
Arab spring and Fruits of Jasmine Revolution

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Abstract:

Tunisia, the birth place of Arab Spring was ready for an uprising long before the events of December 17, 2010, that spread from the coastal town of Sidi Bouzid, engulfing Egypt, Libya, Syria, to Bahrain and Yemen. It occurred due to deep seated popular anger and resentment with the autocratic Arab leaders. Tunisia after gaining independence from the France in 1956 witnessed only two presidents –Habib bourguiba and Zin el abidene Ben Ali, western nations accepted its authoritarian government. Tunisia, a country of mostly homogeneous population with few ethnic, tribal, or religious plurality, liberalized economy; middle class with well educated and productive. Its per-capita income was double those of its neighbouring countries. But all was in the smallest country of North Africa. The Ben Ali Regime (1987-2011), witnessed atrocities and misers to the common masses through inefficient bureaucracy, censorship on freedom of press, and corruption prevalent in administration brought people on streets.

Key word: arab spring, regime, anger, homogenous, religious, bureaucracy, censorship, freedom of press, corruption

introduction: A 26 years old street vendor, Mohammed Bouazizi, whose act of self-immolation triggered a revolution was not unique. It was a tragic plight that witnessed a suicide of Bouazizi but also underscored Tunisian youth and many other youth of the region. It was the result of tragic manifestation of marginalised and estranged youth, unemployment or marginally employed despite their education and skills. Protests erupted in downtrodden areas of south in what is known as the 'Mining Belt'. By the second week of January uprising in Tunisia's suburbs spread, fuelled by social media networks like Facebook and Twitter, which young

demonstrators used to organise and coordinate the mass mobilization of citizens to descend up on the capitl of Tunis.(jasmine revolution).

Security forces being part and parcel of president's coercive governance ,used brutal force against protestors including physical assault ,tear gas and live ammunition resulting more than thirty deaths as reported by Human rights groups all , result of clashes with police.

Causes of Jasmine Revolution:

- I. Corruption
- II. Unemployment and poverty
- III. Censorship of press

Corruption:

The graft and nepotism practiced by Ben Ali's family are among the main causes of anti-government anger. The former president's wife, Leila Trabelsi, has emerged as a Marie Antionette figure, resented by many for her decorated wealth in a country that has seen prices jump and employment diminish during the worldwide recession. It is also widely and, according to Tunisia watchers and cables released by Wikileaks, rightly reported that Ben Ali's family members get sweetheart deals thanks to Tunisia's hazy line between business and government. A book by two French journalists alleges that Trabelsi's brother, Belhassen, specialized in buying land the government had deemed historical preserves, then reselling the land to developers for enormous sums. According to Harvard professor William Granara, who was written about Tunisia and who used to work for the U.S. State Department there, the perception that the Trabelsis and Ben Alis were "pillaging" the country was fatal to their rule.

Unemployment and poverty:

In recent months, unemployment has risen to 14 percent, by modest government estimates, and everyday items like food have become harder to buy. The price of milk has doubled in recent months, says Malika Zeghal, a French-born Tunisian scholar of Middle Eastern and North African politics at Harvard, who has been in touch with people on the ground this week.

Importantly, many of the unemployed are young college graduates who benefited from Tunisia's relatively good public schools and free post-secondary education, but now find themselves unable to make a living. "As we know, unemployed intellectuals make problems," Granara says. The absence of work violated an unspoken bargain struck between Ben Ali's authoritarian regime and the people: You ignore our iron fist, and we will supply you with jobs. Emma Murphy, a professor at Durham University who has written extensively on Tunisian politics, remembers a time when, frightened by a growing tide of Islamism that Ben Ali opposed and content with 5 percent economic growth, Tunisians didn't mind the government "tightening the screws" politically. That time, though, has clearly passed.

Censorship of Press:

Tunisia has long had a rigorously censored press; when I visited the country in 2009, Ben Ali's face appeared daily on the front page of practically every newspaper. And a report from the International Federation of Journalists claims that, from May 2009 to May 2010, the press faced "one of its worst years since independence." It goes on to call the harassment of the media in that period "unprecedented."

In April 2009 Ben Ali's son-in-law bought a publishing house that printed four newspapers. (The website of one of them, the French-language *Le Temps*, suddenly went blank Saturday afternoon.) For Tunisians already bitter about the president's millionaire relatives controlling the country, this was a stinging blow: The son-in-law in question, Fahed Sahkr al-Matri, was a wealthy businessman cited by French journalists as part of the inner ring of government corruption. (According to a State Department cable published by Wikileaks, he was also a lavish host, if socially inept and insecure. And he had a pet tiger.)

State-run television is also a province of the regime, although some international stations like al-Jazeera retain clout. And the government keeps a tight grip on the Internet. As Clothilde le Coz, Washington director of Reporters Without Borders, notes, "They block websites, they chase

down users, they track down IP addresses.” As the recent protests ramped up, the Committee to Protect Journalists reported extensive government attempts to steal Facebook and Yahoo passwords from dissident online journalists—and, in some cases, they succeeded.

Granara says Ben Ali’s media clampdown felt like an unwarranted rebuke to a Tunisian public that had strongly supported the dictator earlier in his reign. “The Tunisian people feel betrayed by Ben Ali turning the country into a police state,” Granara explains. This sense of betrayal was then a key influence on the demonstrations that led to the president’s downfall.

Fruits of Revolution:

On September 28, 2013, after months of political turmoil, Ennahda withdrew from the government. After that Tunisia’s National Constituent Assembly restructured the government with Tunisia’s industry Minister, Mehai Jomma , appointed as the interim prime minister and head of the caretaker government.

The process of finalizing the constitution was marked by sharp debate and contentious negotiations throughout the fall and early winter of 2013.the more conservative majority and secular opposition poked heads on more than one occasion, disagreeing over fundamental issues like women’s rights and freedoms of speech and religion. As a result a number of articles reflected the twists and turns of diverse pressure groups. Article 6, for example, attempted to appease two very different sections of society: a religious cadre that saw the government as protector of religion, and a staunchly secular contingent that viewed the government as the protector from religion.

The state is the guardian of religion. It guarantees liberty of conscience and of belief, the free exercise of religious worship and neutrality of mosques and of the places of worship from all partisan instrumentalisation.

The imprecise wording allowed for a variety of interpretations and may easily serve as an instrument of judges to instrument for judges to advance their personal ideologies within the frame work of legal jurisdiction.

Additionally, some women's rights activists charged that Article 21, which guarantees right to life may be used to advance bans on abortions, which are currently legal in the early stages of pregnancy; some also see article 7 which defines the family as the "nucleus of society" as on possible opening for future limits on divorce.

Conclusion:

Despite these apprehensions, however, on January 26, 2014, three years after demonstrations toppled Ben Ali. Tunisian politicians succeeded in reaching agreements on the constitution. It was conceived as historic success in many domestic and international quarters. While the specific articles would likely be the subject of debate and discussion over the years, the consensus that emerged was testament to Tunisia's democratic transition following the ouster of Ben Ali. The restructuring of political system in a way that honored the institutions of democracy and did not allow one group or individual to dominate the process. Whereas Egypt's constitution was shaped to benefit the very people who would eventually come to power, the implementation of the Tunisian constitution a head of presidential and parliamentary elections was an encouraging sign that the document would form the unshakeable guiding structure that it should in democratic societies.

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