

REPORT PREPARED WITHIN FRAMEWORK OF THE PROJECT EXPANSION OF THE LIBRARY  
OF COUNTRY OF ORIGIN INFORMATION UNIT, CO-FUNDED BY EUROPEAN REFUGEE FUND

# REVOLUTIONS IN THE ARAB WORLD

## POLITICAL, SOCIAL AND HUMANITARIAN ASPECTS

RADOSŁAW BANIA, MARTA WOŹNIAK, KRZYSZTOF ZDULSKI

OCTOBER 2011



COUNTRY OF ORIGIN INFORMATION UNIT  
OFFICE FOR FOREIGNERS, POLAND  
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MARRAKESH, MOROCCO, PHOTO BY EWA CYLWIK



RABAT, MOROCCO, PHOTO BY GRZEGORZ SZYMANIK



## INTRODUCTION

The events that we have been observing in the Arab world throughout the year 2011 should be regarded as unprecedented in the modern history of the region. The revolutionary ferment, initiated by the overthrow of the Tunisian President Zine al-Abidin Ben Ali, spread to other countries in the region. None of the Arab states have been bypassed by these events, although their scale and scope have been different in character and nature, depending on the local political, social and cultural conditions. Some of the protests against the current political order were extremely dynamic in nature and have led to a crisis and a rapid removal of the political leaders (Tunisia, Egypt), others have turned into a long-term internal crisis, reaching the level of armed clashes (Libya, Syria, Yemen). In other countries of the region, the anti-government protests were of ephemeral or episodic nature, without causing significant changes in the functioning of the system of governance. Nevertheless, the image of the region with stable non-democratic regimes has radically changed. The exceptionality of the situation is highlighted by the fact that for the first time in modern history of the Arab world we are witnessing a genuinely mass, grassroots protests, directed against the hitherto existing political order. The scale and the scope of the political disorder encourage to ask numerous questions that will be the purpose of this report. The authors of this report will seek to present a synthesis of the events that have taken place in 2011 in the Arab states of the Middle East and North Africa.

The objective of this report is to present the situation in the Middle East region, which is the result of the revolution in the Arab countries. The events taking place in the countries in which major social protests have taken place will be thoroughly analyzed. The main analytical objective of this report will be to determine the causes – both general and specific – of the revolutionary protests relating to a particular country, and subsequently to describe the development and the consequences of these protests in terms of political, social and humanitarian dimensions. An important element of every analysis will also be to present international conditions, including the reaction of the external powers that have their economic, strategic and military interests located in the Middle East region. The authors of this report will seek primarily to determine the causes and the conditions of the current events, to present the development of the events and to identify the possible consequences for the future of the states and for the entire region.

The structure of the report reflects the areas of concern. In the first place, the outline of the political, economic and social situation of the region will be presented. The subsequent parts of the report will include the analysis of the events taking place in



individual Arab countries, in which the largest anti-government protests took place and where they have caused major transformation in the functioning of the political system. The last part of the report will include the summary of the analyzed problems. The consequences of the current events will be considered at three levels: internal – regarding individual countries in the region, regional – regarding the balance of power between the countries of the region, and internationally – regarding the reaction of the external players towards the change of the political situation in the region.





## **SOCIO-POLITICAL CONDITIONS OF THE REVOLUTIONS IN THE ARAB STATES**

At the beginning of the twenty-first century, the Middle East and the North Africa represent an area where there are twenty-one countries inhabited by approximately 400 million people. The vast majority of the contemporary Middle East states describe themselves as “Arab states”, although their national structure is not always as homogeneous as they claim. The modern system of states in the Middle East and North Africa is the result of the overlapping of two processes. The first process is a local and centuries-old rivalry for power between the indigenous political forces. The second of these processes is a clash between the area and the European imperial and colonial policies. Both of these processes interacted with each other, resulting in a contemporary territorial, political and social structure of the region.

The period of the European domination in the Middle East was relatively short; nevertheless it was crucial for the subsequent history of the region. The system of states, instituted at that time mainly because of the European colonial policy, has survived to this day.

The mandate system has become the basis for the existence of such states as Lebanon, Syria, Iraq and Jordan. The boundaries of the mandated areas, established by the French and the British, have not changed drastically ever since. The only major modification of the territorial order was the creation of Israel in 1948. The creation of the system of modern Arab states was also of paramount importance for the internal political and social system. The supremacy of the Western powers was correlated with the formation of the modern European state and social institutions that gradually became more and more local. Among the most important processes to which the local communities were subject we shall enumerate:

- building the state apparatus in the form of local administration, as well as of police and military forces;
- the process of cultural and ideological transformation associated with the secular ideology;
- the emergence of mass political movements (including the Egyptian Wafd Party, and later the Syrian Baath Party);
- the formation of national identity and the phenomenon of nationalism associated with it.

All these processes ultimately turned into challenges which – after the Second World War – the representatives of the new Arab social classes, particularly receptive to the impact of nationalist ideology, threw to both the colonial authorities and the local elites.





Newly established or newly independent states sought an ideology which could legitimize their governments. Both nationalism and pan-Arabism perfectly suited this purpose. We should note however one important issue, namely that different governments of different Arab states have emphasized – in their internal and external politics – their interest in the so-called Arab unity. This was very often just a rhetoric used in order to serve the internal consolidation and legitimization of a given political regime, as well as an ideological weapon against other rivals in the Arab world. The Arab nationalism of the second half of the twentieth century was not merely a set of ideas and ideologies of a uniform nature, but it took on a slightly different characters and forms in different countries. During this time, the Arab nationalist doctrine underwent radicalization, accepting various forms of authoritarian socialism. These ideas were presented in the form of the ideology of Gamal Abd an-Nasir (Abdel Nasser) in Egypt or in the form of the ideology of the Arab Renaissance Party – Baath, both in the Syrian and Iraqi versions. While all the movements and the nationalist groups have some common features: they emphasized the idea of people who they felt had the right to represent; they stressed the need to free themselves from the external influences, mainly from the western ones and the need for the unity of all the Arabs, to which this political movement was meant to lead. The nationalist ideology understood in such a way prevailed in the Arab countries since the end of the Second World War to the seventies of the twentieth century. Then the secular and modernist nationalist ideology encountered a powerful rival in the form of religious fundamentalism.

The Arab states, after gaining independence, struggled with various issues such as political instability, poor economic development, internal and international conflicts. The political instability was an important factor in shaping authoritarian forms of governance<sup>1</sup>. None of the Middle East states managed to develop a democratic political system in the Western sense of the term. The introduction of new political structures by Western countries has not always been consistent with the local social structure and traditional political relations. The nationalist movements that existed in the Arab countries were aimed not only against the direct authority of the Western powers, but also against the elites, which during mandate period had to accept the status of power subordinate to the interests of the Western countries. That is why the political movements of the second half of the twentieth century were directed not only against the European powers, but also against the governments of the hitherto existing elites<sup>2</sup>. The states created in the Middle East also suffered from the lack of a qualified political class. On the political scene of the Arab states a special role was played by the military elite, which alone disposed of the means allowing to renounce allegiance to the existing political elites, and later used violence as a way of exercising power. The military coups

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<sup>1</sup> J. Zając, *Roles of the European Union in the region of North Africa and the Middle East*, Warsaw 2010, p. 73.

<sup>2</sup> R. Hinnebusch, *The International Politics of the Middle East*, Manchester-New York 2003, p. 54 and consequent.



that took place in the Middle Eastern countries have been officially instigated in the name of freedom of people, changes in social relations, and the improvement of the social conditions of the poor masses. In reality, however, they have led to the creation of a system of dictatorial and authoritarian rule, despite the adoption of formal structures of a democratic state such as government, parliament or the secular judiciary system. Throughout its modern history, almost all the Middle Eastern states have experienced a series of military coups. They were especially common between the thirties and the sixties of the twentieth century. At that time there have been three coups in Sudan, three in Iraq, five in Syria, two in Algeria, three in Yemen and one in Libya and Egypt. The case of Egypt, whose example influenced in a broad way other Arab states, is special in this respect. The Free Officers coup in 1952 provided an important benchmark for the actions undertaken in the neighbouring Arab countries. Egypt under Gamal Abd an-Nasir who held the office of president from 1954 to 1970 became an inspiration in this respect as well for the authors of numerous military coups. Many dictators have tried to copy the style and the charisma of the Egyptian leader, generally with meagre results. It is worth emphasizing, however, that in a country which was in a certain way the model of political change, there has been no further military coup. Removing the President Hosni Mubarak from power in February 2011, accepted by the military elite of the country, took place in the circumstances of a genuine mass revolt.

Starting from the late sixties and seventies of the twentieth century, there has been a certain stabilization of the political systems in the Arab countries. It manifested itself in a series of lengthy periods during which presidents / dictators governed. Among the leaders who stayed in power for the longest time were the following former or current heads of the Arab states: the Tunisian President Zine El Abidine Ben Ali (24 years), the Egyptian President Hosni Mubarak (30 years), the President of Yemen Ali Abdullah Saleh (21 years), the Supreme Leader of Libya Muammar al-Gaddafi (42 years), the Syrian President Bashar al-Assad (10 years, he took office after his father, who stayed in power for 29 years) and the Algerian President Abdelaziz Bouteflika (12 years)<sup>3</sup>.

As it has already been mentioned, the Arab states have developed different forms of political systems. In most of the cases those states are known as undemocratic, authoritarian, and in case of the monarchies – autocratic or despotic. By appealing to the idea of democracy in some of the constitutions, a different term for the description of these states is “facade democracy” or “quasi-democracy”. It is worth mentioning that according to the Freedom House classification for the year 2010, most of the Arab states in the Middle East and North Africa are the countries considered to be “deprived of their liberty” (*not free*), while the “partly free” states (*partly free*) are: Morocco, Kuwait and

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<sup>3</sup> *Mapping the Arab World*, [http://www.economist.com/blogs/dailychart/2011/02/arab\\_league\\_map](http://www.economist.com/blogs/dailychart/2011/02/arab_league_map).  
All websites cited in the report were available on October 27, 2011.



Lebanon<sup>4</sup>. Due to the nature of the supreme power, the modern states of the Middle East and North Africa are divided into republics and monarchies.

The republican states are: Algeria, Tunisia, Libya, Egypt, Lebanon, Syria, Iraq and Yemen. In the republican states, it is the president who is the head of the state, although there often is a function of a head of government, but the head of government has rather the powers of an administrative nature, and the real executive power rests in the hands of the president, whose term of office is limited in time. Usually the president is elected in universal suffrage. However, both the constitutional provisions and the practical way of selecting the leaders meant that in case of the analyzed group of countries, there has always been a principle of long-standing personal rule.

The remaining Middle Eastern countries are monarchies. These include: Morocco, Jordan, Kuwait, Saudi Arabia, Bahrain, Qatar, Oman and the emirates forming the federation of the United Arab Emirates. These countries are referred to as hereditary constitutional monarchies. All of them, except for Saudi Arabia and Oman, have a constitution defining the fundamental principles of state governance. It should be borne in mind that the concept of a constitutional monarchy should be treated somewhat differently than in the Western political systems. In the Arab world, the principle of “the monarch reigns but does not rule” does not apply.

Another feature of the political systems of the Middle Eastern countries is the undemocratic party system. Over the decades, the political parties have become an important component of the political life in the countries of the discussed region. Taking into account the classification of the party systems adopted by La Palombara and Weiner, they can be classified as the systems not considering competitiveness. In their case, there is no real political rivalry, as reflected in the electoral struggle and in the change in exercised power. While adopting a classification based on the criterion of real possibilities of exercising power by the party, the party systems in the Middle East and North Africa may be classified as mono-party and, therefore, characteristic of non-democratic countries. It should be remembered that in the mono-party system, there may be other political groups, but they are devoid of real possibilities of exercising power<sup>5</sup>. An important feature of the party system in the countries accepting the presence of other political parties than the ruling one is to govern the licensing of political activity. The legal provisions regarding political parties introduced a number of conditions which limited to a large extent the possibility of creating a truly pluralistic multiparty system. Among the countries of the region, the freedom to establish political parties is constitutionally guaranteed only in Morocco. An important element of the law on political parties was the introduction of restrictions that excluded the possibility of

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<sup>4</sup> *Freedom in the World 2011: Authoritarian Challenge to Democracy*, [http://www.freedomhouse.org/images/File/fiw/FIW\\_2011\\_Booklet.pdf](http://www.freedomhouse.org/images/File/fiw/FIW_2011_Booklet.pdf).

<sup>5</sup> P. Uziębło, *Party systems*, [http://pedrou.w.interia.pl/systemy\\_partyjne.pdf](http://pedrou.w.interia.pl/systemy_partyjne.pdf).



forming certain political groups. The Algerian law on parties contains the provisions excluding the possibility of creating parties based on religious (Muslim) or ethnic (Arab, Berber) ideology. Similar solutions have been in practice implemented in Egypt and Tunisia. The adoption of the exception clause may be argued in two ways. First and foremost it is aimed at integrating the internal political system by seeking the liquidation of religious divisions. On the other hand, it is impossible not to notice in such solutions the efforts aimed at excluding political parties which could prove dangerous for those in power and become a real and not a facade political opposition.

The above outline of the political system of the Arab states clearly shows its undemocratic nature. It should be kept in mind however that this situation is not a simple consequence of the lack of democratic traditions, but results from a specific path of development of the political institutions through which the region has passed over the last century. Until recently, the modification of individual political systems consisted simply in constraining or enhancing the degree of repressiveness of authoritarian and dictatorial governments. But the recent revolutionary events in the Arab world bring some hope that the authoritarian regimes are not the only option for the organization of political systems of the Middle East.

Repressiveness and the lack of a competitive political system cannot be viewed as the only causes of the discontent of the societies in the Arab states. The protests against the rule of current leaders resulted primarily from the enduring difficult economic and social situation. In the nineties of the 20<sup>th</sup> century, the average economic growth in the Arab countries amounted to 3.3 per cent annually. The economic growth per capita amounted to 1.3 per cent which means that it was higher only than the Sub-Saharan Africa and Central Asia regions. In turn, in the period 1980-2004, the real GDP growth in the Arab countries rose by just 6.4 per cent, which gives 0.5 per cent per annum<sup>6</sup>. The Middle East has also one of the lowest ratios of FDI inflows, which amounted at the end of the twentieth century to 0.7 per cent of the GDP. Another problem is the low competitiveness of the economies that produce low-and-medium-technology products and that translates into a minor increase in exports. In the last decades of the 20<sup>th</sup> century it amounted to only 5 per cent, while other regions of the world reported an increase amounting to several hundred percent. In addition, the export structure is unfavourable. Most of the exported products are raw materials and agricultural products. The economies of the Arab countries suffer also because of the growing foreign debt<sup>7</sup>.

Another problem is the unemployment that grew steadily at the turn of the 21<sup>st</sup> century. In the early eighties, the unemployment rate stood at 8 per cent, in order to

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<sup>6</sup> *Arab Human Development Report 2009. Challenges to Human Security in the Arab countries*, New York 2009, s. 9.

<sup>7</sup> J. Zając, *op. cit.*, p. 79 and consequent.



reach 15 per cent after two decades. Still, there are countries in which the unemployment rate is nearly 30 per cent (Algeria, Yemen). The unemployment rate in the Arab countries is among the highest in the world. In the first decade of the 21st century, the global average unemployment rate stood at 6.3 per cent. In several Arab countries, such as Egypt, almost half of the population under the age of 25 is unemployed. The level of unemployment is also related to the issue of low-quality workforce. It results in a minor increase in labour productivity, which in the nineties amounted to 0.7 per cent and was one of the lowest in the world<sup>8</sup>.

Another problem is the structure of unemployment associated with the natural increase. Over the last several dozen years, the Arab states have experienced important demographic changes. We can even speak of a demographic boom that the Arab states have been experiencing since the fifties of the 20th century. In 1980, the population of the Arab states stood at 150 million. In 2007 it rose to the level of 317 million. The estimates of international institutions show a possible increase in population to 455 million people in 2025<sup>9</sup>. Such significant demographic growth, i.e. one of the largest in the world, was due to high fertility rate, which stood at 6.5 for the years 1975-1980. At the beginning of the 21st century, it was significantly reduced to 3.6, but it still translates into a positive natural increase (we should keep in mind the fact that replacement fertility rate is 2.1). The Arab states are still experiencing high natural increase rate, which determines their demographic structure. And it is dominated by young people. It is estimated that people between the age of eighteen and twenty-four constitute 20-24 per cent of the population. At the same time people under the age of fourteen constitute at present nearly 30 per cent of the total population. Thus, people aged 25 or less constitute nearly 60 per cent of the total population of the Arab states. The average life expectancy in the Arab world stands at twenty-two years while the world average life expectancy is of twenty-eight years<sup>10</sup>. This creates both challenges and threats to the stability of the Arab states. A large generation of young people represents great social capital which can be used for internal transformation but if left alone, in the long run, it poses a threat to the internal system of the region. The Arab states found themselves in a situation of accumulated social energy, which they were not able to manage properly. Discontent, aggravated by two interrelated circumstances, grew among young people.

Large numbers of young people were not able to find work and even people with higher education were forced to perform low-skill occupations. The resulting frustration has been linked with a social imperative, important in the Arab world, i.e. to start a family. Young people, deprived of sufficient income, marry and start a family later in

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<sup>8</sup> *Ibidem*, p. 108 and consequent.

<sup>99</sup> B. Chourou, *Promoting Human Security: Ethical, Normative and Educational Framework in the Arab States*, Paris 2005, p. 53.

<sup>10</sup> *Arab Human...*, *op. cit.*, p. 36.





their lives. In most of the Arab states young people become independent only after the age of thirty, which means that later than it is the case in the rich Western countries. Both of these factors caused frustration which found its vent in the mass opposition to the hitherto existing political order<sup>11</sup>.

Another factor to be taken into account while analyzing the determinants of the current political unrest is a gradual process of urbanization. In the seventies of the 20th century, the percentage of people living in the cities was 38 per cent. However, in the first decade of the 21st century, it rose to the level of 55 per cent, and in 2020 it could reach 60 per cent<sup>12</sup>. This trend indicates the need to adapt the urban infrastructure to the growing population. In this regard, most Arab countries have serious difficulties. Those countries do not conduct an effective housing policy, nor are they able to ensure the sustainable development of the urban space. The result is the juxtaposition of relatively modern areas of central quarters, surrounded by areas of building zones totally uncoordinated and not subject to any technical inspection, inhabited by people with low incomes. The majority of the urban population is located in the second space. Drawing attention to the urban environment is so important because it was the main area of unfolding of political unrest.

The above factors meant that at the turn of the 21st century, in the Arab countries, serious political, social and economic tensions have been created. Today's anti-democratic regimes of the Arab states have failed to manage the social capital growing over the last several decades. In summary, we can enumerate several complex reasons that conditioned the anxiety in Arab countries. They are:

- Failure of the political system which has not been able to fulfil the growing demands of the society;
- Failure of the economic system which could not cope with large numbers of young people in the labour market and provide them with a decent way of earning money to enable them to entry into adult life;
- the impact of the demographic changes associated with high level of population growth and the age structure of the society in which a large number of young people appeared in the situation of social and political exclusion.



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<sup>11</sup> K. Górak-Sosnowska, *Forced youth. The socio-economic conditions of the Arab Spring of Nations*, [http://www.peacestudies.pl/niusy/photos/file/arabska\\_wiosna\\_ludow/krkper cent 20demogf. pdf](http://www.peacestudies.pl/niusy/photos/file/arabska_wiosna_ludow/krkper%20demogf.pdf).

<sup>12</sup> *Arab Human...*, *op. cit.*, p. 3.



TRYPOLIS, TUNISIA 2011, PHOTO BY JUSTYNA JAKUBASZEK



## TUNISIA

When in 1956 Tunisia regained sovereignty by throwing off the yoke of the French protectorate no one foresaw that for the next fifty five years only two people would remain the heads of this state. Had Tunisia remained a monarchy, it would have seemed more natural, but one year after the restoration of independence, Muhammad al-Amin was overthrown, the country was turned into a republic, and Habib Burgiba, the leader of the Neo-Dustur Party (New Constitution) became its first president<sup>13</sup>. In terms of political power, the new leader gradually strengthened his position. The first step was the introduction of the dictatorship of the ruling party, which since 1964 was renamed the Socialist Constitutional Party<sup>14</sup>. The other political parties were forbidden and any sign of opposition was suppressed. The next step was to achieve by Bourguiba the position of undisputed leader which culminated in a parliamentary amendment of 1974, according to which he became the president for life of the Tunisian state<sup>15</sup>. In terms of economy, after a short period of free-market economy, the economic system began to move towards socialist solutions. Initially, it was mainly aimed at increasing state control over the economy through the nationalization of the industry and mining, but with the passing of time the central planning and the programme of collectivization of agriculture were introduced<sup>16</sup>. In terms of ideology, this system differed strongly from the system behind the Iron Curtain. First of all, the class struggle was rejected in favour of terms such as “cooperation”, “freedom” and “development of the individual”<sup>17</sup>. The trade unions united within the Tunisian General Labour Union (Union générale du travail tunisienne, further UGTT) began to play a great role in building a new society. Their position within society has become very strong and has not been undermined despite the repression of the late seventies, which were a response to a wave of strikes. Since the mid-seventies the authorities began to move away from the socialist model. It is true that the state still controlled the most important industries, but the barriers to foreign investment have been eliminated, private businesses have been allowed to operate, even within the industry as long as the production aimed at exporting, and large investments in the development of tourism in the private sector have been made<sup>18</sup>.

All the changes that have occurred within the Tunisian society during the reign of Bourguiba led to the situation in which Tunisia has become one of the most modernized

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<sup>13</sup> A. Dziubiński, *History of Tunisia*, Wrocław 1994, p. 312.

<sup>14</sup> G.W. White, J.P. Entails, M.A. Tessler, *Republic of Tunisia*, [in:] *The Government and Politics of the Middle East and North Africa*, D. E. Long, B. Reich (red.), Oxford 2002, p. 463.

<sup>15</sup> *Ibidem*, s. 466.

<sup>16</sup> A. Dziubiński, *op. cit.*, p. 320.

<sup>17</sup> G.W. White, J.P. Entails, M.A. Tessler, *op. cit.*, p. 465.

<sup>18</sup> *Ibidem*, p. 467.



and secularized Muslim societies, similar in this dimension to Turkey or to the post-Soviet republics in Central Asia<sup>19</sup>. In order to capture this specificity, the socio-economic system of this country was sometimes described as Bourguibism.

However, unlike Kemal Atatürk in Turkey, Habib Bourguiba was never elected the president of Tunisia. In 1987, intraparty opposition removed him from power, and the head of the security forces, General Zine El Abidine Ben Ali, was elected president<sup>20</sup>. The new leader promised political liberalization and reforms. The signal for the upcoming changes was the adoption of a new name of the ruling party – the Democratic Constitutional Assembly (hereinafter: DCA); the release of Rashid Ghannouchi – leader of the Islamic Tendency Movement – was an act of good will, and the first change was the deletion of the amendment instituting presidency for life and replacing it with three five-year terms of office<sup>21</sup>. But the concessions on the part of Ben Ali ended when in 1989 the members of Hizb an-Nahda (Renaissance Party into which the Islamic Tendency Movement was transformed) won 17 per cent of votes while standing for election in the parliamentary elections<sup>22</sup>. In response, 30,000 members and supporters of the Renaissance Party were arrested, many emigrated, and two years later the party was delegalized. Thus, Ben Ali showed his true colours. It turned out that his government would not differ from the previous ones. Tunisia has remained a country where one party ruled, with one man ruling the party, a country with an extensive security apparatus, in which free speech was repressed by the ubiquitous censorship, and the liberalization of the economy and the appearance of democracy were aimed at substituting the political freedom to the citizens. Thus, the Ben Ali's power and the influence of his family were secured for more than the next twenty years, until the dramatic action of a young man from a provincial town triggered a chain reaction.

On the 17th of December 2010, Mohammad Bu Azizi (Bouazizi) set himself on fire in front of a police station in the village of Sidi Bouzid. In this way, a young Tunisian protested against the confiscation of his stall by the local authorities, which was the only (illegal) source of income for his family of eight, and above all against the humiliation inflicted on him by a policewoman who slapped his face and insulted his late father<sup>23</sup>.

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<sup>19</sup> M. Marszewski, *Prospects for the development of Islamic activism within the new post-revolutionary political order in North Africa*, "Peace and Development Studies". Articles from the seminar on the Arab Spring of Nations, p 14. [http://www.peacestudies.pl/niusy/photos/file/Islamskiper cent20aktywizmper cent20 Afrykiper cent20Polnocnej.pdf](http://www.peacestudies.pl/niusy/photos/file/Islamskiper%20aktywizmper%20Afrykiper%20Polnocnej.pdf).

<sup>20</sup> The reasons for removal of Habib Bourguiba from power see G.W. White, J.P. Entells, M.A. Tessler, *op. cit.*, p. 470-71.

<sup>21</sup> *Ibidem*, p. 471.

<sup>22</sup> M. Dudkiewicz, P. Sasnal, *The political scene in Tunisia before the elections to the National Constituent Assembly*, "Bulletin of the Polish Institute of International Affairs", 12.10.2011, p. 2534.

<sup>23</sup> P. Biernacka, *Tunisia, i.e. from what it started*, "International Relations", Issue 71-72, 2011, p. 8.





This desperate act proved to be the proverbial spark in a barrel of gunpowder. The wave of demonstrations that swept through Tunisia had obviously a deeper reason, constituted by a mixture of economic and political factors. The deteriorating state of the Tunisian economy, and especially the inflation linked, among other things, with the current world economic crisis has increased the level of dissatisfaction within the Tunisian society. The unemployment reaching the level of 16 per cent may seem not so high, however, this phenomenon affected mainly young people, among whom it could be up to three times higher<sup>24</sup>. In addition, 37 per cent of university graduates remained unemployed<sup>25</sup>. These data are important because it was the young people who were the driving force of the protests in Tunisia. Even though for years the economic growth was recorded at more than 3.5 per cent, the development of the country was very uneven. The largest investments have occurred in the coastal areas of the country, mainly in the north. Meanwhile, the central and the southern parts of the country were left for years on the margins of economic life<sup>26</sup>. It was these areas where the protests spread first with the greatest intensity. But already in previous years, there has been social unrest in these regions<sup>27</sup>.

The discontent caused by the economic conditions was compounded by political considerations. As Marwan Muasher from the Carnegie Endowment noted: “When watching the slogans they shouted in Tunisia, only a small portion was directed against the inflation, the vast majority accused the government that it has abandoned its people”<sup>28</sup>. And in fact, the Tunisian society was already tired of years of President Ben Ali staying in power and had enough of corruption which prevailed among those in power. The Tunisian people could acquaint themselves with the scale of the latter phenomenon by consulting the U.S. diplomatic documents disclosed by the portal Wikileaks, which only increased the dislike for Ben Ali<sup>29</sup>.

The protests, which swept through Tunisia in late December and early January, were grassroots and spontaneous movements. But the opposition parties had only a

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<sup>24</sup> *Popular Protest in North Africa and the Middle East (iv): Tunisia’s Way*, Middle East/North Africa Report, no. 106, (further ICG, 106), ed. International Crisis Group, 28.04.2011, p. 3.

<sup>25</sup> D. Liszczyk, *France and the political crisis in Tunisia*, “Bulletin of the Polish Institute of International Affairs”, No 14 (796), 10.02.2011, p. 2370.

<sup>26</sup> ICG, 106, p. 2.

<sup>27</sup> In 2008 there were riots in the Gafsa mining region and the southern city of Ar-Rudajjif. In turn, in 2010, the youth protests included the village of Kirdan Bin. *Ibidem*.

<sup>28</sup> M. Muasher, *Tunisia’s Crisis and the Arab World*, „Q&A”, 24.01.2011, <http://carnegieendowment.org/2011/01/24/tunisia-s-crisis-and-arab-world/69nu>.

<sup>29</sup> According to a report of 2006, more than half of the richest businessmen in Tunisia were connected with the so-called “Family”, i.e. with the president of Tunisia, his wife, their three adult children, seven siblings and ten brothers and sisters of his wife. See L. Anderson, *Demystifying the Arab Spring*, “Foreign Affairs”, No 3, 2011, p. 3.





marginal contribution to their progress<sup>30</sup>. This does not mean that nobody directed them. Trade unions played a great role<sup>31</sup>, and especially those associating teachers and lawyers. The first largely contributed to the expansion of the protests in the province of Sidi Bouzid, and the second organized, among others, the first demonstration in the capital, Tunis<sup>32</sup>. Besides, the first professional group which announced the strike were attorneys. Initially, the ordinary trade unionists and regional managers played the main role. In addition to standard instruments to mobilize people, they used electronic media, thanks to which they managed to expand the scale of protests in Tunis<sup>33</sup>. The management of the UGTT tried to mediate and intercede in favour of the imprisoned members of the protests. However, after the bloody events in Kasserine that took place on the 8th and 9th of January 2011, they supported the protesters and announced the general strike for the 14th of January<sup>34</sup>.

The response of the Tunisian authorities for the street protests was an attempt to suppress them by force. The police and other security forces have started an unabated fight with the demonstrators, often using live rounds<sup>35</sup>. When these measures proved insufficient, Ben Ali tried to personally calm the situation, appearing twice on television with a message to the nation and visiting Mohammad Bu Azizi in the hospital. But these actions proved to be belated on one hand and inadequate on the other hand<sup>36</sup>. In these circumstances, on the 14th of January 2011, Ben Ali resigned from office and went into exile.

Ben Ali's resignation cannot be explained only by mass protests, despite the fact that they played a major role. It was also determined by other factors. After the first announcement of a general strike by UGTT, the Tunisian leaders had to realize that the backbone of the society is against them. Secondly the passivity of the DCA, which has not organized a single counter-demonstration, probably showed to Ben Ali that he has no real support within the ruling party and not just among the ordinary members, but also in the party leaders<sup>37</sup>. Ultimately the move of the he Chief of Staff of the Tunisian Armed Forces, Rashid Ammar, who refused to obey the order to silence the protesters, tipped the balance<sup>38</sup>. In this situation, the Tunisian leader could only have counted on the

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<sup>30</sup> ICG, 102, p. 8.

<sup>31</sup> L. Anderson, *op. cit.*, p. 2.

<sup>32</sup> ICG, 102, p. 5.

<sup>33</sup> *Ibidem*, p. 7. More on the role of the Internet See *ibidem*, p. 7-8.

<sup>34</sup> *Ibidem*, p. 6.

<sup>35</sup> The first recorded case of the use of live rounds was a fatal shooting of two demonstrators on December 24, in the village of Manzil Bu Zayan, in the province of Sidi Bouzid. *Ibidem*, p. 4.

<sup>36</sup> For example, the first concession, and only of economic nature (the promise to create 300,000 jobs over two years) was made during a television appearance on January, 10. Besides, in the same speech, the protests were defined as terrorist acts, directed from abroad. *Ibidem*, p. 5.

<sup>37</sup> *Ibidem*, p. 9-10.

<sup>38</sup> M. Ottaway, *Who Will Lead Tunisia?*, 28.01.2011, <http://carnegieendowment.org/2011/01/>



powerful security services (more than four times more numerous than the army), although in this case there were also doubts about their loyalty<sup>39</sup>. Besides, they could not have replaced completely the political base.

The escape of the President Ben Ali did not end the mass demonstrations as the power was still exercised by the representatives of the old regime. According to the constitution, the acting president was the chairman of the Parliament Fuad Mubazza. The government of national unity, among which there were some representatives of the opposition, trade unions and some experts, was headed by the former, long-term Prime Minister Mohamed Ghannouchi<sup>40</sup>, and the most important ministries such as defence, foreign affairs and finance remained in the hands of members of DCA<sup>41</sup>. In this situation, the opponents of the regime announced that they would not resign and that they had united themselves within the so-called the 14th of January Front. At the same time a more formal body, namely the National Council for the Protection of the Revolution, was established aimed at watching over the fulfillment of the demands of the protesters<sup>42</sup>. Scuffles lasted six weeks. Among the demonstrators there were again fatal casualties<sup>43</sup>. Mohamed Ghannouchi formed government twice, and twice resigned from office, in early February the DCA suspended its activity, and after several days it announced its dissolution, and in the end Fuad Mubazza announced the deadline for the parliamentary elections to be held on the 24th of July<sup>44</sup>. Only the last move calmed down the opposition, and the demonstrators began to disappear from the streets of the Tunisian cities.

There were two hundred and nineteen people dead, and five hundred and ten wounded in the mass protests in Tunisia, repressed for over three months<sup>45</sup>. The bloodiest riots took place before the resignation of the President Ben Ali, and a special occurrence among other events was a two-day protest in the villages of Kasserine and Tala. According to the official information, twenty-one people were killed, but those data were disputed by the trade unionists who have estimated the losses of about fifty killed,

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28/who-will-lead-tunisia/5er3.

<sup>39</sup> ICG, 102, p. 11.

<sup>40</sup> Not to be confused with Rashid Ghannouchi, leader of the Renaissance Party. The politicians are not closely related to each other.

<sup>41</sup> M. Ottaway, *op. cit.*

<sup>42</sup> It was about the dissolution of the institutions inherited from the old regime, i.e. the bicameral parliament and the Supreme Court, the conduct of elections to the new National Assembly within one year. ICG, 102, p. 13.

<sup>43</sup> As a result of clashes with the police, on the 4<sup>th</sup> and 5<sup>th</sup> of February, five people were killed in the province. *Ibidem*, p. 17.

<sup>44</sup> *Ibidem*, p. 17-18.

<sup>45</sup> The data provided by Al-Jazeera on the basis of information obtained by the United Nations. They do not include, however, the events of February, which could slightly increase the number of the victims. *Timeline: Tunisia's uprising*, "Al-Jazeera", <http://english.aljazeera.net/indepth/spotlight/tunisia/2011/01/201114142223827361.htmlper cent29>.



the information confirmed by the data obtained from the hospitals<sup>46</sup>. The riots in Tunisia did not lead to migration on a large scale.

For the world public opinion, as well as for the governments of many countries, the protests in Tunisia, and especially their main effect, i.e. the resignation of the President Ben Ali, was a surprise. The Ministries of Foreign Affairs of each country were cautious and sceptical about these events. A hallmark of the attitude of the Western world was the position of France which – by virtue of its special interests in Tunisia resulting from the historical links – is worth taking a closer look. Over the years, the regime of Ben Ali was seen in Paris as a guarantee of the internal stability of Tunisia, and especially as a factor inhibiting the development of Islamic fundamentalism in that country<sup>47</sup>. It is therefore not surprising that the French Ministry of Foreign Affairs remained passive in this situation, and its position was limited only to observing the events and calling for the release of tensions and a dialogue between the parties<sup>48</sup>. It was the fall of Ben Ali which forced the French authorities to redefine their policies. There had to be some changes at the top of diplomacy. The French Ambassador in Tunis was recalled, and Michèle Alliot-Marie lost the position of the Minister of Foreign Affairs<sup>49</sup>. In this way, the French authorities wanted to give the impression that the people responsible for the hitherto prevailing political line towards Tunisia left. They also tried to recover from losses in other ways. In February and March, senior representatives of the state apparatus went on a journey through North Africa to convince the local elites that this region plays an important role in the foreign policy of France<sup>50</sup>. Other European countries such as Germany or Spain also adopted the tactics of diplomatic visits<sup>51</sup>.

While analyzing the international reactions, it is also worth noting that the events in Tunisia made the European countries more actively involved and interested in the southern dimension of the European Neighbourhood Policy. On the initiative of France,

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<sup>46</sup> ICG, 102, p. 5.

<sup>47</sup> D. Liszczyk, *op. cit.*, p. 2370.

<sup>48</sup> *Ibidem*, p. 2371.

<sup>49</sup> *Ibidem*, *France and the political crisis in Tunisia*, "Bulletin of the Polish Institute of International Affairs", No 27 (776), 17.03.2011, p. 2398. The departure of the Foreign Minister was necessary, inter alia, because of her proposal to grant assistance to the authorities of Tunisia in training security forces. This proposal was interpreted as an offer of support to the Tunisian authorities, although Michèle Alliot-Marie explained that it was meant to protect the right to demonstrate and help in maintaining public order on the streets. *Ibidem*, p. 2371.

<sup>50</sup> The Minister for European Affairs, Laurent Wauquiez, and the Minister of Economy, Christine Lagarde, were in Tunisia with official visits (both in February), and in Egypt – the new Minister of Foreign Affairs, Alain Juppé (in March). *Ibidem*, p. 2398.

<sup>51</sup> The chief of the Auswärtiges Amt, Guido Westerwelle, and the Spanish Prime Minister, José Luis Rodríguez Zapatero, were with an official visit in Tunisia. R. Formusiewicz, *Germany and the crisis in North Africa*, "Bulletin of the Polish Institute of International Affairs", No. 26 (775), 15.3.2011, p. 2396 B. Znojek, *Spain and the crisis in North Africa*, "Bulletin of the Polish Institute of International Affairs", No 28 (777), 17.03.2011, p. 2400.



in February, the governments of France, Spain, Cyprus, Greece, Malta and Slovenia have submitted a draft project calling for the strengthening of the EU policy towards their Mediterranean neighbours<sup>52</sup>. This step caused a German counter-action, as Germany struggles to balance the southern and eastern dimension<sup>53</sup>. The fear of destabilizing this balance has led Berlin to put forward its own proposals<sup>54</sup>.

The end of the protests in Tunisia began the stage of the political transformation. The main task of the interim authorities was to organize fair elections to the Tunisian Constituent Assembly. For this purpose, a new electoral law has been adopted; it has also been decided to move the elections to the last decade of October, and the gender parity rule has been adopted, according to which 50 per cent of the registered candidates on electoral lists are to be women<sup>55</sup>. One of the first steps taken was to issue a decree on legalization of religious parties, which was prevented by the hitherto binding constitution. In this regard, the biggest beneficiary was the Renaissance Party which – despite the years of persecution – has managed to retain considerable influence within the society. Its leader, Rashid Ghannouchi, returned to Tunisia, greeted with mixed feelings at the airport in Tunis by the Tunisian society<sup>56</sup>. Even though the party has its origins within the fundamentalist ideology, its ideology has evolved over the years. Its programme is moderate, and the main slogan is “democracy and justice within the Tunisian national identity”<sup>57</sup>. Ghannouchi himself is a representative of one of the most liberal trends within Islam. His political views do not clash with the Western values concerning the political system, women's rights or civil liberties<sup>58</sup>. Moreover Ghannouchi compares his political party to the ruling political party in Turkey, i.e. the Justice and Development Party<sup>59</sup>.

On the 23rd of October, the elections to the Constituent Assembly were held in which one hundred and eight political parties competed, of which one hundred are new or reactivated political groupings which were not present on the political scene during the Ben Ali's authoritarian rule<sup>60</sup>. At a very high turnout, the Renaissance Party won the

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<sup>52</sup> B. Znojek, *op. cit.*, p. 2401; D. Liszczyk, *France and the crisis in North Africa...*, p. 2398.

<sup>53</sup> R. Formusiewicz, *op. cit.*, p. 2397.

<sup>54</sup> The main disputed area is the issue of funding. France and its supporting states postulate, among other things, the increase of credit support from the European Investment Bank and the increase in the budget of the European Neighbourhood Policy. Germans tend to be more flexible with distributing funds which would allow to leave the budget unchanged. More about both proposals see D. Liszczyk, *France and the crisis in North Africa...*, p. 2399.

<sup>55</sup> ICG, 102, p. 20 and 30. M. Dudkiewicz, P. Sasnal, *op. cit.*, p. 2534.

<sup>56</sup> The Tunisian feminists greeted the leader of the party in short dresses and bikinis, thus sending a clear signal that in Tunisia there is no place for religious fundamentalism. P. Biernacka, *op. cit.*, p. 9.

<sup>57</sup> M. Dudkiewicz, P. Sasnal, *op. cit.*, p. 2535.

<sup>58</sup> P. Biernacka, *op. cit.*, p. 9.

<sup>59</sup> M. Dudkiewicz, P. Sasnal, *op. cit.*, p. 2535.

<sup>60</sup> *Ibidem*.



elections, as expected, although the result it has achieved is somewhat surprising. Compared to a survey from the beginning of August, this party has won nearly twice as many votes – 41.47 per cent of voters supported this party, giving her ninety seats in the Constituent Assembly<sup>61</sup>. The second place went to the Congress for the Republic with a score of 13.82 per cent (30 seats). It is a party that exists since 2001, and most of the leaders of this party were in exile. During the reign of Ben Ali this party did not belong to the so-called formal opposition, i.e. the party having its representatives in the parliament. The third place went to the party which did not reach the level of support amounting to 10 per cent, and it will have twenty-one representatives in the parliament. The party discussed is the centre-left Democratic Forum for Labour and Liberties (Ettakatol), which was not part of the formal opposition either. It is quite significant that the parties which sat in the parliament in the days of domination of the DCA, found themselves now on further places. This applies especially to the Movement of Social Democrats which in the elections of 2009 received the greatest support among the opposition parties and had sixteen members within the old parliament<sup>62</sup>.

The tasks facing the new authorities are primarily the preparation and adoption of the constitution within a year. The main challenge in this matter will be the method of electing the president and the issue of separation of religion from the state. The new parliament will select a temporary head of state, prime minister and government. After the adoption of the constitution, the Constituent Assembly will be dissolved and new legislative elections will be held.

Will the on-going transformation succeed, or will it turn out that fifty-five years of authoritarian rule left too strong marks in the Tunisian society? It is too early to unequivocally answer this question. We can present factors that seem to favour the road chosen by the Tunisians. According to Bruce Maddy-Weizmann those factors are: well-developed national consciousness, far-reaching process of modernization with such achievements as: the educated middle class, the lowest level of illiteracy among women in the entire Arab world, the lowest birth rate among the Arab countries and the high status of women, strong trade unions and small, professional and apolitical army<sup>63</sup>. We can add also relatively low level of corruption at lower levels of power<sup>64</sup>, or the process of opening to the West. It should also be noted that the test consisting of the elections to the Constituent Assembly was passed with success. Firstly, the high turnout in the elections showed that the Tunisian society wants to decide autonomously about their

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<sup>61</sup> *Tunisia: the Electoral Committee announced the official results of the elections*, "Gazeta Prawna", 28.10.2011, [http://www.gazetaprawna.pl/wiadomosci/artykuly/561054,tunezja\\_komisja\\_wyborcza\\_oglosila\\_oficjalne\\_wyniki\\_wyborow.html](http://www.gazetaprawna.pl/wiadomosci/artykuly/561054,tunezja_komisja_wyborcza_oglosila_oficjalne_wyniki_wyborow.html). That poll determined the support for the Renaissance Party at 21.1 per cent. M. Dudkiewicz, P. Sasnal, *op. cit.*, p. 2534.

<sup>62</sup> M. Ottaway, *op. cit.*

<sup>63</sup> B. Maddy-Weizmann, *Tunisia's Morning After*, "Middle East Quarterly", No 3, 2011, p. 11-12.

<sup>64</sup> L. Anderson, *op. cit.*, p. 3.





fate, and secondly, the observers from the European Union considered the elections were organized in a transparent way<sup>65</sup>.



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<sup>65</sup> The voting proceeded without objection in 97 per cent of the polling stations. *The EU observers positively about the elections in Tunisia*, “Rzeczpospolita”, 25.10.2011, <http://www.rp.pl/artukul/11,739296-Observatorzy-UE-pozytywnie-o-wyborach-w-Tunezji.html>.



OCTOBER 2011, EGYPT, PHOTO BY AGATA GRZYBOWSKA



## EGYPT

The last five years before the “lotus revolution” is on the one hand the time of strengthening the image of Egypt as a “touristic paradise” and on the other hand the time of growth of society’s frustration. Pro-American policy of President Hosni Mubarak<sup>66</sup> was failing to meet the society’s expectations for many years – ideological issues considerably outweighed economic reasoning (Egypt is now the second – after Israel – country regarding the military size and economic aid received by the countries of Near East from the United States). The Egyptian economy was unfavourably affected by the global crisis. Food prices grew, which affected the poorest people in the first place, which is 40 per cent of eighty million people of Egyptian society living for the equivalence of 2 dollars a day. The minimum salary for the last twenty seven years has not changed and is 51 euro<sup>67</sup>, and the social inequalities are systematically growing. As a result of the demographic processes, millions of young unemployed people appeared on the labour market, including the graduates of universities, who yearned for a decent living.

Frustration of the Egyptians was not unjustified. The Swiss bank UBS calculated that the citizens of Cairo became the busiest inhabitants of the world metropolises. They were to devote 9.2 hours a day for work, while in an average metropolis in the world people work for 7.3 hours. One year before the outbreak of the “lotus revolution”, the Egyptian economist Hamdi Abd al-Azim warned that if food prices grew at such pace, people would act against the government. The demonstrations of thousands of participants took place regularly in Cairo since May 2010. World media were not interested in them since they did not have political, but only economic, undercurrent<sup>68</sup>.

The bad socio-economic situation was caused by the lack of democratic mechanisms and solutions, low participation in political life, exclusion of some groupings and parties from the political arena, centralization of power, maintaining the state of emergency announced in 1981 after the assassination of as-Sadat, censorship in media. Moreover, there was the spread of corruption and nepotism (for example,

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<sup>66</sup> He seized power in 1981, after the death of the previous President, Anawar as-Sadat, who was killed in an assassination carried out by the Muslim fundamentalists. D. Madeyska, *Historia współczesna świata arabskiego (History of modern Arab world)*, Warsaw 2008, page 122.

<sup>67</sup> With relation to GDP per capita this salary decreased at this time from 60 to 13 per cent, quoted after: P. Karnaszewski, *Samotność Egipcjanina (Loneliness of the Egyptian)*, Forbes, <http://www.forbes.pl/artykuly/sekcje/wydarzenia/samotnosc-egipcjanina,12488,1>. See also T. Iwiński, *Rewolucja w Egipcie była nieuchronna (Revolution in Egypt was inevitable)*, <http://www.fakt.pl/Rewolucja-w-Egipcie-była-nieuchronna,artykuly,94549,1.html>.

<sup>68</sup> P. Karnaszewski, *op. cit.*



Mubarak's son, Gamal, who was to become his successor, made himself surrounded by a group of businessmen of suspicious reputation, who considerably benefited financially from the regime). In the eyes of the West political consequences of the protests hid their primary, economic reasons<sup>69</sup>.

The spark which caused the explosion of social discontent in Egypt was self-immolation of Mohammad Bu Azizi and the “jasmine revolution” in Tunisia. Several groups acting via the internet, especially 6 April Movement, called for going out in the streets on 25 January 2011, which is the National Police Day – the institution deeply hated by common Egyptians for its brutality and impunity. Its scale surprised everybody, together with the organizers of the protest – 15,000 people came to the Tahrir Square (Liberation Square). The first demonstration caused the other, and then the next one. Soon there were so many protesters that the authorities were forced to withdraw the police, and the army took the apparently friendly stand toward the street; some soldiers even joined the demonstrators<sup>70</sup>.

Young Egyptians followed the example of Tunisian revolutionaries and banded together via social media. As one of the protesters said: “We use Facebook to plan the protests, Twitter to coordinate them, and YouTube to inform the world.” The reportages of Al-Jazeera television, which broadcast twenty-four hours a day, civil journalism (crucial role played, *inter alia*, video blog of twenty-six-year-old Asma Mahfuz) and leakage of Wikileaks portal added fuel to the fire. When secret service blocked the internet, especially such websites as: Al-Jazeera, Google, Twitter and SayNow, the application Speak-to-tweet was launched which enabled to evade the blockades and record telephone audio announcement on the website. Apart from that the professional journalists despite the attacks, and even kidnappings, did not let themselves be intimidated, and contributed to the victory of the revolution<sup>71</sup>. Some bloggers, journalists and political activists are now released from prisons, where they were beaten and tortured like Ramy Essam – a singer and songwriter, whose song “Irhal” (“Go away”) became the unofficial anthem of the revolution (it was viewed 500,000 times on YouTube portal)<sup>72</sup>.

People gathered in the centre of Cairo and other big Egyptian cities wanted resignation of the president, but also new work places, higher salaries, lowering the prices of bread, freedom of speech, participation in governance, ending the state of emergency which enabled repressions. When they heard the news about the resignation

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<sup>69</sup> *Ibidem*.

<sup>70</sup> However, there were also people who beat the protesters and even kidnapped them to detain and torture them. See M. Levine, *Fears of a 'counter-revolution' in Egypt*, “Al-Jazeera”, <http://english.aljazeera.net/indepth/opinion/2011/03/201132071452793639.html>.

<sup>71</sup> N. Ramdani, T. Curzon Price, *Did the Internet matter in Tunisia and Egypt?*, <http://www.opendemocracy.net/tony-curzon-price-nabila-ramdani/did-internet-matter-in-tunisia-and-egypt>.

<sup>72</sup> M. Levine, *op. cit.*



of President Hosni Mubarak<sup>73</sup>, they were very enthusiastic and they were shouting: "He went away, went away!", "The revolution won!", "The nation overthrew the regime!", "The nation and the army is one!", "God is great!". They shed the tears of happiness, holding one another in dancing circles<sup>74</sup>.

Demonstrators are people who crave for changes, Western standard of living<sup>75</sup> which they know from television (today's forty and fifty-year-old people) and the internet (twenty and thirty-year-old people). The Facebook revolution took place mainly due to bloggers and their readers – very young people, who did not have any political experience<sup>76</sup>. Thus to the front of the events moved the people who were the symbols of resistance such as Wael Ghonim<sup>77</sup>, and not the statesmen, who were able to propose the policy thought possible to be accepted by wider masses<sup>78</sup>.

It should be remembered at the same time that there is no clear leader among the opponents of the regime. Muhammad al-Baradai, former head of the International Atomic Energy Agency and the Nobel Peace Prize laureate, is better known in the West than in his own country. The opposition in Egypt was and still is scattered – apart from mentioned 6 April Movement, Kifaja and Muslim Brotherhood, there are Al-Ghad and Wafd parties, nasserism and socialist movements. So far the Egyptian street has not been influenced by the radical Muslim slogans, but it still demands the total fall of the regime, which is resignation of all officials connected with it and construction of "the state of citizens, secular and democratic"<sup>79</sup>.

On the other hand, there are people who support the old system and protect it – and not only those from the establishment or security apparatus. Especially embedded in the memory was the view of attacking horse and camel riders, who in the centre of

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<sup>73</sup> The same day Hosni Mubarak left the presidential palace in Heliopolis and together with his family went to his residence in Sharm el-Sheikh. Public prosecutor's office forbade him to leave Egypt and froze his bank accounts in the country, quoted after: *Koniec krwawych reżimów. Jak upadł „Czarny Stalin”?* (*The end of bloody regimes. How did "Black Stalin" fall?*), <http://wiadomosci.onet.pl/swiat/koniec-krwawych-rezimow-jak-upadl-czarny-stalin,4,4229395,wiadomosc.html>.

<sup>74</sup> *Egipt oszalał z radości* (*Egypt went crazy with happiness*), <http://wiadomosci.wp.pl/kat,1023303,title,Egipt-oszalal-z-radosci,wid,13127180,wiadomosc.html>.

<sup>75</sup> Por. P. Kugiel, *Arabska wiosna ludów a solidarność międzynarodowa* (*Arab springtide of nations and international solidarity*), <http://www.arabia.pl/content/view/292878/61>.

<sup>76</sup> G. Kepel, *Zdejbowanie arabskiej klątwy* (*Taking the Arab curse away*), "Kultura Liberalna" No 113 (10/2011), 8 March 2011.

<sup>77</sup> An internet surfer, political activist, the head of Google's marketing in the Near East, one of the revolution's faces due to his arrest and investigation which revealed that he administered Facebook website "We are all Khaled Saeed" calling for the uprising.

<sup>78</sup> P. Wyciślik, *Szanse analogii, analogia szans* (*The chances of analogy, the analogy of chances*), "Kultura Liberalna" No 113 (10/2011), 8 March 2011.

<sup>79</sup> M. Tobała, *W Egipcie wciąż wrze! Krytycznie o rewolucji egipskiej* (*It is still boiling in Egypt! Critically about the Egyptian revolution*), <http://politykawschodnia.pl/?p=56>.





Cairo were trampling the youth “armed” only with mobile phones. The riders – as turned out later – were the people earning their living by carrying the tourists around the pyramids, and the revolution was reflected in their earnings very painfully<sup>80</sup>.

These were not the only internal conflicts. Several thousand of prisoners escaped or – as the opponents of the regime claim – were released from prisons in order to spread the chaos, *inter alia*, dangerous criminals, who started to attack and plunder. A similar negative role was played by the infamous gangs *baltagiyya* (bandits, hooligans). The inhabitants of particular districts of Cairo were organizing civil patrols themselves, since burglaries and robberies were at the beginning of the revolution a common thing. The cultural heritage suffered: the Museum in Al Qantarah near Ismailia as well as warehouses near pyramids in Saqqara and Abu Sir were plundered; after breaking into the Cairo Museum the young citizens of the capital city created a living chain around the building in order to protect the remaining treasures<sup>81</sup>.

The costs of the “lotus revolution” are hard to estimate. Although it was relatively bloodless (when taking into account the millions of participants), as a result of the riots about eight hundred and fifty persons died<sup>82</sup> (called the “martyrs” in the Egyptian discourse), six thousand and four hundred were injured, and several hundred are missing. Among the victims there are mainly peace demonstrators and the outsiders, maybe also the criminals shot by the army or the police. The material costs cover ruined buildings and cars, plundered shops, robbed belongings. The loss caused by the departure of almost one million tourists is estimated to reach billions of Egyptian pounds<sup>83</sup>, not including the loss resulting from the break in the functioning of enterprises and transport. As was estimated by the Société Générale, during the demonstration Egypt was losing 300 million euro a day. The Institute of International Finance in Washington cut the GDP growth prognosis from 6 per cent to 1.5 per cent. Since the beginning of January Egyptian pound has weakened by 9 per cent<sup>84</sup>.

The group which again suffered in the riots are Egyptian Christians. On 8 March in Cairo thirteen Copts were killed and several dozens injured in clashes with the Slafis (Muslims having the views similar to Wahhabists from Saudi Arabia), so the followers of the radical stream in Islam, who proclaim the return to the religion of “ancestors” (salaf) and clearing Islam from the “novelties” (which *nota bene* include also democracy). The

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<sup>80</sup> G. Kepel, *op. cit.*

<sup>81</sup> *Chuligani plądrują muzealne magazyny w Egipcie. Snajperzy strzegą Muzeum Narodowego (The hooligans plunder museum warehouses in Egypt. The snipers protect the National Museum)*, [http://wiadomosci.gazeta.pl/Wiadomosci/1,80576,9029777,Chuligani\\_pladruja\\_muzealne\\_magazyny\\_w\\_Egipcie\\_Snajperzy.html](http://wiadomosci.gazeta.pl/Wiadomosci/1,80576,9029777,Chuligani_pladruja_muzealne_magazyny_w_Egipcie_Snajperzy.html).

<sup>82</sup> *At least 846 killed in Egypt's revolution, “Almasry alyoum”*, <http://www.almasryalyoum.com/en/node/406169>.

<sup>83</sup> 1.00 EGP = 0.48 PLN according to the exchange rate of 25 March 2011.

<sup>84</sup> P. Karnaszewski, *op. cit.*



Copts required the judgment of people guilty of burning the church in Sul in Helwan (the reason for the arson supposedly was the “banned” love between a Copt and a Muslim woman) and immediate issuing of the decision allowing for its reconstruction (the decision was issued on 13 March). The Salafis, on the other hand, demanded the release of allegedly detained in Copt monasteries convert women into Islam<sup>85</sup>.

On 9 October in the biggest and most tragic riots in Egypt since the overthrow of President Mubarak at least twenty-four persons died, and more than two hundred were injured. Clashes with the security forces and Muslim radicals started when thousands of Copts demanding the end of religious persecutions in Egypt and protesting against demolishing the church in Asuan province, came near the television building in the capital city. Many witnesses say that two armoured vehicles of Egyptian army drove into the crowd of demonstrators, causing the death of many participants of the protest<sup>86</sup>. Prime Minister Essam Szaraf disapproved of the acts of violence and said that they are inspired from the outside by the “destructive forces”<sup>87</sup>.

These events fall into the general trend which – relying on the classic interpretations of Sharia – excludes non-Muslims from holding the most important functions in the country and forbids Christians to get married with Muslim women (Muslims, on the other hand, can marry Christian women, so Copt women). Until recently, however, the Copts, which are relatively numerous<sup>88</sup> Christian minority within the Muslim society in Egypt, lived in relative peace. The situation changed in the second half of 20th century, getting worse considerably during the ruling of Sadat<sup>89</sup>.

The growing antagonism in recent years between Muslim majority and Copt minority (despite many cases of cooperation and even friendship between the members of both groups) has not brought so far the reflection of the ruling authorities nor the national debate. Planting a bomb in the church in Alexandria on the New Year 2011, in which twenty-one followers were killed, and about one hundred were injured, was the turning point in a sense that it made many Muslims realize how long they were

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<sup>85</sup> M. Tobała, *Walka o (nowy) Egipt (Battle for (the new) Egypt)*, <http://politykawschodnia.pl/?p=169>.

<sup>86</sup> *Krwawe zamieszki w Kairze, zginęły 24 osoby (Bloody riots in Cairo, 24 people are dead)*, <http://wiadomosci.onet.pl/swiat/krwawe-zamieszki-w-kairze-zginely-24-osoby,1,4875463,wiadomosc.html>.

<sup>87</sup> He probably thought of Israel. Such kind of explanation of interreligious disputes is popular in Arab countries since enables to maintain the appearances of social unity, which the authorities generally care for.

<sup>88</sup> It is hard to estimate the number of Copt population in Egypt. Government statistics say that there are about three million of them, but according to the church registers of the baptized there are eleven million of them. Probably the number of them is about seven – eight million and has falling tendencies. During one century the percentage of the Copts in Egyptian society decreased from 8 per cent to 6 per cent, quoted after: Y. Courbage, Ph. Fargues, *Christians and Jews under Islam*, London-New York 1998, page 181.

<sup>89</sup> Por. M. Woźniak, *Sytuacja Kościoła koptyjskiego w Egipcie. Zarys historyczny i chwila obecna (Situation of the Copt church in Egypt. Historical outline and present moment)*, [in:] *Arabowie – islam – świat (Arabs – Islam – the world)*, M. Dziekan, I. Kończak (ed.), Łódź 2007, page 667-675.



insensible with regard to the harm of their Christian fellow-citizens<sup>90</sup>. Showing solidarity with them, they organized on 11 March the “National Unity Movement”. However, despite such positive manifestations, despite the sign of cross raised next to the half-moon at the Liberation Square, further attacks on Christians can be expected<sup>91</sup>.

The events in Egypt put the governments of many Western states in an extremely uncomfortable position due to the support, lasting many years, which Hosni Mubarak received from them. Both the President of the United States Barack Obama, and the Secretary of State Hillary Clinton were criticized for the delay in providing support to demonstrators<sup>92</sup>. On 25th January 2011 Clinton said that the administration of USA supported the „fundamental right of freedom of speech and gatherings” and called all parties to act with restraint. She said that the Egyptian government is “stable” and “will find a way to answer the justified needs and interests of the Egyptian nation”<sup>93</sup>.

The High Representative of the Union for Foreign Affairs and Security Policy Catherine Ashton on 27th January encouraged the Egyptian authorities to show “full respect and protection of citizens’ rights to manifest their political aspirations by means of peaceful demonstrations”, expressing sorrow at the death of demonstrators and calling for releasing people from jails<sup>94</sup>. The head of the European Parliament Jerzy Buzek and the head of the European Council Herman Van Rompuy called for peace, reforms and respect of democratic rights of the Egyptians. As a protest the secretary general of the Union for the Mediterranean Ahmad Khalef Masadeh (Chalif Masada) resigned from the post<sup>95</sup>.

After Mubarak’s resignation the European Union ensured that the Egyptians can count on any support and help from Europe<sup>96</sup>. The Council of the European Union expressed its support for pro-democratic reforms which should respect the rule of law and fully respect human rights<sup>97</sup>. French minister of foreign affairs Michèle Alliot-Marie

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<sup>90</sup> The people responsible for this assassination, however, are still unknown.

<sup>91</sup> N. van Doorn-Harder, *Egypt: does the revolution include the Copts?*, <http://www.opendemocracy.net/5050/nelly-van-doorn-harder/egypt-does-revolution-include-copts>.

<sup>92</sup> A. Quinn, *Analysis: Egypt crisis a fresh dilemma for Obama team*, “Washington”, <http://www.reuters.com/article/2011/01/31/us-egypt-usa-dilemma-idUSTRE70U80420110131>.

<sup>93</sup> *Egypt protests: Three killed in 'day of revolt'*, “BBC News Africa”, <http://www.bbc.co.uk/news/world-africa-12272836>.

<sup>94</sup> *EU calls on Egypt to respect right to protest*, <http://www.eubusiness.com/news-eu/egypt-politics.8c2>.

<sup>95</sup> D. Witoń, *Śródziemnomorze w ogniu – rewolucja w bezpośrednim sąsiedztwie Europy (The Mediterranean on fire – revolution in the direct neighbourhood of Europe)*, <http://www.uniaeuropejska.org/srodziemno-morze-w-ogniu-rewolucja-w-bezposrednim-sasiedztwie-europy>.

<sup>96</sup> D. Gwóźdź, *Czy po Tunezji i Egipcie czas na Algierię? (Is it the time for Algeria after Tunisia and Egypt?)*, <http://www.uniaeuropejska.org/czy-po-tunezji-i-egipcie-czas-na-algerieya>.

<sup>97</sup> Ł. Bigoszewski, *Rada UE o sytuacji w regionie południowego sąsiedztwa (Council of the EU about the situation in the Southern Neighbourhood region)*, <http://www.uniaeuropejska.org/rada-ue-o-sytuacji-w-regionie-poludniowego-sasiedztwa>.



expressed sorrow at the fatalities. The minister of foreign affairs of Great Britain William Hague called for sustaining restraint and avoiding violence. He called the Egyptian government for listening to the demonstrators' fears and respecting the right for freedom of speech and gatherings<sup>98</sup>.

The Israeli prime minister Benjamin Netanyahu on 30 January informed about his anxiety regarding the events in Egypt and the region. He said that Egypt and Israel remained in peace for over three decades and the aim of his government is to sustain such relations<sup>99</sup>, despite fear of taking over the power in the election by “organized Muslim groups”. The authorities of Israel allowed for locating at the bordering area of Sinai Peninsula additional eight hundred Egyptian soldiers in order to strengthen security<sup>100</sup>. Netanyahu's anxiety was not unjustified – on 9th September there was the anti-Israeli demonstration in Cairo, the participants of which tried to take over the Israeli embassy by storm; during the clashes four hundred and fifty people were injured and one died due to heart attack. The head of the resort of defense Ehud Barak turned then to the United States of America for help in protecting the embassy from demonstrators and received the assurance that the White House took appropriate steps in order to finish the incident without further violence<sup>101</sup>.

The “Day of Rage”, as 25th of January is referred to, started the eighteen-day “revolution”, which apparently finished successfully – Hosni Mubarak, who was the president of the country for many years, resigned, and the governance was taken over by the army, the parliamentary elections were planned for autumn 2011, and at the end of 2012 or the beginning of 2013 the presidential elections. On 28th November the popular assembly is to be elected (the elections will be held in three stages), and on 29th January 2012 the advisory body – Consultation Board<sup>102</sup>.

However, there are concerns that the achievements of the “lotus revolution” will turn out to be a pyrrhic victory. According to the experts in issues connected with the Near East, such as Adel Darwish, even the judicial proceedings started with regard to

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<sup>98</sup> *Foreign Secretary on protests in Egypt*, <http://www.fco.gov.uk/en/news/latest-news/?view=News&id=539828682>.

<sup>99</sup> *Israeli PM says ties with Egypt must be preserved*, <http://www.ctv.ca/CTVNews/World/20110130/israeli-pm-says-ties-with-egypt-must-be-preserved-110130/>

<sup>100</sup> *Egypt protests: Army rules out the use of force*, “BBC News Middle East”, <http://www.bbc.co.uk/news/world-middle-east-12330169>.

<sup>101</sup> *Szturm na ambasadę Izraela w stolicy Egiptu (Attack on the Israel embassy in the capital of Egypt)*, <http://wiadomosci.onet.pl/swiat/szturm-na-ambasade-izraela-w-stolicy-egiptu,1,4844903,wiadomosc.html>.

<sup>102</sup> *Egipt: początek wyborów parlamentarnych 28 listopada (Egypt: the beginning of the parliamentary elections on 28 November)*, <http://wiadomosci.onet.pl/swiat/egipt-poczatek-wyborow-parlamentarnych-28-listopad,1,4863492,wiadomosc.html>.

Reuters shows that in the case of the presidential elections it will mean considerable delay with regard to current expectations and will not be accepted by the activists who are for a quick transfer of governance.



former dictator of Egypt and his sons, Al and Gamal, are only a “smokescreen” turning the public opinion’s attention from real problems and the fact that the power is still in the army’s hands<sup>103</sup>. The way in which the process has been conducted so far makes one assume that it will be long – the principal accused may not live to see the judgment.

For the time being, the price of changes made so far, despite generally peaceful nature of the manifestation, was high: death of several hundred people in clashes with the police, strikes, lawlessness and robberies<sup>104</sup>. At the moment it is hard to expect that the “lotus revolution” will considerably, if at all, improve the faith of the citizens of the country at the Nile<sup>105</sup>. Along with the dampening of the demonstrators’ noble enthusiasm, one can rather fear the growth of particularism and renewal of old conflicts.

The situation in Egypt is still liquid, it is difficult to predict the direction of changes. The person who will take over the governance in Cairo, will control the Suez Canal and a big Muslim country connected by alliance with the United States of America and the peace treaty with Israel, and on the other hand, having the only internal organized opposition force, the Muslim Brotherhood. If they gained power after Mubarak, it would not be a very favourable scenario for the West<sup>106</sup>.

It is, however, more probable that as a result of parliamentary elections the divided and scattered political arena will be shaped, which serves the interests of military circles, which would still be able to play the role of the arbiter – even after the official handing over of power to civilians. Thus the pro-democratic forces will have to reach a compromise with the representatives of the old regime.

“Freedom has its price” – the Egyptians repeat, it seems that – as a society – they are ready to pay it<sup>107</sup>. Even if they are able to achieve more freedom, it will not be tantamount to the improvement of economic situation. Any, even the most efficient and democratic government is not able in the short-term perspective to create enough number of work places, level social inequalities in Egypt, nor guarantee its balanced development. Therefore quick return to full stabilization cannot be expected.



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<sup>103</sup> A. Darwish, *Mubarks’ Arrest: a Diversion by Egyptian Military Junta*, <http://www.adeldarwish.com/?p=52>.

<sup>104</sup> Por. M. Woźniak, *Ante et post Diem Irae. Koniec ery Mubaraka w Egipcie? (Ante et post Diem Irae. The end of Mubarak’s era in Egypt?)*, “Histmag”, <http://histmag.org/?id=5154>.

<sup>105</sup> Por. P. Kugiel, *op. cit.*

<sup>106</sup> Por. A. Szostkiewicz, *Skutki arabskiego poruszenia. Cień nad placem Tahrir (The results of Arab movement. The shadow over the Tahrir Square)*, <http://www.polityka.pl/swiat/komentarze/1512816,1,skutki-arabskiego-poruszenia.read?backTo=http://www.polityka.pl/historia/1512840,1,naser-sadat-mubarak.read#ixzz1ZdKrXuHg>.

<sup>107</sup> M. Tobała, *W Egipcie wciąż wrze! (It is still boiling in Egypt!)*, *op. cit.*





## SYRIA

On 10th June, 2000 died Hafiz al-Asad who had been ruling from 1970. The Parliament with one voice lowered required by the Constitution the presidential age from forty to thirty-four years – exactly to the age of the son of the deceased, Bashar to guarantee the smooth devolution and to avoid the era of instability<sup>108</sup>. Bashar held the post of the army commander-in-chief and the plenary congress of Baas appointed him to the general secretary of the party. The referendum affirmed his power as the president (which met with the criticism in Arabic countries).

Promised by the new ruler reforms of the country modernization, called prematurely “Damascus spring” , turned out to be humble and chary. Continuation rather than changes became a daily routine. Despite of gaining bigger popularity after marrying to beautiful and well-educated Asma al-Ahras, who worked before as the financial analyst in England, Bashar had to reckon with his father’s people and his uncle’s supporters. The only real reforms effected by him had an economic character – thank to them the well-to-do residents of Syria could enrich. In turn almost everything in inner policy remained the same. Although the Kurdish riots in Al-Kamishli in March 2004 were suppressed, they showed mobilization potential of the Kurdish community demanding respect of their ethic-cultural separateness<sup>109</sup>.

In foreign policy young Asad gained liking of American and European people. The outbreak of intifada (uprising) al-Aksa improved relations with Arafat; the official reconciliation came up. However, the murder in 2005 of the Lebanese prime minister known of his anti-Syrian attitude, Rafic al-Hariri<sup>110</sup>, to which existed reasoned suspicion that Syria stood behind it, caused the outbreak of so-called “cedar revolution” in Lebanon. Under pressure of the West Syria after almost thirty-year occupation had to back away its armed forces, but left the net of secret agents.

In January 2011 in Tunisia, Egypt and Libya the frustrated citizens went out on the streets, but not in Syria. Only two months after begun the mass manifestations<sup>111</sup>. The main reason of the outbreak in Syria was the disappointment of the ten-year ruling

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<sup>108</sup> R.A. Hinnebusch, *The Foreign Policy of Syria*, [in:] R.A. Hinnebusch, A. Ehteshami (ed.), *The Foreign Policies of Middle East States*, Lynne Rienner Publishers 2002, p. 161.

<sup>109</sup> Read more: J. Gauthier, *The 2004 Events in Al-Qamishli: Has the Kurdish question erupted in Syria?*, [in:] F.H. Lawson (red.), *Demystifying Syria*, SAQI 2009, p. 105-119.

<sup>110</sup> J. Pace, J. Landis, *The Syria Opposition: The struggle for unity and relevance, 2003-2008*, [in:] F.H. Lawson (ed.), *op. cit.*, p. 128.

<sup>111</sup> *Krwawe domino. Ostatni człowiek do „zdjęcia”*, <http://wiadomosci.onet.pl/kiosk/krwawe-domino-ostatni-czlowiek-do-zdjecia,1,4831575,kiosk-wiadomosc.html>.



of Bashar al-Asad. In Syria and abroad taking the reins by Bashar was perceived as a fresh whiff in politics with hope that the young successor would liberalize his father's hard course in politics and economy. Many Syrian people expected their country would open to the wider world and join to "the global village", in contrast they met comedown. The social-economic conditions in Syria deteriorated<sup>112</sup>. The country cut down on helping the poor, the liberty of trade was notoriously broken, the local industry could not count on governmental support, only the unemployment – especially among the young Syrian – was growing.

To make matters worse, from 1963 the martial law incessantly lasted enabling notorious breaking of the human rights and civil liberties (theoretically guaranteed in the Constitution). Continuation of the martial law let for imprisonment and repressions on oppositionists. The free elections were fiction in this one-party system. The national minorities (inter alia Kurdish) suffered from discrimination. At the doorstep of 21st century according to Human Rights Watch the situation of human rights in Syria improved, however it was still among the worst in the world.

On the strength of "the jasmine revolution" in Tunisia, 1st January 2011 in Syria the access to Internet pages, such as Facebook, Wikipedia and YouTube was blocked. On 26th January, a day after the outbreak of revolution in Egypt, Hasan Ali Akleh in Al-Hasaka made a self-immolation, copying the act of Tunisian, Muhammad Bu Aziz.

The first demonstrations, hailed – like in Egypt – "The Day of Anger" occurred on 4th and 5th February, but they were small with the immediate authority counteraction – the political activists and tens of demonstrators from Al-Hasakah were arrested, security measures were reinforced. At the beginning of March it was stated for the first time that Syria is the following country after Tunisia, Egypt and Libya in Arab domino effect. Twelve human rights organizations called on Syrian government to cancel out the martial law.

On 15th March is acknowledged as the beginning of the mass manifestations because on that day thousands of demonstrators gathered in Aleppo, Al-Hasakah, Dar'aa, Dayr az-Zawr and Hama<sup>113</sup>. Everywhere skirmishes with the police and arresting happened. On 18th March more serious riots took place – the protesting people went out on the streets in the whole Syria after Friday prayers, their manifestations being held, inter alia, for the fight with corruption, were put down brutally, some people were killed. Two days after over a hundred persons were hurt in Dar'aa; the demonstrators (gathered in number of ten thousand) set fire the local headquarters of the Baas party.

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<sup>112</sup> E. Zisser, *What does the future hold for Syria?*, „The Middle East Review of International Affairs”, Vol. 10, No. 2, Article 6, June 2006.

<sup>113</sup> *Middle East unrest: Syria arrests Damascus protesters*, „BBC News”, <http://www.bbc.co.uk/news/world-middle-east-12757394>.



Following days brought more victims. The governor of Dar'aa was dismissed, but it did not restrain the police from killing about a hundred people, 24th March.

Presidential assurances of the opportunity to cancel out lasting for forty-eight years martial law and censorship did not calm the situation. The period of putting down of protests in the cities, where the marches expressing solidarity with the protesting in Dar'aa took place, succeeded. In the whole country thousands of mourners took part in the burials of victims shot during the protests. On 1<sup>st</sup> April was a day of the riots in Damascus<sup>114</sup> – it was called “Friday of martyrs” for commemorating of previous victims<sup>115</sup>. On the next day two thousand people protested on the Golan Heights<sup>116</sup>.

Circumscribed events affected changes in the government – on 29th March the prime minister Muhammad Nadžim al-Utrim resigned and his whole cabinet was dismissed. Two weeks later the president called up new government with Adil Safar as its head<sup>117</sup>. On 7th April the executive order appeared naturalizing the Kurdish signed before as foreigners in the province of Al-Asaka. The governors of the provinces: Hims and Dar'aa were dismissed<sup>118</sup>.

In the meantime authorities searched for people responsible for the riots – it was stated that behind anti-governmental manifestations stood armed groups of radical Salafists. Also the exterior wrongdoers were indicated – Lebanon and fundamentalist Muslim formations. On 21st April Bashar al-Asad signed a decree of abolition of lasting for forty-eight years martial law<sup>119</sup>.

The next day was extremely bloody – at least eighty-eight people were killed and tens were wounded from bullets and tear gas. The burials of the victims changed to several-thousand manifestations raked by the snipers and policemen – about one hundred and twenty people were killed then<sup>120</sup>. Late in the April the siege of Dar'aa began; the gunfire killed several dozen people<sup>121</sup>. Wishing to make the escape from the

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<sup>114</sup> *At least 10 killed in Syria*, <http://www.ynetnews.com/articles/0,7340,L-4050879,00.html>.

<sup>115</sup> *Śmierć pod Damaszkim. „Dzień Męczenników” w Syrii*, <http://www.tvn24.pl/12691,1697824,0,1,smierc-pod-damaszkim-dzien-meczennikow-w-syrii,wiadomosc.html>.

<sup>116</sup> *Golan Heights: Thousands of Druze protest in solidarity with Assad*, <http://www.ynetnews.com/articles/0,7340,L-4050968,00.html>.

<sup>117</sup> *Assad keeps Moualem as foreign minister in new government*, <http://af.reuters.com/article/worldNews/idAFTRE73D40720110414>.

<sup>118</sup> G. Mazurczak, *Spóźniony krok w dobrą stronę*, <http://www.psz.pl/tekst-37501/Grzegorz-Mazurczak-Spozniony-krok-w-dobra-strone>.

<sup>119</sup> *Syria: Baszar el-Asad zniósł trwający od 1963 roku stan wyjątkowy*, <http://www.psz.pl/tekst-37660/Syria-Baszar-el-Asad-zniosl-trwajacy-od-1963-roku-stan-wyjatkowy>.

<sup>120</sup> *W ciągu dwóch dni w demonstracjach zginęło 120 osób*, <http://konflikty.wp.pl/kat,1356,title,W-ciagu-dwoch-dni-w-demonstracjach-zginelo-120-osob,wid,13348543,wiadomosc.html?ticaid=1d242>.

<sup>121</sup> *Czołgi w centrum miasta. „Ciała leżą na ulicach”*, <http://konflikty.wp.pl/kat,1356,title,Czolgi-w-centrum-miasta-Ciala-leza-na-ulicach,wid,13349379,wiadomosc.html>.



city impossible, Syrian authorities closed off the frontier crossing points with Jordan<sup>122</sup>; four thousand people succeeded in breaking out to Lebanon<sup>123</sup>.

Syrian authorities announced the program of the reforms, on the other hand the repressions in Damascus intensified and at the beginning of May three hundred people were arrested<sup>124</sup>. The uprising in Dar'aa was effectively put down, the tanks were whisked off to Hims and Banijas – the sieges of other cities began<sup>125</sup>. The government delayed the delivery of the humanitarian aid and food to Dar'aa; the mass grave of revolutionists killed by security services was discovered there<sup>126</sup>. On the border with Lebanon fifteen Syrian tanks were emplaced; nevertheless five thousand civilians escaped to neighbouring country. The army put down the uprising in this city, like before in Banijas<sup>127</sup>. In Hims the fire was opened to mourners – about fifty people were killed<sup>128</sup>. The soldiers who refused to shoot to insurgents were killed by their commanders<sup>129</sup>.

On 24th May the massacred body of Hamza al-Chatib, thirteen-year-old boy, who got lost a month before nearby Dar'aa. The severity of tortures which were made before his death by the soldiers shocked the insurgents and enticed them to continue their fight<sup>130</sup>. Three days later the protests rolled along a dozen or so cities in which tens of thousands people took part. To put them down the artillery and the live round were used. Next persons were killed, therein children and teenagers. In many places the access to the Internet was cut off, to make impossible sending the records of brutal pacifications abroad<sup>131</sup>.

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<sup>122</sup> *Syria zamknięta przejścia graniczne z Jordanią*, <http://konflikty.wp.pl/kat,1356,title,Syria-zamknela-przejscia-graniczne-z-Jordania,wid,13349491,wiadomosc.html>.

<sup>123</sup> R. Fisk, *We will never cease our struggle until we bring down Assad*, <http://www.independent.co.uk/opinion/commentators/fisk/robert-fisk-we-will-never-cess-our-struggle-until-we-bring-down-assad-2277704.html>.

<sup>124</sup> *Syria: Security forces, officials attempt to head off protests*, <http://latimesblogs.latimes.com/babylonbeyond/2011/05/syria-damascus-uprising-students-freedom-human-rights.html>.

<sup>125</sup> *More deaths on Syria's 'day of defiance'*, „Al-Jazeera”, <http://english.aljazeera.net/news/middleeast/2011/05/2011566163239760.html>.

<sup>126</sup> *Syria 'tightens security grip' in border area*, „Al-Jazeera”, <http://english.aljazeera.net/news/middleeast/2011/05/201151613739330881.html>.

<sup>127</sup> *Syryjskie wojsko oblega miasto - 34 zabitych*, <http://konflikty.wp.pl/kat,127354,title,Syryjskie-wojsko-oblega-miasto-34-zabitych,wid,13423491,wiadomosc.html>.

<sup>128</sup> *Syrian protests draw deadly fire*, „Al-Jazeera”, <http://english.aljazeera.net/news/middleeast/2011/05/201152013723847215.html>.

<sup>129</sup> *Syria rights group: 1,100 civilians killed since start of uprising*, <http://www.haaretz.com/news/ international/syria-rights-group-1-100-civilians-killed-since-start-of-uprising-1.363793>.

<sup>130</sup> *Zabili 13-latka, bo „chciał zgwałcić żony oficerów”*, <http://konflikty.wp.pl/kat,127354,title,Zabili-13-latka-bo-chcial-zgwalcic-zony-oficerow,wid,13685303,wiadomosc.html>.

<sup>131</sup> *Dramatycznie w Syrii - wojsko zabija, odcięto Internet*, <http://konflikty.wp.pl/kat,127354,title,Dramatycznie-w-Syrii-wojsko-zabija-odcieto-internet,wid,13474200,wiadomosc.html>.



On 31st May the president Asad announced the general amnesty inclusive political prisoners; hundreds people were freed then. Since June fights lasted in Dżisr asz-Szughur; the insurgents blew to kingdom come the post-office, set fire to the quarters of the government administration and wounded corpses, inter alia bodies of the policemen. Over one hundred and twenty people were killed in massacre on 6th June<sup>132</sup>.

The mass exit of Syrian people to Turkey began. On 7th June from Dżisr asz-Szughur escaped two thousand and four hundred people, the wounded were among them. The Prime Minister Recep Tayyip Erdoğan urged to tamer treatment of civilians and announced that Turkey wouldn't close the door to refugees from Syria<sup>133</sup>. On 9th June the photos of the fifteen-year-old boy's massacred body, the friend of Hamza al-Chatib, who was killed by the security services<sup>134</sup>. In the Middle of June the operations lasted in Dżisr asz-Szughur, Bosra al-Harir, Idlib, Marat an-Numan, Latakia, Ariha, Dayr az-Zawr, Abu Kamal and Chan Szajchun. In the first city the mass graves were discovered. Most of the found victims had their heads and hands cut off with the machetes. Altogether over seven thousand civilians escaped from the city<sup>135</sup>.

The Syrian Foreign Minister Walid al-Muallim turned to the Security Council of the United Nations to not condemn Syria for the brutal repressions of the protests. The demonstrators were called terrorists and blamed for the destabilization of the country<sup>136</sup>. On 20th June Bashar al-Asad made an announcement to the nation promising starting of the national dialogue, conducting the parliamentary election in August preparing the projects of reforms by September. He called on citizens to restoration of normality and the refugees to coming back to Syria<sup>137</sup>. The second amnesty was announced for the political prisoners for the crimes committed before 20th June<sup>138</sup>.

On 23th June thirty tanks of the Syrian army entered the village Chirbat al-Dżuz situated near the border with Turkey. One thousand and five hundred civilians in advance the army escaped; the total number of the refugees reached eleven thousand

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<sup>132</sup> *Syria troops 'killed in clashes' in Jisr al-Shughour*, „BBC News”, <http://www.bbc.co.uk/news/world-middle-east-13672725>.

<sup>133</sup> *European powers step up pressure on Syria*, „Al-Jazeera”, <http://english.aljazeera.net/news/middleeast/2011/06/2011685648824776.html>.

<sup>134</sup> *Syrians decry 'torture' of teenage protester*, „Al-Jazeera”, <http://english.aljazeera.net/news/middleeast/2011/06/2011696563111657.html>.

<sup>135</sup> *More Syrians waiting to cross Turkey border*, „Al-Jazeera”, <http://english.aljazeera.net/news/middle-east/2011/06/201161313657153837.html>.

<sup>136</sup> *Rewolucjoniści w Syrii to terroryści i ekstremiści?*, <http://konflikty.wp.pl/kat,127354,title,Rewolucjonisci-w-Syrii-to-terrorysci-i-ekstremisci,wid,13521518,wiadomosc.html>.

<sup>137</sup> *„Krwawy prezydent” wystąpił przed kamerami – będą zmiany*, <http://konflikty.wp.pl/kat,127354,title,Krwawy-prezydent-wystapil-przed-kamerami-beda-zmiany,wid,13526529,wiadomosc.html>.

<sup>138</sup> *Opozycja i zwolennicy prezydenta walczą na śmierć i życie*, <http://konflikty.wp.pl/kat,127354,title,Opozycja-i-zwolennicy-prezydenta-walcza-na-smierc-i-zycie,wid,13530631,wiadomosc.html>.





and seven hundred people<sup>139</sup>. The Syrian forces occupied some other villages near the border with Turkey wanting to make it tight.

On 1st July the following stream of protests rolled by Syria. The biggest demonstration took place in Hama. On the next day the president dismissed the governor of the city, and a day later the army began the siege of Hama<sup>140</sup>. Half a million people took part in that manifestation. There were also big demonstrations in Hims, Idliba, Dayr az-Zawr, Latakia, Al-Kamishla, Dar'aa and – for the first time – in the centre of Damascus. The films showing the security services killing the civilians leaked out from the capital city<sup>141</sup>.

On 1st August the Ramadan began, a sacred month in the Muslim calendar. However the army did not cease the hostilities, still pacified brutally Hama (the number of the killed went beyond 200 people) and opened the fire to demonstrators in Damascus, Hims, Abu Kamal, Latakia and Madamia<sup>142</sup>. Because of the fact that the organizers of the protests announced that during the Ramadan would demonstrate every night, to restrain them, the tanks raked mainly the surroundings of the mosques late in the evenings. The forces shot also after finishing of the prayers to civilians from Damascus, Al-Hasakah and Latakia<sup>143</sup>. In Dayr az-Zawr a thirty-thousand demonstration took place, after which the army entered the city; fifty people were killed<sup>144</sup>.

In the meantime the President assigned the new Defense Minister, whom became Dawud Rajiha; the situation was not improved though. The offensive lasted in many regions of the country. Despite of residential declaration that the military operations would be cancelled, on 19<sup>th</sup> August opened the fire to demonstrators again. Most of the victims were recorded in the province Dar'aa<sup>145</sup>. Late in August the army conducted the operations near the border with Iraq. On the last Friday of the Ramadan (26<sup>th</sup> August) the mass demonstrations were organized in Damascus, Dayr az-Zawr, Dar'aa, Hama and Hims. Altogether eight people were killed. 30<sup>th</sup> August, on the first Day of the Donation Festival (Aid al-Adha), the Syrian security forces opened the fire to anti-governmental

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<sup>139</sup> *US 'concerned' at Syria border move*, „Al-Jazeera”, <http://english.aljazeera.net/news/middleeast/2011/06/2011623134246255582.html>.

<sup>140</sup> *Bezpieka zabija ludzi - czołgi wokół miasta*, <http://konflikty.wp.pl/kat,127354,title,Bezpieka-zabija-ludzi-czolgi-wokol-miasta,wid,13569186,wiadomosc.html?ticaid=1d251>.

<sup>141</sup> *'Half a million' protest on streets of Hama*, „Al-Jazeera”, <http://english.aljazeera.net/news/middleeast/2011/07/2011780473138345.html>.

<sup>142</sup> *Krwawy początek ramadanu w Syrii - dziesiątki zabitych*, <http://konflikty.wp.pl/kat,127354,title,Krwawy-poczatek-ramadanu-w-Syrii-dziesiatki-zabitych,wid,13649137,wiadomosc.html>.

<sup>143</sup> *ONZ odwraca się od Syrii. Tymczasem masakra trwa*, <http://konflikty.wp.pl/kat,127354,title,ONZ-odwraca-sie-od-Syrii-Tymczasem-masakra-trwa,wid,13652264,wiadomosc.html>.

<sup>144</sup> *Dozens reported dead during Syria protests*, „Al-Jazeera”, <http://english.aljazeera.net/video/middleeast/2011/08/20118513171562502.html>.

<sup>145</sup> *W Syrii giną dzieci*, <http://www.tvn24.pl/12691,1714617,1,1,w-syrii-gina-dzieci,wiadomosc.html>.



manifestants, killing seven civilians<sup>146</sup>. The world found out the hijack and battery of the cartoonist Ali Ferzat, whom the masked attackers broke his hands. The imprisonment touched also other people of cultural distinction, inter alia actors and writers<sup>147</sup>.

The exact number of victims is not known because of the objection of Syrian authorities to the presence of foreign journalists in the places of the fight, however it is estimated that three thousand people were already<sup>148</sup> and a dozen or so thousands were wounded. The army sent the tanks and snipers for the fight with the insurgents. In the revolted cities the access to water and electricity was cut off. Moreover, the security forces confiscated the material goods and food. The most serious scuffles took place in: Damascus, Dara, Aleppo, Hama, Latakia, Hims, Banijas, Tall Kalach; the losses there are also the biggest.

On 6 July the Amnesty International Organization called on the United Nations to examine the crimes committed by the Asad's regime. It was stated in the report inter alia cases of deaths in the brig, tortures and arbitrary detentions, and also extinguishing the cigarettes on the traps of the detainees by the soldiers<sup>149</sup>. In turn Human Rights Watch revealed that Syrian security forces tortured hundreds of the people busted during the anti-governmental demonstrations: they were exposed to electroshocks, deprived of sleep and water.<sup>150</sup> Like in Libya, the cases of the rapes on women committed by Syrian soldiers were stated, especially on those who tried to escape to Turkey<sup>151</sup>.

The actions of the Syrian authorities met with the international condemnation, however it has caused no real reactions until now. In March the Secretary of State of the USA Hillary Clinton froze out the military involvement of the United States in Syria, calling on Syrian government to apply non-violence, let for peaceful protests, and also appealing to implement the economic and political reforms. In August the White House made an announcement, in which was stated that Syria would be better without the president Asad. Washington blamed also the authorities of Damascus of intentional causing the humanitarian crisis and claimed the immediate ending the repressions against the own citizens, as well as to guarantee the crews of the Red Cross the

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<sup>146</sup> *Wielkie święto skończyło się masakrą - zginęło 7 osób*, <http://konflikty.wp.pl/kat,127354,title,Wielkie-swieto-skonczylo-sie-masakra-zginelo-7-osob,wid,13731779,wiadomosc.html>.

<sup>147</sup> E. Flock, *Syrian security forces break hands of political cartoonist Ali Ferzat*, „The Washington Post National”, [http://www.washingtonpost.com/blogs/blogpost/post/syrian-security-forces-break-hands-of-political-cartoonist-ali-ferzat/2011/08/25/gIQAmF9idJ\\_blog.html](http://www.washingtonpost.com/blogs/blogpost/post/syrian-security-forces-break-hands-of-political-cartoonist-ali-ferzat/2011/08/25/gIQAmF9idJ_blog.html).

<sup>148</sup> Władze syryjskie twierdzą natomiast, że śmierć poniosło ponad 250 żołnierzy i policjantów, a starcia zostały sprowokowane przez „wywrotowców”, cyt. za: *Krwawe domino...*, op. cit.

<sup>149</sup> *Amnesty accuses Syria of crimes against humanity*, „BBC News”, <http://www.bbc.co.uk/news/world-middle-east-14032765>.

<sup>150</sup> *W Syrii brutalnie torturowano setki zatrzymanych*, <http://wiadomosci.onet.pl/swiat/w-syrii-brutalnie-torturowano-setki-zatrzymanych,1,4243626,wiadomosc.html>.

<sup>151</sup> *Syrian army defectors recall horrific massacre*, <http://www.ynetnews.com/articles/0,7340,L-4080895,00.html>.



unlimited access to the northern regions of the country. The American Ministry of Treasure announced the imposition of restrictive measures against Syria meted out its biggest bank (freezing credit sides), taking the demesnes in the USA of some socialites of the Syrian regime<sup>152</sup> and forbidding the import of oil and petrochemicals from Syria. In the late August the President Barack Obama branded the brutality of the regime and called on Bashar al-Asad to immediate resignation.

Like Obama, the General Secretary of the United Nations Ban Ki-moon condemned the bloody suppression of the protests several times. On 6th August was on a call with Asad, claiming ending the repressions. A day later the chairman of the European Parliament Jerzy Buzek appealed to Syrian ruler to end the attacks on civilians. On the same day for the first time the situation in Syria was condemned by the Arab League. The European Union imposed sanctions on the thirteen most important persons in the country, inter alia the brother of the Syrian president, Mahir al-Asad<sup>153</sup>. The Chancellor of Germany Angela Merkel, the president of France Nicolas Sarkozy and the Prime Minister of Great Britain David Cameron stated in common announcement that moving to brutal military violence against his own nation Asad “lost any legitimization”<sup>154</sup>.

The putting a stop to bloodshed in Syria was advocated by the King of Saudi Arabia, who on influence of the USA called away his ambassador from this country (like Bahrain and Kuwait). The Foreign Minister of Turkey called on Syria to immediate breaking the military operations, threatening with unspecified steps. Finally, the opposition of Syrian people against the regime endorsed the leader of Al-Kaida, Ajman az-Zawahiri.

On 17th August twenty-six workers of the United Nations with their families departed from Syria<sup>155</sup>; the retreat was mandated, inter alia from besieged Latakia<sup>156</sup>.

The United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights published the report, from which resulted that the derogation of human rights in Syria could be conceded as crimes against humanity. According to the report, in the Syrian country the security forces and army committed tortures and also other humiliating and inhumane treatment

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<sup>152</sup> 62 osoby zostały zabite podczas demonstracji w Syrii, <http://konflikty.wp.pl/kat,1356,title,62-osoby-zostaly-zabite-podczas-demonstracji-w-Syrii,wid,13367021,wiadomosc.html>.

<sup>153</sup> Brat prezydenta Syrii na czele listy osób objętych sankcjami UE, <http://wiadomosci.onet.pl/swiat/brat-prezydenta-syrii-na-czele-listy-osob-objetych,1,4266944,wiadomosc.html>.

<sup>154</sup> *Krwawe domino...*, op. cit.

<sup>155</sup> ONZ wycofuje część personelu z Syrii, <http://konflikty.wp.pl/kat,127354,title,ONZ-wycofuje-czesc-personelu-z-Syrii,wid,13695340,wiadomosc.html>.

<sup>156</sup> Turkish FM: 'Syrian army still in key towns', „Al-Jazeera”, <http://english.aljazeera.net/news/middleeast/2011/08/20118175632478698.html>.



of civilians, which contravened international commitments of Syria within the convention against tortures<sup>157</sup>.

After the massacre in Hama from 31st July Great Britain endorsed bigger diplomatic pressure on the Asad's regime, but the eventuality of the military operation was not taken into consideration. On 23<sup>rd</sup> August the United Nations Council for Human Rights adopted a resolution, in which claimed the collaboration Syrian government with independent commission to examine the actions against the participants of the anti-governmental protests, inter alia crimes against humanity.

However China and Russia stood against the resolution, thereby the United Nations Security Council has not condemned the acts of violence committed by the Syrian regime. The veto of Russia and China endorsing the dialogue<sup>158</sup> and the abstention of Brazil, the South African Republic, India and Lebanon resulted in the hot dispute between the members of the United Nations Security Council; the USA were extremely disappointed of that, like France and Great Britain<sup>159</sup>.

The support Iraq for Syria could be also considered as the defeat of the President Obama administration. Whereas Americans were trying to isolate Asad and make him resign, Iraq governed by the prime minister Nuri al-Maliki (who owes the USA his position), supplies the key political and financial help to the baasist regime. The Iraqi support for Syria is probably the evidence for the allowance to speak of the Shiite majority in this country, indirectly it indicates for the growing Iraqi influences. It should be remembered that Syria is the main ally of Iraq in the Near East.<sup>160</sup>

At first the outbreak of uprising in Syria in March 2011 was reacted weakly by the regime – the president promised the reforms and the introduction of the multiparty system, raised the salaries and tried to meet the postulates of the protesting. The counter-demonstrations were also organized. However, it did not meet with the social approbation. In a way learning from “the mistakes” of the abolished Tunisian and Egyptian rulers, Bashar al-Asad came to a conclusion that the only way to keep the reins was the forcible suppression of the protests<sup>161</sup>. As a result thousands of people were killed.

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<sup>157</sup> *Torturowali, strzelali, by zabić – dramatyczny raport*, <http://konflikty.wp.pl/kat,127354,title,Torturowali-strzelali-by-zabic-dramatyczny-raport,wid,13699334,wiadomosc.html>.

<sup>158</sup> Syria jest ważnym sojusznikiem Rosji w świecie arabskim, zaś Chiny są odbiorcą syryjskiej ropy naftowej. Ponadto Rosja oraz Chiny są głównymi dostawcami broni dla armii syryjskiej.

<sup>159</sup> *Chiny i Rosja bronią reżimu? USA są wściekłe*, <http://wiadomosci.onet.pl/swiat/chiny-i-rosja-bronia-rezimu-usa-sa-wsciekle,1,4870754,wiadomosc.html>.

<sup>160</sup> *Irak wspiera reżim w Syrii? Porażka Obamy*, <http://wiadomosci.onet.pl/swiat/irak-wspiera-rezim-w-syrii-porazka-obamy,1,4875221,wiadomosc.html>.

<sup>161</sup> H. Al-Moustafa, *The Syrian uprising: concerns and pathways*, <http://english.dohainstitute.org/>



Despite of the worsening situation in Syria its president does not lose his faith in stability of the baasist regime, in fact much more consolidated and effective in comparison with Tunisia and Egypt. Bashar al-Asad affirms that subjected to him the security forces are improving in the suppression of the lasting half a year anti-regime demonstrations and the committee preparing the reforms needs even at least six months. The ruler of the Syrian country announces the parliamentary election in March 2012. At the same time he criticizes the countries calling on him to resign, reproaching them that they act as they were “the masters of Syria”. He warns of the military intervention, saying that the interference of any other country in the Syrian internal affairs will cause “the repercussions”<sup>162</sup>.

After the murder of the Libyan ruler Muammar al-Kaddafi, Bashar al-Asad remains the last Near-eastern dictator threatened by the subversion. The chances for this scenario are increasing with the next information on massacres, which the regime committed. If Asad falls, it will be the natural consequence of „the domino effect”, meaning the situation when the end of the one ruler causes the resignation or also subversion of another leader.<sup>163</sup>. On the other hand, it is possible that in case of Syria the rule of analogy will not work at all (it may be caused by the specificity of the Mashriq countries which make up the mosaic of the religions and ethnic groups)<sup>164</sup>.

Even providing preferred by the United States progress of action (meaning the subversion of Asad by Syrian people’s hands), it will be difficult to build the alternative system within “the democratic transformation” promoted by the White House. It is because that beside the president the Baas party, the generals and the prominent of the security forces have real power at their command; the bureaucratic apparatus is extremely powerful, whereas the opposition is sparse, weak and dispersed (despite of the formation of the Syrian National Council during the convention in August 2011 in Turkey). Moreover, the Syrian society has a wary attitude toward the West and its pushed ahead “democracy” (which is mainly identified with Westernization or McDonaldization). In addition non-Muslim minorities (inter alia the Christians and alavits) are afraid of outbreak of hostility after the fall of the regime which protects them. The wraith of “the Iraqi scenario”, that means the destabilization one of the most peaceful during four decades countries of the region, is real.

It may be considered, if in the case of international intervention, the regime will decide to defense with the possessed chemical weapon (it does not dispose the nuclear one). There are no precedents in the history suggested that Bashar al-Asad could use the

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Home/Details?entityID=5ea4b31b-155d-4a9f-8f4d-a5b428135cd5&resourceId=e6c33eb6-f0bd-4ae5-9245-6b98ba73dc45.

<sup>162</sup> *Krwawe domino..., op. cit.*

<sup>163</sup> *Ibidem.*

<sup>164</sup> H. Al-Moustafa, *op. cit.*





chemical weapon against his enemies. Unlike Saddam Hussein, who used the chemical weapon against the Kurdish people in March 1988 and against Iran during the Iran-Iraq War, Syria in all probability never put its chemical arsenal in use<sup>165</sup>.

The scenario, in which Bashar al-Asad keeps the power but does not carry out the reforms is also adverse because it is linked to continued prosecution of the civil population, breaking of the human rights and the probable firmness of Iraq in the region. The keeping up of the relative peace by the army for a longer time could only deepen the psychological chasm between the ruling and the ruled, and as a result it could rot the legitimation of the Baas party.

If neither the government nor the protesting reach the clear lead, the chaos and maybe inter-religious and inter-ethnic tensions will be very likely in the country. The predictions of the nearest future for Syria are pessimistic – the deepening of the crisis is expected, not only political but also social-economical, inter alia the decline of the Syrian Pound value, worsening living conditions of the poor Syrian villagers and suburbanites, increasing of unemployment and deterrence of the foreign investors<sup>166</sup>.

Only in the case of carrying out the real reforms by the present regime the dangers listed above could be avoided. Certainly many Syrian people will welcome such a „transformational“ scenario with relief, because they are much bigger on peace and safety than the subversion. On the other hand coming back to the state before the uprising is now impossible because of the international context – the subversions which happened in Tunisia, Egypt and Libya.



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<sup>165</sup> M. Jouejati, *The Strategic Culture of Irredentist Small Powers: The Case of Syria*, From Science to Solutions 2006, s. 19.

<sup>166</sup> H. Al-Moustafa, *op. cit.*



ALEPPO, SYRIA, PHOTO BY GRZEGORZ SZYMANIK



MANIFESTATION SUPPORTING SYRIAN OPPOSITION IN FRONT OF THE SEAT OF UN IN GENEVA, SWITZERLAND, PHOTO BY RADOŚLAW BANIA



## YEMEN

The Republic of Yemen appeared on the political map of the world in 1990. Earlier, there were two separate states: People's Democratic Republic of Yemen and Yemen Arab Republic, commonly known as South and North Yemen. The first was founded on the area formerly under control of British, who occupied the port city of Aden at the end of 1830's and successively extended their control over surrounding coastal areas. In 1904, the Great Britain achieved agreement with Turkey as regards the division of power in the area and the line thereby demarcated later became the border between two Yemeni states<sup>167</sup>. The authority of London was based on protectorate agreements concluded with local rulers, mainly tribal chiefs, so that it was of a very loose nature. When the British Empire began to shrink as a result of de-colonization process, which accelerated after the Second World War, London decided to strengthen its control over the South Yemen's territory. Apart from prestige, there were also economic reasons for that, as Aden was one of the world's largest ports<sup>168</sup>. For that purpose, the Federation of South Arabia was founded in 1958. However, it turned out to be very weak, and did not endure the test of time. South Yemen declared its independence in 1967, after the withdrawal of British, and local authorities, inheritors of the National Liberation Front, started to build a new state based on socialist ideology and co-operation with Moscow. All parties but the ruling Yemeni Socialist Party were banned; agrarian reform was announced, entire economic activity was nationalized and laic education system introduced. At the end of 1980's the regime was alleviated as a result of decreased support from already weakening Soviet Union. Reforms then implemented and the fact that members of country's establishment were seeking ways to retain power made it possible to start the unification talks with North.

Historically, the territory of Yemen Arab Republic was located on the southernmost frontier of the Ottoman Empire. The sultan's sovereignty over this area was nominal only. In fact, it was ruled by Zaidi Imams<sup>169</sup>, traditional leaders of local tribal confederations. In the second half of XIX century, the Turks attempted to tighten

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<sup>167</sup> F.G. Gause III, *Republic of Yemen*, [in:] *The Government and Politics of the Middle East and North Africa*, D.E. Longa, B. Reich (red.), Oxford 2002, p. 177.

<sup>168</sup> In 1957, it was on the fourth place, after London, Liverpool and New York, as regards the number of ships calling at the port. J. Zdanowski, *Historia Bliskiego Wschodu w XX wieku* [History of the Middle East in the 20th century], Wrocław 2010, p. 336.

<sup>169</sup> Zaidi are a Shi'a grouping that emerged in VIII century, which recognises five Shi'a imams, the last of whom is, according to them, Ziad ibn Ali ibn al-Hussain. Their doctrine is closer to Sunni than to Shi'a. The Zaidi have dominated the Yemeni territory already in X century. *Arabowie. Słownik encyklopedyczny* [The Arabs. Encyclopaedic dictionary], M. Dziekan (red.), Warszawa 2001, p. 363.



their control over North Yemen, but there was only partial<sup>170</sup>. Zaidi Imamate survived the Ottoman Empire, which collapsed after the WWI, and existed until 1962, when a military coup d'état took place and Yemen Arab Republic was proclaimed. For the following eight years the country was torn apart by the civil war. On the one side was the Free Officers faction which received military and political support from Egypt, and, on the other there were henchmen of dethroned imam, who were supported by Saudi Arabia<sup>171</sup>. Eventually, the conflict ended with compromise. The new government remained in power and the supporters of former regime, except of imam and his family, were offered high position in state administration. Persistent fighting was also favourable for tribal sheiks, who became even more independent and influential<sup>172</sup>. At the end of first half of 1970's, central government was once again dominated by the military. Two first presidents-colonels died as a result of attempts and only third one, colonel Ali Abd Allah Saleh, who took power in 1978, managed to keep it – mainly thanks to reforms he implemented and to appeasing tensions between the most important tribal groups<sup>173</sup>.

Saleh remained president after the unification of both countries. However, in the southern areas, there was an increasing separatist movement, whose members were afraid of domination of people from the North in state's structures<sup>174</sup>. In 1994, secession war broke out after proclamation of the Democratic Republic of Yemen. North won the conflict, which also meant the end of short-lived separatist state. Since then, the Saleh's power has been further strengthened and his party, the General People's Congress, dominated the Yemeni Parliament. Beyond official state structures, the president enjoyed support of Abd Allah al-Ahmar, the sheik of Hashids, one of two most influential tribal confederations in the Yemeni territory, which, by the way, also includes Saleh's own tribe<sup>175</sup>.

Stabilization did not come about for Yemen with 21st century, as old threats to the state's security revived and new ones appeared. First of them is so-called "Shi'a rebellion"<sup>176</sup> in the northern part of the country, with lasts, with some intervals, since 2003. It was led by Husian al-Husi, the leader of Believing Youth movement (Ash-Shabab

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<sup>170</sup> J. Zdanowski, *op. cit.*, p. 29.

<sup>171</sup> The death toll of the civil war was about 200 000. More about the civil war, see *ibidem*, p. 339-340.

<sup>172</sup> F.G. Gause III, *op. cit.*, p. 180.

<sup>173</sup> J. Zdanowski, *op. cit.*, p. 552-553.

<sup>174</sup> On the day of unification, in the North Yemen there were ten million of inhabitants, while in the Southern - only two million. *Ibidem*, p. 555.

<sup>175</sup> C. Schmitz, *Yemen's Tribal Showdown. Saleh's Last Ditch Attempt to Hold Onto Power*, „Foreign Affairs”, <http://www.foreignaffairs.com/articles/67877/charles-schmitz/yemens-tribal-showdown>. P. Kukuła, *Jemen w stronę zmian* [Yemen towards the changes], Arabia.pl, <http://www.arabia.pl/content/view/292894/151/>.

<sup>176</sup> Winter, *Conflict in Yemen: Simple People, Complicated Circumstances*, „Middle East Policy”, 2011, nr 1, p. 105.





al-Mumin) and a former Yemeni depute who was accused by the authorities of striving to restore the Zaidi Imamate. He was caught and executed in 2004, which marked an end of the first period of fighting. His henchmen, called Al-Husi grouping, however, did not lay down their arms, as they enjoyed support from the tribes in the area of Sadah city. Fighting was breaking out almost every year and only after Saudi Arabia's military intervention at the turn of 2000 and 2010 it was possible to manage the situation and keep a relative control over the rebel region<sup>177</sup>. The second threat is posed by Muslim extremists. At the beginning, they used the Yemen's territory for organizing terrorist attacks only against the West, and the USA in particular, the most spectacular example of which was the bomb attack on USS "Cole" in 2000. However, after 11 September 2001, when Saleh decided to take the side of antiterrorist coalition and used this fact to limit the influence of Islah party which grouped Muslim fundamentalists, terrorists targeted also Yemeni state authorities<sup>178</sup>. At the moment, the most powerful terrorist group in Yemen is so-called Al-Qaeda in the Arabian Peninsula, regarded as one of the most active cell in global dimension<sup>179</sup>. Finally, the third threat is revival of separatism in the southern part of the country. In 2006, peaceful protests called "Southern Peaceful Movement" (al-Harak al-janubi, hereinafter: Harak) started there. The demonstrators demanded greater interest to be given to the problems of the country's southern region and also some limited autonomy. Lack of authorities' reaction and the use of violence by security service against the demonstrators led to the increase in radical attitudes and spreading secessionist ideas<sup>180</sup>.

"Yemen's political history consists of dichotomy: Zaidis against Shafi'is<sup>181</sup>, supporters of republic against those of imamate, tribes against the state, North against the South" – these words were used by F.G. Gause III<sup>182</sup> to describe the conditions that influence the shape of the Yemeni state. This statement is still valid and perfectly reflects the complicated system of dependency and divisions that exist on the south-western part of Arab Peninsula. Difficult socio-economic situation of the Yemeni state completes this image.

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<sup>177</sup> More on the subject see *ibidem*, 102-120.

<sup>178</sup> J. Zdanowski, *op. cit.*, p. 559.

<sup>179</sup> Spencer, *A False Dawn for Yemen's Militants, Why Saleh's Departure Will Not Give Free Rein to Al Qaeda*, „Foreign Affairs”, 8.06.2011, <http://www.foreignaffairs.com/articles/67883/james-spencer/a-false-dawn-for-yemens-militants> (as of 1.10.2011).

<sup>180</sup> More on the subject see *Breaking Point? Yemen's Southern Question*, Middle East Report No 114 (hereinafter: ICG, 114), prepared by International Crisis Group, 20.10.2011, p. 6-9.

<sup>181</sup> Shafi'is – supporters of Muslim law school founded by Ash-Shafi'i. It is famous for its balance between traditionalism and rationalism. Shafi'is recognize four sources of Muslim law: Quran, the Sunnah, *qiya* (analogy), and *ijmā'* (general consensus). They attach a great importance to Quran, the Sunnah of Prophet and claim that only the legal principles based directly on Quran are important. *Arabowie, op. cit.*, p. 338.

<sup>182</sup> F.G. Gause III, *op. cit.*, p. 185.





Yemen is the poorest country of the Middle-East, with ever-present corruption<sup>183</sup>. The national income *per capita* is 2700 USD per year<sup>184</sup>. It is estimated that 42 per cent of population lives below the poverty threshold, i.e. for no more than 2 dollars per day<sup>185</sup>. The official unemployment rate is 16,5 per cent<sup>186</sup>, but before the protests broke out it was estimated at 36 per cent, and among people less than 29 years old – even at 50 per cent<sup>187</sup>. Moreover, more than a half of population is illiterate. The economic difficulties in Yemen worsen year by year. Profits from oil, the most important export good (about 90 per cent of export), form 70 per cent of budgetary revenue as well as generate 25 of gross national product<sup>188</sup>, are decreasing because Yemeni sources of this raw material are depleting. While in 2003, the production was at the level of 450 000 barrels per day, six years later it was only about 180 000 barrels per day. It is expected that if no new sources are found, Yemen's oil resources may deplete within one decade<sup>189</sup>. The water deficiency is an even greater challenge. Of 70 per cent of country's population living in the rural areas, only 45 per cent have access to potable water. Renewable water resources in Yemen are equal to barely 10 per cent of other Middle-East countries' average<sup>190</sup>. This situation is additionally worsened by the rapid growth of population, which in 20 years will probably double and reach the level of about forty millions<sup>191</sup>.

There are economic and social difficulties in Yemen that form the background of the country's population dissatisfaction. As often, the guilt started to be placed on the establishment, and in particular, on president Ali Abd Allah Saleh, who had been in his position for more than thirty years. The aversion to country's leader grew even further when at the end of last year the ruling party, General People's Congress, announced that it was to lift the limit of terms in 2013 presidential elections, which would potentially enable Saleh to rule Yemen for life<sup>192</sup>. But the rise in anti-presidential moods was not enough for the protests to begin. There was a need for an incentive, that would boost

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<sup>183</sup> Yemen is on 146 place on the list of 178 countries classified as regards the corruption level, according to Corruption Perception Index of the Transparency International. L. Achy, *Economic Roots of Social Unrest in Yemen*, „Los Angeles Times”, 10.03.2011, <http://carnegieendowment.org/2011/03/10/economic-roots-of-social-unrest-in-yemen/6901>.

<sup>184</sup> Yemen, in: *The World Factbook*, <https://www.cia.gov/library/publications/the-world-factbook/geos/ym.html>.

<sup>185</sup> *Popular Protest in North African and Middle East (II): Yemen between Reform and Revolution*, Middle East/ North Africa, Report No. 102 (hereinafter: ICG, 102), prepared by International Crisis Group, 10.03.2011, p. 10.

<sup>186</sup> L. Achy, *op. cit.*

<sup>187</sup> ICG, 102, p. 10

<sup>188</sup> L. Achy, *op. cit.*

<sup>189</sup> K. Fattah, *Yemen: A Social Intifada In a Republic of Sheikhs*, „Middle East Policy”, 2011, nr. 3, p. 80.

<sup>190</sup> *Ibidem.*

<sup>191</sup> L. Achy, *op. cit.*

<sup>192</sup> ICG, 102, p. 1, p. 2.



Yemeni population and rise it from stagnation. Overthrowing president Ben Ali by the revolted Tunisian people turned out to be such an incentive.

On 15 January, a day after Tunisian leader stepped down, several dozens of people organized a rally to show their solidarity with Tunisian demonstrators in Yemen's capital, Sana'a<sup>193</sup>. This small rally gave rise to protests, which started to slowly spread to other cities<sup>194</sup>. In the capital, an important role in enhancing street demonstrations was played by parliamentary opposition. The Joint Parties' Confederation, founded in 2003 as a loose coalition of five parliamentary groups led by fundamentalist party Islah and Yemeni Socialist Party, organized four rallies on 29 January, which attracted thousands of demonstrators. But as opposition was able to mobilize inhabitants of the capital, it failed to control the masses politically and to use them for its own purposes. This was due to the fact that as opposed to young demonstrators, who, inspired by the events that took place in Tunisia and Egypt, demanded Saleh to yield, the opposition parties called only for reforms within the existing regime. Under such circumstances, a new faction started to form. It grouped young, educated people, social activists and people from cities with a common objective: to force the resignation of Yemeni president. The following protests were becoming more and more spontaneous and lost their organized nature; they culminated during demonstrations which took place on 11 February, on the night when Egyptian president Mubarak stepped down<sup>195</sup>. So-called "youth movement" began to grow, central and southern provinces of Yemen, with much higher levels of education and political conscience than in other parts of the country, becoming its powerbase<sup>196</sup>. The city of Taiz may be deemed its main centre, in which a camp for many thousands of demonstrators was established. Its leading group took the name Irhal (yield! or literally: go away!)<sup>197</sup>.

The Yemeni authorities tried to prevent protests from spreading. On the day of Ben Ali's regime breakdown in Tunisia, Saleh announced the program of economic change. The first package was intended to strengthen the loyalty of state administration, and coercive system in particular, while the second was addressed to the entire population<sup>198</sup>. The economic promises, however, turned out to be insufficient, and as a

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<sup>193</sup> *Ibidem*, s. 2.

<sup>194</sup> In Yemen, Internet played marginal role in mobilising masses. In that country, no more than 10per cent of citizens have an access to the web, and a Facebook profile – barely 0,74per cent of citizens. *Ibidem*, p. 13.

<sup>195</sup> *Ibidem*, p. 2-3.

<sup>196</sup> K. Fattah, *op. cit.*, p. 82.

<sup>197</sup> A. al-Qubati, *Letter From Sana'a. Saleh on the Edge*, „Foreign Policy”, <http://www.foreignaffairs.com/features/letters-from/letter-from-sanaa-0>.

<sup>198</sup> The first package was limited to the increase of earnings for soldiers, policemen and security services' members and was to provide them with free food and fuel. Also the rise in state administration officers' salaries, first planned for October 2011, was to be accelerated. The second packages included the following promises: cutting the income tax by half, lifting the tuition fee for students, announcing an



result, the Yemeni President announced his plan of political reforms in the beginning of February. He declared in his speech in the Parliament, that he was not going to be re-elected in the presidential elections planned for 2013. He also stated that his son, general Ahmad Ali Abd Allah Saleh, commander of the Republican Guard, was not going to participate in the elections. Furthermore, he announced that the adopted constitutional amendment lifting the limit of presidential terms was to be frozen, promised country's decentralization (provincial authorities were to be freely elected and not nominated by the government) and called the opposition to form the national unity government<sup>199</sup>.

Saleh's concession did admittedly meet the opposition's expectations, but were not acceptable for the demonstrators. Thus, the Yemeni authorities were left with two solutions: immediate resignation of the president or the use of force. The second option turned out to be more tempting.

In February, repressions from the police and security services increased. Arrests, beating and menacing activists were indeed taking place since the very beginning of protests, but now they took a new dimension<sup>200</sup>. Above all, the demonstrators were deprived of protection they had, so that they became the target of regime's civilian supporters' attacks. Moreover, policing services were accused of incitement and even of participation in such practices. This resulted in first casualties among the demonstrators<sup>201</sup>. The Yemeni authorities also conducted a preventive action, which made it impossible to the demonstrators to occupy the Liberation Square (Tahrir) in Sana'a<sup>202</sup>. Tribes in the vicinity of the capital, loyal to the regime, were mobilized. Their members, supported by special services, turned their territories into the core area of support for the regime.

These measures, however, turned out to be counterproductive. On the one hand, the parliamentary opposition became more radical in its attitudes, which began to resemble those of demonstrators. In early March, in agreement with influential ulema, it submitted a five points-plan, with the most important demand being a call for Saleh's

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employment plan for university graduates, changes in the price control system and extending state's social assistance to another half million of families. C. Boucek, M. Revkin, *The Unraveling of the Saleh Regime in Yemen*, „CTC Sentinel”, <http://carnegieendowment.org/2011/03/31/unraveling-of-saleh-regime-in-yemen/6904>.

<sup>199</sup> *Ibidem*.

<sup>200</sup> ICG, 102, p. 6

<sup>201</sup> Between 11 and 16 February, six persons were killed and 100 wounded as a result of clashes with demonstrators. *Ibidem*.

<sup>202</sup> There is no coincidence, that the name of the square alludes to the name of the square in Cairo, famous of being a central point of protests against Mubarak. The Liberation Square in Sana'a was built in 1960's by Egyptians, who supported the military regime in its fight against the supporters of Zaidi imamate. K. Fattah, *op.cit*, p. 81.



resignation until the year's end, which was, of course, rejected by the Yemeni authorities<sup>203</sup>. On the other hand, the demonstrators did not give in, and, in response to the occupation of the Liberation Square they occupied a crossroad in the front of Sana'a University, which became a central point of protesting youth and was named "Change Square" (Taghjir)<sup>204</sup>.

The most important challenge, however, was put out to the regime by a completely different party. On 26 February, Hussain al-Ahmar left his government post and General People's Congress. The resignation of the Minister of Youth and Sport could be seen as unimportant, but Hussain is one of nine sons of Abd Allah al-Ahmar, who took lead of Hashid confederation after al-Ahmar's death. It was noteworthy that the resignation was accompanied by a huge rally of al-Ahmar brothers' tribal supporters, during which Hussain demanded Saleh's immediate resignation<sup>205</sup>. He was not the only brother (which could potentially enable Saleh to rule Yemen for life<sup>206</sup>), who was against the rule of the incumbent president. The first to support the protests was Hamid al-Ahmar, a powerful businessman and Islah party member. Meanwhile, on 18 March, the most influential of nine brothers, present Hashid confederation's sheik, Sadik al-Ahmar<sup>207</sup>. Thus, Saleh lost the support of most tribes, which to-date formed the base of his regime.

This open action of Al-Ahmar family against the incumbent president was not a coincidence. The conflict between Saleh and Abd Allah al-Ahmar's sons began with the death of the of many years' standing leader of Hashid confederation. The younger generation could not put up with increasing concentration of power and wealth around chief's of state family<sup>208</sup>. Therefore, the al-Ahmar brothers began to criticize Saleh and to defy his authority. For example, at the end of last year, having learned on the adoption by the Parliament of an amendment which would potentially enable Saleh to rule Yemen for life, Sadik stated that "it will destroy Yemen and make a »pharaoh« of Saleh"<sup>209</sup>. Hamid was determined to go even farther. According to documents made available by Wikileaks, he was planning to overthrow the president already at least two years ago. In his conversation with an American diplomat he was talking about organizing massive

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<sup>203</sup> However, Saleh agreed to the remaining demands, i.e. security guarantees for peaceful demonstrations, holding responsible perpetrators responsible for the violence against demonstrators, formal confirmation of president's and his son's resignation from their participation in the elections, restoration of national dialogue. ICG, 102, p. 9.

<sup>204</sup> K. Fattah, *op. cit.*, p. 81.

<sup>205</sup> ICG, 102, p. 5.

<sup>206</sup> ICG, 102, p. 1, p. 2.

<sup>207</sup> A.L. Alley, *Yemen on the Brink. Will Saleh's Resignation Lead to democratic Reform?*, „Foreign Affairs”, <http://www.foreignaffairs.com/articles/67699/april-longley-alley/yemen-on-the-brink>.

<sup>208</sup> A.L. Alley, *op. cit.*

<sup>209</sup> ICG, 102, p. 1.



demonstrations in the entire country and that they would be supported by army<sup>210</sup>. It seems quite likely, that Hamid was indeed the *spiritus movens* behind the Hashid confederation's withdrawal of support for Saleh.

As a result of al-Ahmar brothers' about-turn, many to-date representatives of establishment left the president's camp<sup>211</sup>. They used as a pretext the bloodshed on 18 March, when president's supporters opened fire to demonstrators in front of Sana'a University, killing 52<sup>212</sup>. The most important figure to change the front was general Ali Muhsin al-Ahmar, commander-in-chief of North-Western Military District and commander of elite 1 Tank Division, whose soldiers remained loyal to their commander and forsaken their allegiance to a government. Moreover, following the orders of their commander, they encircled the "Changes Square" in order to guarantee the security of demonstrators<sup>213</sup>. Despite the fact that the Yemeni general is not related to Al-Ahmar family, he has good reasons to desire Saleh's fall. The fact that his tribe is a part to Hashid confederation seems to be of secondary importance here. Perhaps main reason are personal ambitions and his intention to take power<sup>214</sup>.

As a consequence of described events, the president's Saleh position in the international arena also began to weaken. The developments in Yemen were carefully

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<sup>210</sup> No. 001617, *American Embassy to Secretary of State*, Sana'a, p. 2-4. <http://wikileaks.org/cable/2009/08/09SANAA1617.html>.

<sup>211</sup> C. Boucek, M. Revkin, *op. cit.*

<sup>212</sup> A.L. Alley, *op. cit.*

<sup>213</sup> K. Fatah, *op. cit.*, p. 82.

<sup>214</sup> Genera Ali Muhsin al-Ahmar, who has enormous influence in the army, was perceived as the biggest potential rival of Saleh or his son in the presidential elections planned for 2013. The fact that he constituted a threat for the existing regime is confirmed by an attempt to discredit his actions as a main commander of troops combating the Al-Husi rebellion in northern provinces. In the decisive phase of fighting, his troops were withdrawn from the frontline and replaced by the Republican Guard under command of Saleh's son, Ahmad. The decision has been justified by the lack of effectiveness of Ali Muhsin's troops.. Moreover, the government newspaper Ath-Thawra (Revolution) published an article accusing unnamed representatives of authorities, who reportedly acted in favour of prolonging the conflict in the North, to the detriment of state's interests. More on the subject see L. Winter, *op. cit.*, p. 111-112. According to Saudi sources, Saleh went even farther and tried to eliminate general Ali Muhsin al-Ahmar. In his conversation with the US ambassador, Prince Khalid ibn Sultan, deputy Minister of Defence and Air Forces stated that during the Saudi intervention against Al-Husi rebels, the Yemeni General Staff, while providing Saudis with coordinates, pointed the headquarters of general Ali Muhsin al-Ahmar as a target. Eventually, the bombing did not take place, because, as Prince Khalid ibn Sultan said: "the pilots realised that something is wrong and interrupted their attack", and did not hesitate to add that the Yemeni general is considered as Saleh's political opponent. No. 000159, *American Embassy to Secretary of State*, Riyadh s. 4. <http://wikileaks.org/cable/2010/02/10RIYADH159.html>. Taking the above into account, one can risk a hypothesis that general Ali Muhsin al-Ahmar has been motivated to act openly against Saleh by the desire of revenge or concern about his own position, or even life. It is also conceivable that his desire to take power is an equally strong incentive. Apart from some arguments cited above, which obviously remain within the circle of speculations, this may be confirmed by the decision to protect demonstrators, which in social perception may create the general's image as a defender of the nation.





followed by many countries' governments since the very beginning, because of country's strategic location<sup>215</sup>. Two countries are particularly interested: the United States and Saudi Arabia. The Washington's priority is war with terrorism and the White House takes into account mainly this factor as regards Yemen. The outbreak of anti-government protests was not favourable for the American side, because it led to weakening of central government, and, in particular, of its control over Yemen's territory, in which different radical groupings are active, including the abovementioned Al-Qaeda in the Arabian Peninsula<sup>216</sup>. Besides, one should stress that Saleh co-operated with the US in combating terrorist groupings and for that reason he was a valuable ally.

The developments in Yemen were a source of concern also for Saudi Arabia. There were two reasons for that. First, the protests which spread not only throughout the Yemeni territory, but also throughout the entire Middle East and Maghreb, constitute an indirect threat for the Su'ud (Saudi) dynasty, as a representative of the old order. That's why Al-Riyadh took a negative stance towards the developments in the Arabic world, and even decided to play the role of a *status quo* defender, the best example of which was Bahrain<sup>217</sup>. Secondly, the situation in Yemen is of great importance for Saudi Arabia's security – at least because they are neighbouring countries. For years, Al-Riyadh tried – more or less successfully – to influence the situation in Yemen. At the moment, this is taking shape of patronage over some tribes<sup>218</sup> and of close relationships with influential personalities from the governing circles, including general Ali Muhsin al-Ahmar as well as Hamid and Sadik from the Al-Ahmar family<sup>219</sup>. The main objective of this policy is to counteract the south-western neighbour turning into a rival, which might endanger the Saudi Arabia's position in the Arab Peninsula. Therefore, Arabia is striving to weaken the central government and to divide actors on the Yemeni political scene<sup>220</sup>. Under such assumption, protests in Yemen are favourable for the Saudi Arabia. It is, however, too risky thesis. It seems that for Al-Riyadh, a weak government is a government that may be influenced by means of external and internal pressures, and not the one threatened by losing control over

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<sup>215</sup> The Yemeni territory is adjacent to Bab al-Mandab strait, which connects the Red Sea with the Gulf of Aden. One of world's most important sea trade and communication routes runs through the strait. This is the route, along which exchange of goods with India and South-Eastern Asia countries takes place and through which the oil from the Persian Gulf is transported. The region's importance is well illustrated by the fact that every day 3 million barrels of oil are transported by sea along the Yemeni coast. *Senate Committee on Foreign Relations. Subcommittee on Near Eastern and South and Central Asian Affairs, U.S. Policy in Yemen. Testimony by Dr. Christopher Boucek*, p. 1.

<sup>216</sup> More about the US concerns and actions taken as a result, see K. Fatah, *op. cit.*, p. 84.

<sup>217</sup> B. Haykel, *Saudi Arabia's Yemen Dilemma, How to Manage an Unruly Client State, How to Manage an Unruly Client State*, „Foreign Affairs”, <http://www.foreignaffairs.com/articles/67892/bernard-haykel/saudi-arabias-yemen-dilemma>.

<sup>218</sup> Tribes covered by the patronage, see K. Fatah, *op. cit.*, p. 83.

<sup>219</sup> B. Haykel, *op. cit.*

<sup>220</sup> *Ibidem*.



country. The destabilization of Yemen would mean a greater risk for Saudi Arabia's internal security, for example from terrorist groupings, against which it is fighting, or the Al-Husi faction, whose rebels were fought with its help in the recent years.

Taking the above into account, one could expect that the United States and Saudi Arabia would not act to the detriment of Saleh's regime. Meanwhile, the facts are completely different. There were above all the Saudis, who proposed the Gulf Cooperation Council's plan, according to which Saleh would resign in exchange for political asylum for him and his family<sup>221</sup>. United States supported the initiative, which was a clear signal that the Yemeni government lost American support<sup>222</sup>. It seems that both Washington and Al-Riyadh came to conclusion that Saleh's position became too weak for him to control the situation and that he is only able to exacerbate it – in other words, he ceased to be a guarantor and became a threat for political stability in Yemen<sup>223</sup>. Moreover, the bloody violence of 18 March might have played some role in the case of the United States<sup>224</sup>, while in the case of Saudi Arabia the fact that Al-Ahmar family and general Ali Muhsin al-Ahmar took the side of opposition, while, as mentioned above, the Saudis maintain close relations with them.

Mass demonstrations, pressures on the side of opposition and international community, Hashid confederation becoming an opponent, rebellion in a part of army with influential general Ali Muhsin al-Ahmar and loosing the United States' and Saudi Arabia's support did admittedly stagger the Saleh's authority, but could not force him to resign. His opponents were not consolidated, which gave the regime some hope for the future. However the president's backstage did dangerously shrink, it did not fall apart completely. He could still count on a part of military forces – first and foremost on the Republican Guard under command of his son Ahmad, on special services being under control of his nephews<sup>225</sup>, or on a part of tribes belonging to Hashid confederation, and of course his own tribe, as well as the second most important tribal confederation, the Bakil<sup>226</sup>. In spite of all that, the situation was becoming critical. Time was his enemy. The longer the protests lasted, the faster the support for his regime decreased. Moreover, Saleh has lost a room for manoeuvre, as anybody to whom he turned demanded him to resign. One can suspect that in this situation the Yemeni president came to conclusion that only resolute actions may help save his authority. The events that took place at the end of May, largely confirm this.

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<sup>221</sup> *Ibidem*.

<sup>222</sup> C. Schmitz, *op. cit.*

<sup>223</sup> B. Haykel, *op. cit.*

<sup>224</sup> C. Schmitz, *op. cit.*

<sup>225</sup> A.L. Alley, *op. cit.*

<sup>226</sup> ICG, 102, p. 5.



On 22 May Saleh for the third time – and this time definitely – refused to sign the plan proposed by the Gulf Cooperation Council<sup>227</sup>. Day later, the Republican Guard attacked Al-Ahmar brothers' property in Sana'a. The attack, which, anyway, failed, gave rise to serious consequences. In the follow-up, armed tribal troops attacked the capital and besieged the most important buildings belonging to the state, including nine ministries. Regular fighting broke out, and after a week the loses were 105 killed and 467 wounded<sup>228</sup>. Thus the situation in Yemen has changed – an armed conflict with tribal background became a fact.

Choosing the use of force turned out to be a fatal error, which could cost the leader of Yemeni state his life. On 3 June, Saleh was wounded as a result of explosion in the president's mosque. The injuries were serious enough to prevent him from performing his duties; president was brought to Saudi Arabia in order to receive treatment<sup>229</sup>. The regime's days seemed to be numbered, but the Saleh's family, and probably his son Ahmad in particular, effectively counteracted further decomposition of the ruling camp<sup>230</sup>. There was a deadlock. Nobody was able to control the capital. Sana became divided between the president's faction henchmen and supporters of Al-Ahmar family. The protest movement remained the third force, which continued to occupy the university campus and so-called "Change Square" and was under protection of forces loyal to general Ali Muhsin al-Ahmar. The weakening position of the government and disruption in of state structures could not remain without influence in the rest of the country. Tribal territories turned into a battlefield, where Republican Guard troops clashed with local warriors<sup>231</sup>. In the North, the Al-Husi faction took the control over Sadah city and province<sup>232</sup>. At least since March, radical Muslim groupings – in particular so-called *Partisans of Islamic Law* (Ansar ash-Sharia), supported mostly by the Al-Qaeda in the Arabian Peninsula – fight with government forces in southern Yemen<sup>233</sup>. At the end of May, i.e. when heavy fighting was taking place in the capital, the extremists occupied Zinjibar and several other towns in the Abjan province. At the end of the first decade of September, the Yemeni government admittedly announced that it took Zinjibar back, but this did not mean that situation in that area was under control<sup>234</sup>. Besides, a militant activity of abovementioned radical groupings has been observed also

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<sup>227</sup> B. Haykel, *op. cit.*

<sup>228</sup> K. Fattah, *op. cit.*, p. 82.

<sup>229</sup> Senate Committee on Foreign Relations..., *op. cit.*, s. 3.

<sup>230</sup> L. Tayler, Yemen's Hijacked Revolution. New Protests Pushed Aside By Old Rivalries in Sana'a a, „Foreign Affairs”, 26.09.2011, <http://www.foreignaffairs.com/articles/68298/letta-tayler/yemens-hijacked-revolution> (as of 1.10.2011), Amid Renewed Violence in Yemen, It's Unclear Who is in Charge, interview with Christopher Boucek in „Newshour” z 19.09.2011, <http://carnegieendowment.org/2011/09/19/amid-renewed-violence-in-yemen-it-s-unclear-who-is-in-charge/69o7> (as of 30.09.2011).

<sup>231</sup> L. Tayler, *op. cit.*

<sup>232</sup> K. Fatah, *op. cit.*, p. 79.

<sup>233</sup> L. Tayler, *op. cit.*

<sup>234</sup> ICG, 114, p. 27.



in mid-eastern and eastern part of Yemen, in provinces Ma'rib, Shabwah and Hadhramaut<sup>235</sup>. Harak began to gain power in the South. In the beginning, most members of the movement admittedly committed themselves not to propagate any secessionist ideas, but only to support the demonstrators demanding Saleh's resignation, but the political differences turned out to be too significant and since April, during the demonstrations in southern provinces, and in particular in the port city of Aden, there appeared calls to create a separate state<sup>236</sup>.

At the end of second decade of September, the conflict in the capital escalated again. The protest movement, frustrated by persistent political stalemate, decided to go out of the "Change Square". Security services made an assault on the demonstrators, which provoked fighting with general Ali Muhsin al-Ahmar's troops. The situation was additionally exacerbated by the Saleh's return from the Saudi Arabia, on 23 September<sup>237</sup>. Despite the protests and fighting in Sana'a continued, it turned out once more, that none of the conflict sides is able to turn the scales in its favour.

In the beginning of October, there were no signs of any greater changes to occur. After a series of fights at the end of previous month, there was a deadlock again. The regime's opponents kept on demanding immediate Saleh's resignation, but they weren't in position to enforce their call. There were no noteworthy actions in the international arena, too. However, when Yemeni journalist and social activist, Tawakkul Karman, was awarded the Nobel Peace Prize on 7 October<sup>238</sup>, it was an indication of increased activity as regards the conflict in Yemen. On 21 October, the UN Security Council issued a resolution condemning the Yemeni regime for the violation of human rights and also abuses by other actors; it called the enemies to refrain from further use of violence and to accept the plan for conflict resolution, proposed by the Gulf Cooperation Council in April<sup>239</sup>. Before the said document was published, Saleh stated that he was ready to accept the Gulf Cooperation Council's plan, provided that its implementation will be guaranteed by the organization's member states, the United States and the European Union<sup>240</sup>. What he wanted to achieve by this? Was he hoping that if he anticipates the UN Security Council decision, the resolution will not be passed (it is characteristic that the declarations was issued as soon as rumours appeared that the UN is considering a draft

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<sup>235</sup> Ibidem. C. C. Boucek, M. Revkin, *op. cit.*

<sup>236</sup> Hirak demanded written guarantee that after Saleh's resignation the question of the South would be solved as a matter of priority. The opposition and representatives of demonstrators from the North did not want to agree, which eventually led to disappearance of first-declared solidarity. ICG, 114, p. 11-12.

<sup>237</sup> L. Tayler, *op. cit.*

<sup>238</sup> O Tawakkul Karman see P. Kukuła, *Tawakkul Karman - pierwsza Arabka nagrodzona Pokojową Nagrodą Nobla*, [Tawakkul Karman - first Arab woman awarded with the Nobel Peace Prize], „Arabia. pl”, <http://www.arabia.pl/content/view/292968/151/>.

<sup>239</sup> SC/10418, Resolution 2014 (2011), <http://www.un.org/News/Press/docs//2011/sc10418.doc.htm>.

<sup>240</sup> *Yemen president seeks guarantees on exit*, „Al Jazeera”, <http://english.aljazeera.net/news/middleeast/2011/10/2011101919339964119.html>.



resolution)? Is this another tactical manoeuvre to gain time, as it occurred three times in the spring of this year? Or maybe his declaration is genuine and he really wants to resign? It will take days or weeks to know the answer to these questions. For the moment, the Saleh's declaration and UN Security Council resolution became a pretext for renewed fighting in Sana'a: security services and Republican Guard clashed with demonstrators, troops loyal to general Ali Muhsin al-Ahmar and tribal fighters of al-Ahmar family<sup>241</sup>.

The political crisis in Yemen, which lasts for almost ten months, led to even greater economic and social difficulties in the country. In March, in Marib province, which contains the majority of Yemeni oil and gas deposits, rebellious tribes blew up power stations and power lines, thus practically cutting off country's supplies of both raw materials<sup>242</sup>. The energy crisis became a fact. For example, fuel prices rose by 900 percent<sup>243</sup>. Businesses and factories could not function under such circumstances. It is estimated that at least 50 per cent of enterprises<sup>244</sup> and 60-70 per cent of factories<sup>245</sup> halted their activities. In some sectors, such as construction, this share rose even to 90 per cent<sup>246</sup>. The economy found itself in the face of disaster, while the dysfunction of central government and fighting in provinces make it impossible to counteract this situation.

As a consequence, the population's living conditions deteriorated. It is estimated that unemployment level could have reached 60 per cent and the percentage of people living below the poverty threshold may be even 70 per cent<sup>247</sup>. Jobs loss and increase of food prices led to increase in the number of starving. According to British organization OXFAM, in June 2011, over 7 millions of Yemeni people suffered from starvation<sup>248</sup>.

It is difficult to estimate the number of casualties in the Yemeni conflict. According to Human Rights Watch, as a result of security services' assaults on demonstrators, 225 people were killed<sup>249</sup>. These are the data from the mid-September,

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<sup>241</sup> *Fierce fighting erupts in Yemen's capital*, „Al Jazeera”, <http://english.aljazeera.net/news/middleeast/2011/10/20111022101744709230.html>. *Fierce fighting erupts in Yemen's capital*, „Al Jazeera”, <http://english.aljazeera.net/news/middleeast/2011/10/2011102310438603928.html>.

<sup>242</sup> C. Tayler, op. cit.

<sup>243</sup> A. Zamłyńska, *Kryzys humanitarny w Jemenie* [The humanitarian crisis in Yemen], „Pomoc Rozwojowa”, 2011, nr 1-2, p. 9

<sup>244</sup> *Ibidem*.

<sup>245</sup> P. Kukuła (transl.), *Rozruchy w Jemenie pchają kraj w stronę zapaści gospodarczej* [Riots in Yemen push the country towards economic collapse], Arabia.pl, <http://www.arabia.pl/content/view/292944/52/>.

<sup>246</sup> *Ibidem* (transl.), *Jemeńskie firmy budowlane zagrożone bankructwem* [Yemeni construction companies under the threat of bankruptcy], <http://www.arabia.pl/content/view/292957/52/>.

<sup>247</sup> Idem (transl.), *Rozruchy w Jemenie...*

<sup>248</sup> A. Zamłyńska, op. cit., p.9

<sup>249</sup> *UN Human Rights Council: Yemen Resolution Falls Far Short*, <http://www.hrw.org/news/2011/10/01/un-human-rights-council-yemen-resolution-falls-far-short>.





so they do not cover those killed in riots at the end of last month, whose number, according to press information, amounted at 68<sup>250</sup>. They also do not specify the number of killed on the side of the Republican Guard, army, security services, tribal fighters, Al-Husis' henchmen and outsiders. In this case, only partial data are available. It is known, for example, that during the fighting in capital on the turn of May and June there were 105 killed and 467 wounded<sup>251</sup>. For the moment, however, it is impossible to quantify the global number of losses.

Fighting in Yemen, which continues since the spring, also triggered migration among civil population. The UNHCR did not publish any data concerning the number of refugees from the territory of Yemen. Taking this into account, one may presume that this phenomenon is of negligible scale. However, the data concerning internal refugees are known. According to IDMC report, their global number is estimated at about 100 000. They mostly include the population of Abjan province, where fighting between the government forces and Muslim extremists took place. According to this information, 62 000 people fled to Aden and 16 000 – to Lahij province. Moreover, about 13 000 people left the Abjan's capital, Zinjibar. In other parts of the country these moves were much less significant. It is known, that 6000 persons left their homes in Shabwah province and 1000 in Taiz province<sup>252</sup>.

The political crisis in Yemen continues and despite recent declarations by the president Abd Allah Saleh one can suppose, that it won't finish soon. Until now, the Yemeni state leader proved that he was not going to step down easily. The opposition still does not have sufficient forces, nor suitable means of pressure. International armed intervention seems to be very unlikely. It would be difficult to find any justification for such an action. This is because of the fact that as opposed to Libya, in Yemen the government is unable to suppress protests and tribal rebellion by force, because it does not have superiority over its opponents. By the way, the recent UN Security Council resolution does not unequivocally point at those responsible for the bloodshed in Yemen. On the one hand, it admittedly calls the regime to stop violence against the demonstrators, but on the other, it encourages so-called "other actors" to do the same. Despite the United States and Saudi Arabia are most concerned with situation in Yemen, as events in Yemen have the greatest influence on their national security level, it is doubtful that they would be able to undertake any large-scale measures alone. Obviously, the more countries would be interested in the intervention, the more likely it

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<sup>250</sup> *Death toll since Sunday rises to 68 in Yemen*, „RTE News”, <http://www.rte.ie/news/2011/0920/yemen.html>.

<sup>251</sup> K. Fattah, *op. cit.*, p. 82.

<sup>252</sup> *Yemen. New displacement due to unrest, displacement due to Sa'ada conflict*, Report Internal Displacement Monitoring Centre, 3.10.2011, s. 4. They are not the only internal refugees in Yemen. As a result of many years-lasting conflict with Al-Husi grouping, on the territory of the entire country there are about 160 000 inhabitants of the following provinces: Sa'ada, Al-Jawf, 'Amran and Hajjah. *Ibidem*, s. 5.



would be implemented. However, in order for this to happen, the interests of a greater number of countries should be threatened. In other words, there should occur a threat for sailing routes in the Gulf of Aden and Red Sea, and such a scenario would be possible only in the case of “somalisation” of Yemen, which, by the way, cannot be precluded.

Saleh’s resignation would not necessarily mean the end of authority crisis in Yemen. For the moment, opposition is unified only because it has a common enemy. Should this enemy disappear, discrepancies between political parties, protest movement, tribes, army, secessionists etc., would take a very sharp form. For example, should the most powerful political party, Islah, come to power, Harak party would not accept it because it would have feared that its calls for greater freedom for the country’s south could be rejected <sup>253</sup>. Furthermore, Al-Ahmar family, which admittedly would not strive to take official posts in the state, because maintaining and extending their political and economic influence would be a sufficient gain, will not agree general Ali Muhsin al-Ahmar becoming a president<sup>254</sup>. A list of such examples is long, but there is no point in continuing it. It is only worth adding that no matter who will take the rule of Yemen, will be forced to face a great number of political (restitution of state structures, confrontation or agreement with Al-Husi faction, resolving the question of the separatism of the south, to continue or abandon fight with terrorist groupings) and economic (rebuilding the country, problems of water and energy resources) challenges.



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<sup>253</sup> More on the subject see ICG, 114, p. 17

<sup>254</sup> In the already cited conversation with an American diplomat Hamid al-Ahmar stated that general Ali Muhsin al-Ahmar is “a good and honest man, but the last thing we want is another military in the President’s chair” No. 001617, *American Embassy to Secretary of State*, Sana’a, p. 2-4. <http://wikileaks.org/cable/2009/08/09SANAA1617.html>.



COPT FUNERAL MASS, MUKATTAM HILL, EGYPT



SYRIAN ACTIVISTS IN FRONT OF THE SEAT OF UN, PHOTO BY RADOSŁAW BANIA





## LIBYA

Despite some economic successes compared to other Arabic countries<sup>255</sup>, part of society, however, was dissatisfied with the long-standing rule of Muammar al-Gaddafi<sup>256</sup>, and has considered the reforms undertaken by his son, Saif al-Islam, as unsatisfactory. Successful revolutions in Tunisia and Egypt led to the disclosure of the opposition, which since 15 February 2011 launched a protest against the bad economic situation, unemployment, corruption and restricting civil liberties. The opposition forces, also called rebellants, which were comprised of the organizations leading armed struggle with the regime, Libyan diplomats who have turned away from Gaddafi and military men who went on the side of to the protesters. Oppositionists were concentrated in several groupings: Interim National Council, the Libyan People's Army, the Free Libyan Air Force, the National Conference for Libyan Opposition National Front for Salvation of Libya, the Libyan League for Human Rights, the Libyan Youth Movement, the Free Libyan Army, Al -Qaeda of Muslim Maghreb. Al-Jazeera estimated the number of fighters for ten-twelve thousands<sup>257</sup>, and the rebels themselves for seventeen thousands<sup>258</sup>. They faced 10-12 000 of Gaddafi's soldiers (although the Libyan army had 150 000 soldiers<sup>259</sup>); forces on both sides were so aligned.

The first protests took place in January 2011 in Darna and Benghazi<sup>260</sup>; wanting them to end the government lowered taxes and duties on domestic and imported food products. However, after the February 15th demonstrations spread all over the country, becoming a civil war. Gaddafi sent against the rebels the police, army and foreign mercenaries. On 21 February in Tripoli came to the massacre of protesters (about three hundred people were killed). That same day, the insurgents took Benghazi, which then was made the seat of the Provisional National Council (NRT), led by Mustafa Muhammad Abd ad-Jalil (former Minister of Justice).

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<sup>255</sup> Libyan purchasing power parity (PPP), GDP per capita in 2010 amounted to 14 878 U.S. dollars, and its human development index is 0.755 percent. While the the literacy rate in 2009 was 86.8 percent. However, oil revenue went to a relatively small group of the six million citizens. Compare: *Live Blog – Libya Feb 22*, „Al-Jazeera”, <http://blogs.aljazeera.net/africa/2011/02/22/live-blog-libya-feb-22>.

<sup>256</sup> Przejął władzę w 1969 roku. D. Madeyska, *op. cit.*, p. 139.

<sup>257</sup> *Gaddafi's military capabilities*, „Al-Jazeera”, <http://english.aljazeera.net/video/africa/2011/03/2011331522685587.html>.

<sup>258</sup> *NATO assumes command of Libyan operation*, <http://www.tvn24.pl/-1,1696864,0,1,czolgi-w-misracie-wojsko-kaddafiego-zajelo-port,wiadomosc.html>.

<sup>259</sup> *Gaddafi Army is falling apart*, <http://www.tvn24.pl/1,1693642,druk.html>.

<sup>260</sup> *Protests as Hezbollah poised to form Lebanon government*, BBC News, <http://www.bbc.co.uk/news/mobile/world-middle-east-12272483>.



Establishment of 1973 Resolution on March 17th by the UN Security Council has become a green light for international intervention. Provisional National Council from that time could count on military support from Western countries, which in turn changed the balance of power and allowed the rebels go on the offensive.

As a result of attacks, the coalition has destroyed most of the Libyan anti-aircraft system, while the insurgent forces led from Benghazi counter-offensive to the west. There were constant bloody battles, the humanitarian crisis deepened. In late April, Gaddafi's forces crossed the border with Tunisia, Tunisian army has, however, defeated the Libyan one. NATO forces bombed the military infrastructure and the residences of the Gaddafi's. In late May, the allies intensified bombing raids for Tripoli.

June 27th International Criminal Tribunal in The Hague issued an arrest warrant (for suspicion of committing crimes against humanity) Gaddafi, his son Saif al-Islam and the Libyan intelligence chief Abdullah as-Sanusi. In August, the insurgents gained domination, who, after three days of fighting (from 20 to 23rd August) captured the capital. NRT officially moved its headquarters from Benghazi to Tripoli. The insurgents began operations of liberation the rest of the country and seeking the head of state.

In October, hard fights lasted for two last bastions loyal to the dictator – Bani Walid and Sirta. The first of these cities was captured by rebels on October 17th, while Sirta three days later. 20th October, when after NATO air attack for a convoy of several vehicles leaving the city, Muammar al-Gaddafi was captured and killed<sup>261</sup>. Most of his supporters were captured or killed<sup>262</sup> during the fighting. The new authorities announced the official liberation of Libya on 23 October 2011 in Benghazi. This day shall be considered as the end of the civil war.

The exact number of victims of civil war in Libya is not known, it is estimated that at least 25 – 30 000 people were killed (of which about eight hundred at sea<sup>263</sup>), and about 50 – 60 000 were wounded<sup>264</sup>. The bloodiest battle were waged on Misrata and

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<sup>261</sup> Probably from a shot in the head by the devoted fighter Muhammad al-Ahmad Bibi or ash-Shabani, cited by: *Tak wygląda człowiek, który zastrzelił Kadafiego*, <http://konflikty.wp.pl/title,Tak-wyglada-czlowiek-ktory-zastrzelil-Kadafiego,wid,13915100,wiadomosc.html?ticaid=1d484>. Gaddafi's funeral took place on 26th October, at an undisclosed location in the desert, in accordance with Muslim customs. Together with dictator was buried his son Mutasim and former defense minister and army commander Abu Bakr Younis Jabra. *Ujawniono nagranie z pogrzebu Kaddafiego*, [http://wiadomosci.onet.pl/swiat/ujawniono-nagranie-z-pogrzebu-kaddafiego,1,4891703,wia\\_domosc.html](http://wiadomosci.onet.pl/swiat/ujawniono-nagranie-z-pogrzebu-kaddafiego,1,4891703,wia_domosc.html).

<sup>262</sup> Including all his sons except of Saif al-Islam.

<sup>263</sup> In addition, government forces set mines at coastal waters of Libya, cited by : *800 osób zginęło na morzu - uciekali z kraju wojny*, <http://konflikty.wp.pl/kat,126314,title,800-osob-zginelo-na-morzu-uciekali-z-kraju-wojny,wid,13366457,wiadomosc.html>.

<sup>264</sup> *Libya Death Toll Could Be As High As 30,000: U.S.*, [http://www.huffingtonpost.com/2011/04/27/libya-death-toll-could-be\\_n\\_854582.html](http://www.huffingtonpost.com/2011/04/27/libya-death-toll-could-be_n_854582.html).





Zalitan. A lot of victims were taken also campaign in the Jabal Nafusa. In these regions about 15-17 000 people suffered death.

During the civil war, both sides accused the enemy of human rights violations. Rebels in the first weeks of war performed executions on the captured African mercenaries fighting on the side of Tripoli. They also carried out the arsons and robberies. However in general during military operations they followed the rights of prisoners and civilian population<sup>265</sup>. On the other hand NATO's mistaken bombing several times resulted in civilian victims.

According to the Amnesty International report, the regime has repressed bloggers, journalists, suspected rebels. There are known cases of thirty people who disappeared without a trace in eastern Libya. Caught in Ajdabiya oppositionists were murdered (captives had their hands tied and then were shot in the back of the head).

During the fighting in Misrata the army used civilians as human shields<sup>266</sup>, set oil pipelines on fire, was killing pets.

In addition the Gaddafi soldiers committed from his command the mass rapes, especially of the wives of men sympathizing with the insurgent government, but also of the minor girls. At the beginning of the war nearly three hundred women living in refugee camps in Tunisia said they were raped by the military men<sup>267</sup>, this number, however, could be much higher (approximately 780). There are reasons to believe that the dictator ordered distributing Viagra to the soldiers in order to strengthen their sex drive<sup>268</sup>.

Government forces have used cluster bombs in combat. On 20th April UN High Commissioner for Human Rights Navi Pillay said that such actions can be classified as a war crime<sup>269</sup>; On June 27th an arrest warrant of Gaddafi for war crimes was issued. It is ironical that, according to the UN the killing of Gaddafi also may be treated as a war crime<sup>270</sup>.

When it comes to humanitarian situation in Libya, it was substantially deteriorated due to the rise. Stocks of medicines, food and fuel during the conflict were

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<sup>265</sup> *Amerykanie wycofają okręty z libijskiej operacji*, <http://www.tvn24.pl/0,1697241,0,1,rebelianci-zdobyliśmy-rodzinne-miasto-kaddafiego,wiadomosc.html>.

<sup>266</sup> *EU has opened in Bengazi*, <http://www.tvn24.pl/-1,1703967,0,1,ue-otworzyła-sie-w-bengazi,wiadomosc.html>.

<sup>267</sup> S. Sidner, A. Ahmed, *Psychologist: Proof of hundreds of rape cases during Libya's war*, <http://edition.cnn.com/2011/WORLD/africa/05/23/libya.rape.survey.psychologist/>.

<sup>268</sup> O. Bowcott, *Libya mass rape claims: using Viagra would be a horrific first*, *The Guardian*, <http://www.guardian.co.uk/world/2011/jun/09/libya-mass-rape-viagra-claim>.

<sup>269</sup> *Is this what Gaddafi's army doing already a war crime?*, <http://konflikty.wp.pl/kat,126314,title,To-co-robi-armia-Kadafiego-to-juz-zbrodnia-wojenna,wid,13339535,wiadomosc.html>.

<sup>270</sup> *Odpowiedz przed sądem za zabicie Kadafiego?*, <http://konflikty.wp.pl/kat,126314,title,Odpowiedz-przed-sadem-za-zabojstwo-Kadafiego,wid,13919352,wiadomosc.html?ticaid=1d409>.



small. Already on February 25th the International Committee of the Red Cross appealed for support for Libya of 6400 dollars to meet the basic needs of people affected by violent fights in the country<sup>271</sup>.

The migration has become a huge problem. At the end of February 2011 the Libyan-Tunisian border was crossed by the tens of thousands of people (according to the UNHCR Office, about 50 thousands), mostly Tunisians, Egyptians and Libyans, and the citizens of Asian countries. In subsequent days, a wave of migration increased, and till the 1st March it reached a level of 70-75 thousand people. Humanitarian assistance for Tunisian border was assured by UNHCR, World Food Programme and Red Crescent Organization. Tens of thousands of people were waiting for the transport to other cities and countries of origin. Aid organizations have announced the state of humanitarian emergency; the logistical assistance in the form of aircraft and ships was provided by France, Great Britain and the United States, which enabled the evacuation of several thousand Egyptians<sup>272</sup>.

The rapid inflow of migrants to Tunisia began on February 21st, reaching its apogee on 1st-2nd March<sup>273</sup>. Until 3rd March UNHCR reported that approximately 200 000 of people have fled from Libya to Tunisia and Egypt. The refugee camp, set for 10 000 people, was founded on the Libyan-Tunisian border at Ras Ajjeer (quickly there were 20 000, and eventually 30 000 of people), thousands were trapped on the Libyan side of the border. WHO warned about the epidemic outbreak<sup>274</sup>. In the summer the refugees, but also ordinary civilians, were lacking water, food, medicines, gasoline and clothing. After five months of civil war, the 650 – 750 000 of people fled from the country, and nearly two hundred and fifty thousand had to move into other areas of the country<sup>275</sup>.

The following months brought a further deterioration of the situation. Despite humanitarian aid, the last stocks of medicines and medical supplies were running out, both in the regions controlled by the government as well as the oppositionists. After the battle in Tripoli, there was a serious humanitarian crisis. Four hundred thousands of people needed urgent help, in the capital and Sirte lacked electricity, drinking water,

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<sup>271</sup> *Libya: ICRC launches emergency appeal as humanitarian situation deteriorates*, ICRC, <http://www.icrc.org/eng/resources/documents/news-release/2011/libya-news-2011-02-25.htm>.

<sup>272</sup> *Libya: UK and France to fly Egyptians from Tunisia*, BBC News, <http://www.bbc.co.uk/news/world-africa-12625084>.

<sup>273</sup> *UPDATE 3-Foreigners may be prevented from leaving Libya*, Reuters, <http://af.reuters.com/article/tunisiaNews/idAFLDE7231RR20110304?sp=true>.

<sup>274</sup> S. Sayare, A. Cowell, *Libyan Refugee Crisis Called a 'Logistical Nightmare'*, [http://www.nytimes.com/2011/03/04/world/africa/04refugee.html?\\_r=2](http://www.nytimes.com/2011/03/04/world/africa/04refugee.html?_r=2).

<sup>275</sup> *Country is bloodshedding, and the medicines for the victims are lacking*, <http://konflikty.wp.pl/kat,126314,title,Kraj-sie-wykrwawia-a-dla-ofiar-brakuje-lekow,wid,13573230,wiadomosc.html>.



food, medicines and fuel<sup>276</sup>; their residential areas were destroyed by the incessant attacks. Civilians were afraid to go out on the streets<sup>277</sup>.

A side effect of civil war in Libya was a decrease in the oil extraction, which was related to increasing its prices on the world stock markets and adversely affecting the stock market itself<sup>278</sup>.

The reaction to events in Libya was not confined to monitoring the situation, calling for ending violence and attempting to mediate. In this case, the international community has taken concrete actions which final was a military intervention on the side of the insurgents.

The United States acted as the first, who established sanctions on February 25th in the form of freezing of assets of Gaddafi, his family, government and the Libyan central bank<sup>279</sup>. A day later, the UN Security Council adopted Resolution 1970, which imposed on Libya arms embargo and travel ban and freezing assets of certain members of the regime<sup>280</sup>. This document had significant gaps regarding a ban on arms sales, which was limited only to the Libyan country, what allowed the government side to continue recruiting and arming mercenaries abroad used to suppress the uprising. The sanctions were also established by the European Union, which expanded their scope in the category of travel ban to 10 persons (total 26) and the freezing of assets of twenty people (total 26)<sup>281</sup>.

The imposition of sanctions has not changed the image of the conflict in Libya. Troops loyal to the regime were still in the offensive, which was associated with an increase in civilian victims. In the media was emphasized that a particular hazard were bombing from the air. Provisional National Council desperately appealed to the international community to extend assistance. In this case in court appeared the question of establishing a no-fly zone over Libya. The case was controversial because could end up in international military intervention on a large scale. The world was divided into supporters and opponents of increasing involvement in the Libyan conflict.

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<sup>276</sup> 400 tys. ludzi potrzebuje pomocy - kryzys w stolicy, <http://konflikty.wp.pl/kat,126314,title,400-tys-ludzi-potrzuje-pomocy-kryzys-w-stolicy,wid,13744016,wiadomosc.html>.

<sup>277</sup> Bomby spadają na domy - Misrata wymiera, <http://konflikty.wp.pl/kat,126314,title,Bomby-spadaja-na-domy-Misrata-wymiera,wid,13352057,wiadomosc.html>.

<sup>278</sup> Dubai Shares Drop as Mideast Unrest Sparks Risk Aversion; Emaar, Zain Fall, <http://www.bloomberg.com/news/2011-02-20/dubai-shares-drop-most-this-month-on-growing-mideast-unrest-emaar-falls.html>.

<sup>279</sup> M. Menkes, *Polityczne znaczenie sankcji gospodarczych wobec Libii*, „Biuletyn Polskiego Instytutu Spraw Międzynarodowych”, nr 24 (773), p. 2392.

<sup>280</sup> For full content see: Resolution 1970 (2011), <http://daccess-dds-ny.un.org/doc/UNDOC/GEN/N11/245/58/PDF/N1124558.pdf?OpenElement>.

<sup>281</sup> M. Menkes, *op. cit.*, p. 2393.



In the first group was mainly France and Great Britain<sup>282</sup>. Paris, moreover, openly supported the insurgents and was the first who recognized the Provisional National Council for the lawful representative of Libyans<sup>283</sup>. To the second group belonged the other permanent members of UN Security Council, namely Russia, China and the United States. They were accompanied by Germany, which currently sit on the UNSC as a non-permanent member, and two mainstream Mediterranean countries - Italy and Turkey<sup>284</sup>. However, when the League of Arab States supported the establishment of no-fly zone, U.S. and China reconsidered its position on this matter<sup>285</sup>. Russia also decided to abandon its objections<sup>286</sup>.

On 17th March the UN Security Council agreed to create a no-fly zone over the territory of Libya, which was reflected in Resolution 1973. Moreover, the contents of this document included provisions for the protection of the civilian population by all available means, tightening execution of the arms embargo, the prohibition of airline connections with Libya, widening the coverage of freezing assets and travel bans of the representatives of the regime<sup>287</sup>. It is worth noting that the way to enforce no-fly zone has not been specified, allowing the use of any means. Resolution 1973 was the basis for beginning the international action. Two days after the passage of the Paris summit meeting, on which the decision that led to international military intervention was made. Enforcing introduction of the no-fly zone in fact was not limited to patrolling the sky alone, but provided for the destruction of aircraft and enemy air defenses. Operation "The Odyssey Dawn" has become a reality and was initially carried out by an ad hoc gathered coalition, and since the end of March was continued under the auspices of NATO. The main burden of warfare was taken by France, Great Britain and the United States. With time, the military task began to expand, although not included sending troops to Libya regular land forces. Using the record for the Protection of the civilian

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<sup>282</sup> About the motivation of Great Britain and France see: G. Chappell, *The Limits of British Leadership – Test Case Libya*, „PISM Policy Paper”, nr 8, czerwiec 2011, p. 2-4. D. Liszczyk, *Francja wobec kryzysu w Afryce Północnej*, „Biuletyn Polskiego Instytutu Spraw Międzynarodowych”, nr 27 (776), p. 2398-2399.

<sup>283</sup> *Ibidem*, p. 2399.

<sup>284</sup> Clarification of the position of these countries see: R. Formusiewicz, *Niemcy wobec kryzysu w Afryce Północnej*, „Biuletyn Polskiego Instytutu Spraw Międzynarodowych”, nr 26 (775), p. 2396. A. Czerep, *Polityka Włoch wobec Libii*, „Biuletyn Opinii”, nr 13/2011, p. 2-5. *W obronie status quo ante? Polityka Turcji wobec wojny domowej w Libii i kryzysu politycznego w Syrii*, „Peace and Development Studies”. Texts of the Arab Spring of Nations seminar, p. 3-7, [http://www.peacestudies.pl/niusy/photos/file/arabska\\_wiosna\\_ludow/Zdulski.pdf](http://www.peacestudies.pl/niusy/photos/file/arabska_wiosna_ludow/Zdulski.pdf).

<sup>285</sup> The initial motivation of those countries and the causes of the revision of their position presented in B. Wiśniewski, *Stany Zjednoczone wobec interwencji wojskowej w Libii*, „Biuletyn Polskiego Instytutu Spraw Międzynarodowych”, nr 35 (784), s. 2414-2415. D.H. Paal, *China: Mugged by Reality in Libya, Again*, „Asia Pacific Brief”, <http://carnegieendowment.org/2011/04/11/china-mugged-by-reality-in-libya-again/6ac3>.

<sup>286</sup> Factors that influenced the position of Russia See: R. Śmigielski, *Rosja wobec kryzysu w Afryce Północnej*, „Biuletyn Polskiego Instytutu Spraw Międzynarodowych”, nr 30 (779), p. 2405-2406.

<sup>287</sup> For the complete content see Resolution 1973 (2011), <http://daccess-ddsny.un.org/doc/UNDOC/GEN/N11/268/39/PDF/N1126839.pdf?OpenElement>.



population to carry out the coalition began the air attacks on land forces troops loyal to Gaddafi. In addition, some countries like Great Britain and Italy sent their own military instructors in order to train troops of the insurgent army<sup>288</sup>. Assistance for Provisional National Council had not only a military dimension. On the British initiative The Contact Group for Libya was set up<sup>289</sup>, at meetings of which often were taken decision to give or increase financial assistance<sup>290</sup>.

Along with the successes of the insurgents, the international community began to focus on supporting the reconstruction of state structures. On September 16th the UN Security Council issued a resolution, by which three months United Nations Assistance Mission for Libya (UNSMIL – United Nations Support Mission in Libya) was established. Its mission is to serve a versatile policy on many levels, i.e. restoring of internal security, activities of public institutions, promoting the rule of law, national reconciliation, human rights, or taking steps to rebuild the economy<sup>291</sup>.

Along with the death of Gaddafi ended the first act – the civil war in Libya. Now, in front of victorious forces there is more serious task, that is the reconstruction of the country. How will it be carried out, and what will be the new face of Libya, is difficult to predict today.

It would be naive say that the Libyan state enters the path of Western-style democracy. Of course you cannot exclude such a scenario, but it seems improbable. It should be borne in mind about the specificity of the Arab world, that in Libya is particularly evident. Many things that seem to be for residents of Europe or America obvious, for the average Libyan are alien and does not necessarily meet with his approval. For example, democratic elections could undermine the position of the tribes, which have so far benefited from links with the authorities. Besides, they can tear down the traditional divisions and current relative balance between them, which may also meet with objection. If to all this will impose the domination of Cyrenaica over Trypolitania a new civil war will become a reality. This in turn would mean breakdown of the state and rise of tribal communities.

In Libya, therefore, it is also possible scenario according to which there would be a "destruction of state institutions, re-tribalisation and construction of new social and political qualities", what is not excluded by Dr. Mariusz Marszewski from Adam

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<sup>288</sup> A. Czerep, *op. cit.*, p. 6.

<sup>289</sup> G. Chappell, *op. cit.*, p. 4.

<sup>290</sup> Significant in this respect was an third meeting of the Contact Group in Abu Dhabi. See: A. Czerep, *op. cit.*, p. 7. K. Zdulski, *op. cit.*, p. 4.

<sup>291</sup> Resolution 2009 (2011), p. 2-3. <http://daccess-dds-ny.un.org/doc/UNDOC/GEN/N11/502/44/PDF/N1150244.pdf?OpenElement>.





Mickiewicz University in Poznan<sup>292</sup>. Moreover, he notes that this development would not be surprising if one takes into account the history of the African continent in recent years.

Even if that, from the perspective of the Western world black scenario will not come true, then, and so there are many other obstacles that may prove insurmountable. One of the recognized Polish Arabists – Professor Marek Dziekan from the University of Lodz indicates that the major problem may be contacting the residents of Libya with a modern economic system. "The Libyans, who lived under the umbrella of an utopian" third-world theory "outlined in the mid-seventies of the last century in the Green Book can survive a real shock of the west, modern system of functioning of the economy, in which alongside absolute poor people live people unimaginably rich. In Libya, these differences were not so great, as these in Egypt, and certainly were not perceived with the naked eye, "as noted by Marek Dziekan<sup>293</sup>.

The fall of Gaddafi may carry a serious consequences for the international situation. The Western world has taken great risks by opting on the side of the insurgents. In the name of shared values was got rid of a man who for several years was not a threat, on the contrary – who was an important political and economic partner. After 11th September 2001, Gaddafi has ceased to support terrorism directed to the West and began to fight extremist groups in the country ruled by himself. Taking into account the energy security it was not to charge the Libyan dictator with anything. In the recent years of his rule oil and gas companies from all over Europe received more and more new concessions and signed new contracts. Economic cooperation in this field has not encountered any major obstacles, but has developed smoothly. In addition, Gaddafi has worked very effectively with European countries, and especially with Italy in the area of reducing the flow of illegal immigrants to Europe<sup>294</sup>. Lastly the Libyan dictator had a significant contribution to the stabilization of Africa. On his initiative, the African Union was formed, and the Libyan contribution amounted to 15 per cent of the common

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<sup>292</sup> M. Marszewski, *Perspektywy rozwoju islamskiego aktywizmu w nowym ładzie politycznym porewolucyjnej Afryki Północnej*, „Peace and Development Studies”. Texts of the Arab Spring of Nations seminar, p. 24. <http://www.peacestudies.pl/niusy/photos/file/Islamskipercen20aktywizmpercen20Afrykipercen20Polnocnej.pdf>.

<sup>293</sup> M. Dziekan, *Koniec i początek, czyli same pytania*, „Stosunki Międzynarodowe”, <http://stosunki.pl/?q=content/koniec-i-poczpercentC4percent85tek-czyli-same-pytania>.

<sup>294</sup> As a result of agreement from 2009 between Libya and Italy, which establishes the joint maritime patrols, the number of immigrants coming to Italy through Libya has decreased by 90 percent. It is very important that after the sealing of the route through the Straits of Gibraltar, the road through Italy is the most popular illegal route to the Old Continent . A. Czerep, *op. cit.*, p. 4.



budget, he actively involved with in most cases with success in solving the conflict in Darfur, Mali, Liberia, Chad and Niger<sup>295</sup>.

Currently, no one can be sure on which dimensions the new authorities will want to cooperate, and where there will be changes. While the interests of the West seem to be secured as for now, the Libya's further involvement to African issues, which were an area of meeting Gaddafi personal ambitions, is questionable. Reducing or discontinuation of contributions payment by Libya could lead to a crisis of the African Union, which would affect the peacekeeping missions led by this organization, and in this context could lead to further deterioration of the situation in Darfur and Somalia<sup>296</sup>. Even if Libya continues to be interested in cooperation with African countries, the new authorities will not have authority the Gaddafi, what could destabilize the situation in the region of Sub-Saharan Africa.

The Western world also cannot be calm. Pessimistic scenario, a new civil war in Libya or breakdown state structures probably would force another intervention, of which finale could be a long-standing stabilization mission like this in Afghanistan.



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<sup>295</sup> For more informations see: Idem, *Libia i Afryka – co po Kaddafim?*, „Amicus Europae Policy Papers”, nr 9/2011, p. 3-5.

<sup>296</sup> *Ibidem*, p. 3.



STREET IN CASABLANCA, MOROCCO, PHOTO BY MILENA MOŹDZIERZ



A BANNER WITH SLOGAN SUPPORTING PRESIDENT MUBARAK, EGYPT, PHOTO BY MARTA WOŹNIAK



## BAHRAIN

In comparison with other countries where there has been a major occurrences against the present system of governance, internal causes of the crisis in Bahrain had strongly different character. This resulted from the fact that in of its origins were specific conditions, characteristic only for this country. While in other Arab countries economic and social factors played a dominant role, as in the case of the emirate causes anti-government occurrences formed part of a context of long-standing internal tensions resulting from the path of development of political and social system. Internal disturbances in the kingdom are also very important because it occupies a strategic position off the coast of the Persian Gulf and constitutes command headquarters and main base of the U.S. Navy. V Fleet. Therefore, any disturbance of the political situation in the kingdom cause serious regional and sub-regional implications.

Bahrain, belongs to the category of mini-states, is a country island, situated on 35 islands, the largest of which occupies 19 km<sup>2</sup>. The whole area is 622 km<sup>2</sup> state It is inhabited by 680,000 people, of which 235,000 are foreigners. Bahrain is a Muslim state, but unlike the other Arab Gulf monarchies, there are forming in it the relations between Shiites and Sunnis. Shiites constitute a majority of the population – 70 per cent <sup>297</sup>. However, they are deprived of important social and political rights. Bahrain's ruling Al-Khalifas dynasty is of Sunni confession. Traditional conflict in the Islamic world Shiites and Sunnis between constitutes an important background of anti-government occurrences in the country but it is not a fundamental axis of the conflict. In 1783, the Bahrain archipelago was conquered by the Al-Khalifas family, who expelled representatives of Persia from it. Referring to these events, Iran is still reporting territorial claims to the kingdom, treating its area as the lost provinces. At the end of 19th century, Bahrain declared a protectorate of Great Britain. It remained in this dependence until 1971, when the British government acknowledged the independence

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<sup>297</sup> *Bahrain*, The World Factbook, <https://www.cia.gov/library/publications/the-world-factbook/geos/ba.html>.





of all its protectorates in the Gulf. Bahrain is a member of the League of Arab States and the Arab Cooperation Council of the Gulf (Gulf Cooperation Council – GCC)

Bahrain is a hereditary constitutional monarchy, in which the ruler is entitled broad prerogatives, giving him almost unlimited power. Currently there is a valid constitution, which was promulgated by the ruler in 2002. The authority of monarchs is exercised since 1999 by King Hamad ibn Isa al-Khalifa. The monarch, as head of state, appoints the government, which is directly responsible in front of him. At the head of government stands Prime Minister, who is prince Khalifa ibn Salman al-Khalifa. The function of the head of government is exercised continuously by him since 1971. The cabinet is made up of nearly twenty ministries, most of which are staffed by members of the reigning family. Only one third of ministerial posts was assigned to Shiites, they are not, however, the key ministries. In the system of the authorities organs one must also mention the parliament. The first, a single-chamber one, was dissolved in 1972. First in 2002 in connection with a number of political reforms, the National Assembly was established. It consists of two chambers, upper – Consultative Council and lower – Chamber of Deputies. Members of the Council, in number of 40, come from the appointment. The Chamber of Deputies, of the same composition in numbers, is selected on the basis of general election for four years period. Parliament has only a consultative role in lawmaking. Legislative initiative belongs only to the monarch. In Bahrain the functioning of political parties is prohibited. Their informal role is played by political association, whose composition reflects the religious divisions, although in they represent an ideological dimension spectrum of views from fundamentalist attitude to the leftist and secularizing groups. The main Sunni grouping, supporting the system of government in the country is the National Muslim Forum. The Shiite groupings are treated as opposition. The most important ones are: the National Association. Muslim Al-Wifak (Agreement) and the Islamic Action Association. In addition to the above, which activities were tolerated by the authorities, Shiites also formed radicals and openly anti-government groups, which actions are illegal, among which the most important is the





Movement for Freedom and Democracy Al-Hak (True) under the leadership of Hasan Mushaima <sup>298</sup>.

Bahrain has one of the most sustainable economies in the area of Middle East and Persian Gulf, which shows its GDP<sup>299</sup>. It is a country that does not belong to the major oil exporters, although it plays an important role in its economy. Crude oil accounts for almost 60 per cent of exports of Bahrain, with the incomes from its sale account for 70 per cent of government incomes. Nevertheless, the oil sector generates only 11 per cent of GDP. The other main source of export income is the production of aluminum. Bahrain is the seat of numerous companies operating in the Gulf and a major banking center in the region. It is in a group of countries with the highest incomes. GDP measured in purchasing power parity is 40,000 dollars per year, which places the country at the 20th place in the world. Growth of GDP on an annual basis is 4.3 per cent. Despite the good macroeconomic indicators in the country there is persisting high unemployment. It runs into the level of 15 per cent, while in the group between the 15th and 24th years of age it is 20.12 per cent <sup>300</sup>.

The events that began on mass protests in the capital of Bahrain, Manama, although in a direct manner have been provoked by the fall of the rule of President of Egypt Husni Mubarak, should be considered as one of the recurring elements of socio-political upheavals, to which this country is subjected to since gaining independence. Absolutist rule of the Al-Khalifa dynasty met with constant opposition from the society of Bahrain, which opposition was to a large extent expressed by the Shiite population representing 2/3 of the population. It was a result of discriminatory practices, to which this group of population has been subjected by the Sunni minority. The independent state provided Shiites freedom of religion, but also restricted their social and political aspirations. This resulted from the fact that the ruling minority feared that this religious group will become a center of political influence of the neighboring Iran. Shiites recognized that the discriminatory practices are the result of the will of governing elites.

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<sup>298</sup> *Bahrain*, <http://www.carnegieendowment.org/2008/03/06/arab-political-systems-baseline-information-and-reforms/2nn>.

<sup>299</sup> Industrial production – 57.3 per cent, agriculture – 0.5 per cent, the service sector - 42.2 per cent . *Bahrain, The World Factbook*, op. cit.

<sup>300</sup> *Ibidem*.



Discrimination takes many forms. One of them is to restrict the ability to find employment by the Shiites in the government sector of the economy, as well as in the structures of state administration. Shiites have been in practice deprived of employment opportunities in the army, security services and police<sup>301</sup>. During the elections to the National Council the range electoral constituencies was varied to make it difficult to select the Shiite deputies<sup>302</sup>. However, discriminatory practices against Shiite population cannot be treated as the main cause of anti-government occurrences. Equally significant was the increase of internal resistance, both among the Shiite as well as the Sunni population against the autocratic rule of the Al-Khalifa family.

After regaining independence in 1973, the emir of Bahrain promulgated the constitution and agreed to the creation of a parliamentary assembly. A brief episode of democracy was terminated after two years, when the authorities led to the dissolving of the Assembly and suspension of the constitution<sup>303</sup>. The suspension of political rights led to the formation of political opposition, whose main demand of was a return to constitutional rule, restoring the functioning of parliament and, in practice, limiting the privileges and power of the reigning family. In order to achieve this goal, the various opposition groups were organizing strikes and mass demonstrations. One of the biggest waves of social unrest took place in 1994-1998. Authorities in a very brutal way crushed occurrence of the opposition by making arrests among anti-government demonstration participants and forcing the main opposition leaders into exile. Prospects for changing the tense political situation occurred in 1999, along with taking the throne by Emir Hamad bin Khalifa. The first moves of the new ruler announced a willingness to initiate a dialogue with the opposition. On the initiative of ruler the state of emergency was abolished, general amnesty was announced and political reforms were promised. This last commitment was not an empty declaration. The ruler has announced the Charter of National Actions, which announced the restoration of certain constitutional arrangements bequeathed in the constitution of 1973 and the establishment of a

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<sup>301</sup> *Popular Protests in North Africa and the Middle East (III): The Bahrain Revolt*, "Middle East/North Africa Report", No 105, April 6, 2011, p. 4 i n.

<sup>302</sup> In the 2010 elections to the lower chamber of parliament were elected 22 Sunnis and 18 Shi'ites.

<sup>303</sup> An important axis of the conflict between the emir and the parliament was the latter's reluctance to accept the contract with the U.S. on the American fleet units stationed in Bahrain.



bicameral parliament. The Charter was put to a general voting. In February 2001, nationwide referendum was carried out, in which 98 per cent of voters voted in favor of the proposed political reforms. After the referendum was carried out, the emir established a constitutional committee to conduct the proposed changes<sup>304</sup>.

However, soon have brought of the ruler actions considerable disappointment. It was widely expected that from 1973 the constitution will be restored after the introduction of amendments democratizing activity of the political system. Instead, the king<sup>305</sup> promulgated a new constitution, which was not subjected to a wider public consultation. On the strength of the constitution a bicameral parliament was established, but its role in law-making has been reduced to a minimum. The lower house received no real competence of control towards members of the government and the monarch. In its activity the National Assembly has focused on social issues in which there were no overlapping controversy with the government, and thus the political system of Bahrain has not been radically reformed. Representatives of the conservative option in the royal lineage have achieved a clear success. The Constitution was constructed in such a way that actually strengthened the power of the Al-Khalifa family and did not introduce the element of social control over their actions. During the next ten years of governance by King Hamad social discontent grew in connection with discriminatory practices towards Shiite population and the limited political reforms. At the outbreak of revolutionary occurrences authorities in Bahrain were aware that social problems can not miss their country. Trying to reduce possibility of starting the anti-government occurrences the authorities of the country reached for the specific measure. King Hamad, using the tenth anniversary of the adoption of the Charter, announced on February 11th granting each family in the country with non-refundable donation of 2,700 dollars. This measure, however, was not effective<sup>306</sup>.

The resignation the President of Egypt from the office occurrences political also resulted in Bahrain. The first opposition demonstrations began on the Pearly Square in the capital of the kingdom, Manama on 14th February 2011. Initial demands protesters

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<sup>304</sup> *Popular Protests...*, p. 3 i n.

<sup>305</sup> In 2002 the title of emir was replaced by a royal title.

<sup>306</sup> K. Katzman, *Bahrain: Reform, Security, and U.S. Policy*, Congressional Research Service, April 20, 2011, p. 6.



had a clear socio-political nature, but did not contain itself any requests against the monarch power. The protesters demanded continuation of political reform. Among the demands presented appeared to increase demands Consultative Council's powers in the legislative process and the possibility to exercise real control over the actions of government. During the demonstrations also were raised slogans for resignation of the Prime Minister, Sheikh Khalifa conservative ibn Salman al-Khalifa. An important part of the demands concerned the end of discriminatory practices towards Shiite population. Slogans raised by the demonstrators, although they had a clear political dimension, did not contain itself any content, which would be particularly dangerous for the system of government in the state. First of all, nor monarchical powers, neither Al-Khalifa family in the governance system of the state were questioned.

The demands of the organizers demonstration were moderate in nature and did not geared to a confrontation with state authorities. In such circumstances, the government response was excessively brutal. Police units and security forces were given the task of dispersing a demonstration for the Pearly Square. As a result, four people were killed and several people were injured. Pacification of demonstration failed. In the following days the anti-government occurrences sustained and were intensified. On February 15th the King Hamad tried to perform the conciliatory gestures. He promised to investigate the background of events from the previous day, and above all in relation to fatalities and to determine whether the security forces did not abuse the powers to take actions against the demonstrators gathered on the Pearly Square . This declaration did not bring calm the situation, the more that police tried to pacify the demonstrations by measures of force. At that time there was a consolidation of the activities of the opposition. The main Shiite groupings, and other opposition groups, announced the creation of a broad political alliance under the name "Motion February 14th." On 17th-18th February there was a subsequent clashes between demonstrators and security forces. As a result, 5 people died and 231 suffered serious injuries. Protesting against the brutal police action on behalf of deputies of Al-Wifak motion gave the mandates of deputies to the National Assembly. During this time, the scope of demands made by the protesters clearly changed. There was increasingly demanded the for resignation of the Prime Minister Sheikh Khalifa Salman ibn al- Khalifa.



Towards increasing protests and international, mainly U.S. pressure for initiating a dialogue with the protesters authorities in Bahrain have changed their tactics. King Hamad proposed to undertake a real political dialogue with the leaders of opposition groupings, and announced the cessation of operations of the security forces directed against the demonstrators. Subsequently, the authorities have released from prison more than 300 people detained for anti-state activities, and have made changes in ministerial positions. Reorganization of the government, however, did not include the position of prime minister. Taken in this way attempt to control the anti-government occurrences did not produce the desired effect. The opposition has been unable to develop an unified standpoint on dialogue with the authorities. In particular, there was a dispute between moderate al-Wifak and the radical Al-Hak, whose leadership rejected the possibility of compromise with the ruling family. In subsequent days, the anti-government demonstrations were continuous intensified. They reached the highest intensity in early March 2011, extending outside of the Pearl Square. March 1st demonstrators protested in front of the Parliament building, paralyzing its deliberations for six hours. To the political crisis came in mid-month. March 13th, protesters have blocked the financial district, which raised concerns about the stability of the financial sector, which is one of the foundations of the national economy.

At the time of the largest public protests, the authorities of Bahrain decided to mobilize the further emergency measures. Yet March 13th King Hamad announced that Bahrain has asked the GCC for assistance in the form of military intervention. On 14th March 2011 forces of the Council of the Gulf operating within the so-called. Gulf Shield (Shield Gulf), entered into Bahrain<sup>307</sup>. The main contingent were soldiers of Saudi Arabia in the number of 1000. They were accompanied by 500-strong contingent of police forces provided by the United Arab Emirates. Command of these troops took over the Saudi Arabian General Mutlak Salam ibn al-Azim. At the time of entering the GCC troops to Bahrain, their commander issued a statement in which he stated that the goal of the operation is only to protect national infrastructure, and therefore units subordinated to him will not participate in any operations directed against the anti-government

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<sup>307</sup> *Saudi Intervention in Bahrain*, <http://www.stratfor.com/analysis/20110314-saudi-intervention-bahrain>.





demonstrations<sup>308</sup>. The entry of armies of the Arab states of Bahrain has enabled the authorities to crack down on opposition. The conservative fraction clearly won in the ruling clan. On 15th March the monarch announced the introduction of the state of emergency. Later that same day started the security forces to remove the demonstrators from the Pearly Square. Until March 18th this operation has been completed, and the symbol of the breakdown of the protest movement was the liquidation of the monument on the main city square. Subsequently, actions of the authorities were directed against opposition activists. Several dozen of them were imprisoned, including leaders of the groupings Al-Hak. Data on victims of the anti-government occurrences are not certain. According to information provided by the Bahraini authorities as a result of clashes with security forces 30 people were killed.

Consents by the Gulf states to send security forces to Bahrain should be seen in the wider regional context. From the very beginning of the anti-government occurrences neighbouring countries, especially Saudi Arabia, have expressed concern about the situation in Bahrain. Already on February 16th foreign ministers at a meeting of GCC expressed their support for the government of the kingdom. February 23rd took place a visit of King Hamad in Riyadh, during which there could be made first decisions on assistance for the authorities in Manama. It is significant that on March 2nd heir to the throne in Bahrain Prince Salman ibn Hamad visited the United Arab Emirates. For the main promoter of sending military forces into the kingdom should be considered Saudi Arabia. This state was also affected the by the anti-government demonstrations. They began on February 17th, primarily in Eastern Province, and therefore one of the main oil-producing areas in the kingdom. Demonstrations were carried out mainly by Shi'ite population living in this area of the kingdom. Riyadh saw the protests in Eastern Province and Bahrain in the context of regional competition with Iran.

Saudi Arabia has concluded that its political and strategic interests are threatened, if Shiite population will obtain wider political rights. It was emphasized at the same time, that thanks to contacts with Shiites Tehran will gain political influence in

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<sup>308</sup> *Peninsula Shield commander interviewed on mission in Bahrain.(Company overview)*, BBC Monitoring International Reports, April 4, 2011, <http://www.accessmylibrary.com/article-1G1-253288705/peninsula-shield-commander-interviewed.html>.



security sensitive areas of the kingdom. From the very beginning of the demonstrations in Bahrain Saudis encouraged the Al-Khalifa family to take decisive actions against the demonstrators, and spoke out against granting Shiites greater political rights. It is worth emphasizing that the position of Riyadh was in clear contradiction with the views of Washington. The administration of President Barack Obama during the crisis took conciliatory position, constantly persuading King Hamad to reach an agreement with the opposition and initiate real social and political reforms oriented at Shiite population. The Saudis, however, contrary to the standpoint of Washington supported the option of force to resolve the crisis. Ultimately, Washington did not decide to open a diplomatic dispute with Riyadh and informally accepted its position. It should be emphasized that locating on the territory of Bahrain command and base of U.S. Navy V Fleet was an important factor, but not decisive for the position of the Obama administration. USA, having lost an important political and strategic partner in the region, which was Egypt, could not afford an open a political confrontation with another important strategic partner, which is Saudi Arabia. These considerations decided that Washington, although not formally supported the Saudis and the activities of Al-Khalifa family, however did not spoke out against them in an unambiguously negative way<sup>309</sup>.

During the period of the state of emergency the authorities pursued the policy of repression towards political opposition. Special military courts sentenced to imprisonment, not only demonstrators and leaders and members of political groupings but also activists involved in the protection of human rights. Among those arrested was the chairman of the non-government organization Bahrain Center for Human Rights Nabil Rajab. The repressions also affected the doctors and nurses providing assistance to the wounded during the demonstration on the Pearly Square. In June 2011 began a process against doctors and other medical staff members. The process ended in September. As a result, 47 people have been sentenced to years-long jail<sup>310</sup>. The process itself and its sentence caused wave of international criticism addressed to the authorities in Manama. In response to it government of the kingdom declared that the

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<sup>309</sup> A. Bayyenat, *U.S. Policy Towards Bahrain and the Iran Factor*, „Foreign Policy Journal”, <http://www.foreignpolicyjournal.com/2011/06/08/u-s-policy-towards-bahrain-and-the-iran-factor/>.

<sup>310</sup> M. Chulov, *Bahrain doctors jailed for treating injured protesters*, „The Guardian”, <http://www.guardian.co.uk/world/2011/sep/29/bahrain-protester-death-sentence?INTCMP=ILCNETTXT3487>.



accusation was not based on medical assistance to the victims of incidents, but having by those persons illegal weapons and the occupation of public buildings. As a result of international pressure Bahraini authorities allowed the referral of these people back to the civil courts.

The state of emergency in the kingdom was abolished with effect from 1 June 2011. At the end of this month, the GCC states troops began evacuating from the territory of Bahrain. On May 31, King Hamad has announced the possibility to initiate a political dialogue with the opposition. The incentive to its beginning was releasing from prison 150 people arrested during the demonstration. The amnesty did not cover, however, activists of the most radical political groupings, including the leadership of Al-Hak. Another concession towards the opposition was the authorities' decision to set up a research commission, whose task is to assess the appropriateness of actions taken by the government in order to end the demonstration. Publication of the report, of the commission is expected on October 30th. But it is hard to expect that its conclusions will contain charges against the authorities of the kingdom. The dialogue undertaken by political parties did not cause any significant change in the political system of the state. There was only indicated the main directions of the changes which were to be introduced in the future. They concerned the full National Assembly election, giving it a real legislative powers, and also increasing the number of ministerial posts granted to Shiites. It was not specified, however, when and how these demands will be met. In subsequent months the opposition has suffered another one defeat. In connection with the resignation of deputies to the Council, the earlier by-election to the lower house of parliament were necessary. They were held in two rounds on 24th September and 1st October. Their result was negative for the Shiite groupings, especially that most important of them, Al-Wifak boycotted the elections. In such circumstances, the Sunnis won the most parliamentary seats. Currently in the lower house of parliament are seated only eight Shiite deputies. In this way, the composition of parliament is even less representative than it was before anti-government demonstrations.

The current internal situation in Bahrain seems to be stabilized. The family of Al-Khalifa has not only retained power, but also did not allowed to its limitations. Arab states of Gulf, particularly Saudi Arabia, showed that they will not support the far-



reaching political reforms in the kingdom, especially if their main beneficiaries would be Shiites. Shiite opposition, therefore, did not receive measurable benefits in connection with anti-government demonstrations. In many ways, social and political position of Shiites deteriorated. But there remains an open question how long this situation is likely to persist. In the course of recent events any key issues which have destabilized the political situation in the kingdom have been resolved. In the short term perspective, the power of Al-Khalifa lineage as well as the internal position of its most conservative members has been strengthened. This situation, as well as conservative position of Arab monarchies, announces the inability to carry out far-reaching social and political reforms. But in the longer term perspective it should be noted that in front of the political and social system of Bahrain continues to stay major challenges. Aspirations and political demands of opposition were not met. This means that in future further clashes inside the kingdom seem to be inevitable. Thus, although the "Arab Spring" was an important catalyst for these events, it constitutes only their context, and not principal efficient cause.







MULAJ IDRIS, MOROCCO, PHOTO BY EWA CYLWIK



AMMAN, JORDAN, PHOTO BY EWA CYLWIK





## THE SITUATION IN THE ARAB MONARCHIES

### MOROCCO

The internal situation in Morocco differs from the other Maghreb countries. The country is a hereditary constitutional monarchy, in which the political system was relatively liberal in comparison with the other Maghreb and the Arab Middle East countries. This country has the most extensive system of political competition, which provides free ability to create political parties. However, the prerogative of the king as head of state were and are extremely broad, and government's formation did not reflect result of elections to the parliament but was dependent on the royal nomination. Major political decisions lied in the hand of the ruler, the government was primarily an executive body for the royal decisions.

Political demonstrations in Morocco, mainly organized by the central trade unions, began in early February 2011 as an expression of solidarity with the changes in Tunisia and Egypt. The most serious antigovernment occurrence took place on 20th February in the capital Rabat. They gathered more than 30,000 of the participants. The demonstrators put forward a number of political demands which did not however contained demands for radical reconstruction of the political system, such as the elimination of the monarchy. Opposition groups taking part in demonstrations formed a temporary political alliance known as February 20th movement. It called for political reforms limiting the power of King Mohammed VI. After the initial ignoring the demands of demonstrators Moroccan authorities have adopted the tactics of conservative meeting demands of the opposition groups. King Mohammed VI on March 9th, delivered a message to the nation, in which he has announced a constitutional reforms focused on democratizing the political system of the state. The monarch promised among others creation of a special commission which will propose amendments to the existing constitution. They were to cover the real distribution of power between national authorities, the introduction of guarantees for the respect of civil rights and independence of the judicial system from the executive power<sup>311</sup>. Constitutional commission completed its work in June, giving the monarch scope of constitutional amendments<sup>312</sup>. On 1st July 2011 in Morocco took place national referendum to approve

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<sup>311</sup> J.D. Hirst, *Morocco -- An Arab Spring Success*, <http://www.cfr.org/morocco/morocco----arab-spring-success/p25373>.

<sup>312</sup> M. Ottaway, *The New Moroccan Constitution: Real Change or More of the Same?*, <http://carnegieendowment.org/2011/06/20/new-moroccan-constitution-real-change-or-more-of-same/51>.



amendments to the constitution of the kingdom<sup>313</sup>. The attendance was nearly 73 per cent, and in favor of constitutional amendments voted over 98 per cent of voters<sup>314</sup>. The voting took place under the supervision of the National Council for Human Rights, which found no irregularities in passing votes. Performing the referendum should be regarded as tactical move by the monarchy, which was a success. It allowed to increase the degree of political legitimacy, yet appeared to the society that the declarations of the king are not empty promises. Constitutional reforms introduce a substantive changes in the political system of the state, while not affecting the scope of the monarch's power. Number of articles in the new constitution has been increased from 108 to 180. It reconciles the divergent interests of different political forces. Morocco is described as the Muslim state, but there was also a declaration that the state guarantees freedom of religion. An important novelty in the constitution is the recognition of Berber language as a second official language in the country. The most important constitutional amendments include the necessity of entrusting office of Prime Minister to the representative of the largest parliamentary fraction. However, the powers of the ruler in the exercising of executive power still remain wide. The king will have the power to appoint top officials in the ministries, directors of public institutions, representatives of local administration. The monarch will retain at the same control over the military and police forces. The role and importance of the lower house of the Moroccan parliament is increased<sup>315</sup>.

The constitutional amendments approved in popular referendum do not introduce radical changes to the system of governance in Morocco. One cannot call them at the same ostentatious. Nevertheless, the royal court is still most respected center of power in the state. Worth emphasizing is the fact of high social acceptance for the proposed constitutional amendments. Most of the Moroccan society is ready to accept strong political position of the king. This demonstrates the broad popular support enjoyed by the institution of the monarchy in Morocco. The country managed to go through the crisis relatively quietly, owing it primarily to the ability to compromise, both by King Mohammed VI and the main opposition groups. However, it is assumed that a longer time perspective evolution of Morocco's political system will move toward further reducing powers of the monarch. It should only be hoped that, as in past crisis situations, such changes will have a peaceful character.

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<sup>313</sup> M. Fisher, *Will Morocco be the Arab Spring's Great Success – or Great Failure?*, <http://www.theatlantic.com/international/archive/2011/07/will-morocco-be-the-arab-springs-great-success-or-great-failure/241286/>.

<sup>314</sup> *Morocco Adopts New Constitution In Landslide Vote*, <http://www.npr.org/2011/07/01/137565293/morocco-adopt-new-constitution-in-landslide-vote>.

<sup>315</sup> *Ibidem*.



## JORDAN

The internal situation of the Hashemite Kingdom of Jordan has for years remained tense. The country, devoid of significant natural resources, is facing economic difficulties. In terms of internal structure it is not uniform. It is a conglomeration of Bedouin tribes, with the participation of a large percentage of the Palestinian population. In the history of the kingdom Palestinians were often towards center of resistance power and political actions of monarchs of the family of Hashimids. The Kingdom since 1999, is governed by Abdullah II, who took over the government in the country after the death of his father Hussein. The state is a constitutional monarchy with a functioning bicameral parliament, although only the lower chamber is selected by popular elections.

Political protests in Jordan began early in comparison with other Arab states. Already on January 14th it came to the first mass demonstrations in Amman, as well as in smaller urban centers. The protests were organized by trade unions and leftist groups. The demands raised during the demonstrations did not include demands related to the radical reconstruction of the country's political system<sup>316</sup>. First of all, the demonstrators demanded the resignation from the position of Prime Minister Samir al-Rifai Zayd. Recognizing that occurrences have mainly economic character, the government decided to reduce the taxes and a reduction in fuel prices. These actions have not been enough. In the last days of January, were intensified anti-government demonstrations. On February 1st, King Abdullah announced the resignation of Prime Minister Al-Rifai, and appointed a new chief of government. It was al-Bachit Maruf, former general, closely related to the royal palace. King Abdullah said that he entrusted him a mission to carry out economic reforms and political aimed to democratization of the system of state power. Change of the head of government, did not calm down the internal situation. Entrustment the mission of formation of new government to Bachit was a temporary action and could not be considered as a real response to the demands the opposition groups. In the middle of the past decade, Bachit held already office of prime minister and his government was responsible for introducing new regulations that restricted the freedom of press and expression. Severe protests and demonstrations lasted in the subsequent weeks. 24th March at the suburbs of Amman, was established tent city by the students. It had become the main centre of coordination of anti-government protests. A day later, it came to clashes between students and supporters of the government and monarchy. Skirmish between these two groups, as well as targeted police action towards demonstrators, etched into the political landscape of the subsequent months. Mass demonstrations began to fade in the summer. However, there

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<sup>316</sup> *The Kingdom of Jordan and the Arab Spring*, „Daily Kos”, <http://www.dailykos.com/story/2011/03/29/944492/-Adalah:-The-Kingdom-of-Jordan-and-the-Arab-Spring>.



are still manifestations, at least one of the biggest took place on 2nd July. About two of thousands of demonstrators, mostly students and members of the fundamentalist Muslim groupings demanded the introduction of real political reform, especially the possibility of creating a government based on parliamentary elections. Like other such demonstrations, also this one was dispersed by police forces<sup>317</sup>. In October there was a change again in the post of head of the government. The new Prime Minister has been appointed Aun al-Chasauna.

Since the beginning of the year in Jordan took place more than two thousands of political demonstrations. With such a high intensity they however did not exceed the threshold of forceful attempts to change the political regime. Despite the high activity of opposition groups, political system, and above all the authority of King Abdullah, has not been seriously threatened. Lack of effectiveness of the opposition groups and the same the political regime's ability to survive, is the result of specific socio-political situation in which is Jordan. The monarchy remains an important guarantor of internal unity, particularly in the context of the shaky relationship between the Palestinians and Jordanians.

#### **MONARCHIES OF THE PERSIAN GULF**

Persian Gulf sub-region is one of the major sub-regions of the Middle East. An important feature of this area is a gathering of conservative Arab monarchies where the authority is belonging to the ruling family. The factor distinguishing these states from other Arab political organisms is a high level of national income and income per capita, which are obtained from sales of crude oil. In such circumstances, the economic factor is not a significant determinant of dissatisfaction with government policy. It should be noted that in order to maintain internal order and to ensure the families the ruling power of, the Gulf monarchies have decided to a large extent of the redistribution of incomes from crude oil not limiting them only to the ruling family, or a narrow group of beneficiaries. This does not mean that the discussed countries are not exposed to social tensions determined by economic factors. The latter, however, if present are of lesser intensity than it is the case with Mashriq or North Africa countries.

Most of the Gulf monarchies, to a lesser or greater extent, have experienced social unrest over 2011. Only in Bahrain, the situation has reached the level of a serious political crisis. Civil unrest began in the kingdom of Saudi Arabia. To a large extent they were caused by events in Tunisia and Egypt. But the immediate cause of the first protests was a discontent of the population from Jeddah of actions of local authorities in connection with the floods, which killed a dozen people. The first demonstration took

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<sup>317</sup> S. Helfont, T. Helfont, *Jordan's Protests: Aarab Spring Lite?*, [http://www.fpri.org/enotes/2011/201107.helfont\\_helfont.jordan.html](http://www.fpri.org/enotes/2011/201107.helfont_helfont.jordan.html).



place on 29th January, but was quickly dispersed by police forces, and dozens of its members were arrested. In subsequent weeks, the state of tension in the country grew. In February, a dozen human rights defenders, lawyers and intellectuals tried to create a political party under the name of the Muslim Party Umma (Community). The authorities refused to register it and arrested also those who tried to bring the party to life<sup>318</sup>. The culmination of anti-government protests took place in March. The main area of occurrence was the Eastern Province and the city of Katif. This created a potentially dangerous situation from the standpoint of the monarchy. Occurrences were held in the strategically important area, which is one of the centers of oil production in Saudi Arabia. Additionally, this is an area inhabited by Shiite population, which raises concerns about Iran's inspired riots. Demonstrations also took place in Riyadh. March 11th political activists have announced "Day of Wrath", which was to be an expression of solidarity with the people of Libya and neighboring Bahrain. Planned for this day demonstrations have not reached the planned level. Massive presence of the Saudi security forces and the authorities earlier warning for participation in the demonstrations resulted in the limited range of anti-government occurrences<sup>319</sup>. In subsequent weeks, the demonstrations took place primarily in the Katif and other cities in the Eastern Province. They accounted for primarily response for sending Saudi soldiers to Bahrain, which allowed the violation in that state anti-government occurrences. The main demand of the demonstrators was an immediate withdrawal of Saudi forces from territory of a neighboring state. In subsequent weeks, the demonstrations began to fade and actually were confined to the area of Eastern Province. An important factor that contributed to the weakening of the political protests was the announcement of the authorities decision to set aside additional tens of thousands jobs in the government sector, raising the level of salaries and increasing social expenditures<sup>320</sup>. Fundamentals of power of Saud family and construction of the country's political system has not been violated. The only concession to the demands of more democratic system of government in the kingdom, was King Abdullah's agreement on the participation of women in elections to municipal councils in 2015 and their appointment to the Consultative Council which is the substitute for parliament<sup>321</sup>.

Political boiling also did not missed a neighboring Kuwait. In early January, Emir Sabah al-Jabar tried to prevent social unrest. Officially, from occasion of the liberation of Kuwait from Iraqi occupation and the fiftieth anniversary of independence, he ordered the transfer of subsidy to every citizen in the height of four thousand dollars. With this

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<sup>318</sup> *Saudi Detainees Refuse to Sign Pledge*, „Arabia Today”, <http://arabia2day.com/tag/umma-islamic-party>.

<sup>319</sup> I. Black, *Saudi Arabian Security for ces quell 'day of rage*, „The Guardian”, <http://www.guardian.co.uk/world/2011/mar/11/saudi-arabia-police-quell-protest>.

<sup>320</sup> M.S. Khan, S. Milbert, *Middle East Protest: Can Money Buy Peace?*, <http://www.piie.com/blogs/?p=2068>.

<sup>321</sup> *Middle East Monitor, September 2011*, <http://www.wikistrat.com/middle-east-monitor-september-2011>.





move the state managed to avoid the anti-government demonstrations in the hottest period of the revolutionary occurrences in other Arab countries. February 19th took place the first political demonstrations organized by the stateless residents of Kuwait so called bidun. They demanded to grant them Kuwait citizenship. Their occurrences, however, are not directly related to the "Arab spring". They are of the cyclical nature independent of the current political situation of the state. However at the end of February and March activists called on the Kuwaiti community on online forums to organize anti-government demonstration on 8th March. At the same time there were demands for resignation of the head of government, fight against corruption and freedom of expression in the Kuwaiti press. Political demands coincided with the opening session of the Kuwaiti National Assembly. In subsequent months, Kuwaiti authorities tried to re-apply economic measures to help prevent social occurrences, which was the more necessary that in June there were several anti-government demonstrations. On July 1st the National Assembly adopted the budget for 2012, which assumes government expenditures of 70 billion dollars, of which nearly 90 per cent will be used to increase salaries in the public sector <sup>322</sup>. This action did not calm down the situation. In October, several demonstrations took place in Al-Kuwait.

Currently the situation is exacerbated by corruption scandal in the National Assembly. One of the Kuwaiti newspaper announced that in the accounts of deputies linked with the ruling family there were subsidies of unknown origin. The parliamentary representative were to gather in secret accounts nearly 350 million dollars<sup>323</sup>. This information increased the general aversion to the head of government. While the events described have taken place in the context of the "Arab Spring", we must remember that they are a permanent feature of political competition in the country of Kuwait.

Another area of occurrence of anti-government mass demonstrations was the sultanate of Oman. The protests in this country began in mid-January 2011. The protesters, like in other countries, called for political reforms, however, demands an important element was the introduction of measures aimed at improving living conditions and employment. It was primarily protested against corruption, high cost of living. The demonstrations lasted over four months. Their greatest intensity occurred at the end of February and early March, when several thousand protesting people among others blocked for a short time oil terminal in the port of Sohar (Suhar). In the following days, police tried to use force to suppress demonstrations. This measure proved to be ineffective. In the period of greatest tension Sultan Said ibn Kabus as-Said decided to meet the demands of protesters. The ruler dismissed thirteen ministers and agreed to grant greater legislative powers to parliament (Majlis ash-Shura – Consultative

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<sup>322</sup> *Seeking to Avoid Uprising*, Kuwait Escalates Budget, <http://ourbusinessnews.com/seeking-to-avoid-uprising-kuwait-escalates-budget>.

<sup>323</sup> *Kuwait is rally to demand action on graft scandal*, [http://www.google.com/hostednews/afp/article/ALeqM5jaaW\\_8A3F4jjDWiMrM55DK5udrHA?docId=CNG.62960d81c9574355889ec2e3eeb14bb3.8e1](http://www.google.com/hostednews/afp/article/ALeqM5jaaW_8A3F4jjDWiMrM55DK5udrHA?docId=CNG.62960d81c9574355889ec2e3eeb14bb3.8e1).



Council)<sup>324</sup>. It turned out unavoidable to make concessions of the economic and social nature. The ruler of Oman pledged to increase government expenditures by 2.6 billion dollars, increasing the salaries of employees of the government sector and the creation of fifty thousand new jobs in the public sector. These decisions meet the demands of protesting people and in subsequent weeks, the mass protests have ended<sup>325</sup>. Currently, the political situation in the Sultanate is stable. In mid-October were held new elections for the Shura Council. For election stood more than 1,300 candidates. It can be expected that the new parliament will inspire further reforms in the kingdom<sup>326</sup>. However, social expectations rather follow in the direction of maintaining social gains than the real limitations of power of sultan and his family<sup>327</sup>.

The overall conclusion is that the Arab monarchies have managed to control the social protests. They have done so through a skillful combination of concessions and use of financial resources that are at their disposal. The latter element was a significant factor in silencing social unrest primarily in the oil-rich Gulf monarchies. But even those countries which do not have such a rich source of energy (Morocco, Jordan) relatively quickly conquered the internal situation. Certainly not all the internal problems bothering this group of countries have been resolved. Nevertheless, the Arab monarchies have shown that they enjoy a high level of acceptance, which contributes to resolve social tensions. However, in longer time perspective they will have to develop a new model of internal relations, if they want to avoid similar challenges in the future, which means among others the necessity to make the parliamentary assemblies bodies realistically representative.



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<sup>324</sup> *Arab Spring Protests Spurs Rise in Voters in Oman*, „Arabian Business.com”, <http://www.arabianbusiness.com/arab-spring-protests-spurs-rise-in-voters-in-oman-422501.html?tab=Videos>.

<sup>325</sup> S. Aldossary, *How did the Sultanate Escape the "Arab Spring"?*, „Asharq Alawsat”, <http://asharq-e.com/news.asp?section=2&id=25849>.

<sup>326</sup> F. Al-Hasmi, *Oman's Elections Bring Hopes, Doubts of Institutional Change*, „The Christian Science Monitor”, <http://www.csmonitor.com/World/Middle-East/2011/1014/Oman-s-elections-bring-hopes-doubts-of-institutional-change>.

<sup>327</sup> *Ibidem*.



## SUMMARY

Social unrest, which over the current year we observe in the Arab countries are events without precedent in the history of the region. Yet never before, this area did not experience such rapid and dynamic changes that have affected actually all of its states. The wave of unrest that hit the Arab world, has its own conditions, which relate to the whole region. However, it should be noted that the events in concrete countries, although interrelated and mutually influencing each other, have their specific character. Although they share idealistic concept of Arabic character, local experience, however historical development, social conditions, and ultimately shape the political system, are factors which determine to the greatest extent that each of the anti-government occurrences took a different course and yielded different results. So far only in three cases, one can speak of the rejection of the old political system and the resignation or removal of the current leader. This situation applies to Egypt, Tunisia and Libya. Syria remained unresolved issue, although there are many indications that the regime of President Assad will be able to survive the anti-government revolt. This is mainly due to the lack of opportunities for external support for the rebels. Factor of international assistance should be regarded as decisive in the case of Libya. UN Security Council resolutions, especially the involvement of NATO and Qatar, have allowed the insurgents to survive the critical first moment of the offensive by government forces, and later to prepare for operations against the forces of regime that led to their defeat and death of Muammar al-Gaddafi. Another country where there are ongoing fighting both internal occurrences and anti-government, is Yemen. In this case, it seems almost certain that this situation will continue at least until the next year announced for resignation of President Salih. Currently, neither anti-government forces nor the government are not able to gain an advantage that ensures victory.

In other Arab countries the situation is slowly stabilizing, although sometimes occurrences the anti-government are yet to appear. Political systems of these countries, however, managed to survive by making some reforms, largely of a ostentatious character. At the same characteristic phenomenon is that the Arab monarchies of a much greater extent have been able to survive the wave of social unrest than the states of the republican system of government. Most Moroccan political system modified was, but in the other Arab monarchies, the scope of the changes was minimal, if noticeable at all.

In such circumstances, it appears advisable to place the question of transformation that are the result of current social problems, and to try to forecast the possible scenarios of further political developments. This task can be undertaken at least on three levels – local, regional and wider international level. It should be remembered



that the changes experienced by the Arab world will also affect its position in the system of international relations, and later also relations with countries and groups of countries vitally interested in the situation in the Middle East. The contemporary world powers are in fact many political interests, strategic and economic located in this part of the world.

Attempt to evaluate past events is a rather difficult task. This is mainly due to two circumstances. First, the situation is still dynamic, and the process of political transformation in countries that got rid of the current political leaders, barely begun. So far, only in Tunisia were parliamentary elections, which had the character of free competition of political forces. In Egypt, the deadline for elections is still moved away, and in Libya they will just have taken place. Secondly, with the dynamics of the political situation is associated low transparency of real changes, which causes difficulty in capturing their true direction. Nevertheless, it is time to reassemble the occurred events and take reflection on the future of the region.

The first issue that arises in this context is the question about the benefits that have had the Arab communities in connection with the demonstrations against the present political order. In this regard, the balance of current events is not clear. Taking into account the prospect of short-term political disturbances caused serious social costs. It is estimated that the economies of Arab countries suffered losses amounting to 50 million dollars<sup>328</sup>. The most affected were those in which the income from tourism accounted for a significant part of GDP. Over 2011 in these countries unemployment has risen, for example, if in Tunisia in late 2010 500,000 people remained unemployed, in the second half of 2011 the number of unemployed was already 700,00<sup>329</sup>. Thus, in the short term perspective, there has been a significant deterioration in life situation of the masses.

Another issue is the humanitarian crisis. The main reason for it should be considered reaction of political regimes against which political occurrences began to appear. The vast majority of them adopted first strategy of endurance. The use of security forces and the army gave hope for a quick pacification of manifestation. In this case, one can speak about typical reaction of non-democratic systems on expression of social discontent. Most tragic aspect of the use of force are casualties on the side of the demonstrators. The number of victims is difficult to estimate, unambiguously, however, it is assumed that during the civil war in Libya could be killed up to 30,000 of civilians who were not militant party. In the case of Egypt, during the demonstrations and riots throughout the country could have been killed nearly a thousand of people. Still ongoing

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<sup>328</sup> *The Arab Spring Economic Report*, „Albawaba”, <http://www.albawaba.com/the-arab-spring-report-398218>.

<sup>329</sup> Z. Mhirsi, *Unemployment Expected to Rise in 2011*, <http://www.tunisia-live.net/2011/04/17/unemployment-expected-to-rise-in-2011>.



are the anti-government fightings in Syria, so it is difficult to assess the scale of fatalities. However, international estimates suggest that in the course of actions the government forces were killed more than 3,000 of people<sup>330</sup>.

It should be also emphasized that political disturbances in the Arab countries did not produce the appearance of a massive refugee problem. This resulted from the fact that the political tensions, although characterized by a high intensity, had a short-term crisis nature. Only in the case of Libya situation was different. This resulted from the transformation of anti-government occurrences in a regular civil war. This resulted in the escape of civilians from combat zones. At the same part of the Libyans fled to the border zone in neighbouring Arab states. With the end of military actions, as a result of defeat of forces of the regime, these people will return to their places of residence. Therefore fears to flood Europe by wave refugees from Arab countries did not come true. State infrastructure was destroyed to the greatest extent in Libya. However, this will be possible to quick restoring thanks to revenue, which gives the Libyan state the oil production. Appropriate use of these measures can ease the transition for a period of systemic transition.

Only in three cases it came to change the existing system of government, namely in Tunisia, Egypt and Libya. Despite the ongoing tensions the most evident transformation is in Tunisia. Victory in parliamentary elections of the party An-Nahda (Rebirth) caused short-term riots by supporters of groupings which have not reached such a good result. A much more complicated situation takes place in Egypt. Elections to the Parliamentary Assembly are constantly postponed. Although President Mubarak was ousted from power, and there is now under a criminal trial against him, however the old system of power structures and political order still works. Power in the country exercises army, and the head of the Supreme Council of the Armed Forces Marshal Muhammad Hussein Tantawi will seek most likely to obtain the position of president of the state, which continues to ensure the army a strong political position in the country.

In many studies there is a tendency to see in the "Arab Spring" the next phase of the spread of democracy in the world, according to Huntington's theory of waves of development of democratic systems<sup>331</sup>.

Such an impression is superficial. Although the demonstrators raised their slogans of democratization of the political system, increasing its representativeness, there is a basic question concerning the introduction of a democratic system in the Western sense of this term. The formation of democratic system of government in

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<sup>330</sup> A. Flamand, *Syria: Counting the Death*, <http://www.globalpost.com/dispatches/globalpost-blogs/the-casbah/syria-counting-the-dead>.

<sup>331</sup> R. Tham, *Premature Speculation: The Arab Spring Cannot Be Considered as Democracy's Fourth Wave. Yet, „Economy Watch“*, <http://www.economywatch.com/economy-business-and-finance-news/premature-speculation-the-arab-spring-cannot-be-considered-as-democracy-fourth-wave.24-08.html>.





Western countries have long-lasting character, while were accompanied by both internal and interstate conflicts. Thus it is difficult to expect that in the Middle East succeeded in introducing a democratic system of government in a relatively short period of time. It should be remembered that this does not mean that the Arab states are resistant to democracy, and Islam is the religion of it opposite. In Islam, are contained the elements that have democratic character, like the principle of Shura, which assumes the obligation to consult the ruling with the ruled. Another thing is, that in the communities of increasing levels of education and access to information, there is a constant tendency to participate in political activity. It is difficult to indicate what system of government would be most appropriate for the societies of the Arab states. It should be emphasized, however, one issue – communities of countries of the region must be able to fully self-creation of their own political space. Only in such circumstances, the new political systems can achieve the required degree of legitimacy, which is essential for real political stability of each state.

However, there is significant uncertainty in the possibility of achieving political stability of the countries that experienced a revolutionary change of system. Many concerns are raising primarily the question of exercising power by fundamentalist groupings. It should be noted that the actions against organizations of a fundamentalist character were one of the reasons why Western democracies were able to accept cooperation with undemocratic repressive regimes<sup>332</sup>. Many observers both in the Western world, as well as Arabic, emphasizes the fact that the elimination of secular dictatorships gave way to gain real political influence by fundamentalist groupings. It is believed to be the primary threat to the same future political system of democracy in the Maghreb countries and Egypt. In the just completed parliamentary elections in Tunisian An-Nahda party gained 90 seats in the 217-persons parliament, thus becoming the largest political force, although it will not be able to form government itself<sup>333</sup>.

This shows that the fundamentalists in the countries of North Africa are gaining increasingly social support. This is due to alignment of the two circumstances. First, these groupings build their strong position on a permanent opposition to the existing political order. They managed to gain a particular authority, as the only real opposition, not implicated in any way in the functioning of the system of power of state. Secondly, it should be noted that their social activities on the basis of education, health, social welfare, was much more effective than the existing state structures. It should be borne in mind that these groupings, in spite of repression used against them, permanently etched

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<sup>332</sup> M. Dziekan, *Najbardziej pewny czynnik sytuacji politycznej na Bliskim Wschodzie to nieprzewidywalność*, (The most reliable factor in the political situation in the Middle East is the unpredictability) <http://blogi.newsweek.pl/Tekst/swiat/555289,najbardziej-pewny-czynnik-sytuacji-politycznej-na-bliskim-wschodzie-to-nieprzewidywalnosc-2.html>.

<sup>333</sup> J. Shoen, *Final poll results confirm Ennahda victory*, „The Majalla”, <http://www.majalla.com/eng/2011/10/article55227209>.



into the political landscape of the region. At least some of the organizations seem to be able to operate within the political system, especially that new regulations may limit their political past exclusion. In this regard, the most interesting is the case of Tunisia and Egypt. Recent studies of Egyptian public opinion show on strong potential for real public support of religious political parties. It is difficult at this time to clearly define the role that fundamentalist groupings can play in the new political systems, and whether it will be of constructive nature. Promoting the principles of Islam in social and political life does not necessarily mean a move towards a theocratic state, about which many fundamentalists were accused. We should remember that in this case we are dealing with the phenomenon of heterogeneous and subjected to constant evolution. Even the Egyptian Muslim Brotherhood example shows that it is possible to shift from radicalism associated with political violence to actively participating in the functioning of the political system states.

In the case of such event, which is the wave of revolution in the Arab world, it is impossible to avoid the consequences of changes in the international balance of power in the Middle East region and relations with superpowers. At greatest extent events have affected the United States, having many interests in the region, economic, strategic and military. The standpoint of the United States to the events was characterized by a distinct ambivalence, which in a few moments paralyzed actions of Washington. During the occurrences against Mubarak administration of Barack Obama initially gave verbal support to Egyptian president as its ally in the region, while significantly encouraging to introduce political reforms. The message of Washington was not consistent, especially that yet on beginning of February, the Americans have suggested that keeping Mubarak in power is the only guarantee to prevent the internal chaos in Egypt. But in the longer term perspective Washington expressed limited support for the revolutionary movement. In subsequent weeks, the Americans urged its Arab allies in the Persian Gulf to introduce political reforms, but the states of Gulf, particularly Saudi Arabia, rejected these suggestions. The Saudi monarchy has shown substantial degree of independence of political action, apparently acting contrary to U.S. expectations. The revolutions in Arab countries have weakened Washington's regional position, raising doubts, especially on the Saudi side that the U.S. cannot control events, or provide absolute support of his allies. But we should not assume that there has been a permanent weakening of the strategic cooperation between Washington and Riyadh. At the final analysis, the convergence of interests between them, even in relation to the issue of Iran's nuclear program, points to the need to maintain a strategic partnership. Nevertheless, the U.S. will have to face re-evaluation of its regional policy in order to adapt to changes in the political situation. Already seen that the fall of the Mubarak government further weakened the position of U.S. allies which is Israel. An important aspect of past events is to increase the role and importance of both European countries and the EU itself. For events taking place in North Africa France indicated its determination to play a role as a major political player. Support that the European Union



gave the revolutionary movements gives hope for a revival of real interregional cooperation. Union for the Mediterranean is the institution which action should be given a new impetus and new content. Particularly Arab countries of North Africa cannot be left to themselves. Union if it wants to play a significant role in of the regional player and to shape its identity internationally, must actively participate in stabilizing the region. This is not an easy task, at least for two reasons. First, the Union member states are struggling with the economic and currency crisis, which can slow down and limit any political and economic initiatives. Secondly, the Union must find a model of action that would be acceptable to the Arab states, without creating suspicion of wanting their economic domination by the stronger neighbor.

In conclusion, it should be noted that the assessment of events that took place in the Arab world, cannot be unequivocal. This is mainly due to of lack of proper time perspective. Transformations that various Arab states were subjected to, has not yet been completed. Maghreb and Mashriq countries are just facing the need to create a new political system. In the communities of the Arab states were aroused great hopes, related not only to create a more equitable system of government, but primarily with ensuring a fair standard of living. Despite widespread of attention to the objection towards oppressive system of governance, in many cases an important role played economic motivation<sup>334</sup>. New governments in countries such as Egypt, Tunisia, and Libya, will have to deal with economic problems that have largely been deepened by the recent events. There is need for the large patience, because to achieve the growth level of wealth of individual societies will not be possible in the short term perspective. Moreover, estimates of the Economics Intelligence Unit forecast declining in state income and slowing down economic growth. In the case of Egypt's GDP growth in 2011 may reach 3.5 per cent compared to 5.1 per cent in 2010. But in Tunisia, it will be 0.8 percent in 2011 compared to 3 per cent in 2010<sup>335</sup>. In such a situation social frustration can increase and for the countries of the region can wait for another wave of shocks. It is essential that the international community has supported transformations in the Arab world not only politically but also economically. Such measures are already taken. The World Bank has promised to provide Egypt with financial assistance amounting to 2 billion dollars over two years, and then grant a loan of 2.5 billion dollars<sup>336</sup>. G8 countries also pledged to contribute to Egypt and Tunisia financial assistance amounting

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<sup>334</sup> R.J. Heydarian, *The Economics of the Arab Spring*, [http://www.fpif.org/articles/the\\_economics\\_of\\_the\\_arab\\_spring](http://www.fpif.org/articles/the_economics_of_the_arab_spring).

<sup>335</sup> *The Economics of the Arab Spring in the Era of Hope: Cases of Egypt and Tunisia*, <http://www.femise.org/en/2011/05/a-ne-pas-rater/leconomie-du-printemps-arabe-egypte-tunisie>.

<sup>336</sup> S. Kelly, *The Economic Impact of the Arab Spring on the Region*, „The Palestine Thelegraph”, <http://www.paltelegraph.com/economics/world-economics/9410-the-economic-impact-of-the-arab-spring-on-the-region.html>.



to 20 billion dollars<sup>337</sup>. It remains an open question, to what extent the Arab states will be able to utilize this support and if thanks to it they will manage to control or limit another possible wave of social unrest. Current economic problems will not be reduced because only by increasing the flow of financial resources, but need the real structural reforms that are necessary to integrate the region into the global economy. At the same it is worth noting that in other Arab countries that have managed to control or limit the current social unrest, the root causes of social discontent were not liquidated. In conclusion it should be noted that the "Arab Spring" break the stereotype of the Arab world, who is sentenced to a despotic form of government.

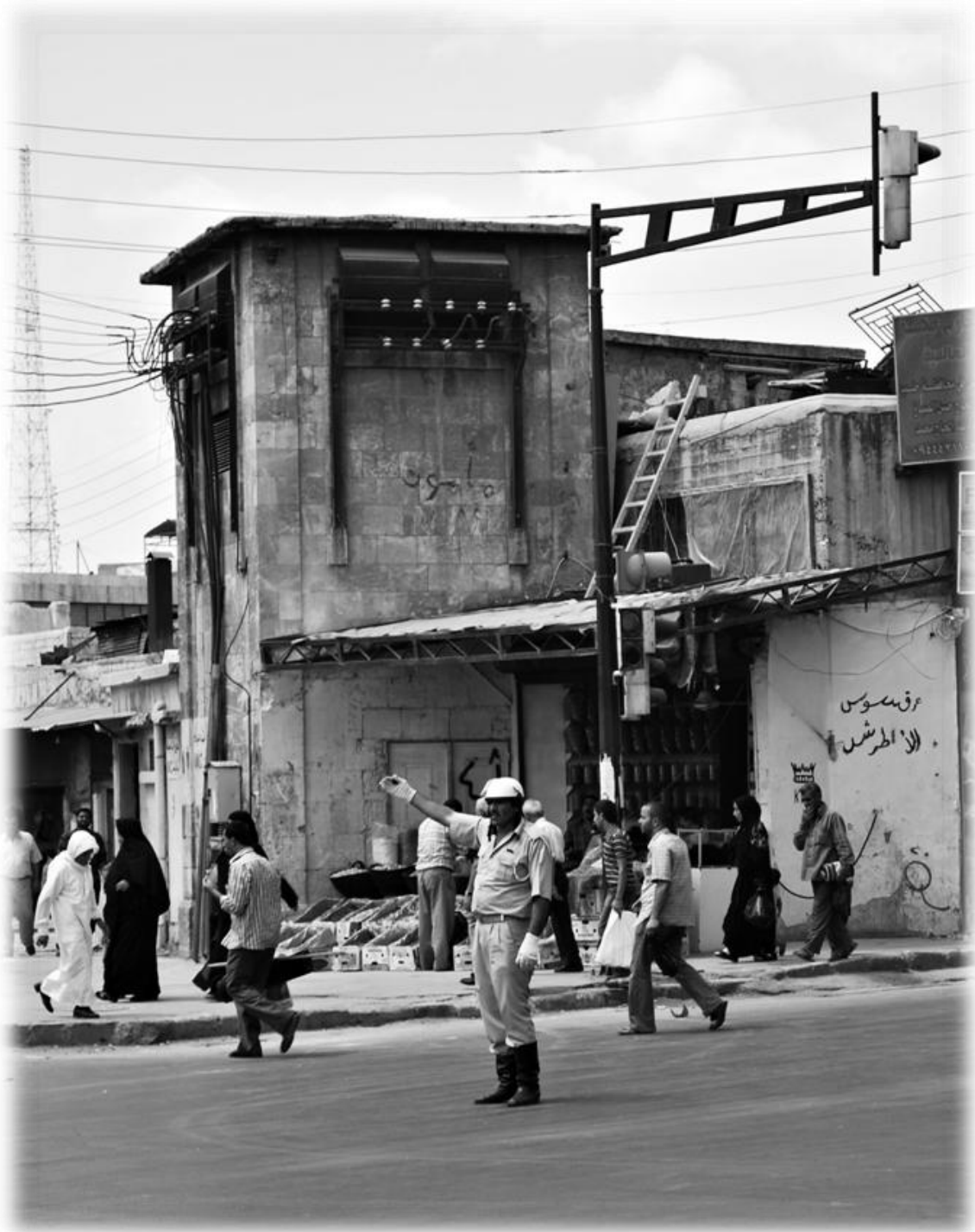


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<sup>337</sup> *G8 pledges \$20bn to foster Arab Spring*, „The Independent”, <http://www.independent.co.uk/news/world/politics/g8-pledges-20bn-to-foster-arab-spring-2289912.html>.



## PHOTOGRAPHS



ALEPPO, SYRIA, PHOTO BY GRZEGORZ SZYMANIK





AQUABA AT THE BLACK SEE, JORDAN, PHOTO BY GRZEGORZ SZYMANIK



TUNIS, TUNISIA, PHOTO BY JUSTYNA JAKUBASZEK



FUNERAL AFTER COPTS' MASSACRE IN OCTOBER 2011, CAIRO, PHOTO BY AGATA GRZYBOWSKA



FUNERAL AFTER COPTS' MASSACRE IN OCTOBER 2011, CAIRO, PHOTO BY AGATA GRZYBOWSKA





PROTEST IN CAIRO, EGYPT, PHOTO BY AGATA GRZYBOWSKA



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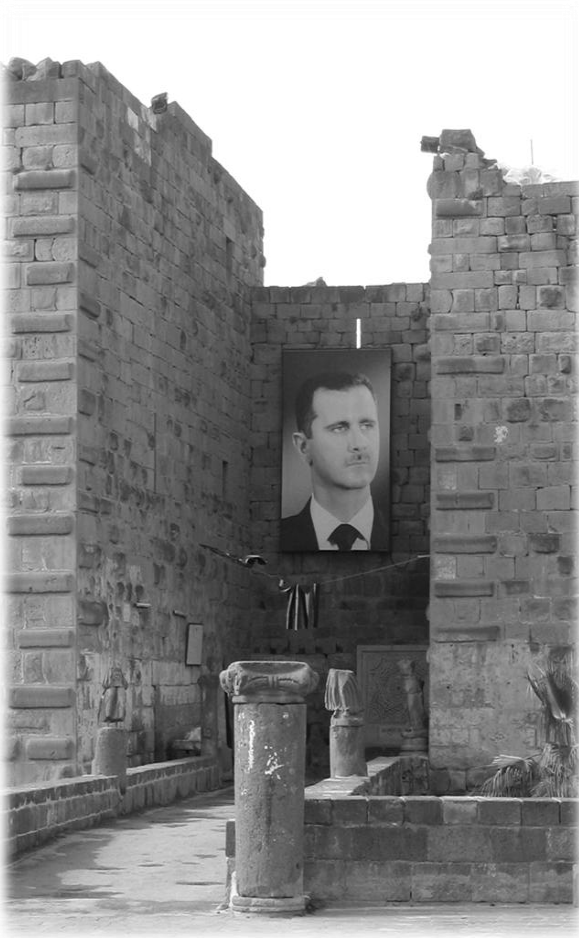


SEIF PALACE – SEAT OF EMIR'S OFFICE, KUWAIT, PHOTO BY RADOSŁAW BANIA



DAMASK, SYRIA, PHOTO BY GRZEGORZ SZYMANIK





PORTRAIT OF BASZAR AL-ASAD IN BOSR  
AND HAFIZ AL-ASAD IN DAJR AZ-ZAUR, SYRIA,  
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SIWA OASIS, EGYPT 2005, PHOTO BY EWA CYLWIK



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