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Libyan ISIS Beheads 21 Egyptian Christians

By Jason Ditz

February 15, 2015

A new video out of Libya shows a group of 21 detained Egyptian Coptic Christians being beheaded by the local ISIS faction, leading Egypt to announce a period of national mourning.

The 21 Christians were working in the Libyan coastal town of Sirte, and had been kidnapped in various actions by ISIS over the course of December and January.

Egyptian junta President Abdel Fattah al-Sisi vowed to take revenge for the killings at a time and in a method of his choosing, saying his government would take any necessary steps against ISIS.

The Egyptian junta has been backing Libyan General Khalifa Hifter in his attempts to take over the country, first in a coup against the parliament and then on behalf of the parliament that replaced them. Egypt has launched a handful of airstrikes in support of Hifter's force, though they control very little of the nation.

The ISIS faction in Libya was originally an unaffiliated Islamist faction in the nation's northeast. Since pledging allegiance to ISIS, the group has become much more powerful and influential, and has carried out operations in several cities across Libya.