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Date of Elections: 1 November 1981

Purpose of Elections

Elections were held for all the seats in Parliament following its premature dissolution in accordance with constitutional law No. 81-78 of 9 September 1981. General elections had previously been held on 4 November 1979.

Characteristics of Parliament

The unicameral Parliament of Tunisia, the Chamber of Deputies*, is composed of 136 members** elected for 5 years.

Electoral System

All citizens aged 20 years or more who have held Tunisian nationality for at least five years and who are in full possession of their civil and political rights are entitled to vote. Disqualified are persons convicted of crime; those convicted of offences which entail either an unsuspended sentence of imprisonment in excess of three months or a suspended sentence in excess of six months; those under guardianship; undischarged bankrupts; the insane; and members of the armed forces and the National Guard.

The electoral registers are permanent. They are revised at the commune or sector level on 1 January. Citizens living abroad may also be registered. All disputes concerning the lists are resolved by a revision committee. Voting is not compulsory.

Candidates to Parliament must be qualified electors who are at least 28 years of age and born of a Tunisian father. Governors, magistrates and members of the police force cannot be elected. The exercise of public functions which are non-elective and remunerated out of funds from the State, public establishments or public collectivities are generally incompatible with the office of Deputy; this is also true for the office of president or director of a national enterprise and public establishment, as well as director of administrator of certain public enterprises. Also incompatible are the offices of ambassador and those which involve working for a foreign State or an international organization when remuneration is provided by these employers.

Candidatures must be submitted during the third or fourth week preceding the elections. Candidates must belong to a party list which is made up of candidates who have agreed to appear on the same list; within the same constituency, several lists may not bear the same title or belong to the same party or organization. Each list enumerates twice as many candidates as there are seats to be filled in the constituency. Candidates need make no monetary deposit.

*See *Chronicle of Parliamentary Elections and Developments XV* (1980-1981), p. 26.

**See section *Parliamentary Developments*, p. 23.

Tunisia is divided into 21 electoral constituencies. In each, four to seven candidates, who appear on the party lists, are elected by simple majority. The elector casts as many votes as there are seats to be filled and, in so doing, may split his vote among candidates of different lists. Should only one list be presented, the candidates on it who have obtained the greatest number of votes are declared elected. In the case of vote splitting, the seats to be filled are allotted to the candidates of the different lists in the order of votes obtained.

An Assembly seat which falls vacant between general elections is filled through a by-election held within three months of the expiry of the legislature's term. No by-elections are however held within the last 12 months of the expiry of the legislature's term.

General Considerations and Conduct of the Elections

The renewal of the Chamber of Deputies took place on the basis of constitutional law No. 81-78 providing for premature elections and within the framework of a wider participation in fielding candidates by political organizations and parties. In accordance with President of the Republic Habib Bourguiba's endorsement in April 1981, the poll was the first multiparty one since Tunisia had become independent.

Leading contenders for the 136 Chamber of Deputies seats were the National Front (composed of the ruling Destourian (Constitutional) Socialist Party (PSD) and the General Union of Tunisian Workers (UGTT)), and three opposition movements -the Movement of Social Democrats, the Popular Unity Movement and the Tunisian Communist Party. During the 15-day campaign, the PSD appealed to voters on its record; Prime Minister Muhammad Mzali particularly emphasized the Government's economic achievements. The Social Democrats, who fielded the most candidates among the opposition, urged that they be backed in order to ensure that pluralism become a reality. A total of 366 candidates were in the running.

On polling day, the National Front captured all 136 seats. Mr. Mazli remained Prime Minister and his Cabinet underwent no change.

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Statistics

1. *Results of the Elections and Distribution of Seats
in the Chamber of Deputies*

Number of registered electors.	2,321,031			
Voters.	1,962,127	(84.5%)		
Void or blank ballot papers.	20,269			
Valid votes.	1,941,858			
Political Group	Number of Candidates	Votes obtained		Number of Seats
National Front	136(21 lists)	1,859,000	94.78	136
Movement of Social Democrats	116(19 lists)	65,500	3.28	—
Popular Unity Movement	54 (8 lists)	16,000	0.81	—
Tunisian Communist Party	42 (6 lists)	15,000	0.78	—
Independents.	18 (3 lists)	6,627	0.35	—
				136*

¹15 seats added since last elections.

2. *Distribution of Deputies according to
Professional Category*

Civil servants.	41
Teachers	34
Businessmen	17
Lawyers	14
Farmers	9
Engineers	7
Doctors	7
Pharmacists	3
Journalists	2
	136

3. *Distribution of Deputies according to Sex*

Men.	12 ^a
Women	7
	136

4. Distribution of Deputies according to Age Group

28-40 years .	35
41-60	96
61 and over	5

Average Age: 46.6 years