Supporting the Democratic Transition in Tunisia through Transitional Justice: Al-Kawakibi Democracy Transitional Centre (KADEM) and No Peace Without Justice (NPWJ)

Project Summary

Background
Since the revolution that ousted former President Zine El Abidine Ben Ali and the elections for the constituent assembly held in October 2011, Tunisian civil society and citizens have started clamouring for justice and redress for past wrongs. The need for the establishment of a national transitional justice process to address human rights violations and corruption is emerging and calls for such a process grow stronger day by day. While any form of dissent, challenge or even oversight was severely repressed in Tunisia under previous authoritarian regimes, which were rife with corruption and imposed severe limitations on democracy and human rights, civil society has flourished in the country since the revolution, reclaiming its proper role: the time is now ripe for change. Victims are starting to voice their rights and investigations and prosecutions are beginning through the judicial system. The work of the National Fact-finding Commission to Investigate Abuses and the Commission to Investigate Embezzlement and Corruption are also contributing to establishing what happened in the most recent past and are reinforcing these calls for accountability. The world is watching Tunisia’s next steps, which will be crucial in setting the stage for how other countries in the region establish democracy and address human rights abuses of the past. With the proper tools, political support, encouragement and vision, the citizens of Tunisia can build their formerly broken country into a model for democracy, justice and a bastion of human rights.

Project Goal
The 24-month project seeks to build and strengthen the capacity of key actors and stakeholders within Tunisia, so they can play the most effective role in ensuring that past abuses are dealt with fairly, transparently and effectively as part of Tunisia’s overall democratic transition process. By building key actors and stakeholders capacity to engage with policy- and decision-makers and investigate past abuses and by consulting with victims, affected communities and the public on how they would like to obtain redress for their harms suffered, including for violations of socio-economic rights, the project will enable key actors and stakeholders to assist citizens in asking for and receiving a transitional justice process that responds effectively to Tunisia’s specific needs.

Project Details
Al-Kawakibi Democracy Transition Center and its international partner No Peace Without Justice will engage key actors in various activities to build their knowledge and understanding of transitional justice, including its relevance for socio-economic rights and corruption, their capacity to engage with key policy- and decision-makers and their ability to document human rights violations. The project will ensure adequate representation by bringing together key actors and stakeholders within Tunisia: civil society groups, victims of human rights violations, legal professionals, the judiciary, State institutions and relevant Ministries, policy- and decision-makers, political parties and the Constituent Assembly, the security services, the media and members of the public, including women and youth.

Project Objectives
The specific objectives of the project are to:

- Build the capacity of civil society actors involved in transitional justice-related activities, such as outreach, advocacy and documenting human rights violations, including socio-economic rights and corruption;
- Build the capacity of victims of human rights violations to organise themselves and advocate for their interests;
- Build the capacity of members of the media on transitional justice;
- Support civil society engagement with policy- and decision-makers.

Project Activities
The project will begin with a baseline mapping of the situation in Tunisia, development of project materials and engagement of key stakeholders. Activities will take place throughout the country and include training seminars, mentoring, advocacy and consultations with the general public and victims of human rights violations and corruption. Follow-up consultations will be held towards the end of the project, with a final report to be presented at its conclusion.