



Armed Conflicts Report

Egypt (1992 - first combat deaths)

After years of declining casualties, Egypt has been removed from the list of active armed conflicts. Fewer than 25 conflict-related deaths during 1999 and 2000 suggest that fighting between government forces and Islamic militants ended. In 2000 the Muslim Brotherhood participated in parliamentary elections.

Summary

Type of Conflict

Parties to the Conflict

Status of the Fighting

Number of Deaths

Political Developments

Background

Arms Sources

Summary:

1999 There were few reports of armed clashes between Islamic militants and government security forces in 1999, although the latter committed extrajudicial killings. At least 10 people died, extending the decline from the estimated 50 conflict deaths in 1998 and 200 deaths in 1997.

1998 The number of government security force and Muslim group assaults declined in 1998 and by year-end the majority of jailed and exiled leaders of the most militant rebel group had endorsed a ceasefire initiative.

1997 Government forces, consisting primarily of the State Security Investigations Sector (SSIS) and the Central Security Forces (CSF), continued to battle various Islamic militants, such as the al-Gama'a al-Islamiya and al-Gihad, especially in Upper Egypt. The rebels maintained attacks on unarmed civilians and foreigners.

Type of Conflict:

State control

Parties to the Conflict:

1) Government forces, led by President Hosni Mubarak:

(a) The State Security Investigations Sector (SSIS), which investigates and interrogates detainees; and

(b) Central Security Forces (CSF), responsible for enforcing curfews and bans on public demonstrations. These also conduct paramilitary operations against terrorist organizations.

*There are several security services in the Ministry of Interior, two of which are primarily involved in combatting terrorism: The State Security

Investigations Sector (SSIS), which conducts investigations and interrogates detainees; and the Central Security Force (CSF), which enforces curfews and bans on public demonstrations, and conducts paramilitary operations against terrorists. The use of violence by security forces in the campaign against suspected terrorists appeared more limited than in 1996. The security forces committed numerous serious human rights abuses." [Egypt Country Report on Human Rights Practices for 1997, Bureau of Democracy, Human Rights, and Labor, US Department of State, February, 1998]

2) Militant Islamic groups:

(a) al-Gama'a al-Islamiya (Islamic Group): One of the most violent Islamic groups in 1997. According to the *1998 Amnesty International Annual Report*, the group was responsible for the killing of at least 100 unarmed civilians during the year, including 58 foreign tourists;

(b) al-Gihad (Holy Struggle);

(c) Muslim Brotherhood;

(d) al-Jihad; and

(e) al-Jihad-Tala'a al-Fateh.

Status of The Fighting:

1999 There were few confrontations between government forces and Islamic militants in 1999. There were no reports of terrorist attacks, although security forces reportedly launched antiterrorist operations, raiding suspected terrorist hideouts.

"In contrast to the previous year, and for the first time in 10 years, there were no reports of terrorist incidents... There were no reports of political killings; however, police committed extrajudicial killings, and such killings also may have occurred in certain antiterrorist operations." [Egypt Country Report on Human Rights Practices for 1999, Bureau of Democracy, Human Rights, and Labor, US Department of State, February, 2000]

1998 Both government security force and Muslim group assaults dropped in 1998 and by year-end most jailed and exiled leaders of the al-Gama'a al-Islamiya had endorsed a ceasefire initiative.

"But militant violence has declined markedly in recent months and the Egyptian authorities have released many people who had been detained on suspicion of belonging to Gama'a." [Reuters, July 6, 1998]

1997 Violent conflicts between the State Security Investigations Sectors (SSIS) and the Central Security Forces (CSF) against terrorist organizations, such as the al-Gama'a al-Islamiya and al-Gihad persisted in 1997, especially in Upper Egypt. Terrorists continued their attacks against unarmed civilians and tourists. One of the most brutal assaults occurred in November when 58 foreign tourists were killed near Luxor. Al - Gama'a al-Islamiya claimed responsibility.

Number of Deaths:

Total: Over 1,300 people have died as the result of the conflict since 1992.

1999 At least 10 people died during the year as a result of antiterrorist campaigns, poor prison conditions, and mistreatment at the hands of security forces.

"In August The Egyptian Organization for Human Rights (EOHR) reported the deaths of five criminal suspects in police custody during the year: Ahmad Mahmoud Mohamed Tammam, Hany Kamal Shawky, Said Sayyed Abd Al-Aal, Hamdy Ahmad Mohamed Ahmad Askar, and Amr Salim Mohamed..."

"In antiterrorist campaigns, security forces killed four members of the "Islamic Group of Egypt" (IG), including Farid Salim Abdel Qader Kidwani, who was the leader of the IG's military wing. The security forces reportedly raided an IG hideout in Giza on September 7. The four IG members were killed in an exchange of gunfire. On August 1, a resident of Assiyut governorate shot and killed a member of the security forces. The gunman subsequently was shot and killed by security forces. [Egypt Country Report on Human Rights Practices for 1999, Bureau of Democracy, Human Rights, and Labor, US Department of State, February, 2000]

1998 Security forces and rebel groups reportedly killed at least 47 people.

"Terrorist groups were responsible for 29 deaths throughout the year.... In antiterrorist campaigns, security forces killed 18 suspected terrorists during raids on suspected terrorist hideouts." [Egypt Country Report on Human Rights Practices for 1998, Bureau of Democracy, Human Rights, and Labor, US Department of State, February 26, 1999]

1997 The number of deaths, including civilians, police officers, and terrorists range in the hundreds. According to an APS news report, over 1,300 deaths have occurred since the Islamic insurgency began in 1992.

"In November, 58 foreign tourists, including at least 33 Swiss, and two Egyptians were killed in an armed attack at a tourist site near Luxor. The six gunmen who carried out the attack were later killed. Al-Gama'a al-Islamiya claimed responsibility for the attack." [*Amnesty International 1998 Annual Report*]

"Terrorist groups were responsible for the majority of the 155 civilian and police deaths. Major actions included a terrorist attack in February on youths who were attending a church meeting in Abu Qurqas in upper (southern) Egypt; 13 persons were killed and 5 wounded.... In antiterrorist campaigns, security forces killed 41 suspected terrorists; there were no reports of excessive use of lethal force. [*Egypt Country Report on Human Rights Practices for 1997*, Bureau of Democracy, Human Rights, and Labor, US Department of State, February, 1998]

Political Developments:

1999 In a national referendum held in September, President Hosni Mubarak was elected to a fourth six-year term.

1997 In February, the Government renewed the Emergency Law, first enacted in 1981, for another three years, which restricts many basic human rights.

1996 A November 1995 election resulted in a resounding win for the incumbent National Democratic Party (NDP) and its leader Hosni Mubarak. Elections were seen as the "most fraudulent and violent ever held in Egypt."

1995 A 1995 assassination attempt on Mubarak led to a severe crack-down on Islamic groups.

Background:

A combination of moderate and militant groups are committed to ending secular government in Egypt and replacing it with an Islamic state under Sharia law. The Muslim Brotherhood, established in 1928 in Egypt and viewed as the prototype for Islamist parties throughout the Middle East and North Africa, has operated legally within Egypt, but not as a political party since Egyptian law forbids political parties formed along religious lines. Recent years have seen the growth of armed groups, notably the al-Gamaat al Islamiya and the Islamic Jihad, both committed to the overthrow of the secular state through terrorist attacks. Although manifested as a religious struggle, the conflict is more a reflection of economic disparities, especially in the poorer South where the Islamist campaign is most intense.

In 1995, following a failed attempt to assassinate President Hosni Mubarak, the government mounted a crackdown on Islamic groups, especially the suspected al-Gamaat al Islamiya, but also including the Muslim Brotherhood, many of whose leaders were jailed. A 1981 Emergency Law restricting basic human rights was extended for another three years in 1997.

Arms Sources:

The government's main source of weapons and military aid is the United States, although Russia, France, and the Netherlands also have provided military equipment recently. Though the relations between the two countries have seen some improvements, Egypt accuses Sudan of supplying arms to the Islamic militants.