

American Foreign Policy Council

TUNISIA

QUICK FACTS

Population: 10,835,873

Area: 163,610 sq km

Ethnic Groups: Arab 98%, European 1%, Jewish and other 1%

Religions: Muslim (Islam - official) 98%, Christian 1%, Jewish and other 1%

Government Type: Republic

GDP (official exchange rate): \$44.7 billion

Map and Quick Facts courtesy of the CIA World Factbook (Last Updated May 2013)



The unprecedented social and political upheaval in Tunisia which began in December 2010, causing long-serving President Zine el-Abidine Ben Ali and his family to quit the country roughly a month later, continues to drive events and developments in the North African state. The so-called “Jasmine Revolution” was unexpected to Tunisian Islamists, as it was to all Tunisians and the international community at large. The revolt itself contained little overt involvement of Islamic groups, and very little Islamist rhetoric. It did, however, destroy the one-party structure that had defined political life since the country’s independence in 1956, and prompted the re-emergence of thoroughly suppressed opposition movements, the return of politicians from exile, and the creation of many new political groupings.

Since the demise of the old regime and the commencement of “real politics” throughout all of society, Tunisia has come quite far on its trajectory towards democracy, with the free and fair election on October 23rd 2011 of a National Constituent Assembly charged with serving both as a legislature and as a consti-

tution-writing body. As in several other countries undergoing radical transformation, Islamists have been major beneficiaries of this process. The Islamist An-Nahda party was the major winner of the election, and now controls almost half of the 217 seats in the Constituent Assembly; more radical Salafist groups control other seats. Since December 23, 2011, an An-Nahda prime minister has led the current interim government. An-Nahda, however, has chosen to lead the country through a coalition not with the Salafists, but with centrist and liberal parties, two of which are members of the governing coalition. In fact, new Tunisian President Moncef Marzouki has described an increasingly strident Salafist movement as a “threat to democracy.”¹ Notably, there has not been a surge in Islamist sentiment since the fall of the Ben Ali regime, and Tunisians remain generally supportive of the secular approach to social and political development.

ISLAMIST ACTIVITY

An-Nahda

The Islamist movement in Tunisia was long embodied by Hizb an-Nahda (The Renaissance Party), which was thoroughly suppressed by the Ben Ali regime but became a legal party in early March 2011. Its leader, Rachid al-Ghannouchi, in exile in London since 1989, returned to Tunis shortly after Ben Ali’s January 14, 2011 abdication of power to a tumultuous airport welcome, and the party has re-established its domestic organization. Despite the emergence of other Islamist groups since the “Jasmine Revolution,” An-Nahda has continued to dominate the Islamist movement in the new era.

The origin of Tunisia’s modern Islamist movement was the Quranic Preservation Society, which was formed in 1970 with the government’s approval. It was apolitical, dedicated primarily to encouraging piety and faithfulness. The Society was placed under the Ministry of Religious Affairs and supported by President Bourguiba as a counterweight to the country’s political left.² The Islamists attracted to the Society were not necessarily anti-regime and, in fact, shared some of the regime’s views, including its opposition to Communism.³ They accordingly did not see the need to confront the government and did not see a role for themselves in social and political change, which was the province of the left.

Their approach began to change in the late 1970s, when growing social unrest in other sectors, especially organized labor, politicized the movement. Several Islamists broke from the Quranic Preservation Society—including Rachid al-Ghannouchi, who founded al-Jamaat al-Islamiyya (The Islamic Group) and explicitly called for the end of Bourguiba’s one-party rule.⁴ In 1978, a year that saw serious economic-based rioting across the country, the “Movement of Islamic Renewal” emerged as a loose coalition of Islamist

groups; by the following year, Ghannouchi's group, then called the Mouvement de la Tendance Islamique (MTI), emerged as its backbone.⁵

MTI issued a political platform in 1981 that included calls for equitable economic reform, an end to one-party rule, and a return to the "fundamental principles of Islam."⁶ These objectives were sufficiently vague and appealing to attract broad support from people across Tunisian society. The group requested recognition as a political party, but was denied such by the government, and most of its leaders were jailed until 1984, when they were released through a general amnesty.⁷ During the course of the 1980s, MTI became younger and more populist in nature, and evolved into a well-organized social and political movement linked with the broader civil rights movement in the country.⁸ It was considered pro-democracy and was the first Islamist group in the Arab world to explicitly adopt democratic principles; in his writings, Ghannouchi favored Islamist participation in pluralist politics.⁹

In November 1987, Zine el-Abidine Ben Ali, whom President Bourguiba had recently appointed Prime Minister, ousted him in a bloodless coup. The coup was greeted with relief by the public, as Bourguiba's age and poor health had seriously degraded his judgment and decision-making capabilities. Ben Ali promised reform and democratization, and Ghannouchi, who sought to openly participate in political life, undertook to cooperate with the new President. He signed Ben Ali's "National Pact," which was essentially a social contract between the government and civil and political groups, and then sought to run a list of candidates in the 1989 legislative elections.¹⁰ But Ben Ali soon changed course and, among other measures, prohibited any party's name to contain the words "Islam" or "Islamic" (the prohibition of religiously-identified parties remains in place today.) The MTI duly renamed itself Hizb an-Nahda, the Renaissance Party. However, Ben Ali still refused to allow An-Nahda to enter the elections as a recognized political party, although he did permit it to field "independent" candidates. Islamists subsequently received 15 percent of the nationwide vote (up to 30 percent in urban areas), but failed to win any seats in the legislature (by contrast, the five recognized secular opposition parties collectively received only 5 percent of the vote).¹¹ The ruling Constitutional Democratic Rally Party (RCD), the successor to Bourguiba's Neo-Destour (New Constitution) Party, received 80 percent of the vote—a function of both general voter satisfaction and effective regime vote-rigging and polling place intimidation. But the unexpectedly strong performance of the Islamists within the opposition, coupled with An-Nahda's increasingly strident political rhetoric, caused the regime to deny An-Nahda's second request for recognition. An escalating cycle of protest and repression ensued, and Ghannouchi fled to London in 1989.¹² By 1992, virtually all of An-Nahda's leadership was imprisoned and its organizational

capabilities within the country destroyed. Although it was commonly understood that An-Nahda was effectively dismantled in the early 1990s, many Tunisians, including Ben Ali, believed it maintained a structure and presence in the country, albeit perhaps a “sleeping” one.¹³

An-Nahda’s ideology is thoroughly rooted in the ideology of its founder, Ghannouchi, who views the Koran and the Hadith as “an anchor for political thought and practice.”¹⁴ However, he appears to interpret Koranic texts in the context of Western political thinking and modern concepts of political freedoms: the dignity of human beings, human rights, and Koranic prohibitions against Muslim dictators.¹⁵ Ghannouchi himself is a “literalist” and believes that it is the duty of Muslims to establish Islamic government where attainable; in practice, he has endorsed multi-party politics.¹⁶ He does not advocate government by clerics, and has said that “[t]he state is not something from God but from the people... the state has to serve the benefit of the Muslims.”¹⁷ His idea of an Islamic political regime appears to be a strong presidential system with an elected president and elected parliament, and considers the parliamentary system a legitimate means of political participation.¹⁸

Ghannouchi’s public statements since his return from exile, and those of other An-Nahda figures, have been consistent with this pluralism. He has said that his party will accept the outcome of fair and democratic elections, and that he will not run for president.¹⁹ In a March 2, 2012 address to a civil society conference, Ghannouchi asserted that, “...We are in need of scholars and intellectuals to debate and study our issues in a climate of freedom, and accept that the legislative institution is the ultimate authority by virtue of being elected.”²⁰ Ghannouchi went on to further explain his views: While Islam has never known the separation between religion and the state, he rejected the use of the state apparatus to impose religion, citing the Prophet Mohammed’s view that religion is one realm and everyday governing is another. The former seeks a truth which cannot be based on reason, while the latter depends on reason informed by values and principles provided by religion. He mentioned the church-state relationship in the United States in a favorable light when compared to the French model. When states have tried to impose one brand of Islam on the populace, revolution has occurred: “There is no value to any religious observance that is motivated through coercion.” Applying his views to the current political situation in Tunisia, he stated, “The fact that our revolution has succeeded in toppling a dictator, we ought to accept the principle of citizenship, and that this country does not belong to one party or another but rather to all its citizens regardless of their religion, sex, or any other consideration.”²¹

An-Nahda has had an ambiguous position on the use of political violence, and a mixed record of using and supporting violent unrest to further its aims. It is not associated with the few instances of recent violence in the country that have been attributed to jihadist elements or al-Qaeda in the Islamic Maghreb (AQIM). Ghannouchi himself criticized the January 2007 clash between an Islamist band and security forces in the southern suburbs of Tunis (see below) as an obstacle to democracy.²² There is no evidence that An-Nahda (or any Islamist movement, for that matter) played a significant role in the “Jasmine Revolution.” What Islamist violence that has occurred since the Revolution has been the work of salafists and not An-Nahda.

Other Islamist movements

While An-Nahda dominates Tunisian Islamism, other Islamist groups do exist, though they tend to be small in size and loosely organized.

A potentially dangerous group is Hizb al-Tahrir (the Islamic Liberation Party), an international group founded in 1953 which seeks to re-establish the Caliphate by force. This group established a presence in Tunisia in 1973, but had only a few dozen members in the country.²³ It has now emerged publicly and stated its goal of competing in elections and offering its “alternative constitution” to the Constituent Assembly.²⁴ While the group claims to renounce violence, it does not rule out rebellion and civil disobedience to establish an Islamic state. It clearly believes in the re-establishment of the Muslim Caliphate and in sharia as the source of the constitution.²⁵ Its spokesman announced that Hizb al-Tahrir is preparing for an ideological and political struggle to save the nation.²⁶ Many Tunisians, including members of An-Nahda, believe with good reason that Hizb al-Tahrir would, if it won an election, ban other parties and implement “one man, one vote, one time.”²⁷ Its request for a license to operate as a political party was denied by the Interior Minister on March 12, 2012 (as was that of the “Tunisian Sunni” party), and it will be interesting to observe what direction this organization will take.

Tabligh wa Da’wa (“transmission and preaching”) is a group with origins in Pakistan focused on reinvigorating Islamic practices among the people of northern Africa. Tabligh is apolitical but, like virtually all civil associations in Tunisia, was illegal under the old regime.

The Tunisian Combatant Group (TCG) was formed in 2000 with the goal of establishing an Islamic regime in Tunisia. It reportedly established contacts with al-Qaeda shortly after its formation. Its membership derives from the Tunisian Diaspora and members have participated in violent operations in Europe, Iraq, and Afghanistan. The group has no evident capability to oper-

ate in Tunisia itself; in fact, observers disagree over whether the group still exists. While not on the State Department's formal list of foreign terrorist organizations, TCG is considered a terrorist entity and its assets are frozen under Executive Order 13224 and UN Security Council Resolution 1333.²⁸

Although al-Qaeda in the Islamic Maghreb (AQIM) claimed responsibility for the February 2008 kidnapping of two Austrian tourists in southern Tunisia, it does not appear that AQIM has a significant presence or recruiting base in the country. In fact, from press reports, all of the perpetrators of that kidnapping infiltrated from outside, and none were Tunisian. That said, a January 2007 gunfight between a well-armed extremist group and authorities near Tunis shocked the country, especially since two members of the group were found to be security forces personnel. The group, which took the name "Assad Ibn Fourat's Army," consisted primarily of Tunisian nationals apparently led by an expatriate living in Italy who, with several companions and a few non-Tunisian Maghrebis, infiltrated from Algeria where they had been trained by the Salafist Group for Call and Combat (GSPC), AQIM's Algerian backbone.²⁹

If extremist Islamic groups remain marginal to Tunisia's political environment, Salafism does not. Salafist activity is growing across the country and, while it is not manifest in terrorist acts, it is disruptive and often violently destructive. Salafists "occupied" Manouba University in late 2011, intimidating faculty and students in an effort to force the university to permit the wearing of the face veil by female students.³⁰ Salafists have also harassed theatergoers, burned bars and shops selling alcohol in several cities, and created a disturbance in the Tunis-Carthage Airport protesting the authorities' barring of two Moroccan salafist leaders from entering the country.³¹ Salafists reportedly control up to 400 mosques in the country, a development being closely watched by the Religious Affairs Ministry.³² Some of these radical imams are calling young Tunisians to jihad against the Syrian regime of Bashar Assad, something of great interest to the Interior Ministry.³³

President Marzouki has stated that some Salafists pose a "threat against democracy," but has rejected the repressive response practiced by the Bourguiba and Ben Ali regimes.³⁴ The government, many of whose members were themselves victims of repression, is clearly on the horns of a dilemma about how to deal with the inchoate, but increasingly aggressive Salafist movement. On May 11, 2012, the Tunisian government granted a license to the Salafist "Reform Front" (Islah) to operate as a party under the Political Parties Law (which requires respect for the "civil principles of the state"); it is the first Salafist group to be so recognized.³⁵ Islah, several of whose leaders were jailed during the 1980s for membership in the Islamic Front, claims that it rejects

violence, respects democracy, and does not seek to impose Islamic codes on dress or personal conduct.³⁶

ISLAMISM AND SOCIETY

Tunisians tend to be moderate in their views and behavior, a characteristic that inhibits the ability of Islamists to exploit the socio-political situation. The course of Tunisian development has not been characterized by social polarization or identity politics, both of which can spawn radical action. Tunisia's colonial and liberation experiences were not marked by extensive violence. Bourguiba, supported by the public, set a moderate course at the very inception of the independence movement and followed through with it after the French left the region. Guerrilla warfare and terrorism did not characterize the struggle, and there were no violent purges and settling of accounts among the victors of the sort that led to continued crisis and near-civil war in neighboring Algeria.

Tunisia is an unusually homogenous country for its neighborhood. Ninety-eight percent of the population is Sunni Muslim.³⁷ Shi'ites number perhaps in the thousands, mostly converts following the 1979 Iranian Revolution.³⁸ There is a small Jewish community concentrated on the island of Djerba, and there are virtually no indigenous Christians in the country. While there are differences between Arabs and Berbers, ethnicity is not a significant factor, and no "identity politics" exist to fuel conflict and instability. Nor is there a large socio-economic gulf between rich and poor to create tensions. As a result of some very sound economic decisions by the Ben Ali government, Tunisia has developed an expansive middle class, and a very large percentage of Tunisians have a stake in the system. There is, however, a geographical "have/have not" gap and the southern interior has not been a focus of development; most dissident movements, including the Islamists, have originated from this region, and it was the cradle of the "Jasmine Revolution." Equitable distribution of wealth to all regions remains an important issue, especially after the revelations of Ben Ali family corruption, and a number of Tunisians have advocated renationalizing and relocating businesses to ensure fairness in the geographical distribution of opportunities.³⁹

But relative prosperity was insufficient to prevent upheaval; the "Jasmine Revolution" was not about bread and jobs alone, but about dignity and the state's relationship with the people. A stroll along Avenue Habib Bourguiba in downtown Tunis has long revealed the extent of unemployment or underemployment of young men. Without employment and the means to support a family, these young men cannot marry, start a family, and fully participate in society. Frustration is the result, and a portion of frustrated youth,

albeit a very small one, is attracted to the fringes of society, including radical Islamism. These young men are still hanging around Avenue Bourguiba, and while their mood is more positive since January of 2011, how long it remains so will depend on how the new order will address their problems.

While Islamism has not, and most likely will not, take hold among Tunisians, religious sentiment grew steadily prior to the “Jasmine Revolution.” Youth were exposed to this phenomenon primarily at the university, especially when secular, modernist, and leftist movements were at best weak and marginalized, and at worst, outlawed and suppressed. Beneath the modernism and sophisticated worldview exhibited by the population, which is far more substantial than the veneer of modernism seen elsewhere, Tunisia is a traditional society that values its religion and cultural heritage. The Ben Ali regime began to recognize this, and attempted to “Islamize” society and use religion to support government policies.⁴⁰ This “Official” or “Popular” Islam was designed to counter the extremist/terrorist threat by preaching the values of moderation and tolerance, and at the same time claiming Tunisians’ Islamic identity, which was denied by past regimes.⁴¹ This effort was supported by many Tunisians; as an example, Radio Zeytouna, a religious station established in 2009 by the Ben Ali government as a counterweight to Islamist satellite networks, was popular with the public and had a good audience base.

Although Islamists and An-Nahda failed over the years to gain the active support of the public, there is sympathy for the vision expressed by the movement—that is, political and economic reform and living by Islamic principles. Most Tunisians do not appear to consider Ghannouchi and other Islamists as saviors of society, but rather simply people who express an appealing vision.⁴² Many of those who join the movement do not necessarily support the establishment of an Islamic regime.⁴³ Tunisians do not like violent transition, but they do believe in good governance, freedoms, and rule of law. They are very protective of their *acquis* (patrimony: the shared cultural, political, social, legal experiences) which they believe distinguishes them from their neighbors. Because of this, any political or religious movement that wants to play a role will have to preserve and improve these values, and not reject or destroy them. Therefore, a call for an “Islamic Republic” will have little standing in Tunisia. Most Islamists realize this, which is why An-Nahda moderated its discourse and its strategy to cope with the moderate nature and modern expectations of Tunisian society.⁴⁴ For An-Nahda to succeed in political life over the long term, it must accept the framework of the national state, agree to safeguard the Tunisian tradition of modernization, and adopt progressive attitudes toward Tunisia’s Arab and Islamic identities.⁴⁵ An-Nahda’s expressed rejection of the Ben Ali regime, and not

its Islamic principles, gave the group its appeal. It, like other heretofore suppressed opposition groups, now must sell its message to a public suddenly enjoying a plethora of alternatives. Interestingly, in some of its public statements, An-Nahda is portraying its opponents, both liberal secularists who want to remove all Islamic influences from the state and culture, and Salafists who want to impose their version of Islam through the use of the state apparatus, as “extremists.” Both threaten Tunisia’s “moderate center,” which An-Nahda claims to represent.⁴⁶

Freedom of expression is widely exercised in the “new Tunisia,” and that includes vigorous and impassioned debates about the role of religion in society, a subject that was taboo under the old regime. It is clear that many more people are expressing their religiosity through speech, dress, and conduct, but this expression remains personal. This most likely reflects the fact that many people are now “out of the closet” religiously, and not necessarily that more people are being attracted to political Islam and particularly to Salafism.⁴⁷

ISLAMISM AND THE STATE

The Tunisian state was hostile to Islamism from independence in 1956 through the end of the Ben Ali regime. Habib Bourguiba, the hero of the liberation and president between 1956 and 1987, dominated the country through force of personality and an efficient political party structure organized down to the lowest grassroots. He made an early decision to devote the country’s energies and limited resources to social modernization and economic growth, and not to democracy and political pluralism. Bourguiba steadily consolidated government control over political life in order to avoid the chaos and serial coups d’etat that characterized much of the Arab and African post-colonial experience. The Tunisian people essentially shared this objective and acquiesced to extensive limitations on political participation. Bourguiba’s politics were strictly secular, and he insisted that the country would be also. He ignored the country’s Arab/Islamic history and connected modern Tunisia directly to a pre-Islamic past—its Carthaginian heritage—while simultaneously secularizing the state and weakening traditional Islamic institutions.⁴⁸ At the same time, his regime embarked upon an economic and social development program based on a socialist model. This model failed and the government changed course; the eventual result was impressive economic performance and very progressive social programs involving public education and literacy, economic mobility, and the position of women in society.

The process of tightening regime control accelerated after the 1987 “palace

coup” by Ben Ali, who maintained that no accommodation with Islamists was possible, and considered Islamism to be a disease against which the public must be “inoculated.” The country’s 2003 anti-terrorism law allowed the jailing of those threatening national security. It was used almost exclusively against Islamists, primarily Islamist-leaning youths using the Internet “illegally” (i.e., blogging or visiting jihadist websites.)⁴⁹ The pre-January 2011 state of affairs in Tunisia was one of comprehensive government domination of the public space and virtually all political activity—not just that of Islamists, but of all potential opposition groups. Under the current constitution, Islam is the state religion, but it has been a government-controlled version of the religion since independence. The state controlled mosque construction, sermon content, religious education, and appointment and remuneration of imams. While these constraints have been relaxed by the new government, imams will not necessarily have *carte blanche* to speak out. When several imams delivered uncensored Friday sermons attacking politicians, an official from the Ministry of Religious Affairs stated: “In the event of too many excesses, then measures will be taken. Mosques are not meant to be venues for defamation and personal attacks. An imam is not a judge, and the law is above all.”⁵⁰ As mentioned above, the government is increasingly concerned about the excesses of some Salafists and has arrested many who have used violence to impose their views.

Although An-Nahda dominates the Constituent Assembly and could theoretically exert a decisive influence over the new constitution as it is developed, the Interim Government adopted the same balanced methodology used to draft the 1957 constitution. Six Constituent Assembly subcommittees are focusing on various parts of the constitution (e.g., the preamble and basic principles, rights and freedoms, the judiciary, legislative and executive powers, etc.) All Constituent Assembly members serve in one or another of these subcommittees, membership in which is proportional to the party distribution in the Assembly. Thus, while An-Nahda is well represented, it cannot pack critical subcommittees with its own members. Perhaps most critically, An-Nahda announced its opposition to including sharia in the constitution; the only reference to Islam will repeat the 1957 Constitution’s Article 1 which states, “Tunisia is a free, independent and sovereign state. Its religion is Islam, its language is Arabic, and its type of government is the Republic.”⁵¹ This has done much to reassure the public, but An-Nahda’s electoral victory and leadership of the current government has prompted a reaction among liberal secularists that at times resembles a “counterrevolution” that rejects the election results. Some liberals and women’s organizations have raised the alarm that the Islamists, despite their moderate public pronouncements, are steadily working to establish an Islamic state. The release in late August 2012 of the draft constitutional texts produced by the Constituent Assem-

bly subcommittees (but not melded into a complete draft constitution) has increased this debate.⁵² There is an underlying concern among Tunisian liberals that the Islamists have a “slow but sure” project to impose their values and practices. Many are understandably worried that incremental actions by the Islamists will steadily erode the undeniably superior social and economic status of Tunisian women. One example is a move to legalize marriage at a younger age (allegedly in order to keep women at home and out of the workforce), and to increase the number of religious primary schools (allegedly to “brainwash” young pupils.)⁵³ They point to occasionally violent but always intimidating actions by Salafists to impose conservative dress codes and social mores. This is aggravated, they say, by the security forces’ favoritism toward the Islamists: the police allowed the Salafist “occupation” of Manouba University to drag on for several weeks, but quickly used force to break up peaceful anti-An-Nahda demonstrations in central Tunis in April 2012. The liberals have in turn sparked a counter reaction by other Tunisians who, while not supporters of the Islamists, point out that the elections were free and fair and the people have spoken, and those that want to undo the results are, at least rhetorically, elites of the old regime.⁵⁴

As leader of the current government, An-Nahda has announced the first general elections under the new constitution will be held in late March of 2013. This is later than the timetable to which all parties originally agreed, but few are protesting as it gives them more time to organize their campaigns. One lesson from the October 2011 Constituent Assembly elections was that a professional, effective campaign strategy carries the day; An-Nahda had one while the others did not. This announcement, made fairly early in An-Nahda’s tenure, indicates that the party does not intend to prolong its temporary mandate and somehow institutionalize its ruling status.⁵⁵ It may also reflect the party’s realization that its governing success depends on meeting the material needs of the population, which it (and arguably other parties) cannot do in the short term. An April 2012 opinion poll assessing the government’s performance in its first 100 days revealed overwhelming dissatisfaction on the key issues of fighting corruption (75% negative), controlling inflation (90% negative), and creating jobs (85% negative.)⁵⁶ While the reliability of the poll can be questioned, and other polls give the interim government higher approval ratings, the message to An-Nahda must be clear.

While the “Jasmine Revolution” has shaken off the old regime and Tunisians are now free to practice and express their religious beliefs, they have not rejected the essentially secular nature of the state and the society and in general are not predisposed to religious or political Islamism. A vigorous public debate on religion and politics—a taboo subject under the Ben Ali regime—is ongoing, and it is clear that it would not at all be easy for Islamists to hijack

the revolution outside the electoral process, if they chose to try. An-Nahda's future fortunes and its position in the new political order will rest in large measure on its ability to offer the citizens both a compelling vision of Tunisia's future and a respect for Tunisia's heritage.

ENDNOTES

- [1] “Tunisian President: Salafis Threaten Our Democracy,” *Al Akhbar*, May 1, 2012.
- [2] Christopher Alexander, “Opportunities, Organizations, and Ideas: Islamists and Workers in Tunisia and Algeria,” *International Journal of Middle East Studies* 32 (2000), 465-490, 466.
- [3] Jennifer Noyon, *Islam, Politics, and Pluralism: Theory and Practice in Turkey, Jordan, Tunisia, and Algeria* (London: The Royal Institute of International Affairs, 2003), 100.
- [4] Alexander, “Opportunities, Organizations, and Ideas.”
- [5] Susan Walsh, “Islamist Appeal in Tunisia,” *Middle East Journal* 40, no.4 (Autumn 1986), 652.
- [6] *Ibid.*, 653.
- [7] *Ibidem*.
- [8] *Ibidem*, 657.
- [9] Noyon, *Islam, Politics, and Pluralism*, 99.
- [10] *Ibid.*, 101.
- [11] Perkins, *A History of Modern Tunisia*, 190.
- [12] Noyon, *Islam, Politics, and Pluralism*, 103.
- [13] Author’s correspondence with Tunisian academic and lawyer, September 2009.
- [14] Noyon, *Islam, Politics, and Pluralism*, 99.
- [15] Mohamed Elhachmi Hamdi, *The Politicization of Islam: A Case Study of Tunisia* (Boulder, CO: Westview Press, 1998), 107.
- [16] Noyon, *Islam, Politics, and Pluralism*, 101.
- [17] As cited in John L. Esposito and Francois Burgat, eds. *Modernizing Islam* (New Brunswick, NJ: Rutgers University Press, 2003), 78.
- [18] *Ibid.*, 79.
- [19] Al-Munji Al-Suaydani, “Ennahda Movement Leader Talks to Asharq Al-Awsat,” *Al-Sharq al-Awsat* (London) February 7, 2011, <http://www.aawsat.com/english/news.asp?section=3&id=24070>.
- [20] Address by Rached Ghannouchi to the Center for the Study of Islam and Democracy, Tunis, March 2, 2012.
- [21] *Ibid.*
- [22] Allani, “The Islamists in Tunisia between Confrontation and Participation, 1980-2008,” 266.
- [23] *Ibid.*, 258.
- [24] Interview with Tahrir spokesman Ridha Belhaj, Assarih (Tunis), March 11, 2011.
- [25] *Ibid.*
- [26] Belhaj interview, Al-Jazeera (Doha), March 10, 2011.
- [27] Interview with an-Nahda official Abdelfattah Moro, Al-Jazeera (Doha), March 10, 2011.
- [28] U.S. Department of State, Office of the Coordinator for Counter-

terrorism, "Appendix C: Background Information on Other Terrorist Groups," in *Country Reports on Terrorism 2007* (Washington, DC: U.S. Department of State, April 2008), <http://www.state.gov/documents/organization/31947.pdf>.

[29] "Chapter 2: Country Reports – Middle East and North Africa Overview," in *Country Reports on Terrorism*, <http://www.state.gov/s/ct/rls/crt/2007/103708.htm>.

[30] "Burqa Ban Causes Confrontation in Tunisian College," *Al-Jazeera* (Doha), Nov 28, 2011.

[31] "Tunisia Denies Entry for Moroccan Salafis, Tunisian Salafis Storm Airport," *Al-Arabiya* (Dubai), May 15, 2012.

[32] Erik Churchill and Aaron Zelin, "A Balancing Act: Ennahda's Struggle with Salafis," Carnegie Endowment for International Peace *Sada Analysis on Arab Reform*, April 19, 2012.

[33] "Radical Mosques Call Young Tunisians to Jihad in Syria," *Agence France Presse*, May 18, 2012.

[34] "Tunisian President: Salafis Threaten Our Democracy."

[35] Houda Trabelsi, "Tunisia Approves First Salafist Party," *Magharebia*, May 17, 2012.

[36] *Ibid.*

[37] This and other demographic statistics derived from the U.S. Central Intelligence Agency's World Factbook, <https://www.cia.gov/library/publications/the-world-factbook/>.

[38] "Tunisia Islamist Trends back to the Forefront," *Al-Arabiya* (Dubai), February 1, 2011, <http://www.alarabiya.net/articles/2011/01/20/134294.html>.

[39] Author's discussions with civil society figures and officials in Tunis, March 10-12, 2011.

[40] Kausch, "Tunisia: The Life of Others," 5.

[41] Author's correspondence with Tunisian academic and lawyer, September 2009.

[42] *Ibid.*

[43] Lise Storm, "The Persistence of Authoritarianism as a source of Radicalization in North Africa," *International Affairs* 85, no. 5, September 2009, 1011.

[44] Author's correspondence with Tunisian academic and lawyer, September 2009.

[45] Allani, "The Islamists in Tunisia between Confrontation and Participation, 1980-2008," 258.

[46] Eric Churchill, "Shaping Ennahda's Re-Election Strategy," *Foreign Policy*, March 27, 2012, http://mideast.foreignpolicy.com/posts/2012/03/27/ennahdas_re_election_strategy_takes_shape; See also Address by Rached Ghannouchi to the Center for the Study of Islam and Democracy, March 2, 2012.

[47] Discussion with several Tunisian civil society figures, Tunis, May 3,

2012.

[48] Noyon, *Islam, Politics, and Pluralism*, 96.

[49] Address by Hugh Roberts of the International Crisis Group before the Center for Strategic and International Studies, Washington, DC, March 21, 2007.

[50] Quoted in Al-Musawwar (Cairo), March 7, 2011.

[51] Duncan Picard, "The Current Status of Constitution Making in Tunisia," Carnegie Endowment for International Peace, April 19, 2012.

[52] "Tunisia: A Debate over the Constitution: Islam is to be Protected, Human Rights Can Wait," Businessnews.com (Tunis), August 22, 2012, as translated in *Al Monitor*, August 26, 2012.

[53] *Ibid.*

[54] Discussion with Tunisian Army Brigadier-General, Garmisch, Germany, January 2012.

[55] Churchill, "Shaping Ennahda's Re-Election Strategy."

[56] Poll conducted by SIGMA Conseil and *Al Maghreb* (Tunisian daily newspaper), published April 11, 2012.