

Egypt court jails 47 Morsi loyalists

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Cairo: An Egyptian court on Sunday sentenced 47 supporters of ousted president Mohamed Morsi and Muslim Brotherhood group from three to 15 years in prison over violence charges, MENA news agency reported.

The Zagazig Criminal Court found the defendants guilty of terrorist activities, violating the new anti-protest law, possessing anti-government fliers, resisting the authorities and assaulting private properties at Sharqiya province, some 65 km north of the capital Cairo.

The ruling regarding other 31 defendants facing similar charges has been delayed to June 30.

Morsi was ousted by the military in early July 2013 after mass protests against his one-year rule. Later on, a security crackdown on his supporters left more than 1,000 killed and thousands more arrested and the Brotherhood was eventually blacklisted as a terrorist group.

On the other hand, hundreds of police and army personnel were killed in attacks carried out by extremists and self-proclaimed Islamists since Morsi's removal.

Sinai-based, Al Qaeda-inspired Ansar Bayt al-Maqdis group, which has changed its name to "Sinai State" and vowed loyalty to the regional Islamic State (IS) militant group, claimed responsibility for most of the anti-government attacks.

The country's judiciary is currently holding mass trials for thousands of defendants over charges varying from belonging to the Brotherhood to murdering anti-Brotherhood protesters, according to Xinhua.

Earlier in June, a court confirmed the death sentence against Morsi over mass jailbreak during the 2011 uprising that toppled long-time ex-leader Hosni Mubarak, besides handing mass death sentences to other Brotherhood members and supporters.

On April 20, an Egyptian court ordered the execution of 22 of Morsi's loyalists over armed attack of a police station in Giza following Morsi's overthrow.

The interior ministry said on Sunday that it is maintaining highest security alert to be ready for June 30 celebrations marking the second anniversary of anti-Morsi protests that toppled him.

Morsi's loyalists who refer to his ouster as "a military coup" call for mass anti-government protests on June 30.

In its annual report released in late May, Egypt's National Council for Human Rights said that the violence since Morsi's removal has resulted in the death of 2,600 people, including 700 police and army men, 550 civilians and 1,250 Brotherhood members and supporters.

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