

# Beyond our Borders:

Analyzing Egypt's Security Threats

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Geographically, Egypt serves as a bridge between Africa, Asia and Europe, its location sets it in a prime position that offers tremendous potential for the country's economy and tourism sectors. Yet, geopolitically Egypt's neighbors face a period of turmoil that risks spilling over into the country mainly in the form of migration issues, security threats, and further economic and environmental pressures. Additionally, Egypt faces growing climate adversities along with water scarcity. In order to fully understand the potential security threats that are both ongoing and those that could arise, it is important to analyze the different variables that the Egyptian state could face.

From a security standpoint, based on the Economist the EIU Global Democracy Index indicates that Egypt's neighboring countries Libya and Sudan both present potential risks, the index which provides a rank (out of 167 countries) and score (out of 10, with 10 being the highest in terms of democratic liberties) for all countries based on 5 different measures such as their electoral process and civil liberties, presented Libya with a rank of 154 and a score of 1.95, while the index also ranked Sudan 145 and gave the country a score of 2.47 (The Economist, 2022). The last of Egypt's bordering countries is Palestine, along with its internal governmental struggles, Palestine also faces constant threats and violent acts from the Israeli government, the Israeli occupation of Palestine is not only seen as a threat to the Palestinians, but also a threat to Egypt and its goal for peace and security. Based on the Council on Foreign Relations latests "Conflicts to Watch in 2022" report, which tiers conflicts and potential crises into three different tiers (1 being the most threatful), Libya and Sudan pose a tier 3 threat as they are classified as low impact crises from the perspective of the global order, while the Palestinian crisis is classified under moderate impact as it has a bigger effect globally (CFR, 2022). Yet, from the perspective of Egypt, all three bordering countries pose immediate and potentially massive threats to the safety and security of Egypt given the proximity and potential likelihood of conflict to arise in those countries. Unfortunately for Egypt, internally the threat of terrorism is a reality that has been faced on occasion, although the threats are mostly localized in the northern Sinai region it remains a threat that must be considered when analyzing Egypt's national security and a threat that the Egyptian government has been dealing with accordingly.

Viewing the potential security threats of a nation from a traditional perspective of international conflicts and terrorism is an important step in defining necessary defenses and safeguards. Yet, it is not enough to only analyze from that perspective, there are multiple potential threats to a country's national security that need to be addressed such as migration



patterns, climate change, water scarcity, etc. Beyond bordering countries and Egypt's internal occasional encounters with terrorism, the three security concerns addressed above are main causes for concern for Egypt, additionally they are all interconnected as well to some degree. Climate Change is regarded by most scientists as the greatest threat facing the world today, with rising sea levels, frequent weather changes, and the occurrence of more intense natural disasters, it would be naive for any country to neglect the potential impacts of climate change on their national and international security. Egypt, being the next host for the Conference of Parties 27, is working to place itself as a defender of the climate, doing so by implementing large scale environmental projects, introducing green bonds, and incentivizing green initiatives. If climate change is not addressed, Egypt, a country already worrying over potential water scarcity issues, could soon find itself facing an immense challenge "Egypt is facing an annual water deficit of around seven billion cubic meters" (UNICEF, n.d.), in the midst of this challenge one of the most pressing matters is the Renaissance Dam, Ethiopia's mega project that seeks to divert water from the Nile river to a large water reservoir for electricity production Ethiopia's need for this project adds pressure to Egypt's national security as cautious negotiations have been taking place and the need for a political compromise raised.

Threats from Water scarcity and climate change in Egypt are additionally significant as they impact citizens' decision making in regards to migration, which leads to the brain drain argument of international migration theory. "Brain drain can have a negative impact on the sending region, such as reduction of human capital, limited capacity to innovate, reduced economic growth, demographic shifts, and a higher cost of public goods" (Srivastava, 2020) the potential threats that Egypt faces can cause able Egyptians to migrate from their home country to countries they consider to be safer in the short or long term. "Egypt is a major migration player in the Middle East and North Africa (MENA) region and in the Global South more broadly, experiencing large, diverse patterns of emigration and immigration, including significant numbers of humanitarian arrivals" (Tsourapas, 2018) notably, Egypt has around 10 million regular Egyptian migrants living outside its borders, although this means that Egypt can benefit from a decent amount of remittances, it is a matter of worry to consider when examining the brain drains effect on the Egyptian ecosystem. Given that migration is a costly decision that requires, not only a hefty financial burden, but also networks and mental preparedness, it is more likely than not that those who would migrate out of Egypt are privileged, educated, Egyptians, which in turn would trigger an internal security threat to Egypt as more of its educated population migrate internationally. The Egyptian migration debate can be seen as both



an opportunity and a threat, the benefit of remittances is impactful to the economy, but it leaves the country with a void of innovative and educated individuals that needs to be filled.

In today's world, analyzing a country's security threats is not as straightforward as we may have once believed it to be. In an ever more globalized world these threats now range from border control, immigration, to climate change, and much more. In order to proceed with appropriate identification of recommendations and policy suggestions, we must go into further detail on each individual threat and conduct a deep analysis of the challenges and potential fitting solutions. Overall, Egypt is indeed placed in a geographically strategic and irreplaceable location, yet it finds itself surrounded by potential crises that could emerge if not handled with caution and care.



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