

TIMELINE: EGYPT'S POLITICAL TRANSITION

Compiled by Ghazala Irshad

April 6, 2008: Factory workers attempt to stage a general strike over low wages and high food prices in the Nile Delta city of Mahalla. Police open fire and arrest hundreds. The incident pushes the nascent April 6 Youth Movement to demonstrate alongside the workers in opposition to President Hosni Mubarak's regime throughout Egypt.

February 24, 2010: Mohamed ElBaradei, former director general of the International Atomic Energy Agency, returns to Egypt to a hero's welcome, raising the possibility that he will run for president; he launches the National Association for Change, a reformist group, with several other prominent democracy activists, including journalist Hamdi Qandil and political analyst Hassan Nafaa.

June 6, 2010: Police beat to death Khaled Said, a twenty-eight-year-old computer programming graduate, on a street in Alexandria.

June 10, 2010: Google executive Wael Ghonim anonymously creates the Facebook page "We Are All Khaled Said," through which images of Said's disfigured face and corpse go viral and galvanize widespread protests against state brutality.

November 28, 2010: Voting in parliamentary elections begins.

December 6, 2010: Mubarak's ruling National Democratic Party wins 83 percent of seats in a parliamentary election marred by exclusion and harassment of voters, journalists, and opposition representatives, as well as ballot fraud.

December 17, 2010: Street vendor Mohammed Bouazizi sets himself on fire in the Tunisian city of Sidi Bouzid after a police officer confiscates his wares and humiliates him, triggering protests against the repressive regime of President Zine El-Abidine Ben Ali that electrify the Arab world.

January 1-3, 2011: Following a deadly New Year's church bombing in Alexandria, Coptic Christians in Alexandria and Cairo throw rocks and set fire to vehicles in protest of the government's failure to guarantee their security.

January 14, 2011: In Tunisia, ten days after Bouazizi's death, Ben Ali resigns the presidency and flees to Saudi Arabia, bringing an end to his twenty-three-year rule.

January 25, 2011: Tens of thousands of Egyptians, responding to calls for anti-government protests on national Police Day, stage unprecedented demonstrations in Cairo's Tahrir Square and other Egyptian urban centers. Riot police attempt to disperse them using batons, tear gas, and water cannons. Two protesters in Suez and a police officer in Cairo are killed.

January 27, 2011: Police clash with protesters throughout Egypt, and attempt to lock down Cairo's Tahrir Square in anticipation of another mass demonstration after Friday prayers on January 28. The government orders Facebook and Twitter blocked.

January 28, 2011: The government orders Internet and mobile phone providers to cut off services. Massive protests with hundreds of thousands of Egyptians swell throughout the country. In Cairo, demonstrators fight pitched battles with police and eventually win control of Tahrir Square. Mobs burn symbols of the regime, including the National Democratic Party headquarters in downtown Cairo, and police stations. ElBaradei attempts to march with protesters, supported by the Muslim Brotherhood, from Giza to Tahrir Square but riot police, water canons, and tear gas prevent them from reaching downtown. Egypt slips into temporary anarchy with widespread looting as police withdraw from streets. Mubarak deploys military troops and tanks into cities for the first time, but the army remains neutral.

January 29, 2011: In the early hours, Mubarak addresses the nation and announces that he has fired Prime Minister Ahmed Nazif, replacing him with former Air Force commander Ahmed Shafik, who is tasked with forming a new cabinet. Later, Mubarak issues a decree appointing intelligence chief Omar Suleiman as vice president in an apparent move to end speculation that the regime is preparing Gamal Mubarak to succeed his aging father.

February 1, 2011: In the largest turnout to date, an estimated one million people from a cross section of Egyptian society demonstrate in Tahrir Square. Mubarak addresses the nation again, promising political reforms and vowing not to seek re-election in September.

February 2, 2011: Hundreds of armed Mubarak supporters ride camels and horses into Tahrir Square and attack protesters in what becomes known as the “Battle of the Camel.” The army does not intervene.

February 5, 2011: Several National Democratic Party leaders, including Gamal Mubarak, resign. The ruling party’s secretary general, Safwat El-Sharif, is replaced by Hossam Badrawi.

February 7, 2011: Wael Ghonim is released after having been arrested and kept in secret detention by government agents for eleven days. He gives an emotional interview on live television, energizing the protest movement to return to Tahrir Square the following day.

February 10, 2011: The Supreme Council of the Armed Forces (SCAF) holds a public meeting without the presence of Mubarak and announces that it is monitoring events in Egypt and will remain in continuous session. In the evening, Mubarak addresses the nation for the third time during the uprising, repeating that he will not step down but transferring his powers to Vice President Omar Suleiman for the remainder of his term, due to end in September. Protesters are furious and throw shoes at the screens in Tahrir Square showing the speech.

February 11, 2011: Suleiman addresses the nation, announcing that Mubarak has resigned and power has been handed over to SCAF, led by Field

Marshal Mohammed Hussein Tantawi. Mubarak leaves Cairo for his vacation home in the Egyptian Red Sea town of Sharm El-Sheikh.

February 13, 2011: SCAF dissolves parliament and suspends the constitution. The military council says it will rule for six months or until general elections are held, whichever comes first.

February 15, 2011: The previously banned Muslim Brotherhood announces that it will form a political party but says it will not field a candidate for president.

February 25, 2011: The military violently disperses a planned sit-in in Tahrir Square calling for the removal of Ahmed Shafik as prime minister.

March 3, 2011: Shafik resigns after being humiliated for being a member of the old regime by writer Alaa Al Aswany on Egyptian television. SCAF appoints former transportation minister Essam Sharaf as prime minister, on the reported recommendation of opposition activists during talks earlier that week. Protests in Tahrir continue.

March 5, 2011: Fearing the destruction of documents proving human rights violations, protesters storm State Security buildings across Egypt, including headquarters in Cairo and Alexandria, and find evidence of torture, mass surveillance, and vote rigging.

March 9, 2011: Civilians and soldiers beat protesters who continue to occupy Tahrir Square, destroying their tents. The army arrests almost two hundred activists, including nearly twenty women who are subjected to strip searches, virginity tests, threats of prostitution charges, and physical torture with stun guns and metal pipes.

March 19, 2011: In a referendum, Egyptian voters by a majority of 77 percent approve amendments to the constitution outlining criteria for the presidency and electoral commission in the transition process, and paving the way for elections.

March 23, 2011: SCAF approves a cabinet decree that criminalizes protests and strikes. Anyone promoting or participating in these activities is subject to imprisonment or a fine.

March 28, 2011: Activist Maikel Nabil is arrested for writing a blog post criticizing the military. On April 10, he is sentenced to three years in military prison.

March 30, 2011: SCAF unilaterally issues a constitutional declaration establishing new rules for the formation of the Constituent Assembly with a privileged role for the SCAF itself, rendering the verdict of the referendum irrelevant.

April 8, 2011: The military violently disperses a protest of tens of thousands in Tahrir, including twenty-one army officers, who want a full dismantling of the Mubarak regime. Ten officers are arrested and sentenced to ten years in prison, later reduced to three years. Two protesters are killed.

April 16, 2011: An Egyptian high court dissolves the former ruling National Democratic Party.

May 15, 2011: The military uses live ammunition, rubber bullets, and tear gas to disperse a protest commemorating the Palestinian day of “catastrophe” (*Al-Nakba*) at the Israeli embassy in Cairo, injuring some 350 people. Over 150 people are arrested.

May 28, 2011: The government of Egypt eases the blockade of Gaza in order to earn back some popular goodwill. Women, children, and men over forty will not need a visa to enter the territory by way of the Rafah border crossing. However, bureaucracy at the border seems to hinder such changes in practice.

June 6, 2011: The Muslim Brotherhood’s Freedom and Justice Party, headed by Mohammed Morsi, achieves legal status.

June 28–29, 2011: Outside Cairo’s Balloon Theater, and later at the Interior Ministry, police fire rubber bullets and tear gas to break up a demonstration led by relatives of protesters slain during the uprising, demanding that their killers be brought to justice.

July 8, 2011: Tens of thousands demonstrate against military rule in Cairo, Alexandria, and Suez. In Cairo, a sit-in resumes in Tahrir Square.

July 19, 2011: Tens of thousands pack Tahrir Square, after the first call by Islamist leaders for nationwide demonstrations since President Hosni

Mubarak was overthrown in February. Many protesters, mostly Muslim Brotherhood supporters, call for an Islamic state and Islamic law. In the earlier protests in Tahrir Square, liberal groups called for constitutional guarantees protecting religious freedom and personal rights, whereas Islamists demanded speedy elections and a recognition of Islam in the new Egyptian system.

August 1, 2011: On the first day of the Islamic holy month of Ramadan, the army clears the month-long Tahrir sit-in by force.

August 3, 2011: Mubarak, his former interior minister, and six police officials go on trial on charges of ordering the killing of protesters during the uprising. Mubarak and both of his sons are also charged with corruption.

August 18, 2011: An Egyptian soldier and two conscripts are killed during an Israeli raid on militants along Egypt’s border with Israel, sparking Egyptian outrage.

September 9, 2011: Protesters storm the Israeli embassy in Cairo, forcing Ambassador Yitzhak Levanon to flee to Israel. SCAF extends the Emergency Law in response. Hundreds of demonstrators are injured and several arrested.

October 9, 2011: In the Maspero neighborhood of Cairo, Coptic Christians demonstrate against the demolition of a church in Aswan. Military forces crack down on the demonstration and more than two dozen people die after being hit with live ammunition or run over and crushed by military armored vehicles.

November 18, 2011: Deadly clashes erupt on Mohammed Mahmoud Street, off Tahrir Square, as hundreds of thousands protest in cities across Egypt against military rule. Over the next six days, more than forty people are killed and over 1,500 injured by rubber bullets, tear gas, and batons at the hands of security forces.

November 21, 2011: Prime Minister Essam Sharaf resigns.

November 25, 2011: SCAF replaces Sharaf with a former Mubarak prime minister, Kamal El-Ganzouri.

November 28-29, 2011: Turnout is a high 59 percent in the first round of voting for the lower house of Egypt's parliament.

December 16, 2011: An army crackdown on protesters staging a sit-in in front of the Egyptian cabinet building in downtown Cairo leads to clashes that leave seventeen protesters dead.

December 20, 2011: In the biggest demonstration for women's rights in modern Egyptian history, thousands of men and women march through Cairo in anger over widely publicized images of the army's beating and stripping of female protesters during the crackdown on cabinet protests.

December 30, 2011: Egyptian police raid U.S.-funded pro-democracy groups, prompting the U.S. government to threaten withholding \$1.3 billion in annual American military assistance.

January 3-4, 2012: With results from the third round of parliamentary elections tabulated, the Muslim Brotherhood's Freedom and Justice Party and the conservative Islamist Al-Nour Party win over 70 percent of seats in the People's Assembly.

January 14, 2012: Mohamed ElBaradei withdraws from the presidential race, citing SCAF's continued hold on power as undemocratic and limiting the space to "serve the goals of the revolution."

January 16, 2012: Egypt asks the International Monetary Fund for \$3.2 billion in aid to support its ailing economy after a year of political turmoil.

January 23, 2012: Egypt's first democratically elected parliament convenes ahead of planned protests on the first anniversary of the revolution; Saad Al-Katatni of the Freedom and Justice Party is elected speaker.

February 1, 2012: An estimated seventy-nine people die in a rampage after a football match in Port Said. Senior Muslim Brotherhood parliamentarians are among critics who accuse the military-led government of purposely neglecting to enforce security. Others claim that it was a planned attack directed at the pro-revolution Ahly Ultras football fans. SCAF declares three days of national mourning.

March 28, 2012: Coptic, liberal, and secular MPs walk out of parliament in protest, accusing Islamist MPs of monopolizing the selection process for a 100-member constituent assembly.

March 31, 2012: The Muslim Brotherhood names leading strategist and multi-millionaire businessman Khairat Al-Shater as the Freedom and Justice Party's candidate for president; the Brotherhood had previously said it would not field a candidate because it was "not seeking power."

April 10, 2012: Amid the ongoing boycott by Coptic, liberal, and secular parliamentarians, a high administrative court suspends the constituent assembly, citing an imbalance in participation due to the majority of Islamists selected.

April 14, 2012: The Supreme Presidential Electoral Commission (SPEC) disqualifies ten candidates in the presidential election, including three controversial front-runners: the Muslim Brotherhood's Khairat Al-Shater; Mubarak's former intelligence chief and vice president, Omar Suleiman; and Salafi preacher Hazem Salah Abu Ismail. The Brotherhood fields FJP head Mohammed Morsi as Shater's replacement.

April 26, 2012: SPEC reverses its disqualification of Ahmed Shafik, Mubarak's last prime minister, as a presidential candidate after the Supreme Constitutional Court rules the parliament's recent disenfranchisement law—the basis for Shafik's exclusion—unconstitutional.

May 2-4, 2012: Outside the Defense Ministry in Cairo's Abbasiya district, plainclothes assailants and military police attack a demonstration by mainly Hazem Salah Abu Ismail supporters protesting his disqualification, leaving nearly twenty people dead. Several presidential candidates temporarily suspend their campaigns in response.

May 23-24, 2012: Egyptians choose between thirteen candidates in the first round of presidential elections. Mohammed Morsi (5,764,952 votes, 24.8 percent) and Ahmed Shafik (5,505,327 votes, 23.7 percent) advance to a runoff election. The next top vote-getters are Hamdeen Sabahi (4,820,273 votes, 20.7 percent), Abdel Moneim Aboul Fotouh (4,065,239 votes, 17.5 percent), and Amr Moussa

(2,588,850 votes, 11.1 percent). Voter turnout is 46.4 percent of registered voters.

May 31, 2012: SCAF chooses not to renew Egypt's Emergency Law after thirty-one years.

June 2, 2012: In a criminal court, Judge Ahmed Refaat sentences Mubarak and former Interior Minister Habib Al-Adly to life in prison for neglecting to prevent the deaths of protesters; Mubarak's sons Gamal and Alaa, and six senior Interior Ministry aides are acquitted of various charges.

June 14, 2012: The Supreme Constitutional Court rules that one-third of the parliament was elected unconstitutionally, and affirms Shafik's right to remain on the presidential ballot. Assembly Speaker Saad Al-Katatni vows to convene

the parliament anyway, but the military orders all entrances to the building locked and stations troops around the perimeter.

June 17-18, 2012: Egyptians choose between Morsi and Shafik in the second round run-off election. Just as polls close in presidential runoff voting, SCAF issues an interim constitutional decree that grants itself broad powers over the new government's legislation, the national budget, and military affairs, without any oversight of its own activities. Many analysts call this move a soft coup.

June 24, 2012: SPEC declares Muslim Brotherhood candidate Mohammed Morsi the winner in the presidential election; official returns give Morsi 13,230,131 votes, or 51.7 percent, compared to 12,347,380 votes, or 48.3 percent, for Shafik.