

**YEAR OF REBELLION**  
**THE STATE OF HUMAN RIGHTS IN THE  
MIDDLE EAST AND NORTH AFRICA**

AMNESTY INTERNATIONAL



Thousands of anti-government protesters march in Alexandria, Egypt, 11 February 2011.





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Amnesty International supporters in the UK during the Global Day of Action for Egypt. London, February 2011.



# INTRODUCTION

2011 was a year without precedent for the peoples of the Middle East and North Africa region. It was a year in which millions of people of all ages and backgrounds, especially the young and often with women to the fore, flooded on to the streets to demand change. Often, they continued to do so in the face of extreme violence meted out by the military and security forces of those who claimed to govern – and who had continued to enjoy and to squander the fruits of power – in their very name.

Dubbed the “Arab Spring”, in fact the protests brought together in common cause people from many different communities – certainly Arabs for the most part but also Amazigh, Kurds and others. It was as if a tightly wound coil of frustration caused by years of oppression, human rights violations, misrule and corruption was suddenly unspung, releasing an energy and power that ordinary people until then had neither experienced nor realized that they possessed.

The flames of protest, literally and tragically, were sparked by the desperate act of one young man – Mohamed Bouazizi – in the small Tunisian town of Sidi Bouzid. His injuries proved fatal before he could see the maelstrom of popular fury that his act touched off. That maelstrom succeeded, in turn, in toppling the long-standing rulers of Tunisia, Egypt, Libya and Yemen who, until 2011, had seemed invincible.

It was a year like no other, when the whole region shook as ordinary people summoned up the courage to provide a demonstration of “people’s power” such as the region had never seen before and, incredibly, to sustain it even when the might of the state and its repressive security forces were deployed against them. This failed in Tunisia and then in Egypt, where peaceful protests triumphed, albeit at heavy human cost, while in Libya the result was a slide into armed conflict in which international intervention tipped the scales against the oppressive regime of Colonel Mu’ammār al-Gaddafi. In Yemen, the President’s obstinate refusal until almost the end of the year to stand down despite mass anti-government protests and increasing levels of repression and violence exacerbated the country’s already deep social, political and economic problems.

Bahrain’s rulers, backed by Saudi Arabia, faced down the protests by force, again at heavy human cost and deepening divisions, but ended the year committing to reform, reparation and reconciliation. Meanwhile, Syria teetered at the edge of civil war as its obdurate President, facing unprecedented

demands for change, used relentless brute force to crush the protests, but in doing so succeeded only in exposing further the rotten nature of his rule.

This report describes the events of this historic, tumultuous year, one which saw so much suffering and sadness but also spread so much hope within the region and beyond, to countries where other people face repression and everyday abuse of their human rights. Amnesty International too was challenged, as never before, to respond to the events by documenting the violations that were committed and, most of all, by mobilizing its members and supporters to extraordinary lengths in support and solidarity with the people in the streets of Cairo, Benghazi, Sana'a, Manama, Dera'a and elsewhere who were truly "in the frontline" in demanding reform, accountability and real guarantees for human rights. This report is dedicated to them, their suffering and their momentous achievements.

# TUNISIA

**“There is much excitement and hope, and apprehension too, here in Tunisia on the eve of the first real multi-party elections in the country’s history. This vote marks a real milestone as the first elections in the region since a wave of popular uprisings swept away three of the world’s longest-ruling autocrats in less than a year.”**

Donatella Rovera, Amnesty International’s Senior Crisis Response Advisor, writing from Tunis on 22 October 2011

When protests started in December 2010 in Sidi Bouzid, an unheard of place for many, no one could have predicted that they would lead to the fall of one of the most notorious police states in the Middle East and North Africa region. Yet on 14 January, after less than a month of largely peaceful protests, President Zine El Abidine Ben Ali fled to Saudi Arabia, abruptly ending 23 years of autocratic rule.

In the following weeks, mounting street pressure led to the resignation of Prime Minister Mohamed Ghannouchi. In the following months, protesters continued to demand more jobs, greater freedoms, and the trial of the former President, his family and officials seen as mired in and responsible for corruption. The success of the uprising gave Tunisians an historic opportunity to show the world that the “jasmine revolution” was not just about toppling President Ben Ali, but was also and most importantly driven by a demand for meaningful human rights reform.

The initial caretaker government and the government that took office after elections to the new National Constituent Assembly (NCA) in October took several positive steps to break with the abuses of the past. However, state institutions that long facilitated or practised human rights violations are yet to be reformed in such a way as to ensure that past abuses are properly investigated and to provide effective guarantees against their repetition.

The caretaker government signalled the new Tunisia’s intention to observe human rights by ratifying key international human rights treaties, including the Optional Protocol to the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights (ICCPR); the Optional Protocol to the Convention against Torture and Other Cruel, Inhuman or Degrading Treatment or Punishment; the International

***A year on from the  
"jasmine revolution"  
there are good grounds  
for hope***

Convention for the Protection of All Persons from Enforced Disappearance; and the Rome Statute of the International Criminal Court (ICC).

As well, in August the authorities adopted a law to better organize the legal profession. Judges, meanwhile, continued to press for reforms to the judicial system to allow greater judicial independence and reduce interference by the executive branch of government.

Significant steps were taken to relax the severe constraints on freedom of expression and association. In November, the new press law and the law on freedom of audiovisual communication lifted restrictions on newspapers and allowed journalists greater freedom, including by abolishing prison sentences as punishment for defamation. Defamation, however, remained a criminal offence punishable by large fines, as did "spreading false information" which had been defined as a crime and used by Ben Ali's government largely to repress dissent. In the run-up to the NCA elections in October, the authorities set up independent institutions to manage the poll, agreed to allow international monitors to observe the vote, accredited foreign journalists wishing to cover the elections, authorized 187 newly created periodicals and granted licences to 12 new radio stations. What a transformation.

Scores of formerly banned political parties, including the Ennahda (Renaissance) Islamist party and the Tunisian Workers' Communist Party, and NGOs previously denied registration, were allowed to legally register. By September, according to the Interior Ministry, 1,366 associations and 111 political parties had been authorized. The Constitutional Democratic Rally (RCD), Ben Ali's party, had been disbanded in March.

Running counter to this liberalizing trend, however, in August the caretaker government renewed the nationwide state of emergency indefinitely, thereby retaining restrictions on some fundamental rights. As well, the security forces continued to clamp down on protests that focused on the slow pace of reform, the need for greater economic and employment opportunities, and demands that officials connected with the former regime and the RCD be removed from office. They used tear gas and even live ammunition against protesters; in one incident, at least three people died and many others were injured. The security forces also prevented a sit-in protest in July, arresting some 47 people, several of whom were said to have been injured during arrest, and chasing away journalists and human rights activists. In September, several people were injured when police and anti-government protesters clashed at Kebili in south-west Tunisia.

There were also new allegations of torture and other ill-treatment by police and reports of beatings of protesters when they were forcibly dispersed. However, in May, the interim government allowed the UN Special Rapporteur on



torture to visit Tunisia for the first time in response to a request that had been pending since 1998.

Regrettably, no significant steps were taken by the new authorities to address the impunity for past human rights violations. Neither the police nor the judiciary, two of the institutions that had been directly responsible for or complicit in serious abuses, were made subject to significant reforms, except that the Interior Ministry dissolved the notorious Directorate for State Security (DSS) – known in Tunisia as the “political police” – in March. The DSS had been infamous for torturing detainees, close surveillance and intimidation of human rights defenders and independent journalists, and imposing restrictions on former political prisoners. The Ministry did not say what would be done in relation to DSS officials, prompting concern that they could escape justice and be transferred into other law enforcement units. In September, the Interior Ministry set out a “road map” for reform of the police, but made no reference to investigations or other action against police responsible for past abuses.

The Fact-Finding Commission set up to investigate human rights abuses committed during the uprising and in its aftermath (the Bouderbala Commission) issued some of its initial findings in July, but had not published its final report at the time of writing (early December 2011). The Commission also said it would not refer cases to the public prosecutor for investigation unless specifically asked to do so by individual lawyers. According to the interim government, at least 300 people died and 700 were injured during the uprising.

Trials, in their absence, of former President Ben Ali and members of his family on charges of corruption and drugs offences began in June. Ben Ali was sentenced later that month to 35 years’ imprisonment for embezzlement and misuse of state funds, and in July to an additional 15 years for drugs- and weapons-related offences. The former President was also among 139 former officials, including former Interior Ministers Rafik Haj Kacem and Ahmed Friaa, who were referred for military trial on charges arising from the killing and injuring of protesters between 17 December 2010 and 14 January 2011. However, families of victims and those injured were still waiting for justice.

Women’s rights saw some improvement. The interim government withdrew a number of reservations to the UN Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women in August, though it stressed the need to respect provisions of the Tunisian Constitution that refer to Islamic law. The withdrawal of the reservations was an important step towards gender equality and established a good precedent for other governments in the region. However, the Tunisian authorities have yet to bring national legislation into conformity with international law and standards and to eliminate discrimination against women in both law and practice.

People reading electoral posters in the centre of Tunis, 22 October 2011, the day before elections were held.









Other positive steps included the government's decision in April to allow women to use pictures in which they are wearing a veil to be used on personal ID cards, and to adopt the principle of parity between men and women on the electoral list. In September, a new NGO, the League for Tunisian Women Voters, was established with the aim of building alliances between women candidates for election to the NCA to work collaboratively against violations of women's rights.

The first democratic elections since Tunisia gained independence were held in October. Ennahda won the largest number of seats but not an overall majority. Representatives of more than 100 new political parties and dozens of independent candidates stood for election to the NCA, which is to develop a new Constitution as a prelude to parliamentary and presidential elections. In November, it appointed a transitional government, appointing representatives of Ennahda and the two other parties that won the most seats as President, Prime Minister and Speaker of the Assembly. Many women expressed concern that they were denied equal status with men and were marginalized by political parties, which put forward mostly men as their main candidates in the NCA election.

The "jasmine revolution" has brought significant improvements in human rights in Tunisia, but one year on many consider that the pace of change has been too slow. There is concern too about continuing rights violations by the security forces, albeit on a much reduced scale than under the Ben Ali regime. As a result of the revolution, prisoners of conscience and other political prisoners were released, and civil society organizations, the media and political parties were freed from many of the shackles of the past and allowed to legally register and operate. Tunisia also took important steps to sign, ratify or withdraw reservations to important international human rights treaties. Some national laws, including the repressive Press Code, were amended. Yet other repressive laws remain, including the Counter-terrorism Law. Impunity remains a key concern, particularly as many officials responsible for human rights violations committed during the revolution or in the preceding years remain in post. Tunisians still face high levels of unemployment and poverty, but a year on from the "jasmine revolution" there are good grounds for hope that the period of transition will bring a better future for all Tunisians.

# EGYPT

**“Since the morning I had felt that this was going to be a historic day... Like so many other Egyptians, until the very last minute I doubted Mubarak would actually show up to his trial until I saw him lying on the stretcher beside his sons in the courtroom.”**

Mohammed Lotfy, Amnesty International researcher, 3 August 2011

As 2011 was drawing to a close, Egypt was grappling with ongoing and fundamental political and economic changes. Mass protests against the ruling Supreme Council of the Armed Forces (SCAF), which resumed in the run-up to parliamentary elections that began on 28 November, highlighted the tensions gripping the country as it embarked on the transfer of power to civilian rule following the momentous uprising earlier in the year.

At the start of 2011, Egypt was a country whose people had been all but stifled by 30 years of oppressive emergency rule, ruthless repression of dissent, high levels of official corruption and endemic poverty. The security forces, hundreds of thousands strong, their commanders and political leaders, enjoyed almost total impunity for human rights violations that were committed routinely and extensively, including arbitrary arrests, torture and grossly unfair trials.

From 25 January 2011, however, the fear seemed to evaporate as thousands, then hundreds of thousands, then millions of Egyptians took to the streets to demand change. In 18 days, the country-wide mass demonstrations and the courage and determination of protesters succeeded in ousting Hosni Mubarak, President for 30 years. His enforced resignation, announced on 11 February, was greeted with cheers of joy by millions of Egyptians, including the thousands camped out in Cairo’s Tahrir Square, the place that had come to symbolize the “25 January Revolution” worldwide.

Yet, those history-making 18 days saw the commission of mass human rights violations by the outgoing regime. At least 840 people were killed and more than 6,000 were injured, mostly by the security forces and “thugs” hired by the authorities. Many protesters were shot dead with live ammunition fired into their upper body while they posed no threat to the lives of the security forces or others. In some cases, bystanders and passers-by were killed by reckless shooting by the security forces.







Demonstrators clash with police in central Cairo during a protest to demand the resignation of President Hosni Mubarak, 25 January 2011.

Thousands of activists were detained; many were tortured. Some were subjected to enforced disappearance for weeks; some remain missing and unaccounted for. Those targeted included human rights defenders, online activists, journalists, volunteers bringing supplies to protesters and doctors treating the injured. In many cases, violations were committed by the military police, heightening fears that torture and other ill-treatment will remain an endemic feature of Egypt's law enforcement apparatus unless those responsible for such abuses are held to account.

On 11 February, the military – in the form of the SCAF, headed by former Defence Minister Field Marshal Mohamed Hussein Tantawi – assumed power amid popular jubilation at the downfall of President Mubarak and the army's decision not to join with President Mubarak's police to shoot at protesters. As if by default, Egypt came under military rule, as it remains at the time of writing. On 30 March, following a referendum over constitutional amendments, the SCAF adopted a Constitutional Declaration setting out steps for the transfer of power to civilian government, starting with parliamentary elections and followed by writing a new Constitution.

In its early statements, the SCAF said that the armed forces would continue to protect “protesters regardless of their views”.<sup>1</sup> It also warned against public disorder or attempts to create dissent or disrupt the functioning of Egyptian institutions, a warning that was all too soon translated into assaults on the very human rights that it said it aimed to protect.

The SCAF introduced many reforms that impacted on human rights, some positively, some negatively. One of its first welcome steps was to disband State Security Investigations (SSI), the security police agency notorious for human rights violations, and release hundreds of administrative detainees. It also amended the law on political parties, allowing many more political parties to legally register and put forward candidates in national elections, and effectively lifted the ban on the formerly proscribed Muslim Brotherhood organization. However, there was widespread criticism of a new law on organizing elections on the grounds that it favoured the chances of members of the National Democratic Party (NDP) – the former ruling party disbanded after the uprising.

The new government also recognized independent trade unions and their right to form federations and join international federations. At the same time, however, the SCAF banned strikes under the new Law 34 of 2011.

On the negative side too, the SCAF maintained the state of emergency continuously in force since 1981 and in September confirmed that it would enforce in full the draconian Emergency Law (Law 162 of 1958) and extend it to criminalize acts such as blocking roads, broadcasting rumours and committing

“assault on freedom to work”. These changes directly threaten freedom of expression and association, and the rights to assembly and to strike – and even reverse reforms that the Mubarak government had felt obliged to make by public pressure in recent years.

Other tough new laws were introduced, such as the Law on Thuggery (Law No. 10 of 2011) enacted in March to criminalize intimidation, “thuggery” and disturbing the peace, doubling sentences already prescribed in the Penal Code and providing for the death penalty.

The SCAF further tightened restrictions on media freedom, warning newspaper editors and journalists against publishing anything critical of the armed forces without prior consultation and permission. As well, human rights NGOs were threatened with prosecution if they accepted funding from abroad without prior permission. Journalists, bloggers and judges were investigated by military prosecutors or imprisoned by military courts for criticizing the army’s human rights violations during the uprising and the lack of reform.

Some of the SCAF’s legal changes and policies targeting basic rights reinforced long-standing patterns of serious human rights violations, while others – such as subjecting women protesters to forced “virginity tests” – represented disturbing new forms of abuse.

From the end of February onwards, the armed forces used violence to forcibly disperse protesters on several occasions. They used tear gas and rubber bullets and fired into the air with live ammunition and accused those they detained of looting or damaging public or private property or other crimes. Many of those arrested were held only briefly, but others were held for days, sometimes in situations amounting to enforced disappearance. Some were tortured or otherwise ill-treated. In September, a video circulated on the internet showed two detainees being mocked, beaten and subjected to electric shocks with tasers by a group of army and police officers, provoking an outcry. In response, the SCAF said it had ordered an investigation but its outcome had not been made public at the time of writing this report.

On 19 November, riot police forcibly dispersed a sit-in at Cairo’s Tahrir Square by people injured during the “25 January Revolution” who were demanding the transfer of power to civilian rule and to receive reparations. Thousands of protesters gathered in the square in solidarity. Military forces and riot police cleared the square using excessive force, resulting in deaths and injuries of protesters. Protesters once again set up camp in the square in the run-up to the start of the elections on 28 November.

Since the armed forces were deployed on 25 January, referrals of civilians to military courts took place in many governorates and in August, the military judiciary said it had ruled on nearly 12,000 cases. All were convicted of

***The SCAF has fallen far short of satisfying the hopes and aspirations that were at the heart of the uprising***



charges such as violating the curfew, using violence and possessing weapons. Sentences ranged from several months in prison to the death penalty.

Military courts were also used to try people arrested while protesting and workers on strike, as well as those charged with “thuggery”, destruction of property, theft or assault. Some journalists were charged with “insulting the army”, then released.

The appearance of former President Hosni Mubarak in court on 3 August was symbolically important both as signalling the end of a long, dark era in Egypt and as a crucial first step towards ending impunity for human rights abuses. The trial, which was initiated after mounting pressure from mass protests, will be a major test of the new authorities’ commitment to delivering justice to the victims of the “25 January Revolution” and addressing impunity. So far, former security heads and other senior officials and officers have been prosecuted and put on trial for crimes committed during the uprising, but there has been no investigation into the decades of serious abuses by the now-disbanded SSI.

Women were at the forefront of the protests and demands for change during the heady days of the revolution, but since then there has been little improvement in their status and situation. They continue to be discriminated against in both law and practice, and nothing has been done to ensure their equitable participation in decision-making; indeed, in July the SCAF scrapped the quota system for women in the election law in favour of a requirement that each political party have at least one woman on its candidate list, though without requiring that they be included near the top of the list. Women’s representation in trade unions and other organizations also remains very low.

Almost one year on, the SCAF has fallen far short of satisfying the hopes and aspirations that were at the heart of the uprising. Protests against the SCAF in November led to the deaths of at least 45 protesters, including some shot dead with live ammunition, and hundreds of injuries. Riot police used methods all too familiar from Hosni Mubarak’s last days in power, including heavy and reckless use of tear gas and shot guns.

In short, despite promising to end the state of emergency, the SCAF has retained and extended the Emergency Law in a manner injurious to human rights. The abusive SSI has been disbanded but its methods, which saw people arbitrarily arrested and detained, tortured, and held without trial or tried unfairly before military courts, live on, mirrored by the security forces of the SCAF. Freedom of expression, association and assembly were promised, but the harsh reality is that criticism of the new authorities is not tolerated, activists are being targeted, and NGOs are being threatened with intrusive criminal investigations. Peaceful demonstrators continue to be forcibly dispersed, leading to clashes

with riot police and deaths. Greater political participation by all Egyptians was promised, yet women have again been marginalized. Many independent trade unions have been formed, but the authorities have banned strikes. A better future for all Egyptians was promised, but nearly one year on millions of people continue to live in slums and in poverty, and wait for their voices to be heard.

# LIBYA

**“Young and old, women and children, killed, injured, disappeared – every family we have met here in Misratah has had its share of pain and loss.”**

Amnesty International research team, Misratah, 25 May 2011

On 1 January 2011 it would have been hard to imagine that anti-government protests would spread across Libya and evolve by late February into an armed conflict that would transform the oil-rich North African state. Colonel Mu’ammarr al-Gaddafi was firmly in control, as he had been for 42 years, with most of his opponents silenced, in prison or in exile. Draconian legislation outlawed dissent and the establishment of independent organizations. Hundreds of political prisoners were being detained arbitrarily. Special courts were sentencing opponents after grossly unfair trials. Impunity for torture, extrajudicial executions and enforced disappearances was deeply entrenched. Calls for truth and justice by families of the some 1,200 detainees killed in the notorious Abu Salim Prison in 1996 were being ignored. Foreign nationals were living under risk of arrest, indefinite detention for “immigration offences” and torture and other ill-treatment. Discrimination against women existed in law and in practice. The death penalty and other cruel punishments such as flogging were prescribed for a wide range of “offences”.

Despite this grim human rights record, Libya had been welcomed back into the international fold after being a pariah state for decades, and in 2010 had even become a member of the UN Human Rights Council. Western governments sought Colonel al-Gaddafi’s help in controlling migration and countering-terrorism, and looked to benefit from access to Libya’s vast oil reserves.

As 2011 progressed and the internal conflict deepened, however, Colonel al-Gaddafi became increasingly isolated internally and internationally. In Benghazi, the opposition established a coalition authority, the National Transitional Council (NTC), which was declared to be a provisional government. On 26 February, the UN Security Council imposed sanctions on Colonel al-



Gaddafi and his family and referred Libya to the Prosecutor of the ICC. In March, a NATO-led international coalition began air strikes with the declared aim of “protecting civilians” from al-Gaddafi forces, then threatening to attack Benghazi.

After around eight months of conflict rife with war crimes and gross human rights violations, including indiscriminate attacks, extrajudicial executions, enforced disappearances, arbitrary detentions and torture, forces opposing Colonel al-Gaddafi had captured and killed him and established territorial control over the whole of the country. On 23 October, the NTC announced the liberation of Libya and a month later a new government was formed. In November, Saif al-Islam al-Gaddafi, the ICC-indicted son of the ousted Libyan leader, was captured.

The new government immediately faced the daunting task of restoring order, securing weapons stockpiles and implementing a process of disarmament. In addition, internal security remained a concern. Heavily armed militia were operating independently and on their own initiative, some of whom had been involved in extrajudicially executing perceived al-Gaddafi loyalists and alleged mercenaries. They were also carrying out widespread “arrests” of al-Gaddafi soldiers and alleged loyalists as well as foreign nationals suspected of being mercenaries, without warrants from the judicial authorities. Many of the thousands of individuals arrested in western Libya after late August, when Tripoli and nearby areas fell under NTC control, were beaten and otherwise ill-treated upon apprehension and in the first days of detention. A UN Secretary-General’s report in late November found that “an estimated 7,000 detainees were being held in prisons and makeshift detention centres, most of which are under the control of revolutionary brigades with no access to due process in the absence of a functioning police or judiciary”.

There was also the continuing danger posed by unexploded munitions in areas where attacks and armed confrontations had taken place. Al-Gaddafi forces planted anti-vehicle, anti-personnel and other mines in areas such as Misratah, Ajdabia and the Nafousa Mountain, and used cluster munitions – further endangering civilians.

On a more positive note, the NTC, in its “vision for a democratic Libya”, promised to respect all international human rights and international humanitarian law. In August, it issued a Constitutional Declaration enshrining these and other principles, including respect for fundamental freedoms, non-discrimination for all citizens – including on grounds of gender, race and language – and the rights to a fair trial and to seek asylum. NTC leaders also promised to amend all repressive legislation and abolish the parallel legal system of special courts – hallmarks of the al-Gaddafi regime. The new





Misratah after shelling by al-Gaddafi forces, 1 June 2011.

***The new authorities  
now face enormous  
challenges as the  
country enters a period  
of transition***

government now faces the task of translating these pledges into reality to render the judicial system into a true guardian of human rights and the rule of law.

Already, Libyans have enjoyed greater freedom of expression. For the first time in 42 years, they could speak their minds and openly voice their long suppressed criticism of the former regime, without fear of imprisonment, harassment and other persecution. After decades without independent organizations and political parties, Libya witnessed a mushrooming of civil society organizations, political groups and media outlets. Public criticism of some NTC members and decisions appeared to be tolerated. On the other hand, serious abuses by militia opposing al-Gaddafi forces, including extrajudicial executions, torture and arbitrary detention, were rarely condemned by the NTC.

For women, the quick evolution of anti-government protests into a fully fledged armed conflict decreased their frontline participation and visibility, although many contributed to opposition efforts and suffered as a result. Al-Gaddafi forces arrested women during the conflict and held several of them incommunicado at unrecognized places of detention. Some were beaten and otherwise ill-treated amid reports of rape. Women also contributed to efforts to send humanitarian aid to areas affected by fighting, prepared supplies for fighters, participated in demonstrations, distributed leaflets, and took great risks in sharing information about human rights violations with the outside world. Some women detained by pro-NTC forces in al-Zawiya, Tripoli and Misratah alleged that they had been sexually abused before or during arrest.

Representation of women in influential institutions remains low. In December, the NTC had only two women among its 61 publicly named members, and the new government included only two women among its 27 members. A worrying development in October was the public support expressed by the NTC's leader for polygamy, despite the negative connotation for those concerned about women's rights.

During the conflict, sub-Saharan Africans were particularly vulnerable to arbitrary arrest and violent attacks on account of their skin colour, following exaggerated reports of the use of "African mercenaries" by al-Gaddafi forces. Many had their homes raided, were arrested and were beaten and otherwise ill-treated by pro-NTC fighters. Black Libyans, particularly from the Tawargha region, seen as loyal to Colonel al-Gaddafi and used as a base for his troops when Misratah was besieged, were also at high risk of revenge attacks and arbitrary arrest. The 30,000 residents of Tawargha fled the city when it came under the control of armed fighters from Misratah and, fearing reprisals should they return, remain displaced in December.

Importantly, the NTC has called on its supporters to avoid revenge attacks and treat detainees with dignity. However, more needs to be done to address



racism and xenophobia and to counter notions that all sub-Saharan Africans, people from Tawargha and other groups are former “mercenaries” or were loyalists of Colonel al-Gaddafi.

One of most challenging tasks facing the new government is to address the legacy of impunity, entrenched for four decades, and to provide a remedy and reparations to the many victims of human rights violations and their families. The NTC has promised to investigate abuses committed by all sides to the conflict, including the alleged extrajudicial execution of Colonel al-Gaddafi and members of his family, and to bring those responsible to justice. However, effective mechanisms must now be established to adequately investigate all crimes under international law and other serious human rights violations. Evidence, such as archives and mass graves, needs to be secured and preserved – particularly in light of the stealing and burning of documents and ad hoc exhumations that took place after Tripoli fell to the NTC.

In short, the conflict in Libya has taken a heavy toll, with many casualties of civilians and fighters on both sides, and thousands of people subjected to arbitrary detention, torture, unlawful killing and other serious abuses. It caused great destruction to public and private property and infrastructure, and widespread hardship. Yet it also ended the long period of repressive rule under Colonel al-Gaddafi. The new authorities now face enormous challenges as the country enters a period of transition, but they have an unprecedented opportunity to address and remedy the many wrongs of the past and to build effective safeguards against their repetition.

# YEMEN

## **“The shooting started from different buildings around the same time and continued for more than 30 minutes.”**

An eyewitness describing to Amnesty International an attack on a protest camp in Sana'a on 18 March 2011, which reportedly left 52 people dead

As 2011 began, Yemen's government proposed constitutional changes that would enable the country's long-ruling President, Ali Abdullah Saleh, to retain power indefinitely and then possibly pass it on to his sons. The proposals sparked an almost immediate, furious outpouring of protest, with students, civil society activists and others rallying to attend a huge but peaceful demonstration in Sana'a, the capital, on 22 January. The next day there were further protests after police detained Tawakkol Karman, President of the NGO Women Journalists without Chains, to which the security forces responded with violence. Mass protests then began in the capital and other cities.

The sheer size and scale of the demonstrations, which quickly demanded that President Saleh leave office, appeared to take the government by surprise. In apparent concession, the President announced in early February that he would not stand for re-election but intended to remain in office until 2013. He also proposed to begin negotiations with the Joint Meeting Parties, a coalition of six opposition parties. This fell far short of protesters' demands and so fuelled the flames.

Protest camps were established in Sana'a and Ta'izz, later dubbed "Change Squares", and tens of thousands of people continued to demonstrate in cities across the country, from al-Hudaydah in the west to al-Mukallah in the east, and from Sa'dah in the north to Aden in the south, despite increasingly violent responses by the security forces and a mounting toll of killings. President Saleh invited the opposition to form a new government but insisted that he would remain in power, scotching any realistic possibility of a deal.

The President became increasingly isolated after government snipers killed at least 52 peaceful protesters in "Change Square" in Sana'a on 18 March. Some senior government ministers and others resigned and General Ali Mohsen, commander of the army's First Brigade, announced that he and his troops would back the protesters. In response, President Saleh dismissed the cabinet and imposed a 30-day state of emergency which suspended the

Constitution, increased media censorship, and extended security forces' powers of arrest and detention and to ban street protests.

As conditions deteriorated, the Saudi Arabia-dominated Gulf Cooperation Council (GCC) sought to mediate between President Saleh and the parties opposing him. President Saleh refused at least three times to sign a proposed GCC agreement after saying he would do so, sparking further demonstrations and killings of protesters.

The crisis deepened. Armed men belonging to tribes that came out in opposition to the President occupied some government buildings and there were armed clashes between government forces and the powerful tribal group led by Sadeq al-Ahmar. This continued until intra-tribal mediation secured a temporary ceasefire in late May. At the same time, however, government security forces burned and bulldozed a protest camp in Ta'izz, shooting dead dozens of people. Meanwhile, Islamist militants were reported to have seized control of parts of Zinjibar in the south and mounted attacks, forcing many local people to flee.

In early June, an attack on the presidential palace killed several people and seriously wounded the President and others, who were evacuated to Saudi Arabia for medical treatment. Vice President Abd Rabbu Mansour Hadi assumed power temporarily while an opposition alliance, the National Council for the Revolutionary Forces, was formed in August but quickly became divided. An uneasy stalemate developed with continuing sporadic armed clashes and killings, leading many to fear the country was slipping into civil war. Mandated by the Human Rights Council, the UN High Commissioner for Human Rights sent a fact-finding team to Yemen in June-July; its report, published in September, pointed to serious and widespread abuses of human rights, including grossly excessive use of force. It called, among other things, for an independent international investigation and for those responsible to be held accountable.

To the surprise of some, President Saleh returned to Sana'a on 23 September and resumed power. His return prompted rival mass demonstrations by his supporters and opponents, including vast anti-government demonstrations. On 7 October, a leading pro-reform activist, Tawakkol Karman, was one of three women awarded the Nobel Peace Prize.

On 21 October, the UN Security Council condemned the continuing violence and demanded that President Saleh leave power in accordance with the agreement previously put forward by the GCC. On 23 November, President Saleh at last signed, agreeing to transfer power to the Vice President to begin implementation of the agreement. This provides for the prompt formation of a "government of national reconciliation" in which the ruling party and opposition parties are equally represented and share power, and new presidential elections

***2011 was a year of almost unremitting protest, turbulence and violence***

Anti-government protesters shout slogans during a protest outside Sana'a University, 13 February 2011.





to be held within 90 days. In return, President Saleh and some of his associates are believed to have been given immunity against prosecution for crimes committed under his administration, both during the 2011 protests and throughout the long period of his rule. Many Yemenis, especially young people and other groups left out of the process, have denounced the immunity clause and vowed not to accept it.

By refusing to leave office for so long, after years in which his government had undermined the rule of law, committed human rights violations with impunity and been mired in allegations of corruption, President Saleh succeeded in uniting much – though not all – of Yemen in a broad front against him. This included the Huthis in the north, against whom government forces had repeatedly fought in recent years; the Southern Movement, based around Aden, that advocates greater autonomy or the secession of the south; and mainstream pro-reform activists determined to break the President's grip over Yemen. Tribal conflicts continue, however, with the government apparently losing control over several areas of the country.

At the same time, armed Islamist militants believed to be linked to al-Qa'ida in the Arabian Peninsula were reported to be increasingly active in Abyan and Zinjibar, where they were attacked by US forces using drones and Yemeni airforce jets. Some 100,000 people were said to have been displaced from these areas. On 30 September, US-born cleric Anwar al-Awlaki, said to have been behind an attempt to blow up an airliner over Detroit in December 2009, and three others were killed by a US drone strike.

For the people of Yemen, already the poorest country in the region with high unemployment, a growing water crisis and fast diminishing oil reserves, 2011 was a year of almost unremitting protest, turbulence and violence. In all, more than 200 people were reported to have been killed in connection with the protests, many gunned down by government snipers while peacefully exercising their right to demonstrate. Hundreds more from all sides were killed in armed clashes. Many thousands of families were forcibly displaced by the violence, sparking a growing humanitarian crisis whose impact was hardest on the poor and most vulnerable, particularly children. President Saleh's determined efforts to cling to power levied a heavy cost on Yemenis. This was due in no small part to the failure of his principal allies and benefactors, the governments of Saudi Arabia and the USA, to insist earlier that he stand down and make way for a new, more democratic Yemen based on respect for human rights and the rule of law – the cause for which so many Yemenis gave their lives in 2011 but which, as the year closed, was still far from being made reality.

# SYRIA

## **“I will crush the throat of your son with my foot. I will return him to you like Ghayath Mattar.”**

Words a security force officer allegedly said to the mother of 22-year-old Muhammad Muhammad Al Hamwi when her son and husband were arrested. Ghayath Mattar, a peaceful young activist from Daraya, died in custody probably as a result of torture four days after his arrest on 6 September.

In early 2011, as unrest swept across much of the Middle East and North Africa, it appeared that Syrians might be too fearful to challenge their government. The al-Assad family had ruled with an iron fist for 40 years under a state of emergency that severely restricted and punished any dissent.

On 18 March, however, after the authorities suppressed a largely peaceful demonstration calling for the release of detained children in the southern city of Dera'a, protests began to spread. As they gathered momentum, so too did the brutality meted out by the government of President Bashar al-Assad and its security and armed forces. As a result, Syria's already dire human rights record deteriorated further.

In the following months, hundreds of thousands of Syrians shook off decades of fear to demand their rights and political change. In overwhelmingly peaceful protests, people from many different sectors of society acted together and shouted unifying slogans. Women participated in demonstrations and played leading roles in the debates and activism, some of it recorded on social network sites.

The resistance seemed to develop spontaneously out of the years of frustration and anger. Week after week protesters defied the extreme violence of the security forces, with each weekly protest having a new slogan – many of them directed at the international community, such as “Your silence is killing us” and “Disappointment with Russia”. In many cities, towns and villages, grassroots groups were formed to organize the protests, film them or otherwise document human rights violations committed by the army and security forces in order to let the world know the truth of what was being done. After the government claimed that footage of demonstrations in Syria was fake or taken in other countries, activists began filming a card with the place and date before turning their phones and cameras towards the marches. A new generation of activists and human rights defenders emerged, with people's awareness of their rights dramatically increasing.

Initially, in the face of the growing protests and international condemnation, President al-Assad announced a number of reforms while also maintaining the repression. In particular, he lifted the 48-year national state of emergency and abolished the notoriously unfair Supreme State Security Court that had been used to jail countless government critics and dissenters. He also issued several amnesties for different categories of prisoners, under which some prisoners of conscience were freed, and passed decrees to allow peaceful demonstrations under certain conditions and the legal registration of political parties other than the ruling Ba'ath party. But these reforms had no impact on the brutal crackdown, and contained elements indicating that they were merely cosmetic. In any case, there remained a swathe of laws and decrees that severely restrict the enjoyment of human rights in Syria. As a result, the legislative changes, from a government now distrusted and reviled by many of Syria's people, fell far short of the protesters' demands and so protests continued.

The army and security forces resorted to sustained and grossly excessive force, including lethal force, against protesters and even mourners attending funerals of protesters killed in preceding days. They deployed snipers to shoot into peaceful crowds and repeatedly deployed army tanks and other armoured fighting vehicles in military operations in residential areas. By mid-December, more than 3,800 people – the UN High Commissioner for Human Rights put the figure at over 5,000 – were reported to have died in connection with the protests, including 200 children. Most were civilians who appeared to have been shot dead by government forces at peaceful protests or funerals, though members of the security forces were also among those killed, including some who were shot by other soldiers apparently when they refused to turn their guns on protesters.

Thousands of other people were arrested, many held incommunicado at undisclosed locations at which torture and other ill-treatment are known to be rife. Indeed, torture, which in previous years had been likely for political prisoners, became the inevitable “welcome” for anyone arrested in connection with the unrest. Numerous forms of torture and other ill-treatment were described by released detainees directly to Amnesty International and indirectly via credible sources. Such treatment appears to have been used to obtain “confessions”, punish protesters, and intimidate others to deter them from joining the demonstrations. Most frequently, detainees were severely beaten but some were also subjected to electric shock torture, including to their genitals, and burned with cigarettes.

Sometimes, the security forces swept through areas, searching all houses and arresting all males over the age of 15, or simply picking people up randomly from streets. Prisons could not cope, so the security forces began to fill schools, hotels, sports stadiums and even barns with their prey. Hundreds were detained

A peaceful pro-reform demonstration  
in Baniyas, Syria, 6 May 2011  
(CC BY 2.0).







لا يستقيم إلا بالهدوء  
والسلامة والعدل والحرية

PUMA

***Hundreds of thousands of Syrians shook off decades of fear to demand their rights and political change***

in situations amounting to enforced disappearance as the authorities refused to acknowledge their detention or concealed their whereabouts from their families.

At least 190 people, including children, died in custody. In many cases, there was evidence that torture caused or contributed to the deaths. Some of the dead were mutilated either before or after death, apparently to strike terror into the families to whom the corpses were returned. Impunity for such egregious crimes remained the norm.

The government extended its cruelty towards people wounded in the protests and to medical staff trying to treat them. Patients in government-run hospitals were beaten and otherwise abused, including by being given inadequate medical treatment. Health care staff were targeted for abuse and threatened with reprisals if they did not report to the authorities the names of wounded patients. Security forces raided hospitals, including operating theatres. As a result, wounded people increasingly turned to private hospitals or makeshift hospitals near scenes of conflict.

In an attempt to stifle news of the massacres and hamper organization of protests, the government banned foreign journalists and independent human rights groups from entering the country, targeted people filming protests, and at times blocked social media sites.

The long arm of Syria's secret police even stretched abroad. Dozens of Syrians living in Europe and the Americas were harassed or threatened apparently by embassy officials and others after organizing in solidarity with the pro-reform movement in Syria, or their relatives in Syria were arrested and tortured because of their solidarity activities.

As the unrest continued, it became clear that the economy was in freefall. The US\$4bn annual tourism industry collapsed and imports were curtailed due to the low level of foreign reserves. The government introduced a further tax on state workers. With EU member states previously buying around 95 per cent of Syria's oil exports, an EU ban on oil imports, in full force from November, soon began impacting the economy. Other EU sanctions were imposed incrementally on the regime from May, while the USA's incremental sanctions began on 29 April.

In October, opposition groups formed the Syrian National Council as an umbrella group for those inside and outside the country seeking to overthrow President al-Assad's government.

The League of Arab States played a pivotal role as the year wore on, and on 2 November a deal or roadmap with the Syrian authorities was announced to end the crisis. However, the Syrian government blatantly failed to implement its commitments, including to stop "all acts of violence" against Syrians and to release "all those who are detained because of the current events". As a

consequence, on 12 November the League suspended Syria and on 27 November announced its own economic sanctions on Syria.

The level and gravity of the human rights violations committed in Syria in 2011 signalled not just a dramatic deterioration in the human rights situation, but also amounted to crimes against humanity. The abuses were part of a widespread and systematic attack against civilians, carried out deliberately as state policy and in an organized manner. Amnesty International called on the UN Security Council not only to condemn the mass violations but also to take other measures to hold those responsible to account, including by referring the situation in Syria to the ICC, to impose a comprehensive arms embargo and to freeze the assets of the Syrian President and his associates in the commission of human rights crimes (see below, International response). However, effective action in the Security Council was blocked by the Russian Federation, China and other states.

As 2011 drew to a close, the situation remained grim. Months of peaceful protest had failed to bring a change of government yet many lives had been lost or blighted by injury or abuse, leading some within the opposition to turn to violence, including guns, to try and force change. Up to 10,000 soldiers were estimated to have deserted and joined the Free Syria Army, which declared its aim to seek to protect Syrian civilians. Armed clashes between the state's armed forces and armed individuals suspected to be deserters grew in frequency. For its part, the government showed no signs of easing the repression.

# BAHRAIN

**“In April, my fears came true and I was taken from my house by more than 30 masked men with guns in front of my son, whom I had to leave alone. I was physically and emotionally abused, blindfolded and handcuffed. They beat me – with their hands and legs, with a hose, and gave me electric shocks. They threatened to rape me. They threatened to kill me so that I would confess to false accusations. I was sexually harassed and humiliated... Then the horror of the military courts started.”**

A Bahraini health worker, writing just before she and 19 other health workers were sentenced to prison terms on 29 September 2011

At the start of 2011, the Al Khalifa family, drawn from Bahrain’s minority Sunni community, had ruled the tiny island state for close to 200 years. Despite restrictions on freedom of expression and the targeting of key opposition activists for arrest and unfair trials, Bahrain was seen as one of the more liberal of the Gulf states.

The situation changed rapidly after protests grew from 14 February onwards demanding greater freedom, social justice and political and constitutional reforms. Some of the protesters were Sunni Muslims but the vast majority were Shi’a Muslims, who comprise around 70 per cent of the population, angry at their perceived economic and political marginalization.

The government, surprised by the mass mobilization of protesters, both Sunni and Shi’a, responded with unexpected levels of violence. Within a week, seven protesters were dead, hundreds of others were injured and Bahrain had reached a tipping point. Tens of thousands of people took to the streets and occupied the GCC (Pearl) Roundabout in central Manama, demanding a new constitution, an elected government, a greater share of the country’s wealth and the release of all political prisoners. Social network sites buzzed with debate and calls to action. Opposition groups and human rights organizations found their bases rapidly expanding, and talk of human rights and political reform filled the air. Women organized women-only marches, and joined men in other protests.



In response, the Crown Prince promised a national dialogue with recognized opposition groups, and initial discussions began. Political detainees were released and the security forces stopped using violence. Demonstrations continued to grow, however, and by early March the long rule of the Al Khalifa family was under increasing challenge. Loud among the demands was the call for parliamentary elections, with the winning party forming the government. This raised fear among many members of Bahrain's Sunni minority, who began to organize large demonstrations in support of the ruling family. Crucially, it also raised fears in Bahrain's predominantly Sunni close neighbour Saudi Arabia that Bahrainis could elect a Shi'a party into government.

As anti-government protests gained momentum some protesters, those not affiliated to the seven legal political associations, marched to key government buildings, sealed off major roads, occupied the Financial Harbour and marched to the Royal Court in al-Riffa' calling for a republican system to replace the monarchy. Violence erupted between some pro-government supporters and some pro-reform demonstrators, especially on 13 March, at Bahrain University. Clashes were also seen in Manama when migrant workers, mainly from Pakistan, were attacked by mobs armed with knives and swords allegedly because of the role played during the protests by Pakistani nationals recruited into Bahrain's security forces and given Bahraini citizenship.

On 15 March, Saudi Arabia sent 1,200 troops in tanks and other armoured vehicles across the causeway linking it to Bahrain, reportedly at the request of the Bahraini government. Bahrain's King imposed a state of emergency, termed the State of National Safety, and authorized the armed forces to use extreme measures to end the uprising. Army tanks entered the peaceful protest camp at Pearl Roundabout, destroying what had become a symbol of resistance and hope. The al-Salmaniya Medical Complex, the main hospital in Manama, which became embroiled in the unrest, was stormed by the security forces and dozens of doctors and nurses were subsequently arrested at the hospital or their home. Government forces took control of the hospital. Many wounded protesters subsequently refused to go to the hospital and therefore were unable to receive treatment. Some who did seek treatment at the hospital were detained.

In the following months, the human rights situation deteriorated and the protest movement appeared stifled. In total, at least 47 people died in connection with the protests, including a reported three or four security officials and, according to various reports, between two and eight migrant workers allegedly killed by protesters. More than 2,500 people were arrested, of whom at least five died in custody as a result of torture. At least 4,000 people who stayed away from their jobs during the arrest or were believed to have participated in the protests were sacked or suspended, including nearly 300 from the state-

owned Bahrain Petroleum Company. Dozens of students were dismissed from universities, and others studying abroad had their grants suspended.

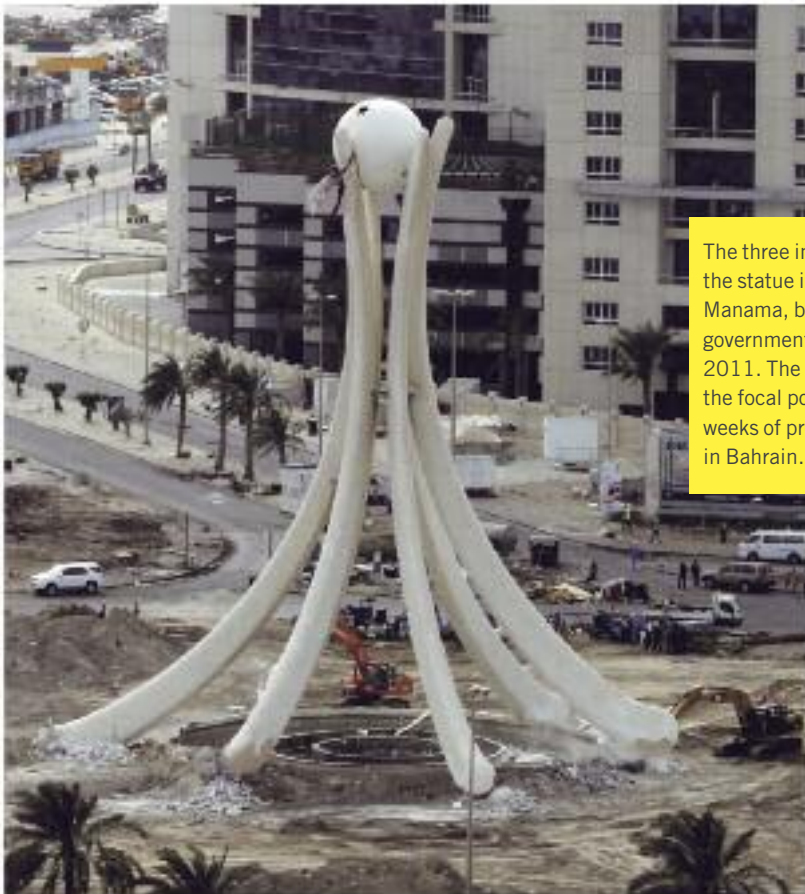
On 1 June the King lifted the state of emergency and the government withdrew its troops from Manama's streets – a move apparently designed to reassure international financial institutions and organizers of major sporting events. However, large contingents of police were then deployed and within hours security forces attacked peaceful protesters in more than 20 villages using rubber bullets, stun grenades, shotguns, sound bombs and tear gas.

Many of those arrested faced grossly unfair trials before a special military court – the National Safety Court – set up under emergency rule. In April, four protesters were sentenced to death by firing squad on charges of killing two policemen during the unrest; sentences against two of them were later commuted to prison terms. In June, eight leading opposition political activists were sentenced to life imprisonment on charges of conspiring to overthrow the government – the charge laid against many of the peaceful protesters. Thirteen others were sentenced to up to 15 years in prison. In September, another person was sentenced to death for the killing of a policeman. The same month, 20 health workers were sentenced to up to 15 years in prison on charges that included attempting to occupy the al-Salmaniya Medical Complex. However, they appeared to have been prosecuted because they spoke to international media about security force violence and for allowing media workers to film people receiving medical treatment. Other charges levelled against medical personnel included refusing to treat Bahraini Sunni Muslims and migrant workers, stealing medicine and possessing weapons. However, no strong evidence was provided in court.

In early October, 60 people were sentenced to up to 25 years in prison in connection with the protests. Among them were members of al-Wifaq, the biggest Shi'a opposition party, and Amal (Islamic Action Society), also a Shi'a political party.

The government tried to stop demonstrations but failed as many protests continued in Shi'a villages and towns, and also in Manama. In October, the government banned a planned protest by al-Wifaq.

The government's crackdown prompted wide international concern, particularly over allegations of torture and deaths in custody. The King responded on 29 June by taking the unprecedented step of appointing an independent international inquiry, the Bahrain Independent Commission of Inquiry (BICI), comprising five international legal and human rights experts. Its damning 500-page report, published on 23 November, concluded that gross human rights violations had been committed by the Bahraini authorities including widespread use of torture and other ill-treatment, unfair trial, and



The three images show the statue in Pearl Roundabout, Manama, being torn down by government forces on 18 March 2011. The roundabout had been the focal point and symbol of weeks of pro-democracy protests in Bahrain.



***The deepening sectarian tensions between the country's Shi'a and Sunni communities represent a long-term threat to human rights***

unlawful killings of dozens of protesters. It stated that these violations were partly the product of a culture of impunity. The BICI made various important recommendations, including the establishment of an independent human rights body to investigate all torture allegations and to bring all those responsible to account, including those who gave the orders. In response, the government announced that it had started the process of prosecuting 20 members of the security forces for allegedly using excessive force during the protests and mistreating detainees.

Despite such positive steps, the deepening sectarian tensions between the country's Shi'a and Sunni communities represent a long-term threat to human rights in Bahrain. The polarization has been fuelled by attitudes within Bahrain's government and among foreign powers, such as Saudi Arabia and the USA, according to which the government of the predominantly Shi'a Iran is seen as the "hidden hand" mobilizing the unrest. The BICI found no evidence linking the protests to Iran.

The sectarian tensions have been exacerbated too by the actions of the security forces, which are reported to have destroyed at least 40 Shi'a mosques and religious meeting places that they say were erected without permission and have been used to launch attacks against the police. The security forces also dug up the graves of revered Shi'a holy men in Nuwaidrat, and subjected some Shi'a scholars, activists and others to abuses during and after arrest. The government's maintenance of its policy of giving citizenship to non-Bahraini Sunnis recruited into the ranks of the security forces was also seen as provocative.

Sunnis too feel aggrieved – and threatened by the Shi'a majority and allegations of Iranian interference in Bahrain's internal affairs. The danger is that intercommunal hostility and violence become institutionalized in Bahrain and instability entrenched.

In short, the human rights situation in Bahrain deteriorated significantly in 2011 with the attempted crushing of the protest movement in February and March. To some extent, the movement was, it appears, a casualty of regional and international vested political interests, including those of the USA which maintains a major navy base in Bahrain. The powerful forces supporting the ruling Al Khalifa family did little to stop the Bahraini government using abusive methods to maintain the status quo, which resulted in new violations and the wide use of some not seen for many years, and which have deepened the dangerous polarization of Bahraini society. A key test of the government's commitment to turn away from the abuses of 2011 will be the speed and degree to which it implements the recommendations made by the BICI to the King in November.



# IRAQ

## **“If you don’t stop your political opposition activities we will kidnap you, rape you and videotape the rape.”**

A political activist, describing to Amnesty International the threats made against her by armed men at her home on 25 February 2011, Iraq’s “Day of Rage”

Iraqis were also inspired into action by the regional unrest, though the scale and nature of their protests were particular to Iraq.

Demonstrations were held regularly in all parts of the country during most of the year, but in most cases they were not the mass gatherings seen elsewhere in the region and the demonstrators did not call for the overthrow of the government. Instead, they protested against corruption, nepotism, sectarianism and the presence of foreign troops, and called for better services and an improved economy.

Most other countries convulsed by the unrest had been through decades of “stability”, albeit a stability maintained by brute force and ubiquitous intelligence and security agencies. In that same period, Iraqis had lived through wars, devastating sanctions, invasion and occupation by foreign troops, and years of endemic violence and economic collapse. Their cruel and autocratic ruler of decades, Saddam Hussein, was removed in 2003 – not by a mass movement demanding democracy, but by a US-led international force of troops.

The 2011 protests in Iraq began in early February when tens of thousands of people took to the streets to protest against the lack of water, electricity and other basic services, rising prices, unemployment and endemic corruption, and to demand greater civil and political rights. The various forces under the control of the authorities, including police, the military and other security forces, responded with excessive force, killing and injuring protesters. They also made frequent arrests, in many cases followed by torture. Most of those arrested were released without charge.

Among those targeted for politically motivated attacks, some of them fatal, were lawyers and journalists. For example, in September, Hadi al-Mahdi, a prominent radio journalist in Baghdad, was shot dead in his flat just before a planned protest he was due to attend in the city’s Tahrir Square. In the days leading up to his death, he had been using social media sites to build support for the protest. Weeks earlier the government passed a law concerning the legal





Riot police disperse protesters during a demonstration in front of the provincial council building in Basra, 4 March 2011.



protection of journalists who face politically motivated threats, but it did not provide for their physical protection.

In the Kurdistan region of Iraq too, where protests were generally focused on corruption within the two parties who rule in coalition, demonstrators died as a result of excessive use of force by security forces and many were injured. Journalists, particularly those working for independent outlets, were threatened in relation to their coverage of the protests and their criticism of the two dominant Kurdish political parties.

Iraqis continue to suffer from mass unemployment, poverty, the legacy of war and lack of basic services in a politically volatile and often violent environment. However, the almost weekly protests by Iraqis from all communities since February represent a positive development in that they have been largely peaceful, contrasting with the suicide and other bombings and violent attacks, many of them sectarian and indiscriminate, that had been such a common feature of Iraq in recent years. Most regrettably, the peaceful demonstrations of 2011 were often met by violence by security forces and arbitrary arrests, while receiving little attention from the world's media, yet Iraqis continue to reclaim their right to express dissent and to demand change openly and peacefully.



# ELSEWHERE IN THE REGION

In **Algeria**, widespread rioting in January over the cost of food was followed by protests demanding reform that began on 12 February. In the face of continuing unrest, the government repealed the 19-year state of emergency, promised further reforms and reduced food prices. Human rights organizations, opposition political parties and trade unions began holding weekly demonstrations, and protests by unemployed youth were held across the country. On 15 April, President Abdelaziz Bouteflika announced some reforms to “strengthen democracy”, including the revision of electoral law and the appointment of a constitutional reform committee. A new law on information was also announced, to replace the provisions in the Penal Code under which journalists and others found guilty of “defaming” the President or other state institutions faced imprisonment for up to a year and fines. The President also announced changes to the law on civil society organizations, but fears were raised that the legislation would prove even more restrictive of their operation and funding.

In **Iran**, many people took to the streets of Tehran and other cities on 14 February in response to a call by opposition leaders Mir Hossein Mousavi and Mehdi Karroubi to show solidarity with the uprisings in Egypt and Tunisia. They did so despite government threats, pre-emptive arrests and a rise in executions widely seen as a government attempt to deter protests. The security forces responded with further repression, killing at least two people on 14 February and another person days later. Mir Hossein Mousavi and Mehdi Karroubi were placed under house arrest, where they remained all year, without charge or trial. The authorities also used force in response to protests by members of Iran’s ethnic minority communities, including Ahwazi Arabs in south-west Iran before, during and after a “Day of Rage” called on 15 April – at least three people died in clashes between security forces and protesters. In north-west Iran, well over 100 members of the Azerbaijani minority were arrested in April and August in connection with protests to demand government action to prevent an environmental disaster due to the drying up of Lake Oroumieh; most were released but several were sentenced to be jailed, flogged or both. The authorities further tightened restrictions on freedom of expression and association, warning SMS users before the 14 February protests that they would face prosecution if they sent information to foreign media, and cutting SMS services, filtering

websites and blocking social networking sites such as Facebook. A shadowy “cyber army” attacked websites critical of the government, and a cyber police force was expanded. Journalists, bloggers and film industry workers were targeted for repression, along with students, political activists, independent trade unionists, human rights defenders, women’s rights activists and others, as part of ongoing efforts by the government to stifle dissent.

In **Israel**, there were mass protests in July, mostly by members of the Jewish population, against steep house prices and rents, and the rising cost of living. These mirrored forms of protest seen elsewhere in the region, with activists organizing through social network sites and setting up protest camps.

In **Jordan**, demonstrations were held throughout the year calling for political, economic and social reform. Although the protests were largely peaceful, there were reports of security forces using excessive force against non-violent protesters and journalists. The King sacked the government in February and promised change, although public criticism continued over the slow pace of reform.

In **Kuwait**, which has an elected government, there were demonstrations early in the year by stateless Bidun demanding to be recognized as citizens and by young people calling for an end to corruption. A wave of strikes by workers began in September, demanding better pay and benefits, and disrupted government services. On 16 November, protesters, including members of parliament, who had been calling for the resignation of the Prime Minister, briefly occupied the parliament building. In the following days, 24 of the activists involved were arrested; they were released on bail on 1 December. On 28 November the government resigned. On 6 December, Kuwait’s ruler dissolved parliament; elections were due to be held within 60 days.

In **Morocco**, many people took part in protests, including demonstrations organized through social networking sites and self-immolations. On 20 February, thousands of people in cities across the country demanded constitutional reform, “real democracy” and an end to corruption. In response, the King promised to undertake fundamental reforms and uphold human rights. On 3 March, he established a new national human rights ombudsman. On 9 March, he announced the appointment of the Advisory Committee for the Revision of the Constitution to propose democratic reform. However, on 13 March, in response to a peaceful protest in Casablanca, the security forces used unwarranted levels of force, injuring scores of people. Protests continued sporadically. In July, for example, thousands of people took to the streets to demand further political changes following the government’s announcement that its constitutional reform proposals had been backed by 98.5 per cent of voters in a national referendum. Many protesters considered that the reforms

did not go far enough as they left the King as head of state and the military. In September, thousands of people marched again in Casablanca to protest against government corruption and demanding reform. Protests were also staged against parliamentary elections in November, which had been brought forward as part of the King's package of reforms. Although a number of prisoners of conscience were released during the year, others were imprisoned and several of the Sahrawi activists released still faced charges of threatening Morocco's "internal security".

In the **Occupied Palestinian Territories**, thousands of Palestinians demonstrated in Ramallah, Gaza City, Bethlehem and other cities in March, demanding political reconciliation between their rival governments – the Fatah-led Palestinian Authority in the West Bank, and the de facto Hamas administration in the Gaza Strip. A framework unity agreement was achieved but not implemented, and it was the Palestinian Authority acting alone that went to the UN Security Council in October to seek recognition of Palestine as an independent state. Prior to this, Palestinian refugees in the West Bank and Gaza also drew inspiration from the mass protests elsewhere in the region to voice their long-held demands for change around Nakba Day, 15 May, and Naksa Day, 5 June, but each time their protests were met by the Israeli military with excessive force, leading to deaths and injuries.

In **Oman**, demonstrators demanded political reforms and protested against unemployment and corruption. Some were killed by police. On 27 February Oman's leader, Sultan Qaboos bin Said, announced some 50,000 new jobs and substantial benefits for the unemployed, and ordered the release of 26 protesters arrested earlier that day. He subsequently sacked several government ministers and announced that some legislative powers would be given to the partially elected advisory Shura Council. Protests continued, however, amid calls for the dismissal of other officials and for those sacked to be put on trial. On 29 March, security forces raided and destroyed the protesters' camp at the Globe Roundabout and made scores of arrests then and in the following days. On 20 April, Sultan Qaboos pardoned 234 people accused of "gathering in the streets" and said that people accused of arson and other offences should face trial. Dozens of people were sentenced to prison terms for offences such as "insulting officials". In October, two activists, both men, and one woman stood successfully as candidates in elections to the 84-member Shura Council, but that same month, the Press and Publications Law was amended to ban the publication of anything deemed by the government to prejudice the safety of the state or its internal or external security.

In **Saudi Arabia**, the government responded to planned protests in early 2011 by announcing handouts to citizens reportedly worth some US\$127 billion.



الشعب  
الثروة والفساد

صد الفساد  
الفساد

بني الثروة

تعب وعناء  
البرلمانية  
السلطان

ريد  
البيضا يريون  
ك

الاستبداد

من أجل دسترة  
اللغة الأمازيغية  
لغة رسمية

ضد الاستبداد  
ضد الفساد

YDEC

نعم لمشاركة العنصرين  
الجزمة العنصرية

الدماء المنوحة من  
دستورنا تجسد  
الشعب

مسيل







Anti-government protesters gather at a rally in Casablanca, Morocco, 3 April 2011. Demonstrators hold up banners denouncing corruption, demanding improved civil rights and calling for a new Constitution.

الحرية  
مغربنا جديد

الشعب  
لوطنية المصالح

كرامة إنسانية

بارك الله  
استقلال  
العهد

من أجل  
رموز الشهاد

الحرية



ميش  
في قطاعي  
الجزيرة

Despite this, sporadic protests by the Shi'a community, who comprise around 10 per cent of the population, continued, including in the oil-rich Eastern Province, just across the water from the turmoil in Bahrain. They were demanding the release of political prisoners and complaining about discrimination that bars them from senior government posts and benefits enjoyed by other citizens. More than 300 people were arrested either at demonstrations or shortly afterwards. Most of them were released, often after pledging not to protest again, and many were banned from travelling. On 5 March, the Interior Ministry reiterated the ban on all demonstrations and said that security forces would take "all necessary measures" against those who attempted to "disrupt order" as calls for reform and a momentum was being built up for a "Day of Rage" in the capital Riyadh on 11 March. A vast mobilization by security forces combined with threats prevented the planned "Day of Rage"; the one man who dared to turn up was arrested and remains detained. Since then, the habitual forms of repression have continued, as have some expressions of dissent. In late June, a proposed counter-terrorism law was leaked to Amnesty International. If enacted, it would give the Interior Ministry even more sweeping powers and mandate jail sentences for anyone who criticizes the King or expresses political dissent, which would constitute "terrorist crimes". It would allow prisoners to be held without access to the outside world and without charge or trial indefinitely. It would also grant the Interior Ministry powers to tap telephones and search homes without permission from the judiciary. In September, in an apparent response to the mood for change, the King announced that women would be allowed to vote and run in municipal elections, the country's only public poll, from 2015, a small but welcome step in addressing the severe discrimination faced by women in Saudi Arabia. In November, 16 men, including nine prominent reformists, were given sentences ranging from five to 30 years in prison by the Specialized Criminal Court following a grossly unfair trial. They were convicted of charges that included forming a secret organization, attempting to seize power, incitement against the King, financing terrorism, and money laundering.

No street protests were seen in the **United Arab Emirates**, but the government still cracked down on dissent, arresting five civil society activists and taking control of four NGOs. The five activists went on trial on security related charges in June; their trial was grossly unfair and they appeared to be prisoners of conscience. On 27 November, they were sentenced to between two and three years in prison, but were released the following day under a presidential pardon.

# INTERNATIONAL RESPONSE

**“Everyone sees the double standards very clearly now. They see Gaddafi hitting people and the US strike back. But here they even bring in foreign armies who don’t believe in democracy...”**

Nabeel Rajab, President of the Bahrain Centre for Human Rights<sup>2</sup>

## FAILURE TO PUT HUMAN RIGHTS FIRST

As millions of people across the Middle East and North Africa showed their hunger for the freedoms and rights enjoyed in other parts of the world, many powerful governments performed political somersaults or continued to ignore human rights violations in the region as they sought to protect their own political and economic interests. Some of them abandoned autocrats that were former allies in the face of unstoppable rebellions. Others quietly helped their friends to stay in power. Some offered military help to opposition forces. Some ignored the plight of opposition movements as they were slaughtered in the streets. None took timely, effective and consistent action to protect the human rights and interests of the region’s disenfranchised people.

The French government, despite its historic links with Tunisia, initially stayed quiet as Tunisians repeatedly braved police violence in the quest for change. The US authorities stayed quiet as Egyptians faced the wrath of President Hosni Mubarak’s ubiquitous security forces until their ally’s refusal to resign risked a much deeper social revolution and a much greater threat to the status quo in the region. The Obama administration then turned on the regime that it had supported with annual military and other aid worth around \$1.5bn, praised the struggle for reform, and backed the military takeover until elections could be held.

As the anger at Western governments’ initial reluctance to support the protest movements intensified, the US authorities praised Bahrain’s progress towards democracy. Yet they and other Western governments, many of which are major arms suppliers to the Gulf states, remained silent as the major power in the Gulf, Saudi Arabia, repressed internal dissent and helped to crush Bahrain’s pro-democracy movement. Bahrain is home to the US Navy’s Fifth Fleet, its base in the Gulf through which a fifth of the world’s oil supplies passes.

Many people in the region were also angered when the US government, having supported action to protect the rights of Libyans, vowed to veto an application by Palestinians to join the UN as a member state.

Members of the UN Security Council showed no greater consistency towards human rights and the protest movements. For months, the Security Council took little action in response to the persistent slaughter of largely peaceful demonstrators in Syria, and none after the crackdown in Bahrain. Eventually, on 3 August it merely adopted a non-binding statement condemning human rights violations by the Syrian authorities. On 4 October, China and the Russian Federation vetoed a draft resolution on Syria condemning the violations against civilians and envisaging sanctions if the situation persisted. They were joined in blocking determined Security Council action there by Brazil, India and South Africa which, acting jointly, had sent a high-level delegation to Syria in August to try and stem the violent government repression.

By contrast, the Security Council took just weeks to refer the situation in Libya to the International Criminal Court and then authorize air strikes on Libya. The intervention was justified in the name of “protecting civilians” but rapidly came to be seen as military action to help the opposition overthrow Colonel al-Gaddafi, thereby inflicting serious damage to the concept of “responsibility to protect” as a basis for human rights protection.

In late October, the Security Council belatedly condemned the grave human rights violations in Yemen and called for implementation of the GCC initiative (see above) that appeared to offer immunity to President Saleh and his inner circle from any possibility of being investigated or brought to trial for serious human rights violations. A UN envoy facilitated the final agreement, in doing so apparently contravening the UN Secretary-General’s directive that prohibits brokering peace agreements that contain such immunity clauses.

2011 also highlighted the politicized nature of responses by the member states of intergovernmental and regional organizations in the face of mass popular uprisings and human rights crises. The relevant UN bodies and the EU did not even openly discuss imposing sanctions on Bahrain, Saudi Arabia or Yemen, yet imposed them swiftly on Libya and, eventually and partially in the case of the EU, on Syria.

The League of Arab States quickly fell in line with the UN Security Council over Libya and helped to garner support for the no-fly zone. However, it appeared to regret this as the military operation unfolded, with some members complaining that NATO had overstepped the mandate granted to it by the Security Council. By contrast, the League did little of any impact for months as Syrians were mowed down in the streets, and only in August, after at least 1,800 protesters had been killed, called on the Syrian authorities to “stop acts of violence against civilians”. It ratcheted up the pressure when the al-Assad



government reneged on its promise to the League to withdraw troops from Syria's cities, and on 12 November, suspended Syria (see above).

The African Union (AU), guided by the Lome Declaration, at first did not recognize the new authorities in Tunisia and Egypt, insisting that those who had been ousted were still the legitimate government. It then changed its position as events in Tunisia, Egypt and later Libya unfolded and it came under heavy criticism for its stance. The AU sought to negotiate a handover of power in Libya and after this failed and Tripoli fell to the opposition in August it recognized the National Transitional Council as the country's legitimate authority.

The EU, one of the region's closest neighbours and key international interlocutor, initially responded to the rebellions and repression slowly and inadequately given the scale of events. The initial reaction was limited to sanitized statements calling for restraint by all sides and negotiations. The EU continued its long-standing relations with repressive states in the region, and opted for diplomatic advances rather than openly condemning human rights violations. This was a continuation of previous stances that justified its extensive political and financial support to repressive governments in the Middle East and North Africa on the basis of the vague notion of "stability providing security" and with the aim of "controlling" migration to Europe, subordinating human rights to these interests as well as to trade and energy interests.

The EU's attitude did begin to change after the protests spread to Libya and Syria. A policy paper issued in May anchored the EU's relations with neighbours in the region more closely on human rights reform, promising a "more for more and less for less" approach, meaning the provision of greater financial support to countries that introduce pro-democratic and pro-human rights reforms and decreasing the amount for those who fail to do so. While this was a welcome development, in practice in late 2011 the EU seemed to be hesitating to translate this into reality.

With regards to Syria, existing sanctions were reinforced in October and the EU took a stance internationally but without succeeding to extend its influence. In contrast, there was no equivalent rethinking of the EU's relations with Gulf countries, as was evident in its response to the protests in Bahrain, Saudi Arabia and Yemen. In particular, the response to Bahrain initially condoned the serious human rights violations, and subsequently involved no more than a timid improvement of wording and some local trial monitoring. Bahrain and Saudi Arabia were glaring examples of the double standards applied by the EU and revealed its continuing policy of subordinating human rights considerations to the pursuit of its other interests.

The most significant intervention of the GCC was a Saudi Arabian-brokered deal between the opposition and the government in Yemen, eventually signed in

***It can only be hoped that the year of rebellion signals an end to policies that put an illusory "stability" before the human rights of half a billion people***

November (see above). The Saudi Arabian government also supported the monarchies in Jordan and Morocco who were facing popular protests, particularly by offering membership of the GCC and therefore military support, and gave sanctuary and the immunity from prosecution to ousted Tunisian President Ben Ali. The same Saudi Arabian government that suppressed dissidents and helped to end Bahrain's protest movement saw fit to urge the Syrian authorities to end the bloodshed and recalled its ambassador from Damascus. Similarly, the Iranian government, which continued to use brutal force to crush its own opposition, called on its ally President al-Assad to end his crackdown on protesters.

The UN Human Rights Council took a variety of measures to address situations in the region, although they were of variable effect. On 25 February, it held a special session on Libya at which it established a Commission of Inquiry to investigate all alleged violations of international human rights law in the country. It recommended that the General Assembly suspend the membership rights of Libya in the Human Rights Council, which the General Assembly did shortly afterwards. The Human Rights Council also held three special sessions on Syria, on 29 April, 22 August and 2 December. At the 29 April session, it established a Fact Finding Mission to investigate all alleged violations of international human rights law in Syria. At the 22 August session, it established a Commission of Inquiry to investigate all alleged violations of international human rights law since March 2011, to establish the facts and circumstances that may amount to such violations and of the crimes perpetrated and, where possible, to identify those responsible with a view of ensuring that perpetrators of violations, including those that may constitute crimes against humanity, are held accountable. The Council held a debate about the situation in Yemen at its September session. To great regret, however, the Council did nothing to address the human rights situation in Bahrain in 2011.

The UN General Assembly, in a move that made the Security Council's inability to act on Syria stand out even more sharply, strongly condemned through its Human Rights Committee the continued grave and systematic human rights violations by the Syrian authorities. The resolution, adopted by the Assembly's Third Committee on 22 November, also called on the Syrian authorities to implement fully and without delay the Plan of Action of the Arab League and comply with the Commission of Inquiry of the Human Rights Council. The resolution does not carry the same authority as one by the Security Council, but it nonetheless further isolated those believed to be primarily responsible for the repression in Syria and the powers in the Security Council shielding them.

The Office of the High Commissioner for Human Rights sent missions to Tunisia, Egypt and Yemen, and supported the Fact Finding Missions and

Commissions of Inquiry established by the Human Rights Council for Libya and Syria. It also opened an office in Tunisia, the first such office in North Africa.

As the demands for human rights reverberated around the region, the disjuncture between the words and deeds of powerful governments and institutions were exposed and undermined. It can only be hoped that the year of rebellion signals an end to policies that put an illusory “stability” and the uninterrupted passage of oil supplies before the human rights of half a billion people.

## PROTECTION OF DISPLACED PEOPLE

**“Life in Choucha camp is hard. Located in the Tunisian desert, not far from the border with Libya, the scorching midday sun beats down on row upon row of tiny tents, where thousands of refugees take shelter from the heat, swirling sands and scorpions.”**

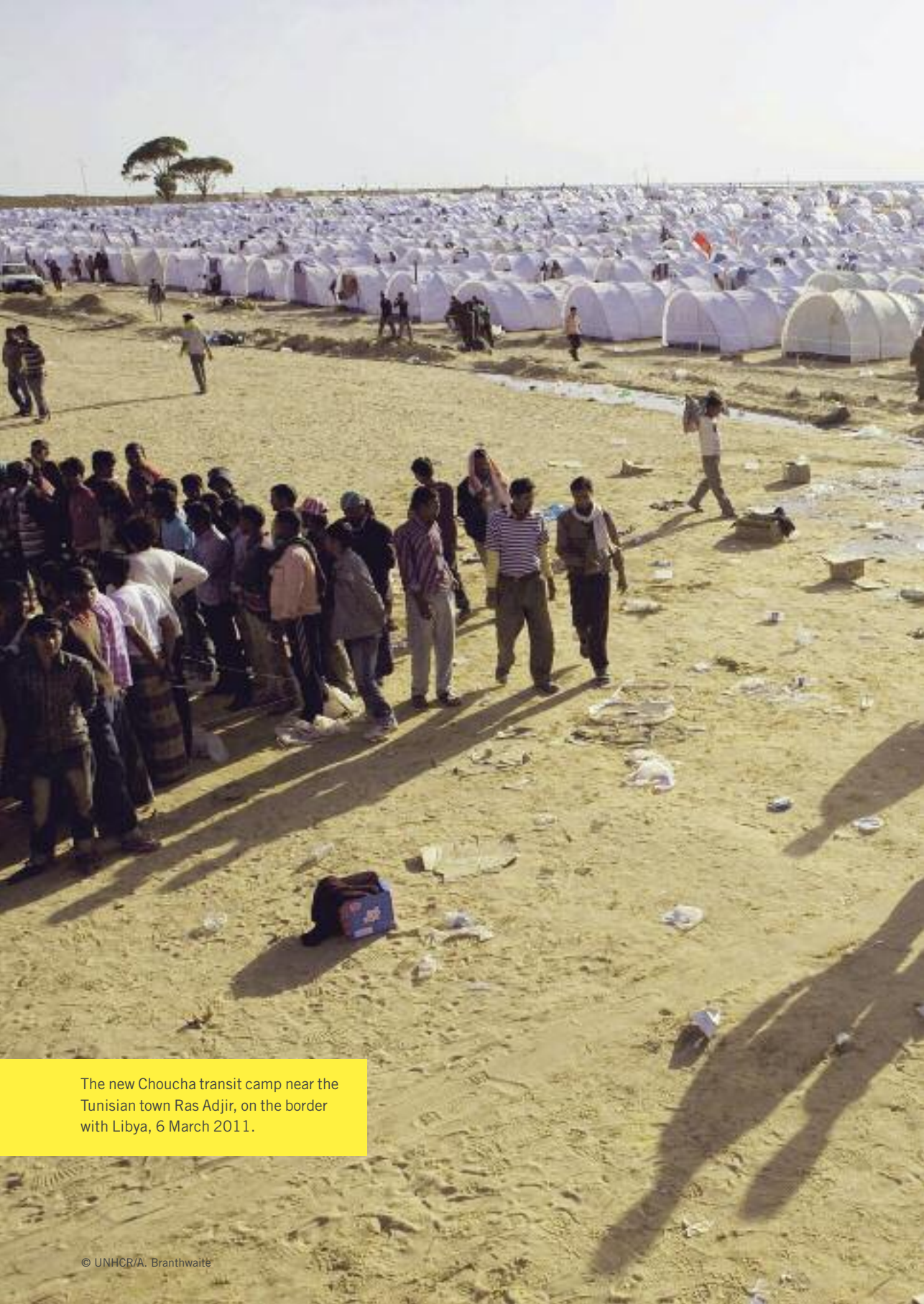
Charlotte Phillips, Amnesty International researcher, writing from Choucha camp on 20 June 2011

Unrest in the Middle East and North Africa provoked mass displacement, with hundreds of thousands of people fleeing their homes to escape violence, poverty, persecution and repression. Thousands of refugees, asylum-seekers and migrants boarded or attempted to board boats bound for Europe in search of safety and a secure future, many of whom lost their lives at sea.

Following the uprising in Tunisia, thousands of people boarded boats heading for Lampedusa, a small Italian island. Prompted by widespread reports of a humanitarian crisis unfolding there, an Amnesty International delegation went to the island and the “Village of Solidarity” in the environs of Mineo, Catania province, between 29 March and 2 April. It documented extremely poor living conditions for migrants and found approximately 4,000 people sleeping rough, without showers, toilets or shelter – most of them young Tunisian men.

As the violence in Libya escalated, hundreds of thousands of refugees, asylum-seekers and migrants fled the conflict. Between 1.5 million and 2.5 million foreign nationals had been living in Libya at the start of 2011, some 11,000 of whom were refugees and asylum-seekers. During the conflict, many foreign nationals, particularly sub-Saharan Africans, were attacked, robbed and falsely accused of being mercenaries loyal to Colonel al-Gaddafi.

Many of those who fled Libya sought safety in neighbouring countries, mainly in Egypt and Tunisia. However, around 5,000 sub-Saharan refugees and



The new Choucha transit camp near the Tunisian town Ras Adjir, on the border with Libya, 6 March 2011.





asylum-seekers remain stranded in desert camps in Tunisia and makeshift tents in Saloum, a remote border point in Egypt. When Amnesty International visited the camps in June and July, poor conditions and insecurity prevailed, making life extremely challenging for those living there. Unlike the thousands of migrants who were repatriated during the initial stages of the conflict, these people cannot return to their home countries because they would then be at risk of persecution. Nor can they remain in Egypt and Tunisia, which have been unwilling to offer long-term solutions to refugees. Returning to Libya is also not an option, despite the fall of the al-Gaddafi regime, as Libya cannot currently offer a safe haven for refugees. The only solution is for other countries where they would be safe to resettle them. How many are resettled and how quickly this happens depends on the speed and extent with which the international community fulfils its responsibility to them.

So far, the international community's response has been miserably poor, with European countries offering fewer than 800 resettlement places between them in response to a refugee crisis unfolding on Europe's doorstep.

Many of those who fled Libya attempted the dangerous sea-crossing to Europe, often in overcrowded and barely sea-worthy boats. Among them were people who initially fled from Libya to Tunisia, but then crossed back into Libya frustrated at the lack of durable solutions for refugees in the camps. At least 1,500 men, women and children are estimated to have drowned while attempting this journey. The true total was probably far higher. Governments and institutions failed to put in place effective mechanisms to prevent such deaths at sea, including by increasing search and rescue operations, and by ensuring that rescue operations comply fully with human rights and refugee law.

In Syria, as government repression intensified, thousands of people fled the country, mostly seeking refuge in Lebanon, Turkey and Jordan. Amnesty International researchers went in May and June to speak to some of these displaced people and as a result exposed unlawful killings and other serious violations of human rights committed by Syrian security forces in and around the Syrian town of Tell Kalakh near the border with Lebanon, including orders to soldiers to shoot civilians. The 3,000 or so people who fled to Lebanon were still in a perilous situation due to the activities there of the Syrian *Mukhabarat* (military intelligence) and their Lebanese allies; some opponents of the Syrian government were kidnapped, according to the head of Lebanon's Internal Security Forces.

As many as 20,000 Syrians fled to Turkey, mostly from Idlib governorate, with around half ending up in camps provided by the Turkish Red Crescent, from which Amnesty International and most other human rights organizations and independent media were barred by the Turkish authorities. Even though the

Turkish authorities were increasingly critical of the Syrian government's unrelenting repression, they were reported to have forcibly returned some Syrians to Syria. At least 1,000 Syrians were also reported to have fled into Jordan.

## ARMS TRANSFERS

**“It is intensely hypocritical of our leadership in the UK... to talk of supporting freedoms in the Middle East and elsewhere while at the same time training crack troops of dictatorships.”**

Jonathan Edwards, UK Member of Parliament, speaking after it was revealed in May that the UK was still training Saudi Arabia's National Guard<sup>3</sup>

The repression unleashed in response to the protests graphically demonstrated the wide range of weaponry, munitions, armaments and related equipment used to facilitate or commit serious human rights violations in the Middle East and North Africa. It also highlighted how states outside the region only belatedly recognized the need to prevent arms supplies that could be used for such repression.

All the governments facing major unrest responded with excessive use of force, deploying a range of weaponry, munitions and other equipment against largely peaceful protesters. In Bahrain, Egypt and Yemen, riot police and internal security forces used firearms, including shotguns; fired live ammunition and rubber bullets; and used tear gas, water cannons and armoured vehicles to suppress and disperse protesters. In Libya, as the country slid into armed conflict, Colonel al-Gaddafi's forces launched Grad rockets and mortars, and fired artillery into densely populated civilian residential areas. In Syria, government forces used heavy weaponry, artillery and tanks to fire at civilian areas in their efforts to crush peaceful protests.

The resort to excessive force against demonstrators was not new – Amnesty International has been highlighting such abuse across the region for decades. However, the scale of the protests and the brutal response in 2011 irrefutably exposed how the weaponry supplied was used to suppress people's legitimate exercise of their human rights. Much of the weaponry was sold and supplied by European countries (including the Russian Federation) and the USA – and much of it should never have been authorized, given the overwhelming evidence of the substantial risk that governments in the Middle East and North Africa would use conventional arms to facilitate or commit serious human rights

People run to escape tear gas fired by security forces at peaceful protesters in Tahrir Square, Cairo, Egypt, 29 June 2011.







***Amnesty International called for the suspension of international arms transfers to the riot police and international security forces in Bahrain, Egypt and Yemen, and for of a comprehensive arms embargo on Libya and Syria***

violations against people of their own country, especially if they dared to criticize the authorities or call for political reform.

It is difficult to ascertain the degree to which arms-supplying states undertook rigorous risk assessments before authorizing transfers to the region because there is insufficient information published by governments on such processes. It is apparent that political and economic interests have often been prioritized over human rights considerations when taking decisions. Some supplying states are legally obliged to undertake a risk assessment. For example, since 2008 all EU member states must “deny an export licence if there is a clear risk that the military technology or equipment to be exported might be used for internal repression”.<sup>4</sup> US law states that export licences for arms transfers “will generally be considered favourably on a case-by-case basis unless... there is evidence that the government of the importing country may have violated internationally recognized human rights”.<sup>5</sup> However, in US law there is no rule that export licences should be denied if there is a risk that the arms are likely to be used to commit human rights violations.

During 2011, Amnesty International called for the suspension of international arms transfers to the riot police and international security forces in Bahrain, Egypt and Yemen, and for the immediate imposition of a comprehensive arms embargo on Libya and Syria. The organization also called on all states supplying arms to these countries to undertake an immediate and thorough case-by-case review of their arms transfers and trade, with the reviews aiming to ensure that no further weapons, munitions or other equipment, or technical support are supplied in circumstances where there is a substantial risk of their being used to commit serious human rights violations.

Some states took steps to suspend arms transfers to Bahrain, Egypt and elsewhere. The UN Security Council, followed by the EU, imposed an arms embargo on Libya, and the EU imposed an embargo on Syria. Such action, albeit belated, was welcomed by Amnesty International. However, Syria’s suspected primary source of arms, the Russian Federation, said as late as November that it would not impose any arms embargo. Little action was taken to stop arms supplies to Yemen, despite months of widespread human rights violations. Existing arms export controls had failed to prevent the transfer of arms in the preceding years, despite evidence of a substantial risk that they could be used to commit or facilitate serious violations.

As 2011 drew to a close, some arms supplying states wanted to resume “business as usual” in the region, despite the lack of evidence of a clear process for change, real reform of the security apparatus and an end to impunity. Given the continuing unrest and repression in much of the region, governments supplying or authorizing the sale or transfer of arms that have been used to fire

on and brutally disperse protesters must reflect on the criteria and methods used in their arms transfer decisions. If those decisions knowingly aid or assist another state to commit a crime under international law, then the transferring state is also responsible, and culpable, under international law.<sup>6</sup>

# AMNESTY INTERNATIONAL IN ACTION

As soon as the scale of the unrest sweeping across the Middle East and North Africa became clear, Amnesty International triggered its “crisis response mode”. This meant it could divert additional resources to enable the organization to increase its monitoring of human rights developments in the region and step up its campaigning.

## ON THE GROUND

Delegations of Amnesty International researchers and other experts travelled to the Middle East and North Africa throughout the year, sometimes at considerable risk to their lives and safety. These included visits to Tunisia in January, February-March, April and October; to Egypt in January-March, April, May, June, June-July, August-September, and November-December; to Bahrain in February, April, September and November-December; to Libya in February-May and August-September; and to Iraq in March.

Because human rights organizations and many others were barred entry to Syria, Amnesty International delegates went to Lebanon in April and May, and to Turkey in June, to speak to people who had recently fled Syria. A team also went to the Italian island of Lampedusa to interview people who had arrived there after treacherous sea voyages from Libya. The Yemeni authorities denied Amnesty International access to Yemen but it could closely monitor developments there through ties long-established with individuals and organizations in the country, in much the same way that Amnesty International has continued to monitor and report on human rights developments in both Iran and Saudi Arabia despite being denied access over many years. Amnesty International delegates also went to Algeria in February-March, to Israel and the Occupied Palestinian Territories in May and November, and to the UAE in June and September.

These teams witnessed some of the tumultuous and historic events. They visited hospitals and morgues, inspected prison and hospital records, and interviewed a vast number of victims of abuses and eyewitnesses, government officials, representatives of local NGOs, health workers, lawyers, human rights



and political activists, and many others. This and other forms of research helped Amnesty International to establish the veracity of many of the claims and counter-claims about human rights abuses, and to publicize on a virtually daily basis some of the key human rights developments across the region. The research also supported our global campaigning, advocacy and media work to ensure that Amnesty International was not just documenting the violations but could also support the demands of the people in the region for human rights change.

Amnesty International's presence on the ground helped to raise the profile of human rights concerns in a rapidly changing environment. For example, researchers reporting from the besieged city of Misratah in Libya helped expose to the world what was being done there and its impact on the local population, and in June an Amnesty International delegation, headed by the organization's Secretary General Salil Shetty, spent a week in Egypt meeting the ruling military authorities and calling on them to abolish repressive laws and end continuing abusive practices.

## GLOBAL CAMPAIGNING

Amnesty International published major reports on many of the countries most affected by the unrest. A booklet documenting developments in the Middle East and North Africa from January to mid-April 2011 was published in May as a supplement to Amnesty International's annual report on the state of human rights worldwide. A special addition of *Wire*, the organization's international newsletter, focusing on 50 years of working in the Middle East and North Africa, was published in August.

During the year, Urgent Actions were issued every week on behalf of people at grave risk, whether because they faced grossly unfair trial, or were in danger of execution or facing likely torture, or because they had disappeared. In total, more than 100 were sent to the network of 165,000 members worldwide resulting in thousands of individual letters being sent and a number of positive outcomes, including the release of dozens of individuals who had been detained.

On an almost daily basis, press releases and news stories covering key developments, special features, blogs and videos were made available on Amnesty International's website, [www.amnesty.org](http://www.amnesty.org), and translated, adapted and promoted through Amnesty International's national media and online networks around the world.

From January 2011 onwards, Amnesty International members and supporters took part in globally co-ordinated local actions in solidarity with the

***From early in the year, Amnesty International began preparing for a “Global Day of Action”***

people of the Middle East and North Africa. Indeed, over 120 individual daily and weekly updates on events in the region were sent to over 150 staff and volunteers around the world to ensure that the movement of over 3 million people was mobilized and could work together effectively in response to rapidly changing events and support the demands for human rights reform.

In some of Amnesty International’s larger national offices, teams of people worked together on this response. Even the smallest offices, however, engaged in some form of action. Around the world, activists attended public protests, signed petitions, wrote letters, sent emails, held banners, joined flash mobs, waved placards, lobbied governments, attended events, posted information on Facebook and mobilized on twitter.

From early in the year, Amnesty International began preparing for a “Global Day of Action” during which thousands of people would gather in solidarity with the people in both Tunisia and Egypt and in defiance of governments that continued to repress protests. Entitled “In Solidarity. In Defiance”, it was held on 12 February. This turned out to be the day after President Mubarak was toppled in Egypt, allowing many thousands of people worldwide to publicly celebrate the victories of the brave people of both Egypt and Tunisia.

Demonstrations were held in prominent locations in 17 cities globally. Activists, trade unionists, students and Amnesty International supporters created a sea of red, black and white – the colours of the Egyptian flag. The events attracted local and international media attention and clearly demonstrated Amnesty International’s power and effectiveness as a global movement to stand together for human rights in the Middle East and North Africa.

A short while after the celebrations, it became clear that the human rights situation in Egypt was still grim. In response, Amnesty International issued Urgent Actions and distinct human rights agendas for change for both Egypt and Tunisia, which supporters promoted in these countries and internationally.

Ahead of Tunisia’s elections for the National Constituent Assembly on 23 October, Amnesty International published a 10-point manifesto for human rights. This challenged candidates to pledge to undertake key human rights reforms, including reining in the security forces, reforming the justice system, combating discrimination, and abolishing the death penalty. Amnesty International campaigned for candidates to sign the manifesto, with its office in Tunisia leading the lobbying work. On the day of the first meeting of the National Constituent Assembly in November, Amnesty International Tunisia staged a large demonstration calling on the Assembly to ensure that human rights were made the foundation of the new Constitution.

In March, people around the world added their name to a petition entitled “Ensure accountability for the excessive force used and a call for the protection of

protesters” in Bahrain. The Action was posted on the main Amnesty International website, and many Amnesty International offices promoted it on their websites and through social media networks. Almost 50,000 signatures – many from inside Bahrain – were collected. Social media, especially twitter, was used to highlight Amnesty International’s ongoing public response to the situation in the country.

In response to the arrests and unfair trials before military courts of health workers in Bahrain, Amnesty International issued Urgent Actions, monitored the trials and helped to make the voices of the workers heard through major international health networks, associations and prominent medical journals. Amnesty International also published blogs by people in Bahrain affected by this repression who were known and trusted.

The “Help stop the bloodshed in Syria” petition, launched in April, called on the UN Security Council to condemn the violent crackdown and to refer Syria to the ICC. In just a few weeks, 165,953 people from across the globe – including, most courageously, from within Syria itself – supported the call for the crisis in Syria to be referred to the ICC and urged President Bashar al-Assad to stop the bloodshed. The petition and its message were hand-delivered to the Syrian authorities via their embassies in a number of countries around the world.

To keep up the pressure on the UN Security Council to act, another action was subsequently launched targeting specific members of the Council, namely Brazil, India and South Africa, urging them to vote for a resolution that would refer Syria to the ICC.

In August, along with the release of Amnesty International’s report, *Deadly detention: death in custody amid popular protest in Syria*, an interactive “Eyes on Syria” website was created to focus attention on 88 reported deaths in custody and to strengthen the call for the UN Security Council to refer Syria to the ICC. The site includes a map that documents the cases of individuals who died as a result of brutal treatment and shows where they died. The interactive site also allows people to post and share campaigning information, photographs and videos. The map is a live campaigning and communication tool, through which Amnesty International continues to monitor the situation in Syria, posts evidence of grave human rights violations by the authorities, and demonstrates the global response to the situation on the ground.

Images and videos of campaigning around the world in solidarity with the people of Syria are visible on the site [www.eyesonsyria.org](http://www.eyesonsyria.org) (see image above). These include public actions held in Croatia, France, Morocco and the UK, where Amnesty International activists took to the streets and staged events outside Syrian embassies calling on Syria’s intelligence agency to stop harassing activists living abroad. Wearing “blood-stained” white T-shirts and carrying the Syrian flag, they called for an end to the bloodshed in Syria.



<http://www.eyesonsyria.org/index.html?theme=activism&photo=6069678756>





Demonstration organized by Amnesty International Tunisia outside the Constituent Assembly (old parliament) building, Tunis, 22 November 2011.



In response to the deepening conflict in Libya, Amnesty International members called on both sides to respect human rights. Following the launch of Amnesty International's "Human Rights Agenda for Change" for Libya and the report, *The battle for Libya: Killings, disappearances and torture*, activists globally wrote to Libya's National Transitional Council (NTC) urging it to put human rights at the heart of institutional reform to ensure pro-NTC militias did not commit abuses.

After launching in September its report on the situation of refugees, asylum-seekers and migrants on the Tunisian and Egyptian borders with Libya, Amnesty International campaigned for European states to agree to resettle meaningful numbers of refugees displaced by the Libyan conflict. Amnesty International activists in Europe wrote to their governments and MPs, and called for meetings with officials. Amnesty International also engaged in constructive discussions with UNHCR, the UN refugee agency, in relation to living conditions for refugees stranded at the border in camps and makeshift tent areas.

Similarly, Amnesty International wrote to the Italian government to express its concerns about conditions for migrants on the Italian island of Lampedusa, to which many Tunisians and other people from north Africa had fled, and about the summary removal of groups of Tunisians from the island to Tunis from 7 April onwards, following the signing of an agreement between the Italian and Tunisian authorities.

In response to the brutal treatment of protesters in Yemen, Amnesty International launched two main actions. The first, entitled "Moment of Truth for Yemen", based on a report of the same name, used three campaigning methods – an online petition protesting about the scale of abuses in Yemen, run on [www.amnesty.org](http://www.amnesty.org) and the websites of Amnesty International's national offices; lobbying of foreign ministries to highlight the extent of the human rights crisis in Yemen; and activists urging their own governments to call on the Yemeni authorities to respect human rights.

The second action on Yemen, which began in March, focused on the supply of weapons being used to commit gross human rights violations against peaceful protesters. Amnesty International identified at least 10 supplier countries – the USA and the UK in particular, but also Bulgaria, the Czech Republic, France, Germany, Italy, the Russian Federation, Turkey and the Ukraine – and called on them to immediately suspend the authorization, supply and transfers of weapons, munitions, armaments and related material to Yemen.

In relation to Saudi Arabia, Amnesty International issued several Urgent Actions and statements in response to the government's crackdown on protesters and dissidents. When Amnesty International discovered that the government was preparing draconian anti-terrorism legislation, it initiated an online action enabling people from around the world to write to King Abdullah

bin 'Abdul 'Aziz Al-Saud, calling on him to abandon the draft law and to stop eroding the human rights of people in Saudi Arabia in the name of countering terrorism. This was followed by a report, *Saudi Arabia: Repression in the name of security*, issued in December, which among other things detailed Amnesty International's concerns about the draft law and the crackdown on protesters. The organization also tested a crowdmap<sup>7</sup> in Saudi Arabia to allow people to report violations directly to the organization.

Urgent Actions and statements were also used to call on the Iranian authorities to investigate the apparent excessive use of force during demonstrations, and to call for the release of prisoners of conscience and others arbitrarily detained. An action against a bill in the Majles (Parliament) that would have further restricted the operations of independent NGOs helped lead to the Bill being sent for further study. An Amnesty International report in June highlighted the ongoing repression of independent trade unions, while another in December addressed the sharp rise in executions for alleged drugs offences.

When five men were detained in the UAE and charged with "insulting officials" after calling for democracy and criticizing the government, Amnesty International promoted a text (SMS) action at the 2011 Edinburgh Festival in the UK in August for the "UAE 5". They asked festival-goers to text the word "FREEDOM" followed by their name to a petition, calling for the immediate and unconditional release of the five. This was then presented to the UAE embassy in London ahead of the trial.

Amnesty International's supporters mobilized on the streets, online and in their communities during the year of rebellion with engagement, sympathy and solidarity, reaching all parts of the globe. Sometimes, the online activities became a battleground themselves. For instance, Amnesty International's Facebook updates on Syria were targeted by the Syrian authorities, and some people in Bahrain tweeted Amnesty International in response to its petition, saying that the organization was giving only one side of the story.

By December, Amnesty International offices in around 50 countries had taken part in activities, ranging from local group events to integrated advocacy and media work, from online actions to international days of solidarity. Hundreds of thousands of people worldwide had shown their solidarity for the people in the Middle East and North Africa demanding their rights in the face of grotesque levels of violence.

***By December, Amnesty International offices in around 50 countries had taken part in activities***

Amnesty International France at a solidarity demonstration in Paris against the gross human rights violations happening in Syria, 15 October 2011. The placard says "Syria, we are with you".



**SYRIE :  
NOUS SOMMES  
AVEC VOUS**

SYRIA: WE STAND BY THE PEOPLE

50 ANS  
**AMNESTY  
INTERNATIONAL**





# HUMAN RIGHTS AGENDA FOR CHANGE

Throughout the year Amnesty International promoted human rights agendas for change in the Middle East and North Africa, based on the following principles but adapted for the particular country situations:

## ■ Reform the security forces

There must be fundamental reform of police forces and other law enforcement bodies in line with international law and standards. Their structure and chain of command must be made public and an oversight body established to independently and impartially investigate reports of abuse.

## ■ Ensure laws comply with international standards

Revoke or amend legislation that restricts human rights, including where relevant, emergency laws.

## ■ Reform the justice system

The independence of the judiciary must be upheld in law and practice. Everyone charged with an offence must have a fair trial by a competent, independent and impartial tribunal established by law, where the rights of defence are fully respected. Military trials of civilians and trials before emergency courts must end; those convicted must be retried before civilian courts or released.

## ■ End torture and other ill-treatment

Torture and other ill-treatment must not be tolerated, and must be criminalized in line with international law. All officers involved in arrest, detention and interrogation must know that torture and other ill-treatment will not be tolerated. Reports of torture and other ill-treatment must be investigated and those responsible must be held criminally liable and prosecuted.

### ■ End incommunicado detention

Detainees must have access in law and practice to the outside world, regularly and without delay, including to their families, lawyers of their own choosing and independent medical care. Places of detention must be publicly listed and subject to regular, unannounced and unrestricted independent inspection.

### ■ Uphold the rights to freedom of assembly, association and expression

Laws criminalizing the peaceful exercise of these rights must be repealed or brought in line with international law and standards. Security forces, including the army, must not use excessive force when policing demonstrations. Peaceful protesters and people peacefully expressing their views must not be arbitrarily arrested and detained, tortured or otherwise ill-treated. The freedom to seek, receive and impart information and ideas of all kinds, regardless of the media, must be protected and undue restrictions on internet and mobile telecommunications services must not be imposed. NGOs must be allowed to function without impediments.

### ■ Release prisoners of conscience

All prisoners of conscience – those deprived of their liberty solely for the peaceful exercise of their right to freedom of conscience, thought, opinion, expression, association or assembly or on account of their identity – must be released immediately and unconditionally.

### ■ End enforced disappearances

The practice of enforced disappearances must be stopped by immediately disclosing the whereabouts of all those detained, and ensuring that all detainees are officially registered and their families and lawyers notified.

### ■ End impunity

All appropriate measures must be taken against officials and others who order, condone, acquiesce in or commit human rights violations. Independent, thorough and impartial inquiries must be conducted into past human rights violations. These must make recommendations to prevent future abuses and to provide truth, justice and reparation to the victims, and such recommendations must be speedily implemented.

### ■ Realize economic, social and cultural rights for all

People must have access to essential public services, including water, sanitation

and health care, and adequate housing, without discrimination. Workers' rights, including the rights to form and join independent trade unions, to strike and to a fair minimum wage, must be upheld.

#### ■ **End discrimination**

Legal provisions discriminating against individuals on the basis of race, colour, religion, ethnicity, birth, sex, sexual orientation, gender identity, political or other opinion; national or social origin; property; or other status must be brought in line with international law and standards or abolished.

#### ■ **Decriminalize consensual sexual relations**

Any laws that criminalize consensual sexual relations and actual or alleged consensual same-sex relations must be repealed. No one should be arrested or prosecuted for their real or alleged homosexuality and anyone imprisoned solely on the basis of their actual or imputed sexual orientation should be unconditionally released.

#### ■ **Protect and promote women's rights**

Women must be full partners in the process of political and human rights reform. Women and men must be accorded equal rights in law, including in relation to marriage, divorce, child custody and inheritance.

#### ■ **Combat violence against women**

Women must have legal protection from domestic violence, including marital rape, and sexual harassment.

#### ■ **Uphold the rights of slum-dwellers**

People living in informal settlements must be meaningfully consulted and able to actively participate in decisions affecting their future. They must have legal security of tenure. Forced evictions must end. There must be a comprehensive plan to address inadequate housing conditions that threaten lives and health.

#### ■ **Abolish the death penalty**

A moratorium on executions must be introduced or upheld pending abolition of the death penalty.

#### ■ **Protect the rights of migrants, refugees and asylum-seekers**

Security forces must not use force against people seeking entry or exit across borders, except in strict accordance with international human rights standards. Asylum-seekers must have meaningful access to asylum procedures and to

UNHCR, the UN refugee agency, and individuals who are fleeing persecution must be afforded international protection.

■ **Proper control of military, security and police transfers**

All states supplying arms to the Middle East and North Africa should conduct an urgent, comprehensive review of all arms supplies to military, security and police forces to ensure that no arms are transferred where there is a substantial risk that they will be used to commit or facilitate serious violations of international human rights law or international humanitarian law. They should also ensure that all training support to military, security and police forces reinforces human rights principles and accountability; and examine critically the factors that would allow the resumption of arms transfers to the country. States should ensure that the negotiation of an Arms Trade Treaty in 2012 includes controls on all weapons, munitions, armaments and related materials designed or modified for military or internal security/law enforcement operations involving lethal force; and strong human rights parameters to prohibit arms transfers where there is a substantial risk that they will be used to commit or facilitate serious human rights violations.



# ENDNOTES

**1** SCAF, Message No. 1, 17 February 2011.

**2** The West's "double standards" in Middle East, *AlJazeera.net*, 28 March 2011

**3** "UK training Saudi forces used to crush Arab Spring", *The Guardian*, 28 May 2011.

**4** Council of the European Union, Council Common Position 2008/944/CFSP of 8 December 2008 defining common rules governing control of exports of military technology and equipment, Article 2.

**5** Under the Foreign Assistance Act, which has application in relation to state-to-state arms transfers. Export Administration Regulations §742.79(b) and (d).

**6** See Articles 16 and 41(ii) of the Articles on Responsibility of States for Internationally Wrongful Acts, UN General Assembly resolution 56/83 (12 December 2001), Annex: International Court of Justice (ICJ), Application of the Convention on the Prevention and Punishment of the Crime of Genocide (*Bosnia and Herzegovina v. Serbia and Montenegro*), Judgment, ICJ Reports 2007, p43, para420.

**7** A crowdmap is an open-source, free online tool that allows users to report information to NGOs and others using mobile phones, landlines and the internet.

Public action of Amnesty International Croatia to raise support for a UN Security Council resolution referring Syria to the International Criminal Court. The action took place in Zrinjevak park in central Zagreb on 20 July 2011.

**AMNESTY INTERNATIONAL** PRODUCES A WIDE RANGE OF MATERIALS, INCLUDING CAMPAIGN MATERIALS, COUNTRY AND THEMATIC REPORTS, LEGAL BRIEFINGS AND BOOKS.

The titles that follow are some of the reports and campaign digests published on the Middle East and North Africa in 2011. For more information on these or to order copies, please visit <http://shop.amnesty.org>

To see what else we produce, go to our main website at [www.amnesty.org](http://www.amnesty.org)



## CRACKDOWN IN BAHRAIN: HUMAN RIGHTS AT THE CROSSROADS

This report, published just before mass protests began in Bahrain in mid-February, shows how human rights in Bahrain were coming under increasing threat, with hundreds of people arrested or imprisoned for participating in protests.

Index: 11/001/2011  
Format: 20pp, A4, B&W report with colour cover

Languages available: English, Arabic  
Product Order Codes: P3472EN, P3472AR



## BLOODIED BUT UNBOWED: UNWARRANTED STATE VIOLENCE AGAINST BAHRAINI PROTESTERS

This colour digest describes the mass peaceful protests demanding political reform that shook Bahrain from mid-February. It was issued just before Saudi Arabian troops helped crush the protest movement.

Index: MDE 11/009/2011  
Format: 8pp, A4, full colour campaign digest

Languages available: English, Arabic  
Product Order Codes: P3548EN, P3548AR



## TUNISIA IN REVOLT: STATE VIOLENCE DURING ANTI-GOVERNMENT PROTESTS

This report, issued in March, focuses on the human rights violations perpetrated by the security forces in the weeks leading up to the overthrow of President Ben Ali on 14 January.

Index: MDE 30/011/2011  
Format: 40pp, A4, colour cover

Languages available: English, Arabic  
Product order codes: P3505EN, P3505AR



## MOMENT OF TRUTH FOR YEMEN

This report, issued in April, highlights the rapid deterioration in the human rights situation in Yemen, including the security forces' brutal response to mass protests calling for reform. It urges the authorities to end the crackdown and conduct investigations into the recent violations.

Index: MDE 31/007/2011

Languages available: English, Arabic

Format: 36pp, A4, B&W report with colour cover

Product Order Codes: P3575EN, P3575AR



## DAYS OF RAGE: PROTESTS AND REPRESSION IN IRAQ

This report, published in April, describes the large demonstrations by Iraqis that began in early February 2011 and were met with excessive force and other violations of human rights by the authorities. The protests were against the chronic lack of basic services, mass unemployment and endemic corruption, and demanded more civil and political rights.

Index: MDE 14/013/2011

Product Order Codes: P3565EN, P3565AR,

Format: 20pp, A4, B&W report with colour cover

P3565KU

Languages available: English, Arabic, Kurdish



## TIME FOR JUSTICE: EGYPT'S CORROSIVE SYSTEM OF DETENTION

This report analyses Egypt's state of emergency, enforced continuously for 30 years, which allows the authorities to arbitrarily detain people and commit other serious human rights abuses. Issued in April, weeks after the "25 January Revolution" toppled President Mubarak, the report urges the authorities to lift the state of emergency and create a state based on respect for human rights and a functioning justice system.

Index: MDE 12/029/2011

Languages available: English, Arabic

Format: 72pp, A4, B&W report with colour cover

Product Order Codes: P3176EN, P3176AR



## EGYPT RISES: KILLINGS, DETENTIONS AND TORTURE IN THE '25 JANUARY REVOLUTION'

This report, issued in May, describes why and how Egypt's "25 January Revolution" unfolded. In vivid detail, it charts the patterns of the security forces' repression of protesters from 25 January until 7 March, when the country's new interim cabinet was sworn in.

Index: MDE 12/027/2011

Languages available: English, Arabic

Format: 130pp, A4, colour insert and cover

Product Order Codes: P3563EN, P3563AR





## MISRATAH – UNDER SIEGE AND UNDER FIRE

This report, published in May, documents evidence obtained by researchers on the ground of the abuses suffered by the 300,000 residents of the Libyan city Misratah during the siege there that began in March, and of the growing humanitarian crisis. Scores of people were killed and many more were injured in indiscriminate attacks on residential areas by forces loyal to Colonel al-Gaddafi.

Index: MDE 19/019/2011

Languages available: English, Arabic

Format: 42pp, A4, B&W report with colour cover

Product Order Codes: P3606EN, P3606AR



## DEADLY DETENTION: DEATHS IN CUSTODY AMID POPULAR PROTEST IN SYRIA

This report, published in August, exposes the ruthless repression of government security forces as they attempted to suppress growing pro-reform protests. It focuses on the scores of people who died in custody as a result of torture, among them children.

Index: MDE 24/035/2011

Languages available: English, Arabic

Format: 36pp, A4, B&W report with colour cover

Product Order Codes: P3739EN, P3739AR



## 'WE ARE NOT DIRT': FORCED EVICTIONS IN EGYPT'S INFORMAL SETTLEMENTS

This full-colour report, published in August, describes the conditions facing millions of Egyptians driven to live in the country's sprawling slums by the acute lack of affordable housing. It documents the authorities' continued failure to protect slum-dwellers from hazardous conditions and their resort to illegal forced evictions.

Index: MDE 12/001/2011

Languages available: English, Arabic

Format: 114pp, paperback book, colour report

Product Order Codes: P3324EN, P3324AR



## NO PLACE OF SAFETY: CIVILIANS IN LIBYA UNDER ATTACK

As anti-government protests developed into armed conflict between forces loyal to Colonel al-Gaddafi and opposition fighters from late February 2011, civilians living in some areas increasingly found that nowhere was safe. This digest, issued in September, shows how al-Gaddafi forces committed serious violations of international humanitarian law in their attempt to regain opposition-held territory.

Index: MDE 19/027/2011

Languages available: English, Arabic

Format: 12pp, A4, full colour campaign digest

Product Order Codes: P3695EN, P3695AR





## EUROPE, NOW IS YOUR TIME TO ACT: REFUGEES FORCED OUT OF LIBYA URGENTLY NEED RESETTLEMENT

This colour digest, issued in September, highlights the abysmal response of Europe to the mass displacement of people living in Libya as the conflict there intensified. It called on European states to urgently introduce or increase resettlement programmes for refugees fleeing Libya.

Index: MDE 03/002/2011

Languages available: English, Arabic

Format: 8pp, A4, full colour campaign digest

Product Order Codes: P3694EN, P3694AR



## WOMEN DEMAND EQUALITY IN SHAPING THE NEW EGYPT

This colour digest, issued in October, highlights how women were instrumental in the uprising that ousted President Mubarak but were quickly marginalized afterwards. It calls for urgent action to ensure women can participate freely and in large numbers in elections and other processes that will shape their country.

Index: MDE 12/050/2011

Languages available: English, Arabic

Format: 8pp, A4, full colour campaign digest

Product Order Codes: P3756EN, P3756AR



## DETENTION ABUSES STAINING THE NEW LIBYA

This report, published in October, documents a range of abuses against around 2,500 people held by militia opposing forces loyal to Colonel al-Gaddafi. The abuses include detention without legal orders in unrecognized detention centres, including schools and sports clubs, and ill-treatment. It urges the new authorities to take urgent measures to ensure detainees are treated with dignity, to avoid reprisal attacks, and bring perpetrators of abuses to justice.

Index: MDE 19/036/2011

Languages available: English, Arabic

Format: 24pp, A4, B&W report with colour cover

Product Order Codes: P3758EN, P3758AR



## HEALTH CRISIS: SYRIAN GOVERNMENT TARGETS THE WOUNDED AND HEALTH WORKERS

This report, published in October, exposes how the Syrian authorities were blocking and manipulating access to health care for people wounded during the unrest that swept across the country from mid-March 2011, putting many lives at risk.

Index: MDE 24/059/2011

Languages available: English, Arabic

Format: 38pp, A4, B&W report with colour cover

Product Order Codes: P3739EN, P3739AR



## **BROKEN PROMISES: EGYPT'S MILITARY RULERS ERODE HUMAN RIGHTS**

This report, published as Egypt's first parliamentary elections following the "25 January Revolution" were about to begin in late November, charts how the military rulers were resorting to familiar patterns of abuse, including excessive use of force against peaceful protesters and torture, instead of breaking entrenched patterns of repression and abuses as they had promised to do.

Index: MDE 12/053/2011

Languages available: English, Arabic

Format: 68pp, A4, B&W report with colour cover

Product Order Codes: P3766EN, P3766AR



## **SAUDI ARABIA: REPRESSION IN THE NAME OF SECURITY**

This report, published in December, shows how the Saudi Arabian authorities launched a new wave of repression in early 2011 in the context of protests sparked by long-standing grievances over detentions without charge or trial. It also analyses a draft law on terrorism leaked to Amnesty International that promises to criminalize even the smallest act of dissent.

Index: MDE 23/016/2011

Languages available: English, Arabic

Format: 68pp, A4, B&W report with colour cover

Product Order Codes: P3672EN, P3672AR

