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Developments of the Sinai Scene
in October

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The Sinai Security Scene in November

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Operation Sinai 2018 has continued in North Sinai, increasing the suffering of citizens with respect to the high rates of unemployment and poverty, which is not in favor of the Egyptian regime as it creates the appropriate [circumstances](#) for likely insurgency in the future, albeit under different umbrellas. However, this does not necessarily mean that there is real popular sympathy with the Islamic State organization, known in Sinai as 'Sinai Province', which is suspected by the Sinai people of being behind some attacks that badly affected them, such as the [Rawda Mosque](#) massacre on November 24, 2017, in the village of Al-Rawda, 40 kilometers from Al-Arish, North Sinai, which left 312 dead, including 26 children.

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

No communiques were issued by the military spokesman of the Egyptian army during this month about developments of the military Operation Sinai 2018, but according to some Egyptian newspapers citing an official source in the Ministry of Interior, the security forces on November 12 [foiled](#) a suicide attack by a militant wearing an explosive belt while he was targeting a security force at the "Batal 5" Checkpoint on the ring road in Arish; where the suicide bomber was wearing an explosive belt, was killed before being able to detonate. The Interior Ministry's National Security Sector

on 22 November [liquidated](#) 12 citizens under the pretext of exchange of fire when forces stormed three deserted buildings allegedly used by militant as hideouts in the northern part of the Sinai Peninsula. An Interior Ministry statement said the militants were the first to open fire on the policemen as they surrounded the buildings in the Mediterranean coastal city of El-Arish. The statement said the forces seized firearms, ammunition and improvised explosive devices. The statement also said there were no casualties among the police.

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, including 3 officers and 2 non-commissioned officers were killed, in addition to assassination of 1 citizen for allegedly collaborating with the Egyptian intelligence, and wounding at least 2 military personnel.

However, this figure does not reflect the real size of casualties among military forces when compared to the number of military vehicles that were targeted during operations, taking into consideration that the Egyptian regime is keen on hiding the real data on casualties and losses military and security forces.

- At the level of operations, the Sinai Province said it engaged in more than 5 armed clashes against the army forces.

- We have been able to monitor only one case of targeting military personnel with a sniping rifle, and the use of 19 anti-tank and personnel explosive devices. However, operations resulted in the destruction/damage of 18 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 (November 2018):

1- The most prominent event during November, specifically on Nov. 15, was the release of a new [video](#) message titled: "Way of Righteousness: From the Darkness to the Light – Wilayat Saynaa (Sinai Province)". The Islamic State's video had been delayed for several months since the militant organization promoted it in March, in a video titled : "The Failed Confrontation". The recent video announced the death of the organization's most famous spokesman in Sinai, "Abu Osama al-Masri". The video also resolved the controversy over the fact that a group of Special Forces officers [joined](#) the militant organization, as Egyptian intelligence services had not been aware that they had joined Sinai Province since they disappeared in 2015.

2- During November, the Sinai Province's video referred to in the previous point, in addition to another report it published, noted that the militant organization was trying to discover Israeli security cells that had penetrated it and led to the killing of most of its senior leaders. The released video showed some executions that were carried out against some IS members accused of working for the Israeli intelligence, as well as the execution of a citizen, Ayad Dhuihi Brikat, allegedly spying on them in favor of Egyptian intelligence.

3- This month witnessed a continued weak activity to the Sinai Province, which shows it was affected by the continuous Israeli aerial bombardment and the continuous pressure resulting from the comprehensive Operation Sinai 2018. In addition, the militant organization lost part of its popular incubation due to some operations it carried out against the local population.

4- Monitoring the emergence of a cell belonging to the IS affiliate Sinai Province in the area of Qantara East, where an ambush of a police patrol was attacked, and local sources reported the [death](#) of five police officers, but the Egyptian regime did not report the incident.

5- On November 12, the Central Security Forces foiled a suicide attack by a militant wearing an explosive belt while he was targeting a security force at the “Batal 5” Checkpoint on the ring road in Arish; where the suicide bomber was wearing an explosive belt, was killed before being able to detonate.

6- Continued army military campaigns to demolish the remaining areas of Rafah, and besieging and storming areas south of Sheikh Zwaid, and November witnessed clashes with these forces in the areas Moqataa, Balaa, and Shalalfa.

7- An Egyptian army soldier shot at an Israeli military vehicle, and it was reported that the incident was under investigation. However, the incident revealed according to Israeli statements that the Egyptian army forces suffered weekly losses as a result of attacks that led to the killing of between 10 to 15 military and police personnel.

8- Maintaining policy of physical liquidation of some of the forcibly disappeared. The Interior Ministry’s National Security Sector on 22 November liquidated 12 citizens under the pretext of exchange of fire when forces stormed three deserted buildings allegedly used by militant as hideouts in the northern part of the Sinai Peninsula. An Interior Ministry statement said the militants were the first to open fire on the policemen as they surrounded the buildings in the Mediterranean coastal city of El-Arish.

9- The Egyptian Ministry of the Interior continues to restrict the freedom of movement of citizens in the cities of El Arish, Sheikh Zuwaid, and the remaining part of Rafah, as security campaigns continued in the villages of Bir al-Abed area.

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

Third: Israeli Drone attacks and violation of sovereignty

This month, we observed four average penetrations of Israeli drones in areas of operation in the northeast Sinai, including areas of Sheikh Zuwaid and Rafah. The penetrations focused on the aerial survey, as follows:

- On 12 November, there were flights and aerial survey of several Israeli drones over the villages of Rafah and south of Sheikh Zwaid.
- On 20 November, Israeli drones carried out several attacks inside Egyptian territory in areas south of Sheikh Zwaid, Rafah and central Sinai.
- On 25 November, there were flights of Israeli drones over the area of Shalalfa in south of Rafah and the border strip.
- On 27 November, Israeli drones penetrated the Egyptian airspace and overflew the villages of Shabana, Mahdiya, Sadut, Qawz Abu Urd, Masura and Taira in the Egyptian Rafah area.