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EGYPTIAN INSTITUTE FOR STUDIES

Sinai

21 AUGUST 2019

## Development of the military situation in Sinai – July

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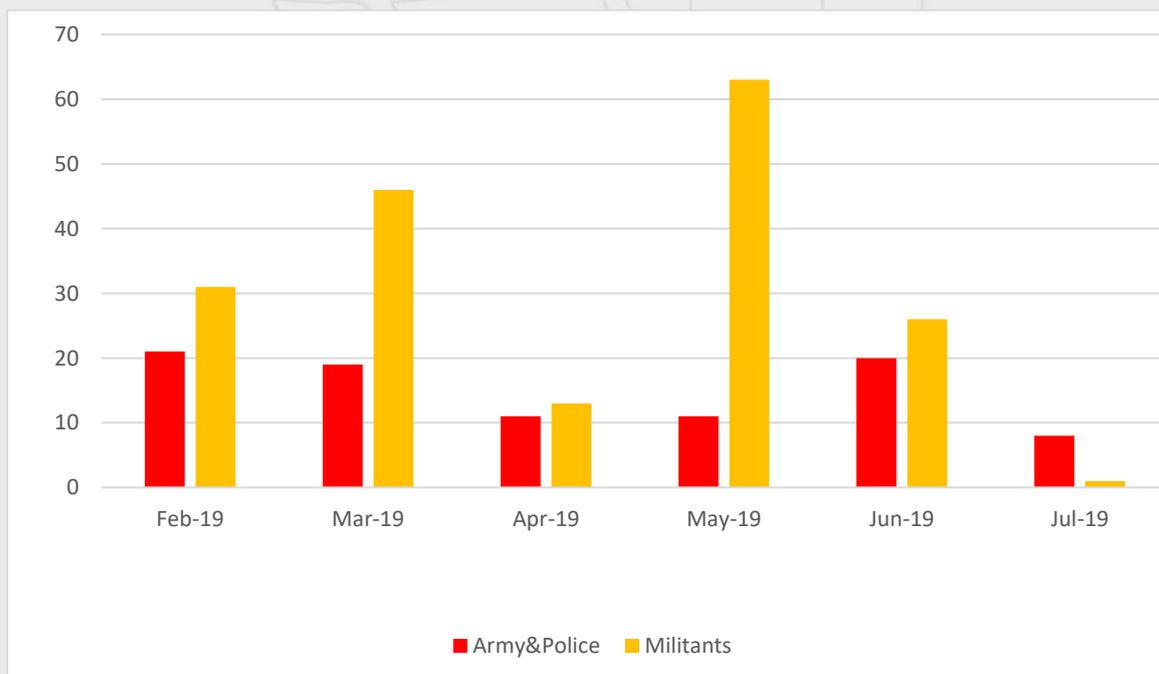
During July, ISIS local affiliate, 'Sinai Province', slaughtered four citizens in the vicinity of North Sinai's Bir al-Abed on charges of communicating with the Egyptian army and police forces. The question that arises is:

*Has the security option, adopted by the regime, succeeded in stopping expansion of the militant organization, or the Egyptian government has chosen to manage the crisis only through pushing 'Sinai Province' to deploy in new areas so that the regime may use as a pretext for eviction of their population in the future?!*

In this report, we will review the course of military and security operations during July in the Sinai Peninsula, as follows:

### Military and security developments

The following graph shows a comparison between the military losses of the two conflicting parties during the last six months, according to sources from both parties as well as the monitoring of the [Egyptian Institute of Studies](#):



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

- Following are the casualties and losses during July 2019 disseminated through the Egyptian Army communiques and the statements declared by militants as well as media reports:

### 1- Casualties and losses as declared by Egyptian Interior Ministry

The military spokesman issued only one [statement](#) during July (18 July) related to military operations in Sinai. The statement said that an army force was able to thwart an attempt by a militant to target the force by blowing himself up. The force clashed with him, which led to killing him, and an army soldier was killed after explosion of the explosive belt the militant was wearing. No other data were announced on the losses of militants by the Egyptian defense or interior ministries.

### 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 July, the casualties and losses of the army and police forces were as follows:

- At least 8 military personnel were killed,
- Some 7 citizens were killed under the pretext of cooperating with the army and police forces,

At the level of operations, we have noticed that there is continued increasing activity of the Sinai Province around El Arish and Bir al-Abed, where the IS local affiliate executed 4 citizens in one of the roads in Amuriya area on the international road between Qantara and El Arish. The militants also stormed a post office belonging to the village of Rawda and seized an amount of at least 75 thousand Egyptian pounds.

In addition, the militant organization returned to engagement in armed clashes with the army forces in areas that had been evacuated by the army forces, for the purpose of disruption or forcing the forces to withdraw. The Sinai Province fought at least two armed clashes in the areas of Rafah and Sheikh Zuwaid. During the month, we monitored the use of sniper weapons by the IS three times, as well as the use of 8 anti-tank explosive devices, resulting in destroying 9 military vehicles.



## Second: Overview of the developments of the military campaign in Sinai Peninsula

Following is an overview of the developments of the military operations in Sinai Peninsula during July 2019:

In July, there was an increasing presence for the Islamic State's local affiliate militants in areas east of the city center of Bir al-Abed, which is not surprising as the organization has been active significantly for months and influentially in areas west of El-Arish city. Our observations on the developments of the military operations this month are as follows:

1- July witnessed a low frequency of field military operations between the Egyptian army and police forces on the one hand and ISIS militants on the other. During July, the IS local affiliate focused on increasing its presence in the vicinity of Bir al-Abed and its villages, which gives us two indications: First, that it is planning to launch operations against the army and police forces in these areas during the coming period. The second indication is that these areas will witness deliberate displacement of citizens under claims to get rid of the IS militants.

2- IS militants attacked the post office of the village of Rawda and seized all available funds, which shows a weak security presence in the village that had witnessed the Rawda Mosque massacre, which raises questions around the absence of security there!

3- On 17 July, militants belonging to the Sinai Province organization ambushed Amoriya area on the international road between Qantara and El Arish, east of Bir al-Abed city, where they searched cars and arrested 4 citizens and slaughtered them immediately on the pretext of cooperation with the Egyptian security forces.

4- Militants belonging to the IS-affiliate Sinai Province killed three citizens in the area of al-Hasana in central Sinai, on the pretext of their cooperation with the army forces.

5- During July, security forces besieged neighborhoods within El Arish 4<sup>th</sup>. Police Station, carrying out searches, and forcing citizens to fill in forms with detailed information about them. The police forces also forced citizens to install surveillance cameras in front of their houses at their expense to monitor the streets.

6- The police forces demolished houses of the families of suspects or wanted persons in the neighborhoods of Salayma, Safa, Fawakhrya.

7- In the area of Bir al-Abed, the authorities decided to ban motorcycles inside the city and related villages completely.

8- As for the armed militias working for the Egyptian army forces, it was [reported](#) that the army forces arrested Mahmoud Ahmed from Al-Shawatra family from the city of Sheikh Zuwaid on charges of trading ammunition, stolen from security checkpoints.

9- Continued closure of the Sabika Salines company due to the threats posed by militants to workers, including kidnapping, as happened with Eng.Taha Abdel Moneim was kidnapped.

10- The militant organization announced this month that one of its members, Abu Qatada al-Ansari, was killed.



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

Intensive activity was monitored on 25 and 26 July for Israeli warplanes on the areas of Rafah and southern Sheikh Zuwaid, North Sinai Governorate, as follows:

- On 25 and 26 July, Israeli drones penetrated Egyptian airspace and launched air strikes targeting:
  - An abandoned building west of Al-Maqrountain School in Al-Safa area, west of Rafah,
  - Al-Muqata'a village, south of Rafah, and
  - Al-Sayayha, Abushnar and Yamit villages, west of Rafah.
- The air raids also targeted other areas in Sheikh Zuwaid but we could not identify them accurately.

It is noteworthy that intervention of "Israeli" drones in Sinai has been taking place on a regular basis since 2011, and Egypt began to pay attention to the use of these drones since 2016.