

## In Egypt, the Struggle for Peace Continues

Hello, and welcome to As It Is from VOA Learning English. I'm Mario Ritter in Washington.

Today on the program, we report on Nigeria's continuing struggle to end the attacks from the militant group Boko Haram.

"I hereby declare a State of Emergency in Borno, Yobe and Adamawa states."

But first, we take you to Egypt, a country working to create stability after almost three years of protests and violence.

"This is a nation that has been pushed to the brink and as long as these issues are not addressed, there will be a third and fourth and a fifth uprising."

The struggle for peace in Egypt and Nigeria: that is the subject of our program today.

### **Will the Egypt Settle Political Differences in 2014?**

Egyptian leaders continue to struggle to calm their nation. But unhappiness with the country's current rulers appears to be growing. June Simms has this report.

In 2013, Egyptians protested in large numbers and forced their leader out of office. It was the second large uprising in two years.

The protestors were helped by the military, which imprisoned the country's first freely-elected president -- Islamist Mohamed Morsi. The army also took action against his supporters.

The current military-supported government has offered a plan for stability -- a new constitution to be voted on by Egyptians, followed by elections for president and parliament.

Until recently, many Egyptians supported their new leaders, who had promised to keep the Muslim Brotherhood political party of Mr. Morsi from taking part in the elections. Wael Khalil is an activist and well-known blogger.

“Getting Morsi back in power is not an outcome -- is not a probable outcome -- so that we are now looking with more scrutiny at those in power.”

Anti-government protesters now include more than Mr. Morsi's supporters. Many activists oppose the strong government and police answers to protests. Mr. Khalil said the protestors thought those severe moves had ended in 2011.

“More and more people are starting to see, first of all, the return of the police state and how the police is really coming back with a vengeance.”

There is also unhappiness about the economy. Unemployment, lack of tourism and investment, plus inflation -- especially in the price of food -- are hurting many Egyptians.

Protestors in the 2011 revolution demanded “bread, freedom, dignity.” Political analyst Hisham Kassem says those demands continue to be made.

“This is a nation that has been pushed to the brink and as long as these issues are not addressed, there will be a third and fourth and a fifth uprising. It’s not going to stop, and whether it is the military or the Islamists, whoever is now on the seat needs to deliver.”

But not everyone thinks everything in Egypt is going badly.

Saad Eddin Ibrahim is the chairman of the Ibn Khaldun Center for Development Studies. He says protests take time to work.

“There is always a decade or so around in the revolutionary explosion before the volcano settles down and the ashes settle.”

He says it will not take that long for Egypt to become calm. He says that may happen in another year. He believes people are tired of revolution. But that is not what protestors in the streets are saying.

I’m June Simms.

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## **Nigeria's Fight Against Terrorist Group Boko Haram Goes On**

This year was supposed to have been the last for Boko Haram. The Islamist terrorist group has been attacking people in northern Nigeria for four years. Thousands of troops were sent to three northeastern states to fight the group, but the violence continues and the area is still under emergency rule. Here is Christopher Cruise.

In May, Nigerian President Goodluck Jonathan said Boko Haram was getting stronger. It had captured territories and was continuing its attacks, assassinations and kidnappings. It was seen by President Jonathan as a declaration of war on Nigeria.

"I hereby declare a State of Emergency in Borno, Yobe and Adamawa states. Accordingly, the Chief of Defense Staff has been directed to immediately deploy more troops to these states for more effective internal security operations."

It was Nigeria's largest offensive against Boko Haram. In the first six months of the state of emergency, the military took control of northern cities, but attacks continued in rural areas.

Army spokesman Colonel Muhammad Dole said the military has cut the supplies of the group:

"We were also able to cut most of their supplies so the attack on villages so the attack on villages is a desperation so they can survive. They do not have food. They do not have water."

Colonel Dole said some members of the group fled to neighboring countries.

In November, the United States called Boko Haram and a linked group called Ansaru foreign terrorist organizations. Emergency rule was then put in place for another six months.

Two weeks later people in Maiduguri -- the original home of the insurgency - - said they felt safe for the first time in years. Dauda Tataly owns a small computer supply shop in Maiduguri.

"Since then, we did not hear of any insurgents, any cheating around. So we can say life is better now."

But in early December, Maiduguri no longer felt safe. Militants attacked the Air Force, the Army and the Police.

The military told everyone to stay in their houses both day and night, a 24-hour curfew. The attackers destroyed an army post and a police base. Many cars and oil trucks were burned.

Human Rights Watch says Boko Haram has killed thousands of people in the past four years. But it says strong answers to the attacks by security forces have killed hundreds more.

Researcher Eric Guttschuss says violence between members of different communities has also killed thousands of people in past four years. He says the government's failure to imprison attackers is giving strength to the Boko Haram crisis.

"One of reasons to that they have used to justify these attacks is to say 'When Muslims were attacked in Plateau State, for example, those who carried out the attacks, nothing happened to them and the government turned a blind eye.'"

More violence between religious, political and tribal groups is expected next year before Nigeria's 2015 presidential elections.

The Nigerian military says it continues to fight Boko Haram and kill members of the group in gun battles and air raids.

But in rural areas of northern Nigeria, people are still being killed, homes are still being burned and people still live in fear.

I'm Christopher Cruise.

And that's our program for today. It was written by Christopher Cruise from reports by Elizabeth Arrott in Cairo and Heather Murdock in Maiduguri.

You can tell us what you want to hear on a future show. You can also go to our website -- [learningenglish.voanews.com](http://learningenglish.voanews.com) -- and click "Contact Us." Thank you for spending some of your time with us today.