

Committee/Council: Political Committee
Issue: Promoting order for regimes in transition
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Introduction

Recently the Middle East region and North Africa have been going through a political uprising. Demonstrations and protests are present in countries such as Egypt, Libya, Yemen, Tunisia, Syria, Iran, Bahrain, and many more Arab states. While some countries have overthrown the government, the others have been making some governmental changes.

Even though the initial wave of protests was seen in Egypt and Tunisia, countries like Bahrain, Yemen, Jordan and Saudi Arabia followed the revolution quickly. The rebellions are all pre-democratic and are against the autocratic dictatorships. The civil resistance grows widely involving violence, strikes, attacks, marches and public demonstrations. The revolutions in the Middle East region called “Arab Spring” are different than other revolutions, which happened in the past and caused also regime changes in countries, because the spread of Arab Spring is based on social media.

Since the uprising has started, lots of people have been dying in the most brutal and violent ways. According to the researches, the death toll has reached thousands of people. Due to the chaotic environment of the countries, people cannot meet their basic needs, and they do not live under safe conditions. Our job as the Political Committee will be to find ways to promote order and security in countries, which are now transitioning their regimes.

Definition of Key-Terms

Arab Spring: a series of anti-government uprisings in various countries in North Africa and the Middle East, beginning in Tunisia in December 2010. [1]

Propaganda: information, ideas, opinions or images, often only giving one part of an argument, which are broadcast, published or in some other way spread with the intention of influencing people's opinions. [2]

No-fly zone: an area above a country which aircraft from other countries may not enter without risking attack. [3]

Embargo: an order to temporarily stop something, especially trading or giving information. [4]

Inflation: a persistent, substantial rise in the general level of prices related to an increase in the volume of money and resulting in the loss of value of currency. [5]

Background Information

According to researches that are done on this topic, it is clear that there are many reasons behind these revolutions. The uprisings in Middle East countries have started due to the unbearable economic situation, political repression, censorship and other reasons.

Inflation

In the countries where Arab Spring has occurred, the prices of fuel, food, electricity, rent and transportation increased enormously, while the wages of the people almost stayed the same. Due to spiraling prices, people could not manage to meet their daily expenses. As a result, the rates of street crimes increased and corruption occurred.

Unemployment and Poverty

The unemployment rates are very high in countries in Middle East and North Africa and this causes the people to rebel. For example in Egypt, lots of graduates are jobless, and during the uprising they also protested Mubarak's

regime and economic policies. They criticized the government's inability to serve the people with job opportunities. Similar conflicts occurred in countries with high unemployment rates such as: Yemen (%35) and Libya (%30). The majority of people who live in Middle East countries earn less than \$2 a day. They rely on government-based education, energy sources, food production, health care, and transportation facilities, because they are cheaper than the private sector. However the Middle Eastern governments adopted neo-liberal economic policies, and privatized the institutions, thereby causing inaccessibility for the majority of people. This situation caused wide social gaps and tension between the different social classes.

Political/Religious Oppression

In countries like Bahrain, Saudi Arabia, Syria, Iran and Libya unjust control of a group of people and political repression were two of the main reasons of people's reactions. Also religious groups' governance led to some significant conflicts in the nations. For example, in Algeria in 1991 The Front for Islamic Salvation (FIS) was elected for presidency. The president Bendjedid called on the Algerian military for a military take over. Then the army took control, banned the religious activities in the country and attacked the armed supporters of FIS including police and civilians. The army's bloody attacks to Islamists lasted until 2002, leaving behind 200,000 dead Algerians and approximately 15,000 disappeared people. Also in Bahrain there is tension between the majority Shiites and minority Sunnis.

Absence of Political Participation

In the abovementioned countries authoritarian regimes and dictatorships ban and even punish any opposition to the current regime. Thus the freedom of speech is limited by punishment and censorship. The lack of political opposition movements creates an unhealthy political life and for that reason the prisons in Middle East countries are full of political prisoners. When anti-government protests started in Libya, the dictator Moammar Gaddafi didn't let the people express their views and address their problems freely. He

organized attacks on rebels and killed civilians because of their ideals and beliefs. The Gaddafi regime suppressed people's right to govern themselves and the so called "People's Committees" were never active. Nepotism and cronyism led the society to realize they needed a political reform.

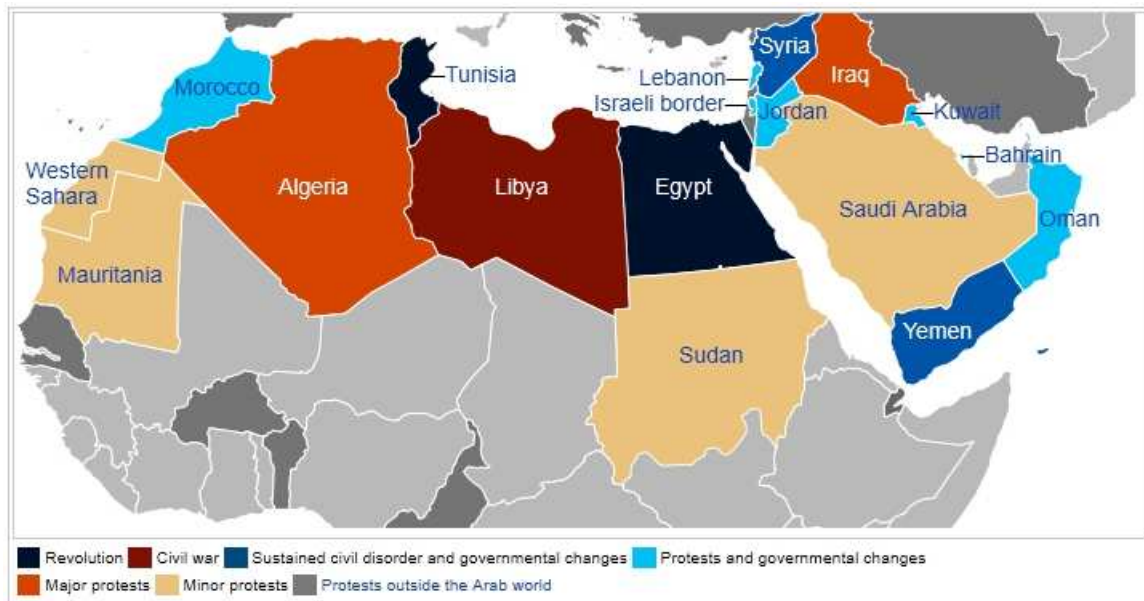
Foreign Interference

Middle East is a region where foreign interference has always been active. Nowadays revolutionists direct their anger at US's foreign policy. The US is infamous for its support to dictatorships in the Middle East, and the people think that Western intervention is the biggest obstacle to settle peace in the region. They protest the foreign interference by burning their flags during the marches. Foreign interference affected Lebanon severely. Israel supported Christian militias whereas Syria armed and aided "Hezbollah" who are Shia militants. Powers like Russia, US and France benefited most from the crisis in Lebanon since the money from the arms trade flowed to them.

Censorship

In the Middle East the young population, aged under 30, makes up more than the 50% of the population, and the youth expresses its voice through mostly Internet. Most of the governments in the Middle East region suppress the voice of the youth and do not tackle their problems. When the people started to make protests by using the Internet, the autocrats silenced them by banning or censoring TV programs, books, newspapers, radio as well as Facebook, Twitter, blogs, other social media networks and every internet site that has "sexual, provocative or harmful information and un-Islamic content".

Major Countries and Organizations Involved



http://www.google.com/imgres?q=arab+spring+map&hl=en&sa=X&biw=1018&bih=630&itbm=isch&prmd=imvns&itbnid=bEdV41fJAJGYM:&imgrefurl=http://spikethedragon.wordpress.com/2012/04/03/arab-spring/&docid=FB179KICisOZYM&imgurl=http://spikethedragon.files.wordpress.com/2012/04/arab-spring-map.jpg&w=720&h=381&e=WIP4T_aki_4ml_h0e1qU3-Bg&zoom=1&ictrc&dur=216&sq=105599890835835444819&page=1&itbnh=105&itbw=198&start=0&ndsp=13&ved=1r-429_r0s:0:175&tx=141&ty=66

Tunisia

When the street vendor set himself on fire on 17 December 2010, violent street demonstrations throughout Tunisia started. During the 24-year-old autocracy of Zine El Abidine Ben Ali, thousands of people suffered from food inflation, unemployment and poverty. The revolution in Tunisia caused thousands of injuries and deaths mostly by the police forces' attacks against revolutionists. At the end Ben Ali escaped to Saudi Arabia and ended his period of reign. After that a state of emergency was announced, and a coalition government was formed, which was dominated by Ben Ali's political party, the Constitutional Democratic Rally (RCD). The few non-RCD members resigned in a very short time, and this again started protests in the country. Mohamed Ghannouch, the prime minister of Tunisia, removed all the RCD members from the council. First RCD was suspended and a short time after that it was dissolved. Protests continued, and Ghannouch resigned leaving his place to Beji Caid el Sebsi. In October parliamentary elections were held, and Ennahda Islamist Party won. However they fell due to a lack of upright majority. Following that the National Assembly gathered to work on a new

constitution. In December Moncef Marzouk, a human rights activist, was elected as the president of Tunisia by the constituent assembly, and Hamadi Jebali who was the leader of the Ennhanda Islamist Party as the prime minister. In 2012 Islamist extremists kept attacking police and security forces. Recently it was decided to punish former president Ben Ali with life imprisonment. However he is currently in Saudi Arabia under protection.

Egypt

Egypt is the second country, which experienced a revolution leading Tunisia. The Egyptian revolution was different than the Tunisian revolution in many ways. The protests in Egypt started on 27th of January, and after that the President Mubarak and the government tried to cut the nation's internet access so that the protestors would not be able to spread out by the way of media. On that day tens of thousands of people protested and this caused President Hosni Mubarak to dismiss the government and create a new cabinet, and appoint a vice president for the first time after 30 years. On tenth of February Mubarak announced that he left all his power to his vice president. However very soon he claimed he was still the president of the country. Protests continued vigorously, and an oligarchy of Egyptian army officials supported these ongoing protests thus strengthening the political revolt. Finally Mubarak lost his 30-year-old power over the most populated Arab country. Now Egypt is going through a transitional period and three different political groups are competing to rise to power: the Muslim Brotherhood organization, the oligarchy of the armed forces, and the youth who are mostly reformer and secular.

Libya

The Libyan civil war started on 15 February 2011 between the forces loyal to Muammer Gaddafi and those seeking to overthrow the Gaddafi government and hold democratic elections in the region. The peaceful protests turned into serious uprising when Gaddafi opposed the protestors by military force. Rebels' initial aim was to take control of Tripoli, and while trying to do that

they established the National Transitional Council”, a new government in Benghazi. United Nations imposed sanctions against Gaddafi and his family. Soon after European Union approved a package of sanctions including a travel ban to the region and an arms embargo. France recognizes Libyan National Council and Libya immediately suspends its relations with France. On March 17 United Nations Security Council adopts Resolution 1973 and authorizes a no-fly zone over Libya and makes sure “all necessary measures” will be taken to protect civilians in Libya. Two days after this France, United Kingdom and United States intervened in Libya and made a bombing campaign against Gaddafi supporters. Following the act, 27 states from Europe and Middle East joined these countries. After a long bloody period of fighting, rebels captured Tripoli and ended Gaddafi’s 42-year-old autocracy. The last battle happened on 20 October in Sirte and the National Liberation Army killed Gaddafi in his hometown. Three days later National Transitional Council (NTC) announced that Libya is finally “liberated” and elections are going to be held within eight months. However, rebel forces in Benghazi were not content with the pace and operation of NTC. So the deputy head of NTC, Abdel Hafiz Ghoga, resigned. In March NTC officials in oil-rich region Benghazi opposed the center NTC in Tripoli and this created tension in the country. Recently in June 2012, the government tried to control militias, which were densely present in the West. A pro-autonomy group ransacked the election commission building in Benghazi. Due to the disorder in the country the council postponed the elections for naming a prime minister and rewriting the constitution.

Yemen

After the uprisings in the North African region, Yemenis started to demonstrate against their government. The people in Yemen were fed up by the corruption in the government, the proposed constitutional amendment, horrible economic conditions and unemployment. Yemenis have always been peaceful in their demonstrations against the military and government until the clan of Sheikh Ahmar started to act. Sheikh Ahmar’s aim was to enforce his own clan’s wishes. In the capital Sana’a the President Ali Abdullah Saleh was

wounded during a bombing in his palace. This act caused the death of hundreds of demonstrators and Saleh's evacuation to Saudi Arabia. Finally Saleh agreed to the proposal of Gulf Cooperation of Yemen and promised to resign.

Syria

In March 2011, protests began in Deraa and Damascus aiming to free political prisoners. Security forces shot numerous people in Deraa, and this led the protests to spread nationwide. The government finds temporary solutions to stop the political unrest. President Assad released a lot of political prisoners, and dismissed the government, while still calling the protestors "Israeli agents". In May the government sent tanks to several cities in order to fight against the anti-regime protestors. United States and the European Union set sanctions against Syria. President Assad announced amnesty for political prisoners. After the mass demonstrations in Hama, President Assad sent in troops to restore order. During the operation lots of people lost their lives and it started to be called as the "Hama massacre". Over 10,000 people fled to Turkey and the activists met in Istanbul for taking effective measures. Meanwhile in August US and its allies invited Mr. Assad to step down, and in October Russia and China vetoed UN resolution "condemning Syria". The Arab League voted to suspend Syria for not fulfilling their job to implement an Arab peace plan and imposed sanctions. Twin suicide bombs in Damascus killed 44 people causing a panic in the region. In February 2012, China and France blocked a UN SC draft resolution on Syria. The Syrian government increased attacks on Homs, and UN reported that around 7,500 people died in total. Un envoy Kofi Annan prepared a peace plan with the support of China and France, however the violence continued. UN Security Council condemned Syria's use of heavy weaponry and the civilian killings in Houla. Some countries such as UK, France, Italy, Canada and more expelled Syrian diplomats in protest. Recently Turkey changed its peace terms with Syria after Syria shot a Turkish plane that entered its territory. It stated that if Syrian troops approaches Turkish borders, they would be seen as a "military threat". Nato supported Turkey strongly concerning its decision.

Bahrain

In February 2011 protests began in Manama following the revolutions in Tunisia and Egypt. A security crackdown caused a number of protestors' deaths. The government banned two political parties, which represented Shias. In November the government agreed that "excessive force" was used against the protestors who supported democracy. In February 2012 protestors celebrated the anniversary of the start of the mass demonstrations. Protests continued throughout the whole spring. In June the Bahraini government eased the punishments against the imprisoned anti-government protestors by either acquitting them or shortening their imprisonment.

International Monetary Fund

The International Monetary Fund stated that it is fully committed to supporting countries, which have experienced Arab Spring. Masoud Ahmad, Director of the IMF's Middle East and Central Asia Department, stated recently that:"In the Arab Spring countries, political transition, pressing social demands and an adverse external environment have combined to increase the near-term risks to macro-economic stability. Events in 2011 have proved the transition is not going to be as easy as initially anticipated."

<http://gulfnews.com/business/economy/arab-spring-nations-have-limited-policy-options-imf-1.1017274>

Timeline of Events

Date	Description of event
17 December 2010	Protests begin in Tunisia when a fruit seller Mohammed Bouazizi sets himself in fire, because the police confiscate his card since he doesn't have a permit.
14 January 2011	The Tunisian President who has been ruling the country for

	more than two decades flees to Saudi Arabia, ending his dictatorship.
25 January 2011	Egyptian anti-government demonstrators begin mass protests on Tahrir Square in Cairo.
3 February 2011	Similar mass demonstrations start in Yemen against President Ali Abdullah Saleh.
11 February 2011	The President of Egypt Hosni Mubarak resigns after a period of protests against him.
14 February 2011	Mass protests begin in Bahrain and last for a long time. Troops from Saudi Arabia intervene and a government crackdown puts an end to the demonstrations.
15 February 2011	After a human-rights activist is arrested, in Benghazi protests begin in Libya.
5 March 2011	The rebels take control of Benghazi and appoint the country's official representatives from themselves.
16 March 2011	People start to protest in Syria against the four-decade long rulers, Bashar Assad and his father. The government responds with violent attacks.
17 March 2011	United Nations Security Council authorizes a no-fly zone on Libya. Two days after that NATO airstrikes begin.
3 June 2011	Yemeni president Saleh is injured in an explosion at his palace. Saleh leaves Yemen and goes to Saudi Arabia for medical treatment refusing to give up on his power.

3 August 2011	Former Egyptian President is put on trial.
21 August 2011	Libyan rebels capture Tripoli, the capital city and Gadhafi escapes to hide.
20 October 2011	Near his hometown in Sirte, Moammar Gadhafi is killed.
23 October 2011	Tunisia holds the first elections among all Arab Spring countries. The Islamic Party Ennahda wins.
23 November 2011	Yemen's president Ali Abdullah Saleh resigns. In Bahrain, security forces use excessive force against protestors including torture. The king promises reforms.
28 November 2011	Egypt holds its first democratic elections after Mubarak's term. The Muslim Brotherhood wins the early phases of voting.
20 December 2011	Women protest in Egypt against human rights violations.
10 January 2012	President of Syria blames foreigners for provoking the protestors.
3 February 2012	Syrian government attacks Homs and kills lots of people.
27 February 2012	President of Yemen, Mr. Saleh resigns.
23-24 May 2012	Egyptians voted for the presidential elections.
25 May 2012	The Syrian government killed a lot of people in Houla by carrying out a massacre.

02 June 2012	Hosni Mubarak was sentenced to life in prison.
13 June 2012	Former Tunisian president Ben Ali was sentenced to life in prison.
24 June 2012	Mohammed Morsi from the Muslim Brotherhood won the presidential elections in Egypt.
12 July 2012	The Syrian army carried out a massacre in Tremseh, killing 225 civilians.

Relevant UN Treaties, Resolutions and Events

A/HRC/16/L.32

S/RES/2040

S/RES/2051

S/RES/2052

S/RES/2042

S/RES/2043

S/RES/1970

A/HRC/RES/S-15/1

S/RES/1973

Previous Attempts to Solve the Issue

Many Western countries showed their support for the protestors' acts during the Arab Spring. On 17 March 2011 Resolution 1973 was adopted in the Security Council by 10 votes in favor and 5 abstentions. The resolution supported an "immediate ceasefire" in Libya and authorized a no-fly zone. It also encouraged any attempts to protect civilians including foreign intervention. Leading the resolution, a NATO coalition was made in order to intervene in Libya and stabilize the situation. France, United Kingdom and United States led the operation mostly; however countries including Turkey,

Canada, Netherlands, Spain, United Arab Emirates and more supported the NATO intervention.

Possible Solutions

Human rights violations are the major concern about the people in Middle East and North Africa. In countries, which have been experiencing the Arab Spring millions of people do not have access to their basic rights. Non-governmental organizations and Member States should cooperate on raising the education level in those countries, as well as providing them with proper health care. Another important point is that people should be able to live in a healthy, safe environment. For that to happen, there must be a ceasefire in every Arab country as soon as possible. For a healthy transition, democratic transition governments may be a solution and finally democratic elections when the country is ready. Also Arab Spring countries have a devastated economy, and economy plans can be created including microcredit projects and voluntary funds.

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