

## Overview

The Arab Spring is a series of protests, uprisings and wars occurring since 18th December 2010. These protests started in Tunisia and sparked off a growing dissatisfaction in Arab countries with absolute autocracy for a long time, unemployment, rising food prices, human rights violations and corrupt government practices. The protests involved strikes, demonstrations, marches and rallies and the effective use of social media to garner attention, spread words about the protests and to organize, communicate and raise awareness about state attempts at repression, internet and press censorship.

Governments and pro-government forces have used violent means to crush these protests and protesters have responded similarly. A major slogan of the Arab Spring protests has been “Ash-shab yurid isqat an-nizam” meaning “the people want to bring down the regime.”

In terms of their scale and significance, the Arab Spring movements have often been compared to the Revolutions of 1989, also known as the “Autumn of Nations” which overthrew the communist states in various Central and Eastern European Countries.

## Summary Table of Constitutional / Leader Status

Country	Type of Government	Leader	Duration of leadership	Current Status
Tunisia	Constitutional Republic	Zine el-Abidine Ben Ali	1987 - 2011	Leader Overthrown
Egypt	Republic and semi-presidential	Hosni Mubarak	1981 - 2011	
Libya	Dictatorship	Muammar Gaddafi	1969 - 2011	
Yemen	Presidential Representative Democratic Republic	Ali Abdullah Saleh	1999 - 2011	
Syria	Unitary semi-presidential Constitutional Republic	Bashar al-Assad	2000 --	Incumbent
Bahrain	Constitutional Monarchy	Hamad bin Isa Al Khalifa	1999 --	Incumbent
Algeria	Presidential System, Semi-presidential system	Abdelaziz Bouteflika- President	1999 --	Incumbent

Iraq	Federal Parliamentary Representative Democratic Republic	Nouri al-Maliki	2006--	Incumbent
Jordan	Unitary Parliamentary Constitutional Monarchy	Abdullah II	1999 --	Incumbent
Kuwait	Parliamentary Constitutional Monarchy	Jaber Al-Mubarak Al-Hamad Al-Sabah	2011--	Incumbent
Lebanon	National Assembly	Najib Mikati	2011--	Incumbent
Mauritania	National Assembly/Senate	Moulaye Ould Mohamed Laghdaf	2008--	Incumbent
Oman	Majlis	Qaboos bin Said al Said	1970--	Incumbent
Saudi Arabia	Majlis as-Shura	Abdullah of Saudi Arabia	2005--	Incumbent
Djibouti	National Assembly	Dileita Mohamed Dileita	2001--	Incumbent
Western Sahara	Democratic Republic	Abdelkader Taleb Omar	2003--	Incumbent
Morocco	Parliament	Abdelilah Benkirane	2011--	Incumbent
Sudan	Majlis Watani	Omar al-Bashir	1989--	Incumbent

## Effects

Lebanon, Mauritania, Oman, Saudi Arabia, Djibouti and Western Sahara: Minor protests

Algeria, Iraq, Jordan, Kuwait, Morocco and Sudan: Major Protests

Bahrain: Civil uprising

Tunisia, Egypt, Libya and Yemen: Rulers have been forced from power.

Syria: Civil war.

Note: Saudi Arabia, UAE, Qatar, Kuwait and Iran, the major oil-rich nations, have been able to keep their ruling families in power.

## Status after the protests

### Tunisia

Tunisia currently functions as a multi-party democracy. After Ben Ali fled into exile, a caretaker coalition government was established which included members of Ben Ali's Party, the Constitutional Democratic Rally (RCD) as well as opposition members from other ministries. As a result of daily protests, Mohamed Ghannouchi resigned and removed all RCD members and dissolved the party. The first post-revolution election took place on 23rd October, 2011 to elect representatives to a 217 member Constituent Assembly to draft a new constitution. The leading moderate Islamist Party Ennahda won the election with 37% of the votes and elected 42 women to the Constituent Assembly.

### Egypt

After Hosni Mubarak resigned his presidency, the Egypt Military took control and immediately dissolved the Egyptian parliament as well as the Egyptian constitution. Elections took place amidst widespread protests. Muslim Brotherhood candidate Mohamed Morsi was the winner of the Presidential election. Protests continued as Morsi tried to rush through a new constitution without giving time for debating or improving it. The Muslim Brotherhood claimed victory in the constitutional referendum. Large scale protests are still on with the opposition complaining of unfair means as well as large scale rigging and demanding an enquiry.

### Libya

Following the collapse of the Gaddafi government in August, 2011, Libya is under de-facto administration of the National Transitional Council (NTC). On 7th July, 2012, the NTC supervised democratic elections to establish a 200 member General National Congress to replace the Council. The assembly will choose a Prime Minister and conduct parliamentary elections in 2013. A new constitution will also be written accordingly.

### Yemen

Ali Abdullah Saleh signed a power-transfer agreement in exchange for immunity from prosecution brokered by the Gulf Cooperation Council, under which he would transfer power to his Vice President Abd al-Rab Mansur al-Hadi within 30 days and leave his post as president. A Presidential Election was held on 21st February, 2012 and Hadi won resounding victory with 99.8% of the vote. Hadi was sworn in as the President of Yemen on 25th February, 2012.

## Timeline of Protests

2011

Yemen

03 Jun

Protests broke out in Yemen and there was a failed assassination attempt on President Ali Abdullah Saleh.

## 2010

### Tunisia

- 17 Dec** A 26 year old Tunisian man, Mohammed Bouazizi, set himself afire in front of a local municipal office in protest against the police and authorities when the police confiscated his cart and beat him because he did not have a permit.
- 18 Dec** Small protests break out in Bouazizi's hometown the day after and soon spread throughout the country representing the Tunisian public's boiling frustration over living standards, police atrocities, and rising unemployment. Protests broke out against the Tunisian president Zine el-Abidine Ben Ali and lasted for almost a month. Around 219 people were killed and 510 injured during the protests.

## 2011

- 14 Jan** Tunisian president Zine el-Abidine Ben Ali and his wife with their 3 children flee to Saudi Arabia.
- 23 Oct** Elections for a Constituent Assembly were held. The centre-right and moderately Islamist Ennahda won the elections with 37% of the votes.

## 2010

### Algeria

- 29 Dec** The Tunisian uprising sparked off protests in Algeria against the 19 year old emergency rule.

## 2012

- 14 Jan** The Algerian uprising was highly successful and culminated in the lifting of the 19 year old state of emergency.

## 2011

### Egypt

- 25 Jan** Following the success of the Jasmine Revolution named after Tunisia's national flower, protests broke out in Egypt. Egyptian protestors assembled at downtown Cairo's Tahrir Square to protest against the emergency law, poverty, unemployment and Hosni Mubarak's government. The government's efforts to crush these protests with armed forces escalated into violent street battles.
- 11 Feb** Mubarak resigned his presidency and handed over power to the army. Social media such as Facebook and Twitter performed a key role in spreading word about the Egyptian revolution and garnering support.
- 03 Mar** The Prime Minister of Egypt, Ahmed Shafik also resigned, after protests.

- 29 Nov** Parliamentary elections were held in Egypt amidst widespread protests and violence. Citizens alleged that the original demands made at Tahrir Square had not been met.
- 20 Dec** Hundreds of women protestors took to the streets to protest against atrocities against women by the military government. Violent clashes took place between the security forces and demonstrators leading to the death of several women.
- 30 Dec** Egyptian people in large numbers protested in Tahrir Square once again demanding that the Supreme Council of the Armed Forces (SCAF) speed up the transition process to a more civilian government. Many people were injured or killed in the clashes that followed between the protestors and the soldiers.
- 2012**
- 20 Apr** The people once again protested in Tahrir Square and demanded a quicker transfer of power to a new president.
- 02 Jun** Mubarak was sentenced to life imprisonment by an Egyptian court.
- 24 Jun** Muslim Brotherhood candidate Mohamed Morsi wins the run-off Presidential election.
- 22 Nov** Morsi passed a controversial decree which faced widespread criticism and protest. The decree ordered retrials for Mubarak-era officials responsible for violence during the uprising against his rule and stated that all decisions taken by Morsi until the election of a new parliament were exempt from legal challenge. The decrees also prevented the courts from attempting to dissolve the upper house of parliament or the constituent assembly which is drawing up the country's new constitution, both dominated by Morsi's Islamist allies.
- 09 Dec** Amid violent protests, Mohammad Morsi scrapped the contentious decree granting him unlimited powers but insisted that the referendum on the new constitution would go ahead as planned. The concession failed to pacify the opposition and protests continued.
- 11 Dec** The International Monetary Fund Loan to Egypt was postponed after judges refused to oversee referendum on new constitution proposed by the president.
- 16 Dec** Voters stayed away from the polling stations because of distrust and apathy towards the government's actions. The opposition complained of large-scale rigging and violations.
- 23 Dec** Egypt's opposition called for an investigation into allegations of fraud in the referendum on the country's contentious draft constitution, after the Muslim Brotherhood claimed 64% of voters had backed the new charter.

2011

## Libya

- 15 Feb** Protests broke out against Muammar Gaddafi's regime in Benghazi, Libya which soon escalated into the Libyan Civil War.
- 20 - 28 Aug** The war reached violent proportions with hundreds of civilians getting killed. The rebel forces refused to yield to government requests of a cease fire and reconciliation by the African Union. They captured and gained control of the capital city of Tripoli and succeeded in overthrowing the dictatorship of Muammar Gaddafi.
- 20 Oct** Muammar Gaddafi was captured and killed by rebels in the city of Sirte.
- 23 Oct** The National Transitional Council (NTC) officially declared an end to the civil war.
- 19 Nov** Muammar Gaddafi's son Saif al-Islam Gaddafi was captured while hiding in Nigeria.

2011

## Syria

- 15 Mar** Nationwide protests began to end the five decade rule of the Ba'ath Party and obtain the resignation of president Bashar al-Assad.

The government deployed soldiers to control the uprising and ordered the Syrian army to open fire on the demonstrators. The protests evolved into an armed rebellion. Defected soldiers and civilian volunteers, who formed the opposition, gradually became more armed and organized and many of these groups received military aid from foreign countries. The casualties were reported to be somewhere between 40,000 - 55,000.

2012

- 03 Feb** The government began an attack on the city of Homs.
- 25 May** The Syrian government in an attempt to quell demonstrations carried out a massacre in Houla killing a very large number of people.
- 12 Jul** The Syrian army carried out a massacre in the village of Tremseh in which 225 people were killed.
- 15 Jul** The International Committee of the Red Cross officially declared that the Syrian uprising was now a civil war.
- 27 Jul** Government forces and rebels began fighting a battle to capture Syria's largest city, Aleppo. The UN reports that over 200, 000 Syrian refugees have now fled Syria, ever since the fighting began.

- 23 Sep** The Free Syrian Army moved its command headquarters from Southern Turkey into rebel controlled areas of northern Syria.
- 09 Oct** The Free Syrian Army, a strategic town in on the highway linking Damascus with Aleppo.
- 18 Oct** The Free Syrian Army captured the suburb of Douma, the biggest suburb of Damascus. They claimed to have captured more than 50% of Syria's territory.
- 19 Oct** Wissam al-Hassan, a Brigadier General of the Lebanese Internal Security Forces (ISF) and several others with him died in a car bombing which came to known as the 2012 Beirut Bombing. Since al-Hassan was an ally of the anti-Assad camp in Lebanon, it was widely speculated that Syria or its allies were behind the bombing.
- 12 Dec** Friends of Syria Summit held in Marrakech. The US formally announced that it would recognize the Syrian National Coalition as a legitimate representative of the Syrian people. Britain, France, Turkey and some Gulf states had already announced their endorsements on November, 2012.
- 13 Dec** 21 months of war have forced at least 2 million Syrians to leave their home. The Syrian people are living in extremely dismal conditions. With Bashar al-Assad's regime targeting bakeries, displaced people are starving with the harsh weather adding to their trouble.
- Russia, which had extended unwavering diplomatic and military support, admitted for the first time that Bashar al-Assad's troops were gradually losing ground and faced threat of a defeat at the hands of the rebels.
- 26 Dec** The head of the Syrian Military Police Abdelaziz Jassim al-Shalal defected from the army and declared allegiance to the rising against President Bashar al-Assad.
- Russia announces that it'll host Syria peace envoy Lakhdar Brahmi this week after Syrian officials held talks in Moscow to try to agree to a plan to end the 21 month old long conflict.