
235 dead, scores injured in bomb & gun attack at northern Sinai mosque (GRAPHIC PHOTOS)

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Egyptian state TV has confirmed 235 people have been killed in a coordinated bomb and gun attack in northern Sinai. Some 130 others were injured.

The explosion took place in the vicinity of a mosque during Friday prayer and was accompanied by an armed attack carried out by suspected militants, Reuters reports, citing eyewitnesses and security sources.

State media showed images of bloodied victims and bodies covered in blankets inside the Al Rawdah mosque in Bir al-Abed, west of the city of El Arish. Those fleeing the mosque were then reportedly attacked by gunmen.

Friday prayers at a mosque in Egypt took a tragic turn after a coordinated bomb and gun attack targeted worshippers, killing 235 people and injuring some 130 others. Ambulances transporting the wounded also came under attack by gunmen.

The blast at Al Rawdah mosque in Bir al-Abed, northern Sinai, prompted worshippers to flee the building, running for their lives. When they did so, they came under attack by gunmen. Photos posted online showed bodies covered in blankets inside the mosque.

Arabiya news channel and local sources said some of the worshippers were Sufis, who hardliners such as Islamic State (IS, formerly ISIS) regard as apostates because they revere saints and shrines, which for Islamists is tantamount to idolatry.

The office of Egyptian President Abdelfattah El-Sisi has declared three days of mourning following the attack. He said that although the attack was aimed at shaking Egyptians' confidence, it will only increase the country's efforts to counter terrorism, according to Al Arabiya.

[@AlArabiya_Eng](#) [#BREAKING](#): [#Sisi](#): Attack is aimed at shaking the confidence of [#Egyptians](#), but it will only increase our will to counter terrorism
pic.twitter.com/bBkq5UR6Td

A major operation titled 'Operation Revenge of the Martyrs' has been launched following the attacks, the news outlet reported.

Meanwhile, Russian President Vladimir Putin has sent condolences to the Egyptian president, describing Friday's attack as cruel and cynical. "The murder of civilians in the course of a religious service is striking with its cruelty and cynicism. We are once again convinced that the notion of human morality is absolutely alien to terrorists," Putin said in a channel on the messaging app Telegram.

US President Donald Trump described the attack as "cowardly," while stressing that the world must defeat terrorists militarily.

[@realDonaldTrump](#) Horrible and cowardly terrorist attack on innocent and defenseless worshipers in Egypt. The world cannot tolerate terrorism, we must defeat them militarily and discredit the extremist ideology that forms the basis of their existence!

Militants in the sparsely-populated Sinai peninsula have largely targeted security forces in their attacks since Sisi, then an armed forces commander, led the overthrow of former President Mohamed Morsi in 2013. Twenty-four IS militants and six Egyptian soldiers were [killed](#) in a series of coordinated attacks on checkpoints last month. In July, at least 23 soldiers were killed after suicide bombs hit two military checkpoints, in an attack claimed by IS. Sisi described Sinai as a "nesting ground for terrorism" following a suicide bombing that killed 31 soldiers in 2014.

However, jihadists have also targeted local Sinai tribes working with armed forces, viewing them as traitors for cooperating with the military and police. They have also tried to expand into Egypt's mainland, targeting Coptic Christian churches

and pilgrims. Twenty-nine people were killed when gunmen attacked a Coptic group traveling to a monastery in southern Egypt in May.
