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WOMEN POLITICAL PARTICIPATION IN TUNISIA: THE 2022-2023 LEGISLATIVE ELECTIONS

AN ANALYSIS OF FOCUS GROUPS WITH
WOMEN POLITICAL CANDIDATES



"I feel so lonely. Upon hearing that I had failed the first round, I noticed my husband's eyes shining with excitement. I only needed two more votes to advance to the next round. I have no money, no support, and I've given up. I'm broke, without support, and without money."

Candidate for the legislative elections of 2022–2023

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PART 1

INTRODUCTION AND OVERVIEW
OF DATA ON WOMEN'S
PARTICIPATION IN THE 2022-
2023 LEGISLATIVE ELECTIONS

The first round of the Tunisian legislative elections in 2022-2023 was held on 17 December 2022 to elect members of Tunisia's Assembly of People's Representatives (ARP). Run-offs were held on 29 January 2023. The elections resulted in 24 women being elected out of a total of 154 members of parliament, a proportion of 15.5 per cent. This figure is below the 26.5 per cent global average and marks the lowest proportion of women's participation in elected legislatures in Tunisia since 2011.¹ Global statistics indicate that gender parity in political life is still a long way off and that women are still underrepresented at all levels of decision-making, around the world. It is crucial to look at both the subjective and objective causes of women's low political participation through the experiences of women who ran for office in 2022, in addition to the subjective causes that contributed to this low participation. This study aims to shed light on the gender dynamics of the 2022–2023 elections in Tunisia by examining the legislative framework, the results from discussions with five focus groups, and in-person interviews with female candidates. It will look at the opportunities and challenges that women face.

The 2022-2023 legislative elections are the 17th Tunisian legislative elections in the country's history, and the first to be held in Tunisia following the adoption and implementation of the Constitution adopted on 16 August 2022 following the referendum of 25 July 2022. The President of the Republic, Kaïs Saïed, decided on 25 July 2021, to suspend the legislature, and take emergency measures after invoking Article 80 of the 2014 Constitution. This decision

prompted the call for new elections. These particular circumstances have certainly influenced the electoral process, especially since major amendments have been made to the electoral law and to the composition and operation of the High Independent Authority for Elections, known by its French acronym as the ISIE (*Instance Supérieure Indépendante pour les Élections*).

1.1 General Context

In 2021, the Human Development Index for Tunisia stood at 0.731.² This indicator measures the average level achieved in three basic dimensions of human development: a long and healthy life, knowledge and a decent standard of living. With this index value, Tunisia is ranked 93rd in the world, which is marginally higher than the average human development index (0.708) for the Arab States in 2021.

However, also in 2021, Tunisia's gender inequality index stood at 0.259. The value of this composite metric of gender *inequality* (GII) measures three dimensions of women's quality of life, namely reproductive health, empowerment and women's role in the labor market. The GII places Tunisia in a much better position than most Arab states, whose average was 0.536. Despite being better than the regional average, Tunisia still has a way to go.

¹ "Women in politics: 2023" map, created by the Inter-Parliamentary Union (IPU) and UN Women
<https://www.unwomen.org/en/digital-library/publications/2023/03/women-in-politics-map-2023>

² United Nations Development Programme – UNDP. Human Development Report 2021-22. New York, 2022.

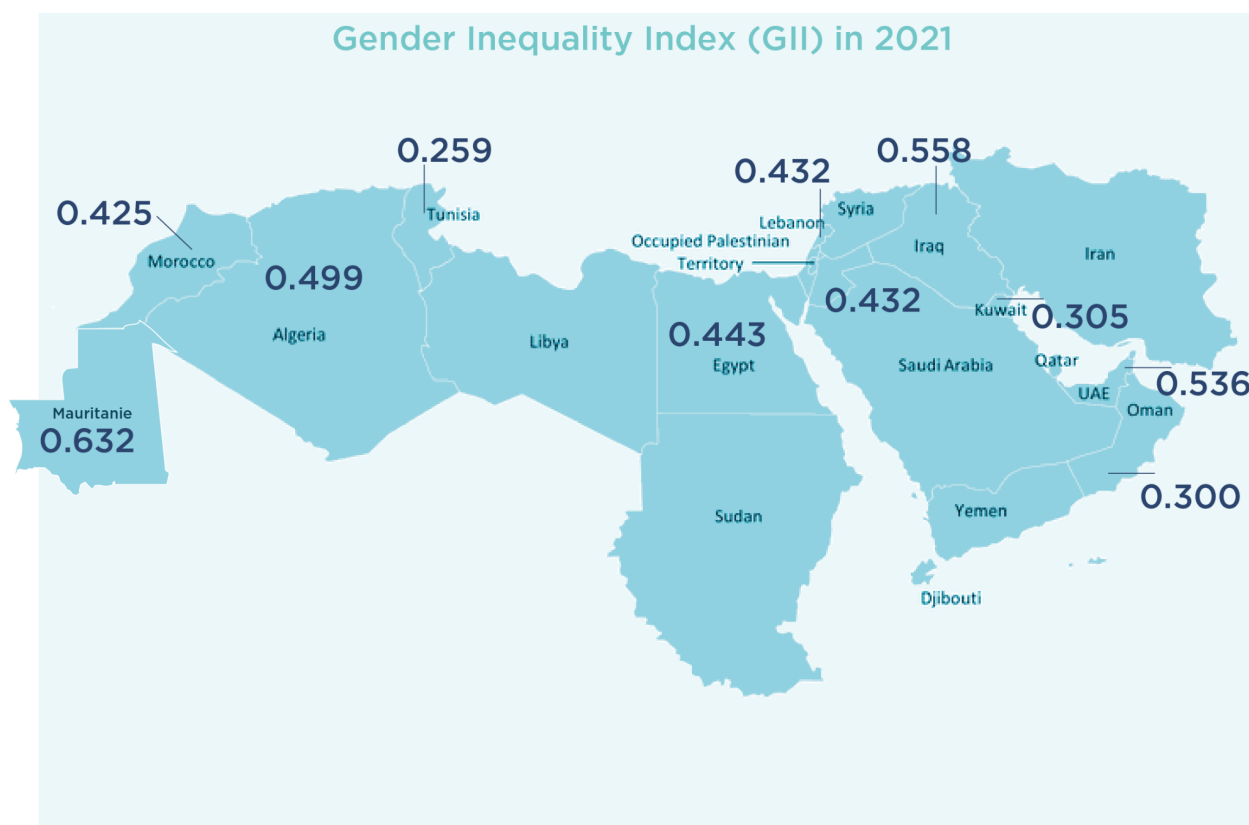


Chart 1. Gender inequality index in 2021 in the Arab States region

With the enactment of the Personal Status Code on 13 August 1956, Tunisia began a protracted process of women's emancipation, which is responsible for this small difference in measured inequality between Tunisia and neighboring countries.³ Several discriminatory institutions, such as polygamy, repudiation, and the duty of obedience were abolished under the Code and several measures were implemented to diminish discriminatory practices, such as raising the age of marriage, requiring consent of a woman for marriage, and encouraging spouses to treat each other with kindness.⁴ However, the lived reality of women demonstrates the persistence of a traditional patriarchal model especially in areas where male privilege is prevalent, as in politics.

In Tunisia, the root causes of gender inequality in politics lie in social norms that discriminate against women, which foster practices of inequality and gender-based violence in the public sphere.⁵ These practices uphold the patriarchal system in such a way that women continue to be disproportionately affected by barriers to civic engagement.

³ Sana Ben Achour, « Le Code tunisien du statut personnel, 50 ans après : les dimensions de l'ambivalence », *L'Année du Maghreb*, II | 2007, 55-70.

⁴ *Ibid.*

⁵ Full Report "A Man Enters the Water and Comes Out Dry": Understanding Masculinities in Tunisia. Results from the International Men and Gender Equality Survey in Tunisia. © 2022 UN Women.

Women's participation in education and administration has expanded in Tunisia as a result of their personal, educational, and cultural progress in recent years, although they still face many obstacles to political participation.

The circumstances surrounding the 2022–2023 legislative election process are unprecedented. In fact, even though the first-ever female Prime Minister was appointed on 29 September 2021—also a “first” for the Arab region— all temporary special measures supporting women's access to parliament, most notably the vertical parity requirement, were repealed without interim stopgap measures.⁶ Tunisia has now eliminated all electoral quotas for women adopted since 2011, an example of serious rollbacks to gender equality. This stands in stark opposition to the recommendation of the Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women CEDAW⁷ which urges states to adopt “temporary special measures.” Article 55 of the 2022 Tunisian Constitution outlines that “The State shall endeavor to attain parity between women and men in elected assemblies,” but does not provide implementation mechanisms to ensure that that happens.

This change took place in light of actions taken by President Kaïs Saïed from 25 July 2021, when he triggered Article 80 of the 2014 Tunisian Constitution to take emergency measures in the face of “imminent danger threatening the nation's institutions.” He subsequently dismissed the Head of Government, suspended the activity of the Parliament and lifted the parliamentary immunity of its members.

President Kaïs Saïed issued Presidential Decree No. 117 on 22 September 2021, suspending major articles in Tunisia's 2014 Constitution except its introductory chapters on fundamental rights and freedom. On 29 September 2021 he appointed a woman, Najla Bouden, to take the office of Prime Minister and form the government, marking the first time a women has held the office in Tunisia’s history.

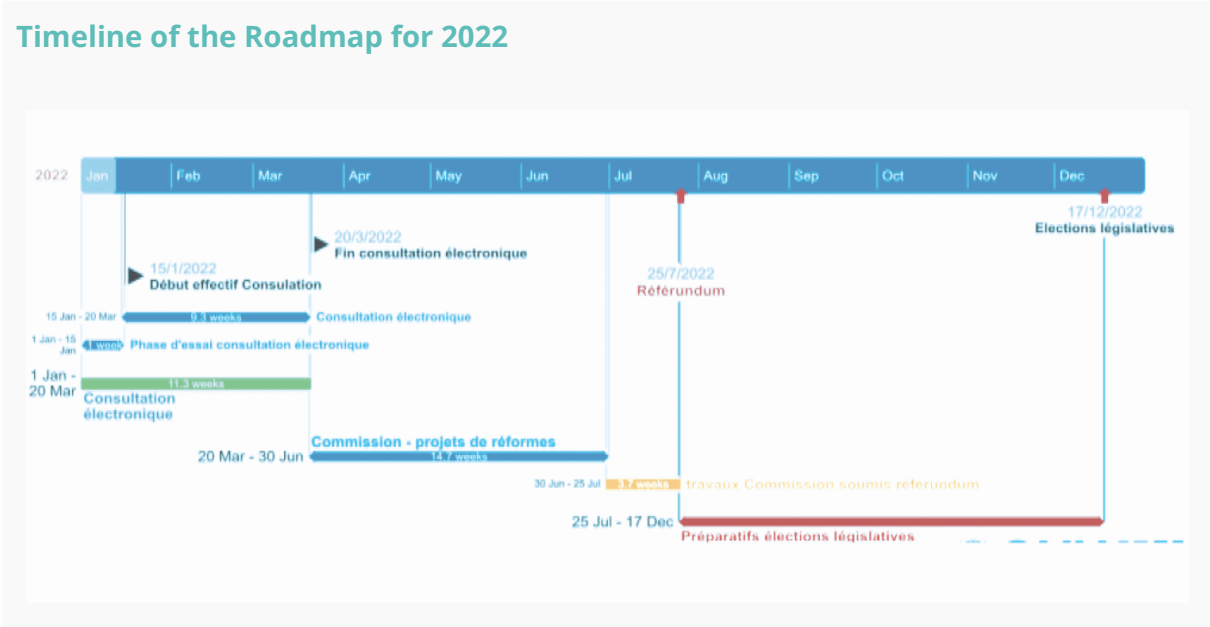
The President announced his roadmap for reform, which included drafting a new constitution and holding a constitutional referendum on 25 July 2022. On 30 March 2022, the President dissolved the Parliament and on 21 April 2022, he promulgated Decree-Law No. 22 amending and supplementing certain provisions of Organic Law No. 23 of 2012 governing the High Independent Authority for Elections (ISIE). The new legal text repeals several provisions of the former law on the election of the ISIE Board. The European Commission for Democracy through Law, known as the Venice Commission, has called for a repeal of this text, as it is not consistent with the Tunisian Constitution,

⁶ The TSMs were removed with the passage of Decree-Law no. 2022-55 of 15 September 2022, which amended Organic Law no. 2014-16 of 26 May 2014 relating to elections and referendums.

⁷

<https://www.ohchr.org/en/instruments-mechanisms/instruments/convention-elimination-all-forms-discrimination-against-women>

nor with Presidential Decree No. 117 dated 22 September, 2021.⁸ President Kais Saïed appointed the members of the ISIE board, including its president. The Presidential Decree was published in the Official Gazette on 9 May 2022, appointing the members of the ISIE board; no women were on the list.⁹



On 20 May 2022, the President announced the members of the High National Advisory Consultation Commission for a New Republic, the body mandated to draw up a draft constitution by 20 June 2022. Although the National Union of Tunisian Women was convened to participate, women's participation in the Commission's work was extremely restricted. The Commission's work was criticized for its lack of transparency and inclusiveness which was signaled by the fact that the Deans of the university law faculties declined to participate in the Commission's activities. The Commission submitted a draft constitution to the President by the deadline of 20 June 2022. The President publicly released the draft on 30 June 2022, less than a month before the vote on the constitutional referendum. The coordinator of the High National Consultative Commission for a New Republic and several members of the commission announced that the draft constitutional text published by the President differed significantly from the version they had submitted on 20 June.

The constitutional referendum was held on 25 July, 2022. Fewer than one-third of registered voters took part. The final turnout for the referendum was 2,830,094 votes

⁸ European Commission for Democracy through Law (Venice Commission). *Urgent Opinion* "on the constitutional and legislative framework on the referendum and elections announcements by the President of the Republic, and in particular on the decree-law n°22 of 21 April 2022 amending and supplementing the Organic law on the Independent High Authority for Elections (ISIE)", issued on 27 May 2022 pursuant to Article 14a of the Venice Commission's Rules of Procedure.

[https://www.venice.coe.int/webforms/documents/default.aspx?pdffile=CDL-PI\(2022\)026-e](https://www.venice.coe.int/webforms/documents/default.aspx?pdffile=CDL-PI(2022)026-e)

⁹ <https://inkyfada.com/fr/2022/05/11/isie-tunisie-nouveaux-membres-kais-saied/>

out of a total of 9,278,541 registered voters, which represents 30.5 per cent. Of these, 94.6 per cent, 2,607,884, voted “Yes” and 5.4 per cent, or 148,723, voted “No.”¹⁰

The 2022 Tunisian Constitution replicated the articles pertaining to women's rights from the 2014 Constitution. Article 51 of the new Constitution incorporates the same provisions as Article 46 of the 2014 Constitution, namely that “the state commits to protect women’s accrued rights and work to strengthen and develop those rights. The state guarantees the equality of opportunities between women and men to have access to all levels of responsibility in all domains. The state works to attain parity between women and men in elected Assemblies. The state shall take all necessary measures in order to eradicate violence against women.”

In terms of political powers, the new Constitution severely restricts the authority of Parliament and considerably increases the prerogatives of the President. The text of the Constitution makes no reference to decentralization and provides for three levels of local authority: municipal councils, regional councils and regional and district councils. However, it does not specify how these authorities are to be elected, nor the place of women within these councils.



¹⁰ Carter Center. Preliminary Statement on Tunisia’s 2022 Parliamentary Elections, Dec. 19, 2022.

1.2. Historical Overview of Temporary Special Measures for Women in Elections in Tunisia

Until 2011, Tunisia had not adopted any temporary special legal measures to enhance women's representation in Parliament. After the Tunisian revolution, the Tunisian feminist movement joined the Council of the Higher Authority for the Realization of the Objectives of the Revolution, Political Reform, and Democratic Transition and managed to take part in the drafting of **Decree-Law No. 2011-35 of 10 May, 2011**, relating to the election of the National Constituent Assembly, which includes measures that encourage women to run for public office.¹¹ The elections to the National Constituent Assembly (NCA) on **23 October 2011** were the first democratic, free and transparent elections in Tunisia. Thanks to the introduction of the principle of vertical parity, which required electoral lists to alternate between men and women candidates, **59 women** were elected to the NCA, which represented **27 per cent of the 217 elected members**.

These measures were taken on the basis of the closed-list proportional electoral system, which requires candidates for parliamentary elections to be nominated according to the principle of gender parity and according to the rule of alternation between male and female candidates on the candidate list.

The 2014 Tunisian Constitution passed by the NCA on **26 January 2014** placed an obligation on the State to establish gender parity in elected assemblies.

Organic **law N°16 of 2014** on elections and referendums applied the same temporary special measures provided for in the **2011 elections** to encourage women to stand for the election of the Assembly of People's Representatives (ARP). These measures were upheld for the 2019 legislative elections.

It became evident after the 2014 experience leading up to the Assembly of People's Representatives (ARP) election that temporary special measures, such as candidate application requirements supporting women's participation, had a limited effect. Political parties have the authority to nominate candidates for their parties. In the context of local and regional elections, this matter was brought up during the 2017 revision of the electoral legislation.

¹¹Law No. 2011-35 states that "Candidates shall file their candidacy applications on the basis of parity between men and women. Lists shall be established in such a way to alternate between men and women. Lists that do not follow this principle shall only be admitted when the number of seats, in the relevant constituency, is odd."

Despite strong temporary special measures to support Tunisian women to stand as candidates in parliamentary elections in 2014 and 2019, Tunisian women continue to face persistent disadvantages due to the low representation of women in the leadership structures of political parties.

New temporary special measures were introduced in addition to the principle of vertical parity, aiming to increase the percentage of women as lead candidates for political parties and electoral coalitions. **Article 49 of Organic Law No. 7 of 2017**,¹² which amended and supplementing **Organic Law No. 16 of 2014**, mandated the appointment of female candidates to the head of the lists, which is known as horizontal parity. This requirement was made in addition to that of vertical parity within the list of political parties and coalitions running in more than one electoral district for the election of municipal and regional councils. The same Article states that party and coalition lists that do not comply with this requirement will be disqualified from the elections. These measures resulted in a women's representation rate of 47 per cent, verging on parity.

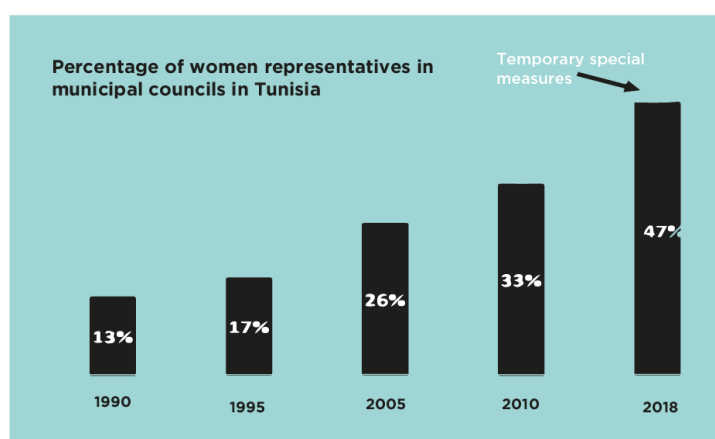


Chart 2: Percentage of women representatives in municipal councils in Tunisia

In 2018, women made up **34 per cent** of parliamentarians in the Assembly of People's Representatives (ARP) and **47 per cent** in municipal councils, thanks to these temporary special measures. Compared with the situation in other countries in the Middle East and North Africa (MENA) region, where women represented an average of **14 per cent** of parliamentarians in 2016, Tunisia was at that time well ahead in terms of women's political participation.¹³ This appears to have changed significantly after the elections of 2022–2023.

¹² Article 49 of Law No. 7 (2017) states that “Nominations for membership of municipal and regional assemblies shall be made on the basis of the principle of parity between women and men and the rule that lists must alternate between the names of men and women. Lists that do not comply with that rule are inadmissible. Nominations for membership of municipal and regional assemblies shall also be made on the basis of the principle of parity between women and men heading party and coalition lists if those parties or coalitions are running in more than one electoral district.”

¹³ Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development (OECD). *La place des femmes dans la vie politique locale en Tunisie*, 2018.

1.3 Legal Framework for the 2022-2023 Legislative Elections

The framework for parliamentary elections underwent substantial changes in 2022 as part of the reforms by the President of the Republic. These amendments included the electoral system, the possibility to recall ARP members, the endorsement requirement and the elimination of public funding.

These changes were introduced by **Decree-Law No. 2022-55**, published on **15 September 2022**, just three months before the elections.

The change in the electoral system concerns the shift from a closed-list proportional representation, where seats are allocated in proportion to the number of votes obtained, into majoritarian single-candidate constituencies. The majority system is based on a boundary delimitation in electoral districts, in which a single deputy is elected. In this two-round majoritarian system, if no candidate gets an absolute majority in the first round of voting, a second round is held in which only the two highest-scoring candidates participate.

These changes have ignited a firestorm of criticism by feminist civil society organizations. The “Feminist Dynamics” (Dynamique Féministe) issued a press release on 16 September 2022 denouncing the exclusion of women from the electoral process.¹⁴ Their statement explained that “the abandonment of the principle of parity because of the single-member district electoral system, without the implementation of safeguards ensuring a wide and effective participation of women, represents a serious violation of the provisions of Article 51 of the new Constitution.” The signatories believe that the consequences will be far-reaching, including that “women will be excluded and will not be able to stand for elections, and that the existing legislation will reinforce the participation of high-ranking people with money and connections, and reinforce patronage.”¹⁵

The Feminist Dynamic, a grouping of nine associations, protested on Friday, 7 October 2022, in front of the Higher Independent Authority for Elections (ISIE) against the exclusion of women from politics based on Decree-Law No. 2022-55. The nine women's groups include the Tunisian Association of Democratic Women, Aswat Nissa, Beity, Amal for the Family and the Child, the Tawhida Ben Sheikh Group, Jousour of Kef, Calam, the Association of Tunisian Women for Research and Development, Woman and Citizenship.

Photo published by Business News. The slogans used in the signs include: “No to the patriarchal electoral process,” “Women endorse and men rule,” and “We are full citizens and not a backdrop for endorsement.”

<https://www.businessnews.com.tn/la-dynamique-feministe-denonce-lexclusion-de-la-femme-du-processus-electoral,520,123450,3>



¹⁴ The signatories of the letter include: The Tunisian Association of Democratic Women (ATFD), Beity, Aswat Nissa, Tawhida Ben Cheikh Group, the Association of Tunisian Women for Research and Development (AFTRD), Jousour for Citizenship (Kef), Calam, The League of Tunisian Women Voters (LET).

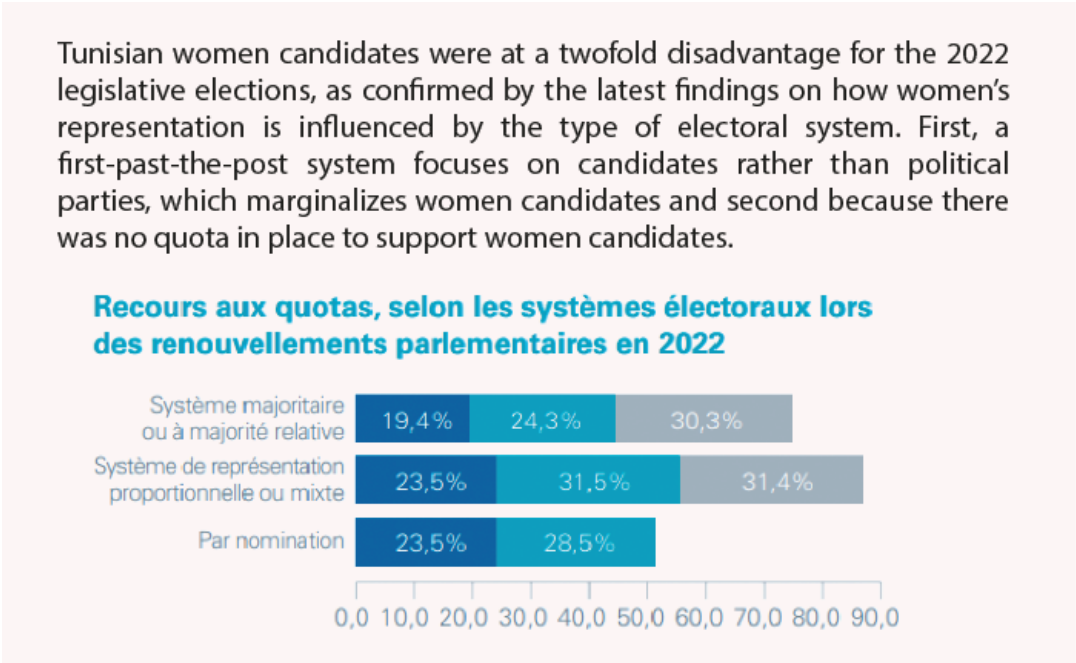
¹⁵

<https://www.businessnews.com.tn/loi-electorale-des-associations-denoncent-levincement-des-femmes-du-processus-electoral,520,122853,3>

The amendment to electoral law is fundamentally detrimental to women's participation for several reasons.

1- There is a positive correlation between the proportional representation system and the proportion of women in parliament. For example, all Western European countries where the proportion of women in parliament surpasses 20 per cent have adopted the proportional representation system (PR). On the other hand, the majority system is often seen as presenting obstacles for women candidates. In 2012, women won an average of only 14 per cent of seats in first-past-the-post elections, according to the Inter-Parliamentary Union (IPU).¹⁶ This system is often described as candidate-centric, which runs the risk of excluding women, who may be seen as representing a riskier choice for political parties. The IPU's 2020 and 2022 reports draw an important conclusion regarding the link between the electoral system and the use of quotas. "Electoral systems continue to influence the use of quotas. Countries using PR or mixed systems for renewals in 2022 were almost twice as likely to apply a legislated quota (or a combination of a legislated quota and a voluntary party quota) as to use no quota at all. In contrast, countries using plurality/majority systems were more than three times as likely to not use any legislated quota."¹⁷

In this respect, Tunisian female potential candidates for the 2022 legislative elections were at a twofold disadvantage, first because of the choice of a first-past-the-post system focused on candidates rather than political parties, and second, because of the absence of any kind of quota for women.



¹⁶ Inter-Parliamentary Union (IPU), Women in Parliament 2012: The Year in Perspective.

¹⁷ IPU, Women in Parliament, 2022.

- 2- There has been a major change in the way electoral districts are divided up. The 33 former major electoral constituencies based on the closed-list proportional representation system have been abolished and substituted with single-member electoral constituencies. The territory of the Tunisian Republic has been divided into 151 in-country electoral districts and ten abroad.

Two approaches were combined to delineate the new constituencies. First, non-administrative electoral constituencies were created by splitting or regrouping delegations. Then, Tunisia's administrative boundaries were adhered to in line with the delegations' boundaries. As a result, the administrative constituencies were extremely heterogeneous.

This boundary delimitation may have contributed to heightened levels of conflict in some parts of Tunisia between neighboring delegations, in addition to family and tribal disputes in several electoral districts in the interior of the country. Rather than depending on national political development platforms, several candidates in the 2022 small single-candidate electoral districts tried to take advantage of their local family or financial influence, or both. Women continue to face significant disadvantages in such an environment, as men often control the decision-making processes and have better access to financial resources at all levels.

Rather than depending on national political development platforms, several candidates in the 2022 small single-candidate electoral districts were trying to take advantage of their local family or financial influence, or both. Women continue to face significant disadvantages in such an environment, as men often control the decision-making processes and access to financial resources at all levels.

- 3- **Article 19 of Decree-Law No. 2022-55 introduces** new conditions for candidate applications. In order to run in the electoral districts within Tunisia, candidates cannot hold a foreign nationality, and must file **400 endorsements** in the same electoral district with notarized signatures of male and female voters. The 400 endorsements must be equally provided by **50 per cent** men and **50 per cent** women, with at least **25 per cent** by young persons **under 35**. Voters may only endorse one candidate.¹⁸ This candidate endorsement requirement has been a major obstacle to women standing for elections, as evidenced by all the interviews with women who have submitted their candidate applications. The public sphere remains male-dominated, which reduces women's chances of securing the required number of endorsements.

¹⁸ <https://inkyfada.com/fr/2022/09/29/nouvelle-loi-electorale-kais-said/>

This system enshrines "the vulnerability of women since they will tend to sponsor men who have a better chance of gaining power and not women."

Neila Zoghlami, President of the Tunisian Association of Democratic Women (ATFD) as interviewed by Rihab Boukhayatia, for Nawat

HYPERLINK "<https://nawaat.org/2022/10/12/tunisie-tolle-feministe-contre-la-loi-electorale/>"
<https://nawaat.org/2022/10/12/tunisie-tolle-feministe-contre-la-loi-electorale/>

- 4- The absence of public funding for election campaigns is also one of the most significant changes in electoral law, as campaigns can now only be funded by self-financing or by private financing. Unquestionably, this restriction adds to the discrimination against women in terms of access to resources and employment. In the fourth quarter of 2022, the unemployment rate for women was estimated at 20.1 per cent, compared to 12.9 per cent for men. The gender gap is even more pronounced when it comes to higher education graduates in particular. For this category of the population, the unemployment rate climbs to 30.8 per cent for women, compared with 15.7 per cent for men over the same period, according to the figures published in February 2023 by the National Institute of Statistics (INS). Women also perform unpaid housework or caregiving duties (on average, they spend between 8 and 12 hours per day and just 45 minutes for men).¹⁹ Nearly 45 per cent of women work in the informal sector. All these considerations make it more difficult for women to bear the additional burden of financing electoral campaign activities geared towards raising voter awareness, especially as additional efforts are required to overcome the influence of gender stereotypes and negative perceptions of women candidate qualifications. Furthermore, the candidate-centered majority system requires, by nature, more self-financing. This leads one to conclude that women are therefore disproportionately affected by the elimination of public funding for election campaigns.²⁰

¹⁹ According to the study carried out by Oxfam in Tunisia in partnership with AFTURD, women spend between 8 and 12 hours a day in unpaid caring duties (depending on their age, family and economic situation, and place of residence), compared with an average of 45 minutes for men.

²⁰ I-Know Politics. Consolidated information from online discussion "Funding for Women" (August 2018) notes that "Majority-based and candidate-centered systems tend to require more self-funding from candidates, putting women at a disadvantage. Costs will often be incurred in attempting to win a primary election, and then in the election period. Party primaries can be very expensive and act as an obstacle for women's participation as they often require significant self-funding. Proportional systems typically require less fundraising from the individual candidate and are therefore considered favorable to women. This is due to political parties bearing the biggest costs for campaigning. However, political parties often stand as gate-keepers, nominating men they believe are more likely to attract more private funding due to ingrained gender stereotypes."
https://iknowpolitics.org/sites/default/files/consolidated_reply_e-discussion_on_funding_for_women_fr_3.pdf

1.4 Statistical Data on Women's Participation in the 2022-2023 Legislative Elections

1.4.1. General Candidacy Requirements

The requirements for candidate registration in the 2022 legislative elections have two dimensions: those relating to the candidate and those relating to endorsement.

- The candidate must be at least twenty-three years of age with a clean criminal record, be a resident of and registered to vote in the electoral district in which s/he stands as a candidate, and not be subject to any form of legal deprivation.
- As regards endorsements, the candidate must submit a list of names of voters endorsing his/her candidacy, together with four hundred endorsement forms. Each form must contain a summary of the candidate's electoral platform, and a notarized signature of the voter. The ISIE would only accept half of the endorsements from women and half from men, on condition that the 25 per cent of them are under 35 years of age.

1.4.2. Gender Analysis of Candidate Application Statistics

Women's participation during the candidate registration phase was very low (212 for women compared to 1215 for men). In fact, the percentage of women candidates did not exceed 15 per cent of the total number of candidates. The proportion of female candidates shortlisted within the final list of approved candidates was less than 11.5 per cent, which is the lowest number of female candidates in Tunisian parliamentary elections since 2011.

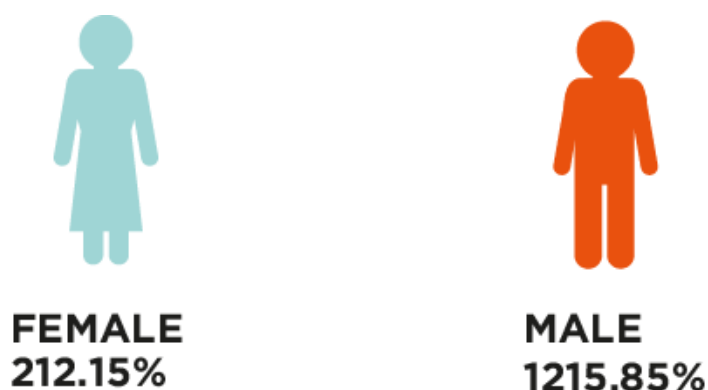


Chart 3: Breakdown of candidate applications by gender

The total number of applications initially rejected was 363, or around 25 per cent of the total number of submitted candidate applications.

Only 29 candidates had their applications initially rejected for failure to meet one of the candidacy requirements. The remainder were rejected due to obstacles in the candidate

application system itself: 334 candidates were disqualified for lack of endorsements, which represents 92 per cent of all rejected applications for candidate nominations.

ISIE approved 122 candidate applications submitted by women and rejected 90 out of a total of 212 candidacies submitted by women, representing **a rejection rate of 42 per cent for women**. The percentage of rejected applications for female nominations is about twice that of male candidates, who experienced a rejection rate of just 22 per cent.

Women candidates for political office face huge obstacles. The greatest hurdles include:

- 1- the absence of temporary special measures for women candidates, including gender parity measures;
- 2 - the first-past-the-post electoral system with no quotas for women;
- 3 - the endorsement requirements and call for non-participation in elections by several political parties.

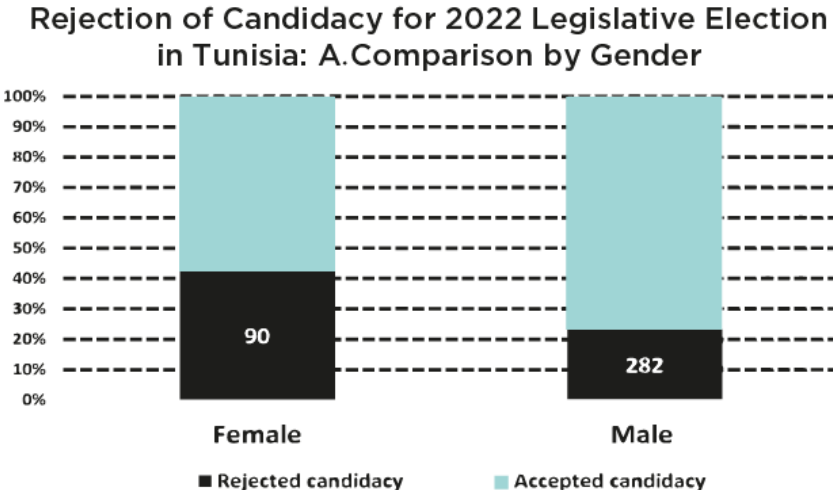


Chart 4: A comparison of rejected applications for candidate nomination, by gender

Women made up 15 per cent to men’s 85 per cent of the total candidate pool during the candidate registration period for Tunisia’s 2022 legislative elections. Female candidate applications were rejected at a rate nearly twice as high as that of male candidate applications. The primary cause of rejection was the insufficient number of endorsements collected from male and female voters. This huge gender gap in this electoral phase revealed once again the entrenchment of a stereotype that confirms a socio-cultural norm in Tunisia: women are expected to prioritize family and professional life, while men are meant to dominate public and political leadership.

Regionally, the highest rate of rejected applications for candidate nominations for both men and women was recorded in the Greater Tunis area, in Béja and in Nabeul. In these regions, individual interviews with female candidates offer a sampling of why the candidate nominations were rejected. Four women confirmed that they refrained from depositing endorsements in opposition to this discriminatory practice against women. Only one woman submitted her application for candidate nomination to the Nabeul 2 Independent Regional Authorities for Elections (IRIE), but her application was rejected. In the constituencies abroad, only three female candidates presented their candidacy, and none of them were approved. Elections were held only in three of the ten overseas constituencies, with only one male candidate in each constituency. The other seven seats decided by expatriate voters had no candidates running at all.

Disaggregation of accepted and rejected female candidacy for the 2022 legislative election in Tunisia

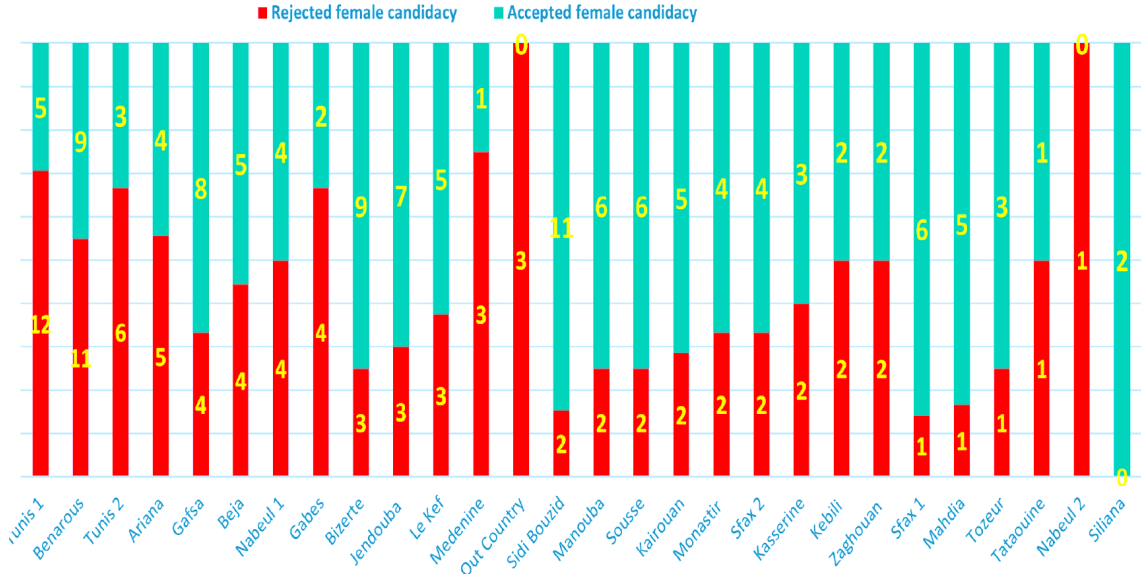


Chart 5. Disaggregation of accepted and rejected female candidacy for the 2022 legislative election in Tunisia

1.4.3. Gender Analysis of Endorsements

Given the number of male candidates, most female endorsements were given to men. According to figures provided by the ISIE, **49 per cent** of the total number of endorsements for candidates were made by women. Nonetheless, male candidates received more than **85 per cent** of these endorsements. In fact, an average of only eight female candidates secured **10,000 female** endorsements, compared to **48 male candidates**. It is also important to note that women candidates had great difficulty in gathering endorsements from men. Conversely, **10,000 male endorsements** on average were submitted for eight female candidates compared to **46 male candidates**.

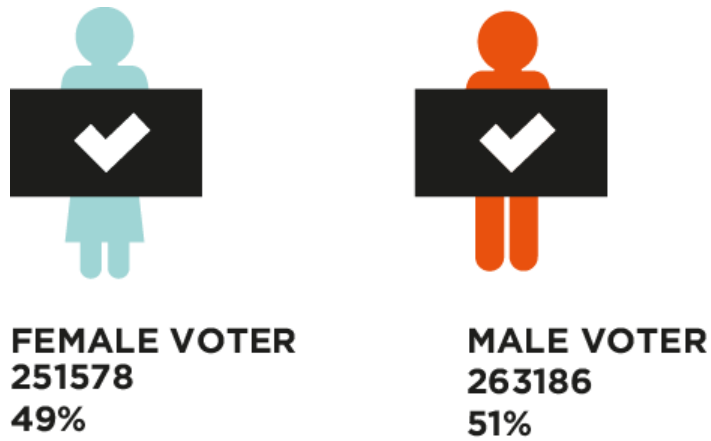


Chart 6. Analysis of endorsements: general figures

During the candidate registration phase of the 2022 legislative elections in Tunisia, the vast majority of endorsements submitted by female voters were made in favor of male candidates.

Endorsement Gap between female and male in 2022: Legislative election in Tunisia

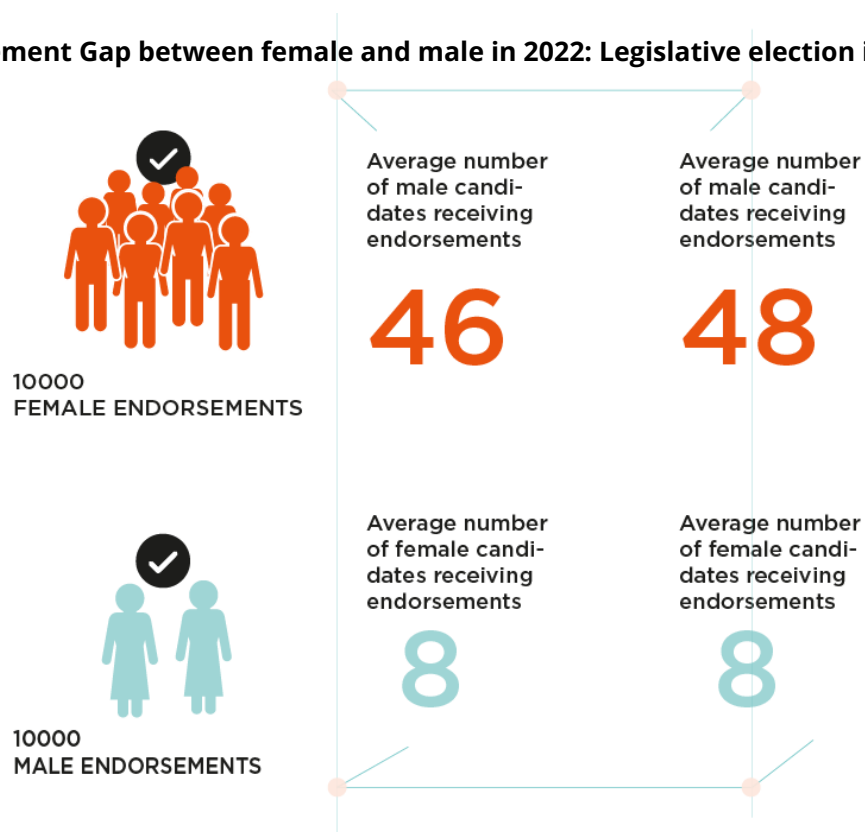
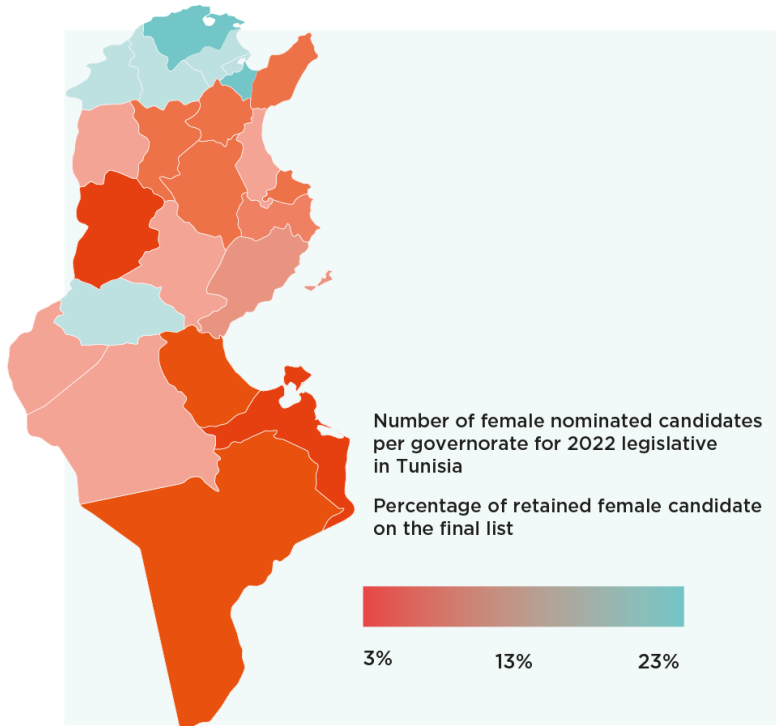


Chart 7. Analysis of endorsements: a gender comparison

1.4.4. Gender Analysis of Statistics on Approved Candidates



Most of the successful women candidates hailed from the central-western region of the country. There were no overseas women candidates. For every governorate, there were between one and eleven candidates. The governorate of Sidi Bouzid had the highest proportion of female candidates. However, the representation of female candidates in each governorate was quite low, **23 per cent** being the highest.

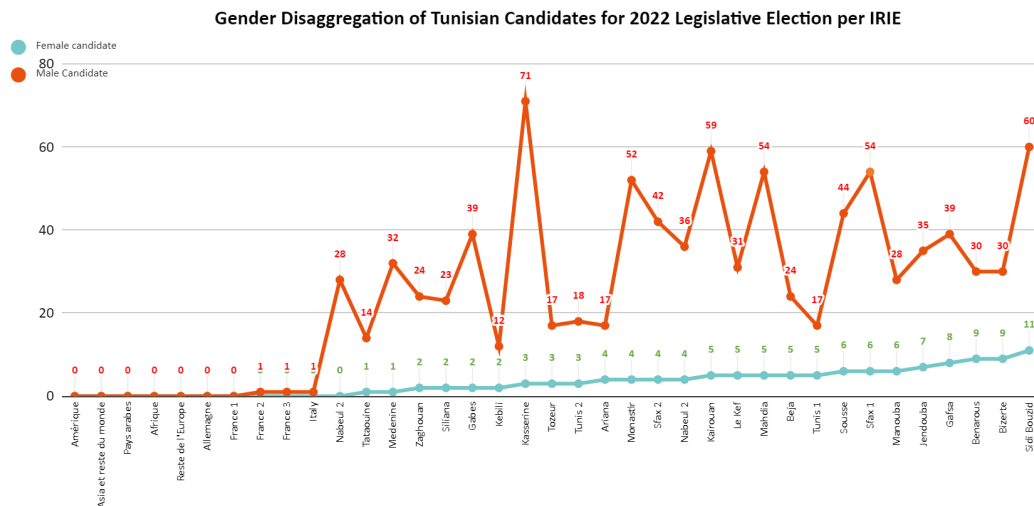


Chart 8. Percentage of retained female candidate on the final list and gender disaggregation of Tunisian candidates for the 2022 legislative election by IRIE

Of the **154 electoral districts**, **74 districts**—or almost half-- had no female candidates. The maximum number of female candidates per district was four. There were **153 districts** with male candidates, often with more than **14 males** per district.

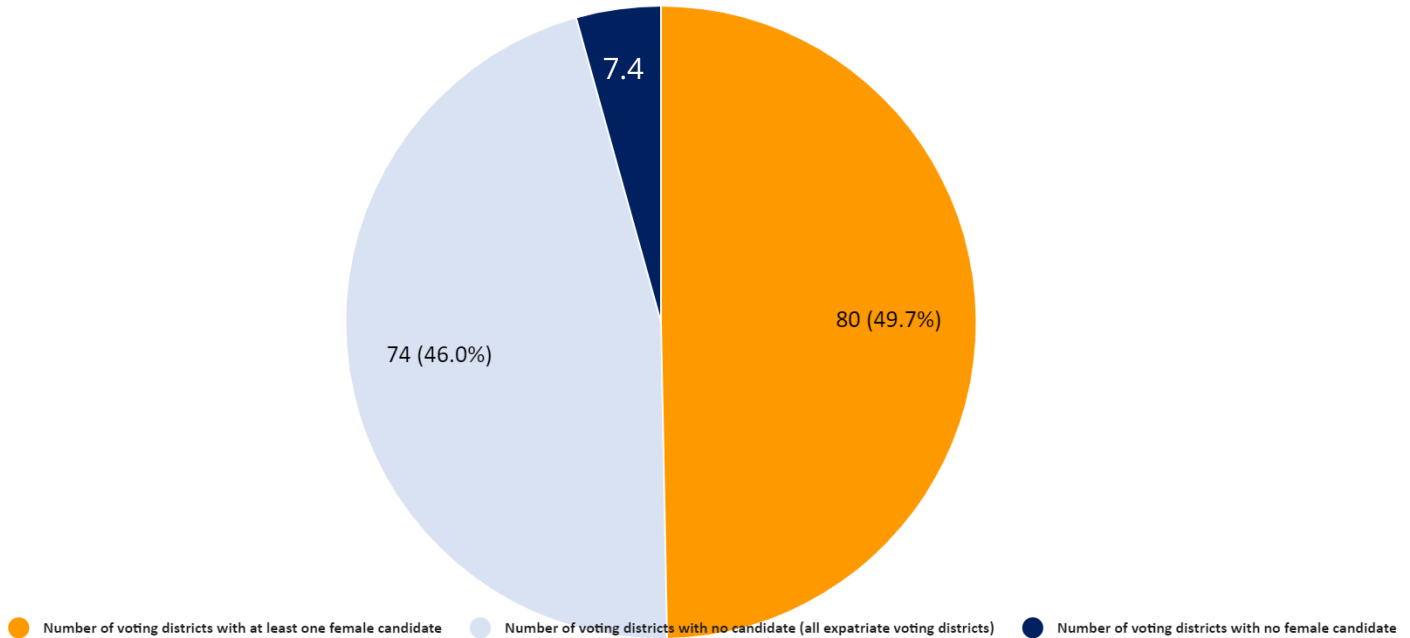


Chart 9. Breakdown of number of constituencies by female candidate nomination

The final list of candidates announced by **Nabeul 2 IRIE** did not include any accepted female candidate. Only male candidates participated in this election.

Breakdown of constituencies per IRIE according to female candidate nomination

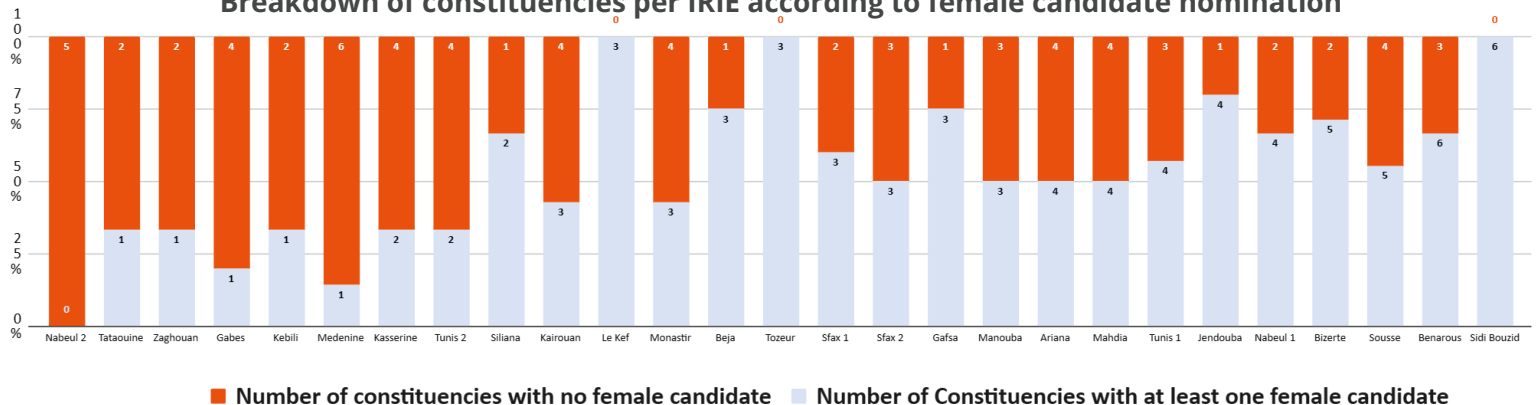


Chart 10. Breakdown of constituencies by presence of female candidate nomination

In 2022, the gender gap in elections deepened, alarmingly. For the first time since 2011, male dominance in parliamentary elections has become institutional. The data tells the reality:

- There were no women on the board of the electoral management body (ISIE), the primary electoral authority of the 2022 legislative elections.
- There were no female candidates in 74 of the 154 electoral districts.
- There was a maximum of 4 female candidates per constituency and 153 male candidates overall, with some regions reaching up to 14 male contesting candidates per seat.
- The final list of candidates announced by Nabeul 2 IRIE, where the race were solely among male contestants, did not include a single female candidate.

1.4.5. Gender Analysis of the Results of the First Round of the 2022-2023 Parliamentary Elections

The primary authority overseeing the 2022 legislative elections was the national electoral management body, or ISIE. It is important to note that there was not a single women on its board. This fact, on top of the severely low numbers of women candidates across the country, points to a tragic rollback in gender equality in Tunisia's political space: male dominance in the parliamentary elections has become more institutional and structural in nature for the first time **since 2011**.

Disaggregation of 122 female candidates for the 2022 legislative election in Tunisia



Chart 11. Disaggregation of 122 female candidates for the 2022 legislative election in Tunisia

When comparing the first-round results of male and female candidates, it is evident that the former were mostly sidelined during the candidate registration phase, while they fared equally well against men during the voting phase.

Women candidates have shown that once they have successfully completed the candidate application phase they can transform the few resources at their disposal into concrete achievements in the campaign phase and at the polls, with a performance on par with male candidates. **The real obstacle for women candidates lies rather in social factors at structural, legislative and behavioral levels in addition to administrative factors in the candidate application phase.** However, women have some personal conversion factors that are highly beneficial to their success.²¹

Gender comparison of results on first round of 2022 legislative election in Tunisia

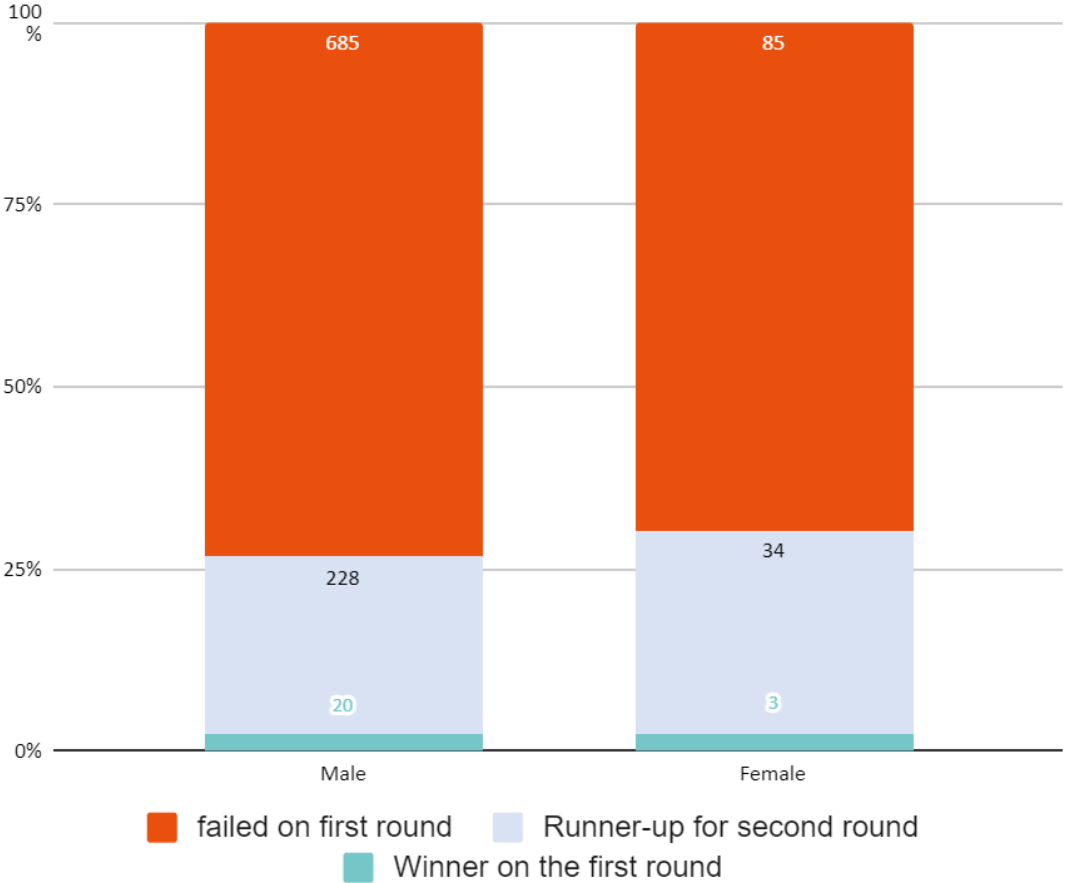


Chart 12. Gender comparison of results on first round of 2022 legislative election in Tunisia

²¹ Amel ben Rhouma, Bilel kchouk. L'Accès des femmes aux postes de gouvernance en Tunisie. Une analyse en termes de capacités. *La Découverte*, « Travail, genre et sociétés » 2019/1 n° 41, pp 105-125.

Women candidates have shown that, once they have successfully completed the candidate application phase, they can transform the few resources at their disposal into concrete achievements in the campaign phase and at the polls, with a performance on par with male candidates. The real obstacle for women candidates lies rather in social factors at structural, legislative and behavioral levels in the candidate application phase. To get results for women, there must be quotas in place in a majoritarian voting system and temporary special measures in place to support female candidates.

At the regional level, analysis of the results of the first round of the 2022 legislative elections indicate that in the northern and north-eastern regions, female candidates fared fairly well. The three seats won by women in the first round correspond to three constituencies in Greater Tunis: two constituencies in Ariana and one in Tunis. No female candidate from Ariana lost in the first round. In Bizerte and Béja, there were two races held entirely among female candidates.

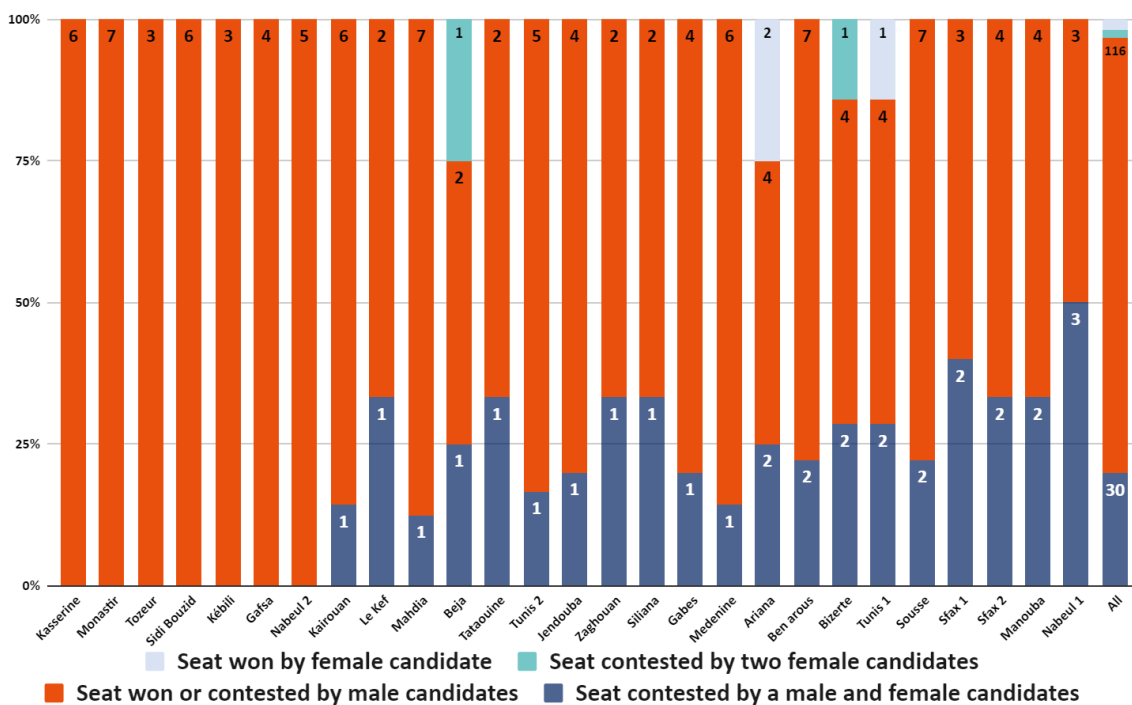


Chart 13. Gender disaggregation of seat contestants in second round of 2022 legislative election by IRIE

It is noteworthy that no female candidate was successful in any of the six governorates in the interior of the country, including five governorates in the southwest and central regions of Tunisia, namely Kasserine, Sidi Bouzid, Gafsa, Kebili, and Tozeur. Nonetheless, during the initial phase of candidate applications, the governorates of Gafsa and Sidi Bouzid stood out for having a comparatively large number of female candidates. These results are consistent with the data on the geography of poverty in Tunisia, which illustrates clear disparities between the eastern coastal areas, with cities such as Tunis, Sousse and Sfax, and the rural environment in the cities of northwestern and central-western Tunisia, known for their relatively high poverty index and rate of internal migration to other cities.²²

It is likely that these governorates have social, structural, behavioral, and environmental factors that create even higher barriers for women than in other voting districts. In fact, a few sociological variables may account for women's failure to advance to the next round of voting in certain areas, consistent with information gathered in focus group discussions. Among these may be the influences of tribalism and family-oriented local customs, and the dearth of resources for women running for office in voting districts that are among Tunisia's ten most marginalized.

For instance, these districts rank the lowest in the regional development index (IDR).²³ This illustrates a possible correlation between levels of women's poverty and their inability to access electoral spaces and rise to positions of elected leadership.

²² Bochra Manaï. Conditions sociales des femmes dans la Tunisie contemporaine : entre symbolisme féministe et justice spatiale. *La Découverte*. <https://www.cairn.info/revue-herodote-2021-1-pa-ge-115.htm>

²³ L'indice de développement régional 2021. - Itceq (Tunisian Institute of Competitiveness and Quantitative Studies).

The Regional Development Index (IDR) in Tunisia in 2021 According to Rapport de ITCEQ-2021

The percentage of female candidates elected or runner-up in second round of 2022 legislative elections in Tunisia per governorate among all female candidates per governorate

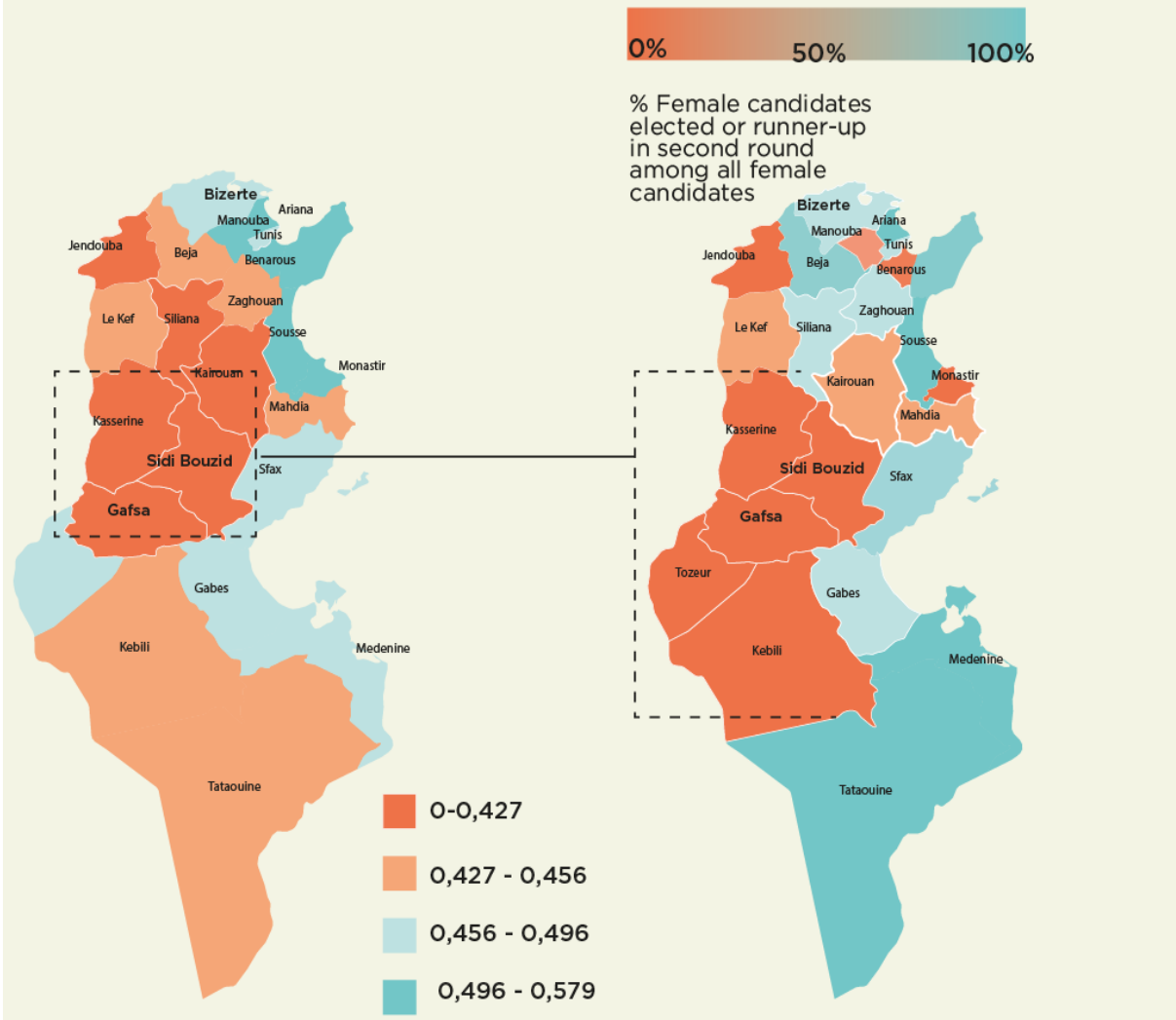


Chart 14. Percentage of female candidates elected or runner-up for second round in 2022 legislative election in Tunisia by governorate among all female candidates by governorate and IDR

1.4.6. Gender Analysis of the Results of the Second Round of the 2022-2023 Parliamentary Elections

In the second round, held on 29 January 2023, 131 candidates were elected, including 22 women (16.8 per cent).²⁴ A total of 25 women (out of 154) had been announced by the ISIE in the preliminary turnout results, but this number was reduced to 24 following the challenge period.

Analysis of the runoffs between male and female candidates showed that, overall, female candidates were more competitive than male candidates. In fact, 19 of the 30 run-off contests were won by female candidates, translating to a female success rate of 63 per cent. This emphasizes the significance of the positive correlation that exists between women's political experience and their electoral success. Women's political campaigns have progressed considerably by the second round, and their success rates have increased. However, the hypothesis that some voters consistently support women who feel "aggrieved" by the electoral system cannot be ruled out. This analysis needs to be confirmed or informed by additional research on the voting behavior of the electorate.

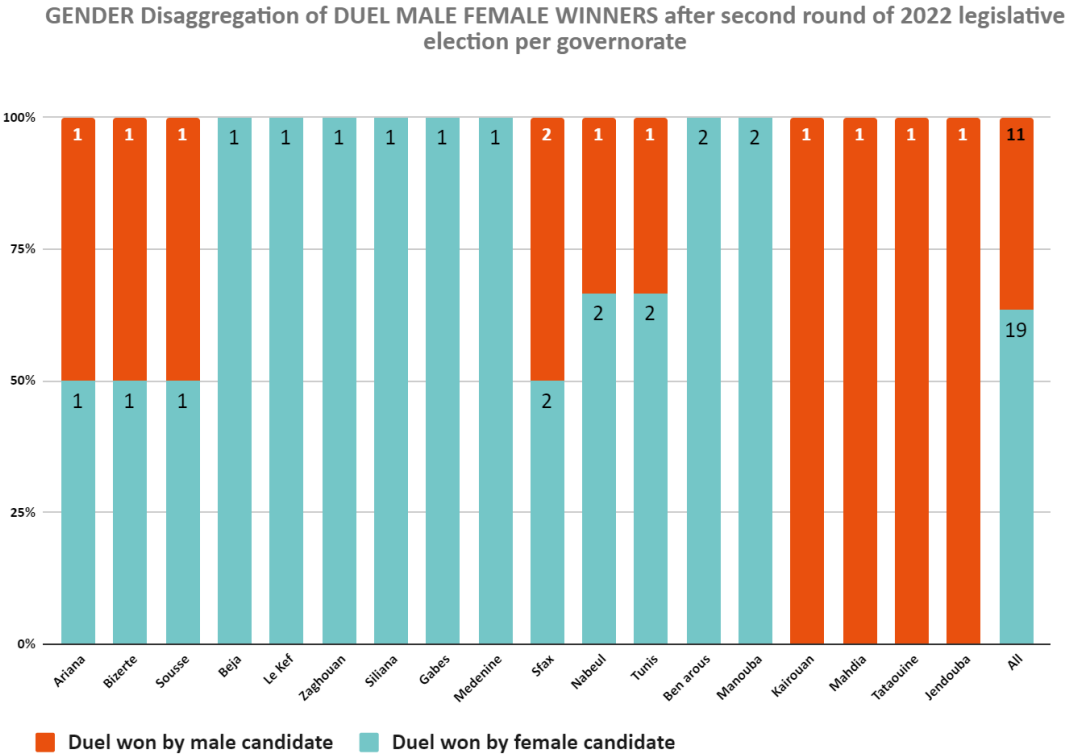


Chart 15. Gender disaggregation of second round contest between a male and female candidate in the 2022 legislative election by governorate

²⁴ It should be noted that the number of women was reduced to 21 following the decision of the Administrative Court in favor of a candidate who had been sanctioned by the ISIE (Sakiet Eddayer district).

At this point in the study, it can be concluded that the **2022–2023 legislative election process** was marked by the implementation of a new legal framework incorporating radical and substantial changes to the core provisions of electoral law, introduced in a hasty manner. A majoritarian electoral system was swiftly established without providing sufficient time for preparation, which meant there was no chance to implement gender quotas or hold consultations to build consensus with political and civil society stakeholders.

The **2022-2023 electoral process** was marked from the outset, including in the nomination process, by gender disparity in favor of men. While the percentage of women registered for the elections made up nearly 51 per cent of candidates, compared to **49 per cent of men**, the indicators of women's participation as candidates deteriorated as the process went on. While **34 per cent of women** cast ballots, the proportion of women who were ultimately elected did not exceed **15.6 per cent**.

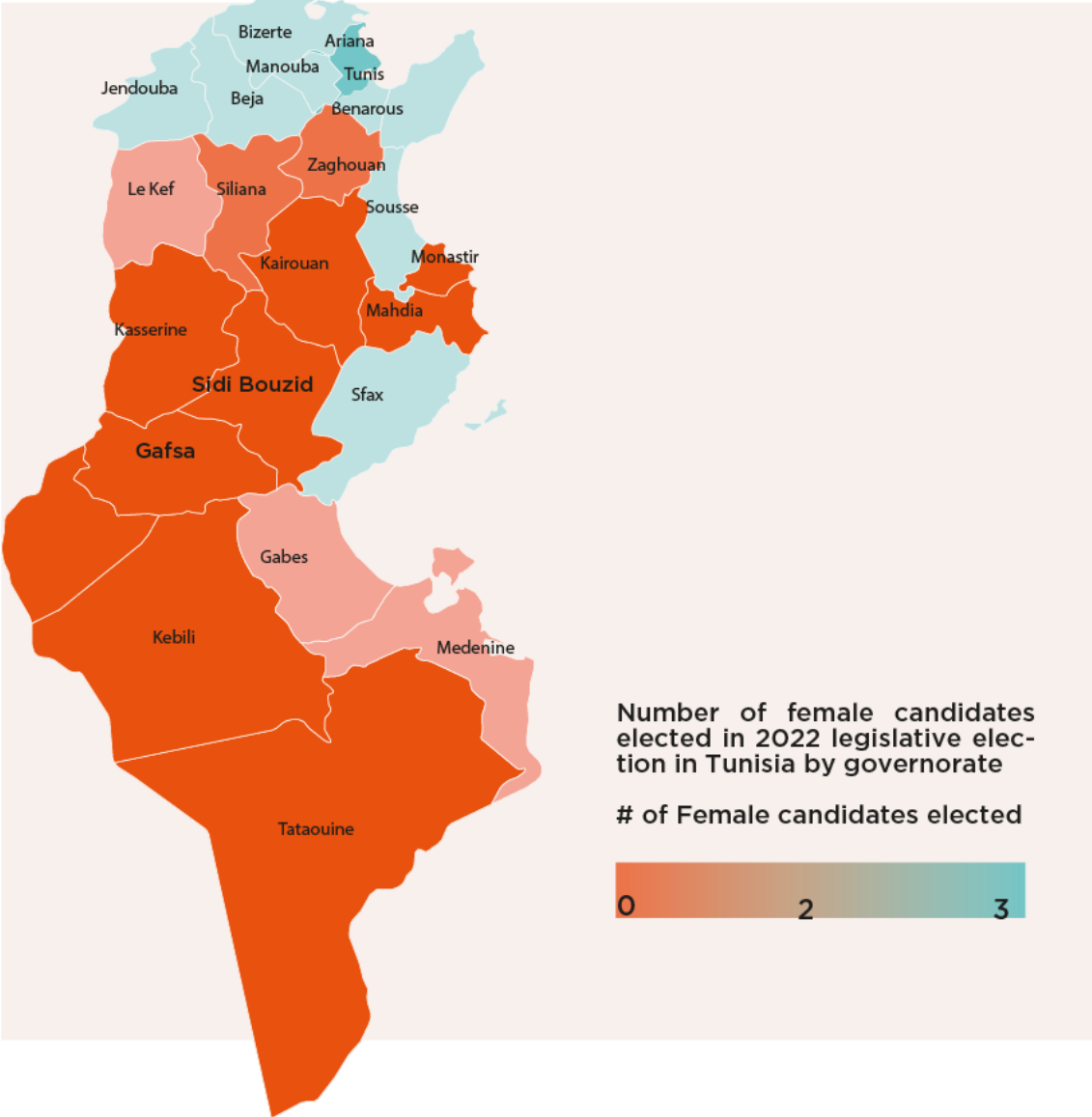


Chart 16. Number of female candidates elected in 2022 legislative election in Tunisia by governorate and gender disaggregation of seats won by women in the second round

Apart from the performance of female candidates in direct contests against male candidates, gender analysis shows a worrying decline in general participation indicators, which is the lowest since 2011. The fact that two indicators --voter registration and voters' endorsement of a candidate-- are marked by a percentage close to parity (between **49 per cent** and **51 per cent for men and women**, alternating) demonstrates that women might be interested in participating. The great disparity in numbers, and the alarmingly low numbers of women participants, is registered when the electoral process begins. This shows the importance of temporary special measures including quotas since the **2022 election** was the first election to have no TSMs in place **since 2011** and it proved also to be the election with the lowest levels of participation by women as candidates.

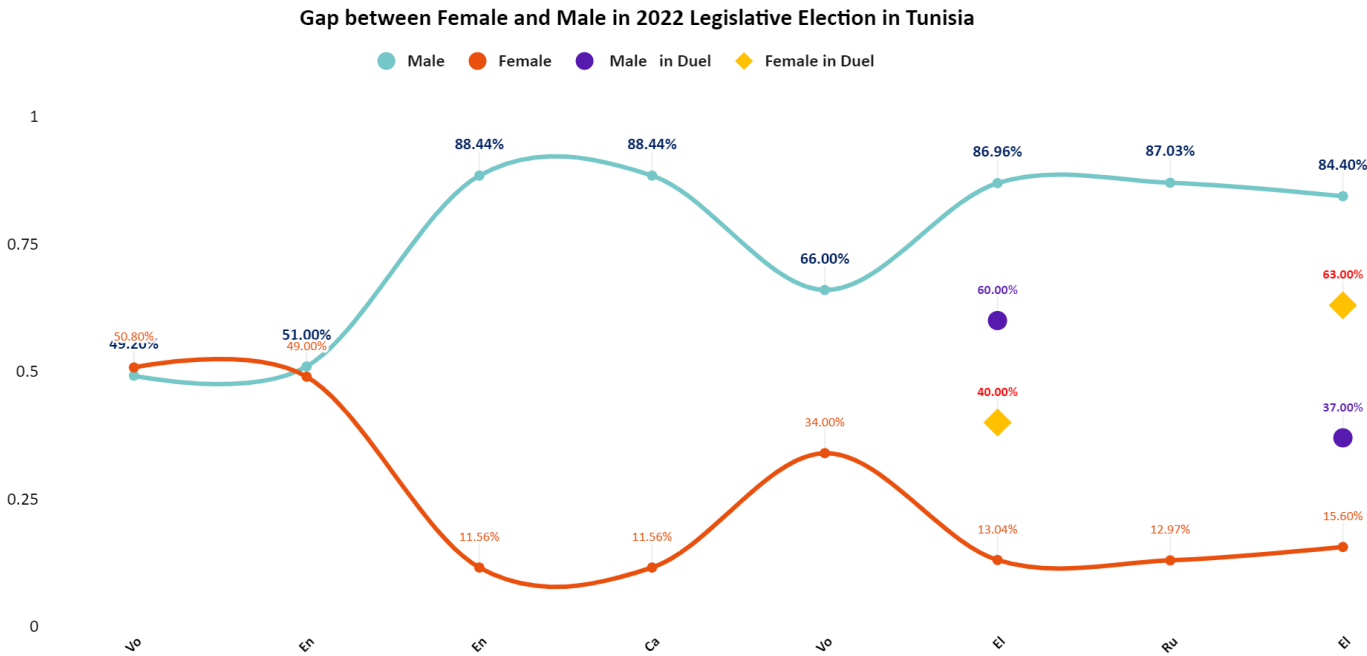


Chart 17. Gap between female and male participation in the 2022 legislative election in Tunisia

The hasty application of a majoritarian electoral system in the absence of quotas for women, established without any consultation with the various stakeholders, has resulted in an electoral process marked by gender gaps in favor of men. Apart from the performance of female candidates in direct contests against male candidates, gender analysis shows a worrying decline in participation indicators, which is the lowest since 2011.

1.4.7. Conclusions Based on the Analysis of Women's Electoral Participation Statistics in the 2022-2023 Legislative Elections

The low percentage of women elected to the ARP (24 out of 154 parliamentarians, or 15.6 per cent) puts Tunisia below the regional average (16.4 per cent for the Middle East and North Africa)²⁵ and the global average (26.7 per cent). Tunisia now ranks 139th out of 180 countries in terms of women's participation in parliament. In July 2020, Tunisia was ranked 77th in the world with a rate of 24.6 per cent. This reveals the intricacies of an electoral system that masks gender disparities, allowing for institutional and systematic discrimination to reinforce barriers that keep women from accessing the electoral process and decision-making positions.

²⁵ <https://data.ipu.org/fr/women-ranking?month=7&year=2023>

PART 2

ANALYSIS OF FOCUS GROUPS
ON TUNISIAN WOMEN'S PARTI-
CIPATION AND CANDIDACY IN
THE 2022-2023 LEGISLATIVE
ELECTIONS, INCLUDING BAR-
RIERS TO SUCCESS

In order to best document the experience of women candidates for the **2022-2023 elections**, it is important to examine the gaps and obstacles experienced by women candidates during this particular electoral process, and also the potential opportunities that this new electoral system may provide. There is also a need to highlight certain emerging aspects of Tunisian female leadership through a study of the profile, attitudes as well as political and electoral behaviors of female candidates, most of whom had this experience for the first time in this election.

A number of hypotheses can be put forward regarding the range of challenges that female candidates faced in these elections. However, little is known about the behaviors and circumstances around these hurdles and the capacities of female candidates to overcome them. The most direct way to gather this information was from the female candidates themselves, through the use of focus groups and individual interviews.

The aim of conducting these focus groups was to analyze the factors influencing Tunisian women's aspirations to take that bold individual step towards becoming a political leader. The focus group is intended to create the conditions to facilitate a discussion guided by empirical questioning, so that each focus group participant can describe and discuss the contingent personal and situational circumstances that helped or hampered her ability to advance her aspirations for political leadership.

The study considers structural social factors such as the family, the political and legal system, social, cultural and moral norms, as well as other people's attitudes towards female candidates, such as stereotypes, prejudice, sexism and violence.

The second section of the study focuses on the methodology employed in the focus groups with female candidates, as well as the findings made.

2.1. Introduction

The primary goal of this focus group study is to identify the profile of female candidates for the legislative elections of 2022–2023, taking into account the sociocultural factors that have influenced women's participation in politics since the announcement of exceptional measures in 25 July 2021 and since the establishment of the new electoral system in Tunisia. Then, the study examines the factors that have contributed to the low rate of elected women as representatives of the people to the first chamber of the new Parliament.

The findings of this survey research should reveal new profiles of women with individual female leadership aspirations independent of most party structures and political coalitions. The quantitative analysis of the survey questionnaires completed by the participants and the qualitative analysis of the individual and interactive discussions during the focus group sessions reveal a wide range of women's viewpoints concerning changes in the electoral system, temporary special measures and barriers that have hindered these women in running for office due to social, environmental and personal factors.

The total sample consists of 83 participants from the following governorates: Greater Tunis (Tunis, Manouba, Ariana, Ben Arous), Nabeul, Zaghuan, Kairouan, Sousse,

Mahdia, Sfax, Sidi Bouzid, Gafsa, Bizerte, Le Kef, Beja, Jendouba. These women participated in focus groups both in-person and virtually between November and December 2022.

2.2 Data Collection Methodology

Data collection in this study was carried out in three stages with three different candidate profiles: candidates whose applications were rejected by ISIE, candidates whose applications were approved and who ran an election campaign for the first round, and candidates who proceeded to the second round. Both the questionnaire and the focus group moderation guides had to be adapted to the target audience, particularly since candidates had very different experiences: some were able to run an election campaign, while other women candidates had their applications rejected at the initial stage.

2.2.1 First Stage: Data on Female Candidates Not Retained by the ISIE

This section of the study targets 40 female candidates for the 2022 legislative elections in Tunisia who were among the 90 female candidates whose candidate applications were rejected by the ISIE. Understanding the new context of Tunisian women's participation in elections after the exceptional measures of 25 July 2021 is the main focus of this part of the study.

The 40 participants in the study were broken down into three focus groups for this initial phase:

- The first focus group was held in Sfax, with participants from the governorates of Kairouan, Sfax, Mahdia and Gafsa.
- The second focus group was held in Tunis, with participants from the governorates of Tunis, Ben Arous, Ariana, Manouba, Bizerte, Nabeul, Sousse and Zaghuan.
- The third focus group was based in Kef, with participants from the governorates of Kef, Beja and Jendouba.

Each of these dual-moderator focus groups lasted for one day.

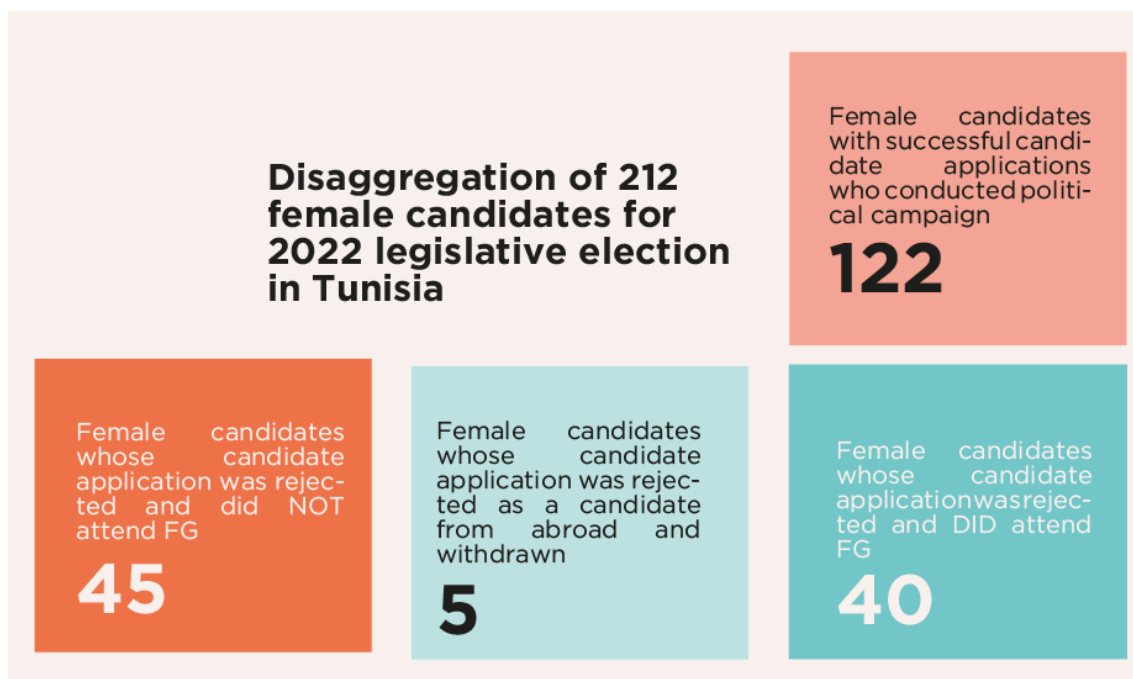


Chart 18. Disaggregation of 212 female candidates for the 2022 legislative election in Tunisia

The participants filled out a questionnaire including their age, marital status, profession, and number of children before the start of discussions with each group. Each participant was also asked questions concerning the time she spent on domestic and care work—including cooking, childcare, and senior care-- the monthly value of her own income, and means of travel.

Regarding running for office, each participant gave her opinion on the single-member district electoral system, the degree to which this motivated her participation, whether or not she already had prior experience in elections, and whether or not she is active or involved in civil society activism.

In addition, each participant responded to inquiries concerning the conduct of her close-circle of friends and family and her level of knowledge regarding the requirements, documents, and candidate application process. In addition, the participants responded to inquiries concerning the challenges faced by female candidates in securing endorsements and if they had come across instances of gender-based violence or sexist comments.

2.2.2. Second Stage: Data on Female Candidates Approved to Run for Elections by the ISIE

This part of the study targeted 43 female candidates approved by the ISIE to run in the first round of the 2022-2023 legislative elections. The methodology for this group was different, in that 35 female participants were interviewed online by a moderator during the campaign period for the first round.

The questions were taken from the survey questionnaire to ensure that the same interview was conducted with all participants. Each participant's answers was written immediately during the interview, with the consent of all participants.

In addition, a focus group was conducted with eight other women whose candidate applications had been accepted by the ISIE and who had participated in the first round of elections, two days after the results of the first round were announced. Three of these women had made it through to the second round of elections in their district. All participants answered the survey questionnaire in writing and took part in a focus group discussion.

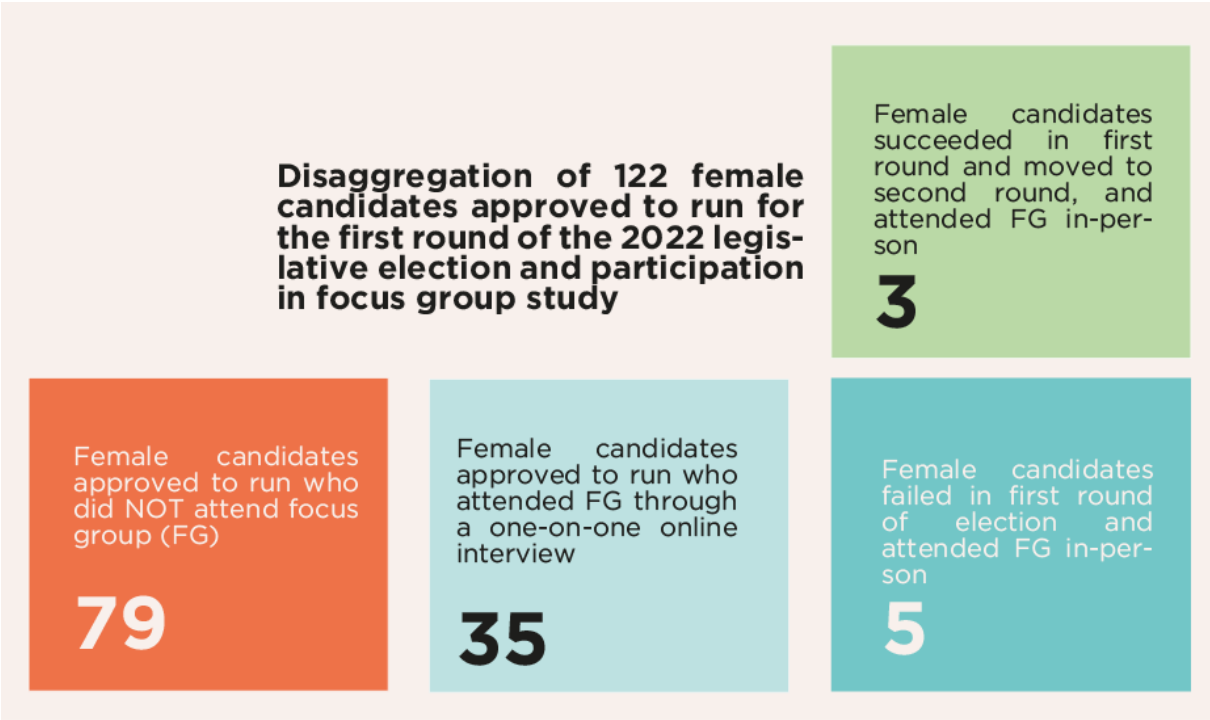


Chart 19. Focus group of female candidates approved to run for election.

With this sub-set of women, the focus groups aimed to explore the campaign characteristics of individual female candidates in a quantitative manner. Participants' answers to the survey questionnaire also reveal the forms of gender-based violence experienced by female candidates. This section of the study examines most of the obstacles to a gender-equitable electoral campaign.

During an individual online interview and an in-person focus group session, the participants answered several questions about their family, social and economic situation. In addition, they answered a series of questions about the course of their electoral campaign with respect to four main themes:

- The first theme concerns the *types of campaign activities* undertaken by female candidates. Questions focused on the different campaign activities frequently used by participants, activities avoided by female candidates because of their gender, voters' general perception of female candidates as political leaders, and gender-based counter-campaigning actions orchestrated by other candidates or their supporters.
- The second theme concerns the *resources available to female candidates* for campaigning. In particular, each participant was asked to describe her electoral campaign team, tell whether or not she had a campaign headquarters, appointed a financial agent or a legal representative, and whether or not she needed to be accompanied by one or more men during her campaign activities. Each participant was also asked whether or not she needed public funding to run her election campaign, and how many accredited agents she had at polling stations on polling day.

The third theme looks at gender-based violence that female candidates encountered while running for office. Each participant was specifically asked to rate how safe she felt during her election campaign—from "very unsafe" to "very safe"—as well as how comfortable she felt on election day and in the conduct of her campaign activities. Each participant was asked to specify the frequency of

harassment, intimidation and threats to her safety; whether or not she had received messages from other male contestants or their supporters portraying her as politically unfit or inferior because of her gender, and whether she had seen any posts or abusive comments demeaning or threatening her on social media.

Participants were also polled about the extent to which they would have experienced stereotypical, offensive, or humiliating treatment, as well as the degree to which, as female candidates for office, the comments they received were more focused on their appearance, hair, and makeup than on their platforms and ideas.

- The fourth theme concerns the assessment of the legal framework in place and the recommendations proposed by focus group participants. Each participant was asked to identify the largest barrier to female candidacy in her region and to provide recommendations for reforming the electoral legal framework regarding temporary special measures to create preferential treatment of female candidates in legislative elections. Participants were asked to state if they were already aware of Organic Law No. 2017-58 on the Elimination of Violence against Women and if they had any recommendations to combat political violence.

2.2.3. Third Stage: Data from Representatives of Tunisian Civil Society Organizations Engaged in Election Observation

This is a micro focus group of four participants, with two women and two men representing CSOs accredited for election observation. These organizations are the Tunisian Association for Integrity and Democracy of Elections (ATIDE), Chahed Observatory, Tunisian Mediterranean Center (TUMED) and Youth without Borders (JSF). All these organizations took part in observing the 2022-2023 legislative elections with central and regional staff.

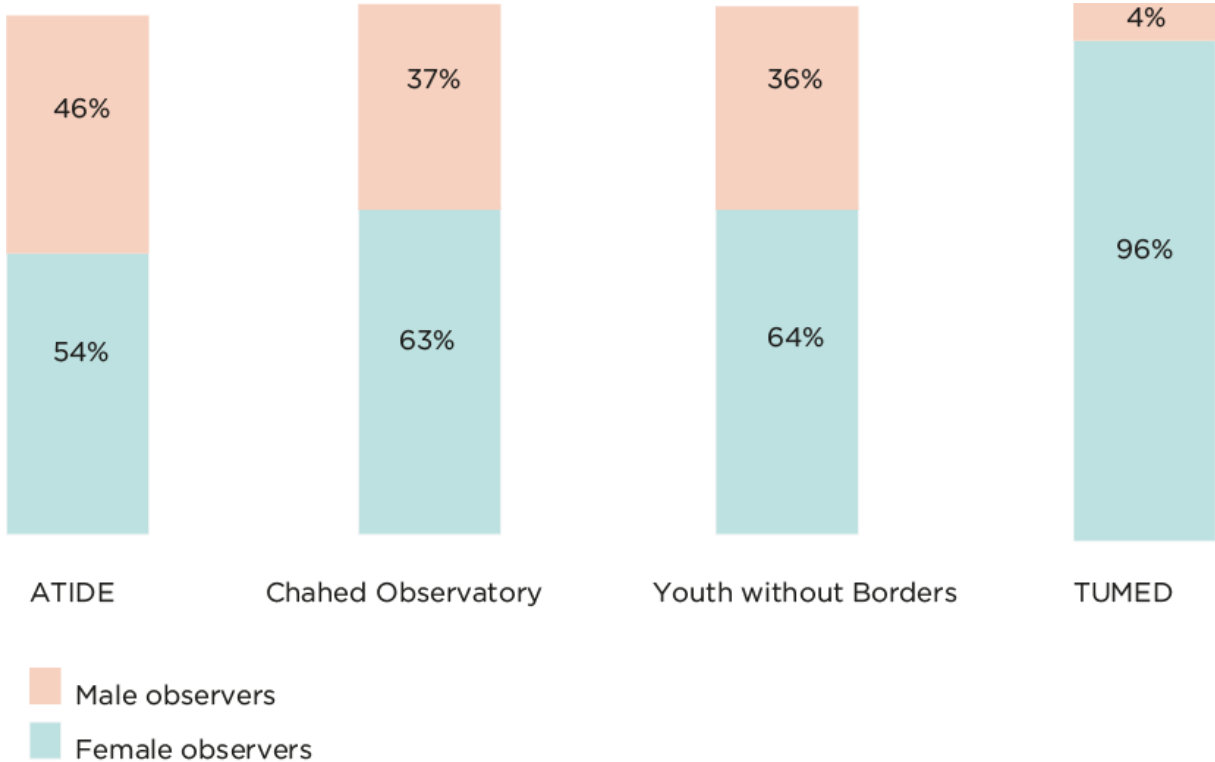


Chart 20. Gender breakdown of local electoral observers from four Tunisian CSOs

Participants in this micro FG filled out a written questionnaire before conducting discussions facilitated by two moderators.

Discussions with the CSO representatives led to a cross-check of numerous observations on the impact of the legal framework on women's low participation in parliamentary elections. The questionnaire and discussions focused on assessing the effect of women's lack of information and the extent to which the complexity of procedures affected women more than men in the endorsement collection phase.

2.3. Analysis Methodology

2.3.1. Quantitative Analysis

The quantitative analysis in this study is made up by the survey questions that the participants filled out before the focus groups. The questionnaires offer information gathered systematically, with multiple-choice answers and possibly structured and open-ended responses.

2.3.2. Qualitative Analysis

The qualitative analysis is based on discussions that took place between the participants and the moderator during the focus group sessions and online interviews.

Throughout the process, the moderators took diligent steps to reassure participants that their personal data would be kept confidential and that the answers collected would remain anonymous.

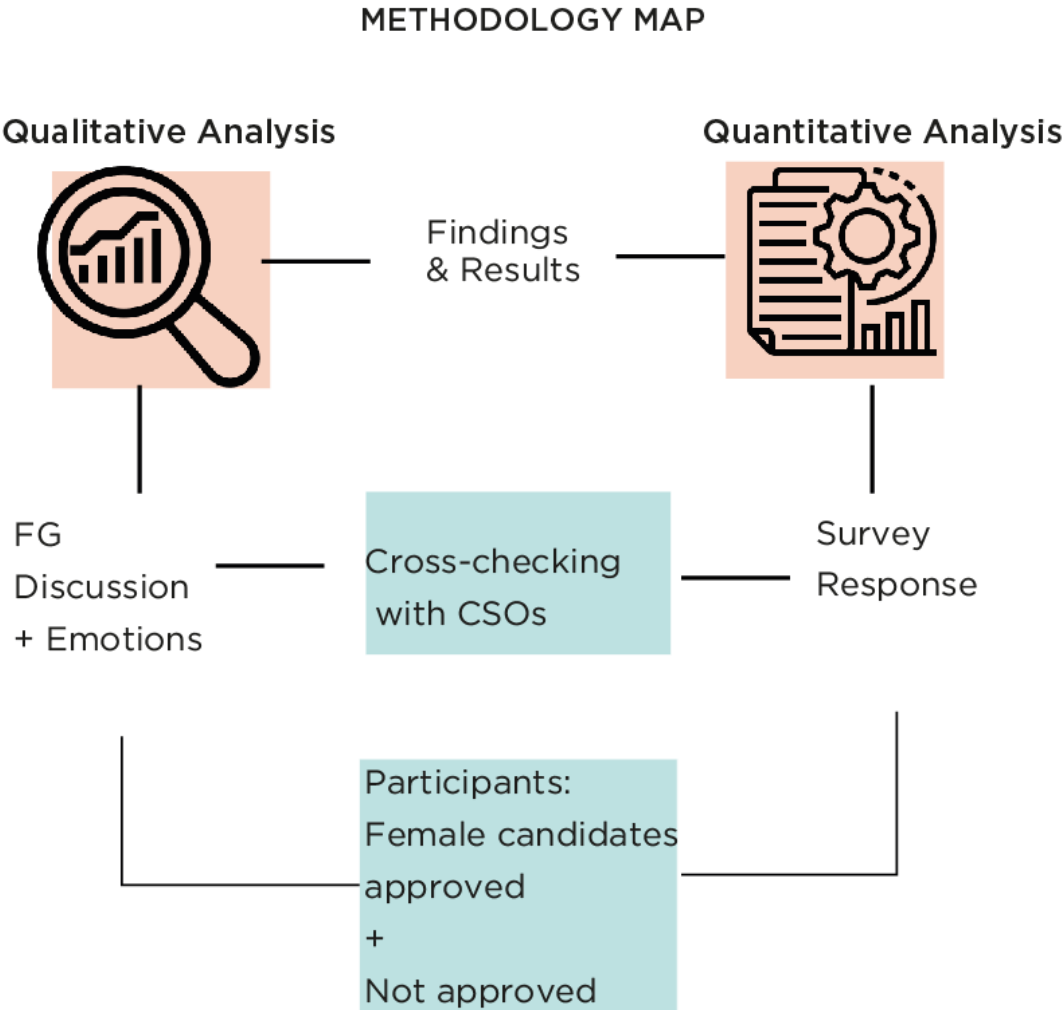


Chart 21. Methodology map of the study

PART 3

FOCUS GROUP RESULTS

3.1. Introduction

This section presents the findings of the study through the combination of quantitative analysis of the survey questionnaires and qualitative analysis of data from individual and collegial discussions of women participating in the various focus groups, as well as their emotional responses. The findings are arranged broadly into four categories:

- Analysis of the profile of women candidates for the 2022-2023 legislative elections.
- Analysis of barriers to female candidates: resources, political context, legal context and level of information.
- Analysis of barriers to female candidates: social norms, gender stereotypes and gender-based violence.
- Impact analysis of the absence of temporary special measures to create preferential treatment of female candidates.

The following designations will be used:

- Group 1 to designate the focus group participants among the female candidates not approved by ISIE;
- Group 2 to designate participants in online interviews and focus groups among female candidates approved by ISIE; and
- Group 3 to designate the CSO leaders who took part in the micro-focus group for discussion and data cross-checking.

3.2. Analysis of the Profile of Female Candidates for the 2022-2023 Legislative Elections

In this section, we examine the female candidates’ profile using nine individual variables of the women who participated in this survey. These variables include: age, marital status, number of dependent children, level of education, professional situation, experience in elections, activism in civil society, opinion regarding political parties and motivation to run in the 2022-2023 legislative elections. These variables are compiled in the table below.

<i>Profile variable</i>		<i>Gro up 1</i>	<i>Gro up 2</i>
<i>Age</i>	25-35 years	13%	10%
	36-50 years	70%	87%
	60 years or more	17%	3%
<i>Marital status</i>	Single	29%	15%
	Married	50%	72%

	Divorced	14%	15%
	Widowed	7%	3%
<i>Number of dependent children</i>	0	57%	30%
	1	5%	45%
	2	18%	15%
	3 and more	20%	10%
<i>Level of studies</i>	High school	27%	9%
	Higher education	52%	72%
	Masters Degree	13%	13%
	PhD	8%	6%
<i>Professional situation</i>	Civil servant	25%	25%
	Teacher	35%	45%
	Lawyer/Doctor	5%	5%
	Graduate seeking employment	25%	15%
	Taking care of family/ not looking for a job	10%	10%
<i>Experience in elections</i>	Has previously stood for election	30%	20%
	Never run for office	70%	80%
<i>Active member of civil society</i>	YES	45%	60%
	NO	55%	40%
<i>Candidacy endorsed by a political party</i>	YES	15%	20%
	NO	85%	80%
<i>Main motivation for running for office</i>	I feel capable of improving the living conditions in my region	50%	60%
	Motivated by the single-member district electoral system	40%	20%
	Motivated by the legislative role	10%	20%

Table 1. Profile of female candidates

Quantitative analysis of the female candidates' profile for the 2022-2023 parliamentary elections showed a married woman, in her forties with at least one dependent child, a teacher or a civil servant, and rather active in her local community. Her main driving force for running is the new single-member district electoral system; she has aspirations to become a non-affiliated local political leader, but she has little experience of elections and little information on the prerogatives of a parliamentarian or on the authority vested in the legislature or its function.

Qualitative analysis of the discussions with participants provides additional insight into the profile of female candidates, namely their shared views on civil society activism. The participants defined civil society involvement quite broadly, as an activism centered on charitable activities and unstructured local volunteering. Few are members of civil society organizations, and most are critical of political parties.

"I would never have run if it were an electoral system centered around political parties." (A woman candidate from Beja)

When discussing female candidates for the 2022–2023 parliamentary elections, Group 3 (leaders of CSOs) reaffirmed this trait, saying, **"These are women with good personal skills who lack experience; they are also ill-informed about the legal procedures and candidate nomination requirements."**

3.3. Analysis of Barriers to Women Candidates

This section examines the impact of structural social factors, such as time spent on unpaid care work, material resources, and family support, on women candidates' participation in the 2022–2023 parliamentary elections. It is crucial to assess how election administration, political procedures and appeal procedures affect women candidates' aspirations in becoming ARP deputies.

3.3.1. The Role of the Family

Quantitative analysis of Group 1 questionnaires showed that **80 per cent of female candidates** reported receiving moral support from their families, mainly from their husbands. Sixty percent of them spent more than four hours a day during the endorsement collection period engaged in care work and household tasks. Additionally, the same analysis revealed that **62.5 per cent of female candidates** confirmed they were unable to secure the support of their neighbors and many of their female friends from supporting them in their quest for endorsements because of household chores and the reluctant opinion of male family members (especially husbands).

Qualitative analysis of the in-depth discussions held by **Group 1** and **Group 2** showed that the women candidates were greatly affected by the spouses' lack of support. Many mentioned how some husbands, particularly when they didn't agree with their wives'

decision to run for office, would tend to unload all caregiving duties in order to put further pressure on their wives' already heavy workloads. They reported that the husbands intended to put further pressure on their electoral campaigns to get them to withdraw. Testimonials to this effect were numerous, particularly in Group 2, where the female candidates' electoral process was longer than that of the other candidates:

"When I failed in the first round, I saw the joy in my husband's eyes. I cried a lot, he didn't care. I worked very hard on the campaign, while he refused to take care of our baby. I lost by only two votes. I didn't file an appeal because I was broke, didn't have enough money, and my husband had given up on me entirely." (Weeping participant from Greater Tunis).

3.3.2. The Legal System

The quantitative research demonstrated that women's candidacies now face additional challenges as a result of the new electoral system. Of Group 1, 95 per cent of participants said that the electoral law's requirements disadvantaged women and that the endorsement requirement—a new stipulation incorporated in the legal framework for the **2022–2023 legislative elections**—was the reason their candidate applications were rejected.

Additionally, 90 per cent of them were in favor of the changes that would have included a female quota in the electoral law, and **100 per cent of Group 1 participants** were in favor of gender parity in the legislature. Just **10 per cent** of participants filed an appeal with the administrative court, but over **87 per cent of participants** disagreed with the reasons given for their candidacies' rejection. Furthermore, **70 per cent** of participants considered that the legal framework for the elections had been announced late, that they had been misinformed and that they had started collecting endorsements late.

Questions regarding the legal framework	Answers from Group 1	
	Yes	No
My candidacy was rejected for lack of endorsements	95.0%	5.0%
I was unable to collect endorsements due to lack of time	70%	30%
I have accepted the reasons for the rejection of my candidate application	12.5%	87.5%
The existing legal framework puts women at a disadvantage	95.0%	5.0%
I am in favor of gender parity in Parliament	100.0%	0.0%

Table 2: Legal framework and impact on candidate applications

The qualitative analysis first revealed that the new political system introduced after the exceptional measures of 25 July 2021 affected the perception of women candidates of political life. For some of them, the problem does not lie in the law but rather in how it is applied.

"The law is good, the problem in this country is corruption..." (Participant from Tunis)

The in-depth interviews with Group 1 participants revealed that, although they were motivated by the majoritarian system, they had not properly appreciated the difficulties of the endorsement collection phase. It requires a great deal of support and a much larger, more organized structure than that of a single woman.

"At first, I thought it was easy. However, as I began pursuing endorsements, I became aware of how challenging it was for women to run for office in these elections." (Participant from Mahdia)

However, participants in both groups stated that they were unable to file challenges against the ISIE's decision before the Administrative Court due to complicated procedures and additional costs.

3.3.3 Lack of Resources

Quantitative analysis of respondents' answers to questionnaires showed that **50 per cent** of female candidates in two study groups had no fixed monthly income, and only 38 per cent had a monthly income over **1,000 TND**.

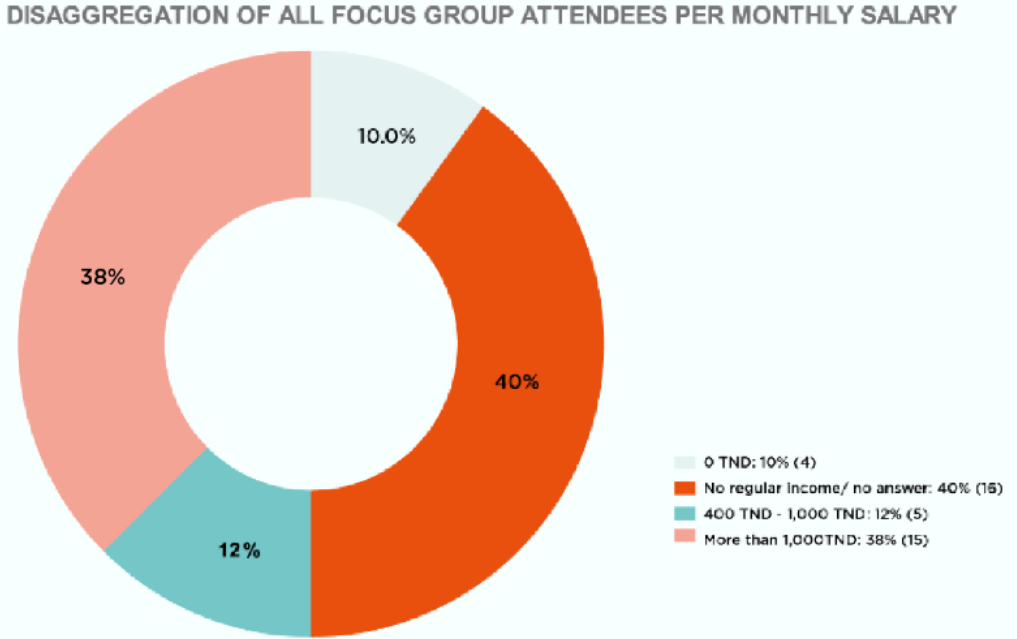


Chart 22. Disaggregation of all focus group attendees by monthly salary

This is in line with the gender imbalance in economic opportunities to the disadvantage of women in Tunisia. In fact, "statistics show that women have a lower labor market participation rate than men, at 28.2 per cent versus 65.8 per cent, and suffer a higher unemployment rate, at 24.1 per cent in the third quarter of 2021 compared to 15.9 per cent for men. In addition, women are more affected by poverty, with 60 per cent of impoverished households headed by women."²⁶

Interestingly, almost 68 per cent of participants in Group 1 believe that their candidacy would not have been rejected should they have had more financial resources to campaign and seek endorsement.

Furthermore, according to the quantitative analysis of Group 2 campaigners' responses, nearly 60 per cent of female candidates believed they needed public funding more than male candidates. Over 90 per cent of female candidates (Group 2) said they did not have sufficient financial resources to run a campaign, and to afford enough accredited representatives at the polling station on polling day. Hence, they appointed themselves as the campaign's financial agent as they were unable to hire a professional agent due to lack of money.

Nearly 80 per cent of female candidates (Group 2) did not have an office or headquarters for their campaigns. Women candidates believe that having men on their teams is essential to ensuring optimum safety in public areas and on the streets, which is why men make up the majority of the teams participating in their campaigns.

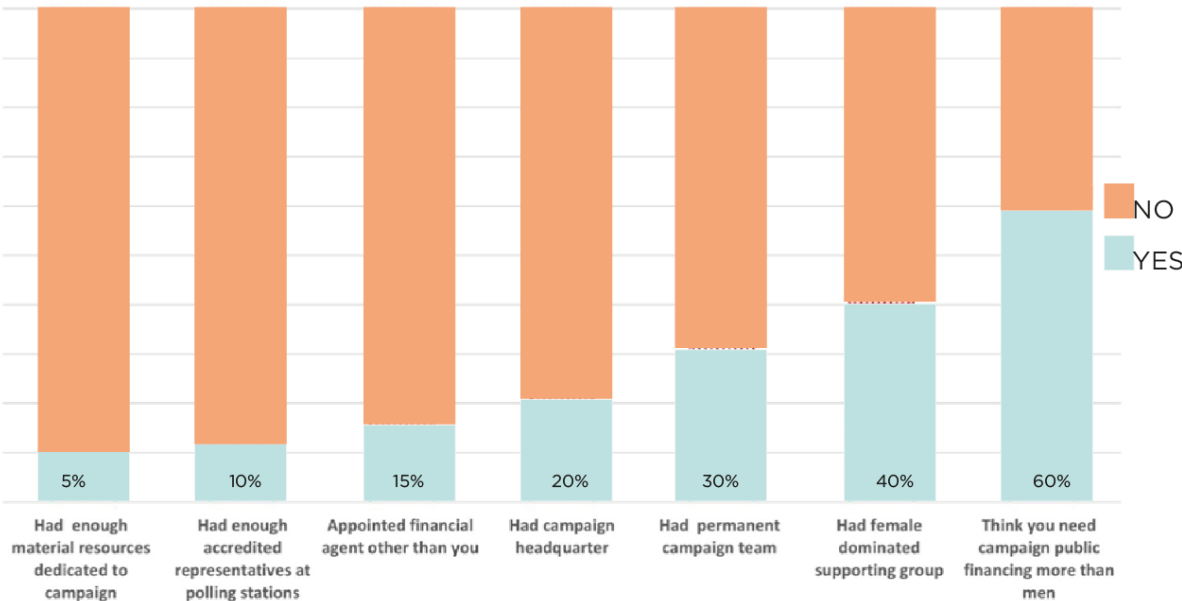


Chart 23. Analysis of focus group survey regarding female candidate resources for conducting electoral campaign

²⁶ Ministère des Finances de Tunisie. Rapport d'analyse budgétaire selon le genre (2010-2021), 2021.

After conducting in-depth discussions with participants, the qualitative analysis showed that the female candidates in Group 1 who were not selected expressed discontent regarding their income and the availability of both material and logistical resources. A few of them conveyed intense resentment, saying things such as: *"My candidate application would not have been rejected if I had a little more money."* (Participant from Sfax)

Due to a lack of funding, the majority of Group 2 participants also stated that they began their campaigns later than male contestants did in their districts.

3.4. Effects of Social Norms, Stereotypes and Gender-Based Violence

This section examines the impact of customs, cultural norms, moral standards, and actions taken by others towards female candidates, including gender bias, stereotypes, and gender-based violence. Both a quantitative and qualitative analysis of the impact they had on female candidates in the 2022–2023 parliamentary elections is provided.

3.4.1 Effect of Stereotypes

Quantitative analysis of the questionnaires filled out by Group 1 participants showed that 55 per cent of female candidates found it extremely difficult to get male voters in cafés and open public spaces to endorse them. In addition, 47.5 per cent of participants reported experiencing harassment from men while collecting endorsements. As many as 27.5 percent were victims of gender-based moral violence allegedly perpetrated by male candidates in the same voting district.

Questions	Yes	No
I have been subjected to violent behavior from male candidates in the same voting district	27.5%	72.5%
I have been disadvantaged by sexist customs	37.5%	62.5%
I have felt harassed by men when collecting endorsements	47.5%	52.5%
I have encountered difficulties collecting endorsements in public spaces	55.0%	45.0%

Table 3. Women's electoral experiences: The impact of stereotypes

The quantitative analysis of Group 2 data reveals that the activities of the female candidates were largely limited to in-person campaigning and the distribution of flyers. Twenty-five percent of participants in Group 2 reported that their primary activity had been social network campaigning. Nonetheless, the majority of them

shied away from activities in male-dominated open spaces such as political debates in cafés, public meetings and election tents.

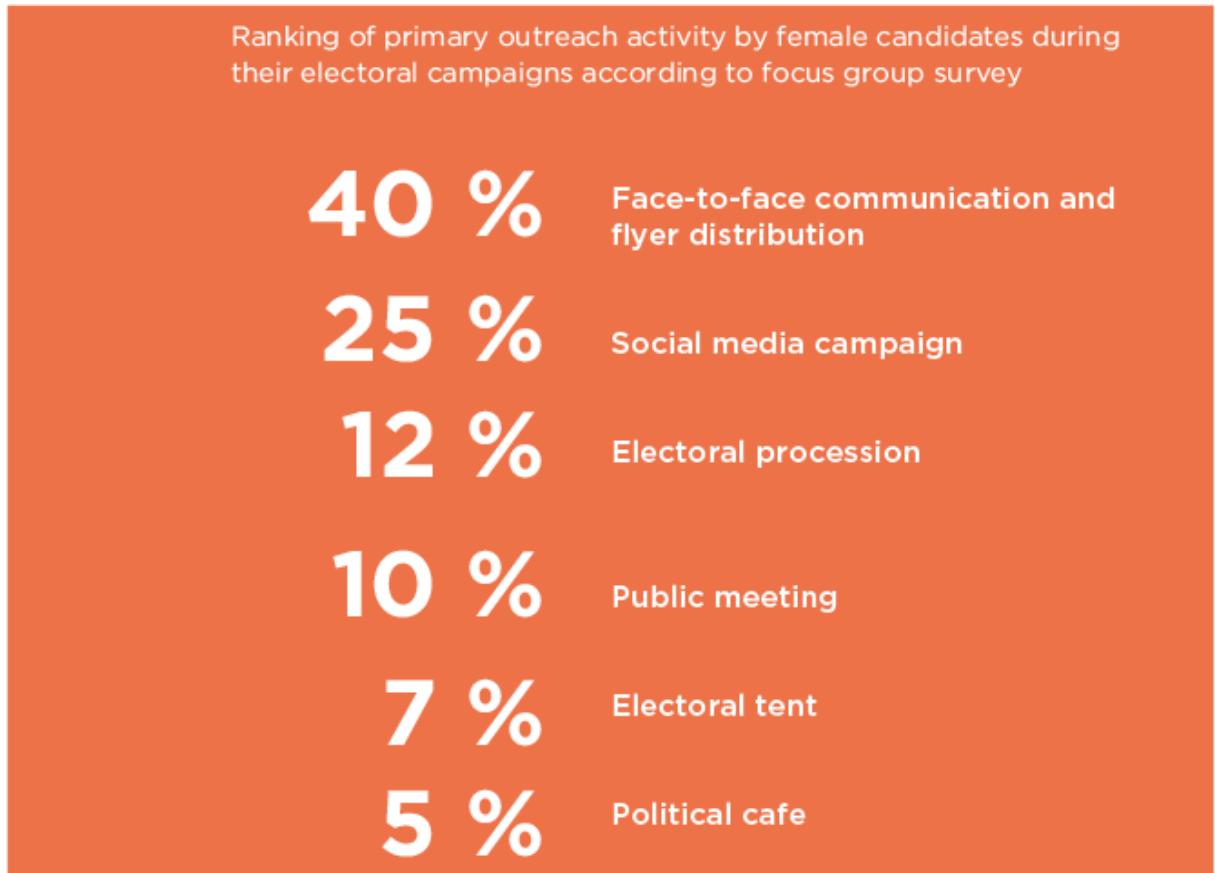


Chart 24. Ranking of primary outreach activity by female candidates during their electoral campaigns according to focus group survey

The quantitative analysis also indicated that half of the participants in Group 2 said that patriarchal social norms that support male dominance in the public sphere and gender imbalance were the main obstacles preventing female candidates from winning this election. They also brought up female poverty and political corruption.



Chart 25. Analysis of focus group participants' perceptions concerning most severe barrier for female candidate success in 2022-2023 legislative election in Tunisia

Qualitative analysis of social norms and stereotypes revealed in Group 1 that the participants themselves hold stereotyped views on women. None of the participants referred to the international or national framework of women's rights. Most thought that women's political leadership was more a matter of personality and a challenge for women, rather than of rights.

In addition, some female voters perpetuated a stereotype of the "politically incompetent woman" to female candidates, saying things like, *"Women don't care about politics, my neighbors didn't support me. They said: if men haven't managed to improve our conditions, how will women like you?"* (Participant from Sfax).

The majority of participants tended to attribute the gender gap in political engagement in Tunisia on women's lack of effort in developing their leadership skills by putting the blame on them: *"We women need to put in twice as much effort in politics."* (Participant from Tunis)

Other barriers mentioned by participants included male-dominated patriarchal society and tribalism.

"A large family in my village refused to support my candidacy and issued a watchword not to sponsor my candidacy because I attended a wedding solemnized by a divorcee." (Participant from Kairouan).

The majority of participants believe that access to markets, cafés, and mosque entrances presents a barrier to the collection of endorsements.

"Male candidates are lucky compared to their female counterparts; I think everything is negotiated in cafés and outside mosques in my town. A man candidate will win both his wife's and his own support if he can persuade a male voter in the café. Women aren't as lucky as men." (Participant from Le Kef).

After conducting in-depth interviews with female candidates who had run for office, Group 2 qualitative analysis showed that while most of them were initially optimistic about the election, as time went on, they grew more pessimistic due to the fierce counter-campaign from male contestants running in the same voting district. The candidates were astonished by the arguments based on sexist stereotypes put forward by male candidates and their supporters. The candidates had felt that they lacked experience, and some of them came to the conclusion that in order to feel more secure, they should be affiliated to a "legal political structure."

"I'm just a woman on her own. I've made a lot of effort but the male candidates in my district have gone on more campaigns than I have... I'm very disheartened... I'm not a member of any political party... The State has the duty to support me."

(Participant from Manouba who was eliminated in the first round)

Three participants also confirmed that competing male candidates in their constituencies were disseminating misinformation.

"They alleged that I was divorced, and conducted a counter-campaign using this false information, saying that a 'bad wife' who couldn't make a family, couldn't also be responsible in politics." (Participant who had campaigned in Sidi Bouzid)

Divorced participants also expressed that they have been the target of smear campaigns because of their marital status.

3.4.2 Impact of Gender-Based Violence

Quantitative analysis shows that 90 per cent of women candidates felt almost totally safe when carrying out their campaign activities in public areas, while setting boundaries for themselves by avoiding going out late at night and focusing on particular areas. In individual discussions, almost 10 per cent of participants complained about the absence of an official security escort during certain campaign activities, despite requesting one.

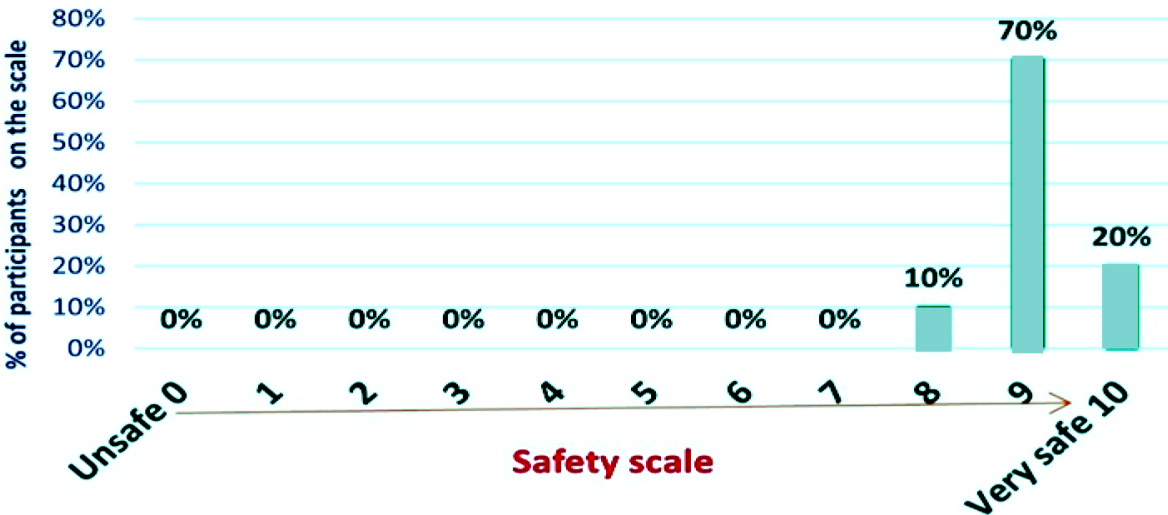


Chart 26. Analysis of focus group participant evaluations of their security during electoral campaign

Eighty percent of female candidates were not aware that Law 2017-58 on the elimination of all form of violence against women even exists. Most female candidates are not familiar with the concepts of electoral violence or political violence. The candidates in Groups 1 and 2 acknowledged having experienced acts of violence during the focus group discussions, but it was unclear for them how those acts should be considered.

20%

Knew the law

80%

Did not know about Law No. 2017-58 on the elimination of violence against women (EVAW)

Chart 27. Breakdown of focus group participants regarding knowledge about organic Law No. 2017-58

Seventy percent of female candidates who ran for office acknowledged that they had come across derogatory communications on social media that contained gender-based derogatory remarks. Over 50 per cent of them received comments about their looks rather than their platforms, and had noticed insulting posts and comments against them. Nearly 40 per cent of participants mentioned an experience with male voters that could be construed as sexual harassment.

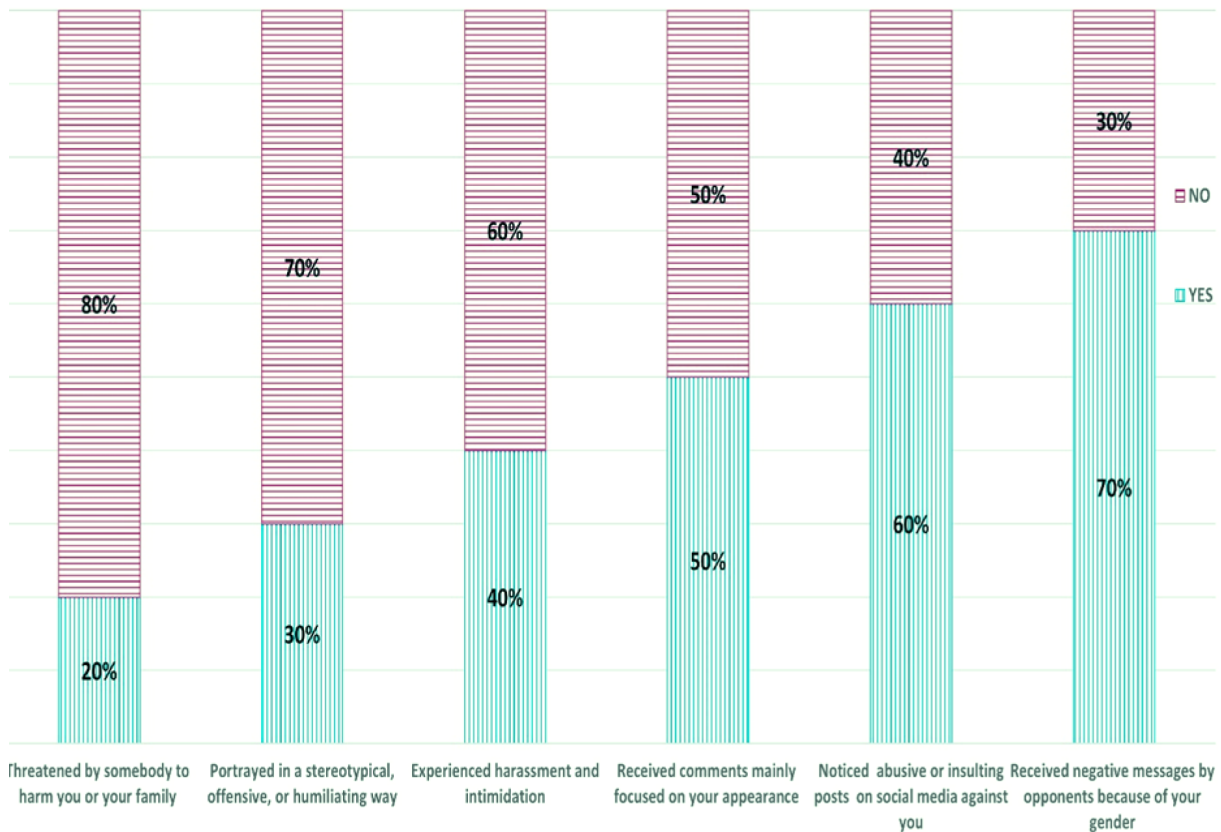


Chart 28. Analysis of exposure of female candidates to gender-violence

Qualitative analysis of the impact of gender-based violence on female candidates shows that women have adopted protective strategies to avoid male violence. According to one female candidate who made it through to the second round, any female candidate should maintain a low profile while personally engaging voters and trying to convince them.

"The hare and tortoise fable by La Fontaine served as the inspiration for my campaign. I played the tortoise, the male candidates were reassured and confident of winning, I didn't get much attention as a candidate, so I won the race." (Participant from Greater Tunis)

Another female candidate reported having received death threats on social networks. She lodged a complaint with the specialized units, but no action was taken.

"I'm an active and influential woman in my community, and the threats intensified as the campaign progressed. I still have nightmares from the very traumatic experience I had during the election," said one candidate while breaking into sobs.

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APPENDICES

Appendix 1. Questionnaire for the civil society

Focus group project on women's political participation in Tunisia Civil Society – December 27, 2022

Name (optional):	Organization/Association:
.....	
The mission within the organization / association:	Level of study:
.....	
Profession:	Age:
Marital status:	Number of children:

I- The stage of drafting the legal framework for the 2022 legislative elections			
1. The type of activity carried out by the organization/association at this phase			
• Remarks	• Conferences / study days	• Studies/reports	• Another answer:.....
2. Publications of the organization/association at this phase			
• Briefings (Nb: ...)	• Reports	• Other publications
3. Gender-based division of staff members within the organization or association in this phase			
At the central level: • Women: • Men:	At the regional level: • Women: • Men:	On the field: observers • Women: • Men:	• Another answer:.....
4. In general, how do you describe the participation of women at this stage?			
• Low	• satisfactory	• good	Another answer:.....
5. In general, how do you evaluate the impact of the new district delimitation on women's participation in elections?			
• Positive impact	• Negative impact	• No impact	Another answer:.....
6. In general, to what extent does the new legal framework (candidate nomination system - electoral system - funding) affect women's political participation?			
• Low impact • Positive • Negative	• Medium impact • Positive • Negative	• Significant impact • Positive • Negative	Other remarks
7. Evaluating this stage in terms of its impact on women's political participation (positive points - negative points - opportunities - risks)			
.....			

III- Endorsement collection phase and candidate registration phase

14. The type of activity carried out by the organization/association at this phase			
• Field observation • Voter awareness	• Conferences / Study days	• Studies / Reports	• Other answer:
15. Publications of the organization/association at this phase			
• Briefings (Nb: ...)	• Reports	• Other publications	
16. Gender-based division of staff members within the organization or association in this phase			
At the central level: • Women: • Men:	At the regional level: • Women: • Men:	On the field: observers • Women: • Men:	• Another answer:.....
17. Did the single-member district electoral system contribute to motivating women to run in the 2022 legislative elections?			
• Yes	• No	Another answer:.....	
18. What are the reasons for the weak participation of women in running for the 2022 legislative elections?			
• Gender-based (societal perception - her social role- house chores.)	• Financial (money – means of transport)	• Political corruption	Other reasons :.....
19. According to the results of your work, what are the most important obstacles that female candidate faced during the endorsement collection stage and submission of candidate applications compared to their male counterparts?			
• Violence, harassment, and blackmail perpetrated on female candidates	• Lack of electoral culture among women	• Difficult access to popular cafes and public spaces	Other reasons :.....
20. According to the results of your work, did some of the professional situations of some women working in the civil service or in the education sector or even their status as unemployed graduates contributed to their decision to stand for the 2022 legislative elections?			
• Yes	• No	Other reasons :.....	
21. According to your knowledge, what is the percentage of women active in civil society / women's rights defenders among the female candidates?			
• Low percentage	• Average percentage	• High percentage	Another answer:.....
22. According to the results of your work, how did the electoral administration and the various authorities involved in the elections treat female candidates?			
• On equal footing with male candidates	• Negative discrimination toward women	• Positive discrimination towards women	Another answer:.....
23. According to the results of your work, who supported women candidacies?			
• Women	• Men	Another answer:.....	
24. According to the results of your work, what are the most important obstacles facing female candidates during the appeal phase compared to their male counterparts?			
• Not being familiar with electoral disputes	• Financial and procedural requirements for filing an appeal	Another answer:.....	

<ul style="list-style-type: none">Briefings (Nb: ...)	<ul style="list-style-type: none">Reports	<ul style="list-style-type: none">Other publications	
40. Gender-based division of staff members within the organization or association in this phase			
At the central level: <ul style="list-style-type: none">Women:Men:	At the regional level: <ul style="list-style-type: none">Women:Men:	On the field: observers <ul style="list-style-type: none">Women:Men:	<ul style="list-style-type: none">Another answer:.....
41. Regarding the number of candidates by gender, who had the most representatives accredited by the ISIE at the polling stations and the collection center?			
<ul style="list-style-type: none">Women	<ul style="list-style-type: none">Men	Reason:	
42. Did you notice any incitement on polling day from other candidates or their supporters against any candidate because she is a woman?			
<ul style="list-style-type: none">Yes	<ul style="list-style-type: none">No	Another answer	
43. In your opinion, who voted for women the most?			
<ul style="list-style-type: none">Women	<ul style="list-style-type: none">Men	<ul style="list-style-type: none">The same number	Other remarks
44. Who did not participate in voting the most in your area?			
<ul style="list-style-type: none">Women	<ul style="list-style-type: none">Men	Reason:	
45. Which age group participated the most in voting among female voters in your opinion?			
<ul style="list-style-type: none">Girls	<ul style="list-style-type: none">Middle-aged women	<ul style="list-style-type: none">Elderly women	Reason:
46. According to the results of your work, did the absence of direct awareness-raising operations for women in rural areas during the various stages of the electoral process contribute to the low participation of women?			
<ul style="list-style-type: none">Yes	<ul style="list-style-type: none">No	Another answer	
47. According to the results of your work, did calls to boycott the elections contribute to the low rate of voting for women?			
<ul style="list-style-type: none">Yes	<ul style="list-style-type: none">No	Another answer	
48. Who has most challenged the preliminary results announced by ISIE?			
<ul style="list-style-type: none">Women	<ul style="list-style-type: none">Men	Reason:	
49. What are your proposals to reinforce women's participation in elections in the future?			
.....			



Appendix 2. Questionnaire for rejected female candidates

Focus Group 1

Sfax – November 22, 2022

Questions for participants

Full name (optional)			Governorate:			Constituency:					
.....											
Delegation:			Sector:			Level of study:			Age:		
.....											
Occupation/profession:			Marital status			Children:					
.....											

50. Have you previously participated as a candidate in any type of election?		
• Yes	• No	• Type of election/reason for non-participation:
51. Do you have activity in any governmental institution or in any local council in your region, in the past or at present?		
• Yes	• No	• Type of activity
52. Did your professional status, or even your status as an unemployed graduate, motivated you to run for the 2022 legislative elections?		
• Yes	• No	• Explain:
53. Are you active in civil society?		
• Yes	• No	• Type of activity ::.....
54. Did your activity in civil society motivated your decision to run for the 2022 legislative elections?		
• Yes	• No	• Explain :
55. Did your family assisted you and encouraged you to run for the 2022 legislative elections?		
• Yes	• No	• Type of assistance:
56. Do you think that becoming a deputy in ARP improves your social status?		
• Yes	• No	• Reason:
57. In the beginning, did you expect that your candidacy in the 2022 legislative elections would be accepted?		
• Yes	• No	• Reason:
58. Who helped you most in preparing your candidate application?		
• Men	• Women	• Reason:
59. How did you know the candidacy requirements, documents and procedures for nomination?		

• ISIE documents	• Media	• Social media	• Friends or acquaintances	• Other source
60. How much time do you allocate to care work (cooking, child care, elderly care, laundry...)?				
• No time	• From 1 to 4 hours	• More than 4 hours	• Another answer.....	
61. What is the monthly value of your own income?				
• No income	• From 400 to 1000 TND	• More than 1000 TND	• Another answer.....	
62. What means of transportation did you use?				
• Public transport	• Private car owned by you	• A private car owned by the husband or family	• Two or more cars	• Another answer...
63. In your opinion, what is the contribution of having money and means of transportation to the success or failure of a candidacy?				
• None	• Between 10% and 50%	• Between 50% and 80%	• More than 80%	
64. Did the individual nomination system motivate you to run?				
• Yes	• No	Your opinion of the list-centered electoral system and nominations for parties.....		
65. How difficult is it for you to enter public spaces in your area? (Cafes - market places- places of worship...)				
• No difficulty- I can enter all spaces	• I can't get into half 50% of them	• 100% - I can enter all spaces	• Other remarks	
66. Based on your experience, what are the different specific reasons that motivate women to run for legislative elections?				
.....				
67. From your experience, what are the difficulties that women face in the process of collecting endorsements?				
.....				

68. In your opinion, what are the reasons why the number of men who obtained endorsements was greater than the number of women?

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69. Based on your experience and observations in collecting endorsements, and in general, did women express more support and advocacy for female candidates than male candidates, or vice versa? What are the reasons in your opinion?

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70. In your experience, do male candidates try to obstruct women from running in their regions? If so, what methods do they use?

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71. Through your experience and observations, have family and tribal considerations been used to hinder the candidacy of some women or prevent them from running? Explain?

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72. Can a female candidate collect endorsements on her own from men in cafes and marketplaces? Have you ever thought that asking guys for endorsements carries a danger of harassment?

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73. Based on your experience and observations, what is the best strategy for female candidates to seek endorsements from female voters? And from male voters too ?

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74. What is the reason for rejecting your candidacy and what is the procedure or document that hinders or prevents most female candidates from running? Is single-member candidacy better or candidate list? Explain?

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75. Did you appeal against the ISIE decision of rejecting your candidacy, and what difficulties did you encounter?

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.....
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76. In your opinion, could state institutions or the election management body support more women to run for the 2022 legislative elections? How is that?

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77. What are your proposals to reinforce women's participation in elections in the future?

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Appendix 3. Questionnaire for candidates following the announcement of the preliminary results of the first round of 2022 legislative elections

Full name (optional)				Governorate:		Constituency:	
.....							
Delegation:		Sector:		Level of study:			
Age:							
Occupation/profession:		Marital status:		Children:			

I- General questions				
78. In general, how much time do you allocate to care work (cooking, child care, elderly care, laundry...)?				
• No time	• From 1 to 4 hours	• More than 4 hours	• Another answer :	
79. What is the monthly value of your own income?				
• No income	• From 400 to 1000 TND	• More than 1000 TND	• Another answer :	
80. What means of transportation do you use?				
• Public transport	• Private car owned by you	• A private car owned by the husband or family	• Two cars or over	• Another answer :
81. In your opinion, what is the contribution of owning money and means of transportation to the success of women's political participation?				
• None	• Between 10% and 50%	• Between 50% and 80%	• More than 80%	
82. In general, are you accustomed to entering public spaces mostly attended by men in your area? (Cafes – marketplaces).				
• No, I cannot access these spaces	• 50%	• 100% I can enter all spaces	• Another remarks:	
II- Candidate registration phase				
83. Did the individual nomination system contribute to motivating you to run?				
• Yes	• No	Your position on the list-based system and part-based nominations		
84. Do you support gender parity in candidacy, and do you support measures in the Electoral Law that encourage women to run for office?				
• Yes	• No	• Opinion about gender parity	• Another opinion	
•	•	•	•	
85. Have you previously participated as a candidate in any type of election?				

• Yes	• No	• Type of election/or reason for non-participation:		
86. Do you have activity in any governmental institution or in any local council in your region, in the past or at present?				
• Yes	• No	• Type of activity :		
87. Did your professional status, or even your status as a holder of an unemployed certificate, help you think about running for the 2022 legislative elections?				
• Yes	• No	• Explain :		
88. Are you active in civil society?				
• Yes	• No	• Type of activity :		
89. Did your activity in civil society motivated your decision to run for the 2022 legislative elections?				
• Yes	• No	• Type of motivation :		
90. Did you find any assistance and encouragement from your family to run for the 2022 legislative elections?				
• Yes	• No	• Type of assistance :		
91. Do you think that becoming a deputy in ARP improves your social status?				
• Yes	• No	• Reason :		
92. In the beginning, did you have hope of your success in the first round of the 2022 legislative elections?				
• Yes	• No	• Reason :		
93. Who helped you the most during the electoral process ?				
• Men	• Women	• Reason :		
94. How did you learn about the legal electoral procedures?				
• ISIE documents	• Media	• Social media	• Friends or acquaintances	• Other source
95. Did you appeal against the retaining of a female candidate?				
• Yes	• No	• Male candidate	• Female candidate	
96. Was your accepted candidacy challenged				
• Yes	• No	• Challenged by a male candidate	• Challenged by a female candidate	
97. In general, do you think that the Independent Higher Authority for Elections treated you on the same foot like the other male candidates?				
• Yes	• No	• Supported men more	• Supported women more	
98. What do you think of the requirement to obtain 400 recommendations to run for legislative elections, half of which are from men, half from women, and a quarter of which are youth?				
• A reasonable requirement and doesn't hinder women	• A requirement that is more difficult for men than women	• Another opinion		
III-Campaign phase				
99. Did you participate in the training sessions for accepted candidates conducted by IRIEs?				

<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Yes	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• No	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• I was not invited and did not participate	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• I did not receive any invitation and did not participate
100. Did you have a team to support you in the election campaign?			
<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Yes	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• No	Number of men in the team:	Number of women in the team:
101. Did you have a headquarters for your election campaign?			
<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Yes	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• No	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Family owned location	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Rented headquarters
102. Have you appointed a financial agent (or legal representative)?			
<ul style="list-style-type: none">• A male agent	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• A female agent	Reason :	
103. Have you needed one or more men to accompany you on your campaign activities?			
<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Yes	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• No	Reason :	
104. As a woman, do you need public funding to conduct your election campaign?			
<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Like the other male candidates	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• More than male candidates	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• I don't need	
105. What type of counter-election campaigns were you exposed to the most as a candidate?			
<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Smear campaigns on social media	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Preventing you from engaging in public activities	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• You are disturbed in campaign activities by sneaky people• Nothing	
106. What was most used in the smear campaigns that you may have been exposed to?			
<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Damaging your honor and reputation as a woman	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Accusing you of sympathizing with one political party and opposing another party	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• False allegations related to your employment, position and civil status• Nothing	
107. In your opinion, who was more exposed to defamation on social media among the candidates			
<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Women	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Men	Reason :	
108. Do you have knowledge of Organic Law No. 58 of 2017 dated August 11, 2017 related to eliminating violence against women?			
<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Yes	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• No	Your opinion :	
109. Every gender-based discriminatory act or practice whose perpetrator aims to deprive a woman or hinder her from practicing any political, partisan or associational activity or from the enjoying any fundamental right or freedom, is a crime of political violence. Organic Law No. 58 of 2017 dated August 11 2017, related to eliminating violence against women. Have you noticed that women are subjected to acts that fall within this category of crimes?			
<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Yes	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• No	Remarks :	
110. According to the results of your work, did the Commission's monitors include all the violations they observed related to political violence against women candidates during electoral campaign activities in election monitoring reports and referred them to the Public Prosecution?			
<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Yes	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• No	Reasons:	
111. What are the most common forms of electoral violence that you or your female supporters were exposed to during the election campaign?			
<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Creating scare through intimidation and threats of bodily harm, injury to family members and children, and property destruction are methods.	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Use of gender-based insults and verbal abuse to diminish one's sense of value	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Cyberbullying and public disclosure of private information through the media	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Sexual harassment manifested as body-shaming remarks, inappropriate looking, or stalking ...• None of these
112. What are the most common types of activities you have carried out in the electoral campaign?			

Appendix 4. Questionnaire for candidates retained

Questions addressed to candidates retained on the final list

Full name (optional)	Governorate:	Constituency:
.....		
Delegation:	Sector:	Level of study:
Age:		
Occupation/profession:	Marital status:	Children:

122. Have you previously participated as a candidate in any type of election?				
• Yes	• no	• Type of election/or reason for non-participation:		
123. Do you have activity in any governmental institution or in any local council in your region, in the past or at present?				
• Yes	• No	• Type of activity :		
124. Did your professional status, or even your status as a holder of an unemployed certificate, help you think about running for the 2022 legislative elections?				
• Yes	• No	• Explain :		
125. Are you active in civil society?				
• Yes	• Yes	• Yes		
126. Did your activity in civil society motivated your decision to run for the 2022 legislative elections?				
• Yes	• No	• Type of motivation :		
127. Did you find any assistance and encouragement from your family to run for the 2022 legislative elections?				
• Yes	• No	• Type of assistance :		
128. Do you think that becoming a deputy in ARP improves your social status?				
• Yes	• No	• Reason :		
129. In the beginning, did you have hope of your success in the first round of the 2022 legislative elections?				
• Yes	• No	• Reason :		
130. Who helped you the most during the electoral process?				
• Men	• Women	• Reason :		
131. How did you know the candidacy requirements, documents and procedures for nomination?				
• ISIE documents	• Media	• Social media	• Friends or acquaintances	• Other source
132. In general, how much time do you allocate to care work (cooking, child care, elderly care, laundry...)?				
• No time	• From 1 to 4 hours	• More than 4 hours	• Another answer :	
133. What is the monthly value of your own income?				
• No income	• From 400 to 1000 TND	• More than 1000 TND	• Another answer :	
134. What means of transportation did you use to collect the endorsements?				

• Public transport	• Private car owned by you	• A private car owned by the husband or family	• Two cars or over	• Another answer :
135. In your opinion, what is the contribution of owning money and means of transportation to the success of women's political participation?				
• None	• Between 10% and 50%	• Between 50% and 80%	• More than 80%	
136. Did the individual nomination system contribute to motivating you to run?				
• Yes	• No	Your position on the list-based system and part-based nominations		
137. How difficult is it for you to enter public spaces in your area? (Cafes -marketplaces - places of worship....)				
• No, I cannot access these spaces	• 50%	• 100% I can enter all spaces	• Another remarks:	
138. Do you think that the Independent Higher Authority for Elections treated you on the same foot like the other male candidates in the candidate nomination process phase?				
• Yes	• No	• Supported me more than men	• Supported men more than women	
139. Was your accepted candidacy challenged				
• Yes	• No	• Challenged by a male candidate	• Challenged by a female candidate	
140. Did you challenge the candidacy approved of a candidate?				
• Yes	• No	• Reason :		
141. Did you participate in the training sessions for accepted candidates conducted by IRIEs?				
• Yes	• No	• I was not invited and did not participate	• I did not receive any invitation and did not participate	
142. Did you have a team to support you in the election campaign?				
• Yes	• No	• Most of the team members are men	• Most of the team members are women	
143. Have you needed one or more men to accompany you on your campaign activities?				
• Yes	• No	Reason :		
144. As a woman, do you need public funding to conduct your election campaign?				
• Like the other male candidates	• Like the other male candidates	• Like the other male candidates		
145. What type of counter-election campaigns were you exposed to the most as a candidate?				
• Smear campaigns on social media	• Smear campaigns on social media	• Smear campaigns on social media		
146. What do you fear most about the smear campaigns you may be exposed to?				
• Damaging your honor and reputation as a woman	• Accusing you of sympathizing with one political party and opposing another party	• False allegations related to your employment, position and civil status • Nothing		
147. In your opinion, who was more exposed to defamation on social media among the candidates				
• Women	• Women	• Women		
148. Do you have knowledge of Organic Law No. 58 of 2017 dated August 11, 2017 related to eliminating violence against women?				
• Yes	• Yes	• Yes		
149. In addition to the complaints that you will lodge to the prosecution, will you ensure that the ISIE's monitors incorporate all the violations they observed related to political violence perpetrated against you as a woman candidate during electoral campaign activities in their reports and refer them to the public prosecution?				
• Yes	• No	Reasons:		
150. What are your chances of winning the second round and the seat allocated to your district compared to the male candidates?				

• Low	• average	• High	Reasons: :..... :.....
151. From your experience, what are the major difficulties facing women candidates in the 2022 legislative elections?			
• Gender-based (societal perception - her role in the family)	• Financial	• Political corruption	Other reasons :.....
152. Based on your experience and observations, are there any obstacles specific to these elections that hindered women's participation and victory?			
• Boundary delimitation of constituencies	• Individual candidate nomination	• Absence of public funding	Other reasons :.....
153. What are your proposals to reinforce women's participation in future elections?			
:..... :..... :.....			

Appendix 5. Questionnaire for candidates losing in the first round of the elections
Questions for candidates after the announcement of the preliminary results of the first round of the 2022 legislative elections

Full name (optional)	Governorate:	Constituency:
Delegation: Sector: Level of study:		
Age:		
Occupation/profession: Marital status: Children:		

I- General Questions			
154. In general, how much time do you allocate to care work (cooking, child care, elderly care, laundry...)?			
• No time	• From 1 to 4 hours	• More than 4 hours	• Another answer : :..... .
155. What is the monthly value of your own income?			
• No income	• From 400 to 1000 TND	• More than 1000 TND	• Another answer : :.....
156. What means of transportation do you use?			

• Public transport	• Private car owned by you	• A private car owned by the husband or family	• Two cars or over	• Another answer :
157. In your opinion, what is the contribution of owning money and means of transportation to the success of women's political participation?				
• None	• Between 10% and 50%	• Between 50% and 80%	• More than 80%	
158. In general, are you accustomed to entering public spaces mostly attended by men in your area? (Cafes – marketplaces).				
• No, I cannot access these spaces	• 50%	• 100% I can enter all spaces	• Another remarks:	
II- Candidate registration phase				
159. Did the individual nomination system contribute to motivating you to run?				
• Yes	• No	Your position on the list-based system and part-based nominations		
160. Do you support gender parity in candidacy, and do you support measures in the Electoral Law that encourage women to run for office?				
• Yes	• No	• Opinion about gender parity	• Another opinion	
161. Have you previously participated as a candidate in any type of election?				
• Yes	• No	• Type of election/or reason for non-participation:		
162. Do you have activity in any governmental institution or in any local council in your region, in the past or at present?				
• Yes	• No	• Type of activity :		
163. Did your professional status, or even your status as a holder of an unemployed certificate, help you think about running for the 2022 legislative elections?				
• Yes	• No	• Explain :		
164. Are you active in civil society?				
• Yes	• No	• Type of activity :		
165. Did your activity in civil society motivated your decision to run for the 2022 legislative elections?				
• Yes	• No	• Type of motivation		
166. Did you find any assistance and encouragement from your family to run for the 2022 legislative elections?				
• Yes	• No	• Type of assistance		
167. Do you think that becoming a deputy in ARP improves your social status?				
• Yes	• No	• Reason :		
168. In the beginning, did you have hope of your success in the first round of the 2022 legislative elections?				
• Yes	• No	• Reason :		

169. Who helped you the most during the electoral process ?				
• Yes	• No	• Reason :		
170. How did you learn about the legal electoral procedures?				
• ISIE documents	• Media	• Social media	• Friends or acquaintances	• Other source
171. Did you appeal against the retaining of a female candidate?				
• Yes	• No	• Male candidate	• Female candidate	
172. Was your accepted candidacy challenged				
• Yes	• No	• Challenged by a male candidate	• Challenged by a female candidate	
173. In general, do you think that the Independent Higher Authority for Elections treated you on the same foot like the other male candidates?				
• Yes	• No	• Supported men more	• Supported women more	
174. What do you think of the requirement to obtain 400 recommendations to run for legislative elections, half of which are from men, half from women, and a quarter of which are youth?				
• A reasonable requirement and doesn't hinder women	• A requirement that is more difficult for men than women	• Another opinion		
III – Questions on the campaign phase				
175. Did you participate in the training sessions for accepted candidates conducted by IRIEs?				
• Yes	• No	• I was not invited and did not participate	• I didn't receive any invitation and did not participate	
176. Did you have a team to support you in the election campaign?				
• Yes	• No	Number of men in the team:	Number of women in the team:	
177. Did you have a headquarters for your election campaign?				
• Yes	• No	• Family owned location	• Rented headquarters	
178. Have you appointed a financial agent (or legal representative)?				
• A male agent	• A female agent	Reason :.....		
179. Have you needed one or more men to accompany you on your campaign activities?				
• Yes	• No	Reason :.....		
180. As a woman, do you need public funding to conduct your election campaign?				
• Like the other male candidates	• More than male candidates	• I don't need accompany		
181. What type of counter-election campaigns were you exposed to the most as a candidate?				
• Smear campaigns on social media	• Preventing you from engaging in public activities	• You are disturbed in campaign activities by sneaky people • Nothing		
182. What was most used in the smear campaigns that you may have been exposed to?				
• Damaging your honor and reputation as a woman	• Accusing you of sympathizing with one political party and opposing another party	• False allegations related to your employment, position and civil status • Nothing		
183. In your opinion, who was more exposed to defamation on social media among the candidates				

• Women	• Men	Reason :..... :.....	
184. Do you have knowledge of Organic Law No. 58 of 2017 dated August 11, 2017 related to eliminating violence against women?			
• Yes	• No	Your opinion :	
185. Every gender-based discriminatory act or practice whose perpetrator aims to deprive a woman or hinder her from practicing any political, partisan or associational activity or from the enjoying any fundamental right or freedom, is a crime of political violence. Organic Law No. 58 of 2017 dated August 11 2017, related to eliminating violence against women. Have you noticed that women are subjected to acts that fall within this category of crimes?			
• Yes	• No	Remarks : :..... :.....	
186. In your opinion, did the Commission's monitors include all the violations they observed related to political violence against women candidates during electoral campaign activities in election monitoring reports and referred them to the Public Prosecution?			
• Yes	• No	Reasons: :..... :..... :.....	
187. What are the most common forms of electoral violence that you or your female supporters were exposed to during the election campaign?			
• Creating scare through intimidation and threats of bodily harm, injury to family members and children, and property destruction are methods.	• Use of gender-based insults and verbal abuse to diminish one's sense of value	• Cyberbullying and public disclosure of private information through the media	• Sexual harassment manifested as body-shaming remarks, inappropriate looking, or stalking ... • None of these
188. What are the most common types of activities you have carried out in the electoral campaign?			
• Publications, statements, advertisements, comments, and distribution of flyers	• Public activities such as in-person contact with voters, public meetings, parades and processions.	• Relying more on social media	• Other types :..... .
III- Polling and tabulation phase			
189. Did you have representatives accredited by the ISIE at the polling stations and the tabulation center?			
• Yes	• No	Their Number	Sufficient/insufficient number : Why ? :..... :..... :.....
190. Did you notice incitement against you on polling day from other candidates or their supporters because you are a woman?			
• Yes	• No	Your Opinion :	
191. In your opinion, who voted for you more, women or men?			
• Women	• Men	• The same number	Other remarks
192. Who did not participate in voting the most in your area?			
• Women	• Men	Reason: :..... :.....	
193. Which age group participated the most in voting among female voters in your opinion?			
• Girls	• Middle-aged women	• Elderly women	Reason: :..... :..... :.....

