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What are democracy's prospects for the Tunisian revolt?

AMOR BOUBAKRI

University of Sousse, Tunisia

The popular revolt in Tunisia has raised several questions among observers concerning the prospects for democracy and whether Tunisia would be able to achieve a transition into a real and sustainable democratic regime. As this revolt, or its actual success, was not anticipated by the majority of the Tunisian elite, the answer to this question remains challenging. For some observers, the long-lasting one party rule under Ben Ali's regime, and the vertiginous rhythm through which one of the most rigid dictatorships has fallen, may not help to reach such goal. However, this opinion reflects the lack of information about the Tunisian scene that has led to inaccurate conclusions. There is no need to go back to the 19th century and remind ourselves of the origins of political reformism in Tunisia, inspired by constitutionalism. It is worth mentioning in this respect, that

Tunisia was the first Arab and Muslim country to adopt a Bill of Rights in 1857 and a constitution in 1861. Besides, since 1956 Tunisia has been the sole Arab country to abolish polygamy and ban traditional marriage and divorce.

To focus exclusively on the recent events in Tunisia, we can say that serious challenges to Ben Ali's regime had been occurring since 1998. Indeed, during his entire rule, Ben Ali only benefited from a short respite, mainly the period between 1992 and 1996. During this period, the dictatorship had reached critical levels of oppression, and there were few who had the courage to defy the dangerous regime's authoritarian drift. Civil society and political opposition were mercilessly oppressed. A huge number of activists of all sensibilities were jailed after unfair trials and indiscriminate use of torture. All these violations have been regularly reported by Amnesty International and other human rights NGOs. The year 1998 marked the first break of silence when a group of activists decided to create the National Council for Liberties (NCL), a national NGO which was never recognized by the regime. Some significant reports issued by it on the human rights situation in Tunisia had a great impact among activists and opened the way to more direct actions against the dictatorship.

One of the most important and courageous acts of civil resistance

was the hunger strike carried on by journalist Taoufik Ben Brik who was deprived of his passport for criticizing the regime. This strike received great media attention, mainly among the French media and Al-Jazeera. It also encouraged more and more people to start resisting the regime. Since then, hunger strikes had become widely used as a technique of civil resistance by activists. Ben Ali's regime became subject to increasingly more open criticism by sections of the Tunisian elite, human rights activists and political opponents. The big pressure on Ben Ali from 1999 to 2001 had showed the weakness of the Tunisian regime and the limits of the dictatorship before the new mass media and internet and the role of NGOs. Ben Ali himself publicly admitted to the widespread presence of corruption and human rights violations within the regime. However, the events of September 11th 2001 were an opportunity that reinvigorated the autocratic regime. The "war against terrorism" offered an opportunity that Ben Ali seized perfectly to return to his violent methods of repression without risking any criticism from the international arena, especially since the latter became absorbed by the wars in Afghanistan and Iraq.

In the meantime, the regime's tyrannical repression worsened. Corruption was a widespread practice, mainly among



Ben Ali's own family. Human rights violations and political and social repression reached unprecedented levels. Ben Ali's approach to dominating society consisted in manipulating national and international opinion via a fake commitment to democracy. He created *de façade* political opposition which supported him, while the real opposition was ruthlessly oppressed. At the beginning of his era (1987-1992), Ben Ali attempted to divide the opposition mainly by isolating the Islamist movement (Ennahda). After his crushing of Ennahda, Ben Ali continued to oppress the secular parties.

Ben Ali's brutally repressive regime forced Islamists and secular militants to cooperate and unify in the struggle against dictatorship. Consequently, the different political groups and movements learned to work together with mutual respect and tolerance. It is rare to see secular political parties accept Islamist movements and see them fighting together against dictatorship in the Arab region. The germs of a genuine democratic and peaceful coexistence between the future democracy's actors were thus created by Ben Ali himself. In other words, the suitable ingredients for a constructive political life already exist in Tunisian society. Ben Ali aimed to create a total political vacuum in this society to avoid any alternative rule except his own one. Due to the many sacrifices made by Tunisia's political and social activists, this plan has failed. Tunisia's dynamic opposition became more consistent in challenging the dictatorship after the events of September 11th 2001. Civil society also became more audacious. The right of association was won against fierce resistance from the regime. A large number of local human rights NGOs were created and began to operate without obtaining legal status. Furthermore, these NGOs operated with enthusiasm and energy despite strict control and indiscriminate political oppression. The revival of civil society and the opposition during the last six years could explain why Ben Ali's regime remained constantly under

heavy pressure from international human rights NGOs. The positions of many Tunisian activists within these international NGOs were very beneficial to this resistance. Worth mentioning here are figures such as Souhyl Belhacen, president of the International Federation of League of Human Rights (IFIDH) who used to be the vice-president of the Tunisian League for Defense of Human Rights, and Kamel Jendoubi, the coordinator of the Euro-Mediterranean Human Rights Network. Other influential Tunisian Diaspora figures have also played an important role mainly in Europe and North America via mass media and NGOs.

The important role of professional organizations in Tunisia also needs to be taken into account. On the first line of the resistance is the General Tunisian Union of Labor (UGTT), a unique workers' union created in 1945 representing all professional categories except liberal professions. It fought for social justice and defended the material and moral interests of all workers without exception. The most important role assumed by the UGTT has been the promotion and protection of the middle class which constitutes the real motor of political change and reform in modern Tunisia. Additionally to its social role, the UGTT has influenced the political scene. On one hand, sometimes it had a direct political role in the elections. On the other hand, the UGTT has, throughout its history, been a refuge for political activists from the opposition. During the last few years before Ben Ali's fall, the UGTT witnessed significant and dynamic political protest reflecting a deep crisis in Tunisian society and genuine anger with Ben Ali's regime. Additionally to the UGTT, the role of some other professional categories during the last years, such as journalists and judges, are also worth mentioning. Lawyers especially have had a decisive role in the resistance against the regime. The Tunisian Bar Association has constantly been an open challenger to Ben Ali. During the last few days of the dictatorship, lawyers

were in the street, demonstrating alongside ordinary people.

It is worth mentioning that the Tunisian revolt had clear precursor signs. The events in the Mineral Basin region (Southwest of Tunisia) in June 2008 specifically pointed towards it. During these events Ben Ali was defied, for the first time, by a population that openly protested against corruption and social injustice. Since then, Ben Ali's regime faced increasing resistance in several regions with a similar motive: end corruption and social injustice.

As a conclusion, it can be argued that the Tunisian revolt came about as a result of an increasing dynamism within Tunisian society during the last few years. Political parties, NGOs and other actors have played a decisive role to make the end of Ben Ali's dictatorship possible. Innumerable social categories, regions and political movements contributed to this revolt. The Tunisian revolt succeeded in a moment when the Tunisian people and its elite decided to heroically stand up to Ben Ali's tyranny. At the roots of this revolt lies the tragic self-immolation of a young unemployed graduate. Yet the martyrs include also activists from worker unions and other social organizations, including one professor from a Tunisian university. The struggle against dictatorship has caused unification among all these actors, thus, democracy would not be a factor contributing to chaos and conflict in such a society. Indeed, consensus among all actors to go forward and build the democratic regime exists and has solid foundations.

The way that the transition has been carried out until now shows that a sustainable and real democracy in Tunisia has genuine prospects. The cabinet of national unity was composed only two days after Ben Ali's fall between parties that had never worked together. The fact that some parties refused to join the cabinet has not led to chaos. People are protesting peacefully while the cabinet works without problems and takes revolutionary decisions which



were scarcely imaginable just two months ago.

Democracy seems likely, is possible and essential in Tunisia. Other Arab societies are now wishing for their own revolution and want to start fighting for democracy. The self-immolation technique has already spread among the region and sends, beyond its tragic aspect, a clear message that the people are ready and willing to pay a dear price for dignity and democracy.

Tunisia's five key challenges on the road to democracy

TOBIAS SCHUMACHER

University Institute of Lisbon,
CIES-IUL, Lisbon, Portugal

Following the collapse of the Ben Ali regime in Tunisia there is a growing belief in the West that the country's current transition will lead to the birth of the first full-fledged democracy in the Arab world. Only four weeks after Tunisians rid themselves of one of the world's most repressive dictators, the 'liberalization virus' has infected Egypt and is likely to infect more societies in the region. However, the belief that political liberalization will necessarily lead to democratization is premature. Democracy is, in fact, only one of the many possible end results of political uprisings in general and of the Tunisian "jasmine revolution" in particular. As the experience with other transition processes in other parts of the world has shown, the time between the downfall of the

old regime and the establishment of a new political system is highly critical and much can go wrong. As one of its first acts, the first interim government in Tunisia decided to hold parliamentary and presidential elections in six months, providing all parties and opposition movements have time to prepare their campaigns. The issue of whether, during this period, a solid bridge can be built between the current process of liberalization and potentially true democratization depends on five key factors.

First, all efforts to initiate a peaceful transition are bound to fail as long as the old elites retain direct or indirect control of the resources of the central power. With continued access to and control over key state institutions they can significantly influence and shape the transition process and its development. The latest reshuffle of the interim government, resulting in the replacement of twelve ministers who belonged to the RCP party of former President Ben Ali, was a much overdue and important step in the right direction. However, the tentacles of the ousted regime go way beyond the political arena, as the bureaucratic elites are still synonymous with the country's entrepreneurial elites. Their clientelistic network is likely to survive the current transition process the longer Ben Ali's formerly loyal allies, interim Prime Minister Mohamed Ghannouchi and interim President Fouad Mebazaa, stay in power.

Second, it is imperative that the coalition of liberalizers, i.e. the unemployed, the middle classes, the opposition parties and the armed forces, agree on and maintain a transition agenda throughout the coming weeks and months. This will prevent the interim government, regardless of its composition, from hijacking the process and defining the itinerary exclusively in accordance with the interests of certain members. Yet, given the fragmentation of the Tunisian opposition movement and their heterogeneous interests, the maintenance of such a consensus will remain a formidable challenge.

Third, since the refusal of their Chief

of Staff to carry out Ben Ali's orders to shoot at protesters, the Tunisian armed forces have emerged as the key actor. So, for the next six months and beyond, much will depend on their role and line of action. The question is whether or not they will eventually split into softliners and hardliners – a common feature in other transition processes – but, whatever the outcome, it will be decisive for the future course of the transition. It will determine whether the situation remains an upheaval marked by limited outbreaks of violence or, at the worst, turns into civil war. Obviously, the Tunisian army has been rather apolitical in the past and is relatively small. However, against the backdrop of years of generous military aid from the West, it is well trained and possesses solid equipment. In the event of a split within the armed forces, which is rather unlikely at this point, the emerging veto-players may very well try to make use of these resources and, following the Algerian example of the 1990s, attempt to possibly exert a more explicit influence on the country's future political development. The army's recent behind-the-scenes efforts to convince interim President Mebazza to replace Ghannouchi as Prime Minister and replace him with a more respected opposition figure prove clearly that it does not intend to confine itself to a mere bystander.

Fourth, the future position of the armed forces is closely related to that of Ben Ali's police and security apparatus, the pillar of the regime's system of repression. With a strength of approximately 150.000 members it is disproportionately high for a country of just 10 million inhabitants. In addition, as a significant number of its members have a mindset rooted in distrust, totalitarian practices and regime loyalty, their integration into an emerging democratic order would be a challenge not only for this and any future government but also Tunisian society itself. The active participation of a few police officers in some of the latest demonstrations is certainly a

positive sign. However, it is only a first small step toward a much broader and certainly time-consuming process of integration and reconciliation.

Fifth, one of the lessons learnt from other transition processes is that it is only a question of time before the euphoria over the long-awaited political liberalization gives way to disenchantment over the economic system's incapacity to satisfy the citizens' basic needs. The "jasmine revolution" had its origin directly in the regime's unjust distribution practices, an uneven and misguided labor market policy, and a rapid increase in food prices. Six weeks after the death of 26-year-old Mohamed Bouazizi, whose immolation sparked the Tunisian uprising and the downfall of Ben Ali's police state, these problems are still there. So, for the interim government, it is literally a matter of survival to underpin the political opening-up with the immediate adoption and swift implementation of a rapid macro-economic response that addresses precisely these issues. Each and every political transition follows its own path and occurs in its own setting, but, taken as a whole, these transitions provide important insights. Reform-minded actors in Tunisia would be well advised to look beyond the borders of their country and learn from others' experience. After all, it is their moment to prove that Tunisia can be the first-ever true democracy in the modern Arab world.

Fearing the message from South Sudan

JAN VÖLKEL

Department of Political Science and Sociology, University of Salzburg, Austria

It is an overwhelming "yes": according to first reports, more than 90% of the people of South Sudan have expressed their support for creating an independent state made up of the ten southern Sudanese provinces. After years of deliberations and negotiations, the door to the creation of a new state (whose name is still unknown) is indeed wide open.

This raises fears. Sudan's central government is caught between the requirements of the Comprehensive Peace Agreement (CPA) which ended the decade-long war with the Sudan People's Liberation Army/Movement (SPLA/M) in 2005, its own economic interests in the oil-rich south, and the international quarrels about the International Criminal Court's (ICC) verdict against President Omar al-Bashir. Officially, the government announced its respect for the referendum's outcome, but warned also of possible postponements due to multiple unsolved problems. For instance, the exact borderline between the North and South is still disputed. The exploration rights to the region's oil wells are not yet defined. And the status of Southerners living in the North and Northerners in the South awaits clarification.

Fears, to a certain extent, have also guided the diplomatic efforts of Sudan's neighboring Arab countries. Notwithstanding its official support for the referendum, the Arab League strongly lobbied for an outcome favorable to Sudan's unity. At some point, Egyptian government clearly expressed its willingness to keep Sudan a unified country, in an

attempt to avoid making the complex negotiation about Nile water usage even more complicated. Saudi Arabia, meanwhile, sees its traditional support of Arab and Islamic expansion on the African continent endangered in the event that a predominantly Christian state is established.

During the recent Arab-African summit, held in the Libyan city of Sirte on October 9th and 10th 2010, Libyan revolution leader Muammar al-Gaddafi clearly expressed what the non-supportive states fear most: if Sudan splits, then what prevents other Arab states from deciding their fate on a religious, ethnic, or geographical basis? The idea of separation could spread like a "contagious disease," he warned.

Claiming just the opposite for Nigeria in March, namely the separation of the country along Christian/Muslim lines "according to the 1947 Pakistan example", Gaddafi rubbed salt into the wounds of the Arab, especially the Maghreb, countries. United in their rejection of a possibly independent South Sudan, they all fear negative spillover effects from South Sudan into their own countries.

First and foremost, a successful separation of South Sudan could evoke new cravings among the Sahrawi people in the Western Sahara territories. Morocco does all it can to prevent any new uprisings in the occupied territories. Here, the South Sudan question is a Pandora's Box, as the Sahrawis were promised a referendum of their own under UN auspices, but have hopelessly waited for it since 1967.

Mauritanian President Mohamed Ould Abdel Aziz has no other choice than to support Sudan's national unity, having to handle the virulent tensions among his own people, especially the Arabic-speaking Bidhan and Haratin and the non-Arabic speaking Haalpulaar, Wolof, Sooninke, and Bamana. In addition, he is a close ally of the Sudanese President: he not only participated in Omar al-Bashir's inauguration ceremony in Khartoum in May last year, but also signed 15 cooperation agreements with him



in late 2009 alone. Also, as a non-signature state to the ICC, Mauritania consequently condemns the ICC's warrant against al-Bashir.

Despite overall poor relations between Sudan and Algeria, only voices supporting Sudan's unity can be heard from Algiers. Foreign Minister Murad Madlasi said that a "partitioning will have fatal repercussions on the African Continent". As traditional archenemy of Morocco, Algeria has somehow lost stringency and understandability in its foreign policy. Being strongly supportive of Western Saharan independence, Algeria at the same time clearly opposes South Sudan's independence. The reasons for this are two-fold: the struggle with independence fighters in South Algeria is one aspect. The other, more internationally rooted reason is that when it comes to the Sudan question, Algeria brings its foreign policy in perfect alignment with the official position of the African Union; so, this is a welcomed chance to improve Algeria's relations with its neighboring countries for a relatively low cost. But notwithstanding the clear rhetoric, it remains unclear whether Algeria maintains its accusations against Khartoum, suspected of supporting Islamist groups fighting the regime in Algeria. Either way, the support of the Algerian government for the SPLA/M is highly likely to continue, keeping the South of Sudan as a trouble hot spot for the government in Khartoum.

All Maghreb countries, besides their common interest in keeping a strong Arab influence in Africa and preventing possible spillover effects from South Sudan onto their own disputed regions, have a third fear in common. An independent, Christian-dominated South Sudan will probably establish good relations with Ethiopia, provoking changes to the regional power equilibrium in the Horn of Africa. And finally, perhaps even more problematically, good relations with Israel can be expected. South Sudan's President Salva Kiir Mayardi announced on October 28th 2010 that Juba would be interested in good

relations with Tel Aviv. According to him, the Jewish state "is the enemy of the Palestinians only, and not an enemy of the South".

The separation of Sudan would not create serious threats for the Maghreb countries in itself. But it would clearly demonstrate the internal weaknesses of similar regimes. Thus, all authoritarian governments in the Maghreb have good reasons to be against the independence of South Sudan.

Science, technology and development in the Maghreb: prospects for stability and change

MELANIE MORISSE-SCHILBACH
TU Dresden, Germany

The popular uprising in Tunisia in January 2011 seems to confirm two hypotheses discussed in the field of political science: the most effective measure for political change towards liberalism and democratization in a state will inevitably come from within societies, rather than from an influence outside the country. The younger generations of society are powerful domestic agents of change willing and capable of generating political pressures (in a more or less peaceful manner), especially those who have benefited from higher education systems, at home and abroad, but cannot find employment opportunities. The current movement in Tunisia, it is said, stems from the fact that the emerging middle-class is increasingly losing privileges and individual rights. Although it is far from evident that the recent turmoil will lead to significant political changes towards more liberalism in the long run, it seems obvious that the main cause for political change is socio-economic:

Tunisia's ruling elite and the closely enmeshed Trabelsi clan have been submerged by a wave of unrest set off by economic deprivation and political frustration among the – mostly – academic youth.

As the youngest population worldwide,¹ young Arabs have the potential to stimulate growth and create dynamic societies, particularly when they are well trained and educated in higher education systems. In the

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presence of this 'window of opportunity' for indigenous progress and growth, the persistent inability of Arab governments to provide the young with sufficient employment opportunities is striking and may well result in social upheavals. In that sense, the Tunisian case might represent only the first indication of a much broader wave of social unrest in Mediterranean Arab countries in the years to come, with Egypt already being the next case. In fact, according to the World Bank, the region will face the challenge of creating 100 million new jobs by 2020 to bring the mostly academically trained youth into employment and consequently to secure social stability. This is bad news for the authoritarian rulers currently in power in the Maghreb states but also for external actors like the EU.

Research, technology and development (RTD), some believe, can serve as a powerful engine for economic

¹ Some 21,5% of the population of Arab countries are between 15 and 44, another 45% of the population is younger than 15 years.

growth and corresponding broader societal change. Performance of RTD in Arab societies, however, is modest – according to some indicators it is among the weakest worldwide. Tunisia, for instance, after having seriously invested in research, technology and especially in higher education over the last 50 years, did not succeed in pushing its society towards science and technology (S&T) induced development and economic growth. Why? Does lacking RTD result from a deliberate political choice made by authoritarian regimes in order to control societies, safeguard privileges and individual benefits? Or, is ‘Arab exceptionalism’ in RTD to be considered an unintended consequence of fixed, i.e. irreversible structural constraints and historical legacies? What role can and should external political actors like the EU play? To what extent might it be worth to consider transnational private initiatives like the “Desertec project” and the “Desert Industrial Initiative” (DII) to serve as a transmission belt for a transfer of mutual knowledge and cultural learning in higher education and research? And to what extent could these trigger as side-effects indigenous economic growth and technological innovation? In what follows, it is argued that a fundamental shift in RTD policy on both sides of the Mediterranean rim is of crucial importance in order to cope with the challenges of rising youth populations and lack of employment opportunities, especially for well-trained and skilled labor forces burdened with poor economic outlooks. This shift, however, requires change in political preferences and strategies in Europe and the Maghreb alike.

The state of the art of RTD and economic growth in the Maghreb are desperate and encouraging at the same time: the situation is desperate because Arab states, in general, perform poorly in almost all indicators used by international institutions such as UNESCO, the OECD or the World Bank as far as the measurement of RTD on a global scale is concerned. Things are even worse when we trace history. Indeed, the situation has not changed significantly since independence in the 1950s and 1960s. Statistical input indicators consist of, for instance, financial resources (R&D expenditure/GDP) and human resources (e.g. number of scientists and researchers employed in R&D; number of students enrolled in secondary and tertiary studies) whereas output indicators comprise economic, technological and scientific factors such as the increase of productivity as

a major output of technological investment, the number of patents or the direct research output of scientists indicated by the number of publications as percentage of world-wide publication.

In terms of engagement in education, Maghreb states – except Algeria – have significantly been investing since 1990. In particular, Tunisia’s performance is evident in that respect. While the overall performance in education seems to be rather good, indicators for research and technology in the Maghreb indicate that systems are badly equipped, as the number of patents and researchers per million inhabitants shows (see figure 1). Also, private investment in technology is modest throughout the region – Tunisia, once again, being the exception: the country is ranked 36th out of 131 countries under review. However, Algeria and Morocco are not even mentioned. As far as the financial situation of researchers is concerned,

unemployment within the R&D community is high. Weak links between universities and research centers do not help to improve this poor picture. Finally, only a handful of Arab researchers are recognized by their international colleagues, among them Algerian biologist B. Samaroui from the University of Annaba, one of the world’s most renowned natural scientists. There are however encouraging signs that indicate interconnectedness of national scientific communities with the outside world. Maghreb countries, especially Algeria, provide well educated and trained academic youth

in those fields of research in which the EU in general – and Germany in particular – might lack skilled labor forces in the years to come: in science, mathematics and engineering. As far as interconnectedness is concerned, Algeria, Morocco and Tunisia are leading among Arab states in terms of international coordination, cooperation and networking among R&D staff. This, for instance, is stressed by the “internationally co-authored publications” indicator.

Thus, while being weak in overall RTD performances compared to the world average and EU and Asian economies (see figure 1), Maghreb countries seem to be well connected with international scientific communities. The three countries under analysis enjoy significant cooperation with the OECD world and in particular with France. In terms of S&T contracts and scientific cooperation with the EU, Mediterranean countries perform even better than

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the Gulf States. In general, it is said, that international scientific cooperation with other countries is very active and deep. However, this interconnectedness comes with high costs: on the one hand, scientific staff in the Maghreb has become deeply integrated into international communities on an individual level. Both geographic proximity and post-colonial heritages seem to favor scientific cooperation with Europe. On the other hand, this does not necessarily mean that the quality of Maghrebi scholarly work has improved at the same pace. Also, surprisingly, Maghrebi scientists do not appear to have become integrated into their own national and regional economies. Social acceptance, in general, is weak, as are inter-regional and bilateral linkages among Arab scientific communities. As far as general skill indicators are concerned, performance is low in the Mediterranean and Arab countries as compared to European and Asian economies, with one honorable exception: as regards the share of tertiary students in science, mathematics and engineering, Algeria performs better in comparison to Arab and Asian economies. In general however, enrolment in science, mathematics and engineering are lower in all Mediterranean and Gulf countries compared to Asian economies. The vast majority of students in the region still favor arts and humanities over natural science, mathematics and engineering.² Figure 1 summarizes key indicators in RTD in the Maghreb.

The situation of research, technology and development (RTD) in Maghreb and Arab countries resembles a paradox: in general there is a considerably large scientific community that expects economic growth as a result of RTD. At the same time, the degree of scientific productivity is extremely low. In fact, Arab societies do not suffer shortage of scientists and engineers, but they do have a scarcity of career researchers.

The situation of RTD in Maghreb and Arab countries resembles a triple paradox: first, in general there is a considerably large scientific community that expects economic growth as a result of RTD. At the same time, the degree of scientific productivity is extremely low (see figure 1). In fact, Arab societies do not suffer shortage of scientists and engineers, but they do have a scarcity of career researchers. After graduation, and due to a lack of employment opportunities in R&D, scientists often work in bureaucratic positions, in public institutions or in private companies. In Algeria for example, young graduates usually join a technocratic elite as part of a “technocrat strata”. Second, the percentage of young people that are enrolled in university programs is low. Yet, Maghreb economies are faced with millions of unemployed young academics. This reflects the inability of Maghreb economies to absorb the knowledge potential that exists on the domestic higher education labor markets. On the one hand, governments increasingly ensure that the young are becoming well skilled labor forces. On the other, they fail to provide sufficient employment opportunities. Third, while Maghreb governments spend reasonable amounts on education and their economies are generally classified as moderately rich, the overall quality of teaching and research is modest. RTD, it is said, can trigger and promote freedom and liberalism in authoritarian societies through the intermediary of economic growth and progress. In order to let

Key indicators on RTD in the Maghreb

	R&D expenditure/GDP (%) 2007	Patents (numbers), 2003 - 2008	Researchers 2007/2008 Per million population	Total publications 2000/2008
Algeria	0.16	0/0	170	410/ 289
Morocco	0.64	1/4	647	1041/1167
Tunisia	1.02	0/2	1588	540/2026
EU-27	1.78	29178/23850	2473.9	290184/359991

Source: UNESCO (2010), UNESCO Science Report 2010. The Current Status of Science around the World, Paris: UNESCO.

² In Morocco, Oman and Saudi Arabia, according to UNESCO, more than 70% of students are enrolled in the arts and humanities.



science and technology become this powerful engine for change, RTD must be closely linked to individual liberties and some rules of democratic governance. In other words, for RTD-induced economic progress to occur in Arab societies, RTD needs political, societal and cultural environments in which science can flourish and serve societal needs. This however seems to be a vicious circle. Obviously, in the past, Arab states and societies did not succeed in breaking this circle. What, in that respect, could then be the role of external political actors like the EU or transnational private RTD projects such as the "Desertec" initiative?

As a matter of fact, RTD has become crucial for the fate of the EU's future knowledge-based economies and societies. Yet, it is still a neglected area of foreign policy. In fact, RTD has only become a key foreign policy instrument of the EU in the last years with a view to foster development and progress in the world. The so-called "Lisbon Strategy" and later on the strategy "Europe 2020" seek to establish the biggest knowledge-based community worldwide by 2020. In that respect, the EU has committed itself to building a European Research Area (ERA) to overcome outdated geographical, institutional, disciplinary and sectoral boundaries. The aim is to extend the single European market to the world of research and technological development by ensuring open and transparent trade in scientific and technical skills, ideas and know-how. EU expenditure on RTD took off in the 1980s, primarily as a result of concerns about the decline of European competitiveness vis-à-vis its then global competitors in science and technological innovation, namely the US and Japan. In 1982, the European Commission and the most influential European high-technology firms persuaded governments throughout the EU to agree to the ESPRIT program. After its successful implementation, the Commission secured further funding from member states by launching parallel framework programs. The first multi-annual framework programs in RTD started in 1984 with a budget of only €800 million. The success of the program encouraged EU institutions to widen and strengthen EU competence in RTD. Today, the "Seventh Framework Program for Research and Technological Development" (FP7, 2007-2013) has a budget of €50 billion. Expenditure under this research

program is distributed through an agreed set of headings, under which both academic and private research institutions can bid for funding. As regards the issues that are funded by the FP7, top priority is given to health, food, agriculture and biotechnology, nanotechnologies, environment (including climate change), transport and security, and space.

As far as the external dimension of EU policy in RTD performance is concerned, one has to conclude that it is astonishingly weak. In the context of its Mediterranean policy, for instance, the EU added RTD to its agenda when member states launched the so-called 'Barcelona' approach in 1995. However, since then, serious interest in cooperation in this policy field is still underdeveloped. A monitoring committee for Euro-Mediterranean cooperation in the field of research and technology (MoCo) exists

in order to stimulate Euro-Mediterranean cooperation in RTD within the wider context of the former Euro-Mediterranean Partnership. Significant progress, however, was not generated. In fact, other issues and areas prevailed during the times of 'Barcelona', namely the Israeli-Palestinian conflict, worries about the alleged "Islamic threat", the civil war in Algeria, the creation of a Euro-Mediterranean free trade area, etc.

The European Neighborhood Policy (ENP) launched in 2004 and considered to be complementary to the Barcelona Process in RTD, as it specifies goals, actions and the implementation of RTD in the Euro-Mediterranean region, only slightly improved the picture. Based on ENP action plans with each partner country, the EU provides core scripts for each

bilateral relationship in such diverse issue-areas such as political dialogue, economic and social cooperation and development, trade, market and regulatory reform, as well as cooperation in functional sectors such as transport, energy, environment and R&D. With regards to R&D, the EU's 'hidden hope' is to foster reform and modernization in the institutional structures of its neighbors. It seeks to identify and promote those key drivers in Middle Eastern and North African (MENA) societies that could facilitate the liberalization of RTD intensive markets, such as energy markets, with a view to benefit both the economic development of MENA countries and the EU's economy. The philosophy of the ENP resembles the one of 'Barcelona', namely to increase security, stability and prosperity in its 'new neighborhood', but instruments

Cooperation among Europe and Arab Mediterranean partners in functional issue-areas such as energy or environmental protection is a potentially powerful engine triggering economic growth and societal progress, but necessitates one crucial precondition: the EU has to avoid 'technological imperialism' and one-sided strategies serving only the interests of the more powerful side.



and techniques are different. Nowadays, the EU responds more clearly to the persisting demands of Mediterranean partner countries to open the European Single Market for their products and to allow them to apply under sectoral programs such as Science and Technology (S&T). As regards the latter, a first step has already been taken when Euro-Mediterranean partner countries together with the EU at the first Ministerial Conference on Higher Education and Research in Cairo in 2007 adopted a plan to build up a "Euro-Mediterranean Higher Education and Scientific Research Area". This space is aimed at facilitating participation of MENA countries in higher education and mobility programs such as MUNDUS and TEMPUS.

The Union for the Mediterranean (UfM), launched in 2008 upon the initiative of French President Nicolas Sarkozy, does not change the overall picture as discussed further above either. The UfM complements the bilateral logic of the ENP by seeking to create a common Mediterranean identity and a sense of community that is more visible for the citizens of the various sub-regions. According to the Paris declaration, the UfM's founding document, visibility shall be secured by jointly developing and implementing functional projects of high societal concern such as the de-pollution of the Mediterranean sea, the establishment of common transport systems, as well as the promotion of alternative energy and solar energy suppliers (Mediterranean Solar Plan).

Funding for UfM projects is poor and implementation still modest. Nevertheless, the UfM seems to be useful as regards strengthening RTD in the Euro-Mediterranean region. For instance, the UfM can benefit from transnational private initiatives such as the S&T project "Desertec", a consortium of European, mostly German, and Mediterranean energy companies seeking to exploit solar energy of MENA countries' deserts for the provision of both European and Maghreb energy markets. In that respect, RTD might be one of those functional cooperation areas in which win-win situations occur as they do not only serve the interests of EU-Europe but also those of Arab societies. At the same time, such joint functional cooperation is discharged from the 'democratization bias' which, for a long time, had been predominant in EU approaches and which was one of the reasons why EU policies failed in countries such as Algeria, for example. However, cooperation among Europe and Arab Mediterranean partners in functional issue-areas such as energy or environmental protection is a potentially powerful engine triggering economic growth and societal progress, but necessitates one crucial precondition: the EU as well as private initiatives like "Desertec" have to avoid 'technological imperialism' and one-sided strategies serving only the interests of the more powerful side. Asymmetrically perceived functional interdependencies will inevitably lead to deadlocks and resistance in the concerned societies, especially in Algeria. For the "Desertec" initiative, for instance,

this would mean to ensure that the Algerian economy (beyond Sonatrach) on the one hand, and well trained Algerian academic youth in science, mathematics and engineering on the other, can significantly participate and benefit from this engagement. Both are of crucial importance, not only for economic but also for security reasons: many Algerian academics in natural sciences took part in the movements that led to the occurrence of fundamentalist and radical Islam as a consequence of unemployment and repression in Algerian university and research centers in the 1980s and early 1990s.

Strengthening RTD policy might be a suitable instrument for the EU to fulfill two strategic obligations: to satisfy the wish of Maghreb societies to participate in the modern 'Western' world on the one hand, and to bring young and well trained Maghreb youth to the EU labor markets on the other. While the former serves the EU's broader interest of stability and security in the region, the latter additionally satisfies the need for skilled labor forces, especially in science, mathematics and engineering. This, however, is a costly and painful strategic choice: it is economically costly because it forces European governments to substantively open labor markets. It is politically painful for some member states as it would imply to fundamentally change national migration policies towards an approach that seeks to inclusively integrate migrants from Arab cultures and traditions into European societies. Does Europe have a choice? Doubts remain. The Tunisian case clearly shows that the demographic 'pressure' of today's Arab societies in conjunction with poor economic outlooks for well-trained youth might become a future source of instability at Europe's southern flank. Improving education and training alone – the RTD strategy of the past – is thus not helpful anymore. At the same time – and this is good news – this situation offers new opportunities for European and Arab economies and societies alike to successfully participate in tomorrow's RTD dominated global markets.



Appeal: help our Tunisian university colleagues

Books which were banned under the Ben Ali regime are now beginning to be available in book stores in Tunis. Salma Yabes, manager of the *Librairie al-Kitab* in Tunis, said on January 20, 2011 that books which were banned under the Ben Ali regime have become available in the book store because friends and families who hid censored books in their homes now give them for free to the shop. In turn, the shop provides these volumes for free to intellectuals, researchers, lecturers and professors

Tunisian researchers, lecturers and professors will be crucial in building a new democratic Tunisia. Knowledge of current research is a high priority for them. In the past it was not possible to order books on the internet as they would be confiscated by the authorities upon arrival in Tunis. Tunisian researchers lack all kinds of books, but volumes in political science (democratization, authoritarianism, Islamism, and MENA international relations), sociology, anthropology and ethnography, and studies on contemporary Islam are in particular demand.

Librairie el-Kitab in Tunis is now working to establish contacts with publishers and order books, but there is also something **YOU** can do to help our Tunisian colleagues.

You can help in tow ways:

1) Send one or more copies of books you have authored and other spare publications that you think fall(s) in the categories above (they can be in English, French and Italian).

2) Send contact info of your publisher(s) to the *Librairie al-Kitab* so that they can get in touch and order books directly.

The *Librairie al-Kitab* is the biggest book store in Tunis and usually serves Tunisian academics. In the beginning they will make copies of books available in their book shop and at a later stage they will distribute the books to the relevant professors at the various universities and research institutes. **The books will be distributed/given for free.**

This is truly a positive contribution we can make and we encourage you all to become involved.

Librairie al-Kitab
43, avenue Habib Bourguiba
1000 Tunis Le Colisée
Phone: 00216 71 258 566
Fax: 00216 71 332 450
email: alkitab-tunis@alkitab.com.tn

Rikke Hostrup Haugbølle
Ph.D. Fellow
Dep. of Cross Cultural and Regional Studies
University of Copenhagen
Snorresgade 17-19, 2300 Copenhagen
Denmark
email: rikhostrup@hum.ku.dk

Francesco Cavatorta
Senior Lecturer
School of Law and Government
Dublin City University
Glasnevin, Dublin 9
Ireland
email: francesco.cavatorta@dcu.ie

Timeline of Events

Algeria

1-2 December 2010 (Algiers):

US Assistant Secretary of State for Economic, Energy and Business Affairs Jose W. Fernandez attended the US-Maghreb Entrepreneurship Conference, an event hosted by the US State Department and the US-Algeria Business Council with the purpose of creating a platform to discuss business ventures in North Africa and encourage support from both the government and private sector.

2 December 2010 (Algiers):

President Abdelaziz Bouteflika met with the Emir of Qatar Sheikh Hamad bin Khalifa Al-Thani. The meeting was attended by Prime Minister Ahmed Ouyahia and Foreign Minister Mourad Medelci. Sheikh Al-Thani stressed that bilateral relations between Qatar and Algeria "are special".

2 December 2010 (Valleta):

Minister Delegate of National Defense Abdelmalek Guenaizia attended the 6th Meeting of the Ministers of Defense of the 5+5 Initiative. The agenda focused on the validation of the results of activities relating to the implementation of the action plan for 2010 and the approval of the plan for 2011.

6 December 2010 (Algiers):

US Army Major General David R. Hogg praised the "leading" role of Algeria in fighting terrorism in the Sahel region. Hogg met with Algerian presidential advisor on human rights Kamel Rezzag Bara, Land Forces Commander Ahsan Tafer, and Major General Ahmed Sanhadji, Secretary-General of the Defense Ministry.

8 December 2010 (Berlin):

President Abdelaziz Bouteflika met with German Chancellor Angela Merkel. Germany and Algeria announced plans to cooperate more closely on energy provision in the field of fossil fuels and renewable sources. Merkel expressed particular interest in Desertec, an

ambitious solar power project destined to generate solar power in deserts.

13 December 2010 (Algiers):

On the sidelines of the celebration of the 50th anniversary of the UN Declaration on the Granting of Independence to Colonial Countries and Peoples, the African Union's Commissioner for Peace and Security Ramtane Lamamra acknowledged the counterterrorism initiatives taken by Algeria in the Sahel region.

13 December 2010 (Tokyo):

Foreign Minister of Japan Seiji Maehara met with Foreign Minister Mourad Medelci, and both signed a memorandum on political consultations, which will be followed in 2011 by two agreements on avoidance of double taxation and on guaranteed and reciprocal promotion of investment. The trip was the first visit by a Japanese foreign minister to Algeria since its independence from France in 1962.

14 December 2010 (Algiers):

President Abdelaziz Bouteflika met with Secretary-General of the Arab League Amr Moussa. The meeting was also attended by Minister for Foreign Affairs Mourad Medelci.

15 December 2010 (Algiers):

African Union experts and leaders debated a draft law for the continent's fight against terrorism. The text was adopted by the Algiers-based African Centre for Studies and Research on Terrorism (ACSRT), which is part of the African Union.

15 December 2010 (Algiers):

President Abdelaziz Bouteflika received Tunisia's National Defense Minister Ridha Grira, who also met his Algerian counterpart Abdelmalek Guenaizia.

16 December 2010 (Belgrade):

Foreign Minister Mourad Medelci met with Serbian Foreign Minister Vuk Jeremic. Both Ministers discussed the conference of the Non-Aligned Movement to be held in Belgrade next September on the occasion of the 50th

anniversary of the movement. Agreements were signed in the fields of agriculture, culture, foreign trade and media.

18 December 2010 (Zagreb):

Foreign Minister Mourad Medelci met with Croatian Foreign Minister Gordan Jandrokovic. Medelci was the first foreign minister of Algeria to ever visit Croatia since its proclamation of independence in 1991. A memorandum of understanding on political consultations was signed.

20 December 2010 (Sarajevo):

Foreign Minister Mourad Medelci met with Bosnian Foreign Minister Sven Alkalaj. Medelci called on Bosnian companies to take part in a major five-year program of public investment in Algeria worth more than €213 billion.

26-27 December 2010 (Algiers):

The 18th Tunisian-Algerian High Joint Committee was chaired by Prime Minister Ahmed Ouyahia and his Tunisian counterpart Mohamed Ghannouchi, who also met with President Abdelaziz Bouteflika. Five agreements for cooperation in the fields of agriculture, rural development and media were signed.

1 January 2011 (Brasília):

President of Parliament Abdelkader Bensalah represented the country in the inaugural ceremony of Dilma Rousseff, Brazil's new President.

7 January 2011 (Algiers):

Riots started after a night of violence over food prices and unemployment.

10 January 2011 (Algiers):

Foreign Minister Mourad Medelci met his Canadian counterpart Lawrence Cannon and both countries pledged to strengthen bilateral cooperation, particularly in the aviation sector.

11 January 2011 (Algiers):

President Abdelaziz Bouteflika and Prime Minister Ahmed Ouyahia met with President of Korean Parliament Park Hee-tae.

**11 January 2011 (Algiers):**

Several people, including an opposition Member of Parliament, were injured after police blocked a banned protest.

14 January 2011 (Algiers):

Religious Affairs Minister Bouabdallah Ghlamallah said that suicide was a violation of Islamic law and added that those who offer to immolate themselves to protest against poor living conditions "are breaching the limits of god". Imams were instructed to evoke in their sermons the topic of suicide by immolation as a phenomenon that is alien to Algerian society.

16 January 2011 (Algiers):

US top counter-terrorism advisor John Brennan met with several Algerian officials to coordinate their security strategy and discuss bilateral relations.

16 January 2011 (Algiers):

President Abdelaziz Bouteflika met with Mohamed Nayef Ben Abdelaziz Al Saoud, Saudi Arabia's Deputy Interior Minister in charge of Homeland Security.

16 January 2011 (Algiers):

President Abdelaziz Bouteflika and Foreign Minister Mourad Medelci met with Peruvian Foreign Minister José García Belaúnde, who was in the country to attend the 3rd Algeria-Peru meeting for political consultations.

17 January 2011 (Algiers):

Interior Minister Daho Ould Kablia stated that local officials needed to take seriously the concerns of young people. Kablia said that the government was creating new plans for employment and that banks had been instructed to speed up requests for small business loans.

17 January 2011 (Madrid):

The Foreign Ministry's State Secretary for the National Community Abroad Halim Benatallah met with the Spanish Foreign Ministry's State Secretary Juan Antonio Yáñez-Barnuevo García to discuss ways to simplify visa policy.

18 January 2011 (Algiers):

President Abdelaziz Bouteflika wished Tunisia's Acting President Fouad Mebazaa "full success".

18 January 2011 (El Oued):

An unemployed 36-year-old immolated himself outside a departmental assembly after demanding

a job and housing. This is the fifth Algerian man to set himself ablaze after protests erupted in Tunisia.

19 January 2011 (Sharm el-Sheikh):

President Abdelaziz Bouteflika attended the 2nd Economic and Social Arab summit. Bouteflika met on the sidelines with Egyptian President Hosni Mubarak.

21 January 2011 (Algiers):

The government called on Algerians to ignore the opposition's anti-government march, warning them that the protest were illegal.

22 January 2011 (Algiers):

Demonstrators and police clashed after opposition supporters tried to hold a protest in defiance of a government warning.

23 January 2011 (Algiers):

President Abdelaziz Bouteflika and Foreign Minister Mourad Medelci met with South Africa's Interior Minister Siyabonga Cyprian Cwele.

25-26 January 2011 (Algiers):

About 350 high-ranking officials and parliamentarians from the Arab Maghreb Union met in a conference organized by the Algerian National Popular Assembly to discuss ways to establish effective cooperation between parliaments.

30 January 2011 (Algiers):

Abdelaziz Belkhadem, head of Algeria's ruling FLN party and cabinet minister, said Algeria will not be affected by the wave of unrest spreading through Arab states because it is investing its energy revenues in improving peoples lives.

30-31 January 2011 (Addis Ababa):

President Abdelaziz Bouteflika attended XVI African Union Ordinary Summit.

4-6 December 2010 (Tripoli):

US Assistant Secretary of State for Economic, Energy and Business Affairs Jose W. Fernandez visited Libya to promote a new US-North Africa public-private partnership which focuses on boosting economic opportunities through social networking, support for start-ups and youth entrepreneurship training in the region.

8 December 2010 (Tripoli):

Muammar Gaddafi praised WikiLeaks for exposing US "hypocrisy" through its diplomacy conducted behind closed doors.

9 December 2010 (Tripoli):

The Secretary of the General Popular Committee for Industry, Economy and Commerce, Mohamed Hawejj, and Egyptian Minister of Trade and Industry Rachid Mohamed Rachid co-chaired a meeting aiming to promote industrial, technical and scientific cooperation, especially between the industrial research sectors of both countries. Rachid also met with Prime Minister al-Baghdadi al-Mahmudi.

13-14 December 2010 (Tripoli):

The 7th Meeting of the 5+5 Interior Ministers focused on migration, specifically on the current status of unwanted migration, and the related negative phenomena, notably terrorism, organized crime, the spread of narcotic and psychotropic substances, and on the coordination of efforts between these countries.

12 December 2010 (Tripoli):

The charitable foundation run by Saif al-Islam Gaddafi, son of Muammar Gaddafi, released an annual report on human rights in Libya, noting progress on some issues and failures in others. The report "regretted a dangerous regression" in the treatment of civil society associations and accused the parliament of "intervening directly in the affairs of unions and professional associations". The report added that the parliament "has not respected the law" and made illegal decisions against some unions, including an association of lawyers.

14 December 2010 (Dakar):

Speaking at the World Festival of Black Arts and Cultures, Muammar Gaddafi said that African nations should join forces to create a one-million-strong army to protect the continent and confront outsiders like NATO and China.

Libya

2 December 2010 (Tripoli):

Head of the African Union/United Nations mission in Darfur (UNAMID) Ibrahim Gambari met with the leader of Darfur's rebel movement Justice and Equality Movement (JEM), Khalil Ibrahim, to discuss the humanitarian and security situation on the ground.

**14 December 2010 (Tripoli):**

Prime Minister al-Baghdadi al-Mahmudi met the UAE's Minister of Economy Sultan bin Saeed Al Mansouri to discuss economic cooperation between both countries.

14 December 2010 (London):

Amnesty International (AI) slammed Libya and the European Union for cooperating on strategies which aim at preventing African migrants from crossing to Europe.

16 December 2010 (Tripoli):

Saif al-Islam Gaddafi, son of Muammar Gaddafi and chair of the Gaddafi Foundation, declared that his charity will no longer focus on the cause of domestic reform but instead focus on aid to sub-Saharan Africa.

19 December 2010 (Tripoli):

Italian energy company ENI agreed to help Libya build a naval port, a desalinization plant and 1.000 houses in the El Agheila area along the Gulf of Sirte.

21 December 2010 (Khartoum):

Muammar Gaddafi and Egypt's Hosni Mubarak visited Sudanese President Omar al-Bashir for talks ahead of a referendum on southern Sudan's independence. Both Egypt and Libya want to prevent any mass migration into their countries if war should break out as a result of the referendum. Mauritanian President Mohamed Ould Abdel Aziz also joined the meeting.

23 December 2010 (Tripoli):

Jamal Al Lammouchi, General Secretary of the Directive Committee of the General Board of Privatization and Investment, announced that the United Arab Emirates and Libya agreed to create a joint investment fund to carry out projects in the two countries.

23 December 2010 (Tripoli):

Saif al-Islam Gaddafi publicly denied that he is caught in a feud with his brothers over Muammar Gaddafi's succession. There is speculation that Saif's conservative opponents are backing two of his brothers, Mutassim, a national security adviser, and Khamis, a senior military leader.

28 December 2010 (Tripoli):

Muammar Gaddafi ordered the Libyan General People's Committee (council of ministers) to lift

all tariffs, administration and financial restrictions that may be required for Tunisian citizens to enter the country. This decision follows bilateral talks between Gaddafi and Tunisian President Ben Ali.

30 December 2010 (Tripoli):

Chairman of state-owned National Oil Corp. Shokri Ghanem said that Libya will not join the International Energy Forum (IEF). According to Ghanem, joining the IEF would lead to a loss of focus. He declared that Libya is "already member of other organizations and this is enough for the exchange of opinions and coordination with other members".

6 January 2011 (Tripoli):

Liberian President Ellen Johnson Sirleaf met with Muammar Gaddafi. The situation in Ivory Coast was discussed.

13 January 2011 (Tripoli):

Shokri Ghanem, chairman of Libya's National Oil Corporation, said that oil prices at US\$100 a barrel would not harm the world economy and that there is no need for OPEC to hold an emergency meeting or add supplies.

13 January 2011 (Tripoli):

Mauritania and Libya signed a cooperation accord and both countries will initiate investment partnerships and create scientific and cultural exchange programs.

16 January 2011 (Tripoli):

Muammar Gaddafi said neighboring Tunisia is suffering bloodshed and lawlessness because "its people were in too much of a rush to get rid of their President."

24 January 2011 (Tripoli):

Libya promised to pay compensation for damages to South Korean construction firms as a result of riots earlier this month.

25 January 2011 (Tripoli):

Muammar Gaddafi voiced support for Tunisia's revolution but denounced foreign interference in an interview to Tunisian television.

27 January 2011 (Tripoli):

Industry and Trade Minister Mohamed Hweji announced a US\$24 billion fund for investment and local development that will focus on housing for rapidly growing population.

27 January 2011 (Tripoli):

Kenyan Vice-President Kalonzo Musyoka met with Muammar Gaddafi ahead of the Africa Union summit to gather support for a UN deferral of the Kenyan case before the International Criminal Court.

30-31 January 2011 (Addis Ababa):

Muammar Gaddafi attended the XVI African Union Ordinary Summit.

Mauritania

9-10 December 2010 (Nouakchott):

President Mohamed Ould Abdel Aziz met the Emir of Qatar Sheikh Hamad bin Khalifa Al-Thani to discuss bilateral relations.

15 December 2010 (Nouakchott):

President Mohamed Ould Abdel Aziz carried out a cabinet reshuffle which led to the replacement of the ministers of finance, equipment, and the vice-minister for African Affairs.

21 December 2010 (Khartoum):

President Mohamed Ould Abdel Aziz met with Sudanese President Omar al-Bashir, who expressed his support for Mauritania's efforts to combat terrorism, also noting Nouakchott's historical stances in support of Sudan's stability and unity. Mohamed Ould Abdel-Aziz reiterated his country's refusal to accept the International Criminal Court's (ICC) arrest warrant against al-Bashir.

14 January 2011 (Nouakchott):

President Mohamed Ould Abdel Aziz asked the government to "take urgent measures" to keep food prices down.

22 January 2011 (Rabat):

Yacoub Ould Dahoud, a Mauritanian businessman who set himself on fire, died of his burns. Dahoud had set himself ablaze on the 17th inside his car in front of the Senate in Nouakchott. President Mohamed Ould Abdel Aziz commented on the situation saying that "frustration and distress led this rich man to act against a government that is in a merciless fight against waste and the misappropriation of public funds".

**24 January 2011 (Nouakchott):**

President Mohamed Ould Abdel Aziz rejected the possibility of a Tunisia-type revolt in his country. Aziz said that the reforms he had implemented since coming to power had benefited the population.

28 January 2011 (Addis Ababa):

The African Union announced that it would form a panel of heads of state with a view to adopt a legally binding resolution on the leadership crisis in Ivory Coast within one month. The panel will be led by President Mohamed Ould Abdel Aziz, which heads the AU's Peace and Security Council.

30-31 January 2011 (Addis Ababa):

President Mohamed Ould Abdel Aziz attended the XVI African Union Ordinary Summit.

Morocco

1-2 December 2010 (Astana):

State Secretary for Foreign Affairs Latifa Akharchab attended the Summit of the Organization for Security and Cooperation in Europe (OSCE).

3 December 2010 (Rabat):

After the Spanish Parliament condemned Moroccan security services for the recent clashes in the Western Sahara, the Moroccan parliament reacted by demanding a review of the two nations' relations.

6 December 2010 (Brussels):

Foreign Minister Taib Fassi Fihri and High Representative of the European Union for Foreign Affairs and Security Policy Catherine Ashton met to discuss the Western Sahara issue and the security situation in the Maghreb.

6-7 December 2010 (Rabat):

US Assistant Secretary of State for Economic, Energy and Business Affairs Jose W. Fernandez visited Morocco to promote a new US-North Africa public-private partnership which focuses on boosting economic opportunity through social networking, supporting start-ups and youth entrepreneurship training in the region.

10 December 2010 (Paris):

France finalized a deal worth €400 million to supply Morocco with rolling stock and railway equipment for the Casablanca-Tangier high-speed TGV trains. The French group Alstom will provide 14 high speed train sets that will begin to operate in December 2015.

11 December 2010 (Rabat):

Secretary of State to Foreign Minister Latifa Akharchab and Korean ambassador to Morocco Choi Jai-chul signed two cooperation agreements in the field of computer security and vocational training.

13 December 2010 (Brussels):

Foreign Minister Taib Fassi Fihri met with Steven Vanackere, Deputy Prime Minister and Foreign Minister of Belgium and President of the EU Council for the 9th Morocco-EU Association Council. Vanackere said that the outcome of the meeting "leads naturally towards a new action plan" which is being negotiated.

14 December 2010 (Paris):

Foreign Minister Taib Fassi Fihri met with his French counterpart Michèle Alliot-Marie. Bilateral ties, EU-Maghreb relations and cooperation on counter-terrorism were the main issues on the agenda.

14 December 2010 (Bujumbura):

Secretary of State for Foreign Affairs and Cooperation Mohamed Ouzzine met with President of Burundi Pierre Nkurunziza.

15 December 2010 (Bangkok):

Secretary of State for Foreign Affairs and Cooperation Latifa Akharchab met with Thailand's Foreign Minister Kasit Piromya on the sidelines of the 3rd Ministerial Conference of the Asia-Middle East dialogue.

16-18 December 2010 (New York):

Morocco and the Western Sahara's Polisario Front held a new round of talks, mediated by the United Nations. The delegations were led by Foreign Minister Taib Fassi Fihri and Khatri Addu. Both parties agreed to speed up talks in 2011 and meet again in January, but remained at odds over a solution for the territory.

20 December 2010 (Rabat):

Secretary of State for Foreign Affairs and Cooperation Mohamed Ouzzine met with a delegation of Australian MPs led by Senator Mark Bishop.

20 December 2010 (Rabat):

Foreign Minister Taib Fassi Fihri met with President of the Council of Europe's Parliamentary Assembly Mevlut Cavusoglu to discuss the Western Sahara, among other topics.

4 January 2011 (Rabat):

The Foreign Ministry's Secretary of State Latifa Akharchab met with the Secretary-General of Italy's Communist Party Oliviero Diliberto.

5 January 2011 (Amghala):

Moroccan security forces dismantled a 27-member al-Qaeda in the Islamic Maghreb terrorist cell.

5 January 2011 (Algiers):

Foreign Minister Taib Fassi Fihri met Egyptian Foreign Minister Ahmed Aboul Gheit. Both countries agreed to set up a mechanism for political and strategic dialogue, coordination and consultation.

19 January 2011 (Sharm el-Sheikh):

Foreign Minister Taib Fassi Fihri attended the 2nd Economic and Social Arab summit.

19 January 2011 (Rabat):

The Foreign Ministry's Secretary of State Mohamed Ouzzine met President of Indonesia Special Envoy Alwi Shihab.

20 January 2011 (Oberammergau):

The Foreign Ministry's Secretary-General Youssef Amrani attended NATO's Partnership Symposium.

21-23 January 2011 (New York):

A Moroccan delegation composed of Foreign Minister Taib Fassi Fihri, director of the intelligence agency Mohamed Yassine Mansouri, and Secretary-General of the Royal Advisory Council for Saharan Affairs (CORCAS) Maouelainin Khalihanna Maouelainin, attended the 5th round of UN-sponsored informal talks on the Western Sahara. Khatri Addu negotiated on behalf of the Polisario Front. The meeting was held at the invitation of the UN Secretary-General's Personal Envoy for the Sahara, Christopher Ross.

25 January 2011 (Rabat):

Foreign Minister Taib Fassi Fihri held talks with his Comorian counterpart Fahmi Saïd Ibrahim.

26 January 2011 (Rabat):

Prime Minister Abbas El Fassi held talks with a delegation from the French-Moroccan Friendship group at the French National Assembly,



led by its chairman Jean Roatta. Cooperation and partnership between the two countries, particularly in the areas of investment, rail projects and basic infrastructure were discussed.

26 January 2011 (Rabat):

Foreign Minister Taib Fassi Fihri held talks with a delegation from Saudi Arabia's Shura Council led by Khidr AL-Qurashi.

27 January 2011 (Rabat):

Canadian Prime Minister Stephen Harper met with King Mohamed VI. Harper announced the start of negotiations for a Free Trade Agreement between both countries.

30 January 2011 (Agadir):

Agriculture and Fisheries Minister Aziz Akhenouch and Russia's head of the Federal Agency for Fisheries Andrei Kraini agreed to further strengthen their partnership in the field of fisheries.

Tunisia

1 December 2010 (Tunis):

Foreign Affairs Minister Kamel Morjane received Ramtane Lamamra, African Union Commissioner for Peace and Security, and Mohamed al-Madani al-Azhari, Secretary-General of the Community of Sahel-Saharan States (CEN-SAD).

1 December 2010 (Tunis):

President Ben Ali met with Prime Minister of Luxemburg Jean-Claude Juncker. The meeting focused on the progress of relations between Tunisia and Luxemburg and prospects for developing bilateral cooperation. Juncker backed the granting of an advanced status to Tunisia.

1-2 December 2010 (Astana):

Secretary of State in the Foreign Minister's Office in charge of Maghreb, Arab and African Affairs Abdelhafidh Harguem attended the Summit of the Organization for Security and Cooperation in Europe (OSCE).

3 December 2010 (Tunis):

Prime Minister Mohamed Ghannouchi received Turkish State Minister for Foreign Trade Zafer Caglayan. Caglayan also met Industry & Technology Minister Afif Chelbi and Minister of Trade and Handicrafts Ridha Ben Mosba. A customs cooperation agreement was signed.

3-4 December 2010 (Tunis):

US Assistant Secretary of State for Economic, Energy and Business Affairs Jose W Fernandez visited Tunisia to promote a new US-North Africa public-private partnership focused on boosting economic opportunity through social networking, supporting start-ups and youth entrepreneurship training in the region.

6 December 2010 (Tunis):

Foreign Minister Kamel Morjane received a delegation of German MPs and Friedrich Ebert Foundation leaders, who were on a visit to participate in the Foundation's regional conference.

8 December 2010 (Tunis):

Foreign Minister Kamel Morjane received Ambassador Girma Birru, the special envoy of Ethiopian Prime Minister Melas Zenawi. The meeting focused on the development of bilateral cooperation.

9 December 2010 (Bardo):

Foreign Minister Kamel Morjane stated that the release of diplomatic cables posted by WikiLeaks "will have no effect whatsoever on the two countries' ties."

10 December 2010 (Tunis):

On the sidelines of the 4th meeting of the Tunisian-Egyptian Commercial and Industrial Committee, Prime Minister Mohamed Ghannouchi received Egyptian Minister of Trade and Industry Rachid Mohamed Rachid.

10 December 2010 (Tunis):

Peruvian Foreign Minister Jose Antonio Garcia Belaunde met President Ben Ali and invited him to the 3rd Summit of South American-Arab Countries (ASPA) which is due to be held in February 2011 in Lima. Belaunde also met Prime Minister Mohamed Ghannouchi.

11 December 2010 (Tunis):

Secretary of State in charge of the National Solidarity Fund Omar Ben Mahmoud received a delegation of Mauritanian MPs led by Mohamed Abdallah Ouled Ghelai. The Mauritanian delegation wished to become acquainted with the Tunisian experience in the social welfare sector.

11-12 December 2010 (Tunis):

Prime Minister Mohamed Ghannouchi chaired the opening works of the 2nd Arab-Japanese Economic Forum. Japan's Foreign Minister Seiji

Maehara also attended and met with President Ben Ali. On the sidelines, Foreign Minister Kamel Morjane met with Secretary-General of the Arab League Amr Moussa. The next edition of this forum will be held in Tokyo in 2012.

12-14 December 2010 (Hanoi):

The Tunisian-Vietnamese Joint Commission's 2nd session was held under the co-chairmanship of Secretary of State in the Foreign Minister's office in charge of American and Asian Affairs Saida Chtioui and Vietnamese deputy Trade and Industry Minister Le Duong Quang.

13-14 December 2010 (Tripoli):

A delegation, led by Minister for Social Affairs, Solidarity and Tunisians Abroad, Naceur Gharbi, attended the ministerial conference on the 5+5 Dialogue on migration.

13-14 December 2010 (Tunis):

President Ben Ali met with Mauritanian President Mohamed Ould Abdel Aziz. The visit focused on bilateral ties and the preparations of the 16th Tunisian-Mauritanian High Joint Committee, to be held in Nouakchott in the first quarter of 2011. Mohamed Ould Abdel Aziz also met Prime Minister Mohamed Ghannouchi and Foreign Minister Kamel Morjane.

15-16 December 2010 (Tunis):

The 5th Tunisian-Qatari High Joint Commission was co-chaired by Prime Minister Mohamed Ghannouchi and Qatari Foreign Minister Sheikh Hamad Bin Jassem Bin Jaber AL-Thani. Several agreements were signed on issues such as environment, industry, public works, technology, education, science and culture.

15 December 2010 (Cairo):

Foreign Affairs Minister Kamel Morjane attended the ministerial committee for the Arab Peace Initiative, which met under the chairmanship of Sheikh Hamad Bin Jassem Bin Jabr AL-Thani, the Qatari Prime Minister and Foreign Minister, Palestinian President Mahmoud Abbas and Arab League Secretary-General Amr Moussa.

16 December 2010 (Tunis):

Foreign Minister Kamel Morjane met with Russia's Culture Minister Alexander Avdeyev. Both reiterated the importance of Tunisian-Russian ties.

**16-17 December 2010 (Hammamet):**

Prime Minister Mohamed Ghannouchi received the heads of delegation that attended the Arab Engineering Union Council's meeting.

19-20 December 2010 (Tunis):

The 2nd session of the Tunisian-Kuwaiti Joint Committee was co-chaired by Foreign Minister Kamel Morjane and Kuwait's deputy-Prime Minister and Foreign Affairs Minister Sheikh Mohamed Sabah al-Salem al-Sabah. On the sidelines, Prime Minister Mohamed Ghannouchi conferred with Sheikh Mohamed Sabah al-Salem al-Sabah.

20 December 2010 (Tunis):

Tunisia's government accused its opponents of manipulating clashes between the police and young people. The riots took place in Sidi Bouzid during the weekend (18-19) after a young man set himself on fire to protest against the confiscation by the police of the fruit and vegetables he was selling from a street stall.

29 December 2010 (Tunis):

President Ben Ali dismissed his communications minister, Oussama Romdhani. No official reasons were presented, but it is widely assumed that the decision is closely related to the street protests.

30 December 2010 (Tunis):

Prime Minister Mohamed Ghannouchi received members of the Maghreb Ministerial Council of Education.

3 January 2011 (Tunis):

Foreign Minister Kamel Morjane met with Egyptian Foreign Minister Ahmed Aboul Gheit to discuss bilateral ties.

4 January 2011 (Tunis):

Mohamed Bouzizi, the 26-year-old man who set himself ablaze on December 17th and initiated the street protests against the regime died.

11 January 2011 (Tunis):

Foreign Affairs Minister Kamel Morjane met with president of the Parliamentary Assembly of the Council of Europe Mevlut Cavusoglu to discuss the development of relations between the Council of Europe and Tunisia and prospects for strengthening them.

12 January 2011 (Tunis):

Faced with mounting street protests, President Ben Ali sacked Rafik Belhaj Kacem, the Interior Minister.

13 January 2011 (Tunis):

President Zine El Abidine Ben Ali vowed to cut food prices, to lift censorship, to control police forces, and promised not to run in the next presidential elections, scheduled for 2014.

14 January 2011 (Tunis-Jeddah):

President Ben Ali fled the country.

14 January 2011 (Tunis):

Prime Minister Mohamed Ghannouchi declared himself Interim President.

15 January 2011 (Tunis):

Fouad Mebazza replaced Mohamed Ghannouchi as Interim President and asked the latter to form a coalition government.

17 January 2011 (Sharm el-Sheikh):

Secretary-General of the Arab League Amr Moussa said that Arab states should consider the lessons taken from Tunisia.

17 January 2011 (Tunis):

Prime Minister Mohamed Ghannouchi announced a transitional unity government composed of former regime members and opposition groups. Ghannouchi also announced the termination of media restrictions and legalized hitherto forbidden human rights groups.

17-19 January 2011 (Sharm el-Sheikh):

Foreign Minister Kamel Morjane arrived in Egypt to attend the Arab Economic, Social and Development summit but left the country before the beginning of the meeting. Morjane said to the press that "the government is a unity government, a transitional government, we must not forget that its goal is clear and its duration is specified - specified legally and specified with the agreement of all parties".

18 January 2011 (Tunis):

Opposition leader Moncef Marzouki returned to Tunisia after two decades of exile in Paris. Marzouki said that Prime Minister Ghannouchi is a factor of instability.

18 January 2011 (Tunis):

Opposition figures leave the national unity government, demanding the dismissal of former Ben Ali loyalists.

18 January 2011 (Tunis):

For the first time since the protests erupted, members of the Islamist party Ennahda organized a protest. According to Houcine Jaziri, a party spokesman, Ennahda plans to run in the upcoming parliamentary elections.

18 January 2011 (Strasbourg):

German MEP Martin Schulz announced that the RCD was expelled from the Socialist International. The RCD was a member of the organization since the 1970s.

19 January 2011 (Tunis):

Interim President Fouad Mebazza said that political parties, including the RCD of former President Ben Ali, would be separated from the state in a "complete break with the past". Mebazza also announced the release of political prisoners.

19 January 2011 (Bern-Tunis):

Switzerland froze the assets of former President Ben Ali. Tunisian prosecutors also opened a judicial inquiry into the assets of ousted President Ben Ali and his family.

19 January 2011 (Geneva):

The United Nations dispatched a team to Tunisia to assess the country's human rights situation.

20 January 2011 (Tunis):

Lotfi Zeiton, a senior member of Ennahda called for the RDC to be dissolved.

20 January 2011 (Tunis):

Ministers from the interim government as well as the acting President resigned from the RCD.

20 January 2011 (Tunis):

After a national unity government meeting, Minister of Education Taieb Baccouche reasserted the interim nature of the government, declared a three-day national mourning for those who died during the protests, and announced the endorsement of a general amnesty. Baccouche also announced the speeding up of the establishment of the three national commissions, including the higher commission on political reform, the fact-finding commission on acts committed during the past period and



the fact-finding commission on affairs of embezzlement and corruption.

21 January 2011 (Tunis):

Prime Minister Mohamed Ghannouchi announced that he would depart from politics after the upcoming elections. Ghannouchi said that Tunisia entered a decisive turning point which was a clear-cut and true departure from the past, adding that all people who committed crimes at the detriment of the Tunisian people and the country should be held accountable for their deeds.

22 January 2011 (Washington-Tunis):

Secretary of State Hillary Rodham Clinton called Prime Minister Mohammed Ghannouchi to express continued support for the people of Tunisia in their path to a more democratic society. Clinton conveyed that the United States is encouraged by indications that the interim government is trying to be inclusive and ensure that the many segments of Tunisian society will have a voice.

22 January 2011 (Paris-Tunis):

Prime Minister Mohamed Ghannouchi received a telephone call from French Premier François Fillon, who expressed France's support to Tunisia on all levels, asserting the keenness to enhance the cooperation between the two countries.

23 January 2011 (Tunis):

Former presidential adviser Abdelwahab Abdallah became the third Ben Ali aide to be put under house arrest, and some ex-ministers had their diplomatic status revoked.

24 January 2011 (Tunis):

Police fired tear gas at anti-government protesters. Hundreds of demonstrators defied an overnight curfew and camped outside Prime Minister Mohamed Ghannouchi's office to force the government to resign.

24 January 2011 (Tunis):

General Rachid Ammar pledged to uphold the revolution and urged protesters to have patience until the elections.

24 January 2011 (Tunis):

The regional development minister Nejib Chebbi declared that the government agreed to offer US\$354 million in compensation to the families of those killed in the month-long uprising.

24 January 2011 (Berlin-Tunis):

After a telephone conversation with Foreign Minister Kamel Morjane, German Foreign Minister Guido Westerwelle welcomed "the new political start in Tunisia", saying that the German government and the European Union were willing to "actively support the democratic transition process in Tunisia".

24-26 January 2011 (Tunis):

The US Assistant Secretary of State for Near Eastern Affairs Jeffrey Feltman underscored US support for the efforts towards democracy. The US offered the Tunisian authorities their help in organizing elections.

25 January 2011 (Tunis):

Foreign Minister Kamel Morjane met with European ambassadors. Morjane stated that the national unity government was the best way to ensure the transition to democracy, compliance with the constitution and avoid a political vacuum. According to Morjane, the main goal is to lead the country to free, democratic and transparent elections.

26 January 2011 (Tunis):

The national unity government issued arrest warrants for Ben Ali and his entourage.

27 January 2011 (Tunis):

The new national unity government is composed of 12 ministers and has kept Mohamed Ghannouchi as Prime Minister, but includes no other members of the former ruling party. Foreign Minister Kamel Morjane resigned and was replaced by Ahmed Abderraouf Ounais. Tunisia's labor union UGTT did not join the new government itself but approved the new cabinet. Ghannouchi said the upcoming elections would be organized by an independent body and monitored by international observers.

27 January 2011 (Brussels):

The European Union decided to freeze the assets of Ben Ali and members of his family and entourage.

29 January 2011 (Tunis):

Hundreds of women rallied to express their fears of an Islamist resurgence on the eve of the return of Islamist leader Rachid Ghannouchi from exile.

30 January 2011 (Tunis):

Rachid Ghannouchi, the leader of Tunisia's Ennahda party, returned to the country after more than 20 years in exile in London.

31 January 2011 (Davos):

The new governor of the Central Bank, Mustapha Kamel Nabli, the newly-appointed Transport Minister Yacine Brahim and Communications Minister Sami Zaoui attended the Davos Summit.



EDITORS | Paulo Gorjão • Tobias Schumacher
ASSISTANT EDITORS | Diogo Noivo • Laura Tereno

DESIGN | Atelier Teresa Cardoso Bastos PRINTING | Europress

Portuguese Institute of International Relations and Security (IPRIS)
Rua Vitorino Nemésio, 5 - 1750-306 Lisboa
PORTUGAL

<http://www.ipris.org>
email: ipris@ipris.org

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