Terrorist Attack in Egypt

What is the issue?

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- A deadly terror attack took place at a Sufi mosque in the Sinai Peninsula (Egypt) that killed at least 305 people.
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- Egypt has faced several attacks in the recent past by a local arm of the Islamic State is under grave threat.
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What are the challenges for Egypt?

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- Home grown Sunni extremists have been targeting Christians, who constitute 10% of the population, and minority sects within Islam.
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- They've also allied with IS and plan to deepen the sectarian divisions and exploit these to win over hard-line Sunni segments.
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- **Eastern Treat –** IS allied groups has been active in the Sinai Peninsula, a region that has been historically neglected by Cairo.
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- Also, after the recent collapse of IS in Iraq & Syria, some fighting in those countries are suspected to have shifted operations to Sinai.
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- Its vast desertic terrain, mountain stretches and long coasts, also provides for a secured operational base for the IS.
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- **Western Treat -** The Egyptian military has also come under strain on its western border due to instability in Libya.
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- After the fall of Qadhafi in Lybia, the black market trade in weapons from there has increased, which has aided militants.
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What has been the aftermath?

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- This is the bloodiest attack in modern Egypt's history and the ease at which it was carried out has raised alarm.
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- President Abdel Fattah el-Sisi, has vowed to respond with "brutal force", in keeping with his promise of stability & security.
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- But repeated attacks have called into question General Sisi's counter-insurgency strategy.
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- **Way Forward -** Cairo has to now defeat the militants and disrupt the supply of weapons.
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- The long-term grievances of the Sinai's population also need to be addressed to deny militants local sympathy or support.
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Source: The Hindu

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