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Islamic State strikes Egyptian naval vessel off Sinai coast

(//www.longwarjournal.org/archives/2015/07/islamic-

state-strikes-strikes-egyptian-naval-vessel-off-

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Bill Roggio (@billroggio) | July

27s%20Long%20War%20Journal) | @billroggio (//twitter.com/billroggio)

The Islamic State claimed credit for a rocket attack off the coast of the Sinai that set an Egyptian ship ablaze earlier today. The attack was confirmed by the Egyptian military, which disputed the jihadist group's claim that the ship was destroyed and all crew members were killed.

The Islamic State released a brief statement on Twitter, as well as three photographs purporting to show the attack (below). The statement and photographs were obtained by the SITE Intelligence Group. The authenticity of the photographs cannot be independently confirmed.

"[T]he mujahideen were able to target a frigate of the naval forces of the apostate Egyptian army in the Mediterranean Sea, north of Rafah, and that was with a guided rocket," the Islamic State's Sinai province claimed, according to a translation by SITE. "It led to its complete destruction and the elimination of all who were in it."

Egypt's official military spokesman said in a statement released on his Facebook page ([//www.facebook.com/Egy.Army.Spox/posts/690666321064353](https://www.facebook.com/Egy.Army.Spox/posts/690666321064353)) that a coast guard vessel was "securing the Mediterranean coast to the city of Rafah," and then responded to "the movements of some terrorist elements on the coast, so it chased and exchanged gunfire, which led to the launch catching fire without loss of life."

The Egyptian military is "currently combing the entire area and hunting the terrorist elements involved in the commission of the incident," the spokesman continued.

The type of ship that has been struck has not been disclosed. The Islamic State said it hit a "frigate." The Egyptian navy is known to operate US-supplied Oliver Hazard Perry and Knox-class frigates. The ship shown in the Islamic State photographs does not appear to be either of those types of vessel.

The images released by the Islamic State indicate that a rocket was indeed fired from the coast at an Egyptian naval vessel. The first photograph shows a palm tree in the foreground while a projectile trailing smoke is heading towards a ship. The Islamic State circled the rocket to highlight it.

The type of weapon used to target the ship has not been disclosed, however the Islamic State's Sinai province is known to have seized and used Kornet anti-tank missiles ([//www.timesofisrael.com/is-said-to-have-used-anti-tank-anti-aircraft-missiles-in-sinai-attack/](https://www.timesofisrael.com/is-said-to-have-used-anti-tank-anti-aircraft-missiles-in-sinai-attack/)) in a major attack in the Sinai on July 1. Anti-tank missiles can be used to target naval craft operating close to the shore.

The July 1 attack was a coordinated operation that targeted military personnel and police stations in El Arish and Sheikh Zuweid, both of which are located in the northern Sinai near the border with the Gaza strip and Israel. At least three suicide bombers and dozens of fighters launched the multi-pronged attack that caught Egyptian security forces off guard. [See *LWJ*

report, Islamic State's Sinai 'province' launches coordinated attacks against Egyptian forces ([//www.longwarjournal.org/archives/2015/07/islamic-states-sinai-province-kills-dozens-in-coordinated-attacks.php](http://www.longwarjournal.org/archives/2015/07/islamic-states-sinai-province-kills-dozens-in-coordinated-attacks.php)).]

The Sinai province, which was formerly known as Ansar Bayt al Maqdis (ABM), swore allegiance to Islamic State leader Abu Bakr al Baghdadi in November 2014. Baghdadi quickly accepted the oath of allegiance days after the pledge. [See *LWJ* report, Islamic State leader claims 'caliphate' has expanded in new audio message ([//www.longwarjournal.org/archives/2014/11/islamic_state_leader_1.php](http://www.longwarjournal.org/archives/2014/11/islamic_state_leader_1.php)).]

The use of anti-tank rockets against naval vessels may have a chilling effect on shipping in the region. The Suez Canal is a major transit point between the Indian ocean and the Mediterranean Sea. Dozens of ship pass through the canal each day.

Islamic State photographs purporting to show a rocket striking an Egyptian "frigate"



([//www.longwarjournal.org/wp-content/uploads/2015/07/IS-Egyptian-ship-rocket-attack-1.jpg](http://www.longwarjournal.org/wp-content/uploads/2015/07/IS-Egyptian-ship-rocket-attack-1.jpg))



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Bill Roggio is a Senior Fellow at the Foundation for Defense of Democracies and the Editor of FDD's Long War Journal.

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6 Comments

Paddy Singh says:

July 16, 2015 at 5:41 pm (//www.longwarjournal.org/archives/2015/07/islamic-state-strikes-strikes-egyptian-naval-vessel-off-sinai-coast.php#comment-77753)

The whole world, the Middle East, Europe, the dithering US and former Soviet bloc countries, all take the Isis to be a joke. It will be take a massive tragedy that will act as a wake up call but then it will be too late.

mike merlo says:

July 16, 2015 at 10:37 pm (//www.longwarjournal.org/archives/2015/07/islamic-state-strikes-strikes-egyptian-naval-vessel-off-sinai-coast.php#comment-77767)

very cool. Now if only all these various Islamic Groups/Muslims can just get busy sabotaging each others' Oil Infrastructure US Energy Manufacturer's should experience a decidedly marked increase in their products & services

infosifter says:

July 17, 2015 at 2:40 am (//www.longwarjournal.org/archives/2015/07/islamic-state-strikes-strikes-egyptian-naval-vessel-off-sinai-coast.php#comment-77777)

The global jv team acts like varsity. When is the U.S. jv administration going to back Leaders like Sisi & Net'u instead of the M.B.Hood terrorist org?

11B says:

July 17, 2015 at 4:21 am (//www.longwarjournal.org/archives/2015/07/islamic-state-strikes-strikes-egyptian-naval-vessel-off-sinai-coast.php#comment-77779)

I fear for the MFO mission and all the soldiers there, American and otherwise. I hope they keep on their toes because they are a VERY soft target, especially those poor Fijians near Gaza.

Peter says:

July 17, 2015 at 3:05 pm ([//www.longwarjournal.org/archives/2015/07/islamic-state-strikes-strikes-egyptian-naval-vessel-off-sinai-coast.php#comment-77797](http://www.longwarjournal.org/archives/2015/07/islamic-state-strikes-strikes-egyptian-naval-vessel-off-sinai-coast.php#comment-77797))

Ouch. ATGM against ships is new and novel. I remember, in the accounts of Hans Von Luck's advance to the French coast at Fecamp (part of Rommel's 7th panzer):

“On 8 June Luck led his reconnaissance battalion towards the coast, with the tanks of the Division some distance behind. On 9 June Luck reached the coast, where Rommel ordered him to proceed southwards with only his reconnaissance battalion and a battery of 88mm guns in support to capture the port of Fecamp. Upon reaching the port, Luck demanded the port's surrender, but due to the presence of two British destroyers evacuating troops, this was denied. On 10 June Luck ordered all his troops to open fire on the destroyers, the port facilities and the radio station in the town, in the hope of forcing the town into surrendering. Apart from the few 88 mm guns he had only the light 3.7 and 2 cm guns of the scout cars to help with the barrage. Nevertheless the barrage quickly persuaded the French garrison to surrender, while the two British destroyers steamed away.”

Tony says:

July 19, 2015 at 8:07 pm ([//www.longwarjournal.org/archives/2015/07/islamic-state-strikes-strikes-egyptian-naval-vessel-off-sinai-coast.php#comment-77873](http://www.longwarjournal.org/archives/2015/07/islamic-state-strikes-strikes-egyptian-naval-vessel-off-sinai-coast.php#comment-77873))

There was also a few photos showing an attack against a tank position in the Sinai with an ATGM, I believe. They have more than we even know about.

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