

How Autocracy Prevailed in Tunisia

by [Sarah Yerkes \(/experts/sarah-yerkes\)](/experts/sarah-yerkes), [Sabina Henneberg \(/experts/sabina-henneberg\)](/experts/sabina-henneberg)

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ABOUT THE AUTHORS

[Sarah Yerkes \(/experts/sarah-yerkes\)](/experts/sarah-yerkes)

Sarah Yerkes is a senior fellow in the Middle East Program at the Carnegie Endowment for International Peace.



[Sabina Henneberg \(/experts/sabina-henneberg\)](/experts/sabina-henneberg)

Sabina Henneberg is a 2023-24 Soref Fellow at The Washington Institute and director of the Junior Research Program.



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Any future democratic renewal will require an entirely new movement that goes much further toward addressing the country's deepest economic and social injustices.

Not long ago, Tunisia was considered one of the biggest success stories in the Middle East and North Africa. Unlike neighboring Arab countries that experienced massive popular uprisings in 2011, Tunisia did not immediately revert to authoritarianism or descend into civil war. Instead, after its longtime dictator fled, an interim government held free and fair elections. The new, democratically elected regime adopted a liberal constitution and allowed civil society and independent media to flourish. By now, however, that success has decisively unraveled. Last month, for the first time in 14 years, Tunisia held a sham presidential election, marked by extensive manipulation and repression...

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