



WYOMUN VI

A Final Hope for Change: The Arab Spring



Chairs: Chloe Rajbhandari, Katherine Hays, Lauren Rutherford

Crisis Directors: Caitlin Broderick, Lydia Smith

Director-General: Liam O'Shaughnessy

Chief of Staff: Sam Black

Secretary-General: Sara Morehous

Hey Delegates!

My name is Chloe Rajbhandari, and I am your head chair for A Final Hope for Change: The Arab Spring. I am extremely excited to hear each of your ideas and help continue your participation in Model UN! I am also very eager to be a part of your passionate debate.

I have been in Model UN since sixth grade, and I particularly enjoy debate over climate change and natural disaster relief. I have loved every second that I spent in the club and wanted to continue to take part in it during high school. In the past year, I became our Secretary of Programs and Recruitment. Through this, I have experienced a whole new side of Model UN that I was not exposed to before. It was this that elevated my compassion for the club and led me to be a better delegate and staffer. I was interested in joining the staff for this committee due to my love for world history. Throughout WYOMUN, I hope you have a great time and love the topics just as much as we loved writing about them!



Besides Model UN, I am in Young Life, volunteer with Generations Together, and chair for Relay For Life. I also play soccer and I ski! My life is constantly busy and I usually have no free time, but if I do it is spent watching The Office and browsing the For You page on Tiktok. Maybe if you guys do exceptionally well then I'll show you some of my own! It will probably happen regardless of the circumstances. Anyways, I truly do hope that you have an amazing time debating, and I can't wait to see you fight for change in the Middle East. If you have any questions concerning the conference or committee, feel free to contact me at chloeraj32@gmail.com or our staff at wymunoh@gmail.com.

Sincerely,
Chloe Rajbhandari
Head Chair
A Final Hope for Change: The Arab Spring

Hello, my friends!

My name is Caitlin Broderick, and I am your Crisis Director for A Final Hope for Change: The Arab Spring. I am super excited to read your intricate crisis notes and help you develop twists and turns that will make our committee even more interesting and fun! I look forward to getting to briefly meet all of you and getting to know you through some awesome notes you pass me.

I first joined Model UN because I felt passionately about women's rights, prison reform, and education on consent, but didn't know how to further the causes that I cared about so deeply. In this club, I found my voice and direction, and hope to help you all do the same in our time together. History easily being in my top seven favorite classes, I am looking forward to getting to help rewrite it.



Outside of Model UN, I volunteer as a Disney princess for assorted charity events, play my violin, and run an after school program in Carthage to help integrate immigrants into our community. I love to travel when I can make the time, and to your left is a picture of me eating my favorite noodles in Rome. They were delicious! But most importantly, I do yoga. In my free time you will find me painting or writing, with a carton of hummus and my dog Fergus at my side. If you have hummus recommendations, please let me know!

On a more important note, I hope you have as much fun as we will in our committee. Whether this is your first committee or fiftieth,

each one of you has something unique to bring to the table to make our day full of learning and growth. Don't be afraid to put yourself out there, that's how you learn!

Sincerely,
Caitlin Broderick
Crisis Director
A Final Hope for Change: The Arab Spring

Introduction

Economic and political instability in the Middle East, while not recent, has worsened into the 21st century as a result of meddling global superpowers in an attempt to hijack the oil industries and gain economic and political control of the region. The Arab Spring officially sprung in 2010, when discontented citizens and pro-democratic government officials began to demonstrate against the various governments' dictatorship-like conditions and human rights violations. As the injustices of child labor began to decrease literacy rates, unfair working conditions stripped employers of their integrity, and discrimination towards minority groups created tension among the people, the lower classes felt the heat and called for help. These conditions helped to lay the groundwork for the protests that would ensue.

However, the disorganization of the lower classes may be the only thing able to maintain order. Politicians and the bourgeois see this strict autocratic rule as a way to prevent uprisings and keep people occupied in the midst of crisis, and as it is commonly acknowledged: monkey see monkey do. Even one revolt within a nation could cause a domino effect throughout the region and a devastating blow to the already endangered economies. Delegates in this committee must find a peaceful (or non-peaceful) solution to the chaos.

Background

The Catalyst to An Uprising

On December 17, 2010 in Tunisia, a man named Mohamed Bouazizi was upset regarding the demolition of his local fruit and vegetable stand. In protest, he went in front of a government office and set himself ablaze. This same demolition had already been taken against several small businesses across the country due to the absurd rules and regulations of Zine el Abidine Ben Ali's dictatorship. Protests began throughout the nation of Tunisia as a result of Bouazizi's death. This caught the attention of a large portion of the Tunisian population and began to make many wary of the oppressive governments scattered across the Middle East.



The protests quickly erupted in the capital Tunis and turned against the government. Ali's regime reacted with brutality, leading to 338 Tunisian deaths and 2,147 injuries. In a period of dismay, Ali blocked public access to the internet. Despite the state's many efforts, word quickly spread of the protests and dismay towards the regime's abuse of power grew. On January 14th, 2011, Ali and his family fled to Saudi Arabia. Tunisia had successfully overthrown their dictatorship.

Egypt

On January 25, 2011 a protest began in Tahrir Square to end the autocratic rule of Hosni Mubarak. In an attempt to control the massive uprising, police fought back in riot gear, causing the murder of over 800 civilians. After two days of protests, the Egyptian government shut down the internet, much like Tunisia, as a result of the large media coverage of the traumatic events that threatened the control of the government. With the access to the internet, the message of a potential end to dictatorial governments became a plausible outcome of riots and protests all across the Middle East.

Syria

The conflicts in Syria began with a cluster of small and non-violent protests across the nation. After hearing of the Tunisian uprising, civilians from a small southern town of Dara took to the streets to paint anti-government graffiti, protesting against the violence towards and death of students. Syrians were distraught over the presidency of Bashar al-Assad. In addition, they were also fighting for equal rights for Kurds, freedom of speech, press, and assembly, as well as the freedom of political parties. They sought an overall increase of freedom for the people, a central tenet of the Arab Spring.

Yemen

Shortly after the beginning of revolutions in Egypt and Tunisia, the Arab Spring began in Yemen. Thousands of people gathered in protest, attempting to overthrow their own oppressive leader, Ali Abdullah Saleh, who had been in power for over thirty years. On January 27th, a massive demonstration involving more than 16,000 people took place with the demand that Saleh step down. Saleh announced that he would not seek reelection nor would he pass power to his son. The government made what appeared to be progress, but then turned to violence in an effort to put down the demonstrations. This caused a greater frustration within their country.

Libya

The uprisings reached Libya in February of 2011, beginning in Benghazi when a human rights attorney was arrested. What started out as peaceful protests quickly became violent confrontations met with military backlash. The protests became very heated and a “Day of Rage” was declared on February 17th. The protests spread throughout the country and once they reached the capital of Tripoli, their intent became to overthrow dictator Muammar Gaddafi.

Bahrain

Bahrain’s protests began much quieter than the other countries. The country regularly experienced protests to fix the inequality between the Sunni and Shiite Muslims, but in the Arab Spring attention shifted to issues like a new constitution and an elected parliament. The absolute monarch, King Hamad bin Isa Al Khalifa, had been in power since 1999, and the people were anxious for change. Soon after the relatively small demonstrations began, some of those involved were killed. After the deaths started to occur, thousands of protestors were drawn out to the Pearl Roundabout on February 14th calling for the overthrowing of Al Khalifa.



Global Superpowers and Their Influence

The complications of the Arab Spring showed how little power America and Britain held over the Middle East in the present days of conflict and war. As a result of the British withdrawal from the Suez Canal in 1971, most nations of any power have struggled to take control of both themselves and the surrounding nations. With their firm threshold on the oil industry, Saudi Arabia and its allies have gained the most respect from the global superpowers and have taken

advantage of competitive edge. The revolutionaries had also built up a plethora of support based on their democratic values and intentions to create a state for the people. While the U.S. and Great Britain surely had their share of involvement, they played an attenuated role.

Religion and Its Importance

Religion played a key role throughout the ongoings of the Arab Spring. While Islam has historically been the major religion within the Middle East and North Africa, other minority religions are present throughout the region. Throughout the Arab Spring, the fight for freedom and a voice from these subgroups became more influential. While opposition grew against the existing government, the minority groups gained a voice of political activism. Through this, they were able to express their discontent regarding prior discrimination.

Current Situation

After seeing the success of the Tunisian Revolution, many Middle Eastern countries are left to consider the fate of their own regimes. In this committee, delegates will be tasked with facing the problems concerning revolutions in their own nation or allied nation. An uprising could be catastrophic to surrounding countries that are structurally weak and reliant on the overbearing control of a powerful leader. It is up to the delegates to decide which political decision will ensure a brighter future for the region. Along with this, several factors of the modern world will help develop these rapidly spreading revolutions. Maintaining these sources of outreach is a crucial aspect of retaining power, but constraining delegates' respective populations may have the opposite effect.

Questions To Consider

- How should each nation manage the outreach of social media?
- Is a revolution necessary in particular nations?
- Would the people benefit from this change of state?

- Could a pre-existing government create a state of neutrality with the revolutionaries?
- What should be the new type of government in place?
- How can the people ensure checks and balances?
- Is the issue rooted in the leader or the dictatorship?
- Will this change lead to coexistence amongst the nations?
- Could a change of government be done with peaceful actions?
- How could the fall of one nation’s leader affect the other nations?
- Could a pre-existing leader potentially rule under the new style of government?

Blocs

Pro-Autocratic Rule

Delegates from this bloc would be inclined to keep the pre-existing government and officials in place. They tend to be conservative with their beliefs and are strict followers of the power of a dictator to effectively run a nation. This bloc consists of major political leaders and their trustees. They back an array of national views and are devoted to holding power within their country. While they may not support the current dictator, they are content with an autocratic style of government and will do anything to stop the spread of revolution. Delegates of this bloc will also try to uphold the power of the governments of allying nations to support their own economy, but are very wary of neighboring nations gaining too much power.

Pro-Revolution

Delegates from this bloc would encourage the incitement of a rebellion among the states, and the implementation of a democratic government with new officials chosen by the people. They can be mediators or radicals, although all aim for a change to the status quo. This bloc will be comprised of current officers aspiring for change and revolutionary speakers and/or important public figures. They want to see the current ruling bodies overthrown. Delegates from this bloc tend to be more liberal and seek change for the good of minorities and the less fortunate. This bloc tends to utilize the influence of social media to advocate for change.

Delegates

<p>Zine el Abidine Ben Ali (Tunisia)</p>	<p>Tunisian president who had originally promised a more democratic approach to government, but did not stay true to his word. He is known to suppress freedom of the press and harshly combat opposition to the regime. However, the per capita GDP more than tripled from 1986 to 2008 as a result of his economic reforms and his moderate foreign policies allow Tunisia to pursue peaceful relationships with both western nations and</p>
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	in the Arab-Muslim world. He is the central target of protests in Tunisia.
Béji Caïd Essebsi (Tunisia)	Pro-democratic politician in Tunisia who served under Bourguabi as part of the separatist movement in various posts, including minister of foreign affairs. He earned much respect for his tolerant policies and impressive body of work, dating back to the 50s. He is retired from politics as of 1994 but still uses his influence to advocate for change. He would be reluctant to go head to head with Ben Ali.
Sakher el Materi (Tunisia)	Insanely wealthy Tunisian businessman and son-in-law of Ben Ali. In 2010, Materi's company Princesse El-Materi Holdings was operating in six industry sectors: News and Media, Banking and Financial Services, Automotive, Shipping and Cruises, Real Estate and Agriculture, giving him a significant presence in Tunisian life, Materi is considered as a possible successor to Ben Ali.
Mohammed ElBaradai (Egypt)	Strong critic of the regime, former head of the International Atomic Energy Agency where he serves three full terms. ElBaradai was awarded the Nobel Peace Prize in 2005. He supports the free press and an independent judiciary. While heavily opposed by the U.S. due to 9/11 controversies, he remains quite prevalent within the Middle East. Other global superpowers have expressed their support for him and his denuclearization peace plans.
Hosni Mubarak (Egypt)	Autocratic president of Egypt and previous military leader who has served for nearly 30 years leading up to the protests. There are frequent allegations of personal corruption against him, and he has been the victim of multiple assassination attempts for his diplomacy towards Israel and opposition to

	<p>Islamic fundamentalism. Egypt had much to gain from their successful allied position in the Gulf War, permitting a large European debt forgiveness and a solidified position in the Arab world.</p>
<p>Essam Sharaf (Egypt)</p>	<p>Prime minister after the resignation of Ahmed Shafiq (who was chosen by Mubarek), also a critic of Mubarek. He was in the National Democratic Party within Egypt. He strongly opposed the normalization of ties with Israel. After abolishing it, he reformed and restored the Ministry of Media but continued the process to be left under government control. Sharaf was known to shuffle the members of his cabinet around to give variability to the people.</p>
<p>Bashar al-Assad (Syria)</p>	<p>Autocratic Syrian president that made reform promises similar to Ben Ali that did not ring true in the long run. Assad replaced his father, Hafiz al-Assad, as leader at just 34 years old after an adjustment made by the legislature to lower the legal age for power. Many hoped for a modernization of the government under Assad since he had been educated in the west, although to no real avail. His reforms tend to benefit the politically connected elite. He is widely seen as a sham leading up to the protests.</p>
<p>Riad al-Assad (Syria)</p>	<p>Member of the Syrian Air Force who shows signs of idleness in his position and a lack of faith in the state of the government. His strong military leadership make him an attractive commander for pro-democratic forces, although he is no stranger to utilising violence as his main method for victory.</p>
<p>Ali Abdullah Saleh (Yemen)</p>	<p>Autocratic president of Yemen who enjoyed friendly relations with western nations such as the US. He was also a longtime ally of Saddam Hussein, opting in favor of his</p>

	<p>invasion of Kuwait at the time of the Gulf War. Saleh is known as tricky and manipulative, especially regarding his connection to the US and Al Qaeda post 9/11, often pardoning the group and demanding more money for retrieval, while being aware of his dispensability in the situation. He faces frustration from citizens on the basis of widespread corruption and human rights violations.</p>
Maj. Gen. Ali Mohsen al-Ahmar (Yemen)	<p>Yemeni army general who has been a longtime partner of Saleh, serving as colonel and chief of staff in the Yemeni army. Mohsen also helped to establish the General People's Congress Party. In the years leading up to the protests, Saleh and Mohsen's relationship has begun to sour due to rivalries between their sons, with Saleh allegedly attempting to have Mohsen assassinated. Mohsen thus has begun to oppose the authority of Saleh, making him a unique and valuable resource.</p>
Muammar Gaddafi (Libya)	<p>Prime Minister of Libya at the start of the Arab Spring. He seized control of Libya in 1969 and operated as an authoritarian dictator. Prior to his rule, he served in the military and quickly rose through the ranks and became the commander in chief. He gradually shrunk the government to include him and a few friends and political allies. He made Libya an Islamic state with next to no tolerance for other religions or political dissent. He is largely disliked by the people of Libya, who live in poverty because of the corrupt government.</p>
Mustafa Abdul Jalil (Libya)	<p>Leader of NTC, serving as the head of state for the National Transitional Council which was in place due to the predictable end to Muammar Gaddafi's government in the Libyan Civil War. Previous to this, Jalil held</p>

	<p>the position of Secretary of the General People’s Committee of Justice. He stood up to the government over several concerning human rights violations. Since the beginning of his governing career, he has been known to think of the regime as oppressive and unable to cooperate with the people.</p>
Saif al-Islam Gaddafi (Libya)	<p>Second son of Muammar Gaddafi, and served as the “de facto” Prime Minister during his father’s reign. While he held no official government position or title, he often handled public relations or foreign duties on his father’s behalf. He has more progressive views than his father, but was still aiding his father while he was in power.</p>
King Hamad bin Isa Al Khalifa (Bahrain)	<p>Has been ruling Bahrain as a monarch since March of 1999. He was focused on improving Bahrain and making it more stable. There was a lot of turmoil between the Sunni and Shi’ite Muslim communities during this time and the Shi’ite’s accused AL Khalifa of being discriminatory toward them.</p>
Maryam al-Khawaja (Bahrain)	<p>Al-Khawaja is a Bahraini human rights activist. Much like her father, she is a liberal and supports a shift of power from the autocratic government, to the people. She is a coordinator for the Bahrain Centre for Human Rights, an organization co-owned by her father. Throughout her career, she has tirelessly fought for democratic independence and a sovereign state.</p>
Hilary Clinton (USA)	<p>The current secretary of state for the USA, it is Clinton who provides the foreign expertise for Obama at the start of the protests. Clinton is known to have many personal connections within the region, thus making her stances on the protests contradictory and circumstantial in picking sides for backing the current leader in power or supporting protesters. She</p>

	would have a large influence over the decision of the US to intervene on either side of the issue.
Nick Klegg (Great Britain)	Nick Klegg is most well known for serving as Deputy Prime Minister of the United Kingdom and as the leader of the Liberal Democrats. Throughout his political career, Klegg has stood behind both socially liberal and economically liberal policies.
Gordon Gray III (USA)	U.S. ambassador to Tunisia at the time of turmoil, and a consistent proponent for democracy. Gray is a notable voice of reason, even for Ben Ali, and his role as a peacemaker is essential in the midst of both violent retaliation and violent suppression. Gray is liable to strong criticism regarding the human rights violations in the country and will always be active in the discussion about pacifist solutions.
Michele Alliot-Marie (France)	Right-wing French foreign minister of affaires. She is only two months into her position when protests begin to unfold. Although a proponent of democracy, she also wishes to restore order in Tunisia by any means possible- she has several radical ideas regarding the involvement of French forces.
Isaias Afwerki (Eritrea)	President of Eritrea who strongly opposes any western interference in middle eastern governments. He accuses the violent methods of protests of being fueled by the US in an attempt to manipulate them into creating chaos, and thus benefiting from the nations picking sides. He recommends that those in power, or protesting, do not rely on outside intervention for aid, as it is their responsibility to solve their own problems.

Further Research

Although this guide is a great starting point for research, additional investigation is necessary for further understanding of the committee and the topics to be discussed. Delegates are strongly encouraged to look for sources beyond the background guide, especially when researching topics specific to particular positions. Taking these actions will ensure a successful committee experience for all delegates.

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