

I. The first year of the Arab Spring

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The 2011 uprisings in the Arab world came as a surprise to most observers. While successive Arab Human Development Reports had identified lingering problems affecting the Arab regimes—including inequality, lack of economic development, low levels of participation in policy formation and the marginalization of women—few experts expected either the series of mass revolts that were carried out with such persistence and with such a global impact or the increasing use of violence to suppress them.¹

The uprisings, which quickly became known as the Arab Spring, spread rapidly from country to country and soon affected large parts of North Africa and the Middle East (see table 2.1). While they shared a number of traits—including large-scale demonstrations, non-violent actions, the absence of single leaders and the use of central squares in major cities—they also differed in certain respects. The extent of the demands made by the protesters varied, ranging from improved economic situations to regime change, as did the level of violence. While there were comparatively few fatalities in Algeria and Morocco, other countries (including Bahrain, Egypt, Tunisia and Yemen) were much more severely affected. The highest levels of violence were reported in Libya and Syria.

This section first outlines domestic developments in the six countries—Bahrain, Egypt, Libya, Syria, Tunisia and Yemen—that experienced at least 25 fatalities related to the Arab Spring in 2011.² It then examines international involvement in the different cases, including external support given to aid one of the parties, and third-party involvement and neutral interventions carried out to attempt to solve the crises. It concludes with some general reflections on the first year of the Arab Spring.

Domestic developments

Bahrain

The 2011 protests in the Bahraini capital Manama and several nearby towns and villages were preceded by months of political repression and years of unfulfilled promises of democratic reforms. In mid-February, thousands of protesters assembled at the Pearl Roundabout in Manama, which became

¹ United Nations Development Programme (UNDP), Regional Bureau for Arab States, *Arab Human Development Report, 2002–2005, 2009* (UNDP: New York, 2002–2005, 2009).

² Other conflicts occurred simultaneously in some countries in North Africa and the Middle East, notably those inspired by al-Qaeda. These had different dynamics and are not discussed here.

Table 2.1. The Arab Spring, 2011

The countries are the member states of the Arab League.

Country	Level of violence ^a	First fatality ^b	Regime type ^c	External support ^d	Third-party involvement ^e	Demand ^f
Algeria	Low	6 Jan.	Monocracy	No	No	Economic reform
Bahrain	Intermediate	14 Feb.	Monarchy	Yes	No	Regime change
Comoros	–	–	Other	–	–	–
Djibouti	Low	18 Feb.	Monocracy	No	No	Political reform
Egypt	Intermediate	25 Jan.	Monocracy	No	No	Regime change
Iraq	Low	16 Feb.	Other	No	No	Economic reform
Jordan	Low	25 Mar.	Monarchy	No	No	Political reform
Kuwait	None	–	Monarchy	No	No	Political reform
Lebanon	None	–	Other	No	No	Political reform
Libya	High	16 Feb.	Monocracy	Yes	Yes	Regime change
Mauritania	None	–	Monocracy	–	–	Political reform
Morocco	Low	20 Feb.	Monarchy	No	No	Political reform
Oman	Low	27 Feb.	Monarchy	No	No	Economic reform
Palestinian Authority	None	–	Other	–	–	Political reform
Qatar	–	–	Monarchy	–	–	–
Saudi Arabia	Low	21 Nov.	Monarchy	No	No	Political reform
Somalia	–	–	Other	–	–	–
Sudan	Low	30 Jan.	Monocracy	No	No	Political reform
Syria	High	18 Mar.	Monocracy	Yes	Yes	Regime change
Tunisia	Intermediate	8 Jan.	Monocracy	No	No	Regime change
United Arab Emirates	–	–	Monarchy	–	–	–
Yemen	Intermediate	16 Feb.	Monocracy	No	Yes	Regime change

^a ‘Level of violence’ refers to the number of people killed in Arab Spring-related violence, with ‘Low’ indicating a death toll of 1–24, ‘Intermediate’ of 25–999 and ‘High’ of 1000 or more. ‘None’ indicates protests without fatalities and ‘–’ indicates that there was no Arab Spring-related protests. Much of the violence connected to the Arab Spring was of a character that makes it difficult to record in UCDP’s 3 categories of organized violence (armed conflict, non-state conflict and one-sided violence—see section III). Other fatalities are therefore included in these totals, such as from violence involving protesters throwing rocks or Molotov cocktails or attacking government institutions (e.g. the interior ministry or police or army barracks).

^b ‘First fatality’ is the date of the first death connected to Arab Spring-related violence. All dates are in 2011.

^c Regime type is as at 1 Jan. 2011. ‘Monarchy’ refers to both absolute and constitutional monarchies. ‘Monocracy’ is a term used to capture one-party or one-family states; it includes both electoral regimes and autocratic regimes where power is vested in an individual.

^d ‘External support’ can range from the provision of sanctuary or financial assistance to aid a party, via provision of arms, logistics and military support, up to sending combat troops.

^e ‘Third-party involvement’ is an intervention aiming to regulate or solve a conflict or crisis with diplomatic means. Typical third-party activities are mediating between the parties in a conflict, hosting negotiations or attending a peace conference, or monitoring a ceasefire or a peace agreement.

^f ‘Demand’ is based on a hierarchy: economic reform is the least threatening to the regime, followed by calls for political reform and then by calls for a complete regime change. The demand noted here is the highest level voiced during 2011 by protesters or the opposition regarding domestic issues.

the centre of the protests. Initially, the protesters' demands focused on political reforms but as security force actions against them intensified, more and more protesters began calling for a complete regime change. Nevertheless, the demands of Wifaq, the largest opposition party, continued to focus on political reforms.³

While the state of emergency imposed in mid-March was lifted on 1 June, protesters as well as health workers who treated the wounded continued to be attacked and hundreds of people were detained and prosecuted in military courts.⁴

Egypt

By the time of the January 2011 protests in Egypt, the National Democratic Party (NDP) had led a de facto one-party state for 33 years, with Hosni Mubarak as president since 1982. In addition to the local context of rigged elections, corruption and mismanagement, Egypt's relatively organized opposition was inspired by earlier developments in Tunisia.⁵

Demonstrations against Mubarak had occurred before. But an announcement, made via Twitter and Facebook, of a protest on 25 January led to tens of thousands taking part in what was named a 'day of rage'.⁶ Police harshly repressed the demonstrations but the protestors remained in Tahrir Square in central Cairo and other cities and the situation escalated as they clashed repeatedly with riot police.⁷ To calm the situation, Mubarak offered several concessions. These were seen as 'too little, too late', and the protesters' repeated demands for regime change were finally met when Mubarak resigned on 11 February.⁸

The Supreme Council of the Armed Forces (SCAF), led by Field Marshall Mohamed Hussein Tantawi, stepped in to fill the political vacuum.⁹ While SCAF initially received praise, the political situation soon appeared to be little more democratic than earlier.¹⁰ Elections to the lower house of parliament were held between November 2011 and January 2012. Simultaneously with the first round of elections Egyptians once again took to the streets, this time to show their discontent with SCAF and the lack of progress since

³ Katzman, K., *Bahrain: Reform, Security, and U.S. Policy*, Congressional Research Service (CRS) Report for Congress 95-1013 (US Congress, CRS: Washington, DC, 21 Feb. 2012), p. 8; and 'Mass march in Bahrain as Mullen wraps up visit', Agence France-Presse, 25 Feb. 2011.

⁴ Human Rights Watch (HRW), *Targets of Retribution: Attacks against Medics, Injured Protesters, and Health Facilities* (HRW: New York, 2011), pp. 10–12.

⁵ 'The view from Liberation Square', *New York Times*, 28 Jan. 2011.

⁶ 'Egypt's day of rage goes on: is the world watching?', *The Guardian*, 27 Jan. 2011.

⁷ 'Two die in Egypt protests as US urges concessions', Agence France-Presse, 26 Jan. 2011.

⁸ 'Mubarak concessions "insufficient"', Al Jazeera, 2 Feb. 2011.

⁹ Tantawi had been Minister of Defence since 1991, and was seen by many as Mubarak's right-hand man. Knell, Y., 'Egypt after Mubarak: Mohamad Hussain Tantawi profile', BBC News, 22 Nov. 2011, <<http://www.bbc.co.uk/news/world-middle-east-12441512>>.

¹⁰ Amnesty International (AI), *Year of Rebellion: The State of Human Rights in the Middle East and North Africa*, Index no. MDE 01/001/2012 (AI: London, 9 Jan. 2012), p. 12.

February.¹¹ This resulted in demonstrations that were met with violence, resulting in further criticism, both domestically and internationally.

*Libya*¹²

The February 2011 demonstrations in Libya were related to a history of brutality by the regime of Muammar Gaddafi.¹³ The massacre in June 1996 of over 1000 inmates in Abu Salim Prison—many of them political prisoners—had created a sense of resentment against Gaddafi.¹⁴ In February 2006 security forces killed 12 people involved in a non-violent demonstration in Benghazi, while the arrest in early 2011 of Fathi Terbil, a human rights lawyer who represented the families of the victims of the 1996 massacre, led to new protests.¹⁵ The unrest soon spread and, as more people took to the streets, repression increased. The opposition was particularly active in the east of the country, and Benghazi quickly became its centre. Gaddafi ordered his military to curb the demonstrations with harsh methods and this led the international community to condemn the atrocities.¹⁶

As the campaign of repression continued, the rebel organization operating from Benghazi began referring to itself as a National Transitional Council (NTC) with the explicit intention of removing Gaddafi from power.¹⁷

While the Gaddafi regime launched an offensive against the rebellious towns, the international community debated courses of action to prevent civilian casualties. This led to the passing of United Nations Security Council Resolution 1973 on 17 March, which authorized the establishment of a no-fly zone over Libya and authorized UN member states ‘to take all necessary measures . . . to protect civilians and civilian populated areas under threat of attack’.¹⁸ The introduction of de facto air support for the rebel cause—led by the North Atlantic Treaty Organization (NATO) in Operation Unified Protector—changed the dynamics of the conflict; after inconclusive battles in the Libyan desert, during which towns changed hands on several

¹¹ Amnesty International, ‘Egypt: military rulers have “crushed” hopes of 25 January protesters’, 22 Nov. 2011, <<http://www.amnesty.org/en/news/egypt-military-rulers-have-crushed-hopes-25-january-protesters-2011-11-22>>.

¹² On developments in Libya in 2011 see also chapter 1 and chapter 3, section II, in this volume.

¹³ Amnesty International, ‘The battle for Libya: killings, disappearances and torture’, Sep. 2011, <<http://www.amnesty.org/en/library/info/MDE19/025/2011/en>>, p. 7.

¹⁴ Human Rights Watch, ‘Libya: June 1996 killings at Abu Salim prison’, 27 June 2006, <<http://www.hrw.org/en/news/2006/06/27/libya-june-1996-killings-abu-salim-prison>>; and Franklin, S., ‘Abu Salim: walls that talk’, *The Guardian*, 30 Sep. 2011.

¹⁵ ‘Libya protests: second city Benghazi hit by violence’, BBC News, 16 Feb. 2011, <<http://www.bbc.co.uk/news/world-africa-12477275>>.

¹⁶ ‘Libya protests: pressure mounts on isolated Gaddafi’, BBC News, 23 Feb. 2011 <<http://www.bbc.co.uk/news/world-middle-east-12550719>>.

¹⁷ UPDATE 1-Rebel Libyan council chief vows “victory or death”, Reuters, 4 Mar. 2011.

¹⁸ UN Security Council Resolution 1973, 17 Mar. 2011, paras 4–12.

occasions, the rebels, supported by NATO, slowly advanced towards the capital, Tripoli.

In late August the rebels gained the upper hand and by the end of the month Tripoli was under rebel control. Gaddafi, who had managed to escape, was not located until rebels took control of his hometown, Sirte, on 20 October. In the tumultuous situation following his apprehension, Gaddafi was killed, bringing a definite end to a regime that had been in place for over 40 years.

The situation following Gaddafi's death was turbulent. The NTC moved its base from Benghazi to Tripoli and attempted to steer Libya towards democratization. However, an abundance of weapons remained in circulation and unemployment was rampant. Combined with a traditionally divided society, this led to clashes between NTC soldiers representing different tribes.¹⁹ While these clashes did not develop beyond skirmishes, the threat of tribal conflict remained. Another unresolved issue was the apparent abuses carried out by the rebel forces during the final phases of the conflict.²⁰ Shortly after the death of Gaddafi, Luis Moreno-Ocampo, the prosecutor of the International Crime Court (ICC), stated that NATO forces and rebel soldiers—as well as members of the Gaddafi regime—would be investigated for war crimes.²¹

*Syria*²²

It initially seemed that the Arab Spring would not affect Syria, whose stability during past decades had been remarkable, particularly given its religious and ethnic heterogeneity. Prior to 2011, the only significant challenge to the 40-year rule of President Hafez al-Assad and his son and successor, President Bashar al-Assad, had been an uprising launched by the Muslim Brotherhood in the late 1970s which, while brought under control by 1982, led to 10 000–25 000 deaths, mostly civilians.²³

Initial protests broke out in February 2011, but they were limited and quickly subdued by the regime. The situation changed on 18 March in Dará, in the south of the country, with a protest triggered by the arrest and torture of a group of young boys. The security services unsuccessfully attempted to end the protests with tear gas, water cannons and ultimately live ammunition, killing four people. From this point the protests quickly spread, resulting in further civilian deaths in Dará and other cities.

¹⁹ 'Fighters clash again near Tripoli, several dead', Reuters, 12 Nov. 2011.

²⁰ Human Rights Watch, 'Libya: apparent execution of 53 Gaddafi supporters', 24 Oct. 2011, <<http://www.hrw.org/news/2011/10/24/libya-apparent-execution-53-gaddafi-supporters>>.

²¹ United Nations, Security Council, 6647th meeting, S/PV.6647, 2 Nov. 2011.

²² On developments in Syria in 2011 see also chapter 3, section II, in this volume.

²³ United Nations, Human Rights Council, Report of the independent international commission of inquiry on the Syrian Arab Republic, A/HRC/S-17/2/Add.1, 23 Nov. 2011.

For the rest of the year protests, often involving tens of thousands of people, occurred all over Syria. While Dará governorate remained a focal point, Homs governorate soon became the main hot spot, experiencing roughly one-third of all fatalities. Throughout the year, protests were coordinated via Facebook, usually taking place after Friday prayers or funerals of killed protesters. While they initially focused on economic and political reforms, protesters soon demanded the ousting of President Assad and free and fair elections. Apart from isolated incidents of looting and stone throwing, the demonstrations remained largely peaceful. In contrast, government responses included mass arrests, torture of detainees, deprivation of medical treatment to the wounded and the use of snipers to kill protesters.²⁴ About one month into the protests, the government also began to besiege and shell whole cities that it considered hostile.²⁵

In addition to the use of force, the regime also reacted politically, blaming the violence on ‘foreign elements’ and ‘terrorists’, and repeatedly promising reforms. Indeed, Assad lifted the state of emergency that had been in effect since 1963 and reshuffled the government, but such reforms remained cosmetic and were usually followed by even more brutal violence.²⁶

The Syrian Army’s violent actions led to a number of defections, mainly by lower-ranked Sunni conscript soldiers. To fight this trend, security agents positioned behind army lines reportedly threatened any soldiers who attempted to defect.²⁷ Some deserters organized themselves into small groups to protect demonstrators and occasionally even clash with the army. A group of defecting officers led by Colonel Riyad al-Asaad announced the creation of the Free Syrian Army (FSA) via YouTube on 29 July.²⁸ In late September, the FSA began fighting government forces, mainly in Aleppo, Hamah and Homs governorates, resulting in several hundred fatalities by the end of 2011, in addition to the several thousand fatalities resulting from the violent crackdown on the protesters.

*Tunisia*²⁹

On 17 December 2010, Mohamed Bouazizi set himself on fire following a dispute with the police concerning his small vegetable business.³⁰ This act triggered increasing protests across Tunisia against police brutality and

²⁴ United Nations (note 23); and Human Rights Watch, ‘We live as in war’, Nov. 2011, <<http://www.hrw.org/reports/2011/11/11/we-live-war>>.

²⁵ Human Rights Watch (HRW), *We’ve Never Seen Such Horror* (HRW: New York, June 2011).

²⁶ International Crisis Group (ICG), *Uncharted Waters: Thinking Through Syria’s Dynamics* Middle East Briefing no. 31 (ICG: Damascus, 24 Nov. 2011); and Human Rights Watch (note 25).

²⁷ Human Rights Watch (HRW), ‘By All Means Necessary!’ (HRW: New York, Dec. 2011).

²⁸ ‘Defected officers declare the formation of “Syrian Free Army”, 29-7-2011’, YouTube, 29 July 2011, <<http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Rk7Ze5jVCj4>>.

²⁹ International Crisis Group (ICG), *Popular Protests in North Africa and the Middle East (IV): Tunisia’s Way*, Middle East/North Africa Report no. 106 (ICG: Tunis, 28 Apr. 2011).

³⁰ ‘How a man setting fire to himself sparked an uprising in Tunisia’, *The Guardian*, 28 Dec. 2010.

corruption and, ultimately, in support of regime change. The escalation of the protests forced President Zine-Al Abidine Ben Ali into exile in Saudi Arabia on 14 January. The Prime Minister, Mohamed Ghannouchi, was also forced to resign in late February, making room for a new interim government without ties to Ben Ali. Elections to a Constituent Assembly were held on 23 October and on 12 December, Moncef Marzouki, a former human rights activist, was elected interim president. Meanwhile, Ben Ali was sentenced in absentia to 35 years in prison.

Yemen

By 2011, after more than three decades of rule by President Ali Abdullah Saleh, Yemen faced significant economic and social challenges including widespread corruption, an unemployment rate of about 40 per cent, falling oil production, a looming water shortage and widespread poverty. Furthermore, over recent years Yemen had experienced high levels of violence, including from al-Qaeda in the Arabian Peninsula (AQAP).³¹

In January, the ruling party—the General People’s Congress—announced that it would seek to remove the limit on the number of presidential terms. This triggered widespread resistance, as many Yemenis feared that Saleh would retain office for life.³² Calls for Saleh’s resignation gained momentum with the resignation of Mubarak as president in Egypt. Thousands of protesters held largely peaceful demonstrations in Sana’a, Aden and Ta’iz, but they were met with lethal violence from government forces and supporters of the regime.³³

In response to the growing number of people killed in the demonstrations, powerful tribes and high-ranking soldiers withdrew their support for Saleh. Towards the end of May, violent clashes erupted between loyalist forces and members of the powerful al-Ahmar tribe.³⁴ On 3 June Saleh was wounded in a rocket attack on the presidential residence allegedly launched by members of the al-Ahmar tribe.³⁵ Saleh was flown to Saudi Arabia for medical treatment but returned to Yemen in September. He retained full presidential powers until 23 November, when he agreed to relinquish them by February 2012 in return for amnesty in a plan negotiated by the Gulf Cooperation Council (GCC). He stood down following the

³¹ International Crisis Group (ICG), *Breaking Point? Yemen’s Southern Question*, Middle East Report no. 114 (ICG: Sana’a, 20 Oct. 2011), pp. 10–11; and Gardner, F., ‘What next in Yemen’, BBC News, 29 Jan. 2011, <<http://www.bbc.co.uk/news/world-middle-east-12309909>>.

³² International Crisis Group (ICG), *Popular Protest in North Africa and the Middle East (II): Yemen between Reform and Revolution*, Middle East/North Africa Report no. 102 (ICG: Sana’a, 10 Mar. 2011), pp. 1–2.

³³ International Crisis Group (note 32), pp. 1–4.

³⁴ International Crisis Group (note 31).

³⁵ ‘Yemen tribe leader denies link to palace attack’, Reuters, 3 June 2011.

election on 21 February of Abdo Rabu Mansour al-Hadi, formerly vice-president, as interim president for a two-year period.³⁶

Throughout the year, government forces pursued widespread violence against peaceful protesters, resulting in hundreds of fatalities. Hundreds more were killed in clashes between government forces, dissident troops and tribal fighters.

External involvement

*External support*³⁷

International community reactions to developments in North Africa and the Middle East varied greatly. External support was provided to one or both sides in the two countries with high numbers of fatalities—Libya and Syria (see table 2.1). In three of the four countries with intermediate numbers of fatalities—Egypt, Tunisia and Yemen—the international community restricted itself to political statements expressing either support for or opposition to the current leader, although this often occurred only at a late stage of the protests, as in the case of Egypt.³⁸ Only the fourth country with an intermediate level of violence—Bahrain—received external support. This came in the form of military and police reinforcements from Saudi Arabia and the United Arab Emirates in response to a request to the GCC by the Bahraini Government.³⁹ In contrast to the condemnation of regimes elsewhere, the Bahraini Government received only muted regional and international criticism for its crackdown on peaceful protesters.⁴⁰

The international community was directly involved in Libya, as demonstrated by the UN's rapid action, with France and the United Kingdom in the lead.⁴¹ The approach built on the idea of protecting the civilian population from the government's indiscriminate actions.⁴² Nineteen states took part in enforcement of the UN-imposed no-fly zone, which, after the first

³⁶ Amnesty International (note 10), pp. 22–23; Ghobari, M., 'Election preparations start in conflict-torn Yemen', Reuters, 6 Feb. 2012; and 'New Yemen President Abdrabbuh Mansour Hadi takes oath', BBC News, 25 Feb. 2012, <<http://www.bbc.co.uk/news/world-middle-east-17163321>>.

³⁷ On the term 'external support' see table 2.1, note d.

³⁸ 'Egypt power transfer not enough: Obama', Agence France-Presse, 11 Feb. 2011.

³⁹ 'Gulf Cooperation Council states pledge "full" support for Bahrain', BBC Monitoring, 19 Feb. 2011; and Katzman (note 3).

⁴⁰ 'Gulf Cooperation Council states pledge "full" support for Bahrain' (note 39); and Amnesty International (AI), *Arms transfers to the Middle East and North Africa: Lessons for an Effective Arms Trade Treaty*, Index no. ACT 30/117/2011 (AI: London, 19 Oct. 2011), p. 22.

⁴¹ Five Security Council members—Brazil, China, Germany, India and Russia—chose to abstain from the vote on Resolution 1973. As permanent members of the Security Council, China and Russia in effect allowed the resolution to pass. UN Security Council Resolution 1973 (note 18); 'West mobilizes for Libya air strikes', Agence France-Presse, 18 Mar. 2011; and 'France, UK draft sanctions text on Libya violence', Reuters, 25 Feb. 2011, <<http://in.reuters.com/article/2011/02/25/idINIndia-55147320110225>>.

⁴² On protection of civilians see chapter 1 in this volume.

few days, was officially implemented by NATO.⁴³ NATO aircraft bombed Libyan Air Force and artillery targets, with the aim of preventing them from attacking civilians and rebel forces. The Libyan Army's headquarters were also bombed, significantly reducing the effectiveness of the army's command structure. The Arab League, initially supportive of UN Security Council Resolution 1973, criticized NATO for its interpretation of the mandate.⁴⁴ The rebels also received direct military or financial support from France, Italy, Qatar, Turkey, the UK and, to a lesser degree, Sudan.⁴⁵ Overall, international involvement greatly facilitated the rebels' armed struggle.

In Syria, Russia and, allegedly, Iran supported the government with arms, ammunition and technical assistance.⁴⁶ Iran is also alleged to have provided troops and military advisers to the government.⁴⁷ Russia occasionally deployed naval vessels to the region and to its naval base at Tartous, Syria, as a deterrent against possible NATO military action.⁴⁸ Politically, China and Russia repeatedly opposed proposals by France and the United States for a substantial UN Security Council resolution on Syria.⁴⁹ When these proposals were blocked, the European Union (EU) and the USA each imposed unilateral sanctions on Syria and increased political pressure on Assad, while continuing to stress that they had no intention of intervening militarily.⁵⁰ Turkey, despite having built an increasingly close relationship with Syria over recent years, was strongly critical of the Assad regime. It welcomed tens of thousands of refugees and hosted the first conference of

⁴³ The 19 participating states included 15 NATO members (Albania, Belgium, Bulgaria, Canada, Denmark, France, Greece, Italy, the Netherlands, Norway, Romania, Spain, Turkey, the UK and the USA) and 4 non-member states (Jordan, Qatar, Sweden and the United Arab Emirates). 'NATO to enforce no-fly zone in Libya—Rasmussen', Reuters, 24 Mar. 2011. See also chapter 3, section II, in this volume.

⁴⁴ 'Arab League condemns broad Western bombing campaign in Libya', *Washington Post*, 20 Mar. 2011.

⁴⁵ 'France says it gave arms to the rebels in Libya', *New York Times*, 29 June 2011; 'Qatar admits sending hundreds of troops to support Libya rebels', *The Guardian*, 26 Oct. 2011; 'Turkey reveals quiet rebel payments', *Wall Street Journal*, 24 Aug. 2011; 'Libya conflict: British and French soldiers help rebels prepare Sirte attack', *The Guardian*, 25 Aug. 2011; 'Sudan armed Libyan rebels, says President Bashir', BBC News, 26 Oct. 2011, <<http://www.bbc.co.uk/news/world-africa-15471734>>; and United Nations, Security Council, Final report of the Panel of Experts established pursuant to Security Council resolution 1973 (2011) concerning Libya, 17 Feb. 2012, annex to S/2012/163, 20 Mar. 2012.

⁴⁶ International Crisis Group (ICG), *Popular Protests in North Africa and the Middle East (VII): The Syrian Regime's Slow-motion Suicide*, Middle East/North Africa Report no. 109 (ICG: Brussels, 13 July 2011). On the policies of arms-exporting countries on supplying states affected by the Arab Spring see chapter 6, section II, in this volume.

⁴⁷ Abdo, G., 'How Iran keeps Assad in power in Syria', *Foreign Affairs*, 25 Aug. 2011; British Foreign and Commonwealth Office, 'Britain's relations with Iran', [n.d.], <<http://www.fco.gov.uk/en/global-issues/mena/017-iran/>>; 'Iran helping Syrian regime crack down on protesters, say diplomats', *The Guardian*, 9 May 2011; and Dagres, H., 'Viewpoint: Iran looms large in Syria conflict', Middle East Voices, 22 Mar. 2011, <<http://www.middleeastvoices.com/2012/03/viewpoint-iran-looms-large-in-syria-conflict-25664/>>.

⁴⁸ 'Russia sending warships to its base in Syria', Reuters, 28 Nov. 2011, <<http://af.reuters.com/article/egyptNews/idAFL5E7MS1XT20111128>>.

⁴⁹ On proposals for a UN arms embargo on Syria see chapter 10, section III, in this volume.

⁵⁰ International Crisis Group (note 46).

all Syrian exile opposition parties in June. Turkey was also the FSA's foremost supporter, as it hosted and protected FSA leader al-Asaad and tolerated the use of its territory as an area of retreat for the FSA.⁵¹

*Third-party involvement*⁵²

In addition to directly supporting parties to the various conflicts in the Arab Spring, the international community was also active in searching for solutions to these conflicts. As with external support, third-party involvement was directed to both high-casualty countries. It also occurred in one intermediate-violence country: Yemen.

In Libya, Russia attempted to mediate between the government and the NTC. Kirsan Ilyumzhinov, a former Russian regional governor and president of the World Chess Federation, was sent on several official missions to Libya in June.⁵³ His meetings with Gaddafi, as well as with the rebels—which came weeks after bombing had commenced, and appeared not to have been coordinated with NATO—did not result in any substantial outcome. Regional organizations were initially hesitant and internally divided concerning the no-fly zone. The African Union (AU) tried to mediate in Libya, but since none of its proposals included Gaddafi's departure they were flatly rejected by the NTC.⁵⁴

In Syria, the Arab League initially supported Assad's proposed reforms. However, as the violence against civilians increased, the League gradually adapted its position, first urging Assad to end the violence and then attempting to establish a dialogue between the parties involved. Faced with ongoing violence, the League suspended Syria's membership in November. Threatened with economic sanctions and further political isolation, Assad agreed to a peace plan on 19 December.⁵⁵ Under the terms of the plan, the League sent an observer mission to monitor and report on the situation in Syria. However, the opposition considered this mission to be biased. In early 2012 it was suspended.⁵⁶

In Yemen, the GCC, supported by the UN, repeatedly negotiated with President Saleh in order to secure his resignation. These efforts proved fruitful and led to a handover of power in February 2012. Yemen's involvement in the fight against AQAP in close cooperation with the USA makes it a special case. However, as both the protests and the violence escalated, the

⁵¹ 'Assad has less than week to heed reforms call—Turkey', Reuters, 20 June 2011; and 'In slap at Syria, Turkey shelters anti-Assad fighters', *New York Times*, 27 Oct. 2011.

⁵² On the term 'third-party involvement' see table 2.1, note e.

⁵³ 'Russia meets with NATO in new push for Libyan peace', *New York Times*, 4 July 2011.

⁵⁴ 'Libyan rebels reject African Union proposal as fighting rages', CNN, 11 Apr. 2011, <http://articles.cnn.com/2011-04-11/world/libya.war_1.leader-moammar-gadhafi-libyan-people-african-union>.

⁵⁵ '3 killed as Syria urged to implement peace plan', *Agence France-Presse*, 20 Dec. 2011.

⁵⁶ On the Arab League Observer Mission to Syria see chapter 3, section II, in this volume.

USA eventually supported the GGC plan and urged Saleh to resign.⁵⁷ At the same time, the USA continued to cooperate with the Yemeni Government and conducted a number of air strikes against AQAP in Yemen.

Conclusions

The outcomes of the first year of the Arab Spring were mixed. There were examples of regime change but also cases where popular resistance was repressed. Nevertheless, Arab politics has been changed by this historically unique series of events.

There was a clear connection between the types of demand and the number of deaths: where the protesters demanded regime change, fatalities reached intermediate or high levels (see table 2.1). In addition, monarchies—regimes based on a single leader or family—were more susceptible to successful challenge than traditional monarchies or other regime types, at least in 2011. Egypt, Syria, Tunisia and Yemen are all in the first category, while Jordan, Morocco, Saudi Arabia and the Gulf states belong to the second. Notable exceptions include Bahrain, where a traditional monarchy was shaken but maintained power with external support, and Algeria, where a military authoritarian regime faced mostly modest demands. The most open Arab countries, including Lebanon, the Palestinian territories and Iraq, encountered fewer popular uprisings on domestic issues. In the Palestinian territories, demonstrators sought greater unity within the Palestinian community, rather than regime change.

International reactions varied, with external support limited to a few cases. Western powers, notably France and the USA, initially supported governments in Egypt and Tunisia but then began to push for change. In the case of Libya, they immediately took an active stand against the regime, with the UN's approval and NATO as the instrument. In Syria, the Western powers were positioned against China and Russia, both of which became increasingly critical of the international use of force. The scope for third-party involvement in solving the crises was remarkably limited, and serious negotiations only occurred in Yemen.

The role of neighbouring countries and regional organizations was important. In particular, the Arab League helped promote international involvement in Libya, and gave regional legitimacy to the first forceful UN application of the principle of the international responsibility to protect civilians. The Arab League attempted to hammer out an agreement on Syria, but its efforts were obstructed by both the Syrian Government and opposition groups. In Yemen, the GCC also pursued a mediating role.

⁵⁷ Carmichael, L., 'US watches Yemen chaos with growing concern', Agence France-Presse, 26 May 2011; and Amnesty International (note 10), p. 25.

The events of 2011 took place against a background of profound divisions in the Arab world. The prevalence of unrepresentative regimes, with no record of solving the problems faced by their populations, fuelled revolts. Monocracies had little space in which to make political concessions and quickly found themselves isolated domestically, regionally and internationally. The use of modern as well as traditional forms of communication exposed these regimes' fragility and stimulated further action.⁵⁸ The message of the Arab Spring is thus not just one for the Arab world but has implications for regimes globally.

⁵⁸ See also e.g. Melvin, N. and Umaraliev, T., 'New social media and conflict in Kyrgyzstan', SIPRI Insights on Peace and Security no. 2011/1, Aug. 2011, <http://books.sipri.org/product_info?c_product_id=429>.