



(Le Figaro, 2019)

Mohamed Ould Ghazouani Elected President; Suicide Bombings in Tunis

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In Algeria, pro-democracy political parties, civil society and the Algerian Human Rights League advocate for a transition period. Ghassam Salame met with Haftar in order to find ways to put an end to the fighting in Tripoli. Egyptian authorities arrested eight activists on charges of having close ties with the Muslim Brotherhood.

Mohamed Ould Ghazouani was elected president of Mauritania, which led to calls for demonstrations from the opposition. A large part of Moroccans are pleading for political change in their country and envisage emigrating. Tunisia experienced two suicide bombings in its capital city while President Essebsi was urgently hospitalized.

Algeria

Following the wave of arrests, which led to the political fallout of Algeria's old regime, Salim Labatcha was elected new head of the *Union Générale des Travailleurs Algériens* (UGTA), Algeria's main trade union center (*Le Figaro*)¹. For his part, former Communications Minister, Abdelaziz Rahabi has been nominated to the coordination mission for the management of the National Dialogue Conference, scheduled for July 6 (*algeriepatriotique*)².

And, in a continuation of public demonstrations in Algeria, seven pro-democracy political parties as well as the Algerian Human Rights league met and advocated a transition period (*RFI*)³. Meanwhile, at least 18 protesters have been arrested for brandishing Amazigh flags (*Jeune Afrique*)⁴. In other news, Algeria did not take part in the Summit of the 5+5 organized by Emmanuel Macron, the latter deeply regretting its absence and evoking a "political" crisis in the country (*Algérie 360°*)⁵.

Egypt

Egyptian authorities detained an opposition leader on charges of plotting against the government (*Reuters*)⁶. The Egyptian police also arrested at least eight activists accusing them of close ties with the Muslim Brotherhood (*Washington Post*)⁷. Regarding Egypt's external relations, President Sisi met with Japanese Prime Minister Shinzo Abe in Osaka, before attending the 2019 Group of 20 summit scheduled next week (*Egypt today*)⁸.

In other news, a jihadist attack targeting an "assembly center" for police killed seven police officers and a civilian and injured a woman and child in North Sinai (*The Defense Post*)⁹. And Egypt began hosting the 8th Africa Cup of Nations (*Egypt Independent*)¹⁰.

Libya

Forces loyal to the Libyan Government of National Accord reported that they have seized a strategic town, previously occupied by General Khalifa Haftar (*The Guardian*)¹¹. Meanwhile, the United Arab

¹ <http://www.lefigaro.fr/flash-actu/algerie-remplacement-d-un-proche-de-bouteflika-a-la-tete-du-principal-syndicat-20190621>

² <https://www.algeriepatriotique.com/2019/06/26/abdelaziz-rahabi-coordonnera-la-gestion-de-la-conference-nationale-de-dialogue/>

³ <http://www.rfi.fr/afrique/20190627-algerie-nouvelle-union-partis-societe-civile-sortie-crise>

⁴ <https://www.jeuneafrique.com/794165/politique/algerie-les-arrestations-de-porteurs-de-drapeaux-amazigh-sont-anticonstitutionnelles/>

⁵ <https://www.algerie360.com/emmanuel-macron-evoque-une-crise-politique-en-algerie/>

⁶ <https://www.reuters.com/article/us-egypt-security/egypt-detains-opposition-leader-accusing-him-of-anti-government-plot-idUSKCN1TQ161?feedType=RSS&feedName=worldNews>

⁷ https://www.washingtonpost.com/world/middle_east/egypt-arrests-8-including-ex-lawmaker-for-plotting-riots/2019/06/25/017f6fe8-9731-11e9-9a16-dc551ea5a43b_story.html?utm_term=.a7fe8cb5f5d2

⁸ <http://www.egypttoday.com/Article/2/72155/Sisi-arrive-in-Osaka-holds-session-of-talks-with-Japanese>

⁹ <https://thedefensepost.com/2019/06/26/egypt-police-officers-killed-islamic-state-sinai-arish/>

¹⁰ <https://www.egyptindependent.com/egypt-grind-out-win-to-launch-africa-cup-of-nations/>

¹¹ <https://www.theguardian.com/world/2019/jun/27/libya-un-recognised-government-captures-gherian>

Emirates (UAE) and Egypt brought military support to the forces of Haftar (*Middle East Monitor*)¹². And the head of UNSMIL, Ghassam Salamé, met with the latter in an effort to end the fighting in Tripoli and to find ways for a political solution (*Libya Herald*)¹³.

In other news, the Donald Trump Administration said there is a “small” resurgence of the Islamic State in Libya since the start of the fighting in Tripoli initiated by Haftar (*Al-Monitor*)¹⁴. A report by the Northern Ireland Affairs Committee revealed that the government of the United Kingdom has collected £17 million on over £10 billion of Libyan frozen assets linked to former dictator Gaddafi (*The Libya Observer*)¹⁵. The Libyan coast guard intercepted almost 200 Europe-bound migrants at sea this week (*Sky News*)¹⁶.

Mauritania

Presidential elections were held in Mauritania on June 22. Mohamed Ould Ghazouani, former Chief of Staff and Defense Minister, was elected President capturing 52% of the popular vote (*Le Monde*)¹⁷. Anti-Slavery candidate Biram Dah Abeid came in second with 18,79% of the popular vote (*L'Authentique*)¹⁸. According to the African electoral mission in Mauritania, no violations were recorded during the first round of the elections but they formulated some recommendations to improve the democratic system in the country (*Sahara Medias*)¹⁹

However, the outcomes of the elections were rejected by the opposition, which called for demonstrations (*RFI*)²⁰ and accused the power of imposing “a state of siege” to set communities in opposition to each other (*FRANCE 24*)²¹. As a result, Mauritanian police raided the headquarters of two opposition candidates, Biram Dah Abeid and Kane Hamidou Baba, and shut down the latter’s (*africanews*.)²².

Furthermore, Internet was shut down in the country. In the meantime, a hundred “foreigners” were arrested during demonstrations and the ambassadors of Senegal, Mali and Gambia were summoned by Mauritania’s Ministry of Foreign Affairs. The latter enjoined them to ask their nationals to refrain from participating in demonstrations which disturb public order in Mauritania (*Le Monde*)²³.

Morocco

¹² <https://www.middleeastmonitor.com/20190622-egypt-uae-send-military-support-to-libyas-haftar/>

¹³ <https://www.libyaherald.com/2019/06/23/salame-meets-haftar-in-eastern-libya/>

¹⁴ <https://www.al-monitor.com/pulse/originals/2019/06/pentagon-islamic-state-resurgence-libya-tripoli-hifter-1.html>

¹⁵ <https://www.libyaobserver.ly/economy/uk-has-taken-£17-million-libyas-frozen-assets-report-says>

¹⁶ <https://news.sky.com/story/libya-intercepts-almost-200-europe-bound-migrants-at-sea-11746885>

¹⁷ https://www.lemonde.fr/international/article/2019/06/23/en-mauritanie-mohamed-ould-ghazouani-el-president_5480467_3210.html

¹⁸ <http://lauthentic.info/Politique/article/Biram-deuxieme-apres-le-depouillement-de-90-des-bureaux-de-vote>

¹⁹ <https://www.saharamedias.net/fr/elections-presidentielles-tout-sest-passe-normalement-selon-la-mission-de-lunion-africaine/>

²⁰ <http://www.rfi.fr/afrique/20190624-mauritanie-opposition-manifestation-ghazouani-internet-coupure>

²¹ <https://www.france24.com/fr/20190626-presidentielle-mauritanie-opposition-denonce-etat-siege>

²² <https://fr.africanews.com/2019/06/25/mauritanie-descente-de-police-aux-sieges-de-deux-candidats-a-la-presidentielle/>

²³ https://www.lemonde.fr/afrique/article/2019/06/26/mauritanie-une-centaine-d-etrangers-arretes-internet-coupe_5481440_3212.html

Protesters gathered in front of the Parliament in Rabat asking to review the law on abortion while associations reported that 600 to 800 clandestine abortions would be practiced every day in the country (*20 minutes*)²⁴. Morocco signed the OECD multilateral convention to implement tax treaty related measures to prevent base erosion and profit shifting (BEPS), namely to fight against tax avoidance (*Le360*)²⁵. Meanwhile, almost half of Moroccans are pleading for political change in their country and consider emigrating for economic reasons (*BBC*)²⁶.

In other news, the European Union welcomed the “serious and credible” efforts undertaken by Morocco regarding the political process aimed at finding a solution to the question of the Western Sahara (*L’Economiste.com*)²⁷. Morocco also confirmed its attendance to the Manama conference initiated by the United States, which focuses on the economic side of the US plan to revive the Israeli-Palestinian peace process (*HuffPost*)²⁸.

Tunisia

Two suicide bombings targeting security forces occurred in Tunis, killing one policeman and injuring at least eight civilians. ISIS claimed responsibility for this attack (*Le Point*)²⁹. On the same day, President Beji Caid Essebsi became seriously ill and was hospitalized urgently. Regarding parliamentary affairs, two weeks after the MPs voted on an electoral amendment which could prevent some MPs from running for the presidency, 51 MPs lodged an appeal against it. Similarly, presidential candidate Nabil Karoui declared this law as unconstitutional and by the same token a return to dictatorial practices (*RFI*)³⁰.

In other news, the Truth and Dignity Committee, in charge of investigating state crimes under the Bourguiba and Ben Ali regimes, claims compensation and apologies from France (*Franceinfo*)³¹.

About:

This is a weekly, non-exhaustive snapshot of regional, and international news regarding the politics of the North African region. Selections demonstrate varying perspectives and opinions from French, Arabic and English media sources. Taking such an approach enables regional trends to be observed and documented so they may be used and applied in our detailed research projects.

²⁴ <https://www.20minutes.fr/monde/2550119-20190626-ivg-manifestants-demandent-assouplissement-loi-maroc>

²⁵ <http://fr.le360.ma/economie/ocde-le-maroc-signe-un-accord-historique-pour-mieux-lutter-contre-levasion-fiscale-193130>

²⁶ <https://www.bbc.com/news/world-africa-48771758>

²⁷ <https://www.leconomiste.com/flash-infos/sahara-l-ue-salue-les-efforts-serieux-et-credibles-du-maroc>

²⁸ https://www.huffpostmaghreb.com/entry/le-maroc-sera-bien-present-a-la-conference-de-manama_mg_5d11ddefe4b0aa375f529c01

²⁹ https://www.lepoint.fr/societe/tunisie-explosion-d-une-voiture-piegee-pres-de-l-ambassade-de-france-27-06-2019-2321366_23.php

³⁰ <http://www.rfi.fr/emission/20190627-tunisie-on-retourne-pratiques-dictature-selon-outsider-nabil-karoui>

³¹ https://www.francetvinfo.fr/monde/afrique/tunisie/il-est-temps-que-la-france-paie-ses-erreurs-la-tunisie-demande-des-reparations-a-la-france_3508311.html

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