

V. Timeline

Select Developments in GCC Security Since the 2011 Arab Uprisings

2011

March 14: Peninsula Shield forces—the joint GCC military organization—enter Bahrain at the request of the Bahraini government via Saudi Arabia after nearly a month of popular protests. Saudi Arabia contribute 1000 troops while the UAE send 500 policemen.

March 15: King Hamad of Bahrain declares a state of emergency after thousands of protesters march to the Saudi embassy to denounce the GCC intervention.

March 25: Qatar becomes the first Arab nation to participate in NATO air combat missions over Libya.

May: GCC reaches out to Jordan and Morocco to join the council in an attempt to boost security.

June 29: Bahrain's government names a five person "Bahrain Independent Commission of Inquiry" as a gesture to the political opposition to investigate the government's response to the unrest of the previous spring. The commission sets a 'National Dialogue' on reform. In July, the commission makes recommendations, including an elected parliament.

August 8: King Abdullah of Saudi Arabia gives a speech criticizing Syrian President Bashar Al-Assad. Later this same month, Saudi Arabia withdraws its ambassador from Syria and pressures the Arab League to suspend Syria's membership and impose sanctions.

October 26: Qatar discloses that it sent hundreds of soldiers to Libya to support the Libyan rebels who overthrew Muammar Gaddafi's regime.

November 21: The GCC releases an agreement that becomes known as the 'GCC Initiative' that sets the terms of transition in Yemen, including the establishment of the Council for National Dialogue. The deal is backed by all GCC member states with the exception of Qatar.

2012

May 3: Bahrain's National Assembly approves constitutional amendments, including limiting the powers of the king to appoint members to the Shura Council and allowing the National Assembly to draft legislation. The measures are ratified by King Hamad.

November 12: The Gulf Cooperation Council recognizes the Syrian National Coalition as the legitimate representative of the Syrian people, ceasing recognition of the Syrian government led by Bashar Al-Assad.

December 2012: During GCC Summit in Bahrain, Saudi Arabia calls for a strong union and a common defense system.

2013

July 3: Saudi Arabia publicly endorses the Egyptian military coup led by Gen. Abdel Fattah Al-Sisi that deposed Egyptian President and Muslim Brotherhood figure Mohammed Morsi. Bahrain, Kuwait, and the UAE each separately voice support.

October 18: Saudi Arabia rejects a seat at the UN Security Council citing "double-standards." Saudi officials singled out the inability of the council to intervene in Syria despite "irrefutable proof" of the use of chemical weapons by the

Syrian regime against its people.

December 11: Leaders of the GCC announce the formation of a joint military command during the summit in Kuwait.

2014

March 5: Saudi Arabia, Bahrain, and the UAE withdraw their ambassadors from Qatar, citing Doha's unwillingness to cooperate with the GCC on regional security matters.

March 7: Saudi Arabia designates the Muslim Brotherhood a terrorist organization. The decision comes a month after the kingdom issued a royal decree stating that it will jail for three and 20 years any citizen found guilty of fighting in conflicts abroad.

August 25: Along with Egypt, the United Arab Emirates launch airstrikes in Libya against Islamist-allied militias. These militias, including Libya Dawn, are backed by GCC member Qatar and ally Turkey.

October 14: Saudi Arabia's Minister of Foreign Affairs Saud Al-Faisal criticizes Iran's alleged support of the Houthi movement in Yemen, saying that Tehran should withdraw its force from the country.

October 15: Influential Saudi Shia cleric Sheikh Nimr Al-Nimr is sentenced to death by Saudi Arabia's Specialized Criminal Court for "seeking 'foreign meddling' in [Saudi Arabia], 'disobeying' its rulers and taking up arms against the security forces."

November 16: Saudi Arabia, Bahrain and the United Arab Emirates return their ambassadors to Qatar, ending their rift.

December 9: Qatar declares its support to Egypt and "the political program of President Abdel Fattah Al-Sisi."

December 9: At GCC Summit in Doha, plans for a regional police force based in Abu Dhabi and a naval force based out of Bahrain were announced.

2015

February 15: The GCC affirms its support for Yemeni president Abed Rabbo Mansour Hadi as the legitimate leader of the Yemeni government. Hadi recently escaped house arrest in Sanaa and found refuge in the southern port city of Aden.

February 19: The GCC voices support for Qatar after Egypt's envoy to the Arab League, Tariq Adel, accused Qatar of supporting terrorism in Libya after Doha expressed concerns over Egyptian air strikes on ISIL targets in Libya.

March 25: A Saudi-led coalition wages 'Operation Decisive Storm' in an effort to wrestle control from Yemen's Houthi movement and reinstate Yemeni President Abed Rabbo Mansour Hadi.

April 22: Saudi Arabia announces it has achieved its military goals in Yemen—bringing 'Operation Decisive Storm' to a close—and announces a new operation, 'Renewal of Hope,' with the aim of combatting terrorism and protecting civilians in Yemen.

May 2015: US President Obama meets with GCC leaders at a Camp David Summit. In a statement, the President Obama declared a commitment to deter and confront external threats to the territorial integrity of GCC member states.

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June 17: Qatar expresses deep concern over the death sentence handed to former Egyptian President Mohammed Morsi and calls for his immediate release.

June 26: An Islamic State-affiliated suicide bomber attacks a Shia mosque in Kuwait City, killing 26 people. The attack represents the worst security breach for Kuwait since the First Gulf War.

August 3: The UAE sends a military brigade to Yemen to assist fighters battling the Houthi rebel movement and their supporters. The UAE has been participating in the Saudi-led air offensive in Yemen that began in late March of 2015.

September 4: 45 soldiers from the UAE and five soldiers from Bahrain were killed in Yemen when a rebel missile struck an ammunition depot.

September 7: Qatar deploys ground soldiers to Yemen after 60 soldiers from Bahrain, Saudi Arabia, and the UAE were killed in an attack near the city of Marib.

December 15: Saudi Arabia forms 34-Muslim nation coalition to fight terrorism. The coalition excludes Iran, Iraq, and Syria.

December 29: Kuwait announces that it will send ground forces to support Saudi border posts to resist Houthi rebel attacks from Yemen.

2016

January 2: Saudi Arabia executes prominent Shia cleric Sheikh Nimr Al-Nimr along with 46 other people on terrorism charges.

January 3: Saudi Arabia severs diplomatic relations with Iran following attacks on its embassy in Tehran. The following day, Bahrain severs ties with Iran while the UAE downgrades its relations.