

Secret Intelligence Service

Relevant Reports in Brief

XXIII

**An Explosion Rocks a Mosque in
Egypt's Northern Sinai, Killing
Hundreds of People**

24 11 2017







The attack struck the mosque during Friday prayers. Egypt has been fighting jihadist militants in the northern Sinai Peninsula since they had pledged allegiance to Islamic State in 2014.

An explosion has occurred at Al Rawdah mosque, west of El Arish city in the north of Egypt's Sinai Peninsula, killing at least 235 - Egyptian Prosecutor General's Office.

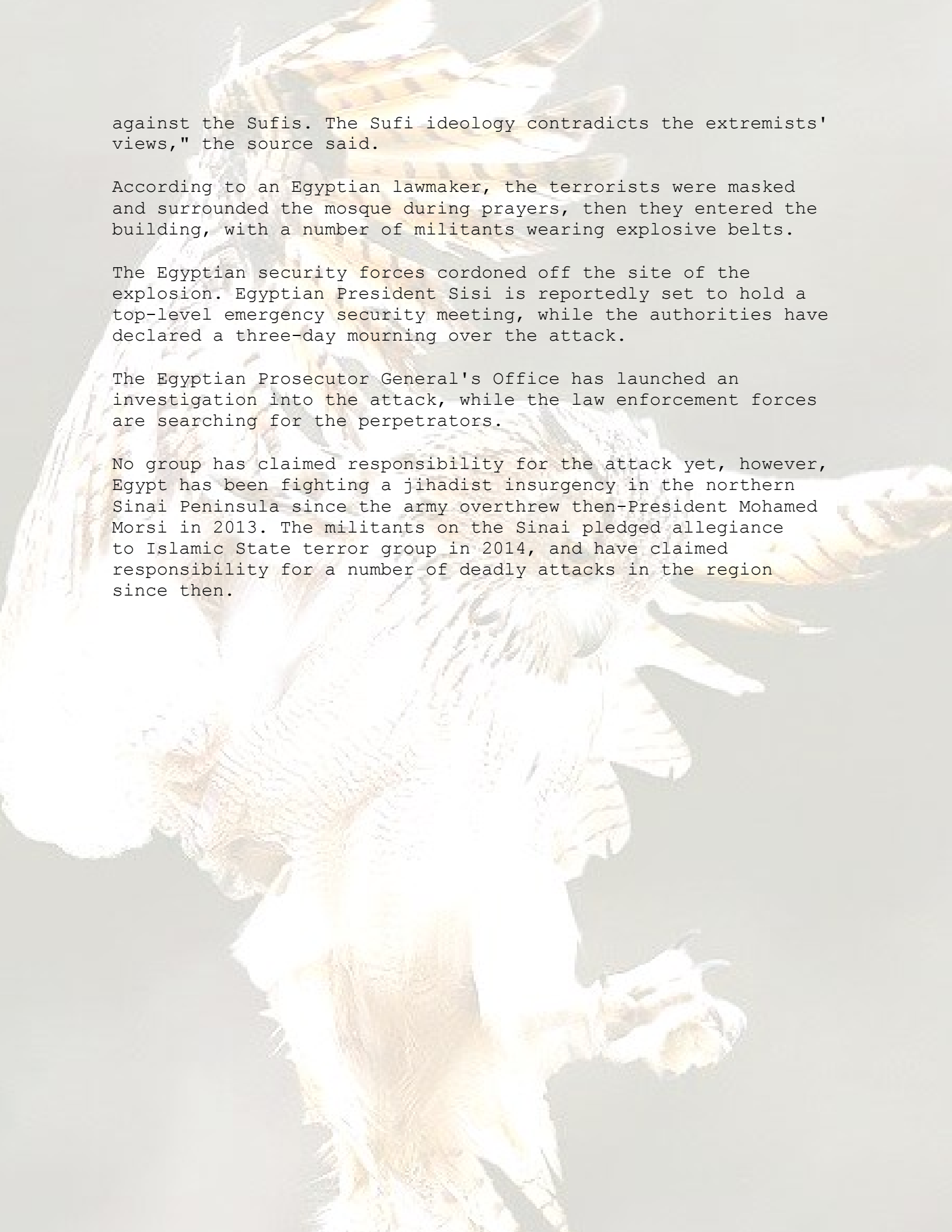
While the death toll will further rise, Egypt's Health Ministry official data previously suggested that at least 75 people were killed or injured in the attack in the mosque, which used to be attended by hundreds.

While there were conflicting reports on the number of casualties, there may be up to 150 injured in the blast.

The explosion that took place during Friday's prayers has been followed by gunfire, sending dozens of ambulances to the scene.

Following the incident, a source in the province's security service said that radical militants, who settled in northern Sinai peninsula in Egypt, have threatened representatives of the Sufism trend of Islam.

"This mosque belongs to the Sufi Tariqa of Gargariya. There have been no concrete threats against the mosque since all dwellers of the village are praying here, but there were threats



against the Sufis. The Sufi ideology contradicts the extremists' views," the source said.

According to an Egyptian lawmaker, the terrorists were masked and surrounded the mosque during prayers, then they entered the building, with a number of militants wearing explosive belts.

The Egyptian security forces cordoned off the site of the explosion. Egyptian President Sisi is reportedly set to hold a top-level emergency security meeting, while the authorities have declared a three-day mourning over the attack.

The Egyptian Prosecutor General's Office has launched an investigation into the attack, while the law enforcement forces are searching for the perpetrators.

No group has claimed responsibility for the attack yet, however, Egypt has been fighting a jihadist insurgency in the northern Sinai Peninsula since the army overthrew then-President Mohamed Morsi in 2013. The militants on the Sinai pledged allegiance to Islamic State terror group in 2014, and have claimed responsibility for a number of deadly attacks in the region since then.

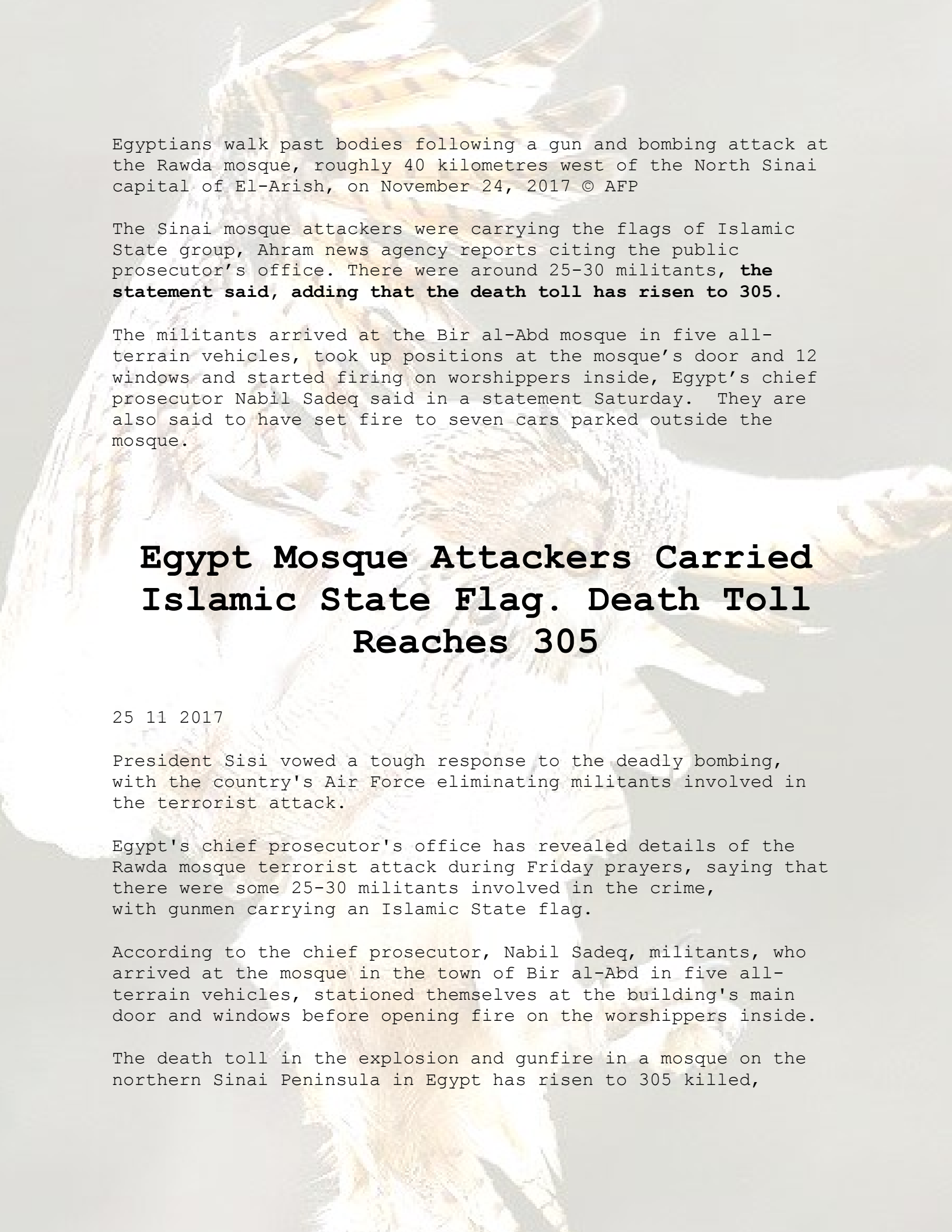




**Gunmen in Egypt mosque attack
carried ISIS flag, were between
25-30 in number - Public
Prosecutor**

25 11, 2017



A person in a white thobe and ghutra is carrying a body wrapped in a white sheet. The person is walking past the body, which is lying on the ground. The background is a light, hazy outdoor setting.

Egyptians walk past bodies following a gun and bombing attack at the Rawda mosque, roughly 40 kilometres west of the North Sinai capital of El-Arish, on November 24, 2017 © AFP

The Sinai mosque attackers were carrying the flags of Islamic State group, Ahram news agency reports citing the public prosecutor's office. There were around 25-30 militants, **the statement said, adding that the death toll has risen to 305.**

The militants arrived at the Bir al-Abd mosque in five all-terrain vehicles, took up positions at the mosque's door and 12 windows and started firing on worshippers inside, Egypt's chief prosecutor Nabil Sadeq said in a statement Saturday. They are also said to have set fire to seven cars parked outside the mosque.

Egypt Mosque Attackers Carried Islamic State Flag. Death Toll Reaches 305

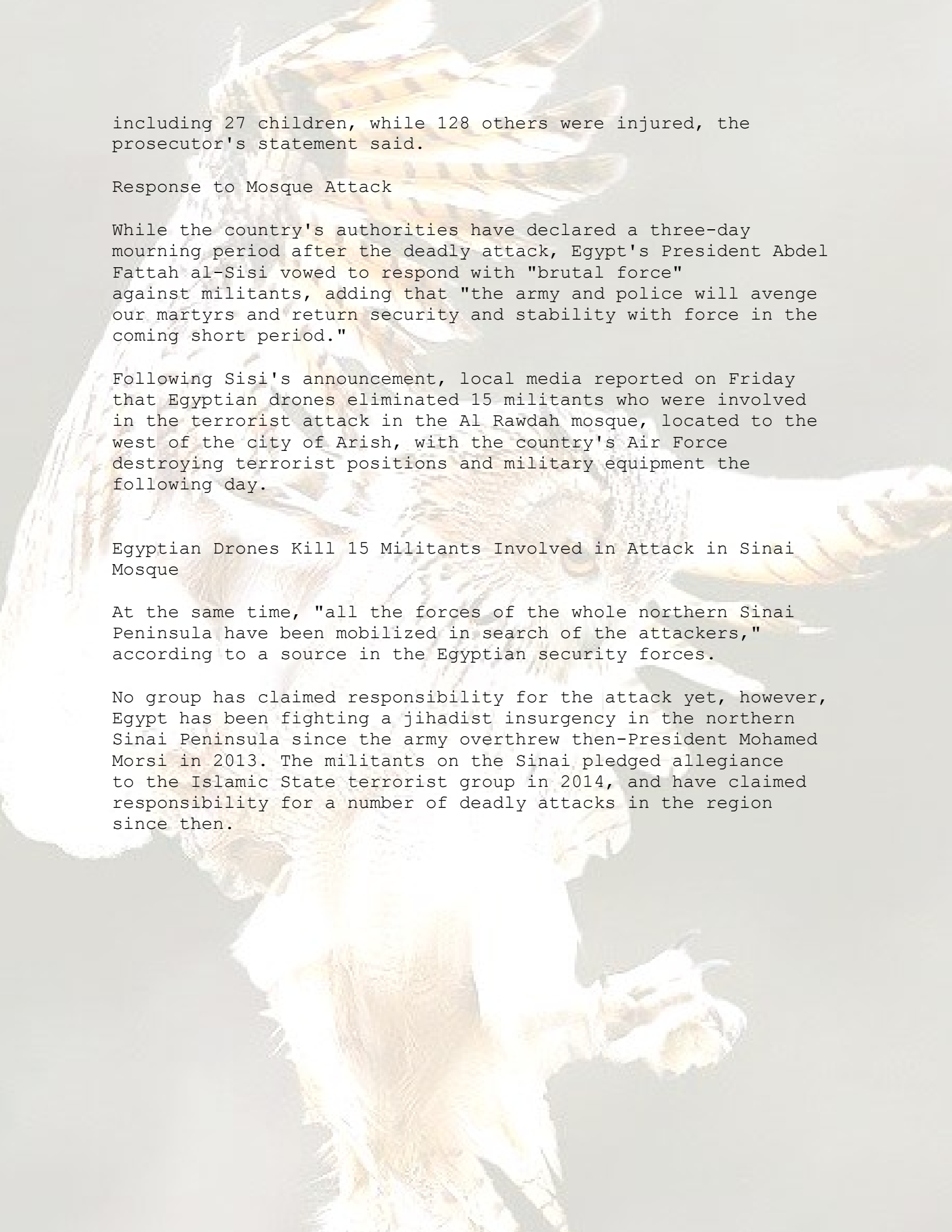
25 11 2017

President Sisi vowed a tough response to the deadly bombing, with the country's Air Force eliminating militants involved in the terrorist attack.

Egypt's chief prosecutor's office has revealed details of the Rawda mosque terrorist attack during Friday prayers, saying that there were some 25-30 militants involved in the crime, with gunmen carrying an Islamic State flag.

According to the chief prosecutor, Nabil Sadeq, militants, who arrived at the mosque in the town of Bir al-Abd in five all-terrain vehicles, stationed themselves at the building's main door and windows before opening fire on the worshippers inside.

The death toll in the explosion and gunfire in a mosque on the northern Sinai Peninsula in Egypt has risen to 305 killed,



including 27 children, while 128 others were injured, the prosecutor's statement said.

Response to Mosque Attack


While the country's authorities have declared a three-day mourning period after the deadly attack, Egypt's President Abdel Fattah al-Sisi vowed to respond with "brutal force" against militants, adding that "the army and police will avenge our martyrs and return security and stability with force in the coming short period."

Following Sisi's announcement, local media reported on Friday that Egyptian drones eliminated 15 militants who were involved in the terrorist attack in the Al Rawdah mosque, located to the west of the city of Arish, with the country's Air Force destroying terrorist positions and military equipment the following day.

Egyptian Drones Kill 15 Militants Involved in Attack in Sinai Mosque

At the same time, "all the forces of the whole northern Sinai Peninsula have been mobilized in search of the attackers," according to a source in the Egyptian security forces.

No group has claimed responsibility for the attack yet, however, Egypt has been fighting a jihadist insurgency in the northern Sinai Peninsula since the army overthrew then-President Mohamed Morsi in 2013. The militants on the Sinai pledged allegiance to the Islamic State terrorist group in 2014, and have claimed responsibility for a number of deadly attacks in the region since then.



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Counter-Terrorism Library

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