



# Public Opinion Research – Citizens of Tunisia Express Their Views

January 22 – 29, 2015



# Research Objectives & Context

- **Determine Tunisian citizens' attitudes on a range of issues** in order to provide political and civic leadership with timely and objective information.

Key themes include:

- Attitudes about the direction of the country and priorities that affect citizen's daily lives;
- Reflections on the 2014 electoral process and results;
- Expectations for newly elected and appointed political leaders; and,
- Views on Tunisia's progress in its transition to democracy.



# Methodology

- **Focus groups are used to understand prevalent attitudes** among various social groups and examine in-depth the reasons for those attitudes
- **Focus group research is qualitative, not quantitative**
- **Attitudes identified can be attributed only to the participants;** samples are not representative
- **Discussion guide developed by NDI, in consultation with ELKA Consulting**



# Methodology

- **Fieldwork** conducted from January 22 – 29
- **4 cities selected:** Greater Tunis, Jendouba, Medenine, Sousse
- **Participants recruited at 5 sample points** across each city
- **ELKA recruiters selected participants** by engaging pedestrians on the street
- **Selection criteria:**
  - Three groups per city: 1) mixed youth 25-34; 2) women 35+; 3) men 35+
  - Equal distribution was a goal from each sample point



# Participant Profiles

- **133 participants** from Greater Tunis, Jendouba, Medenine, Sousse

- **Nine to twelve participants** per group

- **Diversity** of ages, professions and neighborhoods within each group

Voting History	Count
Voter	84
Partial voter	15
Non-voter	34

Gender	Count
Female	65
Male	68
Age	Count
25-34	46
+35	87
Profession	Count
Employed	82
Unemployed	22
Retired	11
Homemaker	16
Student	2
Education	Count
University	59
Secondary	55
Primary	14
None	5

# Direction of the Country

**In the aftermath of the 2014 elections, participants continue to view the country as headed in the wrong direction, citing unemployment, high prices, corruption, and insecurity.**

**“The urgent needs of the citizen right now are economic controls: the limitation of prices, smuggling, parallel commerce, transportation for isolated regions, repairing roads, and preparing for floods. These are the immediate and direct needs and then would come employment and education.”** Male, 44, Sousse, Employed, Voter

**“The issue of security is very urgent. It is very important to protect people in schools, at work, or at home.”** Male, 66, Tunis, Retired, Voter

**“Actually all the sectors—transport, health, education—are suffering. This is the outcome of the revolution of January 14th, 2011. Everybody felt free to do whatever they wanted. Chaos reigned.”** Female, 62, Tunis, Retired, Voter

**“Capitalism became ferocious: rich people became richer and poor people became poorer. Politicians are responsible for this situation. If they only tried to fulfill the objectives of the revolution by applying social justice and creating jobs for all the people, we would not be living in these conditions.”** Male, 34, Medenine, Unemployed, Voter

**“Corrupt people should have been judged and this has not happened yet. Everyone is responsible for this: the government, civil society organizations, and mainly citizens. I believe that citizens forgot this issue by going to vote quietly, forgiving those who were behind their suffering.”** Female, 34, Jendouba, Employed, Partial voter

**“The municipality used to work and control everything so why is this not the same anymore? Things changed after the revolution. Our streets are dirty, people are jobless, the police officers are not firm enough.”** Female, 47, Jendouba, Employed, Non-voter

# Direction of the Country

**Participants view the elections as a success that could lead to positive change. Political freedoms resulting from the revolution are celebrated and seen as protected.**

**“The democratic transition [is going in the right direction].... I’m speaking about the initial steps, i.e. the elections and the handover of power from government to government in this peaceful stage. This makes it go in the right direction.”** Male, 43, Medenine, Employed, Voter

**“The political transition is going in the right way. We can’t know who’s going to win the elections before the final results. All parties are represented in the constituent assembly like in democratic countries.”** Female, 29, Sousse, Employed, Non-voter

**“We are currently enjoying freedoms after years of despotism and repression. Individuals and communities have been ruled with an iron fist. The regime monopolized power, the administration, everything. Now, there has been a ‘Tunisian leap’ and this political direction is positive. We shouldn’t panic because it is temporary.”** Male, 66, Tunis, Retired, Voter

**“It is true that there are so many things that went wrong, if not to say sank deeply, but darkness shouldn’t cover the positive side of what we have achieved until now, such as the breaking of the fear barrier. Who dared before to remove Ben Ali’s picture or even touch it! Now, psychologically speaking, we’re feeling better since we could defeat that terrible feeling of fear of the authorities.”** Female, 30, Tunis, Employed, Partial voter

**“I think everything is a failure except for the democratic transition. The reason this transition is going in the right direction is the awareness of the people.”** Male, 30, Jendouba, Employed, Non-voter

**“Political tension among the parties peaks in every period before the elections. The elections happened and they were fair and legitimate, so calm reigned again.”** Female, 35, Jendouba, Unemployed, Voter

# Direction of the Country

**Some believe that freedom of expression has become excessive. An improved future for many participants depends on changing citizens' mentalities to achieve greater respect, patience, and personal responsibility, especially during daily interactions.**

**"The country is so dirty. The streets are dirty. The streets are pervaded with bad language. There is no room for movement in the street. There is no space so a woman cannot even walk in the street. There isn't respect anymore neither for people in the administration nor for women. People respect neither managers nor employees anymore. They have misunderstood the revolution."** Female, 51, Jendouba, Employed, Voter

**"I would call this the Tunisian frustration instead of freedom. The Tunisian citizen said 'dégage' because he had been frustrated for a long time, but unfortunately we are employing it the wrong way."** Female, 29, Tunis, Employed, Partial voter

**"The only change that is really visible is the freedom of expression even though I hate it sometimes because sometimes it's no longer freedom of expression. On TV programs, we sometimes see people insulting each other. We teach respect to children at school but there are people who still don't know how to respect others' opinions. I can disagree with you but I have to respect your opinion."** Female, 44, Medenine, Employed, Voter

**"It's as if we were attached by chains and suddenly we were set free. It's good to be free but sometimes we see that freedom becomes excessive. Now we hear so much news and we don't know what's right. There are no limits anymore, no control."** Male, 42, Jendouba, Employed, Voter

**"A normal Tunisian family whose son starts praying suddenly or spends all his time in the mosque or whose daughter wears burqa would become very happy with him or her. Two months or two years later they go to Syria and the family is shocked and cries for help. Where have they been when their children changed?"** Female, 29, Sousse, Employed, Non-voter

**"It is true that the situation is miserable but this can't be changed overnight. This can't change if you don't reform yourself. If you are in a miserable condition and want to progress, you have to raise yourself to the level that can make you improve yourself."** Female, 45, Jendouba, Employed, Voter



# Governance: Parliament

**Participants want MPs to work in a collaborative and transparent manner while communicating regularly with constituents. Politicians should avoid inane disputes and focus on fulfilling their responsibilities.**

**“This is the job of MPs. They have to go to the regions they’re supposed to represent twice per week in order not only to talk to the citizens but also to visit different places and report on their situation. They can do the reports either via telephone or fax or in person. In this case, they would inform the government about the health sector, the economic sector, the market situation in Medenine. MPs are the only people able to report on the situation of the regions they represent. They know their respective regions quite well.”** Male, 31, Medenine, Employed, Voter

**“I would remind him that as soon as the deputy is elected, he becomes deputy on behalf of the whole nation.”** Male, 60, Medenine, Retired, Voter

**“When the political scene stabilizes, other social and economic concerns will follow. If politicians reach consensus—which Tunisia requires for a decade or two—it means they would disregard the majority/minority duality and the partisan quotas. Tunisia would be our ultimate concern.”** Male, 66, Tunis, Retired, Voter

**“The parliament should prepare a plan of action. They shouldn’t think of a complementary budget. They should have a clear plan. Now we should have a budget every three months. We can spend only with a clear budget every three months.”** Male, 53, Jendouba, Employed, Voter

**“The members of parliament should be more active, starting now, to prepare the atmosphere for the government to be appointed and approved.”** Male, 62, Sousse, Retired, Voter

**“They should abstain from sophistry and the tension-laden partisan speeches. They should put the public interest first.”** Male, 36, Medenine, Employed, Non-voter

**“The ratification of the laws that can’t wait, like the law on terrorism, their internal law, the constitutional court, reform of the judicial system, and the establishment of a high council for justice... these are urgent files that [the parliament] must deal with quickly to be able after that to take care of the economy, social reforms, etc.”** Male, 62, Sousse, Retired, Voter

# Governance: Government

**Though the formation of the government was met with confusion and cynicism, participants still hope that ministers will govern proactively. Participants are eager to see immediate actions by the new government that will translate into results in the short term.**

**“Nidaa [Tounes] and Ennahda have to work together for a period of time so that the situation improves in the country.”** Male, 47, Jendouba, Employed, Voter

**“The left is totally absent. We can’t understand this perplexing government.”** Female, 37, Sousse, Employed, Partial voter

**“Nidaa shouldn’t fail because it has three authorities.<sup>1</sup>”** Male, 25, Tunis, Student, Voter

**“We don’t like our government to be in this weak situation ensuring the demands of its people only when they fear their protest. I don’t like the government to understand its people only when they kill themselves or destroy their environment.”** Female, 30, Medenine, Employed, Voter

**“As a recently composed government, it is not bad because it is composed of new faces.... I liked this government, especially because its members do not belong to only one party.”** Female, 39, Sousse, Homemaker, Non-voter

**“No one should participate in the government; the party that won the elections should govern.”** Male, 57, Jendouba, Employed, Voter

**“The results of the elections showed that there are two big parties. So, it’s better if they work together.”** Male, 42, Jendouba, Employed, Voter

**“When power is divided between different parties, they would at least observe each other; unlike when it is monopolized by one party when a lot of mistakes might occur without being observed.”** Female, 27, Jendouba, Student, Voter

**“[Nidaa Tounes] should involve other parties in their work so as to avoid conflicts and also because it’s difficult for one party to work by itself.”** Female, 42, Tunis, Employed, Voter

<sup>1</sup> The three authorities likely refer to the parliament, the government (cabinet), and the presidency.

# Governance: Economy

## High unemployment and inflation are top economic concerns.

**“Why have we made the revolution? Because there are so many unemployed young people that desperately need to work. Well, the outcome is that these young people are still unemployed, while those who have stable jobs are asking for higher wages.”** Female, 30, Tunis, Employed, Partial voter

**“We made a revolution because we wanted prices to decrease, to find a job and to be able to live even on a 200 dinar salary, but we didn’t achieve that.”** Male, 28, Sousse, Unemployed, Voter

**“Concerning prices, it’s clear that the rising prices are due to people who sell goods without paying taxes and who are not supervised.”** Male, 47, Jendouba, Employed, Voter

**“The company where I work stopped because of the overall situation. They said we had to wait for the tendencies of the new government to become clear. Our import-export activities are tightly linked to the government. We depend on it. When the government policies are fine, investors will cooperate with us.”** Female, 47, Tunis, Employed, Voter

**“I think the most important issue to be addressed is unemployment.... When people are working, they would not think about doing evil things.”** Female, 30, Medenine, Employed, Voter

**“Those who didn’t study are the lucky ones in this country. Sometimes a person who doesn’t even have a bachelor’s degree has a better position than a university graduate.”** Female, 34, Sousse, Employed, Voter

**“The situation in Libya affected our economy and citizens see goods but can’t buy them.”** Female, 44, Medenine, Employed, Voter

**“[In comparison to Algerians], Tunisians like to work. They work harder when they’re well paid. Tunisians just deal with it the way it is: whether they work or don’t, they’re still not well paid. That’s why they do their jobs leisurely.”** Female, 42, Tunis, Employed, Voter

# Governance: Economy (cont'd)

**Regardless of whether they inhabit coastal or interior regions, participants view regional development as a priority.**

**“[The president] should deliver a speech that comforts the people by emphasizing that he’s the president of all Tunisians without exceptions and that he’d specify the same budget for Monastir and Sousse, their favorite cities, as for Medenine and other cities in the South like Gafsa, Sidi Bouzid, and Kasserine.”** Male, 31, Medenine, Employed, Voter

**“I call for equality, equality, and equality. It’s not acceptable for the government to invest only in Tunis, Sousse, and Gabès and not in the south or the north of the country. When the government, for instance, invests in Sousse and creates about 3,000 jobs, it should do the same in Jendouba or Kef. This way we would decrease crowding in the capital Tunis as well as migration.”** Female, 29, Tunis, Employed, Partial voter

**“Medenine has touristic significance, Tataouine has petrol production, and Gafsa has phosphate production. These are the three governorates that support the economy the most but they are the most marginalized regions as well. It would have been better if the government had allocated, for example, five percent of the revenues contributed by the regions to promote the regions themselves. You would see then what can happen to economic growth.”** Male, 43, Medenine, Employed, Voter

**“Coastal cities in the North and the East are privileged while the West is underprivileged. A new model should be introduced. We can divide the country into production centers, thus bridging the gap between East and West. Consequently, problems like tax evasion will shrink.”** Male, 36, Tunis, Employed, Partial voter

**“There is an inclination against the Sahel and in particular against Sousse....Sousse will not put up with this. It will continue to be one of Tunisia’s lights.”** Male, 62, Sousse, Retired, Voter

**“[President Béji Caïd Essebsi] should visit all regions from North to South and it’s better if he starts with the South.”** Female, 42, Medenine, Employed, Partial voter

# Governance: Economy (cont'd)

**Ideas proposed by participants to expand economic opportunities include: lowering the retirement age, encouraging foreign investment, easing regulations, increasing unemployment payments, and loosening loan requirements.**

**“[The parliament] should reconsider the age of retirement: instead of 62, they should make it 55, just as in the company where I used to work. I was the first to retire. This would create the opportunity for the youth to get employed.”** Female, 62, Tunis, Retired, Voter

**“We need to work more on encouraging both local and foreign investments. For that we need more security and stability, especially political stability, which can only be achieved by a large political coalition among political parties for the coming 20 years.”** Male, 66, Tunis, Retired, Voter

**“We need foreign investors since Tunisian businessmen are hiding their money and don't want to help. We also need loans and grants.”** Female, 29, Sousse, Employed, Non-voter

**“Instead of giving 120 dinars to an employed person, they should offer him a job. In Jendouba we have 24,000 unemployed people and each of them gets 120 dinars from the government. This sum is not enough for a family to live. It's not even enough for a person to buy cookies. So instead of giving 120 dinars to each of them, the government should invest in a project where these people will work. They will earn more than 120 dinars and this will increase consumption too. There's a Chinese proverb 'Give a man a fish, you feed him for a day. Teach him to fish, and you feed him for life.'”** Male, 42, Jendouba, Employed, Voter

**“[Politicians] should ensure equal opportunities.”** Female, 34, Jendouba, Employed, Partial voter

**“[The parliament] should simplify procedures so that people get jobs.”** Male, 34, Sousse, Employed, Voter

# Governance: Security

**Terrorism and crime are prominent concerns for participants, who link insecurity to lack of economic opportunity.**

**“The economy collapsed because of terrorism and terrorism relies on the youth who found it their only resource because they were living in misery.”** Female, 55, Tunis, Homemaker, Non-voter

**“Criminality is still prevalent. People are afraid. In the past, we could fearlessly go out at night and go back home late. Now, we are frightened. We are worried about our daughters. We get reassured only when they come back home safely.”** Female, 52, Sousse, Homemaker, Voter

**“Robbery and criminality are widespread, which is partly caused by poverty and unemployment. Most of the youth are needy and unemployed.”** Female, 35, Sousse, Employed, Partial voter

**“We never heard about terrorism during the era of the ousted president. It’s true that we were frustrated and we couldn’t express ourselves but we were secure. Girls could go out late at night and come home by dawn and nothing bad happened to them, while now they have to go back home before 8 PM. Now there is terrorism and murder. Even policemen have become frightened.”** Female, 29, Tunis, Employed, Partial voter

**“We love the army and we thank them because they sacrifice for our sake. They dwell in the mountains and they die for us. The army and the security forces are sacrificing. They are in the mountains in the snow.”** Female, 51, Jendouba, Employed, Voter

**“The problem is not between citizens and terrorists, but between terrorists and policemen.”** Male, 28, Unemployed, Non-voter

**“Fortunately we don’t have any problems in Medenine, we can go out at night without being afraid.”** Female, 42, Medenine, Employed, Voter

# Governance: Security (cont'd)

**Participants hope that new leaders will reform the security sector, particularly the Ministry of Interior, and push the police to be more proactive in addressing crime and terrorism.**

**“Security for me is not only a policeman in the street. Everyone should play a part and should be involved to achieve a comprehensive approach to security.”** Male, 56, Tunis, Employed, Voter

**“They should also dismiss the corrupt people working in the Ministry of Interior or its departments and replace them with competent people.”** Female, 62, Tunis, Retired, Voter

**“[Parliament] should increase the salaries of security forces and also protect their lives so that they would feel confident to do their jobs in an efficient way.”** Female, 48, Tunis, Homemaker, Voter

**“I hope that the Ministry of Interior intensifies ID checking, day and night, so that we would feel more secure.”** Female, 42, Tunis, Employed, Voter

**“They should train and educate police officers. This is the first thing that should be done.”** Female, 42, Sousse, Employed, Non-voter

**“The death sentence must be enacted for terrorism.”** Female, 39, Sousse, Homemaker, Non-voter

**“The parliament should accredit the law issued by the Ministry of Interior allowing police officers to hold their arms while they’re off duty. In this way, they would feel protected and do their jobs better.”** Male, 27, Jendouba, Employed, Non-voter

**“We should not wait for terrorism to come to us. The parliament should issue laws that the Ministries of Interior and Defense would implement by going to the places where terrorists are hiding and executing them immediately.”** Male, 28, Jendouba, Unemployed, Voter

**“[The president] should implement the law on terrorism, improve social conditions and work conditions [for security forces] and protect them, but at the same time, restrict them with a law to keep them from becoming too powerful.”** Female, 45, Jendouba, Employed, Voter

# Governance: Corruption

**Participants are highly frustrated with persistent corruption and concerned about its impact on the economy.**

**“I can only describe Tunis with one word: the source of corruption....moral, social, and environmental. Well, corruption in everything.”** Female, 29, Tunis, Employed, Partial voter

**“Corruption and bribery still exist. Personal acquaintances are the only way to get employed. Those who don’t know anybody important remain jobless....If corrupt people were judged, jobless people could have been employed at least based on their competence.”** Female, 29, Medenine, Unemployed, Voter

**“People don’t resort to bribery if they’re well paid and their living conditions are decent. Actually, we push them to steal and then we blame them for stealing! Why are people who steal millions not judged and those who steal 10 dinars grow old in prison?”** Female, 42, Tunis, Employed, Voter

**“When I was in high school, I had to bribe the administrative agent with 500 millimes to give me an authorization to get into the classroom after being absent. This means that any simple employee could be bribed with even the tiniest amount of money you give him. How could we blame the authorities then? If you ask the Tunisian people about their ultimate concern, they would say that they were affected mostly by bribery and corruption, but they still indirectly encourage the existence of these practices.”** Female, 30, Tunis, Employed, Partial voter

**“Few competent employees merit their positions in Tunisia. I mean, if a relative favored me to hold a certain post, I would wave my hands in rejection and show him a more competent person.”** Male, 56, Tunis, Employed, Voter

**“If there’s no bribery, the situation will improve. We can do what some foreign countries do. For example, they can give [a policeman] part of the fines that he records. Let me explain: for example, if a policeman makes offenders pay a sum of 3,000 dinars, the government gives him a percentage which is the sum of 300 dinars, for example. Policemen won’t take bribes anymore, and at the same time, citizens will apply the law so that they don’t pay fines.”** Female, 29, Sousse, Employed, Non-voter



# Governance: Education

**Many feel that the standard of Tunisian education has declined and call for system-wide reforms to public education.**

**“Our problem lies in the way we think; we always tend to educate our children so that they grow up to hold posts in administrations. But there are no more positions of this kind and the government is unable to create more jobs in this category.”** Female, 34, Jendouba, Employed, Partial voter

**“The education sector became so disappointing.... We were not like this before! Education is improving in other countries, why not in Tunisia?”** Female, 29, Medenine, Unemployed, Voter

**“Concerning education, we have universities in Medenine but their degrees are not really recognized by employers. In job interviews, they ask applicants where they graduated. If they are graduates from universities in Sousse or Tunis they can have the job and if they graduated from a university in Medenine it’s very hard for them to be employed.”** Female, 44, Medenine, Employed, Voter

**“We can say that the only sector that did not profit from the revolution’s condition is the sector of education.... If we want to reform this wholly dysfunctional system through education, new attention must be given to meanings, to values and curricula.”** Male, 47, Medenine, Employed, Voter

**“[Committing suicide] has become so common among young people in secondary schools. I think they should employ psychotherapists in schools. This could be a solution for some of students’ problems.”** Female, 34, Sousse, Employed, Voter

**“I think they should organize national exams according to specialties. I mean that when someone sits for an exam he can find questions about subjects that he studied.”** Female, 30, Sousse, Homemaker, Voter

**“Education also is not going right. Teachers who are well employed and regularly paid go on strikes while jobless people who don’t have salaries would not dare to protest in this way. Pupils suffer from these strikes. Besides, in the case of my son, the French teacher has been absent for ten weeks. She only came during the exam period! My son cannot read. What should he be blamed for?”** Female, 48, Tunis, 17  
Homemaker, Voter

# Governance: Health

**The health sector is seen as in decline, particularly outside of the capital. Participants yearn for improvements to public hospitals and for more resources to be allocated to hospitals in interior regions.**

**“The local hospital, as my friends said, is terrible. There were catastrophes in the maternity department. People no longer trust this hospital. There were deaths in this hospital.”** Female, 30, Medenine, Unemployed, Voter

**“Another important point is infrastructure and pollution. Recently I gave birth to my baby in Wassila Bourguiba hospital. I was sleeping and a piece of the roof fell on me.”** Female, 30, Sousse, Homemaker, Voter

**“A lot of equipment is missing. Patients here have to go to Tunis to have some tests done and sometimes they can’t afford to do so.”** Female, 32, Medenine, Unemployed, Voter

**“Our hospitals are not equipped like hospitals in Tunis. They should do something in this regard. Some blood tests can be done only in Tunis.”** Female, 40, Medenine, Employed, Voter

**“The health sector is also going wrong. Last night, I heard on the radio that there’s a machine specialized for treating cancer that should have been introduced in [a public] hospital; but unfortunately, they gave it to a private clinic! Why can’t poor people be cured in hospitals? Clinics do not need more equipment! One of our relatives has cancer and he was about to die; why can’t he benefit from this kind of health care? The minister of health is responsible for this situation. Where is he anyway?”** Female, 54, Tunis, Employed, Voter

**“The health sector should recall its heyday when Bourguiba used to employ famous professors in state hospitals and paid them so well that they wouldn’t go to the private sector. Now, all the professors left the hospitals, leaving their places for non-competent youth who caused the whole sector to collapse. We need these professors, now, for their experience.”** Female, 42, Tunis, Employed, Voter

**“We used to have doctors who were known all over the world. We used to be an important destination for health care seekers. Now, the sector is demolished!”** Female, 42, Tunis, Employed, Voter

# Governance: Presidency

**The president's priorities are seen by participants as close to his constitutional mandate: foreign affairs, security, and national unity. Some want the president to be involved in the economy.**

**“There are people who think that since they didn’t vote for [Essebsi] he would not try to develop the regions or improve their situation. So he should convince the people that he’s the president of all Tunisians.”** Female, 30, Medenine, Unemployed, Voter

**“People should first understand that the president doesn’t have the same prerogatives as Ben Ali. I think that his priority should be foreign relations.”** Female, 29, Sousse, Employed, Non-voter

**“Those who voted for him did so because they really think that he will be the father of all Tunisians just like Bourguiba. He has a good heart like Bourguiba and will love all Tunisians. I hope this will be true.”** Female, 45, Medenine, Employed, Voter

**“During the electoral campaign, I watched a scene that is still impressed in my mind: Essebsi went to the market, saw how expensive the prices were, and went into tears. I hope that that image was honest and those tears were sincere.”** Female, 42, Sousse, Employed, Voter

**“We may discuss things and criticize people but the president must be untouchable. We mustn’t mock or parody him. I’m not involved in politics, but when I see a president being mocked, I feel a deep pain. I feel as if I were crying in the inside. Because that person is supposed to be our father, the father of all of us.”** Female, 39, Sousse, Homemaker, Non-voter

**“He should seek to improve economic, social, and political relations between Tunisia and other countries.”** Female, 34, Jendouba, Employed, Partial voter

**“The president should be young, competent, and well-experienced. Essebsi...would remain our source of wisdom, just like in Britain, where they consult their elder politicians for advice on certain issues.”** Female, 42, Tunis, Employed, Voter

# Governance: Foreign Affairs

**The president should restore the country's image and prestige abroad through building relations with other countries. Participants place an emphasis on economic diplomacy to attract foreign investment and create jobs at home.**

**"He should stop the flow of Tunisian young boys and girls going for jihad in Syria!"** Female, 62, Tunis, Retired, Voter

**"He should work on retrieving our stolen national financial resources so that our national bank could be more powerful."** Female, 62, Tunis, Retired, Voter

**"Our policy has to be of non-interference in foreign affairs, no matter what happens."** Male, 49, Jendouba, Employed, Voter

**"Regaining the money that the old regime had smuggled to other countries in addition to the money coming out of selling the properties of the old regime. The collected money should be used to create projects."** Male, 28, Jendouba, Unemployed, Voter

**"First of all, he should restore the prestige of the government, so that Tunisia regains its status at home and also abroad."** Female, 42, Sousse, Homemaker, Voter

**"I heard [other participants] saying [the president] should bring money to the country, but the question is 'how would he bring this money?' We mustn't borrow other loans. We have to attract foreign businessmen instead. If you take loans, you pay interest rates, but if we attract investors we decrease unemployment."** Male, 35, Sousse, Employed, Non-voter

**"He should start with neighbors, mainly Algeria and Libya. Most of the problems we have come from Libya. He has to improve relations with these countries."** Female, 27, Jendouba, Unemployed, Non-voter

**"We have a 'diseased lung' which is Libya. It used to be a field of investment. There must be strategies targeting work, investments, and hospitality so we can promote the region in partnership with our neighbor Libya."** Male, 53, Medenine, Unemployed, Voter

# Local Views: Jendouba

**Participants from Jendouba feel acutely marginalized, believing that economic and security conditions in the governorate are far below average. They want to work and make use of their unused potential and resources.**

**“In other regions, there are always demonstrations and riots and people are expressing themselves. In Jendouba, people are always silent about everything. Why would the government pay attention to us?”**  
Female, 27, Jendouba, Student, Voter

**“In the 1980s, Jendouba was called Kuwait by people living in Tunis and the coastal areas. It was the only city providing the whole country with vegetables. Step by step, it lost this importance.... the raw materials for agricultural production became so expensive. Before, growing potatoes or onions was much easier.”** Male, 28, Jendouba, Unemployed, Voter

**“Jendouba is rich with places and activities. We have interesting green tourism here. We have great forests and we have ideas that we can develop to create good projects. Our real problem is that when we’re compared to people from Sfax or the coastal areas, we come to be insignificant because these people are really hard workers. They’re keen on creating projects.”** Female, 34, Jendouba, Employed, Partial voter

**“Jendouba is remembered twice per year: once in summer when they come to collect wheat and barley and once in October to collect olives!”** Male, 27, Jendouba, Employed, Non-voter

**“[Coastal] cities enjoy more resources than we do here! They have resources that they can use. How is this difference our responsibility? How can we be deprived on the grounds that we’re not hard workers?”** Male, 31, Jendouba, Employed, Voter

**“Even when they want to invest, they go to the governorate and they don’t find enough incentives so they give up. We produce wheat, but we don’t have factories to produce pasta. They take wheat to other regions in order to do this and of course this costs money. Why don’t they invest in companies producing pasta, for example, so that they don’t spend money to transport wheat?”** Male, 45, Jendouba, Employed, Partial voter

# Local Views: Medenine

**Medenine residents fear that the election results will divide the country and that the deterioration in Libya will have ill effects. Strong community ties are cited as a reason for optimism.**

**“All the people without exception should be satisfied with the ruler and not just 50% of the population. In this case, we should have a president that all parties agree upon within a definite compromise.”** Male, 31, Medenine, Employed, Voter

**“We don’t have universities; we just have three or four higher institutes. There are no companies, no factories, no job opportunities. We just depend on Libya. If the borders are open, we benefit from this. If not, we just remain waiting.”** Female, 29, Medenine, Unemployed, Voter

**“Medenine has the lowest rate of strikes compared to other regions with all respect to these regions. The reason is that our people do have a high self-esteem; we’re patient about our situation. Our youth try to work harder through trade with Libya which is full of risks, actually. Our silence, however, does not mean that we’re satisfied. We do like to create new projects and develop our city.”** Female, 30, Medenine, Unemployed, Voter

**“We don’t go on strikes. People in other cities protest all the time by creating chaos and destroying properties to reach their goals and the government hurries to fulfill their demands.”** Female, 30, Medenine, Employed, Voter

**“I ask Béji Caïd Essebsi to be the father of all Tunisians and win their trust, especially those who didn’t vote for him. I want him to make them change their minds and see that they were wrong when they didn’t vote for him.”** Female, 45, Medenine, Employed, Voter

**“The presidential projects included a free market in this place where Libyans and Tunisians could exchange goods. This remained on paper. Why should people resort to smuggling while they could do it legally? Actually, we can’t call it smuggling because these people engage themselves in simple trade operations by buying 20 to 100 cans of fuel from Libya and selling them in Tunisia. They trade in fuel, carpets, and TVs. It’s not drugs or weapons.”** Male, 31, Medenine, Employed, Voter

# Local Views: Sousse

**Participants in Sousse are mostly satisfied with the election results and recognize that their region is better off than many, but perceive the area to be in decline. They are particularly concerned with security (terrorism and crime).**

**“Sousse is different from other places; at the level of cleanness, Sousse is cleaner than the other regions. At the level of employment, the rate in Sousse is higher than elsewhere.”** Female, 42, Sousse, Employed, Non-voter

**“The regression of tourism would inevitably harm employment, because lots of people are working in this sector. Many families here on the coast have been badly affected by the recess of tourism.”** Female, 42, Sousse, Homemaker, Voter

**“Sousse is better; at least we have more opportunities concerning jobs. The problem is that those who really work in Sousse come from other regions; they work hard and take their money back home during the Eid. People from Sousse prefer sitting in coffee shops doing nothing or going to hotels and enjoying themselves. So, we don’t really get any advantages from these jobs.”** Female, 29, Sousse, Employed, Non-voter

**“Sousse is not a paradise as many people may think. I can show you some neighborhoods where the situation is so bad.”** Male, 27, Sousse, Employed, Partial voter

**“Sousse is envied for its climate and its sea, but when you visit the remote and the interior parts of Sousse, you find it is similar and equal to Sidi Bouzid.”** Male, 57, Sousse, Retired, Voter

**“Dirt is omnipresent. There are many things missing. How can you talk about improving tourism if the road linking Sousse with Monastir is full of holes? What would the users of this road think? It is worse than an unpaved way. The infrastructure has to be improved.”** Male, 35, Sousse, Employed, Non-voter

**“Concerning safety and security and judging from what’s going on in Tunisia as a whole, I think that Sousse is relatively secure. There are no strikes, no sit-ins, no arson, and no conflicts with the police so Sousse is fine.”** Male, 62, Sousse, Retired, Voter

# Local Views: Tunis

**Tunis participants tend to have a more negative view of the current situation, and commonly empathize with the plight of those in interior regions.**

**“In Tunis, we live in total chaos! Vendors sell their goods in streets right in front of shops selling the same goods. This affects commerce in shops so badly. People come from the North to sell anything in order to earn their living. Why doesn’t the government facilitate things for these people in their home towns so that they can work and earn their living there? Why should they come here and create this kind of chaos?”** Female, 47, Tunis, Employed, Voter

**“I think that even in Tunis, life is so difficult. Personally, I’m a housewife and jobless. Life is so difficult for me even though I live in Tunis surrounded by my relatives. Even neighbors would not know how miserable life is for us. Sometimes, our living conditions go below the poverty line - and this happens in the capital, not necessarily in rural areas.”** Female, 43, Tunis, Homemaker, Voter

**“Well of course Tunis is better if you consider the infrastructure and the opportunities for employment, even the temporary ones. In the deprived regions, young people are really suffering. They have no means of entertainment, they are jobless, and unfortunately security is almost absent in these regions.”** Female, 34, Tunis, Unemployed, Voter

**“I can see that the economy is fine in Tunis. People are always complaining about the cost of living but on special occasions they could spend their salaries in one day. So I can say that the economy in Tunis is better off compared to other regions.”** Male, 31, Tunis, Employed, Partial voter

**“Many believe that there are more job opportunities in Tunis as well as more opportunities in the different aspects of life. If the regions of the interior get more attention and the living conditions are improved there, the living conditions in Tunis would be much better than now.”** Male, 36, Tunis, Employed, Partial voter

**“Maybe there is more security in Tunis, but in rural areas, the situation is worse and a lot needs to be done at that level.”** Male, 35, Tunis, Unemployed, Voter



# Elections: Process

**Participants credit the High Independent Authority for Elections (ISIE) with organizing a successful electoral process that allowed them to freely express their will. The voting process on election day was generally seen as transparent.**

**“Despite being accused of being biased to certain parties over others and in spite of all pressures, I think that the work of the ISIE was flawless. This has been corroborated by the testimonies of the observers. There weren’t any transgressions in the elections that could have changed the results. The ISIE is capable of supervising the upcoming municipal elections.”** Male, 53, Medenine, Unemployed, Voter

**“The ISIE succeeded in achieving their objective. They organized the elections and the difference between the two candidates was clear. There were 400,000 votes between them so the results were clear.”** Male, 47, Jendouba, Employed, Voter

**“I think [the ISIE] was successful because, at least, this is the first time in the last 50 years we have had such an independent authority. Besides, it does not exist in any of the other Arab countries. The Tunisian state is the only one among the Arab Muslim countries that created such an authority.”** Female, 48, Tunis, Homemaker, Voter

**“Compared to the elections we had before the revolution, the ISIE succeeded in organizing the present elections.”** Male, 27, Jendouba, Employed, Non-voter

**“When I went to vote there was no queue. It was smooth and well-organized. Honestly, I felt comfortable.... I think that the idea of text messages was efficient and very practical. The story of the dead people [voting] is a bit weird though.”** Female, 30, Tunis, Employed, Partial voter

**“On election day I met a French woman who claimed that these elections were better than the elections in France. As such, we understand that we progressed and became in certain respects like the developed countries.”** Female, 37, Sousse, Employed, Partial voter

**“The elections appear to be transparent but I don’t know if any law infringements took place. In the end, no one opposed the results so I suppose that the election process was transparent.”** Female, 26, Sousse, Student, Non-voter

# Elections: Process (cont'd)

**Participants also acknowledge that the process was not perfect. Many express suspicion over what they see as numerous violations. Others hoped for more outreach to encourage citizens to participate.**

**“The elections weren’t transparent because there was bribery. They bought people’s votes with money. All the parties did this, all of them without exception.”** Female, 42, Sousse, Employed, Non-voter

**“Why did they have to organize the elections when the results were known in advance? When people were still voting, the results were announced!”** Female, 27, Jendouba, Student, Voter

**“If the case of registering dead people had not been raised, I would say that the elections were transparent and successful up to more than 80%. But that case unfortunately raised doubt in the minds of many people.”** Female, 30, Medenine, Unemployed, Voter

**“They did not hire any jobless people.... In the polling station, I found the school principal, the teachers and the nurses I knew. I thought I was going to a polling station, not a school or a hospital!”** Male, 31, Medenine, Employed, Voter

**“What actually happened is that the ISIE hadn’t updated its data. As those dead people had registered to vote in 2011, maybe the ISIE should have removed them from the list of voters. Of course politicians have profited from this to attack the winner and doubt the credibility of the ISIE.”** Male, 33, Tunis, Employed, Voter

**“I think that handicapped people have always been marginalized and discriminated against in the elections past and present, and I don’t believe the situation will change for them in the future. Besides, there are no clear statistics about their participation in the elections. Even though the ISIE succeeded in organizing the elections, there is a lot to be done as far as statistics and information are concerned.”** Male, 56, Tunis, Employed, Voter

# Elections: Campaigns

**Participants hoped for electoral campaigns to be based on credible and specific platforms, engage people personally, and involve youth. They react negatively to negative campaign rhetoric and improper use of funds.**

**“[Election campaigns] should have improved the way they presented their projects.”** Male, 28, Jendouba, Unemployed, Voter

**“Election campaigns would have been better if we had felt that there were good intentions among politicians. We saw them on TV attacking each other. We could notice their grudges and inability to look each other in the eye.”** Female, 37, Sousse, Employed, Partial voter

**“All of the campaigns prepared their [electoral] programs in their offices with five or six people. No one came to see the citizens and ask them what they wanted or what they needed. If any one of them did this I would have voted for them but this was not the case.”** Male, 36, Jendouba, Employed, Non-voter

**“[Campaigns] should present a clear program. They should show us how they will bring money to create jobs because we really feel lost. We just hear promises but we don’t know if they can keep them or not.”** Female, 30, Sousse, Unemployed, Voter

**“I would have appreciated it if the citizen was given the right to choose freely, without campaigns influencing [citizens’] political views by giving them money.”** Female, 34, Tunis, Unemployed, Voter

**“If we want campaigns to succeed, there should be equality among parties and a smaller number of parties. Three or four parties are enough and the programs should be clear and should explain their programs in a simple language that a simple citizen can understand. Parties should focus on three or four objectives that they can achieve, instead of having many objectives and lying to people by promising to do all that when they know that they can’t.”** Female, 44, Medenine, Employed, Voter

**“I think it’s because it’s the first experience that parties could be officially registered and many parties enjoyed this freedom. These parties are still young; they need at least five more years to grow more powerful.”** Female, 62, Tunis, Retired, Voter

# Elections: Media

**The media is seen as having negatively affected the electoral process. Private media outlets are viewed as being partisan and having an outsized impact on the outcome.**

**“Not all TV channels were neutral during the elections. They promoted some parties at the expense of other ones and they influenced the political inclinations of the Tunisian people. Some other parties didn’t have equal chances in media platforms.”** Female, 29, Tunis, Employed, Partial voter

**“If the media had been objective and given equal importance to all parties, it could have been better. The day of the elections I saw parties on the list whom I had never heard about before. They should have presented the programs of these parties too.”** Female, 35, Medenine, Unemployed, Voter

**“The media were divided. Half of them sided with Nidaa and the other half sided with Ennahda.”**  
Female, 54, Jendouba, Employed, Voter

**“You feel that the private channels are very biased.”** Female, 43, Jendouba, Homemaker, Voter

**“I don’t blame the private channels because they are private companies with profit-driven objectives. They would certainly praise the party or the person that suits them and that pays the most. The matter then remains between the viewer and the screen. If one doesn’t like what Nessma or Ettounissia broadcasts, he can simply switch the channel. However, we have the right to blame the public channels, Tunisia 1 and 2, because we finance them with our proper money. So we have the right to expect them to provide us with true information and not to manipulate us but let us decide for ourselves.”** Male, 36, Medenine, Employed, Non-voter

# Elections: Participation

**Those who participated in the elections were driven by a sense of civic duty and a desire to change the country for the better.**

**“Voting is a right and a duty. I have to vote and choose because if I don’t choose, they will choose for me. If I don’t choose, I don’t have the right to criticize. If I have chosen you on the basis of your program, and you don’t keep to your promise, I can protest and express my dissatisfaction.”** Male, 66, Tunis, Retired, Voter

**“There was unrest and the situation was unstable so I chose to vote in order to have a government that can settle down the situation.”** Male, 83, Jendouba, Retired, Voter

**“First [I voted] because it’s a duty, and second, because I didn’t want to regret it later if I didn’t participate.”** Male, 57, Jendouba, Employed, Voter

**“I think the legislative campaigns succeeded more than the presidential campaigns because more people voted in the legislative elections. Most young people didn’t vote in the presidential election.”** Female, 25, Sousse, Unemployed, Non-voter

**“I voted because I want to see a real state. We’ve always read about the state theoretically, now I want to see the importance of the state.”** Male, 42, Jendouba, Employed, Voter

**“We have to make this phase succeed. There is also a generation that is watching and learning from us. Those who are now nine or ten or 12 years old will remember attending the election process with their fathers. We should be an example for them.”** Male, 36, Tunis, Employed, Partial voter

**“I’d like to address myself and others who didn’t vote because they thought there would be no change and things would remain the same. Wouldn’t it be better to go to vote and end up with a president that you’re satisfied with, at least psychologically speaking, than someone you can’t stand? You could at least express yourself by choosing the person you like, apart from whether they would improve the situation or not.”** Female, 30, Medenine, Unemployed, Voter

# Elections: Voting Decision

**Voters took their responsibilities seriously by examining candidates' positions and past experience. Some deliberated extensively over their decision and worried about regretting their choice.**

**"I relied on reading about the history of each political party. I did some research on the Internet and watched political debates on TV. Then I tried to evaluate the character of every politician and guess if he would represent my ideas or not." Male, 25, Tunis, Student, Voter**

**"It was very difficult for me [to decide]. It is a matter of conscience and responsibility. One has to think about the choice he would make. Does he deserve it? Does he represent you? You are giving your vote to someone who would represent you so if he does something wrong, it is as if you have done this mischief to yourself. I felt dreadful when I was alone and about to choose." Male, 43, Medenine, Employed, Voter**

**"I gave my vote to the one I thought appropriate and the one who had clear projects. I did vote in the legislative elections but I voted blank in the presidential." Male, 28, Jendouba, Unemployed, Voter**

**"In the 2011 elections, we had plenty of choices. We could decide which one to vote for. In the present elections, it became difficult because we're left with just two choices. The decision is difficult." Female, 25, Jendouba, Employed, Non-voter**

**"I saw that many people voted for Ennahda because they were against Nidaa and many others voted for Nidaa because they were against Ennahda." Female, 26, Sousse, Student, Non-voter**

**"In the legislative elections, I chose on the basis of programs. But in the presidential I obliged myself to vote although it was difficult for me to choose because the programs are the same and I felt desperate because anyone who would make it to the position would execute his own point of view and not ours. Being jobless for 11 years is not insignificant. I put a blank paper in the box because I knew it would be counted." Female, 36, Jendouba, Employed, Voter**

# Elections: Voter Education

**Participants who voted were generally confident with the steps of the process, having received voter education content via TV, SMS, and street activities. A minority expresses confusion over certain aspects of the process.**

**“Yes, everything was clear. Information came through SMS and the voting process was so simple.”**

Female, 54, Tunis, Employed, Voter

**“[The ISIE] worked on advertising the elections everywhere and used different means and ways.”** Male,

30, Jendouba, Employed, Non-voter

**“We got information from TV. The elections were well covered by TV. There were lots of debates, spots, and publicity.”** Female, 37, Sousse, Employed, Partial voter

**“I was confused because that was the first time I have seen a ballot. Furthermore, I felt that I didn’t have enough time. Hence, I was nervous.”** Female, 42, Sousse, Employed, Voter

**“It was also difficult for old people to read long lists of candidates.”** Male, 31, Jendouba, Employed, Voter

**“My father’s eyesight is not good and he forgot his glasses. When he wanted to vote he was unable to see so he wanted me to help him, but I was not allowed to do so. He didn’t vote.”** Female, 35, Jendouba, Unemployed, Voter

**“In the polling centers there were pieces of information about the different steps that we should follow in order to vote.”** Male, 38, Jendouba, Employed, Voter

**“The polls confused us and so did the infringements that we heard about in the media.”** Female, 44, Medenine, Employed, Voter

**“In the presidential election, everything was clear because the pictures of both candidates were clear. In the other elections, I was confused because there were so many choices. I’m not sure for whom I voted.”** Female, 54, Tunis, Homemaker, Voter

# Elections: Voter Sentiments

**On election day, participants who voted generally felt happy, proud, dutiful, and patriotic. Some were concerned about how the outcome of the election would affect the country.**

**“I was happy because I felt free, even though I knew that the situation would not change immediately. I wasn’t optimistic.”** Female, 30, Sousse, Homemaker, Voter

**“I felt that I had a mission and I accomplished it. I voted for someone and now he’s responsible for changing the situation of the country.”** Male, 34, Sousse, Employed, Voter

**“When I voted for the first time, I felt that my vote was important. The second time I felt nothing. I felt that I did something normal.”** Male, 27, Sousse, Employed, Partial voter

**“I felt the same for performing my duty but afraid of the short term results of who was going to win and the long term outcome of how the changes would affect the country.”** Female, 30, Medenine, Unemployed, Voter

**“I was happy because I voted and I was unhappy because of the results.”** Female, 44, Medenine, Employed, Voter

**“I felt the size of my responsibility. I have given my vote to someone so I kept wondering whether he would prove to be trustworthy or whether he would abuse my trust.”** Male, 43, Medenine, Employed, Voter

**“I said to myself ‘I hope that I won’t regret it.’”** Female, 29, Tunis, Employed, Partial voter

**“I felt relaxed and satisfied. It was not like when you vote for the red list that becomes green afterwards.”** Male, 27, Medenine, Unemployed, Partial voter

**“It’s normal that we feel happy because we did our duty.”** Male, 47, Jendouba, Employed, Voter



# Elections: Abstention

**Non-voters faced logistical impediments in registering to vote or turning out on election day. Others were unmotivated to participate due to disillusion with politicians and lack of faith that their vote would make a difference.**

**“I wanted to vote but they didn’t allow me to because I hadn’t registered.... I sent a message via my mobile phone. They didn’t reply and I didn’t pay much attention to the whole issue. I regretted this very much, especially in the third time.”** Female, 47, Sousse, Homemaker, Non-voter

**“I didn’t know that I had to register again in Medenine. I went to vote but they told me that I didn’t have the right and that I had to vote in my town. Honestly, I couldn’t pay six dinars to vote in my town and then come back to Medenine, so I didn’t vote.”** Female, 35, Medenine, Homemaker, Non-voter

**“[Candidates] all have the same ideas. They promise and they don’t keep their words. They came to us in the past and gave us promises but they didn’t honor them. They haven’t kept any of these promises.”** Female, 51, Jendouba, Employed, Non-voter

**“I felt very sorry because I was not able to participate. I didn’t practice my right as a normal citizen. I felt I missed something very important, especially when I saw people going out of the offices after they had voted.”** Male, 36, Medenine, Employed, Non-voter

**“We went to people’s houses to register them as voters. We’ve been to supermarkets, like Monoprix, for the same activity. But we were badly treated by people. They would laugh at our job! Then, they came on the voting day to protest and blame the ISIE because they were not registered!”** Female, 30, Medenine, Unemployed, Voter

**“I didn’t vote in the third election because neither of the candidates presented his program. They were just attacking one another.”** Male, 27, Sousse, Employed, Partial voter

**“I haven’t even bothered myself to read about parties, because it’s all simply a film set.”** Male, 28, Unemployed, Non-voter

# Elections: Citizen Observers

**Civil society elicits admiration and respect for its efforts to oversee and ensure the integrity of the electoral process. Some harbor doubts about observers' partisanship and funding sources.**

**“They observe the transparency of the elections while we don't have any idea who these observers are, who finances them, for whom they work, what values they uphold.... The presence of such organizations is healthy but one should make sure he is transparent before observing the transparency of others.”**  
Male, 47, Medenine, Employed, Voter

**“The ISIE was successful because observation was ensured. At least criticism took place. We hope for more and more criticism.”** Female, 42, Tunis, Employed, Voter

**“I think the elections were 100% transparent, and if there is corruption, I think it's not only the role of the ISIE to prove that. There are other organizations like Mourakiboun whose role is to report such practices.”** Female, 30, Sousse, Homemaker, Voter

**“There were serious conflicts between the leaders of the ISIE and those of these organizations. The ISIE did not cooperate with civil activists; they considered them enemies because they felt they were overseeing them.”** Female, 34, Jendouba, Employed, Partial voter

**“Civil society organizations were the ones who reported violations concerning voters' falsified signatures in support of specific candidates. They've done a great job in this respect.”** Male, 27, Jendouba, Employed, Non-voter

**“They were very excited, especially because they were young and optimistic.”** Female, 37, Sousse, Employed, Partial voter

**“They did a good job but in the second round of the presidential election their activities were limited. The ISIE doesn't have the right to do this.”** Male, 53, Jendouba, Employed, Voter

**“Some organizations were neutral and others were biased.”** Male, 50, Jendouba, Retired, Voter

# Elections: International Observers

**Awareness of international election observers is high, and participants are grateful for their role in confirming the success of the elections to the international community.**

**“I think that international observers’ presence could be positive because they are trained to do this, they are experienced and they know which criteria to take into consideration in observing elections.”**

Female, 44, Medenine, Employed, Voter

**“I think they are objective. Indeed, when international TV channels report that our elections were democratic, this may encourage investors to come.”**

Female, 30, Sousse, Unemployed, Voter

**“Even the ISIE as an independent authority gets its legitimacy from the international organizations because we are novices in this field. Whether we liked it or not, we don’t have a long tradition in elections. It is like a new seed that has to be nurtured.”**

Male, 43, Medenine, Employed, Voter

**“Let’s not forget that during the electoral process the whole world is watching. People around the world were waiting to see how these elections were going to be held in Tunisia and how they would end up.”**

Male, 27, Jendouba, Employed, Non-voter

**“We didn’t pay anything for the international observers; on the contrary, they paid.”**

Male, 66, Tunis, Retired, Voter

**“I wanted the elections to be 100% Tunisian. I didn’t want any other country to participate. The presence of international observers made us feel that international powers intervened in the Tunisian elections.”**

Female, 40, Medenine, Employed, Voter

**“Their role serves our image abroad more than ensuring observation in itself.”**

Male, 27, Medenine, Unemployed, Partial voter

**“I don’t agree with the presence of international observers because we don’t observe their elections.”**

Female, 34, Sousse, Employed, Voter

# Elections: Outcome

**Whether or not participants are satisfied with who was elected, most can differentiate between the outcome and the integrity of the process itself.**

**“For the first time in Tunisia, we enjoyed the moment of not knowing who would win the seat. We were curious to know the final results, glued to TV screens observing the electoral process.”** Female, 30, Tunis, Employed, Partial voter

**“I’m satisfied with the results of the elections and I cannot confirm they are fallacious, but my concern is rather with those who will rule the country.... I’m afraid the same scenario will be repeated, as the new government will blame [problems] on the previous one and they won’t really do anything to save the country.”** Male, 31, Tunis, Employed, Partial voter

**“I’m not satisfied with the results. We wanted freedom but now I see that we went back to the past. We went back to oppression. It was not the decision of the South. We didn’t do this in the South, but other regions voted for those who represent the past and forced us to accept this.”** Female, 42, Medenine, Employed, Voter

**“I accept the results and I hope [the new government] does something to make us change our minds concerning it. I hope they make a change to let us see that they really want to improve our situation.”** Female, 45, Medenine, Employed, Voter

**“I’m satisfied. I think it’s better to have an established government than to have a series of temporary governments. Step by step, things are going to get better.”** Female, 54, Tunis, Homemaker, Voter

**“There is a mass who gave its vote and there is the ISIE that we trust and that gave us the results. We don’t have to be satisfied or not. This is a reality to accept.”** Male, 43, Medenine, Employed, Voter

**“I hoped that the operation would succeed regardless of the party I liked. I wanted transparency. It matters more than the result of the elections.”** Male, 44, Sousse, Employed, Voter

# Democracy: Key Characteristics

**Democracy is associated with freedom of expression, elections, and respect for different opinions. Some link democracy to economic opportunity. Many see changes in mentalities as an essential aspect of attaining democracy.**

**“[Democracy means that] my freedom stops where the freedom of the other starts.”** Female, 42, Sousse, Employed, Non-voter

**“There is no democracy without equality and social justice.”** Male, 66, Tunis, Retired, Voter

**“[Democracy is] respecting the opinions of others. I have my own opinions and you have your own different opinions. I respect your opinions and you respect mine.”** Female, 42, Sousse, Homemaker, Voter

**“Democracy, however, depends on a certain economic and social development level. It is accessible in developed countries like the European ones. It cannot be established in Arab countries, which are poor and under-developed. We should work hard to improve the situation of our country. Then we could talk about democracy.”** Female, 30, Medenine, Employed, Voter

**“It is true that now we have the freedom of expression. This is the biggest fruit we have reaped from the revolution, but we have misunderstood it, so it has become synonymous with anarchy.”** Female, 36, Jendouba, Employed, Voter

**“Democracy we have won from the revolution made us gain the elections, the freedom of the media and the freedom of expression, but we have to consolidate this democracy.”** Female, 45, Jendouba, Employed, Voter

**“Our problem is that we don’t really understand freedom. Your freedom should be limited when others’ freedom begins.”** Female, 42, Medenine, Employed, Partial voter

**“The presidential institution is elected. The government is elected. We are in a democratic atmosphere and all the requirements of success are provided.”** Male, 47, Medenine, Employed, Voter

# Democracy: Is Tunisia a Democracy?

**Most believe Tunisia is making progress toward democracy but that this goal has not been fully realized. Participants feel that their understanding of democracy still needs to develop.**

**“The basis of democracy is the democratic transition and now we are past this phase so we are fine. It is now that we are going to begin to have democratic legitimacy.”** Male, 43, Medenine, Employed, Voter

**“The elections are the backbone of democracy. As long as that backbone is healthy, the body will remain strong.”** Male, 44, Sousse, Employed, Voter

**“Democracy is the only thing we gained from the revolution.”** Female, 47, Jendouba, Employed, Non-voter

**“We’re still learning democracy; we cannot master democracy in two years. We’re just beginners.”** Male, 27, Jendouba, Employed, Non-voter

**“We want this constitution to be implemented, especially in terms of liberties, specifically the freedom of expression and the freedom of the press, which are the pillars of nascent democracies. The same thing applies to individual liberties.”** Male, 66, Tunis, Retired, Voter

**“There’s no democracy on the level of development, economy and politics. An example is the absence of a clear presence of women in political life.”** Female, 34, Jendouba, Employed, Partial voter

**“We are not applying the principles of democracy. In democracy, you cannot prioritize someone because he’s rich. There’s no equality.”** Male, 34, Sousse, Employed, Voter

**“Whether we like it or not, we are an underdeveloped country and we are not used to democracy so we still need some dictatorship. Firmness is a must. Many of us still require the stick.”** Female, 54, Jendouba, Employed, Voter

# Democracy: Role of Politicians

**According to participants, politicians can reinforce democracy by working in an honest and transparent manner, and by putting the interests of citizens before their own. There is a strong desire for new faces in leadership, particularly youth.**

**“Politicians should organize site visits to different regions of the country and try to listen to the citizens. Why are we prevented from meeting these people?”** Female, 42, Tunis, Employed, Voter

**“All the parties should participate in political life. We would like to see new faces; enough with the faces we know!”** Female, 42, Tunis, Employed, Voter

**“Personally I’m not thinking about politics. What I think about when I wake up in the morning are my children and how to provide for them. If I wake up knowing that I don’t even have 10 dinars in my pocket, I don’t feel comfortable. Do you have one dinar to buy milk? Can politics give me the answer? No!”** Male, 47, Jendouba, Employed, Voter

**“Politicians should care for their country more than their party.”** Female, 29, Medenine, Unemployed, Voter

**“This country needs new political figures. We should rely more on young people who are more enthusiastic, especially as there are many who are well-qualified, who have studied abroad, and who can run the country. We are fed up with these old politicians and figures. They have ruled my grandfather, my father, and now they are ruling me, and if I have a son they will also be ruling him.”** Male, 45, Tunis, Employed, Non-voter

**“I was very happy yesterday to see the resignation of a secretary of state from his office, mentioning as a reason the conflict between his personal interest and his job.”** Male, 39, Sousse, Employed, Voter

**“They should make national interests their top priorities rather than government positions.”** Female, 27, Jendouba, Student, Voter

**“Politicians should set an example; they should practice democracy to show citizens what it is.”** Male, 36, Jendouba, Employed, Non-voter

# Democracy: Role of Civil Society

**Participants believe that civil society can oversee the government and raise awareness.**

**“[Civil society’s role is to] supervise and put pressure on politicians.”** Female, 29, Sousse, Employed, Non-voter

**“They should observe how people taking important positions are doing their job and report any violations. There should be an authority to which citizens can resort to claim their rights.”** Female, 42, Tunis, Employed, Voter

**“They should work harder because the impact they have on the people is far more important than that of the opposition. Their major role is observation.”** Female, 42, Medenine, Employed, Partial voter

**“[Civil society’s role is] judging the people who violate the law; when this does not succeed, they lead a new revolution.”** Female, 27, Jendouba, Student, Voter

**“[Civil society] has no official mission, its role is to maintain consensus and intervene in times of crisis. It supervises, gives constructive criticism, advice, and help.”** Male, 66, Tunis, Retired, Voter

**“If only civil society organizations insisted on judging corrupt politicians before the beginning of the electoral process, things would have been different.”** Female, 34, Jendouba, Employed, Partial voter

**“The role of civil society is to improve the situation of the country. If there’s agreement between civil society and politicians then the situation will improve.”** Female, 30, Medenine, Employed, Voter



# Democracy: Role of Citizens

**Participants call on citizens to work, monitor and criticize politicians, be responsible and law-abiding, and express themselves respectfully.**

**“The citizen is the watchdog. He should protect his democracy especially his freedom of expression. I, however, am doubtful because of what has happened lately with that blogger.<sup>2</sup>”** Male, 45, Tunis, Employed, Non-voter

**“Tunisians want salaries, help, assistance, health cards and excellent services. It’s true that the government is not doing well, but citizens are not doing anything at all. Tunisians want the government to be elected at 10:00 and make the situation better at 10:05, which is not possible, of course.”** Female, 29, Sousse, Employed, Non-voter

**“Democracy does not mean expressing oneself in whichever way one wants. Today, many people think that they enjoy democracy when they express themselves in public places using indecent language. This is not democracy. This is chaos.”** Female, 34, Jendouba, Employed, Partial voter

**“First we should understand the meaning of democracy. We should not violate other people’s personal space in the name of democracy.”** Female, 27, Jendouba, Student, Voter

**“We should be active, not passive. We should stop being receivers. We should learn how to think in order to be productive and not just consumptive.”** Female, 34, Jendouba, Employed, Partial voter

**“One hand cannot clap by itself, so I think that the citizen should partner with the president and the head of the parliament to build the country and help boost the economy.”** Male, 31, Tunis, Employed, Partial voter

**“Change for the sake of change is good, but we have to be aware of our mistakes in that we are not doing our job, so how can we ask those in charge to do their jobs? We should begin by ourselves.”** Male, 56, Tunis, Employed, Voter

**“Now people talk too much but don’t work hard.”** Female, 30, Sousse, Unemployed, Voter

**“We don’t fear ‘excessive power’ because Tunisian people have become conscious and careful about their rights.”** Female, 54, Jendouba, Employed, Voter

<sup>2</sup> In January, blogger Yassine Ayari was sentenced to a year in prison by a military court for “defaming the military.”

# Democracy: Role of the Media

**The media is expected to be neutral and professional in its work to raise citizens' awareness.**

**"The media represents a power in the country. It is responsible for informing the people. They should do this job neutrally. They should deal with the different regions of the country in the same way."** Female, 29, Medenine, Unemployed, Voter

**"They should be responsible. When a young child watches people mocking the president, for example, he would show no respect to his teacher and to older people. We want the media to be selective about the material they expose us to."** Female, 42, Sousse, Employed, Voter

**"We are all dependent on the media. When the media says something is good or bad, we all say the same and this is not a good harbinger."** Male, 47, Medenine, Employed, Voter

**"We are going through a democratic experience so the media has to learn fairness, objectivity and neutrality. Like all institutions, the media is an institution where people go to do their jobs to contribute to the improvement of their countries."** Male, 44, Sousse, Employed, Voter

**"The media should know that we're intelligent enough to tell that their programs and shows are senseless."** Female, 25, Jendouba, Employed, Non-voter

**"The media is the only means of conveying information to the citizen. Without the media, we wouldn't be aware of anything. It also has to convey our voices and tell us what's going on with those people who work in the government."** Female, 45, Jendouba, Employed, Voter

**"I wondered why we couldn't have one channel for every city in the country. We have 15 channels now; why not one channel for every city?... They would succeed in showing how all Tunisians live and, at the same time, ensure that Tunisia is for all Tunisians!"** Female, 30, Medenine, Employed, Voter

**"They should check the truthfulness of the information before they give it. They should avoid propaganda, which drives the country into a wave of chaos."** Female, 62, Tunis, Retired, Voter

# Democracy and Security

**Participants maintain that it is possible to have security and democracy at the same time but that it is difficult and takes time. Some participants see security as a prerequisite for democracy.**

**“It is not impossible for us to have democracy and security. The terrorism we are witnessing now is just ‘a storm in a teacup.’ It will disappear with time and the democratic experience will succeed in Tunisia.”**

Male, 39, Sousse, Employed, Voter

**“Yes, I think that there is democracy and security, thank God, we have succeeded in comparison with other countries such as Libya, Syria, or Yemen.”** Male, 39, Tunis, Employed, Voter

**“Democracy can be established if security forces serve citizens and not political parties.”** Female, 42, Medenine, Employed, Voter

**“It is unlikely to have both of them at the same time because we understand democracy as anarchy. And the role of the security forces is to reduce anarchy, so people will think the security forces are beating democracy. The police will beat anarchy and others will picture it like they are beating democracy.”**

Female, 45, Jendouba, Employed, Voter

**“Security is always good. I hope we can reach democracy one day but security is more important.”**

Female, 35, Medenine, Homemaker, Non-voter

**“Let’s start with security first. If there is security, everything else will be easy.”** Female, 47, Sousse, Homemaker, Non-voter

**“I fear that we lost the freedoms that we acquired....There was a time when we could not go to school because we wore the veil as girls or because we had beards as boys. This is what I fear; I worry about the freedoms we acquired.”** Female, 30, Medenine, Unemployed, Voter