



# **EXPECTATIONS AND REALITY**

## **Citizens of Tunisia Express Their Views**

October 22-29, 2015



# Research Objectives & Context

**Determine Tunisian citizens' attitudes on a range of issues** in order to provide political and civic leadership with timely and objective information.

Key themes include:

## **RECURRENT:**

- The direction of the country and priorities that affect citizens' daily lives (14<sup>th</sup> recurrence)
- The performance of the parliament and government (5<sup>th</sup> recurrence);
- Expectations of MPs and preferences for their engagement with citizens (3<sup>rd</sup> recurrence).

## **SPECIFIC TO THIS FOCUS GROUP SERIES:**

- YOUTH: challenges and priorities for this targeted audience, their level of engagement related to politics;
- SECURITY: crimes and terrorism, key problems , causes and potential solutions;
- ECONOMY: current context, problems, potential solutions and their implementers/responsible actors.



# Methodology

- **Focus groups (FG)** are used to **understand prevalent attitudes** among various social groups, examine in-depth the reasons for those attitudes;
- **FG research is qualitative**, not quantitative;
- **Attitudes identified can be attributed only to the respondents** (samples are not representative);
- **Discussion guide developed by NDI**, in consultation with ELKA Consulting;
- **Steering committee meeting** with ministries', MP, Parliamentary Commission, political party representatives.



# Participant Profiles

- **144 Respondents** from the four targeted cities;
- **Ten to thirteen respondents** per group;
- **Diversity** of ages, professions, education level, and neighborhoods within each group.

Gender	Count
Female	71
Male	73
Age	Count
25-34	49
+35	95
Profession	Count
Employed	89
Unemployed	25
Retired	9
Homemaker	15
Student	6
Education	Count
University	69
Secondary	57
Primary	12
Uneducated	6

# Methodology

- **Fieldwork** conducted between October 22 – 29, 2015;
- **4 cities selected:** Great Tunis, Sousse, Kef, and Gafsa;
- **ELKA selected respondents** (random, with screening criteria, key “sample points”, engaging pedestrians on the street);
- **Selection criteria:** 3 groups per city:
  - 1) mixed youth (25-34 years old)
  - 2) women 35+
  - 3) men 35+



# Key Points of this Presentation Content

- I. Direction of the Country (National and Local)
- II. Parliament
- III. Government
- IV. Economy
- V. Security
- VI. Youth
- VII. Additional Citizen Priorities

As per the previous focus groups' presentations, you will find below quotes that were carefully selected that illustrate well the key points made by respondents during discussions. We have selected them to provide an abstract of the views expressed by the different regional groups, taking into consideration the gender and age specificities on each topic.

# National Direction

**Similar to what respondents expressed during previous rounds of focus groups, respondents feel appreciative of Tunisia's freedom of expression brought by the revolution, and believe that civil society is generally conducting good work. Many respondents also commend education reforms and note the Minister of Education's responsiveness in dealing with Tunisia's education challenges.**

**The civil society can influence the decisions of the government. The civil society now has more importance and influence.** *Female, 30, Gafsa, Employed.*

**Freedom of expression is going right. We get information and people know the truth.** *Male, 29, Gafsa, Member of Association.*

**There are judicial, social and economic problems but the civil society isn't the same as it was before. It is more active and people are free to express themselves. We have more freedom of expression and I hope this won't change.** *Male, 36, Gafsa, Employed.*

**I think that Neji Jalloul is doing a good job. The Ministry of Education is making some effort to improve things and introduce new laws.** *Male, 25, Tunis, Unemployed.*

**Maybe we could state the democratic transition [is going right] since there are people who could express themselves via media, we have a constitution and a reconciliation act; it has become possible to talk about corrupt people who took away the people's money, so we could say we have achieved a little degree of democracy even though it's not to a big extent.** *Male, 32, Sousse, Employee.*

**I think that education is going right. For me, the decisions taken by the minister were good and the reform of education is going right. The minister of education and the staff working with him are thinking about what can be improved in the sector.** *Female, 28, Gafsa, Unemployed.*

# National Direction (continued)

**Respondents continue to think the country is moving in the wrong direction. They feel that politicians have failed to revitalize the economy: to address the key problems of rising prices and enduring unemployment. While few view security as improving, the majority are fearful about rising insecurity.**

We have an economic crisis and a crisis related to security. These are two urgent problems we have to deal with. We should encourage investors, and make money from taxation. Taxation is not going well. We have to create job opportunities. We have to eradicate poverty and unemployment. *Male, 56, Sousse, Employee.*

Prices are so high nowadays! 10 or 20 TD are no longer sufficient to buy the necessities. There's a serious problem of unemployment also. *Female, 62, Tunis, Retired.*

Everything is going wrong: living conditions have become harder; security is absent. The reason is that there are no firm political decisions. Concerning the security sector, it still includes corrupt people and that's why there is no security. The Ministry of Interior is not free of corrupt superiors or even employees. *Female, 48, Kef, Employed.*

I have day dreams about Tunisia where the whole country is beautiful, peaceful, unthreatened by terrorism and violence or greed for positions. I dream of a country that led a revolution based on dignity and employment rights. I also dream of finding green places where children could play and enjoy themselves happily with their families without worry. Concerning unemployment, it is impossible to solve this problem immediately; it needs time and that's why it remains another dream. *Female, 57, Gafsa, Employed.*

As we can all see, the country is neither secure nor stable; so how could we dream in those conditions? Many things have degraded in Tunisia such as security, stability, education... it's impossible to dream within all these circumstances. *Female, 55, Kef, Housewife.*

Take for example our neighboring countries that, like us, went through what is called the revolution like Libya or Egypt... the positive thing that we have started to feel is that there is security. There is military security and policemen. *Male, 62, Tunis, Employed.*

# National Direction (continued)

**Changing the mentalities and attitudes of Tunisians toward one another, as well as toward politicians and police, are often cited as necessary for the society to improve, with many respondents noting that changes should start at the individual level.**

**People's awareness is degrading. We don't care about each other anymore. This is noticeable in the way people behave in driving, in walking in the streets, in occupying pedestrians' space by including it inside one's house.**

*Female, 35, Gafsa, Unemployed.*

**I would say the mentalities of people [need to change]. It seems like everyone is being selfish and no one is really thinking of the interests of the others. Even people in positions of authority think so. The workers think about nothing but cheating and getting money dishonestly. They do not even like their jobs.**

*Male, 32, Sousse, Employed.*

**Conflicts between different political parties should end. We witness a serious state of chaos on the political scene.**

*Female, 34, Sousse, Unemployed.*

**We must annihilate nepotism and then we could live peacefully, we love each other and we are good to each other as a people, but problems are caused by the conflicts between the different political parties in the country.**

*Female, 25, Sousse, Unemployed.*

**"Allah will not change the condition of a people until they change what is in themselves. (...) If we want to live in better conditions, we need to start change from the bottom. If we manage to do that, there will come good people in the future who would be able to improve things.**

*Male, 25, Tunis, Student.*

**Politicians should first change their mentality before expecting the citizen to do so. Politicians should work for the citizen's sake. Here in Tunisia everyone in power is working for himself, his relatives and acquaintances. Politicians are the ones who should change their mentality.**

*Male, 36, Kef, Employed.*

**I'd say that Free Tunisia needs people respecting each other's views. We need to respect each other regardless of whether or not we are Islamists or leftists or whatever. If we respect each other regardless of the political and religious tendencies we have, Tunisia will be much better.**

*Female, 35, Gafsa, Activist.*

# Local Direction – Great Tunis

**Respondents place a high priority on the economic situation, particularly unemployment and high prices.**

[The economy] is worse and prices keep increasing. Onions are now called “Mr”! Green peppers became a luxury that poor people can’t afford. Even snacks are now very expensive; -0.5 or 0.6 TD for just one “fricassé”!  
*Female, 36, Tunis, Housewife.*

Smuggling is the reason why prices are still high. [...] Besides, decent salaries are still far from coping with high prices. [...] There are people who can’t afford to buy bread! *Female, 62, Tunis, Retired.*

I’m always on the side of the poor. But the problem is that nobody cares about the poor. Even President Essebsi does not care about them. I am really worried about the situation of the poor in the country. In fact, their situation have become worse. *Male, 32, Tunis, Employed.*

My son for example is jobless. I give him 10 dinars every day. This makes 300 per month. If the state gives him at least 150 dinars, this would at least preserve his dignity. This would even make him feel patriotic so other people can’t use him for other objectives. We have many jobless people. *Male, 57, Tunis, Employed.*

**They harbor concerns about corruption and centralization of public administration.**

The worst thing that ever happened to us is that corruption, instead of being fought, became more and more widespread. Besides, it used to be secret; nowadays, people don’t feel embarrassed when they ask for bribes. People are so insolent in asking for rewards for services that they make it part of their jobs. Moreover, jobs are given to personal acquaintances. These transgressions should be reported and violators should be punished.  
*Female, 53, Tunis, Housewife.*

The government should work according to a plan. This plan should be based on equality between the different regions of the country. There still are many neglected regions that necessitate serious attention. *Female, 62, Tunis, Retired.*

The government should give the authority to the governors of the cities so that they could do what needed to be done. The governor of Ariana succeeded in listening to the people and improving the situation of the city. So, the same can be applied to other governors. *Female, 43, Tunis, Unemployed.*

# Local Direction - Kef

**Kef respondents resent what they view as the results of the long-term marginalization of their region, with recent terrorism as the latest in a history of injustices affecting the area. They think for police should be more professional and respectful of citizens.**

Our region is now considered as a "red zone," which means threatening in terms of security. So, investors would not be enthusiastic about coming here and investing their money in projects they establish in the region. For instance the Dutch minister of the environment wanted to launch an environmental project in Kef, but he discouraged because he was informed that Kef is a "red zone" so he did not come. *Female, 26, Kef, Employed.*

The bad thing [about the police] is the lack of experience and the unchanged mentality. I know many policemen in patrols and such. When you take a group of 6 young people who have been newly recruited, and the majority of the newly recruited policemen do not exceed 24 years of age, and put them under the supervision of an old person, he would guide them in the old way. We all know this. *Male, 56, Kef, Employed.*

"I would say that the North has always been neglected. When something evil happens in the neighborhood, nobody cares to answer our calls or comes to rescue us. When one goes to the police station, he would find them sleeping there and not doing their job." -- *Female, 47, Kef, Employed.*

**They hope for agricultural and industrial development to improve.**

In Kef we have wheat and barley. They should establish couscous and pasta factories here. ...However what they're doing is exploiting the wheat of Kef and consuming it outside Kef. They get the wheat out of Kef to process in Sousse or Sfax. Our youth only work as carriers who stock the sacks in lorries waving them goodbye! This is serious abuse! If they establish the factories here, we could be living happily and we could get jobs. It's the responsibility of the government to apply these measures. *Female, 33, Kef, Employed.*

**They note problems related to youth and substance addiction.**

If you talk to youngsters who sit [in cafes], they cannot communicate with you. They tell you that they have no job and could not find a solution to that. [...] The Ministry of Health should find a solution for what is happening to the Kef's citizens because of smoking (weed) and stuff. In these conditions, the ministries should do their jobs properly and assume their responsibilities. *Male, 25, Kef, Student.*

# Local Direction - Sousse

**In Sousse, the vast majority of respondents worry about their region's over-reliance on the tourism industry, which has caused their economy to depend on a sole source of income. They wish for the development of other economic sectors.**

**We [in Sousse] need to encourage investment in other sectors. For example, we need to build more factories and open more companies. [...]Tourism cannot be a permanent and stable source of money and jobs. *Female, 42, Sousse, Housewife.***

**They debate feelings of insecurity, and the majority express desperation related to the increasing unemployment rate, which they link to a decline in tourism.**

**420,000 jobless people in the tourism sector will be added to the unemployed. When we talked with our employer, he said if I had 50 customers in the hotel, I wouldn't have been obliged to close. He had more than 100 customers, but he took them to other hotels in order to close down. They participate in accentuating [...]unemployment. *Female, 36, Sousse, Employed.***

**I wanted to go and work in Turkey since I'm a teacher of Spanish and I studied Turkish as well. I want to work and support my family. No one wants to live in appalling poverty. Sometimes I can't afford even money for transportation from Sousse to Jammel. This is unreasonable. Let me go! No one likes to live far from their mother and father but there is no choice. We don't enjoy life here and they don't want us to enjoy life abroad. They make life difficult for u and they shut all the doors in front of our faces. We are not living inside or outside. We are just committing suicide. *Female, 30, Sousse, Student.***

**We no longer feel safe here... I had an incident last week when two guys on a motorbike tried to snatch my purse. I held strongly to it while they dragged me along the street. The police station wasn't far, but no one came to my rescue. In the region where I live, robbers use knives to rob you of your wallet or stuff and no policeman would ever show up even if you call him. *Female, 28, Sousse, Employed.***

**The first period after the revolution, crimes have spread because of the absence of security, but nowadays, I think they decreased. One can return home any time he likes safely. It is possible that it's less safe in the rural areas or the mountains but in the town, I don't think so. *Male, 26, Sousse, Employed.***

# Local Direction - Gafsa

**In Gafsa, most respondents claim the region is not able to take advantage of its own wealth and resources. They assess that local resources are being unfairly exploited elsewhere. The lack of investment, high number of strikes, and poor attitude among workers are also aggravating the situation.**

[The government] should allow the region to benefit from its resources. In Gafsa, we have the Chemical Compound but they get people from other places to work here! Why don't our youth work in their region? This is unfair! *Female, 50, Gafsa, Unemployed*

I'll give you a small example; the number of projects funded by the Solidarity Bank in Bizerte and Gafsa. In Bizerte it funded 3000 or 4000 projects whereas in Gafsa it funded only 64 projects. [...]What the parliament should do for example, is to fix the budget according to the actual resources of the country. For example, our budget was 517 billion dinars in 2012 whereas it became about 193 billion dinars in 2015. Not even half of the budget of 2012 was spent on projects in Gafsa. We're still waiting for the factories of bricks and the factory of cement. *Male, 32, Gafsa, Unemployed.*

My only wish is that the situation of Gafsa improves and that the region takes advantage of its wealth and becomes like other cities. *Male, 31, Gafsa, Employed.*

If we put an end to racism and discrimination our situation will improve a lot. For example, we southerners always feel less important than others, even on Facebook. This is the most important point. *Female, 31, Gafsa, Unemployed.*

I also dream of establishing equality and social justice. Unfortunately, these are absent: there's a distinction between the South and the North, the Coast and the interior regions... So, social justice should be implemented. *Female, 50, Gafsa, Employed.*

**Respondents also note a lack of infrastructure to entertain and engage youth.**

In every district in Gafsa, there should be places where the youth could enjoy themselves other than the cafés which are nowadays full of youth spending the whole day smoking cigarettes. They should establish some cultural spaces in Gafsa where the youth could do something beneficial, especially considering that Gafsa is one of the bases of the country's economy thanks to the phosphates we produce. Nowadays, districts in Gafsa look like a desert: take for example Mdhilla where the Phosphate Gafsa Group is situated; it's like a garbage deposit! We're not positively favored in Gafsa. *Female, 50, Gafsa, Unemployed.*

# Parliament – Expectations

**Respondents clearly express their wish for parliamentarians to be more active, for the communication gap between citizens and parliament to be addressed, and for their problems to be voiced and addressed by their representatives. They are impatient for solutions and for concrete achievements to be implemented.**

**It would be better if they stop talking on TV shows and start working practically on the people's problems and focus on concrete solutions in the field, like development projects in the governorates. *Male, 26, Kef, Unemployed.***

**[Parliament's] role is to transmit the concerns of the population to the government and express people's opinions. *Male, 38, Gafsa, Employed.***

**[Parliament's] role is to discuss the problems of the people since it represents them. It has an intermediary role between the people and the state. *Female, 52, Sousse, Employed.***

**MPs are elected by the people to represent people. They have to be very close to society and they have to give their opinions concerning the people's problems. They have to communicate people's problems. They must be equal to the responsibility they are in charge of. Their opinions have to be taken from the people close to them and from their problems. *Male, 53, Tunis, Employed.***

**The parliament can balance the power of the presidency or the government for example so that we don't live under the hegemony of one political party. *Female, 42, Sousse, Employed.***

**The parliament is delivering people's voice by passing laws that apply to everybody to unify people's interests. *Male, 65, Sousse, Retired.***

# Parliament – Achievements

**A small number of respondents are satisfied with how members of parliament have begun their work, noting the passage of a few key pieces of legislation, while others are understanding of the obstacles that prevent MPs to be more effective.**

I've heard that some of the MPs were overseeing the appointment of new commissioners. These MPs questioned the bases on which these commissioners have been appointed. I should say that MPs are doing their jobs not at a quick pace but they're working. They're expressing their views over different issues like for example when they issued a petition asking to discredit the Minister of Higher Education and then they withdrew that petition. They're at least showing that they're working. They seem to be working slowly. They need more time. *Female, 36, Tunis, Housewife.*

They are trying. Don't forget that they represent all the parties, pro-government and anti-government. They are elected by the people. They are trying to find prompt solutions. We should give them a year or two to see if they represent the people or not. *Male, 49, Sousse, Employed.*

There are some achievements made by honest people who want to do their job. The problem is that these people were either portrayed as stupid by the media or were threatened like what happened to the representative of Jendouba who received a death threat because he asked for water for the agricultural lands. Who doesn't have a problem of water among farmers? No one! All of them suffer from the lack of water. Some committees inside the parliament are really good [in theory] and can help the country but they are not working. *Male, 32, Gafsa, Unemployed.*

I could see that MPs are speaking for their regions through the live shows I watch on National TV2. For example, MPs of Sidi Bouzid did talk about the damages occurring in Sidi Bouzid especially in what relates to agriculture. I really enjoyed their tough conflict over the bill of the budget distribution law because that law threatens those with low wages. Even if the number of MPs working hard is few, we can still enjoy the way they discuss important issues in democratic ways. *Female, 35, Gafsa, Employed.*

I know one of them. Unfortunately, I can't remember his name. He was helping people when floods occurred in Sidi Yeich. [...]He came to Gafsa. He also came with the government people, and he seemed to be so caring about the people here. *Female, 50, Gafsa, Unemployed.*

# Parliament – Failures

**Some respondents did not know the difference between the ANC and the ARP's accomplishments, while a strong majority rate the ARP's performance as unsatisfactory, and believe the MPs are not fulfilling their role or respecting their electoral promises.**

**They give us promises but when they are elected they just ratify the laws proposed by their parties in the government. This is the reality of all Parliaments in the Arab world. *Male, 36, Gafsa, Unemployed.***

**The problem is that they are acting as if they forgot the main cause of the revolution which is employment. They did nothing to solve this problem and we're just watching how political parties are fighting for power and they forgot the important problem. *Male, 38, Gafsa, Employed.***

**Each one is a representative of his governorate they should be knowledgeable about what lacks in those specific places; they have to know the problems of the people and voice their opinions. Unfortunately, this is not the case now. *Female, 26, Kef, Housewife.***

**Their most important role is supposed to be overseeing the government work. We didn't see them doing this so far. *Female, 36, Gafsa, Employed.***

**The parliament's role is absent. People think that there are only two parties, or rather two people, the President, and Rached el Ghannouchi, who are controlling the country's politics. Whatever they agree upon, the parliament ratifies. *Male, 40, Sousse, Employed.***

**[Parliament] should specify the characteristics of every region as there are agricultural regions, touristic regions, etc. and it should make this specificity known to the government and since the citizen cannot communicate directly with the government and ask for his rights (...) [they are] not conveying right information, not communicating things for which you went there and not conveying the promises that you have made, how do you expect the country to progress? *Male, 25, Kef, Student.***

**If [MPs] were united, they could put some pressure on the government. For instance, when they managed to pass the law concerning raising their own pensions, they could have seized the occasion to ask for the implementation of the law concerning grants for the unemployed. *Female, 38, Gafsa, Employed.***

# Parliament – MPs/ Representation

**Respondents do not believe that the current parliament represents them. MPs are attributed by absenteeism, self- or partisan interest, failure to fulfill promises, and fighting or otherwise divisive behavior. Youth respondents in particular do not feel their needs and interests are represented by MPs.**

We don't even see them on TV programs lately; they disappeared. Why? Do they want to work or not? I don't understand. It's as if they reached their goal by being in the parliament and stopped thinking about the goal for which they were elected. *Male, 39, Gafsa, Employed.*

"They've done only what serves their interest, not that of the people. They wrote things but we haven't seen anything tangible yet. They are only increasing their salaries, benefitting from their position - better housing, better transportation, and so on." -- *Female, 33, Kef, Employed.* They've done only what serves their interest, not that of the people. They wrote things but we haven't seen anything tangible yet. They are only increasing their salaries, benefitting from their position - better housing, better transportation, and so on. *Female, 33, Kef, Employed.*

"Every day, political parties dispute on TV. They also have internal conflicts. And all that agitates the people. When you watch their disputes, you feel disgusted, as if you are watching a street fight not a debate on TV." -- *Female, 60, Sousse, Housewife.*

"MPs also represent political parties; so they should also put pressure on their respective parties. They're not only individual voices but they represent the power of the parties they belong to since the elections. They should put pressure on their parties so that these parties make their voices heard and their demands fulfilled." -- *Female, 60, Gafsa, Employed.*

"All the leaders should be replaced by young people." -- *Male, 25, Gafsa, Employed.*

"Every representative should know his region and convey the problems and defend his region in order to bring projects and benefits to the region." -- *Female, 33, Kef, Employed.*

"I don't care about politics. They [MPs] are doing nothing for us. If I could profit from a law or something I would know them but there is no need for that." -- *Male, 33, Tunis, Unemployed*

# Parliament – District MPs

**Respondents shared similar responses compared to previous FG findings, i.e. that they feel MPs are disconnected from the local realities. Respondents rarely know who their elected representatives are, with only a few figures receiving recognition due to their visibility in the media after the attacks, or because of personal affiliation or past roles, rather than because of their achievements in Parliament.**

**They didn't introduce themselves. If I didn't see him in his car in the neighborhood, I wouldn't know that he's representing my district. *Female, 36, Tunis, Housewife.***

**Kamal Ben Brahim used to be a football player and work for the CNSS. Like his predecessor and lawyer Najib Hosni, and like any MP, once he got hold of the position of MP he forgot about his region's people and didn't voice their troubles in front of parliament, as if he had never lived here. When the MP comes here, all that he says is "ok, ok" but when he goes back to parliament you never hear his voice. *Male, 29, Kef, Unemployed.***

**We already communicated a number of issues that worried us to the MPs of Kef but none of those issues was taken seriously. The same applies to the institutions: the hospital is still in the same desperate situation. *Female, 26, Kef, Employed.***

**I want them to think about the regions where they were elected. Each of them should try to solve the problems of his region. *Male, 40, Gafsa, Employed.***

**"I knew he [Ridha Charfeddine] was the president of ESS but I have known he is an MP after the assassination attempt." -- *Female, 60, Sousse, Housewife.***

**I haven't seen any MP doing anything good for the benefit of any region. They are making laws for the Tunisian country in general but they haven't intervened in any particular region. I have seen no MP talking about his region. I don't know them because I haven't seen them. *Male, 36, Tunis, Employed.***

**The representatives already know the problems of the region, they don't need to pay visits to know them. (...) For me, solving any of the problems that we have in the region is more important than seeing the representatives. (...) We don't need words, we need achievements. *Male, 36, Gafsa, Employed.***

# Parliament – Means of Engagement

**Respondents long for the opportunity to speak with MPs. To facilitate engagement with citizens, respondents propose that MPs meet regularly and directly with citizens throughout the districts of their regions, whether through planned and publicized public forums or informally in markets and cafes. respondents also suggest MPs should overcome partisan barriers to work together for the good of their regions.**

**The closer the MPs are to the people, the more successful they will be. In that case, they would win our confidence.** *Female, 36, Tunis, Housewife.*

**Before the elections, they used to visit the regions, go to markets, even visit people in their homes! they talked to us and collected our views. Afterwards, when they won seats, they disappeared!** *Female, 53, Tunis, Housewife.*

**MPs representing El Kef and belonging to Nidaa do not meet with MPs from Nahdha and MPs from Nahdha do not meet MPs from other parties and so on. [...]They should take advantage of the chance of their meeting together for as long as they represent us and our region, they should meet together, have a new and different vision together, leave the parties' interests aside and try to understand each other.** *Male, 68, Kef, Employed.*

**[MPs] could just invite one person from different social categories to a meeting they could hold every one or even two months to discuss their class needs and problems.** *Female, 30, Sousse, Student.*

**There should be regular meetings. The member of parliament who was elected to represent the region should have an office and appoint someone on a regular basis in order to be in contact with the citizens.** *Male, 39, Gafsa, Employed.*

# Parliament – Means of Engagement (continued)

They should pay unexpected visits to public institutions to witness the truth and not leave the space for others to embellish the facades and hide the defects as in public hospitals for example. When a government official goes there, they change the seats, paint the walls, and everything becomes perfect and everyone is happy while in reality they live in miserable conditions. *Female, 29, Kef, Employed.*

Personally, I want them to communicate with me through work and tangible achievements. [...]It would be better if they come up with solutions and close every file they open i.e. solve every problem they tackle. If they do this, people will of course know them. *Female, 26, Kef, Employed.*

We want them to behave like in the period of electoral campaigns, i.e. when they were visiting many regions. They went to many places and reached even difficult and hard zones to talk to people and hear their voices. [...]We supported them [to be elected], likewise, you should apply what you have said. We don't need writing and publications on Facebook. We need deeds. We have helped you and now it's your role to help us. You needed us and now we need you. *Male, 25, Kef, Student.*

In order to build strong ties with citizens, MPs could do just what they did in the electoral campaigns. They did contact us directly and show interest in our needs. So, they could at least organize monthly meetings or even once every three months – we understand that they're busy with their work in the parliament – where they meet with the citizens and listen to them about their concerns and needs. In this way, they could keep direct and permanent contact with the region they're representing so as to be able to report the situation in total transparency and confidence. *Female, 57, Gafsa, Employed.*

# Parliament – Information

Similar to previous focus group findings, these respondents, despite their openness to learning more about the work of Parliament, indicate that their interest is fading, due in part to empty rhetoric and frequent partisan debate, rather than constructive dialogue. They voice doubts about the accuracy of reporting on the Parliament's work in the media, while using information from civil society and social media, admitting these sources are not ideal.

I watch TV and get information. If I like something I watch it and if I don't like something I don't watch it. Sometimes when I watch the discussions in the Parliament, I see that the MPs are about to fight so I no longer want to watch. How can you, as a cultivated person, do that in front of 12 million viewers? How can I watch you, follow you or listen to you if you misbehave or call people names in the Parliament? *Male, 64, Tunis, Retired.*

There are many websites such as Nawaat or Bawsala. They are updated sites about the new laws and everything that happens in the Parliament. *Male, 25, Kef, Student.*

When you listen to radio stations like *Mosaïque*, the information may be incorrect. *Male, 25, Tunis, Unemployed.*

[On Facebook] you find news about every field like politics, economics, etc. *Male, 28, Kef, Unemployed.*

Why can't we create a web platform for these representatives organized according to the governorate? For example, we have seven representatives for Gafsa, you'll find their CVs on this platform as well as their activities and citizens can evaluate them. Citizens can also send them messages. They can do this in an anonymous manner or even send them the identity card number so that they can help them if they want to have confidential information. *Female, 30, Gafsa, Employed.*

What is thrilling is the work done by civil society organizations. They're working hard. As you can see in this discussion session, people of all ages and interests are meeting to discuss the situation of the country. The outcome is a group of ideas and suggestions that are going to be communicated to the authorities afterwards. This is very positive. Expressing views in respect of their variations is a positive move. Civil society organizations are making interesting progress in this regard; and they're putting pressure on the authorities so as to make improvements. *Female, 30, Gafsa, Employed.*

# Parliament: Priorities regarding women's issues

**Respondents often note that women's economic empowerment, political engagement/ leadership, and issues related to divorce and violence against women are areas Parliament should focus on for reforms and legislative amendments.**

The constitution indicates in article 21 that men and women citizens are totally equal and in article 46 that opportunities should be given to competent people regardless of their gender. The lately appointed commissioners are all men! All the new governors are men! Does this mean that there are no competent women? We do have competent women able to occupy these positions. *Female, 62, Tunis, Retired.*

A man gets 10 or 15 dinars for a job for which a woman gets only 5 dinars. *Female, 55, Sousse, Employed.*

Women are always given secondary posts in governments. We want to see a woman as a prime minister or a defense minister, for example. We want to give women ministries of sovereignty as it happens in the developed countries. To me, women deserve such posts. *Male, 39, Kef, Employed.*

They've been talking about gender equality but it remained theoretical. On the practical level there's no equality neither concerning employment nor mentalities. *Female, 28, Gafsa, Unemployed.*

I think that there should be more women in political life. Some women are braver than men. They appointed 24 governors and all of them are men. I think that they should have appointed women because they will be more sensitive to the problems of poor families. *Male, 32, Gafsa, Unemployed.*

It's true that women gained an important number of their rights especially in the work field. However, there are other rights which are daily violated and not spoken about. For instance, women whose husbands left them helpless without any fund to raise their children as we can see on TV do need serious attention. The court gives them justice; but unfortunately these verdicts are not implemented. In sum, the rights exist but they're not ensured. Court decisions ordering the fleeing husband to pay 200 or 300TD as alimony when the mother can't afford to feed her kids are sometimes unrealistic. Women are over-humiliated. *Female, 50, Gafsa, Unemployed.*

Concerning the situation of women in Tunisia, the parliament should reconsider the Code of Personal Status and revise some of the laws. Some of the laws that should be reconsidered involve inheritance: why should women inherit half of what men do? Inheritance involves the same father and the same mother for both the man and the woman. Besides, why are children registered only under their father's name? I also want my children to bear my name. *Female, 57, Gafsa, Employed.*

# Government – Achievements

**Respondents once again view the government's efforts on security as its most important accomplishment. Some also note that the government is improving Tunisia's image on the international stage. A smaller number of respondents commend certain reform efforts from Ministries.**

There are some things going right like security. Now you can travel at night without being afraid. There's also more supervision concerning trade and consumers are more protected. *Male, 39, Gafsa, Employed.*

They restored the image of Tunisia[...].I'm talking about the image of Tunisia in the media. I also noticed that security is better than before even though we see that there are old practices coming back like the use of violence against citizens. *Male, 32, Gafsa, Unemployed.*

There is an improvement in the education sector thanks to the will of the authority in control, i.e. thanks to the Minister. When a Minister has the desire to work and improve then everyone will of course stand by his side. The [other] point I want to stress is the foreign policy. Tunisia has recently been decorated by the UN. This is a positive thing. Our country has started to regain its brightness. *Male, 39, Kef, Employed.*

I would like to add, next to the achievements of the Ministries of Health and Education, those of the Ministry of Development. The Minister has managed to find concrete solutions to the projects that have long been held of any progress as for example the project of the Tunis Cultural City that remained unfinished for over 20 years. The Minister, now, has reconsidered the project and ordered to resume the construction so as to finish building the whole cultural city. So many other projects have received equal attention like that of the Bizerte Bridge and are to be continued after a long period of stagnation. *Female, 60, Tunis, Employed.*

In my opinion, there is a high level in the strategies followed at the level of security in comparison with the last three years. *Male, 34, Kef, Employed.*

# Government – Priorities and Expectations

Similar to past focus group findings, many respondents assert that the government has not produced any concrete achievements to date. They say the government has an essential role to play to improve the economy and address insecurity. They expect the government to address insecurity, unemployment, and smuggling; ensure investment in development projects across the country; and better control inflation.

Serious reforms must be done when it comes to the three most important domains, which are: the security force, development, and employment. *Male, 32, Sousse, Employed.*

The priority is security. They have to find a way to fight terrorism; we don't want to hear about terrorist attacks anymore. Second, they should take care of the economy. They have to solve the economic problems and fix prices. We have to take care of our factories. Then, we have to take care of municipalities because they are working only in coastal areas but if you visit the internal regions you'll see the mess. Even if you're building a new house, you'll find no one to sign the authorization so that you have water and electricity. If you pay a bribe you're fine, if not you're lost. *Male, 35, Gafsa, Employed.*

We should focus on justice, because justice is the foundation of prosperity. The second thing is fighting corruption, because it has become very rife in our country and reached even small kids who are now smoking weed and so on. (...) Administrative reform is necessary. Fixing the infrastructure is also a must. *Male, 39, Sousse, Employed.*

The three top priorities are: terrorism, unemployment, and the economy. These are the main three points that we should focus on. Terrorism is the most important one. Unemployment is an essential matter that we should solve and then comes the matter of the economy. When we work we improve the economy. *Male, 68, Kef, Employed.*

The government is the only authority responsible for the execution of the laws, the improvement of the living conditions, the establishment of projects that offer job opportunities, the consideration of poor people in the forms of pensions they grant to them. *Female, 35, Gafsa, Employed.*

[The government must ensure] social equality. All the problems originate from social inequality. *Female, 60, Tunis, Employed.*

# Economy – General Views

**Compared to last year, more respondents perceive the economy to be in decline, at every level. Their main priorities are to reduce unemployment and inflation. They are also highly concerned with corruption, the unscrupulousness of public servants, increase in strikes, and regional imbalance in terms of economic development. They think the government should do more to address these issues. Various economic challenges are viewed as intertwined.**

**Professional conscience is absent, starting from business owners down to simple employees.** *Female, 53, Tunis, Housewife.*

**The government should lend money to jobless graduates to help them start small businesses which the country will benefit from, and which will also get them to develop and improve their projects. This will assist in the economic development of our country.** *Female, 25, Sousse, Student.*

**People should stop or reduce the number of sit-ins and strikes. Security should be restored so that investors would feel more secure to pursue their business, then more people will get employed. Everything is based on security, and without it nothing would seem to go right.** *Female, 28, Sousse, Employed.*

**We lack the industrial economy i.e. factories and production. This is true about Tunisia as a whole. There is stagnation. We have the same number of factories since 2000. There are no new things.** *Male, 52, Kef, Employed.*

**Many things are correlated. Smuggling is related to terrorism. Corruption is closely related to smuggling. They must fight corruption in customs and the latter must be cleaned.** *Female, 52, Sousse, Employed.*

**Citizens should stop making complaints, demands, and protests. This doesn't mean that I'm a surrendering or passive woman; I'm far away from that. But, the current situation needs some understanding from our part.** *Female, 57, Gafsa, Employed.*

# Economy – Parallel Economy

**Respondents believe that the parallel economy is caused by cross-border smuggling, corruption among policemen and border agents, and the lack of job opportunities/poor economy in some regions. Many respondents call for free trade zones along the Algerian and Libyan borders, better laws and their implementation, and stricter government oversight.**

[The government should] implement laws regulating the exchange of goods, and a law organizing a common market between Libya, Tunisia and Algeria, i.e. a free market where taxation fees are limited to the minimum and tax income goes to the state. It's better than smuggling products. *Male, 39, Sousse, Employed.*

I don't think that the smuggler is happy doing this job, but it comes as natural that when young men is poor and all his family members are too, he would do anything to improve their living. *Male, 25, Kef, Student.*

Why don't they [legislate to regulate] smuggling? People should be allowed to work for the parallel market but on the basis that they pay taxes to the government and the government would spend the amount of those taxes on something beneficial. The idea of a free market where imported goods can be exchange between Tunisia and Algeria might present a solution for these problems. *Female, 29, Kef, Employed.*

The absence of the government is the cause of smuggling and illegal trade. Sometimes policemen discover that a car is full of weapons but they don't arrest it, they let it pass in return of money. We have to talk about these things too. Everything is related to politics. *Male, 36, Gafsa, Employed.*

You can see people buying smuggled gasoil in the streets, and even the police are indifferent. *Female, 27, Tunis, Employed.*

[The police] know the business owners who rely on smuggling, but they arrest the poor drivers who do not really hold big responsibility. *Female, 60, Tunis, Employed.*

# Economy – Inflation

**Similar to previous focus group findings, respondents believe inflation is caused by smuggling, monopolization, and high production costs. There is a strong demand for the State and the Parliament to play a greater role in overseeing the regulation of prices, and for citizens to be smarter consumers.**

We are producing phosphate. We also have other products but the problem is that we export them and then they come back as imported goods and they become more expensive while they were produced here. *Female, 28, Gafsa, Unemployed.*

When the government and the parliament don't do their jobs [to control prices], it's the citizen that pays the price. The citizen's responsibility is to make a right choice, and punish those whom he gave his vote and failed to do their job. *Male, 40, Sousse, Employed.*

Tunisia is rich with its natural resources. This year, we're the first exporter of olive oil and dates. Despite this, we buy our own oil at 8 dinars per liter. Why couldn't we benefit from our resources? Why should we suffer high prices when we're already exporting these products? *Female, 47, Kef, Employed*

If the government does not hit with an iron hand the issues of smuggling, tax evasion and others, prices are going to increase further and further. I'm retired and the taxes I'm paying have increased within two months. This is insane! I'm not likely to escape these taxes because my salary is manipulated by the government. But what about business owners? They – in addition to participating in parallel commerce – escape paying taxes for their declared businesses. *Female, 62, Tunis, Retired.*

It seems as if we have a special desire for goods which become expensive. For instance, I chose not to make “osban” during the Eid because parsley was very expensive: 0.7 to 1 TD per bunch! If most of the people did as I did [and chose not to buy it], the government would have been obliged to decrease its price. *Female, 53, Tunis, Housewife.*

# Security – General Views

**Respondents feel especially strongly about their relations with the police corps. They believe that police need better training, and that they must be made more aware of their duties to protect and respect citizens. The current state of security, however, was debated; while some feel the situation is getting better, some do not (particularly women).**

**There is improvement [in security] but there are different points to mention. The general amnesty for example has to be reviewed because many criminals were released, they committed other crimes and went back to jail. *Male, 39, Kef, Employed.***

**We're scared of the police. [...]When a police car passes by me, I feel scared. We don't trust them anymore. How should we feel when those who are supposed to protect us represent a source of threat? *Female, 29, Kef, Unemployed.***

**Before the revolution all the neighborhood left the doors open at night. Now we have to close all the doors before sleeping. *Female, 28, Kef, Employed.***

**Security forces should be trained into becoming national forces ready to work regardless of which party or authority is ruling the country. Just like teachers whose job is to teach; security forces should only be concerned with ensuring security. *Female, 62, Tunis, Retired.***

**Police are also being delinquent in some sort; we have a really big number of policemen who tend to be intensely focused in certain areas and regions, while in some other regions, we wouldn't find even one policeman despite many people's desire to join the police academy. Since these people are willing to be policemen, the government should provide them with the opportunity and necessary equipment to protect us. *Female, 25, Sousse, Student.***

**The military or police employee should be like the good soldier who waits for no thanks or reward but builds his country unconditionally... He should only think of the country's best interests. *Male, 39, Sousse, Employed.***

**There are problems related to the relationship between the police and the citizens. The police arrest citizens without any serious evidence of a crime record. They arrest graduates who spend a lot of time in prison with terrorists and they end up being like them. *Female, 26, Kef, Employed.***

**Future policemen should be trained in how to work for republican police force. This could be possible only when corruption disappears from the security sector. As long as our security institutions contain corrupt elements among its own, we cannot talk about republican police force. *Female, 57, Gafsa, Employed.***

# Security – Causes of Terrorism

Recruitment for terrorism is seen to be driven by offers of money, misinterpretation of religious ideology, unemployment and lack of opportunities. While recruitment for terrorism is viewed as a real problem, respondents are doubtful of whether or not terrorism is a real threat or a political fabrication.

People are not terrorists by nature. There's a whole process by which one might turn into a terrorist. This person might be affected by political or religious considerations, or he might be manipulated by a group of people who manage to brainwash him. Political tyranny might also lead people to join terrorists: when a person is always humiliated by the police while he's done nothing wrong, he would end up in terrorist camps...taking revenge. *Female, 47, Kef, Employed.*

The largest number of people that terrorists target is the Tunisian youth. So, we should ask ourselves about the reasons behind this. As far as I'm concerned, the youth are psychologically unbalanced, starting from the primary school which is supposed to play its role together with the family in shaping the personalities of the younger generation. So should the case be for cultural centers and civil society organizations. We should evaluate how well these institutions played their role in the last 50 years. The rule of both Bourguiba and Ben Ali are concerned in this. Now, that they left, how did we become? Tunisians don't respect traffic signs, nor do they wait for their turns in queues. That's the kind of Tunisian citizens that terrorists target! Our main job is to build the personality of the citizen. I think that there was neglect for religion in the previous school curricula which was made on purpose and which pushed the people to search for some religious balance on the internet and on channels that support terrorism. *Female, 44, Tunis, Employed.*

Tunisians are poor; they are pitiful. Haram or hael do not matter. All they want and need is money. Values no longer matter. Terrorism is due to poverty. *Male, 30, Sousse, Employed.*

For me terrorism is a fabrication; it's not real. It has precise dates. It is organized and directed. There's a difference between the terrorist who was killed in the mountain and real terrorism. That terrorist was created. He believed that he's a terrorist because he was given a gun and some money. The truth is that whenever they want to pass a law and they think that people will oppose it, they give orders of an operation in Chaambi so that people become afraid and accept the law. That music on TV programs and Facebook pages talking about the event has an influence on people. *Male, 32, Gafsa, Unemployed.*

There are people who foresee attacks and they happen really. Each time a scandal or something happens in the government, they stage a terrorist attack in Kef, Kasserine or elsewhere to divert people's attention. This is the government's industry and who is the victim? The simple soldier or policeman is the victim. *Male, 56, Kef, Employed.*

# Security – Solutions for Terrorism

Respondents raise several ideas for long-term solutions, including security and education reform, regional development, vocational training, and moderate religion. Responsibility for combatting terrorism is dual: shared between government and citizens.

It's very important to sensitize and educate the youth especially the unemployed among them. These, if not well educated, will be easily manipulated by the terrorists who talk them into the unimportance of their country which gave them nothing. Next to the daily humiliation these unemployed youth are subject to, they end up cursing their country and wishing everything evil for it. Actually they would strike the hell out of it in that case. However, when the youth are happily employed, terrorism would not win them over. *Female, 50, Gafsa, Unemployed*

As far as security is concerned, the police are not yet republican and human rights are still facing problems. Terrorism is our biggest problem now and fighting against it is not solely the MOI's job...We should create a joint national council where all political and religious sectors participate. *Male, 39, Sousse, Employed.*

We need to improve prisons. There are some who enter the prison for no reason or for a petty crime but they come out as real criminals. *Male, 25, Tunis, Unemployed.*

Prevention is better than cure. Prevention can be ensured by guiding our children, controlling them, and inspecting their behavior. One should know the friends of his children. Especially in what relates to terrorism, the mother should check where her son who did not finish his studies and who is unemployed got money. *Female, 40, Kef, Employed.*

We should all be attentive; all of us including citizens, security forces, and politicians. I've heard once on one of the channels that an interviewee suggested that everyone who sees something weird reports it; but another interviewee said that this meant we go back to the spying business the old regime used to implement. I don't think so because it is very important that we report anything suspicious we see within the current circumstances. This is not spying but saving the whole nation! *Female, 57, Gafsa, Employed.*

Laws should be executed. It's senseless to arrest terrorists and then release them. They should be judged and punished. *Female, 38, Gafsa, Employed.*

Employment is the best solution to fight against terrorism. I could be potential terrorist myself... If I don't find a job in the three coming years, I'll look for euros in the mountain. *Male, 32, Gafsa, Unemployed.*

# Youth – Challenges

**For respondents, the high rate of youth unemployment is the fundamental challenge facing young Tunisians today. Without opportunities to establish themselves through economic independence, youth have little interest in participating in political or civic life.**

## From the men's groups' perspective:

**Employment is very important for these people and they are the men of the future. If we provide work for them, Tunisia will recover and our children will dream of the future. Now most of them don't dream about the future.**  
*Male, 68, Kef, Employed.*

**Young people feel marginalized because on one hand, they are the ones who had started the revolution and sacrificed their lives thinking that after that they would find a bright future but they were not allowed to take positions or participate in ministries. Young people can be ministers. Let them at least acquire experience. They can have better ideas than old people.** *Male, 53, Tunis, Employed.*

**"The youth also should play a very important role and have a big responsibility."** -- *Male, 38, Gafsa, Employed*

**"They must be conscious of their situation and assume their responsibility... the young should enjoy their rights of thinking freely but in a responsible way."** -- *Male, 37, Kef, Employed*

**"Youth is not involved in public life because they spend most of their time on the internet. They spend 5, 6, 7 and up to 10 hours at home."** -- *Male, 61, Sousse, Retired*

## From the women's groups' perspective:

**The state is not benefiting from the competence of the youth who excelled in their studies and who got higher degrees. They would employ youth with low educational level (those who got an average of 10/20 in their degrees) and leave those who excelled (scoring 17/20) jobless. The state is not benefiting from the competence and the interesting ideas of our youth who majored in their studies. These youth end up helpless void of the enthusiasm and dynamism they used to bear!** *Female, 50, Gafsa, Unemployed.*

**There are no job opportunities. The government does not care about youth. That is why many of them opt for illegal immigration to Italy and drug addiction which becomes the only way out in order to escape their disappointment.**  
*Female, 36, Sousse, Employed.*

# Youth – Challenges (continued)

## From the youth groups' perspective:

Young people are concerned primarily about jobs. When he thinks about organizations, associations, or parties, he would say, "what would I get from them? How would this adherence be beneficial for me?" If I get a job I can adhere to an organization, a club or even sit in a cafe. *Male, 34, Kef, Employed*

No political party cares for the youth except when they take advantage of them to distribute flyers and stuff in return for just a pack of cigarettes and 10 dinars. They have never given them real responsibility for something. *Male, 29, Sousse, Employed*

In my opinion, employment is the first priority. Personally, I don't have a job. So finding a job is my first priority. *Female, 31, Tunis, Unemployed.*

"When people sit for a contest examination, only the daughter and son of Mr. X or Y succeed thanks to their fathers and mothers although there are others who have equal or higher qualifications and who remain deprived." -- Female, 29, Kef, Employed

Why should we talk about the governorate or the municipality? In our own houses, who takes decisions? Old people do. We start taking decisions when we leave our parents' house. We have 16 thousand unemployed graduates in Gafsa where are they? We have 4500 jobless graduates in Om Larayes, where are they? People are looking for 200 dinars grant. The government said that we have the right to SIVP contracts which means that we have the right to get 10.000 dinars. Why don't they give us the money instead of the contract? We'll be able to open our own projects with that sum. They may say that they can't give this sum to 16 thousand people. They can give it to the first 5000 people and the others will remain in the waiting list. Governors won't fix streets and they won't make the city look better because your ideas won't let him steal the money. We shouldn't wait for them, we should fight for our rights. *Male, 32, Gafsa, Unemployed.*

# Youth – Solutions

For some participants, empowering youth begins with systemic educational and economic reforms. Others call on youth to be more willing to take initial steps to establish livelihoods.

We dream that our children, for whose education we have sacrificed, get job opportunities and that those who are holding positions now and trying to improve the education system think of trying to educate our youth who represent the future of the country how to be part of the political scene. They should think of educating them to become future political candidates who would be responsible for the development of the country. *Female, 52, Kef, Employed.*

“There must be a framework for both young people and their parents...parents don't have spared and even if they have, they don't give it to their children to frame them.” -- *Male, 57, Tunis, Employed*

[The government] should at least plan training for youth after getting their diplomas. There are youth who graduated in 2004 or 2002 and stayed jobless about ten or twenty years. How do you think they will keep their level? I think it is necessary to train the youth and give them a monthly amount of money until they get jobs. *Female, 29, Kef, Unemployed.*

If the government doesn't have the capacity to offer jobs or give aid, it should at least facilitate getting loans or equipment if young people have ideas they can apply [to start their own business...] I've read recently an article which says that Tunis is demanding foreign employees in a specific specialty which is not taught in our training centers, whereas we have about 700,000 unemployed youth who know other specialties. *Male, 25, Kef, Student.*

Transparency in the national contest exams. They organize these contests just to collect our money and at the end you don't know the result or anything. You only log in to read the word "refused." I demand that they tell us the results and provide the correction so that everyone knows his mistakes and feels convinced about the reason why they didn't pass. *Female, 30, Kef, Employed.*

The participation of the youth in public life remains at minor percentages and the reason is that our educational system did not focus on training them into becoming active citizens. It only focused on teaching them math and physics and making them get degrees. There was no focus on civic or cultural education. The youth have always been advised to study rather than go to cultural centers for example. It is our educational system that needs to be reconsidered. *Female, 60, Gafsa, Employed.*

Most of the young generation are lazy. They want to get everything but they do not work hard for that. It is true that job opportunities are scarce, but they are also lazy. They know that they can get everything they want with no effort. In fact, parents have an important role to play. If parents provide their children with everything they

# Youth's Role in Municipal Elections

**Most respondents view upcoming municipal elections as an essential step toward addressing regional and local development and unemployment. To encourage young people to vote in these polls, local authorities and civil society should undertake awareness-raising campaigns, and parties should engage youth as candidates and offer tangible platforms.**

First, we should increase the number of [voting] registration offices in municipalities, neighborhoods, and public spaces. Second, we should open dialogue with young people to convince them of the importance of voting. We should raise their awareness about municipal elections, as well as legislative and presidential elections. *Male, 49, Sousse, Employed.*

In these [specialized] clubs [at school] , students could get training so as to prepare them to take part in the political scene in the future. *Female, 47, Kef, Employed.*

The solution is to have a high quota of youth in the election lists. I would vote for a list that includes young people, even if we have different ideologies. *Male, 32, Gafsa, Unemployed.*

The youth should be sensitized about the importance of participating in these elections. It is the role of the organizations to sensitize them. The philosophy of the municipal elections has changed; so it's important to explain this difference to the youth and convince them about the change that occurred. Automatically, when they understand the new system, the youth would participate in the elections. This could also be done in universities. I was talking to my friends about the idea of a project that I had: touring the cafés and trying to sensitize the youth about the importance of participating explaining to them the principles of local governance. *Female, 60, Gafsa, Employed.*

The ambiguity of the plans of the parties makes the youth abstain from voting. What should they vote for? *Female, 25, Gafsa, Unemployed.*

The problem is that we lack people who know how to make successful election campaigns. Most of the youth use the internet and the social media such as Facebook or use YouTube. So I think they should make campaigns on the internet. *Male, 25, Tunis, Unemployed.*

# Additional Citizen Priorities – Education

Improving education is a common desire among respondents, who correlate improving education with combatting unemployment and strengthening the economy. There is little sympathy for striking teachers.

Before employment, good education should be ensured. Our youth should be taught in Tunisia just in the same way youth are taught in France or other places. Training should go hand in hand with education in a way that when we study something it should have future prospects. The youth nowadays study some specialties theoretically without any practical follow up activities. Besides, the quality of education has seriously degraded in a way that our diplomas aren't certified at the international level. How could the youth find employment opportunities with this very low level of education? *Female, 37, Gafsa, Employed.*

Higher education is seriously degrading. I would say that those who hold the Bachelor's degree are unable to make a sentence, neither in Arabic nor in French. Let alone those who got a License degree! The recruitment of the teachers at the university level is also arbitrary. How could an MA student who hasn't finished research yet and who is recruited to teach be able to improve higher education? It's total chaos! *Female, 36, Tunis, Housewife.*

Educational reform is needed because those who are responsible are allowing everyone to succeed without strict measures which results in increasing rates of joblessness. *Female, 29, Kef, Unemployed.*

I think that the reforms made by the minister were made for media exposure. The media play a major role in making someone successful. Boughalleb smokes the water pipe with Jalloul, so he made him appear as the best minister. Personally, I just see a minister making problems with unionists. I didn't see a school being painted. I didn't see a school with new tables. I didn't see a canteen for pupils. Four schools in the district of Sidi Yaich were closed because the union asked for means of transport but no one answered them. More than 60 pupils stopped studying. This is the reality. He didn't change the educational system, he didn't modify the content of the books and he didn't change the pedagogical approach. What did the minister do? He just fought with teachers. What is going wrong is that officials are not doing their job. *Male, 32, Gafsa, Unemployed.*

Strikes are another huge problem. Maybe we can accept strikes sometimes but not when the teachers go on strike. How can they let the children go to school only to come back home without studying? This is unacceptable especially because we have reached a point where pupils would feel happy when there is a strike because this has come to rhyme in their minds with "a day off" where they can go outside and play. *Male, 68, Kef, Retired.*

# Additional citizen priorities – Unemployment

According to participants, many factors contribute to Tunisia's unemployment, including the substandard education system, which is criticized for failing to match the needs of the labor market. Nepotism and corruption are also cited for allowing undeserving students to pass and for affording jobs to undeserving candidates. respondents also attribute unemployment to Tunisia's overreliance on tourism, excessive bureaucracy which makes launching projects or starting businesses difficult, and the lack of investment and development in other sectors and in all regions.

Our country has interesting agricultural resources. In Kef mainly, if only they would come and start agricultural projects here, the situation could get much better. Unfortunately, agriculture is neglected. Besides, the country's economy is based on tourism; tourism declined. So, what is left for us? We should give more importance to the bases of our economy. *Female, 40, Kef, Employed.*

The unemployment percentage is getting higher day after day...due to the high number of people graduating: both those who deserve [to graduate] and those who don't. [Because of this, those who did well] find themselves jobless. *Male, 29, Kef, Unemployed.*

I think that they should revise the conditions of investment. I wanted to create a project but I discovered that it's impossible for me to meet the conditions. They ask for a personal fund and for someone to be a guarantor, etc. *Female, 30, Gafsa, Employed.*

Let's imagine I'm planning to start a business, the country demands 10% of the capital. How am I supposed to provide a similar amount when my father sold his piece of land to finance my studies, and my husband is financing his sister's studies? There are thousands of similar cases...there are people who couldn't even get to pass their 1st year at college. *Female, 32, Sousse, Student.*

They have to revise the conditions of giving funds to new projects. I have two ideas of new projects and went to present my ideas to two banks in order to have a loan but their conditions were impossible to meet. *Male, 29, Gafsa, Employed*

Competent people are the ones who should get jobs first because nowadays the majority of posts in the state are given, because of nepotism, to people who don't really deserve them. They say they encourage launching projects and private investment; however, when you intend to launch a project, they set many obstacles and bureaucracy stands in your way. *Male, 32, Sousse, Employed.*

# Additional Citizen Priorities – Corruption

respondents blame both authority figures and citizens for taking part in corruption, and believe that a solution to the problem would require all Tunisians to change their mentalities. Tax evasion, nepotism, and monopolies are frequently cited manifestations of corruption in the economic sector.

The country would become stable only when the corruption system disappears from all the institutions. How should the country be stable and secure when the security staff or the army includes members who are corrupt people? In these domains and in the health field also, in hospitals, the situation is the same and it is aggravated by the persistence of favoritism when employing people. In the education sector, for example, there are university graduates who got their degrees some 10 or 15 years ago and are still unemployed. On the other hand, there are others who got their degrees last year and already started working. How should the country improve when the rulers are corrupt people? *Female, 47, Kef, Employed.*

Competence should be the criterion to determine the wage of the worker. Intelligent people who are well educated should get the positions they deserve in proportion to their competence. They should not be replaced with others with lower qualifications and competence just because they were appointed by someone of authority. This is what is happening now. *Male, 52, Kef, Employed.*

It can all be summed up in the state's prestige which resides in implementing the law. Everybody should be equal in front of the law starting from the president of the country and moving downward. Besides, everyone should have a professional consciousness and should do his job properly. There is also the problem of tax evasion. People do not pay their taxes. However, the state is supposed to live on these taxes. *Male, 52, Kef, Employed.*

In all this I would say that justice in relation to taxation should be ensured. Business owners who make a lot of profits should obey their taxation duties. We, officers, have no control on our salaries because the tax amounts are automatically taken by the government. The problem is that the government cannot impose its authority on these business owners. If these people paid their taxes, we would not have been obliged to get loans from any other country. *Female, 60, Gafsa, Employed.*

# Additional Citizen Priorities – Development and Decentralization

**Development projects in all regions are a high priority for respondents. The government is seen as responsible for addressing insecurity and monopolies to facilitate investment throughout the country, and for allowing regions more say in their development. respondents call on the government to ease loan and funding requirements to allow more individuals to start projects.**

*We need to decentralize everything whether concerning the government, or the economy or any other fields. Female, 30, Gafsa, Employed.*

*Social justice [is the priority]; I mean regional development which will improve [the current situation, which is that] 80% of the wealth goes to only 20% of the population and 20% of the wealth is divided by 80% of the population. Male, 32, Gafsa, Unemployed.*

*What does it mean to have a governor, delegate, or a general secretary of the governorate...? Nothing has changed in Tunisia. We haven't made a new structure. The governor represents whom? Does he represent the head of the state or the prime minister or who? The governor is playing a role similar to the one he played during Bourguiba rule so nothing has changed. The same thing is true for the delegates also. We claim that we want to start reform from the foundations/bases but we have kept the same structure. Male, 59, Kef, Employed.*

*[The economic priority is] the method of decentralization, which I strongly believe in. They should make an urgent plan especially for interior regions to create some balance, creating job opportunities, investment, reviving the economy, then after things improve, we can tackle other issues. Male, 56, Sousse, Employed.*

*In order to improve the situation of the youth, it is mandatory to start with regional development respecting the specificities of each region. Government people should pay site visits to the regions and start to implement the projects the studies of which have been designed a long time ago. Female, 44, Tunis, Employed.*

*The municipality is more important than the governorate. It represents the lungs of the city. The municipality has the money for projects. It's not only there to clean the streets and make the city look better. Male, 32, Gafsa, Unemployed.*