

Tunisia

Tunisia's president wins landslide second term after cracking down on opponents

Kais Saied secured 90.7% of the vote in election on a turnout of just 27.7%, after detaining rival Ayachi Zammel



Farouk Bouasker, president of the Independent High Authority for Elections, announced Kais Saied's victory in a press conference in Tunis. Photograph: Fethi Belaid/AFP/Getty Images

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Mon 7 Oct 2024 21:34 BST

Tunisia's president, Kais Saied, has secured a second five-year term with a landslide victory, although the election had one of the lowest turnouts in the north African country's history.

The Independent High Authority for Elections (ISIE) declared on Monday evening that Saied had won 90.7% of the vote [in Sunday's election](#), on a turnout of 27.7%.

In second place was the detained Ayachi Zammel, who won 7.4% a week after being jailed for 12 years for allegedly falsifying documents in the buildup to the election. Also on the ballot was the ex-lawmaker Zouhair Maghzaoui, Saied's ally turned foe. ISIE had disqualified more than a dozen candidates before the election, leaving the trio to battle it out at the polls.

The turnout was higher than the 11% of the country's nine million eligible voters who had [turned out for December's local elections](#), but still historically low. Observers said it offered an insight into the discontent among many Tunisians, as the country slides into authoritarian rule.

"This is a continuation of the revolution," Saied told state television earlier on Monday while celebrating his presumed victory. "We will build and will cleanse the country of the corrupt, traitors and conspirators."

Saied [came to power in 2019](#) in the second election after the Arab spring protests that led to the ousting of former strongman Ben Ali, who had been in power for more than two decades. Since then, [the incumbent president has suspended parliament](#) and he backed a referendum that granted him sweeping powers two years ago.

Multiple dissidents and opposition figures including former MP [Said Ferjani](#) have been detained and remain in captivity, with restricted access to family members and legal representation.

In 2023, Saïed's comments on undocumented black immigrants made global headlines and [led to criticism across the international community](#). He batted it off casually, saying he had relatives who were "married to Africans" and therefore he could not be racist.

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