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**President El Sisi Presides Over National Defense Council Meeting and
Announces Counter-Terrorism Measures**

President Abdel Fattah El Sisi presided over a meeting of the National Defense Council, NDC, on Sunday night. The meeting was attended by the Speaker of the House of Representatives, the Prime Minister as well as the Ministers of Defense and Military Production, Foreign Affairs, Interior, and Finance. Also present were the Director of the General Intelligence Directorate, the Chief of Staff of the armed forces, a number of commanders of the main branches of the armed forces.

President El Sisi commenced the meeting by calling on the attendees to observe a minute of silence in tribute to the fallen victims of the two terrorist explosions at St. George's Church in the city of Tanta and St. Mark's Cathedral in Alexandria. The President emphasized the need for all state agencies to provide all forms of support and assistance to the victims' families and the wounded. He underscored the need to provide the necessary medical care to the wounded, and to put all medical capabilities at their disposal. This is in addition to offering all necessary social support and assistance to the victims' families and the wounded immediately and facilitating all related procedures.

President El Sisi received a preliminary report on the circumstances surrounding the two terrorist attacks. He was also briefed on measures undertaken by the state apparatuses to deal with the aftermath of the two incidents in accordance with the President's directives, primarily to swiftly hunt down the perpetrators of the attacks. This is in addition to deploying elements of the special security units from the armed forces to assist the police in securing vital and important facilities across the republic, reinforcing security presence and intensifying security measures. The meeting also tackled measures underway to tighten control over all borders, ports and crossings, given the ongoing security challenges in the region and the growing threat of terrorism resulting from the tense situation in the region. The President gave instructions to undertake the necessary measures to enforce full security on the country's borders, to maintain the highest levels of readiness, alert and vigilance and to continue to strengthen security measures on vital places and facilities. This is in addition to the intensive and regular follow up on the security situation.

Later, President El Sisi gave statements to the media in which he mourned the martyrs of the homeland, who fell victim to the two terrorist attacks on Sunday morning. He noted that since the June 30 revolution, the Egyptian people have been courageously facing terrorism in an open and long confrontation with fascist terrorist organizations, which are financed and supported with arms and fighters by some countries. The President confirmed that the two terrorist acts are another attempt to undermine the unity and cohesion of the Egyptian people and their resources. He pointed out that

terrorist organizations have sought during the past period to harm Egypt through various ways, either by targeting the tourism sector or by carrying out operations in different areas, which demonstrates their despair in the face of the Egyptian people's robustness. President El Sisi emphasized the need for the international community to hold accountable countries which support terrorism and fund terrorist organizations. The President called on the Egyptians to remain firm in the face of the terrorists' attempts to destabilize Egypt. He expressed his confidence in the Egyptian people's ability to defeat terrorism, killers and saboteurs and asserted that Egypt will continue on the trajectory of building and construction.

In light of the discussions held at the National Defense Council meeting, President El Sisi announced a package of counter-terrorism measures. Those include declaring a three-month state of emergency across the republic upon completion of the necessary legal and constitutional measures, and intensifying efforts by security apparatuses to hunt down the perpetrators and bring them to justice. The President called on the media to deal with the events with credibility, responsibility and awareness and highlighted the importance of enhancing efforts to rectify the religious discourse by all state institutions. President El Sisi also announced the establishment of a new body, the Supreme Council to Combat Terrorism and Extremism, after issuing the necessary law to regulate its work and enable it to effectively assume its tasks. Concluding his statements, the President called on all Egyptians to endure this pain and expressed his appreciation and respect for their strength over the past years, which was a source of admiration for all, either by enduring the repercussion of terrorist operations or by enduring the economic hardships.