

IS Claims Credit for Car-Bombing at the Italian Embassy in Cairo

Louisa Loveluck writes in [Egypt](#)'s restive Sinai Peninsula.

The Italian consulate sits on a downtown Cairo street that would usually be bustling with cars and crowds by mid-morning. The Italianate strawberry building had been one of only two diplomatic missions to remain open in downtown Cairo. Most have left for more secure neighbourhoods over the years on account of security concerns.

Responding to the news on Twitter, Italian foreign minister Paolo Gentiloni said there were no Italian victims in the blast. "Italy will not be intimidated," he wrote.



The heavy damage caused to the consulate building (APTN)

Egyptian officials said the person killed was a civilian, while those wounded were policemen guarding the building and passers-by.

Police detained several foreign journalists in the immediate aftermath of the blast, claiming that the timing of their arrival was suspicious. They were later released.

The consulate had enjoyed several incarnations since it was built. First a school and later a prison, it only began diplomatic functions after the Second World War.

Saturday's attack underscored the depth of the challenge faced by Egyptian president Abdelfattah el-Sisi in the shape of the country's fragmented but far reaching militant insurgency.

On the country's eastern flank, Islamic State of Iraq and the Levant (Isil) loyalists have killed hundreds of security personnel in recent years. On July 1, the group – known as Sinai Province – launched a twelve hour attack on the city of Sheikh Zuwaid, killing as many as 70 soldiers in one of the deadliest assaults on the military for decades...