



Office of Transition Initiatives

TUNISIA TRANSITION INITIATIVE (TTI)

BACKGROUND

On January 14, 2011, Tunisia's long-time President Zine el-Abidine Ben Ali fled the country after youth-led protests fueled by socioeconomic grievances, corruption, and political repression. The revolution ushered in a wave of political excitement for Tunisia and prompted the initial steps towards democracy and political reform. Tunisia held elections on October 23, 2011 to elect 217 representatives of the National Constituent Assembly (NCA). The NCA's principle mandate was to draft Tunisia's new constitution and prepare for subsequent elections.

Over two years after the revolution, several challenges and key grievances that drove the revolution remain. Though democratic institutions and processes are slowly developing, citizens are frustrated with slow political progress, in particular the lack of a constitution and elections. Many Tunisians, particularly marginalized groups such as youth and women, still lack clear, constructive avenues through which to engage and influence political processes, and lack knowledge and information on general democratic principles. Although civil society has grown significantly in the last few years, its lack of capacity limits its effectiveness and influence. Social media and traditional media outlets are still developing the skills to fulfill their role in the new democracy. Post-revolution, Tunisia has struggled with its national identity and become increasingly polarized. Violent extremism, on the rise since the revolution, threatens the country's stability and young men who lack purpose and belonging are particularly susceptible to recruitment by extremist groups.

PROGRAM ACTIVITIES

USAID's Office of Transition Initiatives (OTI) **seeks to support Tunisians in their pursuit of a democratic society by creating viable space for the transition to succeed.** Activities are clustered together in order to achieve impacts on citizen activism, civic engagement, CSO capacity, social and traditional media capacity, access to information, political participation by marginalized groups, tolerance, and moderation. Through the program subobjectives, OTI supports the constitutional process and elections. Activities are typically small, short-term, in-kind, and respond to emerging political issues. The program implements activities in the central interior governorates of Kasserine, Gafsa, El Kef, and Sidi Bouzid, in the Greater Tunis area, and nation-wide.

Illustrative examples of OTI activities include:

- Implementing a nation-wide tolerance campaign through TV, billboards, and social media
- Partnering with a neighborhood committee to conduct a clean-up project
- Stimulating dialogue between the Constituent Assembly and youth civil society leaders through a forum focused on the role of decentralization and the development of local democracy
- Facilitating town hall meetings between government officials and communities
- Encouraging greater activism among women in the interior region during Women's Day
- Providing physical and virtual meeting space for civil society to conduct business
- Conducting a live television debate on emerging political issues
- Developing graffiti artwork workshops for at-risk youth
- Designing a flash mob on anti-violence

FAST FACTS

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| Start Date | May 2011 |
| Budget | \$20.7M |
| Partners | DAI |
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