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Oxford, Great Britain

"Binge-watch," "twerk" and "schmeat" — three of the seven runner-ups for Oxford Dictionaries' word of the year. Announced on Mon, Nov. 18, the 2013 word of the year is: "selfie." Popularized by contributions from Justin Bieber, Kim Kardashian and Pope Francis (credited with the first "papal selfie"), "selfie" rocketed by 17,000 percent in usage over the past 12 months, The Guardian reports.

Beirut, Lebanon

After a double suicide bomb outside the Iranian embassy in Lebanon, 23 lay dead and at least 147 have been injured, according to CNN. Sunni jihadist group Abdullah Azzam Brigades has claimed responsibility for the attack, motivated in part by Iran's continued support for Lebanese Hezbollah, a Shia militant group. The blasts have been tied to the Syrian civil war, during which Hezbollah has allegedly sent fighters to support Syrian government forces.

Charlottesville, Virginia, USA

State Sen. Creigh Deeds's condition has improved to "fair," hours after Deeds was stabbed in the head and upper torso. The stabbing occurred on Nov. 19 in Deeds's home, where authorities found his 24-year-old son, Gus, lying dead with a gunshot wound. According to Virginia State Police, the injured senator walked from his home to Route 42, where he was spotted by a cousin and airlifted to the University of Virginia Hospital shortly thereafter. Fox News reports that national Democratic sources have made allegations that, "Gus Deeds stabbed his father before shooting himself." As of Nov. 19, police are not searching for a suspect.

Port-au-Prince, Haiti

-- Emerging from the nation's capital, protests demanding President Michel Martelly's resignation have swept Haiti. "We are taking the streets to demand Martelly's departure," said Volcy Assad, spokesman for the leftist Fanmi Lavalas party. According to the BBC, the brunt of public anger stems from the rising cost of living and high levels of government corruption. Martelly has refused to step down, appealing for national unity instead.



Democracy vs. military: opposition in Egypt runs high

BY EMILY HAAKSMA
STAFF WRITER

"I love the Egyptian military," said sophomore Daniel Smith. "It's one of the silliest things I've ever seen." Smith is not alone in his opinion on the ongoing crisis in Egypt.

The trial of ousted president Mohammed Morsi is generating waves of democratic discontent beyond the political pool of Egypt and its African neighbors.

On July 3, Morsi was deposed by the Egyptian military, an incident that sparked mass protest in the nation's capital. He currently faces trial on charges of both instigating violence and the deaths of protesters during his tenure.

While power has shifted to an interim government, many argue that a greater issue lies at stake: Egypt's future relationship with democracy.

What happens when a country achieves some semblance of democratic government and then promptly loses it? Crisis unfolds.

Morsi replaced former president Hosni Mubarak as head of state, served for a year and then was ousted by the Egyptian military in a coup that was referred to as "corrective revolution."

"What seems disingenuous about the military response is their underlying interests," said Jeremy Rinker, visiting assistant professor of peace and conflict studies.

"Forty percent of Egypt's capital is owned by the military," he said. "If Morsi at all jeopardized that, then it's an easy equation for them to say, 'Oh, we're taking you out.' Anybody who stepped in there would have been up against that."

The democracy that Morsi represents is accused of being a facade.



Mohammed Morsi won Egypt's first democratic election for president, but was ousted on July 3. He is currently facing trial.

"I don't think the military ideologically cared for him," said Smith. "They just wanted to keep someone stable in power."

When Morsi was deemed unstable by the Egyptian military this July, he was immediately ousted from his position of power.

His ousting had consequences greater than many had expected.

"America has cut off aid to Egypt because, in the aid agreement, the U.S. denied support if Egypt was in a situation of internal military conflict," said Garrett, a member of the U.S. Armed Forces who chose not to reveal his surname. "Obviously the Egyptian military has fired

on innocent protesters."

This constant struggle between democracy and militarization forms the basis of protests both for and against Morsi.

According to the BBC, one demonstrator outside Morsi's court of trial angrily told a group of policemen on security duty that they, too, would one day find themselves on trial.

Many are finding that such sentiments reverberate on a much larger scale.

"These things don't just affect people in Northern Africa and the Middle East," said Garrett. "They have worldwide consequences that people need to be mindful of."

Is it possible for a state fraught with corruption and conflict to adopt a stable democracy?

The U.S. advocates democratic leadership in developing countries, but the outcomes of U.S. involvement don't always match the initial goals.

"It's the same situation that we got into in Palestine," said Rinker. "It's like, 'Yes, let's support democracy. But hold on — if the Islamists win then ... oh, well, we didn't want them.' But that's how people voted."

Morsi's control of Egypt meant the Muslim Brotherhood's control of Egypt.

"Now the balance of power has been shifted, and it really is a military state," said Garrett. "They call it 'technocratic,' and they're on their way to elections; but really, the people with the guns are in charge."

Egypt's political future is still very much up in the air, and military aid from the U.S. to promote democracy may cause the situation to regress.

"A better use of funds is to actually provide for humanitarian aid and development as opposed to military," said Rinker. "How do we solve the problem that we ourselves were implicit in creating?"

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