

# Historical Timeline



## 1961

The Cultural Writing for Cultural Affairs and News" was established to put forth and implement a state policy of the journalism and cultural sector. This entity evolved to become the Ministry of Culture.



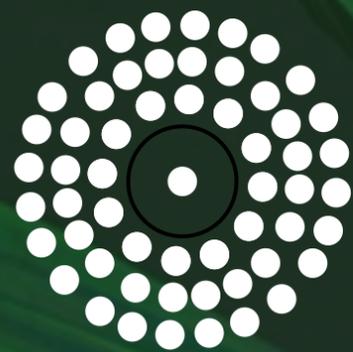
## 1984-2014



Literacy rates increased among young Tunsians between 15-24 from 75% in 1984 to 96 % in 2014

## 1992

24 regional cultural delegations were established within each governorate to work with local cultural committees and manage cultural centers and libraries.



## 1994



Cultural industries were included in the government incentive program which allowed practitioners to benefit from fiscal and tax incentives.



# 2011

The Tunisian revolution erupted resulting in the imposing of a curfew to limit street protests. After the revolution, the Ennahda Islamist Party gained significant influence in the country's political sphere.



# 2011

The council of Ministries approved a decree to regulate the management of cultural centers that would increase the efficiency of cultural activities especially in marginalized communities.



# 2012

Salafi Islamic extremists gain influence in the country and begin a series of attacks on 'non Sharia' compliant or "impure" citizens". The minister of Culture subsequently cancelled 12 artistic events that summer.



# 2015

The Islamic State Extremist group claims responsibility for an attack by three gunmen in Bardo museum which claimed the lives of 21 individuals.



# Human rights

## Limits on artistic freedom of expression



- Loopholes in article 31 in the constitution that forbids all censorship on freedom of expression and media: The law still includes vague terms like "protecting sanctities" and "banning apostasy" allowing the state to restrict freedom of expression
- Repressions from Islamic groups (Salafi groups)
- Texts and laws that:
  - 1- Limit demonstrations
  - 2- Penalize criticism of public officials and the government inciting hatred between religions especially on social media
  - 3- Persecute LGBTQ+ community members

## Main violators

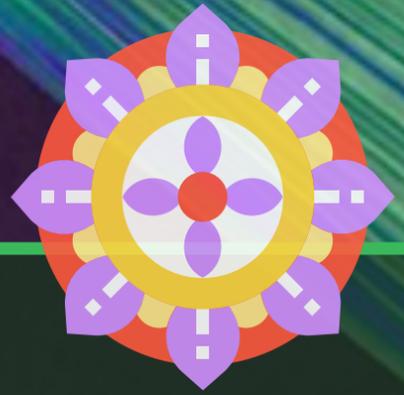
SOME ISLAMIC GROUPS

STATE AUTHORITIES

## It is to note that

Despite abolishing the Ministry of Communication and the Tunisian Agency for External Communication (ATCE) that was utilized to spread disinformation, propaganda, and censorship in 2011, limits on artistic freedom of expression are still abundant.

# Cultural ecosystem 2020/2021



## Highlights

- A strong traditional culture with wide economic and social inequalities
- Decrees to strengthen the management of the existing cultural structures for greater effectiveness of cultural policies
- Considerable efforts for decentralization
- Over 80% of cultural organizations supported by the government do not have a clear legal status, rendering them vulnerable and completely dependent on the state
- After the revolution the cultural sector became extremely divided and politicized

As per the latest budget

2021

## State funding

358,400 TND  
For cultural affairs

## Foreign Aid directed towards developing the cultural sector

Total country budget 2021/2022 =  
£ 0

Funds spent on culture and recreation in 2020 =  
€2.2 million

Fund spent on civil society 2021 =  
1.08 million USD

UK

EU

US

## Foreign funded projects

British Council:  
14000000 £

European Neighborhood Instrument Global South Allocation

Programme d'appui au secteur de la culture

## Local European Union National Institutes for Culture Clusters

- British council
- Camoes, I.P.
- Embassy of Austria
- Embassy of Greece
- Embassy of the Netherlands
- Embassy of Poland

- Embassy of Romania
- Embassy of Spain
- Goethe-Institut
- Instituto Cervantes
- Institut Français
- Instituto Italiano di Cultura
- WBI

# The impact of the Revolution



## Pre -revolution

- The council of ministers tried to strengthen cultural actions in the regions and decided to build two cultural centers in the delegations of Gafsa-Nord and Kasserine-Sud
- The council tried to establish partnership contracts between cultural establishments, associations, and all components of civil society.
- Policies consisted of nation branding and patronage practices and a high priority is given to heritage and tourism events.

## Since 2011

- The role of the state in the cultural field shrank significantly as the culture became more diverse, community-based and decentralized, and most of the cultural activities became managed and implemented by independent actors.
- The national budget that has been devoted to the cultural sector in Tunisia continued to increase since 2003, and during the last 10 years it has maintained the mark of 1% of GDP as recommended by the UNESCO.



## Post revolution

- Underground artists challenged the state by occupying public spaces and reaching out to the masses, and particularly, street art, became perceived as a threat by religious zealots and state authorities.
- The new transitional government prioritized decentralization to meet the needs of populations in the interior of the country
- The period of cultural liberation and westernization movements (early post-revolution) was short lived because of the heavy influence of religious zealots and the new government coalition on the cultural sector
- Policies still encourages nation branding, patronage practices and heritage and tourism events.



## Cultural hubs post revolution

215 culture houses

381 public libraries

4 cultural and artistic complexes

19 institutes of music and dance

5 dramatic and scenic arts centers

Almost 80% of the internationally acclaimed cultural activities in the country were being implemented by independent actors - only 20% were supported and managed by the public sector

2013

2014

The role of state structures has been shrinking especially after the revolution as cultural practices have become more diverse, community based and decentralized

