

For corruption to feed itself, it needs to be embodied by people and their historically acknowledged ability to epitomize the dichotomy of good and evil. In Tunisia, corruption is indeed very-well fed as it feasts on collective and individual human rights in a grandiose ceremony of violence and egotism. The Tunisian people underwent dictatorships, injustice and political dysfunctions that normalized corruption. We have been long absorbed in a suffocating system, where one adapts to violating the rights of others as a coping mechanism after having their own rights violated.

Twenty three is the infamous number often heard on Tunisian streets. It quantifies the years during which, corruption infiltrated within the cracks of our deteriorating society. Ben Ali ran a power-abusing oligarchy for a little over two decades, which thrived on tax fraud, property theft and the falsification of information. In 2011, we aspired for a revolution that would break the infernal cycle of corruption. Unfortunately, it disguised in a new suit, carried the reminiscence of its old self in a briefcase and entered the parliament and the presidential palace.

In post-revolution Tunisia, corruption is being empowered by institutions. On “September 13, 2017” (World Report 2018), the Tunisian parliament passed the Administrative Reconciliation Law, which grants amnesty to the most corrupt figures of the fallen regime. The law dismissed any legal grounds to prosecute those who have been suspected of corruption or its facilitation. The bill since its introduction by the president in 2015, triggered protests across the country, as young activists started *-Menich Msemeh-* I shall not forgive, a nation-wide movement condemning the law that jeopardizes the democratic transition of the country. This very act of normalizing corruption speaks to the core of the violation of human rights. Forgiving people who accepted bribery to proceed with bureaucratic procedures is stomping on the rights of those who were incarcerated for years without a proper court hearing. And applauding those who embezzled public funds, is a sickening oversight of the rights of Tunisians to equitable public health care and education.

Sometimes, corruption can be observed, but not fully traceable. I Watch, an anti-corruption Tunisian NGO, found out that the Tunisian government has accumulated 50.5 billion dinars in grants between January 2011 and July 2017, which is equivalent to 15% of the budget of Tunisia for 2017. Yet, Tunisian ministries receiving these grants did not complete 86.7% of projects agreed upon with donors (Governance of foreign donations). This flagrant misconduct points directly at the violation of the constitutional rights of all Tunisians to the development and especially of those who live in the interior and southern areas, that have been systematically impoverished by the systems of colonialism and postcolonial dictatorships.

The Tunisian revolution was triggered by an act of corruption and power abuse. An official used her institutional influence to slap Bouazizi; a street vendor from the poorly developed Sidi Bouzid who immolated himself to protest against the institutionalized humiliation he went through. Ironically, Tunisia is struggling to maintain herself in the post-revolution fragmented legislative system that contradicts itself at every possible occasion. The Article 230 of the Penal Code criminalizes homosexuality, while the constitution in its 21st Article assures that “The state guarantees freedoms and individual and collective rights to all citizens, and provides all citizens the conditions for a dignified life” (Tunisia’s Const. title. 2. Article 21). A lucidly clear legislative paradox that alludes to Bouazizi’s self-immolation and that empower the Law Enforcement on its quest to commit severe violations of the rights of the LGBTQI+ community. Today, police forces are arbitrarily arresting people who are suspected of homosexuality and are forcing men to take anal tests to point in the direction of their illicit sexual orientation. An unsupervised medical procedure that sentences them to torture and practices of psychological, physical and sexual violence in prisons and police stations.

Posterior to 2011, Tunisians crafted an illusion of liberty. Arguably, achieving international freedom standards is an advancement that we can celebrate. However, Transparency International deems Tunisia of becoming more corrupt after the revolution (Tunisia's Corruption Contagion: A Transition at risk), which projects the depth of the crisis and which raises questions about the effectiveness of the local systems that are trying to combat corruption. Today, corruption has grown to manifest itself as a universal culture; an endemic one that affects internally and externally, which also has been raising questions regarding the establishment of a Pan-African anti-corruption court. This futuristic way to look at the war against corruption might actually be an effective solution when carried out carefully by the technocracy rather than by the nepotistic approach of appointing worn-out politicians

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