



[Dinner Conversation with Dr. Mohamed Moncef Marzouki, former President of Tunisia](#)

By Jacob Van Veldhuizen

On Tuesday, September 26th, the National Interest Foundation had the honor of hosting the former President of Tunisia, Dr. Mohamad Moncef Marzouki, for a dinner conversation. The topic of discussion was the current status of Tunisia, what can be learned from the past, and the outlook of democracy in Tunisia.

Dr. Marzouki began the event by discussing his future outlook on democracy in Tunisia and North Africa. He began by saying that despite the current status of Tunisia, he remained confident in the people's ability to persevere. He believes that though they have lost the immediate battle for democracy, the war will still be one. During their time as a democracy, Tunisians were proud to be Tunisian. The practice of torture was stopped. The people in Tunisia now have a recent example of democracy to compare to the current tyrannical government, allowing them to better understand the benefits of democracy. Marzouki went on to describe the main problem with the Arab Spring. He stated that external influences, especially from Gulf countries, allowed authoritarian rulers to regain power.

The former President ended the event by answering a round of questions from attendees. One attendee asked how Western governments could have and still can assist Tunisia in its quest for democracy. He described the disappointment he felt by the lack of support from Western governments during the Arab Spring. They refused to provide financial support or free up Tunisian funds. He emphasized the need for Tunisians to rely on themselves. He went on that the best thing these governments could do in the future is cut off support for authoritarian regimes globally. This would have multiple benefits, including cutting off funding, and political support, and sending a message to authoritarian countries around the world.

Dr. Marzouki closed the event by highlighting the importance of the younger generations to get involved in the fight for democracy. He encouraged them to get involved and remain as peaceful as possible. He ended the event by ensuring the attendees that there is still a will to reestablish democracy in Tunisia.