Events of the Tunisian Revolution
The Three First Years

Adèle Aranki Nassar

Preface by Peter Wallensteen
This report highlights the episodes, which led to the commonly called “Arab Spring” that originated in Tunisia. It describes the chain of events that took place and their geographical spread all over the country. It is well known that these events started a reaction throughout the Arab World, in some cases with success while in other countries it caused a reversal that can be discussed and might be the goal of further research.

Three main areas are included and studied in this report. The first introduces the sequence of events. The second analyses the trends and the spread of these events. The final part discusses the differences between Tunisia and other countries in the Middle East and North Africa.

Report No. 108

Department of Peace and Conflict Research
Uppsala University
Events of the Tunisian Revolution: 
The Three First Years

By
Adèle Aranki Nassar

Preface by
Peter Wallensteen

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Report No. 108
Department of Peace and Conflict Research
To
Michael and Agnes
Abstract

This report is a post-date of the events, which took place after the self-immolation of a Tunisian street vendor in a main town in one of the central districts in Tunisia and not in the capital Tunis where the political power is concentrated. This event was the start of a spontaneous uprising, which merged into a revolution that led to the collapse of the regime. This revolution proved to be comparatively nonviolent in comparison with the events that took place soon after in the neighboring Arab countries. These were contaminated with a lot of different ideologies and even extreme directions. That in turn merged into more situations that are explosive as the case in Libya, Yemen and Syria, while in Egypt the military took advantage of the situation and came to take over the power.

The Tunisian political elite overcame numerous barriers and obstacles encountered during stages of the country’s democratic transition and succeeded in reviving several constitutional institutions thanks to mutual concessions and the spirit of rapprochement demonstrated by major political players.

There are also persistent challenges on the fifth birthday of the revolution such as economic, social and security conditions.

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Preface

The Tunisian uprising that started in December 2010 belongs to the genuine surprises in human history. Very few analysts had predicted that an event in Tunisia, challenging a seemingly entrenched dictatorship, would actually lead to its downfall in a matter of weeks. Even fewer had suggested that it rapidly would spread throughout the Arab World. It led to the coining of the phrase The Arab Spring. It seemed, initially, as a hopeful democratization of a region that had long been plagued by authoritarian regimes, corruption, repression and lack of economic development favoring the larger segments of the populations. There were precursors, not the least the important series of studies of the Human Development in the Middle East.

Still, few predicted what actually took place.

Thus, it is important to analyze the beginning of this development, the events in Tunisia during the first years of the Arab Spring. This is interesting also as the outcome, so far, Differentiates Tunisia from the other Arab countries. At the time of the five-year anniversaries, Tunisia seems more stable than all the others do.

In this work Mrs. Adele Aranki-Nassar, of the Department of Peace and Conflict Research at Uppsala University as put to use her insights in social science methodology, Arab sources and her experiences with the Uppsala Conflict Data Program, in amassing, –following her own definitions, – event data for the first thirteen quarters of the Tunisian revolution. It is a valuable contribution to our understanding of these developments, and suggests ways forward to further analysis.

I am happy to see that this work has been brought to fruition and hope that it will find its uses among conflict scholars as well as area specialists.

Uppsala, January 2016

Peter Wallensteen

Senior Professor of Peace and Conflict Research
Uppsala University.
Introduction

In this publication, I attempt to present a systematic analysis of the recorded events of the Tunisian Dignity Revolution for the years 2010-2013. The Tunisian revolution of 2011 was comparatively un-violent. The violent dramas of Egypt, Libya and Syria make this clear. Development that is much more dramatic could have taken place. Still, The Dignity Revolution in Tunisia was probably more violent than is often assumed. It is the comparison to other more violent upheaval in other parts of the Arab World that set Tunisia apart. It is not the only reason for studying this development. It was, of course, the seat of the first popularly led uprising against authoritarian regimes, and as such warrant a closer reaction. As of 2015, it has not seen the type of reversal as witnessed in Egypt, breakdowns as seen in Libya or civil wars as witnessed in Syria and Yemen. Thus, the first years of transition in Tunisia are the subject of this publication. The study ends by 2013. Certainly, history has not stopped, but the first years are likely to be formative for what follows. Also in mid-2013 the National Quartet was formed, deliberately attempting to steer Tunisia away from a violent path. To a large extent this was also achieved, not the least highlighted by awarding it the Nobel Peace Prize in 2015. Again, this put the spotlight on Tunisia.

Still, it was not an entirely non-violent revolution and requires further analysis. Official figures from the Tunisian authorities estimate that 338 persons died in the period of 2010-2013. The casualties are often referred to as ‘martyrs’. Pursuing a more rigorous analysis using Tunisian media reports concerning the Tunisian Revolution and looking at each recorded event, one at a time, all over the state of Tunisia this project has located 92 politically motivated public events, from the last quarter of 2010 to the end of 2013. The total number of deaths in these events constitutes 195 persons. The discrepancy requires a closer analysis. For instance, in the official figures, also, other deaths are included, not the least those taking place in the prisons. For instance, Human Rights Watch record that 78 persons died in prison riots on January 15, 2012. Thus, as is often the case, the numbers will vary, largely depending on the definitions of which events are recorded, and, to a lesser extent, the sources used.

Thus, this publication sets out to three things:
a- Present the record of events, as defined here, building on the Uppsala Conflict Data Program and its experience of definition, but still doing this as an entirely independent undertaking. Chapter 1 presents the findings in this regard, and the recorded events are all reproduced in Appendix A, for further analysis of those interested in this issue.

b- Analyze the trends and geographical spread of such public events, as the revolution did not start in the capital. This is pursued in Chapter 2.

c- Use this as a basis for discussing the differences between Tunisian and the other countries experiencing the dramatic upheavals associated with the term ‘The Arab Spring’. This is discussed in Chapter 3.

In doing this work, I am grateful to my husband Michael Nassar, and my daughter Agnes as well as Professor Peter Wallensteen and to all those who supported me in my work.

Uppsala, Sweden

Adele Aranki- Nassar
January 2016
Chapter 1

The First Phase of Tunisia’s Dignity Revolution, 2010-2013

The Tunisian Political revolution from early 2011 has been regarded as a positive example of peaceful transformation. On December 10, 2015, the Nobel Peace Prize was awarded to the Tunisian Quartet to support its work to keep the revolution on a democratic track. In this work I am covering the first phase of this revolution, the two years from 2011 to 2013, which actually also includes the formation of the Tunisian Quartet. This is done by studying the events that have taken place in this period in terms of time, place, participation and deadly outcomes. In this section, I will give an overview of these dynamics.

In this report, the work follows the ideas of the Uppsala Conflict Data Program (UCDP) by focusing on the public events where there is a confrontation between politically motivated actors. In the case of Tunisia, this refers to demonstrations, riots, and battles (with or without fatalities) between official security forces (police, military, rangers) and demonstrators as well as armed non-state actors.

Such events have been recorded for the first phase of the Tunisia Dignity Revolution, i.e. from the last quarter of 2010 to the end of 2013. This is a phase where new actors were being formed, leading up to the elections in 2014. It is thus a formative period to observe. In this period, I have recorded 92 such events, as well as 195 deaths. These events are recorded in Appendix A of this report. These numbers are documented in media with specific dates, places and involved parties.

In Table 1 the data are presented for each quarter beginning with the final quarter of 2010 to the end of 2013.
Table 1. Events and deaths in the first phase of the Dignity revolution.
Each quarter 2010-2013.
Definition and Sources: See Appendix A

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Quarter</th>
<th>Number of deaths</th>
<th>Number of Events</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>2010: Q 4</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>18</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2011: Q 1</td>
<td>113</td>
<td>29</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2011: Q 2</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2011: Q 3</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2011: Q 4</td>
<td></td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2012: Q 1</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2012: Q 2</td>
<td></td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2012: Q 3</td>
<td></td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2012: Q 4</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2013: Q 1</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2013: Q 2</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2013: Q 3</td>
<td>33</td>
<td>8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2013: Q 4</td>
<td>27</td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>TOTAL</td>
<td>195</td>
<td>92</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Let me first comment on the total number of victims. The data I have collected differs from other sources so it is important to understand why.

The number of victims that I counted when compiling the work sheet (Appendix A) are still lower than the official ones that are 338 according to the Tunisian Authorities for the same period. The official data is reported in Table 2, as it is necessary to compare to the ones produced here.

Table 2 shows the statistics provided by a commission appointed by the Ministry of Interior in the categories used officially.
Table 2. Tunisian official data on ‘victims’. Tunisia 2010-2013
Definition and Source: See Appendix A

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Total</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>citizen</td>
<td>233</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>prisoners</td>
<td>86</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>National security forces</td>
<td>14</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>National Army</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Ages</th>
<th></th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>18-39</td>
<td>286</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>40-59</td>
<td>39</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>&gt;18</td>
<td>8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>60&lt;</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Gender</th>
<th></th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Men</td>
<td>326</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Women</td>
<td>12</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

The figures that Tunisian Authorities report i.e. 338 victims are probably more comprehensive than those numbers I counted. The definition of who are counted is wider, as it includes a broader set of victims and all those who died during the revolution, and perhaps in the course of not only events that I found and which had been reported by the Tunisian media. In the excel work sheet that I have compiled, I found places, events and victims (martyrs according to Arabic terminology) who were directly victims of the revolution.

As my interest is to understand the public events that form the revolution, I have restricted my investigation to specific identifiable events that involve clashes between groups of people and actors such as police units.

There are also some other estimates to consider. According to Amnesty International more than 234 people were killed when security forces brutally crushed the protests that continued until President Zine el Abidine Ben Ali fled the country on January 14. A further 74 prisoners were reportedly killed in incidents related to the uprising. (Amnesty international, public statement December 16, 2011) and describes the weekend of 8-10 January 2011 was bloody.
Human Rights Watch reports that 219 were killed of which 174 during the demonstrations that took place prior to January 14-2012. 78 died during riots in the prison on January 15, 2012. We have to keep in mind that HRW were more interested of the violations committed by the former president Ben-Ali’s regime, while Amnesty International reports are mainly regarding political prisoners. (Human Rights World Report 2013).

This differs from the number of victims that are presented in this work. The difference to the official Tunisian numbers, as well as other numbers presented by Amnesty International and Human Rights Watch, can be explained through the fact that I used the Web looking for reports in the Tunisian media, other Arab media as well as European and other international web sites. Some broadcasts from Al-Jazeera Arabic television were also useful. We can safely say that the toll is much higher for civilians than reported in these sources. However, civilians are sometimes difficult to separate from uniformed persons, as police may have joined the demonstrators. The low death number of police and military may indicate that the Tunisian revolution was one where also armed actors supported the revolt. Both the non-official sources come close to the estimates I have arrived at. Thus I am confident that the overall picture given by my data is sufficiently close to the reality to constitute basis for analysis of the dynamics.

Let us now look at the time dimension, as reported in Table 1. We can determine that most deaths took place in the early part of the revolution and rather quickly killing stopped, due to the early departure of Ben Ali, only to again begin to rise in late 2013.

It was on July 26, 2013 when Tunisia erupts in renewed protests after Mohamed Brahmi, leader of the People’s Party, is assassinated outside his home in front of his wife and children. The assassination of the opposition leader, Mohamed Brahmi, was the second time in five months that a leading liberal politician was fatally shot. Many suspected that Islamist extremists were responsible and warned that they threatened the kind of pluralistic democracy envisioned in Tunisia’s 2011 uprising, which inspired the Arab Spring revolutions. Hundreds of demonstrators gathered in front of the Interior Ministry building, blaming the ruling Islamist party and its followers for Mr. Brahmi’s killing and shouting for the government to go. Murder of the left politician Muhammad Brahmi sparked violent demonstrations in several parts of Tunisia. On Friday, that is a week after the assassination, launched a general strike by the country’s largest trade union, and all air traffic is set. Thousands took to the
streets of Tunis and Sidi Bouzid. These were the events that were the beginning of the formation of the Tunisian Quartet.

There is more to be seen in Table 1. We can also calculate that 75 events involved deaths, and the average number of people killed in the events were 2.6 deaths. The most brutal event occurred in the first quarter of 2011 with 113 deaths which took place during the week of January 7 and January 14, that is to say just before Ben-Ali fled the country. At this time the record shows 29 events with the number of deaths mentioned, i.e. an average of almost 4 people killed per event, but already by the summer of 2011 events were largely without causalities.

There were great numbers of events from the third quarter of 2011 and for the following year, almost without causalities. It appeared that the revolution had arrived at a more stable situation, and where demonstrations were accepted as regular political events. However, in early 2013 this begins to change, and in the third quarter there are more than 4 killed per event. This points to a change in the nature of events and in reactions from the authorities. Although the death toll in total was less than the first quarter of 2011, the dangers seem to be rising. Thus, into its third year, the revolution appears to take a more sinister direction. There is a new phenomenon adding to the situations, as can be seen in the column of victims: non-state actors. This also suggests a shift in geographical location.
Table 3. Deaths 2010-2013. Police, civilians and organized actors.
Definition and Sources: See Appendix A

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Quarter</th>
<th>Victims: Non military citizens</th>
<th>Victims: NSAs</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>2010: Q 4</td>
<td>5</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2011: Q 1</td>
<td>113</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2011: Q 2</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2011: Q 3</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2011: Q 4</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2012: Q 1</td>
<td>2</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2012: Q 2</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2012: Q 3</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2012: Q 4</td>
<td>1</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2013: Q 1</td>
<td>3</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2013: Q 2</td>
<td></td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2013: Q 3</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>27</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2013: Q 4</td>
<td>16</td>
<td>11</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>TOTAL</strong></td>
<td><strong>150</strong></td>
<td><strong>45</strong></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

NSA: national security forces, army, police and rangers.

The rise of deaths in the latter part of 2013 is also related to change in geographical location. This will be discussed in the next section.
Chapter 2

The Tunisian Dignity Revolution: The Geographical Dimension

The Tunisian Revolution is often observed as a drama reaching the capital from the peripheries of the country. This makes the issue of its diffusion particularly interesting. As I have mentioned the process started in the small town of Sidi Bouizid in the Sidi Bouizid province with about 430 thousand inhabitants while the city of Sidi-Bouizid counts up to 122 thousand. It lies 127 km South of the capital, Tunis, which is the most populous city number some 2.7 million inhabitants at the time. The popular uprising took about a week to reach the capital. Here are key events after the self-immolation of Mr. Mohamed Bouazizi, on December 17, 2010.

- The first demonstration took place in Sidi Bouzid on December 18-19 2010: Hundreds of young people marched and protested showing solidarity with Mohammed Bouazizi against rising unemployment and rampant price increases. Police used teargas against protesters, clashes between police and protesters that ended with dozens of arrests
- The first protests outside the city of Sidi Bouzid took place on December 22 in the cities Sidi Ali Ben Aoun, Menzel Bouziene Regueb and Meknassy all geographically belonging to the Governate of Sidi Bouzid
- The first deaths took place on December 24 in the town Menzel Bouziene about sixty kilometers south of Sidi Bouzid: Tunisian soldiers had surrounded the town following the death of a teenager, shot in the chest in a confrontation with security forces. A 44 years old man was shot in the same incident.
- On 22 December 2010 the first suicide inspired by Bouazizi took place in Sidi Bouzid when the 22-year-old Houcine Falhi commits suicide during a demonstration after having chanted: “No to misery, no to unemployment!”
- The first events in the capital, Tunis, took place on December 25, that is, about a week after the first incidents in Sidi Bouzid. At that time the revolts spread to other cities as well.
- Following the death of Mohamed Bouazizi on January 4, 2011, more clashes with the police in Sidi Bouzid led to at least 20 deaths. Protesters in Sidi Bouzid began taking pictures, which were then posted extensively on the web using social media sites. His burial on January 5 draw an estimated 5 000 persons. Although Ben Ali visited.
Thus, the riots follow an unusual trajectory, beginning as a local event of police repression and government arrogance in the provinces, and then gradually became more intense and spread to the capital. It did not matter that the Ben Ali regime fired local officials or visited Bouazizi in the hospital. This did not defuse the tensions. Almost to the contrary, it highlighted the failings of the regime. The protesters were targeting the regime itself, and on January 14, 2011 Ben Ali stepped down and left the country. The data I have collected gives us a picture of how the revolution spread. See Table 4.

Table 4. Events with Deaths: Geographical Distribution
Definitions and sources: See Appendix A

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Quarter</th>
<th>Deaths in Capital</th>
<th>Deaths in the Provinces</th>
<th>Deaths at Border</th>
<th>Total Deaths</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>2010: Q4</td>
<td></td>
<td>5</td>
<td></td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2011: Q1</td>
<td>44</td>
<td>69</td>
<td></td>
<td>113</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2011: Q2</td>
<td></td>
<td>2</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2011: Q3</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2011: Q4</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>2012: Q1</td>
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<td>2012: Q2</td>
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<td>2012: Q3</td>
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<td>2012: Q4</td>
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<td>2013: Q1</td>
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<td>2013: Q2</td>
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<td>2013: Q3</td>
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<td>39</td>
<td>44</td>
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<tr>
<td>2013: Q4</td>
<td></td>
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<td>16</td>
<td>16</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>48</td>
<td>79</td>
<td>68</td>
<td>195</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Table 4 shows that the uprising started in the provinces and that this is also where the death tolls are the highest for the whole period, as well as during the events in the first quarters of the revolution. Also, we see a change of location in the fact that there are more killings at the borders in the final quarters of 2013. There is a remarkable and significant shift, taking place in revolutionary dynamics. The following three maps illustrate this.
From the Sidi Bouzid province, the riots and civil unrest broke out in cities of Kairouan, Sfax and Ben Guerdane. Hundreds of trade unionists and human rights activists in Tunis gathered to express their solidarity with the people of Sidi Bouzid and to protest against the repression of popular marches, arrests and the use of live ammunition against protesters that caused the fall of dead and dozens wounded. This was already happening on December 25. For instance, Ben Guerdane is located in the Medenine Governate. Located 423 km - 559 km by road - from Tunis, it is the city furthest from the capital. It is a coastal town in southeastern Tunisia, close to the border with Libya. It has riots and civil unrest on December 27. Similarly and on the same day, Kasserine in southern Tunisia is the administrative center for the governate Kasserine with more than 80,000 inhabitants (2013). Here protesters were stopped by security forces. Trade union activists and about 1,000 citizens joined to express solidarity with residents of Sidi Bouzid, and called upon a rally.

Gafsa is the capital of the southwest of Tunisia and is both a historical oasis and home to the mining industry of Tunisia. The city had 95,000 inhabitants according to the 2014 census. The city lies 369 km by road southwest of Tunis. It also saw demonstrations on Dec 27, 2010. Typically, when the mass demonstrations reach the capital they have a stronger and more immediate impact. Table 4 shows, however, that the killings were more numerous outside the capital. The use of Internet may have made these events more known than would otherwise have been the case. It is likely that many repressive regimes can act without transparency in areas far from the capital. However, this case may demonstrate that this is no longer possible. From this follows, nevertheless, that events in the capital will be more covered by media and have a stronger impact on the political scene. It is more difficult to act repressively, but that also makes limited killings in the capital highly relevant for the political dynamics. It is more difficult for repression to succeed ones it comes into the open in the capital.

From the second quarter of 2011 there are no killings for the following year and a half in the capital, but events occur in the border regions. However, two assassinations in 2013 in the capital, again unsettles the fragile political situation.

On February 6, 2013, protests occurred in the capital Tunis in the shadow of the crisis when the Prime Minister dissolved the government just hours after the politician Chokri Belaid’s cold-blooded murder. The police clashed with protesters in deadly violence.
On July 25, 2013, following the assassination of Mohamed Brahmi, thousands of his supporters demonstrated in front of the Interior Ministry and blamed the incumbent En-Nahda Party who were holding the government.

These events became important, as it is top leaders that are assassinated. It is probably correct to say that a few targeted killings like these can suffice to bring chaos in a country. This is also the moment when the Tunisian National Dialogue Quartet is formed, to stem the rising tide of violence. In the third quarter of 2013 this is furthermore underscored by increasing violence in the boarder areas:

Al-Shaibani mountain area in the north western part of Tunisia, 2 soldiers were killed when a mine exploded (6 June 2013).
3 soldiers were wounded when a mine exploded (14 June 2013).
29 soldiers were killed being ambushed in the mountain area (29 July 2013).
At least eight Tunisian soldiers are killed in ambush on country’s northwestern border area where Islamist rebels are known to be active (30 July 2013).

Tunisian forces launched air and ground strikes on Islamist militants near the border with Algeria after fierce overnight clashes in the area. Aircraft bombed caves in the Mount Chaambi area, where the military had been tracking a band of 15 to 20 Islamist militants since December. The operation was launched in the same area where militants killed eight soldiers earlier in one of the deadliest attacks on Tunisian security forces in decades.

The following examples show that during the period May-December 2013 many events took place on the Tunisian borders between militants, mostly members of Ansar Al Sharia and security forces, National Guards and members of the National Forest Administration. There were arrests and killings on both sides (3 August 2013).

Two members of Ansar Al-Sharia were killed and 3 others were arrested in Sidi Hassine, a nearby city to the capital Tunis (9 August 2013).

Tunisian police killed two Islamic militants and arrested two senior leaders of the militant Ansar al-Sharia near the Algerian boarder (9 September 2013).
Two National Guards were killed in clashes between militants and National Guards in the southern parts of the country (17 October 2013).

One militant was arrested near the Libyan border (18 October 2013).

Thirteen militants killed in clashes between the security forces and members of the organization “Ansar al-Sharia” in Qublat mountain areas in the west of Tunisia (19 October 2013).

Five members of the National Guard were killed in Al-Shaibani mountain area (23 October 2013).

An army captain killed and a warrant officer wounded due to an explosion of a landmine planted by militants in the region of Mount Alhaanbe in the state of Kasserine on the border with Algeria (2 December 2013).

**Detailing the Sequence of Events:** The data in Appendix A makes it possible to follow closely the sequence of events that led to the end of Ben Ali’s regime.

Some important events are the following.

After the self-immolation of Mohamed Bouazizi, **Sidi Bouzid** was the site of the first clashes of the Tunisian Revolution and a catalyst for other protests in the region, often known as the Arab Spring.

Following the death of Mohamed Bouazizi in early January 2011, more clashes with the police in **Sidi Bouzid** led to at least 20 deaths. As noted above, protesters in **Sidi Bouzid** began taking pictures, which were then posted extensively on the web using social media sites. As a direct result, violent protests soon spread through the country, eventually reaching the capital **Tunis**.

Increased protests that spread to nearby cities and communities in the same governate. For instance, **Sidi Ali Ben Aoun**, a town in central Tunisia, located about fifty kilometers south of Sidi Bouzid, as well as Regueb with a population of 8,000, saw protests with demands for work, civic rights and equal development opportunities (21 Dec 2010)

Tunisian soldiers surrounded the town of **Menzel Bouaïene** in the central Sidi Bouzid governate following the death of a teenager, shot in the chest in a confrontation with security forces. Another 44 years old man was shot in the same incident (Two persons were killed 24 Dec 2010)

These are the first deaths in the Revolution after the self-immolation of Mohammad Bouzizi. **Sidi Bouzid** 22-year-old Houcine Falhi commits suicide during a demonstration after having chanted: “No to misery, no to unemployment!”
Gafsa is the capital of the southwest of Tunisia and is both a historical oasis and home to the mining industry of Tunisia. The city had 84,676 inhabitants at the 2004 census. The city lies 369 km (229 mi) by road southwest of Tunis. Protesters were stopped… However when the mass demonstrations reach the capital they have a stronger and more immediate impact

The first events in Tunis, the capital occurred only about a week after the first incidents in Sidi Bouzid. Three hundred attorneys were meeting in Tunis, to show solidarity with the popular protests. The president responded by discharging several of the country’s governors (28 Dec 2010) and President Ben Ali makes limited adjustments in government at ministerial level (30 Dec 2010).

Hack activist group ‘Anonymous’ announced that they hacked several official government websites (2 Jan 2011). The Tunisian Bar Association announced a general political strike (4 Jan 2011), Mohamed Bouazizi died on 5 Jan 2011. Several opinion leaders, journalists, bloggers and cultural persons were arrested 95 percentage of Tunisia’s 8,000 lawyers went on strike, the protests escalated lawyers participated a sit-in in the corridors of court in protest against being persecuted by security (6 Jan 2011)

The death toll rose to over 20 dead after weekend protests (3-7 Jan 2011).

The first reported death in Tunis, the capital, took place a week into the new year. An Italian TV reporter was hit by a tear gas grenade and died later. The camera equipment was seized and confiscated (7 Jan 2011)

Demonstrations spread in Tunis and into the urban neighborhoods, which suffer from poverty and poor living conditions. Demonstrators burned down police stations and other offices that belongs to the ruling party. Police used excessive violence resulting in killing at least 35 people. Demonstration organized by Tunisian artists was suppressed in front of the municipal theater in the capital (11 Jan 2011).

More casualties followed including a French university student of Tunisian origin, Hatem Batahir, who was killed in the city of Douz, south west of Tunisia, The first victim of foreign nationality. There were reports of burning and looting in the capital and its suburbs. The spokesperson for the outlawed Communist Workers Party, Hamma Hammami was arrested (12 Jan 2011).
Violence escalated and protesters attacking the government buildings. Burning facilities and property of members of the president’s family. On the same day fatalities in the capital and other cities close to them, as well as in Alkairouan downtown (13 Jan 2011).

Large demonstration followed in the capital and other major cities. These led to President Ben Ali fleeing after that protesters threatened to march to the presidential palace. President Ben Ali left the country. The Constitutional Council declared a state of emergency, and the president of the parliament Mr. Mbezza gave Mr. Ghanouchi the task to form a new government after discussions with the other political parties. What this shows is that the Tunisian revolution started in the provinces, spread to other areas until it later came to the capital. The Maps shows that it, in that sense, was a national revolution involving many parts of the country.

We can also note that a year after the fall of Ben Ali the turbulence was more concentrated in the border areas. Only in 2013 was there a new wave of rioting engulfing increasingly large parts of the country. This is also the time for the formation of the Tunisian Quartet as an action for the prevention of a further breakdown of the society and its democratic institution.
Chapter 3
The Tunisian Dignity Revolution in Perspective

3.1 Tunisia an Exception
There has been considerable attention to the Tunisian response to the Arab Spring that swept across the Middle East, North Africa in early 2011. It began in Tunisia, and it has been regarded as the least violent of the transformations that followed. In a comparative perspective, this may largely be true, although there were also reformism without violence in Morocco, Jordan and Lebanon. Nevertheless the transitions included less violent and actually involved a transfer of power from an authoritarian regime to a democratic one, and then between different democratic forces. Thus, the country faced some remarkable changes, still with a minimal use of violence. It is worth exploring why this was the case.

Scholars have drawn attention to the different trajectories of the developments in Tunisia compared to other Arab states. In an early analysis, Lisa Anderson said that

“Tunisia has long enjoyed the Arab world’s best educational system, largest middle class, and strongest organized labor movement. Yet behind those achievements, Ben Ali’s government tightly restricted free expression and political parties. In an almost Orwellian way, he cultivated and manipulated the country’s international image as a modern, technocratic regime and a tourist-friendly travel destination. Beyond the cosmopolitan façade frequented by tourists lay bleak, dusty roads and miserable prospects. It is small wonder that the Islamists’ claim that the government was prostituting the country for foreign exchange resonated in Tunisia.”

The factors mentioned by Anderson could also be used to explain why the changes took a different turn. The highly educated population could also mean a willingness to work towards a cooperative new regime, the middle class factor may also contribute to that and if a labor movement is oriented towards democratic reformism it would as well be a factor pointing in that direction. Thus, they are structural factors important to highlight.

Not unexpectedly political scientists point to other factors. Thus, Stepan and Linz applied democratization theory to this case in an article published in April 2013, arguing in particular for the role of political factor such as the democratic outlook of the En-Nahda Party, the lack

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of fear among ‘secular liberals’ not fearing islamists and the emergence ‘not only of a civil society but political society’. This is echoed in an article by Cavatort and Merone from 2015, pointing to the political journey of the En-Nahdaprty from fundamentalism to a conservative position accepting democracy. This, the authors argue is a result of repression and exclusion. In essence the authors point to lack of acceptance in Tunisian society of extremist positions and that the party adapted to ‘an implicit social consensus’ against extremism. Under the leadership of Rachid Ghannouchi the party socialized into the mainstream of society. This argument runs counter to many other observations notably that exclusion rather leads to extremism than moderation. More important is then the observation of adaption to the ‘consensus’ of society and it begs the question where this consensus comes from and how it is sustained.

Thus, interestingly Anne Wolf instead points to the existence of Salafists in Tunisian maintaining extreme positions, but being unable to form a united force as an alternative to En-En-Nahda. Similar arguments have been made with respect to the more secular opposition, maintaining that Ben Ali could sustain his regime not just through repression but also the lack of a unified opposition.

Let me here look at the various factors that are used as explanations for the difference between Tunisia and the other Arab states.

There are background factors that often are alluded to such as:

**The ethnic makeup of Tunisia** is that 98% of the population is Arab while 1% is European and there is also a small Jewish community. The latter may be cited as indicators of a culture of tolerance.

**Islam is practiced by the majority** of Tunisians and governs their personal, political, economic and legal lives. However, this hardly distinguishes Tunisia from other Arab countries.

More important may be **the role of women**, alluded to many observers. This is worth further exploration.

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3 Ibid.
The women in Tunisia are unique in the Arab world for enjoying near equality with men, and they are anxious to maintain this status.

Tunisia’s enrollment rates for girls are higher than its surrounding countries, including Algeria, Egypt, Morocco, Syria, Yemen and even Lebanon and Jordan.\(^4\)

According to the index of the *Global Gender Gap Report of 2015* published by the World Economic Forum, this index is designed to measure the Gender equality. The highest possible score is 1 (equality), and the lowest possible is 0 (inequality). Sweden lies in the fourth place with a score of 0,823 to compare to the following Arab countries as given in the list overall, Arab countries are on the low end of this scale.

Table 5. Gender Equality in the Arab world, 2015

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Land</th>
<th>Score</th>
<th>Rank</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Tunisia</td>
<td>0,634</td>
<td>127</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Algeria</td>
<td>0,632</td>
<td>128</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Saudi Arabia</td>
<td>0,605</td>
<td>134</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Egypt</td>
<td>0,599</td>
<td>136</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Lebanon</td>
<td>0,598</td>
<td>138</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Morocco</td>
<td>0,593</td>
<td>139</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Jordan</td>
<td>0,593</td>
<td>140</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Syria</td>
<td>0,568</td>
<td>143</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Yemen</td>
<td>0,484</td>
<td>145</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Yemen had the lowest score in the whole world. Kuwait, United Arab Emirates and Qatar had scores, which lies between 0,644 and 0,646 and are ranked 117 to 123 that is slightly better than those of Tunisia are.

**The colonial history of Tunisia**, not the least the extent of French cultural influence has also been pointed to. However, that is shared by neighboring Algeria, which saw very violent civil wars in the 1990s. It is, furthermore, a permanent factor that may be difficult to relate to the

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conflicts and it is difficult to say that Tunisia is strikingly different from others of violent action around the year 2011.

3.2 Tunisia’s Internal situation
There were also internal factors of significance for the uprising as such that may have been particularly marked at the time of the revolts. However, again they are probably not very different from those of other Arab countries, but they are still worthwhile to point to. In particular this points to economic factors, such as unemployment, corruption and poverty.

As to unemployment there is an interesting article by Mongi Boughazala it is pointed out that unemployment has been persistently high for more than two decades preceding the 2010 revolution and continued afterwards. It was often above 14 percent until 2010, and between January 2011 and May 2012, about 200,000 additional jobs were lost and the unemployment rate reached 19 percent. Thus, it became higher after the Dignity revolution. More important, the author points out that it affects young people; it was higher for young women and in poorer regions, especially in the west of the country. There is a wide consensus that angry unemployed youth, in a context of regional disparity and increasing corruption and poverty can be crucial elements in the popular revolts. More generally, unemployment is much higher in the west and the south of the country, including in the Sidi Bouzid and Kasserine area.

It seems commonly agreed that educated unemployed youth of Tunisia played a crucial role in the 2010 uprisings in the revolutions across the entire Arab world (and beyond). It has been argued that the recent economic situation in Tunisia is the culmination of three decades of neoliberal economic policies that have contributed to the rise in income inequality, the lack of upward mobility for educated youth, and the removal of social safety nets for the working class.

Corruption and social injustice are also mentioned. It is estimated that Tunisia lost more than US$1 billion per year between 2000 and 2008 due to corruption, bribery, kickbacks, trade mispricing and criminal activities. Lisa Anderson mentioned this as well: Ben Ali’s family was also unusually personalist and predatory in its corruption. As the whistleblower Web site WikiLeaks recently revealed, the U.S. ambassador to Tunisia reported in 2006 that

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6 Ibid.
more than half of Tunisia’s commercial elites were personally related to Ben Ali through his three adult children, seven siblings, and second wife’s ten brothers and sisters. This network became known in Tunisia as ‘the Family.’

The National Constituent Assembly developed an anti-corruption initiative in December 2012, which aims to establish a national integrity system, to promote the independent National Anti-Corruption Authority, and to boost civil society participation in corruption prevention. However, the government’s effort is still considered limited. Corruption is still a serious problem yet it is less pervasive when compared to the neighboring countries. The role of middlemen is very important for doing business in Tunisia, and many investors consider that having the right connections when collaborating on business in order to overcome administrative hurdles to investment and public procurement is crucial. State-owned companies or private groups owned by influential families continue to enjoy a privileged position, with close political and administrative ties and easier access to financing. Prior to the revolution, the so-called Economic Miracle of Tunisia looked good to the outside observer, but inequality and discontent were rising rapidly for many years. In the decade prior to the Tunisian revolution, the country boasted an average of 5 percent GDP growth, a largely industrialized economy and a dominant service sector. However, behind these figures, unemployment was never below 14 percent from 1981 to 2014. Export-oriented industries and private investments generating high-skilled jobs were concentrated mostly in the coastal regions thereby increasing regional inequality. From 2005 to 2009, inequality increased. As a result of corruption and a hesitant banking industry, private investments constituted only 60 percent of total investments compared to Egypt’s 75 percent and Morocco’s close to 80 percent. Banking corruption and low private investments directly leads to slow company growth and higher youth unemployment.

**Regional injustice:** The Tunisian labor market was not able to create enough jobs for new entrants into the labor force, and benefits from the sustainable economic growth were not equally shared across the different segments of the population. While the coastal and northwestern regions benefitted from economic growth and poverty reduction, the center-west regions saw their situation worsen. This resulted in a rise of the unemployment rate and the inequality indices. This perceived injustice combined with the pervasive corruption in the

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The president’s entourage created a combustible situation. It is therefore not surprising that it took the self-immolation of a young unemployed man from Sidi-Bouzid from a governate where unemployment and poverty rates are unbearable, to trigger protests for more equitable distribution and access to employment, followed by a revolution which ended by the ouster of the Tunisian president Ben Ali.

**Poverty and the cost of living** belong to primary economic factors that could have an impact. Tunisia is a good example of successful adjustment with a favorable impact on the incidence of poverty. The government’s adjustment programs, coupled with pro-poor policies have reduced income inequality and poverty: the number of poor was reduced from 11 percent of the population in 1985 to 7 percent in 1990. The estimated number of poor, however, is very sensitive to changes in the poverty line: if the poverty line was raised by 25 percent, the share of the population in poverty would increase from 7 percent to about 14 percent. Key characteristics of the poor are as follows.

Poverty remains primarily a rural phenomenon: about two-thirds of Tunisia’s poor live in rural areas.

There is a marked disparity in poverty among regions: the northwest followed by the center-west have the highest incidence of poverty. These regions are characterized by hilly terrain and by their distance from the more dynamic economies of the eastern coastal cities.

In both rural and urban areas, poor households tend to be above average in size, have a high dependency ratio, and tend not to be headed by young breadwinners.

There is a strong association between lack of human capital and poverty in both rural and urban areas: two-thirds of the poor belong to households whose breadwinner has no formal education.

In both rural and urban areas, most poor earn their living as wage earners, followed by self-employment in nonagricultural activities.

The rural poor derive their incomes primarily from agricultural activities (own-farm activities and agricultural wage labor), but commonly also earn income outside agriculture. Many rural poor also own land and livestock, but their landholdings are small and rarely irrigated, and have low productivity.

Summarizing this, there is little to say that these matters have been dealt with because of the shift in government. All the factors remain, and the focus on corruption investigations has
been on the ousted President Ben Ali and his cronies. It is harder to estimate whether corruption levels in general have declined after the revolution. Nevertheless, these are not factors that make Tunisia stand out from other Arab states. We have to search even further.

3.3 Tunisian Actors and Actions

Civil society: More than 106 parties were legalized in the wake of the uprising, including the Islamist En-Nahda Party and the Tunisian Communist Workers Party, both of which had been illegal and the targets of repression during Ben Ali’s presidency. Many associations that were considered illegal received their official authorization soon after Ben Ali’s departure according to a news publication on Al-Jazeera on 21 January 2011. This suggests that there was an underlying network of organizations that could surface after the departure of Ben Ali, and thus be part of a smoother transition. In the critical year of 2013, as my data show, also these networks helped to reduce tension and keep the developments on a democratic route (chapter 1 in this publication). The Tunisian quartet (that received the Nobel Peace Prize of 2015) appears to be a unique phenomenon in the Arab Spring and can thus form part of the answer to the question of why this revolution became less violent.

To this, we could add that after 23 years in power, President Ben Ali fled the country on 14 January 2011, following a few weeks of countrywide protests against his repressive rule. That meant that the regime crumbled without being able to amass a strong resistance against the protesters. As far as I can surmise, the police was small and easily contained by the new authorities. On top of this Tunisian military very early sided with the uprising.

Lisa Anderson also points to of Tunisian military forces as different from the ones in Egypt and Libya, writing that: ‘Tunisia’s military also played a less significant role in the country’s revolt than the armed forces in the other nations experiencing unrest. Unlike militaries elsewhere in the Arab World, such as Egypt, the Tunisian army has never experienced combat and does not dominate the domestic economy. Under Ben Ali, it existed in the shadow of the country’s domestic security services, from which Ben Ali, a former military police officer, hailed. Although its refusal to support Ben Ali’s regime contributed to the country’s revolution, the military has not participated meaningfully in managing the transition period and is unlikely to shape the ultimate outcome in any significant way.8

Thus, the quick departure by Ben Ali may well have reduced the intensity of violence, and the same time that this indicated the fragility of the regime.

The dynamics is what this publication is all about, it points to critical phases where one was clearly developing in early 2013. It was managed but is not likely to be the last challenge to the new Tunisian democracy.
Appendix A.

Events in Tunisia 2010 – 2013. Definition and List

A. 1. Definitions
In section A.2 I have compiled the events identified for this project, e.g. places, actions and victims (martyrs according to Arabic terminology). The Uppsala Conflict Data Program, UCDP, does not include the violence of Tunisia for 2011, as it was not organized but consisted of low-level violence (stone-throwing, for instance) and without organized leadership and clearly stated goals (ucdp website). The estimated death toll during events in 2011, according to UCDP was around 85. This points to a particular character of the clashes in Tunisia: they do not correspond to typical armed uprisings, one-sided violence or non-state violence. This is what has sparked this study: is it possible to still estimate the number of public and politically motived events, whether they result in deaths or not? It turned out to be possible and all the events that meet these criteria are listed in section A.2 below.

The number of victims that I reached when compiling this information was 195. The numbers that the Tunisian authorities provided for the same period were 338 dead. I have identified 92 events, and they are all listed in A.2 below.

Amnesty International describes that the weekend of 8-10 January was bloody and quotes the director of the hospital with the only forensic medicine department in Tunis that the hospital received 28 bodies of protesters who died from gunshot wounds and over 100 people injured during the unrest including 30 hit by live ammunition. Furthermore, Amnesty believes that the total number of fatalities during the protests in Tunis was more than 28 as some families said they did not take the bodies of their killed relatives to the hospital.9

Human Rights Watch reports that 219 were killed of which 174 during the demonstrations that took place prior to January 14, 2012. 78 died during riots in the prison on January 15, 201210. We have to keep in mind that HRW were more interested of the violations committed by the former president Ben-Ali’s regime, while Amnesty International reports are mainly regarding political prisoners.

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My explanation to the different numbers that are presented in this work is that I researched the internet to look for websites hosted by Tunisian media. By using the Tunisian media reports concerning the Tunisian Revolution and looking at each event one day at a time I have reached the numbers and incidents indicated in this work. Examples where unspecified words were used rather than clear numbers are the following:

In Kairouan on 25 Dec 2010, “Use of live ammunition against the protesters that caused the fall of dead and dozens wounded.”  

In Monastir and other cities on 30 Dec 2010, “protesters were shot dead”. No numbers are mentioned; the same thing is repeated on January and February 2011 where the formulations such as “a number of killings and a number of fatalities” are used.

The numbers that Tunisia reports (338) are probably more complete than those numbers I counted. My data include victims, who were involved in public events. The martyrs and others who died during the revolution can have succumbed due to other occurrences than I could find in reports from Tunisian media.

A.2 List of Events. December 2010 until the End of 2013

**Sidi Bouzid** a city in Tunisia and is the capital of Sidi Bouzid Governorate in the center of the country. Following the self-immolation of Mohamed Bouazizi, it was the site of the first clashes of the Tunisian Revolution and a catalyst for other protests in the region, often known as the Arab Spring.

Following the death of Mohamed Bouazizi in early January 2011, more clashes with the police in Sidi Bouzid led to at least 20 deaths. Protesters in Sidi Bouzid began taking pictures, which were then posted extensively on the web using social media sites. As a direct result, violent protests soon spread through the country, eventually reaching the capital Tunis. Increased protests that spread to nearby cities and communities in the same governate:

Hundreds of young people marched and protested showing solidarity with Mohammed Bouazizi against rising unemployment and rampant price increases. Police used teargas against protesters, clashes between police and protesters that ended with dozens of arrests (18/19 Dec 2010)

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11 Al Bab “Tunisia: The Fall of President Ben Ali.”
12 Ibid.
**Sidi Ali Ben Aoun** is a town in central Tunisia, located about fifty kilometers south of Sidi Bouzid. It lies on the axis of Kairouan-Gafsa RN3. Increased protests that spread to nearby cities and communities with demands for work, civic rights and equal development opportunities.

(21 Dec 2010)

**Menzel Bouzaiane** is a town in central Tunisia, located sixty kilometers south of Sidi Bouzid, in the foothills south of the Tunisian ridge between Jebel Majoura (north) and the Djebel Bou Hedma (to the south). It is located on the Gafsa Meknassy-axis of the RN14 road. Tunisian soldiers have surrounded the town of Menzel Bouzaiane in the central Sidi Bouzid governate following the death of a teenager, shot in the chest in a confrontation with security forces. Another 44 years old man was shot in the same incident.

(Two persons were killed 24 Dec 2010)

These are the first deaths in the Revolution after the self-immolation of Mohammad Bouzizi.

**Regueb** is a town and commune in the Sidi Bou Zid Governorate, central Tunisia. As of 2004 it had a population of 7,892. Increased protests that spread to nearby cities and communities with demands for work, civic rights and equal development opportunities.

(21 Dec 2010).

**Meknassy** is a small town in Sidi Bouzid Governate.

Increased protests that spread…

(21 Dec 2010)

**Sidi Bouzid** 22-year-old Houcine Falhi commits suicide during a demonstration after having chanted: “No to misery, no to unemployment!”

(22 Dec 2010)

One died immediately, another died later from his injuries.

(24 Dec 2010)

The first events in Tunis the capital are only occurring about a week after the first incidents in Sidi Bouzid.
**Tunis.** The capital of Tunisia. It is Tunisia’s largest city, the greater metropolitan area holding some 2,700,000 inhabitants. Situated on a large Mediterranean Sea gulf. The city extends along the coastal plain and the hills that surround it. As the capital city of the country, Tunis is the focus of Tunisian political and administrative life; it is also the center of the country’s commercial activity.

(25 Dec 2010)

**Kairouan,** the capital of Kairouan Governorate, lies south of Sousse, 50 km (31 mi) from the east coast, 75 km (47 mi) from Monastir and 184 km (114 mi) from Tunis. Riots and civil unrest break out in cities of Kairouan, Sfax and Ben Guerdane. Hundreds of trade unionists and human rights activists in Tunis gathered to express their solidarity with the people of Sidi Bouzid and to protest against the repression of popular marches, arrests and the use of live ammunition against protesters that caused the fall of dead and dozens wounded.

(25 Dec 2010)

**Sfax** is a city in Tunisia, located 270 km (170 mi) southeast of Tunis; it is the capital of the Sfax Governorate and a Mediterranean port. Sfax has a population of 340,000.

**Ben Guerdane** The town is located in the Medenine Governorate. Located 423 km - 559 km by road - from Tunis, it is the city furthest from the capital. A coastal town in southeastern Tunisia, close to the border with Libya.

**Kasserine** is a city in southern Tunisia, near the city of Gabes. It is the administrative center for the governate Kasserine and had 83,665 inhabitants at the beginning of 2013. Protesters were stopped by security forces. Trade union activists and about 1000 citizens joined to express solidarity with residents of Sidi Bouzid, and called upon a rally.

(27 Dec 2010)

**Thala** is a town and commune in Tunisia. It is located in the Kasserine Governorate since 1956. As of the 2004 census, it had 13,968 inhabitants. The altitude of Thala is 1,017 meters (3,337 ft.), which makes it the highest and the coldest town in the country.
**Medinine** This is the major town in southeastern Tunisia, 77 kilometers (48 mi) south of the port of Gabès and the Island of Djerba, on the main route to Libya. It is the capital of Medenine Governorate.

**Gafsa** is the capital of the southwest of Tunisia and is both a historical oasis and home to the mining industry of Tunisia. The city had 84,676 inhabitants at the 2004 census. The city lies 369 km (229 mi) by road southwest of Tunis.

**Tunis**
Trade union demonstrations in Gafsa province lead to riots. Three hundred attorneys are meeting in Tunis, to show solidarity with the popular protests. Several attorneys also protest all over the country. The president discharges several of the country’s governors.
(28 Dec 2010).
President Ben Ali makes limited adjustments in government at ministerial level.
(30 Dec 2010).

**Monastir**
Monastir is a town on Tunisia’s east coast, about 25 km south of Sousse. It is the administrative center for the governate Monastir and the population amounted to 92,018 inhabitants in early 2013.
Police stopped the demonstration in Monastir without violence. Other protesters in other cities were shot dead.
(31 Dec 2010)

**Tunis** and several places
Hack activist group ‘Anonymous’ announced that they hacked several official government websites.
(2 Jan 2011)

**Thala**
Protests against unemployment and high living costs. Peaceful student demonstration, the police stopped the demonstration using teargas. (3 Jan 2011)

**Tunis** Tunisian Bar Association announces a general political strike.
(4 Jan 2011)
Mohamed Bouazizi dies because of the injuries
(5 Jan 2011)
Several opinion leaders, journalists, bloggers and cultural persons were arrested 95 percentage of Tunisia’s 8,000 lawyers went on strike, the protests escalated lawyers participated a sit-in in the corridors of court in protest against being persecuted by security.
(6 Jan 2011)

**Thala and Kasserine**
Anger pushes protesters to burn the headquarters and other official buildings, which belong to the ruling party’ Constitutional Democratic Rally’
(3-7 Jan 2011)

**Thala, Kassaerine and Regueb**
The death victims rise to over 20 dead after weekend protests.
“Teaching in schools and universities is suspended indefinitely. 6 people killed. Violent demonstrations swept the over center-west of the country” (3-7 Jan 2011).

**Tunis**
Italian TV reporter had been hit by a tear gas grenade and died later. The camera equipment seized and confiscated.
(7 Jan 2011)
Demonstrations spread in Tunis and the urban neighborhoods, which suffer poverty and poor living conditions, demonstrators burned down police stations and other offices that belong to the ruling party. Police used excessive violence resulting in killing at least 35 people. Demonstration organized by Tunisian artists was suppressed in front of the municipal theater in the capital.
(11 Jan 2011)
Demonstrations spread in major urban neighborhoods of the capital. – Mr. Ghannouchi also announced the release of all those arrested during the protests, except those involved in acts of violence. More casualties including French university student of Tunisian origin Hatem Batahir who was killed in the tribal city of Douz, southwest of Tunisia, the first one of foreign nationality. - The army deployed in the capital and in some urban surroundings, and the fall of at least eight dead. - Impose a curfew at night, in another attempt to retake power on the
street, and the incident of burning and looting in the capital and its suburbs. - The arrest of a spokesperson for the outlawed Communist Workers Party Hamma Hammami.
(12 Jan 2011)
Violence escalated and protesters attacking the government buildings. Burning facilities and property of members of the president’s family. On the same day fatalities in the capital and other cities close to them, as well as in Alkairouan downtown.
(13 Jan 2011)
Large demonstration in the capital and other major cities. President Ben Ali flees the country. The constitutional council declared a state of emergency, and the president of the parliament Mr. Mbezzaa gave Mr. Ghanouchi the task to form a new government after discussions with the other political parties.
(14 Jan 2011)
Hizb uy-tahrir organized other protests and marched to April 9 prisons to free political prisoners. 1,000 prisoners were acquitted.
(15 Jan 2011)
New government is appointed, consisting of 12 members of the old government party RCD (Constitutional Democratic Rally), three opposition party leaders namely Mustafa Ben Jafaar the Democratic Forum for Labour and Liberties, Ahmad Ibrahim from A Tagdid Movement and Ahmed Nagib Chebbi Progressive Democratic Party and 3 representatives of the Tunisian Workers’ Union (UGTT) and civilian representatives.
A commission to reform the Constitution was formed.
(17 Jan 2011)
The three ministers from the Tunisian Workers’ Union, and Mustafa Ben Jafaar leave the government in protest against the holding people from RCD who are carrying posts in the newly formed government.
Street protests against RCD’s participation in the new government. Hundreds marched in the capital Tunis, demonstrations spread to the cities of Sfax, Gabes, Biserta, Sousse and Monastir (18 Jan 2011)
Demonstrations continue demanding that Ben Ali alienates should not be left in the government. Demonstrators marching toward Ministry of Interior in Tunis despite the curfew. Requiring that RCD would be forbidden.
(19 Jan 2011)
The new government announced in its first meeting that all banned parties would be legalized and all political prisoners would be freed.
Demonstrations in front of the RCD’s headquarters with a requirement that the party would be banned. Zuheir M’Dhaffar who is close to Ben Ali resigns from the new government. (20 Jan 2011)

Thousands protesters join in front of the Ministry of Interior. Ghanouchi promised to resign after holding free elections within six months. (21 Jan 2011).

Thousands of police officers protesting against low wages and poor working conditions, and to rid themselves of debt over the killing of protesters and political prisoners because of Ben Ali’s rule.

Protests continue despite curfew. (23 Jan 2011)

The commander Rachid Ammar declared that the army is at the protesters side and that it will defend the revolution. (24 Jan 2011).

100’s of people protested outside Ghanouchis office against him remaining in government. One of the protesters said the new interim government is like a theatre, symbols of the old regime remains while Ghanouchi insists on being left behind. We are 10 million people and there is certainly someone who can replace him. (28 Jan 2011).

Demonstrators tried to march on to the Interior Ministry. 300 lawyers protested near the government building. (2 Feb 2011).

All 24 regional governors were deposed. (3 Feb 2011).

**El Kef**

El Kef also known as Le Kef, is a city in northwestern Tunisia and the capital of the Kef Governorate. Situated 175 kilometers (109 mi) to the west of Tunis and some 40 kilometers (25 mi) east of the border between Algeria and Tunisia.

Protesters called for the local police chief Khaled Ghazouani be removed because he misused his power position. Demonstrators threw stones and small firebombs and burned two police cars. (5 Feb 2011)
**Sidi Bouzid**

Hundreds of people showed up at the local police station in Sidi Bouzid because personal at the local hospital say they found burn marks on the bodies of the victims.
(6 Feb 2011).

**Tunis**

The former ruling RCD party activities were interrupted to prevent a breakdown in state security while waiting a pending order for the dissolution of the party.
(6 Feb 2011)

Protests flared up again with 40,000 protesters demanding a new interim government completely free of people with ties to the old regime.
(19 Feb 2011)

Date was set in mid-July 2011 for elections; more than million demonstrators quickly set to demonstrate requiring Ghanouchis resignation as interims prime minister.
(25 Feb 2011)

Ghanouchi resigns and Beji Caid El-Sibsi takes over.
(27 Feb 2011)

Another two ministers from the interim government have resigned with continued protests demanding that the government resign. Requirements for an elected constituent assembly to write a new constitution.
(28 Feb 2011)

The so-called political police was abolished.

En-Nahda Movement (Islamic Party) was legalized.
(1 Mar 2011)

Interim President Fouad Mebazza announced that elections to a Constituent Assembly will be held July 24, 2011
(3 Mar 2011)

A court in Tunis announced the dissolution of the former ruling party. The party announced that the verdict will be appealed. RCD, the ruling party under Ben Ali, is dissolved and banned from future elections.
(9 Mar 2011)

Justice Department announced that it has filed charges against Ben Ali, including homicide, drug trafficking and conspiracy against the state.
(14 Apr 2011)
A former Minister in the interim government predicts that members of the interim government will stage a coup if En-Nahda Party wins elections. Members of the government and representatives of the En-Nahda party dismissed the statement. The statement triggered several days of protests.

(5 May 2011)
Interim PM warns Sebsi that the election may be delayed due to logistical and technical aspects.

Clashes between police and demonstrators decreases

(8 May 2011)
Independent electoral commission is formed before the scheduled elections for 24 July 2011.

(10 May 2011).
Renewed violence in west-central Tunisia, a man was killed in Kasserine according to several sources.

Interim Government postpones elections to 23 October 2011, because more time is required to prepare a trustworthy voting process.

(8 Jun 2011)
Ben Ali and his wife Leila Trabelsi, still in exile in Saudi Arabia, convicted in absentia of embezzling public funds. They are sentenced to 35 years in prison. Ben Ali is still accused of corruption and issuing orders for the use of lethal force against demonstrators. They are to pay 420 million crowns

(20 Jun 2011)
Election campaign for constituent assembly ends. Tunisians living abroad begin voting.

(20 Oct 2011)
The former Tunisian Constitution of 1959 has been revoked according to a decree 23 March 2011. The new constituent assembly decides with absolute majority on a number of key laws. Ratification of conventions; judiciary; media, press and publishing; financing of political party organizations, NGOs and trade unions/employers’ associations, military and security issues; electoral system; human rights, basic landscape freedom and union issues; and matters of personal status, and other legislative matters, decisions are taken by simple majority.

(22 Oct 2011)
Elections to the 217 members of the new assembly, which has the mandate to appoint an interim cabinet and draw up a new constitution. Votes were about 70%. An-En-Nahda moderate Islamist party won 90 seats with more than 40% of the votes.

(23 Oct 2011).
En-Nahda Party said that a new government could be formed within 10 days. Hamadi Jbeli said the talks on forming a coalition government had already begun. Rachid Ghanouchi added that En-Nahda would honor its commitment to write a new constitution within a year. (28 Oct 2011).

The three main parties agree on who is to keep the positions in a power-sharing government. Hamadi Jebali from An-En-Nahda party becomes premier minister. Moncef Marzouki of the Republican Congress party becomes President. Mustafa Ben Jaafar from Ettakatol party becomes the new President of the Assembly. (21 Nov 2011).

The Constituent Assembly holds its first session. (22 Nov 2011).

Moncef Marzouki selected by the National Constituent Assembly as the new president of the Interim government headed by Hamadi Jebali from An-En-Nahda party take up their duties. (12 Dec 2011).

Sfax
A military court in Sfax has sentenced two police officers to 20 years in prison for killing a political activist during the uprising against former President Ben Ali. (2 May 2012).

Tunisia
Night curfew lifted, the ban has been effective in several parts of the country after violent riots earlier this week. (15 Jun 2012).

Tunis
Reform Minister Mohamed Abbou resigns on the grounds of not having enough power to tackle Tunisia’s widespread racketeering and corruption. The government says that in December 2012, will get an anti-corruption law. (4 Jul 2012).

Demonstrations occurred in front of Parliament calling for the country to introduce Sharia law. (9 Jul 2012)

President Moncef Marzouki promises ex-president the ousted Ben Ali, physical security and a fair trial if he returns to his homeland. (18 Jul 2012)
Former President Ben Ali was sentenced to life in prison for 43 protesters killed during the uprising in early 2011. Former security Chief Ali Serietà sentenced to 20 years in prison. Former Interior Minister Rafik Belhaj was sentenced to 15 years in prison. Trade unions say that about 1,000 people participated in the protests. (19 Jul 2012).

Crowd tried to storm an administration office and set fire to party office of the Islamist party An-En-Nahda, the country’s ruling party. Police fired warning shots and tear gas at demonstrators. (26 Jul 2012)

**Sidi Bouzid**

Police used tear gas and rubber bullets to disperse youths demonstrating for more jobs in the town of Sidi Bouzid. 6 people were injured. (9 Aug 2012).

Protesters stormed local governor’s offices in Sidi Bouzid with demands for work and dignity. Governor evacuated by police. Tunisian police used tear gas and rubber bullets to disperse youths demonstrating for more jobs in the town of Sidi Bouzid, where the ‘Arab Spring’ began. A march in support of the now seated Islamist government. (5 Oct 2012).

**Guellala**

A city in the southern part of the Tunisian island Djerba. The authorities decided to reopen a closed landfill. Residents protested and clashes resulted in 49 police officers injured. (6 Oct 2012)

**Sidi Bouzid**

Unrest on the streets. In Sidi Bouzid, protesters have tried to throw out the governor. A march in support of the now seated Islamist government in Sidi Bouzid. (6 Oct 2012)

The governor resigns after protests. (7 Oct 2012).

**Tunis**

Journalists protest against the former Police Inspector appointed as a newspaper manager. (26 Oct 2012).

Two sentries in the main city suburbs are attacked.
(29 Oct 2012).
Security forces killed a radical Islamist during clashes with Salafists in Tunis. Two members of the security force must have been injured.

(30 Oct 2012)
Protesters scramble in the streets of Tunis during nationwide protests at the assassination of opposition Popular Front leader Chokri Belaid.
Tunisia’s PM dissolves government, just hours after the murder.
Violent demonstrations in Tunisia and several cities were government and Parliament buildings was set on fire and looted.

(6 Feb 2013)
In the streets of the capital Tunis, the police and protesters clashed together in deadly violence.

(7 Feb 2013)
After the cold-blooded murder of a Tunisian opposition politician. The prime minister is trying to dissolve the government. But the plan is cut by the ruling party - which he leads - and new protests are shaking Tunis.

(8 Feb 2013)
Opposition Alliance of People’s Front announced after the murder their withdrawal from the Constitutional Assembly, and has also called for a general strike in protest against the murder.
Editorial charges murder of human-rights activist Chokri Belaid in Tunisia undermines country’s progress toward democracy and pluralism; calls on Tunisia’s political leadership to renew their commitment to tolerance and nonviolence.

(9 Feb 2013)
En-Nahda, Tunisia’s largest Islamist party and leader of governing coalition, blames news media, secular elites and remnants of old government for its troubles, in face of public anger and internal divisions after assassination of opposition leader Chokri Belaid.

(12 Feb 2013)
Tunisia’s Prime Min Hamadi Jebali resigns after failing to form new government, saying squabbling among country’s leaders has led to political crisis; Jebali met resistance in his own party when he sought to replace leaders in political coalition with technocrats.

(20 Feb 2013)
Islamist party that leads Tunisia’s constituent assembly nominates Ali Laarayedh, former political prisoner who now runs ministry of interior, as new prime minister.
Tunisian officials say that an extreme Islamist has been arrested in connection with killing of Chokri Belaid, opposition politician whose death caused protests across country.

(26 Feb 2013)

Tunisian police arrest four ultraconservative Islamists suspected of being accomplices to assassination of leftist leader Chokri Belaid, but they have not arrested the killer himself.

(27 Feb 2013)

Tunisia’s Prime Min Ali Laareyedh announces new cabinet, handing over key ministries previously headed by members of ruling Islamist party to independent figures in effort to calm worst political crisis since country’s revolt.

(9 Mar 2013)

The secular opposition parties demand upon the reshuffle of the government that the ministries of justice, foreign affairs and defense should be given to independent figures, which have no political affiliation.

Federation of Trade Unions announced that security forces in Tunis said that 18 people were killed and 2472 injured since the overthrow in 14 January 2011 of former president Zine El Abidine Ben Ali.

(23 Apr 2013)

“Tunisia erupts in renewed protests after Mohamed Brahmi, leader of the People’s Party, is assassinated outside his home in front of his wife and children.” The assassination of the opposition leader, Mohamed Brahmi, was the second in five months that a leading liberal politician was fatally shot. Many suspected that Islamist extremists were responsible and warned that they threatened the kind of pluralistic democracy envisioned in Tunisia’s 2011 uprising, which inspired the Arab Spring revolutions.

Hundreds of demonstrators gathered in front of the Interior Ministry building, blaming the ruling Islamist party and its followers for Mr. Brahmi’s killing and shouting for the government to go.

Murder on the left politician Muhammad al - Brahmi sparked violent demonstrations in several parts of Tunisia. On Friday launched, a general strike by the country’s largest trade union and all air traffic is set.

Thousands took to the streets of Tunis and Sidi Bouzid.

Tunisian government, under pressure to produce answers, blames Islamist extremist cell linked to Al Qaeda for killing of opposition leader Mohamed Brahmi; identifies chief suspect as person also linked to February killing of opposition leader Chokri Belaid. Tens of thousands of Tunisians rallied at the assassinated opposition leader Muhammad al - Brahimi
funeral. Many of them demanded the Islamist led government’s resignation. Ghannouchi, murderer, criminal “was heard from the trail”.
(27 Jul 2013)

**Gafsa**

Early on Saturday a protester was killed in violent protests in the Tunisian city of Gafsa. Even from other parts of the country disturbances were reported. After the funeral, demonstrators gathered outside the Constitutional Assembly, which serves as the country’s interim parliament. Police fired tear gas against demonstrators who demanded that the Assembly is to be dissolved.
(27 Jul 2013)

**Tunis**

Tensions have risen in Tunis after the assassination of the secular opposition leader Muhammad al- Brahimi. Secular groups immediately began to organize protests and to demand the dissolution of the Islamist led government. Thousands of demonstrators who blame government for Brahmi’s assassination attend state funeral for Tunisian opposition politician Mohamed Brahmi.
(28 Jul 2013)

**Sidi Bouzid**

Tunisian police used tear gas Sunday night to disperse protesters in Sidi Bouzid, the assassinated opposition leader Muhammad al - Brahimi hometown and birthplace of the Tunisian uprising. Hundreds of angry demonstrators, who were protesting against the killing of al- Brahimi.
(28 Jul 2013)

**Tunis**

The tension continues to rise, and on Monday the Army blocked the main square of the capital Tunis, while police in Sidi Bouzid clashed with demonstrators. Protests continued around the country Sunday on the fourth day after the assassination of an opposition legislator. Demonstrators were back out in front of the National Assembly building after police officers broke up their camp overnight and opposition parties continued to press for the government and the National Constituent Assembly to resign.
(29 Jul 2013)

At least eight Tunisian soldiers are killed in ambush on country’s northwestern border, area where Islamist rebels are known to be active.
Tunisian government, embattled after public protests over assassination of left-wing politician Mohamed Brahmi, calls for three days of national mourning for the soldiers. Tunisian Interior Minister Lotfi Ben Jeddou said that he is ready to resign:

“We need to form an emergency government or a government of national unity in order to get out of this bottleneck, said Ben Jeddou to a local radio station.”

Tunisian Prime Min Ali Laarayedh, in concession to opposition groups calling for his Islamist-led coalition to resign, announces that elections will be held in December 2013 and that his government will stay in office to see through the transition.

Larayedh said that his government was not going to resign because it has a duty and an obligation to fulfill. Larayedh launched simultaneously elections will be held on 17 December.

(30 Jul 2013).

Tunisian forces launched air and ground strikes on Islamist militants near the border with Algeria after fierce overnight clashes in the area, which coincided with increased instability and political turmoil in Tunisia. Aircraft bombed caves in the Mount Chaambi area, where the military has been trying to track down a band of 15 to 20 Islamist militants since December.

The operation was launched in the same area where militants killed eight soldiers earlier in one of the deadliest attacks on Tunisian security forces in decades.

(3 Aug 2013)

Tunisia’s Islamist government declared the largest radical Islamist movement in the country as a terrorist organization, broadening its crackdown on Islamist extremists and distancing itself from their violent activities. Prime Minister Ali Laarayedh announced the decision, saying the group, Ansar al-Shariah, was behind two political assassinations this year and other attacks on police officers and soldiers. The group and its leader, Abu Iyadh, have also been accused of orchestrating an attack on the American Embassy in Tunis, last September. The move is a further step by the governing party, En-En-Nahda, to outlaw radical Islamists, despite internal sympathies for the various groups.

(28 Aug 2013)

Dissolve the Government is an essential requirement of the package of demands made by the National Salvation Front, which includes opposition organizations. (1 Sep 2013)

Tunisian police killed two Islamic militants and arrested two senior leaders of the militant Ansar al-Sharia (9 Sep 2013).

General Union of Tunisian Students and the Union of the unemployed university graduates announced the Day of Rage on 30 September. The move comes after the failed mediation by
four civil organizations between the opposition and the ruling tripartite coalition parties led by the Renaissance movement (An-En-Nahda).

(26 Sep 2013)

13 militants killed in clashes between the security forces and members of the organization “Ansar al-Sharia” in Qublat mountain areas in the west of Tunisia, near the border with Algeria
(13 Oct 2013).

**Sidi Bouzid**

Six members of the National Guard, were killed during a military operation in the region of Sidi Ali Ben Aoun from the state of Sidi Bouzid (center west of the country ), including the head of anti-terrorism squad and the head detective at the hands of ‘jihadist group armed’
(23 Oct 2013)

**Sousse**

Sousse is a city in Tunisia, capital of the Sousse Governorate. Located 140 kilometers (87 miles) south of the capital Tunis, the city has 271,428 inhabitants (2014). Sousse is in the central-east of the country, on the Gulf of Hammamet, which is a part of the Mediterranean Sea.

A suicide bomber ignited an explosive belt in front of a hotel at the tourist city of Sousse
(30 Oct 2013).

**Monastir**

The Tunisian security forces foiled attempt to blow up the tomb of the first president of Tunisia, Habib Bourguiba, in the city of Monastir
(30 Oct 2013)

**Siliana**

Siliana is a modern farming town in northern Tunisia. It is located at around 130 km southwest of the capital Tunis. It is the capital of the Siliana Governorate.

50 security elements were injured as a result of confrontations between security forces and a group of young people in the city of Siliana.
(27 Nov 2013)

**Kasserine**

An army captain killed and a warrant officer wounded due to an explosion of a landmine planted by militants in the region of Mount Alhaanbe in the state of Kasserine on the border with Algeria (2 Dec 2013).
Appendix B.

The History of Tunisia

Appendix B contains basic information of relevance for the Tunisian revolution. Thus, it includes a brief history, the modern political developments of the country after independence, followed by specific information on international relations, the word 'jasmine', as well as a background on Mr. Bouazizi and the present president Mr. Beji Caid Essebsi.

The information for this is taken from (A Short) History of Tunisia:
http://www.localhistories.org/tunisia.html

B.1. Brief History of Modern Tunisia

Tunisia, at the northernmost bulge of Africa, thrusts out toward Sicily to mark the division between the eastern and western Mediterranean Sea. It is bordered on the west by Algeria and by Libya on the south. Coastal plains on the east rise to a north-south escarpment that slopes gently to the west. The Sahara Desert lies in the southernmost part. Tunisia is more mountainous in the north, where the Atlas range continues from Algeria.

The Phoenicians settled Tunisia in the 12th century B.C. By the sixth and fifth centuries B.C., the great city-state of Carthage (derived from the Phoenician name for ‘new city’) dominated much of the western Mediterranean. The three Punic Wars between Rome and Carthage (the second was the most famous, pitting the Roman general Scipio Africanus against Carthage’s Hannibal) led to the complete destruction of Carthage by 146 B.C.

Except for an interval of Vandal conquest in A.D. 439–533, Carthage was part of the Roman Empire until the Arab conquest of 648–669. It was then ruled by various Arab and Berber dynasties, with the decline of the local Berber dynasties in the 15th and 16th centuries, the valuable coastal strip of North Africa attracts the attention of the two most powerful Mediterranean states of the time - Spain in the west, Turkey in the east. The Spanish-Turkish rivalry lasts for much of the 16th century, but the Turks gradually win it - in a somewhat
unorthodox manner. Their successful device is to allow Turkish pirates, or corsairs, to establish themselves along the coast. The territories seized by the corsairs are then given a formal status as protectorates of the Ottoman Empire.

The first such pirate establishes himself on the coast of Algeria in 1512. Two others are firmly based in Libya by 1551. Tunisia is briefly taken in 1534 by the most famous corsair of them all, Khair ed-Din (known to the Europeans as Barbarossa). Tunisia is finally brought under Ottoman control in 1574.

The Turks, who took it in 1570–1574 and made it a part of the Ottoman Empire until the 19th century. In the late 16th century, it was a stronghold for the Barbary pirates. French troops occupied the country in 1881, and the bey, the local Tunisian ruler, signed a treaty acknowledging it as a French protectorate. French control over Tunisia brings to an end several decades of diplomatic jockeying between three colonial powers, France, Britain and Italy. All three are officially involved in the region from 1869.

The local dynasty of beys (technically subordinate to the Turkish sultan but in practice independent) has in recent decades spent lavishly to modernize their country, using funds borrowed in Europe. The program, accompanied by necessary attempts to increase taxes, creates profound local resentment. By 1869 it is clear that the province is bankrupt. France, Britain and Italy are placed jointly, by international agreement, in control of Tunisia. The modern Tunisia was established in 1705 when Husayn ibn Ali at-Turki liberated the territory from the Ottoman Empire.

In spite of this, Tunisia remained a vassal state to the Ottoman Empire, and continued to pay attributes to Istanbul until 1871.

During the eighteenth century, the autonomy expanded and in 1861, Tunisia became the first Arab country to adopt a constitution, but the steps towards a complete independence were prevented due to economic problems and political unrest. In 1869, the state declared bankruptcy, an international commission consisting of France, Great Britain and Italy was appointed to get the economy back on its feet.
By 1878, France and Britain come to a quiet agreement that the British will allow Tunisia to be a French sphere of influence in return for French acceptance of the recently established British presence in Cyprus.

A Young Tunisian Party is formed in 1907 to agitate for Tunisian autonomy. In 1920, a more aggressive group calling itself Destour (‘constitution’) puts forward a demand for full independence. From 1922, Destour has the support of the bey. However, the French, by a judicious blend of repression and concessions, ensure that there is little progress. By 1934, the younger nationalists are again impatient. They break away from Destour, calling themselves Neo-Destour. This event brings into prominence a politician destined to play the central role in the future relationship between France and Tunisia and then in the affairs of independent Tunisia. The secretary-general of the new party is Habib Bourguiba. Tunisia became a protectorate of France in 1881. The country was occupied by Germany during the Second World War, from 1942 until 1943.

In June 1954 a socialist premier, Pierre Mendès-France, comes to power in Paris and introduces a new policy of partial French withdrawal from two of the nation’s most troubled colonies, Tunisia and Indochina. The result, in April 1955, is an agreement for Tunisia’s internal autonomy. With only foreign affairs and defense, remaining in French hands (in effect, a return to the situation in 1881). Bourguiba makes a triumphal return to Tunisia and a Neo-Destour government is formed.

Tunisia became fully independent in 1956. It became a one-party-state; the ruling party is the RCD (Constitutional Democratic Rally). Tunisia was declared a republic on July 1957, the same day that Habib Bourguiba became the first president. He governed the country until 1987. Since then Zine El Abidine Ben Ali who fled the country on January 14, 2011, during the recent revolution, held the Presidency.

Mohamed Ghanouchi became president for one day; he was obliged to leave the presidency (due to protests that the Muslim Brotherhood movement may rule the country) to Fouad Mebazza who took over until the elections in December 2011.

On 23 October 2011, Tunisians voted for the first time after the revolution. The election appointed members to a Constituent Assembly charged with rewriting Tunisia’s Constitution. The formerly banned Islamic party En-Nahda won by taking 41% of the total vote.
The assembly elected human rights activist Moncef Marzouki as an interim president. In March 2014, he lifted the state of emergency that has been in place since the outbreak of the 2011 revolution.

The new constitution is written to allow a multi-party system.
B.2. Foreign Relations of Tunisia

Prior to the Arab Spring events, Tunisia was a politically moderate with sound economic performances and on the path of modernization in an unstable region. The violence, anarchy and destruction that has characterized other Arab revolutions and disturbed their foreign policy did not take place in Tunisia even though it was introduced to a new type of Islamist terrorism and ideas about jihad.

Tunisia has long played a moderate role with intention to get along with other states. France considers Tunisia still to be in its sphere of influence due to their history, geographic location, and economic relationship. There is a sizeable Tunisian diaspora In France, and the French language is widely used in Tunisia. Business and government connections are extensive and mutually maintained.

Wedged between Algeria and Libya, Tunisia has sought to maintain good relations with its neighbors despite occasionally strained relations. Tunisia and Algeria resolved a longstanding border dispute in 1993. They have cooperated in the construction of a natural gas pipeline through Tunisia that connects Algeria to Italy. In 2002, Tunisia signed an agreement with Algeria to demarcate the maritime frontier between the two countries.13

Tunisia has long been a voice for moderation and realism in the Middle East. Tunisia served as the headquarters of the Arab League from 1979 to 1990 and hosted the Palestine Liberation Organization’s (PLO) headquarters from 1982 to 1993.

United States has very good relations with Tunisia, which date back more than 200 years. The United States has maintained official representation in Tunis almost continuously since 1795, and the American Friendship Treaty with Tunisia was signed in 1799. Security treaties do not link the two governments, but relations have been close since Tunisia’s independence. The U.S.-Tunisian Joint Military Commission meets annually to discuss military cooperation, Tunisia’s defense modernization program, and other security matters. Since 2015, Tunisia and the United States are allies under the Major non-NATO ally agreement.14

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13 Middle East Monitor
Tunisia associated with the European Union in an agreement, which provides extensive trade liberalization and cooperation in a variety of sectors. As far as the Arab Spring is concerned, Italy and Germany selected silence while the US and the EU welcomed a new era of democracy in Tunisia.\(^\text{15}\)

**B.3. Modern political leaders of Tunisia**

The following is based on [http://www.europeanforum.net/country/tunisia](http://www.europeanforum.net/country/tunisia)

The first President of Tunisia was Habib Bourguiba, who took office on 25 July 1957, the day on which Tunisia was declared a republic. Since then Zine El Abidine Ben Ali, and current President Essebsi have held the office. In addition, Moncef Marzouki, Mohamed Ghannouchi and Fouad Mebazaa acted as Presidents during the Tunisian revolution.

Following Zine El Abidine Ben Ali’s flight from the country on 14 January 2011 in the Tunisian revolution. The Prime Minister Mohamed Ghannouchi assumed the office, but this was found to be unconstitutional by the Constitutional Court a few hours later. On 15 January 2011, the President of the Chamber of Deputies Fouad Mebazaa was appointed to be acting President, as Ben Ali’s constitutional successor. President Moncef Marzouki took office on 13 December 2011, after being elected by the Constituent Assembly.

Current President Essebsi took office on 31 December 2014, after being elected by the 2014 presidential election.

French colonial rule ended in 1956, and Habib Bourguiba, who advanced secular ideas, led Tunisia for three decades. These included emancipation for women - women’s rights in Tunisia are among the most advanced in the Arab world - the abolition of polygamy and compulsory free education.

Mr. Bourguiba insisted on an anti-Islamic fundamentalist line, while increasing his own powers to become a virtual dictator.

Its first modern leader, President Habib Bourguiba brought to the office hard-won political experience, after many decades of service among the leadership of the independence

\(^{15}\) European External Action Service “EU Relations with the Republic of Tunisia.”
movement. As the major figure of the Neo-Destour Party, he was instrumental in obtaining full independence for Tunisia in 1956. He dominated the government until his removal in 1987. During his years in office, his accomplishments included a law reform, economic policies which detoured briefly in a socialist direction, a moderate but steady improvement in standard of living, and a foreign policy that retained an independent approach while maintaining trade and economic connections to the west.

‘Bourguibism’ was also resolutely non-militarist, arguing that Tunisia could never be a credible military power and that the building of a large military establishment would only consume scarce investment resources and perhaps thrust Tunisia into the cycles of military intervention in politics that had plagued the rest of the Middle East. In the name of economic development, Bourguiba nationalized various religious land holdings and dismantled several religious institutions. While surely a secularist, he did not appear anti-religious.

One serious rival to Habib Bourguiba was Salah Ben Youssef. exiled in Cairo during the early 1950s he had absorbed the pan-Arab nationalism associated with the Egyptian leader Gamal Abdul Nasser. Yet because of his strong opposition to the Neo Destour leadership during their negotiations with France for autonomy prior to independence, Ben Youssef was removed from his position as secretary-general and expelled from the party. Nonetheless, he rallied disaffected union members, students, and others, enough to put 20,000 youssefists into the street during the next congress of the Neo Destour party. Eventually he left Tunisia for Cairo. This was the end of any meaningful opposition to Bourguiba. In 1963, the Neo-Destour Party was proclaimed to be the only legally permitted party, though for all intents and purposes Tunisia had been a one-party state since independence.

Socialism was not initially a major part of the Neo Destour project, but the government had always held and implemented redistributive policies. A large public works program was launched in 1961. Nonetheless, in 1964, Tunisia entered a short-lived socialist era. The Neo Destour party became the Socialist Destour (Parti Socialiste Dusturien or PSD), and the new minister of planning, Ahmed Ben Salah, formulated a state-led plan for agricultural cooperatives and public-sector industrialization. The socialist experiment raised considerable opposition within Bourguiba’s old coalition. Ahmed Ben Salah was eventually dismissed in 1970, and many socialized operations (e.g., the farm cooperatives) were returned to private
ownership in the early 1970s. In 1978, the government repressed a general strike with its forces killing dozens; union leaders were jailed.

After independence, Tunisian economic policy had been primarily to promote light industry and tourism, and develop its phosphate deposits. The major sector remained agriculture with small farms prevailing, but these did not produce well. In the early 1960s, the economy slowed down, but the socialist program did not prove to be the cure. In the 1970s, the economy of Tunisia expanded at a very agreeable rate. Oil was discovered, and tourism continued. Foreign corporate investment increased. For example, Renault opened an auto manufacturing plant. City and countryside populations drew roughly equal in number. Yet agricultural problems and urban unemployment led to increased migration to Europe for work.

In 1981, the government allowed a few ‘officially sanctioned’ parties to run for office. But the economy faltered. Austerity imposed by the I.M.F. caused increases in the price of bread; protest riots were widespread during 1983. The Islamic Tendency Movement (MTI) of Rashid al-Ghannushi came to the fore. Thousands were jailed, especially Islamists; critical newspapers were closed, disruptive trade unions disbanded. General Ben Ali headed security. An ailing Bourguiba threatened severe repression.

Tunisia continued its close ties to the West, both economic and political. From 1979 to 1991 the Arab League was located in Tunis. The P.L.O. was also based in Tunis from 1982 to 1994.

On the debit side, political democracy in the Western sense was more or less nonexistent. Even before Tunisia became a one-party state, it adopted a constitution vesting almost dictatorial powers in the presidency. Civil liberties were subject to “the limits prescribed by law,” per the constitution. The media were expected to practice self-censorship, and opponents were frequently imprisoned. Bourguiba became the focus of a modest personality cult in which he was extolled as the ‘Supreme Warrior’ of the nation. In 1975, Bourguiba was proclaimed president for life, though his health was increasingly poor. Although he was prevailed upon to legalize opposition parties in 1981, Tunisia remained essentially a one-party state. The Destourian Socialist Party, in alliance with the trade unions, swept all of the seats in parliament. The opposition was disgusted; it boycotted the next elections, in 1986.
In the 1980s, the economy performed poorly. In 1983, the International Monetary Fund (IMF) forced the government to raise the price of bread and semolina, causing severe hardship and protest riots. In this situation, the Islamic Tendency Movement (MTI) under Rashid al-Ghannushi provided popular leadership. Government security forces under General Zine El Abidine Ben Ali repressed civil disturbances, including those by the Islamists. The government persisted in following its program; Ben Ali was named prime minister.

Ben Ali ascended to the office of President on 7 November 1987, after attending physicians to the former president filed an official medical report declaring Habib Bourguiba medically incapacitated and unable to fulfill the duties of the presidency. Two of the names given to Ben Ali’s rise to the presidency include “the medical coup d’etat” and the “Jasmine Revolution In conformity with Article 57 of the Tunisian Constitution, the peaceful transition occurred as Tunisia was on the verge of economic collapse and a takeover of power by religious extremists. The country had faced 10% inflation, external debt accounting for 46% of GDP and a debt service ratio of 21% of GDP, in addition to a bombing campaign and attempted government overthrow, for which 76 members of the radical “Islamic Tendency Movement” were convicted in 1987.

Ben Ali initially took some steps to liberalize the regime. He dismantled the personality cult surrounding his predecessor. He also amended the constitution to limit the president to three five-year terms, with no more than two in a row. In 1988, several Islamist activists were released from prison. He also forged a national pact with the Tunisian party Harakat al-Ittijah al-Islami (Islamic Tendency Movement), which had been founded in 1981; later it changed its name to En-Nahda (the Renaissance Party). He also changed the ruling party’s name to the Democratic Constitutional Rally.

However, Ben Ali’s innovative tack did not work out well. Subsequently En-Nahda claimed to have run strongly in the 1989 elections, giving it the appearance of being unfair; reports describe pro-government votes often at over 90%. Ben Ali subsequently banned Islamist political parties and reportedly jailed as many as 8,000 activists. Soon afterward, Ben Ali ran unopposed in Tunisia’s first presidential election since 1972. At the time, prospective presidential candidates had to get the endorsements of 30 political figures. Given the RCD’s near-total domination of politics, opposition candidates found it impossible to get their nomination papers signed.
The 1989 crackdown led to the restoration of some Bourguiba-era restrictions. Increasingly, self-censorship gave way to official censorship. Ben Ali was reelected unopposed in 1994. After amending the constitution to allow a president to run for three consecutive terms, Ben Ali was reelected in 1999, 2004 and 2009—each time by implausibly high margins (well over 90 percent). While the requirement to get signatures from 30 political figures had been lifted, opposition figures still faced nearly insurmountable obstacles.

By the dawn of the 21st century, Ben Ali was reckoned as leading one of the most repressive regimes in the world. His regime consistently gained poor ratings from human rights and press freedom agencies.

Stable increase in GDP growth have continued through positive trade relations with the European Union, a revitalized tourism industry and sustained agricultural production. Privatization, increasing foreign investment, improvements in government efficiency and reduction of the trade deficit are challenges for the future. The 2010-2011 Global Competitiveness Report (Davos World Economic Forum) ranked Tunisia first in Africa and 32nd globally out of 139 countries.

However, Tunisia continues to suffer from a high unemployment, especially among youth. Left out of the recent prosperity were many rural and urban poor, including small businesses facing the world market. This was the cause of mass protests in December 2010-January 2011. It was the worst unrest the country has faced for at least a decade.

During Ben Ali’s presidency, Tunisia has pursued a moderate foreign policy promoting peaceful settlement of conflicts. Tunisia has taken a middle of the road approach contributing to peacemaking especially in the Middle East and Africa. Tunisia hosted the first-ever Palestinian American dialogue. While contributing actively to the Middle East peace process, Tunisian diplomacy has supported the Palestinian cause. As host to the Palestine Liberation Organization from 1982–1993, considerable efforts were made to moderate the views of the organization. Tunisia has, since the early 1990’s, called for a ‘concerted’ international effort against terrorism. It has also been a key US partner in the effort to fight global terrorism through the Trans-Sahara Counter-Terrorism Initiative.
President Ben Ali has mostly retained his predecessor’s pro-western foreign policy, though he has improved ties with the Arab-Moslem world. He has taken several initiatives to promote solidarity, dialogue and cooperation among nations. President Ben Ali initiated the creation of the United Nations World Solidarity Fund to eradicate poverty and promote social development based on the successful experience of the Tunisian National Solidarity Fund. Ben Ali also played a lead role in the UN’s proclaiming 2010 as the International Year of Youth.

Although Tunisia under Mr. Ben Ali introduced some press freedoms and freed a number of political prisoners, the authorities tolerated no dissent.

Mr. Ben Ali faced reproach at home and abroad for his party’s three ‘99.9%’ election wins. The opposition condemned changes to the constitution, which allowed him to run for re-election in 2004, and in 2009.

Discontent with his autocratic rule erupted into mass street demonstrations, which prompted Mr. Ben Ali to step aside in 2011. This inspired uprisings across the region that became known as the Arab Spring.

A central actor was the En-Nahda party. It was founded in 1981 as the Islamic Tendency Movement, inspired by Muslim Brotherhood. It changed its name to En-Nahda - or ‘Renaissance’ - in 1989. Banned by then-President Ben Ali in 1992 it regained legal status in March 2011
B.4. The origin of ‘Jasmine’ in the Tunisian context.

The revolution in Tunisia has many names. The Nobel Committee in its announcement of the Nobel Peace Prize\textsuperscript{16} in 2015 used the term Jasmine Revolution. In Tunisia, the Dignity Revolution seems more common. However, jasmine has a particular standing in Tunisia. Imported by the Andalusians in the sixteenth century, jasmine has become the national flower of Tunisia. The gathering takes place at dawn and then, upon nightfall, when young boys collect small bouquets, and later sell them to passersby on the street or to motorists stopped at intersections.

Furthermore, jasmine is the subject of a specific sign language. A man who wears jasmine on his left ear indicates that he is single and in addition, offering white jasmine is seen as a proof of love while on the contrary, offering odorless winter jasmine is a sign of insolence.

B.5. On Mr. Mohamed Bouazizi

Mohamed Bouazizi17, who was known locally as ‘Basboosa’, was born in Sidi Bouzid, Tunisia, on 29 March 1984. His father, a construction worker in Libya, died of a heart attack when Bouazizi was three, and his mother married Bouazizi’s uncle some time later. Along with his six siblings, Bouazizi was educated in a one-room country school in Sidi Salah, a small village 12 miles (19 km) from Sidi Bouzid. Although several media outlets reported that Bouazizi had a university degree, his sister, Samia Bouazizi, stated that he had never graduated from high school, but that it was something he had wanted for both himself and his sisters. With his uncle in poor health and unable to work regularly, Bouazizi had worked various jobs since he was ten, and in his late teens he quit school in order to work full-time. Bouazizi lived in a modest stucco home, a 20-minute walk from the center of Sidi Bouzid, a rural town in Tunisia burdened by corruption and suffering an unemployment rate estimated at 30%. According to his mother, he applied to join the army, but was refused, and several subsequent job applications resulted in rejection. He supported his mother, uncle, and younger siblings, including paying for one of his sisters to attend university, by earning approximately US$140 per month selling produce on the street in Sidi Bouzid. He was also working toward the goal of buying or renting a pickup truck for his work. A close friend of Bouazizi said he “was a very well-known and popular man who would give free fruit and vegetables to very poor families.”

Confiscation of wares and self-immolation

According to friends and family, local police officers had allegedly targeted and mistreated Bouazizi for years, including during his childhood, regularly confiscating his small wheelbarrow of produce; but Bouazizi had no other way to make a living, so he continued to work as a street vendor. Around 10 p.m. on 16 December 2010, he had contracted approximately US$200 in debt to buy the produce he was to sell the following day. On the morning of 17 December, he started his workday at 8 a.m. Just after 10:30 a.m., the police began harassing him again, ostensibly, because he did not have a vendor’s permit. However, while some sources state that street vending is illegal in Tunisia, and others that Bouazizi lacked a required permit to sell his wares, according to the head of Sidi Bouzid’s state office for employment and independent work, no permit is needed to sell from a cart. In any case Bouazizi did not have the funds to bribe police officials to allow his street vending to continue. Similarly, two of Bouazizi’s siblings accused authorities of attempting to extort

17 Encyclopedia Britannica
money from their brother, and during an interview with Reuters, one of his sisters stated, “What kind of repression do you imagine it takes for a young man to do this? A man who has to feed his family by buying goods on credit when they fine him...and take his goods. In Sidi Bouzid, those with no connections and no money for bribes are humiliated and insulted and not allowed to live.”

Bouazizi’s family claims he was publicly humiliated, that a 45-year-old female municipal official, Faida Hamdi, slapped him in the face, spat at him, confiscated his electronic weighing scales, and tossed aside his produce cart. It was also stated that she made a slur against his deceased father. Bouazizi’s family says her gender made his humiliation worse. Faida Hamdi and her brother claimed in interviews that she did not slap Bouazizi or otherwise mistreat him. An eyewitness referred to by Asharq Al-Awsat18 claimed not to have seen Hamdi slap Bouazizi.

Both Bouazizi’s mother and the eyewitness who told Asharq Al-Awsat stated that her aides had kicked and beaten him after confiscating his fruit-cart, Faida Hamdi states it might have happened and Asharq Al-Awsat denies it happened.

Bouazizi, angered by the confrontation, ran to the governor’s office to complain and to ask for his scales back. The governor refused to see or listen to him, even after Bouazizi was quoted as saying “If you don’t see me, I’ll burn myself.” Bouazizi acquired a can of gasoline from a nearby gas station and returned to the governor’s office. While standing in the middle of traffic, he shouted, “How do you expect me to make a living?” He then doused and set himself alight with a match at 11:30 a.m. local time, less than an hour after the altercation. According to Bouazizi’s sister, whose information was based on details relayed from her uncle who was present at the scene, people immediately panicked when he caught fire, and one of them tried to douse the flames with water, which only worsened his condition. Bouazizi barely survived, and had suffered severe burns on over 90% of his body before locals managed to douse the flames. He was taken by ambulance to a medical facility in Sidi Bouzid. When they were unable to treat Bouazizi’s severe burns, he was taken to a larger hospital in Sfax, more than 70 miles (110 km) away. Later, as the government’s interest in his case grew, he was transferred to a Burn and Trauma Centre in Ben Arous, where he was

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placed in an intensive care unit. On 31 December 2010, doctors at the Ben Arous Burn and Trauma Centre reported that Bouazizi was in stable condition, and that he was showing positive prognostic factors. However, he remained in a coma throughout the remainder of his life.

Bouazizi was visited in hospital by then-President Zine El Abidine Ben Ali. According to Bouazizi’s mother, Ben Ali promised to send him to France for medical treatment, but no such transfer was ever arranged. Bouazizi died at the Ben Arous Burn and Trauma Centre 18 days after the immolation, on 4 January 2011, at 5:30 p.m. local time.

It is estimated that more than 5,000 people participated in the funeral procession that began in Sidi Bouzid and continued through to Bouazizi’s native village, though police did not allow the procession to pass near the spot at which Bouazizi had burned himself. From the crowd, many were heard chanting “Farewell, Mohamed, we will avenge you. We weep for you today. We will make those who caused your death weep.” He was buried at Garaat Bennour cemetery, 10 miles (16 km) from Sidi Bouzid. His grave was described by Al-Jazeera as ‘simple’ and surrounded by cactuses, olive and almond trees. In addition, a Tunisian flag flies next to it.

An investigation was launched following Bouazizi’s self-immolation to determine the details leading up to his actions. On 20 December 2010, it was reported that Faida Hamdi, the female officer who allegedly accosted Bouazizi the day of his immolation, was suspended along with the secretary-general (governor) of Sidi Bouzid, but the latter subsequently denied this. Sometime later, Hamdi was arrested on orders from President Ben Ali and held in an unspecified town. A brother of Hamdi later stated that she had been arrested and detained on two separate occasions. The first time following Ben Ali’s visit to Bouazizi in the hospital and subsequent meeting with his mother and sister at his presidential palace. He says his sister and her aides were released following a short detention and the closing of the investigation, which “confirmed her innocence.” He said her second arrest was “in response to the demands of the Tunisian protesters,” and that the Tunisian security authorities informed him that she was being held only for her own protection and would be released once the protesting ended. According to Bouazizi’s mother, Bouazizi undertook his action because he had been humiliated, not because of the family’s poverty. “It got to him deep inside, it hurt his pride,” she said, referring to the police harassment. One of Bouazizi’s sisters stated during an
interview with Asharq Al-Awsat that their family intends to take legal action against all involved, “whether this is the municipal officers that slapped and insulted him, or the mayor who refused to meet him.”

On 19 April, the case against Hamdi was dropped after Bouazizi’s mother withdrew the family’s complaint against her. She stated “It was a difficult but well-thought out decision to avoid hatred and. to help reconcile the residents of Sidi Bouzid.” Hamdi had maintained her innocence, telling the court she did not slap Bouazizi, while her lawyer said the matter was “purely a political affair.” Bouazizi’s brother Salem supported the decision, saying, “All the money in the world can’t replace the loss of Mohamed who sacrificed himself for freedom and for dignity.” Large crowds of people outside the courtroom also appeared to have been satisfied by the Bouazizi family’s decision with some claiming Hamdi was being used as a scapegoat.

Outraged by the events that led to Bouazizi’s self-immolation, protests began in Sidi Bouzid within hours, building for more than two weeks, with attempts by police to quiet the unrest serving only to fuel what was quickly becoming a violent and deadly movement. After Bouazizi’s death, the protests became widespread, moving into the more affluent areas and eventually into the capital. The anger and violence became so intense that President Ben Ali fled Tunisia with his family on 14 January 2011, trying first to go to Paris, but was refused refuge by the French government. They were eventually welcomed into Saudi Arabia under “a long list of conditions” (such as being barred from participation in the media and politics), ending his 23-year rule and sparking “angry condemnation” among Saudis. In Tunisia, unrest persisted as a new regime took over, leaving many citizens of Tunisia feeling as though their needs were still being ignored.

Many Arabs in the Middle East and North Africa regard Bouazizi as a hero and inspiration. He is credited with galvanizing the frustrations of the region’s youth against their governments into the mass demonstrations, revolts, and revolutions that have become known as the Arab Spring. One year on, Tunisian writer and academic Larbi Sadiki asserted that Bouazizi’s self-immolation “changed the course of Arab political history,” achieving the “breakthrough in the fight against autocracy.” However, he also wrote it would take years before the act and the subsequent chain of events that followed were ”profoundly grasped by historians and social scientists.”
The Progressive Democratic Party (PDP) of Tunisia considers Bouazizi a martyr. Tunisian film director, Mohamed Zran, plans on making a feature film about Bouazizi, describing him as “a symbol for eternity.” Tarak Ben Ammar, also a Tunisian film director, intends to make a film on Bouazizi as well, stating he is “a hero for us as Tunisians and the Arab world as a whole.”

Since suicide is forbidden in Islam, Bouazizi’s self-immolation created controversy among scholarly Muslim circles. While al-Azhar, the most prestigious religious institution in the Sunni Muslim world, issued a fatwa (‘directive’) stating “suicide violates Islam even when it is carried out as a social or political protest,” influential Egyptian cleric Yusuf al-Qaradawi spoke sympathetically of Bouazizi.

On 4 February 2011, Bertrand Delanoë, the mayor of Paris, announced that, as a tribute to honor Bouazizi, a square in Paris will be named after him; the Place Mohamed Bouazizi was unveiled four days later. On 17 February, the main square in Tunis that was previously called ‘November 7’, after the date of Ben Ali’s take-over in 1987, was renamed ‘January 14,’ though some had suggested it should honor Bouazizi (though a major roadway leading to the city’s airport was renamed for him). Bouazizi was posthumously awarded the 2011 Sakharov Prize as one of “five representatives of the Arab people, in recognition and support of their drive for freedom and human rights”. On 17 December, a cart statue was unveiled in Sidi Bouzid in honor of Bouazizi. Tunisia’s first elected president Moncef Marzouki attended the ceremony, stating “Thank you to this land, which has been marginalized for centuries, for bringing dignity to the entire Tunisian people.” Also, in Sidi Bouzid, as well as in the capital city of Tunis, both cities’ respective main streets were renamed, ‘Boulevard Mohamed Bouazizi’. The United Kingdom’s The Times newspaper named Bouazizi person of the year for 2011.

“By Fire,” a story by Moroccan author Tahar Ben Jelloun inspired by this incident, was published in The New Yorker edition of 16 September 2013. A fictional treatment, some details in the story differ from the factual account. An interview with the author about his story was posted to The New Yorker’s “This Week in Fiction” on 9 September 2013.

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Bouazizi’s actions triggered a Werther effect, causing a number of self-immolations in protests emulating Bouazizi’s in several other countries in the Greater Middle East and Europe.
B.6. On Mr. Beji Caid Essebsi

Mohamed Beji Caid Essebsi21 (or el-Sebsi, Arabic: محمد الباجي قائد السبسي, Muhammad al-Bājī Qā‘īd as-Sabsī; born 29 November 1926) is a Tunisian politician who has been President of Tunisia since December 2014. Previously he served as Minister of Foreign Affairs from 1981 to 1986 and as Prime Minister from February 2011 to December 2011.

Essebsi’s first involvement in politics came in 1941, when he joined the Neo Destour youth organization in Hammam-Lif (a coastal town about 20 km south-east of Tunis). He studied law in Paris and became a lawyer in 1952 at the Tunis bar, where he began his career with the defence of Neo Destour activists. He was a follower of Tunisia’s post-independence leader Habib Bourguiba. He then joined Bourguiba as an adviser following the country’s independence from France in 1956. From 1957 to 1971, he performed various functions such as director of the regional administration, general director of the Sûreté nationale, Interior Minister from 5 July 1965 to 8 September 1969, Minister-Delegate to the Prime Minister, Defence Minister from 7 November 1969 to 12 June 1970, and then Ambassador in Paris. From October 1971 to January 1972, he advocated greater democracy in Tunisia and resigned his function, then returned to Tunis. In April 1981, he came back to the government under Mohamed Mzali as Minister of Foreign Affairs, serving until September 1986. In 1987, he switched allegiance following Ben Ali’s removal of Bourguiba from power. He was appointed as the country’s ambassador to Germany. From 1990 to 1991, he was the President of the Chamber of Deputies.

On 27 February 2011, in the aftermath of the Tunisian Revolution, Tunisian Prime Minister Mohamed Ghannouchi resigned following a day of clashes in Tunis with five protesters being killed. On the same day, acting President Fouad Mebazaa appointed Caïd Essebsi new Prime Minister. After the elections in October, Caïd Essebsi left office on 24 December 2011 when the new Interim President Moncef Marzouki appointed Hamadi Jebali of the Islamist En-En-Nahda, which indeed became the strongest parliamentary faction.

21 Reuters
Following his departure from office, Caïd Essebsi founded the secular Nidaa Tounes party, which won a plurality of the seats in the October 2014 parliamentary election. He was also the party’s candidate in the country’s first free presidential elections, in November 2014.

On 22 December 2014, official election results showed that Essebsi defeated rival candidate Moncef Marzouki, the incumbent President, in the second round of voting, receiving 55.68% of the vote. After the polls closed the previous day, Essebsi said on local television that he dedicated his victory to “the martyrs of Tunisia”.

Essebsi was sworn in as President on 31 December 2014. He vowed on that occasion to “be president of all Tunisian men and women without exclusion” and stressed the importance of “consensus among all parties and social movements”
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