Tunisia: Organizing the Post-Arab Spring Elections of 2011

Tunisia continues to stand out as an Arab Spring success as it consolidates its democracy. The country held its first post-constitution parliamentary election on October 26 and the presidential election is scheduled for November. These elections mark the end of the country's three-year political transition that began with the 2011 ouster of then-President Zine El Abidine Ben Ali. A new ISS case study describes the 2011 general elections for the National Constituent Assembly, the government body that re-wrote the country's constitution and paved the way for this fall's parliamentary and presidential elections.

In May 2011, Tunisia's newly-formed Independent High Authority for Elections was given just five months to organize and implement elections for the Assembly. The commission navigated the pressures of a compressed electoral calendar, an agitated electorate, and public skepticism of the transitional government. The Authority’s efforts offer insight into how an electoral commission can leverage relationships with political parties, the government, and the public to succeed in volatile circumstances.

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