

## Egypt army in 'deadly Sinai raid'

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Egypt has deployed extra troops, tanks and other armoured vehicles in the Sinai

At least six suspected militant gunmen have been killed by the Egyptian army in the Sinai peninsula, officials say.

They were killed during raids on hideouts in a village near al-Arish town in the north of the region, AP news agency reports.

An offensive against Islamist militants in Sinai was launched last week after 16 border guards were killed.

It was the most brazen attack against Egyptian troops in the Sinai region for years.

Sunday's killings in al-Ghora village, some 30km (19 miles) south of al-Arish, are the first reported casualties among the suspected militants since the military operation began.

A security source told the AFP news agency the suspected militants were armed with rocket launchers, grenades and automatic weapons.

State television, which gave no details of the fighting, said three soldiers had also been killed.

Analysts say that the security situation in the Sinai has deteriorated following the fall of Egypt's long-time President Hosni Mubarak last year, which Islamist extremists appear to have exploited.

The area in Sinai where the borders of Egypt, Israel and Gaza meet has also become a hotbed of smuggling – through tunnels into Gaza.

On Friday, Bedouin leaders in the Sinai agreed to help the army in its offensive and they also backed plans to destroy the smuggling tunnels into Gaza.

## Sinai violence

