

International and Regional Cooperation: As of December, members of the Bahrain Defense Force remained deployed — but in reduced numbers — in Yemen as part of the Saudi-led coalition’s operations against Houthi militants and AQAP. Bahrain is a member of the Gulf Cooperation Council, the Organization of Islamic Cooperation, and the Arab League.

EGYPT

Overview: All terrorist attacks in Egypt during the year took place in the Sinai Peninsula. Egyptian counterterrorism efforts continued, as ISIS-Sinai Province conducted regular small arms and IED attacks against security forces, civilians, and critical infrastructure. ISIS-Sinai Province also continued to execute individuals suspected of collaborating with the Egyptian government and military. Throughout the year, the Egyptian security forces reportedly uncovered and destroyed more than 750 weapons caches and killed more than 150 suspected terrorists through a combination of ground assaults, air strikes, and special operation raids, according to a series of official government publications.

Based on open-source reporting, there were an estimated 234 terrorist attacks across the country in 2020, of which the vast majority were claimed by ISIS-SP. In late July, ISIS-SP led a westward offensive that overran and infiltrated villages near Bir al-Abd, 37 miles east of the Suez Canal in the Sinai Peninsula. The offensive and subsequent three-month security operation to reestablish security and remove ISIS-planted booby traps displaced an estimated 10,000 local residents. In October the North Sinai governor released the first official Egyptian government statistics on civilian casualties in the governorate, reporting 1,004 civilian deaths and 2,800 civilian injuries over the past six years. The report did not distinguish whether civilian casualties resulted from terrorism or government CT operations, or from both. The North Sinai governor reported in June paying more than \$220 million in compensation for residents harmed by counterterrorism operations from 2015 to 2020.

There were no major attacks outside of the Sinai Peninsula, though terrorist attacks targeting civilians, tourists, and security personnel in mainland Egypt and the greater Cairo region remained a concern, particularly from Harakat Sawa’d Misr (HASM) and al-Qa’ida-allied groups such as Ansar al-Islam. Security forces reported foiling several militant threats, including

- A HASM plot on National Police Day — the ninth anniversary of the 2011 protests that sparked the Egyptian revolution.
- On April 14 a shootout with militants in the Amiriyah neighborhood of Cairo disrupted a plot against Coptic Orthodox Easter celebrations.

The United Nations Office of the High Commissioner for Human Rights, as well as local and international NGOs, continued to maintain that Egyptian authorities unjustly used counterterrorism and state-of-emergency laws and courts to prosecute journalists, activists, lawyers, politicians, university professors, and critics for exercising freedom of expression.

2020 Terrorist Incidents: Attack methods largely remained the same as in recent years, including small arms attacks, IEDs, VBIEDs, kidnappings, executions, complex assaults, ambushes, and targeted assassinations. ISIS-Sinai Province’s offensive near Bir al-Abd

demonstrated the terrorist group's sustained capabilities and the continued inability of Egyptian forces to permanently degrade the group. Other notable terrorist incidents conducted by ISIS-Sinai included the following:

- On February 9, ISIS-SP attacked a government checkpoint near Zilzal in North Sinai resulting in the deaths of seven Egyptian Armed Forces (EAF) soldiers.
- On April 30, ISIS-SP attacked an EAF vehicle with an IED, killing 10 EAF members in Bir al-Abd, North Sinai.
- On June 19, multiple ISIS-SP IEDs killed seven local tribesmen in al-Barth, North Sinai.
- On August 6, ISIS-SP attacked an EAF checkpoint with small arms resulting in the deaths of 15 EAF soldiers near Wasit in South Sinai.
- On November 20 and December 24, ISIS-SP claimed responsibility for separate attacks against an Egypt-Israel gas pipeline.

From October to December, at least 15 civilians returning to Bir al-Abd after the July offensive were killed by booby-trapped IEDs left behind by ISIS-Sinai Province.

Legislation, Law Enforcement, and Border Security: The Egyptian government continued to use emergency laws and counterterrorism authorities to prosecute activists, journalists, political candidates, and critics. In March the Egyptian government ratified amendments to the 2015 Antiterrorism Law, expanding the definitions of terrorist entities and terror financing for the purposes of this law. The amendments also broadened the definition of funds to include a variety of assets tied to entities promoting what the Egyptian government determines to be “extremist” ideology, established a compulsory requirement for local authorities to cooperate and provide information relating to money laundering, and outlined requirements for the authorities to publish statistics on its activities countering terror financing.

Egypt's most significant physical border security concerns remained Libya, Sudan, and Gaza. In December the Egyptian military announced that air strikes destroyed a convoy of 21 vehicles attempting to illegally cross Egypt's border with Libya. At border crossings and airports, Egyptian authorities continued to authenticate travel documents by verifying the presence of advanced security features. They also conducted checks of some individuals and shared derogatory information among border security authorities for further action. Egypt maintains a terrorist watchlist for Egyptian immigration officials at the ports of entry, with detailed information maintained by the security services. The United States assisted Egypt's counterterrorism efforts by providing training, equipment, and other assistance to its law enforcement and security services.

Countering the Financing of Terrorism: Egypt is a member of MENAFATF, serving as the chair in 2020. Its FIU, Egypt's Money Laundering and Terrorist Financing Combating Unit, is a member of the Egmont Group and the National Council of Payments. Egypt is also a member of the Defeat-ISIS CFIG.

In 2020, Egypt amended its 2015 Antiterrorism Law to expand the definition of the crime of funding terrorist acts to include providing a place for terrorist training; providing terrorists with

weapons or documents; and offering support and financing for terrorist travel, even if there is no direct link to a terrorist crime.

Countering Violent Extremism: The Egyptian government continued to organize and promote CVE programs, including through curriculum reform.

Al-Azhar Grand Imam Ahmed al-Tayyeb and other religious leaders continued to promote more-inclusive public messaging throughout the year regarding the importance of interfaith dialogue between Muslims and non-Muslims, and regularly produced messaging and fatwas to counter violent extremist narratives. The Al-Azhar International Center for Electronic Fatwa, Dar Al-Iftaa, and other organizations produced messaging denouncing violent extremism. In June the Ministry of Awqaf formed a committee “to counter violent extremist ideology” and dismiss preachers it considered “extremist.”

International and Regional Cooperation: Egypt served a second term as co-chair of the GCTF East Africa Working Group. The United Nations selected Egypt to serve alongside Spain as co-facilitators for the seventh periodic review of the UN Global Counter-Terrorism Strategy. Egypt continued to participate in numerous counterterrorism organizations, including regional-level entities focused on border security as a means to combat the flow of foreign fighters.

IRAQ

Overview: The primary terrorist threats within Iraq included ISIS remnants and Iran-aligned militia groups, including U.S.-designated Harakat al-Nujaba, Kata’ib Hizballah, and Asa’ib Ahl al-Haq as well as the smaller Iranian-aligned militias claiming to be a part of Iraq’s “resistance.” The Kurdistan Workers’ Party (or PKK), a terrorist group headquartered in the mountains of northern Iraq, also conducted multiple attacks in the Iraqi Kurdistan Region (IKR) that resulted in the deaths of several Kurdish security forces personnel.

Despite its territorial defeat, ISIS continued to conduct operations on a smaller scale, particularly in the North and West, including rural areas with limited presence of the Iraqi Security Forces (ISF). ISIS sought to reestablish footholds in Anbar, Diyala, Kirkuk, Ninewa, and Salah al-Din provinces, especially in the areas of disputed control between the Kurdistan Regional Government and the federal government. Although ISIS maintained its capability to conduct deadly terrorist attacks in Iraq, these attacks resulted in fewer casualties in 2020 than in previous recent years. Attack methods included bombings, indirect fire, IEDs, and ambushes. Iraq remains a pivotal member of the Global Coalition to Defeat ISIS and a participant in all Coalition Working Groups (Foreign Terrorist Fighters, Counter-ISIS Finance Group, Stabilization, and Communications). The Counter Terrorism Service (CTS) conducted more than 253 operations against ISIS during 2020, often with Defeat-ISIS support.

Iraqi counterterrorism functions are principally executed by the CTS, a cabinet-level entity reporting directly to the prime minister, as well as by various security forces under the Ministries of Defense and Interior and the Kurdish Peshmerga. In limited instances, Popular Mobilization Forces (PMF) augment Iraqi Army and CTS-led operations. While all PMF are required by law to operate as part of the ISF, many PMF groups continued to defy central government command