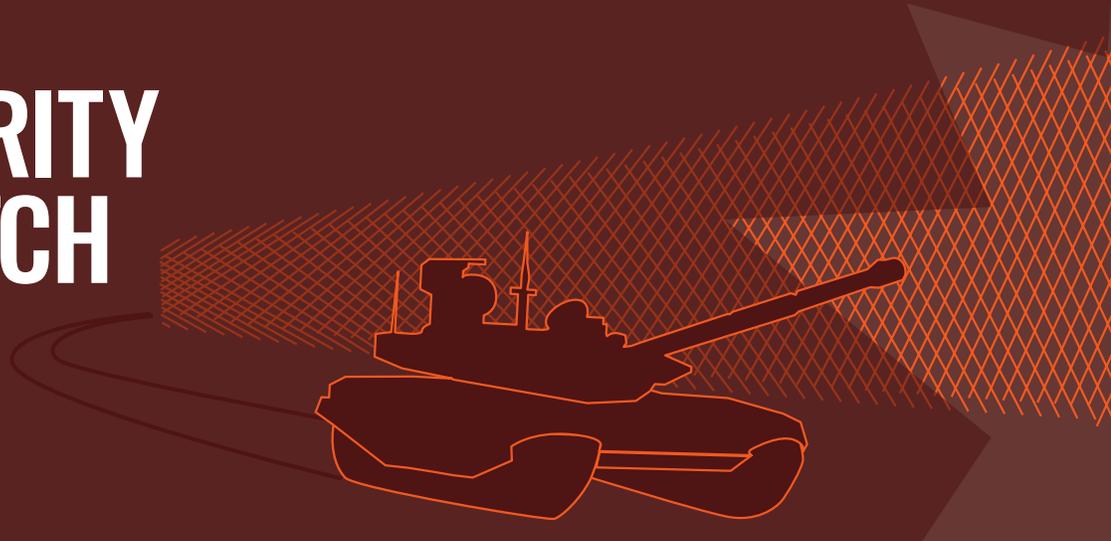




EGYPT SECURITY WATCH



WEEK IN BRIEF JULY 13–19, 2019

Summary

- Kuwait deported eight men to Egypt, amid public condemnation, over terror-related charges stemming from Muslim Brotherhood links and the assassination of Egyptian Prosecutor-General Hisham Barakat in 2015.
- Egypt, along with the United Arab Emirates, United States, and several Western nations, condemned violence in Libya and called for a return to the peace process under the auspices of the United Nations.
- Mada Masr reported that Egyptian security forces in Arish demolished homes that they alleged belonged to militants and their family members, arbitrarily arresting men between the ages of 17 and 20.
- Wilayat Sinai continued to claim attacks on military and civilian targets, including the beheading of four men they alleged were cooperating with the military.
- President Abdel-Fattah El Sisi declared the Arish port a public institution and transferred responsibility of its development to the Ministry of Defense.
- Egyptian officials met with foreign counterparts to discuss defense cooperation, manufacturing, and participation in anti-Islamic State operations.

Kuwait Deports Accused Muslim Brotherhood Members to Egypt

Kuwait transferred eight men to Egyptian authorities, based on terrorism charges relating to alleged links to the Muslim Brotherhood (which was declared a terrorist entity in Egypt in 2013) and the assassination of Egyptian Prosecutor-General Hisham Barakat in 2015. Human Rights Watch denounced the transfers, saying that the deportation violates international law because the men face oppression and torture in Egypt, adding that Kuwait had violated the men's due process rights because they did not have an opportunity to consult lawyers or see their families.

A previous case had already been tried with 66 individuals convicted, some in absentia, in the Barakat assassination case in 2017, 28 of whom received death sentences for their involvement in the attack, 15 sentenced to life in prison, eight given 15 years' imprisonment, and 15 sentenced to 10 years' imprisonment. Only one of the defendants' names from the 2017 case was similar to those transferred from Kuwait. In February of this year, nine of those defendants were executed, amid intense calls of condemnation from the United Nations High Commissioner on Human Rights, citing systemic violations of due process. (The state has also pinned the assassination on other entities, including Hamas and militant Hisham Ashmawy, who is linked to al-Qaeda.)

The names of the men transferred from Kuwait are: Hossam Ibrahim al-Adl, Abdel Rahman Muhammad Ahmed, Abu-Bakr Atef al-Fayumi, Abdel Rahman Ibrahim Abdel Moniem, Walid Su-leiman, Najeh Awad, Faleh Hassan, and Mo'men Abu al-Wafa. Reports indicate that the men fled to Kuwait amid increasing pressure on the Muslim Brotherhood after 2013. The family of Hossam Ibrahim al-Adl said he had been acquitted in three protest cases between 2014 and 2016, but was sentenced for a protest that took place in 2016, although he was in Kuwait at the time of the protest. The family said they did not know the other men deported.

According to a Kuwaiti newspaper, hundreds of Muslim Brotherhood members left Kuwait following the deportation.

Arish Home Demolitions and Arrests

Mada Masr reported police and military forces demolished four homes in the Arish neighborhoods of Salayma and Safa over the weekend, alleging that the homes belonged to suspected members of Wilayat Sinai and their family members. Some of the homes were demolished for the first time, while others had been rebuilt following their previous partial destruction by security personnel. Families moved furniture and valuables out of their homes in anticipation of additional demolitions. Some families were required to install security cameras at their own expenses to assist military and police forces in monitoring roads and other locations. Large scale arbitrary arrests of young men, particularly between the ages of 17 and 20, are reportedly taking place in the same areas of the city.

North Sinai has seen consistent displacement and home demolitions in previous years, though most of these have taken place in the areas farther east, where the military has carried out intense shelling and created a buffer zone on the border with Gaza in 2014. More recently, home demolitions have occurred in and around Arish, particularly as the military has sought to fortify the Arish airport after attacks in late 2017.

At Least Four Civilians and One Soldier Reported Killed in North Sinai

Mada Masr reported that armed militants stormed the village of al-Sadat near the city of Bir al-Abd, with the perpetrators most likely belonging to Wilayat Sinai. The militants searched the town demanding identification from the villagers. One villager was detained, but later released. Mada Masr claims that the raid indicates an escalation in the activities of Wilayat Sinai near Bir al-Abd, as the village is the closest entry point to the city proper from their bases in the surrounding desert.

Wilayat Sinai took responsibility for beheading four civilians they alleged were collaborating with the military, near Masfak Village, Bir al-Abd. Such beheadings occur sporadically in North Sinai, and are generally reserved for those that Wilayat Sinai accuses of collaboration with the military.

Wilayat Sinai claimed a sniper attack on the Kharafayn checkpoint east of Sheikh Zuweid injuring one soldier on July 11, 2019.

The Egyptian Ministry of Defense announced that its forces prevented an individual from entering a checkpoint and detonating a suicide belt on July 18, 2019, claiming one soldier died. At least one social media user cited security sources claiming an additional civilian died in the attack when the attacker's belt detonated.

This is the deadliest week for civilians in Egypt since the week of September 2, 2018, when Wilayat Sinai militants attacked civilians headed to St. Samuel the Confessor Monastery in Minya. That attack killed seven civilians and wounded 20.

Egyptian Military to Develop Arish Port

President Abdel-Fattah El Sisi declared the Arish port a public institution and transferred responsibility for its development to the Ministry of Defense. Residential homes in the vicinity of the port may be demolished in order to expand the port. According to a 2014 presidential decree, any activity perceived as an attack on a public facility may be subject to military trial, a provision that has been used to prosecute protestors at public facilities in military court; any who may protest or publicly oppose these demolitions could risk similar prosecution. The development of the port is reportedly intended to expand its operations to support local granite and salt factories.

Meetings

Egypt hosted the Egyptian-Sudanese Joint Military Commission July 14–18. Chiefs of staff from both countries are chairing the event, which sets out to discuss joint military and security cooperation. Relations between the two countries have been improving over the past year, following an agreement to calm tensions of the Halayeb Triangle land dispute.

The Egyptian foreign ministry sent delegates to the Global Coalition to Defeat ISIS meetings in Washington. The head of the delegation Ahmed Hafez stressed the need for an international approach to combat terrorism and to strengthen efforts to counter extremist ideology.

Minister of State for Military Production Major General Muhammad Saeed al-Assar met with the director of Serbia's Trayal Corporation, Milos Nenezic. The two discussed joint efforts in military technology development, particularly in the field of chemical warfare protection.

Egypt Joins Partners in Condemning Violence in Libya

France, Britain, Egypt, the United Arab Emirates, the United States, and Italy issued a joint statement calling for the immediate cessation of violence in Libya. The group shared their concern over the escalation of violence in Tripoli and called on all sides to return the political process under the auspices of the United Nations. The group also warned of “terrorist groups” taking advantage of the political void caused by the violence.



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**SECURITY
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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.