

## TUNISIA: TRANSITION ENTERS A NEW PHASE LEADING TO THE ELECTION OF A CONSTITUENT ASSEMBLY

### SUMMARY

The deterioration of the political climate in Tunisia all the way through the resignation of the second interim government has raised questions regarding the political transition. The suspension of the constitution, together with the nomination of a new government and the announcement of a series of measures, such as the official establishment of a higher body responsible for realising the objectives of the revolution, of the political reform and of the democratic transition removed some of the obstacles which appeared in the transitional process. These measures met to a large extent the demands made by the National Council for the Protection of the Revolution (CNPR). Afterwards Tunisia entered into a new phase with new challenges.

The higher body that was recently established has a broad mandate. However, as a first priority it needs to set-up the framework for the election of a constituent assembly, which was announced for July 24<sup>th</sup>. Even if the future functioning of this court may be questionable, its establishment is a necessary step in the transitional process. The body, which held its opening session on March 17<sup>th</sup>, consists of 71 members: representatives of political parties and civil society organisations as well as individuals. It will play an important part in preparation of the next steps leading to the election of the constituent assembly.

The time allowed for the election of the constituent assembly is limited. Within a short time it will be necessary to define and decide among political, technical and operational aspects, and to decide upon relevant issues such as elaboration of an electoral list, election administration, complaints and appeals and the electoral system that will be used for electing the constituent assembly. Taking into consideration the experience of the past weeks, where lack of

clarity led to tensions and misunderstandings, it would be advisable that the higher body provides sufficient and clear information in order to ensure acceptance of the election results.