


Last update: April 2015

Location: Sinai Peninsula, Egypt

Main/original objectives	Images
<p>Ansar Bait al-Maqdis was created in 2011 in the aftermath of the 25th January Egyptian Revolution. In the beginning, the group was focused on Israel; bombing gas pipelines leading towards the country. However after the 2013 June 30th Revolution/Coup their principle aims became undermining the security forces including the Egyptian police and military. Additionally, they aspire to enforce sharia law in an 'independent Sinai province' as part of the greater Islamic State (HQ Syria and Iraq)</p>	
Official objectives stated by leader	Currently identifiable objectives
<p>Through various online video clips ABM has stated that it is focused on avenging the acts of the military after the 2013 Coup. The groups' leadership stated that secular forces along with Christians, Jews and the military have undermined the rule of Islam which must be installed across the country. They have also claimed not to target civilians and warned them to 'stay home for safety'.</p>	<p>Their current objectives are to fight off the Egyptian military and police forces; particularly in the northern Sinai region. Ideological allegiance to IS may suggest that they also have aims of creating a separate Islamic State in the peninsula run under sharia law.</p>
Areas of Influence	Other zones of influence in the region
<p>The groups' HQ is in Northern Sinai in areas such as Arish and Sheikh Zuweid. Nevertheless, the group has mounted multiple attacks along the Canal cities (e.g. Suez, Port Said) and Nile Delta (Mansoura). The group has also targeted key government targets in the Capital city, Cairo.</p>	<p>The group has not mounted any cross-border attacks into Gaza or Israeli territory. However their outreach has gone beyond their HQ with a series of attacks in Cairo and other major cities in Egypt.</p>
Type of structure	Structural Failure
<p>Very little is known about the structure of the group as well as its current leadership.</p>	<p>A main structural failure of ABM is its apparent inability to administer land and hold meaningful control over captured towns and cities.</p>

Mapping features of armed groups		Ansar Bait al-Maqdis a.k.a Sinai Province	
<b>Military Capacity</b>		<b>Outlook on other groups</b>	
<p>The tactical sophistication and effectiveness shown by the Sinai Province attacks earlier in January/February 2015 is clear. The jihadist group mounted simultaneous attacks against military checkpoints and facilities in northeast Sinai on January 29th killing at least 32 Egyptian soldiers and policemen, making this among the deadliest attacks on the military in decades. The groups is in possession of RPGs, Grad rockets and mortars, and Man-Portable Air-Defence systems (MANPADS).</p>		<p>ABM has sworn allegiance to IS as of 10th November 2014. It aims to be a part of the greater neo-jihadist IS Caliphate project. Could potentially increase co-ordination with other IS affiliates in Libya and the central branch in Syria and Iraq.</p>	
<b>External Support</b>		<b>Key names</b>	
<p>Reportedly there were previous links with al-Qaeda as well as receiving support by Hamas and the Muslim Brotherhood in Egypt. These allegations have been denied to date. Recent affiliation with IS can lead to great foreign fighter recruitment and technical operational support . Direct patronage or funding from outside Egypt is unlikely. However ties to IS in eastern Libya to access training camps and weaponry have also been reported.</p>		<p>Ibrahim Mohammed Farag and Shadi al-Manaei : both killed in action during 2014. The current leader is unknown.</p>	
<b>Religious dimension</b>		<b>Cultural or traditional practices</b>	
<p>The group is heavily influenced by Wahhabi and Salafist interpretations of Islam. These 'Salafi Jihadis' have used radical versions of Islam to justify beheading combatants , "apostates" and anyone who co-operates with the Egyptian or Israeli security forces. They share common goals with IS such as implementing sharia law in an "independent" Islamic Emirate-style establishment.</p>		<p>The group originally did not focus on harsh punishments and IS-like brutality. However, as the presence of security forces augments the group was the first in Egypt to publically display beheadings of army officials and civilian operatives. The group focuses mainly on striking government targets and has also threatened the local Sinai population to not co-operate with Cairo.</p>	
<b>Control over population</b>		<b>Support / distrust of communities in the group's area of intervention</b>	
<p>The Sinai province does not have great control over territory and thus are still considered a guerrilla force trying to fight rather than govern. Some tribesman in northern Sinai have chosen to side with the group, however the extended presence of the Egyptian military has not given them a chance to influence any significant amount of land.</p>		<p>The local tribal population in Sinai has been marginalized by the central authorities for decades and thus the group has found a certain degree of support in the area. Also the possibility of support across the border for the Gaza strip is likely due to the demolition of existing tunnels and the overthrow of Hamas affiliate Mohammed Morsi from power by the military. Nevertheless, across Egypt and even amongst Sinai inhabitants the actions of the group and their latest videos have made them quite unpopular</p>	