The Transitional Justice Academy

Background
Since the revolution that ousted former President Zine El Abidine Ben Ali and the elections for the Constituent Assembly held in October 2011, Tunisians have started clamouring for justice and redress for past wrongs. The need for a National Commission on Transitional Justice is emerging in order to address violations under previous authoritarian regimes, which were rife with corruption and imposed severe limitations on democracy and human rights, and calls for its establishment grow stronger day by day. Civil society has flourished in the country since the revolution, reclaiming its proper role and forming new groups and organisations. However, under the former Tunisian regime, civil society and other actors have had limited exposure to issues such as justice, accountability and redress for human rights violations and there is a need to strengthen substantive knowledge and understanding of transitional justice issues. Additionally, the secretive environment imposed during the dictatorship has not facilitated cooperation between the various stakeholders and actors, who are not accustomed to exchange information and do not appreciate fully the advantages of coordinating their actions.

Academy goal and approach
The Transitional Justice Academy (the Academy) is a joint initiative to provide a conceptual space within which main stakeholders and actors in Tunisia can gather and build their knowledge and capacity on transitional justice issues and it aims to build and strengthen capacity of key actors in the country. The Academy represents a stable framework where training courses can be organised and to which people can refer to in order to obtain information on transitional justice. The creation of this facility guarantees a minimum standard in the level of courses and the development of a comprehensive program, composed of training seminars, advanced courses and follow-up sessions. These features will enhance the potential positive impacts of each individual course by ensuring greater coordination among activities, continuity over time and the possibility to create specific courses targeting various groups. The Academy is also open to new partners working on transitional justice related areas that want to conduct capacity building activities on transitional justice and offers them the technical support, expertise and contacts of the Academy. This in turn will strengthen cooperation between various actors working on transitional justice and the overall impact of individual projects.

Academy Activities
Academy’s activities will take place throughout Tunisia and include training seminars, advanced courses and follow-up sessions to build a comprehensive program, which will encourage participants to continue engaging in future activities, including as presenters. The activities will focus mainly on civil society groups, including individual actors and non-governmental organisations with pre-existing experience in or involved in work related to transitional justice; victims of human rights and direct corruption violations and organisations or associations representing them; the media; the judiciary; legal professionals and academics; policy- and decision-makers; political parties, members of the Constituent Assembly; members of institution and commissions working on areas relevant for transitional justice. Specific activities will also focus on representatives of Ministries and the security services, including the police. The activities and groups identified are not exhaustive and other actors or kind of activities can be added according to interest and the evolving situation.

Academy expected results
By enhancing the knowledge of main stakeholders and actors on transitional justice, the Academy will contribute to raise awareness about this topic, reinforce key actors and civil society to advocate effectively at the political level and to play a dynamic role in supporting transitional justice processes. It will support broad engagement of policy- and decision-makers and help creating momentum for the establishment of a National Commission on transitional justice also through the use of media to mobilise the general public.

Partners
The founding partners of the Academy are Al-Kawakibi Democracy Transition Center (KADEM) and the Arab Democracy Foundation (ADF), in collaboration with the partners No Peace Without Justice (NPWJ) and Deutsche Gesellschaft für Internationale Zusammenarbeit (GIZ). All partners have, among other skills, strong expertise in engaging civil society, transferring knowledge, sharing experiences and building capacities in the field of democratic transition and transitional and international justice. The Academy is open to new partners to conduct capacity building activities under its framework, offering to them the technical support, expertise and contacts of KADEM, ADF, NPWJ and GIZ.

For general information, the schedule of activities and the possibility to organise activities under the framework of the Academy, please contact kawakibi.center@gmail.com