

DIGNITY PUBLICATION SERIES ON TORTURE AND ORGANISED VIOLENCE
CONFERENCE PROCEEDING

#27

EVERYDAY VIOLENCE AND SECURITY IN TUNISIA

Ed. Rikke Hostrup Haugbølle

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FOREWORD

This conference proceeding is an outcome of the conference 'Everyday Urban Violence in Tunisia and Morocco' hosted By DIGNITY – Danish Institute Against Torture on December 4, 2018 in Copenhagen.

The conference brought together researchers and civil society actors from Tunisia and Denmark with a wide variety of professional and practical backgrounds. However, they all have in common that they work with aspects of 'urban violence', 'everyday violence' and 'security' in Tunisia and Morocco. The presenters were all invited by DIGNITY.

The presentations and discussions at the conference demonstrated that Tunisia in many ways could serve as a model for understanding many of the wider effects and causal patterns that generate violence and security in the Maghreb and the Middle East.

This conference proceeding therefore collects these presentations in order to make them more widely accessible for researchers and practitioners working on similar issues in the region.

The present conference proceeding presents eight of the contributions to the conference together with a background paper that framed the conference. They all reflect on and present various aspects of the key questions which brought the participants together:

Which initial lessons can be learned from the case of Tunisia about key drivers of urban violence in Tunisia, the interrelation between socio-economic inequalities and drivers of urban violence, and how to support initiatives which enhance security for ordinary people?

The articles of the present publication are all transcripts of the oral presentations or extracts of manuscripts prepared for the conference which have subsequently been edited in collaboration with the contributors.

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**Danish-Arab
Partnership Programme**

The UN Sustainable Development Goals and Urban Violence

The conference was set within the framework of the UN Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) No. 11: 'Sustainable Cities and Communities', the SDG no 16: 'Peace, Justice and Strong Institutions', and SDG no. 5: 'Gender Equality' with the aim of creating a shared frame work for understanding the root causes of urban violence and insecurity in Tunisia and Morocco. The presentations were grouped with the SDGs as an overarching frame. In the present publication, the three SDGs also constitute a frame for the contributions.

Why use the SDGs as a framework for understanding everyday and urban violence?



Growing urban populations is one of the 21st century's key developmental challenges on a global scale. Therefore, urban development takes a prominent role in the UN's 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development, which, among other Goals, is reflected through the creation of the SDG 11 and 16. By acknowledging the link between sustainable development and violence prevention, the SDGs guide us toward a safer and better world in which the 25% of the global population that lives in conditions of insecurity, violence and conflict may also benefit from global development.

The enhanced focus on urban development is, however, not only reserved for the UN's 2030 Agenda and the SDGs but is also visible on the agenda of other influential organizations and institutions. In addition, in 2011 the World Bank published its seminal study *Conflict, Security, and Development* which has increased its focus on preventing urban violence, and several donor agencies such as DANIDA and DFID have enhanced their emphasis on issues of urban security.

Yet, as we talk about the emergence of the urban issue, it therefore merits mentioning that SDG 11 is not merely about urban growth per se. With urban growth follows other significant challenges to peaceful and prosperous societies – urban violence being among the most prominent of these. While SDG 11 primarily evolves around the production of sustainable, safe and inclusive cities, the Goal is also relevant as a framework for addressing the challenge of lacking (social and physical) mobility in Tunis and the urban violence occurring as a consequence hereof. By posing the questions *'which everyday experiences and perceptions do urban residents have regarding safety and violence? Why does youth engage in violence in Tunisia and Morocco?'* we want to explore these issues more in depth, providing up to date data, analysis and reflection on the issues.

Obviously, the topic of urban violence is complex, requiring a multidisciplinary approach to addressing the various related challenges. With this in mind, SDG 16 was applied as a framework for approaching the institutional level of the topic through the questions: *'Which relations and forms of co-creation exist between state institutions and urban residents in the production of safety as well as violence? How can public institutions and the security sector handle urban violence and security? And finally, how can citizens, civil society and public institutions cooperate to enhance security?'*

Finally, SDG 5 on gender equality was applied as a frame for covering the gender aspect of urban dynamics, violence and security. The questions related hereto are: *'How is urban violence gendered and generational? How and to what extent does it affect men and women differently? Which role can civil society play in supporting the enhancement of urban security within a gender perspective?'*

SECTION I: SETTING THE SCENE

This section presents an introduction to Tunisia. First, it provides a presentation of various aspects of 'everyday violence' experiences in Tunisia before and after the popular uprising in 2010-11, and of the state of knowledge about (urban and everyday) violence in Tunisia. The subsequent section provides a presentation of reflections on various aspects of 'urban violence' and of DIGNITY's work within the area of 'urban violence'. Furthermore, it reflects on 'urban violence' and 'everyday violence' in the Maghreb countries, and the previous – lack – of attention to the subjects in relation to the Maghreb and Middle East. Finally, the section presents the partnership between DIGNITY and L'Art Rue and their joined project with young men in the Medina of Tunis.

The section contains the following presentations:

Rikke Hostrup Haugbølle: Setting the scene: Tunisia and Everyday Violence and Security

Henrik Rønsbo: DIGNITY's Focus on Urban Violence

Ahlam Chemlali: Urban Violence in the Maghreb

The Partnership between L'Art Rue and DIGNITY in the Medina of Tunis



1. SETTING THE SCENE: TUNISIA AND EVERYDAY VIOLENCE AND SECURITY

By Rikke Hostrup Haugbølle

Rikke Hostrup Haugbølle is senior researcher and consultant with expertise in Tunisia.

*'Our district is safe. The Medina is safe. But when there are problems between our district and another, it is no longer. When you are in conflict with the neighboring district, as soon as you catch one, you hit him! It lasts a week, ten days then we are all in jail where we reconcile. After a while, it starts again.'*¹

In December-January 2010-11, the Tunisian youth together with a wide specter of Tunisians took to the streets and demanded an everyday life of dignity, socio-economic equality and active citizenship. President Ben Ali and his closest family left the country, and Tunisia embarked on a profound transition process. There is no doubt that the Arab popular uprisings have led to the most significant changes in the region of the Middle East and North Africa in our time. Tunisia has come out as the only country where a process of democratization is still taking place: a new, democratic constitution was adopted in 2014, freedom of expression prevails, and free, transparent elections at both parliament and municipal levels have been held.

The past 8 years have delivered reforms, which have secured political reforms and an active civil society, a new constitution, and freedom of expression while the much-needed economic reforms and reforms of the security sector, which would deliver on the initial claims of dignity and equality, have yet to emerge. The years since the Tunisian popular uprising have, however, also brought new but not necessarily better changes for ordinary people's everyday life. In Tunisia, foreign investment has pulled out of the country because of the insecurity the country has faced since the uprising. The economic hardship has led to continued protests by youth throughout Tunisia often ending in violent clashes between police and young people.

The headlines in the West tend to focus on security understood as Western security against migration, jihadism, extreme Islamist violence, and weapon smuggling. It is, however, important to pay attention to the complexity of the issue of 'security'. Likewise, human rights activists, developmental agencies, researchers and politicians often take a macro level approach for explaining policy implication of and supporting the Tunisian transition process. Seldom focus is on what 'security' and 'violence' imply for the Tunisians in their everyday lives.

1 F., male, 25, unemployed, El Maktar district, Medina of Tunis, in DIGNITY study: A Study of Urban Security in the Medina of Tunis, by M. Adnen el Ghali, Dr. Yassine Turki & Ahlam Chemlali (2017).

The conference ‘Everyday Urban Violence and Security in the Maghreb’ and the present conference proceeding publication move beyond the macro level focus and address these questions of ‘everyday urban violence and security’ with a focus on everyday life conditions as well as local, municipal, and national stakeholders.

The Excluded Young Men and Everyday Violence

Since the initial uprising, Tunisian youth have frequently taken to the streets to protest — their slogans and chants bearing a striking resemblance to the demands for dignity that ignited the revolution.

These demands are rooted in the hardships which large numbers of young unemployed men face on a daily basis, namely everyday violence paired with the hostility of and violent clashes with the security forces and the police. Some of the clashes occur during demonstrations, and often result in hundreds of arrests. Those sent to prison often fall prey to radicalization. Other, less violent clashes between the young men and the police occur daily, as young men residing in residential quarters are arbitrarily arrested — sometimes picked up merely while walking down the street — and later interrogated. At other times, the police intervene following clashes between youth groups from different neighbourhoods.

Many of the young men in these residential areas are unemployed and have dropped out of secondary school. They have had trouble with the law and have been jailed for petty crimes. They are caught in a vicious circle because, as one young man attests, “If you enter prison, you’ll often return because whatever you do, you are always at fault.”² These young men are often portrayed as a main threat to Tunisian national security because, for instance, of the image of instability that demonstrations generate.

But at the same time, they themselves are vulnerable and need security, protection, employment, and new dreams. As **Béatrice Dunoyer and Sanaa Moulali** state in their contribution, indeed, the young men of the Medina of Tunis, where l’Art Rue works, are more aimless today than prior to the 2010-11 uprising. They feel neglected and lost in the transition process, which they regard as having been hijacked by elites. ‘These young people no longer have hope or values. They are easy victims of drugs, delinquency and radicalization’, they write in their contribution. This pervasive hopelessness leads many youths to feel as though they are left with only two alternatives: migration or jihadism.³ In his contribution, **Mohamed Ali Ben Zina** demonstrates that also the youth

2 Ibid, 44.

3 56% of Tunisians ages 18-35 (including the highly educated) consider migration. See Afrobarometer, <http://afrobarometer.org/press/more-half-tunisi-as-youth-and-highly-educated-have-considered-emigrating-study-shows>. Furthermore, it is estimated that more than 27,000 Tunisians have tried to become foreign fighters in Iraq and Syria while, however, only 2,900 ended up in the conflict zone. See Aaron Y. Zelin and Jacob Waller, “Tunisia’s Foreign Fighters,” The Washington Institute for Near East Policy (WINEP), Policy-watch 3053 (December 17, 2018), <https://www.washingtoninstitute.org/policy-analysis/view/tunisi-as-foreign-fighters>.

of the two suburbs to Tunis, Etadhamen and Douar Hicher, feel excluded and stigmatized and exposed to experiences of everyday violence, which makes Ben Zina to introduce the notion of 'violence of stigmatization'. In line with Béatrice Dunoyer and Sanaa Moulali he points to the fact that 'these young people are not just in the violence. They are subject to violence and social stigmatization. In other words, they believe that the violence of their peers is a reaction against the violence of the clichés that their neighbourhoods undergo.' The relationship between marginalized urban areas and violence is also highlighted by **Henrik Rønsbo**. In his presentation of DIGNITY's focus on urban violence he states that "marginalized urban areas, to a greater extent than other urban spaces, condense violence, human rights violations, and the absence of protection". He states that human rights violations not only occur in particular situations but that they occur on an everyday basis and is an integral part of violent environments. Therefore, human rights should be seen 'as part of the overall developmental problem that violence constitutes.'

Normalization of Violence as a Life Condition

Everyday violence, however, generally lies beyond the scope of journalists' stories and photographers' lenses, which tend to focus on the public demonstrations. But as **Ahlam Chemlali** argues in her contribution 'Everyday violence has no single form. Rather there are many types of everyday violence in the Maghreb: physical, verbal, emotional and structural.' Tunisian pupils experience daily physical punishment, verbal harassment and stigmatization due to, for example, their parents' life situation. The data provided by Mohamed Ben Zina in his contribution reveals that between 20% and 30% of the surveyed young people report having experienced physical violence in the past year, and that boys are more affected than girls. Women and girls are, however, exposed to many forms of violence. A study has documented that 53,5% of Tunisian women have experienced violence in the public sphere, and 78% state that they have suffered from psychological violence in the public sphere.⁴ But the urban violence and violence in the public also spill over into the homes. **Marie Diernisse Langsted** argues in her contribution that 'violence in the public sphere mirrors the norms and values of the society and has a trickling effect into the homes. In other words, the level of societal violence affects the level of violence at home as well effecting particularly women.' In line with Mohamed Ali Ben Zina, she points to the fact that we must look beyond individual incidents of violence, and increasingly towards the patterns and mechanisms in communities and societies. Local communities, where social relations are built and shaped such as schools, clubs, neighbourhoods, work places, groups and gangs strongly influence the violence, as mentality, culture and attitudes within social networks play an important role in defining what is socially acceptable and what behaviour is accepted at home.

The many places where violence occurs, the various groups of ordinary people experiencing violence and the different forms it takes reflect the many different 'violences' and the complexity of violence in Tunisia.

4 CREDIF, "La violence fondée sur le genre dans l'espace public en Tunisie", 2016, <http://www.credif.org.tn/index.php/les-publications/2011-2016/la-violence-fondee-sur-le-genre-dans-l-espace-public-en-tunisie#>

However, it is important to note that everyday violence in Tunisia is not a novel phenomenon. Nor has it been triggered by the transition process. Due to the authoritarian nature of the former regime, violence and fear were constants in many Tunisians' lives: phones were tapped; young men were subject to arbitrary detention; plain clothed police roamed the streets, tearing headscarves off women; and nightly house searches were all too common. The repression and the everyday violence in Tunisia under the authoritarian regime generated a culture of distrust and fear which persist today.

In her work, Danielle Celermajer raises awareness of the torture in the form of, for instance, the daily abuse of detainees, slaps in the face of someone accused of a petty crime, and abuse by the police of the poor and social marginalized.⁵ To a great extent, this resonates with the conditions of the young men in the Medina of Tunis described by **Adnen El Ghali** in his contribution. Danielle Celermajer argues that when "state agents routinely inflict violence against people over whom they have unilateral and legally sanctioned control, the harms are deep and wide: to the victims of torture, to their families, friends, and communities, to the bonds of trust between communities and state institutions, to the legitimacy of state institutions, to the rule of law, and to the institutions that become saturated with a culture of violence."⁶ Hence, when a large group such as the Tunisian young men are exposed to daily attacks, lack influence over their own life, are marginalized, humiliated, and stripped of their dignity, violence will often ensue. As Adnen El Ghali puts it in his contribution: 'This "anticipatory violence" feeds the vicious circle of violence.' In the same vein, Ahlam Chemlali concludes, that 'violence is so deeply imbedded in Tunisians' everyday lives that it is barely perceived as violence, but rather a premise of life.' Violence has been normalized.

The Emerging Field of Urban Violence Studies and Tunisia's Everyday Violence

The Tunisian transitional process represents an important opportunity for developing new research questions, to consider the relevance of new research fields and methodological approaches. 'Urban violence', 'everyday violence' and 'perception of security by the Tunisians' are among these emerging fields.

"Urban violence" studies have gained ground since the mid-1990s. Caroline Moser notes that 'for more than 20 years now, academics and practitioners alike have considered urban violence [...] a critical constraint on development for cities in the Global South [...]. By the early 2000s, some researchers — many rooted in the realities of Latin American cities — had begun [...] to describe urban violence.'⁷ Urban violence research initially focused on defining the phenomenon, and subsequently on understanding its relationship with poverty and inequality.⁸

5 Danielle Celermajer, *The Prevention of Torture. An Ecological Approach*. Cambridge University Press (2018): 2.

6 Ibid, 3.

7 Caroline Moser, "Foreword", in (eds) Salahub, Jennifer Erin, Markus Gottsbacher, and John de Boer, *Social Theories of Urban Violence in the Global South. Towards Safe and Inclusive Cities*. London and New York: Routledge (2018) xv.

8 Ibid.

It is striking, however, that despite this presence of violence in many forms and at many levels in Tunisians' everyday lives, Tunisia is not featured within the research field of urban violence and everyday violence. (For that matter, neither is the Maghreb or the wider Middle East.) The absence of such studies in the case of Tunisia is caused by at least three factors.

Firstly, before the uprising, Tunisians did not talk about violence and fear. The very foundation of former president Ben Ali's regime was based on state violence, surveillance and crackdowns — with some instances occurring in full public view and many others performed surreptitiously. Tunisia was a state of fear, where people kept silent about their personal experience of repression for fear of reprisal. A female member of the then-illegal Ennahda Party explained that when she would pass her party colleagues on the street, they refrained from greeting each other or even making eye contact, lest they evoke suspicion by other passersby,⁹ who might be on the state payroll as informants. Only after the uprising, Tunisians began talking openly about their past experiences with everyday violence.¹⁰ To some extent, however, the subject of everyday violence is still taboo, especially the domestic violence experienced by women and their children. What happens within the home is considered a strictly private matter.

Secondly, researchers have only to a very limited extent carried out field work about and documented everyday violence and violence by state actors perpetrated prior to the Tunisian and other Arab uprisings. In the case of Tunisia, there are very few such studies.¹¹ This can be explained by constraints imposed by authoritarian regimes on those seeking to conduct field research. Janine Clark has concluded that, "When questioned as to the greatest difficulties encountered in the field, respondents overwhelmingly reported issues that directly or indirectly were a result of the authoritarian political climate."¹² Clark further observes that many researchers have faced difficulties carrying out qualitative interviews because of "the political sensitivity of the topic and interviewees' willingness to speak openly due, most commonly, to political repression [...] interviewees' mistrust and nervousness in speaking frankly to researchers for fear of political repercussions."¹³

9 Interview with an individual who prefers to remain anonymous. Jerba, May 2011.

10 See for instance Doris Gray and Terry Coonan, "Notes from the Field: Silence Kills! Women and the Transitional Justice Process in Post-Revolutionary Tunisia," *The International Journal of Transitional Justice* 7 (2013): 348-357.

11 See, for example, Béatrice Hibou, *La force de l'obéissance: Économie politique de la répression en Tunisie* (Paris: Découverte, 2006); Vincent Geisser and Éric Gobe, "Des fissures dans la 'Maison Tunisie'? Le régime de Ben Ali face aux mobilisations protestataires," *L'Année du Maghreb 2005-2006*, II, Paris, CNRS-Éditions (2007): 353-414; and Oliver Schlumberger (ed.), *Debating Arab Authoritarianism. Dynamics and Durability in Nondemocratic Regimes*, Stanford University Press (2008).

12 Janine A. Clark, "Field Research Methods in the Middle East," *PS: Political Science & Politics* 39, 3 (July 2006): 418.

13 Ibid.

Finally, while research in Tunisia is lagging in the field of urban studies in general, poverty and inequality are issues which have passed almost unnoticed by scholars in the case of Tunisia. To a large extent, the former regime successfully maintained the façade that the country was prosperous and growing economically.¹⁴ It came as a shock to many Tunisians after the uprising that certain urban areas and regions of the country were poor. Documenting this poverty and its wider implications, including its relationship to urban violence, is an important task — and one that has yet to be undertaken in earnest. In his contribution, Mohamed Ali Ben Zina provides important new data about the relation between poverty and violence in two suburbs of Tunis.

Towards a Holistic Approach to Everyday Violence

Violence and insecurity in Tunisia are structural and systemic and constrains the lives of ordinary citizens and their ability to become full and active participants in Tunisian democracy. One of the most urgent challenges after the popular uprising is to create a secure environment, which is conducive to development and good governance.¹⁵ In this publication, **Maxime L. Poulin** points to Tunisia as ‘the Arab country where Security Sector Reform is the most promising’. In his presentation of security sector reforms (SSR) in general, and in the context of Tunisia, Maxime L. Poulin explains that ‘SSR is the political and technical process of improving state and human security by making security provision, management and oversight more effective and more accountable, within a framework of democratic civilian control, rule of law and respect for human rights.’ As has been described above, the security institutions were key pillars of the former Tunisian authoritarian rule. Hence, security sector reforms are crucial to address the deep root structures of the former regime. However, as Maxime L. Poulin stresses in his conclusion, security sector reforms are ‘particularly challenging, given the multiplicity of actors involved’. Tunisian civil society has pushed for security sector reforms the past six or seven years. But in line with Maxime L. Poulin, **Amine Ghali** explains in his contribution that it ‘is difficult as the issue is sensitive, many parties with different interests are involved and impacted by such reforms and seek to protect their own position.’

While the Tunisian Ministry of Foreign Affairs and some of the foreign support to security sector reforms in Tunisia tend to focus on ‘hard changes’ such as training of security sector personnel, border control and providing of equipment, other initiatives have also been launched with focus on ‘soft changes’; among these dialogue, community policing and local security councils. In his presentation of the recent initiative of creating Local Security Councils, Amine Ghali provides a deeper understanding of the multiplicity of actors involved: The idea of the councils is to put three players together: The security sector, the local authorities, and civil society. In a society marked by distrust and fear this is not an easy task. But the councils give these often-opposed actors a space where they can sit

14 Rikke Hostrup Haugbølle and Francesco Cavatorta, “The End of Authoritarian Rule and the Mythology of Tunisia under Ben Ali,” *Mediterranean Politics* 17, 2 (July 2012): 179-195.

15 Middle East Institute, “Civilianizing” the State in the MENA and the Asia Pacific Regions”, April 30 (2014), <https://www.mei.edu/publications/civilianizing-state-mena-and-asia-pacific-regions>

together, talk, and identify problems. Amine Ghali explains, that ‘urban violence’ might be a title of probably 50% of the problems identified by the participants in the Local Security Councils.’ Hence, he concludes that ‘urban violence’ could be a very interesting subject to develop and implement as a core theme for the further development of the Local Security Councils.

Engaging civil society at the local level seems to constitute a fruitful context for bringing about changes of ‘everyday violence and security in Tunisia’. In his contribution, **Souhail Belhadj-Klaz** states that while the Tunisian state lacks the resources to fill the void of everyday security, it is ‘possible to mobilize these missing resources by relying on civil society to better address the current challenges of violence and urban security in Tunisia.’ In his contribution Souhail Belhadj-Klaz suggests that the engagement of civil society is, however, contested by conflicts between the state and the municipal administrations, and by internal struggles inside the administration. He concludes, nevertheless, that ‘promoting the engagement of the local level institutions in Tunisia, namely the Municipalities, in the prevention of urban violence is a first step toward the collaboration of local communities and citizens to ensure the security of their urban space.’

As the contributions in these conference proceedings clearly document, everyday experiences of violence constitute a root cause of the challenges for further progress in the – so far – successful Tunisian transitional process and in the development of a participatory democracy. They also document the complexity of the field of ‘everyday violence and security’ in Tunisia with its inherited structural and systemic culture of violence, structural challenges of the institutions, the multiplicity of actors involved, the population’s disappointment with the political elite, the youth feeling lost, and the critical economy and rising unemployment. For many reasons, the field of ‘urban violence’ is only now being introduced to a Tunisian context. However, the contributions in this conference proceeding clearly indicate that there is a need for generating new knowledge about ‘urban and everyday violence and security’ in Tunisia and that such knowledge must apply a holistic and both bottom-up and top-down approach to ‘everyday violence’ and ‘security’ in Tunisia to capture the full picture of the complexity. The holistic approach also implies that civil society actors and researchers join forces and together explore the field of ‘urban and everyday violence and security’ in Tunisia.

The conference and the following contributions in this conference proceeding publication provide a first attempt of such a holistic approach to the emerging field of ‘urban and everyday violence and security’ in the Maghreb and the Middle East.

2. DIGNITY'S FOCUS ON URBAN VIOLENCE

By Henrik Rønsbo

Henrik Rønsbo is senior researcher and director of the Department of Prevention of Urban Violence at DIGNITY.

Defining Urbanism

Urbanism is not merely a policy approach, it is a term that sets forth the position that the emergence of urban space marks a qualitatively transformation in the history of human society. As Henri Lefebvre asserted in his seminal work 'The Production of Space' it is not until the emergence of cityscapes as structures, topographies and scenes of humans' political, material and creative practice that we encounter a social space, that is the urban space, which is nothing but the sediments of our own history. Because the city is integrated by everyday life in material, functional and symbolic forms it is our assertion that ultimately, issues of urban development – and among these insecurity, violence and human rights violations – cannot be approached without taking into consideration the everyday lives of urban residents and the ways in which such lives make the city.

On one hand everyday life is framed by urban social space as encountered, while on the other hand everyday life and the creativity nested therein continues to generate new openings, new structures and thus, new social spaces in the city. While this position represents a theoretical perspective, it is one that undergirds DIGNITY's engagement in the prevention of urban violence, not only in Tunis but also beyond.

Challenges Linked to Urban Areas and DIGNITY's Work in Relation to Urbanism

Marginalized urban areas, to a greater extent than other urban spaces, condense violence, human rights violations, and the absence of protection. This is so because marginality entails that key livelihood resources (i.e. mobility, work, health, water) are mediated by violent networks and gangs. This entails that the overall development target of DIGNITY is that urban residents not only have rights in the city, but also rights to the city.

But what does the issue of urban violence have to do with torture?

Obviously, the co-presence of violations, absence of protection and high incidences of violence in particular urban spaces suggest that these issues are interrelated. Human rights violations occur in violent environments; they are an integral part of them and should be seen as part of the overall developmental problem that violence constitutes.

Working isolated with specific forms of human rights violations, such as torture, in settings dominated by a multitude of other kinds of violence makes little sense to local stakeholders. Instead one must assume the broader perspective and assess the

various forms of human rights violations taking place in these areas altogether, as the following two examples will demonstrate.

Consider this excerpt from an interview with a young man from the Medina in Tunis:

“when they [the police] intervene by beating us up, how do you want us to behave? You must hit back to save yourself. Here, it’s full of dead ends, sometimes you come face-to-face with [a policeman]. You have to hit and run away, or they’ll get you down [...] Even if you did not do anything, he [the policeman] gives you a beating! And talk to you roughly, insult your mother, that kind of thing! And you, you did not do anything! How do you want to live? Here in the Medina, how do you want to behave with villains, and how to behave with the police? Violence started with them. They are the ones who rooted violence in us. They behave badly with us; how do you want us to behave well?” (male, 25, unemployed, living in El Maktar district).

Such a story could be narrated by millions of poor, young men across the globe. The securitization of urban poverty generates urban spaces in which violent behaviour is the norm, which this young unemployed man bears witness to.

Women’s experiences are often different, although they express the same concerns about violence and lack of protection in public space, as the story of a group of women from Danlí in eastern Honduras suggest. These women came to know and trust each other while participating in a Diploma Course on urban violence prevention, and through their work there they came to realize that they had all been harassed by the same driver of a public taxi, whom routinely picked up female passengers (girls and young women) in front of primary, secondary and high schools and sexually assaulted them. The case was taken up by a female public prosecutor also participating in the Diploma Course, and the man arrested. He is now awaiting sentencing.

These two anecdotes attest to the broad scope of violence and violations that take place in the city. While human rights lawyers may disagree whether the systematic lack of protection against gender-based violence falls under the Torture Convention, we cannot, when we work with people facing everyday violence, ask these local stakeholders to only focus on the textbook torture cases. It is unethical, it is unfeasible, and it is unsustainable. The end to impunity for textbook torture requires that all impunities are addressed. So, as we work with torture, cruel, inhuman, degrading treatment and punishment (TCIDT&P), we must recognize that such experiences are often segmented by issues of gender, generation, race, class and ethnicity and entangled with other experiences of violence and violation.

But there is another reason why DIGNITY has a broad violence-prevention perspective and why a narrow focus on text-book torture makes little sense.

The Role of the State and the Control of Violence

Since the end of the Cold War, we have seen the rapid growth of what has been termed ‘violent pluralities’, polities in which the institutional density and strength of the state has been weakened, and in which new forms and configurations of violent actors have come forward. Nowhere is this more marked than in the growing cities of the global south.

With the dismantling of the developmentalist state and the collapse of the bi-polar world order during the 1980s, we saw the emergence of a new kind of violently plural societies emerging together with electoral democracies. This has been the case in Latin America, Mena, Sub-Saharan Africa and Asia as well. In such situations, the textbook-definition of torture will often be inadequate for understanding how torture is perpetrated and by whom. In many of these societies it is the absence of protection from violent actors which is the principal violation of the convention, and in densely settled urban areas this is one of the key issues, as multiple violent agents compete over the control of space, consumers and tax-payers to be exploited through rent-seeking activities, leading to corruption and extortion. Much of DIGNITY's research supports these conclusions, that is, street gangs, political organizations, private security companies, vigilante groups, and organized crime syndicates all partake in the reproduction of violent societies, where the state is unwilling or unable to maintain the monopoly of violence.

In such cases we could say that torture is driven by a supply and a demand side. On one hand a supply provided by actors which engage in the production of violence - gangs, police and private security - and on the other hand actors which demand torture such as judicial apparatuses dependent on confessions, middle-classes fearful of violent crime, business owners demanding safe public spaces for their investors and themselves, political leaders seeking to improve their positions in inter-elite struggles, through violent organization of youth and drug-cartels seeking to control markets and consumers by supporting local gangs.

Towards a Solution

We suggest that instead of working on the fundamental causes of violence such as income inequality, we should approach the prevention of urban violence from a pragmatic standpoint, looking at what works, where it works, and for whom it works. In order to do so, we rely on partnerships.

Obviously, there are no single solutions to these complex sets of problems without the police. Police forces ipso facto owns the agenda of public security. To seek sustainable solutions without this institution is neither viable nor desirable. But the police alone cannot deliver on the agenda without the active collaboration of civil society and citizens.

Safe urban space is a co-creation of the state and the citizenry. It requires that collectives and groups are recognized as relevant counterparts of the police, thus moving beyond the neo-liberal agenda's one-sided focus on the individualized citizens as the object of security, and towards the recognition of human communities as objects of security and agents in their own rights.

The strength of such co-created spaces builds on the resilience of urban communities towards ongoing everyday violence and is most likely the only ameliorative action we can confirm as being effective in the both the short-, medium and long terms. Such co-created spaces of action insert in the fabric of society a redundancy, which neither justice nor security sector reform is able to achieve.

3. URBAN VIOLENCE IN THE MAGHREB

By Ahlam Chemlali

Ahlam Chemlali is project manager at DIGNITY, project on prevention of violence in the Medina of Tunis.

The growth of the urban population is one of the 21st century's key development challenges. This is no different for North Africa and the Maghreb region: Urban realities are at the heart of changes - transforming the Maghreb countries of Morocco, Algeria, Tunisia, Libya and Egypt. Over only a few decades urbanization has been massive, rapid and sometimes even brutal, profoundly disrupting lifestyles and social structures. Itself a product of social transformations - urbanization in turn produces its own social changes.

It is important to stress that the cities and urban centres of the Maghreb are not homogeneous. They are in fact characterized by great diversity: diversity among the countries of the Maghreb, diversity among the cities within each country and even diversity of social geographies within urbanized areas.

Nevertheless, we do see common trends for the Maghreb countries. They are characterized by high urbanization rates, extreme forms of inequality, political instability and volatility. Rising urban inequality across parameters of security, income, education and health has intensified local struggles over access to resources, democratic participation and the right to sustainable futures in the city. We know that urban residents in the Maghreb are vulnerable to ill-treatment and organized violence – both from within the urban landscape and from states preoccupied with issues of macro level security in the frame of 'terrorism'. Nevertheless, *everyday experiences* of violence are a burden to a larger number of ordinary citizens in the Maghreb and constitute a root cause of pending social and political challenges in the region.

The topic remains, nevertheless, for various reasons to a large extent unaddressed. Focus among scholars, human rights activists, developmental agencies and politicians is often on policy implication and understanding state violence and violent extremism. Focus is seldom on the everyday safety concerns of urban residents.

As a consequence of the headlines' focus on Tunisia's first free election, its new constitution, process of dialogue and Nobel Prize, economic turmoil and armed attacks from presumed Islamists, it has been forgotten that the Tunisian revolt in fact was initiated through acts of everyday-violence: it was an act of frustration over the experienced violence, unemployment, corruption and hence an undignified life that led the fruit vendor Bouazizi to set himself on fire. He was but one out of millions of Tunisians who had enough of living an unworthy life and joined the uprising. Violence exercised by the state, security forces and other authorities, and the visible and invisible control through surveillance of citizens acted out by the police was the foundation of President Ben Ali's regime. Unfounded imprisonment of young men, civilian police dragging off women's religious scarf on the street, tapping into civilians'

phones as a means of surveillance, and nightly domestic searches conducted by the police was all part of everyday life for Tunisians up until the revolt. However, because nobody spoke of it, we do not yet know the full extent and consequences of these conditions. The violence bred mistrust and fear. Violence – and the fear of violence – made it difficult and dangerous for researchers – both Tunisian and international – to carry out fieldwork and interviews. This is another reason why so little knowledge has been generated about the everyday violence that the Tunisians have lived. Yet violence was not only state violence, but also everyday-violence, and it continues to exist throughout all phases of life in Tunisia: Tunisian students daily experience physical punishment, young men are still subjected to random interrogations when they walk the streets, and close to 50% of all young Tunisian girls and women experience domestic violence. Violence is so deeply imbedded in Tunisians' everyday lives that it is barely perceived as violence, but rather a premise of life. Violence has, in other words, been normalized.

Everyday violence has no single form. Rather there are many types of everyday violence in the Maghreb: physical, verbal, emotional and structural. They have in common that they all result in dehumanization, humiliation and exclusion from the society – resulting in social death. In Tunisia, it was the social death, which triggered the popular uprising and caused the root claims of the Tunisian uprising: social and economic dignity and active citizenship.

While police violence against demonstrators, economic instability, terror and violent extremism, and migration control are crucial aspects of understanding post-uprising Tunisia, this focus and big headlines lead to a disregard of the safety concerns of the majority of ordinary urban residents.

Therefore, DIGNITY supports Tunisian and international civil society actors and researchers who are working hard to shift the discourse and the attention away from the stereotype sensational headlines to everyday safety concerns of urban residents.

Thus, since, 2017 DIGNITY has extended its collaboration in Tunisia with a focus on urban violence. The objective is to explore the key drivers and root causes of urban violence in Tunisia and its interrelation with socio-economic inequalities, with the aim of identifying ways to support and implement initiatives, which enhance security and prevent violence for ordinary people in their everyday lives.

Together with its Tunisian partners DIGNITY thereby moves beyond the macro level focus on the state to address the everyday living conditions of ordinary urban citizens, of the Tunisian youth, of Tunisia's women, and of the migrants residing in Tunisia in an attempt to support the transition towards democracy and social and economic prosperity.

4. PARTNERSHIP BETWEEN L'ART RUE AND DIGNITY IN THE MEDINA OF TUNIS

The young people of the Medina of Tunis are aimless and often without hope and values in life. They are easy victims of drugs addiction, delinquency and radicalization. At the same time, headlines about Tunisia's transition process often tend to focus on macro-trends such as the political developments, small and large-scale demonstrations, economic instability, terror attacks and violent extremism, and migration and a disregard of the safety concerns of the ordinary Tunisians.

DIGNITY's Urban Violence Department supports Tunisian and international civil society actors and researchers who are working to shift the discourse and the attention away from stereotypical headlines to focus on everyday safety concerns of urban residents. Since 2017, DIGNITY has extended its support to Tunisia and established a partnership with the civil society organization **L'Art Rue**.

L'Art Rue sees art as a means for economic and social development. The organization is located in one of the old, wonderful houses, Dar Bach Hamda, in the Medina of Tunis. Dar Bach Hamda is a factory of artistic space and activities towards the neighbourhood, the entire medina, the town of Tunis and the world.



The objectives of the partnership between DIGNITY and L'Art Rue are to explore key drivers and root causes of urban violence in Tunisia and to support and implement initiatives, which enhance security and prevent violence for ordinary people in their everyday lives. One of the concrete joint projects is a dance workshop for young men residing in the medina. The joined project of DIGNITY and L'Art Rue for the young men in the Medina builds on the pilot study *A Study on Urban Security in the Medina of Tunis*¹⁶ carried out by the Tunisian researchers Adnen el Ghali and Yassine Turki together with DIGNITY.

At the conference, L'Art Rue programme director Béatrice Dunoyer explained about the project:

'Through art we give the young men another driver, an occupation and the possibility of dreaming about a better future. In the house of L'Art Rue we act against radicalization and hopelessness by creating a shared urban space with common artistic creation. We can change the world perception of the young people who are trying to escape a life without any meaning.

The Medina of Tunis where the house of L'Art Rue is situated has two faces: Night and day. At night the medina is closed, there is no light and the young men go out to drink and take drugs. They have no urban spaces, no activities to share or other ways to interact except the clashes between the different neighbourhoods.

So the idea of L'Art Rue was to create a show that could reunite these young people, who are belonging to 15 different neighbourhoods in the medina. Little by little the young people came regularly and started to trust us and the artist, Serge Aimé Coulibaly. After three months of work, we had a group which would go out together, that will come to our place even when the artist is not there.

Hence, we succeeded in creating trust and that is very important. To meet the young people with trust, to give them a way out, new values – that is important. Because why do they go to Syria as foreign fighters for example? They are looking for values; they want someone to show an interest for them.'

In their contribution to this conference publication, Béatrice Dunoyer and Sanaa Moulali from L'Art Rue explain in detail about the everyday challenges of the young men and the projects of L'Art Rue.

16 Adnen El Ghali, Yassine Turki, and Ahlam Chemlali, "A Study of Urban Security in the Medina of Tunis," DIGNITY Publication Series on Torture and Organized Violence, No. 21 (2018): 55, https://dignity.dk/wp-content/uploads/publication_series_no21-1.pdf.



SECTION II: IDENTIFYING THE EVERYDAY VIOLENCE IN URBAN SETTINGS



Urban growth in space and population entails several challenges to the development and maintenance of peaceful and prosperous societies. Among these challenges, urban violence stands out as one of the most prominent. Urban development takes a prominent role in the UN's 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development and is addressed with the Sustainable Development Goal No. 11. While SDG no. 11 mainly addresses the production of sustainable, safe and inclusive urban spaces in the world's largest urban slums, it also relevant as a framework for assessing

the lacking social and physical mobility in popular areas of Tunis and Tunisia, and the urban violence occurring as a consequence hereof.

This section explores, identifies, documents and describes the multiplicity of ordinary Tunisians who experience the complexities of violence in their everyday lives, the consequence which violence has for the ordinary Tunisians, and the many places where violence occurs.

The section contains the following presentations::

Mohammed Ali Ben Zina: Youth and Violence (s) in the Popular neighbourhoods of Douar Hicher and Etadhamen

Marie Diernisse Langsted: Everyday Violence Against Women in Tunisia

Adnen El Ghali: Key actors in the Prevention of Urban Violence: The Case of the Medina of Tunis

Béatrice Dunoyer & Sanaa Moulali: Fighting Everyday Violence Through Art in the Medina of Tunis

5. YOUTH AND VIOLENCE(S) IN THE POPULAR NEIGHBOURHOODS OF DOUAR HICHER AND ETADHAMEN

By Mohamed Ali Ben Zina

Mohamed Ali Ben Zina is lecturer and researcher at the Department of Sociology, University of Tunis.

This paper focuses on young people in Douar Hicher and Etadhamen, which are two popular neighbourhoods of Tunis, the capital of Tunisia. A sociological study was devoted to them and the main findings have been published¹⁷. However, a theme which occurred during the study but has not been published is presented here, namely violence. Why did we choose these two neighbourhoods? Douar Hicher and Etadhamen are very close to Tunis, within 6 kilometers of the city centre. However, the worn-out infrastructure of these neighbourhoods, the socio-economic problems experienced by its inhabitants, as well as the events reported by the media about both neighbourhoods since the 2010-11 revolution often convey an image of violence, crime and religious extremism, which make these neighbourhoods the very image of marginalization.

Consequently, the young people living here suffer from stigmatization and different kinds of violence, which became accentuated after the 2010-11 revolution.

The two neighbourhoods have existed since 1985 and emerged through different periods, following an immigration movement from rural and interiors zones of Tunisia to the capital in the 1960s. The waves of urbanization continued in the 1980s and 1990s and decreased slightly after. Today, they have a high population density: 82.922 inhabitants in Etadhamen, and 83.317 inhabitants in Douar Hicher¹⁸. The city of Etadhamen is considered as the locality having the highest density of the population with 2.456 inhabitants / km² in 2010. Official reports acknowledge that they suffer from poverty and problems of infrastructure, in addition to the low performance of schools compared to other localities in Tunis.

Through empirical work realized for the study mentioned above, we sought to elucidate the perceptions that young people have about their neighbourhood before and after the revolution. Overall, they confirm that pejorative social representations related to their neighbourhood have not changed: violence, fights and theft still prevail which in turn reproduce stigmatization. After the revolution, the label of terrorism and Salafism is added to the list of attributes that disqualify Douar Hicher and Etadhamen.

17 Olfa Lamloum, Mohamed Ali Ben Zina (dir.), *Les jeunes de Douar Hicher et Etadhamen, une enquête sociologique*, Editions arabesques et Alert International, Tunis (2015).

18 2010 census of the population.

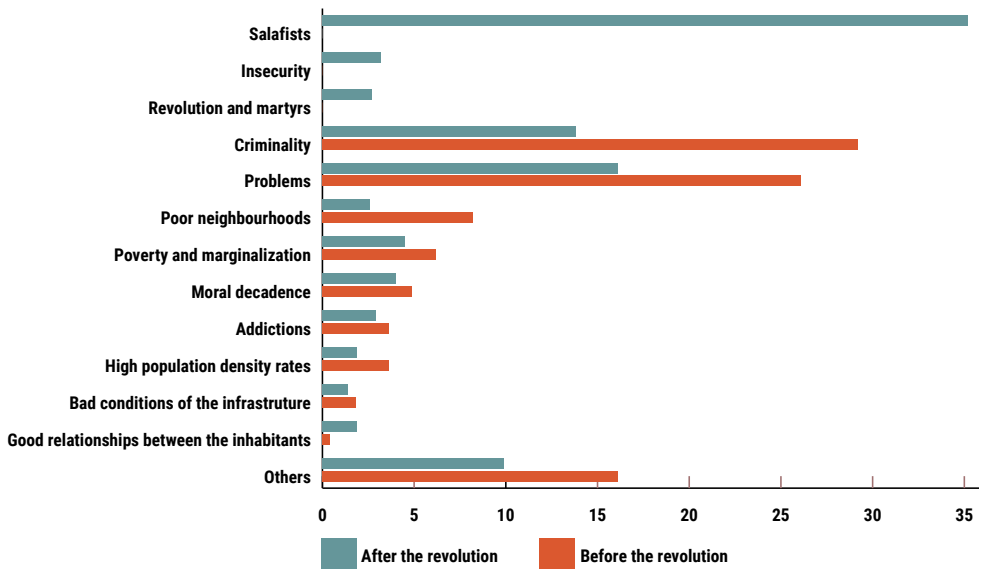


FIGURE 1: WHAT ARE THE NEIGHBOURHOODS OF ETADHAMEN AND DOUAR HICHER KNOWN FOR?

Socio-Professional Categories and Educational Level of the Youth

Comparing the profession of the young people (figure 2, in green) and that of the fathers (in orange), we noticed that about 1/3 of these young people have fathers who are working in the precarious jobs (day workers, unsecure jobs), and so living in vulnerable socioeconomic situation. This precarious work situation is also an inter-generational phenomenon; youth unemployment has high rates in those neighbourhoods. The family then continues, despite the vulnerability of its situation, to assume these young people lacking prospects.

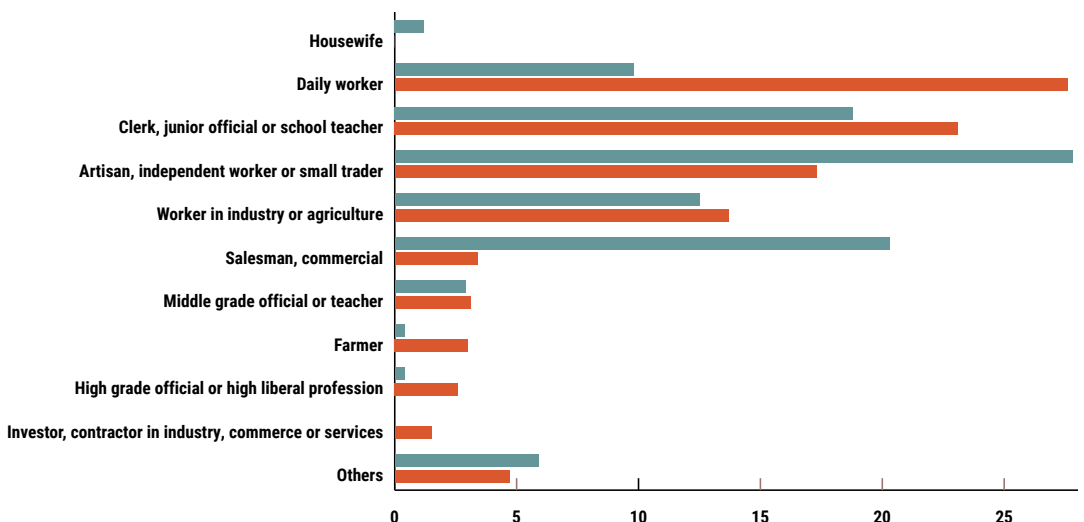


FIGURE 2: SOCIO-PROFESSIONAL CATEGORIES

The situation is different for education. Comparing fathers to young people, the rate of analphabetism has been reduced by 10 points. More young people have access to higher education and almost 28 % of them hold a university diploma, which is not the case for parents (only 3 % for the fathers). The huge educational gap between generations, however, has not led to an improvement of socio-economic conditions for young people. Precariousness, poverty and marginality often characterize young people of those neighbourhoods.

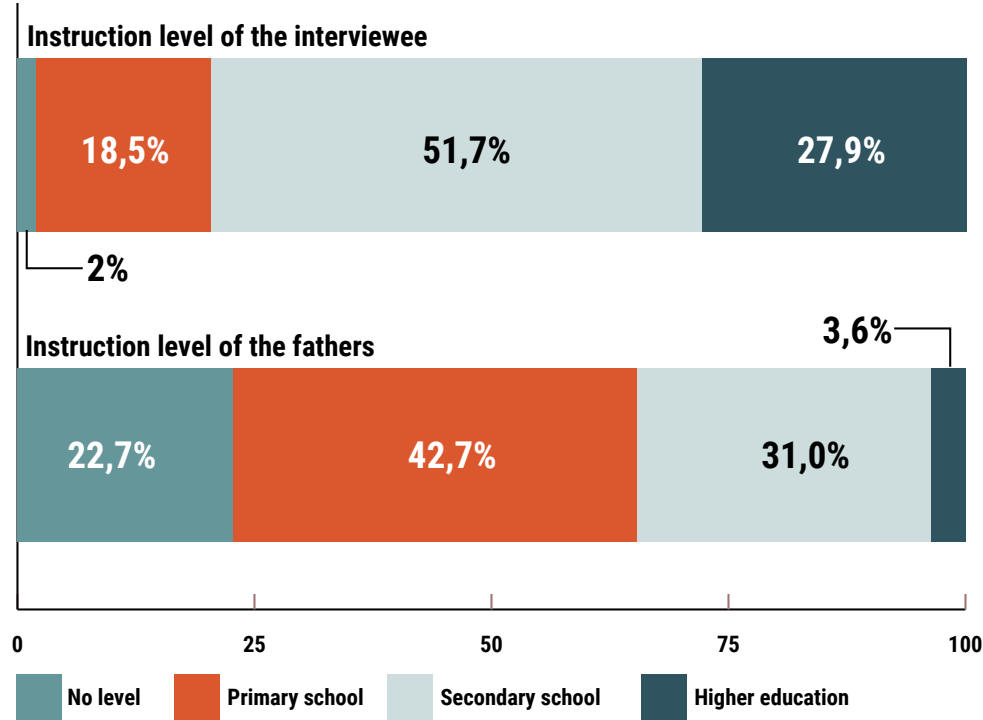


FIGURE 3: LEVEL OF EDUCATION

Young Lives in Douar Hicher and Etadhamen and Impact of Stigmatization

Despite the stigmatization of their neighbourhood, young people of Douar Hicher and Etadhamen claim that they present themselves to others as inhabitants of these popular neighbourhoods, and do not try to hide their belonging (72% of them recognize their belonging). However, these young people seek to stand out from the pejorative image of their area by claiming their distance from extreme behaviour (violence, theft, fanaticism). It's the others who do that, not them. Even the offenses they commit are tiny. They claim to live a life in peace.

Above all, young people insist to show respect for traditional and patriarchal social codes, such as respect for the elderly and protection of girls and women of the neighbourhood. Their main problem, which can lead them to certain so-called deviant behaviour, is poverty (they use the word *zwewla*, which means poor). According to them, taking drugs, having risky behaviour and revolt, as well as listening to rap music are just expressions of anger in a vulnerable socio-economic situation.

To justify behaviours that they perceive as “abnormal” or deviant, young people evoke feelings of exclusion and stigmatization. As one of the interviewees tells: *‘There is a bad image of the city Etadhamen. However, they are just poor people, “zwewla”. Young people have problems, but they respect adults. When a girl passes in the street, they respect her. Their biggest problem is poverty; they do not have anything to eat. If the young man starts taking drugs, he becomes crazy, the rap made them more and more crazy. So he takes a knife and rob to have money for drugs, otherwise they are “zwewla”. Even young men who have been to prison want to work and live quietly. If they did not have their parents, they would be lost, because they have nothing else. Everyone needs to find a small job in order to live because people in Douar Hicher are really poor, “zwewla”. I hope I will find one soon then I will be away from all troubles. (Ahmad, precarious young man from Douar Hicher).*

Ammar, a young worker man from Douar Hicher, said: *‘I know this neighbourhood more than anyone. In fact, it’s not the same everywhere in here, there are categories. This part for example is better than the one upper. There, as soon as he opens his eyes, the young person sees only people who spend their lives in prison and a lot of crimes. Parents miraculously survive in those hard-living conditions. All follow the same path. But in our part of the neighbourhood, we educate, we respect adults, we know what to do and what not to do, the Haram. Here, all are working and do not commit infractions, that’s why they hide sometimes the fact of being from Douar Hicher and say they are from Mannouba. It’s mostly girls who do that, I do not know why! I believe the most important thing is whom you are, not the place where you live. Otherwise, there are doctors and lawyers from Douar Hicher; real men “rjel” From here.’*

We also asked a young man, Ammar, the questions: *‘So the image others have about your neighbourhood is good?’ His answer was no. In his speech, he tried to explain the reasons of this pejorative representation: ‘People in Douar Hicher are partly responsible for the bad image about the city. Here is very different from other cities: too many people who go to jail, others do stupid things when they go to Tunis. Once arrested because of their infractions, they are asked: where are you from? Generally from Douar Hicher. It is obvious that the State/ government does not fulfill its duty, but they cannot satisfy everybody. Here people are in huge misery, they live too close to each other, and necessarily they will follow each other. In these neighbourhoods, there is too much drugs, in consequence, the young consume very early, except a minority’.*

The situation in the neighbourhood is described with much bitterness and rage: around them, they see all kinds of crimes, young people perish in prisons, poor people who remain poor, experiences and lives that are similar and reproduced.

For young men, the girls are those who hide their belonging to Douar Hicher or Etadhamen, saying they are from Manouba. This lying is not appreciated because the two neighbourhoods are not only composed of criminals and deviants. Also doctors, professors and martyrs are born and raised there.

In this way, the social structures faced by these young people are also questioned in the explanation of some misfits, violence and crime. These young people are not just in the violence. They are subject to violence and social stigmatization. In other words, they believe that the violence of their peers is a reaction against the violence of the clichés that their neighbourhoods undergo.

Physical Violence and Assault

22,6% of the interviewed people declare being subject to physical aggression during the past year, most of them the boys. We noticed also that professional and educational status have an important role in the risk of violence: unemployed and inactive people (30%) are more exposed to violence, as are the least educated one.

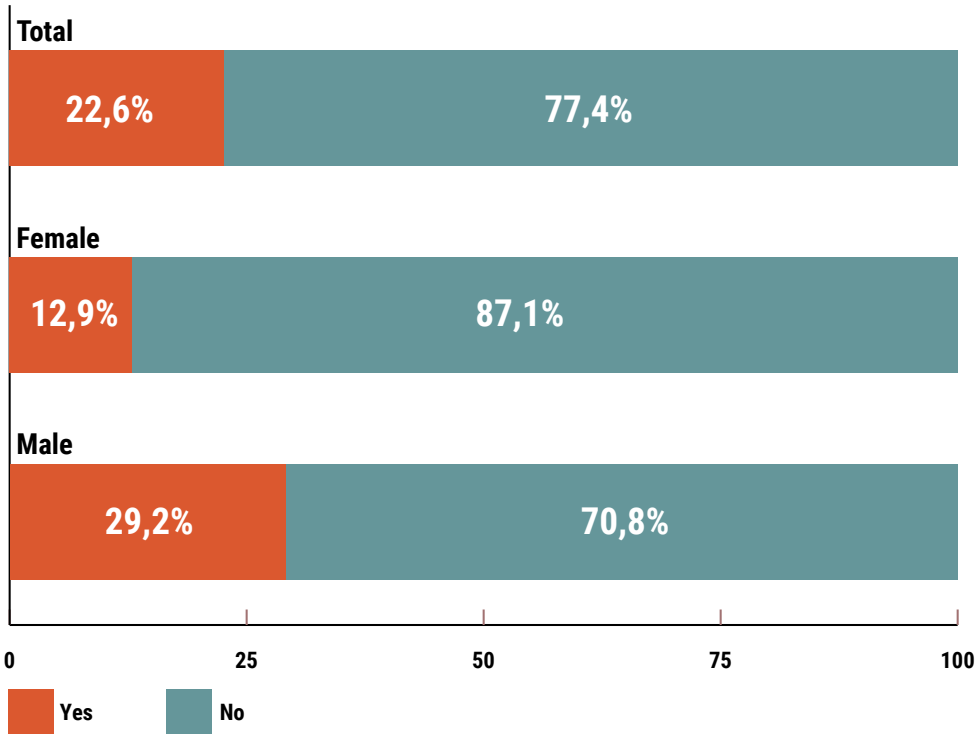


FIGURE 4: HAVE YOU BEEN PHYSICALLY ASSAULTED IN THE YEAR PRIOR TO THE SURVEY?

The perpetrators of the aggression are for 21% of the cases from the neighbourhood and 17% from the police. But in most cases, the young people say that the aggressors are strangers. Violence against women is experienced differently. For 40% of the cases, it is a violence suffered in the domestic space, i.e. in the private sphere.

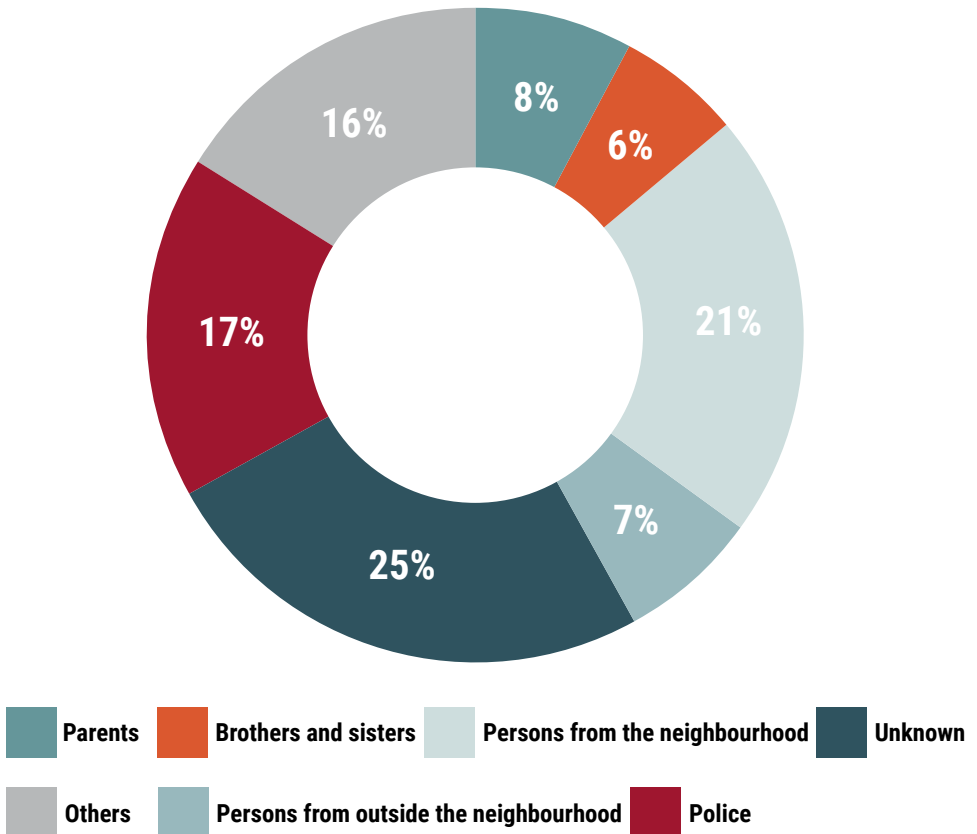


FIGURE 5: THE PERPETRATORS

In 44% of the cases, the places of aggression are located within the neighbourhood, 27% outside of it. Hence, the stigmatized neighbourhoods are places where violence is quite frequent. For young women, violence often comes from their parents and is committed inside the private sphere of the family (nearly 40%). The percentage of violence experienced by women in their neighbourhood is also important (34%): in fact, the family and the nearby neighbourhood represent for women places of control of their body and their morals.

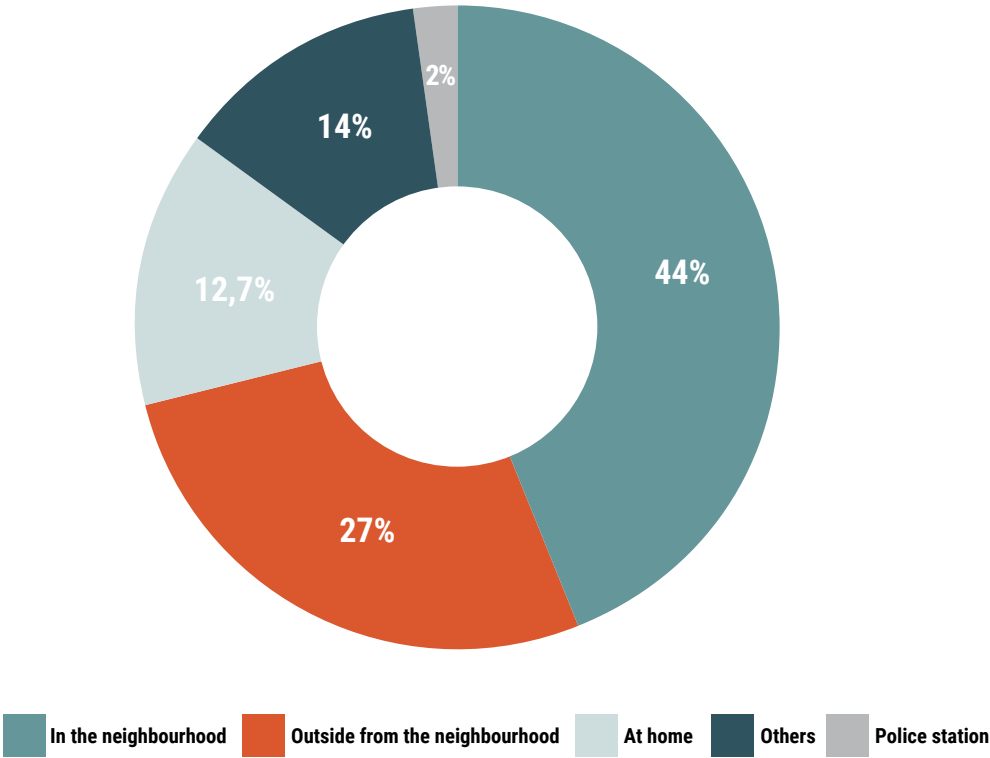


FIGURE 6: THE PLACES OF AGGRESSIONS

Violence is also present in the school environment, whether inside or outside the school. There is violence from educators/teachers (about 57 %), and from the supervisors of schools. However, we noticed that this percentage of violence decreases for young people over 18 years.

Violence of Stigmatization

Nevertheless, the violence experienced in Douar Hicher and Etadhamen is far from being just physical. It is a widespread and multidimensional violence - symbolic, economic, political and social, that the inhabitants undergo, just for the fact of living there. It is the violence of stigmatization. Schools and work environment are some of the spheres where stigmatization crystallizes the most. That explains why studies are not considered a priority for the young people. The work is perceived as domain of exclusion and inequality to which they do not identify anymore and from where they do not derive much hope. One of the most important areas of identification and source of meaning is the religious, for which they show respect and veneration.

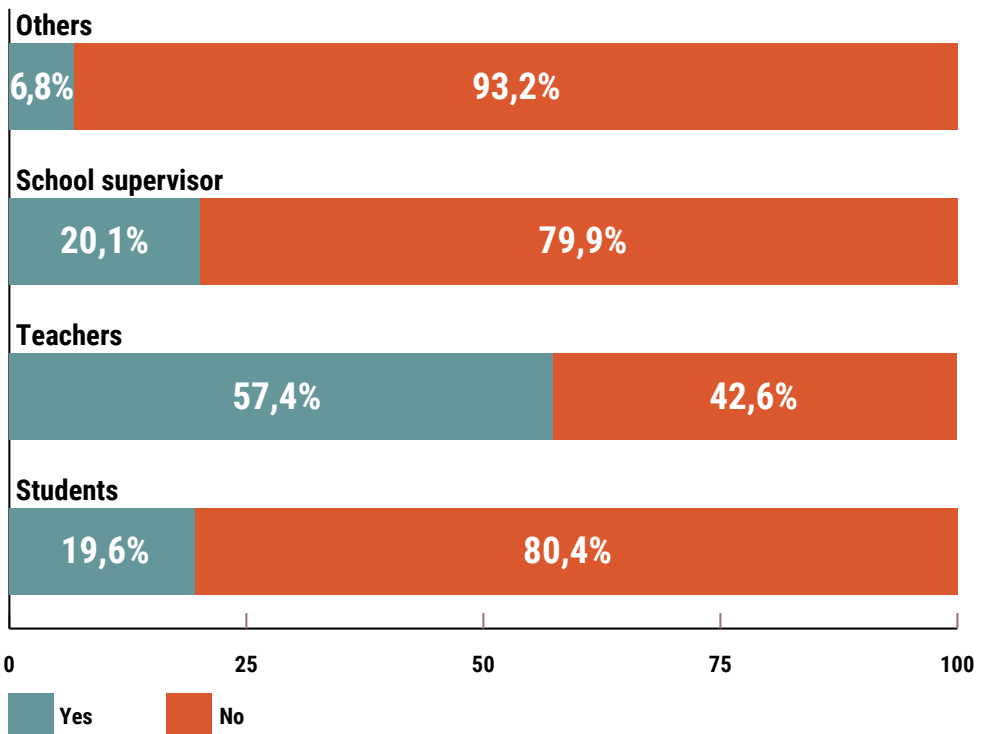


FIGURE 7: VIOLENCE DURING SCHOOLING: THE PERPETRATORS OF THE VIOLENCE

How does one survive if one is excluded from education and work market? The respect of others in the neighbourhoods is a very important value. The young people also want to be independent and autonomous. That's why, despite the high rates of unemployment and the despair of young people in relation to the quest for a stable job, we have identified a real willingness to achieve self-reliance by tinkering with small jobs.

In which way, then, can you improve your situation in Douar Hicher and Etadhamen? When we asked this question, we were positively surprised that young people intend to vote in the next elections in the hope of affecting change. Despite the low level of participations in general elections of 2014, 48,9% of them believe that elections can change the situation. They also believe that one of the best ways of improving their situation is protest, belonging to an organization or belonging to a political party (27 %).

In Conclusion

Violence is multidimensional and a reality that casts a shadow over the neighbourhoods of Douar Hicher and Etadhamen. Whether victims or perpetrators, both facets contribute to the experience of exclusion and stigmatization experienced by young people belonging to these neighbourhoods.

Women, children and young men do not experience this violence in the same way. It is something that affects their entire trajectory and their daily lives. It is often the symbolic violence, this imperceptible violence that marks young people and structures their relationships to the world. Therefore, it is necessary to be attentive to what young people express about themselves and to hear their own stories if we want to establish a better understanding of the phenomenon of neighbourhood violence.

6. EVERYDAY VIOLENCE AGAINST WOMEN IN TUNISIA

By Marie Diernisse Langsted

Marie Diernisse Langsted is project manager for the international work in the Danish organization Danner.

Violence in the public sphere is multi-faceted and the consequences thereof span deep. Urban violence not only takes place in urban public spaces. Urban violence also takes the form as domestic violence. Violence in the public sphere mirrors the norms and values of the society and has a trickling effect into the homes. In other words, the level of societal violence affects the level of violence at home as well effecting particularly women. For this reason, it is important to look at the violence on a societal level as a consequence of existing patriarchal norms as well if we want to get at the root cause and break the cycle of violence in Tunisia in the urban areas and in the society as a whole.

In order to combat violence both in urban areas and in the home, a holistic approach is necessary where state and civil society organizations (CSO) in cooperation take it upon themselves to look beyond individual incidents of violence and more towards the patterns and mechanisms in communities and societies especially from an equality perspective. Local communities, where social relations are built and shaped (e.g. schools, clubs, neighbourhoods, work places, groups and gangs), strongly influence the violence, as mentality, culture and attitudes within social networks play an important role in defining what is socially acceptable and what behaviour is accepted at home particularly towards women.

Violence and Unequal Representation in Society

Violence in the public sphere has severe and long-term effects on women and minority groups such as migrant women and the LGBTQ community. Women are easily targeted and vulnerable to abuse and violations in the public sphere - both physically and psychologically. Assault of any kind may have severe and long-term effects on women. Both in terms of having to overcome the trauma of being attacked or harassed, as well as in terms of herself and/or her family limiting her ability and right to move freely or being able to go about her life without being subjected to violence. Women at risk consequently face confinement or stay voluntarily indoors as a preventative measure to avoid violence resulting in an unequal representation in the society as a whole where women and men do not interact, which then perpetuates the cycle of violence. Furthermore, violence can have long-lasting physical and mental health consequences and affects not only the women as an individual but also her children, family as well as on the surrounding community in terms of e.g. lost work and homelessness.

Tunisia remains the country in the MENA region that has made the biggest leaps to advance women's rights and protect women exposed to Gender Based Violence. A pivotal step was the adoption of the constitution in 2014, which includes a specific article stipulating state responsibility in terms of eliminating violence against women. In 2017 this was followed by the adoption of a comprehensive law on violence against women, which integrates all forms of violence against women, whether physical, sexual, moral, economic or even political, in cases involving discrimination between men and women.

Women's rights organizations in Tunisia have played a pivotal key role in mobilizing political and public support for legal reforms that will hold perpetrators accountable, provide support and protection of women subjected to violence and promote social norms that renders violence against women unacceptable.

Yet still, violence against women remains a widespread and persistent problem in Tunisia and domestic violence is the most prevalent type of violence against women. In 2016, the Tunisian Ministry of Women, Family and Childhood reported that 60 percent of Tunisian women were victims of domestic violence. Reports from nongovernmental groups suggest the figure may even be higher. 50 percent of women said they had experienced aggression in a public area at least once in their lives.

Supporting Inclusive and Equal Society

In terms of how foreign CSOs can contribute in securing inclusive society that in effect can prosper the development of the Maghreb:

CSOs can have a great impact by cooperating and partnering with state/public actors to:

1. Assist and support state institutions in the implementation of the legal reform regarding the new Gender Based Violence law passed in 2017 in Tunisia. The real work lies ahead in this. This includes assisting the capacity development and training of police staff, staff in the judicial system and front staff that receive and treat survivors of violence. Local civil society organizations should be supported in working towards making sure mechanisms for monitoring and impact evaluation are in place in order to ensure accountability, participatory and better coordination. In this regard, inspiration can be drawn from experiences and process regarding optimizing the service delivery from global north countries such as Denmark where civil society and state have a history of close cooperation and coordinate across sectors to ensure a professional level of service delivery to survivors of violence. Foreign civil society organizations can here assist in sharing experiences and knowledge on how Tunisian civil society organizations could be a catalyst for change for survivors of violence by entering into partnerships across the sector and specifically with state actors to ensure that legal access and social services for survivors and focus their work on the vulnerable target groups i.e. women and girls. A special focus should be on securing mechanisms that enhance protection and prevention services for survivors of violence. That includes the right for protection and the right to professional assistance through e.g. shelter stay or counselling.

2. Help raise awareness on human rights issues and mechanisms to encourage and ingrain a culture of participatory democracy by e.g. conducting an outreach campaign to the public regarding decentralization. civil society organizations play an important role at the local level to encourage and ingrain a culture of participatory democracy by conducting an outreach campaign to the public regarding decentralization so to ensure public actors are in line with the public demand and are able and willing to include citizens in the decision-making process when it comes to decisions on e.g. prioritization and distribution of resources and public investment. Furthermore, a decentralized approach encourages citizen involvement and prospers agency and a sense of responsibility in local communities. At Danner we use this approach when working with its partners in Tunisia by working with the local shelters and listening centres to enhance their cooperation between each other and provide capacity training to offer service delivery support to women who have experienced violence.

In Conclusion

Several links can be drawn between violence perpetuated in public - especially in urban areas - and violence in the homes. Vulnerable targets are, in this regard, often women where the consequences can be especially severe and long lasting both on an individual as well as on a societal level. Civil society organizations dealing with Gender Based Violence in Tunisia play a key role in ensuring that the right measures are applied by the state and public actors in terms of ensuring professional service delivery, legal framework and proper implementation thereof is followed closely. If the cycle of violence in both the public and private sphere is to be broken, civil society organizations and state & municipality actors need to collaborate across the sector. Furthermore, civil society organizations need to be inspired and supported in terms of holding state and public actors accountable and making sure action plans on the field are adopted and implemented based on an inclusive citizen participation approach so to ensure the right challenges are met.

7. KEY ACTORS IN THE PREVENTION OF URBAN VIOLENCE: THE CASE OF THE MEDINA OF TUNIS

By Adnen El Ghali

Adnen El Ghali is an architect and urban planner, and Ph.D. student at the Université Libre de Bruxelles.

This contribution aims at sketching the urban violence and security in the Medina of Tunis. It is based on a study requested by DIGNITY¹⁹ and rest on a survey conducted among people living and working in the medina.

The Medina of Tunis – the old Arab part of Tunis with narrow, winding streets, 3-4 storey houses and palaces - constitutes the most culturally attractive area of Tunis. But it is also an urban dwelling space for ordinary people. Furthermore, it is a space of everyday violence as young people living in the medina daily clashes with the police. If the city is primarily defined as a space for humans' exchange and activity, security immediately emerges as an essential element for the urban model to operate. This conference contribution addresses the link between youth as actors and youth as victims based on their relationship with the police. Therefore, it also looks at how the police are acting on the territory where the youth lives. It also addresses the issue of lack of mobility as the young people are excluded from other parts of the city – and the country - and confined to stay in their own underequipped districts which then becomes like a prison.

Whereas security in cities used to be regarded as a social issue, or even of public health, it has now become eminently political. For public authorities, the fight against insecurity becomes less a problem than a solution. After social responses, the issue is increasingly part of public security and is strongly endorsed by public authorities. But what about the reality in a poor neighbourhood located in the most culturally attractive area of the city?

The Medina as a Prison for Young People

The medina has always ignored ranking districts in rich and poor, residential and popular; the only specialization embedded in the fabric of the city was that of trades, distributed by souks according to strict and clear rules and the most sumptuous dwellings can unsurprisingly, be next to the most modest. Marginalized populations, young people, students and the unemployed were already singled out during the events which had affected the capital at the end of the 1970's. It seemed they were suffering of insecurity and engendered violence in response. They put fire to their high schools and universities, dismantled street furniture, lashed out at public equipment

which had embodied, to the preceding generations, the sacrifices made after independence to promote egalitarian social progress with instruction, promotion of teaching and its generalization as the only foundation.

When young people experience the 'nightmare' of being excluded from society, their response may, in some cases, be in the form of violence when exclusion is too strong. Their 'fury' is expressed through 'random and aimless' violence. The neighbourhood becomes the only place where the young people have appropriated and feel a sense of control. It is both a shelter and a place of captivity.

With the failure of school integration mission and unemployment, identity is constructed on belonging to the neighbourhood and gathering in groups. This cultivates cohesion and pride of belonging to a territory formed by the neighbourhood.

In exploring the 'nightmare', of young people's unease, three key professions are of special relevance: teachers, social workers (and similar occupations) and police officers.

The last group seems to occupy privileged place in young people's discontent.

Youth's Relationship to the Police

The police in Tunisia were established in an authoritarian state after independence in 1956 and symbolized violence and arbitrariness of society as a whole. In our survey few associated the violence they experienced or witnessed as urban violence as such. Most cases of reported violence are on robbery, mugging, off motorcycles generally, and are part of *«theft or attempted robbery or with or without violence or threat»* (article 260 of the criminal code). Violence is often related to drug and alcohol use which affects users' ability of discernment as they may no longer recognize neighbours and familiar faces and break neighbourhood codes. Mugging and robbery generate from the drive to meet needs which can be to use drugs or buy valued items.

Violence also has other forms. For example, a mother sought police assistance regarding her son's education. In the absence of the father, she feared her son might be influenced by bad company in the neighbourhood and would use drugs or commit offenses. She spoke to the chief officer (chief commander of the neighbourhood police station) seeking assistance. The officer then invited the teenager and scared him, asking him to watch his behaviour. The adolescent eventually addressed a neighbourhood association requesting that it *«mediate between him and his mother and the police»*.

While performing this role, the police officer steps away from his primary duty (identify, report and punish wrongdoing) and performs mediation work where the agreement with the guardian who confided in him transcended the classical operating mode. In doing so, there is an attempt made towards accomplishing preventive work, though it is neither formalized nor regulated. This kind of undertaking is carried out by police officers with thorough knowledge of the district, its urban morphology and its population through long field experience.

Police's Relationship with Local Population

Relationships with the local population, and knowledge of the people and their problems based on coordination with the delegate, sub-delegates and representatives of local institutions (mainly the school system), are very fragile and can be harmed by awkward, or inappropriately violent interventions. In the quarters of El Kherba, El Maktar, and Torbet el Bey, police officers with whom we had informal conversations, admitted that it was not easy to intervene and that it was better to negotiate and adopt conciliatory attitudes to achieve one's objectives. This assessment is in sharp contrast with young people's statements in the neighbourhood who mention police violence and administration harassment characterizing their relationships with the police. The choice made by local police to establish dialogue with the population, is not, as observed above, the outcome of a lack of means, since backup is available and can be mobilized, but rather of the inadequacy of the backup which is inappropriate as they respond with force without coordination with the local officers who know the people. Indeed, backup which intervenes mainly during security campaigns (*hamalât amniyya*), includes officers from other districts who are unaware of the specific features on the ground and do not know the local population. This puts officers in an awkward position towards the inhabitants. Excessive use of force, where deterrence could be enough, and a few acts of violence, although they are reported as isolated cases, by some local officers who have retained bad practices of the old regime (Ben Ali era), undermine neighbourhood police work. Local officers who have built a relationship with the residents lose the trust they have gained.

Outlining the intervention area of security forces in the medina is linked to another actors' performance. However, what can be noticed in the medina is the weak presence of the main state actors and the limited scope of their action (educational, cultural, health, social, municipal institutions and bodies of childhood protection). This leads security forces to perform acts, in some cases, which are not part of their usual duties. Such operational shift has been denounced by police officers who regret its negative impact on police image as they perform duties outside their area of expertise. Thus, relationships with local institutions (delegates, sub-delegates, school principals, presidents of municipal districts) involve a kind of police superiority since police forces are regarded to be alone capable of dealing with difficult situations alone. Therefore, state actors do not hesitate to hand over their tasks to the police to solve internal problems which are normally part of their own field of competence in the districts and areas under their control.

Security services are used by other public officials for pressure over citizens, allowing them to reach their ends. This reversal of roles, whereby competent authorities delegate their duties to police services which are neither authorized nor qualified for them, leads to a confusion of roles.

Interviews with young people from different districts reveal a complex relationship with the police. Many of them mention police violence. This violence may be deliberate, and part of a long-standing tradition based on intimidation and contempt; while according to an officer informally interviewed, "popular districts like the medina require specific treatment with a focus on the local police and on the safety and security of the inhabitants whom we must protect".

The Difficulty of Breaking the Circle of Violence

Many of the young people interviewed, mostly unemployed and having dropped out of school at secondary level, had trouble with the law and had already been sentenced to prison for attempts of illegal migration or for petty crimes (concealment, theft, pickpocketing, snatching thefts, robberies). They find no support when they leave prison. They feel deeply uncomfortable and suffer from not being given a second chance stating that “if you enter prison, you’ll often be returning because whatever you do, you are always at fault”. This young man confirms what the youngsters reveal in many interviews, namely the impossibility of a complete redemption for a young person already convicted. He will remain marked for life by a “presumption of guilt” and being offered no access to an economic and social reintegration program. The tense relationship between police, community and youngsters gives rise to a singular dynamic, related to the spiral of violence thus produced. Young people’s testimonies about their district life are replete with anecdotes about the violence in their relationships with the police; physical and moral violence, felt during the interventions.

They play with the peculiarities of an old city, where they know every nook and cranny, and the many possibilities offered by its urban layout. Out of necessity especially those with a criminal record already full have developed avoidance strategies. When it is not possible to know the police officers’ movement in the Medina of Tunis, and they find themselves face to face with one of them, violence is often their only avenue. These fortuitous encounters usually result in provoking the police at worst, and attempting to escape, at best. It is therefore a question of assaulting before being assaulted by the police officer. This “anticipatory violence” feeds the vicious circle of violence.

In Conclusion

Young people in the Medina of Tunis seem to be excluded from other parts of the city and confined to under-resourced districts. Subjected to violence – by family, school and police – as well as the victims of it, they appear to be the key players to guarantee security. Given their responsibility in violence and delinquency and their role in securing urban spaces, they are key actors. The strong feeling of belonging to the neighbourhood where they survive through “anticipatory violence” with constrained mobility facilitated inside the *Houma* (*quartier*), but subjected to a strong control outside makes their “refuge city” becomes, therefore, a “prison city” where they are subject to police violence, administrative harassment and the presumption of guilt.

8. FIGHTING EVERYDAY VIOLENCE THROUGH ART IN THE MEDINA OF TUNIS

By Béatrice Dunoyer and Sanaa Moulali

Béatrice Dunoyer is programme director of L'Art Rue, Tunis.

Sanaa Moulali is monitoring, learning and development manager of L'Art Rue, Tunis.

In the old Arab part of Tunis called 'La Medina' some of the historical buildings have been renovated by entrepreneurial and innovative Tunisians. One of these buildings, Dar Bach Hamda, has since 2007 accommodated the civil society organization L'Art Rue. The people behind L'Art Rue see art as a means for economic and social development. Dar Bach Hamda is a factory of artistic space and activities towards the neighbourhood, the entire medina, the town of Tunis and the world. It is a multi-discipline place; a resource centre for children, a platform for thinking, debate and education. It is a space for shows and various artistic performances such as dance, body expression, theatre, tales and design.

In addition to artistic workshops we have a program of debate and reflection so that we can rethink development: How can art contribute to a society that is more democratic, more just and more fair? We work regularly with researchers, anthropologists, journalists and citizens.

Art cannot happen by itself, we do it **IN** society and **WITH** society – and not **FOR** society. It is very important as art is a means to create changes **WITH** the citizens.



The scope of L'Art Rue is to contribute to the ongoing democratization process in Tunisia by giving access to art where it is not present. L'Art Rue believes that through art we can contribute to a society that is more just, more inclusive, more fair. Within this frame, L'Art Rue explores the relation between art and society, economy, politics, heritage, and citizenship. Artistic education is essential to a cultural democratization and equal access to life chances. We note that art constitutes a strong means of expression and gives another lesson as well as different relation to the surrounding world and one self.

The Tunisian society has suffered for a long time from an authoritarian regime, which did not allow for any freedom of expression or dialogue. As all Tunisians, young people have been repressed for decades and have no training in expressing their views or of being heard. Therefore, it is a priority to establish a space for exchange and sharing. One of our main objectives is to invite people from all strata to express their hopes, their feelings, and their frustrations through common citizen projects within the public space.

Children, Violence and Democratizing Art Project

Our projects cover all stages of the life circle. Unfortunately, the environment and society around the children is violent and the rights of children are not recognized. Therefore, L'Art Rue has always been interested in the question of the implication of the youngest in all its activities. We fight for the rights of children in Tunisia through our program "Art and education". We have projects for the children 6 to 12 years old because we believe that the youngest people have to be favored to develop their imagination, to express themselves, to know and to learn how to stand up for their rights. So, we collaborate with the traditional school system and give the children artistic education from a young age because we know that art is essential to raise the awareness and respond to the lack of dialogue and freedom of expression to contribute to build a better society for them.

To know how we best can connect to and support the children we have a committee of psychologists that work with us to help us to further understand the interaction between children and adults and to deconstruct the violence within the child environment. So they try to give some tools that we can use in the schools, observe and analyze this violence, and work with the teachers and the parents to prevent violence. We can talk with them about their experience of being slapped or other physical punishment.

Hence, we have an entire program in place, which includes art but also with a follow up from psychologists so that we transform and make people know that children have rights too.

One of the concrete workshops for children is a dance project to create a horizontal relation. We have invited the company 'Kabinet K' from Belgium to Tunis to recreate within a Tunisian context their show which valorizes the human relationship, equality, trust and worth with children. It is a very important show for us so that we can address the issue of children in our society and contribute to an awareness of rights and democratization from the very early stage of the life circle.

Giving Young Men Trust and Hope through Dance

In the Medina of Tunis, we find all the social classes from all regions of Tunisia, as there has been a huge rural exodus where people from all regions of Tunisia came to and settled in the medina. Many young people live in the various quarters of the medina. These young people no longer have hope or values. They are easy victims of drugs, delinquency and radicalization.

In our projects for these deprived young people we want them to contribute with THEIR energy and their power, we want THEM to talk and we want to recreate a space for dialogue, we want to re-dream, we want to talk about utopia, a more just society. So the programs of L'Art Rue are based on this will to dream about another city, to dream about another and better society. It was not an easy task at the beginning. It was actually a challenge when the project started in October 2018 with the support of DIGNITY and we brought 15 of these young people together with the dance artist Serge Aimé Coulibaly who never talked with them about "dance" or performing at a show or anything but just let them be together, do some sport, express themselves via their body and physical movements.

These young people did not talk much with each other, they went into different groups to let them do whatever. But little by little the young people got more trust and the artist began to deconstruct the groups and put young men together who never talked to each other before. And after three months, we had a group, which would go out together, that would come to the place – Dar Bach Hamba - even when the artist is not there. So we succeeded simply by creating trust. This is a very important point: To re-give trust to the young people, to give them a way out, a re-valuation. Because why do they go to Syria as foreign fighters for instance? Because they are looking for values, they want someone to show an interest in them.

In conclusion, we now have young people with hope and who believe they can do a dance show, that they can be acknowledged, that they can be seen by society. In this way, art can substitute violence and change the way people look upon you because the young men now can express their suffering in a more positive way.



Dream City: A Festival to Recreate Dreams and Community

Every year L'Art Rue organizes the multi-disciplinary festival of modern art in the Medina of Tunis. It was launched in 2007 as an artistic coup d'état as a response to the censorship of the regime, isolation of artists and confiscation of public places by the authoritarian regime, which sought to repress artists by ignoring them. With the festival of Dream City, the artists came into the street and developed the feeling that it was the time to reclaim power. Today, this is celebrated in the festival. There is a march; a choreography where people move around and people in the public are invited to participate. So, from a small artistic event in 2007, the festival has continuously developed each year to respond to a persisting need to reclaim the right to the public space by the citizens.

Dream City is the essence of L'Art Rue's philosophy and actions. During the festival, people interchange and enter into dialogue. More than 300 people from the medina work on the festival, 200 students volunteer during the festival, and this gives a mix in the medina, which is often avoided because people are scared. Work in progress, the festival passes through the different quarters of the medina. With the exception of a few touristic streets, the medina has a bad reputation among Tunisians. Dream City is important because it brings all these issues into the light.

The methodology of the festival is to invite artists that we select for their work, artistic vision and aesthetic, social engagement and who come without a project. They spend 14-15 days in Tunis in contact with the medina, civil society, people who live there, organizations that are in the medina, and from this interchange their projects are born and developed. The festival has around 1500 visitors during the nights and, paradoxically, the security in the medina during the festival is assured by the youth living in the various quarters.

In Conclusion

Can art prevent young people from going to Syria as foreign fighters and from engaging in jihadism? Can art prevent them from engaging in violence? The important thing is to understand these young men's everyday life. It is important to understand that these young men are aimless, that they have lost all life values and hope.

The immersive approach of the artist who come and stay with us, the instructive activities that we develop, the time we spend to think and reflect and the festival of Dream City – all this has the same aim: that art contributes to the making of society and can give these young men new perspectives on life. They educate the young Tunisians with art, which is participatory and characterized by interaction with citizens who are often ignored by the public powers and other citizens because of their difference. They might be minorities or just young people from different neighbourhoods.

Through art we give them another driver, an occupation and the possibility of dreaming about a better future, about other possibilities in the urban spaces. The young men were about to leave, their lives had no meaning. Through art L'Art Rue acts against radicalization and hopelessness by creating a shared urban space, through trust and by showing an interest in them.



SECTION III: IDENTIFYING INSTITUTIONAL CHALLENGES AND POSSIBLE SOLUTIONS



This section draws inspiration from the UN Sustainable Development Goal No. 16. It focuses on the institutional aspects of urban and everyday violence. The section first presents a 'helicopter perspective' overview of security sector reforms in general and in the case of Tunisia at the highest institutional level. Then follows an exploration of the local level; the relationship between the state and the municipalities, and the municipalities and civil society. Finally, the section zooms in on a possible solution for

an improvement of the relationship between the security sector, local authorities and civil society in 'Local Security Councils'.

The section is based on questions such as: *Which relationships exist between the state and urban citizens regarding safety and violence? How should public institutions and the security sector handle urban violence and security? How can citizens, civil society and public institutions cooperate to enhance security?*

The section contains the following presentations:

Maxime L. Poulin: Security Sector Reform: The Tunisian Context.

Souhail Belhadj-Klaz: Engaging the Local Level Institutions: Municipalities and the Prevention of Violence in Tunis.

Amine Ghali: Local Security Councils: Engaging Civil Society in their Communities.

9. SECURITY SECTOR REFORM: THE TUNISIAN CONTEXT

By Maxime L. Poulin

Maxime L. Poulin is deputy head of office of the Geneva Centre for the Democratic Control of Armed Forces, Tunis.

Eight years ago, Tunisia initiated what was later going to be known as the Arab Spring. This series of anti-government protests that occurred in the Arab world was sparked by the first protests that occurred in Tunisia, on December 18, 2010, in Sidi Bouzid, following Mohamed Bouazizi's self-immolation in protest of police corruption and ill treatment. In a way, this event set the table for a Security Sector Reform Agenda because this event highlighted the link between the abuses and the impunity of a security sector apparatus and the fall of Ben Ali's regime. Since then, progresses were impressive and to this day, Tunisia remains the Arab country where Security Sector Reform is the most promising.

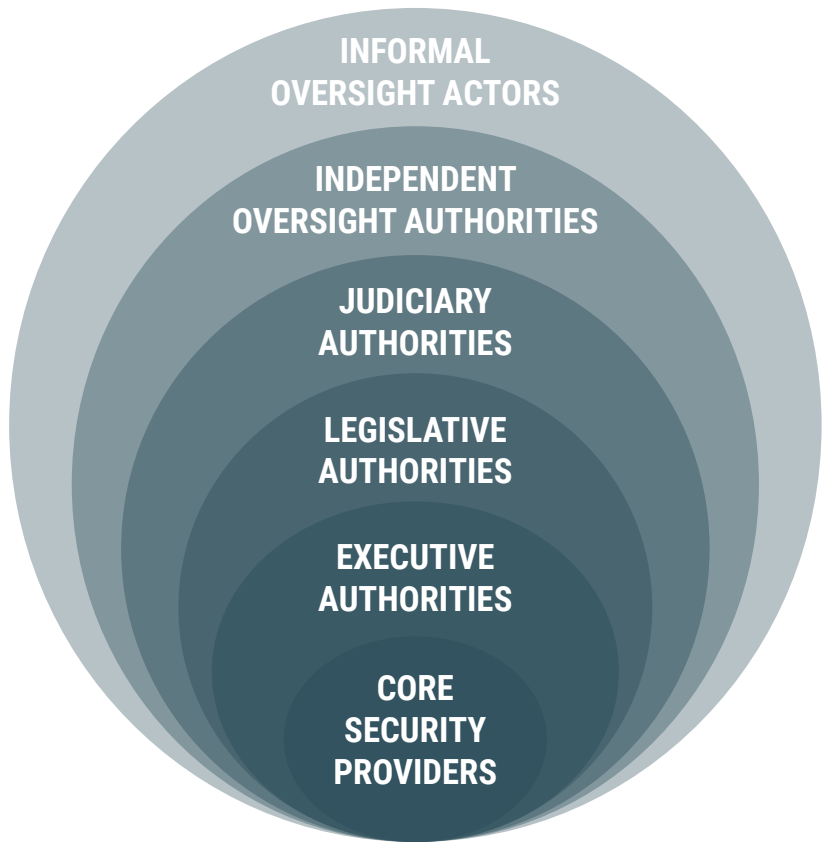
In theory, the democratic transition in Tunisia has given rise to a paradigm shift: security forces should now be service providers to Tunisian citizens and no longer an instrument to maintain a regime in place. Within this new paradigm, in order to restore confidence and establish trust between citizens and security forces, the government should convince citizens of the efficiency, professionalism, and accountability of the later. However, within this new paradigm, security sector reform should aim to provide security institutions with the means and capabilities to ensure the security of citizens and the State.

But as it should be expected, there is a gap between the theory and the practice. This gap is perfectly understandable because Tunisia still faces difficult times. Therefore, it is important for the international community to keep realistic expectations and maintain its effort towards supporting a more peaceful and just society in this Maghreb country.

What is Security Sector Reform?

When considering urban security in the Maghreb region, and particularly in Tunisia, the importance of Security Sector Reform (SSR) becomes quite apparent. SSR is the political and technical process of improving state and human security by making security provision, management and oversight more effective and more accountable, within a framework of democratic civilian control, rule of law and respect for human rights.

The goal of SSR is to apply the principles of good governance to the security sector. SSR concerns all state and non-state actors involved in security provision, management and oversight, and emphasizes the links between their roles, responsibilities and actions.



SSR also involves aspects of justice provision, management and oversight, because security and justice are closely related. A more efficient justice system may constitute, for example, a key element at tackling the problematic of overcrowded prisons. SSR can include a wide range of different reform activities covering all political and technical aspects of security, including, among others, legislative initiatives; policy making; awareness-raising and public information campaigns; management and administrative capacity building; infrastructure development; and improved training and equipment.

Current Security Situation in Tunisia

Although the following account of the current security sector situation on Tunisia does not represent an exhaustive overview, it is worth highlighting the following elements: the current security situation is rather stable compared to previous years. Forces are better trained and probably more efficient now than after the fall of Ben Ali. This is particularly true when facing violent extremism.

Intelligence coordination and national security mechanisms has improved in the last few years. Security forces regularly report successful operations aiming at dismantling terror cells.

The border with Libya is protected by a buffer zone, with technical surveillance. It is also guarded by the military. With the cooperation of Algeria, Tunisia regained control of its Western Border.

Since 2011, Tunisia has enjoyed the most progressive and democratic legal framework for civil society in the Arab world. Broad protections for the exercise of freedom of association and support for a free and independent civil society sector are provided. Although the relations between civil society and authorities are not always harmonious, Tunisia's free civil society has the capacity to provide crucial input to the SSR process.

On a less positive note, there have been recurrent allegations of human rights violations by internal security forces since 2011.

It is also worth noting that current citizens' support for security forces in the fight against terrorism do not constitute a lasting reconciliation of the citizens with the security forces. Particularly with internal security forces. Also, important smuggling activities are taking place at the borders with Libya and Algeria. More importantly, social and economic difficulties faced by the Tunisian youth, which struggles to foresee a future where they can prosper, is considerably impairing in the long run any security gains made by the security forces. As suggested in a recent report from the Réseau Alternatif des Jeunes (RAJ), a Tunisian civil society organization, the level of trust between internal security forces and authorities has reached worrisome lows²⁰.

State of Security Sector Reform

The 2014 Constitution guarantees rights and rule of law. Tunisia has seen the ratification of several international instruments - including to the Optional Protocol to the Convention Against Torture, which relates to the work of the security sector. Important laws have been passed: the law on the access to information; the law on the elimination of violence against women; the law on the fight against corruption which includes whistleblower protection and declaration of assets, etc. A reform of Penal Code / Penal Procedural Code is on its way.

However, these significant improvements are somehow impaired by the fact that the security sector does not appropriately meet the requirements of the new Constitution to this day. Its implementation is often difficult and the independence of the judicial reform process, which is an important part of the SSR, is subject to political pressure.

The legal framework, notwithstanding great achievements, remains, in some cases, obsolete. Human rights violations and corruption persist, if on a diminished scale, combined with weak parliamentary and independent oversight. Limited access to information remains the norm. All in all, oversight and accountability of the security sector remain a challenge as does the development of planning capabilities.

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See for instance the project supported by DCAF: Soumaya Hichri and Khouloud Tlili, 'A study on youth perception of human security at the Local Level', RAJ-Tunisie and DCAF, July 2018, <http://www.dcaf-tunisie.org/En/publication/une-etude-sur-la-perception-de-la-securite-humaine-au-niveau-local-par-les-jeunes/6/10343>

Although improvement occurred since 2015, which saw a peak of instability in the country, the authorities are mostly reacting to the most urgent social, economic or security needs. Due to the consensual nature of Government, ministries find it difficult to implement work plans agreed within the government and/or international donors. Key security institutions are absorbed by managing the security situation and the strong inflow of bilateral security assistance (train & equip) leaving little room for farther reaching reforms.

In Conclusion

It is fair mentioning that the current situation is understandable. As it was once mentioned in DCAF's publications: "one of the most challenging issues when engaging in SSR is to ensure that all stakeholders share the same objectives. This is particularly challenging, given the multiplicity of actors involved and because SSR touches on politically sensitive issues that often create winners and losers"²¹. But highlighting these difficulties, as we just did, in no way represents a negative assessment of the Tunisian authorities' efforts to reform the security sector.

Their actions could certainly benefit from better planning capacities, better coordination between security services, and more strategic communication about the security sector reform process. Combined with long term engagement of international partners supporting better governance and human rights, rather than mostly ensuring short terms security arrangements, the security sector reform process in Tunisia could potentially live up to the expectations that emerged in the aftermath of January 2011.

The Middle East and North Africa Division of the Geneva Centre for Democratic Control of Armed Forces, represented by its Deputy Head of Office in Tunisia, Mr. Maxime L. Poulin, was honored to participate in this conference on "Everyday urban violence and security in the Maghreb" organized by DIGNITY - Danish Institute Against Torture and supported by the Danish-Arab Partnership Programme. Mr. Poulin's presentation consisted of an overview of the Security Sector Reform and how this process is currently being implemented in Tunisia. This presentation intended to play a complementary role to the other presentation more directly focused on the specific thematic of the conference.

10. Engaging the Local Level

Institutions: Municipalities and the Prevention of Violence in Tunis

By Souhail Belhadj-Klaz

Souhail Belhadj-Klaz is researcher at the Centre on Conflict, Development and Peacebuilding at the Graduate Institute of International and Development Studies, Geneva.

This contribution examines how to foster the emergence of institutionalized mechanisms that facilitate collaboration between civil society and the central state in the scope of urban security and prevention of urban violence. At the local level particularly, which means the popular quarters in Tunis and its suburbs, resources are lacking in the Tunisian state to fill the “void” and “security failures”. It is possible to mobilize these missing resources by relying on civil society to better address the current challenges of violence and urban security in Tunisia. One way to do this is to bring out an institutional mechanism that allows the state and civil society to cooperate in this area at the local level. The democratically elected municipal councils in May 2018 can play this role of “institutional link” between the state and civil society. In fact, the municipality is the appropriate intermediate level to identify problems of insecurity and to mobilize political and social resources to fight against this insecurity and to facilitate coordination between the micro-local politico-administrative level (sector and delegation) and local macro (governorate). Most of all, the municipalities, although subject to the strict control of the state, represent first and foremost all the interests of the citizens who elected the municipal councils in May 2018.

One could argue that the local services of the state (administrative decentralization) also work, in theory, in the sense of the general interest and the citizens interest. That is true, but the decentralized administration also defends the vision of the state and notably the state interest in their daily practices of local administration.

Finally, the new Local Communities Code (“code des collectivités locales”, April 2018) gives the municipality general authority to manage local affairs, as long as they respect the competences of other institutions, namely, local state administrations (Article 17). More specifically, the new Code states that the management of local affairs by municipalities is “jointly” with the state. Hence, the provisions of the new Local Communities Code give the legal bases to ensure a better local governance of security through the involvement of citizens and their local representatives.

Institutional Hierarchy and Prevention of Urban Violence

The current practice in urban violence prevention and security is mainly a state practice, the state is the first institutional actor in the field: it acts at the micro-local level via the delegate, who is the representative of the governor, his superior. For example: the delegate requests the intervention of the police, the services of the governor when his authority is requested to resolve a dispute between neighbours for

questions of illegal constructions, illegal occupation of the public or private space by a trade, possible violence within the school, illegal use of permission for a private event in the public space, etc. Nevertheless, the delegate tends to manage these disputes in an ineffective manner because the level of coordination with local actors is low. Indeed, stable actors (educational, social, health, legal) are not mobilized by the delegate to manage problems potentially creating insecurity.

Insufficient Skills of the Municipality

Municipalities have weak jurisdiction over security and violence prevention, and even more so since 2012, when municipal police no longer report to the mayor.

Conflict between the State and the Municipality

A conflict currently exists in Tunisia at the local level between the administrative decentralized institutions (representatives of the state) and the political decentralized ones, namely the municipalities, because the local state administration continues to exercise the same powers as under the centralized authoritarian regime. Indeed, the 1975 law governing local affairs has not been modified. There is therefore in Tunisia a conflict of norms, a conflict of authorities, and more precisely a conflict over the delimitation of competences between different authorities, but both of which are legitimate: state authority (appointed representatives), local authority elected in the name of a political party or without a partisan label (independent).

Internal Struggles between the Mayor and the Administration

There are currently internal power struggles and conflicts between elected officials of the City Council and the administration of the municipality. Indeed, in the modern era, the municipality of Tunis was always headed by a representative of the old bourgeois families of the city affiliated to the regime of Bourguiba. The fact that the new Mayor, "Sheikh'at al Medina", is affiliated to the opposition Islamist party Ennahda and native of a provincial city (Sfax) and not Tunis, created mutual mistrust between the City Council and the administration. This internal struggle is similar to what Ennahda experienced when they were in power in the Ministry of Interior in the first years of the "Revolution".

Possible Ways for Collaboration in Urban Violence

Given these observations, what are the concrete ways in which State and municipalities can be involved in the prevention of urban violence?

First, is it urgent for elected officials and local representatives of the state to respond to the strong expectations of the population linked to the deterioration of the economic situation for the past years and the decline in the level of service provided locally by the state to the population. Second, the deputies who head the two commissions related to security, administration and state reform are very much in favor of involving the municipality in the prevention of violence. This idea also benefits from the support of the deputies who prepared the text of the Local Communities Code which was put to the vote of the Parliament in April 2018.

In addition, a consensus exists within the high administration of the Ministry of Interior and Ministry of Local Affairs to put back the municipal police under the supervision of municipalities and thus to give the mayor an ability to apply and enforce laws and policing.

Finally, several district chiefs, appointed by the City Council of Tunis, are in favor of an authority elected by the citizens which is engaged in the prevention of violence and access to better security on a daily basis. First, the district chief of the Medina of Tunis could propose to bring together state officials around an informal micro local security council. Regular meetings can be held to exchange information with the aim of preventing violence and lowering the level of tension in a coordinated manner and with the collaboration of “stable actors” working in the educational, health, legal, social fields.

Other propositions will be submitted to local actors to assess their feasibility. This work has just begun, it is carried out in parallel with a reform planned by the government of the 1975 law that governs Tunisia’s local affairs.

In Conclusion

The observation made by academic research that the Tunisian state is lacking resources to compensate the “security failures” is a basis to propose a theoretical and policy approach in order to diminish urban violence. Promoting the engagement of the local level institutions in Tunisia, namely the Municipalities, in the prevention of urban violence is a first step toward the collaboration of local communities and citizens to ensure the security of their urban space. This initiative is designed to be replicated in small and large-scale municipalities, and even elsewhere in the Maghreb region (Algeria and Morocco).

11. Local Security Councils: Engaging Civil Society in their Communities

By Amine Ghali

Amine Ghali is director of the Kawakibi Democracy Transition Center, Tunis.

Transition and Security Sector Reforms

For all countries going through a transition process towards democracy, one of the pillars of transition is security sector reform. Before the uprising in 2010-11, Tunisia was not a military state like other countries in the region like Algeria, Egypt, Libya and Syria where the regimes have relied on the military and the Ministry of Defense. Rather, Tunisia was a police state where the security apparatus of the Tunisian despotic rulers always has been the police and different departments of the Ministry of Interior. The police are the main player in the country in terms of autocratic regime and continue to be so. Consequently, security sector reforms in the current transitional process concerns the Ministry of Interior at the institutional level and the security forces, which are the police in the urban areas and the national guards in the rural areas.

As in other countries in transition, security sector reforms have not been carried through as fast and profound as many would wish. The Tunisian civil society has tried to impact and push for security sector reforms for the past six or seven years. It is difficult as the issue is sensitive, many parties with different interests are involved and impacted by such reforms and seek to protect their own position. The Tunisian Ministry of Interior is, however, engaging in some forms of reform and has proved reluctant to other types of reforms. The Ministry of Interior has primarily focused on the need of equipment and hardware: The need for more cars, for more radars, for more cameras.

It has, however, become more and more clear that alongside the equipment more soft changes are also needed. Many of the partners of Tunisia are combining the support of more and better equipment with initiatives of soft changes and have, in this way, succeeded in engaging the Ministry of Interior in soft reform project.

Community Policing - 'police de proximité' – is one of the fields within the Tunisian security sector and the Ministry of Interior where soft changes initiatives have recently been launched with the support of the US, Germany and the UNDP. Community Policing is a complicated field with many components.

Local Security Councils

Part of this soft change is the creation of Local Security Council. It is an experiment in the making, which takes place at community level. It unfolds currently in some areas of Tunis capital but also in 10-12 other localities and some of them are supported by the current projects of the Tunisian NGO Kawakibi Democracy Transition Centre and its partners, while the majority is supported by a much larger project of UNDP. It is still not finally defined if the project will continue to take place at the level of governorate, municipality or a city. Sometimes the councils are held in a neighbourhood – a community. The idea is to put three players together: The security sector, be it the police or the national guard, the local authorities, be it governor or mayor or delegate, and civil society. When we talk about civil society it can be structured civil society. But we can also talk about very community-based civil society made of youth, women, and parents of students. They can be organized in organizations, or sometimes it is just the leader of a neighbourhood. The three players are put together in one space to talk and debate about security issues in their community. They try to talk to each other, engaging together in finding solutions. It is not an easy task at all. Firstly, because this is the first time you see regular citizens sit together with the security sector and discuss, and it is the first time that the security sector come and sit with regular citizens. Second, if you are not comfortable with your vis-à-vis, you throw the responsibility to the other part. This is what always happens in the Local Security Councils: The police are throwing the responsibility of violence or whatever security issue that is debated to the other side, and civil society and citizens are throwing the ball to the local authorities and the security sector.

‘Urban Violence’ covers Half of the Identified Problems

Dialogue is not easy. Dialogue is a process and coming from a background of 60 years or even more of authoritarian regime not allowing dialogue or discussion between institutions and citizens. We are in this process of learning to dialogue within this framework of the Local Security Council. And little by little, things are changing. At least in these small Local Security Council meetings which are supported by UNDP, but also by other actors such as Search for Common Ground, USIP, and the Kawakibi Center. We are trying to provide expertise to the actors of these Local Security Councils. We are trying to improve their capacity in dialogue, in collaborative work, in implementing activities together. They sit, they talk, and they identify problems. These problems we agreed from the beginning are not tackling very complex problems such as terrorism, cross border smugglings, and issues that are very sensitive and need heavy security sector approach. But we are trying to tackle mid-range problems: violence in stadiums, violence around the schools, pick-pockets in the street, petty crime that is present in each community.

Contemporary and previous discussions in Tunisia reveals that urban violence could be a very interesting subject to cover in the Local Security Councils. ‘Urban Violence’ might be a title of probably 50% of the problems identified by the participants in the Local Security Councils. Finding a way to address ‘urban violence’, a big title, smaller titles, small approaches, differentiated approaches, could be a solution.

Within the 6-7 communities where the Kawakibi Center works, but also other communities where the UNDP is working, these problems are common. We do not have huge disparities between communities, rather 60-70 % the problems are more or less identical. Although urban violence in the Medina of Tunis is different from urban violence in southern neighbourhoods or in the western neighbourhoods in Tunisia we still share identical problems within almost the entire country. Currently, the approach is trying to find innovative solutions that are tailored to each region, each community, where we have these experiences. But we need to articulate and create awareness about the communalities, and that would be an important work of researchers to do: to clarify the communalities in approaching and addressing this urban violence.

Citizens engaged in the Local Security Councils

So far, the experience with the Local Security Councils is new as we are only in the third year of this experience. We are starting to see some achievements. Some of them are in numbers, and some of them are in general perception. One of the striking achievements is that we see the engagement of citizens. People love the idea. They are going forward and actually getting upset with not being invited in these Local Security Councils. It is a way for them to get involved in their community, although it is not permanent involvement. Sometimes they get involved in some subjects, sometimes less, but it is something that is attracting them. The Local Security Councils create a better understanding of each other's roles. In the communities where we work, we now see civil society understanding better what the role of the security sector is. Their perception of the public institutions and collaboration with the security authorities is also improving. But we also see that the police change it perception of the citizens through this collaboration and open up to citizens and to civil society.

Is violence decreasing? Is the security improving? We do not know yet and we still lack numbers and facts. The Ministry of Interior does not have the capacity, the means and the experience to measure outcomes and make statistics and numbers, especially when it comes to the very local neighbourhood level. Hence, there is a need for other actors such as civil society and researchers to take up this task.

The challenge of the project of the Local Security Councils is how to go from the pilot phase and 10-12 experiences in the country to a national approach accepted by the Ministry of Interior as an approach to address security issues in Tunisia.

12. CLOSING REMARKS: CULTURAL RIGHTS AND FIGHTING EVERYDAY VIOLENCE

By Béatrice Dunoyer

Béatrice Dunoyer is programme director of L'Art Rue, Tunis.

How can culture contribute to a more secure world free of violence?

To contribute to a more safe and secure world, it is essential to be based on the human rights themselves as objectives. One of the basic human rights are 'the cultural rights'.

According to the Fribourg Declaration on Cultural Rights, article 2, the notion of 'cultural rights' covers the 'values, beliefs, convictions, languages, knowledge and the arts, traditions, institutions and ways of life through which a person or a group expresses their humanity and the meanings that they give to their existence and to their development.'

The cultural rights have been neglected for a long time because they were considered as rights only for the privileged. They frighten because they allow for greater freedom, an open approach towards the other and to the world, reveal human capacities and work both at the individual and collective level.

They frighten because they appear as blurry, they cannot be measured. But in fact, they are real, concrete, and fundamental. Because culture is always in interaction with the surroundings and with the others.

Access to culture allows for fighting exclusion. By supporting culture and the cultural rights, the wealth and plurality of a social system can be developed and encompass a broad variety of aspects : education, politics, economy, ecology, society.

This means to observe and respect one self and the other, bring together, and connect the cultural resources to develop the capacities of the individual, the capacity of the citizens of the world – in order to take an action which is responsible and constructive.

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