



Peace, War and the World in European Security Challenges

Security Implications of the Arab Spring and its Aftermath

Intensive Course “Navigating Security in the Storming World”

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Arab Spring

- “Arab Spring” can be considered as one of the most significant political liberalization movement and the largest social mobilization that have shaped Middle Eastern politics in the post-Cold War era.
- However, the so called “Arab Spring” was transformed into “Arab Spring” leading to the **world’s largest humanitarian crises** since the Second World War.





Arab Spring= Arab Awakening = Arab Uprisings

- Arab Spring was a series of
 - anti-government protests,
 - uprisings
 - armed rebellions
- that spread across North Africa and the Middle East in the early 2010s → as a reaction to
 - Dictatorships: Oppressive and corrupt regimes
 - Human rights violations
 - Serious economic crises
 - High unemployment,
 - Extreme poverty, (2008 financial crisis)
 - Unequal distribution of wealth (increases in food prices)



Arab Spring

- Government Overthrown: Tunisia, Egypt and Yemen
- Civil War: Libya and Syria
- Major Protests: Algeria, Sudan and Iraq
- Protests and governmental Change: Jordan and Morocco
- Minor Protests: Saudi Arabia, Somalia and Mauritania



Arab Spring: Change of Leadership

- **Tunisian President: Zine El Abidine Ben Ali**
(1987-2011) → fled the country in Jan. 2011
- Death due to cancer in Sept. 2019
- **Egyptian President: Husni Mubarak**
(1981-2011) → stepped down in Feb. 2011
- Death following a surgery Feb. 2020
- **Libyan President: Muammar al-Gaddafi**
(1969-2011) → assassinated in Oct. 2011
- **Syrian President: Bashar al-Assad**
(2000- present) → still in power
- **Yemenite President: Ali Abdullah Saleh**
(1990-2012) → injured in June 2011 and stepped down in Nov. 2011
- Killed in a fight in Dec. 2017.





Issues covered in this Presentation

- **How did the Arab Spring start?**
- **Where did it spread?**
- **What are the root causes of Arab Spring?**
- **Aftermath of Arab Spring → Have it reached its aim?**
- **Security challenges created by Arab Spring !!!**



Arab Spring started in Tunisia

- Arab Spring began in Tunisia, in the city of Sidi Bouzid, when Mohamed Bouazizi, a young street-peddler set himself on fire on Dec. 17, 2010
- To protest the harassing practices of the local police who confiscated his fruit and vegetables
- He died a few days later in hospital.
- His individual protest provoked a series of demonstrations, first in Sidi Bouzid and then in the whole country,
- President Ben Ali fled Tunisia on 25 Jan 2011.



Arab Spring spread to Egypt

- On 25 January 2011, a wave of protests began in Egypt, from Cairo to Alexandria and Tanta,
- Tahrir Square in Cairo was occupied by hundreds
- After 18 days of demonstrations that drew millions of people into the streets
- President Hosni Mubarak's 30-year authoritarian regime came to an abrupt end in February 2011.



Arab Spring spread to Libya, Yemen and Syria

- In **Syria**, demonstrations against the al-Assad regime began on 25 March 2011 → sparked a process of repression and then a civil war that turned into the most tragic event in the region in decades.



- In **Libya**, on 13 Feb. 2011, protests against the Qaddafi regime began in Benghazi, Libya → events soon sparked a civil war in the country
- Massive foreign military intervention led to the regime change.



- In **Yemen**, on 27 Jan. 2011, a massive demonstration against the regime of President Saleh was organized,
- starting a one-year long process of unrest.



Major Protests in Algeria, Sudan and Iraq

- Between 2010-2021 a series of protests took place in **Algeria**,
- As a reaction to unemployment, poor living conditions, lack of housing and civil liberties.



- Between 2011 and 2013 as part of the Arab Spring major protests had taken place in **Sudan**.
- The protests increased particularly after the government passed its austerity plan in the summer of 2012.
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- On 25 Feb. 2011, major protests were held throughout **Iraq**
- due to the nation's high unemployment, corruption, and poor public services.
- During the protests, crowds entered into the provincial buildings and broke into jails.



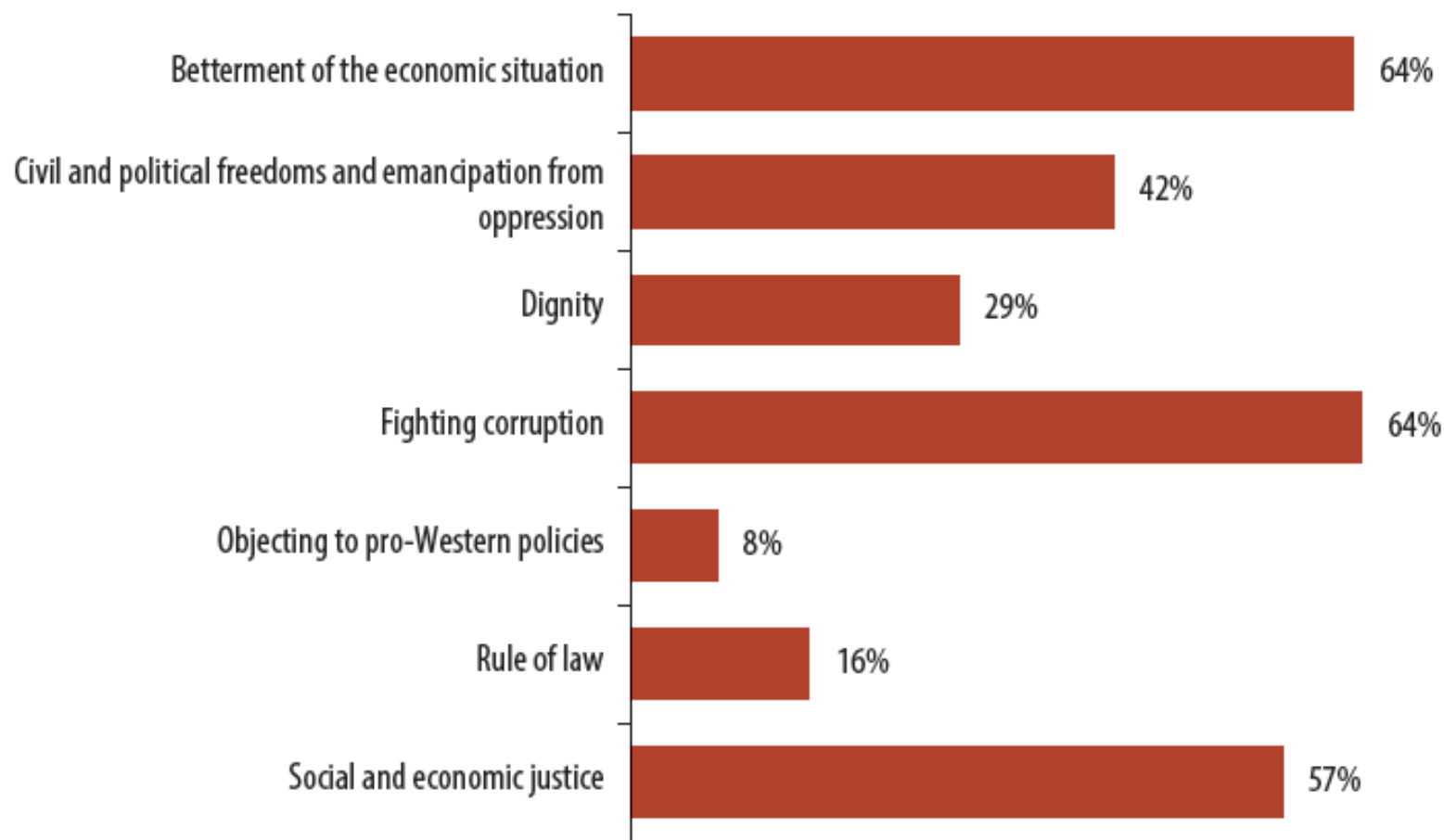
What do People Want?

- Free, fair, regular and competitive elections
- Even playing ground for elections
- Freedom of speech/expression
- Freedom assembly/association
- Freedom of media/social media
- Accountability and transparency from governments
- People are fed up with corruption—no more corruption
- No more repression to the opposition
- Economic survival !!!
- Jobs !!!



Democracy

Reasons for Arab Spring Based on Views in Developing MENA



Source: Arab Barometer 2012–14.

Note: MENA = Middle East and North Africa.



The Root Causes of Arab Spring

- **I. Political Factors**

- **Persistence of authoritarian regimes**
- **Rampant Political Corruption**
- **Human Rights Violations → Lack of Political Rights and Civil Liberties**

- **II. Economic Factors**

- **High unemployment,**
- **Extreme poverty, (2008 financial crisis)**
- **Unequal distribution of wealth (food price increases)**





I. Political Factors:

■ Authoritarian Regimes

- **Tunisia:** President Ben Ali was in power for **23** years
- **Egypt:** President Ben Ali was in power for **30** years
- **Libya:** President Gaddafi was in power for **42** years
- **Syria:** President Bashar al-Assad has been in power for **20** years
- **Yemen:** President Saleh was in power for **22** years (+12 years)

■ Rampant Corruption

- **Egypt:** Mubarak and his family
- **Tunisia:** Ben Ali and his family
- **Libya:** Gaddafi and his family
- Politicians are corrupt
- Patron-client relations
- Military is involved in businesses
- Businesses close to politicians
- Basic public services are run by bribing –medicine, education, water
- Bribes are paid in courts and bribes are paid to the police

• Human Rights Violations

- Security forces are notorious with their human rights violations—not held accountable
- Restrictions on freedom of speech
- Restrictions on freedom of association
- State of emergency
- No respect for rule of law or basic freedoms
- Repression to opposition

Middle East



II. Economic Factors:

■ High Unemployment or Economic Opportunities

- High youth unemployment (23 %)
- University graduates were also unemployed
- Middle class, were frustrated by their deteriorating standards of living due to a lack of job opportunities in the formal sector,
- Typical Arab protestor was single, educated, relatively young (younger than 44), middle class, urban, and male.
- These protestors raised their voices to demand improved economic opportunities and social and economic justice and to express their dissatisfaction with corruption and deterioration in their quality of life, particularly public service quality.

• Unequal Income Distribution

- Wealth disparities
- Middle class is being undermined by the unequal distribution of wealth, with money and wealth concentrated in the hands of a small elite



II. Economic Factors:

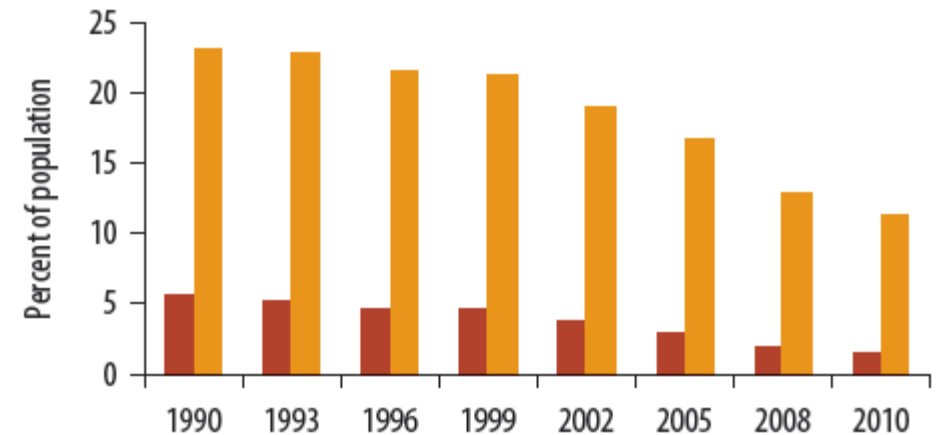
- **Extreme Poverty**
- Interestingly enough poverty rates were dropping during the 2010s !!!
- However, about 250 million people out of 400 million across 10 Arab countries, or 2/3rd of the total population, were classified as poor or vulnerable



FILE - A general view of Ezbet al-Nakhl, a shanty town north of the Egyptian capital Cairo, is seen Oct. 13, 2018.

Poverty Rates

a. MENA



■ Headcount rate (\$1.25 a day) ■ Headcount rate (\$2 a day)

Sources: World Bank PovcalNet; World Bank data.

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Aftermath of Arab Spring



■ Tunisia

- Only country to have made a peaceful transition after the Arab uprising
- Jan. to Oct. 2011, an interim government moved toward reform, recognized new political parties and disbanded Ben Ali's party.
- Oct, 2011 Constituent Assembly elections were held → Islamist party Ennahda won more than 40 % of the vote.
- In 2014, secular parties came to power → Nidaa Tounes won 85 seats and Ennahda 69.
- In 2019 parliamentary elections Ennahda received 17,5 % of the votes—fractured parliament
- In 2019 Presidential elections Kais Saied was elected –

■ Egypt

- 25 Jan. 2011 protests started
- 11 Feb. 2011 President Mubarak left the power
- Mohamed Morsi a candidate of Muslim Brotherhood was elected a the president of Egypt in June 2012.
- In July 2013, a military coup ousted the country's first civilian president, Morsi and General Abdel Fattah el-Sisi is holding the power since 2014.
- Now the Sisi regime is more oppressive than the period prior to Arab Spring.
- New regime is cracking down harder than ever on dissent
- The conditions in in Egyptian prisons are miserable.
- Torture and unfair trials are common.
- Human rights violations are tremendous.

- In **Syria**, the armed conflict of 10 years that resulted from the uprising has displaced **6.7 million** people within Syria and left **5.5 million** seeking refuge outside the country.
- Tens of thousands of opponents of the Syrian government have been arrested and forcibly disappeared since 2011.
- Proxy wars among great powers and terrorist groups are still taking place in Syria



Aftermath of Arab Spring

- **Libya**
- There is an armed conflict and chaos in Libya
- Libya's conflict has turned into a proxy war, with a number of foreign powers joining in to defend ideological and economic interests.
- The Tripoli-based Government of **National Accord** (GNA), led by **Prime Minister Fayez al-Sarraj**, is recognized by the United Nations and backed by the UN and Western powers including the US, but mainly relies on Turkey, Qatar and Italy.
- The rival administration in the country's east is allied with warlord **General Khalifa Haftar**, who commands the so-called Libyan National Army (LNA) → It is supported by the UAE, Egypt and Russia.



General Khalifa Haftar | Abdullah Doma/AFP via Getty Images

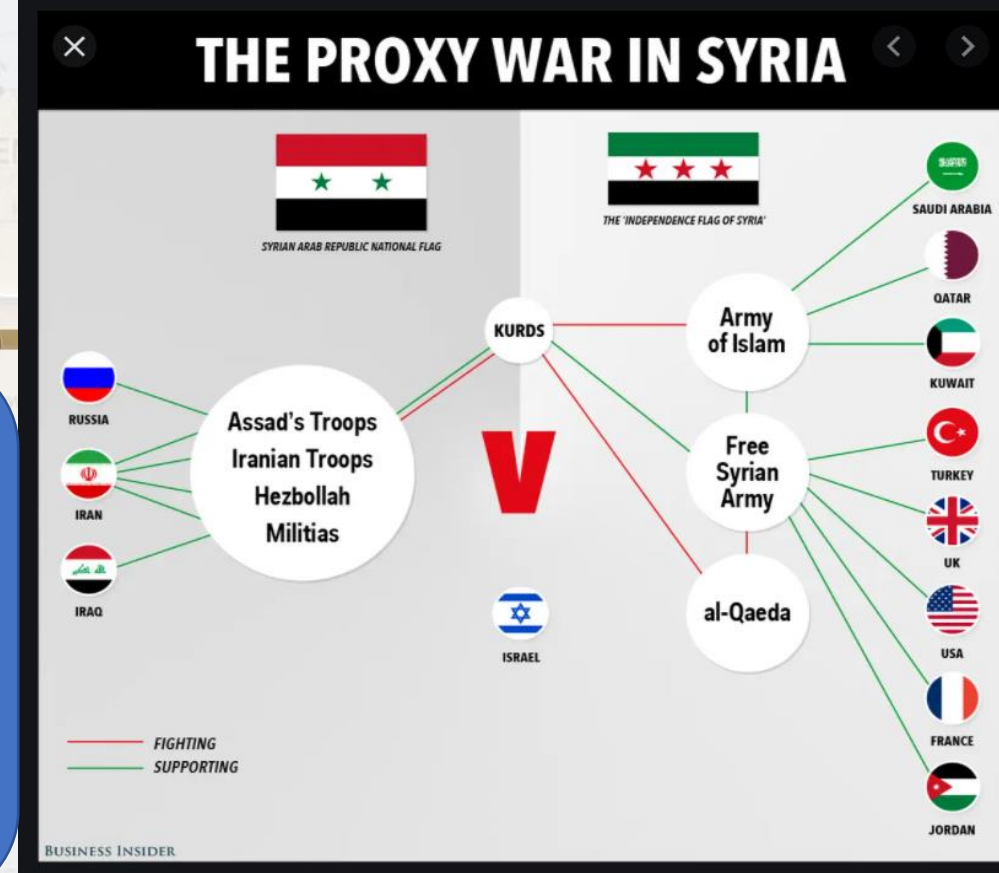


Fayeze Al-sarraj, prime minister, Government of National Accord of Libya | Riccardo Savi/Getty Images for Concordia Summit

The Security Implications of the Arab Spring

■ Collapsed States: Syria and Libya

- I. **Proxy War** in Syria in which the major powers are involved
- II. **Refugees** from Syria and Libya fleeing to the neighboring countries and Europe
- III. These countries are swarmed with **terrorist groups** and radical Islamist organizations



Syrian Uprising turned into the deadliest conflict 21st century has witnessed so far

- 10 years of War
- Violence,
- Displacement,
- Sectarianism
- Radicalization,
- Territorial fragmentation,
- Collapse of economy & infrastructure
- Extremist groups started to control natural resources
- Many actors are involved in the war



I. Proxy War in Syria

A proxy war is a war when two opposing countries avoid direct war, and instead support combatants that serve their interests.

Pro-Assad and Anti-Assad International Actors

- | | |
|------------------------------|-------------------------------|
| ■ <u>Pro-Assad Countries</u> | ■ <u>Anti-Assad Countries</u> |
| – Russia | – USA |
| – Iran | – Saudi Arabia |
| – Iraq | – Turkey |
| – China | – Jordan |
| | – Qatar |
| | – Some European countries |

Pro and Anti-Assad Forces in Syria: **Manipulated by Proxy Forces**

Pro-Assad Groups

1. Assad Regime and Ba'th Party
2. Security Apparatus
3. Syrian Armed Forces
4. Syrian paramilitary groups
5. Loyalists, Socio-economic Elites
6. Religious Minorities
7. Al-Quds Force and Basij Militia (Iran)
8. Hezbollah

■ Anti-Assad Groups

1. National Coalition for Opposition Revolutionary Forces
 - a. Local Institutions
 - b. Free Syrian Army
 - c. Muslim Brotherhood
 - d. Kurdish Military and Political A
2. Islamist Oriented Groups (Salaf Jihadists)
 - a. Ahrar Al-Sham
 - b. Jaish al-Islam
 - c. Al-Nusra Front
 - d. Islamic State of Iraq and Syria



General Khalifa Haftar | Abdullah Doma/AFP via Getty Images

I. Proxy War in Libya



Fayez Al-sarraj, prime minister, Government of National Accord of Libya | Riccardo Savi/Getty Images for Concordia Summit

- **Haftar Supporters**
 - **Saudi Arabia** has reportedly supported Haftar with generous funds
 - **Egypt** has provided his forces with weapons and support through its porous border with Libya.
 - **France** is widely thought to provide the general with military assistance-- French has oil interests-- officially denies supporting Haftar, but views the warlord as the best option to clamp down on extremism.
 - **Saudi Arabia, Egypt** and the **UAE** see in Haftar an ally against the spread of political Islam and in particular the Muslim Brotherhood, which they list as a terrorist organization.
- **Al-Sarraj's Supporters**
 - **Turkey** sent military advisers and deployed soldiers in Libya → Turkey and al-Sarraj government signed a maritime boundary agreement.
 - **Italy** supports Al-Sarraj for the stabilization of the country as a matter of national security and reaching the oil reserves and suffers from immigration.
 - **Qatar** backs Muslim Brotherhood –a faction of the group is in GNA.



II. Syrian Refugees

- Uprisings in Syria turned into a civil war
- Hundreds of people including children died while attempting to flee from Syria → By **2021**, more than **600.000** people were killed.
- **5.5 million** people were displaced,



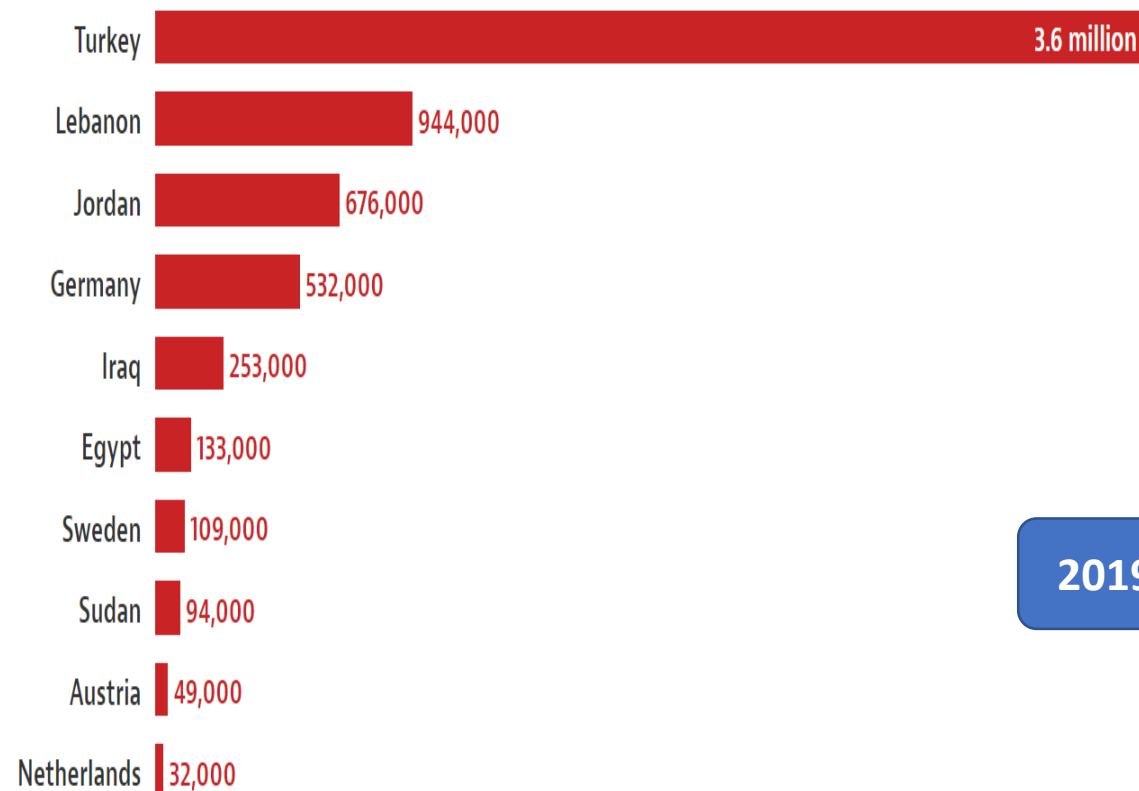
II. Syrian and Libyan Refugees 2015 Refugee Crisis

- More than **a million migrants** and refugees crossed into Europe in 2015 → creating serious economic and security problems in the continent

83% of Syrians fleeing the conflict were in countries bordering Syria



These countries housed the most Syrians



2019

THE MIGRANT ROUTES THROUGH THE CONTINENT



II. Syrian and Libyan Refugees Fleeing to Europe





III. Increase in Terrorist Attacks in Europe

Deadliest attacks of this period were

2004 Madrid train bombings → killed 193 civilians

2005 London bombings → killed 52 civilians

Attacks in Turkey

Jan. 2016- Istanbul Sultan Ahmet Square → killed 13 people

March 2016- Istanbul Beyoglu District → killed 4 people

June 2016 – Istanbul Ataturk Airport → killed 45 people

Jan/ 2017- Istanbul nightclub shooting → killed 39 people

■ France:

- January 2015 → Ile-de-France attacks → 17 death + 22 inj.
- Nov. 2015 → Paris and Saint-Denis attacks → 130 death + 413 inj.
- July 2016 → Nice Attack → 86 death + 458 injuries
- February 2018 → Carcassonne and Trebes attacks → 4 death + 15 inj.

■ Belgium:

- March 2016 → Brussels and Zaventem bombings → 32 death + 340 injuries

■ Germany:

- December 2016 → Berlin lorry attack → 12 death + 56 injuries

■ UK:

- March 2017 → Westminster attack → 5 death + 50 injuries
- May 2017 → Manchester arena bombing → 22 death + 512 inj.
- June 2017 → London Bridge attack → 8 death + 48 injuries
- Sept. 2017 → Parsons Green bombing → 0 death + 30 injuries

■ Sweden:

- April 2017 → Stockholm attack → 5 death + 14 injuries



TOBIAS SCHWARZ/AFP/GETTY IMAGES