

The **Arab Spring** (*Arabic*: الثورات العربية *al-Thuraat al-'Arabiyy*); literally *the Arabic Rebellions* or *the Arab Revolutions*) is a [revolutionary wave](#) of [demonstrations](#) and [protests](#) occurring in the [Arab world](#) that began on Saturday, 18 December 2010. To date, rulers have been forced from power in [Tunisia](#),^[1] [Egypt](#)^[2] [Libya](#),^[3] and [Yemen](#);^[4] civil uprisings have erupted in [Bahrain](#)^[5] and [Syria](#);^[6] major protests have broken out in [Algeria](#),^[7] [Iraq](#),^[8] [Jordan](#),^[9] [Kuwait](#),^[10] [Morocco](#),^[11] and [Oman](#);^[12] and minor protests have occurred in [Lebanon](#),^[13] [Mauritania](#), [Saudi Arabia](#),^[14] [Sudan](#),^[15] and [Western Sahara](#).^[16] Clashes at the [borders of Israel](#) in May 2011 have also been inspired by the regional Arab Spring.^[17]

The protests have shared techniques of [civil resistance](#) in sustained campaigns involving strikes, demonstrations, marches, and rallies, as well as the use of [social media](#) to organize, communicate, and raise awareness in the face of state attempts at repression and [Internet censorship](#).^[18]

Many demonstrations have met violent responses from authorities,^[19]^[20] ^[21] as well as from pro-government militias and counter-demonstrators.^[22] ^[23]^[24] A major slogan of the demonstrators in the Arab world has been *Ash-sha'b yurīd isqāṭ an-niẓām* ("the people want to bring down the regime").^[25]

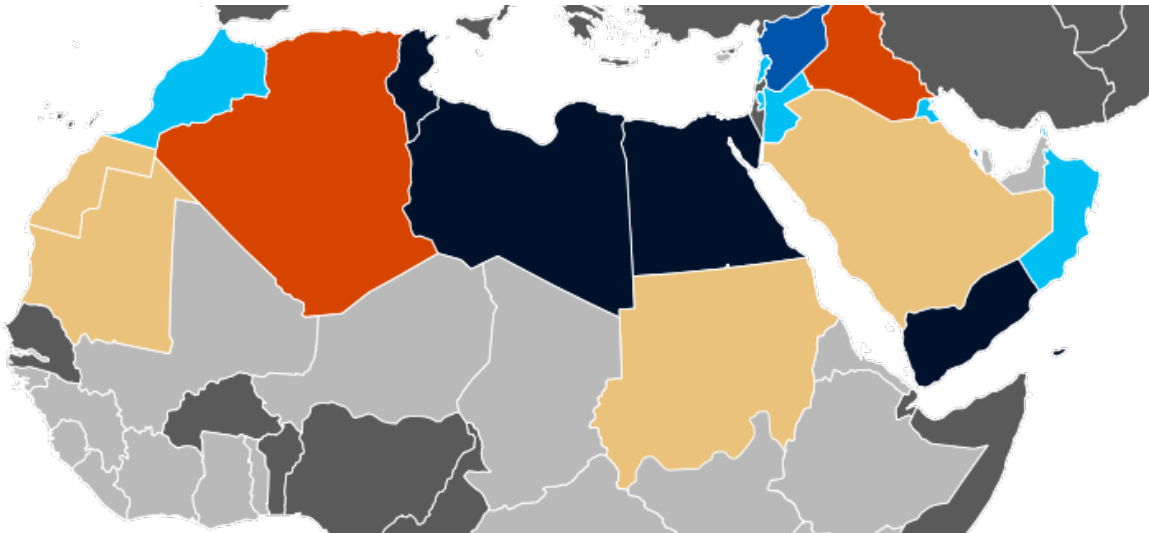
The series of protests and demonstrations across the Middle East and North Africa has become known as the "Arab Spring",^[26]^[27]^[28] and sometimes as the "Arab Spring and Winter",^[29] "Arab Awakening"^[30]^[31] ^[32] or "Arab Uprisings"^[33]^[34] even though not all the participants in the protests are [Arab](#). It was sparked by the first protests that occurred in [Tunisia](#) on 18 December 2010 following [Mohamed Bouazizi](#)'s [self-immolation](#) in protest of police corruption and ill treatment.^[35]^[36] With the success of the protests in Tunisia, a [wave of unrest](#) sparked by the Tunisian "Burning Man" struck [Algeria](#), [Jordan](#), [Egypt](#), and [Yemen](#),^[37] then spread to other countries. The largest, most organised demonstrations have often occurred on a "day of rage", usually Friday after noon prayers.^[38]^[39]^[40] The protests have also triggered similar unrest [outside the region](#).

As of February 2012, governments have been overthrown in four countries. Tunisian President [Zine El Abidine Ben Ali](#) fled to Saudi Arabia on 14 January 2011 following the [Tunisian revolution](#) protests. In Egypt, [President Hosni Mubarak](#) resigned on 11 February 2011 after 18 days of massive protests, ending his 30-year presidency. The [Libyan](#) leader [Muammar Gaddafi](#) was overthrown on 23 August 2011, after the [National Transitional Council](#) (NTC) took control of [Bab al-Azizia](#). He was killed on

20 October 2011, in his hometown of [Sirte](#) after the NTC took control of the city. Yemeni President [Ali Abdullah Saleh](#) signed the GCC power-transfer deal in which a presidential election was held, resulting to his successor [Abd al-Rab Mansur al-Hadi](#) formally replaces him as the president of Yemen on 27 February 2012, in exchange for immunity from prosecution.

During this period of regional unrest, several leaders announced their intentions to step down at the end of their current terms. [Sudanese](#) President [Omar al-Bashir](#) announced that he would not seek re-election in 2015,[41] as did [Iraqi](#) Prime Minister [Nouri al-Maliki](#), whose term ends in 2014,[42] although there have been increasingly violent demonstrations demanding his immediate resignation.[43] Protests in [Jordan](#) have also caused the sacking of two successive governments[44][45] by [King Abdullah](#). [46]

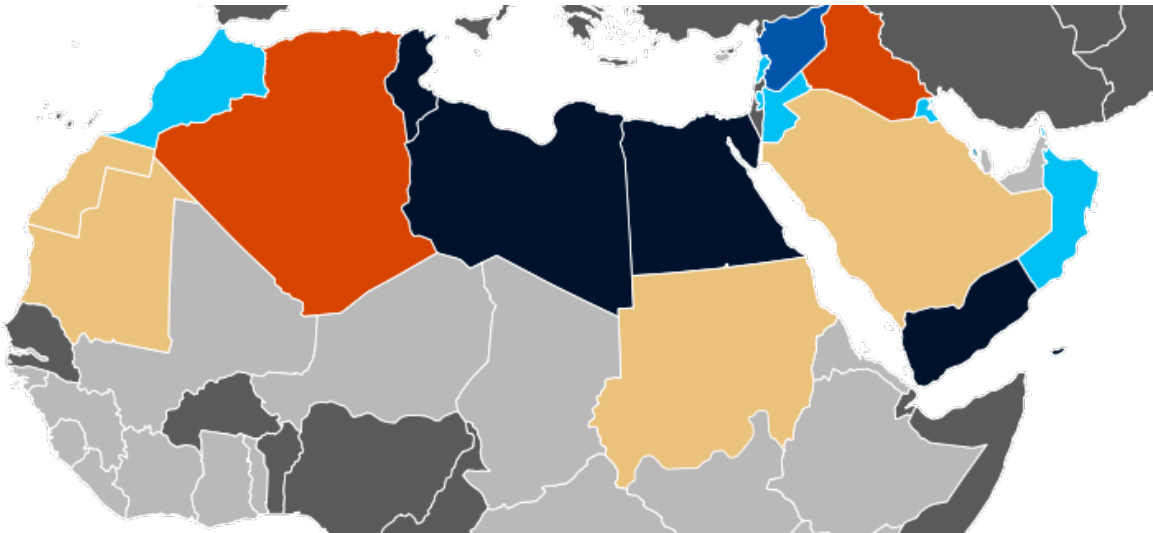
The geopolitical implications of the protests have drawn global attention, [47] including the suggestion that some protesters may be nominated for the 2011 [Nobel Peace Prize](#). [48] [Tawakel Karman](#) from Yemen was one of the three laureates of the [2011 Nobel Peace Prize](#) as a prominent leader in the Arab Spring. In December 2011, [Time](#) magazine named "The Protester" its "[Person of the Year](#)". [49] Another award was noted when the Spanish photographer [Samuel Aranda](#), won the 2011 [World Press Photo](#) award for his image of a Yemeni woman holding an injured family member, taken during the civil uprising in Yemen on 15 October 2011. [50]



[Sudan](#)

Mauritania
— Tunisia
Morocco
Western
Sahara
Saudi Arabia
Jordan
Lebanon—
Israeli border/

— Kuwait
— Bahrain
Oman




Government overthrown and governmental changes Sustained civil disorder and governmental changes Protests
Major protests Minor protests [Protests outside the Arab world](#)

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Summary of protests by country

Count ry	Date start ed	Status of protests	Outcome	Deat h toll	Situatio n
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 Tunisia	18 December 2010	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Government overthrow on 14 January 2011 • Subdued since March 2011 	Overthrow of Zine El Abidine Ben Ali; Ben Ali flees into exile in Saudi Arabia <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Resignation of Prime Minister Ghannouchi ▪ Dissolution of the political police[51] ▪ Dissolution of the RCD, the former ruling party of Tunisia and liquidation of its assets[52] ▪ Release of political prisoners[53] ▪ Elections to a Constituent Assembly on 23 October 2011[54] 	223[55][56]	Government overthrow
 Algeria	28 December 2010	Subdued since April 2011	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Lifting of the 19-year-old state of emergency[57][58] 	8[59]	Major protests
 Lebanon	12 January 2011	Limited	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ A 40% increase in wages[60] 	17	Protests and governmental changes
 Jordan	14 January 2011	Ongoing	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ King Abdullah II dismisses Prime Minister Rifai and his cabinet[61] ▪ Months later, Abdullah dismisses Prime Minister Bakhit and his cabinet after complaints of slow progress on promised reforms[62] 	4[63][64]	Protests and governmental changes
 Mauritania	17 January 2011	Ongoing		3[65]	Minor protests

 Sudan	17 January 2011	Subdued since April 2011	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> President Bashir announces he will not seek another term in 2015[66] 	1[67]	Minor protests
 Oman	17 January 2011	Ended May 2011	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Economic concessions by Sultan Qaboos[68][69] Dismissal of ministers[70][71] Granting of lawmaking powers to Oman's elected legislature[72] 	2–6[73][74][75]	Protests and governmental changes
 Saudi Arabia	21 January 2011	Eastern Province protests ongoing, women's rights campaign s ongoing	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Economic concessions by King Abdullah[76][77] Male-only municipal elections held 29 September 2011[78][79] King Abdullah announces women's approval to vote and be elected in 2015 municipal elections and to be nominated to the Shura Council[80] 	9[81][82][83][84][85]	Minor protests

 Egypt	25 January 2011	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Government overthrow on 11 February 2011 • Protests ongoing 	<p>Overthrow of Hosni Mubarak; Mubarak charged for killing protesters</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Resignation of Prime Minister(s) Nazif and Shafik^[86] ▪ Assumption of power by the Armed Forces^[87] ▪ Suspension of the Constitution, dissolution of the Parliament^[88] ▪ Disbanding of State Security Investigations Service^[89] ▪ Dissolution of the NDP, the former ruling party of Egypt and transfer of its assets to the state^[90] ▪ Prosecution of Mubarak, his family and his former ministers^{[91][92][93]} 	846 ^{[94][95]}	Government overthrow
 Yemen	27 January 2011	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Government overthrow on 27 February 2012 	<p>Overthrow of Ali Abdullah Saleh; Saleh granted immunity from prosecution</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Resignation of Prime Minister Mujawar ▪ Resignation of MPs from the ruling party^[96] ▪ Approval of President's immunity from prosecution by Yemeni legislators^[97] ▪ Al-Qaeda linked militants takes control of several cities in southern Yemen ▪ Presidential election held to replace Saleh as the new president of Yemen; Abd Rabbuh Mansur Al-Hadi elected and inaugurated 	1,784 – 1,870 ^[98]	Government overthrow

 Iraq	10 February 2011	Ended December 2011	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Prime Minister Maliki announces that he will not run for a 3rd term; [99] Resignation of provincial governors and local authorities[100] 	35 [101]	Major protests
 Bahrain	14 February 2011	Ongoing	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Economic concessions by King Hamad[102] Release of political prisoners[103] Negotiations with Shia representatives[104] GCC intervention at the request of the Government of Bahrain Head of the National Security Apparatus removed from post[105] Formation of a committee to implement BICI report recommendations[106] 	76 [107] [108] [109] [110]	Sustained civil disorder and government changes
 Libya	15 February 2011	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Government overthrow on 23 August 2011 War ended 23 October 2011 	<p>Overthrow of Muammar Gaddafi; Gaddafi killed by NTC forces</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> UN-mandated military intervention ended with NATO withdrawal[111] Opposition forces takes control of all Libyan cities Assumption of interim control by National Transitional Council International recognition of NTC as the sole governing authority for Libya Beginning of sporadic low-level fighting and clashes[112] 	25,000 [113] – 30,000 [114]	Government overthrown

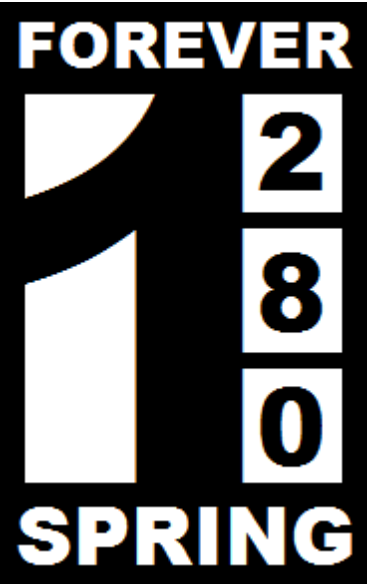
 Kuwait	18 February 2011	Ongoing	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Resignation of Prime Minister Nasser Mohammed Al-Ahmed Al-Sabah^[115] Dissolution of the Parliament^[116] 	0 ^[117]	Protests and governmental changes
 Morocco	20 February 2011	Ended November 2011	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Political concessions by King Mohammed VI; ^[118] Referendum on constitutional reforms; Respect to civil rights and an end to corruption^[119] 	1 ^[120]	Protests and governmental changes
Western Sahara	26 February 2011	Subdued since May 2011		0	Minor protests

 Syria	15 March 2011	Ongoing	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Release of some political prisoners[121][122] ▪ End of Emergency Law ▪ Dismissal of Provincial Governors[123][124] ▪ Military action in Hama, Daraa, Homs and other areas[125] ▪ Battles between the Syrian regime's army and the Free Syrian army in Rastan, Idlib, Homs, Al-Qusayr ▪ Resignations from Parliament[126] ▪ Resignation of the Government[127] ▪ Large defections from the Syrian army and clashes between soldiers and defectors[128] ▪ Formation of the Free Syrian Army ▪ Formation of the Syrian National Council[129] ▪ Syria suspended from the Arab League ▪ International support for a new Syrian government in exile 	7,100-8,700[130]	Sustained civil disorder and government changes
Israeli border areas	15 May 2011	Ended 5 June 2011		30–40[131][132]	Major protests

		32,000–37,800+ (International estimate, ongoing)	
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Background

[\[edit\]](#)
Motivations



A commemorative logo of the date on which the Arab Spring began- 18 December 2010. Numerous factors have led to the protests, including issues such as dictatorship or [absolute monarchy](#), [human rights violations](#), [government corruption](#) (demonstrated by [Wikileaks diplomatic cables](#)),^[133] economic decline, unemployment, extreme poverty, and a number of demographic

structural factors,[134] such as a large percentage of educated but dissatisfied youth within the population.[135] Also, some^[who?] attribute the 2009 Iranian protests as one of the reasons behind the Arab Spring.[136] The catalysts for the revolts in all Northern African and Persian Gulf countries have been the concentration of wealth in the hands of autocrats in power for decades, insufficient transparency of its redistribution, corruption, and especially the refusal of the youth to accept the status quo. [137] Increasing food prices and global famine rates have also been a significant factor, as they involve threats to food security worldwide and prices that approach levels of the 2007–2008 world food price crisis.[138] Amnesty International singled out Wikileaks' release of US diplomatic cables as a catalyst for the revolts.[139]

In recent decades rising living standards and literacy rates, as well as the increased availability of higher education, have resulted in an improved human development index in the affected countries. The tension between rising aspirations and a lack of government reform may have been a contributing factor in all of the protests.[137][140][141] Many of the Internet-savvy youth of these countries have, increasingly over the years, been viewing autocrats and absolute monarchies as anachronisms. A university professor of Oman, Al-Najma Zidjaly referred to this upheaval as youthquake.[137]

Tunisia and Egypt, the first to witness major uprisings, differ from other North African and Middle Eastern nations such as Algeria and Libya in that they lack significant oil revenue, and were thus unable to make concessions to calm the masses.[137]

The relative success of the democratic and Muslim Republic of Turkey, with its substantially free and vigorously contested but peaceful elections, fast-growing but liberal economy, secular constitution but (moderate) Islamist government, created a model (the Turkish model) if not a motivation for protestors in neighbouring states.[142]

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Recent history

The current wave of protests is not an entirely new phenomenon, resulting in part from the activities of dissident activists as well as members of a variety of social and union organizations that have been active for years in Tunisia, Algeria, Egypt, and other countries in the area, as well as in the territory of Western Sahara.[143]

Tunisia experienced a series of conflicts over the past three years, the

most notable occurring in the mining area of [Gafsa](#) in 2008, where protests continued for many months. These protests included rallies, sit-ins, and strikes, during which there were two fatalities, an unspecified number of wounded, and dozens of arrests.^{[143][144]} The Egyptian labor movement had been strong for years, with more than 3,000 labor actions since 2004.^[145] One important demonstration was an attempted workers' strike on 6 April 2008 at the state-run textile factories of [al-Mahalla al-Kubra](#), just outside [Cairo](#). The idea for this type of demonstration spread throughout the country, promoted by computer-literate working class youths and their supporters among middle-class college students.^[145] A Facebook page, set up to promote the strike, attracted tens of thousands of followers. The government mobilized to break the strike through infiltration and riot police, and while the regime was somewhat successful in forestalling a strike, dissidents formed the "6 April Committee" of youths and labor activists, which became one of the major forces calling for the anti-[Mubarak](#) demonstration on 25 January in [Tahrir Square](#).^[145]

In Algeria, discontent had been building for years over a number of issues. In February 2008, United States Ambassador Robert Ford wrote in a leaked diplomatic cable that Algeria is 'unhappy' with long-standing political alienation; that social discontent persisted throughout the country, with food strikes occurring almost every week; that there were demonstrations every day somewhere in the country; and that the Algerian government was corrupt and fragile.^[146] Some have claimed that during 2010 there were as many as '9,700 riots and unrests' throughout the country.^[147] Many protests focused on issues such as education and health care, while others cited rampant corruption.^[148]

In Western Sahara, the [Gdeim Izik protest camp](#) was erected 12 km south-east of [El Aaiún](#) by a group of young [Sahrawis](#) on 9 October 2010. Their intention was to demonstrate against labor discrimination, unemployment, looting of resources, and human rights abuses.^[149] The camp contained between 12,000 and 20,000 inhabitants, but on 8 November 2010 it was destroyed and its inhabitants evicted by Moroccan security forces. The security forces faced strong opposition from some young Sahrawi civilians, and rioting soon spread to El Aaiún and other towns within the territory, resulting in an unknown number of injuries and deaths. Violence against Sahrawis in the aftermath of the protests was cited as a reason for [renewed protests](#) months later, after the start of the Arab Spring.^[150]

The catalyst for the current escalation of protests was the self-immolation of Tunisian [Mohamed Bouazizi](#). A college graduate, he was unable to find

work and was selling fruit at a roadside stand until the police confiscated his wares. The next day, 17 December, he doused himself with gasoline and set himself afire. His death on 4 January^[151] brought together various groups dissatisfied with the existing system, including many unemployed, political and human rights activists, labor, trade unionists, students, professors, lawyers, and others to begin the [Tunisian Revolution](#).^[143]

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Tunisian revolution



Protesters in downtown [Tunis](#) on 14 January 2011

Main article: [Tunisian revolution](#)

Following the self-immolation of [Mohamed Bouazizi](#) in [Sidi Bouzid](#), a series of increasingly violent street demonstrations through December 2010 ultimately led to the ouster of longtime [President Zine El Abidine Ben Ali](#) on 14 January 2011. The demonstrations were preceded by high unemployment, [food inflation](#), corruption,^[152] lack of [freedom of speech](#) and other forms of [political freedom](#),^[153] and poor [living conditions](#). The protests constituted the most dramatic wave of social and political unrest in Tunisia in three decades,^[154]^[155] and have resulted in scores of deaths and injuries, most of which were the result of action by police and security forces against demonstrators. Ben Ali fled into exile in [Saudi Arabia](#), ending his 23 years in power.^[156]^[157]

Following Ben Ali's departure, a [state of emergency](#) was declared and a caretaker coalition government was created, which included members of Ben Ali's party, the [Constitutional Democratic Rally](#) (RCD), as well as [opposition](#) figures from other ministries. However, the five newly appointed non-RCD ministers resigned almost immediately.^[158]^[159] As a result of continued daily protests, on 27 January Prime Minister [Mohamed](#)

[Ghannouchi](#) reshuffled the government, removing all former RCD members other than himself, and on 6 February the former ruling party was suspended;^[160] later, on 9 March, it was dissolved.^[161] Following further public protests, Ghannouchi himself resigned on 27 February, and [Beji Caid el Sebsi](#) became Prime Minister.

On 23 October 2011, citizens voted in the first post-revolution election to elect representatives to a 217-member constituent assembly that would be responsible for the new constitution.^[162]

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Egyptian revolution

Main article: [2011 Egyptian revolution](#)

See also: [Timeline of the 2011 Egyptian revolution under Supreme Council of the Armed Forces](#)



Celebrations in [Tahrir Square](#) after [Omar Suleiman](#)'s statement concerning [Hosni Mubarak](#)'s resignation

Following the uprising in Tunisia and prior to his entry as a central figure in Egyptian politics, potential [presidential candidate Mohamed ElBaradei](#) warned of a 'Tunisia-style explosion' in Egypt.^[163]

Protests in Egypt began on 25 January and ran for 18 days. Beginning around midnight on 28 January, the Egyptian government attempted, somewhat successfully, to eliminate the nation's Internet access, in order to inhibit the protesters' ability to organize through [social media](#).^[164] Later that day, as tens of thousands protested on the streets of Egypt's major cities, President Mubarak dismissed his government, later appointing a new cabinet. Mubarak also appointed the first Vice President in almost 30 years.

On 10 February, Mubarak ceded all presidential power to Vice President [Omar Suleiman](#), but soon thereafter announced that he would remain as President until the end of his term.^[165] However, protests continued the next day, and Suleiman quickly announced that Mubarak had resigned from the presidency and transferred power to the [Armed Forces of Egypt](#).^[166] The military immediately dissolved the [Egyptian Parliament](#), suspended the [Constitution of Egypt](#), and promised to lift the nation's thirty-year "[emergency laws](#)". A civilian, [Essam Sharaf](#), was appointed as [Prime](#)

[Minister of Egypt](#) on 4 March to widespread approval among Egyptians in [Tahrir Square](#).^[167] Protests continued through the end of 2011, however, in response to Sharaf and the [Supreme Council of the Armed Forces](#)' perceived sluggishness in instituting reforms.^[168] The current Prime Minister of Egypt [Kamal Ganzouri](#), who took over for 2nd term.

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Libyan civil war



Thousands of demonstrators gather in [Bayda](#)

Main article: [Libyan civil war](#)

After the success of the revolution in Tunisia, a protest on living conditions began on 14 January in [Bayda, Libya](#), where protesters clashed with police and attacked government offices.^[169] Anti-government protests began in Libya on 15 February 2011. By 18 February, the opposition controlled most of [Benghazi](#), the country's second-largest city. The government dispatched elite troops and mercenaries in an attempt to recapture it, but they were repelled. By 20 February, protests had spread to the capital [Tripoli](#), leading to a television address by [Saif al-Islam Gaddafi](#), who warned the protestors that their country could descend into civil war. The rising death toll, numbering in the thousands, drew international condemnation and resulted in the resignation of several Libyan diplomats, along with calls for the regime's dismantlement.^[170]

On 26 February 2011, amidst ongoing efforts by demonstrators and rebel forces to wrest control of Tripoli from the [Jamahiriya](#), the opposition set up an [interim government](#) in Benghazi to oppose Colonel [Muammar Gaddafi](#)'s rule.^{[171][172]} However, despite initial opposition success, government forces subsequently took back much of the Mediterranean coast.

On 17 March, [United Nations Security Council Resolution 1973](#) was adopted, authorising a [no-fly zone](#) over Libya, and "all necessary

measures" to protect civilians. Two days later, France, the United States and the United Kingdom [intervened in Libya](#) with a bombing campaign against pro-Gaddafi forces. A coalition of 27 states from Europe and the Middle East soon joined the intervention. The forces were driven back from the outskirts of Benghazi, and the rebels [mounted an offensive](#), capturing scores of towns across the coast of Libya. The offensive stalled however, and a counter-offensive by the government retook most of the towns, until a [stalemate](#) was formed between [Brega](#) and [Ajdabiya](#), the former being held by the government and the latter in the hands of the rebels. Focus then shifted to the west of the country, where bitter fighting continued. After a [three-month-long battle](#), a loyalist siege of rebel-held [Misrata](#), the third largest city in Libya, was broken in large part due to coalition air strikes. The four major fronts of combat were generally considered to be the [Nafusa Mountains](#), the [Tripolitanian](#) coast, the [Gulf of Sidra](#),^[173] and the southern [Libyan Desert](#).^[174]

In late August, anti-Gaddafi fighters [captured Tripoli](#), scattering Gaddafi's government and marking the end of his 42 years of autocracy. Many institutions of the government, including Gaddafi and several top regime officials, regrouped in [Sirte](#), which Gaddafi declared to be Libya's new capital.^[175] Others fled to [Sabha](#), [Bani Walid](#), and remote reaches of the [Libyan Desert](#), or to surrounding countries.^[176]^[177] However, Sabha [fell](#) in late September,^[178] Bani Walid was captured after a [grueling siege](#) weeks later,^[179] and on 20 October, fighters under the aegis of the [National Transitional Council](#) seized Sirte, [killing Gaddafi](#) in the process.^[180]

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Yemeni revolution

Main article: [2011–2012 Yemeni uprising](#)



Protests in [Sana'a](#)

Protests occurred in many towns in both the north and south of Yemen starting in mid-January. Demonstrators initially protested against governmental proposals to modify the [constitution of Yemen](#), unemployment and economic conditions,^[181] and corruption,^[182] but their demands soon included a call for the resignation of President [Ali Abdullah Saleh](#),^{[182][183][184]} who had been facing internal opposition from his closest advisors since 2009.^[185]

A major demonstration of over 16,000 protesters took place in [Sana'a](#) on 27 January,^[186] and soon thereafter [human rights activist](#) and politician [Tawakel Karman](#) called for a "Day of Rage" on 3 February.^[187] According to [Xinhua News](#), organizers were calling for a million protesters.^[188] In response to the planned protest, Ali Abdullah Saleh stated that he would not seek another [presidential term in 2013](#).^[189] On 3 February, 20,000 protesters demonstrated against the government in Sana'a,^{[190][191]} others participated in a "Day of Rage" in Aden^[192] that was called for by [Tawakel Karman](#),^[187] while soldiers, armed members of the [General People's Congress](#), and many protestors held a pro-government rally in Sana'a.^[193] Concurrent with the resignation of Egyptian president Mubarak, Yemenis again took to the streets protesting President Saleh on 11 February, in what has been dubbed a "Friday of Rage".^[194] The protests continued in the days following despite clashes with government advocates.^[195] In a "Friday of Anger" held on 18 February, tens of thousands of Yemenis took part in anti-government demonstrations in the major cities of [Sana'a](#), [Taiz](#), and [Aden](#). Protests continued over the following months, especially in the three major cities, and briefly intensified in late May into urban warfare between [Hashid](#) tribesmen and army defectors allied with the opposition on one side and security forces and militias loyal to Saleh on the other.^[196]

After Saleh pretended to accept a [Gulf Cooperation Council](#)-brokered plan allowing him to cede power in exchange for immunity only to back away before signing three separate times,^{[197][198]} an assassination attempt on 3 June left him and several other high-ranking Yemeni officials injured by a blast in the presidential compound's mosque.^[199] Saleh was evacuated to [Saudi Arabia](#) for treatment, but he handed over power to Vice President [Abd al-Rab Mansur al-Hadi](#), who has largely continued his policies^[200] and ordered the arrest of several Yemenis in connection with the attack on the presidential compound.^[199] While in Saudi Arabia, Saleh kept hinting that he could return any time and continued to be present in the political sphere through television appearances from [Riyadh](#) starting with an address to the

Yemeni people on 7 July.^[201] On 12 September, Saleh issued a presidential decree while still receiving treatment in Riyadh authorizing Vice President Abd al-Rab Mansur al-Hadi to negotiate a deal with the opposition and sign the GCC initiative.^[202]

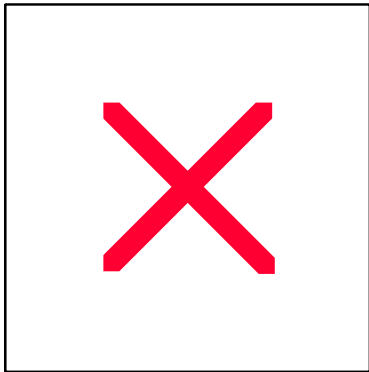
On 23 September 2011, three months since the assassination attempt, Saleh returned to Yemen abruptly, defying all earlier expectations.^[203] Pressure on Saleh to sign the GCC initiative eventually led to his signing of it in Riyadh on 23 November, which Saleh agrees to steps down and setting the stage for the transfer of power to his vice-president.^[204] A [Presidential election](#) was then held on 21 February 2012, which Hadi gets 99.8 percent of the vote.^[205] Hadi was then taken the oath of office in Yemen's parliament on 25 February 2012.^[206] By 27 February 2012, Saleh had resigned from the presidency and transferred power to his successor, marking the end of his 33-year rule.^[207]

During this period of unrest, [Tawakul Karman](#) was awarded [2011 Nobel Peace Prize](#) for her role in supporting women rights and involvement in the Arab Spring.

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Syrian uprising

Main article: [2011–2012 Syrian uprising](#)



A demonstration in the city of [Baniyas](#)

Protests in Syria started on 26 January, when one case of self-immolation was reported. Protesters have been calling for political reforms and the reinstatement of civil rights, as well as an end to the state of emergency, which has been in place since 1963.^[208] A "day of rage" was set for 4–5 February, but it was uneventful.^{[209][210]}

On 6 March, the Syrian security forces arrested about 15 children in Daraa in Southern Syria for writing slogans against the regime. Children were

tortured.^[*citation needed*] [Daraa](#) is the first city to protest against the [Baathist](#) regime, which has been ruling [Syria](#) since 1963.

Thousands of protestors gathered in [Damascus](#), [Aleppo](#), [al-Hasakah](#), [Daraa](#), [Deir ez-Zor](#), and [Hama](#) on 15 March,^{[211][212][213]} with recently released politician [Suhair Atassi](#) becoming an unofficial spokesperson for the "Syrian revolution".^[214] The next day there were reports of approximately 3000 arrests and a few [martyrs](#), but there are no official figures on the number of deaths.^[215] On 18 April 2011, approximately 100,000 protesters sat in the central Square of Homs calling for the resignation of President Bashar al-Assad. Protests continued through July 2011, the government responding with harsh security clampdowns and military operations in several districts, especially in the north.^[216]

On 31 July, Syrian army tanks stormed several cities, including Hama, Deir Ez-Zour, Al-Bukamal, and Herak in Daraa. At least 136 people were killed in the most violent and bloody day since the uprising started.^[217]

By late November – early December Baba Amr district of [Homs](#) falls under the [armed Syrian opposition](#) control, but is surrounded after a big military operation by the [Syrian army](#).

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Bahraini uprising

Main article: [2011–2012 Bahraini uprising](#)



Protesters raising their hands towards Pearl Roundabout



One of the huge marches that swept across Bahrain in February 2011

The 2011 protests in [Bahrain](#) were initially aimed at achieving greater [political freedom](#) and respect for [human rights](#), and were not intended to threaten the monarchy nor were they as large as those in other countries.
[218] Lingering frustration among the Shiite majority with being ruled by the Sunni government was a major root cause, but the protests in Tunisia and Egypt are cited as the inspiration for the demonstrations.
[219] The protests began in Bahrain on 14 February [218] and were largely peaceful, until a raid by police on the night of 17 February against protestors sleeping at the [Pearl Roundabout](#) in [Manama](#), in which police killed three protestors.
[220] [221] Following the deadly raid, the protestors' aims expanded to a call for the end of the [monarchy](#).
[222] On 18 February, government forces opened fire on protesters, mourners, and news journalists,
[223] prompting protesters to begin calling for the overthrow of the Bahraini monarchy and government.
[224] On 19 February, protesters occupied Pearl Roundabout after the government ordered troops and police to withdraw.
[225] [226] [227] On 22 February, an estimated one hundred thousand people, one fifth of the nation's population, marched. On 14 March, at the request of the Crown Prince, [GCC](#) Saudi Arabian troops entered the country,
[228] and opened fire on the protesters, several of whom were killed.
[229] [230] Later thousands of [Shia protesters](#) arose in Iraq and [Qatif](#) in opposition to the [Saudi-led](#) intervention in Bahrain.
[231] [232] [233]

[King Hamad bin Isa Al Khalifa](#) declared a three-month [state of emergency](#) on 15 March and asked the military to reassert its control as clashes spread across the country.
[234] It was later lifted on 1 June 2011.
[235] On 16 March 2011, the protesters' camp in the Pearl Roundabout was evacuated, bulldozed, and set on fire by the Bahraini Defense Force, riot police, and the [Peninsula Shield Force](#), the military arm of the [Gulf Cooperation Council](#), which intervened reportedly at King Hamad's behest.
[236] Later on 18 March, the Pearl Roundabout monument was torn down

as part of the crackdown on protesters.^[237] Human rights organizations reported that since the in the 8 months following the outbreak of protests on 14 February, more than 1,600 peaceful political protesters, medical professionals, journalists, human rights defenders and innocent bystanders were arrested and more than 100 people convicted by a special military court established by the government.^[238]

Since the lifting of emergency law on 1 June, several large rallies have been staged by the Shi'ite community demanding the release of detained protesters, greater political representation, and an end to sectarian discrimination. In July 2011, medical personnel were tried by special military courts for treating injured protesters and sentenced to multi-year prison sentences.^[239] Several human rights groups and news organizations have alleged they have been deliberately targeted by the Bahraini government.^[240]

On 23 November 2011, the [Bahrain Independent Commission of Inquiry](#) released its report on human rights violations during the February and March 2011 protests, finding that the government "systematically" tortured prisoners, summarily fired Shi'ite employees and university students, and committed other gross human rights violations.^[241] One of the report's recommendations was to allow human rights groups into the country to monitor the situation. Between 23 November and the end of January, however, the Bahraini government refused entry to several international human rights groups including [Freedom House](#)^{[242][243]}, [Human Rights First](#) ^[244] and [Physicians for Human Rights](#).^[245]

[\[edit\]](#)

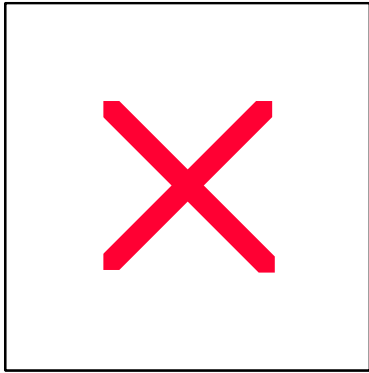
Concurrent incidents

Concurrent with the events in Tunisia, Egypt, Libya, Yemen, Syria and Bahrain, protests flared up in other parts of the region, some becoming violent, some facing strong suppression efforts, and some resulting in political changes.

[\[edit\]](#)

Algeria

Main article: [2010–2012 Algerian protests](#)



8 January 2011 protests in Algeria.

On 29 December, protests began in [Algiers](#) over the lack of housing, quickly escalating to violent confrontations with the police. At least 53 people were reported injured and another 29 arrested.^[246] From 12–19 January, a wave of self-immolation attempts swept the country, beginning with Mohamed Aouichia, who set himself on fire in [Bordj Menaiel](#) in protest at his family's housing. On 13 January, [Mohsen Bouterfif](#) set himself on fire after a meeting with the mayor of [Boukhadra](#) in Tebessa, who had been unable to offer Bouterfif a job and a house. Bouterfif reportedly died a few days later, and about 100 youths protested his death, resulting in the mayor's dismissal by the provincial governor. At least ten other self-immolation attempts were reported that week.^[247] On 22 January, the [RCD](#) party organised a demonstration for democracy in Algiers, and though illegal under the State of Emergency enacted in 1992, it was attended by about 300 people. The demonstration was suppressed by police, with 42 reported injuries. On 29 January, at least ten thousand people marched in the northeastern city of [Béjaïa](#).^[248]

In an apparent bid to stave off unrest, President [Abdelaziz Bouteflika](#) announced on 3 February that the 19-year state of emergency would be lifted,^[249] a promise fulfilled on 22 February, when Algeria's cabinet adopted an order to lift the state of emergency.^{[250][251]} Bouteflika said on 15 April that he would seek revisions to the country's constitution as part of a broad push for democratic reforms.^[252]

In January 2012, protests flared up again in the southern city of [Laghouat](#), over housing and treatment of the elderly by police. The police used tear gas to disperse the protesters.^{[253][254]}

Algeria's major [Islamist](#) parties announced a coalition ahead of [parliamentary elections](#). A leader of the [Movement of Society for Peace](#) called for more opposition parties to join the alliance "to give the best

possible chance for the Arab Spring to happen in Algeria as well".^[255]

[\[edit\]](#)

Iraq

Main article: 2011 Iraqi protests

In an effort to prevent unrest, [Iraqi](#) Prime Minister [Nouri al-Maliki](#) announced that he would not run for a third term in 2014.^[256]

Nevertheless, hundreds of protesters gathered in several major urban areas (notably [Baghdad](#) and [Karbala](#)) on 20 February, demanding a more effective approach to national security, to the investigation of federal corruption cases, as well as increased government involvement in making public services fair and inaccessible.^{[257][258][259]} In response, the government promised to subsidize electricity costs.^[260]

Israel's [Haaretz](#) reported that a 31-year-old man in [Mosul](#) died from self-immolation, while protesting high unemployment. *Haaretz* also reported a planned 'Revolution of Iraqi Rage' to be held on 25 February near the [Green Zone](#).^[261]

On 16 February, up to 2,000 protesters took over a provincial council building in the city of Kut. The protesters demanded that the provincial governor resign because of the lack of basic services such as electricity and water. As many as three people were killed and 30 injured.^[citation needed] On 24 February, [Hawijah](#), [Mosul](#), and [Baghdad](#) featured violent protests.^[citation needed]

[\[edit\]](#)

Israeli border areas

Main article: 2011 Israeli border demonstrations

See also: Arab–Israeli conflict



Free Palestine rally in [Cairo](#)

Palestinians used Facebook to call for mass protests throughout the region on 15 May 2011, the 63rd annual commemoration of the Palestinian exodus, locally known as [Nakba Day](#).^{[262][263]} A page calling for a "Third [Palestinian Intifada](#)" to begin on 15 May garnered more than 350,000 "likes" before being taken down by Facebook managers at the end of March after complaints from the Israeli government that the page encouraged violence.^[264] The page called for mass marches to Palestine from Egypt, Lebanon, Syria and Jordan to commemorate the [Nakba](#) and demand the [right of return](#) for all [Palestinian refugees](#).^[265] Palestinians from Egypt, Jordan, Lebanon, Syria, the Gaza Strip and the West Bank attempted to reach and cross the Israeli border. However, they were all stopped and 12 were killed in clashes with Israeli security forces. Lebanese security forces also made efforts, including the use of live fire according to some reports, to stop protesters from approaching the Israeli border. Almost 300 people were injured, including 13 Israeli soldiers. There were also clashes across East Jerusalem.^[266]

On 5 June, 23 Syrian demonstrators were killed and over a hundred injured by Israeli troops after attempting to enter the Israeli-held part of the [Golan Heights](#).^{[267][268][269]} "Anyone who tries to cross the border will be killed," Israeli soldiers warned through megaphones as people waving Palestinian flags streamed towards the frontier. When protesters tried to cut the razor wire several meters short of the frontier fence, Israeli troops opened fire. Several people were seen being carried away on stretchers.^[270] In the aftermath, thousands began a sit-in near the frontier,^[271] resulting in Syrian security forces creating a security buffer zone to prevent more demonstrators from approaching the border.^[267] [Lebanese](#) President [Michel Sleiman](#) accused Israel of genocide over the incident,^[272] UN High Commissioner on Human Rights [Navanethem Pillay](#) condemned the [Israel Defense Forces'](#) use of force against unarmed, civilian protesters,^[273] and the [Syrian Social Nationalist Party](#) called for an international response to the incident, calling it a "[massacre](#)".^[274] An Israeli military spokeswoman called the violence "an attempt to divert international attention from the bloodbath going on in Syria."^[268] Michael Weiss, a spokesperson for [Just Journalism](#), claimed that he had received leaked Syrian state documents showing that the Syrian government organized the Nakba Day protests to draw attention away from the [uprising](#) in Syria proper.^[275] US State Department spokesman Mark Toner said the U.S. believes President [Bashar Assad](#)'s government was actively supporting the Palestinian protests near the Israeli border.^[276]

[\[edit\]](#)

Jordan

Main article: [2011–2012 Jordanian protests](#)

On 14 January, protests commenced in the capital [Amman](#), as well as at [Ma'an](#), [Al Karak](#), [Salt](#), [Irbid](#), and others. The protests, led by trade unionists and [leftist](#) parties, occurred after [Friday prayers](#), and called for the government of Prime Minister [Samir Rifai](#) to step down.^[277] The [Muslim Brotherhood](#) and 14 trade unions said that they would hold a sit-down protest outside parliament the next day to "denounce government economic policies".^[278] Following the protest, the government reversed a rise in fuel prices,^[279] but 5,000 protested on 21 January in Amman despite this effort to alleviate Jordan's economic misery.^[280]

On 1 February, the Royal Palace announced that King Abdullah had dismissed the government on account of the street protests, and had asked [Marouf al-Bakhit](#), a former army general, to form a new Cabinet.^[281] King Abdullah charged Bakhit to "take quick, concrete and practical steps to launch a genuine political reform process". The monarch added that the reforms should put Jordan on the path "to strengthen democracy", and provide Jordanians with the "dignified life they deserve".^[282] This move did not end protests, however, which peaked with a rally of between 6,000 and 10,000 Jordanians on 25 February.^[283] A protest camp led by students calling for democratic reforms was established on 24 March in Gamal Abdel Nasser Circle in downtown Amman,^[284] but at least one person was killed and over 100 injured the next day after pro-government vigilantes clashed with the protesters in the camp, forcing police to intervene.^[285] These clashes and belated police interventions have become a hallmark of the Jordanian protests, with a major rally in central Amman planned for 15 July being derailed by belligerent regime supporters.^[286]

As of November 2011, protests are ongoing. Under pressure from street demonstrations, Parliament called for the ouster of the Bakhit government. King Abdullah duly sacked Bakhit and his cabinet and named [Awn Shawkat Al-Khasawneh](#) to head the new government on 17 October.^[45]

[\[edit\]](#)

Kuwait

Main article: [2011 Kuwaiti protests](#)

Protests by stateless [Bedouins](#) began in January and February, concurrent with many protests in the region.^[287]^[288] By June, protests grew in size from dozens to hundreds.^[289]

Thousands protested in September,[290] and in October, oil workers went on strike.[291] Protests continued into October, with the largest demonstrations since the start of the unrest early in the year.[292][293] In response, Prime Minister [Nasser Mohammed Al-Ahmed Al-Sabah](#) said the protests were "going too far" and threatened a security crackdown.[294]

Late on 16 November, protesters occupied the [National Assembly of Kuwait](#) for several minutes and rallied in nearby [Al-Erada Square](#).^[295] Emir [Sabah Al-Ahmad Al-Jaber Al-Sabah](#) called the brief occupation "an unprecedented step on the path to anarchy and lawlessness".^{[296][297]}

The largest political protest in Kuwaiti history was scheduled for 28 November to pressure the prime minister to resign, but he and his cabinet submitted their resignation to the emir hours ahead of it. Late November, the emir selected Defense Minister Sheik Jaber Al Hamad Al Sabah as the new prime minister, replacing the long-serving Sheik Nasser Al Mohammad Al Sabah, who had survived several no-confidence votes in parliament and was the target of opposition groups calling for his dismissal.^[298]

[\[edit\]](#)

Morocco

Main article: [2011 Moroccan protests](#)

In early February 2011, protests were held in [Rabat](#), [Fez](#) and [Tangier](#) in solidarity with the Egyptian revolution. Subsequently, a day of protest in favour of Moroccan constitutional reform and social justice was planned for 20 February and advertised on social networking sites.^{[299][300]} Among the demands of the organisers was that the constitutional role of the king should be "reduced to its natural size".^[301] The interior minister [Taib Cherkaoui](#) affirmed the right of the protests to take place. On 20 February, around 37,000 people participated in demonstrations across Morocco, according to government sources. Some protests were marred by violence and damage to property. In [Al Hoceima](#), five people died after protesters set fire to a bank.^[302] On 26 February, a further protest was held in [Casablanca](#).^[303]

On 9 March, in a live televised address, King Mohammed announced that he would begin a comprehensive constitutional reform aimed at improving democracy and the rule of law. He promised to form a commission to work on constitutional revisions, which would make proposals to him by June, after which a referendum would be held on the draft constitution.^[304]

On 20 March, a further protest was held in Casablanca to mark the end of

the first month since the original 20 February demonstrations and to maintain pressure for reform. Protesters, numbering 20,000, demanded the resignation of a number of senior politicians, including the prime minister, [Abbas El Fassi](#), who they regarded as corrupt.^[305] On the same day, around 6,000 people demonstrated in Rabat.^[306]

In June, a referendum was held on changes to the constitution, which became law on 13 September. Some protesters felt that the reforms did not go far enough. On 18 September, 3,000 people demonstrated in Casablanca and 2,000 in Tangier, demanding an end to the king's roles as head of the army and of religious affairs.^[307] In October, around 50 imams protested in Rabat against state control of their activities.^[308]

[Elections](#) were held on the basis of the new constitution in November 2011, with electoral lists reserved for young and female candidates and with the post of prime minister, previously an appointment of the king, being decided by the outcome of the vote.^[309]

[\[edit\]](#)

Oman

Main article: [2011 Omani protests](#)



Protesters set ablaze Lulu Hypermarket in [Sohar](#), Oman on 28 February 2011. In the [Gulf](#) country of [Oman](#), 200 protesters marched on 17 January 2011, demanding salary increases and a lower cost of living. The protest shocked some journalists, who generally view Oman as a 'politically stable and sleepy country'.^[310] Renewed protests occurred on 18 February, with 350 protesters demanding an end to corruption and better distribution of oil revenue.^[311] Some protesters also carried signs with slogans of support for the Sultan.^[312]

On 26 February, protesters in [Sohar](#) called for more jobs.^[313] On the

following day, tensions escalated with protesters burning shops and cars.^[314] The police responded using [tear gas](#) to contain and disperse the crowds of protesters.^[315] Demonstrations also spread to the region of [Salalah](#), where protesters had reportedly been camping outside the provincial governor's house since 25 February.^{[315][316]} In Sohar, witnesses claimed that two protesters were killed when police fired rubber bullets to disperse the crowds.^{[73][74][75][317]} Witnesses further reported that protesters burnt a police station as well as the Wali's house (where the representative of the Sultan to Sohar stays).^[318] The Omani protesters insisted that they were not challenging the rule of [Sultan Qaboos](#), who has been in power since 1970, but were merely calling for jobs and reform.^[319] The protesters even apologized to the Sultan for allowing violence rattle the city of [Sohar](#) on 28 February 2011.^[320]

The Sultan continued with his reform campaign by dissolving the Ministry of National Economy, setting up a state audit committee, granting student and unemployment benefits, dismissing scores of ministers, and reshuffling his cabinet three times.^[321] In addition, nearly 50,000 jobs are being created in the public sector, including 10,000 new jobs in the [Royal Oman Police](#).^[322] The Omani Ministry of Manpower has furthermore directed various companies (both private and public) to formulate their own employment plans. The [Royal Army of Oman](#) has also initiated employment drives by publishing recruitment advertisements in newspapers, etc.^[323] The government's efforts largely placated protesters, and Oman has not seen significant demonstrations since May 2011, when increasingly violent protests in Salalah were subdued.^[324]

[\[edit\]](#)

Saudi Arabia

Main article: [2011–2012 Saudi Arabian protests](#)



Poster for the Saudi Arabia's [women to drive movement](#), artwork by [Carlos Latuff](#). Protests started with a 65-year-old man's self-immolation in [Samtah, Jizan](#) on 21 January^[81] and protests of a few hundred people in late January in [Jeddah](#)^{[325][326]} and several times throughout February and early March in the cities of [Qatif](#), [al-Awamiyah](#), [Riyadh](#), and [Hofuf](#).^{[327][328]} One of the main online organisers of a planned 11 March "Day of Rage",^{[329][330][331]} Faisal Ahmed Abdul-Ahad^[332] (or Abdul-Ahadwas^[82]), was alleged to have been killed by [Saudi security forces](#) on 2 March,^{[82][333]} by which time one of the [Facebook](#) groups discussing the plans had over 26,000 members.^[334]

Small protests over [labor rights](#) took place in April 2011 in front of government ministry buildings in [Riyadh](#), [Ta'if](#) and [Tabuk](#).^{[335][336][337]} Protests, made up mainly of [Shia](#) protestors,^{[338][339][340]} occurred in [Qatif](#) and smaller cities in the [Eastern Province](#) such as [al-Awamiyah](#), and [Hofuf](#) grew stronger in April and May,^{[328][341][342][343]} continuing through 2011. The protestors called for the release of prisoners, for the [Peninsula Shield Force](#) to be withdrawn from Bahrain,^{[344][345]} for equal representation in key offices and for reforms in political positions, as they feel marginalised.^[346] Four protestors were killed by Saudi authorities in late November protests and funerals.^[83] The protests continued into early 2012^{[347][348]} and Issam Mohamed Abu Abdallah was shot dead by security forces in al-Awamiyah on 12^[84] or 13^[349] January, leading to a 70,000 strong funeral^[350] and several days of protests with slogans chanted against the [House of Saud](#) and [Minister of Interior, Nayef, Crown Prince of Saudi Arabia](#).^{[351][352][353]} Montazar Sa'eed al-Abdel was shot dead on 26

January.[85]


Women organised a [Facebook women's suffrage](#) campaign called "Baladi", stating that Saudi Arabian law gives women electoral rights.[354] In April 2011, women in [Jeddah](#), Riyadh and [Dammam](#) tried to register as electors for the [29 September municipal elections](#) despite officials stating that women could not participate.[354][355] In May and June, [Manal al-Sharif](#) and other women organised a [women's right-to-drive campaign](#), with the main action to take place on 17 June. Al-Sharif drove a car in May and was detained on 22 May and from 23-30 May.[356][357][358] From 17 June to late June, about seventy cases of women driving were documented.[359][360][361] In late September, Shaima Jastania was sentenced to [10 lashes](#) for driving in Jeddah, shortly after King Abdullah announced women's participation in [the 2015 municipal elections](#) and eligibility as [Consultative Assembly](#) members; King Abdullah overturned the sentence.[362][363]


[edit]

Others





"The [Laique](#) pride" rally in [Beirut Central District](#), [Lebanon](#)


-  In [Lebanon](#), hundreds of protesters rallied in [Beirut](#) on 27 February in a march referred to as "The [Laique](#) pride", calling for reform of the country's [confessional political system](#). At the same time, a peaceful sit-in took place in [Saida](#).^[364] On 13 March, tens of thousands of supporters of the [14 March Alliance](#) called for the disarmament of [Hezbollah](#) in [Beirut](#), rejecting the supremacy of Hezbollah's weapons over political life. They also showed support for the U.N.-backed [Special Tribunal for Lebanon](#) (STL) after the fall of the [Hariri government](#) and the creation of the [Mikati government](#).^[365] The Syrian Uprising also has leaked over the border^[366]

-  In [Mauritania](#), Yacoub Ould Dahoud, a protester, [burned himself](#) near the Presidential Palace on 17 January, in opposition to the policies of [Mauritanian](#) president [Mohamed Ould Abdel Aziz](#)^[367] The following week, hundreds of people took to the streets of the capital Nouakchott. The mayor of the city of [Aoujeft](#), Mohamed El Moctar Ould Ehmeyen Amar, resigned from the ruling party to politically support what he called "the just cause of youngsters".^[368] In addition to the capital Noukchott, cities such

as [Atar](#), [Zouerate](#), and [Aleg](#) also organised sporadic protests.^[369] Despite minor economic concessions by the authorities, on 25 April protesters again took to the streets to call for the resignation of the prime-minister, [Moulaye Ould Mohamed Laghdaf](#).^[370]


-  In [Sudan](#), protests took place on 30 January and 1 February, when hundreds called for [Sudanese President Omar al-Bashir](#) to step down. On 21 February, President Omar al-Bashir announced that he would not seek to run in the next presidential election (in 2015).^[371]

-  In the **United Arab Emirates**, a group of intellectuals petitioned their ruler for comprehensive reform of the [Federal National Council](#), including demands for [universal suffrage](#). About 160 people signed the petition, many of whom were academics and former members of the FNC.^[372] On 12 April, Ahmed Mansoor, a prominent blogger and pro-democracy activist, was charged with possession of alcohol. According to his lawyer, two other men, a blogger and a political commentator, were detained a few days earlier, a charge denied by the police.^[373] In May, the government started expanding its network of surveillance cameras, as a preventive measure against revolts.^[374] In June, [Mansoor and four other reform activists](#), including an economics professor, Nasser bin Gaith,^[375] pleaded not guilty to insulting the ruling family, endangering national security and inciting people to protest, after being charged.^[376] On 13 November they began a hunger strike,^[377] while on 27 November they were sentenced, Ahmed Mansoor receiving three years in prison, while the others being sentenced to two-year jail terms, only to be pardoned the following day.^[375]

-  In the **Palestinian Territories**, the [Palestinian Authority](#) prevented demonstrations in support of protesters in Tunisia and Egypt. On 3 February, Palestinian police dispersed an anti-Mubarak demonstration in downtown [Ramallah](#), detaining four people, confiscating a cameraman's footage, and reportedly beating protesters. A smaller pro-Mubarak demonstration was permitted to take place in the same area and was guarded by police.^[378] On 15 October, an anti-Assad protest expressing solidarity with [Palestinian refugees](#) in [Syria](#) affected by the unrest there took place in the [Gaza Strip](#), and was attended by 150 people. [Hamass](#) police forces dispersed the demonstration, claiming that it was held without a permit.^[379]

On 1 February, the [Palestinian Authority](#) announced that it would hold [municipal elections](#) in July. The Israeli newspaper [Haaretz](#) reported that this announcement was a reaction to the anti-government protests in Egypt. The elections were postponed to 22 October, then suspended

indefinitely due to an internal division within the Palestinian Authority over candidates for many of the municipalities and councils, and fears that Hamas supporters would back Palestinian Authority opponents.[380] On 14 February, amid pan-Arab calls for reform, Palestinian Authority Prime Minister [Salam Fayyad](#) submitted his resignation along with that of his cabinet to President [Mahmoud Abbas](#).[\[381\]](#) After consultations with other factions, institutions, and civil society groups, Abbas asked him to form a new government.[\[382\]](#) The reshuffle had long been demanded by Fayyad as well as members of Abbas's [Fatah](#) faction.[\[382\]](#)

-  In [Western Sahara](#), young [Sahrawis](#) held a series of minor demonstrations to protest labour discrimination, lack of jobs, looting of resources, and human rights abuses.[\[149\]](#) Although protests from February 2011 onward were related to a series of [Sahrawi demonstrations](#) outside [El Aaiun](#) that originated in October 2010 and died down the following month, protesters cited inspiration from the events in other parts of the region. [Noam Chomsky](#) viewed the October protests as the starting point from which 'the current wave of protests actually began'.[\[383\]](#)

[\[edit\]](#)

Analysis

[\[edit\]](#)

Ethnic scope

Many analysts, journalists, and involved parties have focused on the protests as being a uniquely [Arab](#) phenomenon, and indeed, protests and uprisings have been strongest and most wide-reaching in majority-Arabic-speaking countries, giving rise to the popular moniker of Arab Spring—a play on the so-called 1968 [Prague Spring](#), a democratic awakening in what was then [communist Czechoslovakia](#)—to refer to protests, uprisings, and revolutions in those states.[\[384\]](#)[\[385\]](#)[\[386\]](#) However, the international media has also noted the role of minority groups in many of these majority-Arab countries in the revolts. In addition, this series of revolutions has been marked by the absence of [Arab Nationalist](#) banners and rhetoric among the masses, in favor of principles of human rights, freedom, democracy, and cultural diversity, even in absolute majority-Arab countries.

In Tunisia, the country's small [Jewish](#) minority was initially divided by protests against [Ben Ali](#) and the government, but eventually came to identify with the protesters in opposition to the regime, according to the group's president, who described [Jewish Tunisians](#) as "part of the

revolution".[387][388] While many in the [Coptic](#) minority in Egypt had criticized the Mubarak government for its failure to suppress Islamic extremists who attack the Coptic community, the prospect of these extremist groups taking over after its fall caused most Copts to avoid the protests, with [Pope Shenouda III](#) of the [Coptic Orthodox Church of Alexandria](#) calling for them to end.[389] The international media pointed to a few Copts who joined the protests.[390][391]

Owing to the fact that the uprisings and revolutions erupted first in North Africa before spreading to Asian Arab countries, and that the [Berbers of Libya](#)[392] participated massively in the protests and fightings under Berber identity banners, some Berbers in Libya often see the revolutions of North Africa, west of Egypt, as a reincarnated [Berber Spring](#).[393][394][395] In Morocco, through a constitutional reform, passed in [a national referendum](#) on 1 July, among other things, [Amazigh](#)—a standardized version of the 3 Berber languages of Morocco was made official alongside [Arabic](#).[396] During the civil war in Libya, one major theater of combat has been the western [Nafusa Mountains](#), where the indigenous [Berbers](#) have taken up arms against the regime while supporting an [interim government](#) based in the majority-Arab eastern half of the country.[397][398]

In northern [Sudan](#) hundreds of non-Arab [Darfuris](#) have joined anti-government protests,[399] while in [Iraq](#) and [Syria](#), the ethnic [Kurdish](#) minority has been involved in protests against the government,[400][401] including the [Kurdistan Regional Government](#) in the former's Kurdish-majority north, where at least one attempted self-immolation was reported.[402][403][404]

[\[edit\]](#)

Impact of the Arab Spring

Main article: [Impact of the Arab Spring](#)

The regional unrest has not been limited to countries of the [Arab world](#). The early success of uprisings in North Africa was inspired by the uprisings of disenchanted people in the Middle Eastern states of [Iran](#)[405][406] and [Turkey](#)[407] to take to the streets and agitate for reforms. These protests, especially [those in Iran](#),[408] are considered by many commentators to be part of the same wave that began in Iran and later Tunisia and has gripped the broader Middle Eastern and North African regions. Also, recognition of the Arab spring has led to other movements such as [occupy wall street](#) and riots in London, Russia, the U.S and china.

In the countries of the neighboring [South Caucasus](#)—namely [Armenia](#),[409]

[Azerbaijan](#),^[410] and [Georgia](#)^[411]—as well as some countries in Europe, including [Albania](#),^[412] [Croatia](#),^[413] and [Spain](#),^[414] countries in sub-Saharan Africa, including [Burkina Faso](#),^[415] [Djibouti](#),^[416] and [Uganda](#),^[417]^[418] and countries in other parts of Asia, including the [Maldives](#)^[419] and the [People's Republic of China](#),^[420] demonstrators and opposition figures claiming inspiration from the examples of Tunisia and Egypt have staged their own popular protests.

The bid for statehood by Palestine at the UN on 23 September 2011 is also regarded as drawing inspiration from the Arab Spring after years of failed peace negotiations with Israel. In the West Bank, schools and government offices were shut to allow demonstrations backing the UN membership bid in Ramallah, Bethlehem, Nablus and Hebron; echoing similar peaceful protests from other Arab countries.^[421]

The [15 October 2011 global protests](#) and the [Occupy Wall Street](#) movement, which started in the United States and has since spread to Asia and Europe, drew direct inspiration from the Arab Spring, with organizers asking U.S. citizens "Are you ready for a [Tahrir](#) moment?"^[422] The protesters have committed to using the "revolutionary Arab Spring tactic" to achieve their goals of curbing corporate power and control in Western governments.^[423]

Also, the [Occupy Nigeria](#) protests beginning the day after [Goodluck Jonathan](#) announced the scrap of the fuel subsidy in oil-rich [Nigeria](#) on 1 January 2012, were motivated by the Arab people.^[424]

[\[edit\]](#)

International reactions

Main article: [International reactions to the Arab Spring](#)

Protests in many countries affected by the Arab Spring have attracted widespread support from the international community, while harsh government responses have generally met condemnation.^[425]^[426]^[427]^[428] In the case of the [Bahraini](#), [Moroccan](#), and [Syrian](#) protests, the international response has been considerably more nuanced.^[429]^[430]^[431]^[432]

Some critics have accused Western governments, including those of France, the United Kingdom, and the United States, of [hypocrisy](#) in the way they have reacted to the Arab Spring.^[433] [Noam Chomsky](#) accused the [Obama administration](#) of endeavoring to muffle the revolutionary wave and stifle popular democratization efforts in the Middle East.^[434]

The [International Monetary Fund](#) said oil prices were likely to be higher than originally forecast due to unrest in the Middle East and North Africa, major regions of oil production.[\[435\]](#)

Kenan Engin, a German-Turkish political scientist, identified the new uprising in Arab and Islamic countries as the "fifth wave of democracy" because of evident features qualitatively similar to the "third wave of democracy" in Latin America that took place in the 1970s and 1980s.[\[436\]](#)
[\[437\]](#)

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