



UCBMUN XXI



The Egyptian Revolution: Rebels

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Letter from the Chair

Dear Delegates,

It is with great excitement that I welcome you to UCBMUN XXI! My Name is Shakeer Ahmad, and I shall serve as your Chair for the Egyptian Revolution 2011 – Rebels Join Crisis Committee. Your committee this conference promises to be one full of political intrigue, decisive action and most importantly, the struggle between the systems of old money and power and the desire for a society to choose its own destiny. Come along with us on a journey to one of the most important events in the 21st century Arab history thus far. At the heart of this committee lies, beyond the ambitions and responsibilities of your individual characters, the competing interests of various political groups and movements. As you start this committee in early 2011, the possibilities are endless. Will the revolution succeed? Who will come to power and will true democracy grace the Egyptian nations? And what of opposing committee – how will Hosni Mubarak's government act? These are all questions that I hope you as delegates strive to answer during the conference as you have the ability to change Egyptian history forever thrust upon you. As a committee made up of individuals from all the across the social and political spectrum, from opposition politicians to youth leaders, the responsibility on bringing revolution to Egypt is placed in your hands and I can only hope that you work together to ensure that decisive action is taken to shape its future.

Now, a little bit about myself. I'm currently a junior at UC Berkeley pursuing a degree in Economics. I was born in Bangladesh, but prior to attending university in the US, I lived in Japan, Ukraine, Turkey, the UAE, and Qatar where I attended senior school. My interests include stock trading, debating, filmmaking, poker, and playing soccer and basketball.. Beyond that I love meeting new–feel free to chat with me outside of committee whenever you want to, and of course at UCBMUN's famed socials. I am very passionate about Middle Eastern history and hope that this topic gives you a unique Model UN experience as rebels and revolutionaries! Although this is only my second year in UCBMUN as I joined in my sophomore year, this will be my eighth year in Model UN. Starting in middle school in the THIMUN Model UN style in the Middle East, Model UN has come to be one of my life's great passions. I served as Vice Chair of last year's 1947 UN Security Council, and like last year's conference, I am looking forward to an intense and fun conference this year. If you have any questions, please feel free to email me at shakeer@berkeley.edu. Excited to meet you this March.

Warm Regards,

Shakeer Ahmad

Letter from the Crisis Director,

Dear Delegates,

Welcome to the revolutionary committee of this year's JCC: The Egyptian Revolution- Rebels! My name is Shasun Sultur and I will be your Crisis Director for UCBMUN XXI. A little bit about myself: I was born in a suburb of Los Angeles known as "the valley." I am a second year; political economy major here at UC Berkeley and this is my second year on Cal's Model UN team. Last year, I was an assistant crisis director in a crisis committee.

Academically, my interests include income inequality, Middle-Eastern politics, and economics. Outside of that, my interests include playing golf, listening to and discussing rap music and the industry, keeping up with current events (why Kendall Jenner did not deserve to be on the cover of September Vogue), watching all the shows on Netflix (I mean all!), and eating ice cream!

Modern Egyptian history has been a tumultuous and slow progression from a sultanate, to a kingdom, to a republic, all culminating in 2011 in an event known as the Egyptian revolution. This committee will not only address the issues and the actions the rebel factions during the revolution faced, but you as delegates will also have to interact and respond with the opposing Government Committee throughout the conference. As to be expected at UCBMUN and especially a JCC, delegates should be prepared for high levels of debate and a fast-paced committee. You will be judged on your knowledge of the topics, ability to react to crisis situations, quality of debate and public speaking, and creativity throughout the weekend. If you have any questions, please feel free to contact me with any questions, comments or concerns about the committee at shasunsultur@berkeley.edu. I look forward to seeing you in March for some exciting and interesting crises!

Best,

Shasun Sultur

History of Modern Egypt

a. The formation of modern Egypt and Nasser

An Ottoman pasha of Albanian origin, Mohammad Ali was appointed as the governor to Egypt by the Ottoman Sultan in 1805. Ruling until 1848, Ali worked tirelessly to make Egypt its own independent state, but never succeeded. In 1922, when Egypt became a constitutional monarchy, the British still had control over the Egyptian army, the Suez Canal, the Sudan, and foreign investment. Egyptian nationalists attacked the British and the British retaliated by killing over 40 policemen and wounding many more. This led to chaos and mob violence against British stores and businesses. It wasn't until July 23, 1952 that the Free Officers Movement, a group of young army officers, organized a coup d'état and took over modern Egypt, sending the king into exile. The revolution meant the end of British rule in Egypt. All political parties were banned, while Mohammad Naguib and Nasser became the President and Prime Minister respectively. Despite attacks from the Muslim Brotherhood who felt slighted for not having any political influence, Nasser soon became President and nationalized the Suez Canal to receive funds to develop the Egyptian army. Enraged, Britain, France, and Israel attacked Egypt in October of 1956. Initially,

Nasser attempted to implement many progressive projects but due to corruption and mismanagement, most of these fell through. The government appropriated foreign companies and adopted a socialist economic stance. The economic system became mixed and the government imposed its control on industry. Politically, the government began to adopt a one-party system, expelling all old members. Nasser began to view the military as a potential threat to his power and created the Mukhabarat – an intelligence service to counter the military. The Mukhabarat tortured and arrested communists and the members of the Muslim brotherhood, fragmenting the country through scare tactics. Nasser was baited through a false Russian intelligence report to mobilize troops against Israel who then responded with a preemptive military attack on June 5, 1967. Egypt was quickly defeated and tensions began to fester between the Muslim and Christian Egyptians. Nasser passed away in 1970, leaving behind a regime that had made some structural and economic progress, but was also oppressive. His rule inspired other middle class citizens to follow in Nasser's footsteps and join the army in the hopes of making a name for themselves.

to his assassination in 1981, bringing an end to his autocratic and repressive regime.

b. The Sadat Years

Anwar el Sadat succeeded Nasser as the third president of Egypt. Sadat amended the constitution, giving him far more presidential power. He wanted to eliminate Nasserist ideologies and joined forces with Syria to attack Israel. Though the Israelis were caught by surprise, the US sent Israel an airlift of supplies and tanks – ending the war at a stalemate. Sadat transformed the economy during his rule, shifting to an open door economic policy allowing for domestic and foreign direct investment. This created problems of inflation and widened the class gap in Egypt. Food subsidies were cut by the government in order to repay loans to the International Monetary Fund, resulting in riots throughout the country. Political parties began to form but were soon curtailed, as Sadat did not want to risk the growth of opposition to his regime. Sadat, surprisingly, travelled to Israel and sought peace, signing the Egyptian Israeli Peace Treaty of 1977. Opposition against Sadat grew and he became more detached from his people. Egyptian Muslims began revert to more traditional ways of dressing and behaving, and the formation of extremist groups spurred. The proliferation of political and economic instability in Egypt eventually led

The Mubarak Era

a. The Mubarak Government & its branches

Hosni Mubarak, who was Vice President of Egypt at the time of Sadat's assassination, succeeded him as president. Having served in the military and air force for years, Mubarak won a large portion of the vote. Mubarak allowed various political organizations to exist, with the exception of Islamic extremists, granted that they had exhibited violence at the time of Sadat's assassination. Under the constitution, the President had full control over the armed forces, supreme court, and police system. He also had veto power over the National Assembly and had control over many other areas as well. Because the President was head of the executive branch and had control over the judicial and legislative branches, the system of checks and balances was eliminated and the president often used his powers to gain support for his political party, the NDP. Many times, the legislative branch was abused so that the president could carry forth unconstitutional actions and policies. People were often tried unfairly, if they were lucky enough to get a trial at all. Eventually, the judicial system

began to crack down on political opponents and checks and balances were implemented to the extent where it was legally possible. It was soon concluded that the Mubarak regime was neither a democracy nor an oligarchy, but rather it was simply the definition of authoritarianism.

b. The Emergency State & security apparatus

One fact that justifies the view of Mubarak's government as authoritarian is the experiences that people had with the police, as citizens of Egypt were generally tortured, beaten, and humiliated for information – degrading the very nature of their existences. Many international organizations documented the violent treatment of people by the Central Security Force, the State Security Investigation Services, and the Egyptian Police Force. This violence was generally exhibited amongst extremists, and resulted in mass protests and demonstrations. And as the demonstrations proliferated, so did the police brutality. The police developed a sense of entitlement, as they were under the command of Mubarak who had ultimate control over the nation. Corruption disseminated amongst the police, making the average citizen feel helpless. The fact that in poor economic conditions Egypt kept a large army and police intelligence agency, and gave these members of society priority,

is indicative of an authoritarian regime. In essence, the power structure of the country became police centered, as fear was instilled within the masses. However, Mubarak was careful to limit the power of the military and use coercion to curtail them with his intelligence forces, in order to remind them that he had ultimate power. In addition, the strong army was leveraged to Mubarak's benefit throughout the rest of the Arab world. As the years went by and the general discontent for Mubarak's army and Mubarak himself grew, Mubarak began to implement changes in political ideology. He began to impose political reform towards liberation and democratization, not because he believed in it, but more as a survival strategy. However, the people sensed this and became more vocal about it in the mid 2,000s. In the 2011 riots and demonstrations in Tahrir Square, the police and state security agencies lost control of the people and had to abandon the streets. Strategically, the chaos was blamed on the people rather than identifying the true cause of the revolution – the authoritarian and corrupt regime Mubarak had controlled for decades.

c. Mubarak's parliamentary & political party system

Egypt's multi-party electoral system was predominantly personally orientated, meaning that every electoral candidate

sought the support of the constituency through personal assurances in terms of communal services or private benevolence. Because the NDP was truly the president's party, reelection for Mubarak was made easy. In essence, the NDP was an instrument for gaining the support of the constituency in exchange for providing communal services and private practices. Interestingly enough, there was an inverse relationship between the level of education and income and the participation in elections and vote, thus reflecting the disbelief in the Egyptian political system, as the wealthy and better educated people demand a parliamentarian to provide better services for their district or provide mediation in the bureaucracy for himself or herself. Mubarak thus expressed himself as the only person who could support Egypt against the Islamic extremism in a post 9/11 atmosphere.

d. The army in the era of Mubarak

The tipping point in Mubarak's regime was his treatment of the army. Because all males were required to join the army at age 18, the army grew large and strong. Mubarak provided members of his military with special incentives, which increased as their gained rank. In essence, Egypt was a state that lacked legitimacy because it functioned on the relations that existed between the state, military, and

selected bourgeoisie who had relations with foreign companies. Therefore, repression and violence was the only way to get the masses to comply. Towards the end of Mubarak's reign, the educated youth started to become more politically active in expressing their views. Furthermore, the Egyptian state under Mubarak operated in a relatively autonomous way in respect to the military and the privileged bourgeoisie.

e. Conclusion

In sum, Mubarak regime's main pillar of governance was its coercive power. In addition to that, the regime made use of democratic venues, however limited and restricted, as a mechanism of relief for increasing societal and political tension and as a means of providing legitimacy at the international level for its ostensibly "democratic rule." Moreover, the state subsidies enabled the regime to control a societal uprising

Roots of the Revolution

a. Political Causes

In analyzing the political causes for the 2011 Revolution, there are many factors, long and short term, to consider, but of most importance is framing them in the context where Hosni Mubarak's rule is defined as 'Bureaucratic Authoritarianism'. The term, as defined by Guillermo O'Donnell in *Tensions in the Bureaucratic-*

Authoritarian State and the Question of Democracy is “based on an alliance between the state, the military, and selected segments of bourgeoisie who have established direct links with foreign business interests” (O’Donnell 1979). Within this context, it is at once possible to understand why the revolution occurred and why it occurred when it did. Using the vast bureaucratic, judicial, and security state apparatus available to him, Mubarak was able to both prolong his rule and suppress opponents for decades. In equal measure to the actions taken by Mubarak, the lack of properly unified opposition in a thoroughly segmented Egyptian political class was a key contributor to the prolonging of the Mubarak state. It is no surprise that only when different groups across the Egyptian political spectrum began to cooperate, from Islamists, Leftist and Secularists among others were seeds of the revolution sprung.

The Mubarak Authoritarian Apparatus

It is natural to ask why Mubarak was able to rule for nearly 30 years and only face serious opposition after 29 years, becoming most apparent after the start of 21st century. If the nature of Mubarak’s rule had been apparent for such a long time, why is it that organized resistance only began so late in his term? The first factor to

consider is the subordination of almost the entire Egyptian ruling system to Mubarak, wherein the legislative branch (dominated by Mubarak’s National Democratic Party), the judicial branch (which was crowded with Mubarak appointed members) and the military all existed to buttress Mubarak and suppress the opposition. The 1971 constitution granted Mubarak the power to issue presidential decrees, which he used extensively to uphold his rule. Through his control of the legislative branch he centralized almost all core decision making through the executive branch of the government under him; by doing so he greatly undermined state and local level councils. Ninette Fahmy argues in *The Politics of Egypt: State-Society Relationship* that “that state’s repression of opposition movements, including civil society and the political parties through its security apparatus and legal and administrative measures prevented these intermediary institutions and processes between the state and society from bringing about a significant change in the regime” (Bal 2014). What democracy the state did provide, in practical terms, for show only. Parliamentary and local elections were held, and opposition parties (other than the populist Muslim Brotherhood which was banned intermittently for lengthy periods) were allowed to operate. However the

scope of opposition parties, and true, free democratic processes was severely limited. Opposition politicians were regularly stifled with legal challenges, often in military courts without due process, arbitrary regulations, and intimidation by state actors. In addition to this, elections were almost always rigged to favor Mubarak's NDP party. Opposition parties hoped to create reforms through the system, and this was, for the longest time, one of the greatest strengths of Mubarak's regime; creating a false sense of hope through the preservation of sham democratic systems. As Bal notes "But, in fact, the regime was not ready for any reform and did not allow any political force to reach a point that would directly challenge Mubarak" (Bal 2014). Another tool used by Mubarak was using his government's budget to provide basic food and energy subsidies, as a means of keeping the masses appeased. With little to no proper legal and political process for meaningful reform or opposition, the political causes for the revolution have long existed; however it would require other factors for Mubarak's apparatus to be overpowered and proper revolt to take place.

The Successor Crisis

As early as 1999 when rumours began to circulate, it became apparent to both the public and Egypt's political class that he was grooming his son Gamal

Mubarak, to succeed him in the presidency. In 2002 Gamal was appointed as the General Secretary of the NDP's influential and growing Policy Secretariat which would soon represent the elite of the party. Accompanying Gamal's ascension up the party ranks were a battery of state funded propaganda and media projecting him as a reformer and man of the people. Following the 2005 parliamentary elections, where opposition parties took more seats from the NDP than expected, many senior NDP members were purged from the parties ranks on the basis of poor electoral performance; clearing the way for Gamal to rise to the highest levels of the party from within. The long-term side-lining of legitimate challengers to Mubarak's regime from both within the NDP and from other groups like the military along with the rise of Gamal in the NDP sparked wide spread fears in both the public and Egypt's political establishment that Mubarak's Egypt would follow the path of other authoritarians in the region, such as Syria's Hafez Al Assad into creating a hereditary-dynastic regime.

The Emergency State and Oppression

While the educated classes traditionally had more interest in the political destiny of the country, the vast majority of Egyptians; the poor masses, cared little for who was in power. It is true that when subsisting, surviving day to day, the masses

had little interest in political affairs, especially as Mubarak's government kept basic necessities subsidies at lower than market prices. However, as Mubarak's government began to punish ordinary decedents and police brutality became more apparent through social media; the deaths of ordinary people; such as Khaled Saeed, struck a nerve in the country. Once the authoritarian perception of Mubarak's rule had transitioned from its traditional home in high politics into the daily purview of the masses; wherein regular folk would experience beatings and punishment, did Mubarak's problems come home to roost.

The lack of protection for minorities

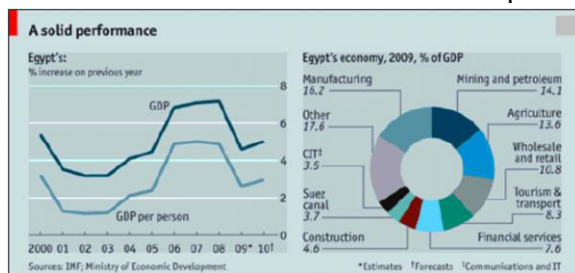
Normally a strong pillar of support for Mubarak's regime, Egypt's minorities, including the almost 9 million Coptic Christians (making around 10% of the population), were also a crucial segment of the population that turned against Mubarak in the events leading up to the revolution. During Mubarak's reign, Egypt's non-Muslim minorities rallied behind the Mubarak regime in exchange for protection from persecution from the more extreme parts of Egypt's Muslim majority; namely the Muslim Brotherhood and other Salafist organizations. Mubarak's banning and hostility to such groups carried favor with non-Muslim minority groups because they helped ensure the failure of measures to

implement Islamist legislation which would no doubt implement tougher conditions for non-Muslims. However, things began to change on New Year's Day 2011 when the Coptic Church of Two Saints was burned down in a terrorist attack that left 23 people, all Copts, dead. The Regime's slow response to catch the perpetrators and a general trend of increasing marginalization over recent years meant that leading up to the January 2011 Revolution, Coptic Christians were no longer strongly in support of Mubarak. As Egyptian political scientist Noha Bakr explains in *Change and Opportunities in the Emerging Mediterranean* "the last few years witnessed a number of violent events against Copts including the failure of the regime not only to protect them, but also to address their grievances related to building churches and appointing public offices. The restoration of the churches was authorised with difficulty, and religious lessons in mosques were avoided. Discriminatory practices against the Bahais took place, in addition to the discontent among ethnic minorities, such as the Nubians and the Bedouins of Sinai" (Bakr 2012).

b. Economic Causes

In the year preceding the Revolution on January 25, 2011 the economy in Egypt as a whole was performing better than ever. GDP growth had shifted into a much higher

gear, increasing from just below 5% in the mid-1990s to 7% in 2006-08. Egypt's share of world trade, which had been falling continuously for 40 years, started expanding as exports tripled in value. Foreign investment gushed in at record levels, notching up a cumulative total of \$46 billion between 2004 and 2009. Gross public debt in that period fell by nearly a third. The size of the country's foreign debt dropped below the value of its foreign reserves for the first time in decades, and debt servicing, a crushing burden in 1990, dwindled to a small fraction of the value of annual exports.



Despite this rapid growth, discontent festered. On the economic level, the figures illustrate development, but not balanced development. Overall, the GDP was a sign of improvement; however, the gap between the rich and the poor was enormous. Income inequality was becoming a major issue for most of the population, especially the large percentage of youth. Prior to the revolution, the Egyptian economy grew, but this growth did not trickle down, as it only benefited the regime's narrow social base. There were areas in Upper Egypt and Sinai that were completely deprived of the fruits of

development leading to the marginalization of large sectors of society. Unemployment reached 9.7%, which is concentrated mostly among young people with university degrees. Corruption reached an extreme, with Egypt rated 80th in the world. The youth felt these pressures heavily, and their dissatisfaction was only amplified by their unprecedented access to the internet and social media.

Unlike many other countries around the world where external factors inspired and drove the revolution (especially in eastern Europe), Egypt was motivated by its own internal economic, political, and social reasons. That being said, a lack of monetary assistance to either side of the conflict propagated chaos for a longer period of time. United States fumbled between backing up the pro-American dictator ally and the promotion of marauding forces aimed at reaching the values of democracy. As for the European Union, despite the mutual cooperation and security challenges it faces together with Egypt, such as illegal immigration and terrorism, it has hindered generous financial support that can help Egypt to stabilize in addition to adopting a policy of wait and see and observing the evolution of the revolution to see whether it will lead to a liberal democratic system.

After the January Revolution, economic confidence seemed to remain high. The banking sector opened its doors to find that public and corporate confidence remained high. Contrary to the beliefs of many, the Egyptian Pound remained strong and only fell slightly from 5.85 against the dollar to 5.95 against the dollar. However, economic turmoil soon ensued. As political and social conflict continued, Egypt's economy came to halt. Real GDP fell the following quarter by 4.2% compared to the 5.4% growth it was experiencing in the previous quarters. Investment and net exports declined almost 30% in the following year and tourism dropped by 60%. Also that year, official reserves went down by 22%. IMF estimate for the expected average growth rate for the 2010-2011 year was one percent. The cost of subsidies has increased on the other hand, with public wages also rising by 25%, with an external financing gap of 12 billion. As protests and demonstrations continued in Tahrir Square every Friday in the following weeks, economic tension grew, leading to a near collapse of the Egyptian economy. Furthermore, regional events deprived the Egyptian economy of remittance of Egyptians living in Libya, Syria, and affected groups coming from Bahrain, Jordan and the Gulf in general.

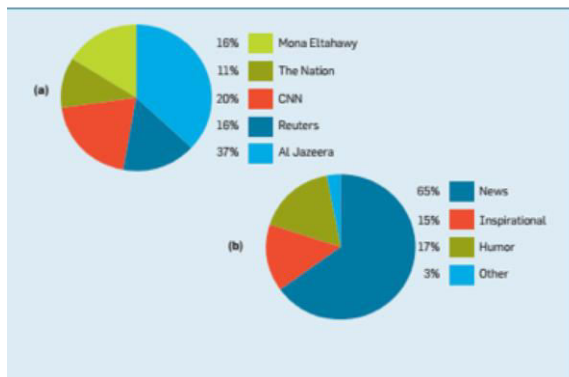
c. Impact of Tunisia, The Arab Spring & Social Media

Social media played a role in exacerbating the revolutionary spirit amongst the youth in Egypt. The Tunisian Revolution is one factor which incited this revolutionary spirit. It can even be considered as a contingent event that stimulated similar aspirations and actions in Egypt and elsewhere in the region. The Tunisian Revolution had profoundly influenced the Egyptians, particularly the young activists. In an interview with Tarek El-Kholi, one of the leading members of the influential April 6th Youth movement, he explained:

"After the Tunisian Revolution, we began saying: if Tunisians did it, we can do it too. We are Egyptians...Tunisian affect was spreading. There were already cases of self-immolations in different cities of Egypt, though none triggered a Tunisian-like mass movement. We decided with several other activist groups to organize a day of demonstration on the Police Day, January 25 to protest the Ministry of Interior. We were excited by what happened in Tunisia, but we did not initially think that so many people would join and it would turn into revolution." The increased use of the internet and social media not only gave the Egyptian youth a view into the Tunisian revolution and kindred revolutionary spirit,

but also gave them the ability to draw attention and support for their own cause.” (Bal 2014)

The protests and the revolution and their reflection in social media garnered enormous worldwide media attention. Many, including a number of activists on the scene, credit social media with helping the movement achieve critical mass. Twitter had a profound effect, showing the world hundreds of thousands of tweets per day on the situation in Egypt. These tweets were even able to gauge the reaction to the world about the revolution. By February 6th, 5 days before Hosni Mubarak’s resignation, 85% of the tweets about Mubarak were negative. The massive social media presence ultimately led to increased coverage of the event by large news companies such as CNN, Reuters, and Al



Jazeera.

There is no question that the protesters, as well as media and journalists, made extensive use of social networking sites, tweeting and texting on the protests. This amassed stream of tweets represents

an enormous, unfiltered history of events from a multitude of perspectives, as well as an opportunity to characterize the revolution’s events and emotions.

The Road to Tahrir

a. Kefaya Movement

The road to the Tahrir revolution can be traced to one meeting in 2004 in the home of Ebu Al Maadi, of the moderate Islamist Wasat Party. The meeting brought together various parts of the Egyptian political spectrum; their agenda was to discuss the state of affairs in the Middle East (with the second intifada in Palestine and the Iraq War raging) and the strong possibility of Gamal Mubarak succeeding his father. This meeting brought the Kefaya Movement. As Mustafa Bal notes in *Anatomy of a Revolution: The 2011 Egyptian Uprising*, “during the Mubarak period, the Islamist versus secularist divide prevented oppositional political forces from both camps to build a lasting consensus against the regime (Shorbagy 2007). The occasional ad hoc based coalitions did not survive long. The Kefaya Movement offered a new hope for Egyptian politics. Its cross-ideological body of members was an important contribution for the opposition politics that had long been fragmented” (Bal 2014). The movement ignored mandatory official channels to protests without the

appropriate licenses and directly addressed issues that are silenced by the regime; such as police brutality, Mubarak's rule and the succession question. As the first of its kind, the Kefaya Movement broke the taboo that surround protesting against Mubarak in Egypt, eventually organizing protests in 24 of Egypt's 26 provinces. In addition to breaking the fear and taboo surrounding challenging Mubarak, the movement also provided an exemplary platform for future revolutionary movements like Tahrir. Its loose organizational structure not only allowed it evade government scrutiny, but also bring together a diverse range of ideological support. A de-decentralized, locality based structure which insisted on consensus based decision making laid the groundwork for future movements like Tahrir by showing that the most effective way to counter Mubarak and his state apparatus was by bringing together as many parts of Egyptian society as possible. Kefaya's grassroots movement helped engage many young Egyptians that meant that even after the 2005 post-elections crackdown on dissent by the state, the desire flame the youth for change was lit. Thousands of young activists turned to growing social media and blogging platforms to share their views and organize. It was from these did the Tahrir revolution grow.

b. Preceding Youth Movements

According to Dina Shehata in Youth Movements and the 25 January Revolution (Shehata 2012), the youth movements that lead to Tahrir can be traced backed to movements coinciding with the start of the second Palestinian Intifada in 2000. Youth affinity with the Intifada in Palestine introduced thousands of young Egyptians to activism and helped as a seed to future grassroots movements like Tahrir. As Shehata argued, the cross-ideological platform of Egyptian Popular Committee for the Support of the Palestinian Intifada (EPCSPI) gave students a means to protest the actions of Israel and related American policy. Similarly the US invasion of Iraq inspired similar youth movements like the Cairo Campaign and 20 March Movement. These various international affairs inspired youth movements created a totally new activist-based working relationship for Egyptians across the ideological and social spectrum.

In step with the Kefaya Movement, youth movements like EPCSPI contributed thousands of young activists to the protests of the Kefaya. Other groups like Freedom now also helped transform youth activism from external to internal affairs. While Mubarak was rarely directly challenged, strong demands for better representation in university democracy and for improvements

to housing, healthcare, education and employment in greater society. With the suppression and ultimate demise of the Kefaya Movement, young activist groups began intensifying their focus on domestic issues. Starting with a workers strike in the textile producing city of Mahalla in 2006, the number of labor protests increased from 222 in 2006 to more than 700 in 2010 (El-Mahdi 2010 a). Increasing numbers of labor protests helped youth movements refocus their efforts in order to better connect with Egypt's laboring classes; which constituted a vast majority of the population. While a weak point of the Kefaya movement was its perception as an elitist organization focused on abstract demands that meant little to the masses, the youth grassroots movements focused on demanding improvements to low wages, food prices and poor working conditions.

In order to better address the needs of the masses members of the Youth for Change Movement created the Tadamon (meaning solidarity) movement in 2007. Engaging members from Egypt's leftist, secularist and Islamist youth movements, Tadamon helped provided legal support to the demands of labor protesters and helped better publicise their cause. In March 2008, the Tadamon movement split when its Labor Party backed segment decided that its bottom-up focus was not enough to

create tangible change and that more radical action was needed. The activists that left created the April 6 Movement, which declared support for textile workers striking in Mahalla on April 6 and called for country wide protests. Thousands of people quickly liked the April 6 group's page on Facebook. The April 6 movement and its protests, although unsuccessful at the time, helped create widespread discord with the Mubarak regime due to its violent response to the protestors. The April 6 movement and increasing social media discussion of the Regime helped create the conditions that lead to Tahrir. As Bal notes "Pictures and videos of security agencies' brutality and torture against detained individuals and prisoners, the misery of people such as those waiting in the long lines for hours for bread were spread all over the internet. Abaza (2013) argued that this phenomenon concurred with growing number of demonstrations and strikes in the face of increasing food prices and with demands for higher salaries and better working conditions. These events included people from a large segment of society including workers, bus drivers, university professors, and tax collectors" (Bal 2014).

The main and unique strength of post-2000 youth movements were their non-aligned, non-partisan nature. In being almost completely separate from

mainstream political parties, the movements not only managed to avoid harsh state scrutiny for years but also provided a unified platform for the masses who were normally disaffected by all political parties, not just the NDP, for their complicity in participating in Mubarak's sham democracy. Increasing youth participation and social media use would be one of the main steps on the road to Tahrir.

c. **Arrival of Mohammed ElBaradei**

The arrival of Mohammed ElBaradei, a Nobel Peace Laureate and former director general of the International Atomic Energy Agency (IAEA) onto Egypt's political scene after this return to Egypt in November 2009 helped escalated the anti-Mubarak environment in Egyptian society. As Ashraf Khalil notes in *Liberation Square: inside the Egyptian revolution and the rebirth of a nation* "People seemed to look to him as their salvation, the hero on a white horse who would single-handedly save the country from a Gamal Mubarak succession scenario. ElBaradei had managed to become a rallying point for the vast ABG (Anybody-But-Gamal) voter bloc" (Khalil 2012). Upon his arrival ElBaradei regularly spoke publicly focused on the corrupt and undemocratic nature of the Mubarak regime and emphasized his desire to run for the presidency in 2011. In an interview conducted in December 2010, "ElBaradei

stated that the system was no longer sustainable and it had to change. He articulated that the established elite in the country was corrupt; however, they seemed dissatisfied with the existing political system. Thus, he expected the change to stem from those in the younger generations, not from the old politicians, most of whom were some how 'coopting' with the regime. He demanded constitutional amendments that would allow independent candidates, without being obligated to be a member of an existing party, to run in the 2011 Egyptian presidential elections" (Bal 2014) (Daily News 2010). While ElBaradei's presidential aspirations crumbled around his constant travels abroad and lack support among the masses due to his unwillingness to hold large rallies and meet with ordinary Egyptian's, his prominence as a national figure held in high esteem by the public helped manifest widespread sentiment that Mubarak had to go.

d. **The Death of Khaled Saeed**

The public and very brutal death of Khaled Saeed, a 28 year old man outside a Cairo Internet café at the hands of police officers on June 6 2010 was another pivotal moment on the road to the Tahrir revolution. Khaled's mutilated dead body was soon seen by the entire nation as a Facebook group called "We are all Khaled Saeed", started by an expat Egyptian, Wael Ghonem

in Dubai, UAE, exploded in popularity and helped spread national awareness of the incident. As Bal notes from an interview he conducted “Khaled Said’s death was not the first case of police brutality that Egyptians came to know on national level. The youth movements such as Six April and many individual blogs were circulating images and videos of torture in police stations. But, several specific features of the incident separated it from many others and caused a deep resentment and anger across the country. Khaled Said was an average young Egyptian; someone whom everybody can easily identify with around himself as a friend, brother, nephew, or son etc. Thus, people easily sympathized with him. Secondly, it happened in public and apparently without any hesitation or fear of possible repercussions. The police was well known for their cruelty but this was too much. People, especially the youth, could not take it. I think the Facebook page, We are all Khaled Said, made a important contribution and in the following days after incident several youth organization coordinated many demonstrations around the country” (Bal 2014).

e. The 2010 Parliamentary Elections

Although elections fraud was nothing new in Mubarak’s Egypt, the 2010 Parliamentary election struck a nerve in a country that was already reaching a tipping point. Reports of

voter intimidation, ballot rigging and a host of other controversies spread throughout the nation. Mohamed ElBaradei’s warning about the 2010 elections proved correct. As Bal notes “It turned out to be one of the most fraudulent elections of the Egyptian history. Mubarak’s National Democratic Party won 420 of 444 contested seats in the parliament. The New Wafd became the second party and won only six seats. Because of its illegal status, the Muslim Brotherhood participated in the elections though independent candidates obtained only one seat. This was a frustrating result for the Muslim Brotherhood that had gained 83 seats in the 2005 parliamentary elections. For many people, this outcome proved the level of manipulation in the elections” (Bal 2014).

The death of Khaled Saeed and the 2010 Parliamentary Elections proved to be the two straws that broke the camel’s back. As Bal describes from an interview he conducted “People were feeling that there was a problem in our lives...They were eating dirty food, streets were crummy, salaries were very low, and financial scandals occurred every now and then without any consequences for the responsible ones. There was no justice. The election, especially in 2010 was a scandal. People felt that the regime was responsible for everything. People were waiting for the

opportunity. These were feelings not usually voiced out. In addition, the issue of heritage of presidency from Hosni Mubarak to his son Gamal Mubarak was annoying. But the boiling point was the torture cases by the police; either Khaled Said, the famous guy, or Sayed Bilal the infamous guy. Khaled Said died in the street and the police said that he was a drug dealer. Sayed Bilal was another guy that got killed under police custody a few months after Khaled Said. After the explosion in the church in December 2010 (I don't know who did it) he was taken from home for questioning; a few days later he was dead. He was a Salafist and had a big beard. The public and the media did not care much about him. He received little attention. Media always was talking about crimes against non- Islamists. Khaled Said's Facebook page received 4 thousand fans in one hour. After 10 days, the number of the subscriber reached to 184 thousand. When I was writing my book, it had 1,700, 000 followers" (Bal 2014).

f. The Tunisian Revolution 2011

As the Arab Spring began to bloom across the region, the already tense environment in Egypt meant that a similar revolution was almost guaranteed to occur. The events in Tunisia, following the self immolation of 26 year old fruit vendor Mohamed Buazizi and the national revolution that followed inspired youth movements in Egypt to revolt against

Mubarak. As Bal and Khalil note "The Tunisian Revolution can plausibly be considered as a contingent event that stimulated similar aspirations and actions in Egypt and elsewhere in the region. The Tunisian Revolution had profoundly influenced the Egyptians, particularly the young activists. As Khalil (2012) put it "there was an immediate post-Tunisia adrenaline rush in the Egyptian activist community—not to mention the uncounted ranks of the depoliticized, who suddenly allowed themselves to think the unthinkable" (Bal 2014) (Khalil 2012).