

# Instabilité politique - Après Kadhafi, Rajoelina ?

Tribune – Mona M - 25/02/11

Au moment même où Mouammar Kadhafi use de la menace de semer le chaos total en Libye s'il est renversé, l'Economist Intelligence Unit, connu notamment pour son classement annuel des métropoles « les plus agréables à vivre » dans le monde, a établi une liste de 10 « États autocratiques » qui pourraient bien être les suivants sur la liste.

Chacun de ces pays s'est vu attribuer une note sur 10 évaluant sa « vulnérabilité ». Sans surprise, la grande majorité des pays qui composent cette liste se trouvent en Afrique du Nord et dans les golfes arabique et persique, avec le Yémen (8,8), l'Algérie (7,6), la Jordanie (7,3), la Syrie (7,3), l'Iran (7,3), le Maroc (7,3), l'Arabie Saoudite (7,3) ou encore Bahreïn (6,7).

**En fait, seuls deux États considérés parmi « les 10 régimes les plus vulnérables » sont, à la fois sur le plan géographique et sur le plan religieux, très éloignés de la zone actuelle d'événements. Il s'agit du Zimbabwe (7,6) et de Madagascar (7,3), qui ont en commun de compter parmi les pays les plus pauvres de la planète et de connaître régulièrement des troubles.**

Source : <http://www.madagascar-tribune.com/Apres-Kadhafi-Rajoelina,15534.html>

## World politics: After Egypt, how to assess vulnerabilities?

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**Tunisia's and Egypt's authoritarian leaders have been toppled. The question now is whether popular protests and uprisings will sweep through the Middle East and North Africa (MENA) and possibly spread to authoritarian regimes in other regions. It is safe to say that vulnerabilities exist in many countries, but assessing whether popular discontent will translate into a serious challenge to a regime is problematic. Any efforts to quantify a given country's vulnerability are by nature imprecise. Nonetheless, as a rough guide to which countries could see similar upheaval to that of the past few weeks, the Economist Intelligence Unit has developed an index for the vulnerability of autocratic regimes to political revolt. The index covers 55 countries, including the two—Tunisia and Egypt—where revolution has just occurred.**

The recent momentous events have been extraordinary in several respects. The popular uprisings in Tunisia and Egypt have been sudden and unexpected, occurring in seemingly infertile territory. The revolts have been home-grown affairs led by secular forces. They have overturned a host of stereotypes about the MENA region and have caught the outside world unawares. In Egypt, the head of a regime with one of the biggest repressive apparatuses in the world was toppled within a few weeks.

According to the Economist Intelligence Unit's *Democracy index 2010*, a report published in December, there are 55 authoritarian regimes in the world. Although the degree of vulnerability of authoritarian regimes differs significantly, no authoritarian regime is completely safe. The astonishing nature and speed of developments in MENA underline the possibilities for political change. Our vulnerability index (see table, below) attempts to rank autocratic regimes according to the prevalence of conditions that are associated with political revolts.

### Conditions for political revolts

What do the recent examples teach us about the necessary ingredients for political revolts? Authoritarian regimes in MENA and elsewhere share similar characteristics, to a lesser or greater degree: human rights abuses and absence of basic freedoms; rampant corruption and nepotism; the presence of small elites that control the bulk of a nation's assets; and poor governance and social provision. Economic hardships in the

form of stagnant or falling incomes, high unemployment and rising inflation have affected many countries. Some authoritarian regimes have young and restless populations.

Long-serving geriatric leaders are another common feature. In Egypt Hosni Mubarak had been in office for 29 years; the former Tunisian president, Zine el-Abidine Ben Ali, was in power for 23 years. Elsewhere in MENA, Ali Abdullah Saleh has ruled Yemen since 1978 while Libya's Muammar Qadhafi has been in power for more than four decades. In other regions such as the Commonwealth of Independent States (CIS), several autocrats have been in power for two decades or more. Zimbabwe's Robert Mugabe has been in power for more than three decades, while the Castro brothers have held sway in Cuba for more than half a century. The longer ageing autocrats hang on to power, the more out-of-touch and corrupt their regimes tend to become, and the more of an anachronism and an affront they become to their peoples.

The extent of economic dynamism varies sharply across authoritarian states; it ranges from double-digit growth in China and rapid growth rates in the authoritarian states of the CIS to falling incomes in some Sub-Saharan African countries. Oil wealth is a double-edged sword. Some of the energy-rich states have been able to buy off the population and pre-empt unrest. On the other hand, minerals-based development magnifies all kinds of institutional pathologies, which can in turn provoke unrest. Some countries, though unable to buy off restive populations, may be rich enough to have a middle class, widespread Internet access and sufficient numbers of educated young people who are able and willing to form the vanguard of a political revolution.

### **Why now?**

Why have the recent uprisings occurred after a long period in which authoritarian governments appeared to have been successfully consolidating their control? The interplay of a number of factors may provide an explanation: electoral fraud; succession crises; economic distress; increasing corruption; and neighbourhood effects.

An attempt by an authoritarian ruler to extend his rule or ensure that a hand-picked successor, usually an offspring, takes power is a catalyst for protest. Stealing elections has often galvanised opposition (for example, now in Egypt or during the CIS "colour revolutions" in the middle of the previous decade). The blatant fraud in the parliamentary elections in Egypt held in November and December 2010 outraged and helped mobilise protesters, as did Mr Mubarak's plan to install his son Gamal as the country's next ruler. Cumulative effects can be important. Years of corruption and repression mean that with each passing year popular dissatisfaction with the regime increases. Neighbourhood demonstration effects have played a strong role in anti-regime protests; without Tunisia there would have been no Egypt. Finally, domestic political opposition is emboldened when external opposition or ambivalence towards an authoritarian government replaces previous support. An increased international focus constrains autocrats' room for manoeuvre.

### **What of repression?**

Most authoritarian leaders have a large security apparatus at their disposal to suppress dissent and can mobilise supporters to counter challenges to their regime. Many do not fear international opprobrium if they crack down. These factors may be enough to ward off regime change in the short term, although this obviously was not the case in Egypt—hitherto one of the most militarised and repressive states in the world. Although greater repression may ensure short-term survival of some autocrats, authoritarianism in many countries is vulnerable.

There are already signs that political upheaval is affecting other MENA states. Anti-government protests, of varying intensity, have spread to Yemen, Algeria, Iran, Syria, Bahrain and Jordan. Nervous governments across the region have made concessions in what look like desperate bids to forestall revolts (for example, Bahrain's government has promised to pay each family US\$2,700).

### **"Revolution watch"**

Our assessment of the degree of vulnerability of the world's 55 authoritarian regimes to political revolt classifies 17 countries as "high-risk" (11 of these are in MENA). Yemen, Egypt and Tunisia top the list, meaning that these countries display the attributes we consider most likely to underpin revolt. In the case of Egypt and Tunisia, these risks have already been realised. Within MENA, Algeria, Jordan, Syria, Iran, Morocco, Libya and Bahrain are also in the high-risk group. So, possibly surprisingly, is Saudi Arabia.

Although there have thus far been no outward signs in Saudi Arabia of any fallout from the events in Tunisia and Egypt, this country may be a potential powder keg as it exhibits many of the features associated with political revolt.

Although several Sub-Saharan African autocracies (including, most prominently, Zimbabwe) are in the high-risk category, most other authoritarian regimes outside MENA are in the medium- and lower-risk groups. Most of Asia's autocracies (Myanmar excepted) are in the lower-risk group, mainly because of good economic performance, a lower degree of inequality and weak opposition movements. We rate the communist regimes in China and Cuba as the least vulnerable. However, this is only in comparison with other autocratic regimes. As noted, no authoritarian regime is safe as such. China's stability is very dependent on the maintenance of high economic growth rates, and it is not difficult to envisage the eruption of serious political challenges in a post-Castro Cuba.

Overall, we expect that political upheavals will indeed affect other authoritarian regimes, with some regimes, mainly but not only in MENA, being especially vulnerable. These upheavals may not all be successful, and not all may necessarily take the form of mass popular uprisings. However, prevailing conditions appear to suggest that there will be political challenges to autocrats in many of the world's 55 authoritarian states.

Vulnerability to political revolt	Economist Intelligence Unit Democracy Index 2010, rank (out of 167)	Vulnerability score (scale of 1 to 10)
<b>High risk</b>		
Yemen	147	8.8
Egypt	138	8.8
Tunisia	145	8.2
Zimbabwe	146	7.6
Algeria	125	7.6
Madagascar	113	7.3
Jordan	117	7.3
Syria	153	7.3
Iran	159	7.3
Morocco	116	7.3
Saudi Arabia	161	7.3
Sudan	151	7.0
Eritrea	152	7.0
Chad	166	7.0
Libya	158	6.7
Bahrain	122	6.7
Afghanistan	150	6.7
<b>Medium risk</b>		
Ethiopia	118	6.4
Burkina Faso	120	6.4
Nigeria	123	6.4
Congo (Brazzaville)	142	6.4
Guinea	144	6.4
Mauritania	115	6.1
Togo	124	6.1
Côte d'Ivoire	139	6.1
Democratic Republic of Congo	155	6.1
Guinea-Bissau	157	6.1
Cameroon	126	5.8
Comoros	127	5.8
Gambia	129	5.8
Angola	131	5.8
Gabon	133	5.8
Swaziland	141	5.8
Tajikistan	149	5.8
Djibouti	154	5.8
Equatorial Guinea	160	5.8
Kuwait	114	5.8
Myanmar	163	5.8
<b>Lower risk</b>		
Fiji	119	5.5
Niger	128	5.5
Azerbaijan	135	5.5
Central African Republic	162	5.5
Oman	143	5.5
UAE	148	5.5
Belarus	130	5.2
Kazakhstan	132	5.2
Rwanda	134	5.2
Vietnam	140	5.2
Uzbekistan	164	5.2

North Korea	167	4.9
Turkmenistan	165	4.9
Qatar	137	4.6
Laos	156	4.3
Cuba	121	4.3
China	136	4.0

Our assessment is based on 14 indicators in all, measuring: economic factors (GDP per head at purchasing-power parity, the unemployment rate and the inflation rate, all in 2010; the annual average growth rate in GDP per head in 2001-10; communications (Internet users per 100 in 2008); demographics (median age in 2010); political attitudes and culture (survey evidence from 2009 on satisfaction with freedom of choice and the degree of political engagement; a rating of the potential strength of the opposition); social provision (life expectancy and mean years of schooling in 2010); social inequality (based on the latest available income inequality data); corruption ratings for 2010; and a neighbourhood effect (for MENA).

We have used the raw values of the indicators to derive scores of 0, 1 or 2. The indicators are all equally weighted, with the exception of the neighbourhood effect, to which we assign a slightly higher weight. The sum of the scores (the higher the score, the greater the vulnerability) is used to calculate an index on a 1 to 10 scale and for the three-fold risk assessment: high risk; medium risk; lower risk. The sources for the data include the Economist Intelligence Unit, IMF, *UNDP Human Development Report*, *CIA World Factbook*, *World Bank World Development Indicators*, Gallup Polls.

**Source:** [http://viewswire.eiu.com/index.asp?layout=VWPrintVW3&article\\_id=1777812562&printer=printer](http://viewswire.eiu.com/index.asp?layout=VWPrintVW3&article_id=1777812562&printer=printer)