



SUMMARY

The Republic of Tunisia is located on the northern side of the African continent bordering Algeria to the south west, Libya to the south west and the Mediterranean Sea to the North.

Chief of State: President Kais SAIED

Capital: Tunis

Gov Type: parliamentary republic

Population: 12,048,847

Colonial History: Tunisia was a part of the Ottoman Empire from 1574 to 1881 but had relative autonomy. In 1881, France established a protectorate over Tunisia through the Treaty of Bardo. Under the protectorate, Tunisia retained its nominal sovereignty, but power was mainly in the hands of the French authorities implementing economic and social reforms. During World War II, Tunisia was a battleground between Axis and Allied forces, leading to the occupation by Nazi Germany and later liberation. Pressure from growing nationalist movements and international opinion led to negotiations for independence. On March 20, 1956, Tunisia gained full independence from France. Habib Bourguiba became the country's first Prime Minister, and later its first President, establishing a republic and embarking on a program of modernization and secularization.

GEOGRAPHICAL INFORMATION

The Republic of Tunisia is about 163,610 square kilometers in total area and has 8,250 square kilometers of water and has 1,148 kilometers of coastline.

The climate is temperate in north with mild, rainy winters and hot, dry summers. It is a desert in south.

The terrain is mountainous in north with hot, dry central plains and the semiarid south merges into the Sahara

Natural resources include petroleum, phosphates, iron ore, lead, zinc, salt

The Republic of Tunisia

MAL FACT SHEET



Executive Summary

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

DEMOGRAPHICS

Noun: Tunisian(s)

Adjective: Tunisian

Ethnic Groups: Arab 98%, European 1%, Jewish and other 1%

Languages: Arabic (official), French (commerce), Tamazight; note - despite having no official status, French is spoken by about two thirds of the population

Religion: Muslim 99% (official; Sunni), other (includes Christian, Jewish, Shia Muslim, and Baha'i) <1%

Literacy: 82.7% (Male 89.1%, Female 82.7%) (2021)

Population growth is at 0.58%

ECONOMY AND GDP

Tunisia's economy is described as a lower middle-income in North African. Tunisia is undergoing reforms for foreign lenders, high unemployment, especially for youth and women. Tunisia was hit hard by COVID-19 with high public sector wages, high public debt, and has taken protectionist austerity measures. Tunisia is also a key EU trade partner.

Real GDP (Purchasing Power Parity): \$130.592 billion (2022), \$127.485 billion (2021), \$122.105 billion (2020)

Real GDP Growth Rate: 2.44% (2022), 4.41% (2021), -8.82% (2020)

Real GDP Per Capita: \$10,600 (2022)

GDP (Official Exchange Rate): \$46.304 billion (2022)

Inflation Rate (Consumer Prices): 8.31% (2022), 5.71% (2021), 5.63% (2020)

GDP - Composition: agriculture: 10.1% (2017), industry: 26.2% (2017), services: 63.8% (2017)

Unemployment Rate: 17.76% (2022), 18.52% (2021), 18.63% (2020)

Youth Unemployment: 38.3% (2021)

MAIN POLITICAL CONTENTIONS

Tunisia's main political contentions revolve around its struggle to balance secularism and Islamism, economic challenges, and the legacy of authoritarian rule. After the 2011 Jasmine Revolution, which resulted in the ousting of President Zine El Abidine Ben Ali, Tunisia embarked on a democratic transition. The political landscape has seen significant tension between secularist parties and Islamist parties.

Economically, Tunisia faces high unemployment rates, particularly among youth, and inflation, which have led to widespread social discontent. The country also struggles with regional disparities. These economic issues have been a significant source of frustration and protests among the populace.

Tunisia's democratic institutions are still maturing and the judiciary and security services, in particular, are in need of reform to ensure they serve a democratic rather than an autocratic state. Corruption remains a persistent problem, hampering economic development and public trust in government institutions.

The political arena is also marked by frequent changes in government and political instability, which have sometimes hindered consistent policy implementation. The assassination of prominent political figures, such as Chokri Belaid and Mohamed Brahmi in 2013, underscored the volatility and the challenges of securing political consensus.

The Republic of Tunisia: A Timeline

