



Bombs Rock Cairo on Eve of Revolution Anniversary

On Friday morning, as Egypt approached the January 25 anniversary of the Revolution of 2011 that overthrew longtime President Hosni Mubarak, multiple bombings in Cairo killed six people and injured dozens of others.

[The first blast occurred](#) when an explosive-laden pickup truck was detonated near Cairo's police headquarters, killing four people and injuring 51. The explosion occurred on Cairo's Port Said Street off Bab el-Khalq Square and damaged the nearby Museum of Islamic Art, which had recently been renovated.



"Casualties were relatively small given the size of the blast," said Interior Ministry spokesman Hany Abdel Latif.

A second explosion destroyed a police car near the Behooth subway station in Cairo's Dokki district. The Associated Press reported that one person was killed and eight wounded in that attack.

A third blast took place close to a police station in Talbia, about two miles from the famous Giza pyramids, but no one was injured.

Russia's [RT news reported](#) that a fourth blast was reported on Friday evening near a Cairo movie theater, killing one person and bringing the total number of dead to six.

"We don't know who is behind these bombings, but it seems likely that they are part of a pattern of bombings carried out by jihadist militants with links to the war, which is raging in the Sinai. And the message to the Egyptian government is: 'We do not accept your constitution, we do not accept your government, we see them as traitors and we want to bring the whole house crashing down,'" Cairo-based journalist Hugh Miles told RT.

The Russian news network reported that Friday's attacks came "less than a week after Egyptians approved a new constitution, despite a vote boycott by Morsi's Muslim Brotherhood, which was outlawed after the coup."

A spokesman for interim President Adly Mansour condemned the violence. He said "such terrorist operations that seek to break the will of Egyptians" will only unify them.

Prime Minister Hazem el-Beblawi issued a statement condemning the bomb attacks, saying they were an attempt by "terrorist forces" to derail the government's political road map, which is meant to lead to free and fair elections.



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[VOA news reported](#) that though there was no immediate claim of responsibility for the attacks, there were unconfirmed reports that the jihadist group Ansar Beit al-Maqdis sent a warning to officials before the blasts occurred, noting that it is among “several jihadi groups who have escalated attacks against security and military targets since the ouster of President Mohamed Morsi last year.”

An article in [The Times of Israel](#) on October 3, 2012 reported that Ansar Bait al-Maqdis is “headquartered in the Sinai desert and enlists local Bedouins to its ranks, but that many of its members are citizens of Egypt proper and other Arab countries.”

The article cited Israeli intelligence sources, who said that the majority of the attacks along the Israeli-Egyptian border in the previous year were the work of a single terror network — including Ansar Bait al-Maqdis — “made up of Islamic extremists who identify with the ideology of Al-Qaeda.”

Another report in Egypt’s [Daily News](#) on July 26, 2012 stated that Ansar Bait Al-Maqdis had claimed responsibility for an attack four days earlier on the Egyptian-Israeli gas pipeline.

The group called the supply of gas to Israel “treason,” reported the *Daily News*, noting that the Islamic group said it was a crime initially committed by the Mubarak regime that was continued by the Supreme Council of Armed Forces (SCAF) at the time of the attack on the pipeline. (SCAF assumed the power to govern Egypt from departing President Mubarak on February 11 and relinquished power on June 30, 2012 upon the start of Mohamed Morsi’s term as president.)

[VOA reported](#) that the prevailing public suspicion for the most recent bombings immediately fell on Morsi’s Muslim Brotherhood, and crowds chanted against the group outside police headquarters, calling for its death. “The people want the execution of the Brotherhood. Execution for Morsi,” they shouted.

While the Brotherhood has denounced previous such attacks, the government blamed them for the Nile Delta bombing, and declared the group a terrorist organization, reported VOA.

Political analyst and publisher Hisham Kassem cited statements made during protests after Morsi was deposed.

“It follows the same pattern which started after the Muslim Brotherhood openly declared, by their leaders in the sit-in they had in Rabaa Square, that they will be carrying out terrorist operations against the state,” he said.

In a recent article, [we reported](#) that 97.7 percent of Egypt’s voters had approved the new constitution, which will replace the one drafted in 2012 under an Islamist government headed by then-president Mohamed Morsi. The Strong Egypt Party, founded by former Muslim Brotherhood member and prominent Islamist Mohamed Abul-Fotouh, initially campaigned for a “no” vote on the constitution, but after some of its members were arrested for passing out fliers against approving the new constitution, it called for an outright boycott of the referendum.

Many Egyptians regard the overwhelming “yes” vote as a fatal blow to the Muslim Brotherhood and Islamist politics, which have held a dominant position since the 2011 ouster of President Hosni Mubarak. In the past three years, the Islamists swept the vote in parliamentary and presidential elections, and seemed to have secured a well-entrenched position of power.

[Reuters news reported](#) that Egyptian authorities have been preparing for more violence during Saturday’s anniversary of Mubarak’s fall, when rival political groups are expected to engage in public demonstrations. These include supporters of General Abdel-Fattah el-Sissi — the commander-in-chief of



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Egypt's armed forces, who ousted Morsi, as well as members of the Muslim Brotherhood, which had backed Morsi. Sissi is seen as the only viable candidate for the presidency.

[AP reported](#) that Islamists are trying to use the anniversary of Mubarak's ouster to build momentum in their campaign of protests to "break the coup" that removed Morsi. Military supporters, in turn, aim to show broad popular support for the government and el-Sissi, whose backers are calling on him to run for president.

It is highly unlikely that calm will return to Egypt anytime soon.

Photo of people standing among debris from the bombing near the police headquarters in Cairo: AP Images

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