

# Five Egyptian soldiers killed in attack in north of Sinai peninsula

Author:

Reuters

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CAIRO: At least five Egyptian military personnel were killed in a militant attack on Wednesday in northern Sinai, two security sources said, the second deadly strike against security forces on the peninsula in less than a week.

Four others were injured when armed men opened fire at a security post in the coastal area of northeastern Sinai, which borders the Gaza Strip, the sources said.

There was no immediate comment from Egyptian authorities.

The deaths follow a May 7 ambush at a checkpoint in Sinai that killed 11 Egyptian soldiers and was claimed by Daesh, one of the deadliest attacks in recent years.

Egypt expanded security control over populated coastal areas of northern Sinai since a major counter-insurgency operation was launched in 2018, but sporadic attacks by militants linked to Daesh have continued.

News of Wednesday's attack came as President Abdel Fattah El-Sisi met US national security adviser Jake Sullivan in Cairo. The Egyptian presidency said the two had discussed the strategic partnership between Egypt and the United States, which is a major provider of military aid to Cairo.

On Monday, El-Sisi voiced hopes for deeper counter-terrorism ties with Washington in a meeting with the general who oversees US forces in the Middle East, a US military official said.



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El-Sisi instructs Egyptian Armed Forces to clear Sinai of terrorists following attack  
Saudi leaders condole with Egypt on victims of terrorist attack in Sinai

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## [Ministers meet in Morocco to discuss ongoing threat from Daesh](#)

Author:

By TARIK EL BARAKAH | AP

ID:

1652276017043507200

Wed, 2022-05-11 16:41

RABAT, Morocco: Members of the global coalition fighting the Daesh group

gathered in Morocco on Wednesday to discuss the campaign, a reminder of the persistent threat from the extremist group despite the overwhelming preoccupation with Russia's war on Ukraine.

US Under Secretary for Political Affairs Victoria Nuland co-chaired with Moroccan Foreign Minister Nasser Bourita the annual meeting of senior officials from the 8-year-old, 83-member bloc. The group aims to reaffirm their shared determination to continue fighting Daesh.

Nuland, the third highest-ranking US diplomat, replaced Secretary of State Antony Blinken who tested positive for COVID-19.

Daesh at the height of its power controlled more than 40,000 square miles (103,600 square kilometers) stretching from Syria to Iraq and ruled over 8 million people. It lost its last patch of territory in eastern Syria in March 2019 following a years-long global fight against the group.

Since that time, it has largely gone underground and waged a low-level insurgency, including roadside bombings, assassinations and hit-and-run attacks mostly targeting security forces in Iraq and Syria.

In recent months, the group has exploited economic collapse, lack of governance and growing ethnic tensions in the impoverished region to reverse counter-Daesh gains.

Its attacks in the region included a major assault earlier this year to seize a prison in northeast Syria holding at least 3,000 Daesh detainees.

The group has claimed several attacks in Israel recently, and a Daesh affiliate in Egypt on Sunday claimed an attack that targeted a water pumping station east of the Suez Canal, killing at least 11 soldiers. In Afghanistan, Daesh militants have stepped up attacks on the country's new rulers, the Taliban, as well as religious and ethnic minorities.

This year's meeting is taking place to the backdrop of significant other international priorities, including the devastating war in Ukraine, fallout from the coronavirus pandemic and stepping up the fight against climate change.

Moroccan media report that some 80 countries would be represented at the gathering Monday. Delegates will also discuss ways to prevent resurgence in Iraq and Syria by stabilizing liberated areas and pursuing sustainable solutions for Daesh detainees and their family members, as well as countering Daesh networks on the African continent and elsewhere.

The Moroccan government said it hopes the meeting will result in increased international commitment and cooperation in the fight against Daesh, with a particular focus on Africa and the growing terrorist threat in the Middle East and other countries.

Numerous Moroccans have traveled to Syria, Iraq and elsewhere to join extremist groups in recent years. Morocco has also experienced multiple attacks itself. Five suicide attacks in Casablanca in 2003 killed 33 people. In 2011, an explosion destroyed a cafe in Marrakesh, killing 17 people, most of them foreign tourists.



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Daesh affiliate claims attack that killed 11 Egyptian troops  
Morocco arrests Daesh suspect in joint probe with US

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## [Tadamon massacre expose lifts veil of secrecy over Syrian war atrocities](#)

Author:

Tue, 2022-05-10 23:12

DUBAI: Forty-one civilians in all were murdered in the single coldblooded incident in 2013. One by one, the blindfolded detainees were brought to the edge of a freshly dug pit in the Damascus suburb of Tadamon and systematically shot. The bodies, piled one on top of the other, were later set on fire.

Footage of the massacre, carried out by Syrian militia members loyal to Bashar Assad's regime, emerged only in April this year following an expose by the UK's Guardian newspaper and the online New Lines Magazine.

The amateur video, taken by the killers themselves, was discovered by a militia recruit in the laptop of one of his seniors. Sickened by what he had seen, the rookie passed the video on to researchers, who later confronted one of the killers identified in the footage.



Caption

Journalists and activists from southern Damascus, speaking to Arab News following online circulation of the video, said that the Tadamon massacre was unlikely to have been the only atrocity committed in the area during that period.

Throughout 2012 and 2013, pro-regime militias would shoot random passers-by at checkpoints in Tadamon, Yalda and the Yarmouk camp, and also gun down people in their homes. Bodies of the victims were often left to rot, according to local residents.

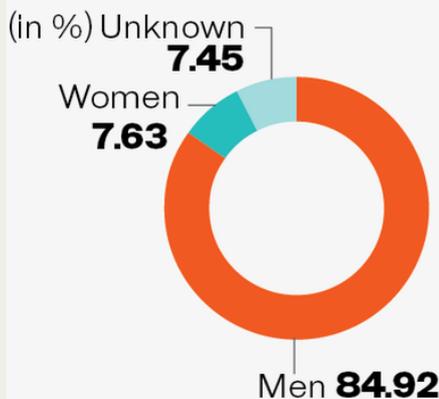
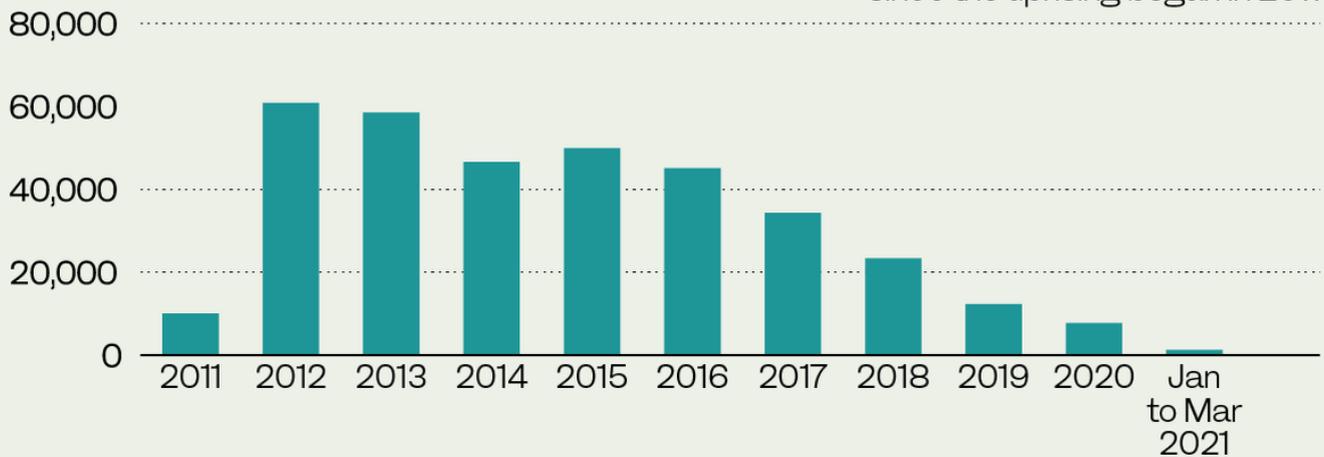
"We would hear about these massacres and the burning of corpses," Rami Al-Sayed, a photographer from the Tadamon neighborhood, told Arab News. "We knew that anyone arrested by the shabiha of Nisreen Street would be disappeared and, in most cases, executed."

# CASUALTIES OF SYRIA'S CONFLICT

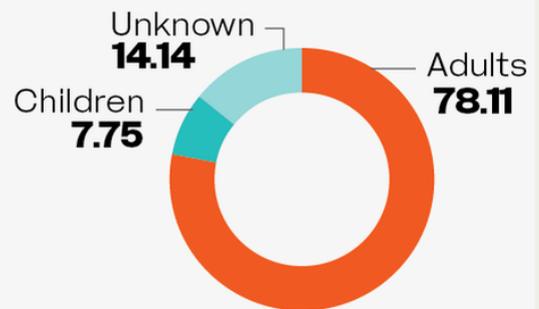
UN estimates put the civil war death toll at over 350,000

The Syrian Observatory in June 2021 reported a higher death toll, **494,438**, since the uprising began in 2011

## Deaths by year



Only deceased with a full name, date and province are recognized and reported by UNHCR, which says it is a "minimum verifiable number"



Source: UN High Commissioner for Refugees (HCR)

ARAB NEWS

Shabiha is a Syrian term for militias sponsored by the Assad government that carried out extrajudicial killings during the civil war that broke out in the wake of the 2011 uprising.

Nisreen Street was notorious as a stronghold of one such militia, which at the start of the uprising violently repressed protests, and later began detaining and executing residents of southern Damascus.

"All the victims identified so far are not known to have participated in protests or military activity against the regime," Al-Sayed said.

"In fact, the presence of a strong pro-regime contingent in Tadamon forced most people opposed to the regime to flee the neighborhood entirely, or to reside in an area that was still under the control of the opposition in 2013."

Syrian human rights monitors say entire families that attempted to cross checkpoints in southern Damascus went missing in 2013, including children and the elderly. In many cases, their fate remains unknown even today.

These families constitute a small fraction of the 102,000 civilians who have vanished since the uprising began in 2011, according to the Syrian Network for Human Rights, which believes regime forces are responsible for the forced disappearance of almost 85 percent of the total number of missing Syrians.

Most of the victims of the Tadamon massacre are yet to be publicly identified since their families, fearing further reprisals, are reluctant to come forward and acknowledge their relationship.

“Many of the relatives are afraid to announce that they recognized their loved one in the video because they are afraid of persecution by the Syrian secret police, especially if they live in regime-held areas,” Mahmoud Zaghmout, a Syrian-Palestinian from Yarmouk camp, told Arab News.

Residents of southern Damascus expect neither the perpetrators of this specific massacre nor those responsible for overseeing countless others to be held to account any time soon, despite the incriminating video evidence.

“This is not the first time such clear evidence of the involvement of Syrian regime personnel in crimes of genocide has been exposed,” said Zaghmout. “But the regime remains protected by the Russians, enabling it to avoid any accountability.”

When footage of the massacre first emerged online, the families of Syrians and Palestinians who had disappeared in 2013 frantically scanned the video for clues to the whereabouts of their loved ones.

Even if the horrific images confirmed their worst fears, at least they might find some semblance of closure that would end the uncertainty concerning their loss and allow them to mourn properly.

Families endured the same trauma while trawling through thousands of photographs smuggled out of Syria by a military defector code-named Caesar in 2013. The images contained horrifying evidence of rape, torture and extrajudicial executions inside regime jails.

Evidence provided by Caesar was used to help prosecute Anwar Raslan, a former Syrian intelligence officer, who in January was sentenced to life in prison by a court in Germany for the horrific abuses he inflicted on detainees.

The Koblenz trial offered a glimmer of hope to Syrians eager to see their tormentors face justice. Despite this small victory, the Tadamon families doubt the militiamen who murdered their loved ones will ever have their day in court.

One couple who sat through the gruesome footage were the parents of Wassim Siyam, a Palestinian resident of the Yarmouk camp, who was 33 when he vanished.

“I watched it a few times, then the way a man was running caught my attention. It was my son. It’s his way of running. I knew it was him,” Wassim’s father told Arab News.

Many families had held out hope that their children might still be alive somewhere in the regime's prison system and would someday be released under one of the government's occasional amnesties.

On May 2, about 60 detainees were released by the regime under a new presidential decree granting amnesty to Syrians who had committed "terrorist crimes" – a term authorities often use for those arbitrarily arrested.

Some had spent more than a decade in facilities described by the rights monitor Amnesty International as "human slaughterhouses."

Large crowds gathered in Damascus in the days following the amnesty, hoping to find their relatives. Some held photos of their missing loved ones and asked the freed detainees whether they had seen them alive in jail.

Wassim's mother had long held out hope that her son might still be alive, almost a decade after his disappearance. "I kept my faith in God. I thought he was probably detained but still alive," she was quoted as saying.

"I don't know how they were able to do this to the civilians. One avoids even stepping on an ant while walking. How were they able to do this?"

She added: "The community loved my son. We never harmed anyone to be hurt this way. I expected to see him out of prison – meek, tortured, maybe missing an eye – but I did not expect this."

The clip of the Tadamon massacre ruled out the possibility of Wassim and the other men being still alive.

"The hope that they had, even if a small one, was gone," Hazem Youness, a Palestinian-Syrian researcher and former diplomat who has interviewed several of the families, told Arab News.

The daughters of one of the victims told Youness that since her father disappeared, "whenever I would hear a knock on the door, I hoped it would be my father, and now I can't be hoping anymore."

Aware of the brutal and subhuman conditions inside regime jails, some families admitted they were relieved to see their relatives in the video. At least, they reasoned, their loved ones had not suffered for long.

"It's better this way," said Youness, quoting one of the families. "We were reassured that he is not being tortured now. It was harder for us when we would keep thinking: 'What is he doing? Is he being tortured now? What is he eating? How is his health? Is he sick? Where is he?'"

The release of the footage had another important effect: It validated the claims of survivors and confirmed that killings had indeed taken place in the area.

"Everyone knew massacres were happening," said Youness. "People in Tadamon and the areas of the camp said that there was a smell of blood and then of rotting corpses coming out from houses."

“But, you know, it’s one thing to suspect something or know it; you still don’t want to believe it’s true, and then you have the proof.”

Some local residents were not surprised to learn that war crimes had been committed in Tadamon. Rather what they found shocking was the cruelty and inhumanity of the militiamen in the video.

“I didn’t expect it to be this horrific,” said Youness. “You can see from the video that it’s a normal thing for them. You see that they do this with ease, while joking around with each other, like it’s routine, like this is a game.

“These are beasts killing in cold blood. It’s unfair to call them beasts, because beasts have at least some degree of compassion and mercy.”

Alluding to the importance of staying optimistic, Youness said: “The path to justice, unfortunately, is a long one. But no matter how long it takes, the march must continue.”







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[Tadamon massacre](#)

[Bashar Assad](#)

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## [UN Yemen envoy in Aden to sustain truce, revive peace talks](#)

Author:

Tue, 2022-05-10 21:10

AL-MUKALLA: Hans Grundberg, UN special envoy for Yemen, on Tuesday landed in Yemen's southern port city of Aden on a two-day visit aimed at salvaging a shaky truce between warring parties and pushing for opening roads in Taiz and resuming flights from the Houthi-held Sanaa.

Grundberg's visit to Aden comes as the internationally recognized government of Yemen and the Iran-backed Houthis traded accusations over breaches to the UN-brokered truce across the country and delays in resuming commercial flights from Sanaa airport.

The UN envoy will discuss sustaining the truce and peace efforts with Rashad Al-Alimi, president of the Presidential Leadership Council, and other government officials, the official news agency SABA reported.

The Yemeni government blamed the Houthis for hundreds of violations of the truce since April 2 and for obstructing the departure of the first commercial flight from Sanaa airport on April 24.

The Houthis also accused their opponents of attacking their forces and impeding fuel shipments to the Hodeidah seaport and the resumption of flights from Sanaa airport.

During a meeting with the UN envoy in Riyadh on Monday, Abdullah Al-Alimi, Yemen's vice president, said the Houthis' reluctance to lift their siege of Taiz and their continuing attacks on government-controlled areas threaten to torpedo the truce and UN efforts to achieve a peace deal to end the war.

"The Yemeni government is keenly committed to what was agreed upon...and it deals positively, flexibly and responsibly with any proposal that would alleviate human suffering," the Yemeni official said, according to SABA.

Before touching down in Aden, the UN Yemen envoy discussed strengthening the truce and peace efforts with Mohammed bin Saeed Al-Jaber, Saudi ambassador to Yemen, and Dr. Nayef Al-Hajraf, secretary-general of the Gulf Cooperation Council.

On Monday, a Houthi sniper stationed on a mountain location outside the city of Taiz shot a 60-year-old shepherdess who was moving her livestock, northwest of the city.

Zafaran Hezam Ahmed was returning to her house with her sheep when the Houthi sniper opened fire at her, wounding her in the left shoulder, residents said.

The Yemeni government on Sunday told Arab News that the Houthis are not serious about ending the suffering of thousands of besieged people in Taiz since they have not nominated their representatives in the joint meeting on opening roads in Taiz and other provinces.



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Yemeni government vows to uphold UN-brokered truce despite Houthi violations  
UN welcomes release of Houthi prisoners by Yemen coalition

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## [Sunni preachers in ‘vote to save Lebanon’ plea](#)

Author:

Tue, 2022-05-10 20:53

BEIRUT: Lebanon’s Sunni preachers have been told to issue a call in their Friday sermons for people to take part in the country’s parliamentary elections on May 15.

Grand Mufti Sheikh Abdel Latif Derian, the Sunnis’ supreme religious authority, instructed preachers to urge Lebanese to head to the polling stations on Sunday, and elect those who would “preserve Lebanon, and the future of its children, its Arab identity and its legitimate institutions.”

Many Sunnis have said they will boycott the elections following a decision by the head of the Future Movement, former prime minister Saad Hariri, to step down from politics and not contest the poll.

Some say that the many electoral lists and numerous candidates in Beirut, Tripoli and Akkar make it difficult to choose Sunni MPs, with most voting only for the Future Movement in previous elections.

Derian has previously declared that "election is a duty and a necessity," and warned of the "extremely dangerous" effects of a voter boycott on the representation of Sunnis in parliament.

Meanwhile, Saudi Ambassador to Lebanon Walid Bukhari visited several election hopefuls on Tuesday, including the Sunni candidate on the Zahle Sovereignty list, Bilal Hoshaimy. This electoral list includes activists who took part in the Oct. 17 protests.

Bukhari also visited current MP and candidate Michel Daher, who is running with the Independent Sovereigns list, which includes nonpartisan figures.

The incoming parliament will elect a new president to succeed Michel Aoun.

For the second day, Hezbollah Secretary-General Hassan Nasrallah addressed party supporters in the southern suburb of Beirut and singled out voters "who support the resistance, but do not want to vote because of the living crisis."

Nasrallah described the upcoming election as a "political July war" – a reference to the July 2006 conflict with Israel – and said: "You must get out of your homes to exercise political resistance in order for us to have armed military resistance; if the resistance abandons its weapons, who will protect Lebanon?"

Parliament Speaker Nabih Berri also urged his supporters to vote on Sunday. Before Berri's speech, the Amal Movement candidate Qabalan Qabalan criticized the "clamor, chaos and madness" that accompanies election campaigns.

Qabalan said that his party hopes to renew political life and constitutional institutions in Lebanon in order to get the country out of the "deep pit" it is in.

"There is no need to raise the ceiling in political discourse, nor to provoke sectarian and political fanaticism in the hope of a vote or a seat or a majority here or there. We must admit that the country does not function by a system wherein a majority rules over a minority. A majority cannot subjugate a minority, no matter how powerful it is, because the foundations of this country are based on understanding among all its components and groups," Qabalan said.

Samir Geagea, head of the Lebanese Forces party – which is engaged in a fierce battle against the Free Patriotic Movement – addressed supporters during an electoral meeting in which he criticized Aoun, saying that the presidency has become "a title for undermining Lebanon's sovereignty,

destroying its institutions and eroding the state; a title of hunger, poverty, humiliation and power cuts.”

The FPM is a Lebanese Christian group founded by Aoun in 2005.

Geagea said that Lebanon witnessed “the biggest lies and fraud undertaken by the FPM. Its goal was only to reach power, and when it achieved that, it forgot its promises.”



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[Grand Mufti Sheikh Abdel Latif Derian](#)

Expats prepare to vote, marking the start of Lebanon elections  
Lebanon vote holds little hope for change despite disasters