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## Development of the military situation in Sinai – August

Haitham Ghoneim



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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)

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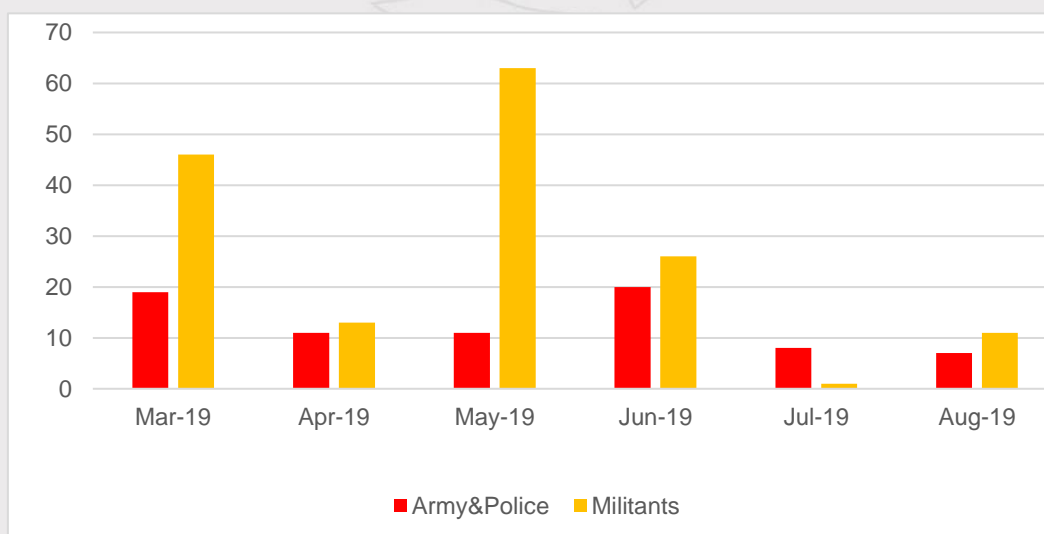
During August, two citizens, including a woman, were killed and 12 citizens, including women and children, were injured by indiscriminate shooting by Egyptian security forces. Activists and some Sinai electronic pages circulated a video showing army recruits in front of a camp in North Sinai governorate while opening fire indiscriminately.

The activity of ISIS local affiliate, 'Sinai Province', continued in the vicinity of the city center of Bir al-Abed, while the military intelligence was reportedly attempting to form armed militias from tribesmen in Bir al-Abed, as it had previously done in Rafah and Sheikh Zuweid. However, these reports confirm that the military intelligence still faces great reluctance and rejection from young Sinai people for fear of being targeted by ISIS militants.

In this report, we will review the course of military and security operations during August 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 August 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 did not issue any statements this month regarding developments in the military situation in Sinai. However, the Chief of Staff of the Armed Forces made an inspection tour in the North Sinai governorate to review development of operations and inspect army forces. On the other hand, the Ministry of Interior announced in a [statement](#) on August 20 that it had killed 11 militants in El-Arish city.

### 2- Casualties and losses as declared by militants and media report:

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

- At least 7 military personnel were killed, and 9 others were injured.
- Two citizens were killed by militants under the pretext of cooperating with the army and police forces.

At the level of operations, we have noticed that there was continued activity of the Sinai Province in the vicinity of Bir al-Abed city, where the IS local affiliate organization executed two citizens. We have monitored presence of a professional sniper within the ranks of the militant organization, which reflected on the accuracy of targeting and the killing rate this month.



The IS-affiliated Sinai Province continued to engage in armed clashes with the army forces in the areas that had been evacuated from civilians, for the purpose of disruption or forcing the forces to withdraw, where the militant organization fought at least 4 armed clashes in the areas of Rafah and Sheikh Zuweid in addition to one clash in the vicinity of El-Arish city. During the month, we monitored the use of sniper weapons by the IS organization 5 times, as well as the use of 12 anti-tank explosive devices, resulting in destroying/damaging 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 August 2019:*

In August, there was a non-escalating rate of military operations in North Sinai amid reports that the army is preparing for a military campaign aimed at combing areas of Bir al-Abed to search for militants belonging to the Islamic State operating in that area more intensively compared to previous periods.

Our observations on the developments of the military operations this month are as follows:

- 1- August witnessed a continued low frequency of field military operations between the Egyptian army and police forces on the one hand and ISIS militants on the other, noting the accuracy of ISIS sniping injuries.
- 2- Continued presence of IS militants in the vicinity of Bir al-Abed and its villages, with reports about army preparations for a military campaign targeting the center of Bir al-Abed, which is expected to result in displacement of civilians.
- 3- The IS-local affiliate manifested its continued ability to gather its members on religious occasions, where the militant organization released pictures showing a gathering of its members in celebration of Eid al-Adha.
- 4- During August, ISIS also released photos of two people (Ayesh Sweilem Salman Sweilem and Gamal Sweilem Salman Sweilem) and announced that they were executed in Al-Barth area because of their work for the Egyptian army forces. The Sinai Tribes Union militias mourned the two citizens.

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It is noteworthy that the Barth area had been a problem for the militant organization because of the presence of the Sinai Tribes Union militias.

5- According to the electronic page of the Sinai Tribes Union, the army forces killed this month two militants in the Sharifat area, east of El Arish airport in the wake of an attack on the army forces.



6- Some Sinai electronic pages circulated reports that the army arrested a number of ISIS militants during August. The militant organization also carried out execution of more than one citizen on the pretext of working for the security forces, but we were not able to confirm this through independent sources.

7- The Interior Ministry's national security apparatus announced liquidation of 11 suspects in one of the farms located in Al-Obour area, El-Arish, in continuation of the policy of physical liquidation of the forcibly disappeared.

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

The third week of August witnessed frequent air raids on areas south-west of Sheikh Zuweid and southern Rafah. We were unable to identify the military aircraft in most of raids except for those on 28 August which were carried out by Egyptian aircraft. We have monitored the air strikes as follows:

- On 11 August, warplanes bombarded various areas east of El-Arish city and southwest of Sheikh Zuweid city, where at least 4 raids were launched.
- On 15 August, airstrikes hit the village of Qabir Amir, south-west of Sheikh Zuweid city, where at least four airstrikes were carried out.
- On 19 August, airstrikes hit Shabana village, south of Rafah.
- On 28 August, Apache helicopters belonging to the Egyptian army fired four missiles on the areas of Sayyala, Naqizat and Shabana, south of Rafah.

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