[Template:Pp-move-indef](/wiki/Template:Pp-move-indef" \o "Template:Pp-move-indef) [Template:Use dmy dates](/wiki/Template:Use_dmy_dates) [Template:Infobox country](/wiki/Template:Infobox_country)

**Tunisia** ([Template:Lang-ar](/wiki/Template:Lang-ar) [*Template:Audio*](/wiki/Template:Audio); [Template:Lang-ber](/wiki/Template:Lang-ber)), officially the **Tunisian Republic** or the **Republic of Tunisia** ([Template:Lang-ar](/wiki/Template:Lang-ar) [*Template:Audio*](/wiki/Template:Audio); [Template:Lang-ber](/wiki/Template:Lang-ber)) is the northernmost country in Africa, covering [Template:Convert](/wiki/Template:Convert). Its northernmost point, [Cape Angela](/wiki/Cape_Angela), is the northernmost point on the African continent. It is bordered by [Algeria](/wiki/Algeria) to the west, [Libya](/wiki/Libya) to the southeast, and the [Mediterranean Sea](/wiki/Mediterranean_Sea) to the north and east. Tunisia's population was estimated to be just under 11 million in 2014.[[1]](#cite_note-1) Tunisia's name is derived from its capital city, [Tunis](/wiki/Tunis), which is located on Tunisia's northeast coast.

Geographically, Tunisia contains the eastern end of the [Atlas Mountains](/wiki/Atlas_Mountains) and the northern reaches of the [Sahara](/wiki/Sahara) desert. Much of the rest of the country's land is fertile soil. Its [Template:Convert](/wiki/Template:Convert) of coastline includes the African conjunction of the western and eastern parts of the [Mediterranean Basin](/wiki/Mediterranean_Basin) and, by means of the [Sicilian Strait](/wiki/Sicilian_Strait) and [Sardinian](/wiki/Sardinia) Channel, features the African mainland's second and third nearest points to Europe after [Gibraltar](/wiki/Gibraltar).

Tunisia is the only [democracy](/wiki/Democracy) in the [Arab World](/wiki/Arab_World).[[2]](#cite_note-2) It has a high [human development index](/wiki/Human_development_index).[[3]](#cite_note-3) It has an [association agreement](/wiki/European_Union_Association_Agreement) with the [European Union](/wiki/European_Union) and is a member of [La Francophonie](/wiki/La_Francophonie), the [Union for the Mediterranean](/wiki/Union_for_the_Mediterranean), the [Arab Maghreb Union](/wiki/Arab_Maghreb_Union), the [Arab League](/wiki/Arab_League), the [OIC](/wiki/OIC), the [Greater Arab Free Trade Area](/wiki/Greater_Arab_Free_Trade_Area), the [Community of Sahel-Saharan States](/wiki/Community_of_Sahel-Saharan_States), the [African Union](/wiki/African_Union), the [Non-Aligned Movement](/wiki/Non-Aligned_Movement), the [Group of 77](/wiki/Group_of_77) and obtained the status of [major non-NATO ally](/wiki/Major_non-NATO_ally). In addition, Tunisia is also a state party the principal world's institutions such as the [United Nations](/wiki/United_Nations) or the [International Criminal Court](/wiki/International_Criminal_Court). Close relations with Europe [Template:Spaced ndash](/wiki/Template:Spaced_ndash) in particular [with France](/wiki/France-Tunisia_relations)[[4]](#cite_note-4) and [with Italy](/wiki/Italy-Tunisia_relations)[[5]](#cite_note-5)[[6]](#cite_note-6)[Template:Spaced ndash](/wiki/Template:Spaced_ndash) have been forged through economic cooperation, [privatisation](/wiki/Privatisation) and industrial modernization.

In ancient times, Tunisia was primarily inhabited by Berbers. Phoenician immigration began in the 12th century BC; these immigrants founded [Carthage](/wiki/Carthage). A major mercantile power and a military rival of the [Roman Republic](/wiki/Roman_Republic), Carthage was [defeated](/wiki/Battle_of_Carthage_(c._149_BC)) by the Romans in 146 BC. The Romans, who would occupy Tunisia for most of the next eight hundred years, introduced Christianity and left architectural legacies like the [El Djem](/wiki/El_Djem) amphitheater. Arabs conquered Tunisia in the first century of [Islam](/wiki/Islam), followed by the [Ottomans](/wiki/Ottoman_Empire) between 1534 and 1574. The Ottomans held sway for over three hundred years. The [French conquest of Tunisia](/wiki/French_conquest_of_Tunisia) occurred in 1881. Tunisia gained independence with [Habib Bourguiba](/wiki/Habib_Bourguiba) and declared the Tunisian Republic in 1957. In 2011, the [Tunisian Revolution](/wiki/Tunisian_Revolution) resulted in the overthrow of President [Zine El Abidine Ben Ali](/wiki/Zine_El_Abidine_Ben_Ali), followed by parliamentary [elections](/wiki/Tunisian_Constituent_Assembly_election,_2011). The country voted for parliament again on 26 October 2014,[[7]](#cite_note-7) and for President on 23 November 2014.[[8]](#cite_note-8)

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## Etymology[[edit](/index.php?title=(none)&action=edit&section=1)]

[Template:See also](/wiki/Template:See_also) The word *Tunisia* is derived from [Tunis](/wiki/Tunis); a central urban hub and the capital of modern-day Tunisia. The present form of the name, with its Latinate suffix [*Template:Nowrap*](/wiki/Template:Nowrap), evolved from French [*Template:Lang*](/wiki/Template:Lang).[[9]](#cite_note-9) The French derivative [*Template:Lang*](/wiki/Template:Lang) was adopted in some European languages with slight modifications, introducing a distinctive name to designate the country. Other languages remained untouched, such as the Russian [Template:Lang](/wiki/Template:Lang) ([*Template:Transl*](/wiki/Template:Transl)) and Spanish [*Template:Lang*](/wiki/Template:Lang). In this case, the same name is used for both country and city, as with the Arabic [Template:Lang](/wiki/Template:Lang), and only by context can one tell the difference.[[9]](#cite_note-9) The name *Tunis* can be attributed to different origins. It is generally associated with the [Berber](/wiki/Berber_languages) root ⵜⵏⵙ, transcribed [Template:Lang](/wiki/Template:Lang), which means "to lay down" or "encampment".[[10]](#cite_note-10) It is sometimes also associated with the Punic goddess [*Tanith (aka Tunit)*](/wiki/Tanit),[[9]](#cite_note-9)[[11]](#cite_note-11) ancient city of *Tynes*.[[12]](#cite_note-12)[[13]](#cite_note-13) Before Tunisia, the territory's name was [Ifriqiya](/wiki/Ifriqiya) or [Africa](/wiki/Africa_(Roman_province)), which gave the present day name of the continent Africa.

## History[[edit](/index.php?title=(none)&action=edit&section=2)]

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### Antiquity[[edit](/index.php?title=(none)&action=edit&section=3)]

[Template:Main](/wiki/Template:Main) Farming methods reached the [Nile Valley](/wiki/Nile) from the [Fertile Crescent](/wiki/Fertile_Crescent) region about 5000 BC, and spread to the [Maghreb](/wiki/Maghreb) by about 4000 BC. Agricultural communities in the humid coastal plains of central Tunisia then were ancestors of today's [Berber](/wiki/Berber_people) tribes.

It was believed in ancient times that Africa was originally populated by [Gaetulians](/wiki/Gaetuli) and Libyans, both nomadic peoples. According to the Roman historian [Sallust](/wiki/Sallust), the demigod Hercules died in Spain and his polyglot eastern army was left to settle the land, with some [migrating](/wiki/Human_migration) to Africa. Persians went to the West and intermarried with the Gaetulians and became the Numidians. The Medes settled and were known as Mauri, later Moors. [thumb|](/wiki/File:CarthageMap.png)[Carthaginian](/wiki/Ancient_Carthage)-held territory before the first First Punic War

The Numidians and Moors belonged to the race from which the Berbers are descended. The translated meaning of Numidian is Nomad and indeed the people were semi-nomadic until the reign of Masinissa of the Massyli tribe.[[14]](#cite_note-14)[[15]](#cite_note-15)[[16]](#cite_note-16)[[17]](#cite_note-17)[[18]](#cite_note-18) At the beginning of recorded history, Tunisia was inhabited by [Berber](/wiki/Berber_people) tribes. Its coast was settled by [Phoenicians](/wiki/Phoenicia) starting as early as the 12th century BC ([Bizerte](/wiki/Bizerte), [Utica](/wiki/Utica,_Tunisia)). The city of [Carthage](/wiki/Carthage) was founded in the 9th century BC by Phoenicians. Legend says that [Dido](/wiki/Dido_(Queen_of_Carthage)) from Tyre, now in modern-day Lebanon, founded the city in 814 BC, as retold by the [Greek](/wiki/Greeks) writer Timaeus of Tauromenium. The settlers of Carthage brought their culture and religion from the Phoenicians.[[19]](#cite_note-19) After the series of wars with Greek city-states of Sicily in the 5th century BC, Carthage rose to power and eventually became the dominant civilization in the Western [Mediterranean](/wiki/Mediterranean). The people of Carthage worshipped a pantheon of Middle Eastern gods including [Baal](/wiki/Baal) and [Tanit](/wiki/Tanit). Tanit's symbol, a simple female figure with extended arms and long dress, is a popular icon found in ancient sites. The founders of Carthage also established a [Tophet](/wiki/Tophet), which was altered in Roman times.

A Carthaginian invasion of Italy led by [Hannibal](/wiki/Hannibal) during the [Second Punic War](/wiki/Second_Punic_War), one of a series of wars with [Rome](/wiki/Roman_Republic), nearly crippled the rise of Roman power. From the conclusion of the Second Punic War in 202 BC, Carthage functioned as a client state of the Roman Republic for another 50 years.

Following the [Battle of Carthage](/wiki/Battle_of_Carthage_(c._149_BC)) in 149 BC, Carthage was conquered by Rome. After the Roman conquest, the region became one of the main granaries of Rome and was fully Latinized.

During the Roman period the area of what is now Tunisia enjoyed a huge development. The economy, mainly during the Empire, boomed: the prosperity of the area depended on agriculture. Called the *Granary of the Empire*, the area of actual Tunisia and coastal [Tripolitania](/wiki/Tripolitania), according to one estimate, produced one million tons of cereals each year, one-quarter of which was exported to the Empire. Additional crops included beans, figs, grapes, and other fruits.

By the 2nd century, olive oil rivalled cereals as an export item. In addition to the cultivations and the capture and transporting of exotic wild animals from the western mountains, the principal production and exports included the textiles, marble, wine, timber, livestock, pottery such as [African Red Slip](/wiki/African_Red_Slip), and wool. [thumb|The Roman amphitheater in](/wiki/File:Amphitheatre_El_Jem(js)1.jpg) [El Djem](/wiki/El_Djem), built during the first half of the 3rd century AD

There was even a huge production of mosaics and ceramics, exported mainly to Italy, in the central area of [El Djem](/wiki/El_Djem) (where there was the second biggest amphitheater in the Roman Empire).

Berber bishop [Donatus Magnus](/wiki/Donatus_Magnus) was the founder of a Christian group known as the [Donatists](/wiki/Donatist).[[20]](#cite_note-20) During the 5th and 6th centuries (from 430 to 533 AD), the Germanic [Vandals](/wiki/Vandals) invaded and ruled over a kingdom in North Africa that included present-day Tripoli. The region was easily reconquered in 533–534 AD, during the rule of Emperor [Justinian I](/wiki/Justinian_I), by the [Eastern Romans](/wiki/Byzantine_Empire) led by General [Belisarius](/wiki/Belisarius).

### Middle Ages[[edit](/index.php?title=(none)&action=edit&section=4)]

[Template:Main](/wiki/Template:Main) [thumb|Domes of the](/wiki/File:Great_Mosque_of_Kairouan,_flat_roof_and_domes.jpg) [Great Mosque of Kairouan](/wiki/Mosque_of_Uqba). Founded in 670, it dates in its present form largely from the Aghlabid period (9th century). It is the oldest mosque in the [Maghreb](/wiki/Maghreb). Sometime between the second half of the 7th century and the early part of the 8th century, [Arab](/wiki/Arab) [Muslim conquest occurred in the region](/wiki/Muslim_conquest_of_the_Maghreb). They founded the first Islamic city in North Africa, [Kairouan](/wiki/Kairouan). It was there in 670 AD that the [Mosque of Uqba](/wiki/Mosque_of_Uqba), or the Great Mosque of Kairouan, was constructed;.[[21]](#cite_note-21) This mosque is the oldest and most prestigious sanctuary in the Muslim West with the oldest standing [minaret](/wiki/Minaret) in the world;[[22]](#cite_note-22) it is also considered a masterpiece of Islamic art and architecture.[[23]](#cite_note-23) The Arab governors of Tunis founded the [Aghlabid Dynasty](/wiki/Aghlabid_Dynasty), which ruled Tunisia, [Tripolitania](/wiki/Tripolitania) and eastern Algeria from 800 to 909.[[24]](#cite_note-24) Tunisia flourished under Arab rule when extensive systems were constructed to supply towns with water for household use and irrigation that promoted agriculture (especially olive production).[[24]](#cite_note-24)[[25]](#cite_note-25) This prosperity permitted luxurious court life and was marked by the construction of new palace cities such as al-Abassiya (809) and Raqadda (877).[[24]](#cite_note-24) After conquering [Cairo](/wiki/Cairo), the [Fatimids](/wiki/Fatimids) abandoned Tunisia and parts of Eastern Algeria to the local [Zirids](/wiki/Zirids) (972–1148).[[26]](#cite_note-26) Zirid Tunisia flourished in many areas: agriculture, industry, trade, and religious and secular learning.[[27]](#cite_note-27) Management of the later Zirid emirs was neglectful though, and political instability was connected to the decline of Tunisian trade and agriculture.[[24]](#cite_note-24)[[28]](#cite_note-28)[[29]](#cite_note-29) The invasion of Tunisia by the [Banu Hilal](/wiki/Banu_Hilal), a warlike Arab Bedouin tribe encouraged by the Fatimids of Egypt to seize North Africa, sent the region's urban and economic life into further decline.[[26]](#cite_note-26) The Arab historian [Ibn Khaldun](/wiki/Ibn_Khaldun) wrote that the lands ravaged by Banu Hilal invaders had become completely arid desert.[[28]](#cite_note-28)[[30]](#cite_note-30) The coasts were held briefly by the [Normans](/wiki/Normans) of [Sicily](/wiki/Sicily) in the 12th century, but following the conquest of Tunisia in 1159–1160 by the [Almohads](/wiki/Almohads) the last Christians in Tunisia disappeared. The Almohads initially ruled over Tunisia through a governor, usually a near relative of the Caliph. Despite the prestige of the new masters, the country was still unruly, with continuous rioting and fighting between the townsfolk and wandering Arabs and Turks, the latter being subjects of the Muslim Armenian adventurer Karakush. Also Tunisia was occupied by [Ayyubids](/wiki/Ayyubids) between 1182 and 1183 and again between 1184 and 1187.[[31]](#cite_note-31) From independence in 1956 until the 2011 revolution, the government and the [Constitutional Democratic Rally](/wiki/Constitutional_Democratic_Rally) (RCD), formerly [Neo Destour](/wiki/Neo_Destour) and the [Socialist Destourian Party](/wiki/Socialist_Destourian_Party), were effectively one. By most accounts, the RCD helmed one of the most repressive regimes in the Arab world.[[40]](#cite_note-40) In November 1987, doctors declared Bourguiba unfit to rule and, in a bloodless coup d'état, Prime Minister [Zine El Abidine Ben Ali](/wiki/Zine_El_Abidine_Ben_Ali) assumed the presidency<ref name = BBC/> in accordance with Article 57 of the Tunisian constitution.[[41]](#cite_note-41) The anniversary of Ben Ali's succession, 7 November, was celebrated as a national holiday. He was consistently re-elected with enormous majorities every five years (well over 80 percent of the vote), the last being 25 October 2009,[[42]](#cite_note-42) until he fled the country amid popular unrest in January 2011.

Ben Ali and his family were accused of corruption[[43]](#cite_note-43) and plundering the country's money. Corrupt members of the Trabelsi family, most notably in the cases of [Imed Trabelsi](/wiki/Imed_Trabelsi) and [Belhassen Trabelsi](/wiki/Belhassen_Trabelsi), controlled much of the business sector in the country.[[44]](#cite_note-44) The First Lady [Leila Ben Ali](/wiki/Leila_Ben_Ali) was described as an "unabashed [shopaholic](/wiki/Oniomania)" who used the state airplane to make frequent unofficial trips to Europe's fashion capitals.[[45]](#cite_note-45) Tunisia refused a French request for the extradition of two of the President's nephews, from Leila's side, who were accused by the French State prosecutor of having stolen two mega-yachts from a French marina.[[46]](#cite_note-46) Ben Ali's son-in-law [Sakher El Materi](/wiki/Sakher_El_Materi) was rumoured as being primed to eventually take over the country.[[47]](#cite_note-47) Independent human rights groups, such as [Amnesty International](/wiki/Amnesty_International), [Freedom House](/wiki/Freedom_House), and Protection International, documented that basic human and political rights were not respected.[[48]](#cite_note-48)[[49]](#cite_note-49) The regime obstructed in any way possible the work of local human rights organizations.[[50]](#cite_note-50) In 2008, in terms of [Press freedom](/wiki/Press_freedom), Tunisia was ranked 143rd out of 173.[[51]](#cite_note-51)

### Post Revolution (2011–)[[edit](/index.php?title=(none)&action=edit&section=8)]

[Template:See also](/wiki/Template:See_also) [thumb|300px|Tunis on 14 January 2011 during the](/wiki/File:Tunisia_Unrest_-_VOA_-_Tunis_14_Jan_2011_(2).jpg) [Tunisian Revolution](/wiki/Tunisian_Revolution). The Tunisian Revolution[[52]](#cite_note-52)[[53]](#cite_note-53) was an intensive campaign of [civil resistance](/wiki/Civil_resistance) that was precipitated by high [unemployment](/wiki/Unemployment), [food inflation](/wiki/Food_inflation), [corruption](/wiki/Corruption),[[54]](#cite_note-54) a lack of [freedom of speech](/wiki/Freedom_of_speech) and other [political freedoms](/wiki/Political_freedom)[[55]](#cite_note-55) and poor [living conditions](/wiki/Living_conditions). Labour unions were said to be an integral part of the protests.[[56]](#cite_note-56) The protests inspired the [Arab Spring](/wiki/Arab_Spring), a wave of similar actions throughout the Arab world.

The catalyst for mass demonstrations was the death of [Mohamed Bouazizi](/wiki/Mohamed_Bouazizi), a 26-year-old Tunisian street vendor, who set himself afire on 17 December 2010 in protest at the confiscation of his wares and the humiliation inflicted on him by a municipal official. Anger and violence intensified following Bouazizi's death on 4 January 2011, ultimately leading longtime [President](/wiki/President_of_Tunisia) [Zine El Abidine Ben Ali](/wiki/Zine_El_Abidine_Ben_Ali) to step down on 14 January 2011, after 23 years in power.

Protests continued for banning of the ruling party and the eviction of all its members from the transitional government formed by [Mohammed Ghannouchi](/wiki/Mohammed_Ghannouchi). Eventually the new government gave in to the demands. A Tunis court banned the ex-ruling party RCD and confiscated all its resources. A decree by the minister of the interior banned the "political police", special forces which were used to intimidate and persecute political activists.[[57]](#cite_note-57) On 3 March 2011, the president announced that [elections to a Constituent Assembly](/wiki/Tunisian_Constituent_Assembly_election,_2011) would be held on 23 October 2011. International and internal observers declared the vote free and fair. The [Ennahda Movement](/wiki/Ennahda_Movement), formerly banned under the Ben Ali regime, won a plurality of 90 seats out of a total of 217.[[58]](#cite_note-58) On 12 December 2011, former dissident and veteran human rights activist [Moncef Marzouki](/wiki/Moncef_Marzouki) was elected president.[[59]](#cite_note-59) In March 2012, Ennahda declared it will not support making sharia the main source of legislation in the new constitution, maintaining the secular nature of the state. Ennahda's stance on the issue was criticized by hardline Islamists, who wanted strict sharia, but was welcomed by secular parties.[[60]](#cite_note-60) On 6 February 2013, [Chokri Belaid](/wiki/Chokri_Belaid), the leader of the leftist opposition and prominent critic of Ennahda, was assassinated.[[61]](#cite_note-61) Tunisia was hit by two violent terror attacks on foreign tourists in 2015, [first killing 22 people](/wiki/Bardo_National_Museum_attack) at the [Bardo National Museum](/wiki/Bardo_National_Museum), and [later killing 38 people](/wiki/2015_Sousse_attacks) at the [Sousse](/wiki/Sousse) beachfront.

## Geography[[edit](/index.php?title=(none)&action=edit&section=9)]

[Template:Main](/wiki/Template:Main) [thumb|Tunisia map of Köppen climate classification.](/wiki/File:Tunisia_map_of_Köppen_climate_classification.svg) Tunisia is situated on the [Mediterranean](/wiki/Mediterranean) coast of North Africa, midway between the Atlantic Ocean and the [Nile Delta](/wiki/Nile_Delta). It is bordered by [Algeria](/wiki/Algeria) on the west and [Libya](/wiki/Libya) on the south east. It lies between latitudes [30°](/wiki/30th_parallel_north) and [38°N](/wiki/38th_parallel_north), and longitudes [7°](/wiki/7th_meridian_east) and [12°E](/wiki/12th_meridian_east). An abrupt southward turn of the Mediterranean coast in northern Tunisia gives the country two distinctive Mediterranean coasts, west-east in the north, and north-south in the east.

Though it is relatively small in size, Tunisia has great environmental diversity due to its north-south extent. Its east-west extent is limited. Differences in Tunisia, like the rest of the Maghreb, are largely north-south environmental differences defined by sharply decreasing rainfall southward from any point. The Dorsal, the eastern extension of the Atlas Mountains, runs across Tunisia in a northeasterly direction from the Algerian border in the west to the Cape Bon peninsula in the east. North of the Dorsal is the Tell, a region characterized by low, rolling hills and plains, again an extension of mountains to the west in Algeria. In the [Khroumerie](/wiki/Khroumire), the northwestern corner of the Tunisian Tell, elevations reach [Template:Convert](/wiki/Template:Convert) and snow occurs in winter.

The [Sahel](/wiki/Sahel,_Tunisia), a broadening coastal plain along Tunisia's eastern Mediterranean coast, is among the world's premier areas of olive cultivation. Inland from the Sahel, between the Dorsal and a range of hills south of Gafsa, are the [Steppes](/wiki/Steppes). Much of the southern region is [semi-arid](/wiki/Semi-arid) and [desert](/wiki/Desert).

Tunisia has a coastline [Template:Convert](/wiki/Template:Convert) long. In maritime terms, the country claims a contiguous zone of [Template:Convert](/wiki/Template:Convert), and a territorial sea of [Template:Convert](/wiki/Template:Convert).[[62]](#cite_note-62)

### Climate[[edit](/index.php?title=(none)&action=edit&section=10)]

Tunisia's climate is [Mediterranean](/wiki/Mediterranean_climate) in the north, with mild rainy winters and hot, dry summers.[[63]](#cite_note-63) The south of the country is desert. The terrain in the north is mountainous, which, moving south, gives way to a hot, dry central [plain](/wiki/Plain). The south is [semiarid](/wiki/Semiarid), and merges into the [Sahara](/wiki/Sahara). A series of [salt lakes](/wiki/Tunisian_salt_lakes), known as *chotts* or *shatts*, lie in an east-west line at the northern edge of the Sahara, extending from the [Gulf of Gabes](/wiki/Gulf_of_Gabes) into [Algeria](/wiki/Algeria). The lowest point is [Chott el Djerid](/wiki/Chott_el_Djerid) at [Template:Convert](/wiki/Template:Convert) below sea level and the highest is [Jebel ech Chambi](/wiki/Jebel_ech_Chambi) at [Template:Convert](/wiki/Template:Convert).[[64]](#cite_note-64)[Template:Weather box](/wiki/Template:Weather_box)

## Politics[[edit](/index.php?title=(none)&action=edit&section=11)]

[Template:Main](/wiki/Template:Main)

|  |  |
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| [150px](/wiki/File:Béji_Caïd_Essebsi_2015-05-20.jpg) | [150px](/wiki/File:HabibEssid.jpg) |
| [Beji Caid Essebsi](/wiki/Beji_Caid_Essebsi) [President](/wiki/President_of_Tunisia) since 2014 | [Habib Essid](/wiki/Habib_Essid) [Prime Minister](/wiki/Prime_Minister_of_Tunisia) since 2015 |

Tunisia is a [representative democracy](/wiki/Representative_democracy) and a [republic](/wiki/Republic) with a [president](/wiki/President_of_Tunisia) serving as [head of state](/wiki/Head_of_state), [prime minister](/wiki/Prime_minister_of_Tunisia) as [head of government](/wiki/Head_of_government), a [unicameral](/wiki/Unicameralism) [parliament](/wiki/Parliament), and a [civil law court system](/wiki/Civil_law_(legal_system)). The [Constitution of Tunisia](/wiki/Constitution_of_Tunisia), adopted 26 January 2014, guarantees rights for women and states that the President's religion "shall be Islam". In October 2014 Tunisia held its first elections under the new constitution following the Arab Spring.[[65]](#cite_note-65) The number of legalized [political parties in Tunisia](/wiki/Political_parties_in_Tunisia) has grown considerably since the revolution. There are now over 100 legal parties, including several that existed under the former regime. During the rule of Ben Ali, only three functioned as independent opposition parties: the [PDP](/wiki/Progressive_Democratic_Party_(Tunisia)), [FDTL](/wiki/Democratic_Forum_for_Labour_and_Liberties), and [Tajdid](/wiki/Ettajdid_Movement). While some older parties are well-established and can draw on previous party structures, many of the 100-plus parties extant as of February 2012 are small.<ref name=cnsd>[Template:Cite web](/wiki/Template:Cite_web)</ref>

Rare for the Arab world, women held more than 20% of seats in the country's pre-revolution bicameral parliament.[[66]](#cite_note-66) In the 2011 constituent assembly, women held between 24% and 31% of all seats.[[67]](#cite_note-67)[[68]](#cite_note-68) Tunisia is included in the European Union's [European Neighbourhood Policy](/wiki/European_Neighbourhood_Policy) (ENP), which aims at bringing the EU and its neighbours closer. On 23 November 2014 Tunisia held its first Presidential Election following the Arab Spring in 2011.[[69]](#cite_note-69) The Tunisian legal system is heavily influenced by [French civil law](/wiki/French_civil_law), while the Law of Personal Status is based on Islamic law.<ref name=ri-law>[Template:Cite web](/wiki/Template:Cite_web)</ref> [Sharia](/wiki/Sharia) courts were abolished in 1956.<ref name=ri-law/>

A [Code of Personal Status](/wiki/Code_of_Personal_Status_(Tunisia)) was adopted shortly after independence in 1956, which, among other things, gave women full legal status (allowing them to run and own businesses, have bank accounts, and seek passports under their own authority). The code outlawed the practices of polygamy and repudiation and a husband's right to unilaterally divorce his wife.[[70]](#cite_note-70) Further reforms in 1993 included a provision to allow Tunisian women to transmit citizenship even if they are married to a foreigner and living abroad.[[71]](#cite_note-71) The Law of Personal Status is applied to all Tunisians regardless of their religion.<ref name=ri-law/> The Code of Personal Status remains one of the most progressive civil codes in the North Africa and the Muslim world.[[72]](#cite_note-72)

### Human rights[[edit](/index.php?title=(none)&action=edit&section=12)]

[Template:Main](/wiki/Template:Main) After the revolution, a number of [Salafist](/wiki/Salafi_movement) groups emerged and in some occasions have violently repressed artistic expression that is viewed to be hostile to Islam.[[73]](#cite_note-73) Since the revolution, some non-governmental organizations have reconstituted themselves and hundreds of new ones have emerged. For instance, the [Tunisian Human Rights League](/wiki/Tunisian_Human_Rights_League), the first human rights organization in Africa and the Arab world, operated under restrictions and state intrusion for over half of its existence, but is now completely free to operate. Some independent organizations, such as the Tunisian Association of Democratic Women, the Association of Tunisian Women for Research and Development, and the [Bar Association](/wiki/Bar_Association) also remain active.<ref name=cnsd/>

The Tunisian regime has been criticised for its draconian policy on recreational drug use, for instance automatic 1-year prison sentences for consuming cannabis. Prisons are overcrowded and drug offenders represent nearly a third of the prison population.[[74]](#cite_note-74)

### Military[[edit](/index.php?title=(none)&action=edit&section=13)]

[Template:Main](/wiki/Template:Main) [Template:As of](/wiki/Template:As_of), Tunisia had an army of 27,000 personnel equipped with 84 main battle tanks and 48 light tanks. The navy had 4,800 personnel operating 25 patrol boats and 6 other craft. The [Tunisian Air Force](/wiki/Tunisian_Air_Force) has 154 aircraft and 4 UAVs. Paramilitary forces consisted of a 12,000-member national guard.[[75]](#cite_note-75) Tunisia's military spending was 1.6% of GDP [Template:As of](/wiki/Template:As_of). The army is responsible for national defence and also internal security. Tunisia has participated in peacekeeping efforts in the DROC and Ethiopia/Eritrea.[[76]](#cite_note-76) [United Nations](/wiki/United_Nations) peacekeeping deployments for the Tunisian armed forces have been in Cambodia ([UNTAC](/wiki/UNTAC)), Namibia ([UNTAG](/wiki/UNTAG)), Somalia, Rwanda, Burundi, Western Sahara ([MINURSO](/wiki/MINURSO)) and the 1960s mission in the Congo, [ONUC](/wiki/ONUC).

The military has historically played a professional, apolitical role in defending the country from external threats. Since January 2011 and at the direction of the executive branch, the military has taken on increasing responsibility for domestic security and humanitarian crisis response.<ref name=cnsd/>

### Administrative divisions[[edit](/index.php?title=(none)&action=edit&section=14)]

[Template:Main](/wiki/Template:Main) [Template:Labelled map of tunisia](/wiki/Template:Labelled_map_of_tunisia) Tunisia is subdivided into 24 [governorates](/wiki/Governorate), which are further divided into 264 "[delegations](/wiki/Delegations_of_Tunisia)" or "[districts](/wiki/District)" (*mutamadiyat*), and further subdivided into [municipalities](/wiki/Municipality) (*shaykhats*)[[77]](#cite_note-77) and sectors (*imadats*).[[78]](#cite_note-78)

## Economy[[edit](/index.php?title=(none)&action=edit&section=15)]

[Template:Main](/wiki/Template:Main) [thumb|350px|A proportional representation of Tunisia's exports.](/wiki/File:Tunisia_Export_Treemap.png)

Tunisia is an export-oriented country in the process of liberalizing and privatizing an economy that, while averaging 5% GDP growth since the early 1990s, has suffered from corruption benefiting politically connected elites.[[79]](#cite_note-79) Tunisia's Penal Code criminalises several forms of corruption, including active and passive bribery, abuse of office, extortion and conflicts of interest, but the anti-corruption framework is not effectively enforced.[[80]](#cite_note-80) Tunisia has a diverse economy, ranging from agriculture, mining, manufacturing, and petroleum products, to [tourism](/wiki/Tourism_in_Tunisia). In 2008 it had a [GDP](/wiki/Gross_domestic_product) of [US$](/wiki/United_States_dollar)41 billion ([official exchange rates](/wiki/Exchange_rate)), or $82 billion (purchasing power parity).<ref name=CIA>[Template:Cite web](/wiki/Template:Cite_web)</ref>

The agricultural sector accounts for 11.6% of the GDP, industry 25.7%, and services 62.8%. The industrial sector is mainly made up of clothing and footwear manufacturing, production of car parts, and electric machinery. Although Tunisia managed an average 5% growth over the last decade it continues to suffer from a high unemployment especially among youth.

Tunisia was in 2009 ranked the most competitive economy in Africa and the 40th in the world by the [World Economic Forum](/wiki/World_Economic_Forum).[[81]](#cite_note-81) Tunisia has managed to attract many international companies such as [Airbus](/wiki/Airbus)[[82]](#cite_note-82) and [Hewlett-Packard](/wiki/Hewlett-Packard).[[83]](#cite_note-83) Tourism accounted for 7% of GDP and 370,000 jobs in 2009.[[84]](#cite_note-84) The [European Union](/wiki/European_Union) remains Tunisia's first trading partner, currently accounting for 72.5% of Tunisian imports and 75% of Tunisian exports. Tunisia is one of the European Union's most established trading partners in the [Mediterranean region](/wiki/Mediterranean_region) and ranks as the EU's 30th largest trading partner. Tunisia was the first Mediterranean country to sign an Association Agreement with the European Union, in July 1995, although even before the date of entry came into force, Tunisia started dismantling tariffs on bilateral EU trade. Tunisia finalised the tariffs dismantling for industrial products in 2008 and therefore was the first Mediterranean country to enter in a free trade area with EU.[[85]](#cite_note-85) [Tunis Sports City](/wiki/Tunis_Sports_City) is an entire sports city currently being constructed in Tunis, Tunisia. The city that will consist of apartment buildings as well as several sports facilities will be built by the Bukhatir Group at a cost of $5 Billion.[[86]](#cite_note-86) The Tunis Financial harbour will deliver North Africa's first [offshore financial centre](/wiki/Offshore_financial_centre) at Tunis Bay in a project with an end development value of US$3 billion.[[87]](#cite_note-87) The Tunis Telecom City is a US$3 billion project to create an IT hub in [Tunis](/wiki/Tunis).[[88]](#cite_note-88) Tunisia Economic City is a city being constructed near Tunis in [Enfidha](/wiki/Enfidha). The city will consist of residential, medical, financial, industrial, entertainment and touristic buildings as well as a port zone for a total cost of US$80 Billion. The project is financed by Tunisian and foreign enterprises.[[89]](#cite_note-89)

### Tourism[[edit](/index.php?title=(none)&action=edit&section=16)]

[Template:Main](/wiki/Template:Main) Among Tunisia's tourist attractions are its cosmopolitan capital city of Tunis, the ancient ruins of Carthage, the Muslim and Jewish quarters of Jerba, and coastal resorts outside of Monastir. According to The New York Times, Tunisia is "known for its golden beaches, sunny weather and affordable luxuries." [[90]](#cite_note-90)

### Energy[[edit](/index.php?title=(none)&action=edit&section=17)]

[Template:Pie chart](/wiki/Template:Pie_chart) The majority of the electricity used in Tunisia is produced locally, by state-owned company STEG (Société Tunisienne de l'Electricité et du Gaz). In 2008, a total of 13,747 [GWh](/wiki/GWh) was produced in the country.[[91]](#cite_note-91) Oil production of Tunisia is about [Template:Convert](/wiki/Template:Convert). The main field is El Bourma.[[92]](#cite_note-92) Oil production began in 1966 in Tunisia. Currently there are 12 oil fields.[[93]](#cite_note-93) Tunisia had [plans for two nuclear power stations](/wiki/Nuclear_energy_in_Tunisia), to be operational by 2019. Both facilities are projected to produce 900–1000 [MW](/wiki/Megawatt). France is set to become an important partner in Tunisia's nuclear power plans, having signed an agreement, along with other partners, to deliver training and technology.<ref name=Reuters>[Template:Cite news](/wiki/Template:Cite_news)</ref>[[94]](#cite_note-94) [Template:As of](/wiki/Template:As_of), Tunisia has abandoned these plans. Instead, Tunisia is considering other options to diversify its energy mix, such as renewable energies, coal, shale gas, liquified natural gas and constructing a submarine power interconnection with Italy.[[95]](#cite_note-95)