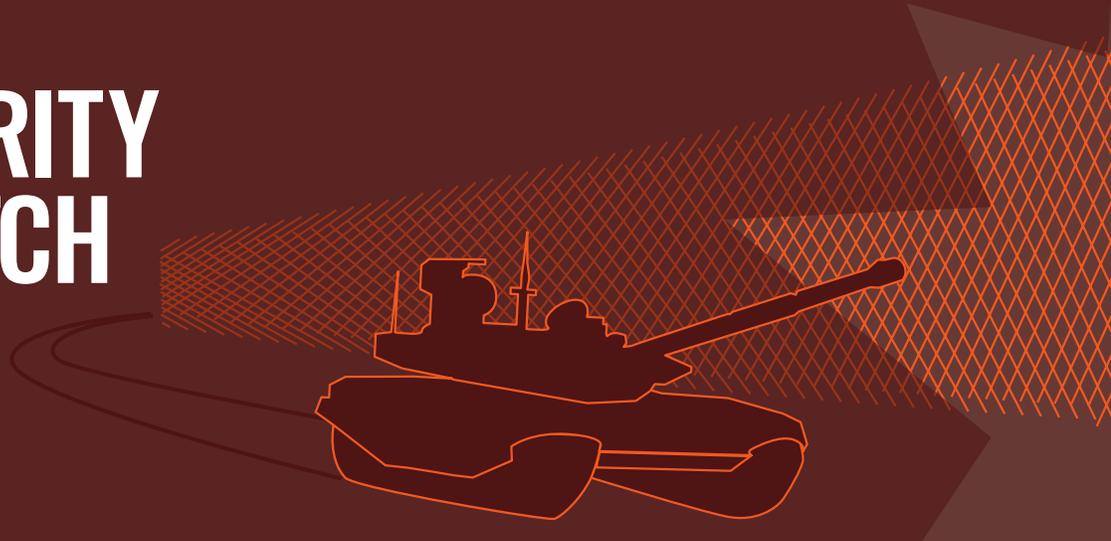




EGYPT SECURITY WATCH



WEEK IN BRIEF AUGUST 3–9, 2019

Summary

- A car blast outside the National Cancer Institute in central Cairo killed 20 and injured 47. The Egyptian Ministry of Interior accused Hassm militant Abdel Rahman Khaled Mahmoud Abdel Rahman of perpetrating the attack, but the group denied any responsibility. The interior ministry claimed to have killed 17 suspected Hassm militants in subsequent counter-terrorism raids in Fayoum and Cairo.
- Wilayat Sinai claimed three attacks and the execution of two individuals accused of collaborating with the Egyptian military.
- The Egyptian military designated areas in Arish, including the city's port and areas surrounding the International Highway, as military-controlled areas. Activists claimed the designation was in preparation for the demolition of residential homes.
- Nathan Sales, the coordinator for counter-terrorism in the U.S. Department of State, visited Cairo for talks with Egyptian officials.
- A U.S. citizen accused by Egyptian authorities of being a member of Wilayat Sinai attempted suicide in prison after reporting abuse and rape by his guards.

Explosion At National Cancer Institute in Central Cairo Kills 20 and Injures 47

Twenty people were reported killed and 47 injured in an explosion that occurred in front of the National Cancer Institute in central Cairo on August 5. The Egyptian Ministry of Interior claimed the blast was caused by a car laden with explosives driving into oncoming traffic, colliding with another car and exploding. The interior ministry claimed that initial investigations indicated that the militant group Hassm was responsible for the explosion. The group denied responsibility for the attack in an online post. There is no clear indication of the intended target of the explosives, and no group has claimed the attack.

Over the past year, at least 34 civilians have reportedly been killed and at least 100 injured in terror attacks throughout Egypt. The latest attack to be reported outside North Sinai came on May 19, when an improvised explosive device (IED) wounded eight South African tourists in Giza. Of the six attacks reported outside Sinai in the past year, four have gone unclaimed, while the remaining two were claimed by the Islamic State in Egypt.

On August 8, the interior ministry revealed the driver's identity as Abdel Rahman Khaled Mahmoud Abdel Rahman and announced that a total of 15 suspected militants had been killed in a counter-terrorism operation, reportedly targeting Hassm in Fayoum and Cairo. The ministry also reported that two suspected Hassm members were killed, including the alleged bomber's brother, while security forces attempted an arrest. One alleged militant, Abdelrahman Gomma Mohammed Hussein, remains at large and another militant, Hossam Adel Ahmed Mohammed, was successfully arrested.

In the past, forcibly disappeared individuals have been identified among those killed in counter-terrorism raids following high-profile attacks. Following the May IED attack in Giza, the interior ministry targeted Hassm in raids in Sixth of October City and Shorouk City, killing 12 alleged militants. Thirty-one individuals have been killed in interior ministry operations since August 2018.

Wilayat Sinai Claims Three Attacks, Executes Two Suspected Spies

Wilayat Sinai published a video purporting to show an August 6 IED strike on an Egyptian Army armored personnel carrier (APC) near Rafah.

Wilayat Sinai published a claim of responsibility on August 6 for the execution of two individuals alleged to have been collaborating with the Egyptian military. The names of the two were given as Jamal Suwaylim and Aesh Suwaylim. This year, Wilayat Sinai has now executed 13 individuals whom it has charged with being military collaborators.

Wilayat Sinai claimed an August 4 IED attack against an Egyptian Army APC near the central Sinai Cement factory.

The group also claimed a complex attack against the al-Ahrash checkpoint, west of Rafah on August 2. It claims that a group of its militants infiltrated the checkpoint, planted and detonated an IED, and then fired on survivors with small arms. The claim did not specify number of killed or injured.

Home Demolitions May Expand in North Sinai

Massad Abu Fager, a Bedouin writer and activist, speculated on social media about a possible escalation of home demolitions and forced evacuations in North Sinai. A possible exclusion zone of two kilometers on either side of the International Highway in North Sinai, demolishing all homes in that area, is reportedly under consideration. On July 15, President Abdel-Fattah El Sisi transferred ownership over the port of Arish, North Sinai's largest city, to the armed forces.

U.S. Coordinator for Counter-terrorism Nathan Sales Visits Cairo

State Department Coordinator for Counter-terrorism Nathan Sales traveled to Cairo on August 6 for bilateral meetings focused on deepening counter-terrorism cooperation with the government of Egypt against the Islamic State & al-Qaeda. This follows Egyptian Defense Minister Lieutenant General Muhammad Zaki's visit to Washington last week.

U.S. Citizen Accused of Being an ISIS Member Attempts Suicide in Egyptian Prison

Khaled Hassan, an Egyptian American who was arrested last year for alleged affiliation with Wilayat Sinai, attempted suicide in prison last week. He had told human rights groups that he was tortured and raped while in detention.



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EGYPT
**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.