

Egypt's President declares three-month emergency after ISIS attack on Coptic churches

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Cairo: Egyptian President Abdel-Fattah al-Sisi on Sunday declared a three-month state of emergency in the Arab country after two church blasts triggered by ISIS killed at least 45 and injured over 100.

Earlier on Sunday, a terrorist blast at Mar Girgis Church of Tanta city in Gharbiya province left at least 27 dead and 78 injured, while a following suicide bombing at Saint Mark's Church of Alexandria coastal province killed so far 17 and wounded about 50, Xinhua quoted the Health Ministry as saying.

"A number of measures will be taken, topped by the declaration of a state of emergency, after all legal and constitutional procedures are done, for three months in the Egyptian state," the Egyptian president said.

He also announced the formation of a supreme council for fighting terrorism and extremism in Egypt as per a new law to give it sufficient authorities to do the job.

ISIS used its Amaq media win to claim responsibility for the attacks that came shortly after the terror group had warned it would be increasing attacks against Egypt's Christians

Most of the victims of the two bombings at the churches in Tanta and Alexandria were Coptic worshippers marking the Palm Sunday, besides several policemen who were in charge of church security.

The explosion comes weeks before the visit of Pope Francis to Egypt on April 28-29.

Palm Sunday falls on Sunday before the Easter. The feast commemorates Jesus' triumphal entry into Jerusalem, an event mentioned in each of the four canonical Gospels.

Coptic Christians make up about 10 per cent of Egypt's population of 85 million.

Egypt's Christian minority has often been targeted by Islamist militants.

Egypt has seen a wave of attacks by militants since 2013 when the military toppled president Mohammed Morsi, an elected leader who hailed from the Muslim Brotherhood, and launched a crackdown against Islamists.

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