



Tunisia in Transition

German-Arab Research Group

Chronology of the Tunisian Transition – April to December 2013

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December 30: The Ministry of Industry and Technology announces the launching of a new program of Tunisian-German partnership for the period 2014-2017, entitled "Manager Training Program" for Tunisian small and medium enterprises of all branches.

December 28: The Secretary General of the centrist liberal Republican Party Al-Joumhourî, *Maya Jribi*, announces the decision of her party to withdraw from the Union for Tunisia while maintaining its adherence to the National Salvation Front.

December 24: "The Board of Directors of the European Investment Bank (EIB) has given its approval for the funding of an exploration of gas reserves project in the south of Tunisia, to the tune of 380 Million Euros (about 856 Million Dinars)", says *Philippe De Fontaine Vive*, Vice-President of the EIB.

December 19: The Independent National Coordination of Transitional Justice organizes an international colloquium on the theme "Between history and Memory: Violations of Human Rights in Tunisia (1956-2013)" with the support of several national and international organizations (UNDP, High Commissioner for Human Rights of the UN, etc.).

December 18: The High Representative of the European Union for Foreign Affairs and Security Policy, *Catherine Ashton*, welcomes the "encouraging developments recorded in the National Dialogue, which has led to the appointment of *Mehdi Jomaâ* as Prime Minister."

December 17: The celebration of the third anniversary of the Revolution of 17 December 2010 is marked by an official ceremony at the Palace of Carthage, in the presence of the presidents of the Republic, the National Constituent Assembly and the government.

December 17: The celebration of the third anniversary of the Revolution of Freedom and Dignity in the governorate of Sidi Bouzid is marked by the absence of the three Presidents and the Secretary General of the General Union of Tunisian Workers (UGTT).

December 14: The long-awaited Draft Organic Law on Transitional Justice is finally being adopted by the National Constituent Assembly.

December 14: *Mehdi Jomaâ*, the Minister of Industry of the Government *Laarayedh* is appointed as the head of the next government as a result of the National Dialogue.

December 5: The Civil Coalition for the Defense of Freedom of Expression denounces the publication by the President of the Republic of a *Black Book* on the "Propaganda Machine of Ben Ali", without consulting the concerned legal and professional bodies and trade unions, and without recourse to a team of competent and independent personalities able to examine, in a transparent and fair manner, the archives of the Presidency on the record of the information and media.

December 1: The Provisional President *Moncef Marzouki* publishes the *Black Book* containing the names of journalists whom he accuses of compromising with the deposed regime.

November 26: The Tunisian Observatory of Judicial Independence asks the Ministry of Justice to apply two judgments of the Administrative Tribunal dated November 22 that suspend the entry into force the appointments of the President of the Real Estate Court and the General Inspector of the Ministry.

November 23: The bill on the establishment of a compulsory service for specialist doctors, which binds them to practicing for three years in public health facilities in the regions before joining the private sector, raises a major disapproval of doctors and medical students.

November 18: The Algerian president receives by turns the President of Ennahdha, *Rached Ghannouchi*, and the President of Nida Tounès, *Beji Caid Essebsi*, intending to play a role in "the approximation of viewpoints" concerning the National Dialogue.

November 15: Partisans of the Salafist movement organize a protest march, after the call of the committees of mosques and associations of Sidi Bouzid, to denounce unlawful conduct and arrests under the pretext of fighting against terrorism.

November 8: In the framework of the fight against terrorism, units of the National Army conduct operations of ground and air bombardments on the heights of the mountains *Chaâmbi* and *Sammama* in the governorate of Kasserine, using heavy artillery and aircraft.

November 7: The Minister of Justice, *Nadhir Ben Ammou*, conducts a mini-movement on the independent body of the judiciary which is responsible for the appointment, transfer and promotion of judges. The Association of Tunisian Magistrates expresses strong opposition and announces a general strike in addition to the rejection of these decisions. None of the judges appointed has taken office.

November 5: The president of the Tunisian League for Human Rights *Abdessattar Ben Moussa* highlights "the need to eradicate torture in our country" at the opening session of the Regional Forum on the Monitoring of Places of Detention in the MENA region (Middle East and North Africa). He adds that it is not acceptable to justify the persistence of torture by the threat of terrorism.

October 30: A suicide bomber blows himself up on a beach in Sousse. The suicide attack has not made any damage or casualties besides the bomber himself. Also, an assassination attempt against the mausoleum of *Habib Bourguiba* in Monastir is successfully aborted. Six terrorists in connection with the events of Sousse and Monastir are later arrested.

October 29: The World Bank publishes the report *Doing Business 2014*. Tunisia is, in spite of its economic difficulties, in good position. Ranked 51st in the world, it remains the number 1 in North Africa.

October 25: The national dialogue sponsored by the Quartet UGTT (General Union of Tunisian Workers) – UTICA (Tunisian Union of Industry, Trade and Craft) – LTDH (Tunisian League for the Defense of Human Rights) – ONAT (National Office of Tunisian Craft) is officially launched at the Ministry of Human Rights and Transitional Justice in the presence of representatives of the parties who signed the roadmap of the quartet.

October 23: After clashes with a group of jihadists in Sidi Ali Ben Aoun, Sidi Bouzid, six officers of the National Guard are assassinated.

October 17: Two officers of the National Guard are assassinated in a terrorist attack, whereas six terrorists are killed and two others arrested in Goubellat, Beja.

September 20: Ennahda expresses its will to accept the roadmap without conditions.

September 10: The quartet that supports the dialogue elaborates a roadmap concerning the demission of the government and the resumption of the work of the assembly.

August 30: The opposition gives propositions in response to the initiative of the National Dialogue.

August 22: Ennahda accepts the dissolution of the *Laarayedh* government and the constitution of a new government led by national competences with the maintenance of the National Assembly until October 23rd.

August 13: Following the intensification of the air raids of the National Army in Jebel Chaambi on the evening of Monday, August 12, six terrorists are killed and four others arrested, reports Shems FM.

August 6: President of the National Constituent Assembly (NCA) *Mustapha Ben Jaafar* decides to suspend the work of the Constituent until the beginning of a National Dialogue.

August 5: The General Union of Tunisian Workers (UGTT) issues a statement to ask all its members to take part in a massive demonstration on August 6 from the barracks Bouchoucha. It has been initiated by the Popular Front to demand the truth about the investigations in connection with the murder of *Chokri Belaid* and *Mohamed Brahmi*. This event is held six months after the murder of *Chokri Belaid* which remains unsolved so far.

August 3: The military conducts bombing operations in Jebel Chaambi against armed terrorists. It should be noted that aerial and ground bombardment in the areas Bir Ouled Nasrallah and Ras Ethour in the same region, have been triggered on the morning of Friday, August 2.

August 1: A security source announces the existence of about 80 terrorist cells on the Tunisian-Algerian border that communicates through encrypted messages. The same source tells the newspaper "Attounissiya" that these terrorist groups carry out operations of smuggling weapons and recruits. The members of these cells use traditional communication techniques, namely paper and encrypted messages on trees and rocks messages, while their leaders use fairly advanced communication technologies.

July 31: The National Constituent Assembly (ANC) holds a plenary session devoted to the examination of terrorism and political assassinations which have occurred in the country.

July 31: The Minister of Education, *Salem Labiadh*, declares his resignation from the government of *Ali Larayedh*, which will, however, be effective only after the current political crisis.

July 30 : The General Union of Tunisian Workers (UGTT) proposes an initiative to end the crisis.

July 29: Nine soldiers are killed in an ambush in Jebel Chambi. A three-day national mourning is declared.

July 27: A bomb hidden under a car of the National Guard explodes in La Goulette causing no casualties.

July 27: An activist of the leftist electoral alliance, the Popular Front, is killed in Gafsa during attempts of the Police to chase hundreds of protesters trying to invade the headquarters of the governorate.

July 27: The sit-in in Bardo called "the departure" in front of the National Constituent Assembly (ANC), organized by the opposition, starts. The sit-inners claim the dissolution of the government and the ANC.

July 27: Tensions have run high in Tunisia since *Brahmi's* assassination, thousands of protesters chanting anti-government slogans have joined the funeral march in the capital, Tunis. In the southern town of Sidi Bouzid, cradle of the country's revolution and hometown of slain opposition figure *Mohammed Brahmi*, the police fires teargas to disperse violent protests in which protesters light tires on fire to block roads and throw rocks at the police.

July 26: At a press conference in Tunis, in which several political parties are present, forty-two members of the ANC announce the freezing of their activities and their entry in an open sit-in until the dissolution of the ANC. These members make clear that this is a withdrawal and not a resignation, because in case of resignation, they will be replaced by other members who might be close to the Troika.

July 26: While calls for the fall of the government and the dissolution of the Constituent Assembly are underway, the Minister of the Interior announces that *Mohamed Brahmi* and *Chokri Belaïd* had been killed with the same weapon.

July 25: The day of the 56th Anniversary of the Proclamation of the Tunisian Republic, *Mohamed Brahmi*, a member of the ANC representing the governorate of Sidi Bouzid and the Popular Movement party, is assassinated in front of his house. The government decrees a national mourning and the UGTT announces a general strike for the morrow. The funeral will take place on July 27 in Djellaz cemetery in Tunis.

July 23: The Governor of the BCT presents the annual report of the Central Bank of Tunisia (BCT) for the year 2012 to the President of the Provisional Republic, *Mohamed Moncef Marzouki*. He announces that "Tunisia will succeed in the shortest possible time, to put its economy on a better path...it was noted in this regard the strengthening of positive indicators of the gradual recovery of the rhythm of growth in most sectors especially energy and services, which has allowed the achievement of a growth rate of 3.6% in 2012".

July 23: The national coordination of the *Tamarrod movement* (Rebellion) organizes a press conference in Sidi Bouzid. This movement calls for the dissolution of the National Constituent Assembly (ANC) and the formation of a Government of National Salvation. They estimate that the number of signatories can reach two million signatures toward the end of this month without specifying the date of the popular movement.

July 22: The National Union of Internal Security Forces files two complaints against the former chief of staff of the army *Rachid Ammar*, the former president, *Fouad Mebazaa*, and former Prime Minister *Mohamed Ghannouchi*, accusing these former officials of "conspiracy against the security of the state". The union also addresses the same charge to Colonel *Ahmed Chabir*, who held the post of General Director of the National Security after the December 17 Revolution, and the owner of the private television channel "Hannibal TV", *Arbi Nasra*.

July 16: *Khaskhoussi Ahmed*, Member of the Movement of Socialist Democrats, announces his resignation from the National Constituent Assembly. He says: "The Constituent Assembly did not meet its moral and even legal commitment to remain in place for only one year, and did not meet either its commitment to write a constitution".

July 10: The High Coordination Committee of the ruling coalition says it is "very concerned" about the events in Egypt, describing them as "unfortunate". It also calls all Egyptian forces to avoid bloodshed and to respect the popular will in order to reconnect with "the democratic legitimacy and initiate a National Dialogue on the basis of the objectives of the revolution of 25 January 2011".

July 9: After a meeting with the Minister of Defense, *Mr. Moncef Marzouki*, Interim President of the Republic and Supreme Commander of the armed forces, decides to appoint *Mr. Mohamed Salah Hamdi* as a new Chief of Staff of the Territorial Army in order to replace *Mr. Rachid Ammar* who has recently resigned.

July 4: The President of the French Republic, *François Hollande*, pays a state visit to Tunisia at the invitation of President *Moncef Marzouki*, the 4th and 5th of July. To help the Tunisian economy to recover, *Hollande* announces the conversion of 60 million Euros of debt into investments in the country. He also awards 500 million Euros in loans and grants. This support is significant for Tunisia, a country whose debt to France amounted to one billion Euros.

June 28: The Interior Ministry strongly condemns the attack on a journalist on June 27 in the National Constituent Assembly on the sidelines of the opening of the discussion of the Draft Law of the Immunization of the Revolution. The Ministry of Interior decides in coordination with judicial authorities to open an investigation on the attack against the journalist *Adnene Chaouachi*.

June 27: The eighth Criminal Court to the Court of Appeal of Tunis issues its verdict in the trial of three "FEMEN". The decision was revised to four months and just one day suspended sentence instead of four months and one day in prison. To recap, three activists "FEMEN" European demonstrated topless in Tunis on May 29 to demand the release of the young "FEMEN" Tunisian Amina who is still in detention.

June 25: *Rachid Amar*, chief of staff of the Tunisian armed forces, submits his resignation to the president.

June 18: For two days, nearly 300 associations and 74 political parties have led the "National Congress Struggle against Violence and Terrorism". *Ghazi Ghrairi*, general coordinator of the long-awaited conference has become a necessity and a priority following the events that rocked and still rocking the region of Kasserine, including Jebal Chaâmbi, this gathering aims to establish a national charter against violence and the creation of an observatory against violence which will be responsible for collecting and documenting violations and assaults.

June 13: *Wided Bouchamaoui*, President of the Tunisian Union of Industry, Trade and Craft (UTICA) calls the International Labour Office (ILO) to further strengthen its support to the Tunisian social partners to implement the various axes of the social contract, which was signed on 14 January between UGTT, UTICA and the Tunisian government.

June 8: The democratic transition in Tunisia, the cradle of the Arab Spring and challenges to political, security, economic and social levels, are the focus of a roundtable at the Institute of Political Science in Berlin, in the presence of *Ali Larayedh*, the Chief of the provisional government.

June 6: The Deputies who have called for the dissolution of the National Constituent Assembly (NCA) have to resign, because nobody has the legal power to dissolve the Assembly. This is expressed by the constitutional law professor *Kais Said*.

June 5: More than 2300 jihadists, 300 of them from Mali, return back home. This is announced by *Neji Jalloul*, Islamic history teacher and member of Al Jomhuri. The university professor says that the fighters need psychological, social and cultural rehabilitation: "These jihadists need to have an income to avoid becoming instruments of death". *Mr. Jalloul* says it is necessary to follow the path of every Mujahid and get an idea of his training, and to maintain a dialogue with him and return it to the Tunisian society.

June 4: The President of the Republic *Moncef Marzouki* decides to extend by one month the state of emergency.

June 3: Some deputies of the National Assembly led by *Smir Ettaib* may introduce a complaint to the administrative court against the President of the Assembly seeing that the draft of the constitution is “dangerous”.

June 2 : A Chief Warrant Officer of the National Army is killed in Jebel Chaambi, after being shot mistakenly seven times through another security force. *Mokhtar Mbarki* from Kasserine walks away from his comrades in the night, before resuming his position. After being arrested by the other members, the deceased has not obeyed the orders to say the password and was shot on the spot.

May 21: At the opening session of the 13th session of the Doha Forum, *Ali Larayedh* says that Tunisia goes well. He affirms that the economic situation is on the road to recovery (rate of inflation is under control, rate of growth 3,6% and unemployment is reduced by 2,2%). According to the Prime Minister, the elections will not exceed the end of this year.

May 20: Two young men from the radical *Ansar Sharia Movement* die in clashes with the security forces in the city Ettadhamen in the governorate of Ariana.

May 16: At the opening of the second phase of the National Dialogue, organized by the General Union of Tunisian Workers (UGTT), the provisional president of the Republic, *Moncef Marzouki*, clearly expresses his position on the Niqab in universities, after first defending the diversity and acceptance of differences, he insists to not judge others by their appearance or beliefs.

May 13: *Ilyes Fakhfakh*, Minister of Finance, launches the National Dialogue on reform of the tax system. “This review is part of a series of other economic and structural reforms initiated by the government”, says the Minister.

May 13: *Ridha Saidi*, Minister in charge of Economic Issues, calls for accelerating "the development of a legal framework for partnership between the public and private sectors (PPP) in order to reduce the burden of the public sector", adding that the PPP contracts must meet certain conditions to ensure fairness, transparency and equal opportunities.

May 9: During a dialogue session with the interim government, dedicated to the security situation in the country, *Laârayedh* expresses the determination of the security forces and the army to pursue terrorists holed up in Jebel Chaâmbi (Kasserine); to capture and bring them to justice.

May 3: Seventeen months after its promulgation, the Decree Law 116 will finally be implemented: The President of the Republic announces the composition of the Independent High Authority of Audiovisual Communication of which university professor *Nouri Lejmi* takes the lead.

April 29: An explosion of two mines at Jebel Chaambi results in one soldier and two National Guards being severely injured.

April 22: The ANC and the commission of executive and legislative powers agree on a mixed political system. The commission of the legislature, the executive and the relationship between the two opts for a mixed political system characterized by a dual executive power based on the balance of power at the head of the executive.

April 4: The fourth meeting of the Council of Arab Ministers of Finance, held from 2 to 4 April in Dubai (UAE), accepts the request of Tunisia to host the annual meetings of the Council in 2014.

April 4: Tunisia and the International Islamic Trade Finance Corporation sign a mutual framework agreement on the financing of companies.

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