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## Morocco: 2010 in perspective

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Despite the protests in Rabat and Casablanca on February 20<sup>th</sup>, 2011, Morocco remains stable politically and economically relative to its North African neighbors and continues a process of reform and development under King Mohammed VI's leadership. This review covers the key political, economic, and international issues in Morocco over the course of 2010 and early 2011.

### Domestic political issues in Morocco

#### *The King re-organizes his cabinet*

At the beginning of 2010, Mohammed VI made several changes to the composition of his cabinet. Most significantly, the King replaced his interior minister Chakib Benmoussa with Moulay Tayeb Cherkaoui, who had previously served as president of Morocco's Supreme Court. The King appointed two technocrats to replace political party ministers: Mohammed Naciri in place of Abdelwahad Radi as Justice Minister and Yassir Zenagui in place of Mohammed Boussaid as Tourism and Handicrafts Minister. These appointments show that King Mohammed VI was filling the Moroccan cabinet positions with technocrats, instead of members of political parties,

and in this way also acted to weaken the political party system in Morocco.

#### *The Justice and Development Party seeks attention*

The Justice and Development Party (PJD) received the second highest number of seats in the 2007 parliamentary elections but is not a part of the ruling coalition. In May 2010, PJD leaders called for the cancellation of British singer Elton John's concert in Rabat because of his homosexuality. Homosexuality is punishable by law in Morocco although, similar to the alcohol law, it is not strictly enforced. In the end, approximately 50,000 people attended the state-sponsored concert in Rabat. Ultimately, the King was able to strike a delicate balance between individual freedom and tolerance with his religious role as the *amir al-muminin* or commander of the faithful.

At the end of June 2010, one of the PJD's most outspoken leaders, Mustapha Ramid, made known that he would leave the parliament to protest the lack of parliamentary authority. Three days later, in a sudden change of events, Ramid announced that he would return to politics to lead the PJD's parliamentary bloc, saying that the party had not approved his resignation. Some political analysts believe that Ramid orchestrated his own flip-flop from the start



to highlight the frustration of parliamentary officials over the King's extensive powers in the political process.

#### **Government fines the newspaper *Le Journal Hebdomadaire***

In February 2010, a Casablanca commercial appeals court declared the publishing group Media Trust and Trimedia, which owns the weekly magazine *Le Journal Hebdomadaire*, bankrupt. At the end of 2006, the Ministry of Justice ordered Aboubakr Jamaï, the former managing director of *Le Journal Hebdomadaire*, and one of his colleagues to pay US\$340,000 for libel damages. Claude Moniquet, the head of the European Strategic Intelligence and Security Center headquartered in Brussels, submitted the case arguing that *Le Journal Hebdomadaire* inaccurately reported on his analysis of Morocco's claim to Western Sahara. To avoid paying the fine, Jamaï left the country only to face the same fine upon his reentry to Morocco in 2009. Although the Moroccan press has become freer in the last few years, journalists are still expected to remain within unspoken boundaries on topics related to Western Sahara and the activities of the King.

#### **New seatbelt law passed to cut down traffic fatalities**

The Moroccan parliament passed a new traffic law in January 2010 intended to reduce the numbers of accidents and driving fatalities. This new law raises the amount of the fine for many driving offences, allows police to perform random tests to see whether drivers are under the influence of alcohol, reduces the speed limits in certain locations, and requires additional training and social security coverage for individuals working as drivers. While traffic fatalities remain a problem in Morocco, there are also concerns that these additional traffic laws could have unintended consequences and lead to new ways for police and administrative officials to extract bribes.

#### **Domestic and regional economic liberalization in Morocco**

##### ***The Moroccan telecoms are liberalized but still heavily controlled***

Morocco has instituted several economic reforms and the economy has experienced growth but the country has yet to reach its full economic potential. Starting in

February 2010, the Moroccan government has taken regulatory steps to liberalize the telecommunication sector. Maroc Telecom, for example, was a Moroccan state monopoly that is now partly owned by Vivendi. There is also now a new Moroccan telecom provider Wana that sells mobile telecommunications under the brand Inwi. The Moroccan government argues that these privatization and liberalization measures will lead to lower consumer prices and increase the number of people with access to these telecommunications services. The Moroccan government wants to increase the number of Internet subscribers from 1.2 million in 2009 to 2 million by 2013. In September 2010, the company France Telecom announced a deal to purchase 40% of the second largest telecommunications company

in Morocco, Meditel. Meditel is expected to compete directly with Maroc Telecom, which was partly acquired by Vivendi.

Interestingly, despite these liberalization measures, the Moroccan government still maintains substantial price controls on the telecommunications industry. In anticipation of the February 20<sup>th</sup>, 2011 demonstrations in Rabat and Casablanca, for example, the government lowered the prices of mobile telephone calls and monthly Internet subscriptions by 50%. These price changes implemented the week before February 20<sup>th</sup> served to satisfy the Moroccan youth and to create disincentives

for youth to join the protests in opposition to the King. These measures in Morocco are in sharp contrast to Tunisia and Egypt where the state used heavy-handed measures such as mobile censorship and Internet cuts to prevent further protests.

##### ***New Oxford Poverty Indicator causes controversy in Morocco***

In August 2010, the Oxford Poverty and Human Development Initiative (OPHI) at the University of Oxford with funding from the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP) launched the Multidimensional Poverty Index (MPI) in which Morocco was ranked 48<sup>th</sup> out of a total of 104 countries. According to the MPI, 28.5% of the Moroccan population is poor compared to 3% according to the Moroccan government survey. The Moroccan Ministry of Foreign Affairs criticized the new MPI ranking measurement because it does not

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accurately reflect the poverty reduction that has occurred in Morocco. Nonetheless, unemployment and low living standards remain a reality especially among the urban poor and the young.

### ***Morocco hosts World Economic Forum on MENA in Marrakesh***

In November 2010, Morocco served as the host to the World Economic Forum on the Middle East and North Africa (MENA) in Marrakesh. King Mohammed VI did not attend the meeting but nonetheless welcomed its attendees by challenging them to find ways to better integrate North Africa into the world economy. Over 1,000 representatives from 62 countries attended the forum, which serves as a place where leaders in business and government can discuss opportunities to improve economic cooperation and collaboration. Various participants attending the World Economic Forum stated that additional investments in physical infrastructure and improvements of the educational system must be made to make Morocco a more desirable destination of foreign direct investment.

### ***Wikileaks highlights the real estate corruption of the Royal Palace***

In November 2010, Wikileaks released US diplomatic cables describing the corruption in Morocco. In one of the released cables, a Moroccan entrepreneur is quoted as saying that the corruption in the real estate sector has become more pervasive during the reign of King Mohammed VI. Some analysts believe that these Wikileaks cables, similar to the cables published on other countries in North Africa, will lead to greater pressure on the Moroccan government to deal with corruption.

### ***Casablanca attempts to become a regional financial center for Africa***

In December 2010, the Moroccan parliament approved a project to create a regional financial hub for North and West Africa in Casablanca known as the Casablanca Financial City (CFC). According to the Moroccan Ministry of Finance, this new financial center is supposed to be complete by 2014 and is expected to create 35,000 new jobs and bring about a 2% increase to GDP. The companies that participate in the CFC will be given substantial tax breaks. Already, Banque Marocaine du Commerce Extérieur (BMCE) has purchased a 35% share of Mali-based Bank of Africa, Atijariwafabank has purchased a share in Credit Agricole's Africa's retail banking operations, and there are other Moroccan banks that have acquired banks in Tunisia and Senegal. The Moroccan government believes Casablanca has the potential to increase its capabilities and serve as a regional financial center for migrants between Africa and Europe as well as foreign investors from countries such as China and India.

## **International issues faced by Morocco**

### ***Morocco and the Western Sahara issue reignites***

The issue of Western Sahara continues to be a significant area of disagreement and concern between Morocco, Algeria, Spain and the international community. Various events within Morocco and North Africa have made Western Sahara reignite as an important foreign policy issue.

From the Moroccan point of view, the Western Sahara issue unites Moroccans and has led to strong support for the monarchy. Ever since he became King in 1999, Mohammed VI maintains that Morocco must maintain control over Western Sahara. Morocco has diverted resources towards Western Sahara and in 2007 presented an autonomy plan for the region under Moroccan sovereignty for negotiation with the UN Secretary-General. Despite expending financial resources to lay claim to this region there are long term economic benefits should Western Sahara remain a part of Morocco.

From the Algerian point of view, Western Sahara is seen as one of the last areas of decolonization. Should the Polisario gain control over the region then Algeria will have greater access to the Atlantic Ocean. If, however, the issue of Western Sahara's future status continues to be unresolved then this outcome hurts Morocco more than it does Algeria. The African Union (AU) has recognized the Sahrawi Arab Democratic Republic (SADR) as well as several governments in Latin America. It is for this official recognition of the SADR that Morocco has suspended its membership in the Organization for African Union (OAU) and the African Union (AU).

The US has tried to encourage both Morocco and Algeria to reach a compromised agreement on Western Sahara. Back in 2007, then US Under Secretary of State Nicholas Burns described Morocco's 2007 autonomy plan as "a serious and credible proposal" and the State Department has encouraged the parties to find a solution. In November 2009, Secretary of State Hillary Clinton said that there had been "no change" in US policy on Western Sahara under President Barack Obama and that the UN led mediation effort should continue. In November 2010, State Department spokesman Philip Crowley said that, "we urge the parties to engage seriously with each other and with Special Envoy Ross to work toward a peaceful, sustainable and mutually-agreed solution". Therefore, the mechanisms are in place and Ross is acting as the personal envoy of the UN Secretary-General to bring the parties to an agreement.

### ***UN Security Council Resolution 1920 on Western Sahara***

At the end of April 2010, the UN Security Council voted to approve Resolution 1920 to continue the work of the UN peacekeeping mission MINURSO in Western Sahara. Then, at the end of July, King Mohammed VI addressed Moroccan citizens by saying that Morocco will not give up any part of the Sahara. This statement by Mohammed VI in July led to a reigniting of the Western Sahara conflict.



### ***Moroccan police officer arrested by Polisario Front during Western Sahara visit***

In September 2010, a Moroccan police officer, Mustapha Mouloud, visited his father in Western Sahara for the first time in 31 years only to be arrested by the Polisario Front. Mouloud had shown strong support for the Moroccan plan for Western Saharan autonomy and the Polisario claimed that he was arrested for “espionage on behalf of the enemy”. The Moroccan press publicized the incident, showing the continued salience of the Western Sahara conflict within Moroccan domestic politics.

### ***Protests and casualties in Western Sahara***

In October 2010, thousands of Sahrawis gathered in El-Aaiun to peacefully protest economic conditions in Western Sahara. The Moroccan police used helicopters and trucks to maintain surveillance and preserve order on the protestors. Following this event, there were conflicting reports of the number of injuries and casualties. According to some reports, a 14-year-old boy was killed and several people were injured when they tried to get through a roadblock into the camp. However, Ana Gomes, a member of the European Parliament, alleged that European intelligence agencies report that “between 500 and 600 people disappeared” in the El-Aaiun events. Then, a raid by Moroccan authorities in early November apparently led to the deaths of several Sahrawi civilians, six Moroccan security forces, and hundreds of injured, casualties that the Moroccan government claims are the work of the Polisario Front. The lack of transparent and credible information makes it difficult to determine cause of these casualties and to improve the future situation of Western Sahara.

### ***Thousands march to condemn the European Parliament***

In late November 2010, major protests erupted in Casablanca to protest Spanish media’s portrayal of Western Sahara and the actions of the European Parliament. The Moroccan authorities prevented international reporters from observing the events in El-Aaiun for fear that this reporting might reflect negatively on Morocco and the international community remains skeptical of official reporting. The European Parliament criticized Morocco for giving restricted access of the media, journalists, and independent observers to Western Sahara. Following this criticism, the Moroccan government provided free train services to attend pro-government protests in Casablanca in November in which people were pledging allegiances to King Mohammed VI, singing the national anthem, and waving national flags. After the events in El-Aaiun and Morocco, the UN Security Council called on the Polisario and Morocco “to demonstrate further political will” towards finding a solution to the Western Sahara issue.

### ***Morocco closes Al-Jazeera’s regional office***

In November 2010, the authorities closed Al-Jazeera’s Rabat office because of its coverage of events in Morocco after having been open only for a few years. The Moroccan government claims that Al-Jazeera does not provide accurate and balanced reporting on Morocco. Several analysts believe, however, that the timing of the closure is due to Al-Jazeera’s coverage of the Western Sahara conflict. In particular, Al-Jazeera reported on the hunger strike of a Saharan activist, Aminatou Haidar, which may have crossed an unspoken boundary in what can be reported in Morocco. Haidar began a hunger strike in November 2009, after the Moroccan authorities took her passport and deported her to the Canary Islands in Spain for writing “Western Sahara” in the address box of the entry form at El-Aaiun airport in southern Morocco. Haidar was returning from a trip to New York to receive the 2009 Civil Courage Prize. Subsequently, Haidar was accused of working with the Polisario Front and the Moroccan Foreign Minister Fassi-Fihri stated that, “in no way can we allow the Moroccan passport to be a subject of insult or ridicule”. Haidar eventually ended her hunger strike and when she returned to Morocco she was placed under house arrest and was reunited with her children.

### ***Morocco and European Parliament disagree***

In December 2010, the Moroccan Minister of Foreign Affairs Fassi-Fihri tried to explain the unrest and latest activities in Western Sahara in front of the European Parliament Committee on Foreign Affairs. This presentation was made in response to the European Parliament’s reports of violence by the Moroccan authorities in the previous month. Fassi-Fihri refuted the claim that Morocco illegally occupies Western Sahara. Fassi-Fihri also argued that the human rights abuses alleged by the Sahrawi people are based on false information from the Polisario Front, and maintained that the Moroccan government was actively providing support to Western Sahara. Doubts still remain between Morocco and the European Parliament over reports on Western Sahara.

### ***UN Western Sahara Envoy Christopher Ross and informal talks***

In February 2010, the Moroccan government and the Polisario Front, as well as other relevant and interested parties, held a series of informal talks in the US in preparation for another round of negotiations. The Polisario Front has emphasized the need for a referendum on self-determination with the option of independence. Meanwhile, King Mohammed VI, in order to mitigate Polisario Front demands, has advocated for greater decentralization and autonomy for various regions of the country and to give greater independence for Western Sahara within Morocco.

In December 2010, the UN began the fourth round of unofficial negotiations between Morocco and the Polisario. Observers from Algeria and Mauritania also attended these three-day talks in Manhasset, New York. According to UN Western Sahara Envoy Christopher Ross, the “parties got involved in in-depth negotiations, based on new approaches so as to instill new dynamism in the series of negotiations in 2011, through holding regular meetings”. Ross also stated that “each party continues to reject the proposal of the other as a sole basis for future negotiations”.

### ***The EU-Morocco Relationship***

In March 2010, a EU-Morocco summit was held in Granada and hosted by the Spanish Prime Minister Jose Luis Rodriguez Zapatero. Morocco became the first country to be given “advanced status” in October 2008 and Morocco continues to seek out ways to strengthen this relationship. In particular, the summit’s participants discussed the political relationship (the EU-Morocco Joint Parliamentary Committee formed in 2010; Morocco’s accession to the Council of Europe; cooperation on migration and visa issues, and efforts to combat terrorism), the integration into the single market (regulatory convergence with the EU; agriculture and fishery issues; improvements to transportation and energy networks), and the development assistance program (Morocco currently receives US\$880 million for 2007-2010). Overall, the summit was successful in discussing the range of issues.

### ***Spain and Morocco engage in political disputes***

In July 2010, a series of negative incidents in Ceuta and Mellila have led to a deterioration of relations between Morocco and Spain. The Moroccan Ministry of Foreign Affairs alleged that five Moroccan students were beaten

while in Mellila en route to Belgium. Morocco claims that the Spanish police have mistreated migrants from Morocco to Spain and Moroccans in Ceuta.

In August 2010, following events in Ceuta and Melilla, Moroccans protested in front of the Spanish Embassy in Rabat. In addition, Moroccan demonstrators temporarily blocked the entry points and trade that Melilla has with Morocco. These peaceful demonstrations

held in Morocco were quite in contrast to the hunger strike by Aminatou Haidar and violent protests held in Western Sahara over the incidents in Al-Aaiun. It seems that certain demonstrations and forms of political expression are allowed in Morocco as long as they are political activities that are acceptable to the Moroccan authorities.

### ***Al-Qaeda in Morocco and Islamic Maghreb***

In April 2010, Moroccan security agencies arrested 24 individuals alleged to be members of Al-Qaeda in the Islamic Maghreb (AQIM). The Moroccan Ministry of Interior made a statement saying that the individuals had a gun as well as ammunition and were planning to attack foreign targets in Morocco. Subsequently, in August, the Moroccan security services arrested 18 people who were suspected as being part of an Islamic militant group. And in the final weeks of December 2010, the Ministry of Interior arrested 10 individuals suspected of planning an attack on foreign targets. The last major terrorist attack in Morocco occurred

in 2003 when suicide bombers killed 45 and injured more than 100 in Casablanca. In addition, the 2004 Madrid bombings involved several Moroccans. In 2007, two suicide bombers blew themselves up in front of the US Consulate in Casablanca and its cultural center but nobody else was killed. On April 28<sup>th</sup>, 2011 there was an explosion in a café near Djamaa al-Fna in Marrakesh. The Moroccan authorities are still investigating the cause of

Although protests in Morocco have been far more measured than those occurring within the country’s regional neighbors, Tunisia and Algeria, questions as to whether (and to what extent) nonviolent demonstrations will continue in the Kingdom and successfully pressure the regime to implement greater reforms. While the regime has enhanced both the country’s economic prospects and social development over the last ten years, unincorporated political and social movements and latent income inequalities threaten to unseat these gains.



this recent attack and showing solidarity and support to the people of Marrakesh by hosting a variety of touristic events in this city.

### **Conclusions**

Although protests in Morocco have been far more measured than those occurring within the country's regional neighbors, Tunisia and Algeria, questions as to whether (and to what extent) nonviolent demonstrations will continue in the Kingdom and successfully pressure the regime to implement greater reforms. While the regime has enhanced both the country's economic prospects and social development over the last ten years, unincorporated political and social movements and latent income inequalities threaten to unseat these gains. Western Sahara remains a key issue to Morocco and has impacts on Morocco's relationship with Algeria, Spain, the EU and various international organizations. Despite the many internal and external events that were covered in this political economy review of Morocco in 2010 it is clear that additional work is needed on the part of various segments of Moroccan government and society to ensure that the various reforms and activities are indeed successful in the future.



## Timeline of Events

### Algeria

#### 3 April 2011 (Algiers-Cairo):

In a telephone conversation, Prime Minister Ahmed Ouyahia and his Egyptian counterpart Essam Abdelaziz Sharaf stressed "the common will of the Algerian and Egyptian governments to spare no effort to consolidate the long-standing relations of friendship".

#### 3 April 2011 (Algiers):

About 2,500 Algerian auxiliary policemen gathered to await President Abdelaziz Bouteflika's response to their demands for better pay and conditions issued at a rally a month ago.

#### 4 April 2011 (Algiers):

Auxiliary police, doctors and students pushed on with strikes and demonstrations to press demands for better salaries and working conditions.

#### 5 April 2011 (Algiers):

After meeting with British Minister for Middle East and North African Affairs Alistair Burt, Minister Delegate for Maghreb and African Affairs Abdelkader Messahel called for an immediate cease-fire in Libya. Messahel also expressed his concern about "the increasingly noticeable presence of al-Qaeda in the Islamic Maghreb in Libya and the increasingly noticeable circulation of weapons which can be exploited by terrorist groups".

#### 10 April 2011 (Algiers):

Foreign Minister Mourad Medelci met with his Cuban counterpart Bruno Rodríguez Parrilla. Both Ministers said they hoped the "fighting in Libya would end and dialogues would be launched soon".

#### 11 April 2011 (Algiers):

Foreign Ministry spokesman Amar Belani denied claims that Libyan rebels had captured or killed more than a dozen Algerian mercenaries in Ajdabiya.

#### 12 April 2011 (Algiers):

The African Union's ad-hoc panel on Libya met with President Abdelaziz Bouteflika and Foreign Minister Mourad Medelci.

#### 15 April 2011 (Algiers):

President Abdelaziz Bouteflika addressed the nation to outline an "extensive political reform" plan. Bouteflika's proposals include constitutional amendments, combating corruption and changing the laws on political parties, elections, and associations. Bouteflika also pledged changes to the information code that would eliminate criminal penalties for journalists.

#### 17 April 2011 (Tlemcen):

At the ceremony for Mechouar palace's restoration, President Abdelaziz Bouteflika said "Morocco is a neighbour and brother. We must cooperate". Bouteflika added that "no dispute with Morocco should stop cooperation with it" and that Western Sahara "is a UN issue".

#### 19 April 2011 (Algiers-Paris):

In a telephone conversation with French Foreign Minister Alain Juppé, Foreign Minister Mourad Medelci denied Libyan rebels' allegations that Algeria had provided military backup for Muammar Gaddafi.

#### 19-21 April 2011 (Paris):

Minister Delegate for Maghreb and African Affairs Abdelkader Messahel headed a delegation to the 16<sup>th</sup> session of the Africa Partnership Forum.

#### 20 April 2011 (Algiers):

Interior Minister Dahou Ould Kablia said that the creation of Islamist political parties in Algeria, amid a political reform plan to boost democracy in the country, is not tolerated as it contradicts the Republic and democratic regime.

#### 23 April 2011 (Algiers):

Truncheon-wielding Algerian police beat hundreds of pro-reform activists outside parliament and prevented another anti-government rally.

#### 23 April 2011 (Oran):

Ahmed Kerroumi, an academician and a senior member of the Algerian opposition Democratic and Social Movement, was found dead at party headquarters. Kerroumi's wife spoke of an assassination plot, while police said there was no evidence of violence.

#### 25 April 2011 (Algiers):

Foreign Minister Mourad Medelci warned of the existence of foreign forces seeking to break the region through the Libyan crisis, stressing Algeria's rejection of any foreign intervention under any pretext. Medelci expressed his fear that Libya could become "a new Iraq or Afghanistan".

#### 26-28 April 2011 (Algiers):

President Abdelaziz Bouteflika met with Malian Foreign Minister Soumeylou Boubeye Maiga to discuss in the fight against insecurity in the Sahel due to the presence of Al Qaeda in Islamic Maghreb (AQIM). Maiga also met with Foreign Minister Mourad Medelci. Algeria donated US\$10 million to fund development in Mali.

### Libya

#### 1 April 2011 (London):

According to the BBC, a senior aide to Muammar Gaddafi's son Saif al-Islam was in London in the past few days for talks with British officials. The Foreign Office said that in all its contacts with Libyan officials, it had made clear that "Gaddafi has to go".

#### 1 April 2011 (Washington):

US Defense Secretary Robert Gates said the people of Libya themselves would throw Muammar Gaddafi out of power, and that the US would not depose Muammar Gaddafi.

#### 1 April 2011 (Tripoli):

The Libyan government conceded that Foreign Minister Moussa Koussa resigned from his post. But the government also claims Gaddafi's regime still enjoys the support of the people. Libya's government spokesman says Koussa's



decision was personal and many others would like to have his job.

#### **1 April 2011 (Tripoli):**

Spokesperson for the Libyan regime Musa Ibrahim refused the rebels' offer for a ceasefire, previously suggested by the leader of the opposition's national council, Mustafa Abdul Jalil.

#### **1 April 2011 (Beijing):**

Germany's Foreign Minister Guido Westerwelle said the situation in Libya could not be solved through military means and called for a ceasefire, amid a NATO-led air campaign against Muammar Gaddafi's forces. Westerwelle made the comments after meeting his Chinese counterpart Yang Jiechi in Beijing on an official trip that will be followed by a visit to disaster-struck Japan.

#### **3 April 2011 (Tripoli):**

According to an unidentified Libyan official, Saadi and Saif al-Islam, sons of Muammar Gaddafi, proposed a plan that entails pushing their father aside and making way for a transition to constitutional democracy.

#### **3 April 2011 (Athens):**

Muammar Gaddafi's special envoy Abdelati Obeidi met with Greek Prime Minister George Papandreou. Greek Foreign Minister Dimitris Droutsas said the Libyan regime is seeking a solution to end hostilities.

#### **3 April 2011 (N'Djamena):**

Chad government spokesman Kalzeubet Pahimi Deubet called on coalition forces to protect its citizens in the rebel-held areas of Libya, saying dozens were accused and executed for allegedly being mercenaries paid by Muammar Gaddafi.

#### **3 April 2011 (Washington):**

Retired US General James Jones, who served as President Barack Obama's National Security Adviser until last October, said the Libya endgame is more "vital" to Europe than the United States.

#### **4 April 2011 (Ankara):**

Muammar Gaddafi's special envoy Abdelati Obeidi met with Turkish Foreign Minister Ahmet Davutoglu to discuss ways to put an end to the Libyan conflict.

#### **4 April 2011 (Valetta):**

Muammar Gaddafi's special envoy Abdelati Obeidi met with Malta's Prime Minister Lawrence Gonzi. No comments were made with regard to the meeting's agenda.

#### **4 April 2011 (Tripoli):**

Spokesperson for the Libyan regime Musa Ibrahim said Muammar Gaddafi is open to the idea of Libya holding elections and reforming its political system, adding that only the Libyan people can decide whether Gaddafi should stay as ruler of the country. Ibrahim said Libya will not accept conditions being imposed from abroad.

#### **5 April 2011 (Benghazi):**

US envoy Chris Stevens met with Libyan rebels to discuss how the US might help them financially.

#### **5 April 2011 (Brussels):**

Brigadier-General Mark van Uhm, NATO's Chief of Allied Command Operations, announced that air strikes by the alliance have destroyed 30% of the military capacity of Muammar Gaddafi's forces.

#### **6 April 2011 (Tripoli):**

Abdelati Obeidi was appointed Foreign Minister.

#### **6 April 2011 (Benghazi):**

Abdel Fattah Younes, head of the rebel army and Muammar Gaddafi's former Interior Minister, lashed out at NATO for not doing enough to stop artillery attacks by Gaddafi's forces.

#### **6 April 2011 (Amman):**

Jordanian Foreign Minister Nasser Judeh announced that fighter aircrafts had been sent to a European air base to support a no-fly zone over Libya and protect humanitarian flights.

#### **7 April 2011 (Ankara):**

Turkish Prime Minister Recep Tayyip Erdogan proposed a path to a peaceful resolution to the conflict in Libya, involving a withdrawal of Muammar Gaddafi's forces from cities held by the rebels, and democratic reform.

#### **10 April 2011 (Tripoli):**

Muammar Gaddafi accepted the roadmap proposed by the African Union. Gaddafi met with the African Union's ad-hoc panel on Libya, composed by Mauritanian President Mohamed Ould Abdel Aziz, AU Commission Chairman Jean Ping and the leaders of Mali, Uganda, South Africa and the Republic of Congo.

#### **11 April 2011 (London):**

In an interview with the BBC, former Foreign Minister Moussa Koussa, who is in Britain after defecting from Muammar Gaddafi's regime, said the restive nation could become a "new Somalia" if civil war broke out.

#### **11 April 2011 (Benghazi):**

The Transitional National Council rejected the African Union's roadmap to end hostilities, describing it as "outdated". The roadmap was presented to the rebels by Mauritanian President Mohamed Ould Abdel Aziz, AU Commission Chairman Jean Ping and the leaders of Mali, Uganda, South Africa and the Republic of Congo.

#### **12 April 2011 (Luxembourg):**

The EU agreed to extend sanctions against Libya, imposing an asset freeze on 26 companies and two people. French Foreign Minister Alain Juppé said NATO must increase bombardments to stop Muammar Gaddafi's forces.

#### **13 April 2011 (Doha):**

Qatar hosted the conference of the First Contact Group on Libya. UN Secretary-General Ban Ki-moon, UK Foreign Secretary William Hague, NATO Secretary-General Anders Fogh Rasmussen, as well as envoys from the United States, Arab countries and international organizations, attended the meeting held behind closed door.

#### **13 April 2011 (Nicosia):**

Foreign Minister Abdelati Obeidi met with Cypriot Foreign Minister Markos Kyprianou as part of Muammar Gaddafi's diplomatic offensive in the region.

#### **14 April 2011 (Washington):**

US President Barack Obama met with the emir of Qatar Sheikh Hamad bin Khalifa Al-Thani to discuss the NATO-led military operation in Libya. Obama thanked Al-Thani for supporting democracy in the Middle East and for assisting the political transition in Libya.

#### **14-15 April 2011 (Berlin):**

NATO's Foreign Ministers gathered to discuss the situation in Libya. Near the end, Russian Foreign Minister Sergei Lavrov, who also attended the meeting, warned NATO about the scale and scope of the attacks launched against Muammar Gaddafi.



**19 April 2011 (London):**

British Foreign Secretary William Hague announced the decision to send military advisers and said the step conformed to United Nations' Security Council Resolution 1973, aimed at protecting Libyan civilians.

**19 April 2011 (Benghazi):**

Suleiman Fortia, a member of the rebel Transitional National Council, said that Qatar began supplying light weapons to assist Libya's rebels in their fight against forces loyal to Muammar Qaddafi.

**20 April 2011 (Geneva):**

The UN's High Commissioner for Human Rights Navi Pillay condemned "indiscriminate attacks" on civilians in Misurata and called for a halt to the siege of the rebel-held western city.

**20 April 2011 (Brussels):**

The EU's High Representative for Foreign Affairs and Security Policy Catherine Ashton said again that Muammar Gaddafi must leave power.

**21 April 2011 (Washington):**

In a joint press conference with Dutch Foreign Minister Uri Rosenthal, US Secretary of State Hillary Clinton said forces loyal to Muammar Gaddafi continued the "vicious attacks", accusing them of using "cluster bombs".

**22 April 2011 (Benghazi):**

US Republican Senator and former Presidential Candidate John McCain visited the Libyan rebels and said that the Transitional National Council was the legitimate voice of the Libyan people, and thus the Obama Administration should officially recognize it.

**22 April 2011 (Paris):**

After meeting with Chief of the Libyan Transitional National Council Mustafa Abdul Jalil, French President Nicolas Sarkozy agreed to visit Benghazi in a future, yet undecided, date.

**22 April 2011 (Moscow):**

After meeting with Russian President Dmitry Medvedev and Foreign Minister Sergei Lavrov, UN Secretary-General Ban Ki-moon called on Libyan authorities to put an end to the fighting.

**22 April 2011 (Beijing):**

Chinese Foreign Ministry spokesman Hong Lei warned Britain over plans to send military officers to advise Libyan rebels, saying that

China opposes any steps that go beyond the mandate of a United Nations resolution.

**23 April 2011 (Athens):**

According to Greek state news agency ANA, a top Libyan official has sought Greek mediation to end the bombings against Libya.

**23 April 2011 (Tripoli):**

The US military confirmed the first strike by an unmanned Predator drone aircraft in Libya.

**25 April 2011 (Tripoli):**

Allied warplanes struck Muammar Gaddafi's compound in what NATO described as a "precision strike" on a communications center. NATO stressed that such an attack was not meant to kill the Libyan leader.

**26 April 2011 (Tripoli):**

Spokesman for the Libyan government Moussa Ibrahim said that Muammar Gaddafi remains "healthy and well" after an "attempt to assassinate" him.

**26 April 2011 (Caracas):**

Venezuelan President Hugo Chávez accused NATO of trying to kill his "friend" Muammar Gaddafi.

**26 April 2011 (Copenhagen):**

Russian Prime Minister Vladimir Putin condemned the bombings of Muammar Gaddafi's residence in Tripoli, saying that they went far beyond the "no-fly zone" resolution passed by the UN Security Council in March.

**26 April 2011 (New York):**

UN Secretary-General Ban Ki-moon said at the end of the UN Security Council closed-door consultations that the humanitarian situation is "growing increasingly urgent" and "diplomatic efforts focus on securing a ceasefire and achieving a political solution".

**27 April 2011 (Paris):**

Chiefs and representatives of 61 Libyan tribes from across the country called for an end to Muammar Gaddafi's rule, in a joint statement released by French writer Bernard-Henri Levy.

**27 April 2011 (Caracas):**

Venezuelan President Hugo Chávez, in an address on national television, announced that a Libyan delegation sent by Muammar Gaddafi had arrived in Caracas. According to Chavez,

the delegation was seeking international support for a truce.

**27 April 2011 (Tripoli):**

A team of UN investigators arrived in Tripoli and met with Libyan officials. The UN team said it would be seeking answers to allegations that Muammar Gaddafi's forces have committed human rights violations.

**27 April 2011 (London):**

UK Defense Secretary Liam Fox said British military commitment to helping Libyan rebels get rid of Colonel Muammar Gaddafi is open-ended and the cost is expected to surpass £1 billion by the summer. Fox denied the existence of a stalemate on the ground.

**27 April 2011 (Brasília):**

Brazil's Foreign Minister Antônio Patriota criticized the bombings carried out by forces under NATO against the private residence of Muammar Gaddafi.

**27 April 2011 (Washington):**

US ambassador to Libya Gene Cretz said that a US diplomat sent to Libya to assess opposition group Transitional National Council had concluded that "it is a political body which is worthy of our support". Yet, the Obama Administration remained without officially recognizing the rebel body.

**30 April 2011 (Tripoli):**

In a televised speech, Muammar Gaddafi offered to discuss a cease-fire despite saying that he would not step down. Both NATO and the Transitional National Council dismissed the offer.

**30 April 2011 (Tripoli):**

According to a Libyan government spokesman, Muammar Gaddafi escaped a NATO missile strike, but his youngest son, Saif al-Arab, and three of his grandchildren, were killed.

## Mauritania

**1 April 2011 (Nouakchott):**

The Opposition Democratic Coordination (OCD), made up of eight political parties, stated its commitment to "serious, honest and responsible dialogue over all issues of national interest". OCD also called on the government



to first lift obstacles to having an inclusive national dialogue.

#### 14 April 2011 (Nouakchott):

As he returned home from the African Union's ad-hoc panel on the AU's mission to Libya and Algeria, President Mohamed Ould Abdel Aziz said the group intends to continue its efforts to achieve a cessation of hostilities and the opening of negotiations.

#### 25 April 2011 (Nouakchott):

Security forces dispersed several hundred anti-government protesters.

#### 26 April 2011 (Nouakchott):

President Mohamed Ould Abdel Aziz and Interior Minister Mohamed Ould Boilil met with Spain's Secretary of State for Security Antonio Camacho to discuss the fight against AL-Qaeda in the Islamic Maghreb (AQIM) and its campaign of kidnapping Westerners.

#### 26 April 2011 (Nouakchott):

Dozens of young Mauritians held a sit-in outside the police directorate's office to demand the release of the 20 protesters that were arrested.

## Morocco

#### 4 April 2011 (Rabat):

The Prince of Wales met with King Mohammed VI and with Prime Minister Abbas El Fassi.

#### 4 April 2011 (Rabat):

Foreign Minister Taib Fassi Fihri met with his Zambian counterpart Kabinga Jacus Pande.

#### 4 April 2011 (Bogota):

Secretary of State for the Foreign Ministry Youssef Amrani met with Colombian Vice-Minister for Multilateral Affairs Patti Londoño and with President of the Colombian Senate Armando Benedetti to discuss bilateral ties.

#### 6 April 2011 (Brasília):

Secretary of State for the Foreign Ministry Youssef Amrani met with Brazilian Vice-President Michel Temer and with a few Brazilian diplomats to discuss bilateral ties.

#### 6-7 April 2011 (New Delhi):

Foreign Minister Taib Fassi Fihri met with his Indian counterpart Samanahalli Malliah Krishna and with the Vice-President of the Indian Senate Rahman Khan.

#### 8 April 2011 (Rabat):

Around 100 members of the February 20 pro-reform movement staged a protest in front of the Moroccan Parliament.

#### 11 April 2011 (Beijing):

Foreign Minister Taib Fassi Fihri met with Chinese Vice President Xi Jinping and with Foreign Minister Yang Jiechi to discuss bilateral ties.

#### 11 April 2011 (Rabat):

Secretary of State for the Foreign Ministry Latifa Akharbach held talks with a delegation from the Danish think-tank "Danish Foreign Policy".

#### 14 April 2011 (Rabat):

King Mohamed VI ordered the release of close to 92 political prisoners and reduced the sentences for scores of others, including members of Islamist opposition groups.

#### 18 April 2011 (Rabat):

Foreign Minister Taib Fassi Fihri met one of Muammar Gaddafi's envoys.

#### 20 April 2011 (Rabat):

Foreign Minister Taib Fassi Fihri met with officials from the rebels' National Transition Council.

#### 20 April 2011 (Monrovia):

Secretary of State for the Foreign Ministry Mohamed Ouzzine met with Liberian President Ellen Johnson Sirleaf to discuss bilateral relations and South-South cooperation.

#### 24 April 2011 (Rabat, Casablanca, Tangiers and Marrakesh):

Thousands of protesters gathered to demand political reform.

#### 26 April 2011 (Rabat):

Foreign Minister Taib Fassi Fihri met with Mustapha El Fekki, the Egyptian candidate to the post of Arab League Secretary General.

#### 27 April 2011 (Rabat):

Foreign Minister Taib Fassi Fihri met with Miguel Ángel Moratinos, former Spanish Foreign Min-

ister and currently the Spanish candidate to the position of Director General of the Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations (FAO).

#### 28 April 2011 (Marrakesh):

A bomb was detonated in a popular café. The terrorist attack killed 16 people, among them a Portuguese national, and wounded close to two dozen.

#### 30 April 2011 (Marrakesh):

King Mohamed VI visited the bombing site.

## Tunisia

#### 1 April 2011 (Tunis):

The Interior Ministry announced that Tunisian women will be allowed to wear the Islamic headscarf in photographs on their identity papers, as a measure aimed at respecting public and civil liberties.

#### 2 April 2011 (Cairo-Tunis):

Egyptian Minister for Foreign Affairs Nabil al-Arabi called Foreign Minister Mouldi Kefi to apologize for riots that occurred during the last minutes of an Africa Champions League match between Egypt's Zamalek and Tunisia's Club Africain.

#### 3 April 2011 (Tozeur):

Soldiers fired into the air to disperse demonstrators, and several people were injured. About 50 unemployed workers gathered outside the local government offices demanding to see the governor to voice their anger about a lack of job opportunities.

#### 3 April 2011 (Tunis):

Interim Prime Minister Beji Caid Sebti and Interim President Fouad Mebazaa met with Italian Prime Minister Silvio Berlusconi. The creation of a bi-national commission to halt the immigration wave was announced.

#### 11 April 2011 (Tunis):

After meeting with Interim Prime Minister Beji Caid Sebti, head of the African Development Bank Donald Kaberuka said "we have important commitments and we will carry on our cooperation with Tunisia".

#### 11 April 2011 (Tunis):

The High Commission for the Realization of Revolutionary Goals prohibited senior Consti-



tutional Democratic Rally (RCD) members from participating in July's constituent assembly elections.

**12 April 2011 (Tunis):**

The High Commission for the Realization of Revolutionary Goals opted for parity between men and women in the lists to be presented by political parties for the July 24<sup>th</sup> elections.

**13 April 2011 (Tunis):**

President of the European Commission José Manuel Durão Barroso met with Interim Prime Minister Beji Caid Sebsi. Barroso said the EU was willing to give an extra €140 million in economic aid to the country, on top of the existing €257 million for 2011-2013, if the government stepped up its efforts to stem irregular migration.

**14 April 2011 (Tunis):**

In an interview on state television, Justice Minister Lazhar Karoui Chebbi said that authorities had prepared 18 legal cases against former president Zine el-Abidine Ben Ali, including "voluntary manslaughter" and "drug trafficking".

**16 April 2011 (Tunis):**

Hundreds of supporters of ousted President Zine el-Abidine Ben Ali's party held a protest, the first since Ben Ali's toppling in January, against their exclusion from politics.

**17 April 2011 (Tunis):**

Interim Prime Minister Beji Caid Sebsi said the decision to bar anyone who held a position in Ben Ali's government or in the RCD from elections could destabilize the country.

**18-20 April 2011 (Tunis):**

Palestinian Authority President Mahmoud Abbas met with Interim President Fouad Mebazaa, Interim Prime Minister Beji Caid Sebsi and with Foreign Minister Mouldi Kefi.

**20 April 2011 (Tunis):**

Interim Prime Minister Beji Caid Sebsi and Interim President Fouad Mebazaa met with French Foreign Minister Alain Juppé, who announced €350 million in development assistance to Tunisia.

**25 April 2011 (Paris):**

Rachid Ghannouchi, leader of Islamist party Ennahda, met with French Foreign Minister Alain Juppé and urged the world's Muslims to reject extremism and restore the true nature of Islam.

**26 April 2011 (Tunis):**

Prime Minister Beji Caid Sebsi announced that officials belonging to the former ruling party RCD in the past 10 years would be barred from standing in elections on July 24<sup>th</sup>. The time limit was cut from the 23 years some groups had asked for.

**28 April 2011 (Tunis):**

Libyan Foreign Minister Abdelati Obeidi met with his Foreign Minister Mouldi Kefi in an apparent bid to rally support for his country.

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