

# 7 Arrested in Failed Terrorist Attack on Church

Egyptian security forces have arrested seven alleged militants suspected of involvement in a foiled church bombing outside Cairo on Saturday, the interior ministry said on Sunday.

A militant wearing a suicide vest blew himself up 250 meters from a Coptic Christian church in Qalyubiyah, a governorate north of Cairo, killing himself but no one else according to eyewitnesses and state media.

The attack was the latest directed at Egypt's large Christian minority, who make up around 10 percent of the country's 96 million people.

Islamist militants carried out two deadly bombings on Palm Sunday in April 2017 and a blast at Cairo's largest Coptic cathedral in December 2016 that killed 28 people, while a church shooting last December killed eleven.

State news agency MENA said Saturday's bomb attack was thwarted by a strong security presence around the church that prevented the assailant from getting too close.

An interior ministry statement identified the attacker as 29-year-old Omar Mohamed Ahmed Mostafa from Cairo but did not link him to a particular militant group.

No group has claimed responsibility.

The statement said the seven arrested were plotting a "series of hostilities" and that among them were two women, including one living in the upscale Cairo neighborhood of Zamalek who "played a prominent role ... in promoting extremist ideas and providing financial support."

Egypt has fought an insurgency led by Islamic State in the

Sinai Peninsula that has killed hundreds of soldiers and policemen in recent years, but attacks in the country's mainland are less common. {eoa}

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