

Arab Spring: A Year Later and Beyond Special Report



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Arab Spring Update Report

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Preface

As a global power, the United States has developed an overall strategy tailored to meet the challenges and opportunities in every region of the world. Traditionally, American policies and actions have focused on a strategy of security through military strength and cooperation, building vibrant and open market economies, and supporting the growth of democracy and individual and collective human rights throughout the world.

Currently, one year after the beginning of the unprecedented explosion of the Arab Spring, the only certainty about future developments in the broader Middle East is uncertainty, and therefore the United States' strategic and tactical responses are understandably at a cross-road. It is for this reason that a realistic analysis of the factors that contribute to stability or instability in the turbulent region is critical if America, as well as its friends and allies, is to be adequately prepared to craft a pragmatic approach in this emerging security environment.

The Inter-University Center for Terrorism Studies' teams of analysts have conducted continuous research efforts in 2011 and early 2012 to understand these challenges and opportunities. The 2012 team included Research Coordinator Patrick Cheetham and Research Assistants: Evan Lundh, Amy Glazier, Jesse Sedler, and Daniel Idziak along with Interns: Katerina Albano, Bridget Greene, Philip Haxel, Marc Baerentzen, and Elisabetta Lanzilao. This report was copyedited by William Mays (Publishing Department) at the International Law Institute. These individuals deserve our gratitude for their dedication and support.

An earlier version of their work was published in a special update report titled "Terrorism in North, West, and Central Africa: From 9/11 to the Arab Spring" released in January 2012. This new publication has considerably expanded the team's original work and they will follow-up with future research updates in the coming months.

It is hoped that this report will stimulate additional academic studies in this important field of national, regional, and global security concerns.

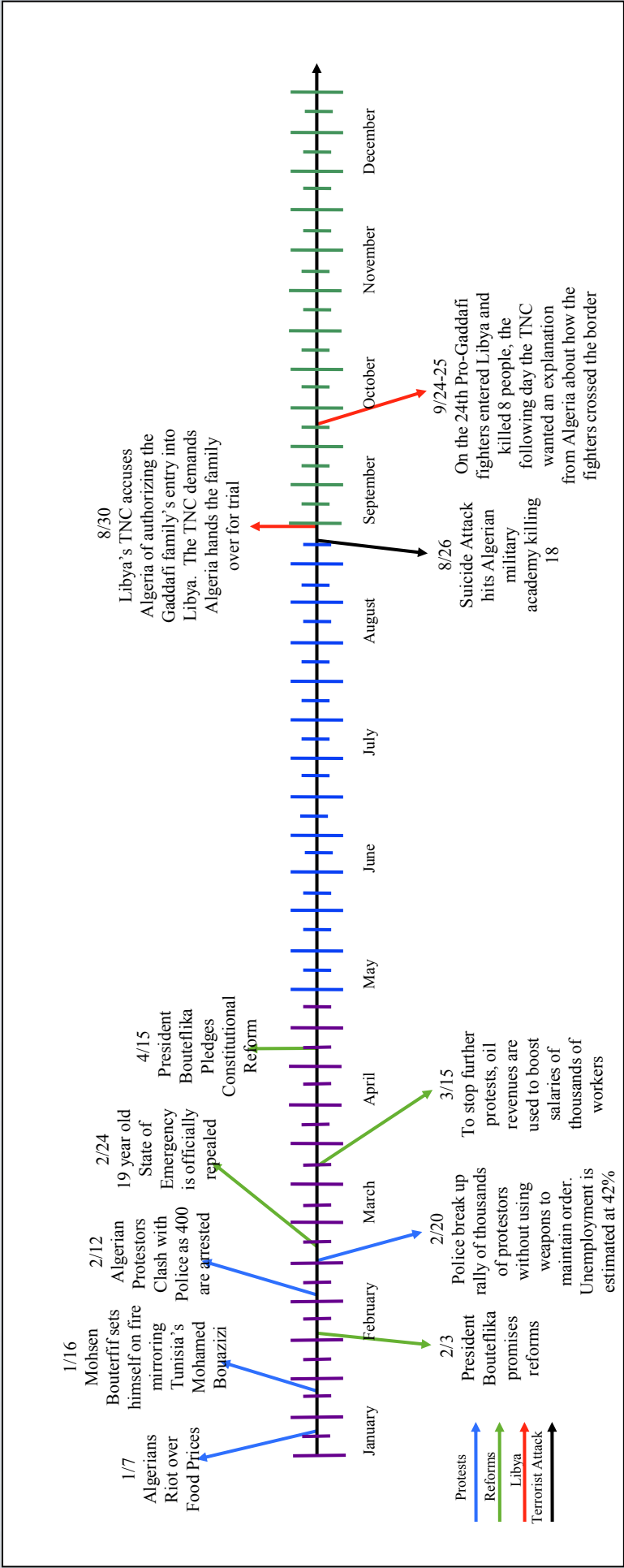
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March 30, 2012

Algeria Timeline 2011



Map of Algeria



Two equal vertical bands of green (hoist side) and white; a red, five-pointed star within a red crescent centered over the two-color boundary; the colors represent Islam (green), purity and peace (white), and liberty (red); the crescent and star are also Islamic symbols, but the crescent is more closed than those of other Muslim countries because the Algerians believe the long crescent horns bring happiness

Ethnic groups: Arab-Berber 99%, other 1%
Religions: Sunni Muslim 99%, other 1%
Population: 34,994,937 (July 2011 est.)
Age Structure: 0-14: 24.2% 15-64:70.6% 65+: 5.2%
Urban population: 66% of total population (2010 est.)
Literacy (age 15 and over can read and write): 69.9%
Unemployment: 24.3%

Demographics

Algeria

Overview:

Algeria would seem to be a nation ripe for mass popular uprisings; it has a young population, with median age around 28, poor economic conditions, and a leader who has held on to power for over a decade. Despite these similarities to Tunisia and Libya, only minimal protests have ensued. These protests resulted in the repeal of a 19-year state of emergency, constitutional reforms to strengthen democracy, and new information laws designed to permit freedom of speech.

The lack of Arab Spring protests can be attributed to the recent Algerian Civil War, which took place from the early 1990s to the early 2000s. Islamist groups in Algeria fought the government's security forces during that period, resulting in the deaths of between 100,000 and 200,000 people. The Algerian population is still recovering from the physical and psychological wounds of that conflict, so many are unwilling to bring about mass violence again. Further hindering the protest movement was the strong Algerian security apparatus which came out in full force to quell the protestors. The protest movement consisted of rival ideological groups whose disagreements splintered the Algerian population, thus preventing a unified movement. With all of these factors bearing down on Algeria, it seems that the country will not follow suit with its North African neighbors. The government's concessions towards a fuller and freer democracy can be seen as a victory for reformers, but this is only a small gain in a much larger quest to oust long-serving President Abdelaziz Bouteflika.

Timeline:

January 7, 2011: In Algiers, police are deployed and soccer games are suspended after protests break out over food prices and unemployment. The government news agency APS says protestors have ransacked government buildings, banks, post offices, state run gas utility offices, and the tax authority buildings. The government puts unemployment around 10% but independent organizations put it around 25%.

January 16, 2011: El Khabar newspaper reports that Mohsen Bouterfif set himself on fire after failing to find a job and a house. Riots erupt after he dies of his burns.

February 3, 2011: President Abdelaziz Bouteflika is reported by official media saying that the state of emergency will end soon. He also highlights new measures to promote job creation and for state controlled media to give air time to all political parties. President Bouteflika said protests, which were originally banned under the state of emergency, will be permitted except in Algiers. A repeal of the state of emergency and an end to a ban on political parties were major demands of the opposition leaders, human rights groups, unions, students, and unemployed workers, who planned a march for February 12.

February 20, 2011: Police break up a rally of thousands of pro-democracy demonstrators, dividing them into small crowds and keeping them isolated. Police use clubs, but not guns, to maintain order. Some estimate the jobless rate around 42%.

February 24, 2011: The 19-year state of emergency is officially repealed. The military will now have limited powers in domestic security issues.

March 15, 2011: In an effort to stop further protests, the government decides to use oil revenue to boost salaries of teachers, magistrates, and police. The government suspends legislation to crack down on the “informal economy,” benefiting markets across Algeria. These markets sell goods and services at considerably lower rates than formal stores so the prices of goods dropped.

April 15, 2011: A suicide bomber detonates an explosive-laden car outside a military academy west of Algiers, killing 18 people and wounding approximately 20. No one claims responsibility for the attack, although similar attacks have been blamed on al-Qa’ida in the Islamic Maghreb (AQIM).

August 30, 2011: Gaddafi’s second wife, daughter, and two sons escape into Algeria. The National Transitional Council (NTC), Libya’s rebel government says that President Abdelaziz Bouteflika authorized the Gaddafi family’s entry into Algeria and that the NTC is seeking their return to Libya. An Algerian newspaper, Echorouk, reports that the Algerian government has promised to hand over Muammar Gaddafi if he tries to escape to Algeria but that Algiers has said nothing about handing over Gaddafi’s family members.

September 24-25, 2011: On September 24, pro-Gaddafi fighters cross the Algerian border, killing 8. The following day the NTC begins investigating how the fighters could have crossed the Algerian border, attacked in Libya, and escaped back over the border. The NTC fears this will become a new front in the war against pro-Gaddafi loyalists.

September 26, 2011: The search for Muammar Gaddafi continues. He is suspected to be protected by the Tuaregs while hiding close to the Algerian border in the Saharan desert to the west of Tripoli.

December 20, 2011: According to the Algerian Security Services, AQIM has supposedly increased its activities in connection with the arms trade that proliferated in the region after Gaddafi’s fall. AQIM in seems to be developing smuggling routes to transport weapons from the Libyan black market.

December 22, 2011: The Algerian Upper House of Parliament passes a media law to go into effect on January 12 which marks the end of the state’s media monopoly. Nevertheless, local journalists and civil society activists call for further reforms to allow more freedom of expression and access to information.

January 12, 2012: Speaking at the Center for Strategic and International Studies (CSIS) in Washington, DC, Algerian Foreign Minister Mourad Medelci expresses full confidence that the military will support the results of the legislative elections scheduled for May 10, 2012. He explains that Algeria has three main objectives: to strengthen democracy, diversify the economy and stimulate domestic and foreign investment.

January 31, 2012: In a suburb of Algiers the police battle residents accusing the Algerian authorities of failing to investigate the murder of a young man.

February 1, 2012: In Tiaret (340 km west of the Algerian capital) a local man sets fire to himself. During clashes, 30 people, including police, are injured and many buildings are looted.

February 4, 2012: Abdelaziz Belkhadem, the Secretary General of Algeria's National Liberation Front Party, criticizes the Arab League for resolutions adopted against Syria. He states that the organization should reconsider its support of the UN Security Council.

February 12, 2012: Tunisia's new President Moncef Marzouki spends two days in Algiers on official visit at the invitation of President Abdelaziz Bouteflika, heartily welcomed by Algerian people. Two days earlier, Sihem Bensedrine, another leading figure of Tunisian revolution, was allowed to enter the country after strong protests from human rights activists.

Outlook:

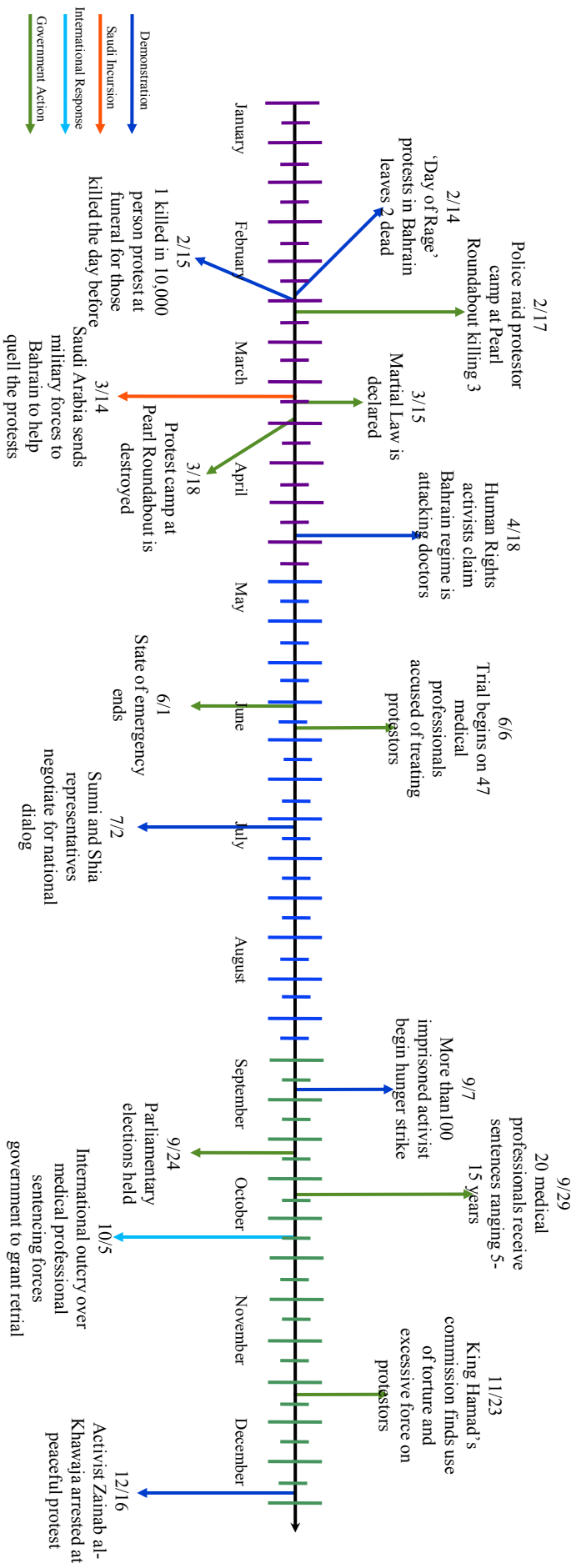
Algeria has stood on the sidelines watching its neighbors transitioning from dictatorship to democracy, and it has yet to be seen if a similar wave of mass uprising will grip Algeria. Algeria's recent history suggests that these protests may never emerge into any kind of national movement, as its population is still recovering from a traumatic civil war that ended only in the last decade and the protestors don't seem to be guided by a coherent political agenda. Algerian reformers would need to overcome these obstacles and the strong Algerian government security apparatus in order to achieve progress.

While the prospect of an Arab Spring-style movement seems low, there is a chance that a traumatic event, just like Mohamed Bouazizi's self-immolation in Tunisia, could throw the nation into turmoil and spark a movement that could potentially overthrow the regime. If economic conditions, unemployment, and low wages remain static, then the youth may see rebellion as the only means of change, potentially dragging Algeria down the same path as its neighbors.

The legislative elections scheduled for May 10, 2012 may be a turning point for Algeria; if Islamists win in the elections it is unclear how the body of political and military officials known as "Le Pouvoir" would react in order to defend its secular interests. Despite a shared apathy among Algerian citizens for the coming elections, the transparency in the electoral process will be telling sign as the European Union is sending observers for the election. Additionally a

commission of judges is replacing officials from the Ministry of the Interior to supervise the vote count.

Bahrain Timeline 2011



Map of Bahrain



Red, the traditional color for flags of Persian Gulf states, with a white serrated band (five white points) on the hoist side; the five points represent the five pillars of Islam

Ethnic Groups: Bahraini 62.4%, non-Bahraini 37.6%
Religions: Muslim 81.2%, Christian 9%, and other 9.8%
Population: 1,214,705 (July 2011 est.)
Median age: total: 30.9 years
Urban population: 89% of total population (2010)
Literacy (age 15 and over can read and write): 86.5%
Unemployment, youth ages 15-24: 20.1%

Demographics

Bahrain

Overview:

Unrest from the Arab Spring spread to King Hamad bin Isa al-Khalifa's tiny Gulf kingdom, home to the U.S. Navy's Fifth Fleet, where a Sunni monarchy rules over a poor Shi'a majority. King Hamad's soldiers initially responded with deadly force to non-violent protests which called for democratic reforms and an end to discrimination rather than a complete overthrow of the government, and over 35 people were killed. The monarchy blamed Tehran and foreign entities for Bahrain's unrest, an accusation which is highly contested. After international outcry, the king vowed an impartial inquiry into the accusations of human rights violations. When the commission reported such findings, the king announced his commitment to instituting the commissions' recommendations. The king has made concessions such as amending the constitution and passing other reforms, but these measures have not fully satisfied protestors' demands. The government's crackdown left a lasting mark on Bahraini society, even since the emergency measures that were instituted to quell protests have been lifted.

Timeline:

February 14, 2011: 'Day of Rage' in Bahrain leaves two dead; King Hamad later expresses condolences for 'regrettable deaths.'

February 15, 2011: One killed at 10,000 person protest marking the funeral of a protestor killed earlier in the week.

February 17, 2011: Police raid camp in Pearl Roundabout, killing three (one more died later of his wounds), enraging populations whose chants turn to: 'Down with the king, down with the government.'

February 18, 2011: Government forces again use live fire against protestors, killing at least one.

March 14, 2011: Saudi forces come to the aid of Bahrain in the face of popular protests; protestors say this amounts to war.

March 15, 2011: Martial law declared in order to end protests.

March 17, 2011: Six opposition leaders arrested for contacting 'foreign agents.'

March 18, 2011: Pearl Roundabout, gathering place of protestors, is destroyed.

April 11, 2011: Human rights leader accused of tampering with photos of a man who died the previous week.

April 18, 2011: Physicians for Human Rights claims Bahrain's government is attacking doctors.

April 28, 2011: Four protestors, accused of killing two policemen in March protests, receive death sentences.

May 11, 2011: Bahrain Petroleum Company announces 293 employees have been fired for roles in protests.

June 1, 2011: State of emergency ends.

June 6, 2011: Trial begins for 47 medical professionals for treating wounded protestors.

June 29, 2011: King Hamad commissions a fact finding mission into human rights abuses.

July 2, 2011: Negotiations begin between Sunnis and Shi'as to create national dialogue.

September 7, 2011: More than 100 imprisoned activists are in midst of a hunger strike.

September 24, 2011: Parliamentary elections held.

September 29, 2011: 20 medical professionals receive sentences ranging from five to 15 years for their roles in protests.

October 5, 2011: After international outcry, the 20 convicted medical professionals are granted retrials.

November 23, 2011: King Hamad's commission finds use of torture and excessive force against protestors; the King vows to accept its recommendations.

December 12, 2011: King Hamad visits London; Prime Minister David Cameron offers to help institute human rights reforms.

December 16, 2011: Blogger/activist Zainab al-Khawaja arrested at peaceful protest.

January 15, 2012: King Hamad pledges constitutional reforms.

February 14, 2012: Protestors mark the first anniversary of Bahraini uprising by hurling petrol bombs and stones in capital of Manama.

February 17, 2012: Elaine Murtagh of the UK and Medea Benjamin of the U.S. are detained for organizing Bahraini women in protests. Ten foreign activists, including six Americans, are deported for their political activity in Bahrain.

March 9, 2012: Shiites march to call for reforms; their calls were met with some violence as they attempted to reach the Pearl Roundabout, but were mostly peaceful elsewhere.

March 15, 2012: Bahrain closes embassy in Damascus.

March 20, 2012: King Hamad announces that the requested reforms have been made and will be implemented in accordance with protestor demands; reform leaders disagree and say the measures are not enough.

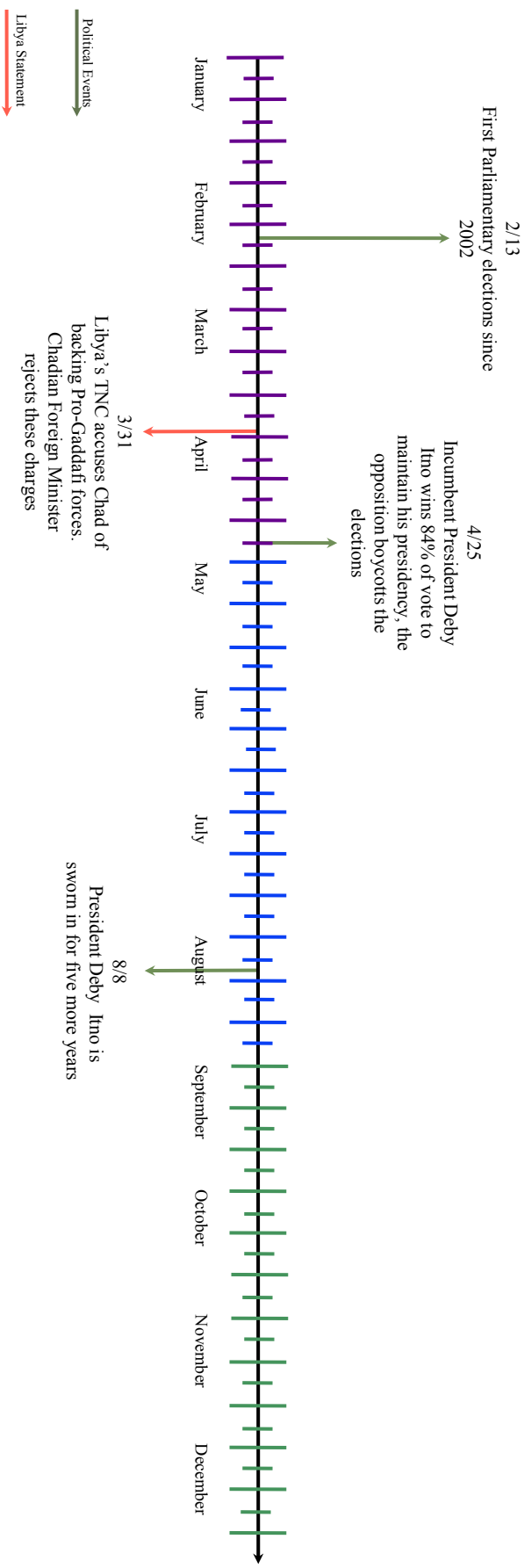
Outlook:

The American response to the Bahraini government's actions, which included live fire at protestors and the targeting of medical professionals, was much more restrained than in Egypt or Libya where the U.S. supported or even provided military aid to protestors. In Bahrain, the U.S. struggles to balance loyalty to the regime that hosts the U.S. Navy's Fifth Fleet with democratic ideals and calculations to contain Iranian influence. The U.S. continues to sell military supplies to the monarchy, a move explained as necessary for Bahrain's defense and its support of the U.S. Navy.

America's need to maintain a friendly government in Bahrain is stronger than ever as tensions with Iran mount over threats to close the Strait of Hormuz. As the U.S. encourages the monarchy to negotiate with the Shi'a majority opposition in pursuit of democracy, it is wary of Shi'a intentions towards Iran and sensitive of its image in a region where transitioning governments (such as Egypt and Tunisia) and entrenched monarchs (such as Saudi Arabia) closely monitor U.S. policy. Saudi forces played a large role in suppressing the protests, and are also vital to America's interests in regards to Iran.

Protestors remain unsatisfied with the scope and pace of King Hamad's constitutional reforms. The protest movement brought to light the divisions between the Sunni monarchy and the Shi'a population, and sectarian tension has penetrated many aspects of life in Bahrain, particularly in its universities.

Chad Timeline 2011



Map of Chad



Three equal vertical bands of blue (hoist side), yellow, and red; the flag combines the blue and red French (former colonial) colors with the red and yellow of the Pan-African colors; blue symbolizes the sky, hope, and the south of the country, which is relatively well-watered; yellow represents the sun, as well as the desert in the north of the country; red stands for progress, unity, and sacrifice

Population: 10,758,945 (July 2011 est.)
Religions: Muslim 53.1%, Catholic 20.1%, Protestant 14.2%, Animist 7.3%
Age Structure: 0-14 years 46% 15-64 years 51% 65+ years 2.9%
Median age: total: 16.8 years
Urban population: 28% (2010 est.)
Literacy (age 15 and over can read and write French or Arabic): 25.7 total population
Population below poverty line: 80%

Demographics

Chad

Overview:

From across its long border with Libya, Chad bore witness to the Arab Spring protests. Chad was ripe for political unrest as it held parliamentary elections for the first time in nine years and underwent a controversial presidential election. However, no unrest developed as incumbent President Deby Itno's Patriotic Salvation Movement won 113 of 155 seats in the February elections and nearly 84% of the popular vote. The opposition boycotted the elections and vowed to stand strong against him, but there is no sign yet of protests similar to those in other North African nations such as Tunisia, Egypt, and Libya. The revolution in Libya spilled over the border as Libya's NTC accused Chad of supplying Muammar Gaddafi with fighters and weapons, a claim which the Chadian government rejected.

Timeline:

February 13, 2011: Chad has its first parliamentary elections since 2002. President Deby Itno's Patriotic Salvation Movement wins 113 of 155 seats.

March 31, 2011: Libya's National Transitional Council says the government of Chad is fighting for Libyan Leader Muammar Gaddafi and that approximately 3,600 Chadian troops are attacking the Libyan rebels. Chad's Foreign Minister, Moussa Faki Mahmat denies these allegations.

April 25, 2011: Incumbent President Deby Itno wins 84% of the vote to maintain his presidency; the opposition boycotts.

July 1, 2011: The African Union says Senegal must put former Chadian dictator Hissene Habre on trial; he has been living in Senegal since 1990.

July 10, 2011: Senegal reverses course on extraditing former Chadian dictator Hissene Habre hours before he is to be sent back to Chad.

July 14, 2011: In a published interview, Habre says he would be willing to appear before an international tribunal to answer charges about atrocities during his rule.

August 8, 2011: President Deby Itno is sworn in as president for another five-year term; at his inauguration he vows to battle corruption.

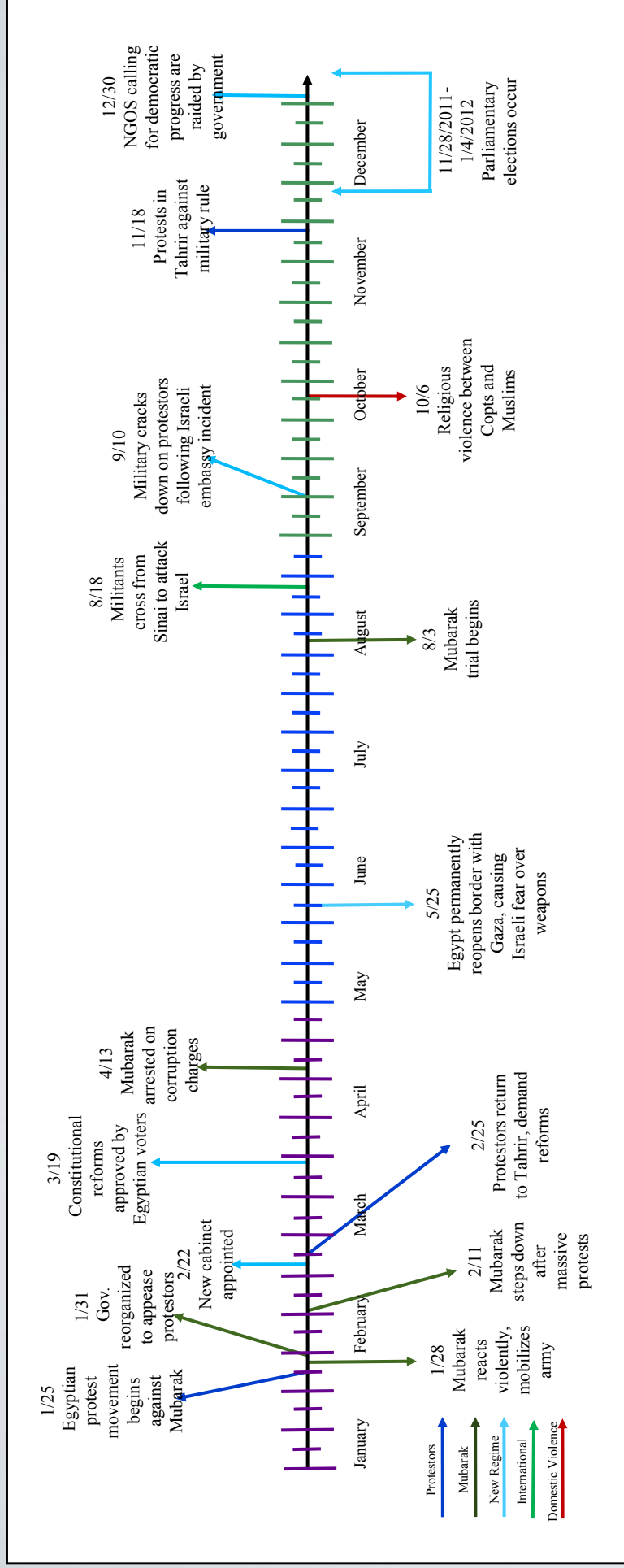
April 11, 2012: UNICEF steps up emergency response to food shortages in Chad amidst Sahel drought.

Outlook:

In terms of politics, Chad held its first ever municipal elections in January 2012, demonstrating a shift towards improved democracy. Despite low voter turnout, this election can be seen as a confidence booster; the occasion marks the beginning of increased political participation in Chad.

Chad's security situation will become more complicated as a result of Muammar Gaddafi's death. Prior to the Arab Spring, Libya and Chad had cordial relations, with Chad receiving both economic and military aid. There were reports during the rebellion in Libya that Chadian troops were fighting and moving weapons across the border into Libya. As a result, Chad and Libya's NTC have experienced a tense relationship. Chad must now deal with a lack of financial investment from Libya and confront the movement of weapons from Libya across the border into Chad. Many Chadians trapped in Libya are at risk of being labeled as pro-Gaddafi fighters and persecuted.

Egypt Timeline 2011



Map of Egypt



Three equal horizontal bands of red (top), white, and black; the national emblem (a gold Eagle of Saladin facing the hoist side with a shield superimposed on its chest above a scroll bearing the name of the country in Arabic) centered in the white band; the band colors derive from the Arab Liberation flag and represent oppression (black), overcome through bloody struggle (red), to be replaced by a bright future (white)

Ethnic groups: Egyptian 99.6%, other .4%
Religions: Muslim (mostly Sunni) 90%, Coptic 9%, Christian 1%
Population: 82,079,636 (July 2011 est.)
Median age: total: 24.3 years
Urban population: 43.4% of total population (2010)
Literacy (age 15 and over can read and write): 71.4% (2004 census)
Unemployment, youth ages 15-24: 24.8% (2009)

Demographics

Egypt

Overview:

Egyptians, who had long tolerated their authoritarian ruler Hosni Mubarak, were inspired by the success of the Tunisian demonstrators and took to the streets to demand basic freedoms, democratic process, economic improvement, and an end to corruption. In 18 days, Egyptians ended President Mubarak's 30-year rule and have since faced the looming question of "what's next?" The revolution, and the American response that was swift in embracing the protestors and abandoning its long-standing ally, Mubarak, has caused dictators everywhere to question American loyalty, and protestors monitoring movements in other countries to question America's commitment to democracy. Egypt's military, facilitating the transition, has struggled to keep up with the speed at which newly empowered citizens want to see change. In the elections that followed the uprising, the Muslim Brotherhood's Freedom and Justice Party, which was the only somewhat organized movement (despite being banned during the Mubarak era), took the most seats in both houses of the Egyptian Parliament. The Salafist party was also very successful in the elections, securing almost 25% of the seats. In the upcoming presidential elections the Muslim Brotherhood has decided to field a candidate to face the Salafist, secular, and other candidates.

Timeline:

January 25, 2011: Encouraged by the overthrow of Tunisia's autocratic ruler, the movement begins in Egypt, propelled by youth, to protest the rule of Hosni Mubarak with methods that ranged from self-immolation to demonstrations.

January 28, 2011: Mubarak's government reacts violently and authoritatively to calls for him to step down, imposing curfews, restricting cell phone access, and mobilizing the army.

January 31, 2011: The government is shuffled to portray willingness to negotiate with protestors.

February 11, 2011: Mubarak steps down following protests that included the 'March of a Million People,' a 'Day of Rage,' and a 'Day of Departure.'

February 22, 2011: New cabinet sworn in; military will remain in control until elections.

February 25, 2011: Protestors return to Tahrir to demand reforms.

March 19, 2011: Constitutional reforms are approved by Egyptian voters, which allow for elections.

April 13, 2011: Mubarak arrested on corruption charges.

May 25, 2011: Egypt permanently reopens border with Gaza, causing Israel to fear weapons smuggling.

August 3, 2011: Mubarak trial begins on charges of corruption and killing protestors. He is weak and caged and lies on a hospital bed during the proceedings.

August 18, 2011: Militants cross from Egypt into Israel instigating an incident in which 8 Israelis are killed, 30 injured, and Egyptian-Israeli relations are badly damaged.

September 10, 2011: Egypt's military cracks down on protestors following their breaching of the Israeli Embassy in Cairo. Protests continue calling for implementation of reforms.

October 9, 2011: Religious violence erupts between Coptic Christians and Muslims.

November 18, 2011: Large scale protests emerge in Tahrir Square against iron military rule.

November 28, 2011-January 4, 2012: Parliamentary elections occur; Muslim Brotherhood is frontrunner.

December 30, 2011: NGOs calling for freedom and democracy are raided by government forces.

February 5, 2012: 19 American and 24 other foreign workers to be tried for undermining the government.

March 2, 2012: 17 NGO workers facing trial leave Egypt after posting bail. Judges assigned to the case step down.

March 8, 2012: None of the American NGO workers who posted bail and promised to return for trial show up for trial except for Robert Becker, an employee of NDI. According to his lawyer, Becker remained in Egypt to prove his innocence in the local judicial system.

March 31, 2012: Khairat el-Shater becomes the Muslim Brotherhood's candidate for the presidency despite the Brotherhood's previous promises to not enter the race. The Brotherhood dominated recent elections and seeks to maintain its peace treaty with Israel and relationship with Washington, unlike another rising front runner in the race Hazem Salah Abu Ismail, a hard-line Salafist candidate.

April 4, 2012: Salafi candidate Hazem Salah Abu Ismail's eligibility is questioned after information emerges that his mother became an American citizen before her death.

April 6, 2012: Omar Suleiman, a former Mubarak aid, announces his candidacy. He had previously stated he would not run, but was convinced by popular support.

April 10, 2012: The constitution, which was supposed to be drafted prior to the presidential elections, will instead be completed after the election.

Outlook:

Egypt has similar demographics to other countries embroiled in the Arab Spring. With a median age of 24.3, a population growing annually at 1.96%, and youth unemployment at 24.8%, the country is filled with young, unemployed, and frustrated people. For any new government—secular, religious, or military—to be successful, it must address these issues in a substantial way.

The downfall of America's longtime ally Hosni Mubarak poses a series of challenges to America's foreign policy makers. While the military was instrumental in the initial revolution, it is still unclear whether it has truly democratic aspirations for Egypt's future, based on its response to continued protests and treatment of American based pro-democracy groups. If the military allows for a smooth transition of power to democratically elected leaders, the Egyptian people may elect a religious rather than a secular government.

Because the international community is uncertain as to the future leadership of Egypt following the transition of power, there is concern over the increase in sectarian violence, lawlessness in the Sinai, and tension between the new government and Israel. U.S. support for the protest movement demonstrates American dedication to democracy. This sentiment may give other pro-Western autocrats cause for concern regarding the continuing loyalty of the U.S. to their regimes.

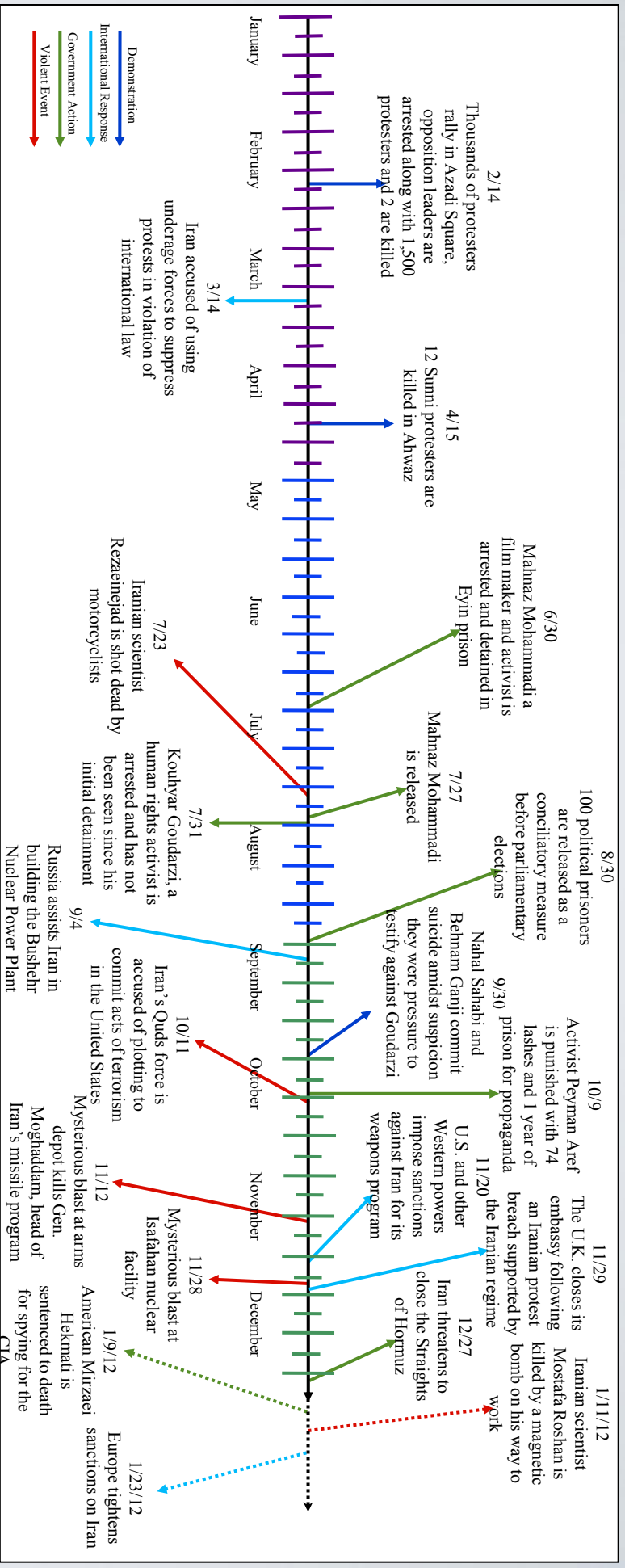
Within Egypt, large questions remain over human rights, religion, and the fate of women, many of whom were instrumental in the protest movement. Egyptian courts found that the military's subjection of women to 'virginity tests' violated their rights. This is only one of a number of complaints, including torture, voiced against the military rulers' disrespect for human rights.

Islamic parties dominated the parliamentary elections. The Brotherhood's Freedom and Justice Party had a strong showing in each round of elections, and the ultra-conservative Salafists' party, which is in favor of strict Islamic law and breaking with the West, has been surprisingly successful. As a result of the Salafists' strong showing, the Brotherhood fielded its own candidate, Khairat el-Shater, to contest the Salafist front runner Hazem Salah Abu Ismail. This has gained the Muslim Brotherhood support from some in the U.S. foreign policy community who fear the rise of the ultraconservative anti-Western Salafists.

Egypt's new government is also more sympathetic to Hamas, a U.S.-designated terrorist organization. Since Mubarak's ouster, Egypt has permanently reopened its border with Gaza and served as a third party in prisoner swap negotiations between Hamas and Israel. Gaza's Prime Minister, Ismail Haniya, who represents Hamas, included a stop in Egypt during his first trip abroad since taking power, which demonstrates his perceived closeness to the new government regardless of its future military or secular identity. The chaos of the revolution has caused some lawlessness in the Sinai Peninsula, a situation which has facilitated weapons smuggling and

attacks against Israel originating in Gaza. There are huge concerns about loose weapons from the revolutions, particularly Libya's, ending up in the hands of Palestinians in Gaza. Shoulder-fired surface to air missiles have already been intercepted en route from Sinai to Gaza.

Iran Timeline 2011



Map of Iran



Three equal horizontal bands of green (top), white, and red; the national emblem (a stylized representation of the word Allah in the shape of a tulip, a symbol of martyrdom) in red is centered in the white band; ALLAH AKBAR (God is Great) in white Arabic script is repeated 11 times along the bottom edge of the green band and 11 times along the top edge of the red band; green is the color of Islam and also represents growth, white symbolizes honesty and peace, red stands for bravery and martyrdom.

Ethnic groups: Persian 61%, Azeri 16%, Kurd 10%, Lur 6%, Baloch 2%, Arab 2%, Turkmen 2% other 1%
Religions: Muslim 98% (Shia 89%, Sunni 9%) Other 2%
Population: 78,868,711 (July 2012 est.)
Median age: total: 26.8 years
Urban population: 71% of total population (2010 est.)
Literacy: 77% (2003 est.)
Unemployment: 23% (2008 est.)

Demographics

Iran

Overview:

Since the initial uprising in Tunisia, Iranian officials have tried to portray the events of the Arab Spring as being philosophically connected to Iran's own Islamic Revolution. Leaders such as Ayatollah Khamenei championed protests in Bahrain, Tunisia, and Egypt as an awakening against secular and Western forces. On the other hand, Iran's regime has condemned and violently suppressed its own reformists, and supported the Assad regime in Syria which has murdered thousands of its own citizens. Iran's government has repeatedly described protests inside Iran and Syria as plots hatched by foreign conspirators.

Beyond the Arab Spring, the nuclear issue has intensified as the U.S. and its Western allies launch increased sanctions against Iran. Early in 2012, The United States froze all properties of the Iranian Central Bank inside the U.S., and the European Union announced its plans to launch an embargo on Iranian oil beginning in July. In addition to sanctions, a covert war allegedly launched by Israel and the U.S. against Iranian nuclear capabilities has been marked by mysterious explosions, assassinations, and computer viruses.

Timeline:

February 14, 2011: Thousands of protestors gather in Azadi Square; opposition leaders are placed under house arrest. 1,500 people are arrested and two are killed.

February 18, 2011: Egypt allows Iranian warships to pass through Suez.

March 14, 2011: Iran accused of using underage forces to suppress protests, in violation of international law.

April 15-18, 2011: At least 12 Sunni protestors are killed in protests in Ahwaz.

June 30, 2011: Mahnaz Mohammadi, film maker and activist, is arrested and detained in Evin prison.

July 23, 2011: Dariush Rezaeinejad, of Iran's Atomic Energy Organization, is shot dead by motorcyclists.

July 27, 2011: Mahnaz Mohammadi is released after much criticism.

July 31, 2011: Kouhyar Goudarzi is arrested; a month later the government still refuses to verify his whereabouts.

August 30, 2011: 100 political prisoners are released as a conciliatory measure in the lead up to March parliamentary elections.

September 4, 2011: With the help of Russia, Iran's Bushehr nuclear power plant begins producing energy.

September 14, 2011: Outspoken lawyer and human rights activist Nasrin Sotoudeh has sentence reduced from 11 to six years.

September 30, 2011: Activists Nahal Sahabi and Behnam Ganji commit suicide after being jailed; it is suspected that they were pressured to testify against their missing friend Goudarzi.

October 9, 2011: Political activist and university student Peyman Aref is punished with 74 lashes prior to being released. He had completed his one year jail sentence for propaganda.

October 10, 2011: Opposition leader Mehdi Karroubi is allowed temporary leave from house arrest for birthday celebrations.

October 11, 2011: Iran's Quds Force is accused of plot against U.S., Saudi, and Israeli interests.

October 18, 2011: Filmmaker Jafar Panahi's six-year jail sentence for acting against national security is upheld.

October 29, 2011: Marzieh Vafamehr, who acted in a movie critical of Iran, has her sentence to a year in jail and 90 lashes overturned and is freed.

November 12, 2011: Mysterious blast kills 17 at arms depot.

November 21, 2011: U.S. and other Western powers impose new sanctions against Iran.

November 28, 2011: Mysterious explosion in Isfahan where nuclear facility is housed.

November 29, 2011: Iranian protestors breach British Embassy in Tehran; Hague vows Iran will be punished for breaking Vienna Convention.

November 30, 2011: Britain determines the embassy attack, reminiscent of the attack on the U.S. embassy and hostage crisis, had official Iranian backing. In response, Britain closes its Tehran embassy and expels Iranian diplomats.

December 27, 2011: Iran threatens to close Strait of Hormuz over sanctions.

January 8, 2012: Iran announces plan to enrich uranium at secondary site, Fordo.

January 9, 2012: American Amir Mirzaei Hekmati is sentenced to death for spying for the CIA.

January 11, 2012: In another step in the ‘covert war’ against Iran, nuclear scientist Mostafa Ahmadi Roshan is killed by a bomb on his way to work. The U.S. condemns the attack.

January 18, 2012: Israel asserts it has not yet decided on military action towards Iran.

January 23, 2012: Europe tightens sanctions on Iran’s oil sectors; Iran repeats threat to close Strait of Hormuz.

January 26, 2012: Iran warns Europe that it will halt oil exports.

February 6, 2012: U.S. moves to freeze all Iranian property holdings in the U.S.

March 5, 2012: Death sentence of alleged American CIA spy Hekmati is overturned by Iran’s Supreme Court; he will get a retrial.

March 24, 2012: U.S. intelligence officials claim that Iran is supplying Syria with weapons to help suppress protests.

April 10, 2012: Iranian Intelligence Ministry uncovers bombs, machine-guns and military communications equipment that are reportedly linked to an Israeli terrorist group.

April 13, 2012: Nuclear talks between Iran, the United States, Russia, China, Britain, France and Germany are held in Istanbul, Turkey

Outlook:

The downfall of leaders critical of Iran, such as Hosni Mubarak, and their replacement with more religious regimes has served to strengthen Iran’s posture in the Middle East. Egypt’s new government has permitted Iran to sail warships through the Suez Canal for the first time since 1979, angering Israel. Saudi Arabia, a traditional opponent, faces increased criticism and illegitimacy as other regimes trumpet popular revolutions, which Iran relates to its own 1979 revolution. Human rights groups, which denounced many of the Arab Spring’s deposed leaders, have also made numerous criticisms of Iran as it has imprisoned political dissidents and executed juveniles.

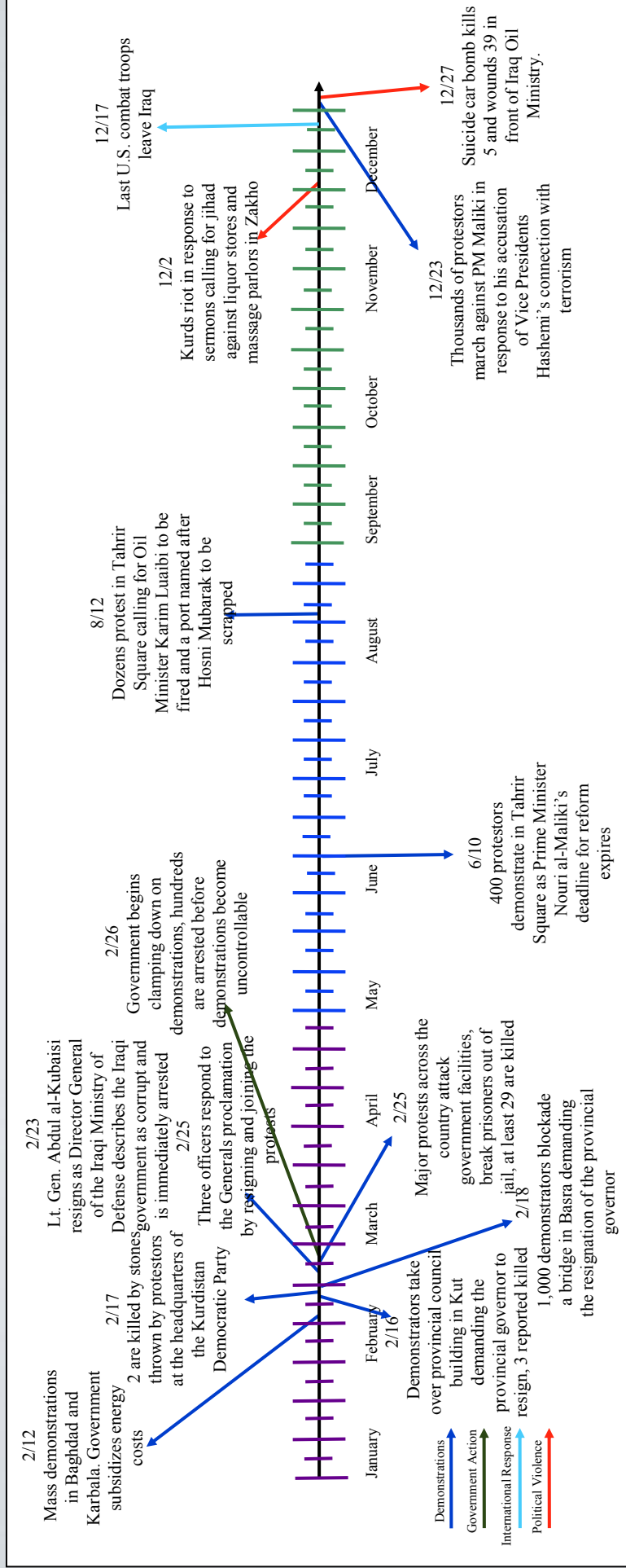
At the same time, Iran’s regional influence is threatened by the ongoing rebellion in Syria. Assad’s regime is seen as Iran’s only true ally in the Middle East, and its downfall could isolate Iran. Iran’s alliance with Syria allows it to use Syria to transfer weapons and aid to Hezbollah. Without a cooperative Syrian regime, Iran’s ability to support Hezbollah could be diminished. Reports claim that Iranian Revolutionary Guard officials have been assisting the Syrian Armed Forces in responding to demonstrators.

Internationally, Iran faces increased pressure from tightening sanctions by the West. These sanctions will limit Iran's ability to sell oil abroad, taking away a vital source of revenue for Iran's struggling economy. Iran has threatened to retaliate by closing the Strait of Hormuz, a crucial waterway for oil transport. Its handicapped economy will only diminish its support for partners such as Syria, and Hezbollah in Lebanon.

While Iran's adversaries have used covert action thus far to stall its nuclear abilities, the consequences of such attacks could lead to outright war. The Stuxnet virus opened a new window into the possibilities of cyber warfare. No countries have claimed responsibility for the subversive tactics, which include the assassinations of scientists and explosions at nuclear sites.

Domestic challenges in Iran continue to mount, including divisions between the Supreme Leader and Ahmadinejad, a clamoring opposition, and a stagnant economy. Nonetheless, the aftermath of the 2009 elections demonstrates that Iranian security forces are trained and prepared to use force to suppress any rebellion within the country. The effects of the Arab Spring are more likely to have a profound impact on Iran's foreign, rather than domestic, affairs.

Iraq Timeline 2011



Three equal horizontal bands of red (top), white, and black; the Takbir (Arabic expression meaning "God is great") in green Arabic script is centered in the white band; the band colors derive from the Arab Liberation flag and represent oppression (black), overcome through bloody struggle (red), to be replaced by a bright future (white); the Council of Representatives approved this flag in 2008 as a compromise temporary replacement for the Ba'athist Saddam-era flag.

Ethnic groups: Arab 75-80%, Kurdish 15-20%, Turkoman, Assyrian, or other 5%
Religions: Shia Muslim 60-65%, Sunni Muslim 32-37%, Christian or other 3%
Population: 31,129,225 (July 2012 est.)
Median age: total: 20.9 years
Urban population: 66% of total population (2010 est.)
Literacy (age 15 and over can read and write): 74.1% (2000 est.)
Unemployment: 15% (2004 est.)

Demographics

Iraq

Overview:

The gradual removal of U.S. troops in 2011 empowered Iraqis to follow their neighbors in mass protests resulting in their own Arab Spring. Demonstrations began in early February, resulting in the resignation of Lieutenant General Abdul-Aziz al-Kubaisi as Director General of the Iraqi Ministry of Defense. Heightened protests started on the 'Day of Rage,' February 25, 2011, and spread throughout the country by autumn. Protestors demanded increased national security, an end to federal corruption and improvements to public services, mainly voicing concern over the availability and impartiality of service. Sectarian tensions between Iraq's Shi'as, Sunnis, and Kurds remain a grave concern to the stability and integrity of Iraq.

Timeline:

February 12, 2011: In Baghdad and Karbala, as well as other major urban areas, hundreds of protestors demand a more effective approach to the issue of national security and an investigation into federal corruption cases. Additionally, protestors urge the government to make public services both fair and accessible. In response, the Iraqi government subsidizes electricity costs.

February 16, 2011: Roughly 2,000 protestors take over a provincial council building in the city of Kut, demanding the provincial governor resign due to a lack of basic services such as electricity and water. Three are reported killed and 30 injured.

February 17, 2011: Two people are killed by stones thrown by protestors at the headquarters of the Kurdistan Democratic Party.

February 18, 2011: About 1,000 demonstrators blockade a bridge in Basra, demanding the resignation of the provincial governor.

February 23, 2011: Lt. Gen. Abdul-Aziz al-Kubaisi resigns as Director General of the Iraqi Ministry of Defense. He gives up his military rank and removes insignia from his shoulders on television. Security forces immediately arrest al-Kubaisi. He describes the Iraqi government as corrupt and calls on all officers to declare their resignation and join the demonstrators on February 25th 2011. Three officers, including one colonel, respond to this call, announce their resignations, and join the protests. Likewise, 37 personnel from the Ministry of Interior also resign and join the crowds of demonstrators.

February 24, 2011: Muntadhar al-Zaidi, an Iraqi journalist famous for throwing his shoes at President George W. Bush in 2008, is arrested for allegedly taking part in the protests.

February 25, 2011: 'Day of Rage,' protests are held throughout Iraq focusing on unemployment, corruption, and poor public services. During the protests, crowds storm provincial buildings, break prisoners out of jail, and force local officials to resign. At least 29 people are killed across the country, though the deadliest protests took place in Iraqi Kurdistan.

February 26, 2011: Protests are quieter the day after the 'Day of Rage,' as a result of the previous day's fatalities. Hundreds are detained by Iraqi security forces, including journalists, artists, and intellectuals.

March 4, 2011: Protestors join in Liberation Square, Bagdad to demand, "that the provincial council step down and essential services such as water and electricity be improved."¹

March 16, 2011: New protests materialize in Baghdad and Basra against the Saudi-led intervention in Bahrain.

March 17, 2011: At Karbala about 3,000 people demonstrate against Saudi intervention in Bahrain. Prime Minister Nuri al-Maliki also criticizes Saudi Arabia's actions.

June 10, 2011: Roughly 400 protestors unite at Tahrir Square in Baghdad after Prime Minister Nouri al-Maliki's deadline for reform expires.

December 2, 2011: Muslim Kurdish riots are instigated by sermons calling for jihad against liquor stores and massage parlors in Zakho in the Dohuk Governorate. The riots soon develop into chaos and arson against Assyrian and Yazidi-owned properties in Iraqi Kurdistan.

December 23, 2011: Several thousand Iraqis march against Prime Minister Nuri al-Maliki, responding to his accusations of terrorism against Vice President Tareq al-Hashemi and other Sunni leaders.

December 27, 2011: A suicide bomber attacks a checkpoint in front of the Iraqi Interior Ministry. The car explosion kills five and wounds 39.

February 17, 2012: Protestors gather in Baghdad and Kurdistan for the anniversary of original protests in 2011; they are met forcefully by security personnel.

February 23, 2012: A series of bombs explode in cities across Iraq and discourage protestors from attending the anniversary of the 'Day of Rage' in Iraq on February 25.

Outlook:

The slow move away from dictatorship toward a democratic state has led Iraqis to follow their neighbors into Arab Spring-style demonstrations. Iraqi demonstrations generated some of the

¹ Juhi, Bushra, and Qassim Abdul-Zahra. "Iraqis Defy Checkpoints, Vehicle Bans to Protest." ABC News, March 04, 2011. <http://abcnews.go.com/International/wireStory?id=13054020>.

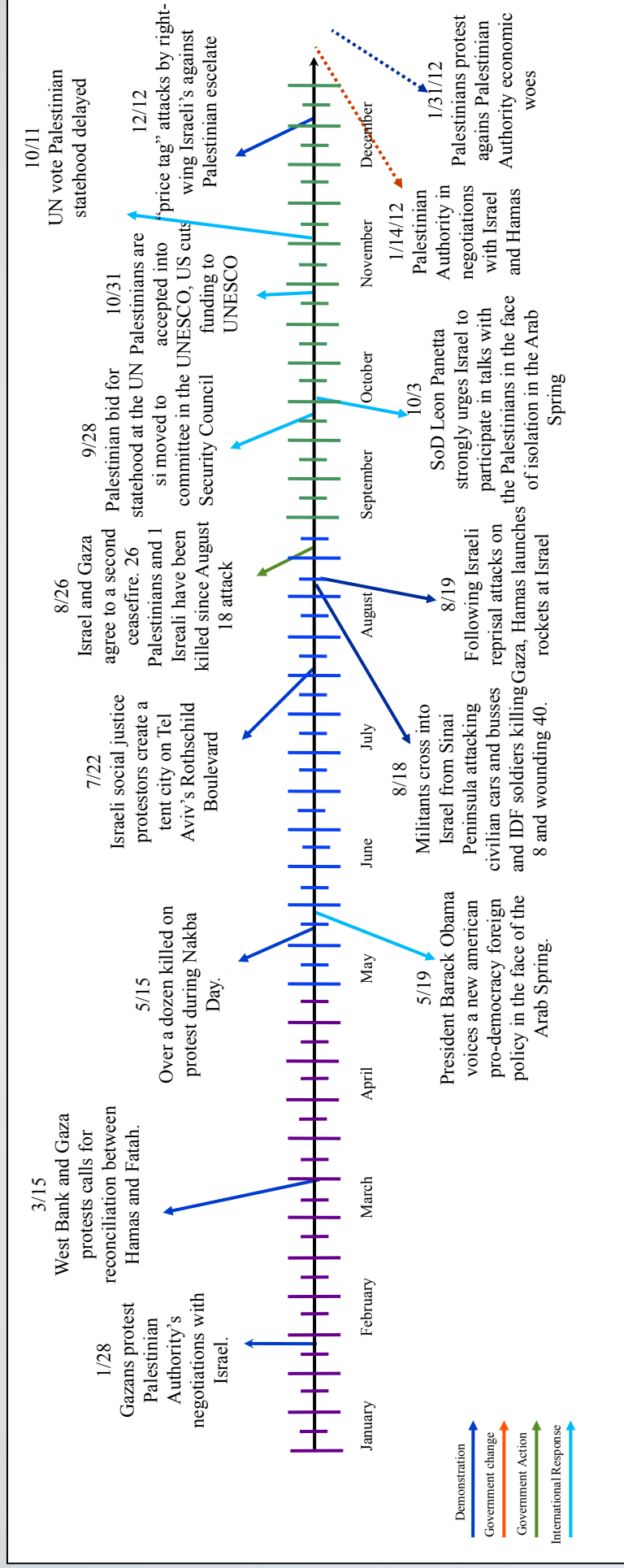
reforms they demanded. During the course of 2011 ambitions grew and the size of demonstrations increased dramatically in number of participants as well as in locations. In looking ahead to the rest of 2012, Iraq now has responsibility for retaining control over their newly formed and fragile democracy. With the resignation of Lieutenant General Abdul-Aziz Al-Kubaisi in February, followed by the resignations of three officers, including one colonel and 37 other personnel from the Ministry of Interior, the Iraqi people have good motivation to continue the protests and riots until the rest of their concerns and demands for reform have been met. Changes in Iraq's government have been gradual in the past ten years, but may speed up in 2012 with the Arab Spring.

Since the withdrawal of U.S. forces from Iraq in December, more than 400 Iraqis have been killed, making this one of the deadliest periods of the last half-decade. It is important to note that such deaths have been the result of increased attacks against Shi'as. Due to the volatile relations between the Sunni Arab Vice President al-Hashimi and Shi'a Prime Minister al-Maliki, the country's security is extremely unstable.

When analyzing the possible outlook for Iraq in the year to come, it is necessary to consider the main issues behind the Sunni/Shi'a tension: the steady elimination of Sunnis from political power, the threat of an al-Qa'ida resurgence, and the necessity to question whether or not recent attacks could have been organized by Iraqi security forces themselves. Iraq is extremely divided, which may allow for Sunni groups with ties to al-Qa'ida to increase the severity and number of attacks countrywide. Iraq's al-Qa'ida franchise has become entangled in the Arab Spring as it has taken responsibility for attacks in Syria against the Alawite regime. This complicates the understanding of the motives and ideology of the Syrian rebels who are facing brutal repression from Assad's government.

Iraqis are still fighting towards freedom in their fledgling democratic regime in the early months of 2012. On the anniversary of the original protests in 2011, Iraqis gathered to voice their demands, but were met almost immediately by security forces and thugs in plain clothes using force to quiet the demonstration. Bombings across Iraq killed over 60 people leading up to the anniversary and kept people from attending. The Iraqi Interior Ministry claimed the bombs were the doing of al-Qa'ida, but many activists claim it was the Iraqi regime. Even a year after the protest movement began, Iraqis still show interest in improving social services and freedom of expression, even if they are frequently met by Iraqi security forces and receive little attention from the media.

Israel/Palestine Timeline 2011



Map of Israel



White with a blue hexagram (six-pointed linear star) known as the Magen David (Shield of David) centered between two equal horizontal blue bands near the top and bottom edges of the flag.

Ethnic Groups: Jewish: 76.4% , non-Jewish: 23.6%
Religions: Jewish 75.6, Muslim 16.9%, Christian 2%, Druze 1.7%, Other 3.8%.
Population: 7,473,052 (July 2011 est.)
Median age: total: 29.4 years
Urban population: 92% of total population (2010)
Literacy (age 15 and over can read and write): 97.1%
Unemployment, youth ages 15-24: 14.7 %

Demographics

Israel and Palestinian Territories

Overview:

The Arab Spring, condemned by Israel's leader Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu as an "Islamic, anti-western, anti-liberal, anti-Israeli, undemocratic wave," has left Israel increasingly isolated as no progress has been made in the Israeli-Palestinian peace process and the reconciliation talks between Hamas and Fatah are emerging as promising.² Israel faces challenges from within over the economy and the role of religion, as well as increased pressure internationally. The Palestinians, long frustrated with the disunity of leadership and stalled peace talks, are making strides towards reconciliation. Hamas has received increased recognition as Islamic governments are emerging in the Arab world. It has demonstrated legitimacy and power not only in its international relations but also through the prisoner exchange with Israel. Many factors will determine the future of the Israeli-Palestinian relationship as each side deals with internal struggles.

Timeline:

January 28, 2011: Gazans protest the Palestinian Authority's negotiations with Israel.

March 15, 2011: West Bank and Gaza protests call for reconciliation between Hamas and Fatah.

May 15, 2011: Over a dozen killed in protests marking Nakba Day.

May 19, 2011: President Barack Obama voices a new American pro-democracy foreign policy in the face of the Arab Spring.

May 27, 2011: Reopening of the Gaza-Egypt Rafah border crossing is announced.

July 22, 2011: Israeli social justice protestors create a tent city on Tel Aviv's Rothschild Boulevard.

August 18, 2011: Militants cross into Israel from the Sinai Peninsula and attack civilian cars and buses and IDF soldiers, killing eight and wounding 40. Israel accidentally kills five Egyptian guards while pursuing the attackers across the Egyptian border.

August 19, 2011: Following Israeli reprisal attacks on Gaza, Hamas launches rockets at Israel.

August 26, 2011: Israel and Gaza agree to a second ceasefire. 26 Palestinians and one Israeli have been killed in the violence since the August 18 attack.

² Sherwood, Harriet. "Binyamin Netanyahu Attacks Arab Spring Uprisings." The Guardian, November 24, 2011. <http://www.guardian.co.uk/world/2011/nov/24/israel-netanyahu-attacks-arab-spring>.

September 2, 2011: Turkey downgrades its relations with Israel over Israel's refusal to apologize for the 2010 Mavi Marmara incident.

September 10, 2011: Deadly protests outside the Israeli Embassy in Cairo cause the embassy to be evacuated.

September 28, 2011: Palestinian bid for statehood at the UN is moved to committee by the Security Council.

October 3, 2011: Secretary of Defense Leon Panetta strongly urges Israel to participate in talks with the Palestinians in the face of isolation in the Arab Spring; Rothschild Boulevard's social justice protestors are evicted and their tents are demolished.

October 11, 2011: Israel reaches an arrangement for a prisoner swap with Hamas, strengthening Hamas's position against Fatah.

October 12, 2011: Israel apologizes to Egypt over the killing of its guards in the August 18 incident.

October 18, 2011: Abducted Israeli soldier Gilad Shalit is returned to Israel in exchange for 1,027 Palestinian prisoners.

October 24, 2011: The officer in charge of the IDF battalion responsible for the death of Palestinian Essam Oudah of Qusra, who was killed in a confrontation with Israelis, is relieved of his duty.

October 30, 2011: After nine Palestinians and one Israeli are killed in an exchange of rockets and air strikes, the Islamic Jihad accepts a truce.

October 31, 2011: Palestinians are accepted into UNESCO; U.S. cuts funding to UNESCO.

November 1, 2011: Israel pushes settlements in response to Palestinian move at the UN.

November 11, 2011: UN vote on Palestinian statehood delayed.

November 15, 2011: Six Palestinian 'freedom riders' protest Israeli bus policy in the West Bank.

November 24, 2011: Netanyahu labels the Arab Spring as an "Islamic, anti-western, anti-liberal, anti-Israeli, undemocratic wave."³

³ Sherwood, Harriet. "Binyamin Netanyahu Attacks Arab Spring Uprisings." The Guardian, November 24, 2011. <http://www.guardian.co.uk/world/2011/nov/24/israel-netanyahu-attacks-arab-spring>.

December 12, 2011: 'Price tag' attacks by extremist right-wing Israelis against random Palestinians escalate.

December 14, 2011: Netanyahu vows to treat Israeli Jewish terrorists with same methods as Palestinian security threats.

December 25, 2011: Prime Minister of Gaza Ismail Haniya embarks on first trip abroad since Gaza takeover; stops include Turkey, Egypt, and Tunisia.

January 14, 2012: Palestinian Authority (PA) in negotiations with Israel and Hamas.

January 23, 2012: Two Palestinians arrested for protest outside Red Cross in East Jerusalem.

January 31, 2012: Palestinians protest against the PA for economic woes, leading to speculation of an Arab Spring movement by Palestinians.

February 1, 2012: Palestinians in Gaza protest Ban Ki Moon's visit because of his 'bias' towards Israel.

February 6, 2012: Fatah and Hamas agree to unity deal.

February 13-14, 2012: Terrorist attacks on Israeli interests in Thailand, Georgia, and India are executed with Iranian backing.

February 17, 2012: As the U.S. pressures Egypt to release American NGO workers or face cuts in aid, Egypt responds with a threat to reexamine its peace treaty with Israel.

February 21, 2012: Khader Adnan ends his hunger strike with the condition that Israel release him. Israel feared widespread unrest if the Islamic Jihad member died of his hunger strike in custody. Other Palestinian prisoners use the hunger strike tactic to secure freedom from administrative detention.

February 22, 2012: The Tal Law, which allows ultra-Orthodox exemptions from the military, will not be renewed in an effort to more evenly share burdens in Israeli society.

February 23, 2012: A call for right-wing religious Jews to occupy the Muslim part of the Jerusalem holy sites known as the Western Wall, Al-Aqsa Mosque, and the Dome of the Rock leads to confrontations between Palestinians and police forces in Jerusalem.

March 5, 2012: As the AIPAC Policy Conference convenes in Washington, DC, President Obama and Prime Minister Netanyahu meet to discuss Iran.

March 9, 2012: Israeli airstrike in Gaza kills Palestinian militants and begins a series of escalating retaliations that ends in a truce between Israel and the Islamic Jihad group.

March 25, 2012: A right-wing settler outpost in the West Bank, Migron, which lies on private Palestinian land, is ordered to be evacuated by Israel's Supreme Court.

March 30, 2012: Land Day protests by Palestinians, recognizing the day in 1976 when Israel seized Galilee Arab villages, turn violent.

Outlook:

Israeli society echoed a demand made across the Middle East this year as social justice protests erupted over the summer calling for more economic opportunities. These tent protests were dismantled in October, but more internal divisions are simmering. Israel faces Jewish right-wing 'price tag' attacks and a challenge from the ultra-Orthodox over women's rights. The Tal Law, which was implemented at Israel's founding to address religious divisions and exempts ultra-Orthodox from military service, will not be renewed, which has caused even more anger from the ultra-Orthodox. The prisoner exchange returning Gilad Shalit was able to temporarily heal some of these divisions, but also legitimized Hamas and compromised Israel's stance on negotiating with terrorists.

In terms of Israel's security situation, Israel faces popularly elected, more religious governments across the Arab world that tend to sympathize with the Palestinian cause. Egypt's domestic elections, now with a Muslim Brotherhood candidate joining the race to try to beat out a Salafist front runner, will shape how Egypt interacts with the Palestinians and respects the peace treaty. Lawlessness in the Sinai Peninsula has remained even after the August 18 terrorist attacks. Israel's fallout with Egypt after that attack, in addition to the diplomatic crisis with Turkey over the refusal to apologize for the raid on the Mavi Marmara (a vessel part of the flotilla that was attempting to break Israel's blockade of Gaza), stand to isolate Israel from what used to be its closest allies in the Muslim world.

Iran has continued its nuclear program despite setbacks from mysterious explosions and assassinations often blamed on Israel and its American ally. There has been much public conversation over whether Israel will strike Iran's nuclear facilities (as it has in the past with Syria and Iraq), although Israel maintains that a decision on the issue has not been made. Both the U.S. and Britain have urged Israeli restraint on striking Iran to avoid a larger conflict.

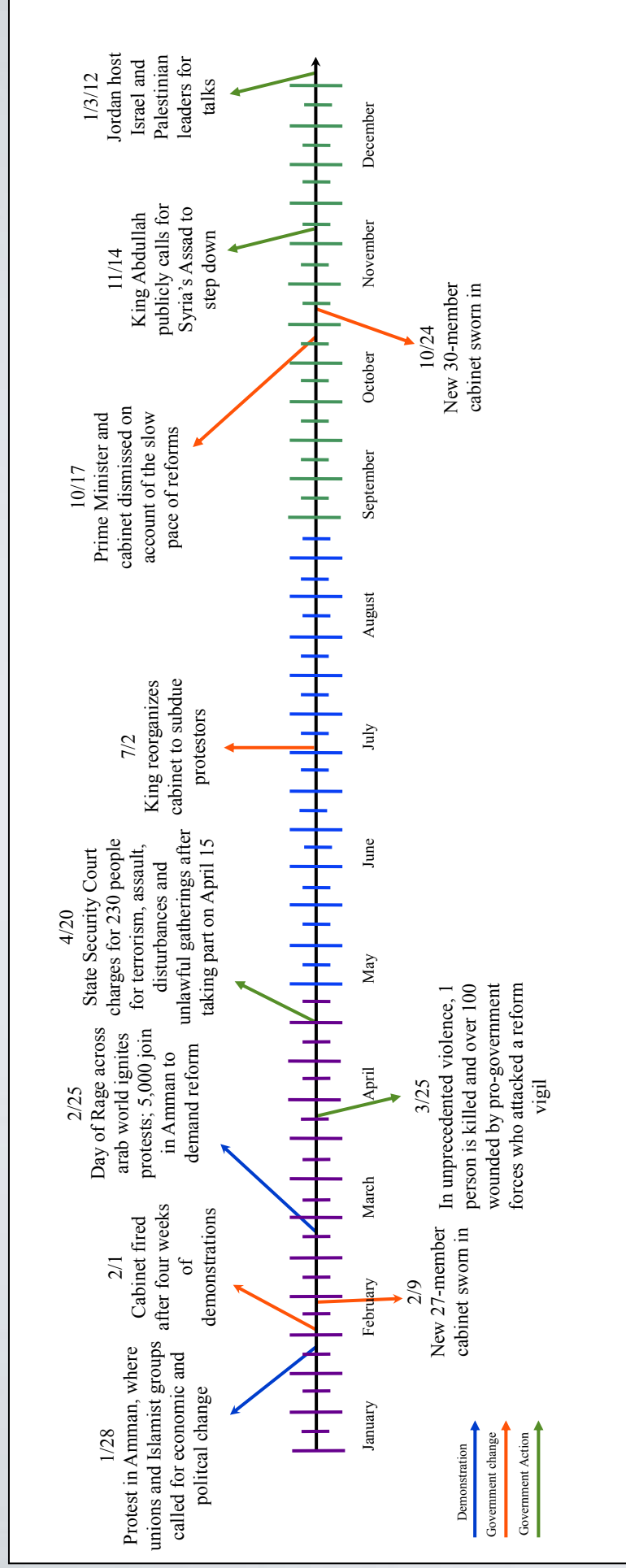
Israel's peace process with the Palestinians remains stalled, and the Palestinians are again broaching a unity agreement to end the divide between rival factions Hamas and Fatah. Netanyahu has raised the stakes by telling Palestinian President Mahmoud Abbas to choose between relations with Israel and relations with Hamas. Egypt's Muslim Brotherhood has encouraged such reconciliation. While populations of the Arab Spring countries overall support the Palestinian people, actual involvement from Arab countries for the Palestinian cause has diminished as governments are directing their resources and attention to their own internal problems.

The Arab Spring is changing the way the West interacts with the Muslim world, and it has extended even into the Palestinian territories. Palestinians have protested the lack of unity among their leadership, the Palestinian Authority's talks with Israel, and economic woes as frustration has mounted. One West Bank protestor, Muhammad Hassouneh, lamented: "The authority defends itself by saying, 'We are still under occupation'... That is true, so they should dissolve themselves."⁴ The Chairman of the Palestinian Academic Society for the Study of International Affairs in Jerusalem, Mahdi Abdul Hadi, explained: "The Arab awakening is witnessing the rise of a reformist political Islam in Egypt and Tunisia, and I believe we will see that Hamas is no exception... Western governments are dealing with the Muslim Brotherhood in Egypt, and it is only a matter of time before they will meet with Hamas as well."⁵ The reopening of the Rafah border crossing between Gaza and Egypt, in addition to trips abroad by Hamas officials to Turkey, Tunisia, Egypt, Sudan, Jordan, signify less isolation for Hamas in the future.

⁴ Kershner, Isabel. "Support for Palestinian Authority Erodes as Prices and Taxes Rise." *The New York Times*, January 31, 2012. <http://www.nytimes.com/2012/02/01/world/middleeast/palestinian-authority-faces-protests-as-prices-rise.html?ref=palestinianauthority>.

⁵ Bronner, Ethan. "Unity Deal Brings Risks for Abbas and Israel." *The New York Times*, February 6, 2012. <http://www.nytimes.com/2012/02/07/world/middleeast/palestinian-factions-reach-unity-deal.html?ref=palestinianauthority> (accessed February 21, 2012).

Jordan Timeline 2011



Three equal horizontal bands of black, representing the Abbassid Caliphate, white, representing the Ummayyad Caliphate, and green, representing the Fatimid Caliphate.

A red isosceles triangle on the hoist side, representing the Great Arab Revolt of 1916, and bearing a small white seven-pointed star symbolizing the seven verses of the opening Sura (Al-Fatiha) of the Holy Koran.

Ethnic Groups: Arab 98%, Circassian 1%, Armenian 1%
Religions: Muslim 92%, Christian 6%, and other 2%
Population: 6,508,271 (July 2011 est.)
Median age: total: 22.1 years
Urban population: 79% of total population (2010)
Literacy (age 15 and over can read and write): 89.9%
Unemployment, youth ages 15-24: 27%

Demographics

Map of Jordan

Jordan

Overview:

Jordan's King Abdullah II has responded to waves of protests by pledging reforms and shuffling his cabinet. Tensions with Islamists and the large number of Palestinians in Jordan give King Abdullah II a stake in the rupture between the West Bank's Fatah and Gaza's Hamas, and the conflict dividing the Israelis and Palestinians. Jordan has been active in moderating peace talks between Israel and Palestine, exemplified with the official Israeli-Palestinian meeting in Amman, January 3rd 2012.

Timeline:

January 28, 2011: Jordanians protest in Amman, where unions and an Islamist group called for economic and political change.

February 1, 2011: Cabinet fired after four weeks of demonstrations.

February 9, 2011: New 27-member cabinet sworn in.

February 25, 2011: 'Day of Rage' across Arab world ignites protests; 5,000 join in Amman to demand reform.

March 25, 2011: In unprecedented violence, one person is killed and over 100 wounded by pro-government forces that attacked a reform vigil.

April 4, 2011: A man wearing a fake explosive belt was arrested in Amman after he entered the offices of the Islamic Action Front, the political branch of the Muslim Brotherhood, and said he would blow himself up if the head of the office, Hamza Mansour, would not meet with him.

April 7, 2011: A Jordanian man is in critical condition after he self-immolates.

April 20, 2011: Charges filed against 230 people for terrorism, disturbance, assault, and unlawful gathering after taking part in protests on April 15; being tried in State Security Court.

June 13, 2011: Government contests reports that protestors attacked the king's motorcade.

July 2, 2011: King reorganizes cabinet to subdue protestors.

October 17, 2011: Prime Minister and cabinet dismissed on account of the slow pace of reforms.

October 24, 2011: New 30-member cabinet sworn-in.

November 14, 2011: King Abdullah publicly calls for Syria's Assad to step down.

November 21, 2011: King Abdullah visits Palestinian Authority in Ramallah.

November 28, 2011: Shimon Peres visits Jordan.

January 3, 2012: Jordan hosts Israel and Palestinian leaders for talks.

January 17, 2012: Omar Mahmoud Mohammed Othman, incarcerated in Britain, was tried and convicted in absentia for planning two bomb attacks. Britain had planned to deport him, but the European court ruled that evidence used against Mr. Othman "had been obtained by torturing one of his co-defendants."⁶

January 29, 2012: First official visit to Jordan by Hamas's leader since the group's former headquarters in Amman were shut down by the Jordanian government in 1999, forcing the group to relocate to Damascus.

March 6, 2012: Gas supplies to Jordan are halted after an explosion of the gas line from Egypt to Jordan. This is the 13th time such a blast has occurred; it is blamed on Egyptians who are demonstrating against the 20-year gas deal between Egypt and Israel.

March 23, 2012: Syrians in Jordan demonstrate against Assad. 1,000 Syrian refugees demonstrated at the Embassy of Syria to show their support to the uprising forces at home.

Outlook:

While Jordan has suffered no terrorist attacks in the past year, it stands in a precarious position as the Arab Spring has overthrown monarchs and brought Muslim Brotherhood-affiliated governments to power throughout the Arab world. Jordan faces challenges from a populace that embraces the monarchy but still longs for greater freedoms and economic reforms. At the same time, certain elements of the country aim to establish Islamic law. In terms of extremism, a Pew Research survey shows that confidence in bin Laden among Jordanians fell from 56% in 2003 to 13% in 2011.⁷ The current reforms being discussed in Jordan are seen as long overdue and there are still weekly protests against the security grip on the country by the government. The government has made several attempts to ease the situation, which has made the Islamist IAF party soften their stance on the government and the upcoming reforms.

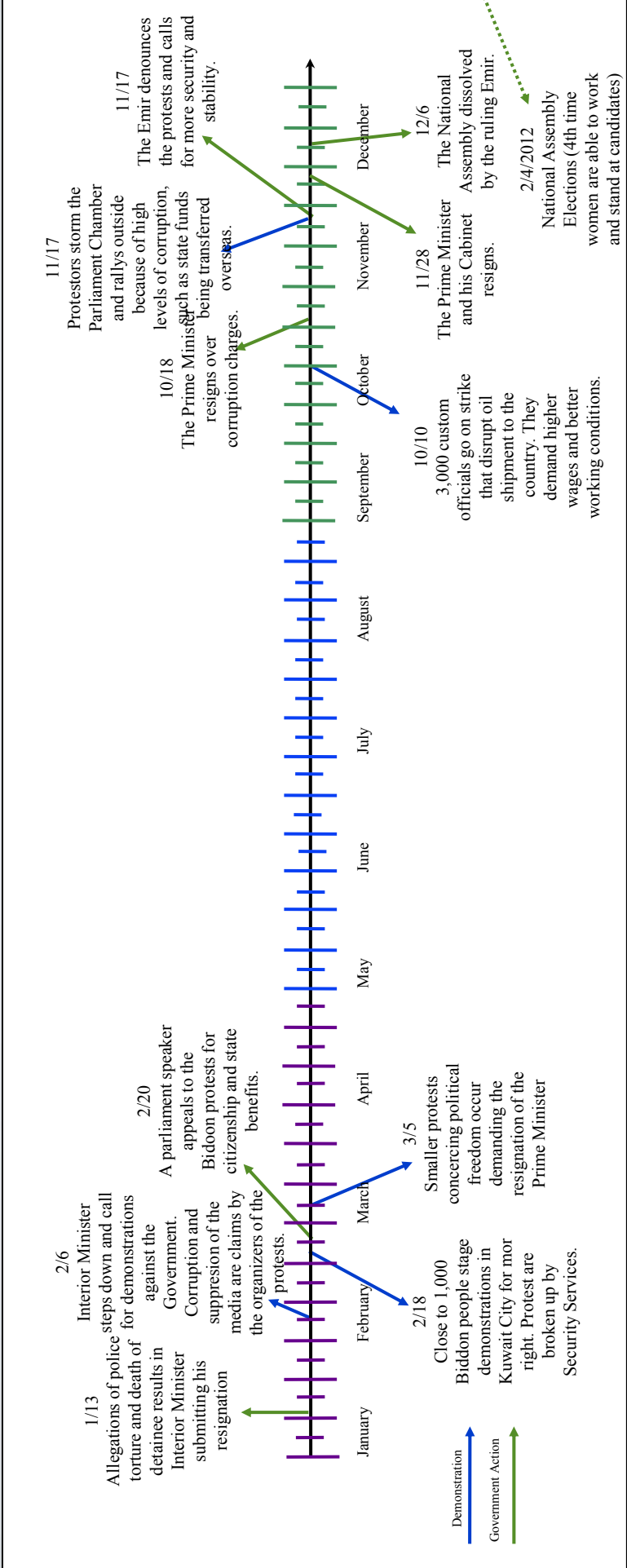
⁶ Somaiya, Ravi, and John F. Burns. "European Court Rules Britain Cannot Deport Terrorism Suspect." *The New York Times*, January 27, 2012. <http://www.nytimes.com/2012/01/18/world/europe/european-court-overrules-britain-on-terror-detainee.html?scp=1&sq=jordan, terror&st=cse>.

⁷ Shane, Scott, and Robert F. Worth. "Even Before Al Qaeda Lost Its Founder, It May Have Lost Some of Its Allure." *The New York Times*, May 2, 2012. <http://www.nytimes.com/2011/05/03/world/03qaeda.html?scp=68&sq=jordan, terror&st=cse>.

In terms of foreign affairs, the visit of Hamas leader Khaled Meshal to Jordan signifies that Jordan may rekindle relations with the U.S. designated terrorist organization as it seeks to reconcile with the West Bank's secular Fatah. Jordan has also sponsored talks between the Israelis and the Palestinians. According to Dore Gold, "King Abdullah would like to see Israeli-Palestinian relations more stabilized, and Israel would like to revive dialogue with the Palestinians and strengthen King Abdullah."⁸ King Abdullah has an important role in such dialogue now, especially given the ouster of Hosni Mubarak, who used to facilitate such communications. The overthrow of Egypt's Hosni Mubarak, who had been an intermediary in the Israel-Palestine conflict, gave the Jordanian monarchy a new role in terms of Israel and additional cause to worry for its own survival. Admiral Mike Mullen visited Jordan on February 13, 2011 to reassure King Abdullah II that he has American support, especially in the wake of Egypt's revolution, where American leaders eventually backed the protestors' democratic aspirations.

⁸ Bronner, Ethan. "As Israelis and Palestinians Talk, the Rise of a Political Islam Alters the Equation." The New York Times, January 3, 2012. <http://www.nytimes.com/2012/01/04/world/middleeast/rise-of-political-islam-alters-israeli-and-palestinian-talks.html?ref=jordan>.

Kuwait Timeline 2011



Map of Kuwait



Three equal horizontal bands of green, white, and red with a black trapezoid based on the hoist side; colors and design are based on the Arab Revolt flag of World War I; green represents fertile fields, white stands for purity, red denotes blood on Kuwaiti swords, black signifies the defeat of the enemy

Ethnic Groups: Kuwaiti 45%, Other Arab 35, South Asian 9%, Iranian 4%, other 7%
Religions: Muslim 85% (Sunni 70%, Shia 30%), Other 15 % (Incl. Christian, Hindu, Parsi)
Population: 2,646,314 (July 2011 est.)
Median age: total: 28.5 years
Urban population: 98% of total population (2010)
Literacy (age 15 and over can read and write): 93,3%
Unemployment: 2,2% (2004 est)

Demographics

*Flag, Map and Demographics courtesy of CIA World Facebook

Kuwait

Overview:

Kuwait, a constitutional hereditary emirate, gained full independence from the United Kingdom in 1961. The ruling al-Sabah family has been in power since the middle of the 18th century. The government's legislature consists of a 50-person elected National Assembly, which is one of the most powerful in the region. In a further show of progress, four women were elected to the National Assembly in 2009.

This oil-rich country where petroleum dominates half of the GDP and almost all of its exports has a large foreign labor force; citizens account for only 1.1 million of the 3.4 million population. The Bidoon people, or "stateless" Arab residents who do not have Kuwaiti citizenship, staged protests in February and March 2011 for more rights and benefits. Corruption is alleged to be widespread and was the motive for multiple protests later in 2011, including one in November in which dozens of protestors stormed Kuwait's parliament. The Emir implemented strict measures to confront protestors who stormed the parliament and gathered outside. There have been no reports of casualties during the protests.

Timeline:

January 13, 2011: Allegations that police had caused a detainee's death through the use of torture leads the Interior Minister to submit his resignation.

February 6, 2011: The Interior Minister steps down and calls for protests against the government. Protestors take issue with government corruption and suppression of the media.

February 18, 2011: Close to 1,000 Bidoon people stage demonstrations in Kuwait City demanding more rights. The protests are broken up by security services.

February 20, 2011: The Parliamentary Speaker appeals to Bidoon protestors asking them to end protests.

March 5, 2011: Some smaller protests concerning political freedoms occur demanding the resignation of the Prime Minister.

October 10, 2011: 3,000 customs officials go on strike disrupting oil shipments to the country. Their demands are higher wages and better working conditions.

October 18, 2011: The Foreign Minister resigns over corruption charges.

November 17, 2011: Protestors storm the parliament chamber and rally against high levels of corruption, which notably includes state funds being transferred to accounts overseas. The Emir denounces the protests and calls for more security and stability.

November 28, 2011: The Prime Minister and his cabinet resign.

December 6, 2011: The National Assembly is dissolved by the Emir.

February 2, 2012: National Assembly elections occur, marking the 4th time that women are able to vote and stand as candidates.

March 15, 2012: Kuwait closes its embassy in Syria as a statement against the regime's violent suppression of the uprising.

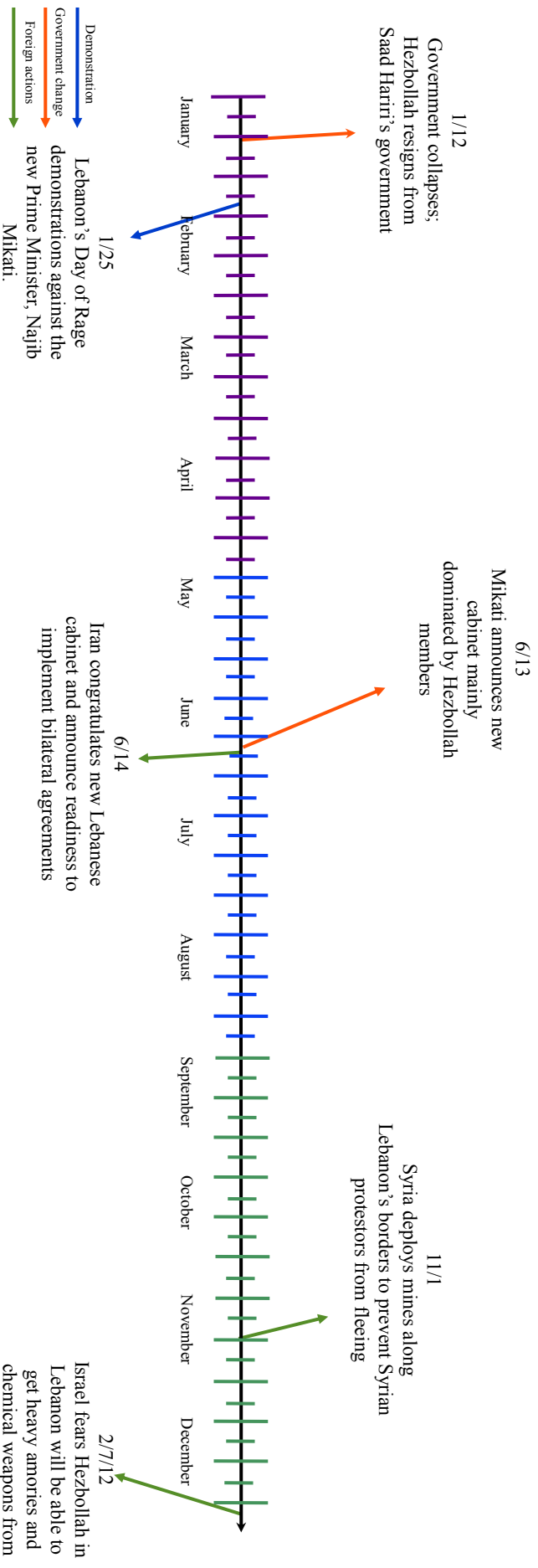
Outlook:

In Kuwait, there has been little indication of a sustained level of protest, in contrast to other countries such as Egypt, Libya, Syria, Tunisia, and Yemen. The government has reacted to protestors' calls for change with large influxes of cash in public spending and fuel subsidies. For example, in January 2011, every citizen was paid 1,000 dinar (2,260 USD) and given free food coupons.

The dissolution of the National Assembly by the Emir in December 2011, and the subsequent elections held on February 2nd changed the makeup of the parliament drastically. The opposition boosted their number of seats from 20 to 34, giving them the majority. The opposition has been empowered by their support and role in forcing former Prime Minister Sheikh Nasser Mohammed al-Ahmed al-Sabah to resign. The opposition's Islamist candidates had the most progress, growing from 9 to 23 seats in parliament. The Emir has a great amount of power, as outlined in the constitution, such as the ability to initiate, sanction, and promulgate laws. A parliament demanding changes that the Emir does not initiate might become a political trigger for further protests.

The Bidoon people are currently without rights to social welfare programs such as healthcare and education, a situation which needs to be addressed. They should have more opportunity to become citizens through a legal naturalization process. Another pressing concern in the country is corruption of both government and private entities. The appointment of an ombudsman to investigate the corruption case against the former prime minister would go a long way in restoring the credibility of the government and the ruling family.

Lebanon Timeline 2011



Map of Lebanon



The red bands symbolize blood shed for liberation, the white band denotes peace, the snow of the mountains, and purity; the green cedar tree is the symbol of Lebanon and represents eternity, steadiness, happiness, and prosperity.

Ethnic Groups: Arab 95%, Armenian 4%, Other 1%
Religions: Muslim 59.7%, Christian 39%, and other 1.3%
Population: 4,143,101 (July 2011 est.)
Median age: total: 29.8 years
Urban population: 87% of total population (2010)
Literacy (age 15 and over can read and write): 87.4 %
Unemployment, youth ages 15-24: 22.1%

Demographics

Lebanon

Overview:

Throughout 2011 Lebanon did not experience the same level of protests demonstrated across the Arab world. Few protests were held, and most of them had little or no relation to the Arab Spring. Despite of this, Lebanon is in a unique position as it borders Syria and Israel.

In January 2011, several Hezbollah ministers stepped down from the government, causing it to collapse, in protest over the investigation into the assassination of former Prime Minister Rafik Hariri. The pro-Western government had agreed to a Netherlands-based tribunal investigation of the 2005 suicide truck bombing which killed 23 people, including the then-Prime Minister Hariri. Prime Minister Saad Hariri's government dissolved on January 12, and on January 25 Najib Mikati, the proposed Hezbollah candidate, was elected as the new Prime Minister of Lebanon. The same day, supporters of Saad Hariri, son of late Rafik Hariri, held violent demonstrations to protest the newly elected Hezbollah candidate. The demonstrations mainly occurred in Tripoli, but smaller protests were also seen in Beirut.

The new government was solidified by June 13 and Mikati announced his new cabinet which gave Hezbollah 16 out of the 30 cabinet posts. In a phone conversation with Mikati on June 14, Iranian Vice President Reza Rahimi congratulated the Lebanese people on their new government. The cabinet announcement caused a minor protest on the Khaldeh Highway and the resignation of State Minister Talal Arslan. Lebanon's government is strained by internal conflicts which impede necessary political reforms, security improvements to obstruct smuggling, and the response to the Syrian uprising.

Timeline:

January 12, 2011: Lebanon's government collapses as Hezbollah ministers resign from Saad Hariri's government.

January 25, 2011: Lebanon's 'Day of Rage' demonstrations against the new PM, Najib Mitaki.

June 13, 2011: PM Mitaki announces new cabinet mainly dominated by Hezbollah members.

June 14, 2011: Iran congratulates new Lebanese government and announces readiness to implement bilateral agreements; protests break out over the new cabinet on Khaldeh Highway.

November 1, 2011: Syria deploys mines along Lebanon's border to prevent protestors from fleeing.

February 7, 2012: Israel fears Hezbollah in Lebanon will be able to get heavy armories and chemical weapons from Syria.

March 19, 2012: The Lebanese Army arrests 7 people including two Lebanese soldiers suspected of having al-Qa'ida connections and planning attacks on military targets.

April 10, 2012: Three people are arrested for smuggling weapons and armor into Syria to be sold to armed groups. According to the Lebanese newspaper Al-Akhbar, the Syrian Salafi network seeks to recruit Lebanese soldiers to execute attacks in Lebanon. Additionally, Syrian armed forces fired into Lebanon, killing a Lebanese cameraman, Ali Shaaban, of the Al Jadeed television channel. According to Al Jadeed, the attack appears to have been intentional. Lebanese President Michel Sleiman urges Syria to conduct an investigation of the killing of Shaaban and hold the perpetrators responsible.

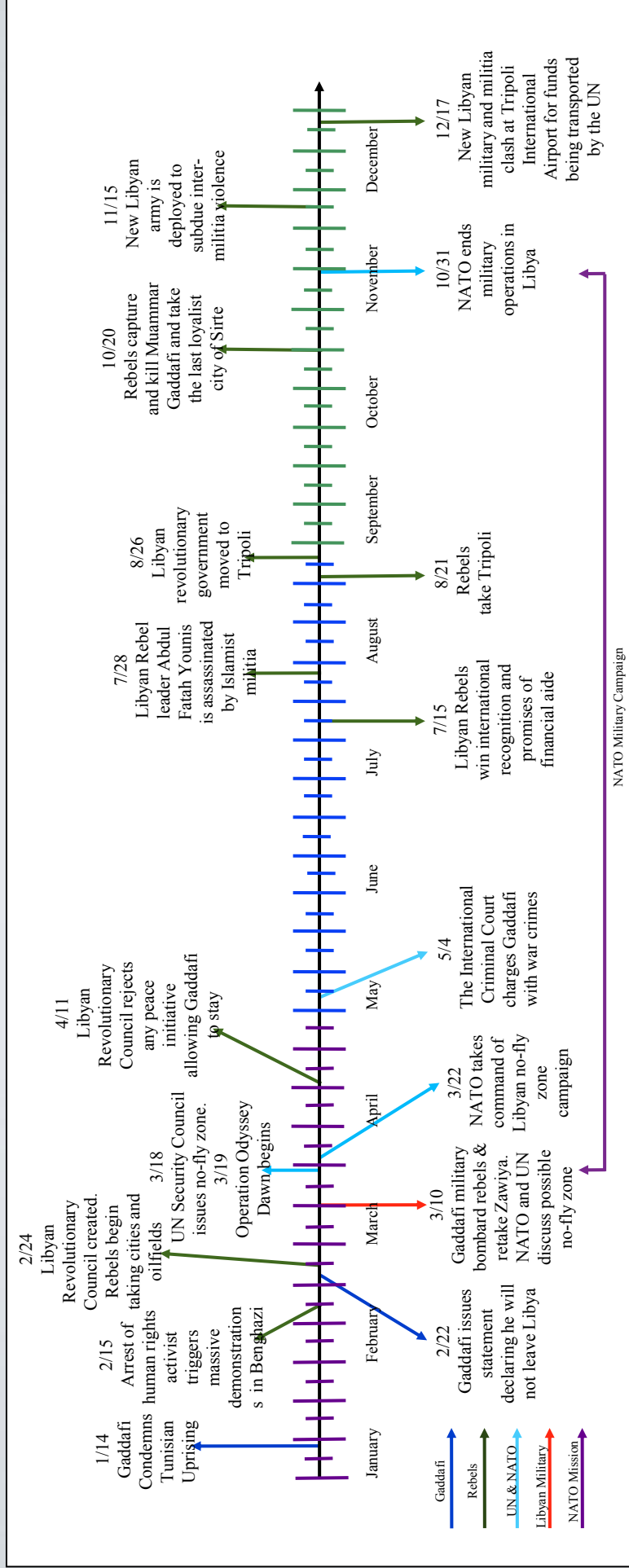
Outlook:

Lebanon has not experienced the same uprisings as other Arab countries, and the fall of 2011 did not bring any significant events to alter the situation in Lebanon. The current Lebanese government supports the Syrian government and the clerical rule of Iran, which has strained Lebanon's relationships with neighboring Israel and the West. The situation in Syria has affected the border regions of Lebanon where many protestors are trying to seek refuge. Syrian military and police have been guarding the border regions between Lebanon and Syria and deployed mines to stop protestors from entering Lebanon, and allegedly shot a Lebanese cameraman, Ali Shaaban, in Lebanon from the Syrian side of the border. The Syrian uprising could have internal political consequences for Lebanon, as the opposition in Lebanon has showed solidarity with the Syrian protestors.

Just as Israel fears the spread of weapons from Libya to Hamas in Gaza, it is also concerned about the spread of arms from the Syrian uprising to Lebanon's Hezbollah. As Lebanon's power sharing system balances the Maronites, Sunnis, and Shi'as, a Hezbollah-dominated cabinet adds tension to sectarian divisions in the parliament and cabinet. Prime Minister Mikati needs to balance a one-sided cabinet with the diverse beliefs and politics of the Lebanese people, which could be a turbulent task if Mikati decides to advance bilateral agreements with Iran. Prime Minister Najib Mikati will be able to maintain the current political position if he is able to control and cooperate with his cabinet.

The collapse of the Syrian government would stand to change Lebanon's relationship with Syria. The killing of Shaaban and other border shootings have made the Syrian situation a matter of high importance and relevance for the Lebanese government. Furthermore, the opposition in Lebanon has shown political solidarity to the Syrian protestors, which could become an important factor in internal conflicts especially in the case of Syrian regime change.

Libya Timeline 2011



Map of Libya



National Transitional Council reintroduced this flag design of the former Kingdom of Libya (1951-1969) on 27 February 2011; it replaced the former all-green banner promulgated by the Gaddafi regime in 1977.

Ethnic groups: Arab-Berber 97%, other 3%
Religions: Sunni Muslim 97%, other 3%
Population: 6,597,960 (July 2011 est.)
Median age: total: 24.5 years
Urban population: 78% of total population (2010 est.)
Literacy (age 15 and over can read and write): 82.6% (2003 est.)
Unemployment: 30% (2004 est.)

Demographics

Libya

Overview:

The Libyan Civil War began in the wake of the Tunisian uprising which deposed President Zine El Abidine Ben Ali. Colonel Muammar Gaddafi condemned Tunisia's uprising in January 2011 amidst reports of widespread unrest and demonstrations occurring in several Libyan cities. Libyan demonstrations quickly transformed into open rebellion following severe government crackdowns on protestors throughout the country. The Libyan Revolutionary Council (LRC) was created in late February 2011 to facilitate the leadership and political needs of the budding revolutionary military. The rebels, following a series of military successes, were pushed back as Gaddafi's forces began to utilize airstrikes on unsuspecting rebel forces. By early March, Gaddafi's military had pushed the rebels back and were closing in on Benghazi, the headquarters of the LRC.

The UN and North Atlantic Treaty Organization (NATO) had been debating the merits of enforcing a no-fly zone in Libya out of humanitarian concern since March 10th and by March 17th the UN Security Council adopted Resolution 1973 approving the no-fly zone. European and American forces launched Operation Odyssey Dawn on March 18th, beginning a massive air campaign against Gaddafi's forces. By March 22nd NATO took command of Operation Odyssey Dawn and continued to strike against Gaddafi's army and military institutions, including strikes on Tripoli.

During the summer of 2011 several attempts by Turkey and the African Union were made to broker a peace settlement between Gaddafi and the LRC. Ultimately these negotiations proved futile as the LRC would not accept any resolution which allowed Gaddafi to remain in power. Following continued NATO military pressure, rebel forces began to press the ground attack on Gaddafi forces while gaining diplomatic recognition and international support. On August 21 rebel forces captured Tripoli and quickly moved the revolutionary government into Gaddafi's former capital. By October 20, Sirte, the last Gaddafi stronghold, was captured and rebel forces apprehended and killed Muammar Gaddafi.

With the rebellion successfully concluded, the new Libyan government began to consolidate power and introduce democratic reforms to the constitution. The transition has been difficult and several powerful militias have risen in the power vacuum to contest the interim government's influence in the new Libyan state. The conflict between the new government's military and militia forces came to a watershed in mid-December during a skirmish at Tripoli International Airport in which fighting erupted over control of the airport as unfrozen Libyan assets were being flown to Libya from the UN.

Timeline:

January 14, 2011: Libyan leader Gaddafi denounces the Jasmine Revolution.

February 15, 2011: More protests break out in response to the arrest of a human rights activist in Benghazi.

February 17, 2011: Deadly fighting occurs between anti-government protestors and Gaddafi supporters in Benghazi and al-Bayda.

February 20, 2011: Total death toll rises to 230 in protest movement.

February 22, 2011: Gaddafi defies protestors and tells them he will not leave.

February 24, 2011: Rebels begin to set up revolutionary government in Benghazi.

March 7, 2011: Rebels struggle to advance against Gaddafi's more organized and advanced forces.

March 10, 2011: Gaddafi forces retake Zawiya and begin to push the rebel forces back towards Benghazi. NATO and the UN discuss implementing a no-fly zone in Libya.

March 13, 2011: Gaddafi continues offensive against rebels; rebels are pushed back towards Benghazi.

March 18, 2011: U.N. Security Council approves no-fly zone and air strikes against Gaddafi forces, with ten in favor and five abstaining.

March 19, 2011: Operation Odyssey Dawn begins as British, French and US aircraft launch strikes against Gaddafi forces, crippling air defenses.

March 22, 2011: Agreement designates NATO as commander of allied forces in Libya

March 27, 2011: Turkey positions itself as a mediator in the Libyan conflict.

March 31, 2011: Al-Qa'ida's Anwar al-Awlaki encourages the revolts against dictators in the Maghreb.

April 1, 2011: Gaddafi sends envoy to UK to discuss a possible ceasefire agreement. High profile Libyan diplomats continue to defect from Gaddafi's regime.

April 11, 2011: Libya's Revolutionary Council rejects the African Union's peace initiative and states it will not approve any deal that allows Gaddafi to remain in power.

April 13, 2011: International leaders declare that Gaddafi has “lost all legitimacy” and must vacate power.

May 4, 2011: ICC announces it will seek an arrest warrant for Gaddafi on charges of war crimes.

July 15, 2011: NTC ‘contact group’ meets with Western leaders, giving it more international legitimacy.

July 28, 2011: Rebel leader Abdul Fatah Younis is assassinated.

August 21, 2011: Rebel fighters enter Tripoli.

August 26, 2011: Rebels move their government to Tripoli.

September 16, 2011: Rebels advance into Sirte, Gaddafi’s hometown and his last remaining stronghold.

September 18, 2011: Conflict over the role of Islamists in the new government prevents agreement on interim cabinet.

October 20, 2011: Gaddafi is killed after being captured by rebel forces. Sirte falls to rebels.

October 27, 2011: In a step of reconciliation, NTC vows to prosecute Gaddafi’s killer.

October 31, 2011: NATO officially ends its military operations in Libya, labeling the mission a success.

November 15, 2011: Libya’s new army is deployed to quell violence between rival armed factions.

November 22, 2011: Saif al-Islam Gaddafi and Abdullah al-Senussi are detained trying to escape Libya. Both may face war crimes trials in Libya, which could result in the death penalty.

December 7, 2011: To halt violence, government gives militias an ultimatum to disarm, Tripoli is put under lockdown.

December 17, 2011: Unrest breaks out over control of Tripoli’s airport to receive freshly minted money that the UN is flying into Libya.

December 23, 2011: U.S. seeks to implement a program to buy back anti-aircraft munitions; specifically, portable shoulder mounted missiles, from rebel groups.

January 5, 2012: Mustafa Abdel-Jalil, leader of the NTC, warns that militias could exacerbate tension within Libya and promote civil war.

January 23, 2012: Massive demonstrations in Benghazi cause chaos for the interim government. Offices are ransacked and one top leader, Abdel-Hafidh Ghoga, resigns in response to the outburst.

February 10, 2012: Libya expels the Syrian ambassador in Tripoli in protest of the Assad regime's crackdown on demonstrators.

February 12, 2012: Libya asks Niger to extradite Gaddafi's son, Saadi, after he makes televised remarks calling for an uprising against the NTC.

March 3, 2012: Islamists join with the Muslim Brotherhood to establish a political party. The party is predicted to perform well in Libya's first election.

March 7, 2012: Eastern Libya demands a measure of political autonomy, specifically with regards to budgetary, police and legal control issues.

March 18, 2012: Former Gaddafi regime Intelligence Chief, Abdullah al-Senussi, is arrested in Mauritania.

March 21, 2012: Mauritania agrees to extradite Abdullah al-Senussi back to Libya to face trial.

April 4, 2012: Skirmish between militias in western Libya leave 22 dead.

April 5, 2012: The International Criminal Court orders Libya to release Gaddafi's son, Saif al-Islam, to The Hague to face trial.

April 9, 2012: The Libyan government decides to put Saif al-Islam on trial in Libya; many analysts suspect a quick verdict.

Outlook:

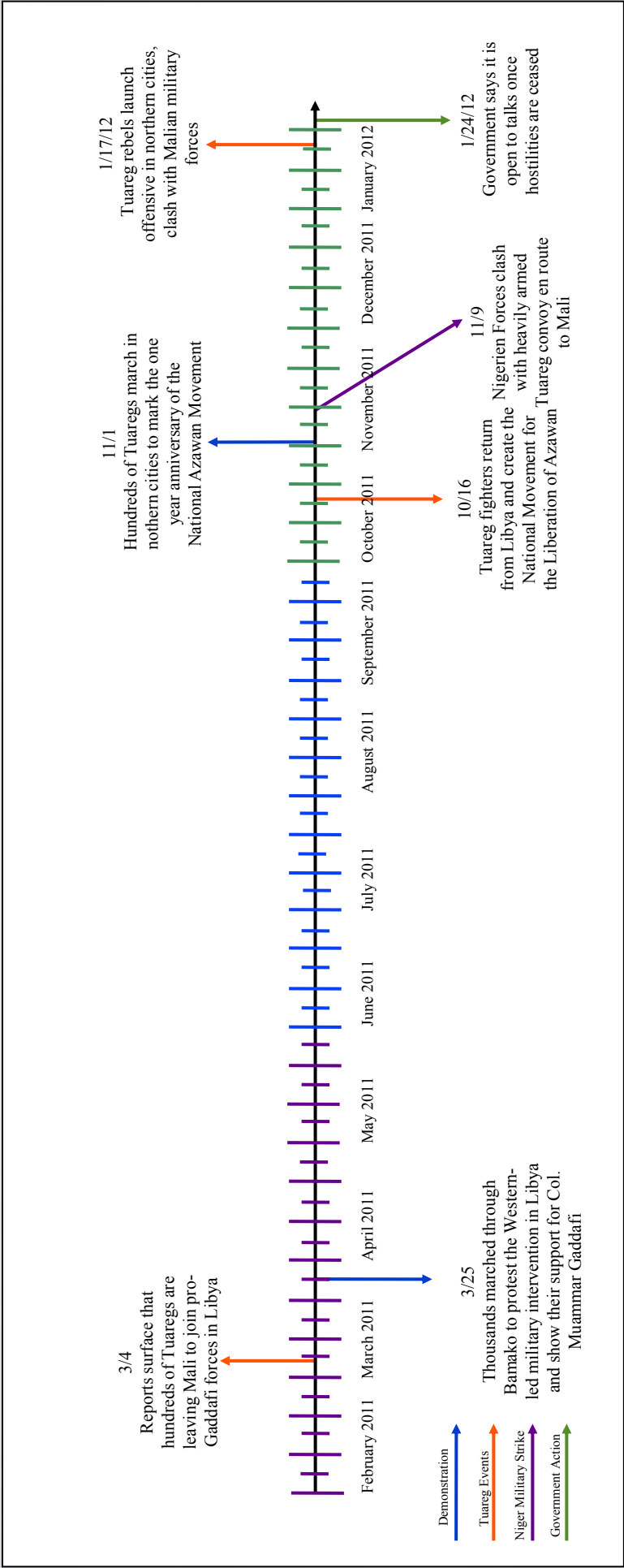
Libya's current political landscape has been marred by recent violence between government forces and local militias battling for power. The frequency of conflicts between the NTC and local militias as well as inter-militia conflict has been increasing. Militias which had been slow to commit to disarmament are now actively resisting government mandates to give up their weaponry. These skirmishes, coupled with an increase of vigilante and revenge killings, threaten to destabilize the tenuous NTC and could potentially lead to a renewed civil war. The NTC also has the challenge of removing the vestiges of Gaddafi's regime while maintaining government services. This predicament, seen in post-Saddam Iraq and to some extent in post-Mubarak Egypt, threatens the balance between legitimacy and functionality. There is also the daunting dilemma of retrieving sophisticated weaponry, such as portable ground-to-air anti-aircraft missiles, which

were looted from Gaddafi armories during the rebellion. These weapons pose a potential threat to the Sahel. As weapons proliferate throughout the region, terrorist networks could use them in major attacks similar to the one against Arkia Israel Airlines Flight 582 in Mombasa, Kenya in 2002. Currently, the United States is considering a possible buyback program to thwart such a scenario.

Despite these security concerns there is a great degree of hope for Libyan democracy. The NTC has pledged to write a new constitution following the election of a National Assembly. The constitution allocates 20 of the 200 seats to women and the National Assembly is expected to convene in June 2012.

Libya continues to experience economic difficulties since the death of Gaddafi. Several international bodies have unfrozen Libya's assets, but this development has yet to improve the cash crisis on the grassroots level. Meanwhile, Libya's oil infrastructure is steadily improving to help the regime recover much-needed income.

Mali Timeline 2011



Map of Mali



Three equal vertical bands of green (hoist side), yellow, and red. Uses the popular Pan-African colors of Ethiopia; the colors from left to right are the same as those of neighboring Senegal (which has an additional green central star) and the reverse of those on the flag of neighboring Guinea

Ethnic groups: Mande 50%, Peul 17%, Voltaic 12%, Songhai 6%, Tuareg and Moor 10%, other 5%
Religions: Muslim 90%, Christian 1%, indigenous beliefs 9%
Population: 14,159,904 (July 2011 est.)
Median age: total: 16.3 years
Urban population: 36% of total population (2010 est.)
Literacy (age 15 and over can read and write): 46.4% (2003 est.)
Unemployment: Unknown

Demographics

*Flag, Map and Demographics courtesy of CIA World Facebook

Mali

Overview:

A rebellion in the north and a coup in the capital sent Mali into a state of disarray in early 2012. In January, separatist movements in the north of the country were reignited when Tuareg rebels, who fought alongside Gaddafi in the Libyan Civil War, returned to Mali armed and prepared to make another effort for national self-determination. In a series of battles, they humiliated Mali's national army, who were forced to surrender key garrisons in the north. These defeats sparked a coup in Bamako, led by junior officers who complained that the government was not properly equipping the Malian army to fight the rebels. This political crisis has come as a shock to West Africa as Mali was reputed to have a fairly stable democracy and planned to hold elections in late March.

Reports claim that a Malian base in Aguelhok was surrendered to Tuareg rebels after military forces ran out of ammunition. The military coup has led to regional condemnation and a further deterioration of the security situation in the north. In the wake of the coup, Tuareg rebels, allied with the Islamic fundamentalist group Ansar Dine, overran Mali's largest military base in the north and have captured the historic town of Timbuktu. Coup leader Amadou Haya Sanogo has recently announced a transition period back to democratic rule, while the Tuareg nationalists are still seeking independent statehood in the north.

In early April, military leaders formally stepped down and former National Assembly leader Diounounda Traore was sworn in as interim president. Coup leader Sanogo seems reluctant to relinquish his role in the political scene, and has claimed that he will have a role in forming the new government. In the wake of the coup, Tuareg rebels have captured and secured what they consider to be the borders of the region of Azawan, and declared their independence from Mali.

The Tuaregs, a nomadic group of about 1.5 million people spread throughout the Sahel region of Mali, Niger, Algeria and Libya, have long-standing tensions with the government based in southern Mali. They complain of being treated like second-class citizens and receiving an inequitable share of wealth from the uranium-rich mines located in the north. Mali's history is laced with rebellions by the Tuaregs, who have sparked uprisings as recently as 2007 to establish an independent state in the Azawad region of northern Mali. In late 2011, as hundreds of Tuaregs returned to Mali from the concluding conflict in Libya, the Northern Mali Tuareg Movement joined forces with the National Azawan Movement, creating the National Movement for the Liberation of Azawad (MNLA). While the MNLA has received attention for its military offensive, it is also launching a campaign based on the concepts of indigenous people's rights and international human rights, in a style reminiscent of South Sudan's successful fight for statehood last year.

Timeline:

March 4, 2011: Reports surface that hundreds of Tuaregs are beginning to leave Mali to join pro-Gaddafi forces in Libya.

March 25, 2011: Thousands march through Mali's capital, Bamako, to protest the Western-led military intervention in Libya and show their support for Col. Muammar Gaddafi.

October 16, 2011: Tuareg fighters return from Libya and form an alliance with the Northern Mali Tuareg Movement, creating the National Movement for the Liberation of Azawan.

November 1, 2011: Hundreds of Tuaregs in the cities of Kidal, Menaka, Gao, and Timbuktu march on the one year anniversary of the founding of National Azawan Movement.

November 9, 2011: The Nigerien army clashes with a heavily armed Tuareg convoy en route to Mali, leaving 13 of the rebels dead. Sources say the convoy consisted of pro-Gaddafi Libyans guided by Malian Tuaregs.

January 17-19, 2012: Tuareg militants launch an offensive on the northern cities of Menaka, Tessalit and Aguel'hoc. After two days of fighting, the military claims to have regained control of the cities.

January 24, 2012: The Malian government says it is open to talks with Tuareg leaders once hostilities have ceased.

February 2, 2012: Violent protests break out in the capital of Bamako as citizens complain that the government is not properly equipping the army to fight Tuareg rebels in the north.

March 11, 2012: The Malian army retreats from key military base in the northern town of Tessalit, granting a major victory to the Tuaregs.

March 22, 2012: Malian President Amadou Toumani Toure is deposed in a coup by junior military officers, who claim that the government is not doing enough to fight the rebellion.

April 1, 2012: Tuaregs invade Timbuktu and a military base in the city of Gao, successfully exploiting the political crisis in the South. Coup leaders announce plans for a transition period back into democracy.

April 6, 2012: Former president Amadou Toumani Toure and coup leader Amadou Sanogo step down after the Economic Community of West African States (ECOWAS) and military leaders announce a deal on the transition of power. Tuareg rebels declare their independence from the rest of the country, sparking outrage from neighboring countries and regional organizations such as the African Union.

April 9, 2012: Mali's constitutional court meets to chart the next step after both the country's democratically elected president and the leader of its recent coup have stepped aside.

April 12, 2012: The head of the National Assembly, Diounounda Traore, takes the oath to become interim president of Mali, and promises “total war” against the Tuaregs if they refuse to negotiate.

Outlook:

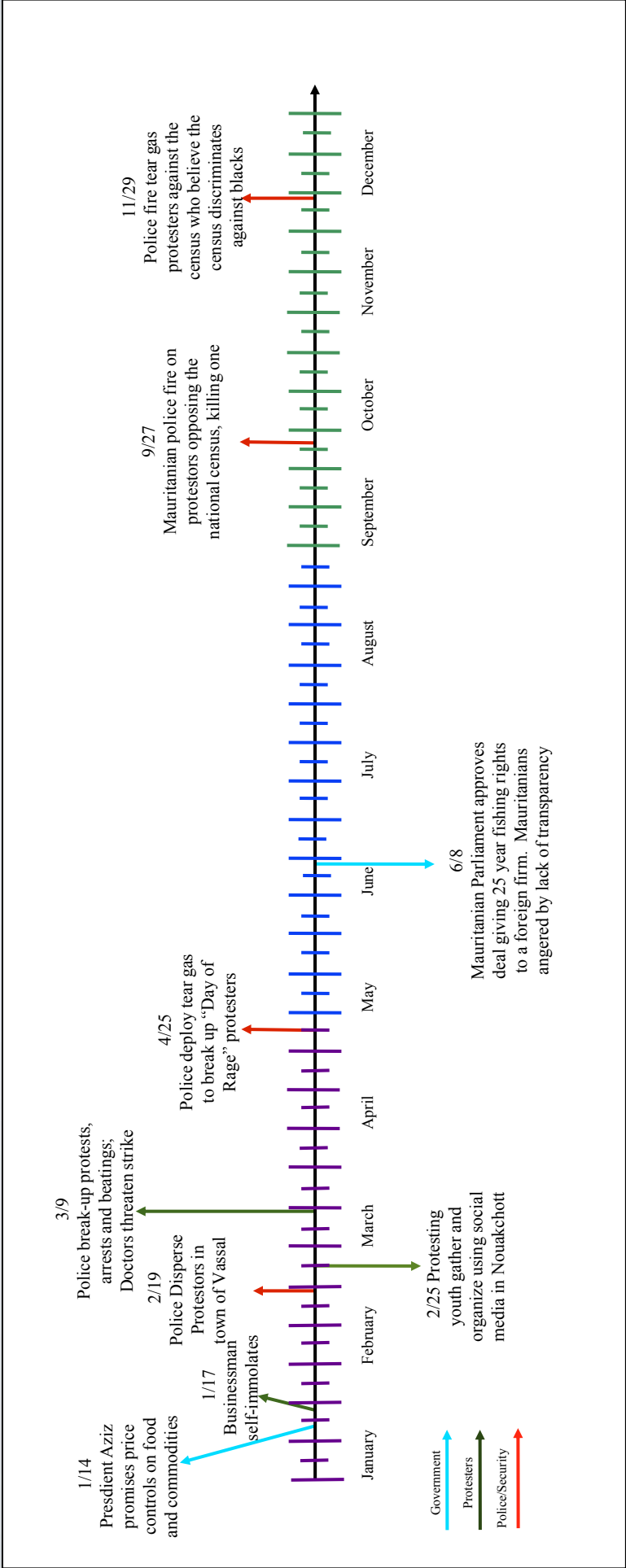
Mali's military coup leaders have not achieved their intended goal; instead of cracking down on the MNLA, the coup has helped MNLA ambitions in the north. The MNLA has exploited the political crisis to effectively capture all major strategic points in the north, and the prospect of a divided Mali seems greater than ever. Mali has come under sanctions by regional organizations which threaten its economy and security. UNESCO has stated concerns over the condition of Timbuktu, a designated World Heritage Site. The MNLA recently announced that they are ready to bargain with the government as they now control of all of the territories which they consider the Tuareg homeland. The MNLA recently declared their independence, an unprecedented event in the history of their repeated rebellions.

The coup leaders have removed themselves from power and allowed an interim government to restore civility. However, even if the government of Mali consolidates power and regains its strength, it will be difficult to halt the momentum of the MNLA. Without help from its regional partners, the goal of an independent state of Azawan may be realized, as the Tuareg rebels have achieved a wave of victories against Mali's security forces.

The Tuareg rebellion is a cause of concern for Mali's neighbors, including Niger and Algeria. The threat is twofold; first, there is the potential for the rebellion to spill over and galvanize Tuareg populations in neighboring countries to launch their own insurrections. Second, there is the possibility that Ansar Dine, which is linked to AQIM, could exploit Mali as a refuge to build strength and launch attacks across the region.

These concerns are amplified by Mali's porous borders, and vast, ungovernable regions in the north and adjoining territories. The lack of security in these areas could breed instability for the whole Sahel region if these groups are allowed to operate on an unhindered basis. The West African group ECOWAS should take immediate action to prevent this potential conflagration.

Mauritania Timeline 2011



Map of Mauritania



Green with a yellow five-pointed star above a yellow, horizontal crescent; the closed side of the crescent is down; the crescent, star, and color green are traditional symbols of Islam; the gold color stands for the sands of the Sahara

<p>Ethnic groups: mixed Moor/black 40%, Moor 30%, Black 30%</p>
<p>Religions: Muslim (official) 100%</p>
<p>Population: 3,281,634 (July 2011 est.)</p>
<p>Median age: total: 19.5 years</p>
<p>Urban population: 41 % of total population (2010)</p>
<p>Literacy (age 15 and over can read and write): 51.2 %</p>
<p>Unemployment: 30% (2008 estimate)</p>

Demographics

*Flag, Map and Demographics courtesy of CIA World Facebook

Mauritania

Overview:

Mauritania, a name deriving from the ancient Roman province of Mauretania, is a country of over three million people with an economy that is heavily dependent upon agriculture, fishing, and iron-ore mining. The current leader of the country, President Mohamed Ould Abdel Aziz, came to power in a military coup in 2008 and was elected President the following year. Mauritania faces many of the same challenges which confront neighboring countries in the Arab World, such as high unemployment, and corruption. These issues are compounded by tensions between Mauritania's black and Arab populations. Slavery and human-trafficking also remain persistent problems. Mauritania faces a growing threat from AQIM and Boko Haram. The Western Sahara-based separatist group, Polisario, which seeks independence from Morocco, as well as former fighters from the Libyan conflict pose border security threats. Simmering protests have marked the Arab Spring in Mauritania but have thus far resulted in little tangible impact on the government and people of Mauritania. Youth, using social media to organize rallies, have echoed concerns similar to those that have appeared across the Arab World, such as calls for greater employment opportunities, political change, and an end to corruption.

Timeline:

January 14, 2011: Concerned that unrest in Tunisia could inspire protests in Mauritania, President Mohamed Ould Abdel Aziz promises price controls on food and commodities.

January 17, 2011: Mauritanian businessman self-immolates in Nouakchott echoing a similar event which led to the beginning of the Tunisian uprising.

February 19, 2011: Police disperse protestors railing against inflation and poverty in the southeastern city of Vassal.

February 25, 2011: Young people organizing through Facebook and Twitter gather in the capital, Nouakchott, calling for better employment opportunities, political change and an end to corruption.

March 9, 2011: Police break up a protest, beat protestors, and arrest 30. Doctors announce strike to take place April 7 if demands are not met for improvement of doctors' safety, equipment, and travel allowances.

April 25, 2011: Police deploy tear gas to break up "Day of Rage" protestors.

June 8, 2011: Mauritanian Parliament approves a deal granting 25 year fishing rights to a Chinese firm. Many Mauritania are angered by the agreement's lack of transparency, adding fuel to protest against the government.

September 27, 2011: Mauritanian police fire on protestors, killing one. Protestors were opposing a census that they say discriminates against the black population.

November 29, 2011: Police fire tear gas on black Mauritians' protests of census.

January 23, 2012: West African and Sahel countries meet for a conference about the threat of terrorist groups such as al-Qa'ida and Boko Haram in Nouakchott.

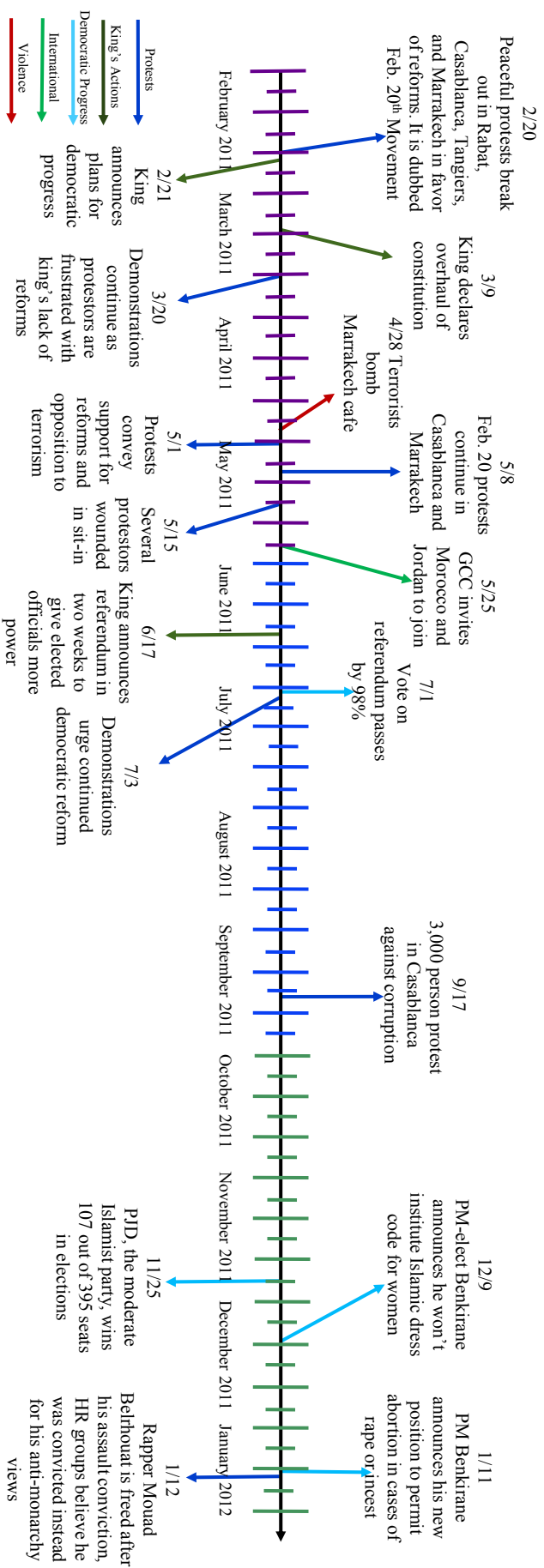
April 3, 2012: Thousands protest in the capital city of Nouakchott calling for President Mohamed Ould Abdelaziz to resign.

Outlook:

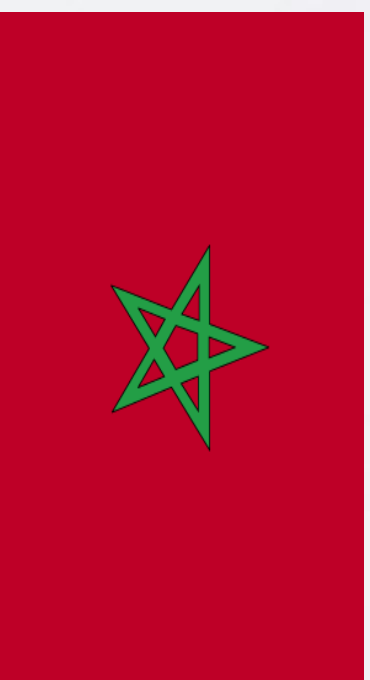
The Arab Spring in Mauritania has thus far seen relatively low-level protests directed at reforming the government and enhancing economic opportunities. The first truly democratic elections in Mauritania took place in 2007, but the results of this election were nullified by a military coup in 2008. Mauritania has a long history of authoritarian rule and has complicated relationships with its neighbors. It is one of only three Arab countries to have recognized Israel, although relations have been suspended since 2009. The government of Mauritania has bounced between being criticized and supported by Western countries. It is one of the poorest countries in Africa with an extremely high youth-unemployment rate and has qualified for debt relief under the Heavily Indebted Poor Countries initiative which eliminated Mauritania's foreign debt. Mauritania's relations with Senegal are stressed over use of water from the Senegal River which serves as the border between the countries. Mauritanian blacks face widespread discrimination in education and employment opportunities, and many have protested in opposition to government efforts to implement a census which blacks claim places unfair requirements on proving citizenship.

The threat posed by AQIM's kidnapping activities in Mauritania has prompted the government to participate in U.S.-supported joint anti-terror activities with Mali. Mauritania faces the daunting challenges of developing its natural resources, creating jobs, and easing tensions between Mauritania's black and Arab populations while modernizing its society, infrastructure and economy.

Morocco Timeline 2011



Map of Morocco



Red with a green pentacle (five-pointed, linear star) known as Sulayman's (Solomon's) seal in the center of the flag; red and green are traditional colors in Arab flags, although the use of red is more commonly associated with the Arab states of the Persian gulf; the pentacle represents the five pillars of Islam and signifies the association between God and the nation; design dates to 1912

Ethnic groups: Arab-Berber 99%, other 1%
Religions: Muslim 99%, Christian 1%, Jewish about 6,000 (2010 est.)
Population: 31,968,361 (July 2011 est.)
Median age: total: 26.9 years
Urban population: 58% of total population (2010)
Literacy (age 15 and over can read and write): 52.3% (2004 census)
Unemployment, youth ages 15-24: 21.9% (2009)
Unemployment, general: 9.1% (2010 est.)

Demographics

Morocco

Overview:

Morocco's February 20th Movement has resulted in less violence and institutional change in Morocco than in other countries affected by the Arab Spring. The popular protests called for parliamentary reform, a crackdown on corruption, and greater employment opportunities. In response, Morocco's King Mohammad VI agreed to a number of demands, including the drafting of a new constitution stipulating increased powers of the parliament and prime minister. The government also consented to reforms that granted more civic and social equality for women. New parliamentary elections were held in November 2011 in which a moderate Islamist party won the greatest number of seats.

Timeline:

February 20, 2011: Thousands participate in largely peaceful protests in Rabat, Casablanca, Tangiers, and Marrakech, among other cities and towns, calling for democratic change and a crackdown on corruption. This becomes known as the February 20th Movement.

March 9, 2011: King Mohammed declares that there will be an overhaul of the constitution, granting more power to the parliament, local government and autonomy for the judiciary.

March 20, 2011: Protests occur in major cities across the country after constitutional reform promises are not kept.

April 28, 2011: Explosion at a café in Marrakech kills 17, mainly tourists.

May 8, 2011: Thousands turn out in protests in Casablanca and Marrakech organized by the February 20th Youth Movement.

May 15, 2011: Several wounded after a sit-in attempt in front of a government building.

June 17, 2011: King Mohammed announces that there will be a referendum in two weeks time, which will grant more power to the parliament and government.

July 1, 2011: Referendum on reform is overwhelming in favor at 98%. There are claims of voting fraud.

November 25, 2011: The Justice and Development Party (PJD), a moderate Islamist party with large support among the poor, won the largest number of seats, 107 out of 395. Election turnout is 45%, as many boycott the election.

January 4, 2012: A new coalition government headed by the Justice and Development Party is installed.

January, 19, 2012: Five Moroccans protest unemployment by means of self-immolation. Three are hospitalized.

February 20, 2012: One year anniversary demonstration for the “February 20 Movement”.

February 21, 2012: Illegal Moroccan immigrant arrested for a suicide terrorist attack attempt on the US Congress.

March 2, 2012: Undercover police arrest “February 20 movement” youth leader Bachir Benchaib, which is followed by massive demonstrations in northern Morocco.

March 16, 2012: Protests against a newly implemented rape-marriage law and the suicide of a 16-year-old girl who was forced by law to marry her rapist. A sharia judge ordered the girl to marry her rapist to preserve her honor.

March 25, 2012: Thousands of Muslims march in a pro-Palestinian demonstration organized by the Islamist opposition parties. A 74-year-old Jew living in Morocco is beaten to death during the demonstration.

Outlook:

Morocco's economy is dominated by phosphate mining, agriculture and low value-added consumer goods production, and is heavily dependent upon trade with Europe. An economic slowdown in Europe could mean increased domestic woes in Morocco as fewer job opportunities become available to unemployed Moroccans.

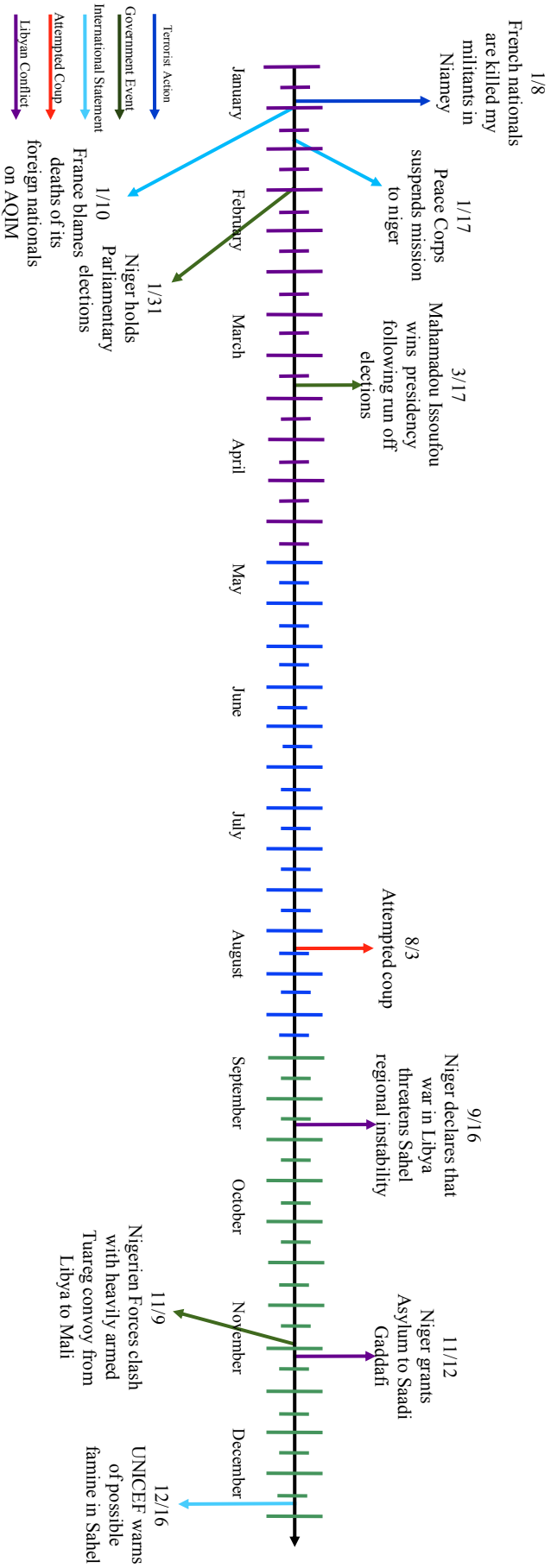
Unlike the former rulers of Libya, Tunisia, and Egypt, King Mohammad VI of Morocco is a hereditary monarch who enjoys a great deal of legitimacy among Morocco's people. The family of King Mohammad VI has been active in Moroccan government since the 17th century. The King is not only the head of government, but also the “leader of the faithful,” exercising religious as well as temporal authority. The protests were aimed not at toppling the monarchy, but at pushing for government reform. Parliamentary elections held in November 2011 resulted in the moderate Islamist Justice and Development Party (PJD) taking 107 out of 395 seats, though voter turnout was low, about 45%, as the election was boycotted by some political groups who demanded more drastic reform measures. With demonstrations every week, the Moroccan protestors are showing their involvement in the cause for a more prosperous and just Morocco.

The current government is attempting to become the Islamic financial hub by allowing full-fledged Islamic financial institutions in Morocco by 2013. This may have an effect on the economic situation, creating more stability and peace for the government. As the current reforms

are still not fully implemented in Morocco, we have only seen a glance of what a potential sharia state of Morocco would be. The use of sharia law judges will make it difficult for the international community to review Morocco's gender rights as acceptable.

Morocco's relationship with Algeria is cause for concern as both countries claim parts of the Western Sahara and have had military conflicts in the past. The Morocco-Algeria border is another point of tension with both countries accusing each other of harboring militants and arms smugglers on their side of the border. However, the shared threat of terrorism has led the intelligence services of both countries to hold regular joint meetings on counterterrorism. Recent attacks on Southern Algeria have led to an increasingly tense situation on how to deal with the common threats from terrorists.

Niger Timeline 2011



Map of Niger



Three equal horizontal bands of orange (top), white, and green with a small orange disk centered in the white band; the orange band denotes the drier northern regions of the Sahara; white stands for purity and innocence; green symbolizes hope and the fertile and productive southern and western areas, as well as the Niger River; the orange disc represents the sun and the sacrifices made by the people.

Ethnic groups: Haoussa 55.4%, Djermma Sonrai 21%, Tuareg 9.3 %, Peuhl 8.5 %, Kanouri Manga 4.7%
Religions: Sunni Muslim 80%, other 20%
Population: 16,468,886 (July 2011 est.)
Median age: total: 15.2 years
Urban population: 17% of total population (2010 est.)
Literacy (age 15 and over can read and write): 28.7%
Male: 42.9% Female 15.1% (2005 est.)
Unemployment (youth): 3.2% (2004 est.)

Demographics

Niger

Overview:

Niger experienced several events in 2011 which threatened its national stability. Niger currently has an active AQIM franchise based within its borders which has successfully attacked foreign visitors. Due to this threat, international development organizations, specifically the Peace Corps, have withdrawn from the country. There also remains an element of Tuareg (a nomadic ethnic minority) insurgency in northern Niger that is suspected of having ties to AQIM.

In January 2011, Niger held its first national election since the coup which ousted former President Mamadou Tandja. Newly elected President Mahamadou Issoufou won after a runoff election in March in what was considered a genuinely free and fair election. Despite the election, Niger's democracy is still on shaky ground as indicated by another attempted coup in early August.

Niger's international relations have suffered over the course of the Arab Spring. Niger did not take an official stance during the rebellion in neighboring Libya, although the government did issue statements declaring that Western military intervention and rebellion related violence has undermined security and economic conditions in the Sahel region. It has been estimated that 150,000 displaced persons have fled Libya to Niger, including many Tuareg militants who fought for Colonel Gaddafi's forces. Bilateral relations between Libya and Niger have suffered in the wake of the Libyan rebellion as Niger has granted asylum to Saadi Gaddafi, one of Muammar Gaddafi's sons. Lastly, there is a burgeoning humanitarian crisis in Niger and the larger Sahel as drought and poor harvest conditions threaten to plunge the region into famine.

Timeline:

January 8, 2011: Two French nationals are kidnapped from Niamey by militants and are killed following a gun fight between the militants and Nigerien military units.

January 10, 2011: France blames AQIM for the killings of French nationals in Niger.

January 17, 2011: The Peace Corps suspends its mission in Niger due to security concerns.

January 31, 2011: Niger holds national elections following the February 2010 military coup against former President Tandja.

March 17, 2011: Former Prime Minister Seini Oumarou concedes defeat to Mahamadou Issoufou in Niger's runoff presidential election.

August 3, 2011: Ten are arrested after an attempted coup against President Issoufou fails.

September 16, 2011: Niger issues statement declaring that Libyan instability undermines the security and economy of the Sahel region as 150,000 Libyan refugees fled to Niger.

November 9, 2011: The Niger military intercepts and destroys a convoy traveling from Libya towards Mali. A large weapons cache is discovered in the wreckage.

November 12, 2011: Niger grants asylum to Saadi Gaddafi, one of Muammar Gaddafi's sons, for humanitarian reasons.

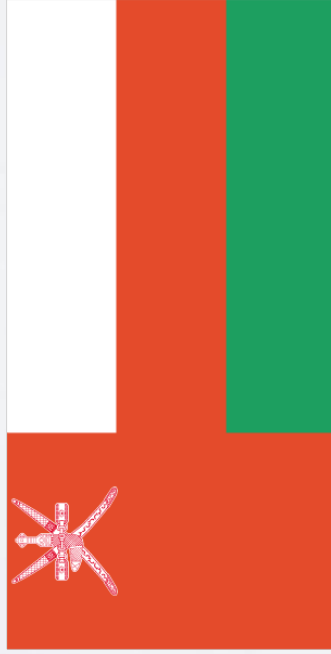
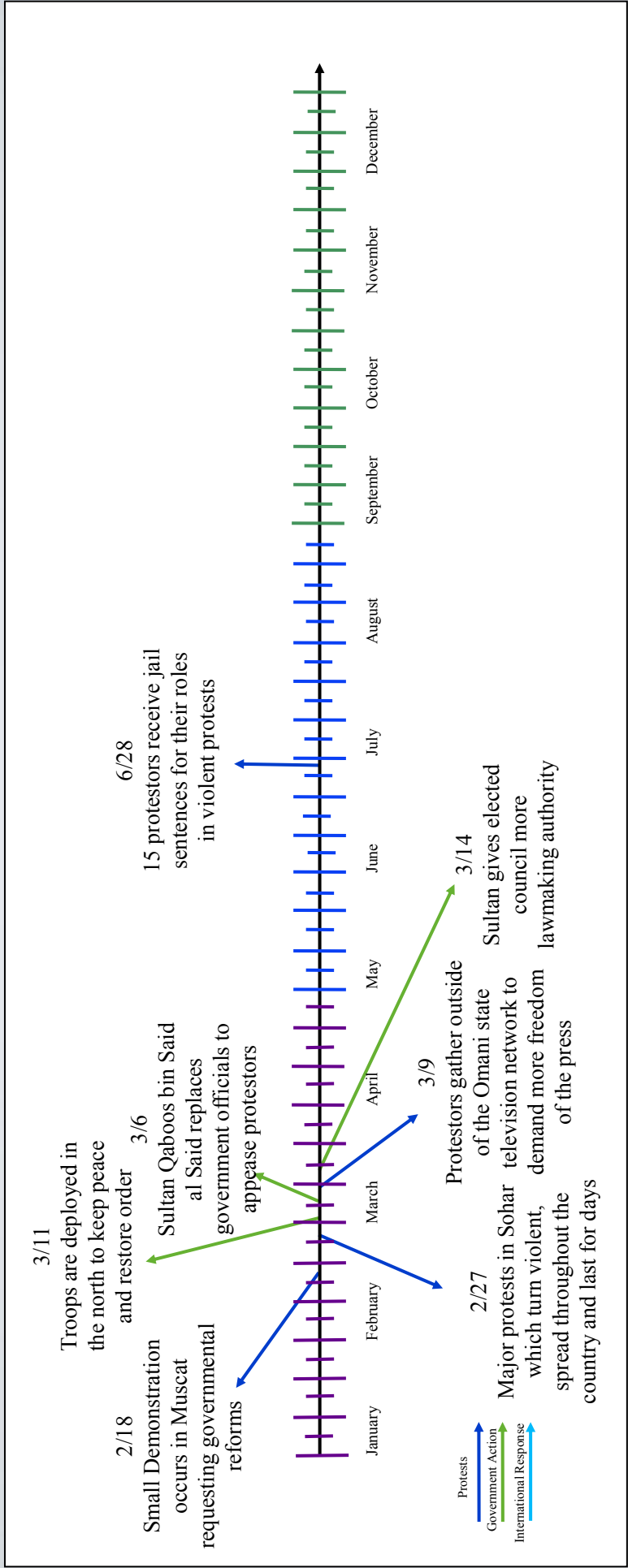
December 16, 2011: UNICEF warns of a possible famine in the Sahel region due to crop failures and prolonged drought.

April 9, 2012: Niger and Mauritania issued a statement urging immediate military intervention against Tuareg separatists during a regional security meeting.

Outlook:

It is difficult to assess the future of Niger as regional developments can significantly influence events within Niger itself. Niger is still confronting the aftermath of the Tuareg rebellion which ended in 2009 and is currently attempting to destroy elements of AQIM within its borders. Both AQIM and Tuareg separatists have support in neighboring countries which could potentially exacerbate conditions in Niger, especially in the North. Politically, Niger has had a tumultuous past regarding corruption in its executive branch. While last year's election was a promising development, there are no guarantees that President Issoufou will be able to stabilize the national political system. Niger's economic outlook is promising as new oil discoveries could provide another avenue for trade growth (along with uranium). However, political instability and security concerns in the region could have a harmful impact in developing the oil sector of Niger's economy. China is currently expanding its political and economic ties to Niger in an effort to develop its oil infrastructure for favorable trade agreements.

Oman Timeline 2011



Three horizontal bands of white, red, and green of equal width with a broad, vertical, red band on the hoist side; the national emblem (a khanjar dagger in its sheath superimposed on two crossed swords in scabbards) in white is centered near the top of the vertical band; white represents peace and prosperity, red recalls battles against foreign invaders, and green symbolizes the Jebel Akhdar (Green Mountains) and fertility.

Ethnic groups: Arab, Baluchi, South Asian, African
Religions: Ibadhi Muslim 75%, other 25%
Population: 3,090,150 (July 2012 est.)
Age Structure: 0-14: 31.2% 15-64: 65.7% 65+: 3.1%
Urban population: 73% of total population (2010 est.)
Literacy (age 15 and over can read and write): 81.4%
Unemployment: 15% (2004 est.)

Demographics

Map of Oman

Oman

Overview

Sultan Qaboos bin Said, the leader of Oman, has been in power since 1970, when he overthrew his father and brought relative prosperity and stability to a country which once resembled Yemen. Under his rule, Oman is seen as a modern country in the Middle East which has enacted reforms to allow the population free access to health care and education. Women in Oman enjoy many rights and are active in the public sphere. One of Oman's many development projects, which often receive foreign backing, is labeled Vision 2020 and encourages the use of gas profits to finance development.

Unlike the populations of North Africa living under corrupt, repressive autocrats, Omanis love the Sultan and do not seek to oust him. The goal of their protest movement is to improve living conditions by lowering prices, eliminating taxes, cutting corruption, and increasing job training to help ease unemployment. Unemployment, particularly among the youth, looms as an issue in Oman, where over 50% of the population is under the age of 20 and 83% under 35. Oman also has one of the lowest GDP per capita rates in the GCC. The GCC pledged \$10 billion over ten years to invest in the infrastructure and housing of Oman.

In contrast to the recent decades of peace that Oman has enjoyed, the protests turned deadly as they were confronted with tear gas and water cannons on February 27th. The movement created a Facebook page titled "March 2 Uprising for Dignity and Freedom" to organize demonstrators. The protests led the Sultan to offer to increase government spending in order to create 50,000 jobs, increase pay to civil servants, increase the minimum wage, and offer unemployment benefits which value \$386 each month.

Since Secretary of Defense Robert Gates and Secretary of State Hillary Clinton are the only two members of the Cabinet to visit Oman since 2009, the Omani government has questioned the commitment of the Obama Administration. In comparison, during the Bush Administration, Vice President Dick Cheney visited Oman three times.

Oman has experienced tension with their GCC partner, the United Arab Emirates, which started when Sultan Qaboos overthrew his father with the support of Iran and Jordan. Mistrust resurfaced when Omani officials discovered a UAE spy ring whose purpose was to start a coup d'état against Qaboos. This discovery came shortly after the foreign minister of the UAE pledged \$10 billion through the Gulf alliance to Bahrain and Oman to encourage restraint while handling the 2011 protests.⁹ Recently, however, the rulers of UAE and Oman have attended events in each other's countries in a positive step to mend past relations.

⁹ Neubauer, Sigurd. "How the Arab Spring Skirted Oman." The Huffington Post, December 13, 2011. http://www.huffingtonpost.com/sigurd-neubauer/oman-arab-spring_b_1144473.html (accessed February 29, 2012).

Timeline

February 18, 2011: A small demonstration occurs in Muscat near the government offices, respectfully requesting reforms and giving thanks.

Feb. 27, 2011: Sohar is the site of protests which turn violent and spread throughout the country and last for days.

March 1, 2011: Protests continue in Muscat with chants of “We will sacrifice our blood, our soul, for you, Your Majesty!” showing the intent of the protests is not the overthrow of the government but enacting changes.¹⁰ Troops are deployed to keep the peace in the north.

March 3, 2011: Fifth consecutive day of protests in Muscat.

March 6, 2011: Sultan replaces top government officials to appease protestors who reach the oil field in Hayma.

March 9, 2011: Protestors gather outside state television headquarters to request increased freedom of the press.

March 11, 2011: Gulf countries volunteer a \$20 billion aid package to be shared between Bahrain and Oman.

March 14, 2011: Sultan gives Omani elected council more lawmaking authority.

April 1, 2011: Sit-in is organized requesting an inquiry into government violence against protestors.

April 5, 2011: 57 protestors are released as the demonstrations continue.

April 22, 2011: More protests break out.

June 28, 2011: Fifteen protestors receive jail sentences ranging from one month to one year for their roles in violent protests.

December 4, 2011: Oman receives a boon of tourism as a result of uprisings and political unrest in other places; tourism is up 50% from October and November 2010.

December 28, 2011: Qatar will invest \$137 million into the Omani economy.

¹⁰ Fuller, Thomas. "Rallies in Oman Steer Clear of Criticism of Its Leader ." The New York Times, March 1, 2011. <http://www.nytimes.com/2011/03/02/world/middleeast/02oman.html?ref=oman>.

January 23, 2012: Oman's real estate market sees growth after a property crash across the Gulf.

March 1, 2012: Sultan Qaboos Bin Said issues decree to replace five ministers in commerce, industry, justice, and information.

Outlook:

Oman appears to be more stable than its neighbors as a result of years of modernized education for both boys and girls and investment in its infrastructure. At the height of the protests there were worries that instability could discourage investment. Standard and Poor's put Oman's A/A-1 rating under review on March 7, 2011 and removed it from CreditWatch on July 21, 2011 "in light of immediate political pressures easing. Aside from an isolated killing in Sohar, the protests were largely peaceful, and the quick response of Sultan Qaboos bin Said al-Said to protestor demands appears to have eased tensions."¹¹

Anwar Ali Sultan, director of the company W.J. Towell, proposed that the violent protest movement was "a spillover effect from what happened in other countries," but that the movement has "not affected the local industries or potential for future investment in this country."¹² This stands in contrast to countries such as Libya, where the country's infrastructure was damaged by violence and now has to be rebuilt.

In January 2012, Al Bawaba reported that 36,000 jobs would be added in the government sector this year, and further that 2,000 jobs will be created in government companies specifically for the youth of Oman. The Minister of Financial Affairs wants to implement strategies such as increased university enrollment, more technical programs, and the reintroduction of a training-for-employment program to boost employment prospects. The private sector also will provide an additional 35,000 to 40,000 jobs.

A more liberal and inclusive government may be more possible as the monarchy has no succession plan—the Sultan is still unmarried and has yet to name an heir. However, the Sultan's responsiveness and willingness to engage with the protestors, as perceived both by Omanis and international organizations, and the respectful nature of the protestors, seem to prove the legitimacy of his government. There is no doubt that during his reign he has consolidated the Sultanate by constructing institutions and reinforcing the rule of law in Oman.

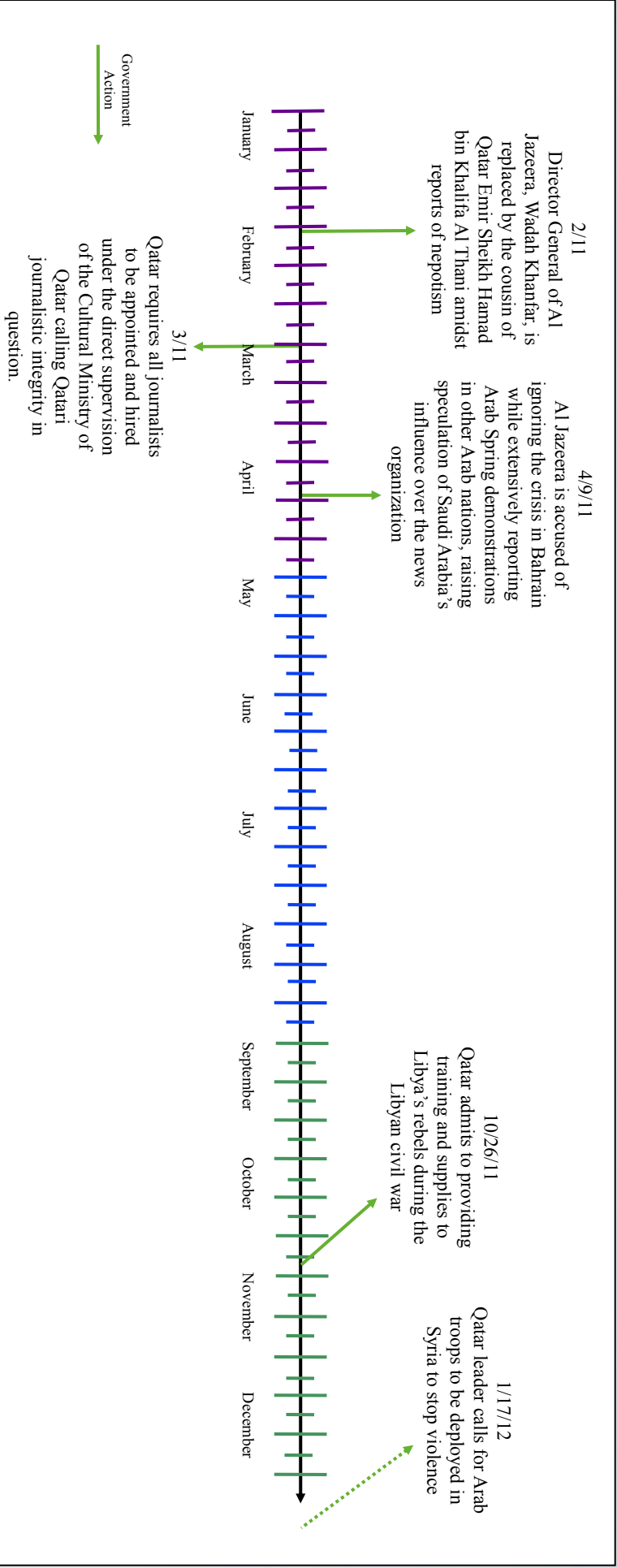
Sultan Qaboos responded to the 77 days of protest in early 2011 with a series of reforms. This included replacing ministers in the Council of Oman and creating more jobs for the extremely young Omani population. In recent months it has become increasingly evident that the economy of Oman is doing extremely well. As the uprisings in Oman were minimal and remained mostly

¹¹ "S&P removes Oman from Credit Watch list." The Hindu Business Line, July 21, 2011. <http://www.thehindubusinessline.com/industry-and-economy/article2279205.ece>.

¹² Hamdan, Sara. "Oman Offers Some Lessons to a Region Embroiled in Protest." The New York Times, April 6, 2011. <http://www.nytimes.com/2011/04/07/world/middleeast/07iht-m07-oman.html?ref=oman>.

peaceful, tourism rates have increased from 2010 by almost 50%. Qatar is also promising to invest \$137 million into Oman. The real estate market is now improving again in Oman. The IMF forecasted that Oman had the lowest debt to GDP rate of all the Gulf States at 3.2%.

Qatar Timeline 2011



Map of Qatar



Maroon with a broad white serrated band (nine white points) on the hoist side; maroon represents the blood shed in Qatari wars, white stands for peace; the nine-pointed serrated edge signifies Qatar as the ninth member of the "reconciled emirates" in the wake of the Qatari-British treaty of 1916.

Ethnic groups: Arab 40%, Indian 18%, Pakistani 18% Iranian 10% other 14%
Religions: Muslim 77.5%, Christian 8.5%, other 14%
Population: 1,951,591 (July 2012 est.)
Age Structure: 0-14: 21.8% 15-64: 76.7% 65+: 1.5%
Urban population: 96% of total population (2010 est.)
Literacy (age 15 and over can read and write): 89.1%
Unemployment: 1.6% (2007 est.)

Demographics

Qatar

Overview:

Qatar has thus far escaped the chaotic turmoil embroiling most of its neighbors since the beginning of the Arab Spring movements. There have not been any major protests or demonstrations against the government and Qatari society remains stable. Despite the relative political calm, there have been allegations of media bias and government intrusion in the Middle East's principal journalistic outlet, Al Jazeera, which is based in Doha, Qatar. The Al Jazeera news organization is a beneficiary of Sheikh Hamad bin Khalifa Al Thani, the Emir of Qatar. Reports have surfaced that the Qatari regime has taken a more active role in the media, requiring all journalists in March of 2011 to be appointed or hired under the direct supervision of Qatar's Cultural Ministry. This development, combined with the February 2011 replacement of Al Jazeera's former Director General Wadah Khanfar, with Sheikh Ahmad bin Jasem bin Muhammad Al-Thani, a cousin of the Emir, has led to suspicion of Al Jazeera's journalistic integrity. Speculation over the extent of the Qatari regime's influence over Al Jazeera reached a threshold following reports that Al Jazeera censored itself on news publicizing Saudi Arabia's role in the Bahraini Arab Spring crackdown.

The Qatari regime continues to be a vocal advocate of international and Arab assistance to Arab Spring movements, specifically in Libya and Syria. The Qatari military's Chief of Staff admitted that Qatar sent hundreds of troops to Libya in order to assist in training the rebels and providing communication equipment for the rebellion. Qatar has also called for Arab troops to be sent to Syria to stop the bloodshed which has escalated since the beginning of 2012.

Timeline:

February 11, 2011: Director General of Al Jazeera, Wadah Khanfar, is replaced by the cousin of Qatar Emir Sheikh Hamad bin Khalifa Al Thani amidst reports of nepotism.

March 11, 2011: Qatar implements a new law which requires all journalists to be hired under the direct supervision of the Qatari Ministry of Culture. Many find this to be a violation of the separation of the media and the government.

April 9, 2011: Al Jazeera is accused of censoring reports on the Bahraini demonstrations. This raises speculation as to the extent of influence Saudi Arabia has on the organization.

October 26, 2011: Qatar admits to arming, training and supplying Libyan rebels during the Libyan uprising. The Qatari military Chief of Staff publicly acknowledges Qatar's role in Libya.

January 17, 2012: Emir Sheikh Hamad bin Khalifa al-Thani calls for Arab troops to be sent to Syria to bring an end to the bloodshed.

March 16, 2012: Qatar closes its Embassy in Damascus amidst the continued bloodshed and government crackdowns in Syria.

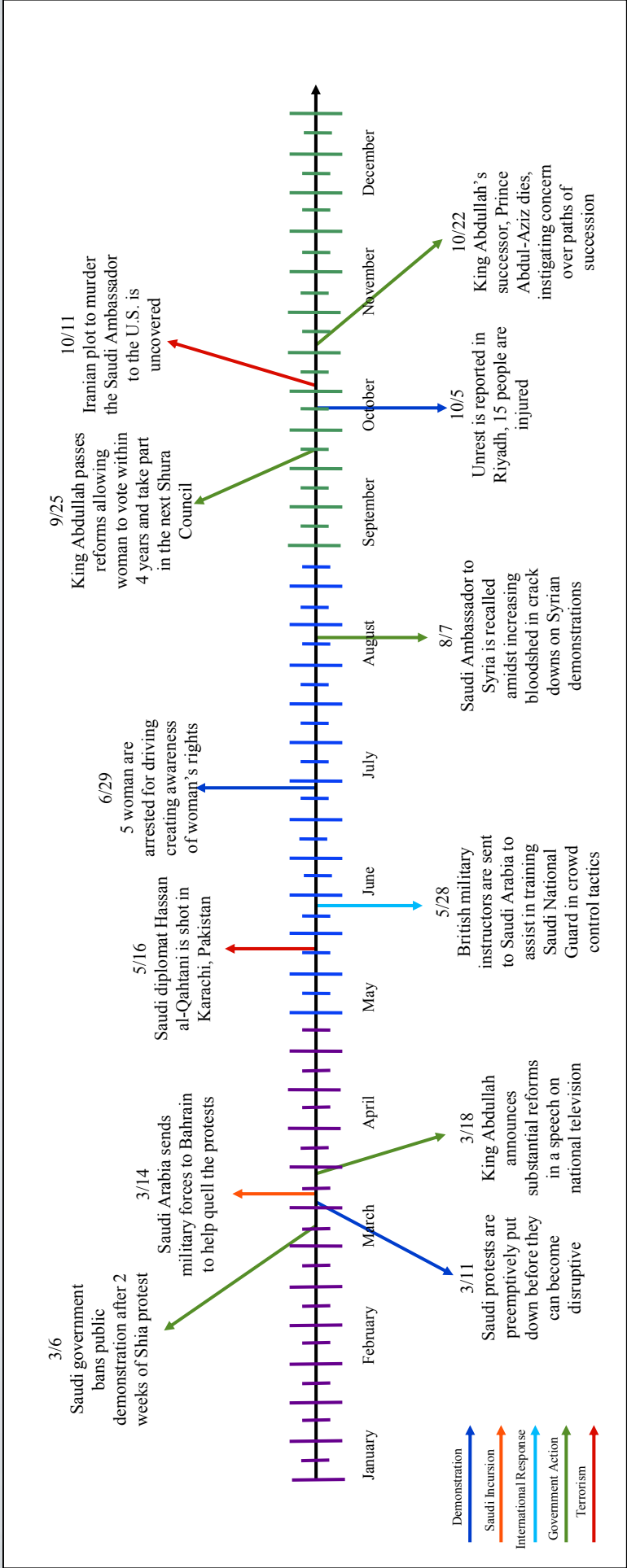
Outlook:

Qatar has thus far escaped the tumultuous conflicts embroiling its Arab neighbors and there is little evidence to suggest that mass demonstrations will transpire in the near future. The Emirate does not seem susceptible to large-scale protests like those seen in Egypt, Tunisia and elsewhere. Qatar has publicly announced its support for Arab military intervention in Syria, which has soured relations between the two nations. Though it is far too early to speculate on how these diplomatic developments will impact the regional political dynamic, as the Arab spring appears far from over.

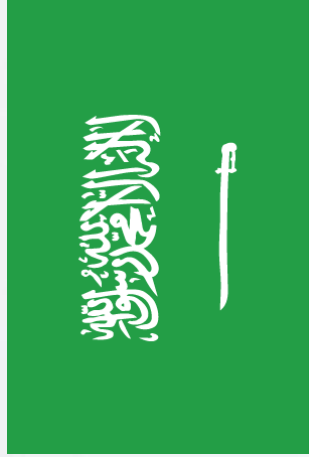
Qatar remains peaceful even as it plays a significant role in the Arab Spring in other countries. Qatar has transformed from a relatively neutral country in the Middle East to an enthusiast for the reforms occurring in other countries across the Middle East. Their rising influence can be attributed to “cash, ambition and Al Jazeera.”¹³ Instead of taking part in the Arab Spring, Qatar has chosen to broadcast it. Al Jazeera has provided real-time updates in most of the countries that are undergoing upheavals. Now that Iraq has replaced Qatar for the position of presidency of the Arab League, Qatar may not have the influence it has been able to maintain over the past year.

¹³ Dickinson, Elizabeth. “Tiny Qatar Played Outsized Role as Arab League President. Will it Last?” Christian Science Monitor, March 28, 2012. <http://www.csmonitor.com/World/Middle-East/2012/0328/Tiny-Qatar-played-outsized-role-as-Arab-League-president.-Will-it-last>.

Saudi Arabia Timeline 2011



Map of Saudi Arabia



Green, a traditional color in Islamic flags, with the Shahada or Muslim creed in large white Arabic script (translated as "There is no god but God; Muhammad is the Messenger of God") above a white horizontal saber (the tip points to the hoist side); design dates to the early twentieth century and is closely associated with the Al Saud family which established the kingdom in 1932; the flag is manufactured with differing obverse and reverse sides so that the Shahada reads - and the sword points - correctly from right to left on both sides.

Ethnic groups: Arab 90% Afro-Asian 10%
Religions: Muslim 100%
Population: 26,131,703 (July 2011 est.)
Median age: total: 25.3 years
Urban population: 83% of total population (2010 est.)
Literacy (age 15 and over can read and write): 78.8%
Unemployment: 28.2% (2004 est.)

Demographics

Saudi Arabia

Overview:

Saudi Arabia, home to 28 million people, has faced sporadic human rights protests and seemed ripe for Arab Spring-style protests early in 2011 in the wake of the uprisings in Tunisia, Egypt, and Libya. On March 11, 2011, Saudi activists called for a 'Day of Rage' to kickoff their reform movement. Days earlier, on March 6, Saudi authorities banned public protests and deployed massive numbers of troops as a defensive measure. New press laws were imposed with punishments including a \$140,000 fine for vague crimes such as threatening national security. In a final act to quell protests, King Abdullah made a TV speech promising a number of reforms, including more jobs, increased pay for government workers, higher unemployment wages, changes in housing loans, and assurances to fight corruption.

In June, the pro-women's rights organization, Saudi Women for Driving, began a highly publicized social media campaign for increased rights. Five women openly broke the law by driving and many others followed suit. By September, King Abdullah succumbed to pressure and passed "cautious reforms" granting women the right to vote within four years and allowing them to take part in the next shura, a governing body that supervises legislation.¹⁴ Through a sustained social media attack these women were able to reach audiences across the globe; Secretary of State Hillary Clinton came out in support of their movement.

The major stain on Saudi Arabia during the Arab Spring came from its actions towards its neighbor Bahrain. Bahrain is a Shi'a majority country ruled by Sunni King Sheikh Hamad ibn Isa Al Khalifa. Because of Bahrain's mixed composition, the Saudis seek to maintain a friendly monarchy in Bahrain so troops were sent across the border to help quell the Shi'a protests. Saudi troops were cited as being unusually aggressive, and the initial Shi'a uprising was all but crushed. These actions did not receive much media attention initially, which has been a point of sharp criticism from both international human rights organizations and protestors. Some believe that the United States wanted a quick crackdown by Saudi and Bahraini troops and used a media blackout to avoid negative worldwide attention.

Timeline:

March 6, 2011: Saudi Arabia bans public protests after two weeks of Shi'a unrest.

March 10, 2011: In al-Qatif, police shoot and wound two protestors.

March 11, 2011: Saudi activists come out for a 'Day of Rage' but security forces manage the small demonstrations.

¹⁴ Chulov, Martin. "Saudi Women to be Given Right to Vote and Stand for Election in Four Years." The Guardian, September 25, 2011. <http://www.guardian.co.uk/world/2011/sep/25/saudi-women-right-to-vote>.

March 14, 2011: Saudi Troops enter Bahrain to help put down protests.

March 18, 2011: In a televised speech, King Abdullah promises 60,000 jobs in the security forces, 500,000 new homes, an additional two months wages for all government workers, two extra pension payments for university students, rise in minimum monthly wage to 500 riyals, 160 riyals to the unemployed, millions in capital for the government's housing loan fund, rise in the maximum loan for homes to about 80,000 riyals, promises to fight corruption, and more money to hospitals.

May 16, 2011: Saudi diplomat Hassan al-Qahtani is shot dead in Karachi, Pakistan.

May 28, 2011: British military personnel begin training Saudi Arabia's National Guard in public order enforcement measures and use of sniper rifles. Human rights organizations are furious that these tactics will be used by Saudi troops in neighboring Bahrain.

June 29, 2011: Five women are arrested for driving. The group Saudi Women for Driving has been fighting for increased women's rights, using driving as their major rallying point.

August 7, 2011: King Abdullah recalls his ambassador from Syria and on al Arabiya satellite TV demands an end to bloodshed in Syria.

September 25, 2011: King Abdullah passes 'cautious reforms' including granting women the right to vote in elections within four years and allowing women to take part in the next shura council.

October 5, 2011: In Eastern Saudi Arabia, unrest is reported, with Riyadh acknowledging that 14 people are injured.

October 11, 2011: An Iranian plot to murder Saudi Arabia's ambassador to the United States, plans to bomb the Saudi and Israeli Embassies in Argentina, and plans to bomb the Israeli Embassy in Washington D.C., are uncovered by the United States.

October 22, 2011: King Abdullah's successor, Prince Sultan bin Abdul-Aziz al Saud, passes away. Debate ensues over who will be the next Saudi king, with Prince Nayef most likely to succeed King Abdullah.

November 21, 2011: Four demonstrators in Qatif were killed and many injured after the government troops opened fire.

December 1, 2011: Saudi Arabia is accused by Amnesty International activists of launching a wave of repression in reaction to the Arab Spring.

January 6, 2012: More than 200 people protest against the Saudi government and in support of Bahrain in Saudi Arabia's eastern region of Qatif.

January 12-13, 2012: Issam Mohamed Abu Abdallah is shot dead in al-Awamiyah by security forces after a clash with demonstrators. The Saudi Interior Ministry stated instead that security forces were attacked with petrol bombs which ignited a fire, and while trying to bring the fire under control, "they were exposed to shooting and were dealing with the situation as necessary."

January 14, 2012: A new demonstration took place in Riyadh in front of the Ministries of Health and Employment against corruption and in support of labor rights, while in Qatif an unknown gunman wounded one member of Saudi security forces. The responsibility for the shooting was later attributed to street protestors.

January 16-22, 2012: Widespread protests against the House of Saud and the Minister of Interior Nayef, Crown Prince of Saudi Arabia, explode after Issam Mohamed Abu Abdallah's funeral, demanding an independent investigation.

February 10, 2012: The celebration of the Prophet Mohammed's birthday, forbidden in Saudi Arabia, evolved into a demonstration. The repression of security forces wounded many Shiite protestors and killed one. The Friday prayer leader in Al-Awamiyah invoked the deposition of the Saudi monarch.

February 11, 2012: in Qatif, Al-Awamiyah, and Safwa demonstrations demanding regime change took place during a 'Day of Mourning.' Participants to one of the killed protestors' funeral chanted "No Sunni, No Shi'a, but Islamic unity! You're the terrorist, you're the criminal, you're the butcher, ya Nayef! We will never rest, country of oppressors! We will never give up 'til death!"¹⁵

February 24, 2012: Prince Saudi al-Faisal praises arming the Syrian rebels against al-Assad's regime.

March 6-10, 2012: The Arab Network for Human Rights Information reported that there was a "[protest] movement [spreading] at the universities level". 1000 women students at King Khalid University in Abha (Asir Province) protested against "injustice and inequality," "discrimination and mistreatment."¹⁶ 50 students were wounded and one killed by security forces. New demonstrations took place in Riyadh, Al-Namas, Qatif and Al-Rabeeya.

¹⁵ Hill, Jess. "The growing rebellion in Saudi Arabia." The Global Mail, February 24, 2012. <http://www.theglobalmail.org/feature/the-growing-rebellion-in-saudi-arabia/84/>.

¹⁶ "Saudi security forces attack, beat female protestors in Abha." Press TV, March 7, 2012. <http://presstv.com/detail/230470.html>.

Outlook:

Saudi Arabia has a particularly strong relationship with the United States. As the two countries share a strategic partnership and the United States relies heavily on the Saudis for oil, it would be hard to imagine a scenario in which the United States would not back the royal family. King Abdullah has feared similar treatment to that given to ousted dictator Hosni Mubarak, but with U.S. reliance on Saudi Arabia, King Abdullah is relatively secure.

The Saudi security apparatus has been deployed in full force in the past against protestors, so it is not surprising that they are repressing the new protest movement. Arab Spring pressure has intensified the long standing tensions in the rich Saudi Eastern Province, where a relevant Shiite minority, around ten percent of Saudi Arabia's population, is concentrated. After decades of Shi'a marginalization and discrimination, they are engaging in protests against the Al Saud regime making demands for better employment opportunities and the end of unjustified arrests.

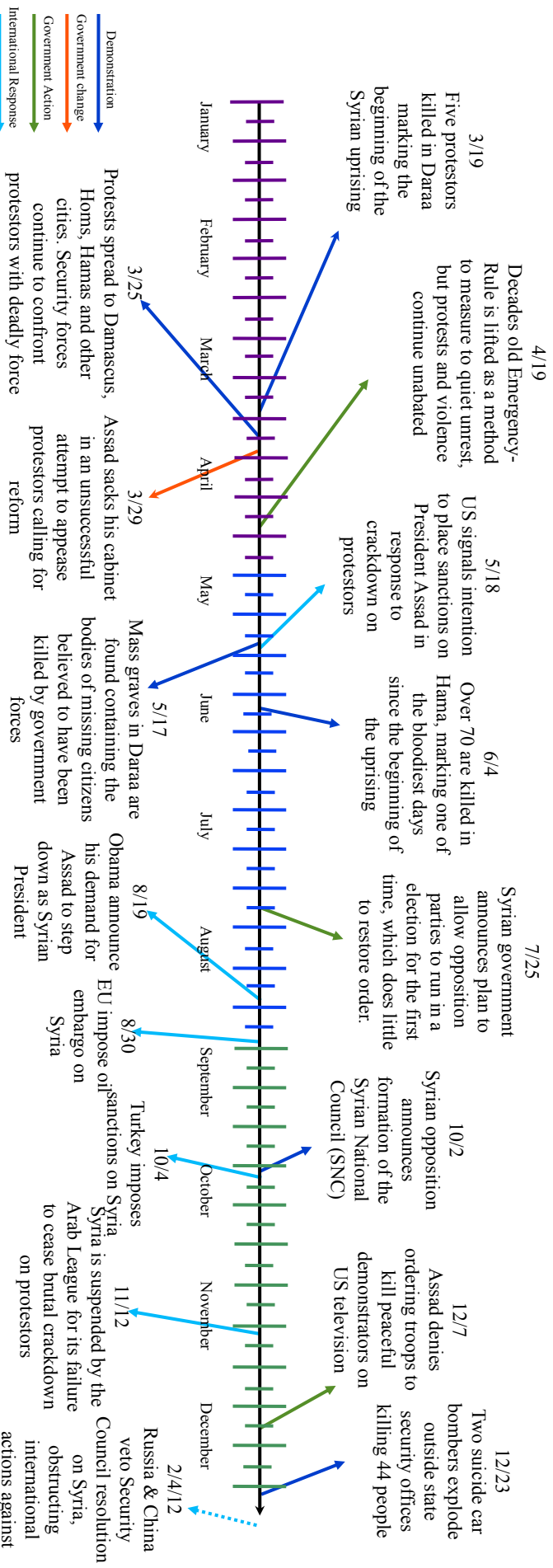
Although all public displays of opposition in the country have been harshly prohibited by Saudi authorities, the protest movement is dramatically spreading from the Eastern Province. It has grown to encompass students and an increasing number of social activists invoking the release of political detainees and the respect of their basic human rights.

As Saudi Arabia is the custodian of Islam's two holiest places, Mecca and Medina, there is added pressure placed on the royal family to maintain order in its country and be a safe destination for pilgrims. A wave of protests followed by harsh crackdowns near or around the holy cities could damage the Saudi monarchy's legitimacy, so it can be expected that they will deal with demonstrators away from the media or deploy troops as a preventive measure.

Saudi Arabia was a very close ally of Hosni Mubarak, and in an effort to maintain ties with Egypt Saudi Arabia has developed a relationship with the post-revolution government. The Saudis view a stable Egypt as a major factor in determining its own security. Therefore, Saudi Arabia has loaned Egypt billions of dollars in emergency aid. As two of the leading states in the Arab world, their stability can help guide the Middle East.

Another noteworthy point is Saudi Arabia's aid to both Bahrain and Oman, countries headed by monarchies. The House of Saud recognizes that close relations with fellow monarchies is in its strategic interest, and interactions with its neighbors can deflect international attention away from its own internal issues. It would not come as a shock to see Saudi troops and aid deployed to both of these countries in addition to Morocco and Jordan.

Syria Timeline 2011



Map of Syria



Three equal horizontal bands of red, white, and black; two small, green, five-pointed stars in a horizontal line centered in the white band. The band colors derive from the Arab Liberation flag and represent oppression (black), overcome through bloody struggle (red), to be replaced by a bright future (white).

Ethnic Groups: Arab 90.3% Other 9.7%
Religions: Sunni Muslim 74%, other Muslim 16, Christian 10%
Population: 22,517,750 (July 2011 est.)
Median age: total: 21.9 years
Urban population: 56% of total population (2010)
Literacy (age 15 and over can read and write): 79.6%
Unemployment, youth ages 15-24: 19.1%

Demographics

Syria

Overview:

Syria erupted into a state of civil unrest in March 2011 after President Bashar al-Assad's security forces opened fire on protestors, killing five in the city of Daara. From the outset, these uprisings have been marred by the iron fist of Assad, who has followed in the footsteps of his father Hafez al-Assad by crushing dissent with brutal force.

The Syrian government initially enacted reforms to appease the protestors which included lifting the longstanding Emergency Rule and allowing for rival parties to participate in upcoming elections, but these measures did little to quiet the calls for regime change. Assad has employed tanks, snipers, and bands of armed thugs to maintain his rule. In March 2012, the UN estimated that over 9,000 Syrian civilians had been killed since the beginning of the protests.

As the government's response has deteriorated into a wholesale slaughter, Syria's neighbors have roundly rejected Assad's extreme use of violence to counter the protests. The Arab League suspended Syrian membership in November 2011, and subsequently placed financial sanctions on the regime. Human Rights Watch declared that the Syrian government's "unlawful killings, arbitrary detention, disappearances and torture" amount to crimes against humanity, and the UN Human Rights Council has listed over 50 Syrian officials who could be prosecuted by the International Criminal Court.¹⁷ The European Union and the United States have both launched their own sanctions against Syria, and President Obama has publicly called for President Assad to step down.

In the summer of 2011, the Free Syrian Army (FSA) was formed by defectors from the Syrian Armed Forces hoping to topple the Assad regime. In November, an intelligence base and a Baath party office on the outskirts of Damascus were attacked. It is unclear whether this was the act of the FSA, the work of al-Qa'ida, or a collaborative effort between the two groups. Regardless, the situation in Syria has since escalated into conditions of civil war, with both sides launching major attacks against one another. The FSA has even had successes in cities such as Zabadani, where Syrian armed forces were temporarily forced to retreat in January 2012.

In spite of this, the Syrian Armed Forces under President Assad have not relented in brutal attacks against their own citizenry. An international coalition has agreed to supply the FSA with communications equipment and financial assistance, but is currently unwilling to provide direct military help. In April 2012 UN Arab League Envoy Kofi Annan claimed that he had reached a deal with President Assad for a ceasefire, but reactions from diplomats abroad signal that many believe Assad is only trying to stall the international community.

¹⁷ "To All Members of the General Assembly." Amnesty International, February 15, 2012. <http://www.amnesty.org/en/library/asset/MDE24/012/2012/en/06a4b763-fd27-47aa-a420-282a6fc093de/mde240122012en.pdf>.

Timeline:

March 19, 2011: Five protestors are killed by security forces in Daraa, marking the beginning of the Syrian uprising.

March 25, 2011: Protests spread to Damascus, Homs, Hama, and other cities. Security forces continue to confront protests with deadly force.

March 29, 2011: President Assad sacks his cabinet in an unsuccessful attempt to appease protestors calling for reform.

March 30, 2011: In his first public appearance since the beginning of the uprisings, President Assad fails to announce any decisive reforms, and instead blames the unrest on foreign conspirators.

April 12, 2011: Reports surface that as security forces continue their deadly crackdown on protests, Syrian soldiers were executed for refusing to fire on citizens.

April 19, 2011: Decades-old Emergency Rule is lifted as another measure to quiet unrest, but protests and violence continue unabated.

April 28, 2011: Hundreds resign from ruling Baath party in protest as a result of the brutality of the crackdown.

May 17, 2011: Mass graves in Daara are found containing the bodies of missing citizens believed to have been killed by government forces.

May 18, 2011: United States signals intention to place sanctions on President Assad in response to his crackdown on protests.

June 4, 2011: Over 70 are killed in one day in the town of Hama, marking one of the bloodiest days since the beginning of the uprising.

June 26, 2011: Syrian intellectuals and activists are given permission by the government to meet in Damascus and discuss measures for peace and reconciliation.

July 25, 2011: Syrian government announces plan to allow opposition parties to run in election for the first time, a move which does little to restore order to Syria.

July 28, 2011: Syrian activists reject support from al-Qa'ida leader Ayman al-Zawahiri, who portrayed their uprising as an effort to fight against Israeli and American interests in the region.

August 7, 2011: The Saudi king demands an end to the bloodshed in Syria and recalls Saudi Arabia's ambassador from Damascus.

August 9, 2011: Turkey's ambassador presses Syrian regime to end the bloodshed.

August 18, 2011: The UN names up to 50 officials who could be prosecuted by the ICC for crimes against humanity.

August 19, 2011: U.S. President Obama publicly announces his demand that Assad step down.

August 30, 2011: The EU imposes an oil embargo on Syria.

October 2, 2011: Syrian opposition announces formation of the Syrian National Council (SNC), an umbrella group committed to overthrowing the current regime.

October 4, 2011: Turkey imposes sanctions on Syria.

November 12, 2011: Syria is suspended by the Arab League for its failure to cease brutal government crackdowns on protestors.

November 14, 2011: King Abdullah of neighboring Jordan publicly expresses his desire that President Assad should step down.

November 16, 2011: Members of the FSA launch a coordinated attack against an intelligence base outside Damascus, demonstrating unexpected tactical capabilities.

November 27, 2011: The Arab League approves financial sanctions targeted toward Syrian government officials.

December 7, 2011: President Assad denies ordering troops to kill peaceful demonstrators on U.S. television, saying that only a 'crazy' leader would kill his own people.

December 13, 2011: The U.N. High Commissioner for Human Rights estimates the death toll at more than 5,000.

December 23, 2011: Two suicide car bombs explode outside the offices of two state security offices in Damascus, killing 44.

January 18, 2012: Syrian government forces announce ceasefire and withdrawal from town of Zabadani, a victory for the FSA.

January 26, 2012: A senior military defector reports that Iran and Hezbollah are giving assistance to security forces in Syria.

January 29, 2012: The Arab League suspends its monitoring mission in Syria as the situation becomes increasingly dangerous.

February 4, 2012: Russia and China veto a Security Council resolution on Syria, obstructing international action against the Syrian regime.

February 16, 2012: U.S. officials claim that al-Qa'ida is now active in Syria, and is responsible for several attacks in recent months.

February 20, 2012: Two Iranian naval ships dock in the Syrian port city of Tartous in a show of solidarity with the Assad regime.

February 22, 2012: Two Western journalists, Marie Colvin of the U.S., and Remi Oshlik of France, are killed by blasts in the city of Homs.

February 28, 2012: Hamas political leaders leave Egypt for Syria and Qatar.

March 1, 2012: The Syrian National Council announces the formation of a military bureau, to bring armed groups under a central political command.

March 8, 2012: Syria's Deputy Oil Minister Abdo Hussameddin announces his defection from the Assad government, making him the highest ranking civilian official to quit since the uprising began.

March 17, 2012: Two explosions shake the Syrian capital of Damascus, killing 27.

April 1, 2012: A coalition of more than 70 partners, including the United States, pledges to send millions of dollars and communications equipment to Syria's opposition groups.

April 3, 2012: Syria's President Bashar al-Assad agrees to start implementing a peace plan by April 10.

April 5, 2012: In 24 hours 2,300 Syrian refugees flee to Turkey from Syria.

April 7, 2012: The world's largest Islamic body, The Organization of Islamic Cooperation (OIC), said it was preparing humanitarian aid of up to \$70 million to help people affected by violence during the year-long Syrian uprising.

April 8, 2012: Around 90 tanks and armored vehicles, backed by helicopters, bombarded the al-Rouge Plain southwest of Idlib city, the provincial capital, near the border with Turkey on Sunday, killing and injuring dozens of people.

April 11, 2012: Fierce attacks on opposition neighborhoods in the run up to the U.N. deadline fuelled widespread doubts Syria would comply with the ceasefire starting at 6am Thursday April 12th.

April 12, 2012: Officials state that the UN backed ceasefire in effect at dawn in Syria is only being "partially observed." Heavy weapons and government troops still remained deployed in cities after a 6am deadline.

April 12, 2012: Syria claimed "terrorists" were responsible for the roadside bomb that blew up in Aleppo, killing one officer and wounding at least 24 cadets and officers, in an attempt to sabotage the UN backed ceasefire.

April 13, 2012: As of 12:30pm on the second day of a nationwide ceasefire, five people were reported killed (four protestors and one army officer).

Outlook:

Barring an unexpected surrender from either the Assad regime or the FSA, it's reasonable to predict that the Syrian conflict will not end anytime soon. Given the unknown composition of the opposition, Western forces are hesitant to directly aid the FSA. Yet the fact that the FSA is composed of defectors lends credence to the hope that Assad's military forces may be crumbling internally. International sanctions and regional isolation are also working to slowly drain the defiant government's resources. Support from Iran may help to preserve the government for a sustained period.

Ultimately, Assad will not be able to reestablish his authority and legitimacy in the country, but his actions over the past year indicate that he plans to fight until the bitter end. At this point the Syrian military is shelling the homes of citizens indiscriminately and cutting off access to essential resources like water and electricity.

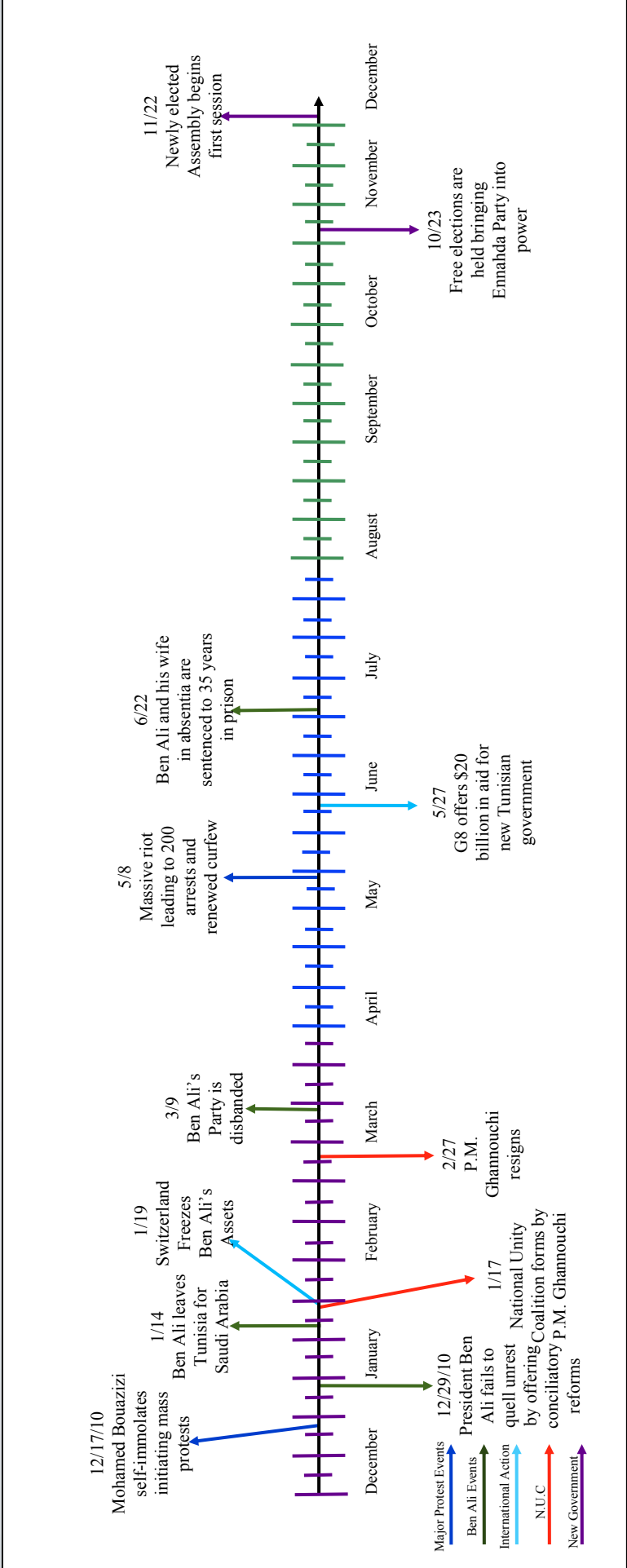
The human costs already incurred by this conflict could increase exponentially if Assad replicates the tactics of his father who killed over 10,000 civilians in a scorched earth operation in the city of Hama in 1982. While the SFA has demonstrated extensive resistance, they do not have the capabilities to destroy Assad's supporters. Unless outside forces, such as the Arab League or NATO, provide military support to the resistance movement, it appears that the stalemated nature of the conflict will continue as both sides wage a war of attrition against one another. President Assad has made promises to UN envoy Kofi Annan to enact a ceasefire, but it appears that these promises are no more than political maneuvering on the part of Assad.

There are also a few variables which could alter the nature of the conflict in unpredictable ways. The first is the influence of al-Qa'ida, which has launched several deadly car bomb attacks in Damascus. Al-Qa'ida in Syria will be a destabilizing force with or without the fall of Assad. The second is the transfer of weapons, particularly of the chemical and biological variety, from government to non-state actors should the government fall. Loose weapons from Libya already

threaten to destabilize the North African region, and there is no doubt that non-state actors such as Hezbollah and al-Qa'ida would desire to procure chemical and biological weapons if the opportunity arises.

General concerns and mutual doubts were expressed throughout in the days before the promised ceasefire in Syria. With an increase in violence in the hours leading up to the UN backed ceasefire; it became evident that a total end to violence in an effort to promote peaceful protests was not an entirely realistic option.

Tunisia Timeline 2011



Red with a white disk in the center bearing a red crescent nearly encircling a red five-pointed star; resembles the Ottoman flag (red banner with white crescent and star) and recalls Tunisia's history as part of the Ottoman Empire; red represents the blood shed by martyrs in the struggle against oppression, white stands for peace; the crescent and star are traditional symbols of Islam

Ethnic Groups: Arab 98%, European 1%, Jewish and other 1%
Religions: Muslim 98%, Christian 1%, Jewish and other 1%
Population: 10,629,186 (July 2011 est.)
Median age: total: 30 years
Urban population: 67% of total population (2010)
Literacy (age 15 and over can read and write): 74.3%
Unemployment, youth ages 15-24: 30.7
Unemployment, general: 13% (2010)

Demographics

*Flag, Map and Demographics courtesy of CIA World Facebook

Tunisia

Overview:

Inspired by the self-immolation of a frustrated, impoverished fruit vendor who had his merchandise confiscated by authorities, Tunisians took to the streets in December 2010 to protest the autocracy, corruption, and inequality rampant in Tunisia, beginning a movement dubbed the “Jasmine Revolution”. The Jasmine Revolution went on to inspire the people of other Arab countries to rise up against their authoritarian rulers in what has become known as the Arab Spring. By January 14, 2011, 78 protestors were dead, 94 injured, and President Ben Ali’s 23-year rule was ended as he left the country for Saudi Arabia. In the days that followed, a transitional government began the process of creating the democratic institutions necessary for a functioning state.

With moderate Islamists of the Ennahda Party (which had been banned under Ben Ali) emerging as a dominant political force, the new government is tasked with balancing liberalism and religion. Tunisia’s long border with Libya (which experienced extensive conflict during the Libyan uprising) could potentially serve as a point of transfer for weapons and militants into Tunisia. Tunisia’s tourism industry, which plays a vital role in the economy, must be revived and commercial connections expanded to create work opportunities for Tunisia’s large unemployed population.

Timeline:

December 17, 2010: After having his produce cart confiscated by police, Mohamed Bouazizi self-immolates in Sidi Bouzid. Demonstrations expressing widespread outrage begin.

December 29, 2010: President Ben Ali offers conciliatory measures to quell unrest while simultaneously promising a massive crack down on dissenters.

January 4, 2011: Bouazizi succumbs to his wounds.

January 14, 2011: President Ben Ali leaves Tunisia for Saudi Arabia.

January 17, 2011: National Unity Coalition is formed by Prime Minister Ghannouchi.

January 19, 2011: Switzerland announces a freeze on Ben Ali’s assets, bolstering the revolution’s international credentials.

January 24, 2011: France offers aid to the transitional government.

February 27, 2011: Prime Minister Ghannouchi gives in to protestors calling for his resignation based on his ties to Ben Ali; he is replaced by Beji Caid Sebti.

March 9, 2011: The Constitutional Democratic Rally, Ben Ali's party, is forced to disband.

March 31, 2011: Anwar al-Awlaki of al-Qa'ida praises the Arab Spring.

May 8-10, 2011: Protestors riot against the government, leading to almost 200 arrests and a renewed curfew.

May 19, 2011: In a posthumous message, Usama bin Laden gives encouragement to the Arab Spring uprisings.

May 27, 2011: The G8 offers \$20 billion over two years in aid and loans to Tunisia and Egypt.

June 8, 2011: In order to protect the legitimacy of elections, which in March had been set for July 24, they are delayed until October 23.

June 20, 2011: The former president and his wife are sentenced in absentia to 35 years imprisonment.

Sept 22, 2011: Libya's Prime Minister Al-Baghdadi Ali al-Mahmoudi is arrested in Tunisia.

October 23, 2011: Free and fair elections are held, bringing the moderate Islamist Ennahda party to power.

November 22, 2011: A democratically elected Assembly meets for its first session.

December 13, 2011: Moncef Marzouki begins his term as President after being elected by the Assembly.

January 9, 2012: Salafists welcoming Hamas leader Ismail Haniya chant anti-Semitic slogans, drawing rebuke from the Ennahda party.

January 12, 2012: Four self-immolations are reported in Tunisia in the past week.

March 30, 2012: The Ruling party Ennahda announces that the new constitution will not use Islamic law as a source for legislation.

April 9, 2012: Protestors emerge on Habib Bourguiba Avenue and face security forces.

April 11, 2012: Ban on demonstrations on the capital's Habib Bourguiba Avenue is removed.

Outlook:

More than one year after Tunisia's autocratic president Zine El Abidine Ben Ali was forced from office in the Jasmine Revolution, the country remains in an official state of emergency. The new government now occupies a tenuous position in which it must balance the role of Islam and secular institutions as new political voices engage in an evolving democracy. The Ennahda Movement, an Islamist political party which was banned under Ben Ali's rule, has emerged as a powerful force, taking 90 out of 217 seats in the constituent assembly that was elected to draft a new constitution for Tunisia. As in Egypt, where the Muslim Brotherhood emerged as a potent political force in the wake of former president Hosni Mubarak's departure from power, Tunisia must learn to manage the interplay between religion and government which were separated throughout Tunisia's history as an independent nation since 1956. Political Islam is gaining a powerful voice; Salafists are actively campaigning for Islamic law to be incorporated into the nation's laws. In its current situation, Tunisia can look to Turkey as an example of how to blend secular institutions and Islam. Turkey, a country similar to Tunisia in its proximity to Europe and Muslim identity can be seen as an example for Tunisia to follow in its evolution into a democratic state. Turkey has managed to achieve both secularism and democracy in its government and society, something that other Arab states have not been able to balance.

The underlying problems which led to the Jasmine Revolution, such as unemployment, particularly among youth, and corruption, must be addressed in order for Tunisia to prosper. Widespread dissatisfaction with economic conditions and the availability of opportunities remains. Worryingly, self-immolations have been a prominent form of the continued protests aimed at economic and political reforms; 107 self-immolations were reported in the first half of 2011.

Tunisia's proximity to Europe and its position within Africa and the Arab world place it at a fertile commercial and cultural nexus. Tunisia has the opportunity to play an enhanced role in regional affairs as a connection point between Europe, Africa and the Arab World. If Tunisia's governmental reforms are successful in bringing a functioning democracy to Tunisia, rooting out corruption and increasing employment, Tunisia may experience significant growth as more of the labor force participates in economic activity and commercial opportunities with other countries expand. In order for tourism levels to return to pre-uprising levels, Tunisia must remain free from civil unrest.

Tunisia has experienced terrorist attacks, including a 2007 plot on the British and American embassies in Tunis. The alleged attackers were linked to the Algerian terrorists of the Group for Preaching and Combat which in turn has links to al-Qa'ida. There is a general threat of terrorism in Tunisia and travelers to the country have been warned that demonstrations with the potential for violence and injury are possible. Tunisia shares an extensive border with Libya which saw heavy fighting and the proliferation of small arms in the fight against the regime of Muammar Gaddafi. Concern exists that weapons and fighters may migrate into Tunisia as they have in Mali.

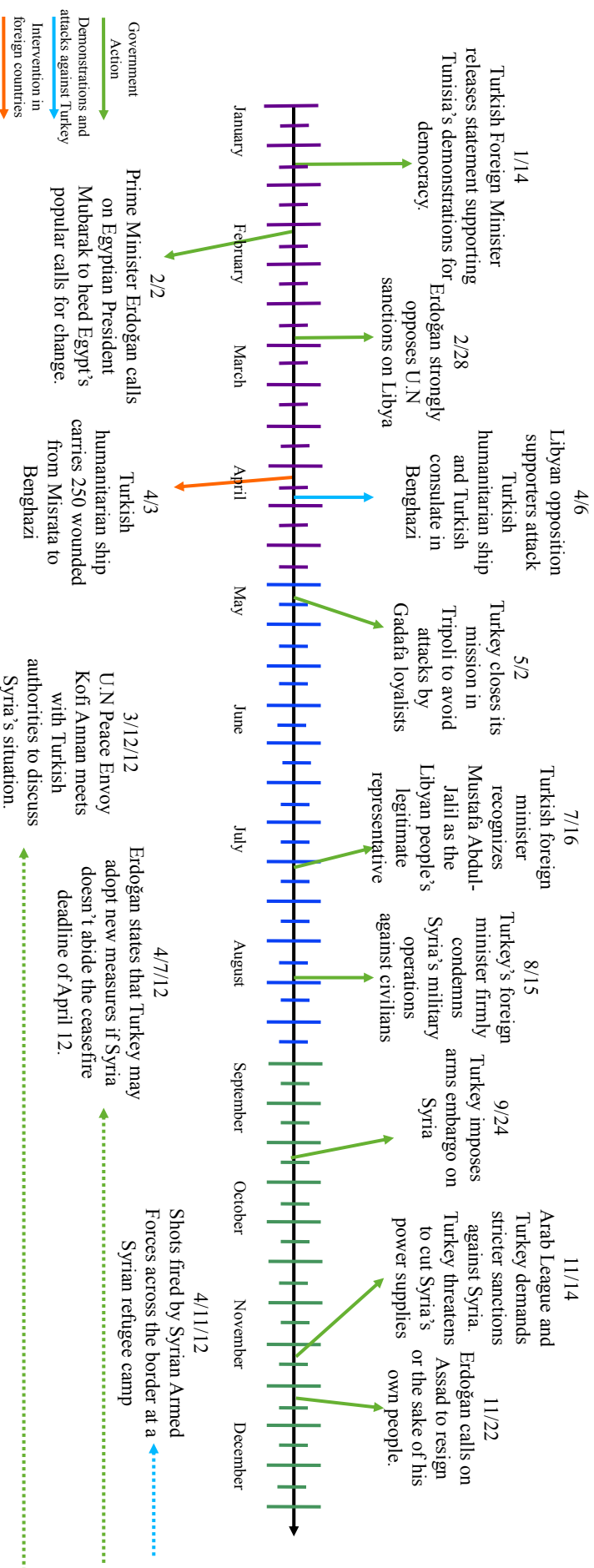
While Tunisia's revolution was not the al-Qa'ida inspired uprising that Usama bin Laden had long advocated, both he and Anwar al-Awlaki praised the outcome. In a posthumous message, bin Laden spoke on the sequence of events saying, "The sun of the revolution has risen from the Maghreb," and "The light of the revolution came from Tunisia. It has given the nation tranquility and made the faces of the people happy."¹⁸ In al-Qa'ida in the Arabian Peninsula's magazine, *Inspire*, Awlaki sent a message of Muslim unity in the Arab Spring: "Our mujahideen brothers in Tunisia, Egypt, Libya and the rest of the Muslim world will get a chance to breathe again after three decades of suffocation."¹⁹

In conclusion, Tunisia must find a way to balance the role of Islam with secular social institutions and the rights of women in the emerging democratic order. Tunisia must also work to ensure that extremism does not spread from other countries and take root in Tunisia, which would further damage the tourism industry. The benefits gleaned from the tourism industry are a powerful incentive for Tunisia to maintain close ties with Europe and to serve as a responsible member of the Mediterranean community. The problems of unemployment and corruption which plagued Tunisia under Ben Ali must be rooted out under the new democratic government in order for Tunisians to be satisfied with the outcome of their Jasmine Revolution.

¹⁸ Crilly, Rob. "Osama bin Laden Tape Praises Arab Spring Uprisings." The Telegraph, May 19, 2011. <http://www.telegraph.co.uk/news/worldnews/al-qaeda/8522799/Osama-bin-Laden-tape-praises-Arab-Spring-uprisings.html>.

¹⁹ Burke, Jason. "Al-Qaida Leaders Welcome Arab Uprisings, Says Cleric." The Guardian, March 31, 2011. <http://www.guardian.co.uk/world/2011/mar/31/alqaida-leaders-welcome-arab-uprisings>.

Turkey Timeline 2011



Red with a vertical white crescent moon (the closed portion is toward the hoist side) and white five-pointed star centered just outside the crescent opening; the flag colors and designs closely resemble those on the banner of Ottoman Empire, which preceded modern-day Turkey; the crescent moon and star serve as insignia for the Turks, as well as being traditional symbols of Islam; according to legend, the flag represents the reflection of the moon and a star in a pool of blood of Turkish warriors.

Ethnic groups: Turkish 70-75 %, Kurdish 18 %, other minorities 7-12 % (2008 est.)
Religions: Muslim 99.8 % (mostly Sunni), other 0.2 % (mostly Christians and Jews)
Population: 79,749,461 (July 2012 est.)
Age Structure: 0-14 years: 26.6 % 15-64 years: 67.1 % 65 years and over: 6.3 % (2011 est.)
Urban population: 70 % of total population (2010)
Literacy (age 15 and over can read and write): 87.4 %
Unemployment: 25.3 %

Demographics

Turkey

Overview:

Mustafa Kemal Atatürk's intention to promote institutional secularism and Western modernization in spite of Muslim faith and Ottoman tradition has been challenged by the conservative democratic Justice and Development Party (AKP) after its landslide victory in the 2002 elections, which was reaffirmed by the July 2011 elections. The power of Turkish generals, who used to be guardians of Kemalism, has been dramatically undermined since the early 90s by the rising of Islamist parties. In breaking with Kemalist establishment, the AKP has pushed a moderate Islamic agenda as it seeks to join the European Union and promote free trade. The religious element introduced by the AKP into Turkish politics sparked fear of a radical Islamist government.

Although Turkey has been relatively immune to the dissent that has erupted within the Mediterranean basin, Turkey has played a crucial role in the Arab Spring, which deeply shook its foreign policy framework. Aside from providing humanitarian and diplomatic support, Turkey is also handling the massive refugee flows pouring across its national boundaries. Turkey's interactions with its neighbors are serving to strengthen its regional authority as a mediator in the Middle Eastern developments.

In January 2011, the Turkish government immediately and openly supported the demands of the Tunisian people. Turkey also stood up for the Egyptian revolution before Europe embraced the movement. In the case of both Tunisia and Egypt, Turkey's support for the uprisings had no negative implications for Turkey. It was even an opportunity to gain more support from the Arab masses, which had already been bolstered by Turkey's firm stance against Israel, and to show the effectiveness of the Turkish model of an Islamic democracy.

Turkey's approach to Libya's turmoil was more cautious and hesitant. The close ties between the Libyan regime and Turkish contractors were given some consideration as Turkey's bilateral trade with Libya was valued at \$ 2.2 billion in 2010 and increased to \$5 billion in the first four months of 2011. Furthermore, between 25,000 and 30,000 Turkish workers were in Libya at the time when many countries, primarily France, were calling for a U.N. resolution to allow military intervention in defense of the Libyan population. Ankara, therefore, strongly condemned any armed intervention and attempted to mediate the conflict. Gradually, the Turkish government transformed its position and established contact with the NTC, which was recognized as the legitimate representative of the Libyan people in May 2011.

Syria has been a critical partner for Turkey in its effort to reintegrate economically and politically with the Arab world. In 1998 Syria handed the leader of the Kurdish terrorist group the PKK, Abdullah Ocalan, to Turkish authorities and signed the Adana Protocol, which drastically improved relations between Turkey and Syria and set the stage for Turkey to create strong ties with Jordan and Lebanon. Ankara supported Assad even after the murder of Lebanese

Prime Minister Hariri in 2005. The dilemma between protecting Turkey's national interests and the supporting protests paralyzed Turkey as it faced picking sides in Bashar al-Assad's Arab Spring battle with Syrian protestors. Syria and Turkey share a border and conduct a significant amount of trade. Openly supporting Assad would have fomented anger in the Arab world, and the demise of the Syrian regime would diminish rule of law allowing the Kurds and PKK in Syria's north to organize and threaten Turkey's stability. After Turkey asked Assad numerous times to suspend violence with no progress, Ankara took a firm stance against Assad's regime. Since then, Turkey has allowed Syrian refugees and military defectors to take refuge and has hosted many members of Syrian National Council (SNC) opposition group and members of the Free Syrian Army to meet and organize in Turkey. Turkey's previous coordination with Syria makes Erdoğan's strong stance against the Assad regime's crackdown even more significant.

Timeline:

January 14, 2011: Turkish Foreign Ministry Davutoğlu releases a brief statement on Tunisian upheavals after President Ben Ali's removal. He also states his support for the Tunisians' demand for a more democratic society.

February 2, 2011: In an address to parliament, the Turkish Prime Minister asks Mubarak to respect the Egyptian people's call for change.

February 28, 2011: Erdoğan strongly opposes U.N. sanctions on Libya, stating that sanctions would dramatically compound the already critical conditions in Libya.

March 31, 2011: Erdoğan declares that he doesn't support arming the Libyan rebels. He specifies that providing them with weapons "would create a different situation in Libya" and "an environment which could be conducive to terrorism."²⁰

April 3, 2011: A Turkish humanitarian ship carries more than 250 wounded people from Misrata to Benghazi, the Libyan rebel stronghold.

April 6, 2011: Libyan opposition supporters, who are against Erdoğan's position to avoid involvement in Libya, attack a Turkish humanitarian ship and the Turkish consulate in Benghazi.

May 2, 2011: Turkey closes its mission in Tripoli to avoid attacks by Gaddafi loyalists after the bloody airstrike by NATO that killed some of Gaddafi's relatives.

May 3, 2011: Erdoğan harshly condemns Col. Muammar Gaddafi's choice to pursue "blood, tears, oppression" and calls for him to "immediately step down."²¹

²⁰ "Turkish PM against arming Libyan rebels". Al Jazeera, March 31, 2011.

<http://www.aljazeera.com/news/europe/2011/03/2011331161058970489.html> (accessed April 11, 2012)

²¹ Arsu, Sebnem and Fahim, Kareem. "Turkish Leader Says Qaddafi Must Step Down Immediately". The New York Times, May 3, 2011. <http://www.nytimes.com/2011/05/04/world/africa/04libya.html> (accessed April 11, 2012)

May 23, 2011: Libyan National Transitional Council Chairman Jalil meets with Prime Minister Erdoğan, President Gül, and Foreign Minister Davutoğlu.

June 16, 2011: The harsh repression by Syrian authorities of anti-government demonstrations causes refugees to flee towards Turkey's borders. Turkey has not granted the almost 10,000 Syrian "guests" within its borders a proper "refugee status."

July 14, 2011: New refugees flow into Turkey after further operations by Syrian security forces.

July 16, 2011: During an official visit to Benghazi, the Turkish Foreign Minister recognizes Mustafa Abdul-Jalil, Chairman of the National Transitional Council, as Libyan people's legitimate representative. He also promises an additional \$200 million in aid.

August 15, 2011: Addressing Bashar al-Assad, Turkish Foreign Minister Davutoğlu firmly condemns the Syrian government's military operations against civilians: "This is our final word to the Syrian authorities, our first expectation is that these operations stop immediately and unconditionally." ²²

September 13, 2011: During an official visit to Egypt, Erdoğan received a hero's welcome from Egyptians. He affirms his support for the Palestinians and displays Turkey's support for their democratic transition.

September 15, 2011: Stopping in Tunisia, Erdoğan says the new Tunisian government will prove that Islam and democracy can coexist successfully.

September 16, 2011: Erdoğan visits Libya and receives a warm welcome. He pays homage to the crowd convened at Martyrs' Square, formerly Tripoli's Green Square, praising the Libyan people as a great example for others seeking to overthrow oppression.

September 24, 2011: Erdoğan confirms that Turkey has imposed an arms embargo on Syria.

November 14, 2011: The deaths of more than 90 protestors during anti-Assad demonstrations across Syria prompts the Arab League, other international organizations and Turkey to demand stricter sanctions against Syria. Turkey threatens to cut power supplies unless Assad's regime ends the violence.

November 22, 2011: During a parliament meeting, Erdoğan calls on Assad to resign for the sake of his own people and the region.

January 9, 2012: The uninterrupted violence against Syria's population leads Erdoğan to warn that "a religious, sectarian and racial civil war" could break out in neighboring Syria: "Turkey

²² "Turkey issues 'final word' to Syria". Reuters, August 15, 2011. <http://www.reuters.com/article/2011/08/15/us-turkey-syria-davutoglu-idUSTRE77E43G20110815> (accessed April 11, 2012)

must play a leading role here. A civil war which could emerge would put us in difficulty... and pose a threat to us.”²³

February 8, 2012: Davutoğlu says the Turkish government is planning an international conference with regional and world actors to solve the Syrian crisis and aiming to promote international understanding.

March 12, 2012: U.N. peace envoy Kofi Annan meets Turkish authorities to discuss the Syrian situation. A new meeting is scheduled for the end of the month.

April 7, 2012: Erdoğan states that Turkey may adopt new measures if Syria doesn't abide by the ceasefire deadline of April 12, 2012 brokered by Kofi Annan. The number of refugees rises to 24,324.

April 11, 2012: Shots fired by Syrian forces hit a Syrian refugee camp across the border in Turkey. Nobody is wounded but panic spreads in the camp. Erdoğan asserts NATO's responsibility to protect Turkish borders and raises the possibility of applying Article 5 of the NATO Charter. Under Article 5, an attack on any NATO member shall be considered to be an attack on all.

Outlook:

Despite internal changes, the strength of the Turkish parliamentary democratic system along with its economic dynamism makes Turkey a successful “model” to be exported in the Middle Eastern area. It serves as an alternative to Iran's blend of religion and government, particularly during the democratic transitions of the Arab Spring. In Egypt after the removal of Hosni Mubarak, the AKP acted as a “mentor” for Muslim Brotherhood.²⁴

Limited freedom of expression and press, in addition to treatment of the minority Kurd and Alevite populations, remain issues for Turkish democracy and its full acceptance by the West and ultimately the European Union. As a strategic bridge between West and East culturally and geographically, Turkey is pursuing an audacious foreign policy strategy planned by Turkish Foreign Minister Ahmet Davutoğlu. He seeks a more active and prestigious role for Turkey in the Mediterranean basin, especially transitioning Arab Spring countries, by projecting soft power.

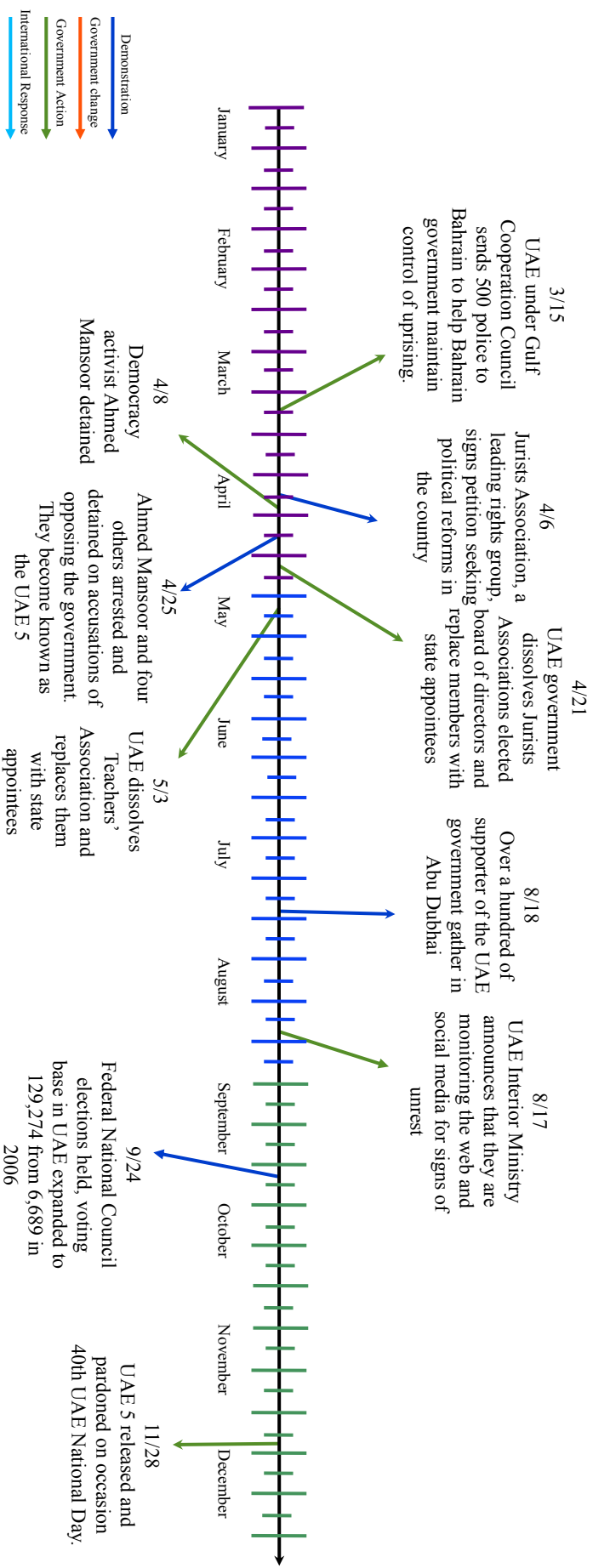
Turkey's relationship with Israel is another demonstration of its goal to gain support and power in the Middle Eastern arena. Israel was once a key partner for Turkey's military, especially in defending against terrorism. However, Turkey has publicly broken its ties with Israel over

²³ “Erdogan warns of ‘civil war’ in Syria as daily bloodshed continues”. Al Arabiya, January 9, 2012. <http://english.alarabiya.net/articles/2012/01/09/187210.html> (accessed April 11, 2012)

²⁴ “Turkey acts as mentor for emerging Islamists in region”. Al Arabiya News, December 9, 2011. <http://english.alarabiya.net/articles/2011/12/09/181596.html> (accessed April 10, 2012)

incidents such as the Mavi Marmara and Operation Cast Lead, showing Turkish dedication to the Palestinian people and a Palestinian state. Turkey's confrontation with Israel is said to be a source for the broad popularity gained by Erdoğan from the Arab world.

United Arab Emirates Timeline 2011



Map of U.A.E.



Three equal horizontal bands of green, white, and black with a wider vertical red band on the hoist side. The flag incorporates all four Pan-Arab colors, which in this case represent fertility (green), neutrality (white), petroleum resources (black), and unity (red); red was the traditional color incorporated into all flags of the emirates before their unification

Ethnic Groups: Emirati 19%, Arab & Iranian 23 % , South Asian 50 %, Other 8% (note: 1982)
Religions: Muslim 96% (Shia 16%), Other 4%
Population: 5,148,664 (July 2011 est.)
Median age: total: 30,2 years
Urban population: 84% of total population (2010)
Literacy (age 15 and over can read and write): 50.2%
Unemployment, youth ages 15-24: 12.1 % rate:

Demographics

United Arab Emirates

Overview:

Oil wealth enables the United Arab Emirates (UAE) government to provide a broad array of services to its citizens; as such the country has not seen the large-scale social unrest and protests that have typified the Arab Spring. The UAE sent forces to help the Bahraini government repress protestors and restore order in March 2011. The UAE arrested, convicted, and then pardoned five prominent political activists and expanded the electoral base which selects members to the Federal National Council, a quasi-parliamentary body with no legislative powers. The UAE is a state composed of seven emirates, of which Abu Dhabi and Dubai are the most populous. The UAE is ruled by the Federal Supreme Council which is composed of the seven emirate rulers; Khalifa bin Zayid Al-Nuha of Abu Dhabi serves as President and Muhammad bin Rashid Al-Maktum of Dubai serves as Vice President and Prime Minister.

Timeline:

March 9, 2011: Citizens' petition with signatures of 133 Emirate citizens calls for reform of UAE's Federal National Council (FNC), the country's quasi-parliament with no legislative powers.

March 15, 2011: The UAE, under the Gulf Cooperation Council (GCC), sends 500 police to Bahrain to help the Bahraini government maintain control in the Bahraini uprising.

March 16, 2011: The UAE announces FNC elections will take place on September 24.

April 6, 2011: The Jurists Association, a leading rights group in the UAE, signs a petition seeking political reforms in the country.

April 8, 2011: Democracy activist Ahmed Mansoor is detained.

April 21, 2011: The UAE government dissolves the Jurists Association's elected board of directors and replaces its members with state appointees.

April 25, 2011: Human rights activist Ahmed Mansoor and four others are arrested and detained on accusations of opposing the government; they become known as the "UAE 5."

May 3, 2011: The UAE dissolves the Teachers' Association and replaces it with state-appointees.

July 18 2011: Over 100 demonstrators gather in support of the UAE government in Abu Dhabi.

August 17, 2011: The UAE Interior Ministry announces that it is monitoring the web and social media for signs of unrest.

September 24, 2011: FNC elections held; voting base in UAE expanded to 129,274 from 6,689 in 2006.

November 28, 2011: The “UAE 5” are released and pardoned for the occasion of the 40th UAE National Day.

December 22, 2011: 6 UAE citizens are stripped of their citizenship due to “security concerns.”

March 6, 2012: Human rights activist Saleh Al-Dhufairi is arrested.

March 21, 2012: 2 Arab Spring-inspired paintings removed from art exhibition by authorities.

March 28, 2012: The UAE government shuts down the US-based pro-democracy group National Democratic Institute. The following day a German NGO is also shut down and its employees are detained.

April 9, 2012: 6 UAE citizens who had their citizenship stripped are arrested on immigration charges.

April 11, 2012: At least 2 Indian NGOs are shut down for having incorrect licenses in Dubai.

April 11, 2012: Ahmed Mansour, member of the “UAE 5,” is re-arrested.

Outlook:

Based on the UAE’s wealth and the tribal and familial connections between the rulers and citizens of the UAE, widespread unrest and protest against the government by citizens is not likely. The government generously provides its citizens with free education and housing, which secures their loyalty and support. However, the population of the UAE is largely composed of non-citizens, as only 19 percent of the country’s five million residents are citizens. The remainder are largely expatriates; 50 percent of the population has origins in South Asia. These non-citizens provide much of the labor force in the UAE and are not beneficiaries of government subsidies in education and housing. The government is concerned with the prospect of the country’s non-citizens engaging in acts of protest and actively monitors social media for signs of unrest. However, the trying of some prominent UAE activists and stripping of citizenship of other UAE reformers show that the government is also concerned about the prospect of unrest even from beneficiaries of its social programs.

The three primary conditions present in countries which experienced Arab Spring protests were widespread unemployment, corruption, and lack of representation in government. Of these three conditions, only the lack of representation in government is a concern for the UAE. In March 2011, a petition signed by 133 Emirate citizens called for political change through an elected parliament with legislative powers. The UAE responded by arresting five activists, who became

known as the “UAE 5,” and putting them on trial for “publicly insulting” UAE leaders. The activists were convicted but then subsequently pardoned. In an effort to address the demands in the petition, on March 16, 2011 the government announced elections to be held September 24, 2011 for 20 of the 40 seats on the quasi-parliamentary Federal National Council. Voting rights were expanded to 130,000 hand-picked citizens from approximately 7,000 in 2006, though additional powers have not been granted to the Federal National Council. The Federal National Council only holds advisory power and is elected strictly by electors who have been approved by the government. In total, some 12 percent of Emirate citizens, including women, may vote. The result is token voting privileges for about 2.5 percent of the residents of the UAE, results which fall short of demands made by petitioners for political change.

The government has intensified its crackdown on political activities, which began with the arrest and trial of the “UAE 5” and has recently included the closure of the offices of several foreign NGOs. Affected groups include American and German human rights organizations and Indian schools. As the UAE is a hub for international commerce, it maintains close business and security relations with other countries and organizations such as the Gulf Cooperation Council. To support its partnerships, the UAE has taken measures such as sending a force of 500 police officers to Bahrain to bolster the Bahraini security apparatus in response to the uprising there in March 2011. Instability in the region following the Arab Spring remains a concern for the UAE.

The UAE is not free from the threat of terrorism. Two of the perpetrators of the September 11th attacks were UAE citizens and in June 2008 American and British tourists and expatriates were warned of a high level of terrorist threat in the UAE. In May 2009, UAE security forces disrupted a terrorist plot that had sought to attack targets in Dubai.

2/2

1/23 President Saleh announces he will resign in 2013 and his son will not succeed him, in an effort to thwart planned “Day of Rage”

3/17 More than 45 people killed in a march through the capital when security forces opened fire

5/11 Security forces open fire on protesters in three different cities, killing 18 and wounding hundreds

6/3 President Saleh’s compound is hit by a missile, killing three guards, wounding two Yemeni officials and Saleh

8/7 President Saleh returns to Yemen after treatment in Saudi Arabia

10/26 Hundreds of women gather in Sanaa to burn tires in protest over government crackdown on peaceful protests killing 25 people

12/30 Protestors unsatisfied with the transfer of power and that Saleh will not be prosecuted for his actions against demonstrators

January

February 2/3

March

April

May

June 5/23

July 6/5

August

September 9/21

October 10/7

November

December 11/23

Day of Rage lead by opposition coalition JMP across cities of Yemen, protesting living conditions and political reform

President Saleh declares State of Emergency after deadliest day since protest began.

121 dead after explosion in munitions factory. AQAP are suspected

50 are dead after 2 days of gun fire between security forces and opposition tribal forces.

US & UK pressure Saudi Arabia to convince Saleh to step down, while he is recovering in Saudi Arabia

100,000 gather for mass funeral of the 83 people killed the last three days, including a 10 months old boy

Tawakkul Karman receives Nobel Peace Prize for her advocacy of women’s rights and democracy in Yemen

President Saleh agrees to resignation and accepts legal immunity for him and his family

Legend:

- Demonstration
- Government change
- Government Action
- International Response



Ethnic Groups: Predominantly Arab; but also Asians and Europeans
Religions: Muslim, small numbers of jews, christians and Hindu
Population: 24,133,492 (July 2011 est.)
Median age: total: 18.1 years
Urban population: 32% of total population (2010)
Literacy (age 15 and over can read and write): 50.2%
Unemployment rate: 35% (2003 est.)

Yemen

Overview:

Peaceful demonstrations led by the Joint Meeting Parties (JMP) coalition quickly turned violent as protestors clashed with Saleh regime supporters. The JMP, which largely consists of the Islamist-oriented Yemeni Congregation for Reform (Islah), had called for democracy and peace by gathering at Sana'a University. The protest movement lacked military forces until General Ali Mohsen al-Ahmar, one of the President's confidants, defected from the regime. President Saleh maintained that he would complete his full term, which was set to end in 2013. However, an attack on his palace compound left him injured and forced him to seek medical treatment in Saudi Arabia. Battles raged throughout the summer and on November 23, 2011 President Saleh agreed to the resignation deal originally proposed by the GCC in April 2011. On February 25, 2012, Vice President Abdurabu Mansur Hadi was sworn in as Yemen's new president.

Timeline:

January 23, 2011: Yemen's call for political change begins in January 2011 with demonstrations calling for President Ali Abdullah Saleh to step down. Four days earlier, key activist and organizational female leader Tawakkul Karman was arrested for "organizing unlicensed demonstrations."

February 2, 2011: President Ali Abdullah Saleh announces that he will resign in 2013 and his son will not succeed him in an effort to thwart the opposition's planned 'Day of Rage.'

February 3, 2011: The JMP opposition coalition leads the 'Day of Rage' across cities in Yemen protesting living conditions and demanding political reforms. Supporters of Saleh take to the streets against the JMP.

March 2011: A state of emergency is imposed as President Saleh fears the possibility of civil war.

March 8 2011: 2,000 inmates revolt and take a dozen guards hostage in Sana'a in an effort to support the anti-Saleh wave of protests in Yemen. Students at Sana'a University, who have stayed on campus since the beginning of the protests, have their peaceful demonstration disrupted by government-armored vehicles, wounding 98 protestors.

March 18, 2011: More than 45 protestors are killed in a march through the capital when security forces and government loyalists opened fire. Hundreds of others are wounded during a peaceful prayer memorial for the seven killed in clashes with riot police the previous week. Security forces open fire on the crowd and plainclothes men fire from a rooftop down on the protestors.

March 21, 2011: General Ali Mohsen al-Ahmar provides troops to protect the protestors and to show his support for the peaceful revolution.

March 28, 2011: 121 people are dead after an explosion at a munitions factory in southern Yemen, showing that Saleh is losing control. It is suspected to be the work of AQAP.

April 5, 2011: One day after 15 people were killed in a protest in Taiz, clashes start again with hundreds of troops attacking thousands of demonstrators.

April 7, 2011: GCC joins the many international states that advise the President of Yemen to relinquish his power.

April 17 2011: Hundreds of thousands demonstrate after President Saleh states that women should not take part in the rallies because it is in violation of Islamic law.

May 11, 2011: Security forces open fire on protestors in three different cities across Yemen killing 18 and wounding hundreds. 2,000 protestors charge the cabinet building shouting, "Allah rid us of this tyrant." The Republican Guards halt the attack with tear gas, water cannons, and live rounds.

May 22, 2011: Pro-Saleh supporters trap Western and Arab diplomats, including the British ambassador to Yemen, in an embassy after President Saleh refuses to resign in exchange for legal immunity.

May 23, 2011: 50 are dead after two days of gunfire between Saleh's security forces and the opposition tribal forces led by Sadiq al-Ahmar from the Hashid tribal federation.

June 3, 2011: President Saleh's compound is hit by a missile or shells. The blast kills three guards and a cleric, injuring Saleh and two other senior Yemeni officials.

June 5, 2011: U.S. and Britain pressure Saudi Arabia to convince President Saleh to step down while Saleh is in Riyadh recovering from his injuries.

June 6, 2011: President Saleh will not return to Sana'a as quickly as he had hoped; injuries he sustained in the attacks on his palace compound were more extensive than initially reported.

July 7, 2011: In his first appearance since the bombing at his palace compound, President Saleh gives a televised statement from Saudi Arabia that criticizes his opposition for trying to bring down his regime.

August 7: President Saleh returns to Yemen after receiving medical treatment in Saudi Arabia.

September 21, 2011: 100,000 gather for mass funeral of the 83 people killed in the past three days in Sana'a. Special attention is paid to the ten-month-old boy who was shot earlier in the week as a symbol of the brutality of the conflict.

October 7, 2011: Tawakkul Karman receives the Nobel Peace Prize for her advocacy for women's rights and democracy in Yemen.

October 26, 2011: Hundreds of women gather in Sana'a to burn veils in protest of the government crackdown against peaceful protestors after a night of clashes that killed 25 people.

November 23, 2011: President Saleh finally agrees to resign in exchange for immunity.

December 30, 2011: Protestors are unsatisfied with the conditions of the transfer of power agreement specifying that President Saleh will not be tried for his actions. The protestors want those responsible for violence against demonstrators to be brought to justice.

February 21, 2012: Presidential election is held; Acting President Hadi receives 99.8% of the vote.

March 4, 2012: 90 government soldiers are killed in an attack on army base in southern Yemen.

April 11, 2012: 30 militants with suspected links to al-Qa'ida are killed in a third day of clashes with government forces near the southern town of Lawdar.

Outlook:

Elections were marked by some violence, but occurred as planned on February 21, 2012, despite rumors of delay due to security concerns. Saleh's vice president, Abdurabu Mansur Hadi, was the only candidate running, and he won with over 99% of the vote, officially ending Saleh's 33 year rule. Although Saleh is no longer president of Yemen, his farewell address did not indicate that he would relinquish power permanently. Hadi has appeared in public together with Saleh and members of Saleh's family continue to occupy prominent positions in Yemeni government and civic life, indicating that Saleh will remain an influential figure. On January 28, 2012, President Saleh arrived in the United States to receive medical treatment. Although the U.S. was criticized for 'harboring a dictator,' the February 2012 elections ran more smoothly with Saleh's absence from Yemen.

As in the case of the other Arab Spring countries, Yemen's new leadership will need to be persistent to achieve the demands of the Yemeni people, and improvements will not occur overnight. The security situation deteriorated in the wake of the long uprising and must urgently be addressed. Rallies and protests have continued even after the swearing-in of the new president as the people want Saleh and his top advisors to be prosecuted for the 2011 crackdown that claimed over 2,000 lives.

Despite the changes in Yemeni leadership, the nation continues to face daunting security challenges and threats of sectarian violence. Al-Qa'ida in the Arabian Peninsula (AQAP), the most active branch of the al-Qa'ida franchise, is based in Yemen and regularly assaults Yemeni institutions. Yemeni civil society is on shaky ground at best and the threat of increased violence between the government and tribal forces allied with AQAP could plunge the nation into civil war.

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