

Egyptians Protest Military Ouster of President

From VOA Learning English, this is In the News.

In Egypt, Islamist parties held protests Friday against the military ouster of President Mohamed Morsi and the arrest of leaders of the Muslim Brotherhood. The protests followed afternoon prayers across the country. Mr. Morsi was forced out Wednesday following huge protests by those opposed to his Islamist policies.

Military leaders replaced him with top judge Adly Mansour. The temporary president was sworn in Thursday. The Muslim Brotherhood quickly denounced the move. Mr. Mansour called for the Muslim Brotherhood to continue to take part in the political process.

Islam Abdel-Rahman is on the foreign affairs committee of the Muslim Brotherhood's Freedom and Justice Party. He told VOA that his group will not take part in any political process led by Egypt's military. Mr. Abdel-Rahman said the Brotherhood still considers Mr. Morsi the rightful president of Egypt. He says his group is calling for peaceful protests against his ouster.

"We fully believe in peaceful means of defying this military coup. Actually, we don't believe in taking [up] arms or something like this. We still believe that this country can be managed by peaceful political means."

The military ouster of Egypt's first democratically elected president came one year after he took office. The military also suspended the constitution, saying the action was necessary because of the risk of a general rebellion.

At least three supporters of the ousted president were killed by gunfire Friday. The deaths came as a crowd tried to march to the military housing where the ousted president is believed to be held. A spokesman for the Muslim Brotherhood Freedom and Justice Party said soldiers shot and killed the protesters. Egyptian soldiers denied that they had used deadly weapons against the protesters.

Also Friday, witnesses say soldiers opened fire on pro-Morsi protesters who were trying to march on the defense ministry headquarters.

Also in Cairo, thousands of Morsi supporters gathered in the Nasr City neighborhood. They denounced the military intervention and demanded that Egypt's first democratically elected president be returned to power.

Early Friday, security officials said people they called "Islamist gunmen" attacked military and police checkpoints in the northern Sinai area. The attacks killed an Egyptian soldier and wounded at least two others.

Egypt's military declared emergency conditions in Suez and Sinai ahead of the planned Islamist protests.

The military and Egypt's former opposition groups have called for understanding and compromise as the military moves to restore democratic, civilian rule in Egypt. The military is also denying any campaign against the Muslim Brotherhood.

But as of early Friday, prosecutors had ordered the arrest of 300 of the group's members and detained some of its top leaders. The military has suspended the country's Islamist-backed constitution and dissolved the parliament.

And that's In the News from VOA Learning English, written by Onka Dekker. I'm Steve Ember.