

## Arab Spring

The Arab Spring was a series of anti-government protests, uprisings, and armed rebellions that spread across much of the Arab world in early 2010s.

Because most of these uprisings were in the spring of 2011, the name 'Arab Spring' was coined.

The social and political upheavals of the Arab Spring are still felt years after they ended to the present day.

This article will give details about the Arab Spring within the context of the Civil Services Examination

### Overview of Arab Spring

The Arab Spring was a series of loosely related group of protests that led to changes in government in countries such as Tunisia, Egypt and Libya. Despite the popular support not all of them were considered successful

The reason was that the end goal was increase in democracy and freedom, the period following the Arab Spring was marked by increased instability and oppression

Although the Arab Spring Protests were divided by geographic constraints and differing objectives, they all began with a single act of defiance.

### Origins of the Arab Spring

In December 2010, Tunisian street vendor Mohammed Bouazizi set himself on fire to protest the arbitrary seizing of his vegetables by the police. They did so as Mohammed had failed to obtain a permit.

This act served as a catalyst for the now famous Jasmine Revolution in Tunisia

It led to street protests in the capital of Tunis and quickly spread throughout the country. The scale of the protest forced the President Zine El Abidine Ben Ali to abdicate from power and flee to Saudi Arabia after ruling Tunisia for 20 years

Activists in other nations took cue from the events in Tunisia. Inspired by the first parliamentary democratic elections in October 2011 that took place in Tunisia, they began protests of their own.

The participants in these grassroots movements sought increased social freedoms and greater participation in the political process. Notably, this includes the Tahrir Square uprisings in Cairo, Egypt and similar protests in Bahrain.

## Events of the Arab Spring

While the protests in Tunisia ultimately led to some improvements in the country regarding human rights, not all nations that had similar uprisings witnesses such changes coming forth by the spring of 2011

In Egypt, the early gains made from the ouster of President Hosni Mubarak were reversed following a coup led by defense minister Abdel Fattah el-Sisi who has remained in power since 2013.

In Libya, long-time dictator Colonel Muammar Qaddafi was overthrown in October 2011 during the worst face of the civil war. In the ensuing conflict he was captured and violently executed by opposition fighters.

But Qaddafi's death changed little as the two opposing factions are still at odds with each other and rule separate regions of the country. Libya's civilians meanwhile suffered significantly during the years of political upheaval, with violence on the ground, limited access on food and health care

In Libya, meanwhile, authoritarian dictator Colonel Muammar Qaddafi was overthrown in October 2011, during a violent civil war, and was executed by opposition fighters.

This has contributed, in part, to the ongoing worldwide refugee crisis, which has seen thousands flee Libya, most often by boat across the Mediterranean Sea, with hopes of new opportunities in Europe.

Similarly, the civil war in Syria that began in the aftermath of the Arab Spring lasted for several years, forcing many to leave the country to seek refuge in Turkey, Greece and throughout Western Europe. For a time, the militant group ISIS had declared a caliphate—a nation governed by Islamic law—in northeastern Syria.

The group committed numerous atrocities and even destroyed cultural heritage sites in areas under their control.

ISIS was defeated in Syria, but the regime of long-time dictator Bashar al Assad remains in power in the country

In addition, the ongoing civil war in Yemen can also be traced to the Arab Spring. The country's infrastructure has suffered significant damage, and the conflict has devolved into tribal warfare.

## Aftermath of the Arab Spring

The aftermath of the Arab Spring in various nations led to waves of violence and instability now known as the Arab Winter. It was characterized by extensive civil wars, regional instability and demographic decline of the Arab League

Although the long-term effects of the Arab Spring have yet to be shown, its short-term consequences varied greatly across the Middle East and North Africa. In Tunisia and Egypt, where the existing regimes were ousted and replaced through a process of free and fair election, the revolutions were considered short-term successes.

The long term consequences however, seem to be the rise of sectarianism at least in part from proxy wars and the escalation of the Iran–Saudi Arabia proxy conflict. With no end in sight it seems less likely that the myriad of conflicts that came about following the Arab Spring is less likely to go away soon