

## *Egypt: Extremism and Terrorism*

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On June 3, 2023, an Egyptian policeman shot and killed two Israeli soldiers securing a military post on the Israeli side of the Egyptian border. The Israeli military reportedly treated the incident as a terrorist attack upon the soldiers' deaths. The Egyptian officer and a third Israeli soldier were killed in a confrontation inside Israel hours later. The Egyptian government offered its condolences but said the officer was pursuing drug smugglers across the Israeli border. Israel rejected the explanation and Israeli Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu labeled the incident a terrorist attack. Israel called for a thorough joint investigation. (Sources: [Reuters](#), [Guardian](#))

According to Egyptian media reports, not a single terror attack took place in Egypt in the first quarter of 2023. The pronouncement followed more than 10 years of counterterrorism operations in the Sinai combating a local ISIS affiliate and other extremists. In February 2018, the Egyptian military began an ongoing operation called Sinai 2018 to capture or kill ISIS militants in the northern and central Sinai. On September 10, 2021, prominent Sinai Province leader Mohamed Saad Kamel, a.k.a. Abu Hamza al-Qadi, turned himself in to the Association of Sinai Tribes, which coordinates with the Egyptian military. In March 2021, the Egyptian government began implementing major economic development projects in the Sinai to further dissuade extremists. In April 2023, Egyptian and other Arab media reported Egypt had successfully "freed" the Sinai from terrorism. Egyptian president Abdel Fattah el-Sisi made the declaration earlier that month while visiting military and security sites in Sinai. Egypt successfully employed local reforms to confront extremist ideas in religious institutions and dismantle the "foundational ideas of violence in all its forms and manifestations," according to a United Arab Emirates media report. The report noted Egypt may be able to export these lessons to other areas. (Sources: [Al-Monitor](#), [Times of Israel](#), [Al-Monitor](#), [Jerusalem Post](#))

In May 2023, Egypt and the European Union became co-chairs of the Global Counterterrorism Forum (GCTF). The GCTF confirmed Egypt and the European Union's leadership bid in April 2022, but human rights groups have raised concerns about abuses carried out under the pretense of counterterrorism. In April 2023, Amnesty International, Human Rights Watch, and the Cairo Institute for Human Rights Studies raised these concerns in a letter to EU foreign policy chief Josep Borrell that accused Egypt of using "counterterrorism to clamp down on human rights." The organizations urged the European Union to raise these concerns with Egyptian officials and make human rights a priority for the GCTF. Created in 2011, the GCTF also includes Saudi Arabia, Russia, China, and Pakistan among its 30 member nations. The co-chair appointment is for a two-year period. (Sources: [Middle East Eye](#), [Global Counterterrorism Forum](#))

Human Rights Watch and other rights groups have accused Egypt of failing to hold its forces accountable. A September 2021 Human Rights Watch report concluded dozens of alleged armed militants killed in so-called shootouts with Egyptian forces did not pose an imminent danger to security forces or others when they were killed. In many cases, the suspects were already in custody when they were killed. Human Rights Watch has called on the United States, European Union, and Egypt's other international allies to impose sanctions on Egyptian officials and for Egyptian authorities to fully investigate incidents of extrajudicial killings. (Sources: [Reuters](#), [Human Rights Watch](#))

## **Overview**

Egypt's Sinai Peninsula has become a battleground between the Egyptian army and ISIS-affiliate Wilayat Sinai (Sinai Province). The group claimed responsibility for the crash of a Russian airliner on October 31, 2015, which killed more than 200 people. The group also claimed responsibility for a November 24, 2015, attack on an Egyptian hotel that killed seven, including two judges supervising the country's parliamentary elections. Previously operating as Ansar Bayt Al Maqdis, Wilayat Sinai has killed hundreds of Egyptian soldiers since 2011. Egypt continues to extend an October 2014 state of emergency in the northern Sinai, where Wilayat Sinai primarily operates. By April 2023, however, Egyptian president Abdel Fattah el-Sisi claimed Egypt had successfully "freed" the Sinai from terrorism. (Sources: [Independent](#), [Reuters](#), [BBC News](#), [Reuters](#), [Al Jazeera](#), [New York Times](#), [Human Rights Watch](#), [AllAfrica](#), [Jerusalem Post](#))

The Muslim Brotherhood is Egypt's oldest Islamist organization. It has been outlawed and subjected to harsh crackdowns in response to terrorist acts over its 80-year-plus history. After the overthrow of President Hosni Mubarak in February 2011, the Brotherhood's candidate, Mohammed Morsi, won the country's presidential elections in June 2012. The army removed Morsi from power in August 2013 after a brutal government crackdown on Egyptian protesters. Former Defense Minister Abdel Fattah el-Sisi replaced Morsi as president. Egypt again outlawed the Brotherhood. The Brotherhood has continued to clash with Egyptian authorities while Egypt has arrested and imprisoned Brotherhood leaders and affiliates. (Source: [Counter Extremism Project](#))

Ongoing terrorism has resulted in Egyptian deaths and has hurt the country's tourism industry and overall economy. El-Sisi has pledged to destroy the Brotherhood and all extremist groups in Egypt. His government has passed a series of harsh counterterrorism laws, which critics say restrict free speech, freedom of the press, and human rights. Human rights groups have criticized Egypt's government for human rights abuses under the guise of

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counterterrorism operations. (Sources: [CNN](#), [Jerusalem Post](#), [Business Insider](#), [Reuters](#), [Human Rights Watch](#))

### **Radicalization and Foreign Fighters**

#### *Radicalization*

The “Islamic nation is being torn apart and destroyed” by extremism, President Abdel Fattah el-Sisi declared in January 2015, calling for a “religious revolution” in Egypt. Two months later, he lamented that “the ideology we sanctify should make our entire nation a source of concern, danger, killing and destruction all over the world.” Egypt faces a “ferocious war against terrorism and extremism,” el-Sisi said in September 2015. (Sources: [Associated Press](#), [CNN](#), [Jerusalem Post](#))

Violent extremist groups have operated in Egypt for decades, and were responsible for heinous acts such as the 1981 assassination of President Anwar al-Sadat and the 1997 bombing of the Hatshepsut Temple in Luxor that killed 62 people. In May 2014, the government charged 200 members of Ansar Bayt al-Maqdis and the Muslim Brotherhood for coordinating 51 recent terror attacks and conspiring with Hamas and al-Qaeda. Critics have also accused the Egyptian government of spurring extremism through repression. (Sources: [Associated Press](#), [Daily Mail](#), [Al Jazeera](#))

#### *Nasser and Pan-Arabism*

Pan-Arabism’s views of Western imperialism inspired the rise of Middle Eastern dictators such as Iraq’s Saddam Hussein and Libya’s Muammar Gaddafi.

Gemal Abdel Nasser assumed Egypt’s presidency in 1953 after leading a coup against King Farouk. Nasser promoted the idea of pan-Arab unity, commonly referred to as Nasserism or pan-Arabism. He envisioned a unified Arab federation led by Egypt and considered pan-Arabism an assertion of Arab independence from Western imperialism. Nasser viewed Israel as a symbol of Western imperialism. He created an alliance with the Soviet Union, which armed Egypt and helped it project an image of strength in the region. (Sources: [BBC News](#), [Foreign Affairs](#), [New York Times](#), [New York Times](#))

Pan-Arabism’s views of Western imperialism inspired the rise of Middle Eastern dictators such as Iraq’s Saddam Hussein and Libya’s Muammar Gaddafi, who led revolutions in their countries against U.S.- and U.K.-backed governments. Gaddafi emerged as a possible heir to the Nasserism philosophy in the 1970s, when he attempted to merge Libya and Egypt into a single state. Observers believed Gaddafi’s plan was the first step in the fulfillment of a new pan-Arabism with Libya at the helm. (Source: [Foreign Affairs](#), [Politico](#), [New York Times](#))

After the Brotherhood attempted to assassinate Nasser in 1954, he began a repressive crackdown on the group until 1966. As a result, the Brotherhood further radicalized and began a series of attempted assassinations and terrorist plots. (Source: [Counter Extremism Project](#))

#### *Government Repression*

Critics accuse the Egyptian government of using terrorism as an excuse to silence political opposition and restrict civil rights. The Committee to Protect Journalists (CPJ) reported in June 2015 that Egypt has imprisoned at least 19 journalists, the highest number reported since CPJ began keeping records in 1990. Egypt convicted three Al Jazeera journalists—an Egyptian, an Australian, and a Canadian—in June 2014 for aiding a terrorist organization, the Muslim Brotherhood. Six other Al Jazeera journalists were tried in absentia. Al Jazeera is based in Qatar, which the Egyptian government believes supports the Brotherhood and other Islamist activities. The three were retried and sentenced to three years each in August 2015 for allegedly broadcasting “false news.” Egypt had previously deported the Australian, who was sentenced in absentia. The United Nations and the European Union condemned the sentences as assaults on press freedom. The journalists were pardoned and released in September 2015, along with 100 activists. (Sources: [Committee to Protect Journalists](#), [Al Jazeera](#), [Al Jazeera](#), [Associated Press](#))

The Egyptian Center for Economic and Social Rights reported that the government had detained, charged, or sentenced at least 41,000 people between July 2013 and May 2015, and held many without trial. Prisons have operated at 160 percent capacity and police stations at 300 percent. Those targeted have primarily been part of political activist or opposition groups. Egyptian authorities arrested investigative journalist Ismail Alexandrani on November 29, 2015, for “spreading false news” and “joining a banned organization.” A December 2015 *Washington Post* editorial blamed government restrictions on civil rights for strengthening Egypt’s radical organizations and extremists. (Sources: [Al Jazeera](#), [Seattle Times](#),

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[Al Jazeera](#), [Washington Post](#))

Increasing numbers of Egyptian youth have reportedly radicalized in response to government crackdowns on protesters since 2013. Dissenters wounded during anti-government protests increasingly believe “armed struggle” is the only way to achieve their goals. Some of these students have declared support for ISIS’s insurgency in the Sinai as a result. Basem Zakaria al-Samargi of the Cairo Institute for Human Rights believes many previously non-political youth “now want vengeance from the state.” The University of Manchester’s Jerome Devon accused the government of aligning Egypt’s Islamists with ISIS and fueling a desire for revenge among Egyptian youth. He believes the government has created a “self-fulfilling prophecy” by suppressing peaceful protest. (Source: [Associated Press](#))

### *ISIS*

In 2015, CNN [dubbed](#) Egypt’s Sinai Peninsula “the new front line in the battle against [ISIS](#).” ISIS’s Egyptian franchise, Wilayat Sinai (Sinai Province), has targeted Egyptian and Israeli interests in the Sinai since 2011. Wilayat Sinai claimed credit for the destruction of Russian flight 9268 and the deaths of all 224 people on board on October 31, 2015. The group has staged increasingly bloodier attacks on the Egyptian military since July 2015. For example, Wilayat Sinai attacked an Egyptian military position in the northern Sinai town of Sheikh Zuwaid that month, killing dozens of Egyptian soldiers and police. It also began urging Egyptians not to cooperate with authorities. Wilayat Sinai has attacked foreign workers in the region, such as the August 2015 beheading of a Croatian engineer who worked for a French energy company in Egypt. Throughout February 2017, Egyptian women reported multiple instances of ISIS militants boarding buses in the Sinai and threatening them with whippings and acid if they do not comply with ISIS’s strict dress codes. Simultaneously, ISIS has kidnapped and murdered Egyptians in the Sinai suspected of aiding security forces against the group. (Sources: [CNN](#), [BBC News](#), [Independent](#), [BBC News](#), [Al Jazeera](#), [Wall Street Journal](#), [Associated Press](#))

Days after an April 14, 2018, attack that killed eight Egyptian soldiers, the Egyptian military claimed it had killed Naser Abou Zaqoul, the leader of Wilayat Sinai. (Sources: [Associated Press](#), [Associated Press](#))

Some observers believe ISIS is building up its forces in the Sinai for a larger purpose. According to the Heritage Foundation, ISIS sees the Sinai as a “stepping stone” to Israel and Jerusalem. Researchers from the Middle East Media Research Institute (MEMRI) believe ISIS has increasingly called on Gazans and Egyptians to join the group because Egypt is the “gateway towards the liberation of Palestine.” MEMRI also called the Wilayat Sinai “one of the most powerful and effective” of ISIS’s branches outside its core base. (Source: [Washington Times](#))

ISIS’s Egyptian franchise, Wilayat Sinai (Sinai Province), has targeted Egyptian and Israeli interests in the Sinai since 2011.

Analysts [estimate](#) Wilayat Sinai has between 1,000 and 1,500 members. It grew out of the terrorist group Ansar Bayt Al Maqdis (ABM), which came into being after the 2011 fall of President Hosni Mubarak. ABM was responsible for killing hundreds of Egyptian soldiers in attacks across the Sinai. ABM began by targeting Israeli interests, firing rockets into Israel, launching [cross-border attacks](#) on Israeli soldiers, and [bombing](#) the natural-gas pipeline between Egypt and Israel. After the army deposed President Mohammed Morsi in 2013, ABM began assassinating [Egyptian officials](#) and targeting [Egyptian infrastructure](#). The Cairo Court of Urgent Matters labeled ABM a terrorist organization in April 2014. ABM pledged allegiance to ISIS leader [Abu Bakr al-Baghdadi](#) that November and changed its name to Wilayat Sinai. (Sources: [New York Times](#), [BBC News](#), [Egypt Independent](#), [CNN](#))

Following a March 10, 2017, double bombing of Coptic churches in Tanta and Alexandria, Egypt declared a three-month state of emergency across the country. Egypt had previously declared a state of emergency in northern parts of the Sinai after a series of October 2014 attacks killed more than 30 soldiers. The government had continued to extend the northern Sinai state of emergency every three months. Egypt began a military crackdown on Wilayat Sinai in July 2015, following the public assassination of the country’s chief prosecutor. On August 4, 2016, Egyptian forces claimed to have killed Wilayat Sinai leader Abu Duaa al-Ansari, along with more than 45 other members of the group. According to a military statement, Egyptian forces also destroyed “a number of weapon and ammunition stores, and their explosives.” (Sources: [Associated Press](#), [New York Times](#), [Washington Post](#), [Reuters](#), [Al Jazeera](#), [AllAfrica](#), [CNN](#))

In November 2016, Egypt’s public prosecutor charged 292 suspected ISIS militants in a military tribunal. One purported cell of six police officers and a dentist allegedly planned to assassinate Egyptian President Abdel Fattah el-Sisi. A Saudi Arabia-based cell allegedly planned to assassinate that country’s Crown Prince Mohammed bin Nayef. Only 151 of the suspects were in Egyptian custody. Seven had been released on bail while the rest remained at-large. Sixty-six of the suspects had reportedly confessed. (Sources: [Reuters](#), [Agence France-Presse](#))

ISIS has increasingly targeted Egyptian Christians, including bombings against Coptic Christian churches in March 2017 and December 2016, and an incident in February 2017 in which the group shot and killed a Christian man and then burned his son alive. In February 2017, ISIS in Egypt

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released a video featuring Abu Abdullah al-Masri, who blew himself up at a Coptic church in Cairo in December 2016, killing 28 people. ISIS also showed images of the Coptic pope and other community members, calling Christians their “favorite prey.” ISIS signed the video as the Islamic State in Egypt, which the Egyptian government and media observers believe signifies that Wilayat Sinai rebranded itself to demonstrate its ability to reach beyond the Sinai. Also that month, in a demonstration of their willingness to act beyond the Sinai, ISIS militants there fired multiple rockets at Israel, resulting in no injuries or damage. On March 10, 2017, Israel temporarily closed its border with Egypt for the Passover holiday and urged its citizens to leave the Sinai because the situation was “life threatening,” according to the Israeli intelligence ministry. (Sources: [Reuters](#), [Associated Press](#), [Fox News](#), [Reuters](#), [Jerusalem Post](#), [Times of Israel](#), [Times of Israel](#))

As of March 2017, ISIS claimed to have formed a religious police force, *Hasbah*, in the Sinai. On March 28, 2017, ISIS released a video on the encrypted messaging service Telegram of the Hasbah beheading two Egyptians accused of witchcraft and sorcery. (Source: [Reuters](#))

The Sinai Province renewed its pledge of allegiance to ISIS in June 2019. That November, the Egyptian branch pledged allegiance to ISIS’s new leader, Abu Ibrahim al-Hashemi al-Qurayshi. (Sources: [Long War Journal](#), [Reuters](#))

### *Muslim Brotherhood*

The [Muslim Brotherhood](#) originated in Egypt in 1928. It is the country’s oldest Islamist movement. The Egyptian government banned the group in the 1950s and imprisoned large numbers of Brotherhood members. The Brotherhood also benefitted from intermittent periods of toleration by the Egyptian government, during which it continued its social, religious, economic, and political activities, building up organizational strength unmatched by any other Egyptian opposition group. (Source: [Counter Extremism Project](#))

As the Arab Spring came to a head in 2011, the Brotherhood’s resilience and robust infrastructure left it well placed to capitalize in Egypt. Egyptian voters elected senior Brotherhood official [Mohammed Morsi](#) as president in June 2012, and the group’s Freedom and Justice Party won a plurality of parliamentary seats. (Source: [Counter Extremism Project](#))

Following mass protests, the Egyptian military overthrew Morsi in July 2013 and called for new presidential and parliamentary elections. The military arrested Morsi and hundreds of other Brotherhood officials and members on various charges. In December 2013, Egypt outlawed the group, designating it a terrorist organization. The High Administrative Court dissolved the Freedom and Justice Party on August 9, 2014. Morsi died on June 17, 2019. He was serving an Egyptian prison sentence of 48 years for charges relating to spying, killing of protesters, and insulting the judiciary. (Sources: [Counter Extremism Project](#), [Wall Street Journal](#), [Guardian](#), [Deutsche Welle](#))

President Abdel Fattah el-Sisi, who led the army’s overthrow of Morsi, accuses the Brotherhood of complicity in violence across the country. More than [250 Brotherhood supporters](#) died in clashes with the Egyptian military following Morsi’s ouster. The Brotherhood looted and burned Egyptian churches and police stations in August 2013 in response to the death of hundreds and imprisonment of thousands of members. The government also blamed the Brotherhood for a December 2013 car bombing that killed 15 people and wounded hundreds. The government blamed Brotherhood-affiliated Islamists after a car bomb killed Egypt’s chief prosecutor Hisham Barakat on June 29, 2015, though the Brotherhood blamed the Egyptian regime. In March 2016, the government blamed Hamas for conspiring with the Brotherhood to assassinate Barakat. He was killed by a car bomb in Cairo in June 2015. He was the most senior government official to have been assassinated since the overthrow of Morsi. (Sources: [Counter Extremism Project](#), [Guardian](#))

In May 2015, an Egyptian court sentenced Qatar-based Brotherhood spiritual leader [Yusuf al-Qaradawi](#), 100 supporters, and Morsi—already serving a 20-year prison sentence for ordering the arrest and torture of protesters—to death for their roles in a 2011 prison break. An Egyptian court upheld the death sentence in June 2015, though it is subject to further appeal. Government forces continued to arrest and violently clash with Brotherhood members throughout 2015. (Sources: [Counter Extremism Project](#), [BBC News](#), [Associated Press](#), [U.S. Department of State](#))

Nine Brotherhood members—including a former parliamentarian—died during a police raid on a Cairo apartment in July 2015. Authorities said the nine were planning terrorist attacks and had weapons and thousands of dollars in the apartment. The Brotherhood called the incident a “turning point” and called for a revolution in Egypt. (Source: [Associated Press](#))

The Egyptian government accuses the Brotherhood of fomenting anti-government sentiment across the country. In January 2020, Egyptian authorities accused Hasm of seeking to disrupt the anniversary of Mubarak’s overthrow by promoting fake news and spreading discord among Egyptians. The government arrested six Hasm members accused of plotting to “target important figures and buildings as well as places of worship” and organize protests on the anniversary later that month. Egypt accused Brotherhood members in Turkey of orchestrating the plots and inciting the Egyptian public against the government. (Sources: [Agence France-Presse](#), [Middle East Monitor](#))

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Egyptian forces have also continued to violently clash with Brotherhood members. In September 2019, Egyptian police killed six Brotherhood members in 6 October City near Cairo. Police accused the group of planning “a series of terror operations.” Sisi accused the Brotherhood of orchestrating protests against him that month. Sisi has decried so-called political Islam for destabilizing the entire region. According to Sisi, the Egyptian public will not again accept the imposition of political Islam. (Sources: [Al-Masry al-Youmy](#), [Agence France-Presse](#), [Daily News Egypt](#))

Sisi’s Egypt has also continued to prosecute members of the Muslim Brotherhood. On January 18, 2021, Egypt’s Court for Urgent Matters ordered the seizure of assets of 89 Brotherhood members, including that of its top leadership. On April 8, 2021, a Cairo court convicted acting supreme guide Mahmoud Ezzat on charges of inciting violence and supplying firearms to protesters in 2013. Ezzat was sentenced to life in prison. In conjunction with his life sentence, on May 29, 2022, a Cairo court sentenced Ezzat to an additional 15 years in prison for disseminating false news and inciting against state institutions. Ezzat was also placed on the country’s terror list. Along with Ezzat, other Brotherhood members have been regularly convicted, with a group of 21 Brotherhood members being sentenced to death on July 30, 2021, by the Damanhour Criminal Court for involvement in a 2015 bus bombing in Beheira. (Sources: [Reuters](#), [Middle East Monitor](#), [Anadolu Agency](#), [Middle East Eye](#), [Associated Press](#))

An Egyptian court sentenced Qaradawi in absentia to death in 2015 in relation to a 2011 prison break during the uprising that ousted Egyptian President Hosni Mubarak. In January 2018, an Egyptian military court sentenced Qaradawi in absentia to life in prison on charges of incitement to murder, spreading false news, and vandalizing public property in relation to the 2015 death of an Egyptian police officer. Qaradawi died in Qatar in September 2022. The following month, the Cairo Criminal Court added Qaradawi to Egypt’s terror list for a minimum of three years. The list also includes 277 other Brotherhood members. (Sources: [Middle East Monitor](#), [Reuters](#), [Agence France-Presse](#), [Al Jazeera](#))

On October 15, 2022, the Brotherhood published a new “political document,” dated September 18. According to the document, the Brotherhood is focused on three issues: political prisoners, societal reconciliation, and building a broad national partnership to realize Egyptians’ desires for political and economic reform. To achieve these goals, the document claims the Brotherhood has adopted an approach with “various options and paths” to overcome its internal power struggles. The Brotherhood’s “political role and presence in all public affairs has been, and will remain, a focus of its reform project,” according to the document, which also denied the Brotherhood is seeking political power in Egypt. (Source: [Asharq al-Awsat](#))

On October 26, 2022, the Brotherhood’s Ikhwanweb official English Twitter account posted a series of tweets recognizing “the importance of solidarity with all the honorable factions of Egypt’s people in all its institutions and bodies at home and abroad.” The Brotherhood affirmed it is an “inclusive Islamic body” led by the General Consultative Body. The Brotherhood affirmed Mohamed Badie’s role as its general guide and declared any future decision or directive must be approved by Badie, as well as consultative and executive institutions within Egypt and abroad. (Sources: [Twitter](#), [Twitter](#))

### *Hamas*

[Hamas](#) is the Muslim Brotherhood’s Gaza-based Palestinian offshoot. Hamas has ruled the Gaza Strip since 2007 when it forcibly expelled the Palestinian Authority (PA) from the coastal enclave. Subjected to a blockade by Egypt and Israel since 2007 and shunned by the international community, Hamas has built a network of smuggling tunnels beneath the Egypt-Gaza border. (Source: [Counter Extremism Project](#))

Hamas and Egypt had increasingly better relations during the presidency of the Brotherhood’s Mohammed Morsi. The Egyptian army cracked down on Hamas after Morsi’s July 2013 ouster. An Egyptian court banned Hamas activities in the country in March 2014. The Egyptian army began flooding the underground smuggling tunnels in August 2015. Egypt has largely kept its border crossing with Gaza closed since 2013. In November 2015, Egypt and the Palestinian Authority reportedly negotiated a deal to open the Rafah border crossing, bypassing Hamas. El-Sisi believes the Palestinian Authority needs to reassert its control of Gaza’s border crossings. (Sources: [Reuters](#), [Associated Press](#), [Times of Israel](#), [Counter Extremism Project](#))

Wilayat Sinai leaders have allegedly met with Hamas to discuss military coordination. Hamas has reportedly used its fledgling drone program to spy on Egyptian military positions on behalf of Wilayat Sinai. Hamas has also allegedly smuggled weapons to the group through underground tunnels. Hamas allegedly paid Wilayat Sinai tens of thousands of dollars a month through 2015 to smuggle weapons into Gaza. Israeli media reported in January 2017 that Wilayat Sinai had opened a media propaganda office in the Gaza Strip. Hamas has also reportedly continued to provide medical aid to wounded ISIS fighters from the Sinai. The Times of Israel reported in February 2017 that “dozens” of top Hamas commanders had defected to Wilayat Sinai in the past three years. Israeli officials alleged that former Hamas commanders took part in a July 7, 2017, ISIS attack that killed 23 soldiers in the Sinai Peninsula near the Egypt-Gaza border. (Sources: [Times of Israel](#), [Algemeiner](#), [YNet News](#), [Times of Israel](#), [Times of Israel](#), [Times of Israel](#))

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In March 2016, Egypt accused Hamas and the Muslim Brotherhood of orchestrating the June 2015 car bombing that killed Egyptian Public Prosecutor Hisham Barakat. Hamas denied the charge. Later that month, Hamas removed all pictures of former Egyptian President Mohamed Morsi and any other signs of Muslim Brotherhood links from its Gaza offices, and Hamas spokesman Sami Abu Zuhri later denied any links between his group and the Muslim Brotherhood. The move reportedly came after Egyptian officials demanded Hamas renounce its links with the Brotherhood before Egypt would restore relations with Hamas. (Sources: [Guardian](#), [Haaretz](#), [Times of Israel](#), [Haaretz](#))

Despite alleged coordination between Hamas's military wing and Wilayat Sinai, Hamas and Egypt were reportedly meeting in February 2017 to discuss opening the Gaza-Egypt border in exchange for Hamas assistance against Wilayat Sinai. In late June 2017, Hamas announced that it would build a buffer zone along the Gaza-Egypt border to deter ISIS militants and other jihadists from crossing into Gaza. (Sources: [Reuters](#), [Associated Press](#), [Al Jazeera](#), [Times of Israel](#))

In October 2017, Egypt negotiated a reconciliation deal between Hamas and its political rival Fatah, the dominant faction of the PA. The two groups signed the deal in Cairo on October 12 to restore the PA's control over the Gaza Strip and dissolve Hamas's governing committee. Nevertheless, the two sides continued to disagree on Hamas's disarmament and PA-imposed sanctions on Gaza, which threatened to derail the reconciliation. (Sources: [Associated Press](#), [Times of Israel](#), [Times of Israel](#))

In 2016, Hamas removed all pictures of Morsi and any other signs of Muslim Brotherhood links from its Gaza offices. The move reportedly came after a meeting between Hamas leaders and Egypt officials who demanded Hamas renounce its links with the Brotherhood before Egypt would restore relations with Hamas. Hamas spokesman Sami Abu Zuhri later denied any links between his group and the Muslim Brotherhood. In May 2017, Hamas released a new guiding political document, which made no mention of the Muslim Brotherhood. (Sources: [Middle East Monitor](#), [Haaretz](#), [Hamas](#), [Guardian](#))

In July 2019, Khairat el-Shater, the Brotherhood's deputy supreme guide, denied charges of spying for Hamas following the 2013 coup that ousted then-president Mohamed Morsi. According to court documents, el-Shater said he was asked by the intelligence services during Morsi's one-year tenure to meet Hamas leader Ismail Haniyeh over border crossings talks. On September 11, 2019, imprisoned Brotherhood Supreme Guide Mohammed Badie and 10 other Brotherhood members were sentenced to life in prison on charges of spying in conjunction with Hamas. (Sources: [Middle East Eye](#), [Associated Press](#))

Egypt has continued to mediate periods of calm between Israel and Hamas. Egypt also agreed in late 2019 to allow Haniyeh to leave the Gaza Strip for the first time in three years to attend high-level meetings in Turkey and Qatar. Haniyeh then attended the January 6, 2020, funeral of Islamic Revolutionary Guard Corps commander Qasem Soleimani in Tehran. Haniyeh's trip to Tehran reportedly infuriated the Egyptian government, which had expressly forbade him from visiting Iran. (Sources: [Times of Israel](#), [Telegraph](#), [Jerusalem Post](#), [Jerusalem Post](#), [Times of Israel](#))

### *Hasm*

Hasm ("Decisiveness") is an Egyptian militant group that emerged in mid-2016. Police suspect it is a violent wing of the Muslim Brotherhood, though the Brotherhood denies any ties to militant groups. Hasm has accused the Egyptian government of imprisoning thousands of innocent people. Hasm has also claimed it wants to end the "military occupation of Egypt by militias of (President) Abdel-Fatah el-Sissi." (Sources: [New York Times](#), [BBC News](#), [Reuters](#))

Hasm claimed responsibility for a December 9, 2016, bombing that killed six police officers outside of Cairo. The group also claimed responsibility for an assassination attempt on a senior Egyptian prosecutor that September. Hasm also claimed responsibility for an August 2016 attempted assassination of Egypt's former grand mufti Sheikh Ali Gomaa. Two masked gunmen attacked Gomaa as he was walking to a mosque in a Cairo suburb. Hasm issued a statement that they aborted the assassination because of bystanders around Gomaa. As of December 2016, Hasm had claimed responsibility for at least half a dozen attacks since the group's emergence that July. (Sources: [New York Times](#), [BBC News](#), [Reuters](#), [Middle East Monitor](#))

On September 30, 2017, Hasm claimed responsibility for a small explosion at Myanmar's embassy in Cairo. It was the group's first reported attack on a civilian target. There were no casualties, and Hasm said it ensured that no innocents would be harmed. The group claimed the attack was in response to Myanmar's military crackdown on Rohingya Muslims. In January 2019, Egyptian authorities arrested several Hasm members accused of planning to disrupt the January 25 anniversary of the revolution against Hosni Mubarak. According to the Interior Ministry, a Brotherhood member in Turkey had directed the local Hasm members. In January 2020, Egyptian authorities again accused Hasm of seeking to disrupt the anniversary of Mubarak's overthrow by promoting fake news and spreading discord among Egyptians. The government arrested six Hasm members accused of

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plotting to “target important figures and buildings as well as places of worship” and organize protests on the anniversary later that month. (Sources: [Reuters](#), [Agence France-Presse](#), [Reuters](#), [Naharnet](#), [Middle East Monitor](#))

### *Other Groups*

Al-Gama’ al-Islamiyya (Islamic Group or IG) was once Egypt’s largest militant group with several thousand members. It is a Muslim Brotherhood offshoot that formed in the 1970s intent on replacing the Egyptian government with an Islamic state. The IG collaborated with the Egyptian Islamic Jihad to assassinate President Anwar al-Sadat in October 1981. The United States sentenced IG spiritual leader Umar Abd al-Rahman to life in prison in January 1996 for his role in the 1993 World Trade Center bombing. Senior IG members signed Osama bin Laden’s 1998 fatwa calling for attacks against the United States. Between 1993 and 1998, the IG claimed several attacks against Egyptian tourists. Most notably, the group carried out the November 1997 attack at the Hatshepsut Temple in Luxor that killed 62 people, including 58 foreign tourists. The IG also attempted to assassinate Egyptian President Hosni Mubarak in Ethiopia in 1995. While the IG has threatened U.S. interests, it has not specifically attacked U.S. citizens. (Sources: [U.S. Department of State](#), [BBC News](#), [CNN](#), [Guardian](#), [Council on Foreign Relations](#))

There have been no IG attacks in Egypt since 1998. The group agreed to a ceasefire in 1999, which created an ideological divide in its membership. Some members have since gone on to join al-Qaeda, which absorbed IG in August 2006, according to al-Qaeda leader [Ayman al-Zawahiri](#). Hundreds of IG members renounced terrorism and were released from Egypt’s prisons in early 2011 before the country’s revolution. IG formed the Construction and Development political party and won 13 seats in Egypt’s August 2011 parliamentary elections. President Mohammed Morsi appointed IG member Adel el-Khayat as governor of Luxor in 2013, but he quit a week later after public backlash because of IG’s link to the 1997 attack. (Sources: [U.S. Department of State](#), [CNN](#), [Council on Foreign Relations](#), [Daily News Egypt](#), [Al Jazeera](#))

On May 20, 2022, the U.S. Department of State revoked its designation of IG as a Foreign Terrorist Organization (FTO). According to the State Department, IG—which was first designated in 1997—was “no longer engaged in terrorism or terrorist activity” and no longer has the “capability and intent to do so.” (Sources: [France 24](#), [U.S. Department of State](#))

Egyptian Islamic Jihad (EIJ) emerged in the 1970s intent on replacing the Egyptian government with an Islamic state. The group carried out attacks against high-level U.S. and Egyptian targets. Members of EIJ and the Islamic Group were responsible for the 1981 assassination of Egyptian President Anwar al-Sadat. The EIJ also claimed responsibility for attempted assassinations of Interior Minister Hassan al-Alfi and Prime Minister Atef Sedky in 1993. Egypt executed two EIJ members in February 2001 for planning an August 1998 attack on the U.S. embassy. In October 2000, security forces killed the EIJ’s military leader in charge of armed operations in Qina, Suhaj, and Luxor. The EIJ has not carried out an attack in Egypt since 1993 and merged with al-Qaeda in June 2001. (Sources: [U.S. Department of State](#), [U.S. Department of State](#), [U.S. Department of State](#))

Ajnad Misr is a Cairo-based group ABM splinter group formed in January 2014. It is responsible for attacks against government and security targets, primarily in downtown Cairo. On April 2, 2014, for example, Ajnad Misr detonated two improvised explosive devices hidden in a tree near Cairo University. The blasts killed a police brigadier general and wounded five other officers. The U.S. State Department designed Ajnad Misr a Specially Designated Global Terrorist in 2014. (Sources: [U.S. Department of State](#), [U.S. Department of State](#))

Hizb ut-Tahrir (Party of Liberation or HT) is an international Islamist movement dedicated to creating an Islamic caliphate. HT has more than 40 international chapters. Egypt banned HT in 1974 following a coup attempt. (Sources: [Atlantic](#), [Newsweek](#))

### *Sayyid Qutb*

Western critics label Sayyid Qutb as the father of modern Islamic fundamentalism. Qutb was a leading theoretician of the Muslim Brotherhood. Heavily influenced by Abul Ala Maududi’s works, Qutb’s writings on Islamism are among the most popular in the Muslim world. Qutb wrote that Islam was “a revolt against any human situation where sovereignty, or indeed Godhead, is given to human beings.” Qutb believed Islam meant restoring God’s authority over man. He rejected Western secularism and believed the modern state of Egypt to be un-Islamic. While studying in America between 1948 and 1950, Qutb was repulsed by what he perceived to be American indecency. He described churches as “entertainment centers and sexual playgrounds.” He viewed the entirety of American culture as corrupt, unjust, racist, materialistic, and morally vacant. He also detested America’s support of the new country of Israel. (Sources: [Guardian](#), [Jamestown Foundation](#), [9/11 Commission Report](#))

Qutb was a leading theoretician of the Muslim Brotherhood.

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Qutb's writings expanded the concept of *jahiliyya*, which Maududi used to describe the barbaric, ignorant state before the revelation of the Prophet Muhammad. Qutb argued that the world was in a state of *new jahiliyya*, and that Muslims everywhere were living as blindly and ignorantly as civilization had in the time before Mohammad. Qutb argued that Muslims must return to living in a state of "pure Islam," which they could accomplish only by waging violent *jihād* against the non-believers. His two most famous works, *Fi Zilal al-Qur'an (In the Shade of the Quran)* and *Ma'alim fi'l-Tariq (Milestones)*, were both written in prison. (Sources: [Guardian](#), [Jamestown Foundation](#), [9/11 Commission Report](#))

Qutb was sentenced to death and hanged for extremist rhetoric and the attempted assassination of President Gemal Abdel Nasser on August 29, 1966. His works inspired future jihadists such as Osama bin Laden and Ayman al-Zawahiri. (Source: [New Yorker](#))

### *Shahid King Bolsen*

Shahid King Bolsen is an American-born convert to Islam, who has inspired a wave of terrorism against government and commercial targets across Egypt through "a distinctive blend of anti-globalization sloganeering and Islamist politics." Bolsen believes Egypt is "being invaded and occupied by a neoliberal crusade." Bolsen advocates what analysts have dubbed an "alternative jihād" targeting multinational companies in Egypt. Bolsen supports violence, and believes that non-violent protests are simply opportunities "to get arrested or shot" by authorities. Bolsen believes there "is nothing wrong with armed resistance. Not by Shari'ah, not by International Law, not by logic." Bolsen also believes the loss of life to prevent future deaths at the hands of Egypt's security forces "is a price to be paid." (Sources: [Facebook](#), [Foreign Policy](#))

Bolsen spreads his propaganda through accounts on [Twitter](#), [Facebook](#), [Ask.fm](#), and [YouTube](#), as well as media appearances. In a May 2014 interview posted to YouTube, Bolsen claimed to be the chief analyst of the "Global Anti-Aggression Campaign," led by radical Saudi cleric Safar al-Hawali. (Sources: [Foreign Policy](#), [YouTube](#))

Bolsen has called for Egyptians to strike against commercial targets such as banks and restaurants. Bolsen considers KFC restaurants to be a symbol of U.S. capitalism and has encouraged attacks against the chain in particular. Bolsen has become popular among young Egyptian Islamists who feel increasingly repressed by government restrictions imposed since the 2013 ouster of Mohamed Morsi's Muslim Brotherhood government but do not belong to larger jihadist groups. Attacks possibly inspired by Bolsen include six bombs in Cairo that wounded four police officers and five civilians on February 26, 2015. Earlier in the month, attacks on two Egyptian KFC restaurants left one dead and wounded two others. Two new groups, the Popular Resistance Movement and Revolutionary Punishment, claimed responsibility for the attacks. The groups are reportedly made up of young Egyptians dissatisfied with the government but unwilling to join larger jihadist groups. Like Bolsen, they call for low-level violence to strike against the regime. (Sources: [Foreign Policy](#), [New York Times](#), [Times of Israel](#))

Bolsen denies ultimate responsibility but believes that Egyptian Islamists have heard his message and "taken matters into their own hands." He likened it to "if you tell someone to go to the store and get you oranges, and then it turns out they have robbed the store." In June 2015, Bolsen posted on Facebook a list of addresses of multinational corporations to target in Egypt. That December, Bolsen posted a series of self-defense videos to prepare his following for "any conflict or any confrontation" they might encounter on January 25, 2016, the fifth anniversary of Egypt's revolution. (Sources: [Telegraph](#), [National](#), [Facebook](#), [Facebook](#), [Al Arabiya News](#))

Bolsen was previously sentenced to death on a murder charge in the United Arab Emirates. He was released in October 2013 on a technicality and fled to Turkey where he began spreading his anti-Egypt propaganda. In March 2017, Bolsen relocated to Malaysia after allegedly being deported from Turkey. Despite a January 2021 announcement he would leave Facebook, Twitter, and Instagram, Bolsen has since continued to spread his views across Twitter, Telegram, YouTube, TikTok, and various blog websites. As of August 3, 2023, Bolsen had more than 51,000 followers on Facebook and more than 8,300 followers on Twitter. His Middle Nation YouTube channel had almost 16,000 subscribers. Launched in 2021, Middle Nation focuses on what Bolsen considers issues of great importance to the greater Muslim community. His commentary maintains an anti-U.S. and anti-capitalist bent. He has likened the European civilization to "an abusive spouse" and condemned the "vagueness of Western moral values definitions" as "a PR trick" without an agreed-upon interpretation. (Sources: [Foreign Policy](#), [New York Times](#), [Facebook](#), [Facebook](#), [Twitter](#), [YouTube](#), [Twitter](#), [Twitter](#), [Twitter](#), [Twitter](#))

### *Muhammad Jamal Network*

The Muhammad Jamal Network is a U.S.- and U.N.-designated terrorist network operating in Egypt. According to the U.S. State Department, founder Muhammad Jamal "journeyed to Afghanistan in the late 1980s where he trained with al-Qa'ida (AQ) and learned how to construct bombs." Jamal returned to Egypt in the 1990s and led the operational wing of the Egyptian Islamic Jihad. Upon Jamal's release from prison in 2011, he



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created the Muhammad Jamal Network to facilitate suicide-bomber training camps in Egypt and Libya. Jamal has ties to al-Qaeda, al-Qaeda in the Islamic Maghreb, and al-Qaeda in the Arabian Peninsula, according to the State Department. American authorities linked Jamal to the September 2012 U.S. embassy attack in Benghazi, Libya. Egyptian authorities rearrested Jamal in November 2012 and discovered letters on Jamal's computer updating al-Qaeda leader Ayman al-Zawahiri on the network's activities and requesting assistance. (Sources: [U.S. Department of State](#), [United Nations](#), [Reuters](#), [Wall Street Journal](#))

### *Ayman al-Zawahiri*

Egyptian-born [Ayman al-Zawahiri](#) is the co-founder of al-Qaeda. He has led the group since the 2011 death of Osama bin Laden. Al-Zawahiri is a former leader of the Egyptian Islamic Jihad, which merged with al-Qaeda in 2001. He was jailed in Egypt as a co-conspirator in the 1981 assassination of Anwar al-Sadat, although he was later acquitted. An Egyptian court sentenced him in absentia to death in 1999 for a plot against U.S. interests in Albania. In 2014, al-Zawahiri called on ISIS, the Nusra Front, and other jihadist groups fighting in Syria to unite under al-Qaeda. Al-Zawahiri again called on ISIS to rejoin al-Qaeda's ranks in 2015, referring to ISIS leader and self-proclaimed caliph [Abu Bakr al-Baghdadi](#) as "illegitimate." He asked al-Baghdadi and his followers to help al-Qaeda "push back the attack of the enemies of Islam." The FBI offers a reward of up to \$25 million for information on al-Zawahiri. (Source: [Counter Extremism Project](#), [BBC News](#), [Long War Journal](#), [CNN](#), [FBI](#))

### *Hani al-Sibai*

The United States and United Nations have designed Egyptian-born Hani al-Sibai as a member of al-Qaeda. Al-Sibai reportedly provided legal defense to Egyptian Islamist groups, including the Egyptian Islamic Jihad (EIJ), during the 1980s. Al-Sibai requested asylum in Great Britain in 1994 after an Egyptian court convicted him in absentia of plotting terrorist attacks with Egyptian Islamic Jihad. Al-Sibai claimed Egyptian authorities tortured him because of his connections to the Muslim Brotherhood. Britain denied his request for asylum. Despite calls from lawmakers, al-Sibai remains in Britain because of a legal prohibition against deporting people who could face torture or death upon their return. Al-Sibai [reportedly](#) lives with his wife and five children in a west London home worth £1 million. Al-Sibai also allegedly receives £50,000 a year in disability payments from the British government. (Sources: [United Nations](#), [U.S. Department of the Treasury](#), [Telegraph](#), [Telegraph](#))

Al-Sibai has a long relationship with current al-Qaeda leader and former EIJ leader Ayman al-Zawahiri. Al-Zawahiri's reportedly made his April 2014 call for ISIS to rejoin al-Qaeda out of respect for al-Sibai, who requested the reconciliation. Al-Sibai previously called the 7/7 bombings in London a "great victory" for al-Qaeda and called Osama bin Laden "one of the lions of Islam." Al-Sibai believes jihad is "mandatory" for all Muslims "when Muslim land is occupied by non-believers." Al-Sibai has claimed during media appearances to be a Middle Eastern political analyst. In March 2015, a female Lebanese news host cut his mic after al-Sibai told her to shut up and yelled that it was "beneath" him to be interviewed by her. (Sources: [Long War Journal](#), [Long War Journal](#), [MEMRI](#), [Guardian](#), [New York Times](#), [Telegraph](#))

### *Foreign Fighters*

At least 600 Egyptians have gone to fight in Iraq and Syria, according to a December 2015 estimate by The Soufan Group. The think tank unofficially estimated 1,000 Egyptians have traveled abroad to fight. Egypt is also reportedly a transit point for ISIS foreign fighters traveling from Africa. Egyptians have primarily joined ISIS and the Nusra Front, though a more precise breakdown of loyalties is unknown, according to analysts. (Sources: [Newsweek](#), [BBC News](#), [Middle East Institute](#), [AllAfrica](#), [Daily News Egypt](#), [The Soufan Group](#))

At least one Egyptian has become a suicide bomber for ISIS. The group released a statement in October 2014 claiming former Egyptian police officer Ahmed el-Darawi had died in a suicide attack in Iraq that past May. Details of where and when the bombing occurred remained uncertain. Authorities suspect he likely died in Syria. More than a year before his death, el-Darawi told his family he was going to Turkey for medical treatment. His family was told he died during surgery on May 29, 2014, and held a funeral for him in Egypt. El-Darawi's brother reportedly learned the truth after traveling to Turkey to retrieve the body. El-Darawi resigned from Egypt's police force in 2007, reportedly over objections to operational policies. He appeared in a 2011 documentary about police reform. El-Darawi ran as an independent candidate in that year's parliamentary elections. (Source: [Ahram Online](#))

At least 600 Egyptians have gone to fight in Iraq and Syria.

Some foreign fighters have returned to Egypt. Authorities arrested a 38-year-old Egyptian man in April 2014 on charges of planning terrorism and coordinating with extremist groups. The unidentified man had fought alongside the Nusra Front in Syria. At least four members of ABM reportedly

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died in Egypt in 2014 after returning from Syria. (Source: [Daily News Egypt](#))

Former President Hosni Mubarak took a hardline position against Islamists and Egyptians who joined foreign conflicts. His successor, Mohammed Morsi, reportedly loosened Egypt's policies. In 2013, Morsi removed the names of at least 3,000 militants from Egypt's most-wanted lists. He also appeared at a June 2013 rally held by hardline clerics. While Morsi rebuffed the clerics' explicit request to endorse their call for Egyptians to join the fight against Syria's President Bashar al-Assad, Egyptian analysts viewed Morsi's presence at the rally as a tacit endorsement. Morsi also pledged the support of the Egyptian military and government to those fighting against Assad. (Source: [Associated Press](#))

After Abdel Fattah el-Sisi replaced Morsi as president in 2014, Egypt passed new legislation limiting travel abroad. Egyptians between 18 and 40 destined for Iraq, Syria, or Turkey must receive government permission to travel. The government also required official permission for travel to Qatar or Turkey as of December 2014. Human Rights Watch, however, accuses Egypt of restricting the travel of NGOs and human-rights activists. A November 2015 Human Rights Watch report documented at least 32 cases of security officials confiscating activists' travel documents. The organization accused Egypt of "turning the country's own borders into de facto prison walls." (Sources: [Associated Press](#), [U.S. Department of State](#))

### **Major Extremist and Terrorist Incidents**

#### *Al Rawdah Mosque Attack*

On November 24, 2017, 25 to 30 militants wearing military combat uniforms and carrying ISIS flags drove five SUVs to the Al Rawdah Sufi mosque in Bir al-Abed in the northern Sinai province. The militants attacked the mosque with automatic machine guns, killing at least 305 and wounding 128 in Egypt's deadliest terror attack to date. At least 27 children died in the attack. Egyptian President Abdel Fattah el-Sisi promised to respond with "brute force." There were no immediate claims of responsibility but the Egyptian government suspects ISIS's Egyptian affiliate, the Sinai Province. The December 2016 issue of ISIS's newspaper *al-Naba* specifically mentioned the Al Rawdah mosque and called for targeting Sufis. Nonetheless, ISIS did not immediately claim the attack and some ISIS supporters denied ISIS's involvement in international media. ISIS supporters on the encrypted messaging service Telegram accused Egyptian intelligence of carrying out the bombing to discredit the Sinai Province. Regional terror groups Hezbollah and Hamas condemned the attack, while the al-Qaeda-linked Jund al-Islam promised retribution against the perpetrators. Ansar al-Islam, which claimed responsibility for an ambush of Egyptian troops the month before the mosque attack, also promised revenge. (Sources: [Reuters](#), [Times of Israel](#), [i24](#), [Mada](#), [CNN](#), [BBC News](#), [Reuters](#))

#### *Attacks on Egypt's Christian Communities*

Coptic Christians make up about 10 percent of Egypt's population. ISIS has increasingly targeted Egypt's Coptic Christian communities with bombings and other attacks, causing hundreds of Christians to flee their homes in the Sinai. In February 2017, Egypt's ISIS affiliate released a propaganda video declaring Christians to be their "favorite prey." That same month, ISIS executed a Christian father and son in the Sinai, burning them alive and then dumping their bodies on a roadside in el-Arish. In February 2018, the ISIS propaganda newspaper *Al-Naba* published an editorial calling for targeting Christians and tourists throughout Egypt. (Sources: [Fox News](#), [Sun](#), [Associated Press](#), [MEMRI](#))

On December 11, 2016, a suicide bomber exploded during a Sunday morning service in a chapel adjacent to St. Mark's Cathedral in Cairo. The cathedral serves as the headquarters of Egypt's Coptic Orthodox Christian Church and its spiritual leader, Pope Tawadros II. At least 28 people were killed and 49 wounded in the blast. Pope Tawadros II was out of the country at the time. Egyptian authorities identified 22-year-old Mahmoud Shafiq Mohammed Mustafa as the bomber, but no group immediately claimed responsibility. The Hasm movement—which claimed responsibility for an attack that killed six police officers two days earlier—condemned the bombing. ISIS claimed responsibility two days later and threatened additional attacks against Christians. ISIS's Amaq News Agency identified the bomber as Abu Abdallah al-Masri, differing from the Egyptian government's identification. ISIS warned in its statement that "Every infidel and apostate in Egypt and everywhere should know that our war ... continues." In response, el-Sisi called on Egypt's parliament to draft legislation to allow more "decisive" methods of dealing with militants. (Sources: [Washington Post](#), [Associated Press](#), [BBC News](#), [Al Jazeera](#), [Guardian](#), [New York Times](#), [Reuters](#), [Associated Press](#))

Egyptian President Abdel Fattah el-Sisi declared a state of emergency across Egypt after twin ISIS bombings killed at least 45 in two Coptic churches in Tanta and Alexandria on April 9, 2017. ISIS gunmen attacked a police checkpoint near St. Catherine's monastery on April 18, 2017, killing one officer. It was ISIS's first attack on a monastery. On May 26, 2017, ISIS gunmen killed at least 29 Copts traveling to the monastery of St.

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Samuel the Confessor. ISIS again targeted the monastery on November 2, 2018, killing at least seven and wounding 14 on a bus leaving the site after a baptism. (Sources: [CNN](#), [Reuters](#), [Associated Press](#), [Associated Press](#), [NBC News](#), [Reuters](#))

### *ISIS Bombing of Russian Airliner*

On October 31, 2015, a Russian charter flight to St. Petersburg from the Egyptian resort area of Sharm el-Sheikh crashed 25 minutes after takeoff, killing all 224 passengers and crewmembers. ISIS's Egyptian affiliate, Wilayat Sinai (Sinai Province), claimed responsibility though Russian and Egyptian investigators were initially skeptical. Russia's Federal Security Service (FSB) chief Alexander Bortnikov confirmed on November 17 that traces of explosives were found in the debris. An investigation of the downed plane revealed it shattered in mid-air after the detonation of a bomb equivalent to up to 1 kg of TNT. ISIS's official magazine, *Dabiq*, claimed the group smuggled on board an improvised explosive device made out of a Schweppes soda can. In February 2016, the Egyptian government acknowledged that terrorists had caused the crash. (Sources: [ABC News](#), [Wall Street Journal](#), [New York Times](#), [BBC News](#), [Reuters](#), [New York Times](#))

Several countries, including the United Kingdom and Russia, halted flights to and from Egypt due to security concerns after the crash. Economic analysts predicted Egypt's tourism industry would face large setbacks as a result. Russians make up close to one in three of all foreign tourists in Egypt. Russia and the United Kingdom account for two-thirds of the tourism industry in the Sharm el-Sheikh resort area. In 2014, approximately three million Russian nationals stayed at Egypt's resorts out of the country's 10 million tourists overall, down from 15 million in 2010. British Airways halted flights to Cairo for a week in July 2019, while Lufthansa also temporarily suspended some of its flights to Cairo that month. The airlines did not specify what prompted the move. (Sources: [BBC News](#), [BBC News](#), [Guardian](#), [BBC News](#), [Reuters](#))

### *Egypt Bombs ISIS in Libya After Mass Beheadings*

On February 15, 2015, Egypt launched airstrikes on ISIS targets in Libya hours after the militants released a video of the beheadings of 21 Egyptian Christians. Egypt targeted camps, training sites, and weapons-storage areas. A second wave of strikes immediately followed. In all, the Egyptian airstrikes killed 64 militants. (Sources: [BBC News](#), [Guardian](#), [CNN](#))

The Egyptian victims were kidnapped in separate incidents in December 2014 and January 2015 from the coastal town of Sirte in eastern Libya, where they worked. Libyan jihadists loyal to ISIS posted the video of the beheadings on Twitter. It was one of the first such videos to come from an ISIS affiliate outside of the group's core territory. (Sources: [BBC News](#), [Guardian](#), [Fox News](#))

### *Muslim Brotherhood Response to President Mohammed Morsi's Ouster*

Egyptian army chief Abdel Fattah el-Sisi suspended Egypt's constitution on July 3, 2013, and military forces removed Muslim Brotherhood President Mohammed Morsi from power. The intervention followed several days of mass anti-government protests and Morsi's rejection of an ultimatum from military leaders to resolve Egypt's worst political crisis since former President Hosni Mubarak's resignation. (Sources: [BBC News](#), [BBC News](#), [New York Times](#), [Al Jazeera](#))

Security forces subdued violent protests by Brotherhood members and supporters, resulting in 14 deaths. The Brotherhood organized a pro-Morsi gathering in Cairo about a month after his ouster. Security forces stormed the protest, killing 500 and injuring 3,700. Forty police officers also died, and 210 were injured. The Egyptian government ultimately declared the Brotherhood a terrorist group following a bombing that killed 12 individuals in Mansoura. The Brotherhood continued to launch violent attacks against the new government in retaliation for Morsi's removal. The attacks primarily targeted police and military installations. (Sources: [BBC News](#), [BBC News](#), [New York Times](#), [Al Jazeera](#))

### *The Luxor Massacre*

Members of al-Gama'a al-Islamiyya (Islamic Group IG) terrorist group killed 62 people, including 58 tourists, outside of the Temple of Queen Hatshepsut at Luxor on November 17, 1997. The attackers posed as security forces to sneak into the tourist area. They indiscriminately sprayed machine gun fire into the crowd and then killed the wounded survivors with knives. The six gunmen escaped the scene, but security forces tracked down and killed them two hours later. (Sources: [BBC News](#), [Al Jazeera](#), [Economist](#), [Guardian](#))

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The so-called Luxor Massacre was the bloodiest terrorist attack in Egypt to date. Egypt faced “the biggest crisis in the history of tourism in Egypt” as a result of the massacre, according to Tourism Minister Mamdou el-Beltagi. After previous terrorist attacks had caused a three-year decline in tourism, Egypt was on track to have a record-breaking tourist year in 1997, with 4.2 million visitors expected to generate \$4 billion in revenue, expanding the economy by 6.2 percent. The Luxor attack caused the industry to plummet, spurring unemployment. Hotels reported having less than a 20 percent occupancy rate, and some were completely deserted. (Sources: [New York Times](#), [Economist](#))

Egyptian security officials instituted new security measures for tourist sites after the Luxor attack. Larger security presences and searches of individuals’ bags became common around the temples. There have still been recurrent attacks against the tourism industry, despite the additional measures. In 2015, Egypt began installing CCTV cameras around the Luxor sites. (Sources: [Council on Foreign Relations](#), [Guardian](#), [Independent](#))

### *Assassination of President Anwar al-Sadat*

President Anwar al-Sadat won the Nobel Peace Prize after he signed the 1979 Camp David peace treaty with Israel. Many in Egypt, however, accused him of siding with an enemy of the country. Members of IG and the Egyptian Islamic Jihad assassinated al-Sadat on October 6, 1981, during a parade commemorating Egypt’s 1973 war with Israel. Four army officers broke away from the parade and approached the pavilion from where al-Sadat was watching the event. Thinking they were part of the demonstration, al-Sadat stood to salute the soldiers, and the gunmen opened fire. (Sources: [CNN](#), [Council on Foreign Relations](#), [Council on Foreign Relations](#), [BBC News](#))

Aboud El Zomor, an IG leader convicted of planning the attack, said the assassination was “to change and provide an alternative leader who could save Egypt from a crisis of the political dead-end we lived in then. I intended complete change, not just the murder of Sadat.” Zomor spent 30 years in prison for his role in the attack. (Source: [CNN](#))

- **June 3, 2023:** An Egyptian policeman shoots and kills two Israeli soldiers securing a military post on the Israeli side of the Egyptian border. The Israeli military reportedly treated the incident as a terrorist attack upon the soldiers’ deaths. The Egyptian officer and a third Israeli soldier are killed in a confrontation inside Israel hours later. The Egyptian government offers its condolences but says the officer was pursuing drug smugglers across the Israeli border. Israel rejects the explanation and Israeli Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu labels the incident a terrorist attack. Israel calls for a thorough joint investigation. Sources: [Reuters](#), [Guardian](#)
- **March 5, 2023:** An Egyptian court sentences 14 people to prison terms between five and 15 years on terrorism-related charges. The suspects were arrested in 2014 on charges of sowing dissent. Among those sentenced are activist lawyers Ezzat Ghoniem and Mohamed Abu Horarira, who were each to 15 years in prison on charges of supporting a terrorist organization—the Muslim Brotherhood. Abu Horarira’s wife, Aisha el-Shater, is sentenced to 10 years in prison. She is the daughter of Brotherhood leader Khairat el-Shater. Human rights organizations condemn the arrest and trial of the 14 as violations of civil rights. Source: [Associated Press](#)
- **December 30, 2022:** Two gunmen attack a police checkpoint in the Suez Canal city of Ismailia, killing at least three and wounding four others. Police kill one of the attackers, while the other escapes. ISIS claims responsibility through its Amaq news agency. It is reportedly the first terrorist attack in mainland Egypt in almost three years. Sources: [Agence France-Presse](#), [Agence France-Presse](#)
- **May 22, 2022:** An Egyptian court sentences Abdel-Monaem Abul Fetouh and Mahmoud Ezzat, two Islamist leaders, to 15 years in prison for disseminating false news and inciting against state institutions. Fetouh is a former presidential candidate and head of the Islamist Strong Egypt party, and Ezzat was the acting leader of the Muslim Brotherhood group. Source: [Washington Post](#)
- **May 11, 2022:** Gunmen open fire on a security post on northeastern Sinai coast near the Gaza border, killing at least five and wounding four. The Egyptian military carries out airstrikes in response to the attack, killing 16 militants and destroying several vehicles between the May 11 and May 7 airstrikes. Source: [Reuters](#)
- **May 7, 2022:** ISIS militants ambush Egyptian soldiers in Ismailia, on the Sinai Peninsula. The ambush kills 11 and injures five others. The Egyptian military carries out airstrikes in response to the attack. Sources: [Al Jazeera](#), [Reuters](#)
- **March 14, 2022:** A Seattle man pleads guilty at a U.S. District Court in Seattle to attempting to provide material support to ISIS. Elvin Hunter Bgorn Williams, who reportedly began telling family members he was a member of ISIS in November 2020, posted a video on Facebook in which he swore an oath of loyalty to ISIS. Williams was arrested on May 28, 2021 at Seattle-Tacoma International Airport on criminal charges related to his alleged efforts to join ISIS in Egypt. Williams’s sentencing date is scheduled for June 2022, and he faces a 20-year sentence. Source: [U.S. Department of Justice](#)
- **November 25, 2021:** Egypt’s Court of Cassation, the country’s highest civilian court, upholds the death sentence for 21 suspected Islamist militants. The defendants were convicted of belonging to Ansar Beit Al-Maqdis group, which changed its name to Sinai Province after pledging allegiance to ISIS in 2014. The suspects are accused of carrying out dozens of deadly militant operations, including against state security facilities and officials. Another 118 defendants are also sentenced in the same case, with 43 defendants facing life sentences, 23 facing 10-year sentences, and another 53 facing five-year sentences. According to international rights groups, the rate of executions in Egypt has risen sharply since 2020. Amnesty International reported that at least 83 people had been executed after unfair trials in 2021. Sources: [Reuters](#), [Times of Israel](#)
- **August 13, 2021:** A roadside bomb strikes an armored military vehicle in New Rafah along the Gaza border, killing eight and wounding six.

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ISIS claims responsibility. Sources: [Al Jazeera](#), [Al-Monitor](#)

- **July 31, 2021:** ISIS fighters ambush Egyptian forces at a security checkpoint in Sheikh Zuweid, killing at least five and wounding six. Security forces kill three of the attackers. ISIS claims responsibility. Sources: [Al Jazeera](#), [Times of Israel](#)
- **April 17, 2021 - April 19, 2021:** On April 17, Sinai Province releases a video on Telegram of the execution of 62-year-old Coptic Christian businessman Nabil Habashi, who was kidnapped in Bir al-Abd in northwest Sinai in November 2020. Habashi is shown kneeling before three black-clad militants shoot him in the head. The militants also shoot dead two Bedouins accused of aiding Egyptian security forces against ISIS. The two Bedouins belonged to the Arab Trabin tribe and were captured in a February 2021 attack in the central Sinai. It is undetermined when the executions took place. On April 19, Egypt announces its security forces had killed three militants accused involvement in Habashi's murder and of plotting to attack Coptic Christians. Three other suspects escape. Sources: [Reuters](#), [Associated Press](#)
- **January 22, 2021:** A remote-controlled roadside bomb targets an armored vehicle in Sheikh Zuweid in the northern Sinai, killing a police officer and wounding three others. ISIS posts a statement on an affiliated website claiming responsibility. Source: [Associated Press](#)
- **January 1, 2021:** A remote-detonated roadside bomb kills two members of Egypt's security forces and wounds five others in Bir al-Abd in the Sinai. Source: [Reuters](#)
- **December 30, 2020:** A roadside bomb in Rafah, near the Gaza border, kills one member of Egypt's security forces and wounds three others. ISIS claims responsibility. Source: [Reuters](#)
- **December 18, 2020:** Two roadside bombs explode at two separate security checkpoints in the town of Sheikh Zuweid, killing three members of Egypt's security forces and wounding 10 others. The military kills four militants during raids in Sheikh Zuweid. Source: [Associated Press](#)
- **November 19, 2020:** ISIS's Sinai branch claims credit for a small explosion at a gas pipeline near el-Arish. ISIS does not provide evidence of its responsibility. There are no casualties. Source: [Al-Monitor](#)
- More than a dozen civilians are killed by explosive devices left in their homes in Bir al Abd in the Sinai. ISIS forced residents to flee after capturing the town in July and laid traps before the army forced the terror group out. Sources: [TRT World](#), [Times of Israel](#)
- - : On July 21, unidentified militants attack an army post in the village of Rabea in the Bir al-Abd area of the Sinai, killing two and wounding four others. The Egyptian army repels the attack, allegedly killing 18 militants and destroying several of the terrorists' vehicles. On the same day, ISIS militants take control of the villages of Rabaa, Katiya, Aktiya, Janayen, and Merihin in the Bir al-Abd area, forcing residents to flee. The militants plant explosive devices at all entrances and replace the Egyptian flag with ISIS's flag. At least five civilians are wounded by IEDs. At least three Egyptian soldiers are killed during a failed ground offensive to expel the militants. On July 27, the military launches airstrikes against militant positions in the villages. On August 14, the militants execute four people for allegedly cooperating with the army. The army secures the villages and allows residents to return by the end of the month. Sources: [Reuters](#), [Middle East Eye](#), [New Arab](#), [Middle East Monitor](#), [Times of Israel](#)
- **May 23, 2020:** Security forces raid two hideouts belonging to "terrorist elements" in the Sinai, killing at least 21 militants. Two officers are wounded. According to Egyptian security forces, the militants were planning attacks during the Islamic holiday of Eid al-Fitr. Security forces reportedly find suicide belts and automatic weapons in the hideouts. Sources: [Arab Weekly](#), [Al Jazeera](#)
- **April 30, 2020:** A bomb in a military armored vehicle kills or wounds at least 10 soldiers south of Bir al-Abd city in the Northern Sinai region. The Egyptian government does not specify the number of casualties. ISIS claims responsibility. On May 3, security forces announce they had killed 18 militants during a raid on an ISIS hideout in the Sinai. Sources: [Al-Monitor](#), [Al-Monitor](#), [New York Times](#), [Al Jazeera](#)
- **April 14, 2020:** A policeman is killed and three are wounded during a firefight with militants in eastern Cairo as police break up a terror cell planning to attack Coptic Christians during Easter celebrations on April 19. Seven militants are also killed during the battle, according to police. Sources: [New York Times](#), [Al-Monitor](#)
- **February 2, 2020:** Masked gunman blow up a gas pipeline in the Sinai Peninsula. There are no casualties reported. The following day, ISIS claims responsibility for the attack, asserting that the pipeline connected to Israel's offshore gas field. ISIS also claims the pipeline it targeted was in the Sinai village of Al Teloul. Egyptian authorities dispute the claim, saying the pipeline was a domestic one and connected to a power station in el-Arish. Source: [Agence France-Presse](#)
- **October 12, 2019:** A shell strikes a truck carrying civilians in Bir al-Abd in the northern Sinai, killing at least nine and wounding six. The nine victims are all members of the same family. Separately, two explosive devices hit armored vehicles in Bir al-Abd and Rafah, wounding seven members of the security forces. There are no immediate claims of responsibility for the attacks. Source: [Associated Press](#)
- **August 4, 2019:** An explosives-filled car speeding on the wrong side of the road in downtown Cairo explodes after colliding with three other cars, killing at least 20 and wounding 47. The Egyptian government initially claims the explosion resulted from an accidental collision before it reclassifies the incident as a terrorist attack the following day. According to authorities, the explosives-filled car had been on its way to carry out an attack elsewhere in the city before the collision. The car had been stolen from the Menufia province earlier in the year. There are no immediate claims of responsibility but the Egyptian government blames Hasam. Sources: [Washington Post](#), [Wall Street Journal](#)
- **July 17, 2019 - July 18, 2019:** Militants pull five civilians from their cars, killing four and kidnapping the fifth. Security forces discover four headless bodies in Bir al-Abd in the Sinai on July 17. ISIS claims responsibility for the kidnapping and accuses the four victims of being Egyptian spies. On July 18, a suicide bomber detonates in a carpark in Sheikh Zuweid near the Gaza border, killing two.

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- Security forces say they stopped the bomber before he could reach a security checkpoint, which was the intended target. ISIS claims responsibility and claims the bomber killed or wounded five members of the security forces. Source: [Reuters](#)
- **June 25, 2019:** ISIS militants attack four Egyptian police positions in el-Arish in the Sinai Peninsula, killing eight and wounding two. One of the attackers detonates an explosives belt during clashes with Egyptian forces after the attack. Three other militants are killed during the clashes. ISIS claims responsibility through its Amaq News Agency while claiming it carried out multiple simultaneous raids. Sources: [Defense Post](#), [Al Jazeera](#)
  - **June 5, 2019:** ISIS militants attack a military checkpoint in Egypt's northern Sinai Peninsula, killing at least eight policemen. Egyptian forces kill at least five of the militants after the attack. Source: [Washington Post](#)
  - **May 19, 2019:** A bomb explodes outside the Grand Egyptian Museum and Giza Pyramids near a tour bus carrying South African tourists, wounding 17. Egyptian security officers kill 12 suspected militants the following day. Sources: [Associated Press](#), [Al Jazeera](#)
  - **April 12, 2019:** Egyptian security forces repel an attack on a security checkpoint in Oyoum Moussa in the Sinai, killing two of the attackers. Source: [The National](#)
  - **April 9, 2019:** A suicide bomber explodes in the town of Sheikh Zuweid in the Sinai, killing at least six and wounding 27. ISIS claims responsibility through its Amaq News Agency and identifies the bomber as Abu Hagar al-Masry. The bomber killed or wounded 15, according to ISIS. Separately, a suicide bomber blows up near the Rafah police station, killing one and wounding one. Sources: [Reuters](#), [Egypt Independent](#), [Anadolu Agency](#)
  - **April 7, 2019:** Militants attack a police patrol in the al-Nozha al-Gedida area north of Cairo, killing two and wounding two. There are no immediate claims of responsibility. Source: [Egypt Independent](#)
  - **February 18, 2019:** A militant sets off explosives while police are pursuing him through Cairo, killing three and wounding two. The suspect is identified as 37-year-old Al-Hassan Abdullah, whom police were pursuing in relation to an attempted attack on February 15. There are no immediate claims of responsibility. Sources: [Al Jazeera](#), [Reuters](#)
  - **February 15, 2019 - February 16, 2019:** On February 15, a homemade bomb explodes in Cairo while police attempt to diffuse it, leaving five wounded. There are no immediate claims of responsibility. On February 16, Egyptian forces clash with militants in the Sinai, leaving 15 Egyptian security personnel dead or wounded. Seven militants are also killed. ISIS claims responsibility for the attack on security forces. Sources: [Reuters](#), [Haaretz](#)
  - **January 14, 2019:** A police convoy in Rafah is hit by a roadside bomb, killing one and wounding four. There are no immediate claims of responsibility. Source: [Associated Press](#)
  - **January 5, 2019:** Police discover two bombs on a rooftop near a Coptic church in Cairo. One of the bombs explodes as police try to diffuse it, leaving one dead and three injured. There are no immediate claims of responsibility. Source: [Reuters](#)
  - **December 28, 2018:** A roadside bomb explodes in Giza near a tour bus carrying Vietnamese tourists, killing four and wounding 12. There are no immediate claims of responsibility. The following day, Egyptian forces kill 40 suspected militants in Giza and the Sinai. Sources: [BBC News](#), [Reuters](#), [Wall Street Journal](#)
  - **November 2, 2018:** Gunmen attacked a bus traveling from a baptism at the St. Samuel the Confessor Coptic Christian monastery in Minya, killing at least seven and wounding 14. ISIS claims responsibility through its Amaq News Agency, but does not provide evidence of its involvement. On November 4, the Egyptian army reports that it killed the perpetrators of the attack in a shootout that left 19 suspected militants dead. The military does not specify when or where the battle occurred. Sources: [Reuters](#), [Reuters](#), [Associated Press](#)
  - **October 25, 2018:** A roadside bomb kills three and wounds 10 in el-Arish. The bombing targets workers building a security wall in the city. Officials blame ISIS. Source: [Associated Press](#)
  - **October 21, 2018:** Militants shoot and kill three people outside their homes in el-Arish. The victims are construction workers building a security wall in the city. Authorities suspect ISIS. Source: [Associated Press](#)
  - **August 25, 2018:** Militants attack a police checkpoint in west of el-Arish. Egypt state news agency MENA reports no police casualties in the attack and says Egyptian forces killed four of the attackers. The al-Masri Youm newspaper reports that four policemen are killed. ISIS claims responsibility and claims the attack killed or wounded 15. Sources: [Reuters](#), [Reuters](#)
  - **August 11, 2018:** Police stop a suicide bomber on a bridge outside the Coptic Virgin Mary Church in the Cairo suburb of Mostorod. The bomber sets off his explosives, killing himself but causing no other injuries. There are no immediate claims of responsibility. Source: [CNN](#)
  - **April 14, 2018:** An attack on an army base in the Sinai kills eight soldiers and wounds 15. ISIS claims responsibility through its Amaq news agency. Four days later, the Egyptian military claims it had killed Naser Abou Zaqoul, the leader of Wilayat Sinai. Sources: [Associated Press](#), [Associated Press](#)
  - **December 28, 2017:** The Egyptian military reports that an army vehicle had been destroyed and six soldiers killed during a raid on a terrorist hideout. The military does not report the date of the raid. Source: [Al Arabiya English](#)
  - **December 19, 2017:** ISIS militants attack a military airport in el-Arish in the Sinai Peninsula, killing one and wounding two others. ISIS claims through the Amaq news agency that it fired a Kornet anti-tank missile targeting the Egyptian interior and defense ministers who were visiting the area. Neither minister is injured. Also that day, another Egyptian officer is killed during separate clashes with ISIS militants in

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el-Arish. Source: [Reuters](#)

- **November 24, 2017:** Between 25 and 30 militants wearing military combat uniforms drive five SUVs to the Al Rawdah Sufi mosque in Bir al-Abed in the northern Sinai province. The militants attack the mosque with automatic machine guns, killing at least 305 and wounding 128 in Egypt’s deadliest terror attack to date. Egyptian President Abdel Fattah el-Sisi promises to respond to the attack with “brute force.” There are no immediate claims of responsibility, but ISIS has carried out similar attacks and at least one of the attackers carried an ISIS flag. The December 2016 issue of ISIS’s newspaper al-Naba specifically mentioned the Al Rawdah mosque and called for targeting Sufis. Sources: [CNN](#), [BBC News](#), [Reuters](#)
- **October 20, 2017:** An ambush by Islamic militants in the Western Desert region kills a disputed number of Egyptian soldiers, according to security sources. The militants also reportedly steal weapons and supplies from the convoy. Hasm claims responsibility, but local experts dismiss the group’s claim. An Egyptian government statement the following day claims that at least 16 soldiers were killed in the attack, but security sources tell international media that at least 52 soldiers were killed. The government reprimands news agencies for reporting the contradictory higher numbers. Reuters and BBC News issue statements defending their journalistic integrity. Sources: [Wall Street Journal](#), [Associated Press](#), [Reuters](#), [New York Times](#), [Reuters](#), [BBC News](#)
- **October 15, 2017:** More than 100 militants attack security outposts south of Sheikh Zuweid along the Sinai-Gaza border. At least six soldiers and 24 militants are killed. ISIS claims responsibility. Sources: [Reuters](#), [Reuters](#)
- **September 30, 2017:** A small explosion at Myanmar’s embassy in Cairo is initially attributed in the media as a gas explosion. Hasm later claims responsibility, calling the explosion a warning in response to Myanmar’s military crackdown on Rohingya Muslims. It is the group’s first reported attack on a civilian target. There are no casualties, and Hasm says it ensured that no innocents would be harmed. Source: [Reuters](#)
- **September 11, 2017:** ISIS fighters ambush a security convoy in the Sinai Peninsula, killing at least 18 police officers in gun battle after roadside bombs reportedly destroy four armored vehicles and a fifth carrying signal equipment. Seven other officers are wounded. Sources: [Reuters](#), [Associated Press](#)
- **July 7, 2017:** Two suicide car bombs explode at a security checkpoint in the Rafah area of the Sinai Peninsula near the Gaza border. After the explosions, militants in 24 SUVs attack security forces with machine guns. The attacks reportedly kill at least 23 soldiers and wound 26, though the military claims 26 casualties in total without distinction. An almost immediate Egyptian airstrike against militant positions in the Sinai kills at least 40. ISIS claims responsibility for the attack, reportedly one of the deadliest on Egyptian soldiers in the Sinai in several years. In an unrelated incident, police kill two gunmen who opened fire on police in 6th of October City. Police blame the Hasm movement, which denies responsibility. Separately, Hasm claims responsibility for the assassination of a security officer in the Qaliubiya governorate that same day. Sources: [Associated Press](#), [Reuters](#), [Times of Israel](#), [Daily News Egypt](#)
- **July 6, 2017:** A roadside bomb in the Sinai kills three policemen and wounds 10 others. There are no immediate claims of responsibility but security officials suspect ISIS. In response, the Egyptian government extends its national state of emergency for three months. Source: [Reuters](#)
- **May 26, 2017:** A group of masked gunmen attacks two buses and a truck carrying Coptic Christians to the monastery of St. Samuel the Confessor in the Minya province south of Cairo. The gunmen open fire with automatic weapons, killing at least 29 and wounding 25. ISIS claims responsibility. Sources: [CNN](#), [Reuters](#), [Al Jazeera](#)
- **April 18, 2017:** A group of gunmen attack a police checkpoint near St. Catherine’s Monastery in southern Sinai, killing one police officer and wounding four others. The gunmen escape, though some are wounded in an ensuing firefight. ISIS claims responsibility. It is the first ISIS attack on a monastery. Sources: [Reuters](#), [Associated Press](#)
- **April 9, 2017:** A bomb planted under a seat in the main sanctuary at St. George’s Church in Tanta kills at least 25 and wounds 60 others. Also that morning, a suicide bomber explodes outside of St. Mark’s Coptic Orthodox Cathedral in Alexandria, killing at least 11 and wounding 35. Coptic leader Pope Tawadros II is inside the Alexandria church but is not wounded. ISIS’s Amaq News claims an ISIS “security detachment” carried out the attacks. The combined death toll rises to 45 by the following day. Sources: [Associated Press](#), [CNN](#), [Reuters](#), [Associated Press](#)
- **March 28, 2017:** ISIS releases a video on the encrypted messaging service Telegram of two Egyptians being beheaded for sorcery. ISIS also claims it has created a religious police force in the Sinai. Source: [Reuters](#)
- **March 22, 2017 - March 25, 2017:** At least 16 police officers and soldiers are killed by roadside bombs and snipers in the Sinai Peninsula. Four police officers are killed by two roadside bombs on March 25, while another officer is killed by a sniper near a security checkpoint near el-Arish. On March 23, the Egyptian army reveals that 10 Egyptian soldiers had died in two roadside bombings during fighting with ISIS militants in the Sinai, which also killed 15 ISIS fighters. The army does not specify when the clashes occurred, but ISIS released a statement the previous day claiming the terror group blew up two army vehicles during fighting in the Sinai city of el-Arish. Two police officers are killed in a separate incident on March 23 near a police station in el-Arish. Sources: [Associated Press](#), [Associated Press](#), [Reuters](#), [Agence France-Presse](#)
- **January 16, 2017:** A group of Islamist militants attack a security checkpoint in the New Valley province of the Western Desert, killing eight policemen and wounding three others. Police kill two of the attackers. The Egyptian interior ministry blames “terrorists,” but there are no immediate claims of responsibility. Sources: [Reuters](#), [Guardian](#), [BBC News](#)
- **January 9, 2017:** A group of about 20 militants in a stolen, explosives-filled garbage truck attack a security checkpoint outside a police building in the Sinai city of el-Arish.

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- According to the Egyptian government, security forces shoot and kill the truck driver before he can set off the explosives. The attackers then fire guns and RPGs at the checkpoint, killing at least eight people and wounding 22, according to the government. Among the dead are seven policemen and one civilian. Security forces also claim to kill five of the attackers and wound three others. ISIS claims responsibility. A police officer is killed in a separate attack on another security checkpoint in the city. Sources: [Associated Press](#), [Egypt Independent](#), [Associated Press](#), [Reuters](#), [Times of Israel](#)
- **December 11, 2016:** A suicide bombing at a chapel adjacent to St. Mark’s Cathedral in Cairo kills at least 28 people and wounds 49 others during Sunday mass. ISIS claims responsibility two days after the attack and identifies the bomber as Abu Abdallah al-Masri. St. Mark’s is the headquarters of the Coptic Orthodox Church and its leader, Pope Tawadros II, who was out of the country during the bombing. Egypt’s government declares a three-day mourning period. Sources: [Washington Post](#), [Associated Press](#), [Reuters](#), [Associated Press](#), [BBC News](#)
  - **December 9, 2016:** A bomb kills six police officers and wounds three others at a security checkpoint outside of Cairo. The recently emerged group Hasm claims responsibility. Hasm had claimed responsibility for a handful of recent attacks, including a September 2016 attempted assassination of a senior Egyptian prosecutor. Police suspect Hasm of links to the Muslim Brotherhood. Sources: [New York Times](#), [BBC News](#)
  - **November 15, 2016:** Wilayat Sinai releases images of the beheading of 100-year-old Sufi cleric Sheikh Sulaiman Abu Haraz, who had been kidnapped from his home in el-Arish, Egypt. ISIS accused the cleric of “practicing witchcraft.” Sources: [Daily Mail](#), [Al-Arabiya](#)
  - **September 28, 2016:** A car carrying three suspected militants cuts off a taxi in el-Arish in the Sinai Peninsula. Gunmen inside the vehicle then open fire on the taxi, killing three policemen and the civilian driver before fleeing the scene. Egyptian authorities suspect ISIS is responsible. Source: [Associated Press](#)
  - **September 26, 2016:** Egyptian authorities disclose that the bodies of five murdered civilians—clad in orange jumpsuits—have been discovered in the Sinai. Two of the bodies are decapitated and the other three are shot in the head. Officials hold ISIS responsible and believe the executions were retaliation for suspected collaboration with the Egyptian army. It is not revealed when the murders actually took place. Source: [Fox News](#)
  - **May 8, 2016:** Four masked gunmen in a pickup truck pull up alongside a police vehicle in the Cairo suburb of Helwan. The gunmen open fire, killing eight plainclothes police officers. Wilayat Sinai claims responsibility and says the attack is to avenge women held in Egyptian prisons. ISIS also claims the attack is part of its Abi Ali Al-Anbari campaign, which has included a series of bombings and attacks in Iraq. Sources: [Reuters](#), [Associated Press](#)
  - **March 29, 2016:** Seifedeem Mustafa allegedly hijacks an EgyptAir plane and forces it to land in Larnaca, Cyprus. Mustafa reportedly told the pilot he was wearing a suicide belt. According to Cypriot media, he demands the release of female prisoners from Egypt and to see his ex-wife. The hijacker releases 56 of the 64 hostages in Cyprus and surrenders a few hours later. Egyptian officials call the hijacker “unprofessional” and are hesitant to label the hijacking as terrorism. Sources: [New York Times](#), [Associated Press](#), [Reuters](#)
  - **March 19, 2016:** A mortar round kills at least 13 police officers in the Sinai. The attackers target ambulances trying to evacuate the wounded with heavy gunfire. Egyptian forces reportedly kill five of the attackers. Wilayat Sinai claims responsibility. Source: [Reuters](#)
  - **March 5, 2016:** Egypt arrests six Brotherhood members in connection with the assassination of chief prosecutor Hisham Barakat. Based on the suspects’ confessions, authorities accuse Hamas of coordinating the assassination with the Brotherhood. Hamas denies the charge. Source: [Guardian](#)
  - **January 21, 2016:** A bomb in a Giza apartment kills nine people, including six police officers. Ten people are wounded. Police were preparing to raid the apartment, which they believed to be a militant hideout. Wilayat Sinai claims responsibility. Source: [Reuters](#)
  - **November 24, 2015:** Police kill a suicide bomber attempting to drive a vehicle into the Swiss Inn hotel in el-Arish in North Sinai. The vehicle explodes when police shoot at it. Security forces shoot and kill a second suicide bomber attempting to blow himself up in the hotel’s kitchen. A third attacker opens fire on guests in the hotel, killing seven people and wounding 17. Victims include two judges supervising parliamentary elections, four police officers, and a civilian. Wilayat Sinai claims responsibility. Sources: [Wall Street Journal](#), [Reuters](#)
  - **November 11, 2015:** Gunmen, believed to be members of Wilayat Sinai, kill eight Egyptian civilians in el-Arish in North Sinai for allegedly cooperating with Egyptian security forces. The victims are from a town on the border with the Gaza Strip. Source: [Jordan Times](#)
  - **November 9, 2015:** Egyptian authorities kill Wilayat Sinai leader Ashraf Ali Ali Hassanein al-Gharabli as he attempts to avoid arrest. Source: [CNN](#)
  - **October 31, 2015:** Wilayat Sinai claims responsibility for the crash of a Russian airliner to St. Petersburg, Russia, from the Egyptian resort area of Sharm el-Sheikh. Investigators say a bomb on board detonated after the plane was airborne, killing all 224 passengers and crew. Sources: [New York Times](#), [Reuters](#), [Fox News](#)
  - **September 14, 2015:** The Egyptian air force accidentally attack a tourist convoy, killing 12 people and injuring 10 more. The convoy had entered a prohibited area during an operation against ISIS militants in the Western Desert. Two Mexican citizens are among those killed. Mexico demands a thorough investigation. Sources: [Washington Post](#), [New York Times](#), [BBC News](#), [Al Jazeera](#)
  - **August 20, 2015:** A car bomb outside a state security building in Cairo’s Shubra al-Khaima suburb wounds 30 people. Wilayat Sinai claims responsibility. Source: [Reuters](#)
  - **July 11, 2015:** An explosion outside the Italian consulate in Cairo kills one person and injures nine others.



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- Wilayat Sinai claims responsibility. Sources: [GOV.UK](#), [Reuters](#)
- **July 1, 2015:** Simultaneous attacks against military targets in northern Sinai Peninsula kill 64 Egyptian soldiers, four civilians, and 90 militants. Wilayat Sinai claims responsibility. Sources: [GOV.UK](#), [USA Today](#)
  - **July 1, 2015:** Nine Muslim Brotherhood members—including a former parliamentarian—die during a police raid on a Cairo apartment. Authorities say the nine were planning terrorist attacks and possessed weapons and thousands of dollars. The Brotherhood calls the incident a “turning point” and calls for a revolution in Egypt. Source: [Associated Press](#)
  - **June 29, 2015:** A car bomb kills Egyptian Public Prosecutor Hisham Barakat and wounds eight others in Cairo. The Egyptian government blames the Brotherhood, but the group does not publicly claim responsibility. Barakat is the highest level assassination since the army deposed the Brotherhood government. The attack spurs Egypt’s controversial counterterrorism law. Sources: [Wall Street Journal](#), [New York Times](#), [New York Times](#)
  - **June 10, 2015:** Security forces fend off an attack on a checkpoint at the Karnak Temple in Luxor. Security, killing two of the attackers and apprehending the third. Four civilians are also injured. Officials suspect the Brotherhood though it does not claim responsibility. Sources: [GOV.UK](#), [Reuters](#), [BBC News](#)
  - **February 26, 2015:** Multiple explosions in Cairo outside a telephone shop, a restaurant, and a police station kill one and wound nine. A newly formed group, the Popular Resistance Movement, claims responsibility. Sources: [GOV.UK](#), [New York Times](#)
  - **February 16, 2015:** Egyptian airstrikes target ISIS positions in Libya after the group releases a video of the killing of 21 Egyptians. Sources: [BBC News](#), [New York Times](#)
  - **January 29, 2015:** Wilayat Sinai kills 26 people in coordinated rocket and bomb attacks on the Egyptian military and police in the Sinai Peninsula. Source: [Independent](#)
  - **January 27, 2015:** Wilayat Sinai shoots down a military helicopter with a surface-to-air missile in North Sinai. Source: [GOV.UK](#)
  - Ansar Bayt al-Maqdis (ABM) pledges allegiance to ISIS and changes its name to Wilayat Sinai (Sinai Province). Source: [Al-Monitor](#)
  - **November 12, 2014:** Assailants attempt to hijack an Egyptian navy guided missile vessel in the Egyptian port city of Damietta. Five navy personnel are wounded, and eight are declared lost at sea. Egyptian aircraft engage the attackers, destroying the four fishing boats used to attack the vessel. Authorities kill four attackers and capture 32. Navy officials describe the assault as a “terror attack,” but do not identify the perpetrators. No group claims responsibility. Sources: [U.S. Department of State](#), [Reuters](#), [Telegraph](#)
  - **October 24, 2014:** ABM members attack a military checkpoint using a suicide vehicle-borne improvised explosive device followed by RPGs and small arms fire. ABM kills 30 Egyptian troops and wounds dozens. Source: [U.S. Department of State](#)
  - **September 21, 2014:** Ajnad Misr detonates a bomb near the foreign ministry in downtown Cairo, killing two lieutenant colonels and a key witness in a trial against former President Mohammed Morsi. At least five police officers and a civilian are injured. Sources: [Ahram Online](#), [Reuters](#)
  - **August 18, 2014:** ABM kidnaps and beheads four civilians in Sheikh Zuwaid in the northern Sinai. ABM claims they were Israeli spies. Source: [U.S. Department of State](#)
  - **August 6, 2014:** ABM carjacks and kills a U.S. oil worker. Source: [U.S. Department of State](#)
  - **July 30, 2014:** A car bomb in Giza kills the three suspected militants inside after accidentally detonating. Later that day, police stop another car in the same area carrying explosives. Sources: [Ahram Online](#), [Daily News Egypt](#)
  - **July 19, 2014:** Gunmen armed with RPGs and machine guns kill 22 Egyptian border guards during an attack on a military checkpoint near the al-Farafra Oasis in Egypt’s Western Desert. ABM claims responsibility. Sources: [U.S. Department of State](#), [Reuters](#), [Al Jazeera](#)
  - **July 14, 2014:** ABM members fire a barrage of rockets at Eilat, Israel, wounding many. Source: [U.S. Department of State](#)
  - **June 30, 2014:** A series of explosions near the presidential palace in Heliopolis kill two police officers and injure three others. Ajnad Misr claims responsibility. Source: [Ahram Online](#)
  - **June 25, 2014:** Four small bombs injure six people in Cairo metro stations, while two other devices blow up near a Cairo courthouse in Heliopolis. The government blames the Muslim Brotherhood for the attacks. Sources: [Ahram Online](#), [Fox News](#)
  - **May 2, 2014:** A car bomb in downtown Cairo kills one civilian. Three separate explosions kill four people in Sinai. The government blames the Muslim Brotherhood, but the group denies responsibility. Sources: [Ahram Online](#), [Reuters](#)
  - **April 2, 2014:** Three explosions kill a policeman and injure five others at Cairo University. Ajnad Misr later claims responsibility. Sources: [Ahram Online](#), [U.S. Department of State](#)
  - **February 16, 2014:** An ABM member detonates a suicide belt on a tourist bus in Taba, killing three South Korean tourists and the Egyptian bus driver and wounding several others. Source: [U.S. Department of State](#)
  - **January 25, 2014:** ABM assailants shoot down an Egyptian military helicopter near Sheikh Zuwaid, killing all five soldiers on board. Source: [U.S. Department of State](#)
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- **January 24, 2014:** Four bombs target the Cairo Security Directorate building, two police stations, and a government building, killing six people and injuring dozens.  
ABM claims responsibility. Sources: [Ahram Online](#), [U.S. Department of State](#)
- **December 24, 2013:** The Muslim Brotherhood detonates a bomb in Mansoura killing 12 people.  
Afterward, the Egyptian government declares the Brotherhood a terrorist group and criminalizes all of its activities. Sources: [BBC News](#), [Guardian](#)
- **November 17, 2013:** High-ranking national security officer Mohamed Mabrouk is shot dead near his home in Nasr City.  
ABM claims responsibility. Source: [Ahram Online](#)
- **September 5, 2013:** Interior Minister Mohamed Ibrahim survives an assassination attempt in Cairo when an IED blows up his motorcade, injuring 22.  
Source: [Ahram Online](#)
- **August 14, 2013:** Armed Islamist militants fire RPGs at Kerdasa's police station in Giza, killing 11 officers.  
Source: [Ahram Online](#)
- **August 14, 2013:** Security forces storm a Cairo gathering of pro-Morsi and Muslim Brotherhood supporters, killing 500 and injuring more than 3,700.  
Over 40 police officers are killed and around 210 are injured during the dispersal. Sources: [BBC News](#), [Ahram Online](#)
- **January 26, 2013 - January 27, 2013:** More than 50 people died during two days of violent street protests.  
Army chief Abdel Fattah el-Sisi warns that political strife is pushing the state to the brink of collapse. Sources: [BBC News](#), [New York Daily News](#)
- **August 5, 2012:** Islamist fighters attack an army outpost in Sinai, killing 16 soldiers.  
Sources: [BBC News](#), [Reuters](#)
- **June 24, 2012:** Muslim Brotherhood leader Mohammed Morsi wins Egypt's first free presidential election.  
Sources: [BBC News](#), [Guardian](#)
- **January 11, 2011:** An al-Qaeda-inspired suicide bombing at a Coptic church in Alexandria kills 23 and wounds almost 100.  
Egyptian police arrest seven individuals for planning the attack. Source: [NCTC](#)
- **February 22, 2009:** A bomb in Cairo's Khan el-Khalili bazaar kills one and wounds 24. No group claims responsibility.  
Sources: [Daily Mail](#), [Reuters](#)
- **April 24, 2006:** A series of bombs explode in the Red Sea resort of Dahab, killing 23 people and injuring 150.  
Sources: [GOV.UK](#), [BBC News](#), [Al Jazeera](#)
- **July 23, 2005:** Three bombings at the Red Sea resort of Sharm al-Sheikh kill 64 people and wound 100 others.  
The al-Qaeda-inspired Tawhid wal-Jihad claims responsibility for the two suicide car bombs and improvised explosive device. Sources: [BBC News](#), [Guardian](#), [Al Jazeera](#), [Overseas Security Advisory Council](#), [Guardian](#)
- **April 7, 2005:** A suicide bomber kills two French citizens and an American in a Cairo bazaar.  
Authorities arrest nine individuals connected to the attack. A previously unknown group called the Islamic Brigades of Pride in Egypt claims responsibility for the bombing. The group claims the bombing is "to avenge our brothers, martyrs of injustice and detainees." Sources: [Daily Mail](#), [Sydney Morning Herald](#)
- **October 4, 2004:** Car bombs at resorts and hotels in Taba and near Nuweiba in the Sinai Peninsula kill 34 people and injure 159.  
The Egyptian government holds the al-Qaeda-inspired Tawhid wal-Jihad (Monotheism and Jihad) responsible. Tawhid wal-Jihad shared the ideology and name of an early incarnation of al-Qaeda in Iraq. Sources: [Guardian](#), [Al Jazeera](#), [CNN](#), [Overseas Security Advisory Council](#), [Guardian](#)
- **November 17, 1997:** Gama'a al-Islamiyya, also known as the Islamic Group (IG), kill 62 people at the Hatshepsut Temple archeological site near Luxor.  
The six gunmen, impersonating military members, open fire on groups of tourists and are all killed after Egyptian security forces arrived.  
Sources: [Guardian](#), [Al Jazeera](#)
- **September 18, 1997:** A firebomb attack on a Cairo tourist bus by two IG militants kills nine Germans.  
Sources: [NCTC](#), [Council on Foreign Relations](#)
- **April 18, 1996:** Suspected IG gunmen open fire on Greek and Australian tourists boarding a bus outside the Europa Hotel in Cairo, killing 34.  
Sources: [Al Jazeera](#), [New York Times](#)
- **June 8, 1992:** The IG assassinates Egyptian professor and human rights activist Farag Foda for speaking out against radical Islam.  
He had challenged IG's calls for the creation of a religious state since 1980. As a result, IG labeled him an "infidel." Sources: [Council on Foreign Relations](#), [Daily News Egypt](#)
- **October 7, 1981:** Extremists from the IG and the Egyptian Islamic Jihad assassinate President Anwar al-Sadat.  
Sources: [BBC News](#), [CNN](#), [Council on Foreign Relations](#)
- - : The Muslim Brotherhood further radicalizes and plans violence and terrorism during a period of repression by President Gemal Abdel Nasser known as the "mien" (ordeal).  
Sources: [Counter Extremism Project](#), [RAND Corporation](#)
- **December 28, 1948:** The Muslim Brotherhood assassinates Egyptian Prime Minister Mahmud al-Nuqrashi as an act of condemnation of British and Jewish interests in Egypt.  
Sources: [Counter Extremism Project](#), [BBC News](#)
- Hassan al-Banna founds the Muslim Brotherhood in Egypt.

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It is the country's oldest Islamist organization and has branches across the world. Source: [Counter Extremism Project](#)

### **Domestic Counter-Extremism**

Egypt declared a state of emergency in northern parts of the Sinai after a series of October 2014 attacks killed more than 30 soldiers. The government continued to extend the northern Sinai state of emergency every three months. In April 2017, Egypt declared a three-month state of emergency after ISIS bombed two Coptic churches in Tanta and Alexandria the month prior. The state of emergency has been renewed every three months since. (Sources: [Reuters](#), [Associated Press](#), [New York Times](#), [Washington Post](#), [Reuters](#), [Al Jazeera](#), [AllAfrica](#), [CNN](#), [Reuters](#), [Al Jazeera](#), [Egypt Independent](#), [Al Jazeera](#))

#### *Domestic Military Counter-Extremism*

The Egyptian military actively fights against suspected terrorist elements within the country. In October 2018, the Egyptian military reported that it had killed 450 suspected militants since the start of a military offensive that February. The military also claimed it had dismantled more than 1,200 explosive devices and destroyed approximately 1,900 vehicles in the same period. On November 16, 2015, Egyptian forces reportedly killed 24 ISIS militants hiding in a cave in the Sinai and captured eight others. In September 2015, the military claimed to have killed almost 300 ISIS members in the Sinai. A series of airstrikes in the Sinai in May 2016 killed 88 ISIS fighters, wounded hundreds more, and destroyed ISIS's weapons storage facilities, according to military sources. Officials said the strikes prevented planned attacks against the Egyptian military. In early August 2016, the Egyptian military also claimed to have killed Wilayat Sinai leader Abu Duaa al-Ansari. According to an Egyptian army statement, the strike "confirms the successful undertakings of the armed forces to avenge our martyrs and the determination to track down and prosecute all terrorist elements and their leaders wherever they are." (Sources: [Associated Press](#), [Reuters](#), [Agence France-Presse](#), [Times of Israel](#), [Times of Israel](#), [Times of Israel](#))

In September 2015, the military claimed to have killed almost 300 ISIS members in the Sinai.

Egyptian and Israeli military sources credited Egypt's offensive with decreased ISIS activity in the Sinai. The sources claimed that from January 2016 to August 2016, ISIS's Sinai affiliate carried out fewer attacks, resulting in fewer casualties, compared with the same periods in 2015 and 2014. (Source: [Times of Israel](#))

In February 2018, the Egyptian military began an ongoing operation called Sinai 2018 to capture or kill ISIS militants in the northern and central Sinai. The operation has resulted in fewer attacks by the Sinai Province, but it has not put a total stop to them. On September 10, 2021, prominent Sinai Province leader Mohamed Saad Kamel, a.k.a. Abu Hamza al-Qadi, turned himself in to the Association of Sinai Tribes, which coordinates with the Egyptian military. Extremist attacks in the Sinai became rarer in the first half of 2021, though they did not end altogether. In March 2021, the Egyptian government began implementing major economic development projects in the Sinai to further dissuade extremists. Despite the successes of Egypt's counterextremism initiatives, ISIS's Sinai Province has continued to sporadically carry out attacks in and around the Sinai Peninsula. (Sources: [Al-Monitor](#), [Times of Israel](#), [Al-Monitor](#))

According to Egyptian media reports, not a single terror attack took place in Egypt in the first quarter of 2023. The pronouncement followed more than 10 years of counterterrorism operations in the Sinai combating ISIS and other extremists. In April 2023, Egyptian and other Arab media reported Egypt had successfully "freed" the Sinai from terrorism. Egyptian president Abdel Fattah el-Sisi made the declaration earlier that month while visiting military and security sites in Sinai. Egypt successfully employed local reforms to confront extremist ideas in religious institutions and dismantle the "foundational ideas of violence in all its forms and manifestations," according to a United Arab Emirates media report. The report noted Egypt may be able to export these lessons to other areas. (Source: [Jerusalem Post](#))

Egypt has not limited its forces to the Sinai Peninsula, and the military's use of live fire has resulted in the accidental deaths of civilians. On September 13, 2015, for example, a military airstrike killed two Mexican tourists and 10 others, including Egyptian tour guides, while chasing militants in the Western Desert. The group had wandered into a restricted area, according to the Egyptian government. (Sources: [Guardian](#), [Guardian](#))

Egyptian forces face criticism for extra-judicial killings of detainees. According to Egypt's Interior Ministry, security forces killed 235 people during raids in 2018. In the first half of 2019, security forces killed at least 153. Complaints filed by victims' relatives allege that multiple Egyptian

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citizens detained by security forces have disappeared only to later be allegedly killed in exchanges of gunfire. The U.S. Department of State has also noted numerous cases of arbitrary and extrajudicial killings by Egyptian security forces. The State Department has also noted that Egypt has not held any individual or government body accountable for state violence since 2013. Human Rights Watch and other rights groups have accused Egypt of failing to hold its forces accountable. A September 2021 Human Rights Watch report concluded dozens of alleged armed militants killed in so-called shootouts with Egyptian forces did not pose an imminent danger to security forces or others when they were killed. In many cases, the suspects were already in custody when they were killed. According to Human Rights Watch data, the Interior Ministry announced the deaths of at least 755 people in 143 alleged shootouts between January 2015 and December 2020. During that period, only one suspect was arrested. Human Rights Watch has called on the United States, European Union, and Egypt's other international allies to impose sanctions on Egyptian officials and for Egyptian authorities to fully investigate incidents of extrajudicial killings. (Sources: [Wall Street Journal](#), [U.S. Department of State](#), [Reuters](#), [Human Rights Watch](#))

### *Legislation*

In July 2017, President Abdel Fattah el-Sisi called for the creation of a National Council for Combating Terrorism and Extremism. On April 1, 2018, Egypt's Parliamentarian Committee of Constitutional and Legislative Affairs passed a bill to create a Supreme Council on Terrorism and Extremism. Sisi approved the creation of the council on April 26. According to Egyptian media reports, the new body will address socio-political reasons behind terrorism and extremism in Egypt without impacting individual rights. The new council is charged with mobilizing communal support to combat extremism, creating economic opportunities in extremism-prone areas, and coordinating with security forces. The independent council has the authority to make decisions on existing counterterrorism and counter-extremism policies to expedite terrorism cases in the court system. The council is also charged with amending educational curriculums to instill tolerance and the value of citizenship within Egypt. (Sources: [Egypt Today](#), [Egypt Independent](#))

Egypt passed a new constitution in January 2014. Article 237 committed Egypt to "fighting all types and forms of terrorism and tracking its sources of funding...." Following the December 2016 ISIS bombing of a Coptic Christian church in Cairo, Egyptian President Abdel Fattah el-Sisi called on Egypt's parliament to draft legislation to allow more "decisive" methods of dealing with militants. (Sources: [U.S. Department of State](#), [Associated Press](#))

Egypt adopted a new counterterrorism law in August 2015 in response to the June assassination of Egypt's chief prosecutor, Hisham Barakat. The new law protects state security officers from prosecution for using proportionate force "in performing their duties." It also grants the government wider surveillance capabilities and threatens steep fines for journalists who contradict official government statements on attacks or security operations. The law further mandates prison sentences for those convicted of incitement to terrorism. Those convicted of forming or leading terrorist organizations can receive life sentences or the death penalty. (Sources: [New York Times](#), [Al Jazeera](#), [Business Insider](#))

Press advocates said the law threatened newspapers that could not afford the steep fines of 200,000 to 500,000 Egyptian pounds (approximately \$25,000 to \$60,000) for publishing "false" reports that differ from the official record on security matters. Egyptian Rule of Law Association member and Long Island University professor Dalia Fahmy accused the government of "not protecting the citizenry, but rather protecting the state." (Source: [Al Jazeera](#))

Tom Malinowski, assistant secretary of the U.S. Bureau of Democracy, Human Rights, and Labor, testified before the U.S. House of Representatives in November 2015 that Egypt has initiated "a series of executive initiatives, new laws and judicial actions that severely restrict" such freedoms as expression, press, association, peaceful assembly, and due process. Malinowski further accused Egyptian counterterrorism legislation of failing to distinguish between "peaceful dissent and violent extremism." (Sources: [U.S. Department of State](#))

In late 2014, Egypt passed the Terrorist Entities Law, which employs a broad definition that human rights groups fear could be applied to civil society. The law defines a terrorist entity as "any association, organization, group or gang that practices, aims at or calls for destabilizing public order, endangers society's well-being or its safety interests or endangers social unity by using violence, power, threats or acts of terrorism to achieve its goals." Designated groups have the right to appeal their designation. Individuals added to the list are designated for a period of five years and are subjected to a travel ban, asset freeze, and passport cancellation. By 2023, Egypt's list of terrorist entities had grown to more than 6,300. On April 14, 2023, the government added 81 individuals to its terrorism list under the Terrorist Entities Law. The additions included human rights defenders, journalists, and political activists. The designations drew broad condemnation from Egyptian and international human rights groups, who warned the government was using the law to silence dissent. Multiple Al Jazeera journalists have been added to the list for spreading false news, among other charges. The Qatar-based news agency has called on Egypt to "reconsider and refrain from measures that impede journalistic work and restrict freedoms." (Sources: [U.S. Department of State](#), [Al-Monitor](#), [Egyptian Initiative for Personal Rights](#), [Middle East Eye](#), [Al Jazeera](#))

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On September 28, 2016, Egypt's Criminal Court of Zagazig sentenced 40 ISIS militants to life in prison for ties to ISIS, recruiting youth to ISIS, and planning attacks against police and Christians. Twenty of the accused were sentenced in absentia. According to prosecutors, the group's ringleaders were arrested at Cairo International Airport while trying to leave for Syria and gave authorities detailed confessions. Human rights groups have accused Egyptian authorities of using torture to coerce confessions. (Source: [Associated Press](#))

In 1972, Egypt's government passed the Dismissal Without Disciplinary Action Act, which allowed the government to dismiss any public employee deemed a threat to state security. On July 12, 2021, Egypt's parliament passed amendments to the act to include inclusion on Egypt's terrorism list as "serious evidence" of posing a threat. The amendments allow the government to dismiss employees without prior disciplinary action based on their affiliation with Islamist movements—such as the Muslim Brotherhood—deemed a threat to the country. The amendments also allow for the dismissal of suspects in terrorism cases who are still under investigation or whose trials are still ongoing. Some in Egypt feared the government would use the amendments to further purge any civil servants who disagree with government positions and policies. (Sources: [Reuters](#), [Daily Sabah](#))

### *Gaza Strip Buffer Zone*

In October 2014, the Egyptian government began work to build a buffer zone in the Sinai Peninsula along the border with the Gaza Strip. The government sought to use the buffer to decrease Hamas's smuggling through underground tunnels beneath the border. In October 2017, the Egyptian government seized homes along the border area in order to expand the buffer zone. According to a government statement, the additional seizures would allow the buffer zone to expand to a width of .9 miles and length of 8 miles. According to Human Rights Watch, the Egyptian government has evicted 3,200 families (Sources: [Reuters](#), [Agence France-Presse](#))

## **International Counter-Extremism**

Egypt announced plans in September 2015 to buy two new warships from France, due for delivery in June and September 2016. Analysts suspect Egypt is seeking to reinforce its military capabilities in light of the turmoil in neighboring Libya and nearby Yemen. According to Peter Roberts of the Royal United Services Institute, Egypt is broadening its focus from insecurity in the Sinai to a regional outlook. (Sources: [Reuters](#), [Defense Industry Daily](#))

### *ISIS*

Egypt is part of the Global Coalition to Counter ISIL. U.S. Secretary of State John Kerry believes Egypt has a key role to play in the coalition. Egypt has provided logistical and political support and made efforts to prevent the travel of foreign fighters to join ISIS in Syria. (Sources: [U.S. Department of State](#), [Al Arabiya](#))

Egypt has not taken military action against ISIS in Syria and Iraq because it is combating the group's affiliate in the Sinai Peninsula.

Egypt has not taken military action against ISIS in Syria and Iraq because it is combating the group's affiliate in the Sinai Peninsula. The Egyptian military did, however, conduct multiple airstrikes against ISIS entities in Libya after the beheading of 21 kidnapped Egyptian Christians in February 2015. El-Sisi has since made failed attempts to convince the anti-ISIS coalition to help destroy ISIS in Libya. The Egyptian air force began coordinating overflights into Israeli air space in 2015 to strike ISIS targets close to the Israeli border. It is the first time Egyptian warplanes entered Israeli airspace since the 1973 war. (Sources: [CNN](#), [Al Arabiya](#), [Daily Beast](#), [YNet News](#))

Beginning on May 26, 2017, Egypt launched a series of airstrikes in Libya against terrorist training camps in response to an ISIS attack that killed 29 Coptic Christians traveling to a monastery in Egypt. According to Egyptian officials, the airstrikes in Libya hit camps belonging to the al-Qaeda-aligned Shura Council. Egypt pledged to continue its strikes in Libya, alleging that the ISIS militants who carried out the attack had received training in Libya. (Sources: [Wall Street Journal](#), [Guardian](#), [Reuters](#), [Voice of America](#))

Jordan and the United Arab Emirates have offered Egypt military assistance to combat ISIS. In December 2015, Egypt joined a Saudi-led coalition of 34 predominantly Muslim nations to confront ISIS. During a March 2015 meeting in Cairo, the Council of the League of Arab States approved a proposal from President Abdel Fattah el-Sisi to create a unified Arab military force to counter regional security threats. (Sources: [CNN](#), [CNN](#), [CNN](#), [Reuters](#))

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### *Qatar*

While visiting Saudi Arabia on May 21, 2017, Sisi publicly denounced Qatari support for international terrorism. On June 5, 2017, Egypt, Saudi Arabia, Bahrain, and the United Arab Emirates severed diplomatic relations with Qatar over the country's support for terrorism. The nations also barred Qatari citizens and closed all of their borders to Qatar. The Egyptian foreign ministry cited Qatar's support for the Muslim Brotherhood and ISIS, particularly in Egypt's Sinai Peninsula. The ministry also cited Qatari hostility toward Egypt through the Qatari state-operated Al Jazeera network and other media outlets. Egypt has also accused Qatar of interfering in its domestic affairs. (Sources: [Reuters](#), [CNN](#), [CNN](#), [Al-Monitor](#), [Reuters](#), [Agence France-Presse](#))

In a July 2017 interview with CNN, Egyptian Foreign Minister Sameh Shoukry accused Qatar of "supporting radical organizations." He further blamed Qatar for "human suffering" in Syria and Yemen. He also accused Qatari media outlets of "glorifying terrorist activities." The four Arab nations issued a series of demands of Qatar earlier that month, which included closing the Al Jazeera news agency. Qatar reportedly rejected the demands. In response, Egypt's foreign ministry called the Arab demands non-negotiable. (Sources: [CNN](#), [Reuters](#))

On January 4, 2021, Kuwait's government announced it had mediated a deal under which Saudi Arabia agreed to allow Qatar to use Saudi airspace in exchange for Qatar dropping legal suits against the four nations. Saudi Arabia also agreed to open its land and sea crossings to Qatar as of January 4. The Kuwait-negotiated deal did not address Qatar's support for terrorism or its ties to Iran. Only Saudi Arabia agreed initially to lift its blockade of Qatar, but U.S. officials reported Egypt, Bahrain, and the UAE would soon follow. The U.S. Trump administration supported the deal and Trump's son-in-law and adviser Jared Kushner reportedly helped negotiate the agreement, but U.S. officials denied that recently negotiated sales of more than \$760 million in arms to Saudi Arabia and more than \$100 million to Egypt were related to either country agreeing to the deal. (Sources: [CNN](#), [Reuters](#), [Wall Street Journal](#), [Al Jazeera](#))

### *Yemen*

Egypt participates in the Saudi Arabia-led coalition against Iran-backed Houthi rebels in Yemen. In August 2015, Egypt extended its participation in airstrikes against the rebels for six months. Egypt deployed up to 800 ground troops to Yemen in September 2015 as part of a 2,000-plus Arab fighting force. According to an unnamed Egyptian military official cited by Reuters, the death of any Egyptian soldier in Yemen "would be an honor and considered martyrdom for the sake of innocent people." (Sources: [Al Jazeera](#), [Defense News](#))

### *International*

In May 2023, Egypt and the European Union became co-chairs of the Global Counterterrorism Forum (GCTF). The GCTF confirmed Egypt and the European Union's leadership bid in April 2022, but human rights groups have raised concerns about abuses carried out under the pretense of counterterrorism. In April 2023, Amnesty International, Human Rights Watch, and the Cairo Institute for Human Rights Studies raised these concerns in a letter to EU foreign policy chief Josep Borrell that accused Egypt of using "counterterrorism to clamp down on human rights." The organizations urged the European Union to raise these concerns with Egyptian officials and make human rights a priority for the GCTF. Created in 2011, the GCTF also includes Saudi Arabia, Russia, China, and Pakistan among its 30 member nations. The co-chair appointment is for a two-year period. (Sources: [Middle East Eye](#), [Global Counterterrorism Forum](#))

## **Public Opinion**

Following the Paris terrorist attacks of November 13, 2015, Egypt's Grand Mufti Shawki Allam denounced violent extremists who cloak their actions in religion but do not follow the teachings of true Islam. He described the attacks as "senseless, heinous, appalling and cowardly" and "an attack against all humanity" as defined by the Quran. Allam called the attackers "products of troubled environments" who "subscribed to distorted and misguided interpretations of Islam that have no basis in traditional Islamic doctrine." (Source: [Reuters](#))

Egyptians voiced frustration that the victims of the Paris attacks received greater international outcry than victims of attacks by ISIS and other terrorist groups in Egypt. Columnist Mohammed Amin, from Egypt's *al Masr al Youm* newspaper, told readers not to believe President Obama's words of sympathy. He spread the notion that the United States was behind the Paris attacks and that the Western anti-ISIS coalition was not serious about fighting terrorism. Satirical cartoons of the West's seemingly double-standard reaction trended on Twitter. (Source: [Daily Beast](#))

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Many Egyptians believed President Abdel Fattah el-Sisi's August 2015 anti-terrorism laws would be twisted to prevent political dissent. "Midnight laws mark the republic of darkness. A law which has been passed, and considers all criticism or dissenting voice or acts that are not to the state's liking... terrorism," tweeted human-rights activist Jamal Eid. The editor-in-chief of the *Al-Misriyun* newspaper believes that "[v]ery dark days lay ahead" for journalists and anyone wishing to share their opinions. (Source: [BBC News](#))

A September 2014 poll by the [Washington Institute for Near East Policy](#) found that only 3 percent of Egyptians approve of ISIS. The study also found that one-third of Egyptians views Hamas positively while 35 percent approve of the Muslim Brotherhood. Only 12 percent of the Egyptian population viewed the United States positively.