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Tunisia

“Fundamentally, nothing has changed”

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Jilani Hammami is the new spokesperson for the Workers’ Party (PdT, the former PCOT). These remarks were published in the Tunisian daily “Le Temps” of December 18, 2012.

- The aspirations of the Tunisian people for freedom and democracy are still current, given that they have been little realised. Apart from the freedom to organize and publish a newspaper, nothing has been done. Public freedoms are still flouted. There is a return to torture and arbitrary arrest. Demonstrations are suppressed. In the regions and to some degree everywhere, we have returned to the abusive use of repression and weapons. The government has turned a deaf ear to the practices of the League for Protection of the Revolution and the acolytes of Ennahda.

- At the political level the balance sheet is very thin. In the National Constituent Assembly (ANC), we are still awaiting the Constitution. At the same time there are attempts at non-democratic legislation such as that of the so-called immunization or that of the ethics of the judiciary.

- Worse still, at the level of economic and social issues, Tunisia is still in a recession with no light at the end of the tunnel. The indicators, inter alia, of production, prices, and foreign trade lead to anxiety. Our balance of trade is very much in deficit. Inflation has stabilized at more than 5.5% and is expected to rise to 6%. The budget deficit is growing. The share of the debt is a cause for concern. In the time of Ben Ali indicators were better. The government does nothing. It follows the same solutions as the old regime.

- Social problems have become acute. Unemployment is above 700,000. The inland areas are still left out. This is generating uprisings such as that at Siliana and demonstrations nearly everywhere. The poverty rate is above 20%.

- Nothing has been done in the fight against corruption. The Court of Auditors has revealed the maintenance of the same practices of corruption and abuse of power.

- The government still refuses to engage in Transitional Justice. It wants to use the old do-it-yourself measures.

- On the external side, Tunisia has placed itself in the reactionary axis of the Arab world. The country advances towards a status of a protectorate of Qatar, Saudi Arabia and the Turkey. The government has taken initiatives to make Tunisia a privileged partner of the European Union. It will open the doors of the country in the areas of agriculture and services. We expect that the Tunisian economic fabric will receive some damaging blows.

Overall, the balance sheet is very negative. This situation cannot be explained only by international economic difficulties, but also by the choice of the government.