



**PRELIMINARY STATEMENT OF
THE IRI-NDI ELECTION OBSERVATION MISSION
TO TUNISIA'S OCTOBER 6, 2019 PARLIAMENTARY ELECTIONS**

Tunis, October 7, 2019

OVERVIEW OF THE MISSION

This preliminary statement is offered by the joint international Election Observation Mission (EOM) of the National Democratic Institute (NDI) and the International Republican Institute (IRI) to Tunisia's October 6, 2019 parliamentary elections.

The EOM delegation, comprising 34 observers from 15 countries, including current and former legislators, diplomats, political party leaders, election experts, representatives of nongovernmental organizations and regional specialists. It was led by Andrew Natsios, former administrator of the U.S. Agency for International Development and professor at the George H. W. Bush School at Texas A&M University, and Anna Lührmann, former member of the German parliament and deputy director of the Varieties of Democracy (V-Dem) Institute.

The delegation's findings were informed by observations of the joint mission's delegation to the September 15 presidential elections, the work of 15 long-term observers and analysts who have been deployed across Tunisia since late August and a pre-election delegation that visited Tunisia from July 30 to August 2 to assess preparations for the polls. On election day, the mission delegates visited more than 150 polling stations in 25 electoral districts across the country.

The delegation is grateful for the cooperation it received from voters, election officials, candidates and political party leaders, citizen observers, and civic activists. The mission was invited and officially accredited by the Independent High Authority for Elections (ISIE) and conducted its work in accordance with the laws of Tunisia and the *Declaration of Principles for International Election Observation*, which has been endorsed by 55 intergovernmental and international nongovernmental organizations worldwide.

Through this statement, the mission seeks to demonstrate the international community's interest in and support for the democratic process in Tunisia, provide an accurate and impartial report on the electoral process to date and offer recommendations to improve future elections.

The delegation does not seek to render final conclusions on the October 6 elections at this time.

The official tabulation process is yet to be completed and the results are still to be announced. Any complaints that may be lodged remain to be resolved. This statement is therefore preliminary in nature. The mission will continue to monitor the electoral process and will issue reports as appropriate. The EOM does not seek to interfere in electoral processes and recognizes that it is the people of Tunisia who will ultimately determine the credibility and legitimacy of their elections.

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY OF FINDINGS

Tunisia's October 6 parliamentary elections mark another important milestone in the country's democratic trajectory. Together with the upcoming presidential runoff, the election will usher in the first handover of power from one democratically elected government to another since the adoption of the 2014 constitution. Despite continued frustrations with stalled reforms, persistent corruption and an ongoing economic crisis, over 41 percent of the seven million Tunisians registered to vote participated in Sunday's parliamentary elections. This turnout is considerably lower than the 2014 parliamentary vote, with wide variations between constituencies, but higher than many projections. With over 10,000 candidates vying for 217 seats, dynamic free debate in the media and thousands of citizens once again deploying across the country to safeguard the integrity of the vote, the electoral process remains healthy. This is an important sign for Tunisia and, indeed, for a region where democratic aspirations endure.

Overall, the elections were well-administered by a knowledgeable and professional staff, and voting passed without major incidents. Although citizen observers, political contestants and media reported isolated irregularities, these are unlikely to have affected the overall results of the vote. Nevertheless, irregularities should be reviewed and addressed by the relevant authorities to ensure confidence in future elections among contestants and voters. Notably, the mission did hear concerning reports of an increase in the harassment and exclusion of domestic election observers during campaigning and in some polling centers in contrast to the 2014 cycle of elections.

The parliamentary vote took place against a backdrop of a presidential runoff, which may have had an impact on the turnout rate and the level of parliamentary campaigning. In the September 15 presidential vote, two political outsiders advanced to the runoff, which many have characterized as a rebuke of established parties and politicians, and the October 13 date of that vote was not determined until well into the parliamentary campaign period. Before October 6, many voters seemed confused by the timeline and in which election they were voting. Significantly, the debate and press coverage surrounding the incarceration of one of the presidential candidates and his ability to equitably campaign distracted attention from parliamentary races. Several political parties argued that the result of the presidential vote caused them to delay their campaigns and reorient messaging and strategies to more localized issues and smaller-scale activities. Additionally, the highly regulated campaign environment and a lack of campaign funds may have contributed to a subdued campaign period and lower voter turnout.

The overlap of the parliamentary elections with preparations for the runoff placed significant pressures on the ISIE, political competitors, civil society organizations, voters and other stakeholders. Nevertheless, that the electoral preparations, campaigns and election day proceeded in an overall calm environment and generally in line with the existing regulations, demonstrates Tunisia's continuing commitment to democratic processes.

Given the limited parameters of the Tunisian president's power, the parliament and the prime minister it appoints play a critical role in Tunisian governance. To maintain momentum in its democratic transition and ensure public confidence in the process given the tepid turnout rate, members of the next parliament need to come together to form a government, establish a roadmap for reform and demonstrate that democracy can deliver by addressing pressing social and economic challenges.

ELECTORAL SYSTEM AND LEGAL FRAMEWORK

The parliament is comprised of 217 members elected for a five-year term by direct suffrage. There are 33 constituencies, including 27 in Tunisia electing 199 members, and six abroad electing 18 members. Tunisia employs a proportional representation, the largest remainder system. Voters must choose only one candidate list in their constituency, without deleting or rearranging the order of the candidates. Individual seats are awarded to lists in the same order in which candidates are listed.

The electoral legal framework is generally sound and adequate for the organization of the 2019 parliamentary elections. It is primarily based on the 2014 Constitution, the 2011 presidential decree on setting the constituency boundaries and seats, the 2014 electoral law (amended in February 2017 and August 2019) and regulatory decisions adopted by the ISIE.

Some challenges remain, notably the absence of a clear definition of permitted “electoral propaganda” and its distinction from illegal “political advertisement”, and the absence of a specific and timely complaints resolution process for campaign and campaign finance violations. Additionally, the current distribution of seat allocations, including 27 in Tunisia and six out-of-country, was set in 2011 on a provisional basis and does not include any criteria or timeline for re-assessment. There are wide differences between districts without clearly stated criteria for the anomalies; therefore, the principle of vote equality is not fully ensured. As currently allocated, for example, a seat in one district may represent twice the amount of voters in another.

ELECTION ADMINISTRATION

Overall, the parliamentary elections have been well-administered. Despite several vacant executive positions within the ISIE Secretariat, the amended electoral calendar and the resulting operational pressures put on election authorities, it is commendable that key electoral operations have been effectively and impartially implemented. In the period between the two elections, election authorities retrained the polling officials and replaced some of the polling staff who failed to conduct their duties in a professional manner.

Nonetheless, transparency and consistent communications remains a concern. Lack of accurate, systematic, comprehensive and timely reports on various aspects of the electoral process, particularly the campaign violations detected and measures taken to sanction or prevent violations, was frequently evoked by multiple stakeholders as a key criticism of the work of the election administration.

Voter registration is active and continuous, with no significant changes to the voter registration process occurring between the presidential and parliamentary elections. In 2019, the ISIE organized a large registration exercise from April 10 until May 22 for parliamentary elections and

until July 4 for the presidential elections. The ISIE deployed mobile registration centers to target groups that had been under-represented in the voter register, most notably women, youth and rural populations. As a result, 1,467,963 new voters from across the country were added to the voter register, 53 percent of whom were women and two-thirds were under the age of 35. The final voter list was published on July 19 and comprises 7,065,885 people, including nearly 49 percent women and approximately one third under 35 years of age. However, the ISIE has not yet published detailed data about its list verification process, including the number of changes or additions made, or the number of voters removed from the register. There are also no special provisions for enabling voting by individuals unable to reach their home polling station, including polling officials, party agents or observers deployed outside of their registration area, home-bound voters, and hospitalized citizens, which effectively disenfranchises a significant segment of the population.

CANDIDATE REGISTRATION

The right to stand for parliamentary elections is given to parties, coalitions or independent lists. Each entity can have only one list per constituency. The number of candidates on each list must be equal to the number of seats in the constituency. In Tunisia, it ranges from four candidates in Tataouine and in Tozeur, to 10 candidates in Sousse and in Ben Arous, while Tunisians constituents abroad, it ranges from one candidate in Germany to five candidates in France². Each list is complemented by a secondary list, with at least two candidates who could replace candidates disqualified from the main list. A total of 14,953 candidates were included on the primary and secondary lists.

In order to register, candidate lists must respect the principle of vertical gender parity by alternating women and men on the list. The promotion of youth is encouraged across all constituencies with four or more seats (all but four constituencies abroad), where lists that do not have a candidate of 35 years of age or less among the first four candidates will be denied half of the public funding available to reimburse their electoral expenses. Political parties and coalitions must use the same name and symbol for all their candidate lists.

Each parliamentary candidate must be a registered voter, hold Tunisian citizenship for at least the last 10 years, be at least 23 years of age on the date of candidacy, not be in the military or security forces and not have had their political rights revoked. While candidates can run in any constituency, there are some limitations imposed on persons holding certain functions (judges, governors, secretary generals of governorate, heads of delegation, mayors, and heads of diplomatic and consular missions), who must resign or be released from their functions to run, and who may not run in the electoral constituency where they last exercised their functions for at least one year before applying for candidacy.

The parliamentary candidate nomination process was conducted from July 22 to 29, 2019. The ISIE reported receiving 1,581 applications and initially rejected 78 lists. Following the appeals process, and the re-inclusion of three rejected lists, the final candidate lists were announced on August 31. While details on the grounds for rejection are yet to be provided, many Regional Independent Authorities for Elections (IRIE) reported that initial applications were well prepared and adequately respected administrative and eligibility requirements. According to the ISIE, a total

of 1,506 lists with 10,549 candidates were certified, including 674 party lists (45 percent), 324 coalition lists (22 percent), and 508 independent lists (34 percent).

CAMPAIGN ENVIRONMENT

The campaign period for the parliamentary elections started on September 14 and ended at midnight on October 4. The electoral law prescribes a campaign silence period, starting 24 hours prior to the opening of polls and ending when the polls close. The revised election calendar created an overlap between the silence period of the September 15 presidential elections and the start of the parliamentary campaigns. There is also an overlap between the start of the run-off campaign on October 3 and the final four days of the parliamentary election period. As a result, observers noted that many voters seemed confused by the timeline and in which election they were voting.

Many parties chose to delay their campaign start until after the presidential election to avoid accusations of violating the campaign silence period and possible voter confusion (party ballot numbers for presidential and parliamentary elections were different). Even after the announcement of the preliminary results of the presidential election, campaigning was minimal. Several political parties argued that the result of the presidential vote caused them to delay their campaigns and reorient messaging and strategies to more localized issues and smaller-scale activities. Thus, despite over 1,500 lists running, observers noted little campaign activity taking place in the first two weeks. For those that did carry out campaign activities, candidates reported focusing on door-to-door visits, distribution of fliers and interactions with voters in cafes, on the streets or on social media networks. Although the intensity and visibility of campaigns increased significantly in some districts during the last week, most candidates continued to focus on direct contact with voters and social media outreach rather than large rallies or mass campaign events.

The legal framework provides for a thorough and detailed monitoring and control of campaign activities, funding and expenditures for all registered lists of candidates. The ISIE must be notified 48 hours in advance of all public meetings, demonstrations, marches or rallies. While candidate lists are entitled to conduct “electoral propaganda” (such as announcements about platforms or meeting dates, posters or leaflets) through national and electronic media, “political advertising” (including billboards, outfitted vehicles, advertising videos or advertising in print or electronic media) is prohibited. Various stakeholders raised concerns that the distinction between the two is not clearly stipulated in the law and was difficult to enforce.

Candidates in general reported no major obstacles to campaigning, while the ISIE stated that only minor campaign violations were detected, such as placement of campaign materials in unallowable locations, destruction of campaign materials or failure to notify IRIEs of campaign activities or cancellations 48-hours in advance. Citizen observer groups monitoring campaigns also noted that lists frequently changed the time and location of scheduled events or canceled events without notifying the IRIEs. They also reported the use of children in campaigns which is prohibited under the law, as well as several instances of hate speech or altercations at public events.

CAMPAIGN FINANCE

Tunisian legislation stipulates that electoral campaigns can be self-funded, or rely on private and public funding. Corporate donations and foreign funding are prohibited. Private donations are limited to 8,000 TND (approximately 2,750 USD). Public funding is provided to candidate lists as

a reimbursement of their campaign costs after the final results have been announced and based on the calculation made by the Court of Accounts. Only lists that receive over three percent of votes cast, submit their reports on time and comply with campaign and campaign finance regulations are eligible for reimbursement. If lists with four or more candidates fail to include a candidate under 35 years of age, public reimbursement is halved. Spending limits differ depending on the number of voters and are significantly higher in densely populated areas.

Interlocutors reported several challenges in terms of implementation and enforcement of campaign finance rules. Some candidates reported that the spending ceiling is too low and therefore hinders their ability to effectively reach potential voters. Others noted that while the spending limit is helpful in leveling the playing field, the amount of public reimbursement is not sufficient to compel inclusion of youth in lists presented by major political parties. Most importantly, the timeframes for reviewing candidates' financial reports and for adjudicating possible cases of non-compliance do not appear to be sufficient. While the foreseen timeframe follows the ordinary rhythms of administrative and penal justice, candidates and parties noted that it does not take into account the specific requirements of the electoral calendar and could have negative implications for voter turnout.

Over 1,500 campaign monitors were deployed by the ISIE nationally to assess the cost of campaign activities. The full report on their findings from the presidential election is yet to be released. Additionally, observers in some districts reported that with the uptick in campaign activities during the final week of the campaign there were not sufficient numbers of monitors to cover all the events and ensure that all contestants faced the same level of scrutiny.

MEDIA ENVIRONMENT

On August 21, the HAICA and ISIE published a joint decision regulating media in the campaign for both the presidential and parliamentary elections. After the presidential election, the authorities issued an annex to the joint decision, outlining the principles for coverage of candidate lists during the parliamentary elections. It required that media coverage be proportional to lists' representation across the country.¹ Several media outlets criticized the publication of the annex coming after the campaign had already started.

Candidate lists were also given the opportunity to use free airtime on public TV and radio to announce their platforms; 924 lists (about 62 percent) recorded and had their messages broadcast on TV and 738 (about 49 percent) on the radio. Several list representatives did complain that the time and expenses needed to travel to the studio to record their message exceeded the expected benefits from the allocated 90 seconds of free time.

Following the historic presidential candidate debates, national TV proceeded with organizing debates among parliamentary candidates. With over 1,500 registered lists, a lottery system was used to determine the nine participants in each of the three debates. Each debate lasted 2 hours and 35 minutes and covered a range of topics such as the economy, priority parliamentary initiatives and healthcare. Some political parties whose lists were not selected for the debates, such as the

¹ Between 30 and 40 percent of electoral coverage should be dedicated to lists running in 28 to 33 constituencies, 20-30 percent to lists fielding candidates in 12 to 27 districts, 10-20 percent dedicated to lists present in 2 to 11 districts and up to 10 percent to lists running in only one constituency

former ruling Nidaa Tounes, considered their exclusion a violation of the right to equal access. However, in general, there was significantly less interest in the parliamentary debates than those for the presidency.

Although a comprehensive report on all detected media violations and the sanctions imposed is yet to be released, HAICA reported leveling over 20 fines ranging from 3,000 to 160,000 TND against media outlets that did not comply with the regulations governing the election campaign, such as broadcasting political advertisements, releasing results of opinion polls and breaching the campaign silence rule. So far, no appeals have been lodged against HAICA's decisions. In addition, HAICA reportedly referred the case against the Nessma TV to the prosecutor, accusing it of disseminating hate speech, defamation and calls for violence.

While information is not yet available for the time period covering parliamentary elections, the monitoring unit of the National Union of Tunisian Journalists (SNJT) reported 34 physical attacks targeting 36 individuals working in the media sector from July 16 to September 16. Most of the attacks are allegedly linked to the electoral process, representing a trend that warrants further attention during the presidential run-off.

Social media played an important role in the election process. Candidates, parties and lists used Facebook extensively to communicate with potential voters and the public. However, a broad range of electoral stakeholders commented that the conduct of online media remains insufficiently regulated. In addition to official pages, observers noted numerous pages with undisclosed affiliations supporting or opposing candidates or lists and frequently featuring hate speech or disinformation. Moreover, while social media provides a unique opportunity to communicate directly with citizens, Tunisia is not immune from the global trend of disinformation. To address this challenge, HAICA is working with a coalition of media representatives and providing media training to journalists on how to identify and dispel disinformation on social media. For its part, the ISIE reported discussions with Facebook and other social media outlets to identify ways to address these problems in the future.

GENDER AND INCLUSION

Inclusion of women, youth and persons with disabilities in the electoral and political processes has gradually, if slowly, improved. A higher portion of eligible women and youth have been included in the voter register and candidates from traditionally marginalized or underrepresented groups, such as the Black Tunisian and Amazigh communities, are running in higher numbers. The ISIE has made additional efforts to reach some of these groups in its voter education efforts and facilitate their vote.

The legal framework for parliamentary elections includes provisions for gender parity and incentives for the inclusion of youth, but does not include any provisions ensuring the inclusion of persons with disabilities or belonging to other minorities as candidates. Nevertheless, these elections marked a milestone for the political participation of some historically marginalized groups: two independent lists were exclusively comprised of candidates with disabilities, in addition to various coalition or party lists that included them as candidates and heads of lists in several districts; candidates from the Black Tunisian community competed in and headed party,

coalition and independent lists in Tunis and the south; and around 20 Amazigh candidates ran in a number of coalition lists.

Women represent almost half of registered voters (49.5 percent) and were 53 percent of newly registered voters in 2019. The electoral law requires vertical gender parity (alternation between men and women on the candidate lists). Horizontal parity (an equal number of women and men as heads of lists) has not yet been introduced at the parliamentary level and the 2019 elections demonstrated again that without being mandated, political parties, coalitions and independent lists remain reluctant to nominate women as heads of lists. While women comprised 49 percent of total candidates, they only headed 14 percent of lists (219 out of the 1,506 registered lists), a slight increase from the 2014 elections. In one constituency, Tataouine, not a single list was headed by a woman. Although women are well represented at the lowest level of the election administration, there is only one female board member of the ISIE.

As part of its campaign monitoring efforts, the ISIE also monitored instances of violence against women during elections, but has yet to publish its findings. Despite a ground-breaking 2017 law on gender-based violence that prevents violence against women in politics, CSOs and female candidates reported being exposed to threats, insults, derogatory comments and smear campaigns on social media meant to censor and discourage their candidacy for parliament and their political activity. During the campaign, the most serious instance of electoral violence was the attempted attack on a female candidate in Kairouan. Several observer groups reported physical and verbal violence against women monitors during campaign events. However, violence against women voters, which often takes the form of disenfranchisement or pressure to vote by male relatives, remains largely invisible and under-reported, as most instances happen in the private sphere.

The constitution recognizes the role of the youth as “an active force in building the nation.” Over 38 percent of the population is under the age of 24 and, according to the ISIE, around two-thirds of approximately 1.5 million newly registered voters are under 35. In the outgoing parliament, 28 MPs, mostly women, were under 35 (13 percent) when elected. The electoral law, which gives a financial incentive for lists to include a candidate up to 35 years of age in the first four positions, contributed to high numbers of youth running, especially in coalitions and independent lists. Several lists across the country fielded exclusively younger candidates under the age of 45 or 35.

As in the presidential election, measures guaranteeing access to polling stations by persons with disabilities and facilitating the voting process for the visually impaired were in place in polling stations. To help illiterate voters, a ballot paper with list numbers and logos along with posters on voting procedures were available in polling stations.

ELECTION OBSERVATION AND MONITORING

Thousands of Tunisian citizens have been observing the 2019 parliamentary elections. Recruited and trained by non-partisan civil society organizations, these observers are using specialized methodologies and new technologies to report on all phases of the electoral process from voter registration through post-election appeals. These efforts significantly contributed to the transparency and integrity of the electoral process. The ISIE reported accrediting approximately 95,000 candidate list agents, 17,000 domestic observers, 700 internationals and 2,000 media representatives, reflecting high levels of citizen engagement and international interest.

The mission did hear reports of an increase in the harassment and exclusion of domestic election observers during this electoral period in contrast to the 2014 cycle of elections. Over the presidential and parliamentary electoral cycles, citizen observers have reported over 15 cases of violence and intimidation against observers by campaign staff and activists. On election day, citizen observer groups reported that some polling station officials restricted observers' entry to and movement in polling stations, as well as access to information about the voting process. According to observer groups, these issues occurred more frequently in the parliamentary elections than during the first-round presidential vote or prior elections, leading observer groups to request that the ISIE remedy the situation before the October 13 runoff vote.

ELECTION DAY OBSERVATIONS

There were 13,446 polling stations for the parliamentary elections in Tunisia and 384 in 46 countries around the world. The ISIE announced that 252 polling centers with 348 polling stations in five governorates - namely Gafsa, Jendouba, Kasserine, Kef, Sidi Bouzid and Siliana - had reduced voting hours on October 6 due to general security concerns in those regions.

Overall Assessment

The mission observers witnessed a generally well-administered election day, conducted in an overall calm and orderly environment. However, several instances of active campaigning in violation of the silence period, as well as campaign posters in the vicinity of the polling stations were observed. The security forces were present at all polling stations visited and adhered to their roles in a professional manner.

Participation

Voter turnout was generally observed to be low, even in urban centers, with some observers noting that there were no voters in some polling centers during the time of their visit. According to the preliminary data, significantly more men voted than women (with a ratio of approximately 64 to 36 percent) and the turnout varied significantly between the districts.

Observers also noted several cases of voter confusion about the proper voting procedures, mostly among elderly or uneducated voters. In a few instances, voters were turned away because they were at the wrong polling station, did not have a proper or any identification, did not have the required certificate for assisted voting or were unable to access the polling center due to disabilities. A significant number of polling centers and stations were not accessible for persons with disabilities or those with mobility issues.

Opening and Voting Procedures

Opening procedures at observed polling stations were timely and smooth. Overall, polling officials conducted their duties in a professional and efficient manner, demonstrating a high level of procedural knowledge. In isolated cases, observers reported disorganization, tension, ink running out, ballots being stamped before voters arrived, and observers and polling officials using cellphones inside the polling stations, contrary to the rules. The secrecy of the vote was maintained in almost all instances with a few minor exceptions. Large ballots did not fit properly behind the voting screens and were difficult to fold without compromising the secrecy of the vote. Transparency of the process was generally ensured, although in several instances observers were

not given the requested turnout figures. Nonpartisan citizen election monitors as well as candidate pollwatchers representing different lists were present in the vast majority of visited polling stations.

Closing and Counting Procedures

Observed polling stations generally closed on time or with only a slight delay. Overall, the environment and level of transparency at polling stations during closing and counting were positively assessed, as was the polling officials' understanding of closing and counting procedures. Ballots were counted in a transparent manner, counts were recorded in the official minutes and were posted publicly at the entrance of polling stations.

COMPLAINTS AND APPEALS

By law, only candidates and party representatives may contest the election results, which must be submitted in the constituency in which they are running and submitted collectively to the Administrative Court. They have three days from the official announcement of the preliminary results to submit their complaints to the Administrative Court. The court has three days to conduct the hearing, five days to deliver the judgment and three days to notify the parties of the decision. Judgments can be appealed within three days from the decision notification. The hearing on the appeal must be conducted within three days, judgment rendered within seven days from the hearing, and notification provided within two days of the judgment. The mission will follow complaints and appeals processes through their resolution.

RECOMMENDATIONS

In the spirit of international cooperation, the mission offered recommendations following the September 15 presidential vote, most of which continue to stand following these parliamentary elections as important considerations moving forward. With less than one week until the presidential runoff, the mission understands that there is little time to address some of these issues. However, there are key elements that the relevant authorities are urged to address for the presidential runoff given the current situation affecting the two candidates:

- The judicial system and election authorities should work together to ensure a level playing field where every appropriate effort is made to enable all eligible candidates to campaign, have fair access to the media and inform voters.
- The ISIE should ensure unimpeded access to polling stations and relevant data for citizen observers.
- The ISIE should provide systematic, comprehensive and timely information about any violations detected, complaints received or sanctions imposed and ensure equitable enforcement of regulations.
- The ISIE should release detailed information about their media monitoring efforts, including any violations detected, the scale and nature of these violations and sanctions imposed against violators.

Over the longer term, all actors have a responsibility to continue working to enhance both the quality of the electoral process and voter confidence in the polls and broader political processes they impact. To this end, the mission highlights several longer-term recommendations:

- Candidates should use available legal remedies to address any concerns and ensure that election violations are properly documented and substantiated.
- To allow for timely and efficient enforcement of regulations and appropriate reimbursement for contestants, campaign finance matters, in particular, must be adjudicated within a shorter and well-defined period of time.
- A subdued campaign may result in a reduced turnout, and Tunisian authorities and political parties should review campaign laws and regulations to encourage a lively and informative campaign period.
- After the next parliament is inaugurated, members should make all efforts to reinstate the Constitutional Court as mandated under the Constitution, as referenced in the September 16 statement.
- The electoral framework should be thoroughly reviewed and amended as appropriate to include revisions to the seat allocation system, media regulations, campaign financing, campaign restrictions and duration and candidacy eligibility, as well as to address a high number of effectively disenfranchised voters and the potential to combine election dates for logistical ease and voter engagement.

ABOUT IRI AND NDI

IRI is a nonprofit organization dedicated to advancing democracy worldwide. IRI has supported free and fair electoral processes around the world since 1984. IRI has extensive election observation experience, having conducted more than 207 election observation missions in 57 countries, including in Tunisia, where IRI and NDI observed the 2011 National Constituent Assembly elections and the 2014 presidential and parliamentary elections.

NDI has more than 25 years of experience in international election observation. It also assists the electoral integrity efforts of political parties and nonpartisan citizen (domestic) election monitoring organizations, which have included large numbers of women and youth in more than 90 countries and territories. NDI has supported Tunisian organizations to observe every election since 2011.

IRI has been registered in Tunisia and has been working to support Tunisia's democratic transition since 2011. IRI helps political parties develop issue-based platforms, works with civil society to educate voters on elections and their civic responsibilities, and conducts public opinion research to inform elected officials of citizens' priorities. As such, IRI has closely followed Tunisian electoral and political developments and developed relationships with elections stakeholders. NDI works with Tunisian organizations to recruit, train and deploy tens of thousands of citizen observers; collect and analyze their findings; and communicate their conclusions. NDI has also worked with members of parliament and staff of the ARP since its inception in 2014 to provide tailored, responsive, technical assistance to help MPs and parliamentary staff advance policy debates and legislation that is based on constituent engagement. The long-term goal of NDI's work in Tunisia is to foster a competitive multiparty system, where citizens are offered a meaningful choice between political parties with contrasting policy proposals.

The mission wishes to express its appreciation to the United States Agency for International Development (USAID), which has funded the work of this delegation and supported IRI and NDI democracy assistance programs in Tunisia.

CONTACT INFORMATION

For more information, please contact:

IRI: Patricia Karam, pkaram@iri.org

NDI: Les Campbell, les@ndi.org

EOM: Marija Babic, mbabic@ndi.org