



المعهد المصري للدراسات  
EGYPTIAN INSTITUTE FOR STUDIES

# Sinai

13 NOVEMBER  
2018

## Developments of the Sinai Scene in October

Haitham Ghoneim



[WWW.EIPSS-EG.ORG](http://WWW.EIPSS-EG.ORG)

Eipss.EG Eis\_EG

TURKEY- ISTANBUL

Bahçelievler, Yenibosna Mh 29 Ekim Cad. No: 7 A2 Blok 3. Plaza D: 64  
Tel/Fax: +90 212 227 2262 E-Mail: [info@eis-eg.org](mailto:info@eis-eg.org)

## Developments of the Sinai Scene in October

Haitham Ghoneim

The month of October 2018 witnessed an intensive media activity for the Egyptian military spokesman, where he attempted to improve the image of the army regarding the comprehensive Operation-Sinai 2018, claiming that the extension of the military operation for a long period was due to keenness to preserve the lives of civilians. On the military side, the Egyptian Ministry of Defense continued to hide its real losses on the ground amid an intensive media blackout to avoid the reaction of the public opinion.

### First: Casualties and Losses as declared by the Army and militants

Here are the casualties and losses during October derived from the Egyptian Army communiques and the statements declared by militants as well as media reports:

#### 1- Casualties and Losses as Declared by Egyptian Army

As reported by the military spokesman of the Egyptian army and through two communiques ([28](#),[29](#)) on military operations in October, with focus on communique No. 29 which addresses the military activity in Sinai in Oct., the casualties and losses included:



- The army killed 34 “gunmen” and the interior ministry forces killed 36 “gunmen”, including 11 persons that were killed in September; thus the total number of fatalities reported in October reached 59.
- Some 129 suspects were arrested, 44 vehicles and 87 motorbikes were seized and destroyed, 154 shelters and storehouses were destroyed, 141 improvised explosive devices were seized and destroyed, a number of tunnels were destroyed; a drone, a wire, and a laptop were seized, and a number of automatic rifles and shotguns were seized. According to the two communiqués, only two officers, one non-commissioned officer and a conscript were killed.

### Notes on the declared numbers

- We focused on the military communique No. 29 issued on November 1, as it focuses on the statistics of casualties and losses in October.
- Reviewing the number of “gunmen” killed by the Interior Ministry’s National Security Service, we find that in the first communique, 26 “gunmen” were killed; however, eleven of them were killed in September, including Mohamad Ibrahim Gabr Shahin, who had been arrested and disappeared forcibly, together with his son, Ibrahim (on 25 July 2018), and the remaining 15 victims were reported on 3 October (on the liquidation of 15 citizens under the pretext of being terrorists)
- The total army casualties mentioned in the two communiqués was just two officers, one non-commissioned officer, and one conscript; a number that does not reflect the size of the real casualties, which can be monitored through the reports circulated on the social networking sites about the funerals of military personnel killed in military operations in the North and Central Sinai.

November 13, 2018

## 2- Casualties and Losses as Declared by militants and media reports

According to what was monitored by the [Egyptian Institute for Political and Strategic Studies](#) in October, the losses of the army and police forces were as follows:



- At least 13 military personnel were killed, including 2 officers, in addition to the assassination of 4 citizens on the grounds of cooperation with the army forces, while at least 8 soldiers were injured, including one officer.

However, these numbers do not reflect the size of army losses when we look at the number of clashes that took place during this month and the size of military vehicles that were targeted.

- At the level of operations, the IS affiliate, Sinai Province, engaged in more than 13 armed clashes with the army in the area of Bela, Rafah, in particular and in areas south of Sheikh Zuwaid.

- The Sinai Province also announced that its snipers carried out eight attacks against army and police targets, and that its fighters blew up more than 30 anti-armor and

anti-personnel improvised explosive devices, resulting in the destruction or damaging of 27 military vehicles.

## Second: Overview of the military operation developments

Following is an overview of the developments of Egypt's Comprehensive Operation - Sinai 2018 during its eighth month (September 2018):

The comprehensive Operation-Sinai 2018 continued for the ninth month in a row as it started on 9 February. Our observations on the operation this month are as follows:

- 1- The IS affiliate organization, Sinai Province, published a report on October 3, announcing that its fighters led a guerrilla warfare against the army forces in the streets of the evicted Balaa area in the city of Rafah. The IS report notes how the organization's fighters benefited from the eviction of the village inhabitants in moving freely between houses in confrontations.
- 2- After the Sinai Province announced its report, Israeli and Egyptian drones carried out multiple air raids against targets in the village of Balaa and other areas. The raids that continued for two days were described by local population as the fiercest attack over weeks.
- 3- The operations of the Egyptian army forces during October targeted areas in Balaa, west of Rafah, and Shelifat, south of Rafah, and areas in Sheikh Zuwaid.
- 4- The return of the military spokesman communique on the comprehensive Operation Sinai-2018, which continued to report the physical liquidation of citizens declared by the Egyptian Ministry of the Interior as IS casualties in armed clashes.
- 5- The Egyptian army forces continued use of military balloons for the purpose of photography and spying on communications in the areas south of the city of Sheikh Zwaid.

6- Maintaining the policy of carrying out physical liquidation of some of the disappeared forcibly. The Egyptian Ministry of Interior's National Security Service liquidated 25 citizens in October claiming that they were gunmen killed in clashes during security forces raids.

7- The Egyptian Ministry of the Interior continues to restrict the freedom of movement of citizens in the cities of El Arish and Sheikh Zuwaid and the remaining areas of Rafah, with continued security campaigns in villages of Bir al-Abd. It should be noted that this policy did not stop the assassination operations in the city of EL Arish but on the contrary led to increased feelings of hatred and anger against the security forces.

8- Continuation of the poor performance of the IS operations, which reflects its temporary decrease in capacity on the ground due to many factors, including qualitative targeting of its leaders and continuous aerial bombardments and campaigns.

9- Continued operations carried out by the Sinai Province inside the city of El Arish.

10- The IS-affiliate organization is keen to raise the moral status of its supporters through Al-Nabaa newspaper; as it published in Issue No. 153, a feature about the "Reality of the failed campaign of Egypt's Tyrant on Sinai".

11- Continued intensive activity of the Israeli drones in terms of survey and targeting IS members in the Sinai.

### Third: Israeli Drone attacks and violation of sovereignty

During this month, intensive activity of the Israeli drones in Sinai was monitored. During the first ten days of the month, there were several violations of Egyptian sovereignty in areas of operation in the northeast of Sinai in Sheikh Zuwaid and Rafah, as follows:

- On 3 October, an Israeli drone carried out aerial survey over Al-Barth village, south of Rafah.
- On 4 and 5 October, more than an Israeli drone carried out reconnaissance activity and then launched several air raids inside Egyptian territory over two days targeting the villages of Balaa, Masawrah, Al-Hilweh, Shalalfeh, Tayrah, Shabana, Al-Muqata'a, and Dahir, south of Sheikh Zuwaid.
- On 7 October, an Israeli drone carried out reconnaissance over the villages of Al-Masura, Al-Hilweh, Rafiah, Al-Tayera and Mahdia in Rafah.
- On 14, 15, 16, 17 and 18 October, Israeli drones conducted an aerial survey of the sea coast of Rafah city, the Balaa area west of Rafah, and the Shalala area south of Rafah.
- On 29 October, two Israeli drones carried out aerial reconnaissance over the areas of southern Rafah and Sheikh Zweid.

In light of the ongoing military operation in Sinai, the residents of the governorate of North Sinai continue to suffer from the hindering of trade and fishing activities in light of the siege imposed on the southern area of Sheikh Zuwaid and the remaining part of the city of Rafah, resulting in severe shortages of food, drinking water, and fuel.