



Resolution 1819 (2011)¹

The situation in Tunisia

Parliamentary Assembly

1. The Parliamentary Assembly refers to its [Resolution 1791 \(2011\)](#) on the situation in Tunisia, adopted in January 2011 at the end of a debate held under urgent procedure only two weeks after the Jasmine Revolution, which put an end to the Ben Ali regime. It again pays tribute to the courage and determination of the Tunisian people who, despite violence and repression, have clearly shown the will to put an end to authoritarian rule and to transform Tunisia into a free, open and democratic country.
2. Five months after the revolution, the Assembly notes with satisfaction that the process of democratic transition in Tunisia is well under way and steps have already been taken to dismantle the structures of the former regime and put in place elements of a democratic political system.
3. The Assembly pays tribute to the courage, competence and determination of the members of the interim government, the newly established authorities and the representatives of civil society.
4. The Assembly reaffirms its readiness to put its experience of accompanying democratic transitions and establishing new institutions in young democracies in Europe at the disposal of Tunisia's transition institutions, future permanent institutions and civil society. It has no intention of giving lessons or imposing models, however, and respects the sovereign choices of the Tunisians. Any support and assistance must be governed by respect for the Tunisian people and their dignity.
5. The Assembly supports the intention of the transition authorities to organise elections to a National Constituent Assembly as soon as possible in order to ensure the democratic legitimacy of the transformations under way. It congratulates the authorities on drafting a legal framework for the elections and entrusting their organisation to an independent authority. It is aware, however, that the material organisation of the elections presents a great many practical problems. It notes that, following a proposal from the Independent High Authority for the Elections and the consultation between the transitional government and the main political forces of the country, the elections originally scheduled for 24 July 2011 should be held on 23 October 2011.
6. At the same time, the Assembly is concerned about the considerable deterioration of the economic and social situation of the country, including a substantial increase in the unemployment rate. It takes note of the efforts of the provisional government to stimulate the economy and create jobs, but considers that international solidarity is needed to support Tunisia in transition.
7. The revolution created much enthusiasm and high expectations in the Tunisian population. If there is no concrete economic improvement, support for the revolution may quickly wane and give way to feelings of disillusion and disappointment.
8. The sudden rise in political tension in early May 2011 showed that the apparent stability of the political situation in Tunisia is still very fragile and that the discontent of a considerable part of the population can easily be exploited to destabilise the country on the eve of the elections. The Assembly urges all Tunisian political and civil forces to act responsibly and not endanger the transformation process under way.
9. The authorities must make it a priority to strengthen internal security, which is very fragile.

1. Assembly debate on 21 June 2011 (22nd Sitting) (see [Doc. 12624](#), report of the Political Affairs Committee, rapporteur: Ms Brasseur). Text adopted by the Assembly on 21 June 2011 (22nd Sitting). See also [Recommendation 1972 \(2011\)](#).



10. The Assembly welcomes the fact that the setting of priorities and the development of the reform programme are essentially taking place in an inclusive political climate with the broad participation of civil society players.
11. It notes with satisfaction that contacts have been established between the European Commission for Democracy through Law (Venice Commission) and the Higher Authority for Realisation of the Objectives of the Revolution, Political Reform and Democratic Transition, and encourages the Higher Authority to avail itself fully of the experience and expertise of the Venice Commission in the preparation of the new constitution.
12. The Assembly is ready to contribute to the organisation and observation of the elections to the National Constituent Assembly and welcomes the intention of the authorities to invite it to observe those elections.
13. The Assembly reiterates the importance of taking steps to curb corruption and nepotism and to investigate abuses of power committed by the former ruling elites of Tunisia. It notes that a trial *in absentia* of the former President Ben Ali took place on 20 June 2011. It encourages the Commission of Inquiry into misappropriation of funds and corruption to shed all possible light on the abuses committed by the former rulers of Tunisia and those close to them. It calls upon the transition authorities and the future Tunisian authorities to put in place an effective anti-corruption mechanism.
14. The Assembly calls on the Tunisian transition authorities to:
 - 14.1. guarantee, in the framework of the election campaign for the National Constituent Assembly, respect for fundamental political freedoms such as freedom of assembly, freedom of association, freedom of expression and media freedom, as well as individual rights;
 - 14.2. ensure that the essential democratic principle of separation of the temporal and spiritual powers is respected;
 - 14.3. ensure that all state security forces observe strict neutrality and do not interfere in the electoral process;
 - 14.4. create fair and transparent conditions for the election campaign, and in particular guarantee equal access to the media for the different political forces and the citizens' right to access to information in order to be able to make informed political choices;
 - 14.5. ensure that the funding of political parties and the election campaign is transparent;
 - 14.6. create the conditions for national and foreign observers to follow the electoral process in complete transparency;
 - 14.7. ensure speedy and objective examination of any possible challenge.
15. The Assembly calls on the Tunisian political and civil forces to:
 - 15.1. conduct the election campaign in an atmosphere of calm and mutual respect;
 - 15.2. refrain from any attempt to provoke or exacerbate political, economic or social tensions, or to disturb public order;
 - 15.3. comply with the electoral legislation and with the decisions of the institutions responsible for organising the elections;
 - 15.4. accept and respect the results of the vote.
16. The Assembly encourages civil society players to remain actively involved in the organisation and follow-up of the electoral process and, after the elections, in the promotion of democratic principles and values in the framework of the reforms.
17. After the election of the National Constituent Assembly, the Assembly invites the future Tunisian authorities to:
 - 17.1. ensure that the positive achievements of Tunisian society, in particular the high level of education and the status of women, are safeguarded;
 - 17.2. put in place conditions enabling Tunisian youth to be actively involved in public life and political action and in this way give effect to its wish to be an active force for change;
 - 17.3. continue the political reform process, taking inspiration from universal principles and values and the experience of democratic transition accumulated in the Council of Europe;

17.4. deepen for this purpose the dialogue with the appropriate bodies, mechanisms and structures of the Council of Europe. To this end, the Assembly reiterates the elements contained in paragraph 13 of [Resolution 1791 \(2011\)](#), and again invites the future Tunisian authorities to:

17.4.1. accede to those Council of Europe legal instruments which are open to non-member states, in particular to those in the fields of democracy, human rights and the rule of law;

17.4.2. avail themselves fully of Tunisia's membership of the Venice Commission in the future constitutional reform process;

17.4.3. accede to the Council of Europe's enlarged partial agreements, such as the European Centre for Global Interdependence and Solidarity (North-South Centre) and the European and Mediterranean Major Hazards Agreement (EUR-OPA);

17.4.4. establish contacts between the Council of Europe and the authorities in Tunisia responsible for questions of justice, sustainable development, culture, education and higher education, youth and sport, gender equality and the rights of the child;

17.4.5. study and use, in their respective activities, the experience of the Council of Europe human rights institutions and monitoring mechanisms, including the European Court of Human Rights and the Commissioner for Human Rights;

17.4.6. foster contacts between Tunisian and European parliamentary and civil society representatives;

17.4.7. consider the prospects for parliamentary dialogue offered by the Partner for Democracy status recently established by the Assembly.

18. The Assembly invites the Secretary General of the Council of Europe to:

18.1. strengthen contacts and consider support measures for Tunisian civil society;

18.2. examine the extent to which Tunisia could benefit from the experience of the Council of Europe Schools of Political Studies;

18.3. examine ways of involving representatives of Tunisian youth in the activities of the Council of Europe in the youth field;

18.4. examine the possibility of inviting Tunisian representatives to the Summer University for Democracy;

18.5. raise, in his contacts with the Council of Europe's international partners, above all the European Union and the Organization for Security and Co-operation in Europe (OSCE), the need for effective co-ordination of efforts to assist the democratic transition in Tunisia.

19. The Assembly invites the European Commission to reconsider its decision to withdraw its financial support for the existing network of Council of Europe Schools of Political Studies.

20. The Assembly calls on the main international partners of Tunisia, in particular the European Union, to demonstrate genuine solidarity towards this country in transition, and speedily provide real support to stimulate the economy and tourism and improve the social situation.

21. It considers it entirely inappropriate to tarnish the image of Tunisia, a country that has just freed itself from an authoritarian regime and chosen democracy, as a country that is a source of irregular migrants.

22. The Assembly confirms its determination, already expressed in [Resolution 1791 \(2011\)](#), to follow political developments in Tunisia closely and strengthen its dialogue with the country's political forces and civil society players. It is ready to establish contacts with the future National Constituent Assembly, and to invite its representatives to be present in Strasbourg during its plenary sessions, on the basis of its [Resolution 1598 \(2008\)](#) on strengthening co-operation with the Maghreb countries.

23. The Assembly decides to invite representatives of the future National Constituent Assembly and of the future Tunisian Parliament to participate in the Forum for the Future of Democracy.

24. The Assembly asks national parliaments of Council of Europe member and observer states and parliamentary supported foundations to foster contacts with Tunisian parliamentary bodies.