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Morsi to stand trial for 'espionage' aiding a 'terrorist' campaign

Prosecutors investigate his alleged links to Hamas during mass prison breaks in an early 2011 uprising against ousted Mubarak.

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CAIRO - Egypt's deposed president Mohamed Morsi and former aides will stand trial for "espionage" that aided a "terrorist" campaign involving the Palestinian militant Hamas and jihadist groups, state media reported Wednesday.

Morsi, an Islamist who the military toppled in July after a single year of turbulent rule, is already on trial over alleged involvement in the killings of opposition protesters.

Prosecutors had been investigating his alleged links to Hamas during mass prison breaks

in an early 2011 uprising against ousted strongman Hosni Mubarak, when Morsi and other Islamist prisoners escaped.

He and 35 others, including former aides and leaders of his Muslim Brotherhood, now stand accused of "espionage for foreign organisations abroad to commit terrorist attacks in the country," the official MENA news agency reported.

The groups, according to the prosecution's investigation, included Hamas and the militant Lebanese Hezbollah movement, MENA reported.

Some of the defendants, including Essam Haddad, Morsi's second in command when president, were also accused of betraying state secrets to the Iranian Revolutionary Guards.

The prosecution also alleged Muslim Brotherhood involvement in a surge in attacks on soldiers and police following Morsi's overthrow, centred mostly in the restive Sinai peninsula.

Some of the attacks, which have killed dozens of soldiers and policemen, have been claimed by Al-Qaeda inspired groups with no known links to the more moderate Muslim Brotherhood.

But prosecutors say the attacks were carried out to "bring back the deposed president and to bring Egypt back into the Muslim Brotherhood's grip."