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Egypt's Morsi to face trial over espionage charges

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Former Egyptian President Mohamed Morsi is to stand trial on charges of conspiring with foreign groups to carry out terrorist attacks in Egypt, an official says.

Egypt's prosecutor general said on Tuesday that Morsi will stand trial on February 16 for alleged espionage and conspiracy charges.

The ousted president and 35 others are accused of plotting with foreign organizations like Palestinian Hamas and Lebanese Hezbollah, as well as with Iran.

Morsi is also charged with planning an uprising in the Sinai Peninsula to avenge his dismissal, the official added.

Under the Egyptian law, the accused will face the death penalty if found guilty.

Morsi faces two other trials including for his role in inciting the killing of protesters outside the presidential palace in December 2012. He also faces charges of planning prison breaks during the 2011 revolution.

On Monday, an Egyptian court sentenced top Islamic leader and former presidential hopeful, Hazem Salah Abu-Ismael, to one year in prison on charges of insulting the judges.

During the trial, Abu-Ismael told judges that the court was void and that Egypt's judiciary was not a real judiciary in the first place.

The trial of Morsi and other Muslim Brotherhood members and leaders has been criticized by the international community as being part of the interim government's crackdown on the Islamic movement.

On July 3, 2013, the military-installed government removed the country's first democratically elected president, Morsi, from power.

The head of the Egyptian armed forces, General Abdel Fattah el-Sisi, also suspended the constitution and dissolved the parliament.