

January 2011

Here are the key events in world news for the month of January 2011. Governor of Punjab Province, Pakistan, Assassinated (**Jan. 4**): The Governor of the Punjab Province, and a close ally of the President of Pakistan, is assassinated. Gov. Salman Taseer is shot getting into his car by Malik Mumtaz Hussain Qadri, an elite-force security guard, who is apprehended immediately after the shooting.

At Least 24 Die in Tunisian Protests (**Jan. 11**): At least two dozen people, mainly young civilian men, are killed in government protests in Tunisia. The protesters are unhappy with the chronic unemployment they are facing in the country, as well as perceived police brutality. President Zine el-Abidine Ben Ali ordered a night curfew, and schools and universities have been temporarily closed. (**Jan. 14**): After 23 years of authoritarian rule, President Ben Ali flees Tunisia for Saudi Arabia amid protests. Prime Minister Mohamed Ghannouchi announces he will take over as interim protests. It is the first time a President of an Arab country has been overthrown because of widespread protesting.

11 Cabinet Members Resign, Toppling Lebanese Government (**Jan. 12**): Hezbollah and its allies withdraw from the Lebanese government, breaking a unity government that has been in place since 2009. Eleven of the 30 cabinet members resign. The government has been in turmoil since 2005, when former Prime Minister Rafik Hariri was assassinated. Egyptian President Asks Army to Intervene After Days of Violent Protest (Jan. 28): After days of violent protest in Cairo, Egypt, President Hosni Mubarak calls the army into the streets to stop the demonstrators, protesting over government corruption, the economy, and lack of personal freedom. Those involved called the event a "day of wrath"; the protests have stretched on for four days.

February

2011

Here are the key events in world news for the month of February 2011. Unrest in Middle East Spreads to Bahrain (**Feb. 14**): Violence erupts in Bahrain as protestors, inspired by recent events in Egypt and Tunisia, select Feb. 14th as a day of protest to coincide with the 10th anniversary of the National Action Charter. Bahrain is the most recent country facing upheaval among its citizens, mirroring the instability in Yemen, Iran, and Libya. Libya on Brink of Civil War (**Feb. 24**): Civilians and defected soldiers seeking the removal of Col. Muammar al-Qaddafi hold off his forces in cities close to Tripoli, Libya's capital. Unlike the Facebook-enabled youth rebellions in neighboring Egypt and Tunisia, the insurrection in Libya is being led by people who have been actively opposing the regime for some time. In a series of determined stands these rebel forces are proving to be a well-armed revolutionary movement. Security Council Approves Sanctions on Libya (**Feb. 26**): The UN Security Council votes unanimously to impose strong sanctions on Libya's leader, Col. Muammar al-Qaddafi, and his inner circle of advisers. The council also calls for an international war crimes investigation into "widespread and systemic attacks" against Libyan citizens.

March

2011

Here are the key events in world news for the month of March 2011. Egyptian Protestors Demand Faster Change and Accountability (**March 6**): Newly appointed Prime Minister Essam Sharaf addresses tens of thousands of protestors in Tahrir Square, where demonstrators press for faster and more substantive changes. The former interior minister, Habib el-Adly, pleads not guilty to corruption charges. A series of fires break out in government security and financial investigation offices angering protestors who suspect that senior officials are trying to destroy evidence that will

implicate more of them in corruption and human rights abuses. Uprising Continues in Libya (**March 7**): Government warplanes repeatedly bomb rebel positions near an oil refinery in the coastal city of Ras Lanuf, seeking to drive them back to the east, as the country's slide into civil war continues. In Tripoli, government supporters celebrate after state television falsely reports that Col. Qaddafi's forces had regained the entire country. Yemen President Rejects Proposal to Step Down (**March 7**): President Ali Abdullah Saleh rejects the political opposition's proposal that he step down by the end of the year, calling it undemocratic and unconstitutional, the official Saba news agency reports. Saleh calls for a national conference to be held, which is rejected by the opposition. Thousands Protest in Bahrain (**March 8**): Thousands of Shiite protestors form a human chain around the Manama, the capital of Bahrain while hundreds demonstrate outside the U.S. Embassy in an appeal for support. Opposition leaders vow that they will not be mollified by offers of money and jobs.

Interim Government Dissolves State Security Dept. in Tunisia (**March 8**): The State Security Dept., which had been accused of human rights abuses under the ousted president Zine el-Abidine Ben Ali, is disbanded by the interim government in Tunisia. The prime minister also names a new cabinet, selecting new leaders for six ministries while retaining ministers in significant agencies like defense, interior, and justice.

Bahrain Cracks Down on Demonstrators (**March 18**): Bahrain brings in troops from Saudi Arabia and the United Arab Emirates to crack down against peaceful protestors clamoring for reform. The government also tears down the monument in Pearl Square, the site of many protests. The 300-foot sculpture, a stone pearl held by six sweeping arches, is seen by protestors as the defining monument of the protest movement. The official Bahrain News Agency reports the change as a "face-lift" to "boost the flow of traffic."

No-Fly Zone is Imposed in Libya (**March 19**): American and European forces unleash warplanes and missiles, striking against the government of Col. Muammar al-Qaddafi in a mission to impose a UN-sanctioned no-fly zone. The goals of the no-fly zone are to keep Col. Qaddafi from using air power against rebel forces and to prevent a massacre in Libya. French warplanes begin the campaign. U.S. forces knock out air defense systems as well as missile, radar, and communication centers around Tripoli, Misurata, and Surt. NATO plans to take over the operation and enforce the no-fly zone.

Military Kill Protestors in Syria (**March 25**): Troops open fire in the southern part of Syria after tens of thousands take to the streets in peaceful protests around the nation. At least twenty demonstrators are killed.

Cabinet Resigns in Syria (**March 29**): President Bashar al-Assad accepts the resignation of his cabinet. The cabinet resignation reflects a rare responsiveness to public pressure by the Syrian government. Meanwhile, in the capital, government supporters take to the streets in an effort to counter the ongoing pro-democracy protests in several cities.

April **2011**
Here are the key events in world news for the month of April 2011. Former Ivory Coast President Captured (**April 11**): French military storm the residence of former

president Laurent Gbagbo and capture him. The West African nation has been entrenched in civil war because Gbagbo refuses to accept the results of the presidential election last year, which he lost. Gbagbo's arrest ends a four-month standoff that has left hundreds dead.

French Legislation Bans Full-Face Coverings (**April 11**): France bans the wearing of full veils in public, becoming the first European nation to impose the restriction. The ban causes protests in Paris and several other cities. The new restriction also has many Muslims worrying about their rights as French citizens. Covering the face is considered by some Muslims as a religious obligation. Supporters of the ban view it as necessary to preserve French culture and to combat what they claim are separatist actions in Muslims.

Libyan Rebels Reject Truce Plan (**April 12**): The African Union presents a plan in Libya, which they call a road map for political settlement. The plan includes a suspension of NATO airstrikes and a cease-fire. Col. al-Qaddafi accepts the plan, but the rebels reject it, saying it does not meet their basic demand that Qaddafi leave power immediately. (April 30): Col. al-Qaddafi survives an NATO airstrike that kills one of his sons and three grandchildren. It is the second airstrike within a week to hit a location close to the Libyan leader.

Three Billion Watch Prince William Marry Kate Middleton (**April 29**): A million people line the streets, half a million gather in front of Buckingham Palace, and two billion tune in via television or computer to see Kate Middleton marry Prince William. Middleton receives rave reviews for wearing a modern, but restrained wedding dress designed by Sarah Burton, the creative director for the late Alexander McQue

May

2011

Osama bin Laden Is Killed in Pakistan (**May 1**): U.S. troops and CIA operatives shoot and kill Osama bin Laden in Abbottabad, Pakistan, a city of 500,000 people that houses a military base and a military academy. Following a firefight, the troops descend upon the compound and shoot Osama bin Laden after he reportedly refuses to surrender. News of bin Laden's death brings cheers and a sense of relief worldwide. (May 13): Two suicide bombers attack recruits leaving a paramilitary training center in Shabqadar, Pakistan. Eighty people are killed and 120 are wounded in the first retaliation for the killing of bin Laden. The Taliban immediately claims responsibility and blames the Pakistani military for failing to stop the U.S. raid.

Palestinian Factions Sign Historic Reconciliation Accord (**May 4**): Fatah and Hamas, rival Palestinian parties, sign a reconciliation accord. The two factions cite common causes behind the accord: opposition to the Israeli occupation and disillusionment with the American peace efforts. The deal remakes the Palestine Liberation Organization, which until now excluded Hamas. Hamas will now be part of the political leadership, starting with a committee to study necessary changes. Hamas's new, larger role in the Palestinian government could have diplomatic consequences. The U.S., which recognizes Hamas as a terrorist group, currently provides hundreds of millions of dollars in aid to Palestine. Syria Forces Go Door-to-Door to Make Arrests (**May 5**): Syrian security forces raid a Damascus suburb, going house-to-house and arresting men in an effort to intensify their crackdown of the uprising against four decades of authoritarian rule. Human rights organizations say that at least 286 men, most between the ages of 18 and 50, have been arrested. IMF Head Arrested for Sexual Assault (**May 14**): Dominique Strauss-Kahn, head of the International Monetary Fund (IMF) and a leading political figure in France, is arrested for sexually assaulting a maid at

a Manhattan hotel. Strauss-Kahn is removed from an Air France plane at Kennedy International Airport and taken into custody. Reaction in France to the arrest is a mixture of anger, disbelief, and embarrassment, with polls showing that most people think he was set up. (May 18): Strauss-Kahn, considered by many as a favorite to oust President Nicolas Sarkozy in the next election, resigns as managing director of the IMF. (May 19): A grand jury indicts Strauss-Kahn on multiple charges, including committing a criminal sex act, attempted rape, and sexual abuse. After Being at Large for 15 Years, Ex-General Is Captured (**May 26**): Ratko Mladic, the former Bosnian Serb general responsible for the massacre of over 8,000 Muslims at Srebrenica in 1995, is found and arrested in Lazarevo, a farming town north of Belgrade. Serbian President Boris Tadic offers few details about the arrest, but promises that Mladic will face a war crimes trial.

Egypt Stops Enforcing Israel's Blockade of Gaza (**May 29**): Egypt lifts the Rafah border blockade, allowing Palestinian residents of the Gaza Strip to pass through. This marks the first break in the enforcement of the four-year Israeli blockade. Israel issues no statements in response to the border opening—a border that in the past has served as a symbol of both their partnership and complicated relationship with Egypt.

June

2011

Injured in Attack, President Saleh Leaves Yemen (**June 3**): Yemen President Ali Abdullah Saleh barely survives an attack when a bomb hits the mosque at the presidential compound where he and other government officials are praying. Saleh and a half dozen other officials are wounded. Saleh claims he's fine in a two-minute audio message, but his words are slurred as if he is under sedation. The Ahmar family, opposition leaders whose militia has been fighting Saleh's troops for nearly two weeks, is blamed for the attack. (June 4): Saleh arrives in Saudi Arabia for medical treatment for injuries sustained in the attack. Al Qaeda and other jihadists exploit Saleh's departure and the existing the unrest to solidify their base in Yemen. (June 8): The Obama administration sends armed drones and fighter jets to Yemen to strike militant suspects linked to al-Qaeda in an attempt to keep the militants from consolidating power during the current political chaos.

Li Na and Rafael Nadal Win French Open (**June 5**): Li Na, a 29-year-old from China, wins the French Open women's championship. She beat last year's winner, Francesca Schiavone, 6-4, 7-6 (0) to become the first player (male or female) from Asia to win a Grand Slam singles crown. Rafael Nadal, of Spain, beat rival Roger Federer 7-5, 7-6 (3), 5-7, 6-1 to take the men's crown for the sixth time. In doing so, Nadal ties the record held by Björn Borg for most French Open men's singles championships.

Killing of a 13-year-old Boy Fuels Protests in Syria (**June 3**): Syrians pour into the streets, creating some of the largest antigovernment protests in the face of a brutal government crackdown that has killed more than 1,000 people. The protests are fueled by anger over the torture and killing of Hamza al-Khateeb, a 13-year-old boy. Marches are dedicated to him and other children who have been killed during the uprising. The protests continue even though Syria's internet has been shut down. As with other uprisings in the region, the internet has been a critical tool in organizing protests. (June 12): Syrian forces regain control over Jisr al-Shoughour, crushing a mutinous alliance of armed civilians and soldiers there. The siege on the northern Syrian town causes thousands of residents to leave, most of them fleeing to

Turkey.

Somalis Kill East African Al-Qaeda Leader (June 11): Somali Soldiers kill Fazul Abdullah Mohammed, the leader of al-Qaeda in East Africa and the mastermind behind the American embassy bombings in Kenya and Tanzania. Mohammed and another militant are killed in a shootout after mistakenly driving up to a security checkpoint in Mogadishu, Somalia's capital.

July

2011

Strauss-Kahn Is Released (July 1): Fomer International Monetary Fund director Dominique Strauss-Kahn is released from house arrest in New York City. Prosecutors, who initially believed they had a strong case, acknowledge that the accuser has credibility issues. Since the hotel maid accused Strauss-Kahn of sexual assault in May, she has admitted to prosecutors that she lied about what happened after the incident. The woman also reportedly lied about her income to qualify for housing as well as the number of children she has to increase her tax refund.

Kvitova and Djokovic Take Wimbledon Titles (July 3): The Czech Republic's Petra Kvitova beat former Wimbledon champ Maria Sharapova 6–3, 6–4 to win the women's singles title. It is the first Major win for 21-year-old Kvitova who says that Martina Navratilova, also from the Czech Republic, is her hero. Novak Djokovic, who won the Australian Open back in January, continues his successful year and dominating in a 6–4, 6–1, 1–6, 6–3 win over Rafael Nadal in the men's singles championship. This is Djokovic's first Wimbledon singles title, which makes him the #1 ranked player in the world.

South Sudan Becomes a Nation (July 9): After more than 50 years of struggle, the Republic of South Sudan declares its independence and becomes Africa's 54th state. Thousands celebrate in the streets of South Sudan's capital, Juba. Salva Kiir, South Sudan's president, signs the interim Constitution.

Scandal Brings End to The News of the World (July 11): The News of the World, a British newspaper owned by Rupert Murdoch, closes after several allegations that the paper's journalists hacked into voicemail accounts belonging to not only a 13-year-old murder victim, but also the relatives of soldiers killed in Iraq and Afghanistan. Prime Minister David Cameron orders two separate investigations. Murdoch's News Corporation feels an immediate impact as its stock price falls. (July 13): Murdoch's News Corporation withdraws its \$12 billion bid to buy British Sky Broadcasting. (July 17): Rebekah Brooks, former editor of The News of the World, is arrested on suspicion of illegally intercepting phone calls and bribing the police. Her arrest comes two days after her resignation as chief executive of News International, which runs the British newspaper operations of Murdoch's News Corporation. (July 18): Paul Stephenson and John Yates, two Scotland Yard senior police officials, resign. Both officers have ties to Neil Wallis, a former deputy editor at The News of the World who was recently arrested on suspicion of phone hacking and bribery of police officers.

Japan Beats USA to Win Women's World Cup (July 17): Germany hosts the 2011 FIFA Women's World Cup where 845,711 fans attend 32 matches to watch 16 teams battle for the trophy. In the final, Japan defeats USA in a post-match penalty kick shoot-out. Japan's win comes to a country desperate for good news after the catastrophic earthquake and tsunami earlier this year as well as the ongoing nuclear

disaster.

Two Related Terrorist Attacks Shock Norway (**July 22**): Norway is hit with consecutive terrorist attacks. First, a bomb explodes in Regjeringskvartalet, the government quarter of Oslo. The explosion happens right outside the prime minister's office, killing eight people and wounding several others. Two hours later, a gunman disguised as a policeman opens fire at a camp for young political activists on the island of Utoya in Tyrifjorden, Buskerud. The camp is organized by the youth organization of the Norwegian Labour Party. The gunman kills 68 campers, including personal friends of Prime Minister Stoltenberg. Police arrest Anders Behring Breivik, a 32-year-old Norwegian who has been linked to an anti-Islamic group and may be connected to other terrorist groups and extremists.

Influential Singer Amy Winehouse Dies (**July 23**): The award-winning, internationally known singer-songwriter Amy Winehouse is found dead in her apartment in London. The cause of death is not immediately known. Although her musical talents and influence were eclipsed in later years by her public battle with drugs and alcohol, Winehouse's success is undeniable, selling five million records and becoming the first British female artist to win five Grammys. She revitalized the music scene in Britain, starting a retro-R&B trend as well as paving the way for other female artists such as Adele and Lady Gaga.

August

2011

Crackdown Continues in Syria (**Aug. 1**): For the second day in a row, the uprising against President Assad's government is met with bombing attacks by Syrian forces in the west-central city, Hama. (**Aug. 3**): Despite global condemnation, the Syrian government orders its military to march into Hama after three days of bombing. Tanks and soldiers seize the central square. Even Russia, a Syrian ally, gives its support to possible Security Council Action against Syria. (**Aug. 4**): Syrian military kill more than 100 people in 24 hours in Hama, bringing the civilian casualties to more than 200 since the bombing began. (**Aug. 7**): Still ignoring international condemnation, the military in Syria initiate another attack, this time in the eastern city of Deir al-Zour. Thousands of people flee and dozens are killed as tanks roar into the city. Hama and Deir al-Zour have been the setting for mass protests in recent weeks and have been the most defiant in the uprising. (**Aug. 15**): The Syrian government sends navy vessels along with tanks and soldiers to the port city of Latakia. At least 25 people are killed, including three children. The attack sparks renewed outrage, partly because they occur during Ramadan, the Muslim holy month. (**Aug. 18**): Britain, France, and Germany release a joint statement stating that President Assad has lost legitimacy as a leader and that he must step down. For the first time, President Obama calls for Assad to leave office. Obama also announces new sanctions against Syria including freezing all Syrian assets. (**Aug. 22**): President Assad says American and European calls for him to step down are "meaningless" and suggests that the military in Syria will continue its crackdown. (**Aug. 26**): Inspired by the fall of Col. Muammar Qaddafi in Libya, thousands of protestors take to the streets in Syria, demanding that President Assad leave. Security forces continue to fight the protestors, including severely beating Ali Farzat, Syria's best-known political cartoonist. The attack on him comes just days after Farzat published a cartoon showing President Assad hitching a ride out of town with Qaddafi.

Mubarak Trial Begins (**Aug. 3**): Tens of millions watch live on television as an ailing Hosni Mubarak is rolled into the courtroom on a hospital bed for the beginning of his trial. Mubarak, the former Egyptian

president, faces charges of corruption and complicity in the killing of protesters. Mubarak was ousted earlier this year after an 18-day revolution in Egypt.

Violent Riots Spread Throughout Britain **(Aug. 6)**: A protest over the police shooting of Mark Duggan, a 29-year-old local man, turns violent. Rioters with makeshift weapons fight police in Tottenham and set fire to two police cars and several buildings. **(Aug. 8)**: Over two days, riots breakout in Enfield, Lambeth, Camden, Walthamstow, Oxford Circus and Islington. Rioters smash storefronts and burn cars. Two officers are hit by a car in Walthamstow. **(Aug. 9)**: Several hundred rioters burn cars and fight with police in several London neighborhoods. A man in south London is shot and killed, becoming the first fatality in the riots. **(Aug. 10)**: Ten thousand police officers patrol London. Residents are strongly advised to stay home and businesses close early. Prime Minister David Cameron pledges in a speech to "fight back" against the rioters, describing them as "groups of thugs."

American Forces Experience Deadliest Day in Afghan War **(Aug. 6)**: Thirty U.S. armed servicemen, including 22 members of the Navy SEALs, are killed in Afghanistan when insurgents shoot down their Chinook helicopter. The casualties make the day the deadliest for U.S. forces in the decade-long war. Most of the 22 Navy SEALs killed are members of SEAL Team Six, the unit responsible for finding and killing Osama bin Laden on May 2, 2011. **(Aug. 11)**: The Pentagon releases the names of the servicemen that died on August 6 and reports that none of the men killed were involved in the Osama bin Laden mission back in May.

Yemen President Leaves Hospital **(Aug. 7)**: President Saleh, having recovered from injuries sustained in June when the presidential compound was attacked, is discharged from a hospital in Saudi Arabia, but chooses to remain in the country. An official in Yemen says that Saleh is not well enough to function as president. **(Aug. 11)**: President Saleh appears on state television looking healthy and walking. (Aug. 17): Yemen opposition leaders form a national council. The government instantly condemns the act. **(Aug. 23)**: Prime Minister Ali Mujawar returns to Yemen from Saudi Arabia where he was treated for injuries sustained in the June attack, while President Saleh remains in Saudi Arabia despite vows to return to Yemen.

Rebel Forces Advance in Libya **(Aug. 18)**: Rebels opposing Col. Muammar Qaddafi seize Zawiyah and gain control of the city's oil refinery. Zawiyah, a port city just 31 miles west of Tripoli, is a key victory. **(Aug. 21)**: Rebel forces advance into Tripoli as foreigners try to flee the city. With the rebels meeting little resistance from loyalists, residents in Tripoli take to the streets to celebrate the end of Qaddafi's 42 years in power. **(Aug. 23)**: Rebels seize Qaddafi's compound. Qaddafi and his family flee and remain at large. In a radio broadcast from an undisclosed location, Qaddafi vows to continue the fight. Rebels respond by placing a \$2 million bounty on his head. **(Aug. 24)**: More than 30 foreign journalists who had been held hostage in Tripoli's Rixos hotel by loyalists since the rebels invaded the city are freed, yet another sign that Qaddafi's rule is coming to an end. **(Aug. 26)**: Rebels begin transferring their administration from Benghazi to Tripoli, Libya's capital. **(Aug. 27)**: Five mass executions carried out by Qaddafi loyalists during his final hours in power are uncovered. **(Aug. 29)**: Qaddafi's whereabouts remain unknown, but three of his children and his second wife flee to Algeria.

Attacks in Israel Cause More Tension with Gaza and Egypt **(Aug. 18)**: Multiple attacks are made near Eilat, a popular resort in Israel, killing eight Israelis and wounding more than 30. Authorities blame the Popular Resistance Committees, a group that has worked with Hamas, for the attacks. Authorities believe the attackers crossed into Israel from Egypt. Israel responds with several airstrikes on Gaza, killing the Popular Resistance Committees' commander, among others. Egyptian officials deny that the attackers crossed through Egypt to get to Eilat. Hamas also denies Israel's accusations. **(Aug. 19)**: Tension between Israel and Egypt increases when three Egyptian security officers near the border are inadvertently killed during Israeli airstrikes. The cross-border terrorist attacks along with the Israeli airstrike retaliation threatens the decades of peace between Israel and Egypt. Meanwhile, Palestinian militants fire more than 10 rockets into Israel. **(Aug. 20)**: Palestinian militants continue to fire rockets into Israeli territory from Gaza, killing one civilian and wounding six. Hamas, which controls Gaza, takes credit for four of the rockets fired into Israel. **(Aug. 29)**: A Palestinian man from the West Bank hijacks a taxi in Tel Aviv. He drives the cab to a popular nightclub where he runs over police officers and stabs several bystanders. Four police officers and the taxi driver are wounded. Japanese Parliament Selects New Prime Minister **(Aug. 30)**: Japan's finance minister Yoshihiko Noda is elected prime minister by parliament. Noda becomes the nation's sixth prime minister in five years. He faces a country still recovering from an earthquake, tsunami, and nuclear disaster earlier this year as well as a weakened economy and ongoing concern over Japan's debt.

September

2011

Iran's President Calls for Syrian Leader to Back Down **(Sept. 8)**: President Mahmoud Ahmadinejad of Iran joins other world leaders in calling for President Bashar al-Assad to end his crackdown on the uprising that is challenging his rule in Syria. Ahmadinejad's shift is unexpected because the two leaders have been allies for decades and Iran has recently been accused of funding Assad's crackdown. Protesters Attack Israeli Embassy in Cairo **(Sept. 9)**: Thousands of protesters attack the Israeli Embassy in Cairo, demolishing a protective wall while Egyptian security forces watched. Two dozen protesters break into the offices and throw documents into the street. The Israeli flag is ripped down. When riot police attempt to stop the attack, protesters fight back with Molotov cocktails and stones. At least two protesters die in the attack and at least 1,200 are injured. The attack in Egypt comes just one week after Turkey expels Israel's ambassador. American Hikers Released From Prison in Iran **(Sept. 21)**: Shane Bauer and Joshua Fattal, the two American hikers who were imprisoned on espionage charges in Iran for over two years, are released. They are taken by plane from Evin Prison to Oman where they are reunited with family members. Their release comes after a power struggle between Iranian President Mahmoud Ahmadinejad who promised their release and Iran's judiciary which denied that the hikers would be freed. Bauer and Fattal have been in prison since they wandered over the border from Iraq by mistake with a friend over two years ago. Palestinians Officially Request United Nations Membership **(Sept. 23)**: Palestinian president Mahmoud Abbas officially requests a bid for statehood at the UN Security Council. The request comes after months of failed European and U.S. efforts to bring Israel and Palestine back to the negotiating table. The Palestinian Authority is pursuing a Security Council vote to gain statehood as a full member of the UN rather than going to the General Assembly. One of the reasons for this is that the General Assembly can only give the Palestinian Authority non-member observer status at the UN, a lesser degree of statehood. In addition, the European states in the General Assembly have made it clear that they will support the

proposal only if the Palestinians drop their demand that Israel halt settlement construction. The Palestinians have long insisted that Israel cease the settlement construction and deem the condition unacceptable. Therefore, the Palestinian Authority prefers to take its case to the Security Council even though the U.S. has vowed to veto the request.

Yemen President Returns From Saudi Arabia **(Sept. 23)**: President Ali Abdullah Saleh returns to Yemen after spending almost four months in Saudi Arabia where he sought medical treatment after a bomb attack on his presidential palace back in June. Saleh calls for a return to negotiations and a ceasefire, but his return does not immediately stop the fighting between government forces and soldiers who are now siding with anti-government protesters. The fighting has killed more than 70 people since Sept. 18.

Saudi Arabia Grants Women the Right to Vote **(Sept. 25)**: King Abdullah of Saudi Arabia grants women the right to vote and run for office in future elections. The new ruling will not go into effect until the next election cycle in 2015. Still, this is a big victory for women in a country where they are not allowed to drive and must have a male chaperone with them in public at all times.

American Born Al-Qaeda Leader Is Killed in Yemen **(Sept. 30)**: A missile from an American drone aircraft in Yemen kills Anwar al-Awlaki, a radical, U.S.-born Islamic cleric and an influential figure in al-Qaeda in the Arabian Peninsula. He is believed to have inspired Nidal Malik Hasan, the U.S. Army psychiatrist who is accused of killing 12 fellow soldiers and a civilian in a shooting spree at Fort Hood, Texas, in 2009. As head of external operations of al-Qaeda in the Arabian Peninsula, Awlaki is believed to have been involved in planning attacks against U.S. targets.

October

2011

Alleged Assassination Plot Is Exposed **(Oct. 11)**: U.S. Attorney general Eric H. Holder announces from Washington that the Quds Force of the Islamic Revolutionary Guards Corps paid assassins from a Mexican drug cartel \$1.5 million to kill Adel al-Jubeir, Saudi Arabia's ambassador to the United States. The main suspects are Mansour J. Arbabsiar, an American citizen of Iranian descent who is in custody, and Gholam Shakuri, a member of the Quds Force, who is at large and is believed to be in Iran. American investigators believe that high-ranking Iranian government officials are responsible for the plot.

Prisoner Swap Between Israel and Hamas Begins **(Oct. 18)**: Gilad Shalit, a twenty-five year old Israeli soldier, is released after being held for more than five years by Hamas, a militant Palestinian group. He is exchanged for one thousand Palestinians who have spent years in Israeli jails. Shalit has been held in Gaza since Palestinian militants kidnapped him in 2006. In a televised address following Shalit's release, Israel's Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu says, "Today we are all united in joy and in pain."

Two-day Strike In Greece Pushes Riots to New Level **(Oct. 19)**: Tens of thousands begin the first day of a two-day general strike in Greece bringing the country's ongoing rioting to a whole new level. Protestors range from retired army officers, teachers, judges, and trash collectors. The strike is in reaction to the Parliament's pending vote to approve new austerity measures. On the evening of the 19th, the Greek Parliament approves the new austerity measures and receives rescue financing. The new measures cut pensions and wages as well as approve thousands of public sector layoffs. The bill also revises collective bargaining rules, making it easier to fire workers. **(Oct. 31)**: In an effort to placate protestors and save his political standing, Prime Minister George Papandreou announces that there will be a public vote on the austerity measures.

European Leaders Agree on How to Resolve Euro Crisis **(Oct. 26)**: Led by Chancellor Angela Merkel of Germany and President Nicolas Sarkozy of France, leaders of the euro zone agree on a package to bring

the debt crisis in Europe under control. The terms include forcing banks to take a 50% cut in the value of Greek debt and to raise new capital to protect them from future defaults, increasing the euro-zone's bail-out fund to \$1.4 trillion, more austerity measures in Greece, and a reduction of Greece's debt to 120% of its GDP by 2020. Many Greek citizens and politicians condemn the deal out of frustration over Germany and France's continued influence over Greece's affairs.

Qaddafi Is Captured and Killed **(Oct. 20)**: Libya's interim government announces that Col. Muammar el-Qaddafi has been killed by rebel troops in Surt, his hometown. Initial reports are unclear on the cause of death. **(Oct. 23)**: Libya officially declares its liberation from Qaddafi and begins the process of electing a government and creating a constitution.

Tunisia Votes in First Ever Free Election **(Oct. 24)**: Millions of Tunisians vote in their first ever free election. The vote is for an assembly to write a constitution and shape a new government. Ennahda, a moderate Islamist party, is the winner with 41 percent of the vote. Ennahda will therefore name the prime minister, lead the coalition government and have the most say in Tunisia's new constitution.

Palestine Becomes Member of UNESCO **(Oct. 31)**: UNESCO (The United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization) approves the Palestinian bid for full membership to the UN with a 107 to 14 vote. The favorable vote defies a mandated cutoff of American funding. The U.S. contributes \$70 million to UNESCO per year, about 22 percent of its yearly budget. The vote makes Palestine the 195th member of UNESCO.

November

2011

Greek Leader Calls off Referendum, Agrees to Resign **(Nov. 3)**: Prime Minister George Papandreou calls off a referendum on Greece's new debt deal with the euro zone just days after calling for one. Papandreou calls off the vote after winning support from his opposition. **(Nov. 4)**: Papandreou wins a confidence vote in Parliament after he pledges to form a unity government. The vote is a sign of approval for the deal reached by European leaders in late October to help Greece avoid default and stabilize the euro. **(Nov. 6)**: Papandreou agrees to create a transitional administration which will manage the country's debt-relief deal and to resign after the country holds early elections.

Italy Passes More Austerity Measures, Berlusconi Steps Down **(Nov. 11)**: Italy's Senate passes another round of austerity measures. Italy has no other option with its economy too big for a bail out and no end in sight for its debt crisis. **(Nov. 12)**: Berlusconi, who has somehow managed to weather political and personal scandals that would have ended most political careers, steps down. Mario Monti, an economist and former antitrust commissioner for the European Commission, takes over, leading a cabinet of technocrats to implement the austerity plan.

Protesters Return to Tahrir Square **(Nov. 18)**: Protesters-representing both Islamists and the liberal opposition-return to Tahrir Square in Egypt to demand the ruling military council step aside in favor of a civilian-led government. The demonstrations turn violent with police firing on crowds with tear gas and rubber bullets. **(Nov. 21)**: As protests grow in size and police are widely criticized for their crack down, the cabinet resigns. In an agreement reached with the Muslim Brotherhood, the military council vows to install a civilian prime minister and to accelerate the transition to a civilian government, with presidential elections being held by June 2012.

Iran Downgrades Relations with Britain **(Nov. 28)**: Iran criticizes the increase in sanctions by Western nations and is particularly outraged with England. Parliament votes to downgrade the diplomatic ties with Britain. Several dozen Iranian protesters rush into the British embassy compound in Tehran, yelling, "Death to England!" They break embassy windows, burn the British flag, and vandalize offices. British

Prime Minister David Cameron withdraws several diplomats from Iran following the incursion.

December

2011

Parliamentary Elections Spark Massive Protests in Russia **(Dec. 4)**: Parliamentary elections spark protests, mainly from middle-class Russians. International and local monitors condemn the election as fraudulent. United Russia, the party led by Vladimir Putin, comes out on top in the elections, receiving nearly 50 percent of the vote, but they lost 77 seats. Monitors say that United Russia would have lost more seats were it not for ballot-box stuffing and voting irregularities. For example, videos, some taken with cellphones, surfaced on the internet showing local authorities threatening subordinates at polling stations. **(Dec. 10)**: Over 40,000 Russians rally near the Kremlin. It is the largest anti-Kremlin protest since the early 1990s and is approved by city authorities, although riot police are on hand. The activists call for Putin's resignation and denounce the election results. Putin accuses the United States, singling out Secretary of State Hillary Rodham Clinton, for instigating the demonstrations when she criticized conduct during the parliamentary elections. (Dec. 12): Billionaire industrialist Mikhail D. Porkhorov announces that he plans to run for president against Putin in 2012. Porkhorov owns many businesses in Russia as well as the New Jersey Nets, the NBA franchise, in the United States. In his announcement, Porkhorov says, "I made a decision, probably the most serious decision in my life: I am going to the presidential election." Many observers question if Porkhorov is truly challenging Putin or if he has Putin's approval to run to create an air of legitimacy to the race. European Leaders Call for Changes to Treaty **(Dec. 5)**: Together German Chancellor Angela Merkel and President Nicolas Sarkozy of France make a joint call for Europe's governing treaties to be amended in order to provide better governance on the economic policies of the 17 countries within the euro zone. The proposed amendments include monthly meetings of all European leaders, automatic penalties for nations that exceed deficit limits, and a creation of a European monetary fund.