

Timeline of the Arab Spring

Dec. 17, 2010

Tunisia

A 26-year-old fruit vendor named Mohamed Bouazizi sets himself on fire in an act of protest after police confiscate the produce stand he was operating without a permit; he later dies of his injuries. Public outrage prompts nationwide protests.

Jan. 14, 2011

Tunisia

After weeks of violent protests, President Zine al-Abidine Ben Ali flees to Saudi Arabia, ending 23 years of authoritarian rule.

Jan. 25, 2011

Egypt

Inspired by the success of demonstrations in Tunisia, tens of thousands of protesters gather in Tahrir Square, in central Cairo, demanding the resignation of President Hosni Mubarak, who has been in power since 1981.

Feb. 3, 2011

Yemen

Mass protests begin against President Ali Abdullah Saleh, who has ruled the country for more than 30 years.

Feb. 11, 2011

Egypt

After 18 days of protests by Egyptians from across the political spectrum, Mubarak resigns. He transfers his powers to the Egyptian military, which promises to hold elections.

Feb. 14, 2011

Bahrain

Mass protests begin. Over the next few weeks, the government, led by King Khalifa, cracks down with the help of troops from neighboring Saudi Arabia.

Feb. 15, 2011

Libya

After the arrest of a human-rights lawyer, protests begin in the city of Benghazi. Over the next month, the demonstration evolves into an armed uprising against Muammar el-Qaddafi, who has ruled Libya since taking power in a coup in 1969.

March 16, 2011

Syria

Protesters calling for political freedoms take to the streets in Deraa. Demonstrations quickly spread to other cities, including the capital, Damascus. The government of President Bashar al-Assad, whose family has ruled Syria for four decades, responds with a violent crackdown.

March 17, 2011

Libya

With Qaddafi's forces on the verge of defeating the rebels, the United Nations authorizes a no-fly zone in Libya. Two days later, Western airstrikes against Qaddafi's troops begin. Over the next few weeks, the intervention turns the tide of the conflict.

Aug. 21, 2011

Libya

Rebel troops enter the capital, Tripoli, and Qaddafi goes into hiding. He is found and killed by a mob in October.

Oct. 23, 2011

Tunisia

In the first election held since the Arab Spring revolts began, Tunisians elect a moderate Islamist party.

Timeline of the Arab Spring (continued)

Nov. 23, 2011

Yemen

President Saleh steps down, after a political negotiation paves the way for his resignation.

June 2, 2012

Egypt

Mubarak is found guilty on charges of accessory to murder and attempted murder of protesters in the 2011 uprising. He is sentenced to life in prison.

June 24, 2012

Egypt

After two rounds of voting and a very close run-off, Mohamed Morsi—a member of the Muslim Brotherhood, an Islamist group—is declared the winner in the nation’s first democratic presidential election. The previous January, in the country’s first parliamentary election since Mubarak’s ouster, Islamist parties won 70 percent of the seats.

Summer 2012

Syria

The death toll soars as opposition forces and government troops battle for control of major cities, including Syria’s largest city, Aleppo.

Nov. 22, 2012

Egypt

President Morsi issues a decree giving himself broad new powers, including placing himself above the authority of all courts.

June 2013

Syria

The United Nations announces that the death toll in this civil war has topped 90,000 and that more than 1 million Syrians are refugees. Opposition forces are becoming more fractured and increasingly dominated by extremist fighters, many with connections to terrorist groups like Al Qaeda.

July 3, 2013

Egypt

In response to mass demonstrations, the military removes President Morsi from office and detains him in a secret location. The coup prompts Morsi’s supporters to take to the streets, demanding he be restored to his office. Weeks of protests follow, as Western nations, including the U.S., try to negotiate a peaceful solution.

Aug. 15, 2013

Egypt

The military conducts a violent crackdown on protesters who support ousted President Morsi. The daylong operation to clear out the protesters’ encampments on the streets of Cairo leaves more than 600 Egyptians dead and close to 4,000 wounded.

Aug. 19, 2013

Egypt

A court orders the release of former president, Hosni Mubarak, who has been imprisoned for more than two years. Mubarak, 85, had been sentenced to life in prison for his role in the deaths of unarmed demonstrators in the protests that led to his ouster. Three days after the court order, Mubarak is released from prison and allowed to remain under house arrest.

Aug. 21, 2013

Syria

A chemical-weapons attack, believed to have been carried out by the government, kills more than 1,000 people in a Damascus suburb. The U.S. considers taking military action in response. More than 100,000 Syrians have died in the civil war and more than 2 million are refugees.