



[Thousands of Tunisians Protest in the Country's Capital City to Denounce President Kais Saied's Moves to Consolidate Power and Demanding Accountability for the Worsening Economic Crisis](#)

Thousands of citizens took to the streets in Tunisia this past weekend to voice their discontent with President Kais Saied's moves to consolidate power and the major economic crisis plaguing the country. Observers and analysts have outlined how Saied's array of actions during the preceding 15 months have served as a debilitating setback to the democratic gains achieved as a result of the 2011 Jasmine Revolution. The latest round of protests not only decries the injustice of the power grab measures enacted by the president, but also denounces the economic and social marginalization that many are facing due to rising levels of food insecurity and inflation. On the political front, Saied has dismantled independent institutions and any checks on his power, with the moves clearly being done in an effort to suppress opposition and use the governmental bodies to target dissidents.

One of the primary motivations for the recent round of demonstrations is the troubling state of the economy, as substantial price increases for basic goods and services have left many Tunisians in difficult financial circumstances. The younger generation of Tunisians are particularly disgruntled with their economic conditions, though citizens across the board hold negative views of the economy. The dissatisfaction with how authorities have handled the economy and increasing skepticism of the political process may push more and more Tunisians away from civil society activism, putting their democratic nature in jeopardy. Some experts have also surmised that continued economic challenges and increasing popular discontent could further undermine the citizenry's faith in governmental institutions, potentially making them even more susceptible to corruption and manipulation. The current state of the economy suggests a situation moving forward for Tunisia whereby political and economic woes always possess the possibility of manifesting into outbreaks of protest amongst the population.

President Kais Saied has initiated multiple controversial measures since July of last year which have fueled growing levels of discontent. He has suspended the elected parliament, fired the prime minister, shut down the country's independent anti-corruption body, and sidelined the national election authority. Saied also dissolved the supreme judicial council and granted himself the power over the selection and promotion of judges. The president has regrettably tried to argue that his actions are necessary to keep Tunisia safe, despite the fact that impartial analysts highlight the obvious politically-motivated and repressive nature of the measures. Meanwhile, as Saied tries to consolidate his powers and revert Tunisia back to autocratic rule, a serious economic crisis presents challenges as well, as the government struggles to finance its 2022 deficit and repay debts. Many citizens in Tunisia are struggling to make ends meet, with price hikes and food and fuel shortages only worsening the situation. Thus, the large-scale nature of the recent protests highlights how more and more citizens are becoming displeased with the country's economic and political ills.

During the latest protests in Tunis, demonstrators marched and voiced their anger against the presidents' power-grabbing measures. Some marchers chanted "the people want to bring down the coup" and "the people want to depose the president." Tunisia has long been seen as the main democratic success story to emerge from the 2011 Arab Spring uprisings, and thus Saied's actions pose a significant threat to this.