



## **FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE**

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### **NDI and IRI Pre-Election Delegation Arrives in Tunisia**

WASHINGTON—The National Democratic Institute (NDI) and the International Republican Institute (IRI) are fielding a joint pre-election assessment mission Sept. 9-12 as part of a broader comprehensive mission to observe Tunisia's fall parliamentary and presidential elections.

The mission is led by Isabelle Durant of Belgium, former vice president of the European Parliament; Robin Carnahan, former secretary of state of the U.S. state of Missouri; and Brad Smith, director of the Annenberg-Dreier Commission and former advisor to several members of the U.S. Congress.

This year's elections represent a milestone in the consolidation of Tunisia's democratic transition. On Oct. 23, 2011, after a citizen-led movement toppled Tunisia's authoritarian regime, citizens freely elected a constituent assembly that, despite several setbacks, successfully negotiated and ratified a new constitution. The upcoming elections will usher in new political leaders to tackle the country's economic and security challenges.

The pre-election delegation will meet with government officials, candidates, political party leaders, election authorities, representatives of civil society and the international community to assess issues that might affect the integrity of the election process. At the conclusion of the mission, NDI and IRI will issue recommendations for improving the process ahead of election day. The findings of the delegation will be incorporated into NDI's overall assessment of the elections, which will include deployment of short-term observers on election day.

The delegation will conduct its activities in a nonpartisan manner in accordance with Tunisian law and international standards for election monitoring set forth in the Declaration of Principles for International Election Observation. Election observation can build public confidence in elected institutions, deter fraud, expose irregularities and help strengthen democratic reform processes.

*The National Democratic Institute is a nonpartisan, nonprofit organization working to support and strengthen democratic institutions worldwide through citizen participation, openness and accountability in government.*

*A nonprofit, nonpartisan organization, the International Republican Institute advances freedom and democracy worldwide by helping political parties to become more issue-based and responsive, assisting citizens to participate in government planning, and working to increase the role of marginalized groups in the political process – including women and youth.*

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