

ISIS-Sinai



OVERVIEW

AS OF MAY 2025

ISIS-Sinai, a branch of ISIS, has been in decline since at least 2022. Egyptian security services have arrested or killed many of the branch's members, and other members have accepted the government's offers of amnesty and surrendered to the authorities. ISIS-Sinai conducted more than 500 attacks in the Sinai between 2014 and 2022, mostly against Egyptian security forces and local tribal leaders allied with the government. The branch's last claimed terrorist attack was in February 2023.

In 2011, ISIS-Sinai formed, but the branch was formally known as Ansar Bayt al-Maqdis, an al-Qa'ida-aligned group that focused on attacking Israeli targets and called for the use of violence to overthrow the Egyptian Government. Ansar Bayt al-Maqdis began increasing its attacks on Egyptian military and government targets after Egyptian President Muhammad Mursi was removed from office in 2013. Like many jihadist groups in the Middle East, Ansar Bayt al-Maqdis pledged allegiance to ISIS in 2014 and changed its name to ISIS-Sinai.

Operating Area

Based primarily in northern Sinai, Egypt

Members

Unknown

Tactics And Targets

ISIS-Sinai historically employed small-arms assaults, roadside bombs, suicide attacks, kidnappings, and targeted killings. It mostly targeted Egyptian security forces but also attacked government personnel and infrastructure, Israeli targets, local tribal militias, Copts, and other civilians perceived to be working against the group or opposed to its interpretation of Islamic law.

Terrorist Group Designation

The US Department of State designated Ansar Bayt al-Maqdis as a foreign terrorist organization in April 2014; this designation remains in effect with respect to ISIS-Sinai.

KEY LEADERS



Muhammad 'Ali al-'Isawi [DECEASED]

a.k.a. Abu Osama al-Masri

Amir from 2015 until his death in 2018; founding member; claimed responsibility on behalf of the branch for the downing of a Russian plane in 2015; studied sharia at Cairo's al-Azhar University



ISIS-Sinai *(continued)*

NOTABLE ATTACKS

27 February 2023

El Tor, South Sinai

ISIS-Sinai claimed responsibility for a machinegun attack on an Egyptian military vehicle near the town of Saint Catherine that killed one officer and wounded three soldiers.

21 July–26 August 2020

Bi'r al 'Abd, North Sinai, Egypt

ISIS-Sinai members, using small firearms, killed 40 Egyptian soldiers and captured at least four villages on the outskirts of Bi'r al 'Abd. They held the villages for a month until Egyptian forces retook them and killed at least 73 members of ISIS-Sinai.

24 November 2017

Bi'r al 'Abd, North Sinai, Egypt

ISIS-Sinai conducted coordinated suicide bombings and firearms attacks against a Sufi mosque, killing more than 300 worshippers and wounding at least 100.

31 October 2015

Sharm ash Shayk, Sinai, Egypt

ISIS-Sinai smuggled an explosive device onto a Russian passenger plane to retaliate for Russia's counter-ISIS efforts in Syria. The device downed the aircraft shortly after takeoff, killing all 224 passengers.

