, who worked with the French geophysical services company CGG. In a video that included Salopek, the militants threatened to execute him within 48 hours if the Egyptian government did not release Muslim women from prison. A week after the kidnapping, Wilayat Sinai declared that it had beheaded the 30-year-old Croatian, accusing his home country of participating in the war against the Islamic State.

Then, on October 31, 2015, a St. Petersburg-bound Metrojet commercial aircraft carrying 217 tourists and seven crew members, the majority of whom were Russian nationals, disintegrated over the Sinai Peninsula. Wilayat Sinai claimed the high-profile incident, posting pictures on social media of what appeared to be an improvised explosive made with a Schweppes soda can, which was ostensibly used to bring the plane down. In the claims, the Islamic State referenced Western and Russian involvement in the Syrian conflict.

¹⁴In the weekly magazine affiliated with the Islamic State, al-Naba, Wilayat Sinai gave a detailed account of this outage, explaining that the state had blocked social media outlets and banned news outlets from reporting on a military operation that occurred at that time, and that it was unable to issue claims. The report listed over 30 attacks that Wilayat Sinai had conducted during that period.

¹⁵The U.S. military has an authorized strength of 410 personnel in Sinai as part of the 1,680-member peacekeeping mission.

¹⁶ There were, of course, notable exceptions. In February 2014, for example, Ansar Bayt al-Maqdis targeted with an explosive a charter bus carrying South Korean tourists near the Taba border crossing, killing two South Korean nationals and the Egyptian driver.

¹⁷ In one case, Ajnad Misr declared it had sabotaged the detonation of an improvised explosive device to avoid civilian casualties.

¹⁸ The memory of the Two Saints Church bombing, which killed 21 after a New Year's mass weeks before the first demonstrations in Tahrir Square, and for which no perpetrator has been brought to justice, was still fresh in collective memory as churches were burned in attacks in the summer of 2013.

¹⁹ The fate of the priests is unclear.

²⁰ Reports surfaced that President Barack Obama was considering the transfer of an unspecified number of American troops from the MFO's North Camp—what it now refers to as a Forward Operating Base, or FOB-N—in Gorah to the South Camp near Sharm el-Sheikh, where the security situation was more stable. Gorah military checkpoint, which abuts FOB-N, was for some time the focus of a number of Wilayat Sinai's attacks in 2015 and 2016. The U.S. at that time was reportedly in talks with the Egyptian and Israeli governments concerning the move. In addition to the large North Camp at Gorah, the MFO operates a smaller facility on the Red Sea, near Sharm el-Sheikh, which houses the MFO headquarters (separate from the Rome office) and serves as a logistical and operational base. The Pentagon spokesman at the time, Jeff Davis, even hinted at a possible force reduction, pointing out that the Department of Defense was considering automation of observation activity with surveillance technology.

²¹ For months, Wilayat Sinai kept a thorough, monthly account of its activities (even breaking down attacks by the day) and released links to the reports every month over various social media channels such as Twitter. Wilayat Sinai even released a few English-language versions of these monthly accounts, though they were poorly translated. For whatever reason—possibly because it required linking to a report, rather than having the report itself available on a given platform—these report-like accounts were eventually phased out, and Wilayat Sinai came to rely more on ad hoc or singular claims, with many of them presented on the now recognizable, standard Islamic State and Amaq templates. While proactive anti-extremism measures employed by social media platforms have certainly influenced the production, dissemination, and accessibility of claims, Wilayat Sinai continues to adapt and seek other methods to spread its propaganda.

²² It is unclear if this nomenclature refers to militants fighting in Sinai that enter from outside of Egypt or merely outside of the peninsula, and so it may include fighters traveling from the Nile Valley or Upper Egypt.

²³ Ajnad Misr later acknowledged Attiya's death, along with the aforementioned al-Qaeda statements lamenting his passing. Ajnad Misr's so-called Shura Council announced that Ezzeddin al-Masry succeeded Attiya as leader.

²⁴ One of the most prominent in Egypt to date was the attempted assassination of former interior minister Mohamed Ibrahim Mustafa in September 2013, which was never formally claimed.

²⁵ In September 2015, overall attacks across the mainland dropped significantly. There was another spike in January 2016—around the time of the fifth anniversary of the revolution—which corresponded with a concurrent increase in attacks with one or more fatalities.

²⁶ Based on Egypt Security Watch's methodology, many incidents of arson—e.g., burning tires in the middle of the streets—are excluded from this count.

²⁷ See previous note.

²⁸ In four incidents, the province in which the attack allegedly took place was not identified.

²⁹ Whereas commercial and economic interests constituted less than five percent of the Revolutionary Punishment's activities, these targets composed about a third of the Popular Resistance Movement's, making a very clear distinction in the groups' *modi operandi*. The group claimed at least four dozen attacks targeting commercial interests (e.g., Etisalat, Mobinil, and Vodafone stores), telecommunications and transportation infrastructure, and public utilities. Many of the Popular Resistance Movement's claims in 2016 carried the hashtag "economic blockade," and the group targeted foreign entities (particularly Emirati) that it deemed supportive of the Egyptian government and its economic objectives.

³⁰ "Economic" targets here include attacks on businesses (e.g., Vodafone, Mobinil, Etisalat), telecommunications and transportation infrastructure, and utilities.

³¹ The nature of the group and its relationship with (and indeed distinction from) the Islamic State's Sinai arm, Wilayat Sinai, was the subject of speculation until the so-called emir of the Islamic State in Egypt (described as the "emir of the caliphate's soldiers in Egypt") shed light on the issue. In an interview published in the 79th issue of the Islamic State-affiliated magazine *al-Naba* on May 4, 2017, the emir, who went unnamed, spoke explicitly about his group's distinction from Wilayat Sinai, describing them as "our brothers of the caliphate's soldiers in Wilayat Sinai."

³² The raiding security personnel were reportedly acting on intelligence that the apartment was a link in the Islamic State's IED production chain in Egypt. As security forces entered the apartment, the occupants detonated a number of explosives, killing at least seven members of the security team and injuring others, including civilians.

³³The Popular Resistance Movement also claimed responsibility for the attack, possibly indicating that a relationship existed between the groups.

³⁴Since the beginning of May 2016, there have been just 13 attacks per month on average throughout the mainland, compared to 48 per month between January 2015 and April 2016.

³⁵One of the notable exceptions was an attack on March 8, 2017, that targeted a man—ostensibly a civilian—whom Hassm accused of spying for the Egyptian police.

³⁶Interestingly, soon after Regaei's assassination, Liwaa al-Thawra threatened a number of prominent Egyptian figures—including Khaled Salah, steel tycoon Ahmed Abu Hashima, Minister of Justice Ahmed al-Zend, and Coptic activist Naguib Gabriel—over the messaging application WhatsApp. None of the figures have been physically targeted, however.

³⁷As the Popular Resistance Movement did with the Jabhat al-Tahrir attack in Khosous, PRM also claimed the Gomaa attack, providing grainy pictures as “evidence” of their involvement.

³⁸These attacks have collectively killed or wounded nearly 300 (mostly Christian civilians, but also including security personnel who were guarding the perimeter of the churches) since December 2016.

³⁹Even more than with terror attacks, an accurate account of the number of counter-terror operations is heavily dependent on the accuracy in state bodies' reporting of them. Because terror attacks tend to seek public recognition to achieve their greatest symbolic impact, and because of the public's general interest in these attacks and their potential harm to society, terror attacks are often more frequently reported on by the media. (There are the notable exceptions of attacks in North Sinai and the Western Desert, areas more or less off limits to journalists.) Counter-terror operations, on the other hand, because these are carried out exclusively by the state, and because significant legal restrictions on reporting figures that differ from those of the state were put in place in 2015, reports have come to rely more heavily on state media's versions of events. For example, despite intermittent reports about activity in the Western Desert, the state seldom releases official information on its operations in that area. Additionally, a lack of coordination in reporting also has led to confusion over details of certain events; the disparate casualty counts reported by the state, Wilayat Sinai, and the media after the July 1, 2015 assault on Sheikh Zuweid is but one of many examples. These factors may help to explain the discrepancy in the activity reported officially and that reported in the news media, as well as the drastic changes in frequency of operations reported.

⁴⁰Despite nearly 60 percent of overall terror activity occurring in the Sinai Peninsula, only 38 percent of arrests in counter-terror operations since July 2013 have been carried out in Sinai. (However, security operations in Sinai are much more lethal on average than those in the mainland.) Among the provinces with the most counter-terror operations leading to or involving arrests are Egypt's most populous urban areas: Giza, Cairo, and Alexandria, as well as Fayoum.

⁴¹More than 1,100 alleged terrorists were reported to have been killed during counter-terror operations in July and September 2015 alone. In 2015, the average number of fatalities per reported counter-terror operation was close to two.

⁴²A Human Rights Watch report [documented](#) at least 3,255 demolitions between July 2013 and August 2015. According to [one account](#), residents of Rafah were offered 1,200 Egyptian pounds (about \$167 at the time) per square meter of constructed land, with evacuees getting 300 pounds (about \$41) per month for three months to help with rent.

⁴³However, the official military death toll later [rose](#) to at least 21. Other figures put military casualties much higher. The Washington Post, citing unnamed officials and local media outlets, [reported](#) that as many as 70 military personnel had been killed in the assault.

⁴⁴The ministry later [released](#) a report that claimed another 63 militants had been killed in F-16 and Apache air strikes that [targeted](#) four separate hideouts in Sheikh Zuweid and Rafah.

⁴⁵Because of the aforementioned discrepancies in accounts and a dearth of independent reporting, determining deaths in combat versus executions is extraordinarily difficult. However, reports of extrajudicial killings have been on the rise since the end of 2016.

⁴⁶That incident came only months after another incident in Arish, in which 10 alleged members of the Islamic State were [killed](#) during a security raid-turned-shootout. Locals in Arish claimed that at least six of the men had been in [custody](#) for several months. The incident sparked a partial civil strike in Arish and calls for the resignation of members of parliament for Sinai, among other demands.

⁴⁷While the operation was focused on Sinai, there were also reports of [activity](#) in the Western Desert. By the end of phase one, [announced](#) on September 22 that year, authorities claimed to have killed more than 500 alleged terrorists and arrested more than 700 others. On October 7, 2015, the military [announced](#) the start of [phase two](#) of Operation Martyr's Right and, only recently, it wrapped up phase four. It is unclear what, if anything, distinguished each phase, as there has been no development phase, as originally planned.

⁴⁸Other high-level Wilayat Sinai members have been reported killed in counter-terror operations over the past four years. Shady al-Mena'i, a high-ranking figure in Wilayat Sinai and at one point the presumed leader, has been reported killed in at least half a dozen security operations. One of the most recent [reports](#) was in early 2016, but it was later refuted by the Ministry of Interior,

which said it would notify the public as soon as Menaei had been killed. After another, earlier report that Menaei was killed, Wilayat Sinai released a video of him reading his own obituary. On November 9, 2015, security forces in Cairo reportedly killed Ashraf Hassanein al-Gharably during a security raid-turned-shootout in al-Marg district. Gharably, previously a high-ranking member of Wilayat Sinai and implicated in more recent attacks claimed by the Islamic State in Egypt in the mainland (notably including the Italian consulate bombing), had been sentenced to death in absentia for his involvement in an attack on police officers in Arab Sharkas village, located north of Cairo.

⁴⁹ Despite the absence of activity, the Ministry of Interior has continued to report operations killing Afnan Misr members and leadership, including Ahmed Galal Ahmed Muhammad Ismail, Muhammad Abbas Hussein Gad, and Muhammad Ahmed Abdel Aziz Abdel Karim.

⁵⁰ Nearly every Ministry of Interior account of these events followed the same formula: first, security forces executed a raid on alleged terrorist(s), then the terrorist(s) opened fire as the security personnel approached, and, finally, the security forces returned fire, killing them all with no injuries among their own ranks.

⁵¹ Despite the uptick in counter-terror operations directed at Hassm and Liwaa al-Thawra, those groups have explicitly denied the claims of the state, insisting that the Ministry of Interior fabricates its claims and that, at least in the case of Hassm, they would be proud to acknowledge “martyrs.”

⁵² The Ministry of Interior said that the group had entered an off-limits area, even though they had received official permits and passed through a number of police checkpoints. The Mexican secretary of foreign affairs, Claudia Ruiz Massieu, said that the government had blamed the tourism agency for failing to understand the details of permits required to enter a restricted area. The Mexican Ministry of Foreign Affairs sent a diplomatic note to the Egyptian ambassador to Mexico, demanding full reparations and compensation for the families of those killed in the incident. (However, the Egyptian ambassador reportedly refuted these claims, denying that the Egyptian foreign ministry had received any request for compensation.) The incident remains publicly unresolved, though the Egyptian ambassador to Mexico said in 2016 that the investigation was nearly complete and agreements on compensation were pending.

⁵³ The confessions (the recordings of which atypically included English subtitles) followed a narrative of the individuals getting involved with the Muslim Brotherhood while at al-Azhar University and then training in Gaza with members of Hamas military wing al-Qassam Brigades, in preparation for the attack. Abdel Ghaffar also accused Morsi’s former Ministry of Health spokesman, Yahia Moussa, of coordinating the attack from Turkey. Fourteen individuals were arrested at that time in connection with the assassination, joining scores of others who had already been taken into custody.

⁵⁴ An earlier police raid in Kerdasa (also in Giza, next to Sheikh Zayed City) led to the fatal shooting of an alleged member of the Brotherhood; investigators reportedly discovered a number of IEDs at this location. It is possible that this is the place in Sheikh Zayed City that was referenced in the confession video.

⁵⁵ Both Hamas and the Brotherhood issued official statements in which they denied allegations of involvement. The United States released a statement saying that it agreed “with Egypt on the importance of holding culprits in the assassination of the former public prosecutor . . . to account,” but made no comment on the specific allegations.

⁵⁶ Kamal had been sentenced in absentia to life imprisonment for sponsoring groups that attacked state institutions and was implicated in attacks targeting Prosecutor-General Hisham Barakat, Colonel Wael Tahoun, and former Grand Mufti Ali Gomaa, while Shehata had been sentenced to 10 years in prison.

⁵⁷ Of the more than 30 individuals allegedly connected to Hassm killed during shootouts with the police since mid-2016, these are the only two for which Hassm has formally released martyrdom announcements. The group has denied the veracity of the state’s other claims.

⁵⁸ Ironically, despite its focus on the Brotherhood, it was Ansar Bayt al-Maqdis (ABM) that claimed the bombing.

⁵⁹ With scant evidence and no claim of responsibility from any terror group, observers were decidedly mixed about the causes of the wreck. But Egyptian investigators notably tried to get French police to sign off on a report that acknowledged the presence of explosive residue on the aircraft, which would have suggested that the crash was a result of terrorism. Yet Egypt still offers no explanation for the Wilayat Sinai-claimed downing of the Metrojet flight that originated in Sharm el-Sheikh. With a credible claim of responsibility (including pictures of both the explosive allegedly used and Russian passports that were ostensibly recovered from the wreckage) and compelling evidence of an onboard explosion, most findings—including those of the U.S. and Russian governments—concluded that the plane was brought down by an act of terrorism and not by mechanical failure.

⁶⁰ Though there is evidence that members of the Brotherhood have certainly had a hand in post-2013 violence, the fair prosecution of these crimes has been diluted by such a liberal application of the terrorist label, and nonviolent actors and political opponents have been ensnared in terrorism legislation.

⁶¹ The emergency law allows the president to evict some areas or order their isolation, as previously discussed.

⁶² The North Sinai state of emergency affects the area west of Rafah to al-Awga, east of Arish, and imposes a curfew between 7 p.m. and 6 a.m. Accompanying the state of emergency in North Sinai are other restrictive security measures, including a recent decision

ENDNOTES

to ban motorcycles in much of Sinai. The South Sinai Security Directorate has also limited mobility for non-Sinai residents, requiring travelers (i.e., those without Sinai residences on their identification cards) entering through the Ahmed Hamdy Tunnel in South Sinai to present their hotel bookings at security checkpoints in order to enter the province.

⁶³ More information and analysis on security-related cases can be found in TIMEP's Transitional Justice Project Court Case Spotlight: <https://timep.org/transitional-justice-project/>.

⁶⁴ Hassm was not designated as a terror organization until February 2017.

⁶⁵ Hegazy, having played an important role in Cairo's dealings with the governments in Tripoli and Beyda, Libya, also heads Egypt's Libya committee.

⁶⁶ SSIS was disbanded after the January 25 Revolution but was soon reconstituted as Egyptian Homeland Security.

⁶⁷ Abdel Ghaffar spent most of his career in SSIS, holding at one point a directorship in the Cairo branch of the agency's counter-extremism division. Abdel Ghaffar left his post at SSIS for a position in the ministry's port security division in 2008 and returned as the first deputy director of the newly formed EHS in 2011, after the post-revolution disbandment of the SSIS. Abdel Ghaffar took over as EHS director in December 2011 and held that position until his retirement in January 2013.

⁶⁸ The replacement notably followed a high-profile gaffe in which a recording ostensibly made of Sisi during a private meeting at the Ministry of Defense was leaked, revealing the president talking about how to manage ousted Morsi's imprisonment and prosecution. Egyptian officials claimed that the recording was not authentic.

⁶⁹ One prominent example is the case of Ismail Iskanderani, a well-known Egyptian researcher and investigative journalist whose work focused on Sinai, who was arrested at Hurghada airport in November 2015. Iskanderani was accused of membership in the Brotherhood and of spreading false information and rumors to terrorize people; he has been kept in continuous pretrial detention since. Iskanderani's detention is one of many examples of state-sanctioned media silencing. In one decision, handed down in May 2016, an Egyptian court recommended the death penalty for three journalists tried in absentia on espionage charges: former Al Jazeera Arabic news director Ibrahim Helal, Al Jazeera producer Alaa Omar Mohammed Sablan, and former Rassd editor Asmaa al-Khatib. The individuals were accused of smuggling secret documents to Al Jazeera and intelligence officers in Qatar.

⁷⁰ Obama said of the cancellation, "While we want to sustain our relationship with Egypt, our traditional cooperation cannot continue as usual when civilians are being killed in the streets and rights are being rolled back.

⁷¹ A joint exercise between the U.S. and Egypt, dubbed Bright Star, also suspended, did not recommence until September 2017.

⁷² These developments come amid a continued stream of high-level American security delegations. Visiting officials included the secretaries of defense and state, the directors of the Central Intelligence Agency and the Defense Intelligence Agency.

⁷³ As part of the Excess Defense Articles grant program, which is separate from foreign military financing, the U.S. in 2016 delivered 453 Mine-Resistant Ambush Protected (MRAP) vehicles to the Egyptian military. The package was approved in May 2015 and valued at the time at over \$42 million. The announcement, however, also came with a change in the structure of assistance, ostensibly to allow for a more precise tailoring of aid to counter-terror efforts, as well as the elimination of the cash flow financing program that allowed Egypt to buy articles on credit. These measures are scheduled to go into effect in 2018. This included 89 RG-33L Haga Cat II ambulances, 12 Maxxpro MRAP recovery vehicles, 260 RG-33 Cat II 6x6 base MRAPS, and 92 Caiman Cat I base MRAPS. Note that 762 MRAPs were allocated and accepted but that, of those, only 453 have actually been delivered. The initial quantities included 90 RG-33L Haga Cat II ambulances, 12 Maxxpro MRAP recovery vehicles, 260 RG-33 Cat II 6x6 base MRAPS, and 400 Caiman Cat I base MRAPS. At least 12 other armored vehicles—all M113A2 armored personnel carriers—were delivered to Egypt in June 2013 under the same program.

⁷⁴ The Senate's accompanying committee report for FY19 also notes the 2016 GAO report on end-use monitoring and human rights vetting, requiring the secretary of state to consult with Congress on the matter within 45 days of obligation of military assistance. The Senate bill also requires the secretary to issue a report assessing the Egyptian government's efforts to provide injury compensation to April Corley, while the House's committee report urges the secretary to resolve the claims resulting from the incident.

⁷⁵ Nearly a third of the Egyptian tourism industry at the time comprised Russian nationals. Despite the Islamic State's claim of responsibility for the incident and the findings of the Russian government and others that the crash was an act of terrorism, Egypt has taken no official position on the cause, excluding an off-the-cuff reference by Sisi in February 2016. Sisi suggested in a speech in February 2016 that the plane crash may have been terrorism, saying "those who downed the flight . . . what were they hoping for? Just to hit tourism? No, but also to hit relations with Russia." The resumption of flights between the countries has been a drawn-out process. In January and March 2016, the Russian transportation minister insisted that Russia have oversight of security screening procedures in Egyptian airports through the presence of Russian security specialists. Egypt denied the request, saying such a move would violate Egypt's sovereignty. Over the past two years, the countries have exchanged a number of delegations focused on flight resumptions, yet, aside from hollow speculation, there is little indication of when the flights will actually resume.



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Egypt Security Watch provides the most comprehensive available resource to monitor Egypt's security situation, with a dataset that includes all instances of violence and state operations, state actor and terror group profiles, and expert analyses.