



Language

The uprisings in Tunisia and Egypt at the beginning of 2011 not only reverberated throughout the Arab world, but encouraged popular movements across sub-Saharan Africa. Some of these campaigns were about land, food prices, living standards, and demands for higher pay. Others focused on demands for justice (Burkina Faso), freedom for an imprisoned opposition leader (Uganda), restrictions of the electoral rolls (Senegal and Benin), or demands for a change of regime (Gabon and Swaziland).

Just as the 'Arab Spring' of 2011-12 in North Africa drew attention to popular protest in Sub-Saharan Africa, the 'Second Arab Spring' of 2019' (See E.V.C.), and the impressive movements in Algeria and Sudan, encouraged discussion of unarmed protest in the rest of the continent.

Advocates of nonviolent action have also been particularly interested in the major struggle to achieve democratic government in Burkina Faso in 2014-15 (see references under [A.4.a. Resisting Military Coups](#) [1] and additional references below). Sadly, the political and economic success of Burkina Faso after 2015 has since come under a new threat: armed gangs espousing extreme Islamist ideologies invading from the north and east, and driving hundreds of thousands to flee these areas of the country. (See for example: Safi, Michael, 'Masked Men and Murder Threaten a Nation', *Guardian Weekly*, 27 March, 2020.)

Manji, Firoze ; Ekine, Sokari, [African Awakening: The Emerging Revolutions](#) [2], Cape Town, Dakar, Nairobi and Oxford, Pambazuka Press (imprint of Fahamu), 2011, pp. 234

These are largely contemporaneous accounts, lightly revised from Pambazuka News, Pan-African Voices for Freedom and Justice, <http://www.pambazuka.org> [3]. As well as interesting contributions on Tunisia, Egypt, Libya, Morocco and Algeria (noted again under [E.V](#) [4]), this book covers unrest in a number of Sub-Saharan countries:

'People's revolts in Burkina Faso', February-April 2011, involving students, the broad population and army mutinies (unfortunately the mutineers did not make common cause with the civilian protesters), pp. 131-46.

A 'Protest Diary' from Cameroon in February 2011, by presidential candidate Kah Walla, blogs about strictly nonviolent protests brutally suppressed (pp.107-10).

In Swaziland (pp. 155-169) the 12-15 April 2011 popular demonstrations went ahead in the face of roadblocks and despite the arrests of virtually the entire leadership of the democratic association, perhaps signalling 'the beginning of the end' for the absolute monarchy.

Marks, Zoe ; Chenoweth, Erica ; Okeke, Jide, [People Power Is Rising in Africa](#) [5], Foreign Affairs, 25/04/2019,

The authors argue that the movements in Algeria and Sudan are part of a wider trend across Africa, where since 2000 most popular uprisings have been unarmed.

Red Pepper, [African Awakenings](#) [6], Red Pepper, issue Dec/Jan, 2012, pp. 27-32

with articles by Firoze Manji, 'Hope for the Future'; Justin Pearce, 'Aspiring to Tahrir' and Tommy Miles 'After Gaddafi'.

Siegle, Joseph ; al., et, [Africa and the Arab Spring: A New Era of Democratic Expectations: Special Report](#) [7], Africa Center for Strategic Studies, 2011, pp. 72



The paper argues that the Arab Spring encourages movements for greater democracy in Africa as a whole, but notes that some countries in Sub-Saharan Africa have already established democratic institutions, though others remain autocratic or are 'semi-authoritarian'. The Arab Spring has alarmed some dictators and prompted more than dozen demonstrations in capitals. The paper also examines other factors promoting popular opposition.

Tafadzwa, Maganga, [Youth Demonstrations and their Impact on Political Change in and Development in Africa](#) [8], Conflict Trends, Vol. 2020, issue 2, 2020

The author notes that almost 60 per cent of Africa's population was under 25 by 2019 and that they are deeply discontented due to unemployment and a sense of marginalization, and often very critical of governments. They are therefore prominent in political protests. This article examines both the causes and successes of these demonstrations since the Arab Spring of 2010, as well as drawing lessons from the movement in Sudan in 2019.

Wienkoop, ; Kathryn, Nina ; Bertrand, Eloise, [Popular Resistance to Authoritarian Consolidation in Burkina Faso](#) [9], Carnegie Endowment for International Peace, 2018

The article examines the popular insurrection in 2014 when President Compaore tried to consolidate his power by changing the constitution, as well as the resistance to his coup attempt against the transitional president in 2015. and considers factors in the popular success.

See also:

Hagberg, Sten, 'The Legacy of Revolution and Resistance in Burkina Faso', SIPRI: Stockholm International Peace Research Institute, 22 February, 2016.

Wilmot, Paul, [Prospects for Revolution in Africa's 55 Countries](#) [10], Waging Nonviolence, 20/03/2019,

Wilmot, director of 'Solidarity Uganda', which helps organize civil resistance in East Africa, provides an overview of movements for democracy in all Africa's regions. His survey also notes examples of growing authoritarianism, and stresses the diversity of the continent.

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16:54):<https://civilresistance.info/section/e-resisting-oppressive-dictatorial-military-or-authoritarian-rule/e-i-africa-sub-saharan/e-5>

Links

[1] <https://civilresistance.info/section/introduction-nonviolent-action/4-civil-resistance-defence-strategy/4a-civil-resistance> [2] <https://civilresistance.info/biblio-item/2011/african-awakening-emerging-revolutions> [3] <http://www.pambazuka.org> [4] <https://civilresistance.info/section/e-resisting-oppressive-dictatorial-military-or-authoritarian-rule/e-v-middle-east-and-north> [5] <https://civilresistance.info/biblio-item/2019/people-power-rising-africa> [6] <https://civilresistance.info/biblio-item/2012/african-awakenings> [7] <https://civilresistance.info/biblio-item/2011/africa-and-arab-spring-new-era-democratic-expectations-special-report> [8] <https://civilresistance.info/biblio-item/2020/youth-demonstrations-and-their-impact-political-change-and-development-africa> [9] <https://civilresistance.info/biblio-item/2018/popular-resistance-authoritarian-consolidation-burkina-faso> [10] <https://civilresistance.info/biblio-item/2019/prospects-revolution-africas-55-countries>