

Security Council | Tunisia Position Paper

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Introduction:

Tunisia is a relatively small country located on the Northern tip of Africa connected to the Mediterranean Sea. Being a relatively small country, it has a population of 11.8 million people. With that in mind, Tunisia does not have a large presence on the global level, like some of its neighboring countries do. Since a political revolution in 2011 overthrew the authoritarian government, Tunisia has established itself as a democratic stronghold in the region.

Tunisia, for the most part, keeps to itself and its own relations. In turn, they are not actively involved in any major conflicts outside their own border, they understand internal, political turmoil, and have focused on human rights in their own country. Overall, Tunisia is an amicable country that tends to ally with more democratic countries, but depending on the issue, can be impartial to multiple sides.

ISSUE ONE: Internal Conflicts: Civil Wars and Beyond

Tunisia recently had a revolution in 2011 which resulted in the ousting of longtime president Zine El Abidine Ben Ali. This means that Tunisia and her people have seen firsthand what it is like to go through civil turmoil in recent history, Tunisia did not have help in dealing with this civil turmoil and we believe became stronger because they did it themselves. Tunisia believes that it is not the duty of the world stage to intervene in civil wars, instead, it should prioritize keeping the surrounding region stable through trade agreements and protection. This allows countries to deal with internal affairs but also not destabilize entire regions. Tunisia hopes to support legislation that affirms these goals.

Tunisia is part of the Maghreb Region, where lots of religious wars have taken place. This has caused a lot of religious extremism and anger in the Maghreb region. As a result, Tunisia put together a report to combat religious extremism. Tunisia's plan is to reduce the socio-economic marginalization in underprivileged areas and strengthen trust in the political elite. Though this is a national plan, we hope to bring these goals to the United Nations Security Council. Tunisia's report believes that this plan allows for the de-radicalization and re-integration of refugees as well as common citizens. Tunisia believes that religious extremism comes from a place

of poverty and the perception that religious extremism is the only way out of poverty. Tunisia hopes to pass resolutions about combating poverty around the world. We believe that poverty causes a lot of the security threats in the world including all three issues that we will be debating.

Tunisia believes in strict punishment for the offense of drugs. 1- year sentences are common for most drug offenses, as well as minimum 5-year sentences for repeat offenses. These harsh consequences are purposeful. Tunisia believes that harsh consequences, including extended jail time, are needed to combat drugs. We do not see that as a violation of human rights but the responsibility of the government to prevent the harmful effects that drugs cause. Therefore Tunisia supports both Mexico and the United States of America in its war to combat drugs in North America.

Tunisia believes that internal affairs should be the responsibility of the host country and should not burden the international stage. The Security Council should only help countries that are affected by the civil war through support and trade agreements. Tunisia will support resolutions that have similar beliefs on how to deal with Internal Affairs.

ISSUE TWO: Military Overreach

Tunisia, being the small country it is, originally constructed its military to be purposefully weak to prevent the country from succumbing to the same fate of their neighboring countries. This being said, the Tunisian military has grown significantly since 2011. Why 2011? As aforementioned in the section above, the country experienced a political revolution in 2011, transitioning from an authoritarian regime, to a democratic institution. From partnerships with the United States, European nations, and regional partners like Algeria, the military has grown exponentially. Faced with the need to modernize outdated military equipment, reform its defense institutions and doctrine, and combat evolving security threats affiliated with al-Qaeda and the self-proclaimed Islamic State, the Tunisian defense sector is seizing the opportunity to receive foreign military assistance and boost their military.

This being said, Tunisia does not have specific issues that deal with military overreach in other countries, but the political unrest in their own country has influenced the military significantly. Since the 2011 political revolution, the unrest in the country has caused some of the leaders to misuse their own constitutional duty, attempting a coup of elections with the military on hand. This being said, Tunisia has since returned to a strong democratic state in the region.

Although they are a strong democratic state, Tunisia does not wish to impart their own democratic ideals on their surrounding authoritarian neighbors. Since they have only boosted their military since 2011, with support from countries mentioned before, Tunisia does neither have the time, money, nor power to be very influential in global conflicts. They have more pertinent issues to deal with inside their own

borders. Nonetheless, they do have to deal with the instability of their neighboring country, Libya. They also have to deal with the constant threat of terrorism in the region, specifically Al-Qaeda, ISIS, and ISIL

Tunisia, in response to the constant threat of terrorism, has engaged in a few conflicts in the region. The first of which is the Chaambi Operations, where Tunisia forces fought and won three battles on the border of Tunisia and Libya. The second conflict deals with the ISIL insurgency on the border of Tunisia and Libya, where Tunisian forces fought and eliminated ISIL in the battle.

Overall, Tunisia would support democratic countries more than communist and authoritarian regimes. However, they would take support from any country when it comes to fighting against terrorist groups in the region. There is a fine line that comes with that statement though. Tunisia would vehemently oppose those same countries sending in weapons and troops to deal with their own problems, seeing as Tunisia has witnessed firsthand the conflicts in the Middle East. Tunisia ultimately believes that each country has the right to fight their own problem and should not involve themselves in others affairs, but should there be the need to fight terrorist groups, and not countries themselves, resources should be shared.

ISSUE THREE: Women, Peace, and Security

Tunisia is one of the most progressive states in the Middle East, especially concerning personal status. Starting in 1956, the Code of Personal Status was introduced that abolished polygamy, eased the process for divorce, and required consent from both parties for a marriage to be legal. In 2017, Tunisia took a large step towards gender equality when it passed laws that specifically outlawed violence against women, ranging from prevention to protection and prosecution. The legislation especially emphasizes reactive measures, such as restraining orders and the establishment of shelters for women in danger. Tunisia also repealed Article 227 which gave rapists impunity if they married their victims, one of the first Arab countries to do so.

Tunisia fully supports the UN's current survivor-based approach and takes on an active partnership role. The Tunisian government offers multiple services that aim to help victims of sexual violence. This includes "case management, psycho-social support, financial assistance for Extremely Vulnerable Individuals (EVIs), monthly meetings to assess protection claims, awareness sessions and activities, and livelihood opportunities."

Tunisia works with the UN Refugee Agency (UNHCR) to provide asylum to anyone forced to flee their country due to war and/or violence and persecution. Refugees can apply for asylum with the Tunisian Council for Refugees (CTR) in either North or South Tunisia. Tunisia firmly believes that the best way to end conflict-related sexual violence is to put an end to the conflicts themselves. CRSV asylees need custom measures that respond to each situation based on context and needs. These measures include psychological, legal, and medical services that focus on their

general and reproductive health. It is almost of the utmost importance to prioritize reintegration into general society for the victims by awarding them the socioeconomic opportunities to empower themselves.

Tunisia urges other countries to end impunity, much like they did with the repeal of Article 227, to ensure legal and judicial repercussions on the perpetrators of the crime. They also urge the Council to create sanctions to “reflect the seriousness of these heinous crimes” and that Tunisia is committed to solving the issue of CSRV performed by terrorist groups.

In addition, the Tunisian government is steadily working toward reducing human trafficking through a multitude of ways, starting with holding traffickers more accountable and providing more assistance to the victims. New legislation passed in 2019 helps identify victims and pushes for the prosecution of the traffickers. In addition, following new laws passed in 2016, the punishment for trafficking in Tunisia is a ten-year prison sentence and a 50,000 Tunisian dinar fine (\$16, 620 USD) for adults. In the case of child trafficking, there is a fifteen-year prison sentence and up to a 100,000 dinar fine. The Tunisian government has promised help to victims of trafficking, with hospitals set up in the country’s capital of Tunis with specifically trained personnel.

In totality, Tunisia believes in the sanctity of human rights and is committed to defending these rights. While states are welcome to deal with their own internal conflicts, it welcomes aid and support regarding issues that affect the lives of multiple peoples.

Major Conflicts:

The three most prominent conflicts in Tunisian history are the Tunisian Revolution, the Chaambi Operations, and the ISIL Insurgency. The Tunisian Revolution took place in 2011 and culminated with the removal of longtime president Zine El Abidine Ben Ali. It was preceded by a period of civil resistance due to high unemployment rates, poor living conditions, corruption, and the absence of political freedom. Following Ben Ali’s ousting, the country went through a period of democratization and inspired similar protests around the region which came to be known as the Arab Spring. Only a year after the Tunisian revolution in 2012, the Chaambi Operations occurred, though it was a part of the larger insurgency in the Maghreb region which has been going on since 2002. The fighting took place in the Chaambi mountain range that borders Libya, Algeria, and Tunisia. The goal was to remove Al-Qaeda militants suspected of hiding in the area. Following this conflict came the ISIL (Islamic State of Iraq and the Levant) insurgency which is an ongoing conflict between Tunisia and ISIL that has resulted in hundreds of people injured and killed.