GLOBAL NETWORK FOR RIGHTS AND DEVELOPMENT (GNRD) & INTERNATIONAL INSTITUTE FOR PEACE, JUSTICE AND HUMAN RIGHTS (IIPJHR)

JOINT OBSERVATION MISSION TO TUNISIAN PARLIAMENTARY ELECTIONS 2014: REPORT

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GLOBAL NETWORK FOR RIGHTS AND DEVELOPMENT (GNRD) AND INTERNATIONAL INSTITUTE FOR PEACE, JUSTICE AND HUMAN RIGHTS (IIPJHR)

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Executive Summary

The Global Network for Rights and Development (GNRD) and the International Institute for Peace, Justice and Human Rights (IIPJHR) received accreditation to observe the 2014 Parliamentary and Presidential elections in Tunisia. GNRD and IIPJHR formed a Joint Observation Mission based on a Memorandum of Understanding, signed by both parties. The reason for forming this Joint Mission is to provide an impartial and accurate assessment of the nature of election processes for the benefit of the population of Tunisia; combining their resources to produce better results.

GNRD and IIPJHR both have solid experience in election observation and have successfully completed related missions for:
· South Sudanese Independence Referendum: January 14-15, 2011.
· Jordanian Parliamentary Elections: January 23, 2013.
· Egyptian Constitutional Referendum: January 14-15, 2014.
· Algerian Presidential Elections: May 17, 2014.
· Egyptian Presidential Elections: May 26-28, 2014.

The Joint Mission committed itself to the Declaration of Principles for International Election Observation and the Code of Conduct for International Election Observers as well as to Tunisia's laws and regulations. Additionally, the Joint Mission followed the GNRD Code of Conduct for Observation Missions, which is based on its experience and is in compliance with all international regulations.

The Joint Mission included persons of diverse political and professional skills, backgrounds, as well as proven integrity. This experienced team observed the election through the lens of their expertise in electoral processes and principles, international human rights, comparative election law and administration practices, comparative political processes, and country specific considerations. The mission also respected the importance of the balanced diversity of citizenship, demographics, as well as gender diversity in the development and composition of the team and its

leadership. The observers represented 22 countries: Norway, India, Russia, Latvia, Canada, Spain, Armenia, Jordan, Egypt, Belgium, France, Zambia, Switzerland, United Kingdom, Austria, United States of America, State of Palestine, Sudan, Australia, Iceland, South Africa and Germany.

The Joint Mission defined its objectives as follows:
- To contribute to the transparency of the elections;
- To contribute to Tunisia's transition to democracy;
- To support the Tunisian citizens' right and wish to vote.

The mission included 80 observers (55 from GNRD, and 25 from IIPJHR) and 70 logistics managers (including translators, local administrative coordinators, security personnel and drivers). The Joint Mission aimed to monitor three phases of the election process: the pre-election period, the Election Day, and the post-election period. The first group of observers arrived on 13 October 2014 to follow the pre-election period, which included observing activities such as campaign and candidates' rallies, voters' education, media coverage of the election's preparation, and the situation in Tunisia. The complete Mission of 80 observers was deployed on 23 October 2014. During the Election Day, the observers were divided into 16 groups and assessed 148 polling centres with 67 069 registered voters in 16 governorates. The assessment of each polling station was undertaken based on the checklists as presented in Appendix 1-3. The data from all checklists was analysed and subsequently summarised.

In conclusion, the three phases of the Joint Mission ended on 28 October 2014 with a press conference in which the leadership team, as well as the international observers of the mission, congratulated the people of Tunisia on the election process and expressed their wish for the future success and development of

Tunisia. Preliminary results and recommendations were also presented. Delegates and representatives from various governorates attended, and this event was widely covered by local and international media.

The Joint Mission stated that the Tunisian people have experienced a unique process towards democratic transition, and despite the fact that minor errors and inaccuracies occurred, these do not shed a negative light on the overall results of the electoral process.

The Joint Mission was honoured to be a part of the 2014 Tunisian Parliamentary Election and to contribute to promoting its transparency, integrity, and success. The Joint Mission expresses its hope that these contributions will support Tunisia's development and a smooth transition to democracy.

Historical and Political Background

Independent Tunisia: An Overview

A French colony since 1881, Tunisia was granted independence on 20 March 1956. Habib Bourguiba, leader of the independence and of the Neo-Destour party, was elected President on 8 November 1957.

Bourguiba initiated a range of economic, social, judicial, secular and educational reforms to modernise the country and consolidate the State. This notably included the Code of Personal Status adopted on 13 August 1956 for the emancipation of women.

However, the country faced a social and political crisis in the eighties illustrated by a series of riots, such as the 'Bread' riots in 1984 and the violent repression of Islamist movements. Bourguiba's regime increasingly relied on authoritarianism.

Tunisia under Ben Ali

Taking advantage of the deterioration of Bourguiba's health, his Prime Minister, Zine El Abidine Ben Ali discharged him on grounds of senility on 7 November 1987. Ben Ali was elected President in 1989. The Destourian Social Party became the Constitutional Democratic Rally (RCD).

After a short period of political liberalisation allowing for the participation of the Islamist Renaissance Party (Ennahda) in the parliamentary elections held in 1989, opposition was systematically suppressed. The President was criticised for making changes to the constitution, which allowed him to run for re-election in 2004, and in 2009.

On an economic level, although the country enjoyed good growth rates, high rates of unemployment, especially of youth and graduates and regional inequalities have constituted critical challenges.

Strong restrictions on civil and political liberties along with the elite's corruption undermined the regime's legitimacy.

The 2010-2011 Uprisings

Mohammed Bouazizi, a young street vendor set himself on fire on 17 December 2010 after being denied a vendor permit by local authorities. This unleashed several popular protests starting first in Sidi Bouzid before spreading to the country and to the region, a revolutionary wave known as the "Arab Spring".

While Ben Ali promised to crush demonstrations, the Chief of the Tunisian Armed Forces, Rachid Ammar assured that the Army would not shoot unarmed protesters. On 14 January 2011, Prime Minister Mohamed Ghannouchi announced an interim government, following the escape of the former President Ben Ali to Saudi Arabia, putting an end to a 23 year autocratic rule. Fouad Mebazaa, the President of the Assembly, became president and replaced Mohammed Ghannouchi with Béji Caid Essebsi after several protests against former collaborators of Ben Ali.

Tunisia in Transition

Elections were held in October 2011 in order to establish a National Constituent Assembly charged with drafting and adopting a new constitution. Ennahda party, the winner of the elections, formed a coalition with two other secular parties, the Rally for the Republic Party (CPR) and Ettakatol party. Moncef Marzouki, leader of the CPR, was elected interim President by the Assembly in December 2011.

The transitional process was paralysed by the assassination of two leftist prominent figures of the secular opposition: Chokri Belaid on 6 February 2013 and Mohamed Brahmi on 25 July 2013. A series of terrorist attacks perpetrated by al-Qaeda in the Islamic Maghreb (AQMI) against security forces further contributed to tensions.
In October 2013, Ennahda party agreed to step aside in favour of a non-partisan, technocratic government to pave the way for elections in 2014. Prime Minister Mehdi Jomaa was sworn in on January 10, 2014, after Ennahda Prime Minister Ali Larayidh stepped down.

On 24 January 2014, in a historical moment, the Constituent Assembly finally adopted the new Constitution. Parliamentary elections were held on 26 October. The first round of the presidential elections will take place on 23 November 2014. The country continues to face numerous transitional, political, social and economic challenges.

Electoral Institutions and the Legal Framework for the Election

Legal Documents

The main Legal Framework for the parliamentary election is the 2014 Tunisian Constitution, and the 2014 Tunisian Electoral Law.

Tunisia's National Constituent Assembly (NCA) adopted the new Tunisian Constitution on 26 January 2014. The Constitution includes more general regulations concerning the election process, while the more detailed regulations are to be found in the Electoral Law.

Article 54 of the Constitution sets out the following two general criteria to be eligible to vote:

- Tunisian citizenship

- Minimum eighteen years of age.

According to Article 53 of the Constitution, in order to be eligible to be elected to the Assembly of the Representatives of the People, candidates must:

- Meet the requirements for status as a Tunisian voter (see above)

- Have held Tunisian nationality for at least ten years

- Be at least twenty three years of age on the day of candidacy

- Not be prohibited from holding such a position, as specified by the law.

According to Article 56 of the constitution, the Assembly of the Representatives of the People shall be elected for a term of five years, and this election should take place during the last sixty days of the parliamentary term.

The Tunisian Electoral Law was adopted by Tunisia's NCA on 1 May 2014, by 132 votes to 11 (nine abstentions). The law regulates in more detail the election process for both legislative elections (Parliamentary) and Presidential elections, including the

process for organising elections, from registration of voters to the declaration of results and contestation mechanisms.

Article 24 requires that there is a 50-50 representation of male and female candidates on all lists, to be listed alternatively. Further, Article 25 requires that every electoral list in a constituency with four seats or more has at least one candidate under the age of 35, among its top four candidates.

Electoral Institutions

The elections are administered by the Independent High Authority for Elections**, ISIE,** as stated in the new Constitution. ISIE is a permanent independent public authority responsible for ensuring that the elections are democratic, free, pluralistic, fair and transparent.

The Independent Regional Authorities for Elections, **IRIE,** was established in each electoral constituency to assist the ISIE in completing its tasks.

According to the Electoral Law Articles 71-74**,** ISIE is charged with monitoring the respect for legal rules, principles and procedures by the candidates during their campaigns. ISIE is empowered to take the necessary measures to end any infringements.

Electoral System

The electoral system in Tunisia is governed by the Electoral Law 2014 Articles 106-110. According to these Articles electoral districts for parliamentary elections shall be set by way of law and shall be passed at least one year before the elections. There shall be only one round of voting and voting is not compulsory. Parliament is elected in 33 electoral constituencies. It is elected on a regional, closed–list proportional representation system using the largest remainder method.

Legal Framework for Voting

Articles 102-103 of the Electoral Law 2014 state that voting shall take place over the course of one day only and that this day should be either a weekend or a national holiday.

Articles 106-110 state that parliamentary elections shall have one round of voting. The electoral districts for the parliamentary elections shall be set by way of law, passed at least one year before the parliamentary elections begin.

According to Electoral Law Article 103 Tunisians abroad can vote over three consecutive days, but the last day of voting should coincide with the Election Day in Tunisia.

According to the Electoral Law, voting shall be done by way of a single ballot paper, designed and printed in colour by the ISIE. It is the ISIE's responsibility to ensure that the ballot paper has a high level of clarity and precision. To avoid confusion for voters, the names of the lists shall be arranged in a column, and ISIE shall publish an example of a ballot paper on their website before the election campaign begins.

A list of polling stations in every electoral district shall be established by ISIE and the heads of the polling stations shall be appointed. The appointment of the heads of the polling stations should be done on the basis of integrity, impartiality and independence. There are set rules for the staff working at the polling stations, in order to ensure that the polling stations are impartial and independent. For example no staff may be related to, or employed by a candidate, or be a member of a political party. Neither staff nor the head of the polling station shall have held a position of responsibility in the dissolved Rassemblement Constitutionnel Democratique Party (former ruling party). ISIE shall seek to ensure that the polling stations have a maximum of 600 voters each.

The electoral lists, candidates or parties may appoint representatives to be at the polling stations on the day of the election, but these representatives cannot display

any symbol, which would indicate an affiliation to a political party. The same applies for both international and domestic observers at the polling stations.

Campaigning inside polling booths or stations is prohibited, according to Electoral Law Article 128.

According to Electoral Law Article 131, the polling stations must facilitate the participation of voters with disabilities. The Electoral Law Article 132 gives a right to voters who are either blind or have a disability that prevents them from being able to write, to choose an assistant to accompany them during voting. The assistant shall be an eligible voter and related to the disabled voter. The role of the assistant is limited to helping the voter perform those acts that are difficult for the voter, due to his/her disability. If the assistant violates the voter's right to confidentiality, the assistant will be fined.

Voting Procedures

Tunisia's Parliamentary Election will be held on Sunday 26th October 2014 for Tunisians living domestically in Tunisia.

The ISIE guidelines state that on the day of the Parliamentary Election the polling stations will be open from 07.00 and will close at 18.00.

The procedure for voting is regulated by the Electoral Law Articles 118 to 133.

According to the ISIE guidelines, the first step in the voting procedure is for a member of the polling station to organise the queue outside the electoral office. The second step is that an assigned member will check the IDs and the voters list. After the voter signs the list the assigned member for checking IDs asks the voter to put his/ her left index finger in the ink, which should cover at least a third of the finger. The member in charge of handing out the ballots will check the validity of the ballot and stamp the back of the ballot four times, in each corner. Failure to do so makes the

vote invalid. The member will direct the voter to the voting booth so the voter can vote in secret.

When at the voting booth, the voter uses the pen inside the booth to mark the box assigned to one of the party blocks. The voter folds the ballot in way in which the stamp is shown and the writing is not. Their folded ballot is then to be placed in the ballot box by the voter him/herself.

Counting Procedures

According to the ISIE election guidelines, the process of sorting and counting can be divided into three steps; (1) the preparation step, (2) the sorting and counting step and (3) the end of the sorting and counting.

The process of sorting and counting takes place at each election station separately, immediately after voting is over. The counting should be continuous until the entire process is finished, without counting stopping or being postponed. People present at the sorting station cannot leave and come back until the process is finished. During the sorting and counting process, all mobile telephones should be switched off, and it is illegal to take pictures.

During the preparation step, the head of the polling station has to make sure that the polling station is reorganised and made into a counting station. The head of the polling station shall also start to fill in the electoral book, in three copies. During the process of sorting and counting, the head of the polling station, or someone authorised by him/her shall take the minutes of the process.

The ballot papers shall be sorted publicly with the presence of observers and representatives of electoral lists. After the ballots are emptied from the ballot box, the staff at the polling station order the ballots in piles of 50 ballots, placing all the ballots upside down. All the received ballot papers from the ballot box are then counted, and compared to the number of signatures on the voters list.

The head of the polling station or a member who has been delegated this responsibility, then reads out the result of the ballot papers and shows each ballot to the attendants. The result of each ballot shall be registered in the minutes.

The ballot papers are to be sorted into the following piles; valid ballots, invalid ballots and blank ballots. Blank ballots, which have not been marked by the voter, shall be counted as part of the election results. The ballot paper is considered to be invalid if it does not clearly reflect the will of the voter. This includes ballot papers containing votes for more than one electoral list.

At this point, a member must check that the number of ballot papers from the voters list matches the total number of counted valid, blank and invalid ballots. The valid ballots are then sorted again according to the electoral list, and the votes for each electoral list are counted.

After the process of sorting the ballots is finished, the staff of the relevant polling station and the representatives of the electoral lists sign the minutes from the sorting process. Observers and representatives can ask for their observations and reservations to be included to the minutes as an annex, and the head of the polling station shall include these. The signed minutes shall be hung up at the front of the polling stations, and one copy shall be placed inside the ballot box.

Voters Registration

Registration process

The registration process for both parliamentary and presidential elections was opened by the ISIE on June 23, 2014, and was scheduled to end on July 22, 2014, however, it was extended to July 29, due to slow turnout of voters [1].

ISIE was reportedly criticised by a number of stakeholders for organising the voters' registration during the month of Ramadan and during the summer. Among other factors that slowed down the registration process was the delayed decision on the election dates that were not set until June 25, 2014, the late election of members to the ISIE, the late adoption of the election law, and the length of time to adopt the new Constitution [2].

Apart from traditional ways of registration that require a voter to be physically present at the registration, for the first time in the history of Tunisian elections the voters were able to register or verify a polling centre through sending short text messages (SMS) and online.

To verify one's polling centre, the voter enters a number determined by the ISIE along with his/her identification number into a mobile phone. The SMS system then responds with a text containing the person's polling centre information. According to the ISIE on July 23, about 58 percent of those newly registered did so via SMS.

ISIE's website also provides a potential voter with all the information he or she would need to register.

The process of online registration was interrupted by a hackers' attack for a short period. However, according to the elections commission, the system was soon restored and the attack had no significant influence on the registration process [3].

In total, the ISIE announced that during the two registration periods, 993,696 Tunisian citizens were added to the voter list, of which 50.5 percent are women. According to the ISIE, the total number of registered voters for the 2014 elections is 5,236,244, 359,530 are registered to vote abroad. Around 3.3 million registered voters also confirmed their data online.

Voters' eligibility and organisation of voting procedure
According to Articles 5 and 6 of the 2014 Electoral Law, all Tunisians registered in the electoral register, over 18 years of age, may vote, unless they have a conviction under Article 5 of the Penal Code, are members of the Armed Forces and Security Forces, or are mentally incapacitated [4].

Upon registration, each voter was assigned to a specific polling centre, however, unlike in 2011, they had an opportunity to vote at any polling station within that centre, to prevent long queues and distribute numbers of voters between the stations more efficiently.

Voter Education

The Right of Access to Information is considered to be one of the most crucial elements of practicing democracy. The flow of information to all sectors of the Tunisian population should be a priority to all players in this process, starting from the Independent High Authority for Elections in Tunisia (ISIE), through to the candidates themselves, civil society and the media. Voters all over Tunis, from different sectors, regions, ethnic groups, political groups, in rural or urban areas, should be equal in receiving information concerning all steps of the election process.

The role of the Independent High Authority for Elections (ISIE)
The most important body, whose main responsibility is to educate voters about their rights and duties in the whole process, is the ISIE. The ISIE's role is to ensure the fairness, integrity, and transparency of the electoral process, and announce the results, as well as train supervisors of various components of the electoral process. Further, the ISIE's role is also to design campaigns for civic awareness and voter education, which means to provide the voters with all the information needed, starting from the registration to the candidates' nomination, through to the voting day.

Indicators:
- Content of the leaflet and other type of publication (different steps of the whole procedure)
- Language of the leaflets.
- Area of distribution
- Ways used to reach voters/ coordination with other stakeholders

The role of the candidates
Similarly, part of the candidates' responsibility is to clarify and explain to the voters their programs, how they are planning to implement them. Their information should reach the entire population, with no discrimination towards ethnic or religious groups.
Indicators:

- The language of their program.
- How many areas and districts they reach to explain their program.
- Number of lectures or media sessions they used to explain to the voters their program.
- How many types of media they used in their campaigns.

The role of civil society

Civil society has an important role in educating the voter on their right to vote, as it is a right they need to practice.

Indictors:

- Number organisations working on educating people about their rights?
- Kind of programs these organisations implemented.
- Areas they reached in their programs.
- Type of society sectors they tackled in their programs

Media

Media is the main player in this voter education process, and candidates usually use media in their propaganda. It is very important to see whether and to what extent the governmental media is neutral in its programs. The law specifies the limitation for using official media for different candidates, which should be equally distributed.

Indicators:

- Neutrality and impartiality of the official media.
- The effectiveness of the private media on the election.
- Usage of different type of social media

When looking at the ISIE website, a person can see the efforts and attention given to make people aware of almost everything related to the election process. The are many different methods employed to inform the Tunisian nation of all the legal procedures, regulations and laws related to the election process and there is a hot line for any inquiries or clarifications. Even the minutes of their meetings with their stakeholders were published on the website, such as civil society, media, etc.

The website clearly demonstrates the positive relationship the ISIE has with civil society organisations. A number of meetings were held to coordinate the awareness campaigns and different specialised organisations were coordinating the work with ISIE. The intention was to reach all sectors of the Tunisian populations, both in the rural and urban areas, and specifically in isolated communities, where it was impossible for some to reach.

According to ISIE, the aim of these coordination meetings was to organise the awareness campaigns in the country among all players, in order to reach the main aim, which is to encourage Tunisians to participate in the democratic process together and to practice their right to free election, as well as to go through this transitional period to democracy with transparency and dignity.

In rural areas, where the use of computers and social media is less and in some areas where they do not use it at all, ISIE used visual media, awareness campaigns on TV channels, especially the governmental ones. This was important and maybe more crucial for rural areas, and to communities outside the cities.

Therefore, GNRD concludes that ISIE did a through and good job in relation to awareness campaigns.

The effectiveness of the information in the election process
As international observers, we noticed that the voters were mainly middle aged and elderly people. When talking to some of the youth representatives, it was clear the frustration they have from the previous period. Some believed there had been no

changes in the economic and political situation, and they believed there to be a lack of confidence and trust in the present political parties and candidates.

Responsibility should be taken by all stakeholders: ISIE, the political parties/ candidates, the previous government, and of course civil society. Some comments made by youth to our international observers suggested that some young people had lost belief and hope in the political parties. Thus, the youth should be the parties' priority in awareness building and encouraging greater youth participation in the elections.

Another problematic issue stated by the mission was in relation to illiterate persons' access to the voting process. The Electoral Law clearly stated not to help illiterate people, and neither relatives nor ISIE staff could help. From the procedural and transparency side, this is correct, but there should be an alternative. Somebody should show these people how to vote, a lot of invalid ballots were because of incorrect marks on the ballots.

Candidates, Parties, and Campaigns

Candidate registration

Article 25 of the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights states that every citizen shall have the right and the opportunity […] to vote and to be elected at genuine periodic elections which shall be by universal and equal suffrage […]". The enjoyment of electoral rights in Tunisia is guaranteed by the Constitution and Electoral Law. The Constitution provides the citizens with the right to form and participate in the activities of a political party and the right to assembly and association.

According to the Electoral Law, in order to participate in the Parliamentary elections, an individual must have Tunisian citizenship for at least 10 years, be over 23 years of age and not barred from standing by virtue of any law [5]. The law also specifies that those individuals who held the following positions may not be in the candidate lists:

- Member of the Government;
- Official position in any state institution or company in which the state has a stake;
- Member of elected official local bodies;
- Official position in a foreign state institution; or
- Official position in an intergovernmental organization or international institution [6].

In order to guarantee equal representation of male and female candidates on the electoral lists, the new law requires that all electoral lists shall include an equal number of men and women candidates. A list that does not respect this principle will not be accepted, except in relation to constituencies having only one representative [7]. The law also requires youth representation by stipulating that candidate lists in any constituency that have at least four seats must include a male and a female candidate not older than 35 amongst the four first candidates. Any list not meeting this requirement will have half of its public funding withheld [8].

The candidate registration process took place from August 22 to August 29, 2014. IRIE reported submission of 1,500 lists with a total of 15,652 candidates [9]. This number included 807 candidate lists from political parties, 134 lists from coalitions, and 441 lists of independents submitted in-country, whilst 83 candidate lists of political parties, 17 coalition lists, and 18 independent lists were submitted abroad [10]. The IRIE was responsible for reviewing and approving the lists in each constituency.

The initial numbers, published on September 5, 2014 and subsequently announced by ISIE, indicated that 1,314 candidate lists were accepted and 192 were rejected. According to the international observers, the process was conducted in quite a transparent way, since the ISIE posted the lists as soon as they were published by the IRIE, and appropriate technical explanations for any of the lists that were rejected were provided [11].

According to the president of the ISIE, the reasons behind the initial rejection of the 191 lists included the following:

- Inclusion of candidates who had registered during the second phase of voter registration;

- Withdrawal of some candidates without replacing them;

- Failure to refund the second part of public funding from the 2011 elections by those parties and lists that did not receive three percent of the vote;

- Inclusion of candidates who had not reached the minimum age of 23 at the time of submission of the lists.

A total of 133 complaints were filed with the Courts of First Instance against the decisions of the ISIE; 117 related to in-country lists and 15 to lists from abroad. By September 18, 107 appeals were filed with the Appellate Chambers of the Administrative Tribunal.

After the appeals process ended, the ISIE released the final lists of candidates on September 27, which increased to 1,327 compared to the 1,314 initially accepted lists [12]. Of the lists competing in Tunisia, 810 are made up of political parties, 170 are from coalitions and 347 are independent-candidate lists. Out of the 1327 candidate lists, only 145 are headed by a woman, although 47 percent of the candidates were female.

According to the Tunisian monitoring groups and international observers in the field, the political parties in general expressed satisfaction with the candidate registration process and they reported that it was conducted according to the law.

Main parties included:

Call of Tunisia
Call of Tunisia is a secular political party in Tunisia founded by former Prime Minister Beji Caid el Sebsi on 20 April 2012 as an initiative called Nidaa Tounes. The initiative sought to invest in youth development, safeguard individual freedoms, and implement new economic strategies. The official party was formed just two months later, and was quickly joined by several members of the Constitutional Democratic Rally, secular leftists, progressive liberals and Destourians. Although Call for Tunisia initially joined the coalition Union for Tunisia (UPT) with the Republican Party and Social Democratic Path, the party ultimately elected to run in the 2014 parliamentary elections independently.

Call of Tunisia espouses a secular ideology and anti-Islamist platform. As a self-described "modernist" party, the leaders have repeatedly stated that a coalition of Tunisia's secular interests is necessary to counter the dominance of the Islamist Ennahda Movement. The party also receives wide support from many members of the Tunisian General Labour Union (UGTT) and the national employers' union, UTICA.

Ennahda Movement

Ennahda Movement is a moderate Islamist political party, and is the largest and most widely supported Islamist party in Tunisia. The Ennahda Movement was reformed and legalized as a political party in the wake of the 2011 Revolution and quickly gained a plurality of 37.04 % of the popular vote during the October 2011 Constituent Assembly Election. Despite a tumultuous history in Tunisia that has involved violent repression and militant activity, the co-founder of the movement, Rachid Ghanoushi, who was recently allowed to return to Tunisia, announced that the group is committed to democracy and is against any type of Islamic State or Caliphate.

The leadership of Ennahda has worked extensively to assuage fears of Islamic political groups that have risen in neighboring countries. On May 18th 2014, spokesman for the party, Samir Dilou, stated in an interview, "We do not want a theocracy. We want a democratic state, which is characterised by the idea of liberty. The people are to decide themselves how they live." Party leaders have professed a genuine commitment to modernity, equality and democracy. In one notable example, the party has embraced the acceptance of both women who chose to wear headscarves, and those who do not.

Congress for the Republic

Congress for the Republic (CPR) is a center left-secular party founded in July 2001, and subsequently legalised after the revolution in 2011. In its founding declaration, CPR sought to establish a new regime that would guarantee freedom of speech, association and organisation, while promoting greater respect for human rights and gender equality. Following the revolution, CPR performed well in the Constituent Assembly election and became the second largest political force with 29 seats. The CPR platform continues to revolve around the protection of civil liberties, such as ensuring political freedoms, lifting censorship, and establishing stronger human rights legislation. CPR has publically stated that it does not accept funding from businesses and other external sources.

Progressive Democratic Party

The PDP is a secular political party in Tunisia, founded under the name Progressive Socialist Rally in 1983 and renamed in 2001. The PDP is considered to be the main rival of the leading Ennahada movement and are outspoken critics of the Islamist coalition. In 2006, Maya Jribi was appointed as PDP's secretary-general, the first woman to hold such a position in Tunisia. Chebbi has served as Tunisia's Regional Development Minister since January. The party supports a raise in the minimum salary, and easing regulations to increase foreign investment.

Ettakatol

Ettakatol, also known as the Democratic Forum for Labour and Liberties, is a centre-left party founded in 1994 and legalised in 2002. The party emphasises the importance of transparency and fighting corruption. Ettakatol is an observer of the Party of European Socialists and was elected as a member of Socialist International in 2012. Tunisia Live also reported that Ettakatol is one of the very few political parties in Tunisia to call for inheritance laws that ensure equality between men and women, and to condemn domestic rape.

Free Patriotic Union

The Free Patriotic Union (UPL) is a secular centrist party established after the 2011 revolution, and is founded and led by wealthy 39-year-old businessman Slim Riahi, who grew up as an ex-patriate in Libya and made his fortune in energy and property development. The UPL supports a free-market economy and modernist values, and has rejected all forms of Islamism. In an interview with Al Chourouk, Riahi stated that he views Ennahdha as a major rival, and has refused to work with the Islamist party. The UPL is known for its expensive and lavish electoral campaign and has offered bus trips to party rallies to potential voters. With extensive support from Riahi's fortune, the campaign has been able to afford large advertising campaigns.

Role of Media

After the Tunisian Revolution, restrictions on media ownership were removed and the old regime's censorship practices were dissolved. Due to this freshly realised freedom of the press, dozens of new media platforms were launched. The formerly oppressed media campaigns were in support of the authoritarian regime lead by Ex-President Zine el-Abidine Ben Ali. This new liberty raised new issues about transparency and objectivity, and prompted the country's recently formed broadcast regulator to formulate new rules that banned the exploitation of privately owned TV and radio stations for partisan propaganda.

The High Independent Board of Audiovisual Communication (HAICA) established last year, after months of political disputes over its membership, said that changes are necessary to ensure editorial independence. Hichem Snoussi, board member of HAICA stated that "HAICA is seeking to separate media from politics".

Since January 14, 2011, the circumstances of editorial independence have fundamentally changed. The central system of censorship has been disbanded. There is no longer any special treatment for the government in the media. Critical of the government is common in the press. However, in the absence of formal legal and structural reform, concerns remain with regard to the risk of government inference in the process of appointing leaders of the public press and broadcasting organisations. Since the Revolution, the public press, radio and television, under their new leadership, have all sought, with some success, to develop a public service model. During the period which immediately followed the Revolution, the journalists themselves, inside the public media, formed editorial committees to defend their independent reporting of news and information, which they have since sought to transform into permanent structures.

Consequently, there is a pressing need to ensure the editorial independence of the public media through legal and structural reform. The editorial independence of private media is better protected, but media in this arena also faces a series of economic and political pressures, as well as pressure from non-state actors. Unfortunately, most newspapers are under the control of certain political or business lobbies and their priority is not to produce editorial content that acts against these interests. Private broadcasters are also to a large extent, politically aligned, as has been demonstrated by media monitoring which was conducted during election campaigns.

Religious extremist groups pose a major challenge for the editorial independence of the media. Notably, they provoked a public campaign against the editorial decision of Nessma TV to broadcast the Franco-Iranian animated film, "Persepolis".

A key issue for HAICA has been governmental appointments to state-owned media outlets. In February of this year, for example, the Prime Minister Mehdi Jomaa agreed to involve the board in the appointment of state-owned media outlets. HAICA had previously criticised former Prime Minister Ali Laarayedh for ignoring a decree on media freedom that allows the board to nominate heads of public media outlets. HAICA also accused a government appointee of editorial interference with state-owned radio stations, alleging a pro-government bias.

In May, 2012 the Zeitouna television station was launched. This station is perceived as pro-government as it is run by Oussama Ben Salem, son of Moncef Ben Salem – who is also a leader of the powerful Ennahda party in Tunisia.

Three television channels were launched in July, 2013: Ettounsiya Al-Oula, Ettounsiya Sport and Ettounsiya News, by Slim Riahi. They are operated by a wealthy Tunisian entrepreneur and founder of the Free Patriotic Union party. During Ben Ali's Regime, entrepreneurs such as Riahi, also took advantage of the new media landscape to become politicians themselves. Larbi Nasra, who founded Tunisia's first private television station in 2005, led a political party which holds 12 seats in parliament.

Nabil Karouli, co-owner of the Nessma station, recently launched his own political party, Tahya Tounis.

The media in Tunisia is a powerful force, and therefore the ruling political parties frequently seek to impose their control. Journalists regularly allude to the fact that despite the fall of the old regime, a significant dictatorship remains in place. This insistence in controlling the media relies on its penetration amongst Tunisians. According to a survey made by the BBC, 83% of the population reported television as their main source of information. Nowadays, state-owned outlets, such as Wataneya I and Wataneya II, have a greater audience than private stations (72% of Tunisians).

Although access to radio is relatively high in the country, only 34% of the population use this medium to follow the news. The regional radio stations are still more popular amongst rural populations, since television is considered to focus on the major cities.

Regarding new media and the Internet, almost a third of the population have used the Internet recently. The majority of those who were connected to the Internet (80%), used social media to access information. Facebook dominates this sector with 81% of social media users, Twitter being much less popular with 10% of social media daily users. The youth population, men and those in urban environments were most likely to use social media as a source of information.

Participation of Women

Women's rights in Tunisia

Women in Tunisia enjoy relatively progressive rights compared to the rest of the Arab world, which have been enshrined in the Code of Personal Status since 1956. This almost revolutionary Code saw the abolition of polygamy, gave women the right to seek a divorce and made it necessary for both women and men to give consent in the case of marriage. Tunisia was also one of the first countries in the Arab region to give women their right to vote in 1957 and shortly afterwards, the right to stand as a political candidate. As a result of progressive reforms advancing the rights and status of women, Tunisian women are well educated, with 96.1% of 15 to 24 year old females able to read and write, and 92% of females transitioning to secondary education, compared to 89.7% of their male counterparts [13].

Tunisian women played a significant role in the 2011 Arab spring uprising, which saw women of all ages and from all different backgrounds actively participating in the nation-wide protests for democratic change. During this democratic transition, women were also active as politicians, ministers and civil society activists [14], campaigning to ensure that women's rights and gender equality become enshrined in law, during the drafting of the new constitution. The new constitution, adopted on 27 January 2014, contains several provisions setting out the protection of women's rights. For example, Article 46 stipulates that the State has a responsibility to protect the established rights of women and strengthen and develop these rights. It also obliges the State to ensure that men and women enjoy equal opportunities and have access to all levels of responsibility in all domains [15].

In April 2014, Tunisia made a further step to advance women's rights by officially withdrawing its reservations to the Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination Against Women (CEDAW), which particularly concerned the provision of equality to women in the family domain [16]. However there are still discriminatory laws against women regarding inheritance, which entitles them to only half the inheritance that their male counterparts are entitled to [17].

Role of women at previous elections

During the 2011 National Constituent Assembly Elections, there were approximately 5000 women candidates [18]. This relatively high number can be attributed to the newly adopted Electoral Law requiring gender parity on the candidate lists and the alternation of men and women's names. Despite the significant number of women candidates, this did not guarantee equal numbers of men and women being elected to the National Constituency. This is largely due to the fact that there was no requirement for parties to alternate male and female leading candidates on the lists and consequently just 7% of the candidate lists were headed by a woman. The final election results saw women candidates elected to 27% of the total number of seats [19].

In terms of voter turnout in the last election, women were well represented and actively participated in the electoral process by attending campaign events and working as polling staff or observers. Women's participation was said to be higher in urban areas as opposed to rural areas. Although the ISIE did not produce a statistical breakdown to measure women's participation, it was estimated that approximately 45 to 46 percent of total voters were women [20].

Share of women in the voter's register

Women made up 50.5% of the total number of newly registered voters who signed up during the two registration periods in June/July and August 2014, compared to 49.5% of newly registered male voters [21]. There have been some concerns raised regarding the registration of rural women due to their remote location and lack of official identity documents [22]. Furthermore, it has been suggested that due to cultural and social stereotyping, some rural women believe that politics is exclusively a male domain and they underestimate the importance of their political voice [23].

Role of women at current elections

Women actively participated in the presidential elections as candidates, voters, polling officials, observers and ISIE staff. Despite the electoral laws which require gender parity and alternation between names of male and female candidates, only

11.2% of electoral lists appointed a woman as the leading candidate on the list, which has implications for the total number of female candidates elected [24].

Furthermore, it has also been noted that women candidates encountered difficulties during campaigning. Firstly, campaign rallies took place in the evening, meaning that the audience was predominated by men. Secondly, women candidates also faced difficulties interacting with voters, as unlike their male counterparts, they must be accompanied during campaigning activities at all times [25].

International observers from the GNRD and IIPJHR mission, noted that participation of women voters, in particular older women was solid and of the total number of voters observed by our mission, roughly 50% were women. In the majority of polling stations, there was a marked absence of younger female voters.

The observation teams noted that women were largely involved in the polling administration and in almost all polling stations visited, there was at least 1 woman who was a polling official. The observation results from the joint mission, show that 57.3% of polling officials were women, however of this percentage only 30% were heads of polling stations. 26.4% of party representatives observing were women and 38.8% of domestic observers were women.

Observers also noted that several older, illiterate women experienced difficulties in voting. In some cases, husbands attempted to help their wives to vote but were not allowed to, as the voting regulations stipulate that illiterate voters are not allowed to receive any voting assistance. This was sometimes distressing for the women as they knew who they wanted to vote for and wanted to exercise their right to vote but faced obstacles due to a lack of education.

Participation of Youth

Tunisia's youth

The courage of Tunisia's youth, who rose up against autocracy in 2011, was an inspiration to other movements across the Arab world. Mohamed Bouazizi's protest, symbolized the vexations and despair of many educated and unemployed Tunisian youth, struggling to make a living. The role of youth in the revolution was fundamental and largely due to neglect of Tunisia's most important demographic. The presence of a large youth population has never held as much sway as it has today.

Despite the freely elected parliament in 2011, many of the problems facing Tunisia's youth remain. Job creation has not kept pace with the rising number of young people entering the workforce. Unemployment is consequently a major social issue, especially for highly educated young workers. Tunisia's unemployment rate spiked by 6 percent following the revolution, from 13 to 19 percent. For highly skilled youth, the unemployment rate exceeds 44 percent. Youth participation is therefore an extremely important variable in Tunisia's democratic transition [26].

 Tunisian youth is marginalized in the political process. They view the older generation as reaping the benefits of the youth-driven revolution and worry about the unclear direction the process is heading in. Hence, Tunisian youth are struggling to find their place in the public realm and a sense of ownership of the revolution is guiding Tunisia's youth towards demanding more political participation. The key achievement of the revolution is the expansion of civil society, where student unions play a significant role [27].

Past election participation

Youth participation was a major concern in Tunisia's first transparent election in its history. Many political parties failed to engage youth in the political scene and young people were evidently absent. Only 17 percent of those aged between 18 and 35 registered to vote. Notwithstanding a requirement that every party list must include one candidate under the age of 35, it appeared that youth were not in the top position

of most lists and that made it unlikely for them to win a portion of seats in the assembly [28].

Share of youth in the voter's register

Tunisia's youth (inhabitants under the age of 30), represent 51 percent of the current total population. According to the ISIE's statistics, 377,714 voters of a total 5,236,244 registered electors are under the age of 30. Of the 962,291 voters who registered for the first time this summer from June 23th to August 26th, 40 percent were between the ages of 18 and 30. Registered voters in the age between 18 - 40 remains at 63 percent [29].

Current election participation

Data shows that over 80% of Tunisian youth (aged between 18 and 25) boycotted the parliamentary elections. The alarmingly low turnout of youth that did not cast their vote is a reaction to their poor social and economic situation. Tunisians acknowledge the importance of political freedom and the abstention phenomenon will increase if politicians do not construct a proper strategy to attract young voters. The high youth absenteeism has been attributed to political parties' omission to engage with young people. Analysts state that over 60% of Tunisian youths are pessimistic and they refuse to participate in political life, as they no longer believe in "empty promises". Observation teams recorded that there was a low turnout among youth that reflects existing information mentioned above.

Role of Local and International Observers

The role of national and international observers is important to consider with regard to the assessment of the entire election process and in accordance with international and national legal standards. Even though the presence of observers does not legitimise the elections process per se, by providing comprehensive feedback on the whole election period, both local and international observers contribute to the improvement of the election process in the future and help to indicate existing challenges.

Requirements for the observers

All local and international observers should receive accreditation from ISIE prior to the election.

In order to be accredited as a national observer, an individual had to meet the following requirements:

- Be eligible to vote;
- Not to be a part of ISIE;
- Not be a candidate at the current elections;
- Be submitted by an organisation or an association, specialising in elections, democracy, human rights or citizenship;
- Have received training in election observation.

International observers had to:

- Be over 18 years old on the day of application;
- Be submitted by a foreign organisation, specialising in election observation;
- Have received training in election observation [30].

Requirements for the organisations

According to the rules set by ISIE, all organisations or associations participating in the election observation had to meet the following criteria:

- pay due respect to the electoral legislation and decisions adopted by ISIE;
- pay due respect to the sovereignty of the state of Tunisia and its national legislation;
- be impartial and independent of all political parties;
- have trained observers, acting on their behalf and informed about the electoral legislation and the code of conduct;
- have the capacity to supervise the observers;
- be objective and rely on official sources while gathering information;
- not disclose any election results before the official announcement by ISIE;
- produce a report with an objective evaluation of the electoral process and hand a copy to ISIE after the official announcement of the results.

The observers were also required to carry the accreditation card visibly, to not interfere in the election process, to not accept any money from political parties, to not carry weapons and to respect the secrecy of the vote.

Statistics on observers

According to ISIE, 14 local organisations participated in the election observation with a total number of 14070 observers [31], along with 496 international observers.

List of international observers:

- African Union

- The Arab League

- Comité de Vigilance pour la Démocratie en Tunisie

- Arab Election Watch

-        European Union

-        Global Network for Rights and Development

-        International Institute for Peace, Justice and Human Rights

-        National Democratic Institute

-        The Carter Center

-        The International Republican Institute

The association "I watch Tunisia", promoting transparency and the fight against corruption had also launched a campaign to recruit local observers in order to include civil society and to counter the top-down approach of election observation [32]. Furthermore, election observations are organised outside of Tunisia, such as the association "Jasmin Tunisie Liberté & Démocratie" that recruited observers in France, where the elections took place between the 24th and 26th of October [33].

The role of GNRD and IIPJHR

Observers must adhere to standards of impartiality and be free of any political considerations. GNRD and IIPJHR is therefore acting according to the rules set out in the Declaration of Principles for International Election Observers and the Code of Conduct for International Election Observers, developed by the United Nations in cooperation with international civil society organisations since 2001 and finalised in 2005, as well as with the rules of the ISIE stated above.

Additionally, based on its previous observation experience, GNRD and IIPJHR developed and adopted its internal Code of Conduct for the members of observation teams. The main pillars of the Code are:

- Respect for the country where the observation mission is being held, its legislation, rules and traditions in the framework of international human rights;
- Strong impartiality;
- Adherence to the rules and regulations of the international observation mission;
- Non-interference in the election process;
- Maintaining accuracy, professionalism and transparency;
- Refraining from making personal comments to the media;
- Maintaining proper personal behavior.

GNRD and IIPJHR believes that adherence to these rules allows its observers to perform their responsibilities with a high level of professionalism and accuracy, therefore, contributing to positive developments in democracy and promoting the rule of law.

Election Day, Voting, and Vote Counting

Election Day

The GNRD and IIPJHR observation mission to Tunisia consisted of 80 experts and observers in total; 55 international observers from GNRD, and 25 international observers from IIPJHR.

On the 26th October, the observers were divided into 16 teams, with each team consisting of a driver, a security guard and at least two international observers. The teams visited between 9 and 15 polling stations each. In total, 148 polling stations with 67,069 registered voters were visited, covering 16 different governorates throughout Tunisia.

On this Election Day, observers assessed the voting process, using checklists to make notes and comments. The checklists were used to assess the polling stations and the voting procedures. There were three types of checklists, for the different steps of the elections day; (1) one for the opening of the polling stations, (2) one for voting during the Election Day, and (3) one for closing of the polling stations at the end of the elections.

Voting procedure

Voters entered the polling station one by one, and had their ID's checked by the staff at the polling station. After the ID check, the voters name was found on the voting list, and the voter had to sign beside their name on the list. The voter had to put his/her left index finger in indelible ink, as a sign that he/she had been to vote. A second member of the polling station staff stamped the voting ballot in each of the four corners on the reverse side. The voter took the stamped ballot into one of the polling booths, filled it in with his or her vote, folded the ballot and put it in the sealed ballot box.

Disabled voters were allowed to be assisted by a relative. A person could only assist one disabled voter, and had to put their left little finger into the ink as a sign that he or she had assisted someone. However, illiterate voters were not allowed to be assisted when voting. The voting ballot was designed to make it easy for illiterate voters to vote, with pictures symbolising the different electoral lists.

The observers recorded an active presence of party representatives and domestic observers from civil society organisations. In a few cases, the party representatives performed some of the duties of the polling stations' administration, such as providing voter information, or instructing the polling staff on the counting procedures.

In general, except for a few minor irregularities, the observers noted that the polling procedures were followed according to the requirements. Among these minor irregularities, the observers mentioned missing voting instructions outside polling stations, campaign activities in the proximity of polling stations, and few observed incidents of buying and selling of votes. The observers also witnessed few cases, when citizens were not able to vote, the most common reason for which was the absence of their names on the voters' lists. A low rate of young voters was also reported by the observers.

Vote counting procedure

The procedure of counting the votes took place after the polling stations closed at 18.00. Two of the observation teams noted that the closing of the polling station was delayed, with one of the teams reporting that this was due to a delayed opening. Only 3 of the observation teams observed that the counting process began

immediately after closing, with most teams noting that their polling stations had breaks between the closing and the counting. Polling staff in several polling centres explained this break as being necessary because of the long day without rest and since the counting procedure could go on for several hours.

The counting procedure started with the head of the polling station clipping the locks of the ballot box, and emptying all the ballots from the box. The polling station staff then counted all the ballots, putting them in piles of 50 ballots facing downwards. After finding that the number of ballots in the box was the same as the number of signatures on the polling lists, the counting of each vote started. The head of the polling station read out each vote, and showed the ballot to all attendees, while the rest of the polling station staff kept a record of all the votes. The invalid votes and the blank votes were put in their own envelopes. In many of the polling stations the vote counting process took several hours, which indicates that the process was thorough.

After the counting of the individual votes, the polling staff had to make sure that the total number of valid, invalid and blank votes matched up with the number of signatures in the voters list.
The process ended with the polling station staff and the party representatives signing the minutes of the counting procedure, and placing all election materials, including all ballots into the ballot box and sealing it.
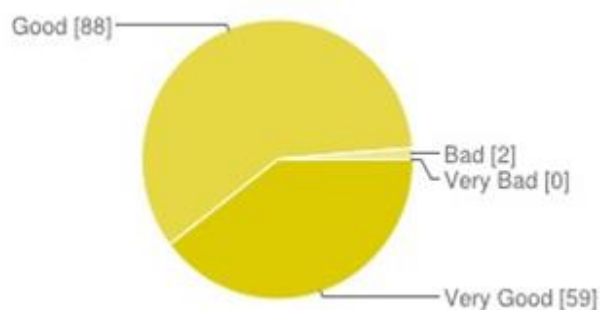
Many of the observers noted that the polling station staff took their role seriously, and performed their job in accordance with the given guidelines, with just a few minor deviations.

The observers were not able to observe the results aggregation and tabulation processes.

**Observers' overall assessment of the polling centres**

Generally, in their overall assessment of the polling centres, the observers rated them as good, with 92% of observers categorising the centres as either good or very good. For the most part the legal procedures and regulations were followed.

Good [88]

Bad [2]
Very Bad [0]

Very Good [59]

Very Good	**59**	37%
Good	**88**	55%
Bad	**2**	1%
Very Bad	**0**	0%

Observers' assessment of the security at polling centres

Overall, observers noted that the level of security was appropriate, with 89% of polling centres being described as either well secured to adequately secured.
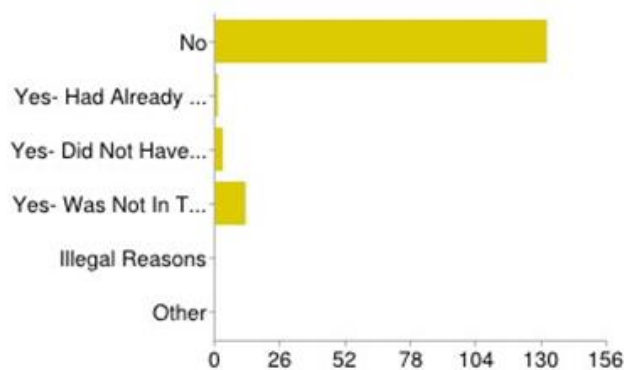
Adequate [54]

Poor [7]
None [2]
Oversecured [8]
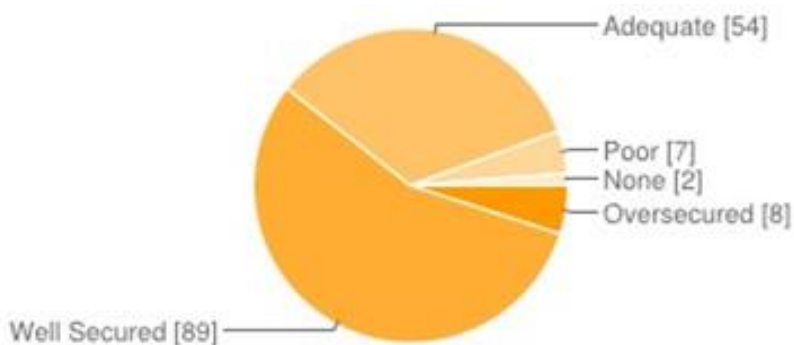
Well Secured [89]

Oversecured	*8*	*5%*
Well Secured	*89*	*55%*
Adequate	*54*	*34%*
Poor	*7*	*4%*
None	*2*	*1%*

Most common problems observed

1. *Voters registration and turning away of voters*

The following statistics reveal if any voter was seen to be turned away and if so for what reason:

No	**132**	82%
Yes- Had Already Voted	**1**	1%
Yes- Did Not Have Proper ID	**3**	2%
Yes- Was Not In The Voter's List	**12**	7%
Illegal Reasons	**0**	0%
Other	**0**	0%

These statistics reveal that a relatively high percentage of voters were turned away because they were not registered on the list. ISIE should try to improve voter education with regards to the registration process and simplify the process for determining the polling station at which voters are registered.

2. *Voting ballots being transparent*

As the voting ballots were transparent they did not ensure the secrecy of the vote, while the best practice requires that a marked ballot cannot be viewed before being cast, and it is the state's obligation to take measures to guarantee the requirement of the secrecy of the vote during elections.

3. *Assistance with voting*

According to the Tunisian legal procedures, it is forbidden to accompany an illiterate person in the voting process. GNRD observers witnessed that many illiterate voters had difficulties with voting procedures, which in many cases resulted in the vote being disregarded as an invalid ballot. According to our statistics, only 14% of illiterate voters that the observation teams observed were aided with their vote, whereas, 87% of disabled voters were allowed assistance to vote. To make sure illiterate voters are able to vote efficiently, ISIE should pay special attention to illiterate voters through its voter education campaign, and make sure the ballot papers are designed as simply as possible and are suitable for all voters.

4. *Participation of youth*

Our observers noted a clear lack of youth going to vote. We recommend youth campaigns to improve youth participation and education in schools. We believe that youth participation would increase if parties aimed to incorporate issues that impact the youth in their campaigns.

5. Gender equality amongst heads of polling stations

Only 30% of polling station heads were women according to our statistics.

6. Campaign materials

In 3% of polling stations visited, our observers found campaign materials.

None	148	92%
Violent Incidents	0	0%
Campaign Materials	5	3%
Campaign Activities	1	1%
Unauthorized Persons (Civilians With Guns)	0	0%
Intimidation of Voters	0	0%
Indication of Vote Buying	1	1%
Bussing Activities	0	0%
Other	1	1%

7. Displayed voting instructions

In 76% of observed polling stations, the voting instructions were displayed in a visible place. However, as the chart below demonstrates, this leaves a large proportion of voting instructions that were not in a visible place, which is concerning, since this may impact on the accuracy and validity of votes.

Announcement of the Results

According to the Electoral Law Articles 142-148, which pertain to the announcement of results, ISIE is responsible for monitoring and collecting the results from polling stations and for examining any claims of irregularities. ISIE has the authority to order recounts in any district, and to annul results if it finds there are fundamental irregularities in the process of voting or sorting.

Within three days after the end of voting and sorting, ISIE shall announce the results of the election. Following the announcement of the preliminary results, there is a three day window open for appeals/ complaints. Complaints may be submitted by the head of an electoral list or one of its members, or a legal representative of a party. The final result of the election must be released before November 24th, according to Electoral Law.

The preliminary results of this parliamentary election were announced by ISIE at a press conference on October 30 at 02:00 am. The results were also announced on ISIE's web page [34].

The joint observation mission of the Global Network for Rights and Development (GNRD) and the International Institute for Peace, Justice and Human Rights (IIPJHR) would like to congratulate Tunisian citizens on the parliamentary election. This election marks an important point in Tunisia's democratic transition and GNRD and IIPJHR are honoured and pleased to be part of this process, and to contribute to its transparency, success and legitimacy.

Conclusions and Recommendations

The joint mission is pleased to present its general comments and recommendations below.

General Comments

1. In most cases the atmosphere at the polling centres was peaceful and the procedures were carried out in an orderly manner

2. High turnout of voters in most polling centers, especially among elderly people. Less participation of the youth

3. Several cases were registered when the voters could not find their names in the list, thus were not allowed to vote

4. Administration of the polling centers were well trained and prepared for their mission. Women were largely involved in administration, but only in 30% of centers they were heads.

5. The polling stations were provided with sufficient security

6. The observers were mostly given free access to polling stations and provided with the necessary information

7. Closing and counting process went smoothly, only with minor errors which were more the result of lack of sufficient knowledge on the details of the procedure by the polling administration, rather than intentional errors.

Recommendations

1. Improve the system of voters registration in order for all voters to be registered in the lists
2. Redesign the voting ballot to make it less transparent
3. Amend the procedures with regards to illiterate voters so they have more assistance with how to cast their vote
4. Organise better campaigns to encourage the participation of youth

5. Higher percentage of women involved as heads of polling stations

6. Better enforcement and monitoring of regulations relating to campaign activities on election day all over the country, including in and around polling stations

7. Better enforcement and monitoring of regulations relating to the placement of voting instructions at the polling centres.

Appendix 1

Checklist for GNRD Observation Mission Tunisian Parliamentary Elections 2014 **Opening**		
Governorate/District: …………………….. Name of the polling center / number of polling stations: ……………………………. Number of the group: ………………………… Number of registered voters (should not exceed 600): ……………………. Time of arrival: ………………. Time of departure: ……….............		
Outside the polling center/station		

1.	Were you allowed to enter the polling centre without any restrictions?	Y	N
2.	Please, asses the security of the polling centre: • Oversecured • Well-secured • Adequate • Poor • None		
3.	Did you observe any of the following problems? • Violent incidents • Campaign materials • Campaign activities • Unauthorized persons (civilians with guns) • Intimidation of voters • Indication of vote buying • Bussing activities • Other (specify) • None		
Inside the polling station			
4.	Did you observe any campaign materials/activities?	Y	N
5.	Did you observe any presence of unauthorized people?	Y	N
5.a	If YES, please specify: • Civilians with guns • Non-authorised security forces • Candidate/party agents, observers, journalists, translators without badges • Other (specify)		
5.b	If YES, were they requested to leave?	Y	N
6.	Was the polling station staffed according to the requirements? • Head of the polling office • Other members of the staff (minimum 2 and maximum 3 persons)		
6.a	How many of the polling officials were women?		
6.b	Was the head of the polling station a woman?	Y	N
7.	Were the polling officials present with sufficient time to setup the polling station?	Y	N

8.	Were all election materials delivered to the polling station safely and securely?	Y	N	
8.a	Were the following essential elections materials delivered to the polling station? • Adequate polling booths • Transparent box • Ballot papers • Seals • Voters' lists • Stamp • Indelible ink • Minutes (journal)			
9.	Were these people present? • ISIE members • Candidate and/or party agents • Other international observers • Domestic observers • Media representatives			

Opening

10.	What time did the polling station open? _____			
11.	If the polling station did not open on time, what was the reason? • Insufficient materials • Insufficient number of polling officials • Disturbances • Other (please specify)			
12.	Did the head of the polling station check the electoral materials and make sure that all materials are available?	Y	N	
13.	Did the head of the polling station present the ballot box as empty to all the attendees?	Y	N	
14.	Was the ballot box closed with plastic locks?	Y	N	
15.	Were the delivered ballots papers counted?	Y	N	
16.	Did the polling officials record the following data in the minutes: number of the ballots, number of the box locks, number of the registered voters?	Y	N	
17.	Was the opening process free from interference (including from the security personnel and the attendees?)	Y	N	
18.	Were all the attendees allowed to observe the procedure without any restrictions?	Y	N	

Comments

Please provide details of any irregularities that occurred in the polling station, indicating the number of the question. You should provide explanation for the questions which you answered NO.

Overall assessment of the process
Very good   **Good**   **Bad**   **Very bad**

Appendix 2

Checklist for GNRD Observation Mission Tunisian Parliamentary Elections 2014 **Voting**			
Governorate/District: …………………….. Name of the polling center / number of polling stations: ………………………… Number of the group: …………………………… Number of registered voters (should not exceed 600): …………………… Number of voters that had already voted at the time of your arrival: ………………………… Time of arrival: ………………. Time of departure: ………............ Number of voters that had already voted at the time of your departure: ………………………… Approximately what percentage of the voters has been women?...			
Outside the polling center/station			
1.	Were you allowed to enter the polling centre without any restrictions?	YES	NO
2.	Please asses the security of the polling centre: • Oversecured • Well-secured • Adequate • Poor • None		
3.	Did you observe any of the following problems? • Violent incidents • Campaign materials • Campaign activities • Unauthorized persons (civilians with guns) • Intimidation of voters • Indication of vote buying • Bussing activities • Other (specify) • None		
4.	Did you observe long queues of voters?	YES	NO
Inside the polling station			
5.	Was the environment in the polling station peaceful?	YES	NO
6.	Were the voting instructions displayed in a visible place?	YES	NO
7.	Did you observe any campaign materials/activities?	YES	NO
8.	Did you observe any presence of unauthorized people inside the polling stations/office?	YES	NO
10.a	If YES, please specify: 19. Civilians with guns 20. Non-authorised security forces 21. Candidate/party agents, observers, journalists, translators without badges 22. Other (specify)		
10.b	If YES, were they requested to leave?	YES	NO

9.	Was the polling station administration staffed according to the requirements? • Head of the polling office • Other members of the staff (minimum 2 and maximum 3 persons)				
9.a	How many of the polling officials were women? _____				
9.b	Was the head of the polling station a woman?			YES	NO
10.	Were the following essential elections materials in the polling station? • Adequate polling booths • Transparent box with three locks • Ballot papers • Seals • Voters' lists • Stamp • Indelible ink • Minutes (journal)				
11.	Were these people present? • ISIE members • Candidate and/or party agents • Other international observers • Domestic observers • Media representatives				
11.b	Of _____ domestic observers, how many were women? _____				
Voting					
12.	Did the polling official check whether voters had ink on their fingers?	Always	Mostly	Sometimes	Never
13.	Did the polling official check whether voters' ID/passport was identical to the data on the voter's list?	Always	Mostly	Sometimes	Never
14.	Did you see any voter who was turned away?			YES	NO
16.a	If yes, indicate the reasons: • Had already voted • Did not have a proper ID • Was not in the voters' list • Illegal reasons • Other (specify)				
15.	Did voters sign/mark against their name on the voters' list?	Always	Mostly	Sometimes	Never
16.	Did voters immerse their finger into the indelible link before receiving the ballot?	Always	Mostly	Sometimes	Never
17.	Did the polling official stamp the ballot on the four corners before handing it to the voter?	Always	Mostly	Sometimes	Never
18.	Was voting done in secrecy?	Always	Mostly	Sometimes	Never

20.a	If <u>not always</u>, specify the reason:
	   2. Inadequate voting booth
	   3. Crowded room
	   4. Interference by others (except in the case of elderly/disabled voters)
	   5. Marking ballot outside the booth
	   6. More than one person in a booth at once
	   7. Folding the ballot in a way that the choice is visible
	   8. Other (specify)				

19.	Did voters cast the ballot inside the ballot box by themselves?	Always	Mostly	Sometimes	Never
20.	Were disabled voters receiving help to mark their ballots?	YES	NO	N/A
21.	Were illiterate voters casting their ballots without assistance?	YES	NO	N/A
22.	Was the process free of irregularities?	YES	NO	■

24.a	If NO, indicate the reason:
	   • Duplicate voting
	   • Ballot box stuffing
	   • Interruption of voting
	   • Insufficient ballots
	   • Wrong ballots
	   • Influencing voters' choice
	   • Intimidation of voters
	   • Other (specify)				

23.	Was voting conducted in an orderly manner?	YES	NO	■
24.	Were all the attendees allowed to observe the procedure without any restrictions?	YES	NO	■

Comments

Please provide details of any irregularities that occurred in the polling station, indicating the number of the question. You should provide explanation for the questions which you answered NO.

Overall assessment of the process

- **Very good**
- **Good**
- **Bad**
- **Very bad**

Appendix 3

	Checklist for GNRD Observation Mission Tunisian Parliamentary Elections 2014 **Closing and Counting**			
Governorate/District: …………………….. Name of the polling center / number of polling stations: ……………………………. Number of the group: …………………………… Number of registered voters (should not exceed 600):……………………. Time of arrival: ………………. Time of departure: …….............

Checklist for GNRD Observation Mission
Tunisian Parliamentary Elections 2014
Closing and Counting

Governorate/District: ……………………..
Name of the polling center / number of polling stations: …………………………….
Number of the group: ……………………………
Number of registered voters (should not exceed 600):…………………….
Time of arrival: ……………….
Time of departure: …….............

Outside the polling center/station

25.	Were you allowed to enter the polling centre without any restrictions?	YES	NO	
26.	Please asses the security of the polling centre: • Oversecured • Well-secured • Adequate • Poor • None			
27.	Did you observe any of the following problems? • Violent incidents • Campaign materials • Campaign activities • Unauthorized persons (civilians with guns) • Intimidation of voters • Indication of vote buying • Bussing activities • Other (specify) • None			

Closing

28.	Did the polling station close on time (6pm)?	YES	NO	
4.a	If early/late closing, what was the reason? _____			
29.	Were there any voters queuing outside the polling stations at the closing time?	YES	NO	
5.a	If YES, were all these people allowed to vote?	YES	NO	
30.	Did the polling officials count and register in the minutes the number of unused ballots, spoiled ballots, signatures in the voters' list?	YES	NO	
31.	Were these people present? • ISIE members • Candidate and/or party agents • Other international observers • Domestic observers • Media representatives			
7.b	Of _____ domestic observers, how many were women? _____			
32.	Did you observe any presence of unauthorized people?	YES	NO	

8.a	If YES, please specify:
	    23. Civilians with guns
	    24. Non-authorised security forces
	    25. Candidate/party agents, observers, journalists, translators without badges
	    26. Other (specify)			

8.b	If YES, were they requested to leave?	YES	NO	
33.	Was the polling station administration staffed according to the requirements? • Head of the polling office • Other members of the staff (minimum 2 and maximum 3 persons)			
9.a	How many of the polling officials were women?			
9.b	Was the head of the polling station a woman?	YES	NO	

Counting

34.	At what time did the counting begin?			
35.	Did the head of the polling station open the ballot box in the presence of the attendees?	YES	NO	
36.	Was vote counting transparent and observable by the attendees?	YES	NO	
37.	Did the number of the used ballots match with the number of the signatures in the voters' list?	YES	NO	
13.a	If NO, were the ballots recounted?	YES	NO	
38.	Did the polling stuff sort the ballots in the following categories? • Ballots for each candidate/candidate list • Invalid ballots • Blank ballots	YES	NO	
39.	Did the polling staff count each category of ballots accurately and in an impartial way?	YES	NO	
40.	Did the head of the polling station double-check the counted ballots?	YES	NO	
41.	Were the results recorded in the protocol according to the procedures?	YES	NO	
42.	Did the head of the polling station announce the results in the presence of the attendees and display the results protocol?	YES	NO	
43.	Were the results protocol signed by the polling officials and the representatives of candidates/parties?	YES	NO	
44.	Did you observe any interference to the process?	YES	NO	
20.a	If YES, by who? • Media representative • Candidate/party agent • Unknown person • Voter • Observer • Security personnel • Other (specify)			
45.	Did the counting stop at any moment?	YES	NO	
21.a	If YES, indicate the reason:			

21.b	If YES, were you able to observe the materials when the counting stopped?	YES	NO	
46.	**Please point the following numbers:**			
	Registered voters:			
	Signatures in the voters' list:			
	Ballots received:			
	Unused ballots:			
	Spoiled ballots:			
	Valid ballots:			
	Invalid ballots:			
	Blank ballots:			
47.	Were the election materials packaged and sealed according to the procedures, in the presence of the attendees?	YES	NO	
48.	Were the attendees allowed to observe the process without restrictions?	YES	NO	
Problems and irregularities				
49.	Did you observe any unrest in or around the polling station during the counting?	YES	NO	
50.	Did you observe intimidation of the polling staff members?	YES	NO	
51.	Was the counting process hampered by overcrowding?	YES	NO	
52.	Was the counting process hampered by disorganisation?	YES	NO	

Comments

Please provide details of any irregularities that occurred in the polling station, indicating the number of the question. You should provide explanation for the questions which you answered NO.

Overall assessment of the process

- **Very good**
- **Good**
- **Bad**
- **Very bad**

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