

2019 Lebanese Revolution

February 2020

**MORE ENTRENCHED GAP BETWEEN ROTESTORS
AND AUTHORITIES IN LEBANON**



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Arab NGO Network for Development
شبكة المنظمات العربية غير الحكومية للتنمية

Political Updates:

The newly appointed government in January 2020 is highly criticized by protestors for failing to appoint experts who are independent from the political ruling classes (refer to ANND's News Bulletin IV), and has been thus observed very closely in these critical circumstances the country is enduring. Indeed, the government has failed to share a clear vision of the situation in Lebanon, particularly on the social, economic and financial levels, or show real action within a consolidated plan that can address the multilevel challenges individuals are facing, especially following its embracement and adoption of the 2020 budget law prepared months back by a deposed government and that does no longer reflect real numbers nor situations.

On 6 February 2020, almost two weeks after the formation of the government, the ministerial statement was presented before the public, and similar to the ones adopted by previous governments, the statement lacked essential planning and framed commitments to address the current crises and respond to the revolutions' demands. More precisely, the ministerial statement neglects the political and institutional crisis, which is indeed very tightly linked to the socio-economic and financial crises. Moreover, the statement frames the actions of the government within three years, which contradicts with the fact that this government should act as a government formed to address the crises and

as a transitional one. In this context, the Arab NGO Network for Development (ANND) shared a lengthy critique of the statement, available in Arabic.

Socio-Economic Updates:

For the past few months, Lebanese households have been exposed to increased threats on the social and economic levels, with the increased restrictions banks are enforcing on withdrawals in foreign currency (particularly USD), and with the fluctuating rates of the USD/LBP in the informal markets that are hovering around 2500, far higher than the official rate fixed at 1515. This gap between the official and unofficial rates has contributed to hindering the production or importation of essential commodities and hence the rise in prices at great rates, as well as the rise of inflation rate that is currently hovering around 40% according to analysts and economists.

As a result, the bakeries initiated a strike denouncing the rise of the prices of wheat, which lasted for a few hours as they were reassured and encouraged to suspend it. This is very distressing and has only one conclusion, which is the exacerbation of the vulnerability of Lebanese households amid any prospective similar actions.

As a result of the current socio-economic crisis, the discussions about the Eurobonds payment due by the Government on 9



March 2020 have amplified the tension in the country and calls for defaulting on the Eurobonds in order to secure enough dollar reserves to provide the people with essential goods including wheat, medicine and fuel. Until date, the new government has not made any decision on this matter. In parallel, other calls and protests have continued to criticize the potential (and most likely) intervention from the International Monetary Fund (IMF), especially amidst the visit the IMF technical team has paid to Lebanon at the end of February to answer the call of the government and provide technical assistance on the debt crisis. Although there haven't been any official decisions on an IMF intervention, people fear the austerity measures that could be associated with such an intervention, and the repercussions they will have particularly on the low and middle income households. An overview of IMF programs in the Arab countries is available [here](#).

Besides talks about limited medicine due to obstacles in importing, threats on Lebanese healthcare have also increased with the outbreak of the corona virus, and the identification of a number of cases in Lebanon. This outbreak is a public health issue, and fears are amassed due to the lack of an effective and stringent plan by the government to limit the spread of this virus among citizens.

Human Rights Violations:

Throughout February 2020, protestors continued to demonstrate on a daily and weekly basis to denounce the social and economic repercussions of the crises. They demand to be involved in key decision making, and a strong government capable of genuinely overcome all these obstacles. The highlight was on 11 February, when thousands gathered across Beirut trying to block roads and hinder deputies from attending the parliamentary session dedicated to discussing the ministerial statement and running a vote of confidence to the new cabinet. More than 350 protestors were injured during clashes with security forces around the parliament in Beirut, and more than 10 were arrested (then released) for taking part in the protests.

Moreover, political activists continue to be targeted by the government and according to the Lawyers Committee in Defense of Protestors in Lebanon, more than 10 activists were called for interrogation for their participation in the revolution and some by the military court; and more recently, three key activists and journalists were called for interrogation for tweets and other social media posts they shared in critique of the politicians. As a result, CIVICUS Monitor, which is a global platform that brings research partners across the globe to monitor the civic space conditions recently listed India, Nicaragua, Guinea and Iraq and Lebanon in the watchlist. Being in the watchlist refers to serious and rapid decline in the respect of civic freedoms, especially freedom of speech, assembly and association.

On 17 February, Ahmad Toufic who was shot by a rubber bullet fired by security forces in Tripoli on the tenth day of the protests passed away after almost three months of suffering and fighting illness. Protestors across the country gathered in his memorial, being the third martyr of the revolution.

Among the demonstrations that took place during this period, a women protest took place in front of the Supreme Islamic Shiite Council, on Saturday 27 February 2020, organized by the National Campaign to Raise the Age of Custody within the Shiite Community in Lebanon, in an unprecedented scene compared to previous demonstrations held against the Council. This protest was organized after a video circulated on social media, for a mother crying over the grave of her daughter, from behind a fence. After the mother was deprived by the father of seeing her daughter for two years, and after the mysterious death of her daughter by gunfire, the mother was deprived from saying goodbye to her daughter and from visiting her grave, as she was buried in the property of the father, which the mother cannot enter. This incident has brought back to the minds of women dozens of cases that have emerged in the media for unfair rulings issued by the Ja'fari Court against mothers, preventing them from seeing their children. This issue has once again sparked debates about the religious clerics' power over the state and the law in the context of the absence of a civil law for personal status, the absence of any kind of accountability of religious courts, and the freedom of religious judges to issue unjust and patriarchal rulings.



HIGHLIGHTS FROM ANND'S FORUM ON 18-19 FEBRUARY, "CIVIL SOCIETY AMID TRANSFORMATION IN THE ARAB REGION" – Beirut, Lebanon.

The forum was attended by 70 representatives of civil society organizations (CSOs) from 11 Arab countries, in addition to academics and experts who have closely been following the economic, political and social transformations in the region. The forum discussed the transformations and the general context in the region and the most prominent requirements for change among civil society, while benefiting from the wide experiences of CSOs in the Arab countries and identifying ways for broader involvement in global development agendas and processes.

The forum took place in light of a new wave of protests emerging in the region, which denounce the repression of the political systems and economic and social policies linked to them, and in light of serious political developments at the regional and global levels, the latest of which is the "Deal of the Century". As such, the forum sought to rethink the role of civil society and the possibility to reconsider its goals and objectives to be more aligned with the existing transformations and thus to reinforce its role and influence during the current revolutions and among societies on the routes of change.

Intervention by Ziad Abdel-Samad, executive director, Arab NGO Network for Development

ANND's forum takes place as the regional geopolitical system faces major threats and transformations. International and regional powers are intervening through what seems to be a global war being waged to control the region's natural resources, while its populations lose control of their ability to have an impact on events and the decisions of major players.

I remember being invited to a regional seminar in October 2008, organized by Heinrich Boll Foundation and the Carnegie Foundation on the challenges faced by civil society in light of the emergence of new powers influencing the region such as China, Russia, Turkey, Iran, and India. The proceedings of the seminar were published in 2010. Speaking about obstacles and civil society's role in light of these transformations, I pointed to the following challenges faced by civil society at the time. They revolved around the complex political situation (especially following the occupation of Iraq in 2003 and the start of the war on terror), the multidimensional nature of local and regional conflicts, and loss of security and stability. To these challenges, I added the reality faced by civil society on the national level, due to the hegemony of extremely centralized regimes, restrictive legal measures, regression in development indicators, and the backwardness of traditional cultural relations and linkages.

Nonetheless, the paper prepared in collaboration with my colleague Kinda Mohammadih pointed clearly to several factors that predicted the rise of civil society and social movements to actuate the desired change. Among such

developments was the involvement in international alternative globalization movements, particularly the World Social Forum, and participation in actions around the World Trade Organization (WTO), the G7, the G20 (established following the international financial and climate crisis), and International Financial Institutions (IFIs). UNDP's Arab Human Development Report issued in 2002 and the decisions taken by the League of Arab States in Tunisia in 2004 recognized the importance of strengthening democracy and role of civil society and political movements in developments to catch up to the rapid transformations in economic policies, population growth, and rural migration to the cities. Civil society was thus forced to reflect on the shift from social and political solidarity and service provision to active participation and influence on public policy. The Arab Spring followed suit, after simmering for some time in popular and civil movements in Morocco, Tunisia, Egypt, Sudan, Algeria, Lebanon, Yemen, and so on.

Where are we now?

As of late 2010, the region plunged into a transitional phase that began in Tunisia and spread quickly, succeeding in some places (Tunisia), facing a counter-revolution in others (Egypt), simply failing (Morocco), or turning into a catastrophe (Syria, Yemen, Libya). The second wave of the Arab Spring came at the end of 2018, sparked in Algeria prior to the Presidential elections. It intensified in 2019 that saw the eruption of protest movements regionally and worldwide, from Asia (Hong Kong), Latin America, Africa, to the Arab Region, united on one demand: social justice.



It clearly expressed the failure of brutal neoliberal policies and austerity measures, the hegemony of the global financial regime and the flow of capital, and the emergence of tax havens and spread of tax evasion. Exacerbated by these phenomena, the social and economic crisis expanded, wealth was further concentrated in the hands of the 1%, and more than 60% of the world's population saw a deterioration in their conditions.

The above situation is exacerbated by the spread of systematic violations of human rights and international law and the adoption by major international and regional powers of a policy of brute force in international diplomatic, economic, and social relations to impose their conditions on others. This takes place either through trade wars armed with political or administrative measures or direct military intervention and provoking strife in other countries.

Wide gaps also exist within and between countries of the Arab region, considered one of the most unequal, with 10% of the richest enjoying 62% of the wealth. According to ESCWA, this came a result of lack of equal opportunity among citizens in access to public services, especially decent work opportunities, due to institutional deficit and structural weaknesses.

Thus, it was no surprise that 2019 witnessed the eruption of the Arab Spring's second wave from Algeria, where the people overthrew President Abdelaziz Bouteflika and began on a steady path towards desired democratic transformation, albeit which remains winding, complicated, and ambiguous, due to the continuing primary role of the armed forces

in the process. In Sudan, the peaceful revolution succeeded in toppling President Omar Hassan al-Bashir and establishing a transitional phase led by a joint council between the leadership of the armed forces and representatives of the revolution. Despite these two accomplishments, both countries continue to face challenges on the road to building democracy and a modern state as demanded by the people, brought about in part by the role played by the armed forces, which contrasts - if not contradicts - the aspirations of civil forces in Sudan as well as in Algeria.

Moreover, I would like to highlight the Rif movement in Morocco, a part of wider popular movements for political and social change, which continues until today despite iron-fist suppression. The actions against unfair tax, labor, and social protection laws in Jordan are also of note. And the struggle continues.

Lebanon and Iraq, on the other hand, are in a very similar and closely related situation. The geopolitical crisis and conflicts between the regional axes and their international extensions have had serious repercussions on the political, economic, and social conditions in both countries. The nature of both political systems is one of a clientelist political-sectarian division and where decision-making mechanisms fall outside of constitutional institutions, weakening their immunity and multiplying their fragility and inability to overcome crises. Both systems do not allow citizens' active participation and tend to hinder the mechanisms of disclosure and accountability. In addition to the crisis faced by both economic models, where production in basic sectors decreased as a result of conflicts, tension, and external interference in Iraq, the economic choices and financial and monetary

policies of Lebanon, and the spread of structural corruption, clientelism, patronage in employment and supplies, and monopolizing commodity markets in both countries.

The situation is compounded by weak redistribution tools, such as fair tax policies, comprehensive social protection systems, and fair wage policies. All of these factors have led to increased social inequality at various levels and to a periodic eruption of severe political and institutional crises. Furthermore, the Syrian crisis brought serious repercussions inside Iraq and Lebanon, threatening stability and civil peace due to the fragile nature of both regimes and political divisions. In Lebanon, the Syrian crisis closed land borders leading to Jordan, the mandatory passage for Lebanese goods towards Gulf markets, in addition to increasing smuggling operations to and from Syria, not to mention the influx of refugees, whose numbers exceed one fifth of the Lebanese population. Furthermore, political factors related to the Syrian situation led to worsening relations between Lebanon and GCC countries, who had been the biggest contributors to supporting the economy through direct investments, bank deposits, real estate investments, aid, and tourism in addition to remittances by Lebanese expats in those countries.

Earlier this year, the "US peace sponsor in the Middle East" and its partner, the Prime Minister of the "enemy" announced the unilateral Deal of the Century, calling for Palestinians and neighboring countries to join the deal in return for a sum of money



totaling US\$50 billion. Regardless of the form, the Deal, which we believe was stillborn as it carried the reasons for its failure, will have serious repercussions on the region's security and stability. It will inevitably increase tensions in the occupied territories and lead to political and economic pressures on countries that refuse to engage in it. The Deal cannot be accepted, as it deprives the Palestinian people of their most basic human rights, foremost of which is the right to self-determination, the establishment of an independent state, and the right to development and to live in peace, security, and prosperity. It also deprives the Palestinians of the diaspora of the right of return, although stipulated by all international charters and laws and repeated by UN resolutions, the world's only legitimate international institution.

In short, the region is undergoing one of its direst moments, with occupations, armed conflicts, economic, financial and political crises, external interventions, and, above all, its exposure to pressure from IFIs and their non-stop interference under the pretext of getting out of the financial and monetary crisis or providing social safety nets to vulnerable groups, demanding structural reforms in public policies and ignoring human rights. There is ample evidence in the reports of many international, regional, and national human rights organizations of flagrant human rights violations caused by the application of IFI policies, including reports by the special rapporteurs for human rights (especially in Egypt and Tunisia).

Regimes and governments, on the other hand, continue to treat these existential crises with some indifference and show no sign of willingness to reform for the sake of

their peoples and improving livelihoods. However, their reports to international organizations, the Universal Periodic Review (UPR) at the Human Rights Council in Geneva, and Voluntary National Reports (VNR) on sustainable development policies at the High Level Political Forum (HLPF) in New York continue to attest to the contrary. Moreover, these governments continue to bow to IFI conditions, which place no value on human rights, especially the right to decent work, social protection, fair wages, or fair tax systems and call for the privatization of public sector institutions without any feasibility studies or the ability to monitor the private sector's performance, especially if it is affiliated to partners in power.

To conclude, in the past several years, the region became stuck between suffocating crises, on one hand, and authoritarian governments, on the other, in a situation of a global reversal in human rights standards and the respect of international law, added to the militarization of globalization and the dominance of the security approach at the expense of all rights, including the right to development.

Perhaps the biggest danger facing people and civil society in Arab countries is the almost complete departure from the principle of the supremacy of law and respect for the constitution in most countries, making them failed or rogue from the perspective of international balances.

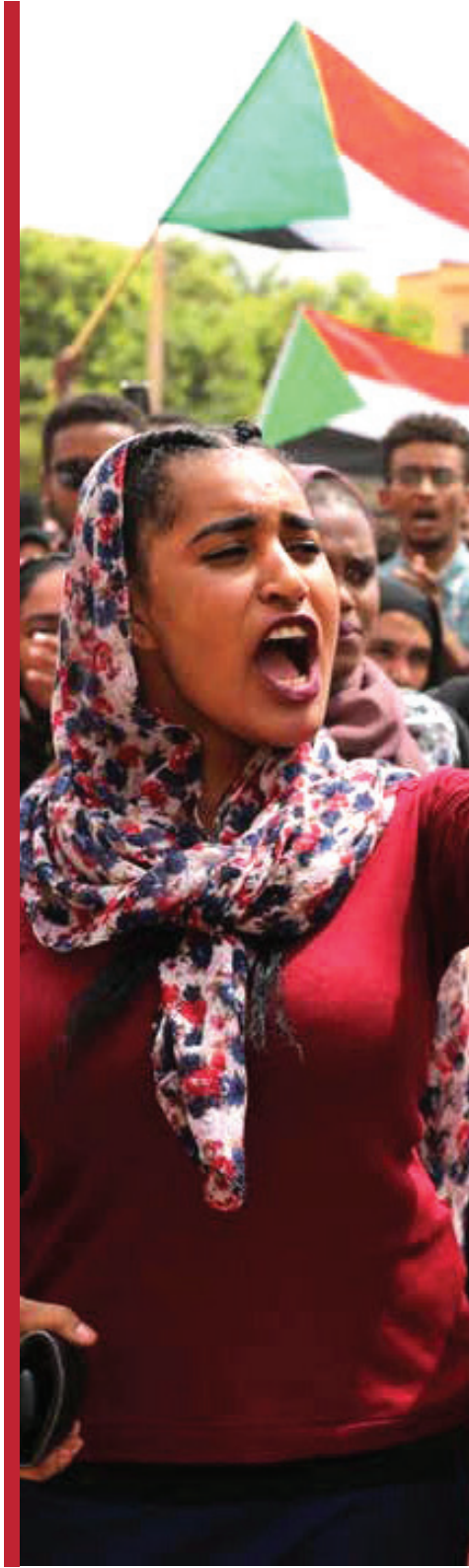
Nonetheless, the eruption of popular anger is full of promise that in the next few years, people will gradually find their voice and achieve their will towards building modern, democratic, constitutional states offering

social justice, human rights, and citizenship for all, as well as respecting international law, maintaining global peace, and seeing an end to imperial policies of intervention that harks back to a long gone age.

Intervention by Dr. Tarek Mitri, Lebanese academic and former minister

Early last century, a cultural renaissance project was launched, occupied with reviving the language and linking the question of identity to progress and universal values, using blueprints that find harmony between Western modernity and Arab tradition. It was also involved in the questions of participation, citizenry, and equality. Soon, modern ideas were imprinted in the national and patriotic self-rising above ethnic, sectarian, and regional prejudice. This awareness began introspective but materialized in the Great Arab Revolt and the ensuing independence movement.

As the national liberation movements emerged, the cultural renaissance project became the platform for novel political experiments. However, beyond its utility in reaching power, democracy was never a priority in said movements or resulting regimes. For political movements and people in general, calls for democracy were secondary. The establishment of democratic institutions fell to the bottom of nation-state priorities, regardless of whether it aimed at [pan-Arab] unity or some type of national harmony in emerging entities.



As military regimes rose, supported by social segments calling for liberation from fragmentation, backwardness, and social disparity, political life almost disappeared at the ruins of short-lived political experiments. One-party systems made popular participation subject to some sort of tribal allegiance. The regimes branded their opponents as traitors on the pretext of deviating from their larger goals of unity, freedom, and socialism.

Arab nationalist projects neglected the issue of political participation, completely overcome by the obsession of unity and confronting the enemy. Defending the regime and its big slogans became more important than their achievement. Individual rights were obscured in the name of national interest that rejected differences and looked down at diversity. For many, democracy seemed to be a delayed luxury or desire.

The erosion of the authoritarian regimes' legitimacy in the past three decades, as a result of failure to fulfill their promises, led to a rise in voices calling for political participation. Nevertheless, with the wave of democracy spreading in Latin America, Africa, and Eastern Europe, the Arab world seemed unique in its reluctance to embrace the prevailing political model in the world after the fall of the Soviet Union. There was talk in the West and among the Arabs themselves of an Arab or Islamic exception.

The eruption of Arab revolutions put an end to this exception, at least on the surface, but the many failures in the transition to democracy brought it back to the minds of some. They saw that what we had reached in this short period as the end of the road, while, in fact, we are still in its beginning.

Many who used the phrase "Arab Spring" were quick to express their fears of the following seasons, pointing to its Fall and Winter. In this manner, they asserted, consciously or semi-consciously, that in their borrowing an explanation or an assumption, and at the first stumbling block, they question the viability of the democratic idea in our Arab societies.

Everyone agrees on the strong setbacks and harsh disappointments we faced. However, it does not mean that failure is inevitable or its causes fundamental, stemming from an alleged essence of Arab society. But we need to deal with historical, not essentialist problems, including fragile social cohesion and national unity, in addition to the legacy of authoritarian regimes and the weak management of the transitional period.

Various reasons lie behind the hardship of democratic transition, some of which reveal the difficulty of abandoning practices inherited from authoritarianism. Others point to the weak political experiences of new political players, on the one hand, and the declining influence and power of the middle class, on the other. As the state institutions dedicated by rulers to perpetuate their tyranny begin to crumble, our present, diverse conditions become imprinted with a turbulent transitional character.

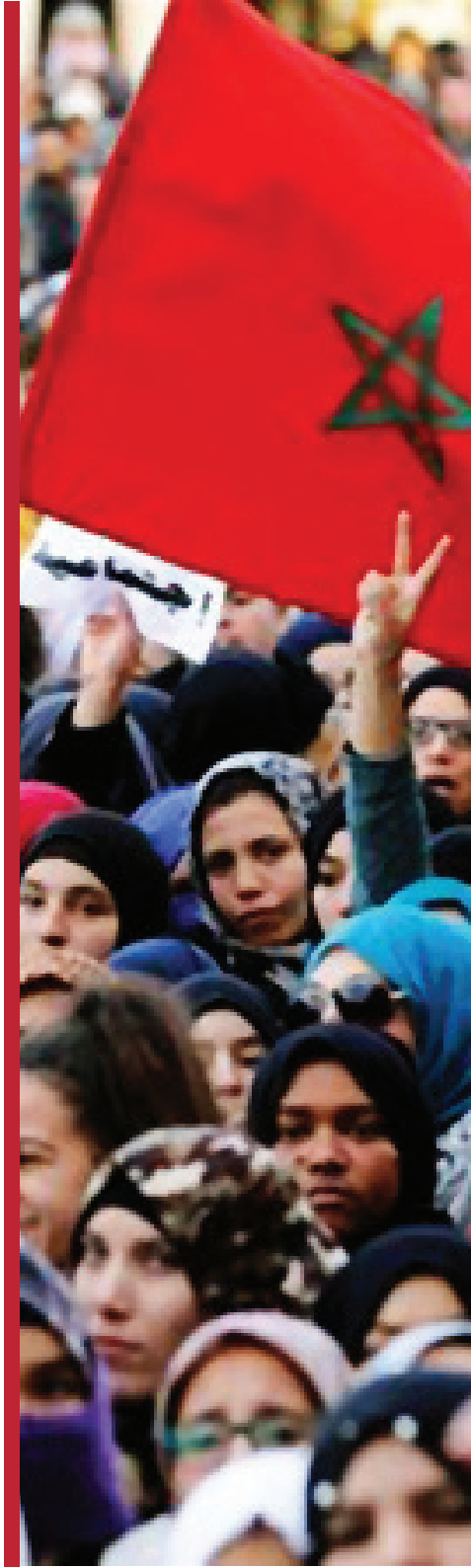
But the transition is temporary and the temporary often drowns in the present, governed by haste, division, and unwillingness to risk linking the direct to the longer-term. The horizon becomes narrowed by the force of subnational allegiances, which some consider the bane of modern Arab societies, as they pull individuals into closed social units against those of different tribal, sectarian,

familial, linguistic, or ethnic affiliation. Ibn Khaldun calls them the characteristics of strife, discontent, and zeal, with its high degree of individual mobilization and the supremacy of communal interests over public good and the direct needs over future aspirations.

These affiliations, however, are neither constant nor fatefully inevitable, despite responding to individual need for actual and moral protection by their primary communities, always strengthened and reinvented through political investment. The fall of some regimes allowed some political parties fighting over power and its later spoils to reawaken these affiliations and employ them against their foes.

The power struggle became dominant. Politics, in its narrow sense, overcame the priority of building the nation and its state. Human development issues in all their aspects were absent from public life. Social divisions were deepened by the hasty practice of winner-takes-all electoral democracy, which excluded electoral losers at a stage that requires the collaboration of all soldiers in establishing the national edifice.

It goes without saying that democracy is not limited to holding free and fair elections. Rather, it means the reform of state institutions, or rather rebuilding them. This is all in addition to emphasizing the definite distinction between the state and the authority. Reaching the second, even through elections, does not lead to the first being appropriated by the winners or taken over as the spoils of the victors.



On the contrary, institutional building cannot happen without emphasizing the purpose for which they are built, not merely to run government facilities but to lift the role of the state in providing services for its citizens and taking the path of sustainable development. Without a doubt, a stubborn obstacle lies in the absence of institutions worthy of their name, that is, institutions that are not governed by the interests of the people in power but rather that are concerned with preserving the interests of citizens. The situation cannot be overcome through the power of strong authority, what some people tend to in the event of confusion and chaos. Rather, it requires the emergence of new political elites with civil authorities free of tribalism and with a vision for their homelands, whose members do not view themselves as victors but rather as workers restoring in order to restore social unity and dismantled institutions. In other words, the role of leaders and civil organizations, given the weakness of institutions, becomes more important.

In light of these needs and responsibilities of active civil powers and the new political elites, it is difficult to ascertain the matter of democratic transition and determine its time period. The concept of democracy is itself blurred. There are those who reduce it to the ballot box and do not give enough weight to institutions, the independence of the judiciary, or public freedoms, and do not care about the issue of social values and those implicit in political culture that refuse to dominate and accept equality before the law and accept diversity and respect for opinions, whether they express the interests of the majority or the aspirations of the minority.

With a few exceptions, our peoples are still at the very beginning of the right path to democracy. Just as walking it requires awareness of progression and not being satisfied with elections, it will not lead the way unless we avoid falling into the trap of victors. The widespread adoption of elections, in light of the general confusion between authority and the state, makes democracy a means of consolidating the control of one group, large or small, over another. With the sectarian, confessional, and cultural vertical divisions, elections become akin to sorting groups based on subnational allegiances.

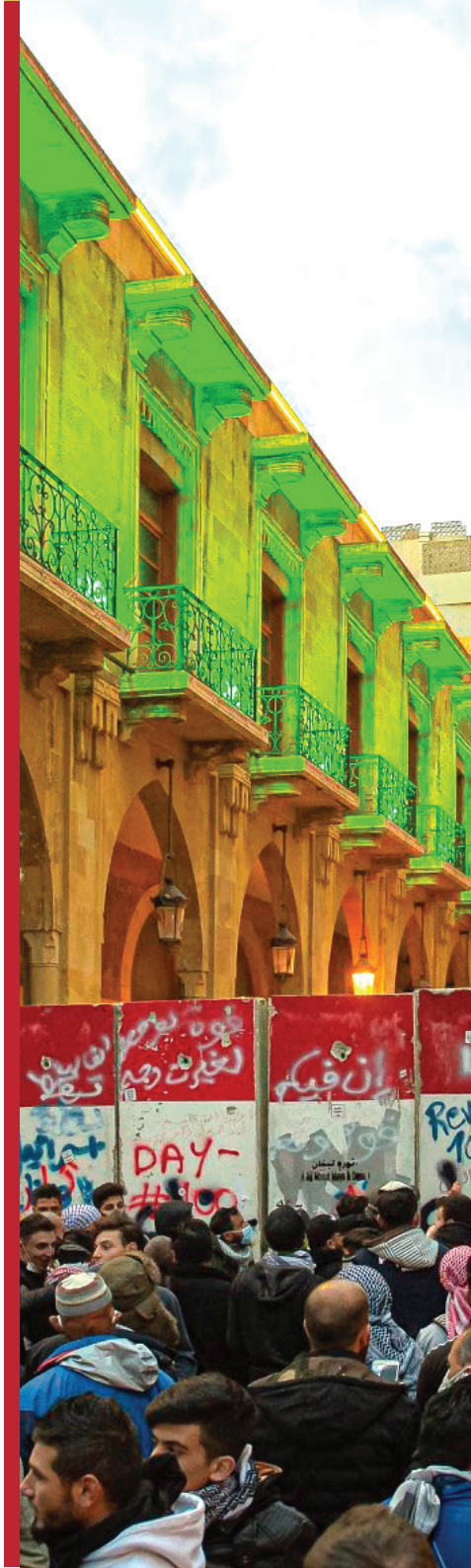
The bitter and less bitter Arab experiences of the past years have taught us that containment is better than exclusion, that inclusion is better than isolation, and that accepting diversity is necessary to avoid the transformation of subsequent competition, which is natural in democracy, strife or even bloody conflict. We also learned the necessity of dealing with the issue of the state in a way that confirms, in thought and practice, the rejection of the authoritarian security state, which deals with public good as the private property of rulers, which restricts diversity and is based on forcing a total sublimation of the ruler and the ruled, and the state which claims its preoccupation with defending national dignity uplifts its citizens, while actually reducing the value of personal dignity.

The first rejection does not only emphasize the monopoly of legitimate violence by the state, but also the prohibition of revenge and communal violence in all its forms and preventing the use of violence, initiated by the few, when confronting the remnants of deposed regimes. Differentiating between the

state and authority and between electoral democracy and the separation and balance of powers was lost to the mainstream political culture. This means the need to give precedence to building the state and its institutions over the control of all authority by popular mandate. The state is a neutral structure, not an addition to society or merely a tool for its control. Political power, on the contrary, is a space for competition and is negotiable, compared to the state's eternity.

The alternative to a state subjugated to the interests of an individual, a relatively small group, a clan, or a sect is the state that protects the public good and unites private interests, so as to avoid conflict. This is the true state of law or, more precisely, the state of rights. It goes without saying that the principles of the state and citizenship are inseparable and mutual. There is no doubt that civil organizations are based on considering citizens as individuals who establish voluntary ties between them and are not merely members of groups or parts of a homogeneous community due to a particular cultural, social, and political order. Civil organizations lead us to breaking free from policies of dictation and derogation or that of the masses and into practicing a healthy life-style.

Of course, we need to wait as the process of change takes various courses with many outcomes. But no matter how long the wait, there is no security except in the project of state and citizenry.



Intervention by Dr. Bouchra Belhadj Hamida, former Tunisian MP and civil and feminist activist

The Tunisian revolution and the achievements it made on the levels of freedoms, democracy and gender equality makes it a reference for the rest of the Arab countries, especially those who witnessed or are witnessing revolutions or uprisings, some of which have turned into civil wars or into more authoritarian and oppressive regimes than previously overthrown.

However, the revolution has had major difficulties that can constitute lessons learned for the uprisings in the region.

There is no doubt that Tunisian women and men have lived and enjoyed since 2011 the first democratic experience with a democratic constitution that was drafted in partnership with a strong civil society that has fought to guarantee rights, freedoms and a civil state. The feminist movement and tens of thousands of male and female citizens who were eager to preserve the gains of the first republic in the area of women's rights particularly to support and strengthen them played a fundamental role in transforming the fear of losing the gains into an opportunity to achieve more rights that reduced legal discrimination against women and that would hence reduce gender-based violence. Since the revolution, Tunisia has also known free and democratic elections that are periodic and transparent, and ensure the peaceful transfer of power. All these gains would not have been achieved without the role of civil society and its strong

energy. In addition to the classic civil society organizations (CSOs), new ones led by young men and women have emerged and were eager to work and live in a free and democratic society.

However, on the economic and development levels, the Tunisian failed to achieve its goals and people's aspirations for a decent life as the Tunisians are currently suffering from the high cost of living, the deterioration of purchasing power and the spread of corruption, and are therefore feeling nostalgic about their past for two reasons they believe, one the social situation was better under the previous regime, and two, better security and safety compared to the current growing phenomenon of terrorism and crime. And therefore, Tunisians believe that the gained freedoms are secondary, and rather the cause of the deteriorating safety and security.

The failure of the authority to face and respond to the economic, social and financial challenges has become a threat to the democratic path and strengthened the nostalgia to the past, which is sought by some Tunisian parties and neighboring countries that are threatened by the Tunisian experience and believe it jeopardizes their power and preservation of their privileges.

What contributed to the country's failure in this regards is the absence or weakness of strong progressive mass parties that carry the concerns of the people and capable of fighting corruption and restoring reassurance to the public that lives in a state of multifaceted fear such as fear from major transformations, fear for security, fear of the future and fear of the other. And consequently, this fear exposed the

weakness of the culture of human rights and the public opinion that believes the solution to ensuring security lies in deterrence and deterrence only without looking for causes and without the slightest consideration of human rights and fundamental rights.

Rather, it appears that the link between the feeling of fear and all kind of violence nurtures each other and strengthens the rejection of pluralism and peaceful coexistence and contributes to the emergence and growth of populist discourse that are based on emotions at the expense of reason and rationality. This makes some of us fear for the Tunisian experience that would have almost become lonely without now Sudan, Iraq and Algeria that provide us with hope and assurance that democracy is inevitable for all people.





The Arab NGO Network for Development works in 12 Arab countries, with 9 national networks (with an extended membership of 250 CSOs from different backgrounds) and 23 NGO members.

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