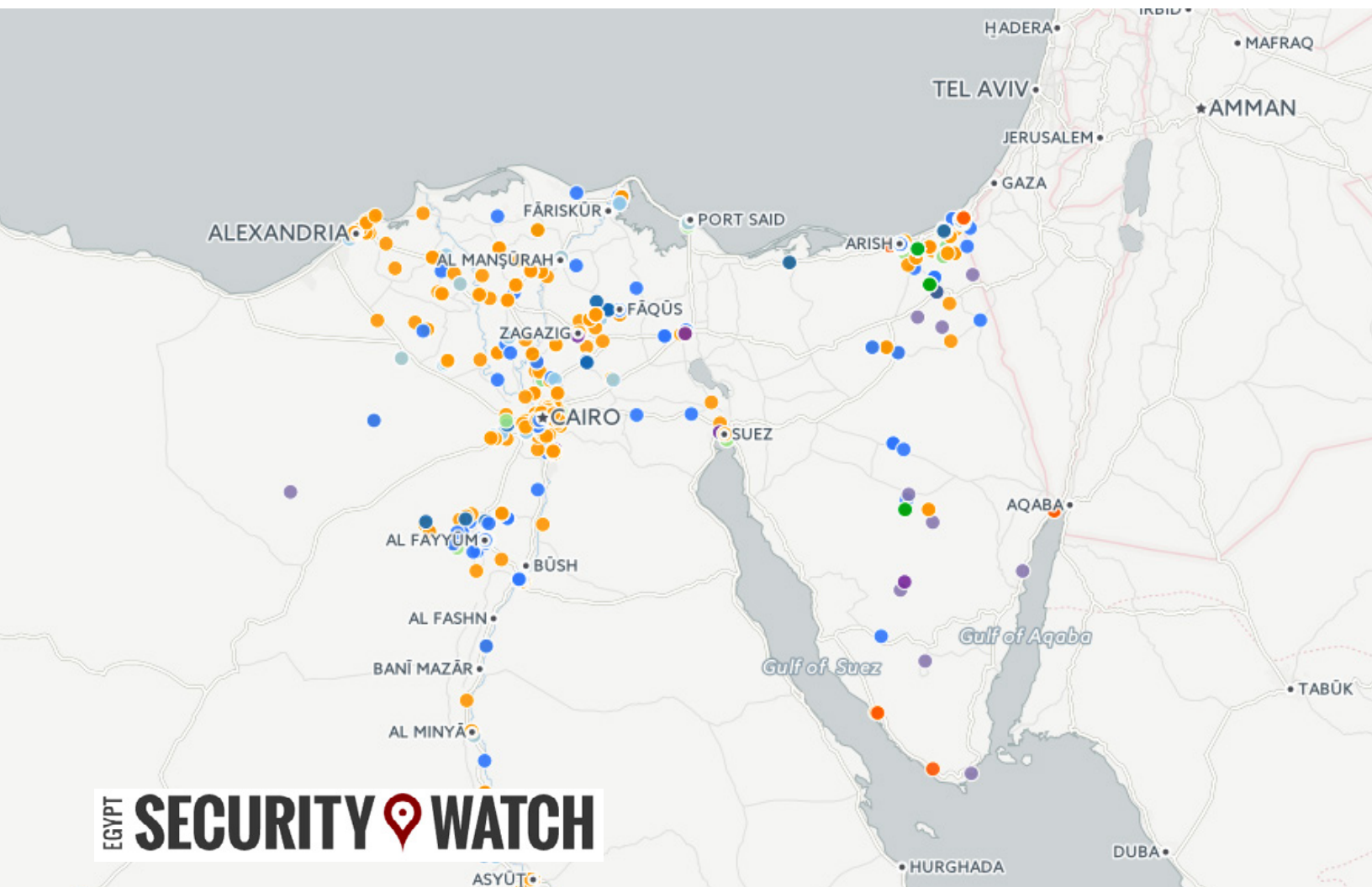




The Tahrir Institute
for Middle East Policy

EGYPT'S RISING SECURITY THREAT



The Tahrir Institute for Middle East Policy

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Foreword

Egypt's War on Terror has become a defining feature of Abdel-Fattah El Sisi's presidency, and the provision of security a top priority. This is especially the case because of the sensitivity of the current period of political and economic transition, including ongoing parliamentary elections, large economic projects like the recently completed expansion of the Suez Canal, and a need to continue to bolster the tourism that has struggled since the 2011 uprisings.

Just over a year ago, the Tahrir Institute for Middle East Policy (TIMEP) published a report that examined trends in violence from January 2010 through August 2014. The report found that terror violence in Egypt became more pronounced, more organized, and was taking place in new locations over that time. Since the publication of that report, all of these trends have intensified: the last year has seen hundreds of attacks take place across the country, a sustained insurgency in North Sinai, the emergence of new terror groups, and the arrival of the Islamic State to the Egyptian scene.

The current wave of violence thus inspires a critical question: **After more than two years of concerted efforts in a war on terror, why is Egypt facing an ever-increasing security threat?**

The answer to this question is highly complex. *Egypt's Rising Security Threat* investigates the phenomena that have contributed to actors' desire to carry out violence, and considers this violence as deeply rooted in environmental conditions that have allowed for its evolution. The report details the changing nature of Egypt's security threat, explores Egypt's security strategy over the course of the past year, and provides recommendations for policymakers to effect a more successful strategy.

The first sections of the report deal with the local, national, and transnational contexts in which terror groups have operated over the past year and compares trends in violence to its causes and conditions. It then attempts to define the Egyptian security strategy, situating it in a global understanding of effective security strategy. The final sections of the report outline recommendations for Egyptian as well as U.S. and international policymakers to better advocate for effective policy.

The report is a product of the *Egypt Security Watch* project, the only one of its kind to offer original content on the security situation in Egypt as a whole. With this project, TIMEP explores causes and implications of the proliferation of terror violence in the country and makes sense of the ways in which Egypt's war on terror has and has not been effective. Through unique efforts to aggregate official, news media, and social media reports, the project addresses not only the complex relationship between terror acts and state response, but also the larger political landscape in which these developments occur. It is a live project, continuously monitoring reports from the ground, drawing on a deep network of experts, and tracking media from state and non-state actors, constantly revising content to provide the most accurate and timely information.



The Tahrir Institute
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Executive Summary

On June 30, 2013, millions of Egyptians protested against then-Egyptian President Muhammad Morsi of the Muslim Brotherhood's Freedom and Justice Party; after the military removed him from power, violent attacks surged throughout the country. However, new trends in the nature of violence had actually begun in the weeks leading up to these events. After large-scale protests or riots prior to this time, organized political violence became more predominant:

- ❖ **More attacks are occurring than ever before.** After a spike in attacks in July and August 2013, attacks were reported at a rate of around 30 per month throughout 2014—four times the rate of prior years. By 2015, this number had jumped to an average of over 100 attacks per month (from January to August).
- ❖ **More organized actors are carrying out attacks than any time in recent history.** From 2011 to 2013, Ansar Bayt al-Maqdis, operating in the Sinai Peninsula, focused its efforts on Israel and the gas pipeline to Jordan. In mid-2013, it began a campaign of attacks on security forces, and in November 2014 the group pledged allegiance to the Islamic State. Other groups like Ajnad Misr and the Allied Popular Resistance Movement have emerged in the past two years, carrying out attacks on the Egyptian mainland.
- ❖ **Attacks are occurring in more locations throughout the country.** Whereas attacks up to June 2013 were mostly reported in North Sinai, more attacks are now occurring outside of the province than within it. Reports of attacks have particularly increased in Greater Cairo, Fayoum, and Sharqia.
- ❖ **Violence in North Sinai has grown to become an entrenched insurgency.** No longer limited to sporadic attacks on checkpoints, near-daily attacks occur in the province, often employing advanced weaponry. Militants have managed to hold territory in the areas of Moqataa and Mehdiya, and they very briefly held the city of Sheikh Zuweid in a July 1, 2015, advance.

These trends have occurred in parallel with the post-June 2013 developments within Egypt and in the region. Such developments, although they may not be direct causes, have contributed to an environment in which violence has become a more widespread tactic to carry out political projects:

- ❖ **A failure to deliver on revolutionary promises has fueled calls for violence.** Fundamental demands of the 2011 revolution, particularly calls to address rampant corruption and impunity in the security sector, have not been addressed. Angry at the failure to achieve these through peaceful measures, many actors now promote violence as the most effective way to mete “justice.”
- ❖ **Schisms have torn apart social hierarchies and caused increased chaos.** Seen throughout the country, generational divides have led to feelings of disillusionment and betrayal among a younger generation. From the breakdown of tribal hierarchies to splits within the Muslim Brotherhood, some youth are viewing violence as a more effective means of achieving demands than their elder counterparts' desires to work with or through the state.
- ❖ **Transnational extremism has provided a viable alternative.** Where peaceful political projects appear to have failed throughout the region, the rise of the Islamic State and the spread of al-Qaeda seem to demonstrate the “success” of more violent, extremist models. That these groups are able to provide support to domestic groups within Egypt further strengthens this view.
- ❖ **Conflict throughout the region fuels Egypt's internal struggles.** Aside from the symbolic value of transnational extremism, neighboring conflicts in Libya and elsewhere in the region have facilitated transfers of weapons, knowledge, fighters, and likely capital that continue to feed Egypt's terror groups.

Some fundamentals may be established from a review of literature, case studies, and U.S. and international government best practices on countering security threats. Though it incorporates some, Egyptian security strategy has yet to adopt many of these common principles of effective security strategy:

- ❖ **The state has not fully established itself as legitimate and a force for good.** The Egyptian state has built its credibility among some segments of the population, but has still failed to generate the public's trust in security sector institutions.



- ❖ **Rule of law has been undermined.** Broad language in terrorism legislation has allowed for its political use, and security actors are not systematically and publicly held accountable for wrongdoing, fueling terror groups' narratives that they must take matters into their own hands.
- ❖ **Security policy has been relatively static.** While there have been escalations in the number of operations carried out, and the number of actors killed or imprisoned, the fundamentals of Egypt's security strategy have, overall, not been discernibly flexible or dynamic.
- ❖ **Intelligence has not been a priority, though that might be changing.** The endemic distrust of security actors, large numbers of on-the-spot arrests, and evidence of torture suggest that intelligence gathering has taken a back-seat to immediate action. However, the appointment of Magdy Abdel Ghaffar, a former official in the State Security Investigations Service, as Minister of Interior may suggest the state is reversing course on this.
- ❖ **In North Sinai and elsewhere, collective punishment remains the government's *modus operandi*.** Scores of civilians have been implicated in sustained security campaigns in the North Sinai, and tens of thousands have been imprisoned under terrorism laws, some for non-violent crimes. Anger at unjust imprisonment or death has fed calls for violent retribution, and provides individuals with little incentive to remain peaceful.
- ❖ **It is unclear to what extent the state has been successful in disrupting access to resources.** Smuggling on the Gaza border has been effectively disrupted, but international and domestic resource flows remain murky, as is the state's record in disrupting them.
- ❖ **Development projects have been undertaken, though they do not benefit most at-risk populations.** While large-scale announcements like the Suez Canal expansion project or the new Capital Cairo have inspired positive morale among some, plans that would have benefit those populations most susceptible to extremist ideology have not been carried out, particularly those in the North Sinai.

Recognizing these fundamental principles, TIMEP recommends the following for a more effective strategy to counteract new trends in Egypt's violence:

For the Egyptian government:

- ❖ **Avoid collective punishment** as it has served to create enemies and hampered intelligence gathering.
- ❖ **Elicit support from mainstream Islamic preachers to denounce extremist ideologies**, but recognize that "establishment" religious figures may not be the most effective to deliver this message. Consider initiatives that would draw on the experiences of reformed fighters or extremists.
- ❖ **Reverse restrictions on reporting present in the new terrorism legislation** during the incoming parliament's obligatory review of legislation. Transparent reporting of terrorist incidents will illuminate the threat that Egypt faces and demonstrate the need for state efforts to combat violence.
- ❖ **Encourage accountability in the security sector** through transparent investigations, and hold security sector actors responsible where they have committed wrongdoing.
- ❖ **Ease restrictions on political discourse.** Closing off peaceful avenues of dissent fosters the idea that violence is the only way to oppose the government.
- ❖ **Facilitate parliamentary elections, open debate of governmental policies, and greater development of party politics.** Freeing up political space will weaken the message that the government is a dictatorship.
- ❖ **Provide job training and employment opportunities in North Sinai, particularly for Bedouin.** Bedouin youth have few legitimate avenues to make a decent living, and hence have resorted to illicit means. Job opportunities—including opening police and military positions to those operating in their home areas—will have the joint effect of building trust in the state and providing alternatives to joining terror groups.

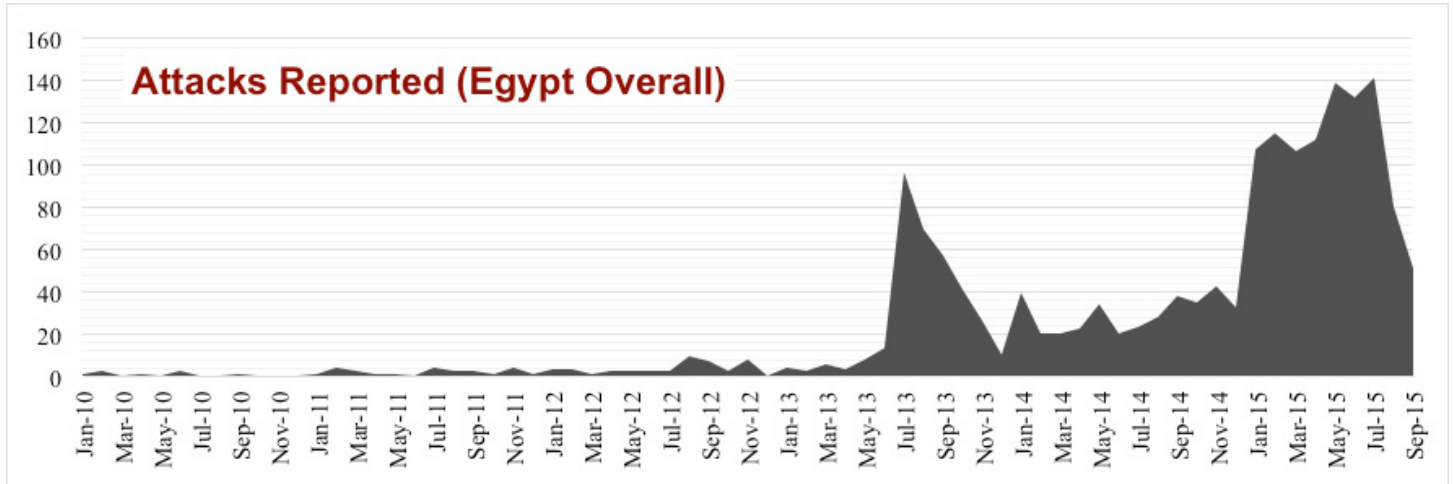
For U.S. and international policymakers:

- ❖ While recognizing setbacks in political development and human rights, **the United States should continue to support Egypt** and supporting it in its efforts to establish security. Providing necessary assistance will allow for Washington to retain its influence in Cairo, and thus to push for more effective security measures.
- ❖ **Strategic dialogue between the U.S. and Egyptian governments** should form a cornerstone of U.S.-Egyptian relations. Such dialogues should foster honest discussions away from the media spotlight.
- ❖ **The U.S. and other international actors should continue to press for the “best practices”** to combat a security threat. Even where there may be resistance, it should be emphasized that this is ultimately in the best interest not only of the U.S. and regional allies, but of a safe and secure Egypt.
- ❖ In efforts to promote such best practices, the **United States and other countries may wish to elicit the additional help of Saudi Arabia and the U.A.E**, Egypt’s principal Arab benefactors who also have shared interests in seeing a stable Egypt.
- ❖ **The United States, as well as the European Union and its member countries, should press the Egyptian government to ease its restrictions on fundamental political freedoms.** For the Egyptian government to succeed in security efforts it needs to build trust and support, which will not be forthcoming if the Egyptian government continues to alienate peaceful dissenters.
- ❖ **The United States and other international actors should help economically to provide opportunities for the Bedouin of the Sinai.** Egypt has declared its intentions to develop the area economically, and a special, designated fund centered on job creation projects in the Sinai would support these efforts.

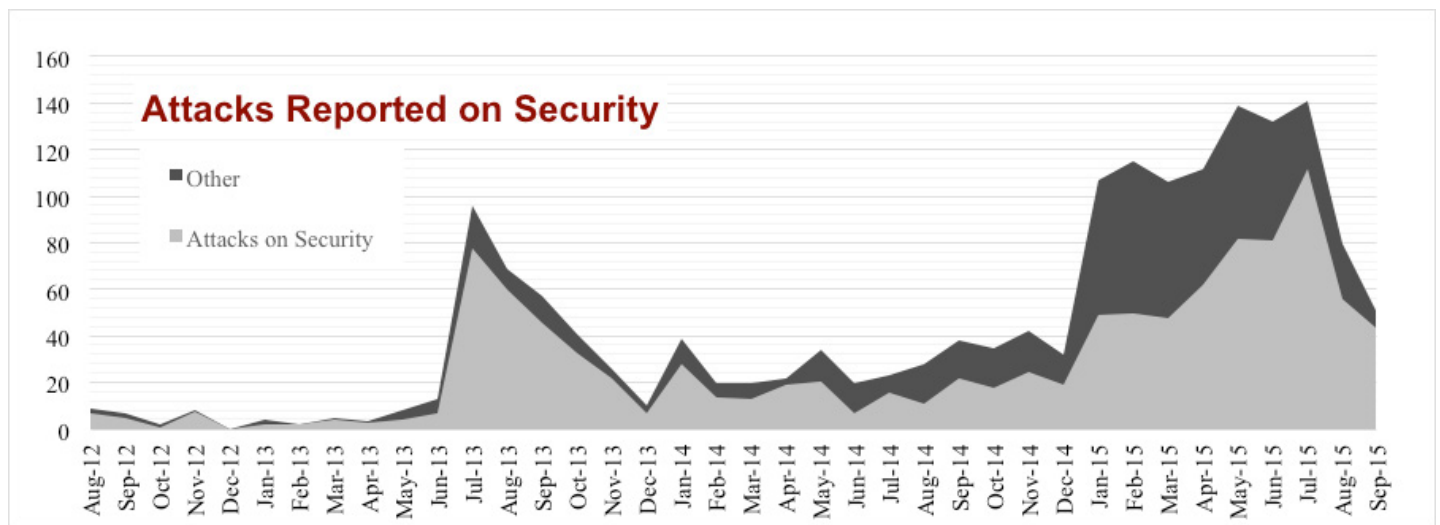
1. June 2013 and January 2015: Signposts in a New Era of Political Violence in Egypt

Organized Violence Increases over Two-Year Period, Becomes More Sophisticated

While Egypt has faced periods of insecurity in the past,¹ the current violence has a character that is particularly unique to the post-June 2013 context. Analysts often point to former President Muhammad Morsi's removal from power as a defining moment in the escalation of violence in the country, and indeed, July and August 2013 saw rates of terror acts unprecedented in the previous years.



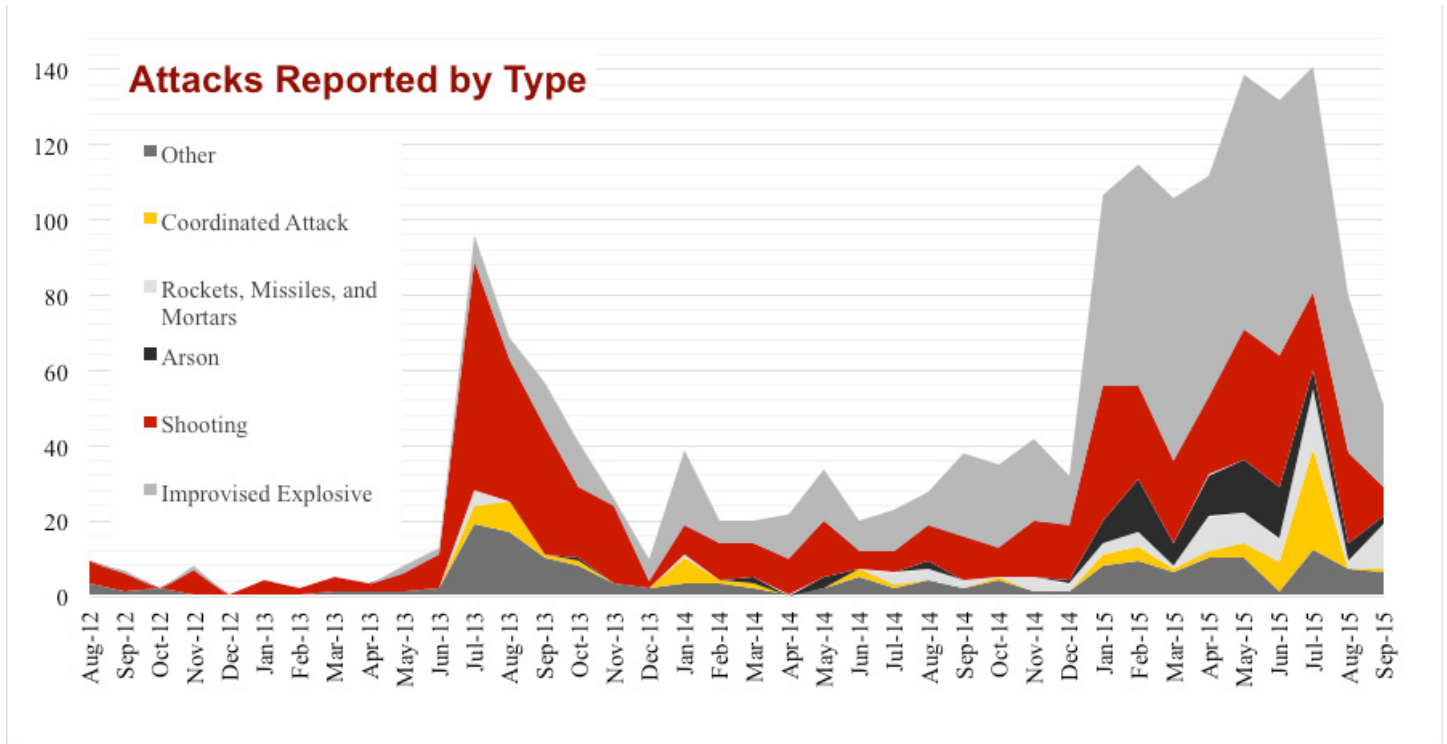
Not only were there more attacks after June 2013, but new trends and characteristics of violence emerged as sporadic rioting gave way to premeditated and organized violence. Over a period of several months, previously disparate actors joined together in new collective formations, carrying out more sophisticated and deadly attacks, while lower-scale sporadic attacks continued throughout the country. The political nature of the violence became more evident through the use of social media to spread messages and images of violence, and terror groups carried out “campaigns” against state actors they deemed illegitimate or immoral.



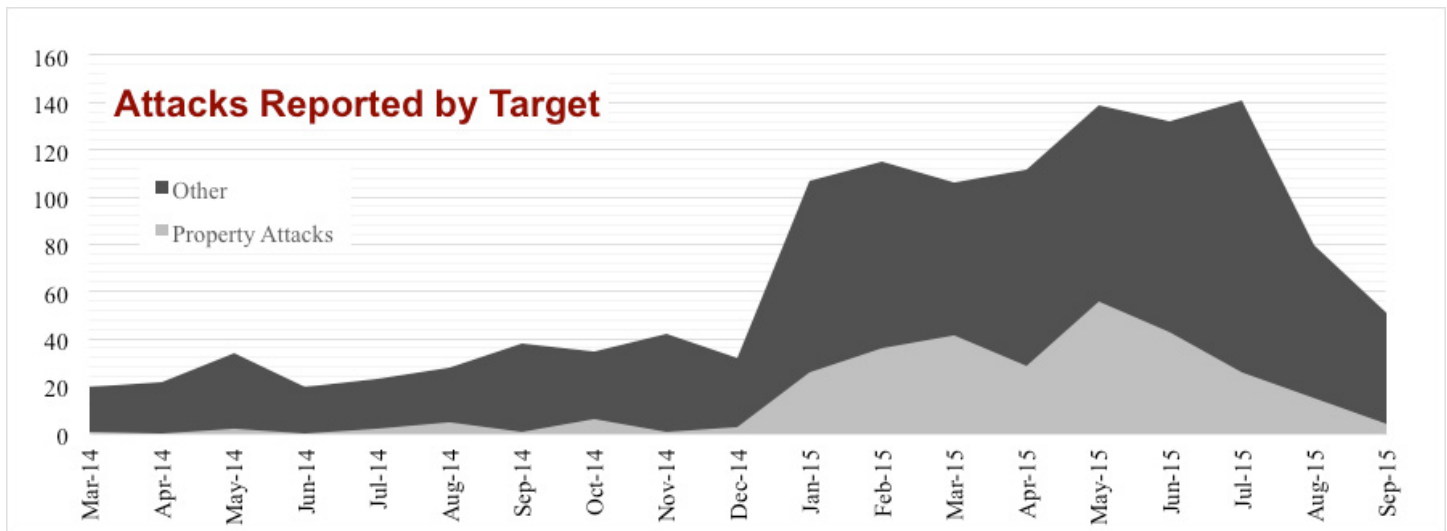
Attacks during this time could mostly be characterized by the use of small arms to target security figures. Of the attacks reported from July 2013 to December 2014, 71% of these were carried out against police or military persons or installations. Other attacks targeted government buildings and figures, and, rarely, civilians. Nearly half of these were reported

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shootings, and one-fifth were reported use of improvised explosive devices (IEDs). In only a few attacks were heavier weapons (mortars, missiles, rockets) reported to be used.

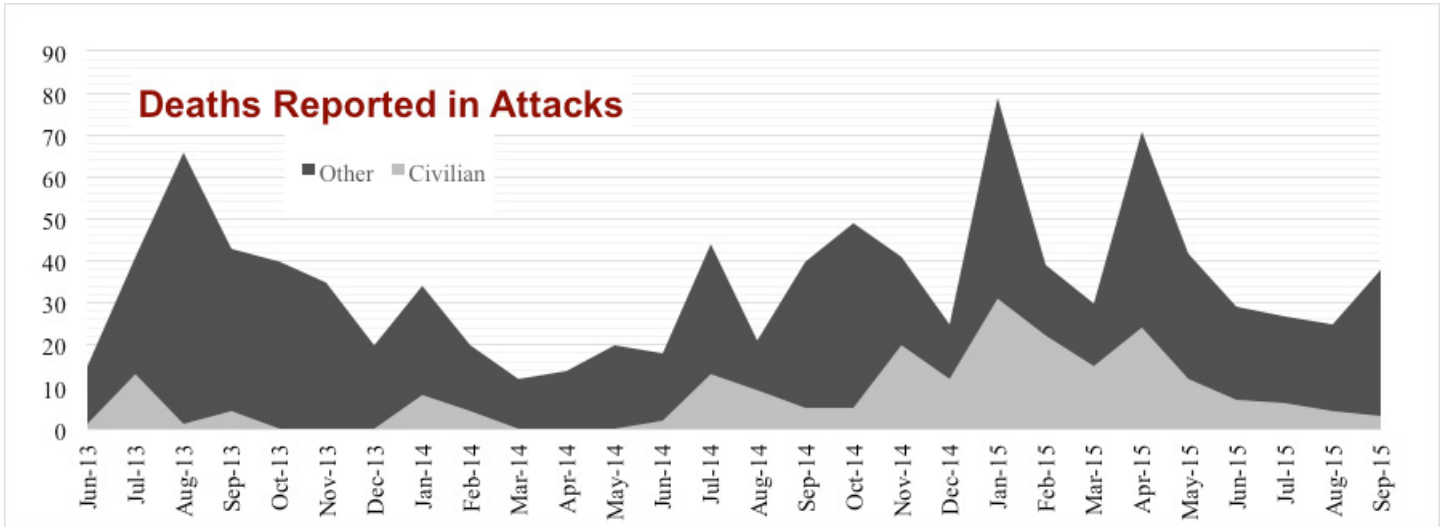


If June 2013 saw the beginnings of new trends and characteristics, January 2015 saw their intensification; by mid-year 2015, Egypt had seen more attacks reported than in the prior two years combined, along with the intensification of the previous trends.



Also since the start of 2015, property and economic targets have become more and more common. Attacks on multinational corporations and other foreign institutions, particularly in the banking and telecommunications sectors, became prominent as a concentrated campaign began around the time of the Egypt Economic Development Conference in March 2015. Infrastructure—transportation, electricity towers, and telecommunication services—have also come under greater attack.

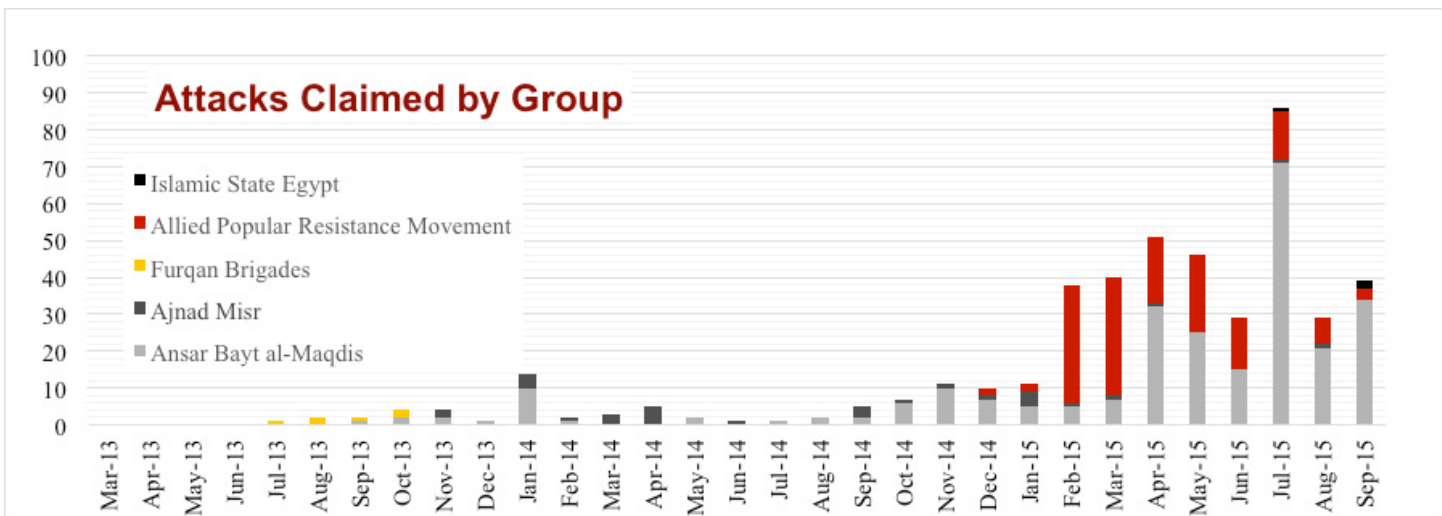




As attacks have increased overall, and particularly in densely populated urban areas, civilian casualties have risen. This rise also has coincided with a waning reluctance by known groups to cause harm to civilians. Though extremely rarely are they the explicit targets of attacks, in 2015 civilians are being killed at nearly three times the rate as in the past year.

Transformations in Actor Landscape Influences New Trends, Poses Policy Challenges

While the post-June 2013 landscape saw currents of consolidation and the emergence of new actors in Sinai (with groups like the Furqan Brigades and Jund al-Islam claiming attacks in late 2013, before their relative disappearance with the rise of Ansar Bayt al-Maqdis), the post-January 2015 landscape has seen the proliferation of groups acting throughout the rest of Egypt.



By September 2013, Ansar Bayt al-Maqdis, a Salafi-jihadi group which at the time had ties to al-Qaeda leader Ayman al-Zawahiri, shifted from attacks on Israeli targets and the gas pipeline to Jordan to attacks on Egyptian security forces. The shift was slow, and up to January 2014, the group claimed no more than two attacks in any month.² At the third anniversary of the January 25 Revolution, however, this changed drastically; in January 2014, no fewer than 14 attacks were claimed in Cairo, Giza, and North Sinai by Ansar Bayt al-Maqdis and a new Giza-based group, Afnad Misr.³

In November 2014, Ansar Bayt al-Maqdis announced its pledge of *bay'a* to the Islamic State, rebranding itself Wilayat Sinai, or the Sinai Province, referring to its position as a smaller unit in the larger “caliphate.” Although Wilayat Sinai

still has yet to adopt the full-fledged governance model of its Syrian, Iraqi, and Libyan counterparts, the group attempts to promote itself as a sort of champion of North Sinai, circulating images of its members delivering food or monetary aid to residents. The group frames its targeted attacks on security forces as delivering “justice,” simultaneously undermining the state’s institutions in their failure to prevent these attacks. This objective is underpinned by the group’s initial cause of delivering revenge to state actors that have harmed the residents of North Sinai (and Egypt more generally).

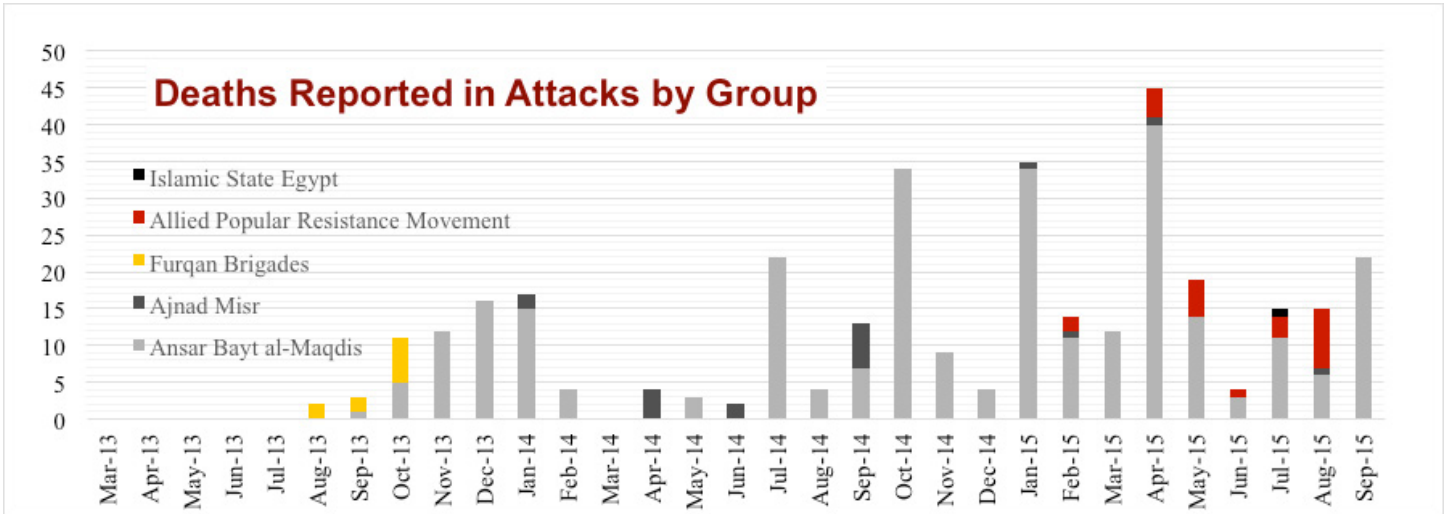
While it maintains political goals, Wilayat Sinai describes its efforts in religious rhetoric, referencing a sacred mandate to bring justice to “apostate” forces: the Egyptian state and its institutions. In this way, the group epitomizes the potency of ideological sacrosanctity, perceived injustice, and—as will be explored in the section on North Sinai—environmental conditions favorable to entrenched militancy. Along with its access to more advanced weaponry and training, the combination of these factors has made Wilayat Sinai one of the most powerful violent actors operating in Egypt, and one that has been most difficult to counter, particularly as the group induces such fear among North Sinai residents that most of them do not cooperate with government authorities.

In 2013, a member of Ansar Bayt al-Maqdis, Hammam Muhammad Ahmed Atiya, left the group due to his frustration over its exclusive focus (at the time) on Sinai and Palestinian issues. Atiya wanted to create a group that would bring Ansar Bayt al-Maqdis’ ideological conviction and tactics of terrorism to what he viewed as the illegitimate Egyptian state throughout the country, and so he founded Ajnad Misr. His group carried out attacks from January 25, 2014. When Atiya was killed in a security raid in April 2015, al-Qaeda in the Maghreb and al-Qaeda in the Arabian Peninsula issued statements recognizing his martyrdom, demonstrating that Atiya retained his ties to al-Qaeda despite his former affiliates’ allegiance to the Islamic State. Since Atiya’s death, Ajnad Misr’s activity has nearly ground to a halt, claiming only two attacks from March through October 2015.

In addition to Giza-based Ajnad Misr, several other new groups have emerged in mainland Egypt. The Popular Resistance Movement and Revolutionary Punishment announced their presence jointly (along with three other groups) as an “allied” movement in a January 24, 2015 Facebook statement.⁵ These groups do not espouse overtly religious motivation or use primarily religious rhetoric, but rather voice their goals and ideology in terms of the continuation of the Egyptian revolution. They have attributed their emergence and particularly their decision to take up arms after January 2015 to factors including “the unbelievable rise of the ideas of the Muslim Brotherhood’s new revolutionary youth leadership,” the organization of “rebel” actors across Egypt, control of public space, and use of new “revolutionary” media to disseminate their message.⁶ The groups explicitly target security actors or those deemed to be cooperating with them, sometimes tracking individuals for weeks or months before carrying out executions (usually shootings).⁷

The increased organization of actors—whether or not they are in coordination with one another—poses a serious policy challenge. More compelling than violence from individuals, collective, organized violence has a greater force of inertia and is much more difficult to combat. Successful recruitment efforts not only strengthen a group’s numbers, but they embolden those in the group, as they perceive a greater affinity and support for their cause. Additionally, security efforts that lead to the arrest or death of any one member may neutralize an individual’s ability to carry out violence, but often contribute to a sense of injustice, leading to greater resolve by other members to avenge a comrade’s suffering.

It is unsurprising, therefore, that an overall increase in violence would correspond with both greater consolidation of organized groups, as well as parallel internal evolutions within these groups. Each of the groups known to have carried out claimed attacks has become more sophisticated since June 2013. This has happened in terms of their tactical operations and their technical capacity, carrying out more spectacular attacks and using more advanced weaponry than ever before. They have each refined their methods of recruitment and public relations, using social and other media—including branded campaigns and photo and video series—to publicize their activities, while still mobilizing networks and appealing to potential recruits on the ground. While the exact size of any group is unknown (but not thought to exceed more than a few hundred), their ability to carry out a greater number of more sophisticated attacks, particularly amid sweeping arrests and security campaigns, indicates an ability to at least replenish their numbers. (For more information on particular groups, see Appendix B: Developments in Terror Groups 2014 – 2015.)

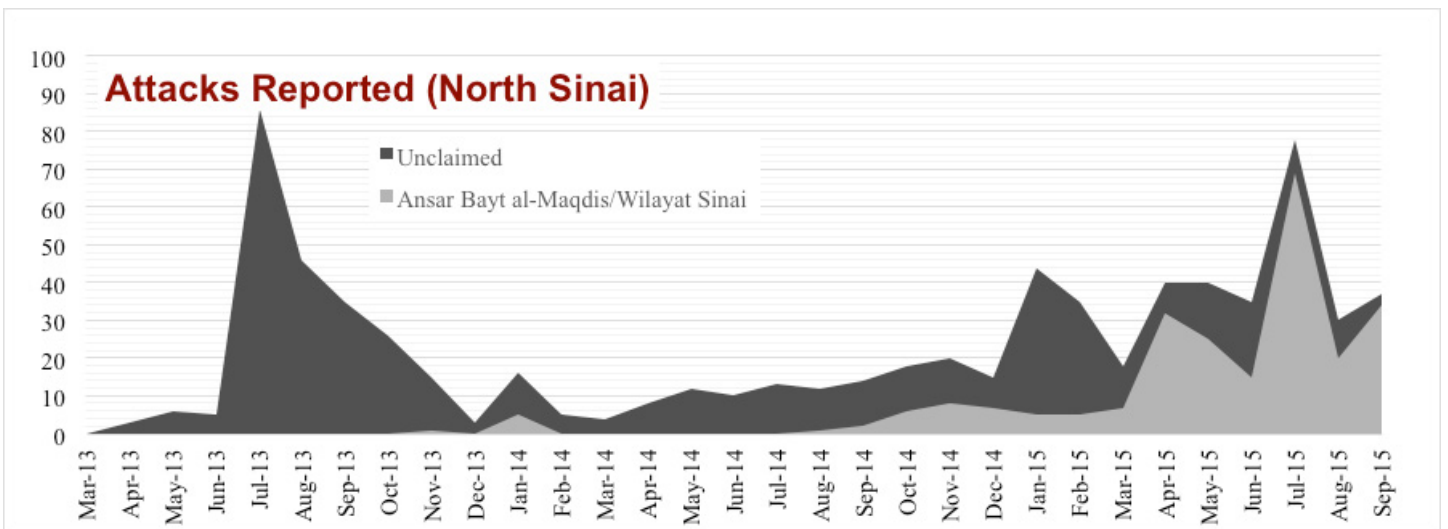


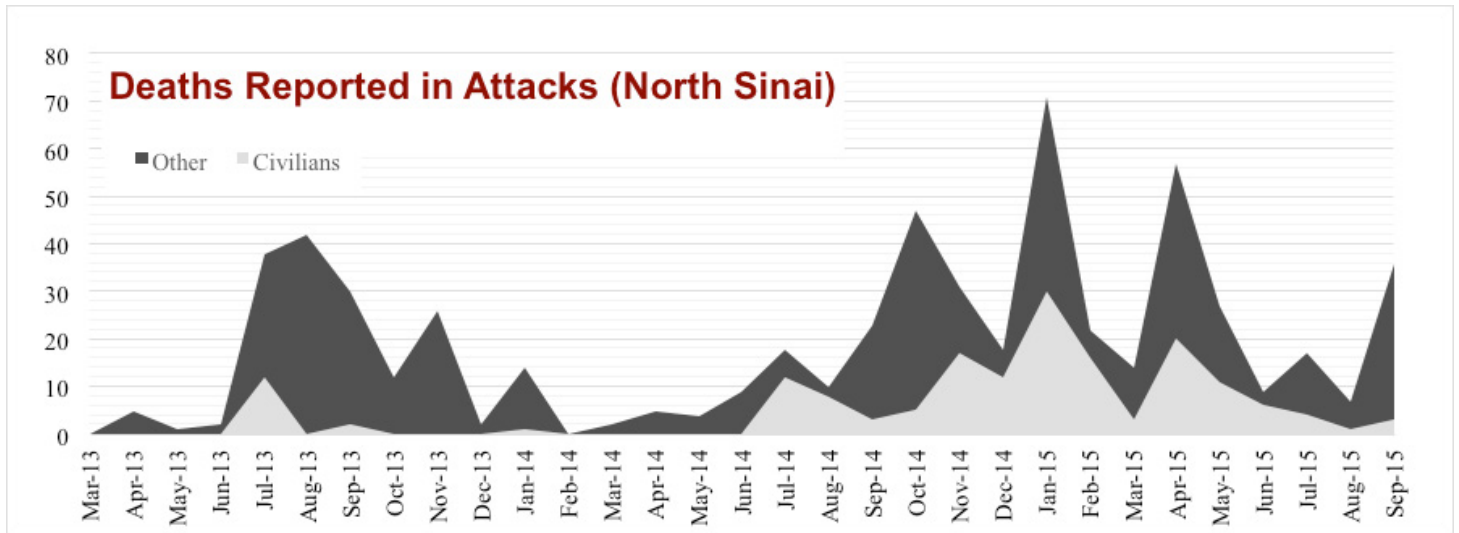
2. Geographies of Violence

With the increase in the number of attacks after June 2013 came a more diverse distribution of attacks, and specific, localized characters became evident in violence in the North Sinai province (reports of violence stopped completely in South Sinai after May 2014), Greater Cairo (with some similarities in Alexandria), the Western Desert, and the provinces of Fayoum, Beni Suef, and Sharqia, collectively.

North Sinai Sees a Growing Insurgency

Over the past year, North Sinai has seen a sustained insurgency, marked by ever-more-spectacular operations and a growing base of militants. Violence occurs on a nearly daily basis, and the population of North Sinai has been increasingly implicated in an entrenched battle between security forces and militants.





The state’s activities in North Sinai have been confined to the security realm. While some development projects had been promised in the past years, no economic development projects have materialized. The province remains under constant military lockdown. Emergency laws restrict mobility by way of curfews that begin before sundown and checkpoints that limit traffic. After the announcement of a security buffer zone in the city of Rafah on the border with Gaza, thousands of residents were forcibly evicted from their homes.⁸ Military air strikes and ground campaigns have destroyed homes and agricultural land. All in all, residents of North Sinai have little interaction with the state outside of its military campaigns; for them, the state represents violence.

This fact is compounded by the physical and social marginalization of the majority of the province’s residents. With only limited access to the Nile Valley, the population in North Sinai is trapped, and legal and social discrimination against the majority Bedouin population further removes them from the rest of Egypt. This discrimination is the product of many years of history—land dispossession, underdevelopment, and neglect have all characterized Bedouin-state relations for decades. Moreover, because Sinai residents lived under Israeli occupation from 1967 to the early 1980s, there is the added problem that mainland Egyptians often do not fully trust them.

The security campaigns have only intensified this longstanding marginalization, particularly with regard to economic development. North Sinai residents have long depended on agriculture as a driving force in their economy. With agricultural land destroyed, little other licit economic opportunity exists. However, proximity to Gaza provided the opportunity for illegal smuggling networks, which grew from 2005 and were particularly strong after 2011 (especially through the early months of Morsi’s presidency).⁹ As the tunnels proliferated, some North Sinai Bedouin tribes and residents profited greatly.

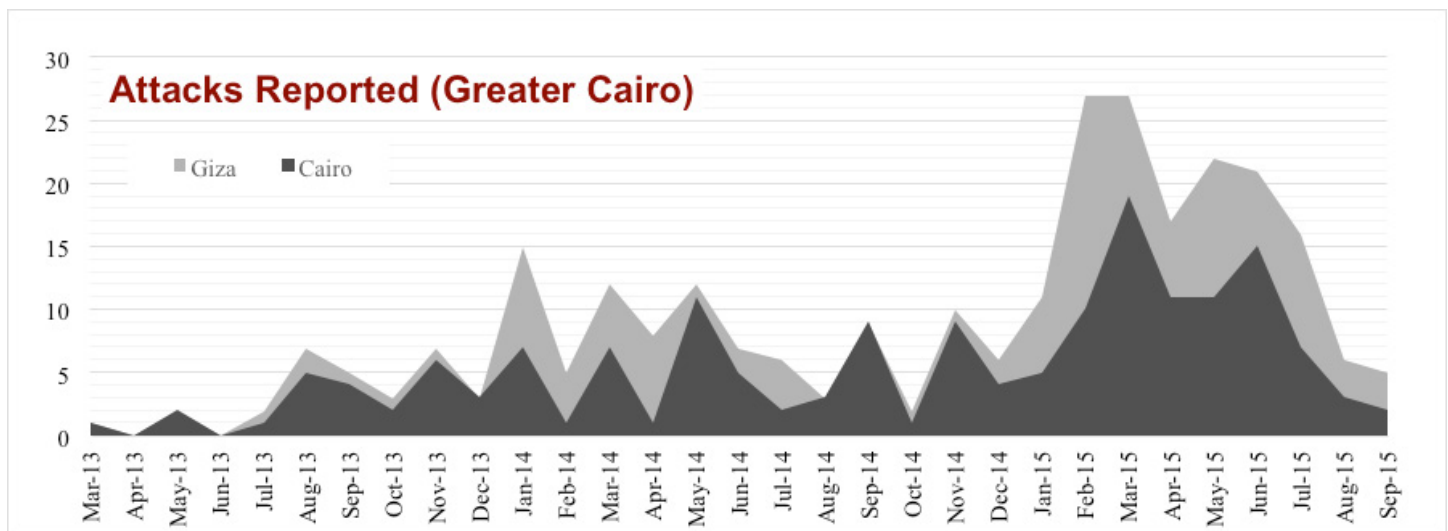
In early 2013, Morsi began a crackdown on the smuggling tunnels, flooding many of them (to the great chagrin of Hamas).¹⁰ However, after his ouster and the explosion of violence in North Sinai, the interim government and military under the watch of then-Defense Minister Abdel-Fattah El Sisi began its unforgiving campaign to destroy the smuggling networks.¹¹ To date, the creation of the Rafah buffer zone and new plans to flood the border to build a fish farm¹² have largely eliminated smuggling networks.

This has had an obvious effect on the economy of North Sinai. With both smuggling and agriculture disrupted, residents have very little in the way of economic opportunity. The rise (and fall) of smuggling has also had less obvious consequences on the tribal and social hierarchy. In the past, Bedouin tribal leadership carried great authority to make decisions, and a strong, patriarchal, social hierarchy existed. The access to weapons, money, and illicit trade disrupted this hierarchy as a younger generation experienced material gain as well as exposure to various ideologies. The latter became pronounced as jihadism took root in the province, providing an alternative project to that of the state.

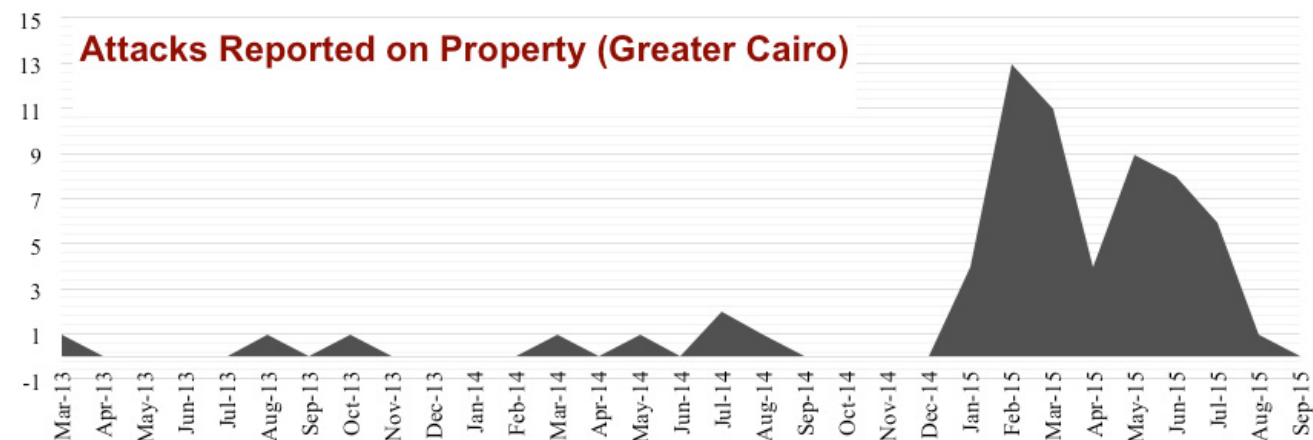
When smuggling wealth disappeared, not only did this younger generation feel greater antagonism toward the state, but also a greater disregard for tribal leaders who appeared impotent in advocating for the community. Thus, the appeal of jihadism proved even more salient. Rather than sit back and do nothing, some young Sinai residents have seen the opportunity to fight back, protect their land, and finally bring justice to their community as compelling.¹³ Left without any other economic or social opportunity, others simply see no other option than to at least turn a blind eye to militants' recruitment efforts.

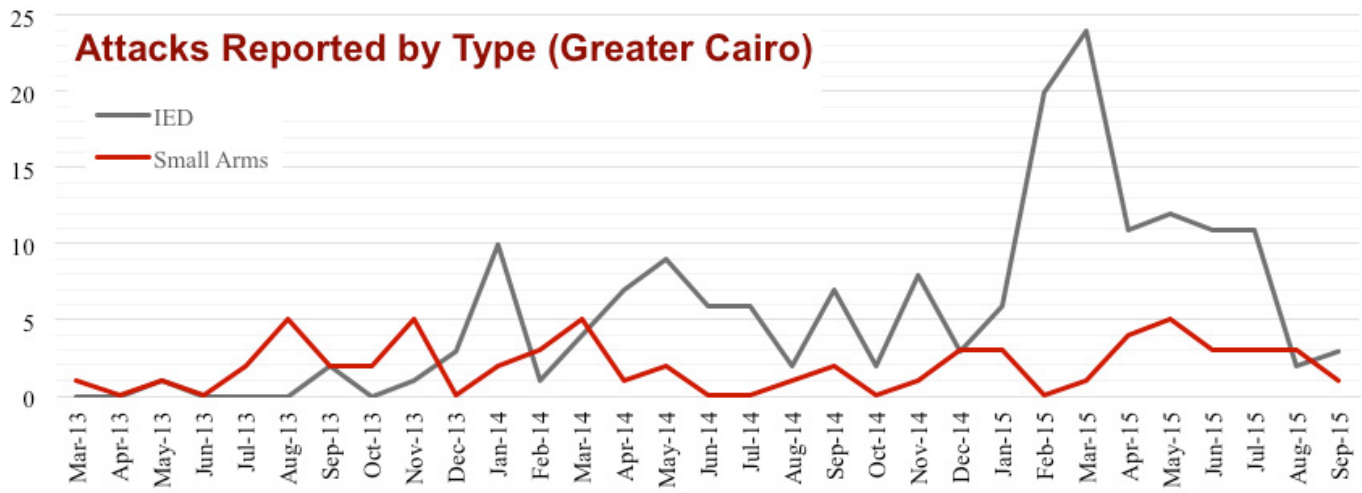
Symbolic Urban Centers

Greater Cairo (the provinces of Giza and Cairo) has again become a frequent location of attacks, after some ebbs and flows over the past two years. The violence that takes place in this densely populated urban center has its own characteristics, and is shared in part with other urban centers, particularly Alexandria. Cairo has special symbolic weight as the seat of the state systems that many terror acts seek to destabilize. Similar to provinces across the country, violence increased greatly in urban centers in 2015.



No longer have the police been the only target of attacks: after January, attacks on public and private property skyrocketed. Prior to 2015, attacks on property accounted for around 4% of all attacks in the urban areas of Cairo, Giza, and Alexandria; in the first six months of 2015, 37% of attacks were reported to have targeted property. Many of these properties were targeted in an attempt to strike Egypt's economy, and included banks, cell phone stores, fast food chains, and public transportation. Renewed attacks focused on government buildings, highlighting the symbolic importance and high visibility of attacks in Egypt's densely populated urban centers. In keeping with this targeting, the method of attacks changed as well, with IEDs (rather than firearms) becoming the most common weapon reported.



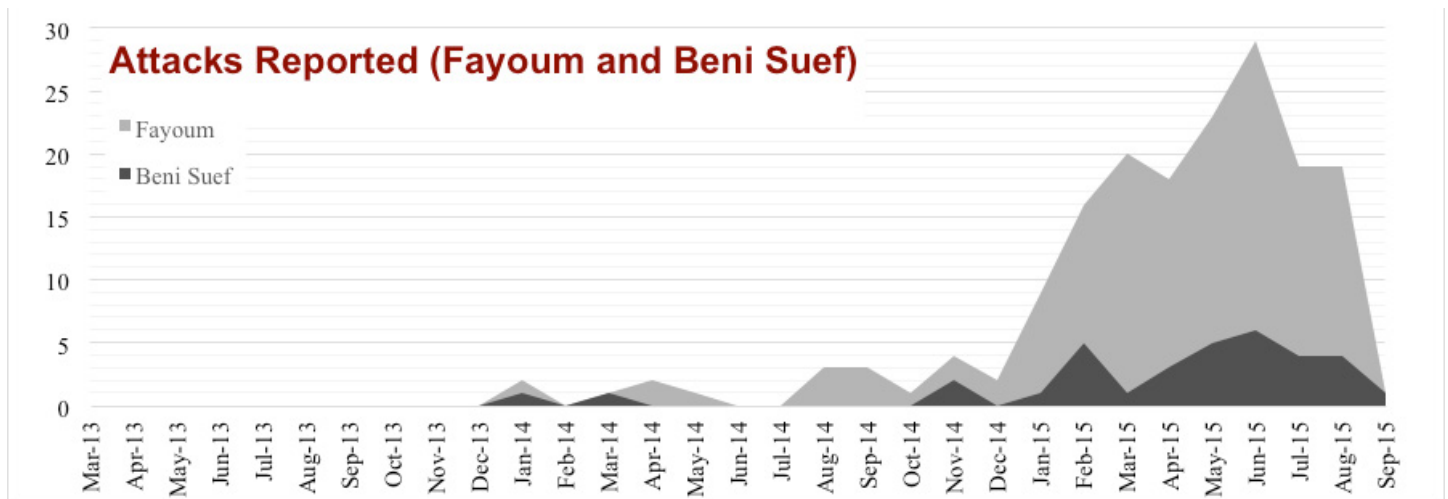


Thus far in 2015, the greater Cairo area has seen IED attacks outside the presidential palace, near the defense ministry, on the public tram, at a United Nations building, outside the Maspero state television station, and within the Egyptian Media Production City. By summer, these attacks had become more spectacular, as the Islamic State carried out its first, unprecedented attack on the Italian consulate on July 11, 2015, and then claimed Cairo attacks on the Shubra al-Kheima Security Directorate and on the Ministry of Foreign Affairs.

These attacks are noteworthy because of their increased media attention, especially compared to media blackouts in other areas (like North Sinai). Additionally, the attacks carry the added severity of increased damage and a higher risk to bystanders, as they occur in densely populated areas, particularly as storefronts or ATMs tend to be in crowded shopping districts. However, given the new counter-terrorism law passed by the Egyptian government in August 2015—which imposes stiff fines on journalists who do not mimic the government’s own reporting on terrorist incidents—and existing powers by the public prosecutor to suppress reporting on ongoing investigations, it is likely that accurate reporting on terrorism in urban centers will also suffer.¹⁴

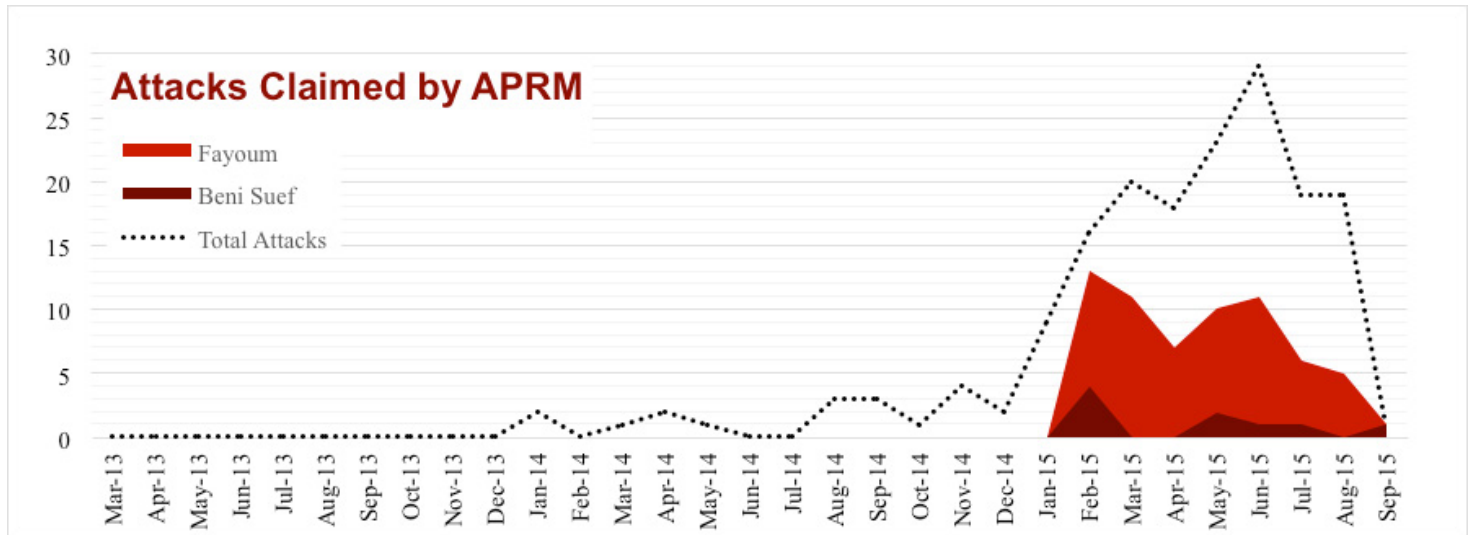
Fayoum and Beni Suef: Spoiling the State

Reports of attacks saw sharp increases in the provinces of Fayoum and Beni Suef in early 2015. This increase happened in parallel with the rise of the Allied Popular Resistance Movement groups operating in this area, and many of these attacks focus on infrastructure and police. Rather than carried out for their spectacular or symbolic value, such attacks have been designed to spoil the state’s efforts at effective governance and its ability to maintain security.



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From June 2013 to December 2014, Fayoum saw 15 reported attacks and Beni Suef saw four. In the first half of 2015—one-third of the above timeframe—these numbers ballooned: Fayoum saw 92 reported attacks and Beni Suef saw 21. This spike may have been due to the increased publicity the attacks received on social media, which added to their significance as premeditated political acts. These attacks are announced and applauded on groups' social media sites or on fan sites like the “Below the Ashes” Facebook page, which has 90,000 followers. Commenters cheer the groups for targeting the government's support for the “coup,” as they deem the state's ouster of Morsi.



Reports of these attacks declined rapidly in September 2015, as their promotion halted almost completely on social media. The “Below the Ashes” page has reduced its activity significantly, now largely promoting posts already published by the Popular Resistance Movement groups. The fact that reports of attacks increased and decreased so rapidly across the board in these areas indicates that the campaign of attacks—even those that were not explicitly claimed by any group—were carried out in coordination.

Western Desert Shrouded in Obscurity

Egypt's porous border with Libya continues to cause significant security problems for the country. The difficulty in adequately securing a long desert border has allowed for significant quantities of arms, and, in some cases, militants into and out of Egypt. Until mid-2013, Egyptian security forces had reported apprehending large shipments of arms (including mortars, Grad rockets, and missiles) traveling on overland routes destined for the Sinai Peninsula and Gaza Strip. In February 2015, a United Nations panel of experts concluded that “Egypt continues to be among the primary destinations for Libyan weapons,” although the same report found that these flows have been reduced since 2013.¹⁵

Despite the security risks, only seven terror attacks have been reported in the western border provinces of Matruh and New Valley (four in 2014 and three thus far in 2015). Most prominently, 22 members of the security forces were killed on July 18, 2014, when armed gunmen carried out a highly sophisticated coordinated attack on a border checkpoint in Farafra, New Valley, in an attack carried out by Wilayat Sinai.

The low number of reports almost certainly understates the threat present on the Western border. Much like in the North Sinai province, many attacks on border checkpoints are not reported by news media. This was apparent when, in reporting on the Farafra attack, security officials referenced prior attacks that had gone unmentioned elsewhere in news media. When Egyptian security forces mistook a group of Mexican tourists for militants, killing eight of them in an air strike, it was not widely reported that the Islamic State in Egypt had broadcast its activities in the area on the same day, publishing photos of their beheading of a military “spy.” A swift media gag was put in order after international publicity around the killing of the tourists, further obscuring the true nature of the security situation in the Western Desert.



However, while these reports do point to a clear militant presence on the Western border, the area has not seen the outright insurgency that North Sinai has. Although the area harbors a similar landscape and Bedouin tribal networks, the local population benefits from a more robust tourist economy and even integration into military-sponsored construction and security projects. Additionally, Cairo has had greater success in working with the Bedouin in this area, after making good on promises to address grievances in exchange for information sharing.¹⁶

3. Political Polarization and Social Schisms

The Unfulfilled Promises of the Revolution

Some of the millions of those who protested during and after 2011, many of whom saw friends or family members give their lives, have expressed a sense of injustice at what they view to be a return of transgressions like those that occurred under former President Hosni Mubarak. They point to police who continue to act with impunity (and have now been given added protections by a new counter-terrorism law), evidence of torture in prisons, the formation and then disbandment of parliament (which left the country without a legislative body for years), unfulfilled development promises, and a stifled civil society. Moreover, a strict law on public protest restricts the ability for collective demonstrations that drove many of the popular changes of the past years.

Groups like Ajnad Misr and the Allied Popular Resistance Movement use the language of unfulfilled revolutionary demands to draw supporters, playing on the sentiments of those who are frustrated that their demands have not been met, and presenting violence as the most effective means to engage with a state that they see as the cause and creator of injustice. These groups claim to be fighting on behalf of “those who have been wronged,” constantly referring to the illegitimacy of the unjust state.

In late 2014, when security forces used violence to break up protests in their continued demonstrations to demand Morsi's reinstatement as president, the Popular Resistance Movement “responded” by burning a public bus. When six members of the Arab Sharkas cell, on trial for their violence as a part of Ansar Bayt al-Maqdis, were swiftly executed, the Revolutionary Punishment group carried out a series of attacks on courts in retaliation, and the Islamic State in Egypt attacked the Shubra al-Khaima Security Directorate. Ajnad Misr consistently references violence on university campuses, many of which have witnessed clashes between protesters and police: their primary campaign “Retribution is Life” references their desire to avenge state brutality. And Wilayat Sinai makes combating what it deems an immoral military campaign in Sinai (and throughout Egypt) the focal point of its championed cause.

The Egyptian government's sweeping crackdown has given terror groups a cause to champion because they can appeal to a sense of collective injustice shared by significant segments of the population. Ever-broadening legal definitions of terrorism have allowed for the continued targeting and imprisonment of a wide breadth of actors. Based on aggregates of figures reported by state and news media, over 16,000 individuals have been arrested on charges of terrorism since July 2013.

Fragmentation of the Muslim Brotherhood

While the state has continuously blamed violence on the Muslim Brotherhood, the organization itself has never claimed any acts of terror violence outright.²² However, as the Brotherhood's formerly rigid hierarchy has been shaken, its rhetoric has become more antagonistic and its previous stance against violence has become much looser.²³ This disintegration has come as a result of two processes. The first is the state's battle against the organization, where leadership figures and huge numbers of members and supporters are imprisoned. The second has come from a generational rift, the product of a schism that is mirrored through post-revolutionary Egypt. (This is the same rift faced by the Bedouin tribes; see earlier section “North Sinai Sees a Growing Insurgency”).

While the decision to adopt violence is not articulated in terms of a clear objective (whether for retribution, survival, or otherwise), Brotherhood rhetoric uses the same language of the continuation of the revolution as that of many known ter-

ror groups. This language is particularly used by the younger cadre of Brotherhood members, some of whom have taken on a greater leadership role in the organization.²⁴ These changes were reflected in the aforementioned foundational statement of the Allied Popular Resistance Movement, crediting the new leadership in the Brotherhood with an impetus for its desire to adopt violence as a tactic. In addition to responding to the repression of pro-Morsi protests previously discussed, terror groups have adopted the imagery and symbols of the post-June 2013 Muslim Brotherhood. A page advertising their activities features pro-Morsi posters, the Raba'a al-Adaweya mosque, and the yellow four-fingered Raba'a sign.

While these statements and images do not necessarily mean that terror groups are formally affiliated with the Brotherhood (and in fact neither faction has claimed this), the Brothers' attempt to capitalize on the polarized environment may give the terror groups' credibility among those who still view Morsi as the revolutionary leader, or at least view the state as the primary counter-revolutionary force. And, as Brotherhood youth are more inclined to use violence, they are more susceptible to join other organized violent groups.

4. Transnational Processes Shape Landscape of Violence

Transnational Extremism Brings Real and Symbolic Weight

Indeed, the evolutions in Egypt's violence, in the refinement of terror groups' strategy, and in sophistication of their media are undoubtedly tied to the presence and growth of other transnational extremist movements, whether directly or indirectly. The success of these groups has allowed them to provide both direct support to their Egyptian counterparts and inspiration as they demonstrate the "victory" of violence in delivering on stated political goals.

For example, prior to summer 2014, when their relationship with the Islamic State was developing,²⁵ Ansar Bayt al-Maqdis did not use social media to advertise their activities. Not even a year later, attack reports were published following a standard template in the same style as those of the Islamic State (and published via the Islamic State's centralized media outlets).²⁶ The group began to carry out beheadings (condemned by Ayman al-Zawahiri, with whom the group was previously affiliated), and in August 2015 they announced their intent to kill Croatian Tomislav Salopek. Wearing the orange jumpsuit reminiscent of similar executions in Iraq, Syria, and Libya, militants beheaded Salopek when their demands to release all female Muslim prisoners were not met. Finally, although they have not fully embraced the provision of services, Wilayat Sinai has produced propaganda showing their distribution of food and other resources to "the people," mirroring Islamic State-style governance.

Al-Qaeda's inroads into Egypt over the past years have been less clear. When Ajnad Misr leader Atiya was killed in a security raid, both al-Qaeda in the Arabian Peninsula and al-Qaeda in the Islamic Maghreb issued statements lamenting the loss, demonstrating their support for the group. A new group, al-Morabitoun, and its leader Hisham Ali Ashmawi—a former Egyptian special forces officer—announced its presence and ties to al-Qaeda in a July 2015 audio statement. Moreover, the fact that Zawahiri is an Egyptian (and has credence among extremists in Egypt for having been involved in the conspiracy to assassinate Egyptian President Anwar Sadat in the early 1980s as a leader of Egyptian Islamic Jihad) will make al-Qaeda take a special interest in Egyptian matters for as long as he remains the leader of the organization.

External Conflicts Fuel Internal Struggles

While in some instances external groups have provided support to those fighting within Egypt, the regional turmoil has also affected the ongoing violence in Egypt in less direct ways. The conflicts in Syria, Iraq, and Libya (and perhaps Yemen) have provided markets fueling transnational flows of fighters, weapons, and capital. The longstanding tension, often erupting in armed conflict, between Israel and Palestine continues to prove a focal point and championed cause, particularly in religiously motivated violence.

In many ways, Egypt is caught in the midst of these conflicts. It is clear that young Egyptians have traveled, and likely continue to travel, to other countries to carry out a global jihad. Martyrdom notices from Libya, Syria, and Iraq have frequently featured Egyptians, although the exact number currently engaged in fighting abroad is unknown. As has been the

case in the past, these fighters may bring varied and advanced experience and training from other battlefields back to their home country. Atiya, for instance, fought in both Afghanistan and Syria before returning to Egypt under Morsi's rule.

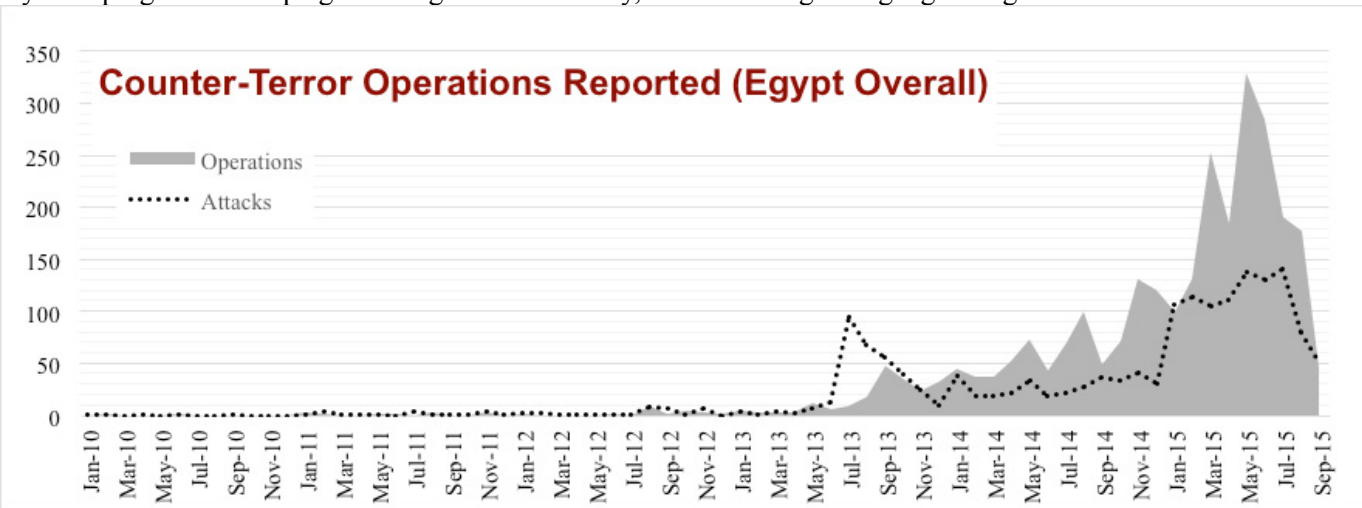
Although weapons flows from Libya have slowed considerably, many weapons remain in Egypt, and many advanced weapons remain unaccounted for. After the regional revolutions in 2011, Egyptian forces regularly claimed to intercept weapons arriving from Libya. While those flows have dropped significantly since mid-2013, automatic weapons, explosives, and Grad rockets remain in the country. Advanced weapons also come from elsewhere in the region; a June 2015 report from the Small Arms Survey notes that, while man-portable air defense systems (MANPADS) stockpiles were liquidated out of Libya, the MANPADS featured and used by Wilayat Sinai do not actually appear to be of Libyan origin.²⁸

5. Countering the Threat: Best Practices and Egypt's Efforts

Defining Egypt's Counter-Terror Strategy: Escalation of Measures

For its part, Egypt's security strategy has not been clearly articulated. No defined objectives have been announced publicly to provide benchmarks for success, which makes an analysis of its efficacy difficult. Those which have been discussed include vague references to eradicating the enemy or eliminating terrorism. When successes are announced, these typically are exaggerated statements, like that the Ministry of Interior has been successful in eradicating 99% of terrorism in the country,²⁹ or that North Sinai is completely under military control,³⁰ disproven with each new terror attack.

A review of the activities published by the Ministry of Interior and the military, as well as news reports on developments in the war on terror, provide a clearer picture of the state's approach. This approach is one that is characterized by sweeping arrest campaigns throughout the country, broadened legal language designed to remove barriers to neu-

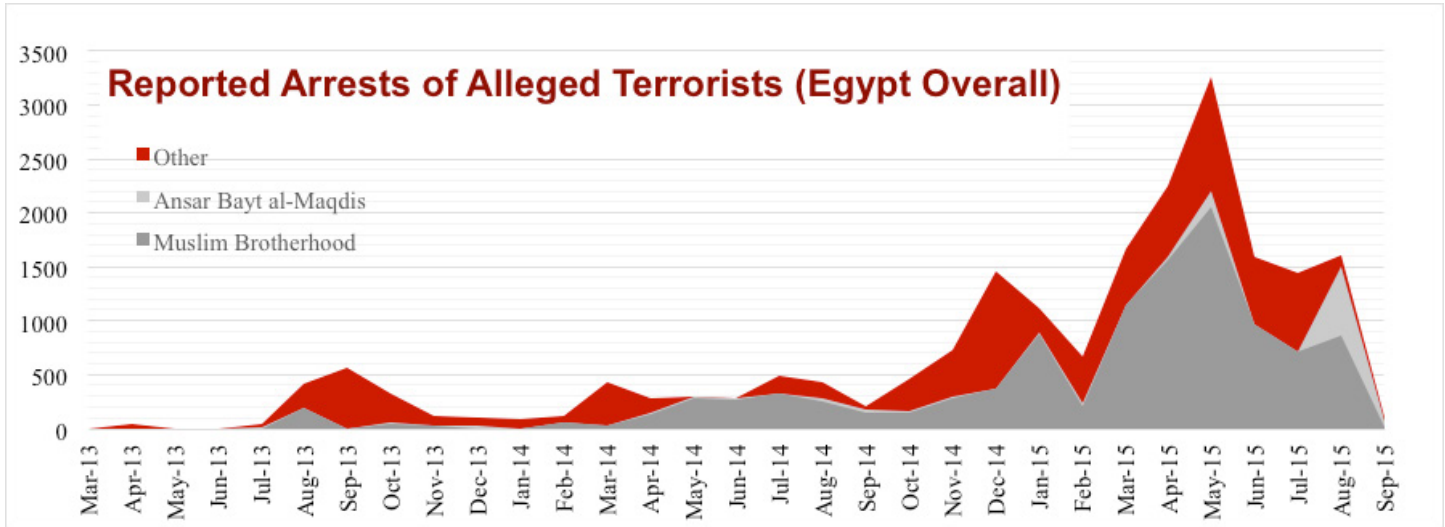


tralizing the enemy, and broad and indiscriminate security operations in the Sinai. All of these measures have seen escalation since Sisi requested a mandate to fight terrorism in July 2013; in fact, they have mirrored the escalation in terror trends.

The obscurity surrounding security operations and criminal investigations makes them difficult to assess. Media gags are often put in place around significant events, like the assassination of Prosecutor-General Hisham Barakat in June 2015, and the new counter-terrorism law makes it a crime for journalists to print different statistics from what the government has put out. Alleged terrorists are often arrested on the scene of the incident and seemingly without

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significant periods of intelligence gathering,³¹ and the vast majority of these alleged terrorists are said to be members of the Muslim Brotherhood. Of all state-reported arrests of “terrorists” from January through October 2015, around 65% of these—some as young as 15³²—were arrested for their alleged involvement with the Muslim Brotherhood, and many for non-violent crimes like possession of pro-Morsi paraphernalia,³³ holding political meetings,³⁴ or for operating Facebook pages.³⁵



As the law governing appropriate state actions to combat terrorism continues to broaden, security actors have been given a wider mandate to apprehend anyone antagonistic toward the government and prosecute them as terrorists. These prosecutions often happen in military courts, which do not always require the presence of a judge. The vast number of arrests over the past years has flooded Egypt’s jails with alleged terrorists, and the ability to separate hardline extremists from those who have merely been critical of state actions is doubtful. Such wide jurisdiction on terrorism has raised questions about the imprisonment of journalists, activists, and others.

In North Sinai and on the western border, the state favors actions closer to conventional warfare, although arrests are still prominent. Apache helicopter strikes—like the one that killed eight Mexican tourists in September—the use of Hellfire missiles, and armed military raids have been ongoing, and increasing in both number and intensity over the past years. While some efforts to gain the support of tribal leaders have been highly publicized, these are only superficial and do not typically reflect the actual support of the tribes.³⁶

Despite the predominance of security efforts, Egypt has engaged in some efforts to address underlying ideology as well. In an attempt to counter religious extremism, the Egyptian government has been very vocal about its desire to engage in religious reform, with a concerted effort taking place particularly since the summer of 2014. On May 31, 2015, Sisi called for a “religious revolution,” and since this time the Ministry of Religious Endowments (which oversees mosques) has followed suit, closing small mosques, unifying Friday sermons, and cracking down on unlicensed preachers. While officials in the Endowments Ministry, the Justice Ministry’s Fatwa Department, and the Azhar mosque and university establishment have praised the state and condemned terrorism, they have also passively resisted the calls for a religious revolution. The clerics regularly denigrate Jewish, Shi’a, Baha’i, and non-religious citizens, and promote theories that Egypt’s terror threat is a Western plot, calling into question their ability to play a constructive role in addressing the root causes of the violence.

While the majority of Egypt’s efforts have been directed internally, it has resumed a position as a key player in multilateral security efforts. A member of the joint coalition forces, shared security interests have formed the foundation of Egypt’s strengthened ties between its Gulf neighbors and Israel. Particularly as Gulf allies conduct their own battle against domestic Islamists and regional extremists, they have had significant interest in assisting Egypt’s struggle against the Muslim Brotherhood (in addition to interest in its economic development), offering substantial political and financial support to the current government. Finally, relations with Israel are stronger than at any time in the recent past; the Camp David trea-

ty is, with Israel's assent, being interpreted very loosely, allowing the expansion of military operations in Sinai. Egypt has contributed naval forces and air assets to the conflict in Yemen, and is in talks with the Arab League for the establishment of a joint military force, though it remains to be seen whether an agreement can be reached.

Effective Approaches for Countering Violence

Countering terrorism requires not only the measures of law enforcement that deal with crimes of terrorism directly, in attempts to dismantle terror networks and bring actors to justice, but must also consider the causes and conditions that drive it. This is by no means to suggest that governments capitulate to demands, but to examine the consequences of policies that may create conditions in which violence thrives.

For this reason, many modern counter-terrorism strategies adopt a more holistic view of countering terror as one that depends on the fundamentals of law enforcement and dynamic, strategic, and targeted military operations, and that includes considerations of preventative measures and institutional capacity building. Indeed, a 2006 United Nations plan of action to counter terrorism mentions *first* “measures to address the conditions conducive to the spread of terrorism,” and *then* “measures to prevent and combat terrorism.” The first category includes social inclusion, a culture of justice and tolerance, and respect for rule of law among other pillars, and the second category includes denying safe haven, targeting sources of funding, dismantling arms trade, and law enforcement.³⁷

The U.S. military field manual on countering insurgency emphasizes several main pillars of effective strategy: Intelligence gathering is of primary importance. Rule of law should take precedence over strict security measures. Local populations must be empowered. Dynamic, targeted operations are more effective than indiscriminate, large-scale ones. Learning and adaptation is key.³⁸

Extensive RAND studies in 2010 and 2013 examined post-WWII cases of sustained insurgency identified 15 “good” practices and 11 “bad” practices. The studies concluded that in every case (out of 59) where more “good” practices were employed than “bad,” the state was successful in its efforts. “Good” practices included government legitimacy, reduced government corruption, successful intelligence gathering, avoiding collateral damage, a positive view among the local population, and investments in economic development and service provision. “Bad” practices included collective punishment, fighting on insurgents’ terms, failure to adapt, and greater motivation or professionalism among the opposing force.

Although a great deal of research and analysis has been conducted to explore effective strategies to counter terror as it immediately exists, and to counter insurgency as a corollary field, not enough effort and work has been done to counter violent extremism as an ideology. No clear definition exists for countering violent extremism, neither via close consensus in academic literature nor in a shared understanding among various governmental departments. However, established knowledge on countering violent extremism aims to promote healthy societies and governance, tackling the local, national, and global scales. Above all, these approaches require adherence to inclusive political frameworks and rule of law, and necessitate the engagement of multiple stakeholders, across multiple scales, generations, and political and cultural orientations (civil society, government, security sector, youth, online activists, etc.).

Has Egypt Adhered to Best Practices in Security Strategy?

In comparing the lessons learned on most effective policies to the new forms of violence that Egypt has seen since June 2013, several fundamentals emerge that would form the basis of an effective security strategy. Using these, it is possible to assess what is known of Egypt's current approach for its strengths and potential weaknesses:

❖ The state must establish itself as legitimate and a force for good.

Terror groups have gained followers and sympathizers by promotion of the image of the state as authoritarian, repressive, and simply evil. This message has been strengthened as other, more peaceful messages have been crushed by restrictive laws on protest and dissent, control over media space, and continued delays of free and fair elections. This is particularly important given the continued symbolic gravity of the 2011 revolution and collective anger due the perceived failure of the state to address popular demands.

On the local level, security actors have failed to gain the trust of the population. This has especially been the case in North Sinai, where state presence has been relegated almost solely to security operations that have been severely detrimental to the physical, emotional, and economic well-being of residents. The same distrust and disdain for security forces remains the case in the rest of Egypt as well: the Matariya district of Cairo, a hotbed for violence and an area that is known to be ground zero for actors in the Allied Popular Resistance Movement, is particularly known for police corruption.³⁹

❖ **A strong system of rule of law is essential.**

A strong system of rule of law builds trust in the state as a transparent, uncorrupted governor, while also allowing frameworks for intelligently designed legislation that will aid efforts to target legitimate security threats. By consistently re-writing legislation on terrorism to broaden the definition of the term so that it may be used as a political tool, the state has fundamentally undermined the rule of law.

Additionally, the use of the law to target nonviolent dissidents in the same manner as those who have carried out or attempted to carry out violent and harmful acts does not allow punishment under the law to serve as it is intended: a disincentive for committing violence.

That state actors have not been subject to the same rules of law as other citizens also contributes to the perceptions of state institutions (particularly security institutions) as corrupt and unjust. Where the state has failed to hold these actors accountable for crimes, terror groups claim to take matters into their own hands.

❖ **Security policy must be flexible and dynamic.**

To date, Egypt has not made major adjustments to its security approach in order to anticipate and adapt to its opponents. Aside from reorganizations in the security sector (including the firing of the Cairo security director after several major attacks in July 2015 or the creation of a new military command in North Sinai), escalation has been favored over transformation. Even those few reorganizations of security forces or reappointments have not led to substantial shifts in policy.

This is problematic in that it has allowed for terror groups to observe and learn from patterns, as was evidenced in the July 1 attacks in Sheikh Zuweid, where militants were able to overcome security checkpoints in the same manner as they had for months previously.

Where attacks continue to occur and become more sophisticated, the state has discouraged critical public discussions that may prove useful as part of a learning process. Media gags and blackouts have limited any ability for citizens outside the security forces to meaningfully contribute to more dynamic security approaches.

❖ **Robust intelligence gathering is necessary to appropriately target threats.**

In isolating local populations, namely in the Sinai, security forces have diminished their ability to gather actionable intelligence. Elsewhere in the country, on-the-spot arrests and the use of torture also suggests that intelligence gathering may not be conducted as thoroughly as necessary to identify the most serious threats.

However, the appointment of Magdy Abdel Ghaffar to succeed Mohamed Ibrahim as interior minister may indicate the state's recognition of the importance of intelligence. Abdel Ghaffar had previously headed Egypt's Homeland Security—the MoI's intelligence apparatus and successor agency to the State Security Investigations Service⁴⁰—while Ibrahim, other recent interior ministers, and other senior officials had come from the ranks of the Central Security Forces, a paramilitary force often used as riot police.⁴¹

❖ **Collective punishment should be avoided.**

By conducting broad campaigns of mass incarceration (and killing in the North Sinai), the government has provided fodder for allegations of injustice while simultaneously disrupting social hierarchies that have led to increased chaos. The removal of whole sectors of Muslim Brotherhood leadership, for instance, has had the unintended consequence of a greater affinity for violence within the group.

As with broad legislation, collective punishment may also provide a disincentive for actors to express dissent through

peaceful means, as citizens have been jailed or killed whether or not they have committed violent acts. Also, the personal nature of arrest and state killings has provided personal motivations for individuals to desire retribution, as well as group motivation to avenge members' imprisonment or death. This has been prominently the case with Ajnad Misr's campaign "Retribution is Life," as well as the emergence of the Allied Popular Resistance Movement groups and their targeting of specific security actors for revenge.

❖ Resource networks that feed violence must be dismantled.

It is hard to gauge to what degree Egypt has been able to disrupt flows of financing, weapons, and fighters inside of and into the country. While the creation of a buffer zone on the border with Gaza has been a negative force as it has caused suffering and resentment from local populations, flows in this area have ceased. The border area with Libya, however, still sees relatively free flows, as was evident in the Islamic State's September 2015 announcement of activities in the area.

Financing networks for terror groups remain incredibly obscure, and restrictions on media's ability to explore these (or to broadcast the state's successes in disrupting them) mean that it is difficult to gauge whether these have been strengthened or weakened in any real way by state security efforts.

❖ Economic investments are required.

Terror groups' narratives allege the state does not have citizens' best interests in mind, and investments in development projects and job creation would undermine these narratives. Recently, Egypt has announced several large mega-projects, including the Suez Canal expansion and the new Capital Cairo. These plans have been important in that they improve the government's image among some segments of the population, but have not necessarily had effects on security because they have not been geared toward vulnerable populations. Those investments that would improve life for the most susceptible to terror groups' messaging—like plans for low-income housing in urban areas or for developments in North Sinai—have not come to fruition.

6. Recommendations

For the Egyptian Government

In the 1990s, the Egyptian government faced a terrorist threat as challenging as today's from groups like Egyptian Islamic Jihad and the Islamic Group. The former concentrated on infiltrating the army and trying to assassinate regime officials, while the latter targeted foreign tourists, policemen, and regime officials, including even a spectacular attempt to assassinate Mubarak during a trip to Ethiopia in 1995. Some parts of this terrorist campaign took on characteristics of an insurgency, particularly in areas of Upper Egypt.

Like the present counter-terrorism campaign, the Egyptian government initially relied on brute force and other draconian policies (such as arresting family members of young terrorists in order to force them to give up their cohorts), but these measures only had limited success. After a few years, the government employed a more holistic approach to the terrorist problem, such as pouring development assistance into neglected areas (like the Imbaba neighborhood of Giza, which was a hotbed for the Islamic Group) and certain areas of Upper Egypt that had been neglected by the government and from where many terrorists originated. In addition, the government began to use more sophisticated propaganda against the terrorists, for example, highlighting the deaths of children who were victims of the terrorists' violence and showing that terrorists were hurting the livelihoods of ordinary citizens working in the tourism industry. The government attempted to inculcate conscripts with what was described as moderate—i.e., government-friendly—interpretations of Islam.

These more comprehensive measures, plus the revulsion that many Egyptians felt toward the terrorists, particularly in the wake of the Luxor massacre of 1997, in which 58 foreigners and four Egyptians were brutally killed, helped to turn the tide against the terrorists.

The government needs to get back to this holistic approach if it wants to defeat terrorism again. This report recommends the Egyptian government adopt the following policies:

- ❖ **Avoid punishment of whole villages in the Sinai** if a few of the village's youth are suspected of aiding or joining Wilayat Sinai (WS). Such collective punishment serves only to make more enemies of the government and prevents the government from obtaining valuable intelligence on the terrorists.
- ❖ **Continue to elicit the support of mainstream Islamic preachers to denounce the extremist ideologies of the terrorist groups**, but understand that, for many young people, such establishment preachers offer little appeal. Eliciting the support of former, disillusioned terrorists to speak with young people may be a more effective way to reach them and help them understand the destructiveness of the terrorists' ideologies and tactics. The government should consider granting pardons to some imprisoned terrorists if they have truly seen their error of their ways, and employ them as lecturers (in informal settings) to speak to youth.
- ❖ **Review the definition of terrorism currently present in Egyptian legislation.** Given the incoming parliament's constitutional mandate to review all legislation decreed under Sisi and interim President Adly Mansour, the first 15 days of their first session provide an important opportunity during which the counter-terrorism law should be reexamined.
- ❖ **Reverse the provision in the recent counter-terrorism law that imposes stiff fines for reporting on terrorist incidents that does not conform to the government's line.** The vast majority of Egyptian journalists are opposed to terrorism, and it is counterproductive to alienate this educated, professional group. The government should not be afraid of honest reporting of terrorist incidents. Allowing accurate reporting reduces violent actors' ability to control or manipulate narratives, a central component of their strategy.
- ❖ **Encourage accountability in the security sector.** Conducting transparent and impartial investigations where security sector crimes have occurred—and holding actors accountable where they are found to have committed wrongdoing—will build citizens' trust in these institutions and in rule of law. This will also encourage greater professionalism in the security sector, allowing for more effective and targeted operations.
- ❖ **Ease restrictions on political discourse and other internationally recognized freedoms.** Restricting political space has enabled the terrorists to sell disaffected young people the idea that violence is the only way to oppose the government.
- ❖ **Allow for free and fair parliamentary elections, and allow members of parliament to openly debate and challenge governmental policies.** Although the large number of independent candidates—which the present election law necessitates—that will be elected to parliament will likely gravitate toward Sisi, there will likely be a minority of parliamentarians who will want to challenge the government. Allowing free debate in parliament will serve to weaken the terrorists' message that the government is a dictatorship.
- ❖ **Revise the election law to eventually allow for more political party candidates** (as opposed to independents) to be elected, as that will strengthen democratic processes.
- ❖ **Provide job training and employment opportunities in the troublesome North Sinai region, and open tourism jobs in South Sinai** (heretofore largely reserved for mainland Egyptians) to Bedouin residents. Bedouin youth in Sinai have few legitimate avenues to make a decent living, leading many to resort to smuggling or joining terror groups. In the Western Desert, where there is a robust tourist economy, local populations have not joined militant ranks as have their eastern counterparts. The government needs to encourage labor-intensive industries to move to the North Sinai region, and industrialists could be given tax breaks for doing so. Egyptian security services would need to protect not only such facilities but also North Sinai residents going to and from their jobs.
- ❖ **Lift prohibitions that severely restrict Bedouin from joining police forces, and when they do join such forces, they should be allowed to work in their home areas.** Currently, Bedouin are barred from the police and

military services due to the lack of trust that many mainland Egyptians have toward the Bedouin and the perception that they are not truly Egyptian. Such policies have not only set the Bedouin apart from the rest of Egyptian society but reinforces the suspicions of many Egyptians in the Nile Valley. Because the government sorely needs allies in the counter-terrorism campaign, enlisting Bedouin youth in the police forces and paying them a decent salary would promote the idea that the government is their ally and protector, not their enemy. Using Bedouin officers to patrol Sinai would bring important local knowledge to intelligence gathering and investigations.

- ❖ **Work more closely with Bedouin tribal leaders to ensure that youth do not become susceptible to the entreaties of the terrorists.** As with many disaffected youth the world over, radicalization does not take place overnight, but is a process. Tribal or other respected community leaders are best situated to see changes in behavior among certain youth, but in order for the government to obtain the cooperation of these leaders, they need to be reassured that such youth will not be arrested, but instead be counseled about the dangers of heading down the extremist path.

For the United States and Other International Actors

Egypt holds a special importance for the United States in the Middle East. Egypt's internal counter-terrorism struggle is seen in U.S. policy circles as part of the regional effort against the threat posed by the Islamic State. Attacks in recent months by Islamic State-affiliated groups against foreign tourists, Christians, and security forces in the area have generated considerable support for Egyptian counter-terror efforts, despite the fact that these seem to run counter to the preferred approaches adopted by U.S. bodies. The United States, after an eighteen-month hiatus that began in October 2013, has resumed its military-to-military relationship and increasingly seems to support a strong state in Egypt, providing military assistance and defense articles. In July 2015, the U.S. agreed to sell Egypt border surveillance equipment worth about \$100 million in an effort to stymie weapons and terrorist flows, particularly from Libya.

The challenge for U.S. policymakers is to balance support for Egyptian counter-terror efforts with legitimate U.S. concerns about how these efforts may in fact undermine shared security interests and their implications for human rights. The following recommendations provide U.S. and international policymakers with suggestions on how to promote rights- and rule-of-law-based security policy with their Egyptian counterparts:

- ❖ Despite ongoing political and human rights problems in Egypt, **the United States and other countries should continue to supply or sell Egypt military equipment that is important to its counter-terrorism campaign, including military hardware and border security systems.** This assistance underscores that Egypt remains a key ally in a turbulent region, and that the United States and other friends of Egypt want to help the Egyptian government defeat terrorists. Without such military assistance, it would also be difficult for these outside governments to have influence with Cairo. However, assistance provision should also come with close scrutiny and penalties for cases where weapons are used indiscriminately or improperly.
- ❖ **The strategic dialogue between the U.S. and Egyptian governments that was renewed in August 2015 after a hiatus of several years should continue.** This dialogue provides an important venue where sensitive issues can be discussed in a frank manner, away from the media spotlight, and it also underscores Washington's commitment to a stable Egypt.
- ❖ **The U.S. and other international actors should continue to press the Egyptian government to use "best practices" in its counter-terrorism campaign** that have been used effectively in other countries, including in the Middle East. Some reports have suggested that Egypt has resisted U.S. counter-terrorism advice and training offers. This is an unfortunate development because Egypt's harsh measures against suspected terrorist areas in the North Sinai region have clearly not worked, or have produced only temporary lulls in terrorist violence. Additionally, the U.S. should conduct more rigorous pre- and post-assessment of training to ensure the viability of intended training outcomes.

- ❖ As a proud country with a strong nationalist heritage, Egypt has long resisted Westerners telling them what to do, although this attitude may be slowly changing. The U.S. should continue to try to offer counter-terrorism assistance and training, but realize that it may not be able to persuade the Egyptian military hierarchy to change tactics. If the Egyptians continue to resist this assistance, the **United States and other countries should try to elicit the help of Saudi Arabia and the U.A.E.**, Egypt's principal Arab benefactors, to have them lean on Cairo to accept this U.S. counter-terrorism assistance.
- ❖ **The United States and the E.U. countries should press the Egyptian government to ease its restrictions on fundamental political freedoms.** These countries should continue to make the case that the vast majority of Egyptians are opposed to terrorism and the ideology of groups like Wilayat Sinai and Afnan Misr, and that it is counterproductive to alienate moderate oppositionists simply because they are opposed to government policies on issues outside of the terrorism realm. For the Egyptian government to succeed in the counter-terrorism campaign it needs broad public support, but this support will not be forthcoming if the Egyptian government continues to alienate moderate oppositionists.
- ❖ At the same time, **the United States and other international actors should help the Egyptian government as much as it can economically to provide more economic opportunities for Sinai Bedouin.** Again, the Egyptian government may resist this assistance because of the peculiarities of the Sinai—much of the region being a closed military zone and the perceptions held by many mainland Egyptians that Bedouin cannot be fully trusted. Nonetheless, pursuing economic development in a troublesome region is not a novelty. As mentioned earlier, it was practiced by the Egyptian government in the 1990s in other parts of Egypt, and proved to be one of the successful tools in the government's counter-terrorism arsenal.
- ❖ Although U.S. economic aid to Egypt is lower than it was in the 1990s, a compelling case can be made to the U.S. Congress that boosting economic aid to Egypt, especially to counter terrorist appeals in Sinai to disaffected Bedouin youth, is in the U.S.' national security interest. Moreover, because Sisi has been outspoken among leaders of the Arab world in calling on Islamic religious figures to counter extremist ideologies, and because of his efforts to stop the smuggling tunnels from North Sinai into the Gaza Strip, his stock in Congress has risen. A special, designated fund centered on job creation projects in the Sinai, perhaps in conjunction with training programs for Bedouin youth who wish to enter the tourism industry in the South Sinai, would have a good chance of being passed by Congress if the U.S. administration puts its full weight behind the proposal.
- ❖ The E.U. can also play a role in helping Egypt economically, more than it has done so far. For example, the Egyptian government plans to develop economic zones along the Suez Canal as a way to generate economic growth and jobs. European technical advice and economic assistance could be channeled to this venture, with incentives to prioritize the creation of jobs for the Bedouin inhabitants of the Sinai.
- ❖ **As for CVE (countering violent extremism), that is best left to Egyptian political and religious authorities, institutions, and NGOs,** especially given laws that restrict NGO work and particularly those with foreign ties. Any Western attempt to enter into this religious fray is likely to backfire and be used by the extremists to portray the effort as being inspired and funded by “infidels.” As mentioned earlier, Egyptian authorities have already begun this effort, which is a positive development, but they should be encouraged to think more creatively about trying to reach and influence disaffected Muslim youth. Additionally, easing restrictions on NGOs will allow for more flexible and robust civil society efforts to counter extremism.

Appendix A: Methodology

Data Procurement

TIMEP engages in daily media monitoring to update its dataset as developments occur, tracking 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 is obtained through monitoring jihadi web forums and terror groups' social media pages. TIMEP additionally independently monitors all statements on Egyptian Ministry of Interior and the Egyptian military spokesperson's social media accounts, where both institutions publish a record of their public activities.

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 (and arrests, in the case of counter-terror operations), and the targets. In the case of terror attacks, the perpetrator is designated where one has claimed the attack; in the instance of a suspected perpetrator, this information is also recorded. The dataset is 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 recorded before this time were documented based on data provided by the Armed Conflict Location and Event Dataset (ACLED). Using ACLED data, TIMEP extracted a dataset unique to reference terror violence in Egypt. Accessing newswire reports or government statements corresponding to each individual event, TIMEP cross-referenced every data entry from ACLED before recording it in the TIMEP dataset.

Using this unique dataset, the research features 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.

Defining Terrorism in the Egyptian Context

Terrorism, as an essentially contested term, is not obviously defined. At its base it denotes efforts designed to instill fear in an enemy. The creation of a climate of constant threat by use of unpredictable and often spectacular (public, large-scale, or particularly brutal) violence accomplishes this goal, and so forms the basis of a definition of terrorism. Aside from this general characteristic, however, the actors, methods, targets, and motivations for terrorism are not strictly established.

First used to describe state violence against civilians during the French Reign of Terror in the late eighteenth century, the term has described anything from leftist guerilla insurgent acts in Latin America to the Oklahoma City bombing carried out by two individuals determined to strike out at the U.S. government. Recently, and particularly since the attacks on September 11, 2001, terrorism has increasingly come to be understood as Islamist extremist violence, most often jihadism. This conflation complicates the understanding of terrorism, however, which primarily denotes a means, method, or action, rather than the ideology that drives it; terrorism itself is not an ideology.

Thus, defining acts of "terrorism" is a necessarily subjective exercise, but one that this research attempts to make systematically. The nature of "terrorism" that Egypt faces today is one that is politically motivated, that is, the employment of violence in an attempt to strike at the state apparatus, show ordinary citizens that the state is not omnipotent, gain new adherents, and ultimately bring the state down. The creation of a climate of fear has the explicit intent to fundamentally alter existing power structures.

Much of the literature that tackles a definition of terrorism denotes it as a method of violence carried out against non-combatants. Yet, non-combatants are often loosely defined—at times these may mean civilians, and at others could reasonably extend to security forces that are not actively engaged in combat. Generally, the logic in narrowing the acts is meant to underscore how targeting non-combatants contributes more greatly to an overall climate of fear, as these acts are less predictable than symmetrical warfare. In this sense, the random targeting of security officers—and perhaps even more so, of

conscripts—not actively engaged in conflict is adopted here as terror violence.

Some acts in this category—burning police stations or attacking armored personnel carriers, for instance—have been described as “revolutionary violence” when committed during the uprising against Mubarak, for instance; these same activities are now deemed to be “acts of terror,” or “terrorism.” The decision to term these acts as such does not indicate whether or not they may be viewed as a legitimate means, a revolutionary means, etc. The designation of these acts as “terrorist acts,” rather than as “revolutionary violence,” or even “political violence,” is not a qualitative or moral judgment, but rather an attempt to classify, for the purposes of interrogation, the distinct character of the violence that has taken root in Egypt over the past several years. Equally, differentiating between “terrorist violence” and “insurgent violence” is important in crafting an effective mitigating strategy.

As the purpose of this research is to better inform an audience of the nature of the security threat Egypt is facing currently, in the interest of providing actionable recommendations to U.S. and international policy-makers in assisting Egyptian counterparts to mitigate this threat, the report adopts the terms “terrorism,” “terror acts,” and “terror violence” as a classification to indicate a premeditated act, carried out for political means, by non-state actors, for which the report adopts the term “terror groups.”

Appendix B: Developments in Terror Groups 2014 – 2015

Ansar Bayt al-Maqdis Becomes Wilayat Sinai

Through the summer of 2014, Ansar Bayt al-Maqdis moved to formalize ties with The Islamic State (IS), effectively ending its tacit association with al-Qaeda.⁴² The Sinai-based organization, now referred to as *Wilayat Sinai* (State or Province of Sinai), made public its new loyalties in a November video, in which the group pledged *bay'a* (allegiance) to Islamic State leader Abu Bakr al-Baghdadi. How, and to what extent, this new relationship has impacted WS is not fully understood, although it appears to have been made manifest in several ways throughout the year.

First, Wilayat Sinai has continually refined its internet-based messaging and propaganda efforts. The organization’s social media presence, in particular, has grown increasingly sophisticated over the past year, despite its frequent account closures. For example, catchy slogans and phrases, often embedded in sensational images, and low-text “visual reports” have become a common medium. In May, following a number of attacks on military fuel, water, and food supply trucks, WS launched a campaign dubbed “Severing the Supplies,” which featured a large supply truck that they had burned. Another of these, coined “War of the Minds,” made the rounds after the group’s April execution of conscript Ahmed Fathi Abul Fotouh.

Apparently borrowing from the Islamic State community-relations strategy, a growing portion of WS media is focused on documenting charitable activities. WS has released videos and photos of its operatives distributing (presumably confiscated) food rations to local civilians, as well as purification campaigns destroying illegal cigarettes or marijuana.

The aims of this propaganda also run in the reverse, exacting fear on the very population they are trying to influence. In April 2015 WS operatives disseminated leaflets warning tribal members against cooperation with the Egyptian military; images of this were widely disseminated through the group’s social media channels. Combined with their well-publicized videos of executions, like that of Fotouh, and their general use of brute force and violence,⁴³ such as dumping beheaded bodies by a roadside, WS is balancing “goodwill” with fear.

Its operational planning also has grown in complexity. The organization has carried out a number of increasingly large-scale, coordinated attacks against North Sinai military and police installations. In July, the group launched one of the most significant armed assaults against Egypt in recent years, during which it carried out simultaneous suicide operations and attacks at more than 15 checkpoints. Official statements concluded that 21 security personnel were killed in that attack, although some news sources reported much higher figures.⁴⁴

Generally speaking, the tactical character of these attacks has remained somewhat constant. Their targets have, for the most part, been stationary checkpoints, security patrols, and convoys, with their preferred modes of attack being roadside IEDs, mortar fire, and firearms. Two particular developments are noteworthy, however. The first is the group's increased targeting of private residences with explosives and arson (these are almost exclusively directed at police officers' homes). In the last three months, eight such attacks have been carried out in North Sinai alone. The second is the recent use of anti-tank guided missiles. On June 14, the group debuted its possession of (and ability to use) these systems, when it destroyed an M60 Patton tank using what appeared to have been a variant of the Russian 9M133 "Kornet" anti-tank missile. These were also (apparently) employed during the July assault on Sheikh Zuweid, when WS militants subsequently took over the North Sinai town for several hours. Then, on July 16, WS fired what, again, appeared to have been an anti-tank missile at an Egyptian naval vessel that was patrolling Egypt's Mediterranean coast. These weapons have been used intermittently since. WS also debuted its possession of 107-mm "Katyusha" rockets, of which it launched nearly a dozen in August and September alone. Both the Kornet and Katyusha platforms featured heavily in the "Harvest of the Soldiers" video released on Tuesday, September 1.

Allied Popular Resistance Movement Signals Transition from Spontaneous to Premeditated Violence

On January 24, 2015, according to a statement on a now-defunct Facebook page, five entities coalesced to form the current Allied Popular Resistance Movement (APRM). These include the Popular Resistance Movement, the Determination Movement, the Revolutionary Punishment Movement, Beni Suef Revolutionaries Movement, and the Execution Battalion. While, in many instances, these entities claim attacks via their respective social media organs, the level of autonomy exercised—and, more generally, the level of centralization of APRM—is not presently clear.

The most organized of these, at least with respect to their media presence, is Revolutionary Punishment (RP). While the group's formation date is not known, they first officially claimed an attack in February 2015. Since then, they have carried out a variety of attacks across at least thirteen governorates. The majority of their documented claims were directed against security personnel, government property, or private commercial interests with alleged connections to the government.⁴⁵

While the allied entity has demonstrated undercurrents of Islamist motivation (like in references to "God and Nation," or in an anomalous fifth statement published on Facebook in February in which it references "God, Nation, Islamic Caliphate"), the ideological focus of APRM is on the continuation of the revolutionary cause and the exaction of revenge for state suppression of the revolution. Early activities were carried out against security forces after repression of protests, and these have only grown more targeted in nature, now focusing on particular judicial or security actors.

Until June 2015, these groups avoided executing civilians, but, following a recorded interrogation of civilian Walid Ahmed Ali, released on June 25, 2015, RP executed the individual by gunfire to the chest and his extremities. This video also strikingly adopted the formula of Wilayat Sinai videos, beginning with a *nasheed* (Islamic chant), showing security actors using force, a confession and warning from a declared informant, and ending with an execution. It is not clear whether the outright adoption of Islamic symbols and imagery signify a true ideological shift or are designed because of their seeming success in attracting new members (and possibly funds), as has been seen with Ansar Bayt al-Maqdis. Regardless of the exact links, the copycat style underscores another consequence of a stronger and more diverse actor landscape: groups will learn from one another, even if they are not receiving direct training.

Thus, the rise of the APRM groups demonstrates both the continued significance of revolutionary demands and the increased acceptance of violence to achieve them. It also reveals the complex and interconnected relationships between groups that exist even in indirect ways.

Ajnad Misr Demonstrates Collective Resilience

Since its emergence in early 2014, Ajnad Misr has continued intermittent attacks on locations in and around the Greater Cairo area. Rather than the sustained, almost daily attacks of Wilayat Sinai, it has not been uncommon for weeks or months to lapse between the group's operations. These are almost exclusively small-scale bombings, aimed at security personnel and civilians. Since August 2014, they have carried out fourteen such operations, three of which were in Giza governorate and eleven of which were in Cairo.

Ajnad Misr has had two particularly prolonged periods of inactivity since last summer. The first came between June 2014 and September 2014, although the reason is not immediately clear. The second period came after the April 9, 2015 death of its founder and leader, Hammam Mohammed Atiya (nom de guerre: Maged al-Din al-Masry), during a highly publicized raid by Egyptian security forces. Statements released by al-Qaeda in the Arabian Peninsula (AQAP) and al-Qaeda in the Islamic Maghreb (AQIM) expressed their condolences for al-Masry's death, reinforcing speculation of the group's connection to al-Qaeda. Following the leader's death, Ajnad Misr's Shura Council named its new leader, Ezz al-Din al-Masry.

Barring a few tweets about Atiya's passing, the organization went through a complete media blackout until its July claim of an IED attack at Roxy Square in Cairo's Heliopolis neighborhood. On July 23, following the Roxy bombing, the group released a statement that touched on Atiya's death and underscored their resolve to continue terror operations. Since then, the group has carried out several more attacks, including an August 10 attack in Courthouse Square in Heliopolis. That the organization has been able to regroup, albeit after a long respite and decreased capacity, demonstrates the resilience of collective versus individual actors.

Other Groups Reveal Complexities in Landscape

A new Egyptian Islamic State province—or at least a mainland cell affiliated with Wilayat Sinai—appears to be in an early stage of formation. Following the detonation of a 450-kg car bomb at the Italian consulate in Cairo on July 11, 2015 (an attack that, incidentally, struck the mission in the early morning hours on Saturday when the building was at its lightest staffing), a claim was released from Wilayat Sinai's official Twitter account. Curiously, the claim, which was published in the same standard format as Islamic State claims throughout the region, attributed the attack to the Islamic State "Misr" (i.e., Egypt)—and not to Wilayat Sinai. Three other attacks have since been claimed in the same manner. These include an attack on a Homeland Security building in Shubra al-Kheima and one on a Ministry of Foreign Affairs office building in Mohandiseen, in addition to the beheading of a soldier in Egypt's Western Desert. While there have been no *formal* declarations of a new Egyptian branch, it appears that the *Islamic State in Egypt* now operates outside of the Sinai and as a distinct entity. Other than speculative takes on the apparent division, however, very little information on the splinter group is available; even the degree of overlap between Wilayat Sinai and the Islamic State in Egypt is unclear.

A second organization also emerged in July. An al-Qaeda-linked group calling itself *al-Morabitoon* surfaced mid-month, following circulation of an audio statement from the group's leader (and former operations commander for Ansar Bayt al-Maqdis), Hisham Ali Ashmawi. Following an internal rift brought on by ABM's switch of allegiance from al-Qaeda to the Islamic State in mid- to late-2014, it is likely that Ashmawi left the organization for Libya to fight against the Islamic State's presence there with the Derna-based Majlis al-Sahawat. He and some of his fellow fighters reportedly decided to establish al-Morabitoon during that time. While the organization has not formally claimed any attacks, Egyptian security officials believe its members were behind a number of high-profile operations, including the attempted assassination of Interior Minister Mohamed Ibrahim in 2013; the Farafra attack in Egypt's Western Desert in July 2014; the Battalion 101 attack in Arish in 2015; and the assassination of Prosecutor-General Hisham Barakat in June 2015. It is not yet clear whether the group is connected to al-Qaeda's other Egyptian affiliate, Ajnad Misr.

Endnotes

¹See “Egypt’s Security: Threat and Response,” The Tahrir Institute for Middle East Policy (October 2014): Section 2A.

²It is possible, perhaps even likely, that the group had carried out other attacks not publicly claimed. They did not systematically announce attacks until summer 2014.

³At the time, it appears that both groups had connections with al-Qaeda (for more information on this, see Appendix B: Developments in Terror Groups 2014-2015), though it is unclear to what degree the groups may have been in contact or working together. In a series of January 25, 2014, attacks in Cairo, both Ansar Bayt al-Maqdis and Ajnad Misr claimed the same attacks; Ansar Bayt al-Maqdis later conceded the claims to their “brothers” in Ajnad Misr.

⁴For more information on Atiya, see Egyptian newspaper Shorouk’s report on the confession of Ajnad Misr’s head of recruitment, Hossam Ali Farghali Ali: “Ajnad Misr’s Recruitment Head Provides Insights into the Group’s Inception,” Shorouk (February 23, 2015): <http://www.shorouknews.com/news/view.aspx?cdate=23022015&id=b570840d-9171-4856-bd26-e48c6214afe4>.

⁵As noted in TIMEP’s profile of the group, this was not their first statement. The group had announced its presence initially in January 2014 and continued its Facebook activity on this page until it was shut down after declared attempts to target security forces in August 2014. For more, see Allied Popular Resistance Movement: www.timep.org/esw/profiles/terror-groups/aprm.

⁶Allied Popular Resistance Movement in Egypt, from a January 27, 2015, Facebook post (AR). Full text:

“The most serious prior developments leading to God’s will and promise of black days for the Egyptian military are:

- 1. A group of peaceful and unknown actors’ adoption of an unprecedented revolutionary pattern distinctive to the Egyptian revolution;*
- 2. The unbelievable prominence of the ideas of the Muslim Brotherhood’s new revolutionary youth leadership, which has been long discussed inside the group;*
- 3. The unprecedented evolution, audacity, unification, and coordination in rebel and unknown actors at all levels of the republic, underlining the driving force behind them*
- 4. The unprecedented excellence and superiority of the revolution’s media space, which remains free from the direction/orientation of Al Jazeera;*
- 5. The continuation of the revolution’s media to surpass social media sites to the point that they become sources for every news outlet, including those of the regime and the regime’s (web)pages/media;*
- 6. The abnormal persistence of the protesters in the streets to the point that the secretive Interior Ministry makes reports about its inability to effectively break up any march;*
- 7. The ability of the revolution to direct the attention of the entire world toward Matariya. We can make 100 public squares like Matariya in 100 places throughout Egypt. In this case, we want to keep conveying the message to the military to keep Tahrir Square for themselves. Do what you want in it, we don’t want it.”*

⁷For example, the June 24 videotaped shooting of civilian Walid Ahmed Ali, an alleged police informant, by Revolutionary Punishment; the July 9 murder of policeman Muhammad Essam in Beni Suef by Revolutionary Punishment; the July 14 execution of Sharqia City Council member Atiya Harouni by Revolutionary Punishment; or the August 13 assassination of policeman Mostafa Muhammad Ayoub in Fayoum by the Execution Battalion (all in 2015).

⁸See “Egypt: Thousands Evicted in Sinai Demolitions,” Human Rights Watch (September 22, 2015): <https://www.hrw.org/news/2015/09/22/egypt-thousands-evicted-sinai-demolitions>.

⁹Mohannad Sabry, “By Military or Militants, Society is the Casualty in Sinai,” The Tahrir Institute for Middle East Policy (July 24, 2014): <http://timep.org/esw/articles-analysis/military-militants-society-casualty-sinai/>.

¹⁰Reuters, “Egypt floods Gaza tunnels, cuts Palestinian lifeline,” republished in The Jerusalem Post (February 13, 2013): <http://www.jpost.com/Middle-East/Egypt-floods-Gaza-tunnels-cuts-Palestinian-lifeline>.

¹¹Smuggling networks throughout Egypt provide illicit goods and/or engage in human trafficking, particularly of East African migrants. These have been particularly lucrative in delivering goods and migrants to the closed economies in Sinai and across the border in Gaza. Many of the smuggling networks are based on tribal and familial ties.

¹²The Associated Press, “Egypt Starts Dig on Gaza Border to Stop Smuggling Tunnels,” republished in Al Arabiya News (August 31, 2015): <http://english.alarabiya.net/en/News/middle-east/2015/08/31/Egypt-starts-dig-on-Gaza-border-to-stop-smuggling-tunnels.html>.

¹³See “Egypt’s Revolution Bring Little to Underdeveloped Sinai,” IRIN News (December 13, 2013): <http://www.irinnews.org/report/99329/egypt-s-revolution-brings-little-to-underdeveloped-sinai>.

¹⁴See Basil El Dabh, “Breaking News and Inconsistent Media Standards in Egypt,” The Tahrir Institute for Middle East Policy (September 2015): <http://timep.org/commentary/breaking-news-and-inconsistent-media-standards-in-egypt/>.

¹⁵United Nations, Security Council, “Final report of the Panel of Experts established pursuant to resolution 1973 (2011),” United Nations, S/2015/128 (February 23, 2015): http://www.securitycouncilreport.org/atf/cf/%7B65BFCF9B-6D27-4E9C-8CD3-CF6E4FF96FF9%7D/s_2015_128.pdf.

¹⁶For example after the Farafra attack in 2014. See Eric Trager and Gilad Wenig, “Egypt’s Western Security Concerns,” Washington Institute for Near East Policy (August 8, 2014): <http://www.washingtoninstitute.org/policy-analysis/view/egypts-western-security-concerns>.

¹⁷Ajnad Misr statement (AR), published via their Twitter account, March 9, 2015.

¹⁸“Security forces raid a village in Alexandria, protests occur in Egyptian cities (AR),” Al Jazeera (December 19, 2014): <http://www.aljazeera.net/news/arabic/2014/12/19/%D8%A7%D9%82%D8%AA%D8%AD%D8%A7%D9%85-%D9%82%D8%B1%D9%8A%D8%A9-%D8%A8%D8%A7%D9%84%D8%A5%D8%B3%D9%83%D9%86%D8%AF%D8%B1%D9%8A%D8%A9-%D9%88%D9%85%D8%B8%D8%A7%D9%87%D8%B>



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¹⁹On December 19, 2014, the group published a YouTube video entitled “The Response to the Second Storming of Muhajireen [Neighborhood] – Popular Resistance of Alexandria.”

²⁰The group announced the attacks in a May 19 WordPress entry entitled “Port Said: Targeting the Military Court with IEDs in Conjunction with the Execution of the Sharkas Heroes.”

²¹See Mai El Sadany, “Yet Another Terrorism Law” and “Designating a Terrorist: Process Unchecked,” The Tahrir Institute for Middle East Policy (May and July 2015): <http://timep.org/commentary/yet-another-terrorism-law/> and <http://timep.org/commentary/designating-a-terrorist-process-unchecked/>.

²²It appears that Muslim Brotherhood members have been implicated in at least the intention to commit violent acts, as some have been reported killed or injured from preliminary detonation of IEDs. Although the group deems these incidents “killed in dubious circumstances,” the Arab Organization for Human Rights documents several cases from February to June 2015 where security reports have indicated that Muslim Brotherhood members are killed in explosions during raids. See “Report Monitor on Human Rights Violations in Egypt (AR),” The Arab Organization for Human Rights (July 2015): 21.

²³See Mokhtar Awad and Nathan Brown, “Mutual escalation in Egypt,” The Washington Post (February 9, 2015): <http://www.washingtonpost.com/blogs/monkey-cage/wp/2015/02/09/mutual-escalation-in-egypt/>.

²⁴Nathan Brown and Michele Dunne, “Unprecedented Pressures, Uncharted Course for Egypt’s Muslim Brotherhood,” The Carnegie Endowment for International Peace (July 2015).

²⁵The development of rapport between the two groups became obvious during a July Eid al-Fitr sermon when WS leader Abu Osama al-Masry praised Abu Bakr al-Baghdadi’s efforts. For more see Allison McManus, “The Battle for Egypt’s Sinai,” The Tahrir Institute for Middle East Policy (December 2014): <http://timep.org/commentary/battle-egypts-sinai/>.

²⁶Interestingly, in its monthly activity reports for the hijri months of Shaban and Ramadan, WS released (poorly) translated English versions alongside the Arabic originals. Whether this was meant to appeal to (prospective) English-speaking recruits, display its growing level of sophistication, or achieve some other goal, is not clear, but, in any case, it mirrors the efforts of other takfiri groups (including al-Qaeda) to produce non-Arabic propaganda.

²⁷For more on Ashmawi and his group, see Appendix B: Developments in Terror Groups 2014-2015.

²⁸See “Missing Missiles: The Proliferation of Man-portable Air Defence Systems in North Africa,” Small Arms Survey (June 2015): <http://www.smallarmssurvey.org/fileadmin/docs/G-Issue-briefs/SAS-SANA-IB2-Missing-Missiles.pdf>.

²⁹“99% of terrorism eliminated, says Egypt’s interior minister,” Mada Masr (April 27, 2014): <http://www.madamasr.com/news/99-terrorism-eliminated-says-egypt%E2%80%99s-interior-minister>.

³⁰After the July 1 offensive on Sheikh Zuweid, Army spokesman Brigadier General Mohamed Samir stated “no one, whoever he is, will be able to control even one millimeter of Sinai or any part of Egypt while the Egyptian army and police exist” (“Week of Militant Violence Lays Bare Threat Facing Egyptians,” Bloomberg Business (July 2, 2015): <http://www.bloomberg.com/news/articles/2015-07-02/week-of-islamist-militant-violence-lays-bare-threat-facing-egypt>).

³¹While this may be a largely subjective determination, successful surveillance on known terrorist activities and entities elsewhere can take months or years and require significant resources in manpower and technology. It is practically impossible to imagine that the Egyptian security sector is able to conduct proper intelligence gathering to determine terrorist activities for hundreds or thousands of alleged terrorists monthly.

³²Photos and text detail the arrest of three women aged 15, 17, and 18, for possession of police license plates and Muslim Brotherhood-related paraphernalia, and for participating in marches and chanting slogans against the army and police. Egypt’s Ministry of Interior Facebook page (AR) (May 4, 2014): <https://www.facebook.com/MoiEgy/photos/a.181676241876047.36036.181662475210757/712032718840394/?type=1&theater>.

³³Photos and text detail the arrest of a woman in Port Said for broadcasting Al Jazeera programs and possession of posters showing Morsi’s picture and the four-fingered Raba’a sign. Egypt’s Ministry of Interior Facebook page (AR) (May 30, 2014): <https://www.facebook.com/photo.php?fbid=725857194124613>

³⁴Photos and text detail the arrest of 13 men, alleged members of the Muslim Brotherhood, for holding secret meetings to develop plans in opposition to upcoming presidential elections. Egypt’s Ministry of Interior Facebook page (AR) (May 22, 2014): <https://www.facebook.com/photo.php?fbid=721428277900838>.

³⁵Photos and text detail the arrest of an individual for his involvement with the Muslim Brotherhood and for operating a Facebook page in support of the group. Egypt’s Ministry of Interior Facebook page (AR) (September 6, 2014): <https://www.facebook.com/MoiEgy/photos/a.773743502669315.1073744106.181662475210757/773744439335888/?type=1>.

³⁶For more on recent relations between the tribes, state, and militants, particularly in regard to rumors of confrontation between the Tarabin tribe and Wilayat Sinai, see “Are Sinai tribes really unifying against terrorism?,” Al-Monitor (May 15, 2015): <http://www.al-monitor.com/pulse/originals/2015/05/egypt-siani-tribes-war-terrorism-army.html#>.

³⁷General assembly resolution 60/288, The United Nations Global Counter-Terrorism Strategy, A/RES/60/2088 (September 20, 2006): <http://daccess-dds-ny.un.org/doc/UNDOC/GEN/N05/504/88/PDF/N0550488.pdf?OpenElement>.

³⁸U.S. Department of the Army, FM 3-24 MCWP 3-33.5 Insurgencies and Countering Insurgencies (May 2014).

³⁹See Mai Shams el-Din, “Cycles of violence in Matareya,” Mada Masr (April 23, 2015): <http://www.madamasr.com/sections/politics/cycles-violence-matareya>.

⁴⁰Abdel Ghaffar had worked in SSIS’ office for countering terrorist groups, and the anti-Islamist Political Security Unit was reinstated in October 2013. Abdel Ghaffar has overhauled the top ranks of the ministry, firing dozens of assistant ministers and security directors in his first month on the job. For more details, see TIMEP’s profile: <http://timep.org/esw/profiles/state-actors/magdy-abdel-ghaffar/>.

⁴¹For more information on senior officials in Egypt’s Ministry of Interior (as well as other security institutions), see TIMEP’s state actors’ profiles:



<http://timep.org/esw/profiles/state-actors-2/>.

⁴²The extent to which this relationship has been accepted internally is unclear.

⁴³For example, the group was alleged to have simply shot Sheikh Zuweid inhabitants who refused to grant them access to their homes during their July siege of the city.

⁴⁴“Military death toll from Sinai attack rises to 21: Health ministry,” Ahram Online (July 4, 2015): <http://english.ahram.org.eg/NewsContent/1/64/134548/Egypt/Politics-/Military-death-toll-from-Sinai-attack-rises-to--He.aspx>.

⁴⁵The organization claims 141 total attacks, but their documentation of these attacks is inconsistent and the number appears to be either intentionally erroneous or a typographical error.







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