

Press release

08-May-2011

[The Arab Spring](#)

WITH hundreds dying on the streets of Syria fighting for freedom and the Western powers engaged in a headlock with Gadhafi in Libya, a new and profoundly different political map of the Middle East is being drawn.

The so-called Arab Spring has witnessed spontaneous demands for democracy and basic human rights in countries such as Egypt, Tunisia and Bahrain – with varying degrees of success and often met with savage reprisals.

With this in mind, the [Manchester Salon](#) is leading an urgent discussion on the fall-out from this struggle introduced by [Karl Sharro](#). Karl is a writer and commentator on Middle East politics and has taught at the American University of Beirut.

The West is wary of greater military commitment in the area, the UN appears to be reluctant to send out any strong signals of support, and the Arab League are unwilling to criticise fellow members such as Syria for its brutal repression of the uprising.

Like other Western powers, the Americans were taken completely by surprise by the unrest in the Middle East and are struggling to devise a political strategy which protects their interests and shows them to be supporting democracy at the same time.

The discussion will question whether western intervention will actually benefit the uprisings against the very regimes the western powers have a long history of supporting. It will also aim to answer whether western intervention is driven more by lofty principles of democracy or by more practical interests in political stability and access to resources whatever the cost?

Date: Tuesday, 7 June, 7.30pm

Venue: Shakespeare pub, Fountain Street, Manchester, M2 2AA. There is a £5 charge to cover costs. Book in advance by emailing events@manchestersalon.org.uk