

TURKEY-TUNISIA RELATIONS ON THE EVE OF ELECTIONS IN TUNISIA



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TURKEY-TUNISIA RELATIONS ON THE EVE OF ELECTIONS IN TUNISIA

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Contents

Preface	5
I. DEMOCRATIZATION PROCESS IN TUNISIA	7
1.1. Jasmine Revolution and End of Ben Ali Era	8
1.2. Interim Governments Period	10
1.2.1 Troika Government	10
1.2.2. Technocratic Government	13
II. TURKEY-TUNISIA RELATIONS ON THE EVE OF ELECTIONS IN TUNISIA	16
2.1. Developing Economic Relations	16
2.2. Expectations and Challenges	20
III. EXPECTATIONS AND CHALLENGES	24
ENDNOTES	29

Tables and Charts

Chart 1 - 23 October 2011 Constituent Assembly Elections Results by Party.....	10
Chart 2 - 23 October 2011 Constituent Assembly Elections Results by Independent Lists.....	11
Chart 3 - 23 October 2011 Constituent Assembly Elections Results by Coalition Lists.....	11
Chart 4 - 1981-2011 The Treaties and Protocols signed between Turkey and Tunisia	21
Chart 5 - 2009-2013 Turkey-Tunisia Trade	22
Chart 6 - Turkey-Tunisia Export Data	23
Chart 7 - Turkey-Tunisia Import Data.....	23
Graph 1 - Political Developments in Tunisia 2011.....	9
Graph 2 - 23 October 2011 Constituent Assembly Elections Results by Party, Independent Lists and Coalitions	10
Graph 3 - Political Developments in Tunisia 2013-2014	14

PREFACE

Tunisia is undergoing a transformation process, which was triggered by the street protests. The street politics in Tunisia has left its place to institutional politics more quickly than other examples of the Arab Spring. Especially in the post-2011 period, the integration of non-governmental organizations and Tunisian youth via the institutional structures broke the power of street politics and enabled the shift of the location of political struggle from streets to political structures. Thus, Tunisian politics has been stabilized after ensuring the normalization of the political processes.

However, the constitution writing process in Tunisia progressed in the shadow of intensive discussions, economic challenges and political crisis. After 2011, the assassination of opposition leaders Chokri Belaid and Mohammed Brahmi raised the security concerns, while the ongoing culture war over the constitution writing has dragged the country into political polarization. Especially, with the impact of the coup d'état in Egypt, Tunisian opposition repositioned themselves into a more radical political line and this has led to the rise of tensions. In the region, where disputes are generally solved by power and oppression, Tunisia demonstrated the ability to resolve the political stalemate through negotiations. Today, Tunisia is preparing for presidential and parliamentary elections that will take place in October and November under the leadership of a technocratic government.

The relations between Turkey and Tunisia, the unique country that sustains the hopes for Arab Spring, has continued to increase in the period after 2011. Turkey has provided important contributions to Tunisia's democratization process, the solutions of socio-economic problems and stabilization of country in the post-2011 period. It is clear that Turkey will continue to play a key role in the period ahead in Tunisia in order to support the normalization of social, economic and political life, as well as the stabilization and democratization of the country.

Therefore, this report aims to contribute to the understanding of the current status of Turkey-Tunisia relations. The report is structured into three parts. In the first part of the report, the post-2011 era in Tunisia is examined within the context of the dynamics of democratization. The second part is devoted to Turkey-Tunisia relations. In the last section, Tunisia-Turkey relations are studied in the context of the expectations and challenges.

For those interested in the subject, the report contains significant findings and data towards a better understanding of Turkey-Tunisia relations. I would like to underline the importance of democratization process in Tunisia as well as Turkey's support for Tunisia, hoping that the report will contribute to their betterment.

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ORSAM President

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1. DEMOCRATIZATION PROCESS IN TUNISIA

1.1. JASMINE REVOLUTION AND END OF BEN ALI ERA

Mohammed Bouazizi's self-immolation on 17 December 2011, following the confiscation of his wares and harassment of him in Sidi Buzid, located in the inner part of the country, has led to a massive response in the country. First, the protests spread to the villages dominated by the Hammama tribe- of which Mohammed Bouazizi is a member- such as Menzel Buaz, El Maze, the Argab, Bin A, Cil the Sake of El Jadid, an El Hafi and Sabala' and then to the country's coastline and finally on 12 January 2011, to the capital city, Tunis. The protests on December and January, 2010-2011, were no longer limited in scale compared to the protests of Gafsa in 2008 or Ben Guardene in 2010, and thanks to the support of civil society organizations and trade unions, the protests spread across the country. First, the local branches of the Tunisian General Labour Union (UGTT) have played an active role in spreading the protests throughout the country in a few days and gaining a political ground. In the first stage, the demonstrations that began in Sidi Buzid spread to the underdeveloped southern and central areas and economic reasons and responses came to the fore due to the socio-economic problems of these areas. At this point, the unions affiliated to UGTT (teachers unions, health professionals, unions, postal service employee unions, bar associations, workers' unions, trade unions) supported the initial demonstrations and politicized their

demands.² The professional associations played a larger role in transformation of economic demands into political demands, in targeting Ben Ali's rule and even in triggering protests in some places.³

On the other hand, highly political December-January protests had developed in a leaderless manner. It is difficult to say that any political party was effective in the process. However, the Tunisian Workers' Communist Party (PCOT)⁴ and the Patriotic and Democratic Labour Party⁵ which were illegal during Ben Ali rule as well as some Arab nationalist movements gave an active support to protests since the first day. The other political parties began to integrate themselves to the mass protests when demonstrations spread across the country. Towards the end of December, Ettajdid (Renewal) Movement and Progressive Democratic Party (PDP) began to participate into the protests and supported the protests via their media branches, Al Tariq and Al Makif.⁶ The Houria wa-Insaf (Liberty and Fairness) organization, which is close to An-Nahda, supported the protests right from the beginning of the uprising.⁷

Two significant turning points played a crucial role in the success of the downfall of the regime of President Zine el-Abidine Ben Ali on 14 January 2011. Firstly, the protests reached the capital city, Tunis. Secondly, General Rachid Ammar, the chief of staff of the Tunisian army, disobeyed Ben Ali and refused to order his troops to fire on



unarmed protesters. The main reasons that led to the demise of Ben Ali rule are economic corruption, shift in the balances in domestic and international politics against him, the opposition which found bases both in public and state institutions, and loss of foreign support to the regime.⁸ As a result, Ben Ali era was finalized by the flight of Zine el-Abidine Ben Ali to Saudi Arabia on January 14 and the country entered into a period of radical transformation.

1.2. INTERIM GOVERNMENTS PERIOD

Following Ben Ali's departure, the period of interim governments began. Three interim governments were formed from 14 January 2011, Ben Ali's departure, to 20 December 2011, formation of the first government after the elections. Fouad Mebaza, the speaker of the parliament, became the president while Mohamed Ghannouchi⁹ was assigned to form the interim government as the prime minister.¹⁰ Mohammed Ghannouchi formed an interim government consisting of the former ruling party members, Constitutional Democratic Rally (RCD), and opposition parties legalized during Ben Ali era. However, the first interim government faced opposition and was viewed as the continuation of the old regime.

Thereupon, Mohammed Ghannouchi and other cabinet members declared that they all resigned from RCD.¹¹ However, this decision did not end the protests and the interim government led by Mohammed Ghannouchi was forced to resign. Then again Mohammed Ghannouchi was assigned to form the new interim government and he has announced the formation of a "national unity government" consisting of civil society organizations, opposition parties and youth leaders. However Mohammed Ghannouchi once again resigned on 21 February 2011 due to the clashes between protesters and security forces and growing tensions.¹² This time, instead of Mohammed Ghannouchi, Beji Caid el Sebsi was authorized to form the new government.¹³ All the RCD members were excluded from the government formed by Beji Caid el Sebsi. In this period, the protests had continued due to discontent against interim governments and as a result, the RCD was dissolved, all its assets and funds were liquidated and political ban was imposed on its high level members for 10 years.¹⁴

Because of ongoing protests, calls for immediate elections increased. In this context, in order to accelerate electoral process, the electoral law and the electoral commission had been revised. But, at the beginning of June 2011, the

GRAPH 1 - POLITICAL DEVELOPMENTS IN TUNISIA 2011

17 December 2010

Mohamed Bouazizi, street vendor in Sidi Buzid, set himself on fire in protest of the confiscation of his wares and the harassment.

12 January 2011

Protests spread to capital city Tunis.



14 January 2011

Zine El Abidine Ben Ali fled to Saudi Arabia.

Fouad Mebazaa became president, Mohamed Ghannouchi became Prime Minister



15 January 2011

First interim government was formed by Prime Minister Mohamed Ghannouchi.



27 January 2011

First interim government resigned and Prime Minister Mohamed Ghannouchi formed second interim government.

21 February 2011

Second interim government resigned.

24 June 2011

With amnesty, political prisoners were released.



23 October 2011

The first democratic election was held in Tunisian history for National Constituent Assembly.



20 December 2011

Nahda, CPR and Ettakatol formed first troika, transitional government under the leadership of Prime Minister Hamadi Jebali.

new independent Electoral Commission postponed the election of constituent assembly to July 2011 in order to give more time for newly founded parties for their electoral preparations.¹⁵ However, due to the delays in the preparations for the elections, the elections could be held on 23 October 2011. Meanwhile, interim governments formed three significant fact finding commissions to operate until the constituent assembly took office. These commissions are the Higher Political Reform Commission, the National Fact-Finding Commission on Abuses Committed during Recent Events, and the National Commission of Investigation of Cases of Corruption. The Higher Political Reform Commission was later transformed into the High Commission for the Fulfilment of Revolutionary Goals, Political Reform and Democratic Transi-

tion with the decree approved on 18 February 2011. This transformation of the commission allowed the representatives from political parties and civil society organizations, as well as other prominent figures, to become members of the commission.¹⁶ This commission was obligated to adopt interim laws. In this context, the electoral law written by the High Commission for the Fulfilment of Revolutionary Goals, Political Reform and Democratic Transition was adopted.¹⁷ According to this new electoral law, civil servants, governors, and judges cannot be candidates in the elections unless they resign their position. Also the members of former ruling party RCD could not be candidates in the elections in any circumstances. In addition, with the new regulations, an electoral quota was adopted for women candidates.¹⁸ On 24 June 2011 cen-

sorship was eased and political prisoners were released in Tunisia.¹⁹

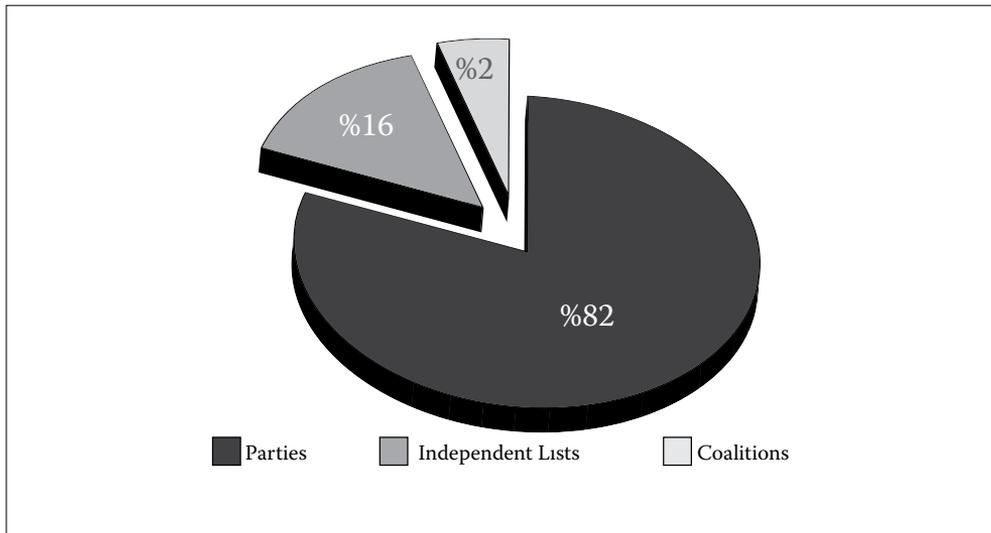
1.2. TRANSITIONAL GOVERNMENTS PERIOD

1.2.1. Troika Government

In the first free and democratic elections of Tunisia that was held on 23 October 2011, Tunisians went to ballot boxes to elect 2018-members-National Constituent Assembly which was

planned to operate for one year. The main obligations of constituent assembly were to prepare basic laws such as constitution, electoral law and press law, and to actualize the incoming parliamentary elections. However this transitional government could not complete the process of constitution writing in the first year following the elections and thus, it was decided to hold the elections on 2014. According to the results of 23 October 2011 election, vote distribution of parties, independent lists and coalitions are as follows:

Graph 2 - 23 October 2011 Constituent Assembly Elections Results by Party, Independent Lists and Coalitions



Parties:²⁰

Chart 1 - 23 October 2011 Constituent Assembly Elections Results by Party

Name of the party's list	Number of seats	Total number of votes	Percentage of votes
Nahda Party	89	1500649	54,3
Congress for the Republic (CPR)	29	341549	12,3
Ettakatol	20	248686	9
Progressive Democratic Party (PDP)	16	111067	4
Mubadara Party	5	97489	3,5
Afek Tounes	4	29336	1
PCOT	3	11891	0,4
Echaab Movement	2	13979	0,5

The Movement of Socialist Democrats (MDS)	2	8230	0,3
Maghrebine Liberal Party PLM	1	6621	0,23
Equality and Justice Party	1	6098	0,22
Progressive Struggle Party	1	5860	0,21
The New Destourian Party	1	5826	0,21
The Democratic Social People Party	1	5643	0,2
Cultural Unionist People Party	1	5219	0,18
Free Patriotic Union UPL	1	4456	0,16
National Democrats Movement	1	3599	0,13
Total	178	2406198	86,84

Independent Lists:²¹

Chart 2 - 23 October 2011 Constituent Assembly Elections Results by Independent Lists

Name of the independent list	Number of seats	Total number of votes	Percentage of votes
Aridha Chaabia	26	252025	9,12
Voice of the Independent	1	13432	0,48
The Independents	1	11980	0,43
Tunisian National Front	1	7421	0,26
The Hope	1	6022	0,21
The Faith	1	5070	0,18
Social Struggle	1	4749	0,17
Equity	1	4232	0,15
Faith to the martyrs	1	2540	0,09
Total	34	307471	11,1

Coalitions:²²

Chart 3 - 23 October 2011 Constituent Assembly Elections Results by Coalition Lists

Name of the coalition list	Number of seats	Total number of votes	Percentage of votes
Democratic Modernist Coalition (PDM)	5	49186	1,78
Total	5	49186	1,78

Before the 23 October 2011 elections, Democratic Modernist Coalition (PDM), which brought 11 left-wing parties such as Ettajdid (Renewal) Movement, the Left Socialist Party, the Patriotic and Democratic Labour Party, Tunisia Green Party under its umbrella, announced that they would not form a coalition government with Nahda under any circum-

stances.²³ This attitude has continued in the post-election process.

Nahda Party was the winner of the 2011 elections but could not obtain enough seats to form a government on its own. So, Nahda formed a coalition government with the center-left party Congress for the Republic (CPR) and left party Ettakatol. The basis of the cooperation among

these three parties was laid at the 18 October Coalition for Rights and Freedoms that was formed in 2005.²⁴ In December 2005, a large number of political parties and civil society organizations, which differed from each other and even were placed in the opposing camps, gathered and compromised under the umbrella of the 18 October Coalition for Rights and Freedoms and decided to act together with the guidance of a “purposes statement”.²⁵ With the promulgation of the 10 December 2003 Law, known as the Anti-Terror Law, activity scopes of oppositional parties and movements rapidly narrowed down and the waves of arrests and pressures spread to the country. Following these developments, in order to protest this pressure and anti-terror law, Samir Dilou,²⁶ Hama Hammami,²⁷ Ahmed Néjib Chebbi,²⁸ Ayashi Hammami,²⁹ Abdul Rauf al-Ayadi,³⁰ Lutfi Hajji,³¹ Mokhtar Yahyaoui and Mohammed Nouri began hunger strike on 18 October 2005.³² The hunger strike took the attention of international media in November 2005, thanks to the World Summit on Information Society hosted by Tunisia. 18 October hunger strike then transformed into the 18 October Coalition for Rights and Freedoms and the coalition gathered several different political parties and civil society organizations. Since 2005, a considerable part of the opposition decided to push disputes between them to the second plan, to prioritize the issue of rights and freedoms, and to act together under the umbrella of a platform.³³ Thus, in December 2005, negotiations between the opposition movements began. Since 2005, albeit under a loose platform, Islamist and secular-left movements and parties began to move together in the framework of common goals and they formed a common agenda. The troika government consisting of Nahda-CPR-Ettakatol, which was established following 2011 elections, is the most concrete outcome of this cooperation. Until 9 January 2014, two transitional governments were formed by Nahda Party, the CPR and Ettakatol and power has been transferred to the technocratic government on 9 January 2014 according to the road map.

The first troika government was established by former Prime Minister Hamadi Jebali on 20 December 2011. During the first transitional



government, fundamental political agenda was formed by dynamics of democratization. Constitution Writing Commission was established during this period and constitution writing process was initiated.³⁴ However, as a result of increasing violence and assassinations and the rise of the Salafi movement within the country, criticism against the troika government increased rapidly. In Tunisia there are Salafist political parties such as Jabhat al-Islah (Front of Reform) and Hizb ut-Tahrir as well as radical movements such as Ansar al-Sheria.³⁵ Despite the fact that they have small-scale structure and a limited social base, Salafi groups and parties have been creating problems for Nahda Party because of their radical demands. Nahda Party leader, Rachid al-Ghannouchi, paid a lot of effort and time in order to prevent the radicalization of these groups and draw them into legal political framework. In this period, policies of transitional government aimed to integrate political parties as many as possible to the political system. During 2011 and 2012, Ghannouchi, who met with Salafi groups and young people and gave moderate messages, repeatedly called for active participation in politics. Ghannouchi’s speeches had taken place in the Tunisian media several times and he was accused of having a “hidden agenda”.³⁶ To respond these criticisms, Ghannouchi gave an interview and un-

derlined the fact that “Tunisia should learn from past mistakes” and said that demonizing Salafis would lead to radicalization.³⁷ However, all these efforts undertaken by Ghannouchi were criticized both by some segments of Nahda Party and nearly all opposition parties. Escalating violence left the government in a difficult situation and led to a political crisis.

This challenging political environment resulted in the deepening of political crisis and was dragged to a political stalemate in 2013 due to political assassinations and mass protests. Former Prime Minister Hamadi Jebali resigned on 19 February 2013 in order to stop political crisis that emerged with the assassination of opposition leader, Chokri Belaid, and recommended the establishment of a technocratic government. This proposal was welcomed by President Moncef Marzouki; however Jebali’s party Nahda rejected the proposal and decided to form a new coalition government composed of both politicians and technocrats. Ali Larayedh, who served as Minister of Interior of troika government led by Jebali, was assigned to form a new government as Prime Minister on 22 February 2013. He established the cabinet on 8 March 2013.³⁸ The second troika government was composed of Nahda, CPR and Ettakatol parties as well as technocrats. In this government, the key ministries such as Ministry of Interior were given to technocrats in order to ease the criticisms. However, this could not end the political crisis and a new assassination led to another political turmoil.

After Chokri Belaid, the assassination of Mohammed Brahmi on 25 July 2013 triggered deeper political crisis in the country.³⁹ Second troika government paid a great effort to end this crisis. Thus government suspended the parliament on 6 August 2013 to hold talks with opposition in order to resolve the political stalemate. But 65 deputies from opposition insisted on their boycott decision and began to boycott constituent assembly and constitution writing commission, which was responsible for drafting constitution, electoral law and finalizing electoral timeline, in order to force troika government to resign.⁴⁰ Despite the ongoing boycott of opposition deputies, the parliamentary session was initiated.

After a period of more than a month, all the negotiation attempts of political parties as well as civil society organizations, such as UGTT, had failed. Then troika government brought up the option of revising the cabinet, but the opposition insisted on their demands.

The negotiations led by the UGTT and other civil society organizations eased the tension in late August. On 22 August 2013, Ghannouchi announced that they agreed in principle to establish a technocrat government but they needed to negotiate over the road map with opposition parties.⁴¹ Following the national dialogue meetings, on 20 September 2013, Nahda Party announced that they agreed in principle on the road map.⁴² This road map required the National Constituent Assembly (NCA) to approve an electoral law and commission, draw up the timetable for the parliamentary poll, adopt a new constitution and transfer the power to technocrat government.⁴³ Thus, negotiations on the constitution, electoral law and members of technocratic government began. On 16 December 2013, it was announced that Mehdi Jomaa, Minister of Industry in the Ali Laarayedh government, would be assigned to form the technocrat government as the new Prime Minister.⁴⁴ Tunisian National Constituent Assembly approved the draft constitution on 27 January 2014. The new constitution, which was accepted by 200 of 216 seats, paved the way for upcoming parliamentary and presidential elections.

1.2.2. Technocratic Government

In January 2014, Nahda-CPR-Ettakatol troika resigned and on 29 January 2014 Mehdi Jomaa, who was assigned as Prime Minister, established the new government.⁴⁵ The most important responsibility of the Mehdi Jomaa’s cabinet was to perform the elections of presidency and the parliament. According to the roadmap, Nahda-CPR-Ettakatol troika had to prepare the constitution, election law and the election calendar until January 2014. However, since the negotiations for the election law and calendar took more time than planned, these issues had to be postponed. In February 2014, the national constitutional assembly started to work on electoral law⁴⁶ and approved the new law on 29 April

GRAPH 3 - POLITICAL DEVELOPMENTS IN TUNISIA 2013-2014

6 February 2013

Oppositional leader, Chokri Belaid was killed.



19 February 2013

First transitional government resigned.

22 February 2013

Ali Larayedh was assigned to Prime Minister.



8 May 2013

Prime Minister Ali Larayedh formed new government.

25 July 2013

Oppositional leader, Mohammed Brahmi was killed.



28 July 2013

Some deputies from opposition parties decided to boycott constitution writing commission.

6 August 2013

The parliamentary session was initiated for negotiations.

22 August 2013

Nahda Party leader Rachid Ghannouchi announced that they agreed in principle to establish a technocrat government but they needed to negotiate over the road map with opposition parties.

20 September 2013

Nahda Party announced that they agreed in principle on the road map.

16 December 2013

The road map was announced.



27 January 2014

Tunisian National Constituent Assembly approved the draft constitution.

29 January 2014

Prime Minister Mehdi Jomaa formed technocrat government.

February 2014

Tunisian National Constituent Assembly to work on electoral law.

29 April 2014

New electoral was approved.

23 June 2014

Tunisian National Constituent Assembly agreed on election calendar, announced that 23 November 2014 and Parliamentary elections on

Presidential elections to hold on 26 October 2014.



2014.⁴⁷ On 23 June 2014, National Constitutional Assembly decided to hold presidential elections on 23 November 2014 and parliamentary elections on 26 October 2014.⁴⁸ Mehdi Jomaa's cabinet has responsibility to arrange the election calendar in a stable environment with transparency.

In the statements of the Mehdi Jomaa, he gave signals to make new assignments and eliminations in administrative and political positions. In this context, technocrat government announced to change around 40 senior managers in the public corporations. Additionally the government started to change the secretary generals in the governor's offices in order to reconstruct the administrative and political structure.⁴⁹ Besides, Mehdi Jomaa removed many consultants from the office who was appointed during the Ali Larayedh period in order to promote the "impartiality" principle.⁵⁰

It is possible to predict that the technocrat government will reshuffle and change political and administrative posts since the opposition par-

ties and non-governmental organizations have blamed Nahda on corrupt assignments during the political crisis in 2013. Because of the mentioned issues there is a concrete pressure on Mehdi Jomaa to control and rearrange assignments that were done during the troika government. Notably UGTT and other non-governmental organizations and secular opposition parties, particularly Afek Tounes, frequently demand such arrangements.⁵¹

At the end, technocrat government aims to implement practical security measures in order to solve security issues, which have increased dramatically in post-2011 era, since it has responsibility to promote both stability till to the elections and hold elections in a secure environment. The technocrat government has been conducting operations by the interior ministry units and army, and also has plans to form a special unit to "fight against terrorism". Hence Mehdi Jomaa announced on May 2014 that they will start to form a new organization to fight against terrorism.⁵²

2. TURKEY-TUNISIA RELATIONS AT THE THIRD YEAR OF ARAB SPRING

2.1. THE ROLE OF TURKEY IN DEMOCRATIZATION AND POLITICAL PROCESS

Bilateral relations between Turkey and Tunisia had been rather limited between 1956 and 2000. Relations between the two countries began with the Treaty of Commerce that was signed on 17 April 1958. Between these dates, 8 cooperation agreements were signed between the two countries.⁵³ The relations have developed rapidly in the period after 2000. Turkey-Tunisia relations began to deepen following the Arab Spring, which triggered a deep and radical transformation in Tunisia. In the post-2011 period, government bodies and civil society organizations of the two countries have come together several times, and many meetings, workshops and events were organized while a set of protocols for cooperation agreements were signed. In the new era, Turkey announced its desire to transfer its experience, while Tunisian officials stated that they want to benefit from the experience of Turkey.

In the aftermath of 2011, mutual diplomatic visits between Turkey and Tunisia gained momentum. Former Foreign Minister Ahmet Davutoglu visited Tunisia as the president of the Council of Europe Committee of Ministers with Thorbjørn Jagland, the Council of Europe Secretary General on 21 February 2011; and stated Turkey's will to support democratization process in Tunisia.⁵⁴ In this meeting, which was organized to contribute to Tunisia's political transformation, Foreign Minister Davutoglu conducted meetings to examine "to-do list for European Council

and Turkey" that could enable a transformation based on the values of European Council, such as transparency and openness.

Turkey had asserted that Tunisia should be included in "Partnership for Democracy Project" designed for the non-member countries surrounding Europe during its term presidency. In the meetings held on 21 February 2011, delegations discussed the opportunities for Venice Commission to contribute to the constitution writing process in Tunisia. Mevlut Cavusoglu, President of Parliamentary Assembly of the Council of Europe (PACE), paid a visit to Tunisia to discuss the project, which aimed contributions of Venice Commission, between 10-12 January.⁵⁵ During this visit, Mevlut Cavusoglu met with President Fouad Mebazaa, Prime Minister Mohammed Ghannouchi, and President of the Board of Advisors Abdullah Khalil, Minister of Foreign Affairs Kamel Morjane, and other officials.⁵⁶ In his remarks during the visit, Cavusoglu drew attention to the positive role that will be played by the EU in Tunisia, and stated that collaboration between Tunisia and the EU would bring democracy and human rights into the forefront. The Council of Europe, with its commissions on torture and ill-treatment, combating racism and xenophobia and the Venice Commission, can play a constructive role in democratization of Tunisian political system and state institutions. Indeed, Tunisia signed a "privileged partnership" agreement with the European Union on 19 November 2012.⁵⁷ The EU has made important contributions to the ongoing transition period in Tunisia, and Turkey has played a constructive role in providing this sup-



port. In this process, the active role played by Turkey supported the development of relations between Turkey and Tunisia as well as providing opportunities for Turkey to develop its relations with North African countries. Paying visit to Tunisia as part of North Africa tour and in order to underline the importance of relations between two countries, Erdogan maintained that “Tunisia and Turkey as well as Tunisians and Turks are together, because there is a blood tie between the two nations. In Kastamonu province, there is a Tunisian village. The main reason of this is the strength of the bonds between us. Current volume of trade between us is a \$ 1 billion today.”⁵⁸ During the visit, Turkey and Tunisia Friendship and Cooperation Agreement was signed.⁵⁹ Prime Minister Erdogan met with President Fouad Mebazaa, Prime Minister Beji Caid el Sebsi, and leaders of leading political parties. During this visit that was paid on the eve of 23 October 2011 election, Prime Minister Erdogan said that “revolutions should not happen with blood and deaths. Revolutions should be actualized by will of people with their thoughts, ideas, and ideals which can only be reflected via ballot box,” and called Tunisian to turn their face to electoral politics instead of

streets.⁶⁰ Prime Minister Erdogan also called on Tunisians to vote in the upcoming elections: “Now we all desire a real democratic transition with the constituent assembly which will be elected by the Tunisian brothers and sisters who will vote on 23 October election.”⁶¹

Refik Abdusselam, Foreign Minister of Tunisia, paid his first overseas visit to Turkey in January 2012.⁶² Abdusselam met with former President Abdullah Gul, former Prime Minister Recep Tayyip Erdogan and Parliament Speaker Cemil Cicek. On 12 January 2012, Foreign Minister Refik Abdusselam made a speech at a panel on Arab Spring organized by SETA.⁶³ In his speech Abdusselam highlighted the importance of the roots of the relations between Turkey and Tunisia and said that “we share a long history and a deep and long tradition with Turkey. As all we know, since the 16th century, Turkey nested Tunisia and North Africa, Tunisia also tied with Turkey.” In his speech Abdusselam underlined that not only Tunisia but whole region had carried the potential for change since the 1980s and the nations in the region are ready for change since then. He also stressed that intra-regional connections are strong, as a result, Tunisia’s

success and failure would have an strong impact on the region's future directly and Turkey's role in the process is important and they will continue to learn from Turkey's experiences.⁶⁴

Foreign Minister Davutoglu, taking the floor after Abdusselam, started his speech by noting that Abdusselam represents not only Tunisia but also "Tunisia's struggle, the demands and dignity". Davutoglu said that "Tunisian as grandchildren of Ibn Khaldun and Hayrettin Pasha have a tradition based on their rooted history." Davutoglu also indicated that Tunisia is unique not only in a cultural or political sense, but also its ability to combine Islamic values and modernity.

In addition, Davutoglu also addressed Tunisia's geostrategic position. Davutoglu, saying that Tunisia as a Mediterranean, African and Arab country, has multiple-identities like Turkey, expressed that there are similarities between the two countries. He then continued his words by highlighting the positive role of high education level in the Tunisian success, and stated that Tunisia offers a significant model for the region.

In his speech, Foreign Minister Davutoglu also included the importance of Tunisia for Turkey. Davutoglu said that the Tunisia's importance is rooted in two dimensions and defined these dimensions as "values" and "strategic dimension". He then stated that Turkey and Tunisia share the same values, the universal values such as rule of law, transparency, and dignity. Moreover, Davutoglu emphasized that Tunisia is an important strategic actor in Africa, the Middle East and the Arab world; hence the partnership between Turkey and Tunisia would provide a significant contribution to the solution of many problems in the region. Davutoglu ended his speech by saying that in the coming years Tunisian model came to the fore and will be around in coming years.⁶⁵

President Abdullah Gul paid an official visit to Tunisia on 7-9 March 2012 and made a speech at the Tunisian National Constituent Assembly. President Gul met with President Marzouki during his visit. President Gul was accompanied by Deputy Prime Minister Besir Atalay and De-

velopment Minister Cevdet Yilmaz in this meeting. In addition, inter-delegation meetings were conducted in the context of the meeting. President Gul and President Marzouki organized a joint press conference. President Gul expressed the central importance of political and economic success on democratization and said that failure in one aspect has the potential to trigger failure in other aspects. He said that "if there is economic failure, political failure also emerges." President Gul many times stated his positive observations and expectations toward the ongoing constitution-making process in Tunisia and expressed that Turkey's support for Tunisia will continue during his visit. Three protocols on 'Application of Scientific and Technological Cooperation, Transport Cooperation between Tunisia and Turkey and Drawing distant markets of tourists to Tunisia' were signed. Following the end of Gul's visit, Tunisian Prime Minister Hamadi Jebali and Tunisian Minister of Interior expressed their satisfaction regarding President Gul's visit and renewed the messages for developing relations.

Tunisian Prime Minister Jebali paid a visit to Turkey on 24-25 December 2012. During this visit, he met with President Abdullah Gul, Prime Minister Recep Tayyip Erdogan, Finance Minister Mehmet Simsek and Parliament Speaker Cemil Cicek. Jebali expressed that Turkey plays a historic role in the democratization process taking place in the whole Arab world and said that this support would flourish the hopes for Tunisian future.⁶⁶ Prime Minister Jebali was accompanied by Deputy Prime Minister for Economic Affairs Reza Saidi, Minister of Foreign Affairs Abdusselam, and Minister of Investment and Cooperation Riyadh Tayyib.⁶⁷ During this visit, the Joint Political Declaration, which envisages the establishment of the High Level Strategic Cooperation Council, was signed.

Tunisian President Moncef Marzouki made an official visit to Turkey as the guest of President Gul on 28-30 May 2013.⁶⁸ Marzouki was accompanied by a large number of ministers and a large delegation of businessmen during this visit. It was the first visit from Tunisia to Turkey at the presidential level since the Tunisian revolution. Marzouki, in his speeches, stated



that Turkish experience guided Tunisia and Turkey-Tunisia relations are deep and powerful. Especially in his speech made in Parliament, he stated that Turkey's support to Tunisia makes a major contribution to the democratization process and this is welcomed by all Tunisians.⁶⁹ However, he said that Tunisia continues to need Turkey's support to overcome the challenges posed by the ongoing process, because Tunisia has not completed its democratic transformation and thus delays of the process would jeopardize democratization.⁷⁰ "Turkey has both power and the political will. It can be overcome by taking a regional role. We want from our Turkish brothers to be sensitive on this issue and help us on political outlet," said Marzouki during his speech and underlined "key role" they attributed to Turkey.⁷¹

Prime Minister Erdogan paid a visit to Tunisia on 5-6 June, 2013.⁷² He met with Prime Minister Ali Larayedh, Tunisian President Moncef Marzouki, Speaker of Parliament Ben Jaafar, Minister of Agriculture, Minister of Education, and Minister of Interior during this visit. Prime Minister Erdogan attended to Tunisia-Turkey High-Level Strategic Cooperation Council Summit and Turkey-Tunisia Business Forum.⁷³

Prime Minister Erdogan also visited the Turkish Embassy in Tunisia and during his visit to embassy he met with the leader of Nahda Party, Rachid Ghannouchi. Also during the visit, 21 agreements and action plans on several fields were signed. In addition, in the context of a cooperation agreement that was signed by Turkey Union of Municipalities and Tunisia Cities Association; "sister city protocol" was signed between the municipality of Istanbul, Kahramanmaraş, Keciören, Kocaeli, Konya, Malatya, Manisa, Meram, Burdur, Odunpazarı, Samsun, Sakarya, Canik, Selcuklu, Sincan, Sanliurfa ve Trabzon as well as 27 major Tunisian municipalities including capital Tunis.

Upon the adoption of a new constitution in Tunisia, with an extraordinary session at the National Assembly of Tunisia, "Constitution Day" ceremony was organized on 7 February 2014. In this ceremony, Speaker of Parliament Cemil Cicek represented Turkey.⁷⁴ Foreign Minister Davutoglu also paid a visit to Tunisia on 11 February 2014.⁷⁵ Davutoglu's visit was the first ministerial level visit to Tunisia after the adoption of the new constitution. Davutoglu met with Speaker of Parliament Mustafa Ben Jaafar, new Prime Minister Mehdi Jomaa, and President

Moncef Marzouki.⁷⁶ Also he met with the leader of Nahda Party, Rachid Ghannouchi.⁷⁷

2.2. DEVELOPING ECONOMIC RELATIONS

Economic development in Tunisia continues to be an important condition for healthy and successful democratization process. The economic performance of the Ben Ali regime in Tunisia was shown as a “successful example” when compared to other countries in the Middle East and North Africa. After 1969, the regime began to implement liberal economic policies which have increased the country’s exports and tourism revenues. Thanks to these liberal economic policies, the country was able to attract foreign direct investment. However, despite these economic success, inequality in income distribution in the country, there is a huge economic disparities between regions, sectoral underdevelopment and high unemployment rates has played an important role in the emergence and spread of the 2010-2011 popular uprising in the country.

December-January events and ongoing actions against the provisional government have influenced adversely the country’s economic situation. The flight of foreign investors from the country due to the instability, the loss of tourism revenues because of similar reasons and the halting of production due to the strikes caused deepening economic problems and with the impact of the political crisis, economic problems reached a critical threshold. This situation has increased the existing poverty in the country’s less developed and poorer southern and central regions pre- 2011. However, after the 2011 process, the Tunisian economy has exceeded expectations and has entered in a rapid recovery and in 2012 Tunisian economy has experienced relativistic contraction period. Nevertheless, due to increasing political and social instability, this economic recovery lasted a short time and economic growth started to slow down in 2013.

Rate of 1.9% of GDP in 2011 rose above expectations and reached 3.6% in 2012. Because of the slowdown in manufacturing and agricultural

production and the current developments in the oil and gas sector, this ratio declined to 2.6% in 2013. Unemployment rate has regressed from 16.7% in 2012 to 15.3% at the end of 2013 but 13% ratio before 2011 has not been re-captured. The provisional governments and transitional governments that came to the power after 2011 followed expansionary fiscal and monetary policies until 2013 in order to support economy and employment. As a result of these policies, while consumer price inflation was 6.3% in 2013, it decreased to 5.5% at the beginning of 2014. On the other hand, the transition process in the country has also affected Foreign Direct Investment (FDI). In 2011, FDI rates suffered a rapid decline, but significant recovery was seen in 2012. As a consequence of this recovery, FDI caught 1.7 billion dollars. Nevertheless, the political crisis and instability and increasing violence with the protests during 2013 have a negative impact on FDI ratio and caused it to fall around 1 billion dollars. At the beginning of 2014 the political crisis was resolved by consensus, the adoption of the constitution and start of the work for the creation of the election timetable increased the confidence in the economy, which entered into a rapid recovery.

The events started at the end of the 2010 and interim government’s difficulty in ensuring the stability after the fleeing of Ben Ali from the country brought the country’s economy to a stagnation point. The restructuring and support of the economies of Tunisia and Egypt which was the main topics of President Barack Obama’s historic speech of the Arab Spring are still being discussed. In the first meeting of Deauville Partnership, which was held on 10 September 2011 and aims to support transitional countries experiencing Arab Spring by G-8 countries, sides reached a consensus over the 38 billion dollars in aid to Egypt, Tunisia, Morocco and Jordan until 2013.⁷⁸ There are efforts to reshape the regional economy by the United States and European countries. When considering Turkey’s active foreign policy, it cannot be expected from Turkey to stay out of this process. Turkey, Qatar, Saudi Arabia, the United Arab Emirates and Kuwait taking part in the G-8 meeting should be noted in this context. However, given the long procedure of expected

loans and grants from the United States and Europe and the conditions attached to them, countries in the region especially Turkey is emerging at an advantageous position. Turkey's cash assistance and its speedy aid to Libya, grant and loan programs undertaken by countries such as Saudi Arabia and Kuwait, Egypt, Jordan Bahrain emerge as striking examples in this context. The winds of change beginning with the year 2010 in North African countries have created a more

permission room of maneuver for the regional actors.

In fact, Turkey and Tunisian economic relations have gained momentum in recent years; from 2000-2008 bilateral relations developed rapidly and in areas covering trade, transport, industrial and mining, 11 agreements have been signed between Turkey and Tunisia.⁷⁹

Chart 4 - 1981-2011 The Treaties and Protocols signed between Turkey and Tunisia

Agreement/Protocol	Date of Signature
Agreement of Cooperation on Tourism	28.09.1981
Civil Aviation Agreement	07.05.1982
Agreement for Preventing Double Taxation	02.10.1986
Intergovernmental Agreement on the Establishment of the Standing Committee	23.05.1989
Maritime Transport Agreement	23.05.1989
Agreement on Cooperation in the Field of Agriculture	23.05.1989
Agreement on Reciprocal Promotion and Protection of Investments	29.05.1991
Trade, Economic and Technical Cooperation Agreement	15.07.1992
Agricultural Cooperation Committee Protocol on the Establishment and Duties	14.01.1993
International Road Transport Agreement	29.04.1994
Agreement on Cooperation in the Field of Health	24.06.2000
Scientific and Technical Cooperation Agreement	22.03.2001
3. Term Agricultural Cooperation Meeting Minutes	27.01.2001
9. Term Joint Economic Commission Protocol	07.02.2002
6. Term Tourism Joint Committee Meeting Statement	07.10.2003
Turkey-Tunisia Free Trade Agreement	25.11.2004
Industrial Cooperation Agreement	29.03.2005
10. Term Joint Economic Commission Protocol	09.02.2005
Agreement on Cooperation in Mining and Geology	01.02.2006
Memorandum of Understanding in the Field of Transport	09.06.2008
Customs Cooperation Agreement	02.12.2010
Turkey-Tunisia Friendship and Cooperation Agreement	15.09.2011

**Source: Republic of Turkey Ministry of Economy.*

The number of treaties had reached 32 in 2010.
⁸⁰ The trade volume between the two countries began to increase with Free Trade Agreement that was signed on 25 November 2004 and en-

tered into force on 1 July 2005.⁸¹ Free Trade Agreement aims "promoting and strengthening economic and technical cooperation, phasing out restrictions on merchandise trade includ-

ing agriculture, structuring appropriate competitive conditions, promoting mutual investments” and building a free trade area following the end of a nine-year transition period between the two countries.⁸² Following the signing of the agreement, as of 2013, foreign trade volume between Turkey and Tunisia reached 1,182 million dollars. Tunisia has become the 6th country in Turkey’s largest trading partner in Africa.⁸³ According to the Foreign Economic Relations Board (DEİK) data, total investments of 17 Turkish companies operating in Tunisia reached \$ 210 million. In 2007, a \$ 500 million contract between Tunisia and TAV Holding for construction and operation of International Enfidha Airport for 40 years and operation of Monastir Habib Bourguiba Airport for 40 years was signed. Flights from Enfidha Airport began at the end of 2009. Monastir Habib Bourguiba Airport had been operated by TAV Holding since January 2008.⁸⁴ TAV Holding has become the first private company that operates the airport

in Tunisia. Enfidha Airport and Monastir Habib Bourguiba Airport have increased their capacity of transport passengers each passing day; became the country’s main airport and air crossroads; and provided employment to the Tunisians in the country that were suffering from unemployment and deepening socio-economic problems. Also, Ekon Construction Industry and Trading Co., Ltd. in Djebel Ressas for the installation of new cement plant; Cebi 61 in Sfax for building. business center; Artı Yapı North Africa Construction with a Tunisian partner in Bizerte for the construction of 288 residential units belonging to Djebel Ressas; STFA Firm for the construction of the bridge pile of Rades-La Goulette bridge signed contracts in Tunisia.⁸⁵ In the post-2011 period, as in aforementioned examples, Turkish investments are making a significant contribution to the Tunisian economy. Turkey-Tunisia’s foreign trade data can be seen in the table below:

Chart 5 - 2009-2013 Turkey-Tunisia Trade

TURKEY-TUNISIA FOREIGN TRADE (BILLION \$)						
	Foreign Trade Volume	Export/Import	Share in Turkish Export	Share in Turkish Import	Turkish Share in Tunisian Export	Turkish Share in Tunisian Import
2009	881	%275	%0,63	%0,17	%3,37	%1,63
2010	994	%254	%0,63	%0,15	%3,21	%1,71
2011	1.052	%321	%0,59	%0,10	%3,25	%1,40
2012	992	%407	%0,52	%0,08	%3,26,	%1,15
2013	1.182	%309	%0,59	%0,11	%3,67	%1,70

* Source: Republic of Turkey Ministry of Foreign Affairs, Republic of Turkey Embassy of Turkey to Tunisia, <http://tunus.be.mfa.gov.tr/ShowInfoNotes.aspx?ID=121683>

In the post-2011 period, economic relations between Turkey and Tunisia have accelerated. on the one hand investments and trade volume has increased rapidly on the other. The number of economic agreements also began to raise. Thus,

Turkey has played an important role in the Tunisian economy in the post-2011 period. The imports and exports data among Tunisia and Turkey after 2001 can be seen from the table below:

Chart 6 - Turkey-Tunisia Export Data

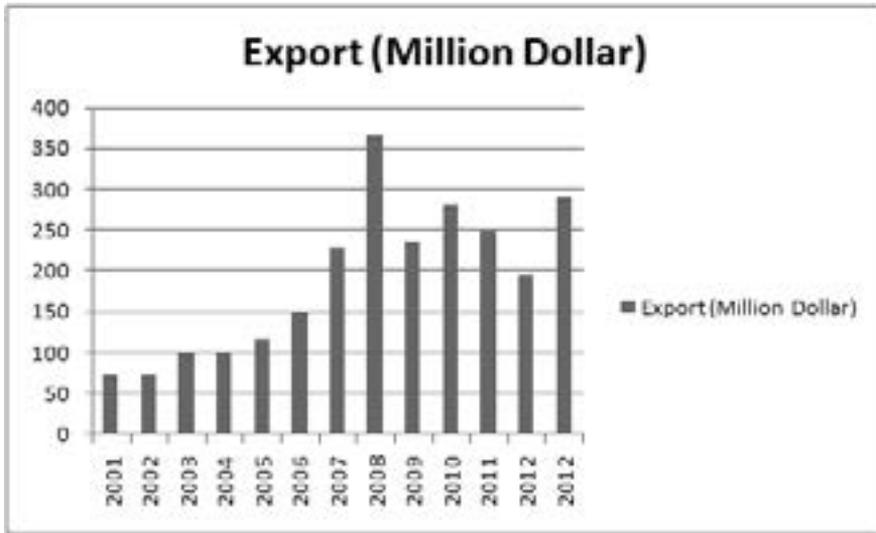
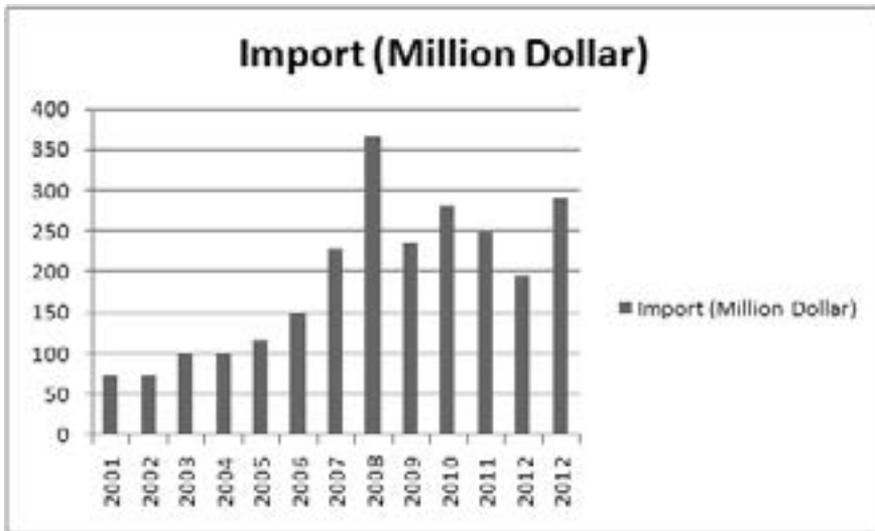


Chart 7 - Turkey-Tunisia Import Data



In 2012, Turkey has agreed to loan \$ 500 million to Tunisian businessmen.⁸⁶ The General Framework Agreement on USD 200 million in loan from Turkey to Tunisia by Turk Eximbank was signed on 16 November 2012 and entered into force on 15 August 2013.⁸⁷ In addition, TIKA was tasked with financing development projects in less developed inner areas of Tunisia.⁸⁸ TIKA Programme Coordination Office in Tunisia became operational in March 2012. Techni-

cal Cooperation and Development Agreement between Turkey and Tunisia” was signed on 11 October 2012.⁸⁹ Since 2012, TIKA has continued to run several projects in diverse fields including projects for supporting social, cultural and educational infrastructure, promoting technical equipment and capacity promotion for manufacturing sector, and training and technical cooperation programs in security, tourism, health and agricultural fields.

3. EXPECTATIONS AND CHALLENGES

One of the most influential factors behind December 2010-January 2011 popular protests in Tunisia was the socio-economic problems. It could not be possible for Nahda- CPR- Ettakatol troika government who had been struggling with political crises to solve these socio-economic problems in a short time. Despite the fact that there was a rapid economic improvement in post-2011 era, chronic economic problems inherited from Ben Ali era are still producing socio-economic discontent. As a result, unresolved socio-economic problems that fed December 2010-January 2011 popular protests have resulted in the expansion of the existing gap between society and state institutions. Tunisian society expected that the revolution would immediately have positive effects. These high expectations of Tunisian society have fuelled instability, political and social discontent.

Stability and security issues fed by socio-economic issues have been the most challenging issue for the troika government, because it was necessary to re-establish the state authority which was weakened during and after the popular protests, by taking into account human rights and reducing political repression policies. Troika government had been looking for ways to solve such problems. Despite all the criticism, with the help of Rashid Ghannouchi's personal charisma, Salafi groups were reached out for integration into the political system. This policy has been partially successful. However the troika government shifted its policies and diverged security policies in 2013 as a result of Ansar Al Sharia's insistence on their radical stance and

their involvement in acts of violence. This policy shift was resulted in the appointment of a new interior minister on May 2013 and official announcement of Ansar Al Sharia as a terrorist organization by Tunisia. Nevertheless, troika government carefully avoided applying intense security measures not to deepen the radicalization in the country.

However, the most critical struggle of the transition period took place during the constitution writing which turned into a battleground of the culture wars and resulted in political polarization. The political struggle focusing on the issue of state-religion relations between secular opponents and troika government became the main fault line of the political crisis. In this process, both sides accused each other of "restricting individual rights and freedoms". At a time when negotiations continued among the sides, political assassinations increased political tension. Following the assassination of opponent figures Chokri Belaid on 6 February 2013 and Mohammed Brahmi on 24 July 2013, the opposition parties boycotted parliament and turned their face to the Tunisian street. Despite all these difficulties and political deadlock, political crisis has been overcome by compromising on basic issues and constitution, thanks to the constructive attitude of political parties and civil society actors in Tunisia.

National Constituent Assembly paved the way for the general elections scheduled to be held this year by approving the draft constitution on 24 January 2014. According to the road map ac-



cepted by political actors following the political deadlock, Tunisia is preparing for elections under the leadership of “interim technocratic government”. In consequence, constitution writing process during last two years in Tunisia was realized in the shadow of intense discussions, economic challenges and political crises. Despite all challenges and crises, dialogue and reconciliation had remained the dominant approach for conflict resolution in Tunisia.

While Tunisia has been encountering economic, social and political crisis during the last three years, Turkey has made significant political and economic contributions. On the one hand, bilateral political visits gained momentum; on the other hand, mutual trade volume has shown a rapid increase due to expanding economic relations. As a result, Turkey’s political and economic support has played an important role in alleviating the issue of unemployment, lack of investment and socio-economic challenges in Tunisia. In the upcoming days, a considerable challenging process is awaiting Tunisia. Therefore, Turkey’s positive contributions to Tunisia

will continue to play an important role. The upcoming challenges that Tunisia will face and contributions that Turkey can make fall into democratization, solutions to economic challenges and security.

A deep and arduous process of democratization began in Tunisia in the post-2011 period. First of all, interim technocratic government needs to conduct the presidential and parliamentary elections, which will be held in October and November, in a stable environment with transparency. Radical elements and armed groups, which are fed by the chaotic environment of Libya and can easily cross Libya-Tunisia border, pose the most serious threats for security and stability of elections. Similarly, there have been clashes and attacks near the Algerian-Tunisian border and providing border security became harder for the Tunisian army. Stability issues created by the return of Tunisians who fought in the Syrian civil war made the situation more critical. In particular, an increase in security issues in the pre-election period is observed. Therefore, efforts to produce new laws and poli-

cies for security and stability issues have intensified in the pre-election period.⁹⁰ On the other hand, Tunisia needs to avoid the risk of escalating political tensions in the country.

The high voter turnout in upcoming elections has crucial importance as well as the security and stability of elections. Voter turnout rates at the elections held in 2011 with 90% reached the highest participation rates.⁹¹ Tunisia Supreme Election Board announced that there are 8 million potential new voters in Tunisia during voter registration in 2011. 4 million of these potential new voters registered in 2011 elections. Voter registration process for presidential and parliamentary elections began but the number of applications lagged far below the targets. Only 761,463 of the 5,127,043 potential new voters registered.⁹² Low registration rates revealed the concerns regarding low voter turnout. The latest opinion polls measuring the tendencies of the Tunisians regarding the upcoming elections confirmed these concerns.⁹³ Therefore, Tunisia Supreme Election Board opened a second application period between 5 and 26 August to receive new voter registration.⁹⁴ In parallel to this decision, many non-governmental organizations organized door to door visits to convince Tunisians for voter registration in order to prevent low turnout.⁹⁵

In addition to performing the elections, the acceptance of election results by the political parties, all actors and the Tunisians and the acceptance of elections as the "only game in town" for power struggle carry out vital importance for Tunisia's ongoing democratization process. In the 2011 elections, the Tunisians voted for an "interim Constituent Assembly" responsible for the preparation of the basic laws and the constitution. With the 2014 elections, the main aim is to finalize this interim period and normalize the new system. For that reason, the acceptance of election results and consolidation of electoral politics constitute decisive turning point to finalize transitional period in Tunisia.

Following power transfer after the elections, it is necessary to integrate society to a new political system and processes successfully. The coup in Egypt has demonstrated the importance of

integrating the masses into the political system and processes for the consolidation of electoral politics and democratic political life instead of street politics. Therefore, one of the most important steps that must be taken is to improve and expand existing institutions as well as establishing new systems and mechanisms for the integration of the masses, especially youth. Only in this way, the attractiveness of street politics can disappear and stability which is needed for democratization can be sustained.

In addition to the problems and challenges of democratization, Tunisia has been encountering serious economic problems and challenges during the last years, and in the near future, these challenges and problems seem to continue occupying a major place on the main agenda. Within these economic issues, which also have produced social and political crises in Tunisia, three main items come to the fore. It is observed that these three items- reconstruction of economy, closure of the gap in regional development, solving the problem of unemployment- carry out vital priority.

First of all, the economic system, corrupted during Ben Ali rule, needs to be restructured urgently. Especially in the last ten years, the state role in the economy had been transferred to Ben Ali's family and business circles close to him. These transfers include some basic state factions that regulate economic life such as taxation. In addition, by manipulating the role of state in economy, Ben Ali had created economic elites that provided social base for his rule since 1987. Therefore, the role of state in economy needs to be reformed and reorganized structurally in the new era. In this respect, the policies to attract foreign direct investment to Tunisia are promising. However, adopting and implementing structural reforms is essential for the permanence and expansion of foreign investments.

Another important issue is the closure of the regional developmental gap. Achieving this goal is a challenging task as much as implementing structural reforms in the economy. However, one should remember that the main trigger of the popular uprising was the initial uprisings

emerging in economically underdeveloped southern and central areas of the country; and economic demands were much louder than political demands at the early days of uprising. In the three-year transition period, similar protests with economic demands continue in the region. Therefore, in order to ensure stability in Tunisia, Tunisia needs to ensure economic development and to provide infrastructural investments in southern and central parts of the country. Thus, it can be possible to avoid radicalization and potential street movements in near future.

Another possible crisis in Tunisia is the security problems. After 2011, Al Qaida linked groups influenced Tunisia in a very short time period. Because of the authority gap and power struggle, border security between Tunisia-Libya becomes a major problem. Al Qaida linked groups can easily cross the Tunisia-Libya border and organize terrorist attacks. The leader of Tunisian Ansar al Sharia fled to Libya-Derna because of increasing operations in the country. Current situation affects particularly the rural areas. State cannot fulfil the authority gap in Tunisia like other countries which witnessed public riots and transformation demands. The power and authority vacuum merges with unemployment and poverty and creates a suitable environment for the radical movements and violence. Because of that, Al Qaida linked groups increased their influence in the rural areas of Tunisia. They took the responsibility of education and health care, and they became more influential with economic activities like smuggling and trade.

The violence and political assassinations that took place after 2011 in Tunisia put the troika government that is composed of Nahda, CPR and Ettakol under pressure and caused intense criticism to Nahda. The developments which have direct response in social life like the occupation of university campuses, attacks against the cafes and restaurants that sell alcohol and dress controls by some groups in the streets deepened the political crisis in Tunisia. After the attacks against the police stations, UGTT offices which is the oldest union in the country, buildings of secular and leftist parties buildings, and the killing of secular-leftist leaders Chokri

Belaid and Mohammed Brahimi, the troika government gave the interior ministry to a technocrat. Moreover, rather than depending on “negotiation and persuasion” policies, implemented “security oriented” policies. In that context, extensive operations started against the Salafi groups and Al Qaida linked groups in Tunisia.

2012 US Embassy attack is linked with Abu Iyad (Seyfullah ben Hussein), one of the prominent figures of Ansar al Sharia. Ansar al Sharia shifted its discourse against Nahda to a clear threat after Bashir Golli and Mohammed Bahti who are arrested as the perpetrators of September attack and died because of hunger strike. On 27 March, Abu Iyad (Seyfullah ben Hussein) announced via Facebook that they will fight against Nahda and declared that they will overthrow them. This threat is remarkable as it is the first statement that directly targets Nahda. On the other hand the leader of Tunisian Ansar al Sharia, Abu Iyad made a statement and called for a peace between ISIS and other radical Salafi groups and unity among all of them. According to the statement of Tunisia Interior Ministry Lutfi bin Ciddu on June 2014, there are more than 2400 Tunisian fighters in Syria. On February 2014 nearly 400 Tunisian teen returned from Syria. The fact that Tunisian teens are joining the clashes around the region and they continue their efforts in Tunisia increases the terror linked concerns of Tunisia.

In this context two aspects gain importance for the security problems of Tunisia. First, promoting the border security in order to hinder the threats emanates from Libya and Algeria and secondly finding a way not to harm the democratization process by preventing radicalization of security issues are main concerns. With the election time getting closer, attacks in Tunisia particularly at border areas are increasing drastically. On 16 July, 15 Tunisian soldiers lost their life at the Algeria-Tunisia border. Again at the Tunisia-Algeria border on 26 July, two Tunisian soldiers lost their lives. Similarly at the Tunisia-Libya border lots of attacks have been observed for the last three years. At last in May 2014 a Libya brigade attacked Bin Guardene at the Tunisia-Libya border. On the other hand the operations that have been conducted by General

Haftar caused immigration waves towards Tunisia. Hence Tunisian officials decided to close some border gates on 1 August 2014. However it seems that Tunisian officials cannot sustain this decree for a long period. At first the refugee camps for the Libyans are complicated that it is difficult to close border completely. Additionally, the Tunisian tribes who live at Bin Guardene have relatives at the other side of the border and social and economic relations still remain. At last, the Tunisia-Libyan Border is one of the sole exit points for the foreign workers in Libya. Approximately, there are 50,000-60,000 Tunisian workers among those workers. And it is known that many Egyptian citizens try to leave Libya. Under these circumstances, it seems, closing the border is only a short term solution to the crisis. Thus Tunisia has to strict the border security and to take extra measures.

Right alongside the border security, the other tension fields are the domestic violence, lack of authority especially in the south and inland parts of the country and getting ground of the al-Qaeda linked groups. Temporary technocratic government announced that a new unit must be established to fight against terrorism and in this respect, studies for this aim are commenced. Additionally, Tunisian decision makers and some nongovernmental organizations call for rearranging the laws of terrorism to take more repressive measures. Presumably those pressures may pay off. However it is important for democracy and stability in Tunisia to prevent the radicalization of security policies. Till today, this balance has been maintained successfully. However, this balance is being criticised gradually. Thus, the security policies have the potential to come to the forefront in respect to democratization. This danger can be overcome by sustaining strong support to Tunisia.

As a result, Turkey has the potential to continue playing a key role in order to support normalization of social, economic and political life, as well as stabilization and democratization. These contributions can be listed as follows:

- Turkey's positive contributions will have great importance regarding the normalization of political life, acceptance of democratic principles by political and social actors, completion of transitional period with power transfer and integration of society to new political system via institutional mechanisms.
- In addition to support for democratization, increasing economic relations between Turkey and Tunisia play a positive role in the solution of economic problems. Especially economic investments of Turkish investors in Tunisia will help to alleviate the problem of unemployment by creating jobs, catalyzing reforms for the economic structure and easing the economic recession.
- In addition, Turkish investments in southern and central areas, which are suffering from shortage and lack of infrastructure, will also help to reduce regional development gap.
- Tunisia needs support to solve security challenges. It is vital for Tunisia in terms of democratization and stability to get support for ensuring border security as well as generating and implementing policies. At this point, the development of cooperation in the security field between Tunisia and Turkey will make a positive contribution to stability and democratization.
- Finally, in addition to contributions in economic and security fields, Turkey's most crucial contribution will be to support the restructuring of existing state institutions and creation of new institutions.

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