

FROM REVOLUTION TO UNREST; THE CONUNDRUM OF THE ARAB SPRING

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ABSTRACT

This research paper delves into the intricate dynamics of the Arab Spring movement in Tunisia and Yemen, providing a comprehensive analysis that combines primary data from interviews with secondary information and case study examples along with insightful, personalised solutions for both countries. By exploring the factors that kindled these uprisings, the different routes they travelled, and the continuing challenges the stakeholders had to face, this research paper aims to provide a rounded knowledge of the Arab Spring's impact on political, social, and economic aspects in Tunisia and Yemen, while suggesting country-specific solutions to mitigate the aftermath.

Introduction

The Arab Spring Movement was a social movement which brought along with it a wave of destruction and change. It was a surge of pro-democratic protests which focused on toppling the totalitarian regimes in many countries in the Middle East North Africa (MENA) region. It began in 2010 and challenged some of the region's most ingrained and corrupt authoritarian regimes.

This whole revolutionary yet destructive movement began when Tunisia successfully toppled its regime. Tunisia was soon followed by Egypt, Syria, Yemen, Libya, Bahrain, Algeria, Jordan, Morocco, and Oman who decided to free themselves from the shackles of their totalitarian regimes. Unfortunately, not all countries were successful in doing so and many protestors were met with violence from their country's security forces. In fact, for many countries, the Arab Spring has not only brought them to square one but has in fact increased oppression and instability.

However, in this interview paper, I will be focusing on primarily Tunisia and Yemen. But before we begin with the interviews, let me introduce the situation of Arab Spring Movement in both these countries briefly.

First, Tunisia. The Arab Spring Movement in Tunisia is more specifically referred to as the Tunisian Jasmine Revolution, referring to Tunisia's national flower – Jasmine and the geopolitical naming style of “colour revolution” (a term used to recognize a series of anti-regime protest movements and the changes of government that happened in post – Soviet Eurasia during early 21st century). This revolution resulted in the corrupt president Zine al-Abidine Ben Ali stepping down from his rule and fleeing the country, bringing upon a wave democracy in Tunisia. In fact, this whole revolution began when in 2010, on a small street of Tunisia, a Tunisian vendor Mohamed Bouazizi burnt himself in front a government office. In a matter of few days, his one act of defiance led to the Arab spring movement. On December 17, 2010, Tunisian came up to a vendor of a lower class called Mohamed Bouazizi regarding Mohamed's unlicensed cart. Mohamed has offered to pay a fine but instead the police took away his vegetables and publicly harassed him. To make matter worse, official declined his complaints of police harassments. So, to rebel, Mohamed decided to set himself on fire in front of a government office and he died due to his injuries on January 4. Since then, Mohamed Bouazizi became the face of the Arab Spring and a hero to so many people. He had become a martyr.

On the other hand, we have Yemen where the Arab Spring Movement was known as the Yemen Revolution of Dignity. After looking at the success of Tunisia and Egypt in ousting their dictators, Yemeni citizens took to the streets of Sanaa along with other Yemen cities to perform Arab spring demonstrations in hopes of ousting President Ali Abdullah Saleh. Yemen was one of the first countries to start protesting in the Arab Spring Movement and was also one of the most consequential case. The Yemen Revolution of Dignity was worsened by an existing humanitarian crisis and it lead to a civil war which turned into a proxy war due to foreign intervention. Yemen was even successful in ousting President Saleh with his Vice President Haldi taking over. However, Houthi rebels (a minority group suppressed by the regime) had other plans in mind as they raged a war of destruction on Yemen, harming people, forcing interim President Haldi to flee to Saudi Arabia and killing the previous president, Ali Saleh. As a result, the Houthis took over taking Yemen further away from their goal of democracy by worsening corruption, economic instability, failing healthcare and a collapsing economy. The UN Secretary General himself said “A child under the age of 5 dies of preventable causes in Yemen every 10 minutes”. This means that Yemen loses more than 52560 children every year due to reasons which can easily be prevented, and this is resulting in the “starving and crippling of an entire generation” (as said by the UN Secretary General).

Yemen and Tunisia each face their own obstacles, some more deadly than others, but what concerns me most is the lack of awareness about the struggles these citizens go through daily whether it is airstrikes and gun shots in Yemen or unemployment and poverty in Tunisia. This is why I am conducting an inquiry into these countries and presenting it in the form of this interview paper. So let us begin.

For this interview paper, I will be interviewing the following people –

1. **Ms. Jyotika** who is the CEO and co – founder of women’s NGO in India called Srujna which helps women affected by poverty, abuse and human trafficking for 20 years now. Srujna provides women with livelihood opportunities guiding them through the whole process of earning money and being independent. As a part of her passion for women rights, she has done a lot of research and investigation into the lives of women in Yemen. In fact she believes that the topic of women rights in Yemen is “very sensitive” because there are less people “who have researching in the life of women in Yemen”. “There is poverty. There is violence. There is structural inequality that we see in that country”, she mentioned while giving the statistics that atleast “one in four women is the head of a displaced family because most of the time the male members are killed in attacks and terrorism, or they just flee because they don't know what to do”.
2. **Ms. Amira** who has been living in Tunisia her entire life. She has just recently graduated as a software engineer. As a software engineer, her profession involves designing, developing, and maintaining software applications and systems. It's a field that allows her to work on various technology-related projects, solving problems and creating innovative solutions using computer programming and software development skills.

Yemen -

1. What issues do women face in Yemen due to this revolution which turned into a civil war?

According to Ms. Jyotika, the main issue faced by women is the fact that they are left to lead families without having any financial or social help, after the male members of the family die or flee due to the war. In fact, Ms. Jyotika had shared, “one in four women is the head of a displaced family because most of the time the male members are killed in attacks and terrorism, or they just flee because they don't know what to do”. And if you think about it, it completely makes sense.

Due to the prevalent “structural inequality” (mentioned by Ms. Jyotika) along with the lack of access of “to formal education system, formal work systems and formal banking system”, women are left behind to run a whole family without the support, skill and guidance of getting a

job, earning money and becoming independent. Hence, they were incredibly dependent on the male members of the family to run the household financially and lead the household. However, once these male members got displaced by the war or were killed, women were left behind to lead the family, feed their family and ensure their family's survival without the skill, knowledge, or experience of doing so, that too in those troubled war times.

Ms Jyotika's opinions on this were quite similar as she mentioned "women are left behind with high number of children because the population is high. And then they have to "go through the whole cycle of saving themselves and their children from violence and falling prey to malnutrition in general" all without any support from the government, authorities and financial systems due to the structural inequalities mentioned by Ms. Jyotika.

However, in many cases, all this results in child labour as the woman is forced to make her son work to earn enough money for the family. For example, the case of Hosam, a 16-year-old boy. Ever since the war began in 2015, Hosam and his brother have not been able to go to school but are rather forced to work, repairing cars and motorbikes to financially help their families. *"We wanted to help our family financially," Hosam said. "With this money we could afford only bread and wheat. Sometimes we get some rice from one of our neighbours." Due to continuously working, the brothers developed health conditions like debilitating hernias and hence were unable to work anymore, leaving their family with a loss of a source of income.*

Ms. Jyotika further went on to say that "even recently, there is not much of change" as "there is still a lot of gender-based violence and abuse that is happening". Owing to her immense passion in women rights and wellbeing, she has read and inquired a lot about the life of women in Yemen through her friends and has found out that "there are high levels of cases of rape, there are cases of women not being able to venture out. There are cases of loss of livelihood. There is a dire need for income generation, but there is no scope of opportunity that women are able use". So along with the responsibility of heading displaced families without the experience and skill of doing so, women also have to deal with problems like violence, abuse, rape, economic and social confinement along with the crippling economy which cancels out even the smallest opportunities women might have had before.

2. How do you think this war has impacted Yemen? And how do you think this economic situation has impacted the well-being of citizens?

Prior to the war, Yemen was already facing multiple issues like poverty, unemployment, inflation, discrimination etc and this civil war, that stems from the Dignity Revolution, only made the situation worse. Now amidst airstrikes and bombing, which have become a part of citizen's daily lives, citizens are left to "extreme poverty" (as mentioned by Ms Jyotika) along

with “falling prey to malnutrition” and other health issues. In fact, this complex war situation has impacted Yemen so much that the situation is deteriorating day in, day out.

According to Ms. Jyotika, “76% of Yemen (population) would be starving literally”. They are experiencing extreme famine due to their lack of resources and finances to afford basic amenities like food and shelter. If you look at the statistics also, Yemen is mostly towards the end in most indexes, whether it is the happiness index (where getting a larger number as a rank means being a sadder country) in which Yemen is the 138th happiest countries out of the 146 countries ranked or the human rights and rule of law index (where getting a larger number as a rank means having a higher appreciation of human rights and law) in which Yemen was the 1st out of the 177 countries ranked. In fact, Ms. Jyotika herself quoted a study conducted of 144 countries, ranking them based on gender equality and Yemen was the 144th country in that rank, signalling its extremely poor emphasis on gender equality.

In Yemen, much like other countries, girls and women “are given last priority, especially when it comes to displacement when family goes through famine or when there are hardships, economic hardships”. This meant that even during the times of war, the appreciation for women was so low that women and girls were given the last priority in getting access to any financial or social assistance, no matter the urgency with which they required it. In fact, “every stakeholder in Yemen is facing a lot of inequality right now”.

As we all know, black swan events like a war are known to result in a lot of loss of resources, forcing the country to go back to square one. As a matter of fact, in Yemen, due to the war, there have been many power cuts, medicine shortages and threats of famine due to food insecurity. More than twenty million Yemeni citizens (which is two-thirds of Yemen’s population) are in dire need for humanitarian aid. Now amidst the food insecurity, power shortage, lack of healthcare and medicine shortage, women are given last priority in accessing these basic needs, according to Ms. Jyotika. So the crippling economy in Yemen which has led to food insecurity, frequent power cuts and so much more is affecting women worse than others.

The war has also lead to “poor livelihood” and “poor work conditions”, as mentioned by Ms. Jyotika. This means that the men and a few women who were lucky enough to work during the war were working in rather poor conditions earning bare minimum wages, living hand to mouth. They were unable to feed their families and provide basic amenities. The statistics go to show this as according to latest analysis done by the Integrated Food Security Phase Classification, the number of people experience extreme food insecurity is quite high reaching around 3.2 million people in IPC phase 3 or above (which signals a crisis and emergency) between January and May 2023, that too only in areas under the control of the Government of Yemen. Imagine the living conditions in areas seized by the Houthi Rebels.

To make matters worse, food insecurity isn't the only issue citizens face in Yemen. Families are being displaced due to them fleeing the country or their male leads dying during the war. According to Ms Jyotika, "you will find four out of five family being displaced". This is because, due to the war, "there are shelters are burned down" (as stated by Ms. Jyotika) and this worsening economic crisis does not allow families to have enough money to repair the damage, forcing them to become displaced. Moreover "there is no way they can go back to work" (as pointed out by Ms. Jyotika) making it even harder for people to earn money to support a living.

On top of it all, due to the war, "their identities are also destroyed". Ms Jyotika revealed that Yemeni citizens "literally have to pay for creating their ID proofs and identity proofs and get back on track". And the war is also having a staggering affect on Yemen's demography as more and more of the working population are either dying due to the war or are fleeing the country in hope of survival. In the long term this would mean that, if and when the war is resolved, Yemen would have a really small workforce to help build their crippling economy back again, creating a long-lasting economic impact on the country.

3. Do you think that a democratic transition is what Yemen needs right now? Or does it need to stick with the dictatorship and instead focus on improving its sectors and facilities like healthcare and education?

When asked this question the first thing that Ms. Jyotika pointed out was the fact that "moving from dictatorship to a democratic nation is a mindset change that the country has to go through which is quite difficult." And statistics along with examples seem to agree with her. We have seen Tunisia and Egypt trying to shift from a dictatorship to a democracy ultimately either failing or being bruised. Tunisia is facing economic regression, unemployment, inequality and violation of human rights even after shifting to democracy whereas Egypt faces problems like a lack of transparency, increased cost of living, inflation and soaring unemployment. Unfortunately, Tunisia and Egypt had the bandwidth to be able to enforce democracy, but like pointed out by Ms. Jyotika, incorporating democracy in Yemen will be quite hard considering the fact that the country's economy, demography and social situation is worse than it was before the movement due to the whole war. In fact, Ms. Jyotika clearly said, "I don't see it happening in the next three to five decades.", indicating the fact that even in the next 30 to 50 years, Yemen might not be able to achieve democracy.

Hence, Ms Jyotika feels that "building the capacity of leaders, the dictators who are there on how they can engage their audience (citizens)" is what should be the next focus of the country and its authorities. There are existing systems in place where if a dictatorship goes on too long and is dangerous to the people's wellbeing, the UN can interfere and call it a No Man's Land in sorts. This would mean that the government cannot have a role; that these dictators cannot have a role

and the country will just be run by administration from the UN. But Ms. Jyotika rightfully believes that instead of doing this extreme step, the country should focus on “building the capacity of the leaders”, by which she means providing leaders with the resources so they can create “some networks and civil societies”. Even “their UN agencies office are being built there”, as quoted by Ms. Jyotika.

You have to agree with this because a country which is struggling like Yemen to just sustain its population cant afford to have a radical political change, changing their complete system. Yemen does not have the resources, time nor the finance to be able to first implement democracy and then adapt to it. Families are in danger, children are in danger, women are in danger as malnutrition, unemployment, poverty and lack of healthcare soar. Women are forced to wear veils and cover their whole head, even their eyes, according to Ms. Jyotika. Neither are women part of any formal education system or formal job sector.

Hence why, what organizations like UN are currently doing where they are providing the government of Yemen with the capability to fix the war is what the next step should be because these citizens are in dire need of humanitarian assistance. The UN is “building such offices, which are indirectly supplying aid” along with “influencing, educating the women, literate and illiterate both, to take charge of their life and their country.” There are also organizations like Save the Children which are working toward providing education and assistance to children who have fallen prey to the war and its impacts like child labour or malnutrition. According to Ms. Jyotika, “dictatorship is just a format, it won't really matter.” What matters most is that the “systems are going to go through a major upheaval and change.” Afterall, looking at the situation in which these Yemeni citizens are living in, they require major change in systems like education and healthcare more than they require democracy right now. So, in a way, I agree with Ms. Jyotika, in keeping democracy aside for now and focusing on patching the country up after the impact it has shouldered due to the war.

4. Do you think Yemen should go back to how it was before the revolution and the war?

The situation is definitely worse than it was before the war. Like said by Ms. Jyotika, “Everything is like a barren land” right now in Yemen. According to her, “Even though there are people, there are structures, there are humans leading their life, but everything is back to zero. You have to start from scratch” in Yemen due to the war.

However, she believes that going back to how Yemen was before is not really a viable solution. Instead, she believes, “they will have to come up with a middle part; taking some good parts of the previous administration and (mixing it with) whatever UN is building with them to create something new, which will lead to a healthy lifestyle for all sections of society.” She proposes

that this will provide a good lifestyle for “the rich (and) poor equally” along with supporting “the women, men, children, everyone, and in general it will bring about peace, security, food security and life security for the country.” I believe, this might just be the best way forward, considering the UN has been able to improve quite a lot of things from even before the war like women’s access to education and jobs along with children’s access to quality education as well. So the best way forward would be for Yemen to take the best of both worlds (Yemen from before the war and the Yemen which UN is helping design right now).

5. Your opinions about the corruptions in Yemen?

Ms. Jyotika believes that “because corruption is so deep rooted there (Yemen) in the system, that there is no way that we can get it repaired”. She believes that before we can focus on solving the issue of corruption, we would need to focus on patching the country up after the whole aftermath of the Yemeni war. Ms. Jyotika pointed out, “currently, in the families, hundreds and 1000s of families which are displaced, they first have to be brought back into the country, the population needs to be stabilized the food security and the life security need to stabilize.”. So, its safe to say that at this point where Yemen is completely shattered by the war in terms of its crippling economy, unemployment crisis, food shortage, malnutrition and other health issues, poverty and displacement, corruption is one of Yemen’s least worries because the country is in an actual humanitarian crisis. Though Ms. Jyotika did say “corruption is making it impossible right now to get things rolling at a massive speed (and) scale. But yet there is no way around it”, which goes to support her previous opinion on there being more important priorities. The UN and organizations like Save the Children are able to improve the lives of Yemen citizens, which is what the country’s focus should be right now, ensuring the wellbeing of its citizens.

6. Do you think that there is hope for Yemen to become a liberal state after years of corruption and years of the Arabic rule and the dictatorship?

According to Ms. Jyotika, she believes that there is hope for Yemen because she mentioned the fact that every 80 years or so, there is a change in the geopolitical situation of every country. In fact, she mentioned that old research papers shows that previously in Arab countries “women had a healthy living there.” She went on to say that even though there were head scarfs that “determine whether they were participating in (...) political level or the local level. But they were (at least) participating at various levels in many of the Arabic countries.” This shows us that there was a time where these Arabic states were in a better situation, had more liberty, had more freedom and were more progressive, even though the situation then also wasn’t completely perfect. According to her, “yes, definitely there is hope” and “it might take three, four decades”.

However, in this case, there is a second lens we need to look through as well where there might be little hope for Yemen to become liberal. This is due to the long complex history between Yemen and the Sharia Laws. Yemen has been following the Islamic Law, including the Sharia Law, since the 7th century when the religion Islamism was introduced to Yemen. Then came the Ottoman Empire, which Yemen was part of, that gave the Islamic Law (including Sharia Law) more power by implementing Islamic Law as a basis of governance. The strength of the Sharia Law in Yemen was shown once the British began influencing southern Yemen and yet the southern part was still ruled with a mix of British influence and Islamic Law (like the Sharia Law), unlike other countries who lost their identities due to colonization. Then North Yemen and South Yemen unified to form just 1 entity, however North Yemen was more conservative in their ideologies whereas the South had been influenced by socialist and secularist ideologies. So, the unification of Yemen did cause a lot of discussions and arguments on how Yemen will be run from now onwards with both sides pushing their models. Then comes the variation in the interpretation and implementation of the Sharia Laws by various fractions like the Houthi rebels, the government and each region or territory also has an interpretation of their own. However, the thing that makes the Islamic Laws worse than they are is the fact that the existence of extremist groups mixed with the weak governance allows for Islamic Laws to be abused for political or extremist reasons, harming the wellbeing on citizens.

In fact, looking at the historical example of the 2008 execution of a young girl named Aisha Ibrahim Duhulow. Aisha was a 13-year-old girl who lived in Somalia. Now even though she lived in Somalia, this incident gathered international attention highlighting the abuse of Sharia Law and its affect on citizens. In 2008, Aisha was gang raped by 3 men and instead of receiving protection and justice she was accused of adultery, which is a crime under Sharia Law. Despite her young age and the trauma, she experienced, she was forced to go on trial in court with a proper representative. The trial was publicly held and at the end she was punished to death by stoning. The complete international community was shocked to hear this and were able to understand the potential of Sharia Laws to be abused to victimize women and girl in conservative areas. Human rights organizations tried their best to get Aisha to be released but ultimately, she was publicly executed.

Now Islamic laws, themselves, are quite conservative as well. For example, one of the Sharia family law states that husbands have the right to polygamy while also being wedded to up to 4 women at the same time. However, women don't have the right to do the same and must stay loyal. As we can see, Yemen has always been a supported of the Islamic Laws because even when British influence started to spread, Islamic laws were still held in high regard, unlike with other countries who lost their culture in the colonization. So, Islamism and laws like Sharia Laws have been so deep rooted in Yemen since the 7th century and even though many obstacles have risen to

risk this, in the end its still a major part of Yemen. So, a country as deeply attached with Islamic Laws will not be ready to give it up, making it rather difficult for Yemen to be able to efficiently become liberal.

7. What do you think about the human rights situation in Yemen right now?

According to Ms. Jyotika, Yemenis continue “facing a very high level of food insecurity, their life is dependent on other countries’ aid, they are displaced, they don't have household purchasing power, they don't have houses to go back to.” I full heartedly agree because, after the war, the situation with human rights has definitely worsened considering the fact that before the war, citizens at least had homes and a source of income, even though in many cases it was low paying, to support themselves and their family. But due to the destruction caused by the war Yemenis no longer have a job and those lucky enough to still have one cant attend their job due to the huge threat of air strikes. This lack of financial earning further leads to starvation as the people’s purchasing power reduces rapidly due to no income and increasing inflation.

Additionally, to ensure that the limited resources last longer, citizens have resulted to using coping mechanisms like drastically reducing their meal sizes, limiting the quality and variety of food being consumed alongside giving priorities to certain family members over others when it comes to eating. The same is evident in the statement by a Yemeni man to the world bank who says “Sometimes we sleep with no dinner. My wife and I, no one knows what we eat or what we don’t. Sometimes when I have some money for dinner, my wife tells me that the kids need milk, so I buy them milk and we sleep without having dinner. The kids are more important.”

Moreover, children are unable to achieve their basic right of education because schools have been burnt out and parents can no longer afford education. Schools are underfunded and teachers are not being paid enough due to the ongoing war. A school principal from the Hajjah district shares the same concern as they tell the UN “My school has 1050 students, and it is only six rooms, one of which is residential for two teachers, one for the principal’s office, and the remaining four rooms for all grades. We have three shifts for different grades. One of the teachers had to bring his family from Hodeida governorate as conflict intensified there, so we had to move the other teacher to live under the staircase. There is no restroom or water in the building.”In many cases, children are forced to work in hazardous conditions to help earn for their family, increasing the level of child labour.

To make matters worse, many Yemenis were forced to leave the country and become refugees due to the dangers posed by the war causing them problems like a loss of cultural and personal identity as they no longer have a home to go back to. In many cases this has also led to discrimination and exploitation of Yemenis workers in foreign countries who exploited these

refugees for cheap labour. In fact, several Gulf countries like Saudi Arabia or the UAE have been criticized on their exploitation of migrant workers, including Yemeni refugees, for cheap labour. Multiple reports by organizations like the ILO (international labour organization) have shown many issues like poor working conditions, unpaid wages, passport confiscations and inhumane treatment of these migrant workers.

Additionally, these displaced citizens have to continue facing the threat of erosion of livelihood combined with the challenge of building a new life. An individual from Al – Baida governorate further shares his experience by telling the UN “We had to leave our town because the war destroyed our homes. We had four homes. Our life is very tough here and there. The rent is also very expensive. We cannot afford that. All of us moved, even my in-laws. From Raada we first moved to a house that was expensive to rent, then we moved to another house where we could afford to pay the rent. It is difficult to live everywhere in Yemen.” For example, a 2017 report by the Guardian highlighted the issues faced by Yemenis refugees in Saudi Arabia’s agricultural field.

Then there is the issue of lack of healthcare accessibility, as due to the war, the prices for accessing medical services have increased. As a result, many citizens avoid accessing healthcare, leading to long lasting problems with their immunity or bodily systems. A health worker from Hodeida governorate talked to World Bank about the grim state of healthcare in Yemen by saying “We used to offer services and medicine for free. Now we must charge the patients and write them a prescription to buy medicine from pharmacies. People stopped coming, and they shy away. They can’t afford all that, given that commuting here will also cost them a lot. It is even a hardship for staff who spend half of their salaries on transportation.”

8. Your thoughts about media and speech control in Yemen?

According to Ms. Jyotika, Yemen is “in the bottom” when it comes to media and speech freedom. Ms. Jyotika pointed out that media can’t exist in most of the Arabic countries due to the strict control over speech and the lack of freedom of the same. She believes that most of these humanitarian breaches happening in Yemen are because media is not allowed “to showcase the real picture.”

Moreover, she mentioned that, “All these civil societies and everything are latched off, they are burnt, they are shut down, because they don’t want the true stories to come out.” The only way the foreign community have been able to see the situation in Yemen is by organizations like UN going there and reporting.

However, the Yemenis journalists who risk their life to report the truth are facing life threatening corruption. For example, in an exceptional case, a court controlled by Houthi rebels issued a

death penalty to journalist “Yahya al-Joubayhy”, claiming he was a Saudi spy. This aggression by the Houthi rebels to the media was also shown in a 2016 speech on the television made by the leader of Houthi rebels, Abdelmalek al-Houthi, where he said “The media workers are more dangerous to our country than the nationalist and warring mercenaries,” This leads to the media being unable to tell Yemeni citizens what the actual situation is really like, often times allowing these citizens to fall prey to propaganda. So naturally, Yemen’s media presence has started reducing due to the Yemeni war. Yemen’s national information centre says that before the Houthi rebels took over Sanaa (Yemen’s capital) during the war, Yemen had access to 295 publications, 4 official state-owned TV channels along with 14 private TV channels.

However, despite this, Yemen’s freedom of media and speech was still one of the worst in the world and due to the war it has become even worse. When the Houthis first entered they started bombing media outlets in Yemen and replaced them with the Houthi controlled media groups. Now due to this both the citizens of Yemen and the international community receive a twisted picture of the war from the perspective of the Houth rebels. This often included downplaying the destruction caused by war or the impacts it had on the citizens lives. To make matters worse, the international media, specifically the Arab media, have very rare articles and coverage on the Yemeni war and instead focusing on other global issues. This is because the Houthi rebels either forcibly prisons the non – propagandist journalists or make them disappear intentionally. Moreover, to protect their image, Saudi Arabia has also bought silence internationally while also hiring PR companies to clean its media image at the same time. To add fuel to the fire, Yemen has closed off all borders not allowing international journalists to enter and report.

However, there is hope considering the fact that UN has been able to enter the country and report the honest truth to the best of its abilities. This is because, according to Ms. Jyotika, “The UN has a way of doing it without exposing it.” According to Ms. Jyotika, “they actively go in different [...] international community” so they can explore other methods and “alternative mechanisms that they can use to monitor [...] what is happening to the human rights there and the human life there”, as stated rightfully by Ms. Jyotika. Moreover, Ms Jyotika also pointed out the fact that UN has started protecting civil society groups and national media journalists who are spreading awareness of the truth. So the information has started reaching the audiences.

Then again, the main problem is how this information is not able influence the country’s own population referring to the “the lack and dearth of information which the people of Yemen have or any other Arabic country” for that matter, as mentioned by Ms. Jyotika. Ideally, media should have been seen to be a tool to revolutionize the population, like in the case of Arab Spring in Tunisia, however, with Yemen that will never happen. The population would find it hard to come together because media and social media does not provide people with the information and the causes that are worth fighting for. The media is a mere tool for Houthi rebels to spread their

propaganda and so the foreign community and citizens from Yemen cant come together due to lack of awareness of the causes that are actually worth fighting for. So even though, the UN is able to get the data, the citizens still don't have easy access.

9. What about foreign investment and aid in Yemen?

When asked about Yemen opening its border to accept foreign aid and investment, Ms. Jyotika replied that Yemen has "a very strict way of living so they will not open up to any country regardless of their current condition."

However, considering Yemen's history, there have been cases where Yemen has in fact encouraged foreign investment which we would need to look into. After South Yemen and North Yemen reunified, Yemen started opening its door and encouraging forest investment mostly in the oil and gas sector. This can be seen through foreign investment by the French company, Total, which in 2010 announced a significant gas recovery in Yemen highlighting Yemen's capability to indulge in hydrocarbon production. Later on, other companies like Hunt Oil and Exxon Mobil had a presence in Yemen as well through various agreements and extraction sites, contributing to Yemen's oil and gas sector.

At the same time, it is important to know that there have been mainly 3 challenges that threaten the beneficial presence of foreign investment in Yemen.

First, we have political instability. Frequent changes in the government and the civil unrest caused due to this, like in the case of the Arab Spring Movement, have made Yemen a rater hostile country for foreign companies to invest in. This also stops the political leaders from being able to create a fostering market for these investments to happen by providing incentives for these investors because they have too short or too turbulent of a ruling time to be able to implement effective policies.

Then there are many security concerns due to multiple terror minority groups like Al – Qaeda and Houthi rebels which have quite a threatening presence in the country. So this combined with the prevailing corruption in Yemen makes it rather dangerous for a business to make foreign investments in Yemen.

Lastly, there is also a major challenge in the legal regulations and framework which make it rather difficult for foreign companies to invest in Yemen. Foreign investment's legal frameworks and regulations have been erratic and hence many investors have faced and can face challenged regarding property control, land lease and contract implementation. All of this has caused a major decline in foreign investments, which have declined even further due to the whole Yemen war which is currently happening.

Nonetheless, Ms. Jyotika isn't wrong when she says that foreign investment could be quite beneficial to Yemen, if only one could do it. Prior to the conflict in 2015, a substantial amount of Yemen's government revenue came from oil exports which were increased by the presence of foreign investment. Moreover, foreign investments by oil companies created many job opportunities, helping to solve the issue of unemployment in Yemen. These employments were both indirect and direct ranging from skilled labour to managerial positions. Foreign oil companies invested in Yemen's infrastructure by giving investments to governments to build upon roads and buildings in Yemen. Yemen's foreign exchange reserve also benefitted from these foreign investments because foreign investments by oil companies meant a higher export of oil resulting in more generation of earnings for foreign exchange reserves which was important for Yemen's imports that helped sustain their lives.

Now, this is not to say that foreign investment can't cause harm. For example, when Sri Lanka accepted foreign investment by China who promised to help with infrastructure and Sri Lanka was unable to pay loans on time due to their economic crisis so China took over one of its main ports, taking the revenue that port generates away from Sri Lanka. Now a staggering country like Yemen would definitely not be able to pay the loans set by these foreign investors on time, allowing their land to be exploited by these investors, aggravating the war and conflict even more.

So, due to the aforementioned reasons, I have to say that Ms. Jyotika is accurate when she says that when it comes to foreign investments by all these countries "they will have to be very strategic about it" but when it comes to UN "they have no option" other than allowing UN to do its job in mediating this conflict. But knowing Yemen and its government, "they will guard their (Yemen's) way" towards all these countries with ulterior motives.

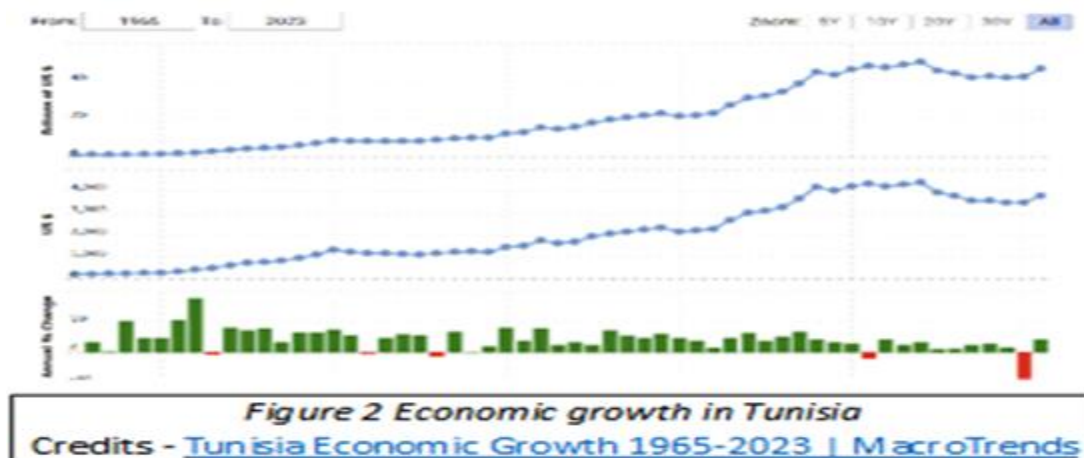
Moreover, when asked if there were other ways for Yemen to rebuild itself than just foreign investments, she said that other ways would be to "reduce your currency price, you start taking loans, you start importing food". For example, if Yemen was to devalue its currency in comparison to other currencies, then naturally its exports will become cheaper in the international market. Now cheaper exports would mean a greater number of exports, which would bring in more revenue. Ideally, a country can devalue its currency to attract more tourism as well since goods and services will now be cheaper for the international community in that country with the devalued currency and this would once again generate more income. At the same time, though, devaluing currency could lead to reduction in people's purchasing power since the cost of products would start to increase and the salaries would not. Additionally, the purchasing power would also decrease because imported goods would now be more expensive since the country's currency is of lesser value so they will have to pay more to get the same amount of imports than before. Though, in the case of Yemen, which depends almost completely

on their imports to be able to provide sufficient stable food to their citizens, devaluing the currency would not be that efficient of the solution considering the country's great dependency on its imports to provide for its citizens. By devaluing currency, we are increase the cost of imports and even though the cost of Yemen's exports would decrease which would mean more exports and hence more revenue, Yemen depends on imports for a need as basic as food and so reducing its currency value and hence reducing people's purchasing power is not the way to go about rebuilding the country, in my opinion. Also, Ms Jyotika believes that taking steps like devaluing the currency "will take a very, very long time for you (Yemen) to get back on your feet". So, according to Ms. Jyotika, "if you open up to foreign investment and aid, the progress [...] will be faster." And I do agree with her because even after the currency's value decreases, it will take time before the global community start to realize the cheaper exports of Yemen and so the positive effects will take time to show. Till then the country would still be in their humanitarian crisis.

Tunisia -

1. How is the economic, social and political situation in Tunisia and how does it impact the citizens?

Here is what Ms. Amira, citizen of Tunisia, had to say regarding this question "The economic situation in Tunisia has been challenging in recent years. High unemployment rates and inflation have affected many families. Finding stable job opportunities can be difficult for young graduates like me. The political situation has been somewhat unstable, with changes in government leadership. These economic and political challenges have made it harder for families to access quality healthcare and education, and job security can be a concern."



The same is shown in the country's statistic and data. Before the descent of President Ben Ali and his regime along with the democratic transition, Tunisia was starting to thrive economically. As can be seen in figure 2, in 2007, the country experienced a 6.71% GDP growth rate followed by a 4.24% growth rate in 2008, a 3.04% growth rate in 2009, a 2.97% growth rate in 2010 and finally a -2.05% growth rate in 2011, where a decade worth of efforts to grow Tunisia economically went to waste. In fact, Tunisia was projected to achieve a growth rate of 5.4% in 2011 with their budget deficit projected to not be more 2.5% of their GDP and the public debt ratio to stay below 40%. However, due to the Jasmine Revolution, the country's economic situation is way different.

The time after the Jasmine Revolution has been quite challenging for Tunisia due to the definite decrease in domestic economic activity as well as increased instability of various regions and rising prices for fuel and food internationally. Due to this worsening economic situation, unemployment is affecting Tunisia like a plague. Unemployment impacts more than 15% of total work force, majorly affecting youth and women. Luckily, the unemployment rate for graduates has reduced since 2011 but its still alarmingly 30%. As for youth, the rate is about 35% and women unemployment is at 25%. So we can see that what Ms. Amira is quite accurately represented by the facts. Needless to say, the price of goods and services in Tunisia is increasing in order for businesses and producers to cope with the staggering economy. This has resulted in inflation as the cost of products is quite high compared to citizen's earning resulting in many citizens being unable to afford many goods and services. This inflation mixed with the rising unemployment and worsening economy signal that Tunisian citizen's purchasing power is reducing as the costs of good are either increasing or staying the same while the salary of citizens is decreasing. All this would mean that Tunisian citizens won't be able to actively participate in the market, further hindering economic growth and market development and hence forming a cycle of unemployment, inflation and low economic growth.

Like Ms. Amira mentioned, young graduates who are just entering the market find it even harder to source a job due to the lack of proper technical skill development, making it hard for them to earn and support themselves and hence forcing their parents to work even harder to support them. Then there is the issue of the continuous government turnover or replacement, which makes it hard for any government to implement and come up with plans to tackle difficult but required economic reforms. Elyes Fakhfakh and his government lasted only five months, which is not enough time for actions and plans to be executed. The current government under Mechichi could also go through reshuffling and shifting in his cabinet, which could possibly make it one of the shortest – lasting governments in Tunisia's history. This political instability not only stops governments from acting on and implementing beneficial policies, but it also hinders the government's ability to form connection with the citizens and be able to understand their

struggles properly. Due to this Tunisian citizen still continue to face problems like unemployment and poverty, though this time, due to the amount of resources and money spent during the Jasmine Revolution (when there was little to no revenue generation) and the quantity of businesses shut down, these problems have now aggravated.

As for the social situation, after the Jasmine Revolution, Tunisia has made a lot of development in terms of eradicating corruption by trying to incorporate democratic principles along with bettering the country's security systems to restart Tunisia's tourism. However, corruption still continues to be a problem, acting as a threat against the country's development potential. Even though, corruption is now not concentrated in the central authorities, it still continues to live deep with every part of Tunisia's economic, political and security improvement plans, leading to a lack of belief in facilities and a scary promise of instability. But what makes the problem worst is that its not as though the government doesn't understand the need to remove corruption but is rather, in a sense, unwilling to.

One of the first actions taken by the temporary government was to dissolve the RCD (Ben Ali's political party) in order to reduce the connections between the temporary government and Ben Ali along with any influence of the previous regime in Tunisia. Moreover, on January 15, 2011, a day after Ben Ali step down, the temporary government created the Commission of Inquiry into Misappropriation and Corruption, which was led by Abdelfattah Amor. Ever since, many more such legal and official institutions have been set in place. And yet, corruption continues to exist within Tunisia's society, even more widespread than during Ben Ali's regime. However, why is that Tunisia's corruption levels continue to increase? Its due to the consequences of actions taken by President Saied. Upon taking charge, he has issued decree-laws to destroy the important safeguards for human rights, especially regarding judicial independence and the right to freedom of speech. Moreover, authorities used unjust force to stop protesters while targeting high-profile critics along with the president's enemy with illogical prosecutions. Then there was also the decree-law to fix electoral law that stopped legislative measures to increase political women participation. To add on, the LGBTQIA+ community continued to be threatened and penalized.

2. What's the situation with media and freedom of speech or expression in Tunisia? What about other human rights? How has this impacted your life?

Ms. Amira's answer to this was, "Tunisia has made significant progress in terms of media freedom and freedom of speech compared to other countries in the region. However, there are still occasional restrictions and self-censorship. Personally, I feel that I can express my opinions more freely compared to some of our neighbouring countries, but there are still issues with censorship and limitations on some topics in the media."She also added by saying, "Human rights have improved in many ways, but challenges remain. While there have been positive

changes, incidents of human rights violations still occur, such as restrictions on freedom of assembly and cases of police abuse. It's essential to continue advocating for human rights in Tunisia.”

Ms. Amira is accurate in saying so because according to UNHCR, by March 2011, towards the end of the Jasmine Revolution, the internet and social played such a big role in this revolution that almost 3.5 million Tunisians used the internet. In fact, after December 17, 2010, when Bouazizi set himself on fire, there was a major increase in the frequency of online conversations about the Jasmine Revolution and Ben Ali’s regime. This shows that Arab Spring Movement in Tunisia had led to a significant increase in the usage and proliferation of media in Tunisia. Now this would obviously mean that Tunisian citizens were able to express themselves freely, like mentioned by Ms. Amira, and now had access to much more information.

However, at the same time, there is still a lot of corruption and censorship in Tunisian media. This is due to certain unjust actions by President Saied. He announced two decree-laws that, going against freedom of speech, enforce prison terms for spreading “fake news” or offensive statements. Decree-Law 2022-14 goes after individuals participating in economic activities that spread fake information about the supplies of goods whereas Decree-Law 2022-54 punishes the exploitation of telecommunications networks to create and propagate false information. But worst of all, these laws allow the authorities to use their power to monitor internet usage and share personal information. Due to this, the judicial authorities were able to investigate and prosecute many critics and president’s enemies such as the case with lawyer Abderrazak Kilani for insulting a public official. These laws have also been abused to attack media figures like editor Nizar Bahloul and political leader Ghazi Chaouachi, who complained regarding government officials.

In 2022, Tunisia faced severe human rights violations, with notable restrictions on freedom of speech, violence against women, and arbitrary constraints during a state of emergency. President Kais Saied's power consolidation in July 2021 significantly weakened democratic institutions and hindered the country's transition to democracy. Saied abrogated the 2014 constitution and as a result gave himself more power while introducing new reforms that reduced the judiciary's independence. The new constitution, ratified in July 2022, centralizes power within the presidency, diminishes the role of parliament, and does not adequately ensure the judiciary's autonomy.

Journalists, activists and news reporters faced harassment and prosecution from the authorities and hence Tunisia's freedom of speech faced threat. Some of these prosecutions were even tested in courts but they were unsuccessful. The president also implemented curtailments on protests and imposed illogical travel bans. Women's rights suffered as well, with discriminatory

inheritance laws, a lack of protection for pregnant girls' right to education, and inadequate measures to address domestic violence.

The new constitution does have provisions on gender inequality but, at the same time, it also includes provisions that could curtail women's rights. Moreover, same-sex relationships are still penalized and the LGBTQIA+ community are targeted digitally and persecuted.

Even though the African Court of Human and Peoples' Rights made a ruling which asked these decrees to be revoked and also asked for the creation of a Constitutional Court, there has been no action on this by the Tunisian authorities.

3. Your opinions about corruption in Tunisia? Is there any hope of improvement soon?

According to Ms. Amira, "Corruption has been a long-standing issue in Tunisia. While there have been efforts to address it, it remains a concern. Many Tunisians, including myself, hope for further improvements in the future, but it's a complex issue that will require sustained efforts from the government and society as a whole."



Figure: Tunisia's Corruption Perceptions Index

I do agree with this, considering the power these citizens' voices had when they got together to fight for democracy under the Arab Spring Movement. However, these decree-laws being issued by the government continue to threaten this hope of citizens voicing out and getting what they want and deserve. The Corruption Perceptions Index gives ranks to countries and territories depending on the intensity of corruption their public sectors are believed to have. The index gives the countries' scored showing the believed intensity of public sector corruption on a scale 0 to 10, 0 representing extremely corrupt and 100 representing extremely clean. According to this graph showing Tunisia's perceived corruption scored from 2000 to 2023, taken from Trading Economics, Tunisia's perceived corruption, on average has been getting worse of the years. In

2001, during the Ben Ali's rule, Tunisia had a perceived corruption score of 53, which only got worse over the years, reaching a minimum of 42, in 2007, during Ben Ali's rule. During 2011, the year of the Jasmine Revolution, the country perceived corruption was as low as 38, given the constant turmoil and police attacks against demonstrators and protestors. However, after the democratic transition came into play, the country's perceived corruption rank has stooped lower than it was during Ben Ali's regime, with the minimum being 40 in 2022. This indicates that Tunisia's corruption continues getting worse even after the country started shifting towards democracy.

4. How do you think the democratic transition has been in Tunisia? Has it been effective? If not, why, and is there hope of improving it in the future in both countries specifically?

Upon being asked this question, this is what Ms. Amira had to say, "The democratic transition in Tunisia has been a work in progress. While we've made significant strides, there have been challenges and setbacks. It's a long journey, and there's hope that with continued efforts, we can strengthen our democratic institutions and processes to better serve the citizens." Sure, there has been a lot of political progress in Tunisia. For one, the jasmine revolution led to the reconstruction of the constitution. Then, the revolution also allowed for the citizens to have the right to free speech and open criticism to the leaders, government, and authorities. Thirdly, the revolution had paved a pathway to calm and democratic transitions, however, people still believe that even though Tunisia has a procedural democracy that still has connections to the old regime. However, the biggest accomplishment of the revolution was probably the Tunisian citizens discovering their power of the unified voice to overthrow a dictator and bring upon a wave of change.

But there was also a lot of political chaos. During the immediate days after Ben Ali fled the country, chaos and catastrophe continued to engulf the country. Demonstrators continued rebelling due to their complaints against the RCD (Ben Ali's party) taking part in the temporary government being formed. Moreover, the irregular bursts of violence, which many Tunisians blamed Ben Ali's loyal fans for, continued spreading disorder in Tunisia.

A major political concern people have after the revolution is the citizens' irritation over the incapacity and reluctance to eliminate corruption. President Kais Saied was nominated on an anti-corruption venue, and he can Prime Minister Hichem Mechichi have taken some actions to eliminate corruption at the higher stages. Yet, many Tunisia share frustration over the ongoing lack of transparency in the country and are angered by the economic price that this corruption brings along.

Moreover, the country transition towards democracy has had to face many obstacles and challenges like the tensions between political parties due to democratic elections along with tensions within the National Constituent Assembly (NCA). Some other obstacles faced by the country's democratic transitions include the horrible economic impacts of the terrorist attacks in 2015 combined with the bigger issue of Tunisians joining Jihadi groups in Syria and Iraq. Furthermore, issues like President Beji Caid Essebsi's death and the planning of a shift in power combined with struggles of fixing the country and mitigating the aftermath.

5. How has your experience working and studying in Tunisia been given the economic struggle and corruption?

Ms. Amira says, "Studying and working in Tunisia has had its challenges due to economic struggles and corruption. It can be tough to find stable job opportunities, and the uncertainty in the job market can be disheartening for recent graduates." Looking at the statistics and case studies, this does go to show. Tunisia has been wrestling with a persistent issue of high unemployment, and this challenge has been a concern even before the onset of the COVID-19 pandemic.

Since 2013, the country's unemployment rate has been quite high at around 15-16%. On top of it all, unemployment is worst for the youth and graduates with unemployment at 36% among 15 - 24 year-olds. Women have also been facing significant hurdles, with a staggering 75% of unemployed individuals holding college degrees. All this is a result of several factors like an excess of labor and employees in Tunisia, curtailed opportunities for women to work, slow creation of jobs and insufficient comprehensive labor market data.

But what's concerning is the impact that unemployment can have. Endemic unemployment can lead to alienation from society along with higher chances of individuals pursuing extremist ideologies which increases chances of violence.

The country still has a lot of obstacles to overcome due to 10 whole years of little to no growth. This combined with a huge amount of government intervention, decreased trade positioning and reduced investment have lead to a drop in productivity growth. The dependence on social welfare programs has increased as the economy failed to create sufficient job opportunities, especially for university graduates and the prime working-age population. As a result, there is a growing public debt along with the introduction of more challenges while starting a business. These socio-economic vulnerabilities have been aggravated by Covid 19 and inflation, as a result also increasing trade deficit and pressurizing public finances. Though, not all hope is lost. Tunisia's services, manufacturing and agriculture sectors have shown some growth and are hence helping Tunisia recover. At the same time, unemployment rate in the labour market has reduced

but mainly due to a drop in labour participation instead of high employment rates. Moreover, gender disparities in labour force participation are slowly decreasing. Despite many challenges, Tunisia has taken and will have to continue essential steps to completely recover itself.

Solutions –

Now to conclude my interview paper, I find it crucial to provide some solutions of my own taking into consideration what Ms. Jyotika and Ms. Amira has said. So, without further a due, here are a few solutions I urge to be implemented amidst this life-threatening humanitarian crisis.

Yemen –

1. Creating opportunities for women – as talked about in this interview paper, in many cases, women are left behind to earn for families due to displaced male members and the worst part is that women don't have the knowledge or support about how to earn money and manage finances. Ms. Jyotika suggests, "the access of women to formal education system, formal work systems and formal banking system payment systems is necessary. Once they start creating that, the women will be able to get back on their feet. Most of the women are working as housekeepers, they're very few who rarely went out and did like a formal employment" in Yemen. Now, to be able to do this, here is what I propose. Yemen authorities are in deep need of non – governmental organizations and the authorities need to allow the existence of such organizations in society. An NGO would need to have incredibly simple registrations with reduced bureaucratic obstacles and at the same time establishing guidelines for agreeance to laws to avoid much interaction with government and its forces. The NGO must also have anti – corruption clauses in the NGO regulations to ensure the complete process of providing aid is transparent and not corruptive. Moreover, since there aren't many NGOs in the local community, members of internationally established NGOs would need to provide training to these new local NGOs to ensure that the NGO is as effective as it can be. I would encourage the United Nation Human Rights Council (UNHRC) to overlook this NGO building in Yemen. UNHRC would have to first perform a thorough analysis of any NGO planning on establishing itself in Yemen. In this thorough analysis it needs to consider the NGO's possibility of being corrupt while also understanding the organization's capability of bringing a change. Then upon doing a thorough analysis of the possible impacts of this NGO and its regulations, the UNHRC council must give permission for such an organization to set itself up in Yemen. Now once the NGO has set it self up in Yemen, UNHRC needs to be in contact with these NGOs till as long as they run while also providing these NGOs protection from Yemen's authorities to avoid them from being shut down. The UNHRC, in the NGO's initial years, must conduct surprise visits very month

and soon after it can start conducting these surprise visits quarterly. This is to be done to ensure that the NGO is not misusing its power while also helping ensure that the NGO doesn't face any problems which threaten its existence. Moreover, I also encourage the UNHRC to hold programs to train NGO owners and workers on how to behave in emergency cases while also connecting these local NGOs with international NGOs for expertise and advice. UNHRC should also closely work with the World Bank to provide financial support to these new NGOs. These NGOs also need to have comprehensive whistleblower protection laws that protect the privacy of any citizen who comes to complain to the NGOs about authorities or government of forces in Yemen. But most importantly, UNHRC should create an independent Ombudsman office where any citizen can come and file a complain against any NGO's incompetency or corruption. UNHRC should be the only one owning this Ombudsman office and the staff should come from the human rights council itself and not from any other entity. Now, once these safe, transparent NGOs have been established, citizens of Yemen, whether it be women, children, men or members of LGBTQIA+ community, will have safe places and organization to go request aid in terms of finances, food, shelter or even protection from abuse of harassment. These NGOs will also be able to support homeless Yemeni citizens and women, who have been left behind by their displaced or deceased spouses, to take care of their families.

2. Fixing unemployment – Now, as talked about in this interview paper, due to the war there is high inflation as people's purchasing power is decreasing exponentially due to a lack of sufficient stable sources of income. For this I propose the solution of establishing something similar to the Grameen Bank in Yemen. Grameen Bank is a bank focused on the development of the community. Now this bank provides microfinancing services to unemployed or low-income individuals who otherwise don't have access to such services. This bank was founded by Professor Muhammad Yunus in Bangladesh and it gives small loans to people who are experiencing poverty and the bank doesn't require them to pledge to give their possessions in case loan is not given, unlike other banks who require loan takers to give the bank the right to take control of one of their possessions as a back up if a loan is not paid. Now the best part about this bank are the low interest rates. There is an interest rate of 20% is used for income generation loans which are used to start or expand businesses. Then there is a 8% interest rate for housing loans for these citizens to buy a proper house and a 5% student loan to send kids to home. Lastly there is a 0% interest rate for loans to members who are struggling quite a lot. However, the reason why this bank is successful in Bangladesh is because the Bangladeshi government has exempted the Grameen bank from paying taxes, allowing them to not worry too much about finances. I suggest that Yemen should also have a Grameen Bank of its own.

However, considering the lack of political stability in Yemen, I believe that the United Nations Development Programme will have to work with World Bank in order to create a Grameen Bank of sorts in Yemen as well. But before creating a bank like this UNDP should do a thorough analysis of foreign economists or high professional economists within Yemen as well who can take charge of Yemen's Grameen Bank once it has been established. Moreover, to do so, Yemen should take support of Professor Yunus (who created the Grameen Bank in Bangladesh) to ensure the best candidate is picked. Then this candidate should reach out to Bangladesh and Professor Yunus for continuous support while implementing and establishing the Grameen Bank in Yemen. Once this bank has been established United Nations or Professor Yunus should make surprise visits to this bank to ensure no corruption is taking place while at the same time ensuring that the bank is not paying taxes to the government and keeping the bank and its workers safe from the government. I believe the Grameen Bank can create a huge difference in Yemen by helping encourage entrepreneurship in Yemen by providing not only financial support to start businesses but also financial advice to help citizens manage their finances and money better. Grameen Bank could also help many Yemenis buy houses, afford food and even send their children to school to help create a more stable and healthier livelihood.

3. Yemen Recovery Plan (YRP) (a UN mission) – To begin with, I would like to request United Nations Development Program (UNDP) to work with the International Peace building Fund to provide for war-torn regions like Yemen in terms of resources or even funding peace building missions. UN should urge major global powers, international financial institutions and humanitarian organizations to donate resources and money in ratio to their revenues in order to have enough money to provide Yemeni citizens with at least the necessary amenities. At the same time, the international body in coordination with the UN should divestment from companies involved in arms sales to conflict zones and allocate a portion of these divestments to the Yemen Recovery Plan mission. Moreover, once Yemeni citizens start to settle and the situation becomes a little better, Yemen should start to untap its natural resources like oil and gas and then secure international partnerships for responsible resource extraction. Then this oil and gas can first be used to sustain Yemen's citizens and then can be traded, the revenue of which would go towards the Yemen Recovery Plan. Now that the funding has been explained, here is what the Yemen Recovery Plan implementation calls for. First of all, a multinational stabilization force should be deployed under UN mandate to ensure a secured environment for the YRP to be implemented. This force should include peacekeepers from only neutral nations. Secondly, UN should continue to prioritize humanitarian aid above all else by providing the citizens with necessities like food, water, shelter, clothes etc. USAID and other humanitarian organizations should work with YRP

to help rebuild critical infrastructures like roads, hospitals, schools and utilities, first focusing on regions most affected by war. Most importantly, to do this, YRP should make use of local labour for employment generation. YRP should also work with mine-clearing organizations to remove landmines and unexploded munitions to ensure that the land is safe for habitation and agriculture. To do all the above, YRP should work closely with Yemeni citizens to increase employment generations while also ensuring that Yemeni citizens gain certain knowledge and understanding on how to mitigate aftermaths of the war, so they are better prepared in the future. Doing so will also help ensure that Yemen is being rebuilt with the citizens' perspectives in mind. As for monitoring the progress of the YRP, a coalition of humanitarian organizations under the UN would overlook the progress highlighting any concerns or criticisms they feel need to be resolved. Moreover. Local communities and civil society leaders should also get an opportunity to spot any irregularities or share any concerns the citizens have. During this time, there should also be an arms embargo of sorts to avoid further violent conflicts, especially during such a fragile time for Yemen. To add on, the YRP should support the restructuring and formation of the Yemeni security forces such that the security forces support the citizens and not the government. In the long term, the YRP should also look towards developing vocational training or youth programs to help train the youth and avoid high unemployment rates. The YRP should also support media and education programs that promote tolerance, dialogue, and conflict resolution to counteract the spread of extremist ideologies. The YRP may also consider the establishment of a Truth and Reconciliation Commission (TRC), which is a transitional justice technique used to bring justice, healing and reconciliation in post-conflict or post-authoritarian areas, to promote national healing.

Tunisia –

1. Developing a Grameen Bank of sorts – Considering how big of a problem unemployment is in Tunisia, I propose the solution of establishing something similar to the Grameen Bank in Tunisia. Grameen Bank is a bank focused on the development of the community. Now this bank provides microfinancing services to unemployed or low-income individuals who otherwise don't have access to such services. This bank was founded by Professor Muhammad Yunus in Bangladesh and it gives small loans to people who are experiencing poverty and the bank doesn't require them to pledge to give their possessions in case loan is not given, unlike other banks who require loan takers to give the bank the right to take control of one of their possessions as a back up if a loan is not paid. The best part about this bank are the low interest rates. There is an interest rate of 20% is used for income generation loans which are used to start or expand businesses.

Then there is a 8% interest rate for housing loans for these citizens to buy a proper house and a 5% student loan to send kids to home. Lastly there is a 0% interest rate for loans to members who are struggling quite a lot. However, the reason why this bank is successful in Bangladesh is because the Bangladeshi government has exempted the Grameen bank from paying taxes, allowing them to not worry too much about finances. I suggest that Tunisia should also have a Grameen Bank of its own. However, considering the lack of political stability in Tunisia, I believe that the United Nations Development Programme will have to work with World Bank in order to create a Grameen Bank of sorts in Tunisia as well. But before creating a bank like this UNDP should do a thorough analysis of foreign economists or high professional economists within Tunisia as well who can take charge of Tunisia's Grameen Bank once it has been established. Moreover, to do so, Tunisia should take support of Professor Yunus (who created the Grameen Bank in Bangladesh) to ensure the best candidate is picked. Then this candidate should reach out to Bangladesh and Professor Yunus for continuous support while implementing and establishing the Grameen Bank in Tunisia. Once this bank has been established United Nations or Professor Yunus or Grameen Bank's workers or managers should make surprise visits to this bank to ensure no corruption is taking place while at the same time ensuring that the bank is not paying taxes to the government and keeping the bank and its workers safe from the government. I believe the Grameen Bank can create a huge difference in Tunisia by helping encourage entrepreneurship in Tunisia by providing not only financial support to start businesses but also financial advice to help citizens manage their finances and money better. Grameen Bank could also help many Tunisians buy houses, afford food and even send their children to school to help create a more stable and healthier livelihood.

2. Tunisian Recovery Plan (TRP) –First of all, the UN should work with humanitarian organizations and global powers to come with a multilateral trust fund specifically for Tunisian Recovery Plan. Organizations and stakeholders like the European Union, the United States, the Gulf Cooperation Council (GCC), and multilateral institutions such as the World Bank and International Monetary Fund (IMF) can contribute to this fund. The fund would need to be taken from wealthy nations and organization directly by the UN and then using those funds UN should implement this recovery plan. The first course of action for the TRP would be political reforms and transitional justice where a transitional justice commission will be formed, consisting of domestic and international experts or professionals in fields like socio economics, investigative research, law etc. This will be established to investigate into and address past human rights violations & corruption and hold those responsible accountable. This commission will be an independent body monitored by an international oversight body consisting of humanitarian organizations

and the UN to ensure transparency. The UN and the international body must put some pressure on the Tunisian government to adjust their law and judiciary by providing training to judges and asking the decree-laws to be revoked. This pressure will also be to include anti-corruption measures and the international body must work towards the establishment of independent oversight bodies. UN must also diplomatically pressure Tunisia to perform decentralization by dividing power to local governments as well and encouraging citizens or civil groups leaders to run for local government elections. As for the economy, foreign investments can be encouraging if they are closely monitored and overlooked. MNCs like Samsung can look towards opening their manufacturing facilities in Tunisia to promote job creation, revenue generation and invest in education, healthcare and other such social services, like in the case of Vietnam. In order to do this, the TRP must first encourage investments in Tunisia by encouraging public-private partnerships in sectors like infrastructure or technology. International financial institutions will offer guarantees to incentivize private sector participation, making sure the market is fair and competitive to prevent corrupt and increase revenue generation. Tunisia's education systems must also be adjusted to produce the kind of smart labor or workforce the country needs right now in order to create more local businesses in the future and encourage foreign investments as well. TRP can also look towards encouraging civil society groups and NGOs by forming a bridge between international NGOs and local NGOs so the international ones can provide the local ones with training. Though UN and the TRP should also be ready to provide local NGOs and society groups with legal and physical protection. The TRP can also give incentives to the Tunisian government in order for them to comply with reforms and combat corruption. These incentives could include factors like increased access to international. At the same time, the TRP should impose targeted sanctions on corrupt officials and those who block the government's path in removing corruption. TRP can work with the government to invest in the country's tourism industry by preserving and increasing the country's cultural heritage in order to generate more revenue from this industry.

As my interview paper comes to an end, I would like to end it by sharing Ms. Amira advice for authorities. Here's what Ms. Amira had to say; "My advice would be for authorities to prioritize economic stability and job creation. This could involve attracting foreign investments, promoting entrepreneurship, and providing more support for education and healthcare. Additionally, efforts to combat corruption should be intensified, and human rights should be protected and promoted more effectively."

Before I leave, I would like my dear readers to help me in my quest to increase awareness on the Arab Spring Movement by encouraging conversations on this topic, even if they are just amidst

friends. As they say, news spreads fast. So let us all be the agents of change and do our part in ensuring maximum number of people are aware of the silent war Yemeni and Tunisian citizens continue to fight till this date.

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