

Middle Eastern Perspectives on the Revolutions

April 18, 2011

Doelenzaal, Library of the University of Amsterdam
Singel 425, Amsterdam

DRAFT PROGRAMME

9:00 – 10:30 Session 1

Tunisia and Egypt: What happened at the eve of mass protest?

What were the obvious and the less obvious causes of mass grievances and what were the triggers for action for change? Which actors and factors had a mobilising role in the protests? Was prior organisation and mobilization important for the protests to achieve critical mass? Was there an initial protest leadership or was it exactly the protests' diffused nature that made it so difficult to clamp down on them? In terms of causes, triggers and main constituencies, what do the Arab revolutions have in common and how do they differ?

Discussant: Reinoud Leenders (University of Amsterdam)

10:30 – 11:00 Coffee break

11:00 – 12:30 Session 2 **Collapse of the fear factor**

How did the protests manage to overcome the fear factor? How were masses mobilised? How did social media contribute to this development? How were protests sustained? How were possible divisions and varying demands overcome, how links were established with elements in the regime including the army, did during protests a leadership of sorts emerge? What is the impact of the revolutions on the longstanding flashpoints of the region: Palestinian-Israeli conflict, Arab-Israeli conflict, Iraq, sectarianism and domestic conflict?

Discussant: Kawa Hassan (Hivos)

12:30 – 14:00 Lunch

14:00 – 15:30 Session 3
Perspectives on transitions: transitions to what?

What are the prospects for the constitutional changes in Tunisia and Egypt? Will the protests in Yemen and Bahrain, Syria and Iraq lead to any real changes? Will the current developments lead to more public space for women? What types of or models for democracy can be envisaged?

Discussant: Paul Aarts (University of Amsterdam)

15:30 – 16:00 Tea break

16:30 – 17:00 Session 4
Role of international actors

What role for external actors vis-à-vis post revolutionary regimes and remaining authoritarian systems? Which international actors are relevant and well positioned to provide support in the transitions? What kind of support?

Discussant: Francesco Cavatorta (Dublin City University and University of Amsterdam)

Speakers

Esraa Abdel Fattah – Egypt

Ms. Esraa Abdel Fattah is a leading Egyptian democracy and human rights activist and Projects Coordinator at the Egyptian Democratic Academy (EDA). In April 2008 she was imprisoned for her role in organizing what became known as the April 6th Facebook Protests, a mobilization of thousands of young people demanding political change that gave its name to a branch of the youth movement behind the mass protests that brought down President Mubarak on February 11, 2011. Esraa played a leading role in the mass protests in Tahrir Square and is a prominent spokesperson for the youth protest movement in Egypt. On March 15 she was among a group of activists who met with Secretary of State Hillary Clinton in Cairo.

Mohammed Al-Maskati - Bahrain

Mr. Mohammed Al-Maskati is the Head of the Bahrain Youth Society for Human Rights, representing the Arab-European Centre for Human Rights in Norway. The Bahrain Youth Society for Human Rights has been a major source of information to international human rights organizations as well as for international journalists since the February 14th protests. As a human rights activist, Mohammed is facing serious legal issues in Bahrain which can endanger his life and terminate his human rights activities. He was sentenced with a fine for establishing a Human Right Association. Mohammed has supported many activists in Bahrain, he has rallied for blogger Kareem Amer and fought for human rights across the Arab world.

Mohammed Ayadi – Tunisia.

Mr. Mohammed Ayadi is the General Coordinator of the Tunisian Observatory for Rights & Freedoms of Trade Unions. He is the Representative of Amnesty

International in Tunisia and the representative of Karama for Human Rights in Tunisia. Mohammed is also member of the Arab-Euro Centre for Human Rights and International Law in Norway.

Basem Fathy – Egypt

Mr. Basem Fathy is the Projects Director at the Egyptian Democratic Academy (EDA), a youth non-profit organization established by a group of Human Rights and Democracy activists. He is a blogger and cofounder of the April 6th Youth Movement and participated in a number of campaigns for Democracy in Egypt. He participated in the 25th of January Revolution and he is a member of Revolution Youth Coalition comprised of a number of youth political movements and groups that took part in organizing the events and negotiating the different parties through the Revolution. Basem has been detained multiple times by the Egyptian government before the Revolution. He has a B.Sc. in Chemistry from Cairo University where he is also studying NGOs Management.

Salam Kawakibi – Syria

Mr. Salam Kawakibi is a researcher in political and social science. He is a director of research at Arab Reform Initiative and senior researcher at the University of Amsterdam. His main interests are media, civil society, international relations and human rights in the Arab countries. He has published several studies in English, Arabic and French. Salam was director of the French Institute of the Near East in Aleppo from 2000 to 2006.

Yanar Mohammad - Iraq

Ms. Yanar Mohammad is co-founder and President of the Organization of Women's Freedom in Iraq. Yanar Mohammed is a prominent Iraqi feminist who was born in Baghdad. She serves as the editor of the newspaper *Al-Mousawat* (Equality). She is one of the most prominent women's rights campaigners in Iraq, and received the Gruber Foundation Women's Rights Prize in 2008.

Maati Monjib – Morocco

Mr. Maati Monjib is a political historian from the University of Mohammed V-Rabat and coordinator of Citizens' Assembly in Morocco. He got his first PhD in France (North African Politics) and another one from Dakar University in African political History. He published articles and studies on MENA and Africa. Maati has been the initiator and facilitator of bargaining debates between Islamists and secular activists in Morocco 2007-2010. He is the founder and director of the Ibn Rochd Centre for Studies and Communication. He has also organized the *Press Now Investigative Journalism Prize* in 2007-9 in Morocco.

Falah Moradkhin – Iraq

Mr. Falah Moradkhin is a lawyer and is Project coordinator at WADI, an organization that supports programs in Jordan and Iraq. He focuses on projects that combine practical support with the rights and abilities of individuals such as rehabilitation projects for long-term prisoners, literacy programs, education and training of women, public awareness and violence against women and girls. Falah is a human and women right activist, board member of different Human Rights NGOs and administration member of the Federation of civil society NGO, which is the most active network of independent NGOs in different fields of lobbying for civil rights and arranging campaigns and protest in Iraqi Kurdistan. He is one of the survivors of the chemical attack in Halabja city in 1988 and witness of the genocide of Baath regime in Iraq.

Hibaaq Osman – Somalia

Born in Somalia and based in Cairo since 2005, Ms. Hibaaq Osman is a global political strategist who has lived in Somalia, Ethiopia, Sudan, Yemen, Egypt and the United States. Building institutions to promote peace, democracy, human rights, and women's rights around the world, Ms. Hibaaq Osman conceives visionary approaches to issues of peace, human rights, and women's rights. She is founder and CEO of Karama, a movement to end violence against women in the Middle East and North Africa. Hibaaq has redefined activism and opportunity in the region, putting forth a new global agenda for women. She serves on boards for organizations such as Ashoka Arab World, Equality Now, the Global Fund for Women (Advisory Council) and Africa Action, and is a Senior Fellow at the Academy for Political Leadership and Participation.

Emad Qayed Al-Garash – Yemen

Mr. Emad Qayed Al-Garash is Deputy Executive Director of the Yemeni Organization for Defending Rights and Democratic Freedoms. They were at the centre of the protests in The Change Square in Sana'a. Emad has a BA in Journalism and is a member of the Yemeni Coalition against the Death Penalty. He is the founding member of the organization Change to the Rights and Freedoms.

Messaoud Romdhani – Tunisia.

Mr. Messoud Romdhani has a BA in English Literature and is an English teacher at a high school. He has a long track-record within the trade union, being an activist in the students' union in the 1980s, the Secretary General of the Teachers' Trade Union in Kairouan for two terms and the spokesman for the Committee of Support for the Mining Basin Inhabitants in 2008, demanding the rights to employment and political freedom. He was a coordinator of a committee supporting imprisoned students. During the Tunisian Revolution he wrote articles in the opposition newspapers and had many interviews with Aljazeera, Arabia and other radios and TV stations.

Imen Toumi – Tunisia.

Ms. Imem Toumi is a Scientific Researcher and human rights activist from Tunisia with an academic background in Vegetal Physiology. She is part of the Watan for justice and progress movement. She is member of the local committee of the protection of the revolution in Tunisia.

Organizers

Hivos is a Dutch non-governmental organisation guided by humanist values. The work of Hivos aims at structurally alleviating poverty, with an emphasis on civil society building and on sustainable economic development. www.hivos.nl

IKV Pax Christi works for peace, reconciliation and justice in the world and join with people in conflict areas to work on a peaceful and democratic society. www.ikvpaxchristi.nl

The Knowledge Programme on Civil Society in West Asia is a joint initiative by Hivos and the University of Amsterdam (department of political sciences) with the purpose of generating and integrating knowledge on the roles and opportunities for civil society actors in democratization processes in politically challenging environments. www.hivos.net