

## The Blue Revolution

The country of Kuwait acquired independence from the United Kingdom in 1961. With the country feeling a sense of liberation, the women in particular seized the moment to seek further liberation. As an act of defiance, many women burned their robes. In doing so, they rejected notions of female dress and began to adopt a more Western wardrobe.

A year later, a significant obstacle to their campaign appeared; the Kuwaiti parliament passed new election laws in 1962 that limited the electorate to a select few. Only men over the age of 21 whose families lived in Kuwait prior to 1920 were eligible to vote. Additionally, the election laws stipulated that members of the police and military could not vote. The result of the laws was a very exclusive electorate that excluded all groups of women from participation in the political process.

Blue Revolution was a term used by some Kuwaitis to refer to demonstrations in Kuwait in support of women's right to vote beginning in March 2005; it was named after the colour of the signs the protesters used. In May of that year the Kuwaiti government acceded to their demands, granting women the right to vote beginning in the 2007 parliamentary elections. The demonstrators did not aim to overthrow the government. Their objective was to win the right to vote for women, which they did.

Building on the energy of previous years, the campaign really captured the attention of the entire nation in 2005. So much so that a nonviolent anti-women's rights campaign came into existence in Kuwait. Mostly consisting of staunch Islamists, the campaign organized rallies and criticized foreign influence. The women's campaign, however, also received some new support in 2005 from the Kuwaiti Islamist Ummah Party, which became the first Sunni Muslim group in the Persian Gulf region to publicly support women's right to vote.

In March, 1,000 demonstrators gathered peacefully outside of the Kuwaiti parliament to reinforce their demand for the right to vote. A small group of male anti-suffrage protesters made their presence felt at the demonstration, but were largely overshadowed by the pro-vote group. Many of the women involved in the demonstration wore pale blue to represent the struggle for suffrage. On May 17, after relentless resistance from conservatives, the Kuwaiti parliament passed a bill, granting the women the right to vote and run for elected office. The final vote in parliament saw 37 votes in favor and 21 votes against.

## The Denim Revolution

The Denim or Jeans Revolution was a term used by Belarus' democratic opposition to describe their protests following the 2006 Belarusian presidential election. The term was coined after a September 16, 2005 public demonstration against the policies of Alexander Lukashenko. On September 16, 1999, popular opposition leader Viktor Gonchar disappeared. The Belarusian police seized the white-red-white flags used by the opposition and banned in the state, and an activist of the youth movement Zubr, Mikita Sasim raised his denim shirt, announcing this will be their flag instead. This spontaneous incident was recognized to have a symbolic meaning. In the former Soviet Union jeans were a symbol of the Western culture, and hence jeans were immediately recognized by Belarusian opposition as a symbol of protest against Lukashenko's Soviet-like policies, as well as the symbol that Belarusians are "not isolated" from the West. Subsequently, Zubr suggested to wear jeans on 16th day of each month, in remembrance of alleged disappearances in Belarus.

The term "Jeans Revolution" was brought to worldwide attention in reference to the demonstrations held in Minsk, the capital of Belarus, disputing the elections. Up to 40,000 protesters gathered in October Square on March 19, 2006, it is believed. The protest against the outcome of the March 19 election began as soon as polls closed late Sunday, with more than 10,000 people gathering in the square.

On March 24, authorities sent in riot police to clear out the makeshift tent camp in October Square and told them to disperse. State television emphasized a report from city police stating that no one was hurt in the operation.

President Alexander Lukashenko earlier announced that protests similar to what occurred during other revolutions in the region would not take place in Belarus, stating that "force will not be used" to claim the presidency. Belarus authorities vowed to crush unrest in the event of large-scale protests following the election. Despite the government's prediction, the rally after the election was the biggest the opposition had mustered in years, reaching at least 10,000.

On March 20, Alaksandar Milinkievič said to 7,000 supporters that they faced a long haul with their protests: "We, free people of Belarus, will never recognise the election. They are afraid of us. Their power is based on lies". However, Lukashenko renewed charges that his rivals had planned pro-Western revolts like those in ex-Soviet Ukraine and Georgia. "Let me say that the revolution that so many people talked about and some were preparing, has failed and it could not be otherwise", he stated during the news conference on his victory.

On March 25, the 45,000 protesters in Belarus met police that did not clash with them, because they were waiting for riot police, but they did not interfere. However the protesters clashed with riot police and were eventually driven back. The riot police arrested more than 100 people along with Alexander Kozulin, a supporter of the protests and a candidate against Lukashenko. Kozulin was allegedly assaulted by the police during his arrest and on July 14, 2006, was sentenced to five-and-a-half years imprisonment for his actions in the protests.

Belarus is an autocratic state where KGB-like surveillance rules and the media have no rights. Protesting is considered a criminal activity and any writing that is critical of the regime can land a person in jail for three years.

Sadly democracy in Belarus still remains far off in the distance.

## The Green Revolution

The 2009–10 Iranian election protests were a series of protests following the 2009 Iranian presidential election against the disputed victory of Iranian President Mahmoud Ahmadinejad and in support of the opposition candidates that occurred in major cities in Iran. The protests were given several titles by their proponents including the Green Revolution, the Green Wave or the Sea of Green, reflecting presidential candidate Mousavi's campaign color.

The protests began the night of 12 June 2009, following the announcement that incumbent President Mahmoud Ahmadinejad had won nearly 60 percent despite several reported irregularities. However, all three opposition candidates claimed that the votes were manipulated and the election was rigged, and candidates Mohsen Rezaee and Mousavi have lodged official complaints. Mousavi announced that he "won't surrender to this manipulation" before lodging an official appeal against the result to the Guardian Council on 14 June. Ayatollah Ali Khamenei ordered an investigation into the claims of voting fraud and irregularities as per the request of the Green movement leaders. Ahmadinejad called the election "completely free" and the outcome "a great victory" for Iran, dismissing the protests as little more than "passions after a soccer match".

Despite the relative peaceful nature of the protests, the Police and the Basij (a paramilitary group) suppressed them by using batons, pepper spray, sticks and, in some cases, firearms; the most widely known victim was Neda Agha-Soltan, who was shot by a Basij and her last moments were uploaded to YouTube and was broadcast around the world. Opposition groups have also reported that thousands more have been arrested and tortured in prisons around the country, with former inmates alleging mass rape of men, women, and children by the Iranian Revolutionary Guards in prisons. The Iranian government has confirmed the deaths of 36 people during the protests, while unconfirmed reports by supporters of Mousavi allege that there have been 72 deaths (twice as many) in the three months following the disputed election, with a possibly higher number, since relatives of the deceased are forced to sign documents claiming they had died of heart attack or meningitis. Iranian authorities have closed universities in Tehran, blocked web sites, blocked cell phone transmissions and text messaging, and banned rallies.

The events have also been nicknamed the "Twitter Revolution" because of the protesters' reliance on Twitter and other social-networking Internet sites to communicate with each other.

The Islamic Republic has not escaped popular opposition in the past. During the 1980s, the Marxist-Islamist, Mojahedin Khalq was instrumental in opposing Ayatollah Khomeini through large protests and bombings against politicians such as Mohammad-Ali Rajai, Shahid Beheshti, and Khamenei himself, who escaped an assassination attempt that left his right arm paralyzed. Following the 1981 Haft-e Tir bombing, Ayatollah Khomeini declared the Mojahedin and anyone opposed to the Islamic republic, "enemies of god" and pursued a mass campaign of torture, rape, and execution against members of the Mojahedin, Fadaiyan, and Tudeh parties as well as their families, close friends, and even anyone who was accused of insufficient Islamic behavior, resulting in the deaths of thousands of Iranians who were usually tried in secret kangaroo courts run by hard line clerics. Following the failed Operation Mersad in 1988, Khomeini ordered all prisons to execute those still in captivity, resulting in an estimated 30,000 dead. Since then, no organized opposition has surfaced in Iran and following this experience, the Iranian Government usually employs heavy handed tactics to marginalize any attempt at regime removal and usually justifies this with the "enemy of god" classification.

## The Orange Revolution

The Orange Revolution was a series of protests and political events that took place in Ukraine from late November 2004 to January 2005, in the immediate aftermath of the run-off vote of the 2004 Ukrainian presidential election which was claimed to be marred by massive corruption, voter intimidation and direct electoral fraud. Kiev, the Ukrainian capital, was the focal point of the movement's campaign of civil resistance, with thousands of protesters demonstrating daily. Nationwide, the democratic revolution was highlighted by a series of acts of civil disobedience, sit-ins, and general strikes organized by the opposition movement.

The protests were prompted by reports from several domestic and foreign election monitors as well as the widespread public perception that the results of the run-off vote of 21 November 2004 between leading candidates Viktor Yushchenko and Viktor Yanukovich were rigged by the authorities in favour of the latter. The nationwide protests succeeded when the results of the original run-off were annulled, and a revote was ordered by Ukraine's Supreme Court for 26 December 2004. Under intense scrutiny by domestic and international observers, the second run-off was declared to be "fair and free". The final results showed a clear victory for Yushchenko, who received about 52% of the vote, compared to Yanukovich's 44%. Yushchenko was declared the official winner and with his inauguration on 23 January 2005 in Kiev, the Orange Revolution ended.

In the 2010 presidential election Yanukovich became Yushchenko's successor as Ukrainian President after the Central Election Commission and international observers declared that the presidential election was conducted fairly. Yanukovich was ousted from power four years later following the February 2014 Euromaidan clashes in Kiev's Independence Square. Unlike the bloodless Orange Revolution, these protests resulted in more than 100 deaths, occurring mostly between 18 and 20 February.

The state of Ukraine during the 2004 presidential election is considered an "ideal condition" for an outburst from the public. During this time Ukrainians were impatient while waiting for economic and political transformation. The results of the election were thought to be fraudulent and considered "a nail in the coffin" of the preceding events.

The Ukrainian regime was in power before the Orange Revolution created a path for a democratic society to emerge. It was based on a "competitive authoritarian regime" that allowed for a democracy and market economy to come to life. The election fraud definitely emphasised the Ukrainian citizens' desire for a more pluralistic type of government. The president was embroiled in a scandal that undermined the peoples' respect for him as president, but also for the elite ruling class in general. Because of Kuchma's scandalous behaviour, he lost many of his supporters with high ranking government positions. Many of the government officials who were on his side went on to fully support the election campaign of Yushchenko and well as his ideas in general. After a clear lack of faith in the government had been instilled in the Ukrainian population, Yushchenko's role had never been more important to the revolution. Yushchenko was a charismatic candidate who showed no signs of being corrupt. Yushchenko was on the same level as his constituents and presented his ideas in a "non-Soviet" way. Young Ukrainian voters were extremely important to the outcome of the 2004 Presidential election. This new wave of younger people had different views of the main figures in Ukraine. The abundance of younger people who participated showed an increasing sense of nationalism that was developing in the country. The Orange Revolution was impactful enough to interest people of all ages.

The Orange Revolution was first called the Chestnut Revolution, after the trees along the main avenue in Kiev, the nation's capital, the more vivid orange was adopted by backers of the opposition candidate, Viktor Yushchenko, who finally gained office after two run-off elections.

## The Saffron Revolution

Saffron Revolution is a term used to describe a series of economic and political protests and demonstrations that took place from August to October of 2007 in Burma (also known as Myanmar). The protests were triggered by the decision of the national military government to remove subsidies on the sales prices of fuel. The national government is the only supplier of fuels and the removal of the price subsidy immediately caused diesel and petrol prices to increase by 66%-100% and the price of compressed natural gas for buses to increase 500% in less than a week.

The various protests were led by students, political activists, including women, and Buddhist monks and took the form of a campaign of nonviolent resistance, sometimes also called civil resistance.

In response to the protests dozens of protesters were arrested or detained. Starting in September 2007 the protests were led by thousands of Buddhist monks, and those protests were allowed to proceed until a renewed government crackdown in late September 2007. Some news reports referred to the protests as the Saffron Revolution.

The exact number of casualties is not known, but estimates range from 13-31 deaths resulting from the protests and reprisals by the government. Several hundred people were arrested or detained, many, but not all, of whom were released.

The phrase "Saffron Revolution" connects the protests against Myanmar's military dictatorship to the saffron-colored robes widely associated with Buddhist monks, who were at the forefront of the demonstrations.

Democratic Voice of Burma puts the number of deaths at 138, basing their figure on a list compiled by the 88 Student Generation group in Myanmar. The Executive Director of the DVB, Aye Chan Naing, told the Associated Press that "this 138 figure is quite credible because it is based on names of victims, I also think the figure is accurate because of the pictures coming from inside Burma. The way they were shooting into the crowds with machine guns means dozens of people could have died."

A report in the Daily Mail states that "thousands of protesters are dead and the bodies of hundreds of executed monks have been dumped in the jungle", the report is based on information provided by Colonel Hla Win, who defected from the army some days prior to the report, he is quoted as having said "Many more people have been killed in recent days than you've heard about. The bodies can be counted in several thousand."

Australia's The Age reports that, after two non-protesters were shot in northwest Yangon, "the army came back, gave the families less than \$20 each and took away the corpses."

On 11 November 2008, a court in Insein Prison sentenced Students Group members arrested during the anti-government protests to 65 years in prison. The government used a variety of laws including the foreign exchange act and the video and electronics act which prohibit Burmese nationals from holding foreign currency or from owning electronic and video equipment without a permit.

The government attempted to block all websites and services that could carry news or information about Myanmar, barring access to web-based email. However protesters were able to access the Internet anyway and as a result the protests received a never before seen level of international news coverage. Bloggers in Yangon succeeded in circumventing the censors, posting pictures and videos on blogs almost as soon as the protests began. Many of these images were picked up by mainstream news organizations, because bloggers had managed to capture images that no one else was able to get. When Aung San Suu Kyi stepped outside her home in Yangon to greet marching monks and supporters on Saturday, the only pictures of the landmark moment were posted on blogs. On 28 September it was reported that the government had blocked all access to the Internet. The official explanation is that maintenance is being carried out but Sky News reports that all Internet cafés have also been closed.

## The White Revolution

The Egyptian Revolution of 2011, locally known as the January 25 Revolution (or the Lotus revolution after the national flower of Egypt), was a movement following a popular uprising which began on 25 January 2011. It consisted of demonstrations, marches, plaza occupations, riots, non-violent civil resistance, acts of civil disobedience and strikes. Millions of protesters from a range of socio-economic and religious backgrounds demanded the overthrow of Egyptian President Hosni Mubarak. The revolution included Islamic, liberal, anti-capitalist, nationalist and feminist elements. Violent clashes between security forces and protesters resulted in at least 846 people killed and over 6,000 injured. Protesters burned over 90 police stations. The protests, which took place in Cairo, Alexandria and other cities, followed the Tunisian revolution which resulted in the overthrow of longtime Tunisian president Ben Ali.

The Egyptian protesters' grievances focused on legal and political issues, including police brutality, state-of-emergency laws, lack of free elections and freedom of speech, corruption, and economic issues including high unemployment, food-price inflation and low wages. The protesters' primary demands were the end of the Mubarak regime and emergency law, freedom, justice, a responsive non-military government and a voice in managing Egypt's resources. Strikes by labour unions added to the pressure on government officials.

During the uprising the capital, Cairo, was described as "a war zone" and the port city of Suez saw frequent violent clashes. Protesters defied a government-imposed curfew, which was unenforced by the police and military. Egypt's Central Security Forces police, loyal to Mubarak, was gradually replaced by military troops. In the chaos, there was looting by gangs which was instigated (according to opposition sources) by plainclothes police officers. In response, watch groups were organized by civilians to protect neighbourhoods.

Mubarak dissolved his government, appointing former head of the Egyptian General Intelligence Directorate Omar Suleiman vice-president in an attempt to quell dissent. Mubarak asked aviation minister and former chief of Egypt's air force Ahmed Shafik to form a new government. Mohamed ElBaradei became a major opposition figure, with all major opposition groups supporting his role as negotiator for a transitional unity government.

On 11 February 2011 Vice President Omar Suleiman announced that Mubarak would resign as president, turning power over to the Supreme Council of the Armed Forces (SCAF). The military junta, headed by effective head of state Mohamed Hussein Tantawi, announced on 13 February that the constitution would be suspended, both houses of parliament dissolved and the military would rule for six months (until elections could be held). The previous cabinet, including Prime Minister Ahmed Shafik, would serve as a caretaker government until a new one was formed. Shafik resigned on 3 March, a day before major protests to force him to step down were planned, and was replaced by former transport minister Essam Sharaf. On 24 May 2011, Mubarak was ordered to stand trial on charges of premeditated murder of peaceful protesters and, if convicted, could face the death penalty. On 2 June 2012 Mubarak was found guilty of complicity in the murder of protesters and sentenced to life imprisonment.

After the revolution against Mubarak and a period of rule by the Supreme Council of the Armed Forces, the Muslim Brotherhood took power in Egypt through a series of popular elections, with Egyptians electing Islamist Mohamed Morsi to the presidency in June 2012. However, Morsi's government encountered fierce opposition from secularists and members of the military, and mass protests broke out against his rule in June 2013. On 3 July 2013, Morsi was deposed by a coup d'état led by the minister of defense, General Abdel Fattah El-Sisi, who became Egypt's de facto strongman and was eventually elected president himself in a disputed 2014 election.

In Egypt and the Arab world, the protests and governmental changes are also known as the 25 January Revolution, Freedom Revolution or Rage Revolution, and the Youth Revolution, Lotus Revolution or White Revolution.