



**Carter Center Preliminary Statement
Tunisian National Constituent Assembly Elections**

**Carter Center Reports Peaceful and Enthusiastic Participation in
Tunisia's Landmark Elections**

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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In a statement released today, Carter Center observers monitoring the landmark Oct. 23 Constituent Assembly elections in Tunisia reported that the voting process was marked by peaceful and enthusiastic participation, generally transparent procedures, and popular confidence about Tunisia's democratic transition. Tunisian voters waited patiently in very long lines, determined to take part in the historic first election of the Arab Spring movements of 2011.

While the electoral process has been very successful so far, Carter Center observers reported that the process was hindered by insufficient information about the allocation of voters to polling stations, as well as a lack of detailed procedures and training for key parts of the process, including vote counting, tabulation, and election dispute resolution. The tabulation of vote counts is ongoing, and final results have not yet been released.

Key findings of the Carter Center observation mission include the following:

- **Competitive elections:** The National Constituent Assembly (NCA) elections provided millions of Tunisians with their first opportunity to vote freely in genuinely competitive elections following more than 50 years of authoritarian rule. Tunisians turned out to vote in significant numbers, showing great enthusiasm and determination to consolidate the achievements of the revolution.
- **Independent election commission:** For the first time, the elections were conducted by an independent election management body, the High Independent Authority for the Elections (ISIE), which benefited from government support at critical junctures of the process. In a relatively short time, the ISIE succeeded in building confidence among key stakeholders and being perceived as impartial.
- **Election administration.** While acknowledging the dedication of election officials in carrying out their duties, The Carter Center notes that the ISIE could have ensured more efficient planning by establishing a strong technical and administrative body.

Essential decisions and regulations by the ISIE came often late in the process, leaving inadequate time for training of elections officials and workers.

- **Voter registration.** During the voter registration period in July and August, approximately 55 percent of the estimated eligible voters on the national ID card database actively turned out to verify their data; the rest were retained as eligible voters and ultimately allocated to specialized voting stations around the country.
- **Voting process.** Voting took place in an orderly way with polling staff largely following procedures. The processing of voters started slowly but the pace quickened over the course of the day. However, many voters who had not actively registered experienced difficulties in identifying the location of their polling station.
- **Vote counting.** While polling staff was diligent in following the procedural manual, the counting process was slow and laborious due to a lack of experience, insufficient training on the counting process, and the high number of candidate lists.
- **Participation of candidate representatives and observers.** Almost all polling stations visited had representatives of candidates and many had domestic observers. Candidate representatives and observers generally played a very positive role and contributed to increased transparency in the elections. In some stations, Carter Center observers noted that domestic observers became directly involved in the process, which despite being well intended, went beyond their mandated role.
- **Tabulation.** The start of tabulation was delayed considerably by the system of collection of voting materials. The tabulation process lacked detailed procedures such as who has the authority to correct mathematical errors and to quarantine results.
- **Campaign period.** The campaign was generally peaceful, with candidates free to assemble and to get their messages to the public. The ISIE attempted to level the playing field among candidate lists but appeared sometimes inconsistent in enforcing regulations. Carter Center observers heard allegations of campaign expenses exceeding the cap established by the law, and there were recurring reports of certain parties receiving financial support from foreign sources.
- **Women participation.** Tunisian women actively participated in the electoral process by casting their vote, attending campaign events, working as polling staff, and observing the elections. Given the quota on gender parity, there were many female contenders in the elections. However, women headed only seven percent of the lists.
- **Voter education.** Outreach by the ISIE mainly focused on basic information about the electoral process. Civil society organizations, often supported by international partners, undertook several initiatives to reach the public and explain the significance of the process. While valuable, these initiatives alone could not replace a comprehensive voter education campaign, much needed for the population to understand the election system and the mandate of a constituent assembly.

Background: The Carter Center received a letter of invitation from the ISIE to observe the electoral process in mid-July, followed by official accreditation on Aug. 4. The Center observed the NCA elections, deploying 65 observers who visited 272 polling stations in all of the state's governorates. The mission was led by former President of Mauritius Cassam Uteem and CEO and President of The Carter Center Dr. John Hardman. Former First Lady Rosalynn Carter accompanied the leadership delegation. Twenty-five different nationalities were represented on the observation mission.

The Center will remain in Tunisia to observe the final tabulation processes and resolution of electoral complaints for the NCA elections. The objectives of the Center's observation mission in Tunisia are to provide an impartial assessment of the overall quality of the

electoral process, promote an inclusive process for all Tunisians, and demonstrate international support for this ambitious democratic transition. The electoral process is assessed against the Tunisian legal framework, as well as Tunisia's international obligations for genuine democratic elections.

The Center's observation mission is conducted in accordance with the Declaration of Principles for International Election Observation and Code of Conduct that was adopted at the United Nations in 2005 and has been endorsed by 37 election observation groups. The Center will release periodic public statements available on its website: www.cartercenter.org.

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Carter Center Preliminary Statement on Tunisia's National Constituent Assembly Elections

Oct. 25, 2011

This statement is preliminary; a final report will be published four months after the end of the electoral process.

Statement of Preliminary Findings and Conclusions

POLITICAL BACKGROUND

The elections on Oct. 23, 2011, provided millions of Tunisians with their first opportunity to vote freely in genuinely competitive elections following more than 50 years of authoritarian rule. Since independence, Tunisia has had only two presidents, Habib Bourguiba, the father of independence, and Zine El Abidine Ben Ali, who ousted Bourguiba in a “medical coup” in 1987.

The popular revolution that forced Ben Ali to flee Tunisia in January 2011 came after a long period of socio-economic unrest, and was sparked by the self-immolation of a young street vendor, Mohamed Bouazizi, in the central city of Sidi Bouzid on Dec. 17, 2010. The political revolt that followed spread quickly across Tunisia and catalyzed “Arab Spring” movements throughout the region. The Tunisian revolution was a movement of citizens fighting against poverty and marginalization, without any political or ideological leaders. The army did not directly take part in the revolution, but remained its guarantor. Unlike other countries in the region, Tunisia experienced a largely peaceful revolution, with relatively few victims and with little disruption of infrastructure and state administration.

The suddenness of the regime change required Tunisians to move rapidly to manage the political transition. Under the terms of the Constitution, the parliamentary speaker, Foued Mebazaa, became interim president and Prime Minister Mohamed Ghannouchi formed a new government. In addition, a political reform commission known as the Ben Achour Commission was appointed to draft an electoral code to elect a new president.

In the weeks following the fall of the regime, however, many opposition leaders refused to support the transitional government because it included many members of the former ruling party (RCD). As a result, a period of intense political pressure ensued, during which the opposition used its revolutionary legitimacy to demand a complete break with the past. In February, the opposition created the Council for the Protection of the Revolution (*Conseil de Sauvegarde de la Révolution*, CSR) composed of political parties, civil society organizations and trade unions, and demanded that institutions from the old regime be dissolved and that the CSR share responsibility for the transition with the government.

On Feb. 21, protesters went back to the streets and organized a sit-in known as “Kasbah 2,” gathering around 100,000 people to demand the dismissal of interim Prime Minister Ghannouchi and the election of a constituent assembly. This led to the resignation of Ghannouchi, who was replaced Béji Caïd Essebsi, formerly a minister in the Bourguiba government. A few days later, the new government announced the partial suspension of the 1959 Constitution and called for elections by July for the National Constituent Assembly (NCA).

To meet the opposition’s demands, the Ben Achour Commission was absorbed by the CSR and renamed “The High Authority for the Realization of the Objectives of the Revolution, Political Reform, and Democratic Transition” (HARO). HARO was authorized to draft legislative decrees for approval by the council of ministers and the president. The most important was a new electoral code and the establishment of an independent body to organize the elections, the Independent High Authority for the Elections (ISIE). On Sept. 15, nearly all of the political parties represented on the HARO signed a “Declaration on the Transitional Process,” defining the operating rules of the National Constituent Assembly and limiting its mandate to one year.

The NCA elections represent a critical challenge for Tunisia. For the first time in their history, Tunisians have a multitude of political parties with diverse and sometimes vaguely defined ideological orientations. As a result, there is considerable confusion and some skepticism. Many criticize new politicians for being opportunists and fear that the elections will not bring about solutions to the socio-economic problems facing the country.

Legal Framework

When the Constitution was partly suspended in March 2011¹ existing laws were deemed inadequate in the post-revolution context and a new legal framework was elaborated for the NCA elections. This framework was composed of Election Decree-Law 35² (election law) as well as several additional decree-laws³ and decrees⁴ as well as decisions issued by the ISIE.⁵

Tunisia has also ratified a series of international and regional human rights treaties whose provisions are relevant for the electoral process. These treaties include the International

¹ Decree-Law 14 on the Temporary Organization of Public Authorities (March 23, 2011).

² Decree-Law 35 was adopted on May 10, 2011, and was later amended by Decree 72 adopted on Aug. 3, 2011

³ They included the Decree-Law 87 on the organization of political parties (September 24, 2011); the Decree-Law 88 on the organization of associations (September 24, 2011); the Decree-Law 91 on procedures and modalities of control by the Court of Auditors of the financing of the election campaign for the NCA (September 24, 2011);

⁴ They included the Decree 1086 setting the dates for the elections (Aug. 3, 2011); the Decree 1087 detailing the modalities of public financing and the ceiling for authorized expenses for the election campaign (August 3, 2011); the Decree 1088 on electoral constituencies and number of seats (Aug. 3, 2011); the Decree 1089 fixing the responsibilities of RCD members not illegible to be candidates (Aug. 3, 2011).

⁵ They include the Decision setting the rules and procedures for the electoral campaign (Sept. 3, 2011); the Decision setting the rules to be observed by the audio-visual information means throughout the electoral campaign (Sept. 3, 2011); the Decision setting the conditions for the production and broadcasting of radio and TV programs related to the electoral campaign (Sept. 3, 2011); the Decision laying down the procedures for appeal to the ISIE against decisions of the IRIE attached to diplomatic centers regarding voters lists (dated 25 June 2011, published on Sept. 3, 2011); the Decision relating to the election schedule, as amended August 5, 2011, (published on Sept. 3, 2011); the Decision regulating the special procedures to ensure that voters with disabilities are exercising their right to vote (Oct. 4, 2011) and the Decision on the use of ink for the NCA election (Oct. 6, 2011).

Covenant on Civil and Political Rights (ICCPR),⁶ the Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination Against Women (CEDAW),⁷ the Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities,⁸ and the African Charter on Human and Peoples' Rights (AfCHPR)⁹, among others.

Electoral System

The NCA elections were composed of one round of voting and followed a closed-list proportional representation system with seats allocated by largest remainders. By this formula, the number of valid votes is divided by the number of seats allocated to the constituency to produce a quotient. Seats are allocated to all lists that reached this quotient. The remaining seats are allocated to the parties or independent lists with the largest remainders.¹⁰

Equality before the Law and Absence of Discrimination. The law provided for gender parity on the candidate lists as a special measure to ensure equal opportunities for women to participate in the political process. While the Carter Center welcomes this provision as it reflects Tunisian commitments towards the equal enjoyment of rights, in practice, the quota is unlikely to produce a balanced representation of women and men in the NCA, due to the fact that 93 percent of the electoral lists were headed by men.¹¹ Similarly, The Carter Center supports the provision requesting that all lists include at least one person under the age of 30, to recognize the important role of the youth during the revolution.

The Center also acknowledges efforts by the election authorities to accommodate specific categories of eligible voters, such as disabled persons.¹² In addition, it is important to note that the ISIE has been responsive to concerns about possible vote buying expressed by civil society organizations (CSOs) with regard to the original Article 61 of the Election Decree-Law which allowed illiterate voters or voters clearly suffering from a disability to be assisted by a voter of their choice.¹³

To avoid possible vote buying or influence, the ISIE amended this provision to allow only holders of a “disability card” to be assisted during balloting by a voter of their choice.¹⁴ In an effort to minimize the potential for undue influence from individuals accompanying voters in need of assistance, the display of the logo next to the name of the list on the ballot paper was deemed sufficient to assist illiterate voters.

Every citizen has the right to be elected. While the right to be elected is a widely recognized principle in both regional and international treaties, it is not an absolute right and may be

⁶ Ratified on March 18, 1969.

⁷ Ratified on Sept. 20, 1985

⁸ Ratified on April 2, 2008.

⁹ Ratified on March 16, 1983.

¹⁰ Decree-Law 35, article 36.

¹¹ ICCPR, art.3, CEDAW, art. 3

¹² The Ministry of Social Affairs reported in 2003 that there are over 150,000 people with disabilities in Tunisia, or about 1.5 percent of the total population (cited by IFES in “Elections in Tunisia: The 2011 Constituent Assembly, Frequently Asked Questions, July 2011”).

¹³ There are 1.9 million illiterate Tunisians over the age of 20. This is 19 percent of the total voting-age population, of which 68 percent are women. (Data from the 2004 census, according to the National Institute for Statistics, cited by IFES, “Elections in Tunisia: The 2011 Constituent Assembly, Frequently Asked Questions, July 2011”).

¹⁴ Decision regulating the special procedures to ensure that voters with disabilities are exercising their right to vote (Oct. 4, 2011).

limited on the basis of objective and reasonable criteria established by law.¹⁵ Unreasonable restrictions to the right to be elected include those based on political affiliation, be it past or present.¹⁶ In addition, good practice sources suggest that the loss of this right should only be imposed after adjudication by a court of law.¹⁷

Article 15 of the electoral law stipulated that three categories of persons were not eligible to stand for the elections. The first two categories were in regards to persons who held government responsibilities under former President Ben Ali and those who held responsibilities within the presidential party, RCD, all the way down to local level.¹⁸ The third category disqualified individuals who signed a petition in August 2010, requesting that Ben Ali to run for president in 2014.¹⁹

Based on Decree 1089 that defines the level of responsibility of persons excluded to run as candidates, the ISIE was tasked with drafting a list for the first two categories of ineligible persons. To establish the list, the ISIE relied on press clippings retrieved from the National Archives Office and the Official Gazette. By not following a more rigorous process, the ISIE risked ex-RCD officials falling through the cracks during the nomination process, seeking seats in the NCA and possibly being elected.

The HARO compiled the list for the third category of ineligible persons without establishing a clear procedure to provide concerned individuals with the due opportunity to clear their names. However, the HARO considered ad hoc requests from a few individuals who were able to demonstrate that they were in fact included on the petition without their knowledge.

The election authorities referenced these three lists, comprising approximately 8100 persons, during the nomination process. However, persons considered ineligible were not informed about their status before the nomination period.

The Carter Center understands the exceptional context and the motivation to exclude from the constitutional drafting process individuals allegedly involved in human rights violations and corruptive practices under the previous regime. However, the Center notes that the process that led to the establishment of lists of ineligible persons generally lacked transparency and did not consistently comply with the State's obligation to protect the right to effective remedy.²⁰

ELECTION ADMINISTRATION

An independent and impartial electoral authority that functions transparently and professionally is recognized internationally as an effective means of ensuring that citizens are able to participate in genuine democratic elections and that other international obligations related to the electoral process can be met.²¹

¹⁵ ICCPR, art. 25; AU, AfCHPR, art. 13; Arab Charter on Human Rights, art. 24

¹⁶ ICCPR, art. 2

¹⁷ OSCE/ODIHR, Existing Commitments, p. 59

¹⁸ Decree 1089 fixing the responsibilities of RCD members ineligible to stand for elections (August 3, 2011) defined the level of responsibilities within RCD, which disqualified a candidate.

¹⁹ The signatories of the petition are referred to as “munachidine”, meaning “those who implored” in Tunisian dialect.

²⁰ ICCPR, art. 2(3); United Nations, “Human Rights and Elections: A Handbook on the Legal, Technical, and Human Rights Aspects of Elections”, para. 114 “Anyone alleging a denial of their (...) political rights must have access to independent review and redress.”

²¹ UN Human Rights Committee, General Comment 25, para. 20

An independent election management body was established by Decree-Law 27 on April 18, 2011, supporting the desired principles of legal, financial and administrative autonomy. The ISIE is mandated to prepare, supervise and monitor the NCA elections, and ensure that elections are democratic, pluralistic, fair and transparent. It has been established that its mission shall end with the announcement of the results of the elections.²² The ISIE enjoys broad powers, duties and responsibilities for all aspects the electoral process.²³

The ISIE is composed of a central commission based in Tunis, and 33 Regional Independent Commissions for Elections (IRIE) covering 27 constituencies in Tunisia and six constituencies abroad.²⁴ Shortly before the start of the campaign period, Local Commissions for Elections (ILE) were also established at delegation level.²⁵ The ISIE Decision on Rules and Procedures provides for ILEs, but gives no specific instruction regarding their role and responsibilities.²⁶

The ISIE has 16 members drawn from the judiciary, academia, and civil society, and also includes a representative for expatriates, a notary, a bailiff, an accountant, an IT expert and a journalist.²⁷ These individuals were selected by the HARO, following a set of criteria including political independence and impartiality, and ensured that members had no previous responsibilities within former RCD party.²⁸ The ISIE was appointed by decree on May 20²⁹ and shortly afterward elected Kamel Jendoubi as president, Ms. Souad Triki as vice-president and Mr. Boubaker Bethabet as secretary general.

Each IRIE is composed of 14 members at the governorate level. IRIEs that are based abroad in Tunisian diplomatic missions are composed of between eight and 14 members. All IRIE members were selected by the ISIE and appointed on July 6, 2011.

Overall, Carter Center observers have reported that election authorities carried out their responsibilities with a high level of dedication. In a relatively short timeframe, and without previous experience, election authorities drafted regulations and procedures, prepared for and carried out electoral operations and built confidence among stakeholders. IRIE members were appointed just a few days before the start of the voter registration period, thus facing the challenge of establishing their structure while simultaneously supervising registration operations. Although shortcomings were visible at times, The Carter Center acknowledges the sustained efforts by the ISIE to ensure democratic elections.

In spite of these achievements, noticeable internal divisions and tensions within the ISIE often hindered the efficiency of the election administration and slowed decision-making processes. While the legal framework provided for additional technical, administrative and financial bodies to support election authorities, these structures appeared insufficiently staffed at the central level and non-existent at the regional level.

²² DL 27, articles 1 and 2

²³ DL 27, article 4

²⁴ DL 27, article 5

²⁵ The “delegation” is an intermediary administrative district between the governorate and the sector. There are 264 delegations attached to 24 governorates.

²⁶ Adopted by the ISIE on June 25, 2011.

²⁷ DL 27, article 8

²⁸ DL 27, article 6

²⁹ Decree 546

A timely adoption and dissemination of procedures and decisions is an important aspect of election administration, and is essential for ensuring transparency and access to information. Official documents by the election authorities should be widely accessible.³⁰ The adoption of essential procedures was often delayed by the ISIE until the period immediately preceding the start of the concerned phase of the election process. This thus left an inadequate amount of time to conduct proper training and implement the procedures accurately, including important processes such as the results management and tabulation processes. In addition, this led to inconsistencies in the implementation of procedures, e.g. during the registration process as highlighted in Sept. 1 statement by The Carter Center.³¹

The creation of the ISIE website and opening of a Facebook page had the potential of increase transparency and ensure easy, prompt, effective and practical access to information.³² The Carter Center regrets that the ISIE did not take full advantage of such tools by posting official documents in a prompt and systematic way.

Working within an environment characterized by an enduring mistrust of state institutions and a record of flawed elections, building confidence among stakeholders was one of the foremost challenges faced by the ISIE. The Carter Center notes that the election authorities took steps to consult with relevant stakeholders, such as political parties, civil society organizations and the media. Most election stakeholders met by Carter Center observers throughout the country recognized the efforts of ISIE and the IRIEs to fulfill their duties impartially. However, several smaller parties and independent candidates complained about delays in both ISIE and IRIE operations. Unlike well-established parties with extensive infrastructure and dedicated personnel, it was difficult for small parties and independent candidates to attend meetings that were announced on short notice. Despite those shortcomings, The Carter Center welcomes ISIE efforts to ensure an inclusive electoral process.

VOTING

The voting process is the cornerstone of the obligation to provide the free expression of the will of the people through genuine, periodic elections. Certain participatory rights must be fulfilled in order for the voting process to accurately reflect the will of the people. Foremost among these are the right to vote, to participate in public affairs, and to enjoy security of the person.³³

Polling was held on Oct. 23 in a peaceful and orderly atmosphere. The turnout for voters who participated in the active voter registration process was high, and a significant percentage of voters were women.

Polling materials were delivered on Oct. 21-22 by the military, and observers reported that polling materials appeared to be secure until polling. Most polling centers opened on time, with only small delays in some locations. Soon after opening, lines outside of polling centers began to grow and increased in length throughout the day.

³⁰ ICCPR, article 19 para.2; UN Human Rights Committee, General Comment 34, para. 19

³¹ “The Carter Center Welcomes Completion of Tunisia’s Voter Registration; Highlights Additional Steps Needed to Ensure Successful Polling,” Sept. 1, 2011.

³² UN Human Rights Committee, General Comment 34, para. 19

³³ ICCPR, Articles 2, 25(a) and 9.

In most polling centers staff were effective in moving voters through the process once entering the polling station. Observers reported many instances in which elderly or illiterate voters struggled to fill out the ballot, an issue that should be addressed in future elections, but other voters received their ballots, marked them and deposited them relatively quickly. In spite of this efficiency within polling stations, however, there were several issues that contributed to long lines at the polling stations throughout the day.

Voters who did not participate in the active registration process were confused as to where they should cast their ballots. The ISIE created specialized polling centers for voters who did not participate in the active registration process, but who were eligible based on the civil registry. Many voters were confused or unaware of need to report to specialized polling centers, and instead frequently has to be redirected from regular polling centers.

A system of text messaging was put into place by the ISIE for all voters, whether they had actively registered or not, to check which polling center they were assigned. The texting system was operational on election day, but was flooded with texts just after the opening of the polls. This created a backlog of voters who were waiting to receive a response from the ISIE regarding their correct polling station. Many voters did not receive a text response for two to three hours to confirm their correct polling center and therefore went to the nearest polling center and waited in line, only to be told upon reaching the head of the line that they were not assigned to that center. Following good practice to meet its obligation for universal suffrage, The Carter Center urges the ISIE to consider carefully the appropriate number and location of specialized polling centers.³⁴

This problem could have been mitigated to a certain extent had voter lists been consistently posted at polling centers as foreseen in the Voting and Counting Procedure Manual,³⁵ but Carter Center observers noted that voter lists were frequently not posted at polling centers.

Another problem reported by Carter Center observers was that polling stations within a given polling center had an uneven distribution of voters. The first polling station frequently had more voters assigned than the second, third or fourth polling station within the center, which resulted in long line at the first station and often none at the fourth.

Carter Center observers reported a large domestic observer and list representative presence at polling centers throughout the country. Domestic observers and list representatives appeared well organized and often stayed at a given polling station to observe the entire process. Although Carter Center observers did not directly witness violations of the campaign ban within the polling centers, domestic observers and list representatives approached Carter Center observers to report alleged instances of vote buying, influencing and campaigning occurring within polling centers.

COUNTING

³⁴ ICCPR, article 25 (b): "Every citizen shall have the right and the opportunity, without any of the distinctions mentioned in article 2 and without unreasonable restrictions: (b) To vote and be elected at genuine periodic elections which shall be by universal and equal suffrage and shall be held by secret ballot, guaranteeing the free expression of the will of the voter." U.N., Human Rights and Elections: A Handbook on the Legal, Technical, and Human Rights Aspects of Elections, para. 104: "polling stations should be distributed so as to guarantee equal access within each constituency."

³⁵ The head of the polling station shall ensure that voter lists are exhibited in the entrance of the office.

In general, polling center staff was very deliberate and conscientious in observing closing and counting procedures. Observers reported many staff members consulting the manual step-by-step in order to ensure that they were following the correct procedures for verifying and counting ballots.

While well intentioned, polling staff did not appear appropriately trained on the counting procedures, resulting in a slow and laborious process, in some cases, lasting several hours to count and reconcile ballots. There was also some procedural confusion regarding the correct way to store materials. These difficulties reflected insufficient familiarity with the procedures and lack of sufficient training. Observers reported the active participation of Tunisian observers in several instances. Although well received by the polling staff, involvement by observers or list representatives in the counting process is contrary to procedures and inappropriate for the role of an observer.

After counting was completed, the military picked up materials from each polling center, creating a large convoy. This process was time-consuming and delayed the arrival of materials at tabulation centers. Tabulation therefore did not begin until very late on election night.

A lack of detailed procedures for tabulation, in particular with regard to discrepancies on results forms and who has the authority to correct potential tabulation errors, may lead to delays or disputes during the tabulation process, which is still ongoing.

CANDIDATES, PARTIES, AND THE CAMPAIGN ENVIRONMENT

The right of individuals to participate in public affairs, including the establishment of political parties and freedom of association, expression and assembly are obligations under international law.³⁶

Freedom of Assembly. Freedom of Assembly was stipulated by Article 40 of the electoral law, which stated that electoral rallies and meetings shall take place freely.³⁷ On July 26 and again on August 26, 2011, the interim president signed an order to extend the state of emergency in place since January 2011.³⁸ The state of emergency prohibits public gatherings that “could threaten national security” and grants expansive powers to the Minister of Interior. Additionally, the minister of interior and the local governors are granted the right to search personal property, as well as to censor the press, radio broadcasts, and other activities without requiring prior judicial permission. While legislation restricting fundamental rights is generally inconsistent with the conduct of free elections, it is to be noted that the state of emergency law has not been used in the context of the elections, including during the election campaign.³⁹

A total of 11,686 candidates contested 217 seats in Tunisia’s NCA election. The ISIE registered 1,519 lists, 54.6 percent of which were presented by political parties, 43.3 percent by independent candidates, and 2.4 percent by coalitions. The emergence of a large number of independent candidates was a notable trend within the electoral process, although many of these independents may be linked to political parties such as Ennadha, PDP and the former RCD.

³⁶ ICCPR, Article 25(a); ICCPR, art. 21, U.N.HRC General Comment no. 25, para. 26.

³⁷ ICCPR, art. 21.

³⁸ Decree 1176 (26 August 2011) extends the state of emergency throughout Tunisia until 30 November.

³⁹ UN Handbook on Human Rights and Elections.

Nominations. The nomination period was Sept. 1-7. Parties and independent candidates were allowed to present one list per constituency, and candidates were not allowed to be registered on more than one list. The number of candidates on the list had to equal the number of seats for the constituency. In addition, candidates had to be at least 23 years old.⁴⁰

Nominations proceeded at a slow pace during the first few days of the nomination period. In fact, nearly half of the applications were submitted to the IRIEs during the last two days of the nomination period. Although the Carter Center assessed the nominations process to be generally open and inclusive, some inconsistent practices were observed, e.g., instances of people ineligible to stand as candidates due to their links to the former regime who were successfully nominated. Because the confidential database of barred persons did not include national identity card numbers, in the case of identity discrepancies or doubts many IRIEs placed the burden of proof of identity on the candidates themselves, whereas others IRIEs attempted to verify the identity of the individual themselves. In many of its decisions, the Administrative Tribunal ruled that the IRIEs should not have based their decision to reject a candidate solely on the database, but should have considered additional information sources when restricting the right of a person to be elected.⁴¹

Campaign period. The pre-campaign period was marked by a controversial decision by the ISIE to ban all forms of commercial political advertising from Sept. 12 to Oct. 1 despite the fact that law did not dictate this.⁴² While the decision was intended to level the playing field for all candidates in a context of great disparities in terms of human and financial resources, the regulation was released relatively late in the process. At that time, several political parties had already spent money on campaigning through billboards across the country and various media outlets. The Parti Démocratique Progressiste (PDP) and Union Patriotique Libre (UPL) in particular contested the legality of the ban and refused to abide by it.⁴³ Some smaller parties/lists were forced to respect the ban for fear of breaking the law while others chose to ignore it.

The enforcement of the ban was uneven and complicated by the lack of provisions clearly outlining penalties for violations. In order to avoid disputes with political parties disregarding its decision, the ISIE pressured advertising companies to abide by the regulation.⁴⁴ The Carter Center acknowledges the determination of the election authorities to promote fair competition; however the principle of legal certainty and good election practice requires refraining from substantial changes to the legal framework in the period before the elections.

The official campaign period opened on Oct. 1 and closed on Oct. 21. The kick-off to the campaign was extremely slow, with only a handful of parties holding campaign rallies and few lists displaying campaign posters. Increased dynamism was perceptible in the second half of the campaign period, with additional candidates holding rallies. Campaigning techniques also included low-profile events, door-to-door canvassing and distribution of leaflets. Carter Center observers reported that political parties and list representatives generally respected the 24-hour black out immediately before election day.

⁴⁰ Decree-Law 35, articles 24 to 29.

⁴¹ The processing of two lists submitted in the name of Mouvement des Démocrates Socialistes in almost all constituencies following an internal split in the party also showed important discrepancies between IRIEs.

⁴² ISIE Decision on Rules and Procedures for the Electoral Campaign (3 Sept. 2011).

⁴³ UPL later removed their billboards on Sept. 20 in respect of the regulation.

⁴⁴ Penal Code, art. 315.

The Carter Center's observers attending campaign events throughout Tunisia assessed the campaign environment as generally positive and peaceful. Freedom of assembly was generally upheld, as candidates and audiences were able to gather freely. Some campaign events that were not notified to the IRIEs 72 hours in advance, as required by the regulations, were not allowed to take place.⁴⁵ When security forces were present at campaign sites, they acted appropriately without interfering in the campaign. A few incidents were reported by observers, such as the robbing of Ettakatol party office in Ben Arous.

Carter Center observers reported that candidates were generally not using inflammatory language during rallies. The campaign messages went beyond issues strictly related to governance and the new constitution, to encompass economic programs, commitments to overcome unemployment and fight corruption, promises to develop the regions, and strengthen foreign relations. However, the tone became heated towards the closing of the campaign period, with several political parties accusing each other of vote buying. Even before the official campaign period started, Carter Center observers witnessed food distribution by a political party. Observers also received reports from citizens about undue influence, ranging from gifts and financial assistance to blatant attempts of vote buying by different political parties.

Campaign Finance. The legal framework for the Constituent National Assembly provides for public financing of the campaign and the imposition of a campaign-spending ceiling. While the use of foreign funds and private assets were prohibited, public funds were to be provided to candidates' lists as follows: 35 TND for every 1000 registered voters in constituencies with less than 200,000 voters; 25 TND for every 1000 registered voters in constituencies with more than 200,000 voters. The first installment, equivalent to 50 percent of the total amount, was to be disbursed seven days before the start of the campaign. The second was to be disbursed 10 days before the end of the campaign, upon request and presentation of campaign expenditures of the first installment.

The law also imposed a ceiling on campaign expenditures at three times the amount provided for by the State. Political parties and independent candidate lists were required to open bank accounts dedicated to campaign funds and expenditures, while the law also foresaw the audit of campaign expenditures by the ISIE and the Court of Audit after the elections.

The provisions on campaign finance were intended to ensure equal opportunities for contenders and prevent disproportionate expenses on behalf of any candidate. However, the funding mechanism, involving the election authorities, the Ministry of Finance and the Treasury, was not always administered efficiently. Some candidates interviewed by Carter Center observers showed evidence of the late receipt of public funds. For newly established parties and independent candidate relying mainly on public financing, such delays may have affected their ability to campaign.

In addition, there were concerns during the campaign period that certain political parties had received funding from foreign sources, contrary to the law. Carter Center observers heard many allegations, which were also reported widely in the news. Given the potential impact of foreign funding on the elections, the legal framework should be strengthened to ensure thorough scrutiny of financial sources.

⁴⁵ ISIE Decision on Rules and Procedures for the Electoral Campaign (Sept. 3, 2011).

Media Environment. Media outlets during Ben Ali's era faced a total blackout. In 2010, press freedom in the country was on the "Worst 15 List" established by Reporters Without Borders. The freedom enjoyed since January 2011 represents a dramatic change, but has also sheds light on the need to build the capacity of journalists to uphold professional standards.

The election law and related decisions by the ISIE regulating the media environment during the campaign period reflect efforts to ensure that all candidate lists were provided with equal opportunities to compete. Each list was granted three minutes of free airtime on public TV and radio, following an order of appearance determined by lottery on Sept. 13 in a live broadcast.⁴⁶ Public and private media were to abide by the principles of neutrality and impartiality, while private media were allowed to broadcast electoral programs in a non-discriminatory basis at their own costs and in close coordination with the public media and the ISIE.⁴⁷

The ISIE was tasked with ensuring equal treatment for all candidates' lists and established a media-monitoring unit. The ISIE monitoring reports covering audio-visual media and newspapers showed that media generally complied with principles of neutrality and impartiality, except for some private media outlets. The Association of Democratic Women also conducted media monitoring.

VOTER REGISTRATION

Voter registration is recognized as an important means to ensure every citizen the right to vote. Where registration of voters is required, it should be facilitated and obstacles to such registration should not be imposed.⁴⁸

The election law states the general principles for voter registration, but appears confusing with regard to its purpose. While Article 3 implies that registration is a pre-requisite for exercising the right to vote, Article 6 qualifies registration as "voluntary" and aimed at providing the opportunity to update one's residence address on the voter register derived from the national identity cards database.⁴⁹

The use of the national identity card database created several issues potentially impacting the accuracy of the voter register. An estimated 400,000 Tunisian citizens were not recorded on the database as their national identity cards database were issued before 1993.⁵⁰ The national identity card database is not directly linked to the civil registry and thus is not systematically and immediately updated when deaths are recorded in the civil registers. In addition, individuals' addresses referenced in the database did not enable a reliable allocation of voters to polling stations. ID card holders may have changed residence since their cards were issued, while address entries and fields were often inconsistent or incomplete.

Election authorities were aware of these shortcomings of the national ID cards database as

⁴⁶ ISIE Decision on the conditions for production, programming and broadcasting of radio and TV shows related to the election campaign, Article 4 (adopted on Sept. 3, 2011).

⁴⁷ ISIE Decision fixing the rules for audiovisual media during the campaign, Article 3 (adopted on Sept. 3, 2011).

⁴⁸ UN HRC, General Comment no. 25 "The right to participate in public affairs, voting rights and the right of equal access to public service", para. 11

⁴⁹ Law n. 93-27 (22 March 1993) on the National Identity Card

⁵⁰ This estimated figure was communicated to The Carter Center by the ISIE and the CNI

they were considering other options for registering voters. After lengthy deliberations, the ISIE finally opted for a “passive” registration system, with prospective voters being encouraged, instead of required, to register and given the opportunity to select a polling station.

Voter registration started on July 11 for an initial period of three weeks and was later extended through Aug. 14 to increase participation. Approximately 1,000 registration centers, including mobile teams, operated under the supervision of the ISIE and its branches in the 27 electoral districts. Tunisians residing abroad had the opportunity to register at consular and diplomatic missions until Aug. 28.

The Carter Center found that the registration process was conducted peacefully, however, there were numerous problems. This included initial technical glitches with the online registration system, late designation of the IRIEs members and start of outreach campaign, and lack of clear information to explain the voter registration process. There were also inconsistencies in the implementation of procedures, in particular regarding the requirement that individuals personally register.⁵¹ Nevertheless, the Carter Center found in its Sept. 1 statement that the voter registration process was conducted peacefully across the country.

According to the ISIE, 3,882,727 citizens registered in Tunisia, representing approximately 55 percent of the estimated voting population. However, since more than 3 million prospective voters did not update their data or select a polling station, the ISIE was faced with a substantial operational challenge to ensure proper allocation of these voters to polling stations. The ISIE offered unregistered voters an additional opportunity for selecting a polling station, within the governorate mentioned on their ID cards, from Sept. 4-20. Despite increased outreach efforts by the ISIE, Carter Center observers found that the number of eligible voters participating in this initiative was low. The ISIE decided to extend this operation on two occasions, until Sept. 30 and then to Oct. 10.

The ISIE announced on Oct. 15 that a total of 4,439,527 persons, or approximately 62 percent of total estimated eligible voters in Tunisia and abroad, had chosen their polling station. ISIE President Jendoubi explained that the ISIE would set up special polling stations, in addition to originally planned 7,692 polling stations in Tunisia and abroad, dedicated to prospective voters who did not chose their polling station.

In a statement released on Oct. 4, The Carter Center urged the ISIE to intensify public outreach and to consider the appropriate number and location of such specialized polling centers, particularly in light of registration statistics and population centers, in order to ensure that voters would not be disenfranchised on polling day, consistent with good practice in election administration.

The law provides that individuals sentenced to more than six months of imprisonment for committing honor-related felonies or misdemeanors and who have not yet regained their civil and political rights are deprived from their right to vote.⁵² The fact, however, that neither voter registration nor polling were conducted in prisons lead to the effective

⁵¹ The ISIE manual on registration procedure explicitly states that registration is a personal process and therefore cannot be handled by delegation. Observers noted however that the manual on registration procedures was not always available at registration centers and registration staffs were not always aware of its existence, presumably due to the development and distribution of the document relatively late in the process.

⁵² Article 5, para.1, Decree-Law 35

disenfranchisement of all persons deprived of liberty. The Carter Center notes in this regard that Tunisia did not uphold its obligation to guarantee universal suffrage and the right to vote.⁵³

Exhibition of the provisional voter list. The exhibition of the provisional voter list provided an opportunity for the public to inspect the list and challenge mistakes such as the omission of eligible voters or the inclusion of ineligible voters.

The provisional voter lists were displayed from Aug. 20-26 at IRIEs, municipalities (*Baladiya*), districts (*Mu'tamadiya*), sectors (*Imada*), as well as in Tunisian diplomatic or consular missions (hereafter referred to as “exhibition venues”). The lists were printed in book format and in two separate volumes: one showing prospective voters who actively registered, the other showing prospective voters who were automatically included on the registry from the national identity card database. Prospective voters were listed in Arabic alphabetic order, without reference to allocated polling stations, noting their names, father’s name, and grandfather’s name.

The Carter Center noted with concern that the low turnout in the initial phase of the voter registration was even more discernable during the exhibition and challenges period when few voters inspected the provisional list. Voter information by the ISIE was barely visible and the lists showing unregistered voters were displayed with one or two days delay. Exhibition venues were officially open the same hours as the *Baladiyas*, only from 8:30 a.m. to 2:30 p.m. and often closed on Sunday, thus leaving little time to the public to inspect the list.

Challenges to the provisional list could be submitted to the IRIE and its decisions could be appealed against before the territorially competent Court of First Instance. Very few challenges were submitted with the IRIEs during the inspection period, and in just one case the plaintiff appealed to court.

ELECTORAL DISPUTE RESOLUTION

The Carter Center recognizes Tunisia’s efforts to fulfill its obligation to ensure that effective remedies are available for the redress of violations of fundamental rights related to the electoral process.⁵⁴ The electoral law provides for electoral dispute mechanisms through judicial appeals at the main stages of the electoral process including exhibition of provisional voter list,⁵⁵ candidate nomination,⁵⁶ electoral campaign⁵⁷ and preliminary results.⁵⁸ However, some aspects of the adjudication process lacked consistency, failed to specify deadlines or were not spelled out in enough detail.

For instance, during the candidate nomination phase the lack of a clear deadline for the adjudication process resulted in the Administrative Tribunal granting lists the right to compete for the NCA six days after the electoral campaign had already started.⁵⁹ As a

⁵³ UNHCR, GC No. 25, indicates that persons who are deprived of liberty but have not been convicted should not be excluded from exercising the right to vote.

⁵⁴ ICCPR Art. 2(3), UNHRC General Comment No. 32, para. 18.

⁵⁵ Articles 12 to 14, Decree-Law 35.

⁵⁶ Article 29, Decree-Law 35.

⁵⁷ Article 47, Decree-La 35.

⁵⁸ Article 72, Decree-Law 35.

⁵⁹ New Article 29 mentions that the plaintiff can appeal the decision of the Court of First Instance within two days to the Administrative Tribunal following the notification of the decision. However the Law omits to specify the deadline for the notification by the Court of First Instance of its decision to the plaintiff.

consequence, five candidate lists lost one of only three weeks campaign. Good electoral best practice suggests that parties should be given equal opportunities, including campaign time.⁶⁰

During the campaign period, the ISIE was in charge of monitoring violations and receiving complaints related to the electoral campaign and issuing “sanctions,” with a possibility to appeal its decisions before the Administrative Tribunal. However, the ISIE did not issue regulations on the procedures to submit a complaint, leaving list representatives and the media with no clear information regarding on how to file a claim.⁶¹ Despite reported violations, no complaints were filed with the ISIE or the Administrative Tribunal during the campaign period.

While there were very few complaints during the display of the preliminary voter list and the campaign period, due in part to late dissemination or absence of procedures, during the nomination process more than 50 percent of the candidates whose lists had been rejected filed an appeal before the Tribunals of First Instance.⁶² There were 90 cases filed before the Administrative Tribunal, with the IRIEs appealing the decision in 35 cases. In order to deal with this caseload during the legal deadline, five chambers were set up address electoral disputes during the legally mandated period.

Since the revolution, there have been very few changes in the judicial system, which has been marred by a lack of independence and impartiality. The public has little confidence in the judicial system as a mechanism of justice. However, during the pre-election period, the adjudication process was generally undertaken in a transparent manner, including through public hearings and the publication of decisions in most cases.

According to article 72 of the electoral law, the preliminary results of the elections can be appealed by the head of the list or his representative before the plenary session of the Administrative Tribunal within 48 hours following their announcement. The Administrative Tribunal has to schedule a hearing session within a maximum period of seven days from the submission of the appeal. During that time the parties to the conflict can present their remarks to the court. Once the case has been heard, the plenary session has a maximum of three days to announce its verdict

According to the electoral law, all complaints related to the preliminary results should be decided upon at the latest 12 days following their announcement. The verdict administrative tribunal is final and can not be challenged. To deal with the potential caseload, the Administrative Tribunal has set up a special office to receive appeals related to the preliminary results, given the potential for many claims and short deadlines (10 days once a claim is received), especially if ballots have to be recounted.

Just as for the nomination process, only heads of lists are allowed to file complaints. This situation is regrettable; other alternatives would have allowed voters to appeal and CSOs to allow legal challenge of the electoral process by concerned citizens.

⁶⁰ ICCPR, article 26 "All persons are equal before the law and are entitled without any discrimination to the equal protection of the law"; OSCE, Election Observation Handbook (Fifth Edition), p. 47 "All contestants should have an equal period of time in which to campaign."

⁶¹ ISIE Decision setting the rules and procedures for the electoral campaign, Art. 32.

⁶² At the time of writing, no official figures regarding the exact number of rejected list was available. The Center however was told by the ISIE that around 220 lists were originally rejected by the IRIEs.

PARTICIPATION OF WOMEN

International human rights treaties foresee that women shall enjoy equal rights to men,⁶³ and that in some cases, states shall take special, temporary measures to achieve *de facto* equality for women.⁶⁴ State obligations to promote *de facto* equality for women derive, in part, from broader obligations regarding absence of discrimination⁶⁵ and the right of all citizens to participate in the public affairs of their country regardless of gender.⁶⁶

The Center noted that both ISIE and IRIE members were predominantly male, despite the principle of parity being explicitly mentioned in Tunisia by the legal framework outlining their composition.⁶⁷ Among female members, only a nominal number held senior-level president or vice-president positions within the election management body. This notable lack of representation contrasts with the high rate of educated and professionally active women in Tunisia. In polling stations visited by Carter Carter observers, 32 percent of polling staff were women.

Although the election law required gender parity on the candidates' lists, female candidates led only 7 percent of the lists. Only one party, the Pôle Démocratique Moderniste honored the spirit of the law, by nominating women to head 16 lists out of 33. In light of this, it is likely that very few women will be elected to the NCA.

Female candidates received significantly lower media coverage during the campaign period and the months before. According to the ISIE media monitoring report, public TV channels 1 and 2 both devoted less than 10 percent of airing time to women candidates. The private TV Nessma devoted about 25 percent airtime to women.

CIVIL SOCIETY AND DOMESTIC OBSERVATION

The right to participate in public affairs is a widely recognized obligation in public international law. Impartial election monitoring is a means for citizens to participate and promote the integrity of democratic processes.⁶⁸

Several domestic observer networks have emerged in advance of the NCA elections. Although the issuance of international observer badges was facilitated quite quickly, domestic observer organizations experienced difficulties in applying for and receiving their accreditation. Accreditation requirements initially set by the ISIE included election observation experience, a condition few domestic observer groups could meet in Tunisia. The election authorities recognized that such a requirement could impede civil society from participating, and agreed to consider training in election observation as a sufficient prerequisite to qualify for accreditation.

⁶³ ICCPR, art. 3

⁶⁴ CEDAW, art. 3

⁶⁵ ICCPR, art. 25; 2(1); 26

⁶⁶ UDHR, Art. 21(a); ICCPR, Art 25(9); ICERD, Art 5(c)

⁶⁷ Decree-Law 27 establishing the ISIE, art.8; ISIE Decision on Rules and Procedures, art. 24

⁶⁸ ICCPR, Article 25 (a): "Every citizen shall have the right and the opportunity, without any of the distinctions mentioned in article 2 and without unreasonable restrictions: (a) To take part in the conduct of public affairs, directly or through freely chosen representatives". UN Human Rights Committee, General Comment no. 25 on "The Right to Participate in Public Affairs, Voting Rights and the Right to Equal Access to Public Service" paragraph 8: "Citizens also take part in the conduct of public affairs by exerting influence through public debate and dialogue with their representatives or through their capacity to organize themselves. This participation is supported by ensuring freedom of expression, assembly and association."

The ISIE also proved receptive to concerns expressed by domestic observer groups regarding the shortened deadline for accreditation.⁶⁹ The Carter Center urged the ISIE to show flexibility in this regard, and welcomed its decision to grant an additional week for domestic observer groups to complete their applications through providing a training certificate.

The most active and large networks were the National Observatory for the Elections, the Association for Transparency and Integrity of the Elections (ATIDE), Mourakiboun, Awfiya, Chahed, and the League of Tunisian Women Voters. According to official figures, the ISIE accredited 13,392 domestic observers and 661 international observers.

At the same time, the accreditation process was centralized in Tunis, making it difficult for organizations based in the regions to apply, receive and distribute their accreditation badges in a timely manner. The ISIE was not able to produce sufficient numbers of the badges with adequate time before the elections; some organizations received accreditation badges just a few hours preceding poll opening in Tunis, and then had to distribute them across the country. These delays put significant pressure on Tunisian observer organizations to deploy observers and restricted their access to polling stations in the early hours of voting.

While observers benefited from freedom of movement around the country, and observed polling and counting processes, they reported being refused access to tabulation centers in several constituencies, including Beja, Sidi Bouzid, Nabeul II, and Mahdia. Carter Center observers also experienced difficulties accessing certain tabulation sites.

VOTER EDUCATION

Voter education is necessary to ensure an informed electorate that is able to effectively exercise the right to vote. The fulfillment of the international obligation of universal suffrage is partially dependent on effective voter education.⁷⁰ Internationally recognized good practice indicates that impartial and consistent voter education is the primary responsibility of state organs, chiefly the election management body. Political parties, civil society and international organizations may also contribute to voter education efforts.

The Carter Center regrets that the ISIE did not conduct more comprehensive voter education campaigns to provide the public with much-needed information to understand the electoral process. Given the absence of a recent democratic tradition, the specific character of a Constituent Assembly election, and the persistent phenomena of illiteracy in Tunisia, the need for voter education was particularly relevant. Several opinion polls and surveys published in the months ahead of the elections indicated that a significant portion of electorate lacked understanding of key areas including the electoral system, the mandate of a Constituent Assembly, and the role of the ISIE.

The ISIE outreach provided only basic information during the voter registration. The campaign was designed to mobilize eligible voters to register, but lacked detailed information on registration procedures and objectives. The Carter Center observers reported that citizens had varying and limited understandings of the process. Notably, public outreach by the ISIE to mobilize citizens to check the provisional voter list during the exhibition and challenges period was barely visible.

⁶⁹ The deadline to apply for observer accreditation was moved forward from Oct. 19 to Oct. 8 by the amendment to the electoral law adopted on Aug. 3.

⁷⁰ ICCPR, Art. 25.

In the lead-up to polling day, voter education was similarly concentrated on basic information, delivered through mass media. The national radio and TV broadcasted spots to explain which documents were required to cast the ballot, and how, when and where to vote on polling day. A SMS service was also intended to allow prospective voters to identify their respective polling station.

Civil society organizations, often supported by international partners, undertook several initiatives to reach the public and explain the significance of the process. While valuable, these initiatives alone could not fill the gap left by the election authorities. Regrettably, there was also a notable lack of voter education activities conducted by political parties vis-à-vis their potential supporters.

Background: The Carter Center received a letter of invitation from the ISIE to observe the electoral process in mid-July, followed by official accreditation on Aug. 4. The Center observed the NCA elections, deploying nearly 70 observers who visited 272 polling stations in all of the state's governorates. The mission was led by former President of Mauritius Cassam Uteem and CEO and President of The Carter Center Dr. John Hardman. Former First Lady Rosalynn Carter accompanied the leadership delegation.

The Center will remain in Tunisia to observe the final tabulation processes and resolution of electoral complaints for the NCA elections. The objectives of the Center's observation mission in Tunisia are to provide an impartial assessment of the overall quality of the electoral process, promote an inclusive process for all Tunisians, and demonstrate international support for this ambitious democratic transition. The electoral process is assessed against the Tunisian legal framework, as well as Tunisia's international obligations for genuine democratic elections.

The Center's observation mission is conducted in accordance with the Declaration of Principles for International Election Observation and Code of Conduct that was adopted at the United Nations in 2005 and has been endorsed by 37 election observation groups. The Center will release periodic public statements available on its website: www.cartercenter.org/.

The Carter Center conducts election observation in accordance with the Declaration of Principles of International Election Observation and Code of Conduct for International Election Observation adopted at the United Nations in 2005.

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