



Tunisia Voter Registration & Voter Confidence Assessment Survey

May 2011

A phone survey to assess the comprehensiveness of the national ID card database and citizens' opinions of the voter registration process in Tunisia.

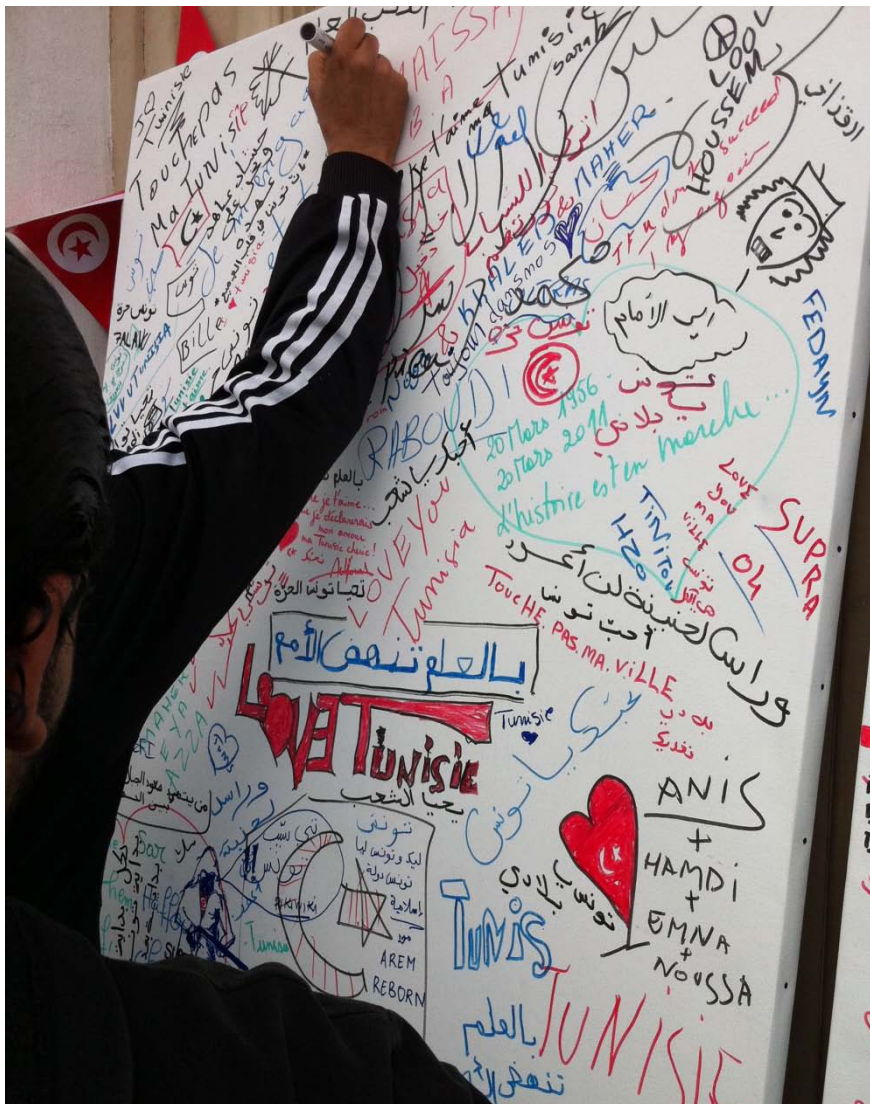


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I. SURVEY HIGHLIGHTS

Tunisians express a high degree of trust in the national ID card database and most Tunisians believe that only people with valid national ID cards should be allowed to vote.

A significant majority of Tunisians trust that citizens are adequately getting their national ID cards. As well, a significant majority also have confidence in the voter registration system. When asked what type of identification should be used when voting, nearly 74% said that only the national ID card should be allowed.

Seventeen percent of ID card addresses do not correspond to voters' current residential addresses.

Respondents who said the address on their national ID card is not accurate were asked if they would be in favor of voting at a polling station near the address listed on their national ID card. To this question, 88% said that they are in favor of that while only 4% said that they would prefer to vote somewhere else. Five percent said it doesn't matter to them where they vote.

Majority of respondents do not know what type of election will be held in the summer.

Less than half (43%) of the adults asked correctly identified the upcoming election as a Constituent Assembly election. In addition, 26% gave an incorrect answer and 31% did not know. This is vital information for election officials. When breaking down the demographics, election officials should gear voter education campaigns towards women, those in the 18-24 and 55+ age groups, rural areas and the Center and the South regions of the country.

Majority of Tunisians need more information about different aspects of the election process.

At least 8 out of every 10 Tunisians said they needed more information in each key area: voter registration, participating political parties, candidates and campaigns, where and when to vote, voting procedures and vote counting.

Overwhelming majority of Tunisians intend to vote in the upcoming elections.

When asked if they intend to vote in the upcoming elections, an overwhelming majority (92%) of respondents said they are likely to vote. This is in sharp contrast with voting behavior before the Tunisian revolution. When respondents were asked if they had voted in the October 2009 Parliamentary and Presidential elections, only 28% of respondents reported that they voted versus 71% who did not.

Majority of Tunisians are confident that the elections will be free and fair.

Eighty-seven percent of respondents said that they expect the election to be completely (36%) or somewhat (51%) free and fair. Similarly, respondents seem generally confident in the ability of the commission to organize the elections. However, when breaking down this data by different demographics, we notice that younger voters (18-34) seem slightly less confident in the commission's ability than voters aged 35 or older.

II. OVERVIEW

Background

An accurate and up-to-date voter register is a vital part of preparing and conducting an election. In preparation for the National Constituent Assembly Elections to be held on 24 July 2011, Tunisia's Technical Committee of the High Commission for the Fulfillment of the Revolutionary Goals, Political Reform and Democratic Transition (HCFRG) envisioned two possible options for improving the voter register in Tunisia.

The first is to create an entirely new voter register by extracting data on Tunisian citizens from the National ID card database. The second option is to enable an immediate period of time to update and verify information in the current voter register.

In Tunisia, every adult citizen, 18 years or older, should possess an ID card. All adults are considered eligible voters. Understanding the opinions and attitudes of voters and key stakeholders towards the proposed changes is crucial. It helps to examine the practicality of the options being considered and create support for the process.

Project Objectives

The survey was designed to be nationally representative of the adult Tunisian population and collect data to achieve the following objectives:

- Estimate the percentage of eligible Tunisian voters who possess a national ID card
- Estimate the percentage of eligible Tunisian voters who reside at the address listed on their ID card
- Solicit opinions for those who do not live at the address on their ID cards on where they would like to vote: the address where they live or the address listed on their ID card
- Gauge confidence in the accuracy of the National ID Card Database and its use for voter registration
- Examine voters' confidence in the subsequent voter registry reform process
- Explore the likelihood of voting in the upcoming elections and expectations for these elections

Acknowledgments

The survey was conducted with the generous support and funding provided by the Department of Foreign Affairs and International Trade (DFAIT) of Canada, through its Global Peace and Security Fund.

III. METHODOLOGY

Survey Sample Specifications

The survey was conducted using computer assisted telephone interviewing (CATI). The phone database consisted mostly of mobile phone numbers since the usage rate is almost universal. The database also included landline numbers for those respondents without a mobile phone number. The mobile phone penetration rate in Tunisia is at 106%. The landline penetration rate is much smaller at 13%.

The sample was designed to represent Tunisia's adult population, so it was stratified geographically by the 24 governorates of Tunisia.

Following data collection, a weight factor was used to correct for slight imbalances in terms of gender and age in order to bring the realized sample in line with population parameters.

Survey and Questionnaire Specifications

- The *survey questionnaire* consisted of 26 closed questions and 5 open-ended questions not including demographics (See Appendix A). The following are the core sections of the questionnaire:
 - Voting in previous elections
 - National ID card and voter registration process
 - Upcoming elections (likelihood to vote and voter knowledge)
 - Confidence in the electoral process
- The *sample size* of the survey is 1,506 respondents
- The *margin of error* is ± 2.53
- *Fieldwork dates*: 24 March 2011 – 7 April 2011
- *Survey firm*: IFES contracted Emrhod International, a Tunis-based research organization, to implement the survey

Feedback

This analytical report was developed by IFES' Applied Research Center (ARC). For any feedback or questions about data analysis or methodology, please contact Senior Research Specialist Rola Abdul-Latif at rabdullatif@ifes.org.

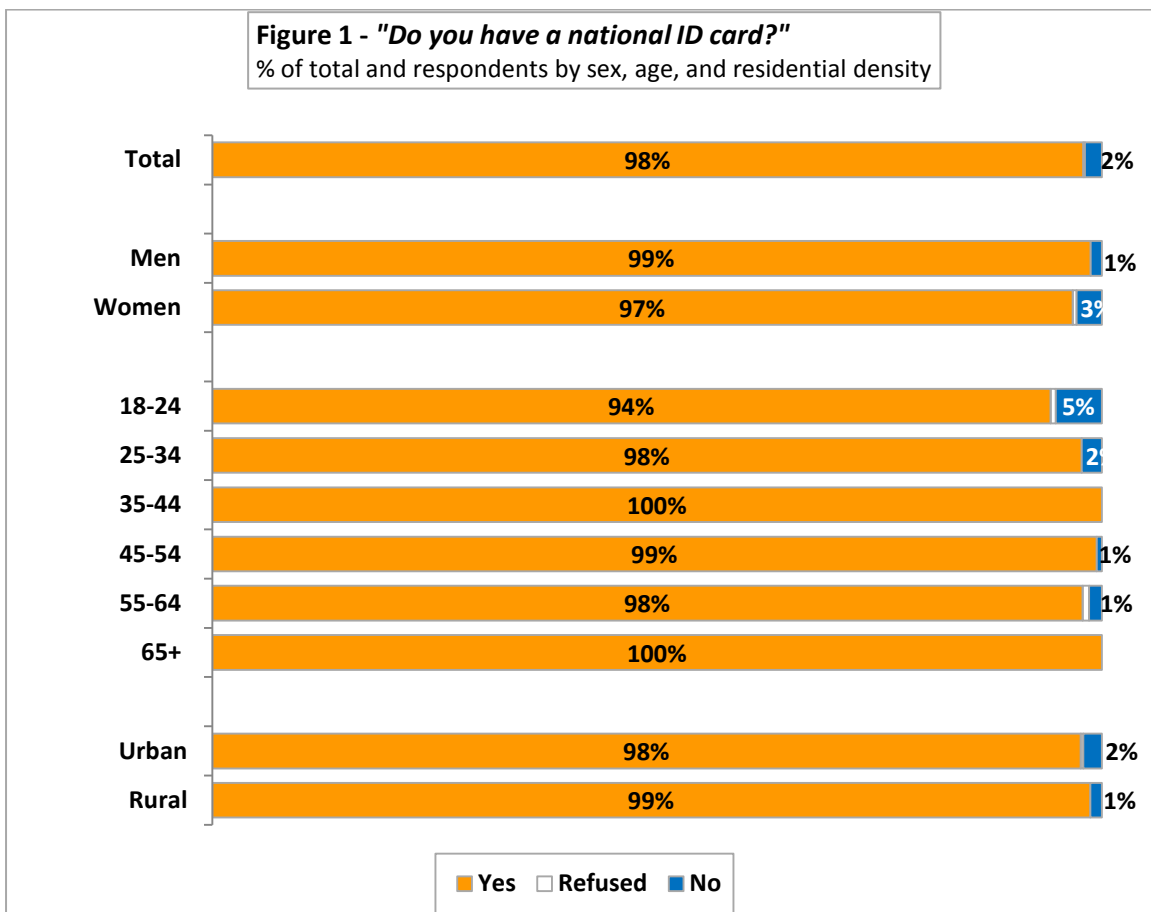
For any questions about IFES programming in Tunisia, please contact Deputy Director for Middle East and North Africa Ambar Zobairi at azobairi@ifes.org.

IV. FINDINGS

National ID Cards

Possession of national ID cards is almost universal

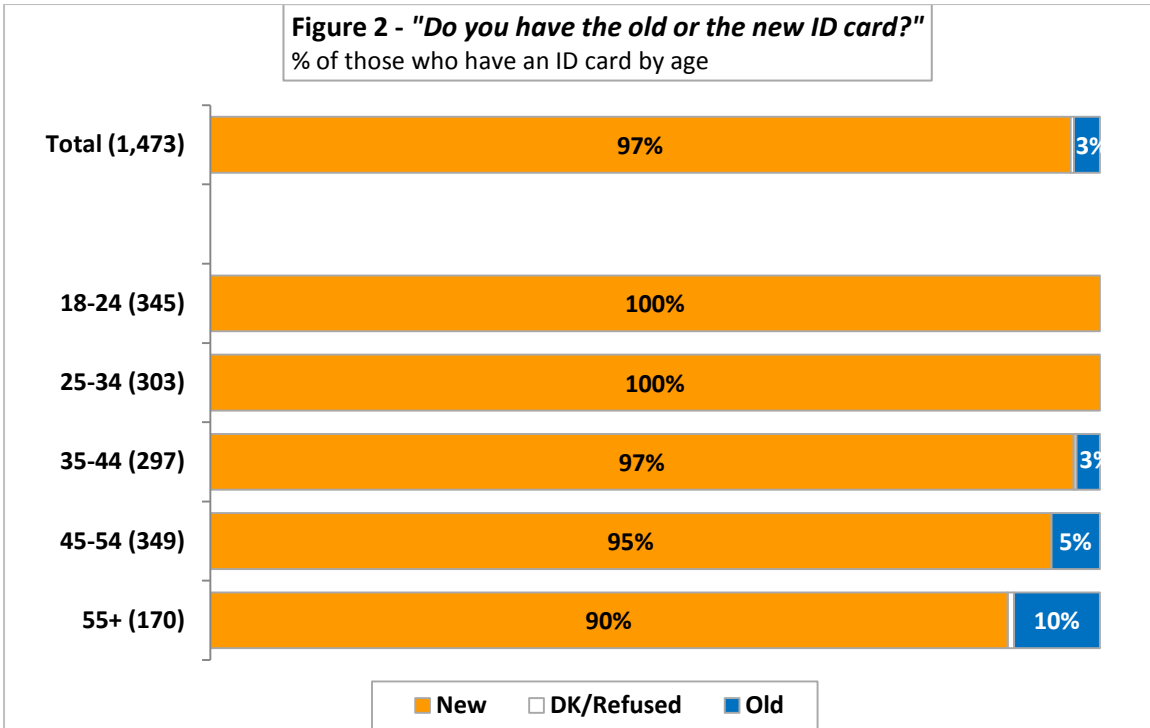
Data from the IFES survey shows that 98% of adult Tunisians possess a national ID card. There are slightly more men (99%) than women (97%) who say they have an ID card. Within the age group of 18-24 years, slightly more respondents say they do not have an ID card (5%) compared with the national average (2%). Similar proportions of rural and urban Tunisians have the national ID card (Figure 1).



One in 10 respondents aged 55 or older has the old ID Card

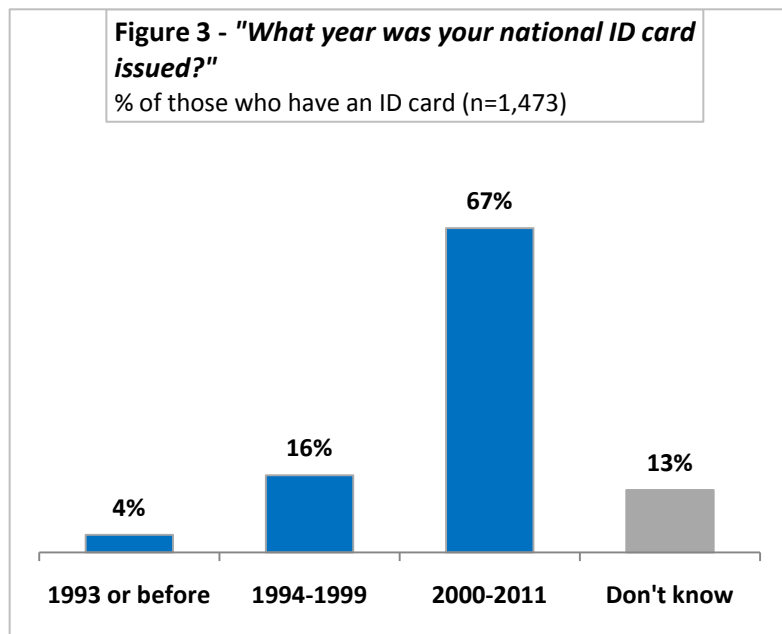
Respondents were also asked if they have the old or the new ID card and asked what year their ID card was issued. Of those who have an ID card, 97% said they have the new ID card and 3% said they have the old ID card.

When breaking down this data by age group, we find that respondents who are 55 and older tend to have the old ID card. However, only 10% of this age group reported having the old ID card while 5% of respondents from 45-54 years of age reported having the old ID card (Figure 2).



Respondents who have ID cards were asked what year their ID card was issued. Over two-thirds of respondents (67%) reported that their ID cards were issued between 2000 and 2011, 16% reported that their ID cards were issued between 1994 and 1999 and 4% of respondents said their cards were issued in 1993 or earlier.

Those who reported having ID cards issued in 1993 or before are considered to have old ID cards before the new database system was created. Meanwhile, 13% of respondents did not know or could not recall what year their card was issued (Figure 3).

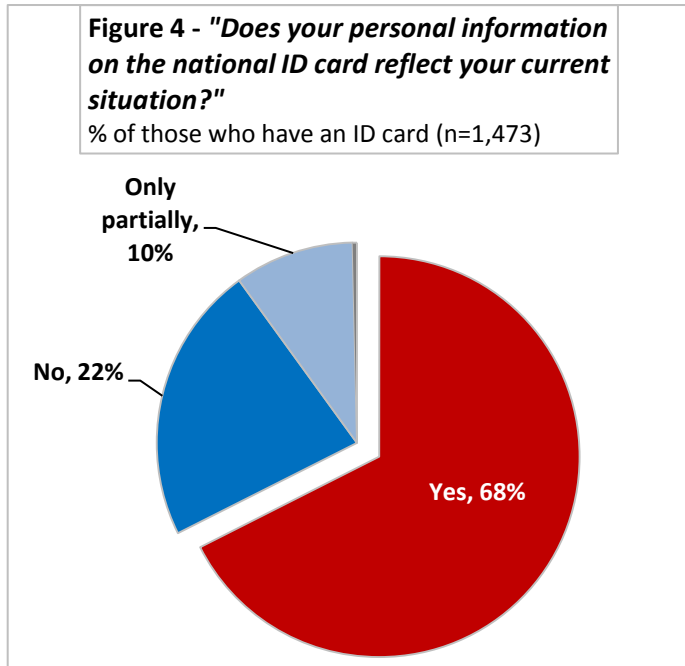


One-fifth of Tunisians say their voter ID card information does not reflect their current situation

Next, respondents were asked if their personal information on the national ID card reflects their current situation. "Situation" entails all personal information that would be displayed on the national ID card. Over two-thirds of respondents (68%) answered "yes" - that the personal information on the national ID card does reflect their current situation. Twenty-two percent said "no" it does not and another 10% said the information "only partially" reflects their current situation (Figure 4).

When breaking down the accuracy of personal information on the ID card by different demographics, we do not detect significant differences by gender or urban versus rural residence.

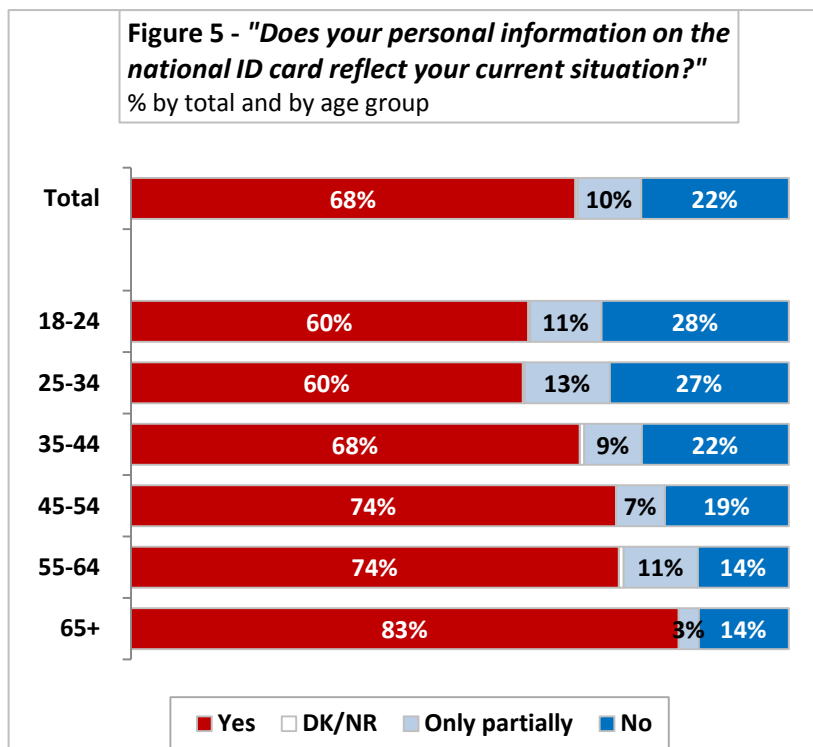
We do find a significant difference by age groups. Respondents 45 or older are more likely to report that the personal information on their ID card reflects their current situation while those 18-34 are more likely to report that it either does not reflect their current situation or that it only partially reflects their current situation. Of respondents 18-24 years, with an ID card, 28% report that the personal information on their ID card does not reflect their current situation. Eleven percent say that it only partially reflects it, leaving 60% who say their information is accurate.



This is similar to the proportion of respondents in the 25-34 age group who reported their information is correct. Meanwhile, of those who are 45-64, 74% reported that their information reflects their current situation. Of those who are 65 or older, 83% said that their ID information is accurate (Figure 5).

Those respondents who said that their ID information either does not reflect their current situation or only reflects it partially were asked what fields in their national ID card no longer reflect their current situation or are inaccurate.

The most frequently mentioned inaccurate field was "occupation," cited by two-thirds of respondents who reported that their ID card information is inaccurate. While this corresponds to a sizable proportion of Tunisians voters (21%), errors in the occupation field would not prevent a voter from casting a ballot.



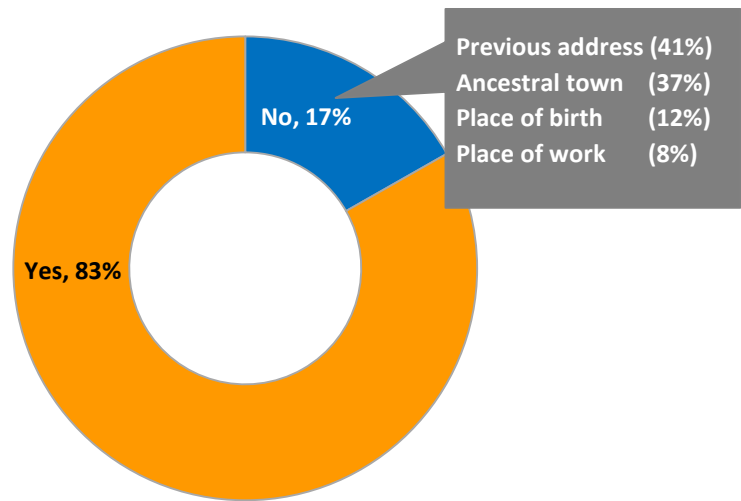
However, of the respondents who reported inaccurate information on their national ID card, 40% said that the "address" field either does not reflect their current situation or is inaccurate. This corresponds to 12% of Tunisian voters and could potentially be problematic for assigning voters to correct polling locations if the ID card database is not corrected for addresses before the elections. Meanwhile, 10% of respondents cited "marital status" as a field that does not reflect their current situation (Figure 6).

Figure 6 - "What are the fields in your national ID card that no longer reflect your current situation or are inaccurate?"	% of cases (Respondents with incorrect ID information n=483)
Occupation	66%
Address	40%
Marital status	10%
Place of Birth	1%
ID number	1%
Date of Birth	1%
Don't know/Refused	2%

Seventeen percent of ID card addresses do not correspond to voters' current residential addresses

All respondents who reported having a national ID card were explicitly asked if the address listed on their card is the same as their current residential address. Seventeen percent said their address is not the same and the remaining 83% said that it is (Figure 7). Of those who said that it is not their current residential address, 41% said that it is their previous residential address, which implies that they have moved and their address information was not updated. Another 37% said that the address on their card is that of their ancestral town or village, 12% said that it is their place of birth and 8% said that it is their place of work.

Figure 7 - "Is the address listed on your ID card the same as your current residential address?"



Respondents who said that the address listed on their card is not their current residential address were asked if they would be in favor of voting at a polling station near the address listed on their national ID card. To this question, a full 88% said that they are in favor of that while only 4% said that they would prefer to vote somewhere else. The remaining 5% said it doesn't matter to them where they vote.

Tunisians express a high degree of trust in the national ID card database

Next, respondents were asked a series of questions to gauge their perceptions of the comprehensiveness and accuracy of the voter ID card database in Tunisia. Respondents were thus asked to what extent they think Tunisian citizens who are eligible to receive a national ID card actually have it. Seventy-seven percent said that they think that all eligible Tunisian citizens have it, and another 21% said that they think most eligible Tunisian citizens have it. Less than 1% believed that only some citizens have it. This shows a high degree of confidence in the comprehensiveness of the national ID card database (Figure 8).

When asked whether their close family members and friends who are eligible to vote have valid national ID cards, 64% of respondents said all of them have it and another 26% said most of them do. Just 5% said that only some of their close family members and friends do (Figure 9).

Figure 8 - "To what extent do you think that eligible Tunisian citizens have a national ID card?"

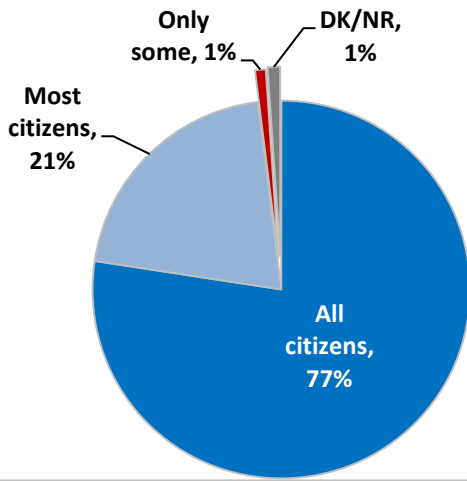
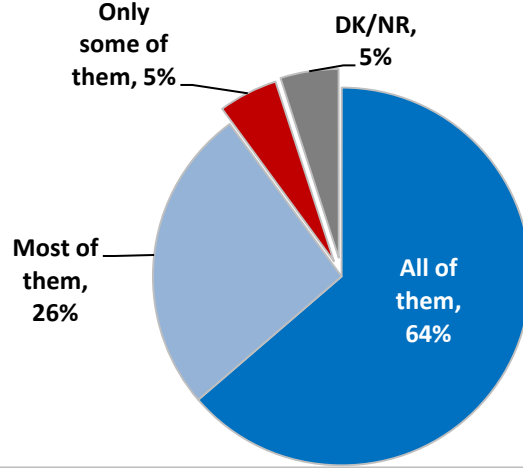
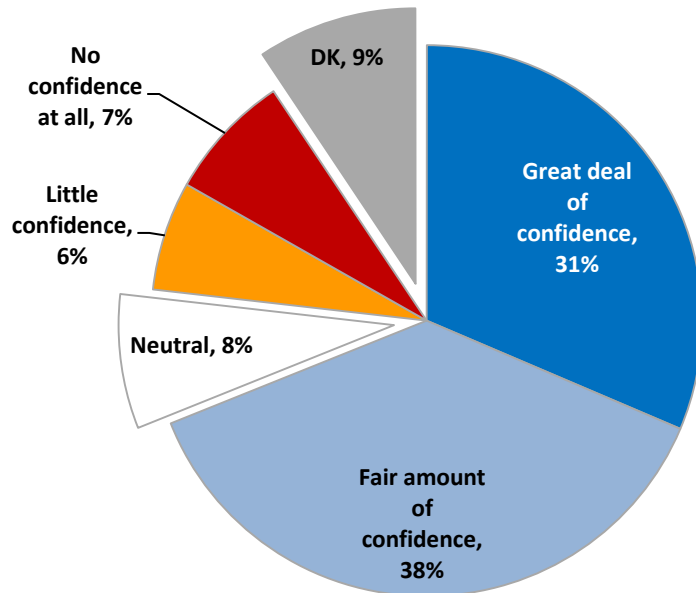


Figure 9 - "How many of your close family members and friends who are eligible to vote have valid national ID cards?"

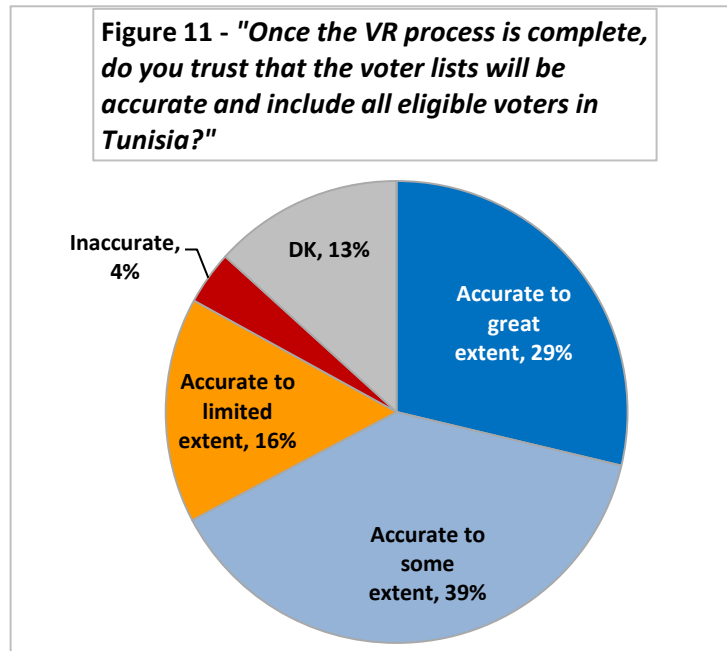


Survey respondents were also asked if they have confidence in the voter registration process in Tunisia. Nearly seven in 10 respondents said they have either a great deal (31%) or a fair amount (38%) of confidence and only 14% said they had little or no confidence in the process. Eight percent were neutral (Figure 10).

Figure 10 - "How much confidence do you have in the voter registration process in Tunisia?"

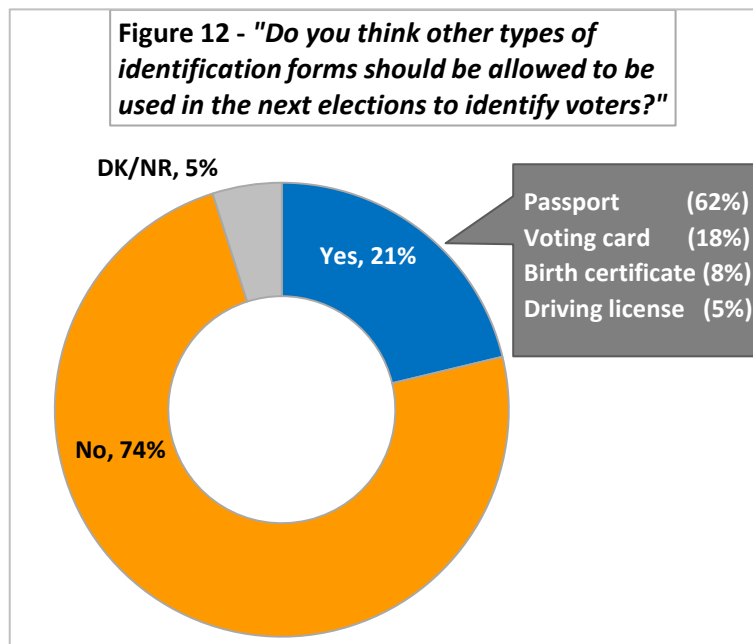


Regarding their expectations as to whether the voter list will be accurate once the voter registration process is complete, over two-thirds of respondents said that it will be accurate to a great (29%) or to some (39%) extent. Meanwhile, 16% said the voter list will only be accurate to a limited extent and 4% said the voter list will be inaccurate (Figure 11).



Most Tunisians prefer that only people with valid national ID cards should be allowed to vote

Respondents were next asked if they thought other types of identification forms should be allowed to be used in the next elections or if only the national ID card should be used. Nearly 74% said that only the national ID card should be allowed while 21% said that other forms should be allowed as well (Figure 12). Among those who said other forms should be allowed, the most cited document was the passport (62%), followed by the voting card (18%) and the birth certificate (8%).



Upcoming Elections

Majority of respondents do not know what type of election will be held in the summer

Survey respondents were tested on their knowledge of the type and date of election. When asked if they knew what type of election would be held in Tunisia this summer, 43% were able to correctly say that it will be a Constituent Assembly election.

However, 23% gave an incorrect answer saying that it is a Presidential election. Few respondents said it will be a Legislative election (2%) or a Parliamentary election (1%). Over three in 10 respondents (31%) could not give any answer to this question (Figure 13).

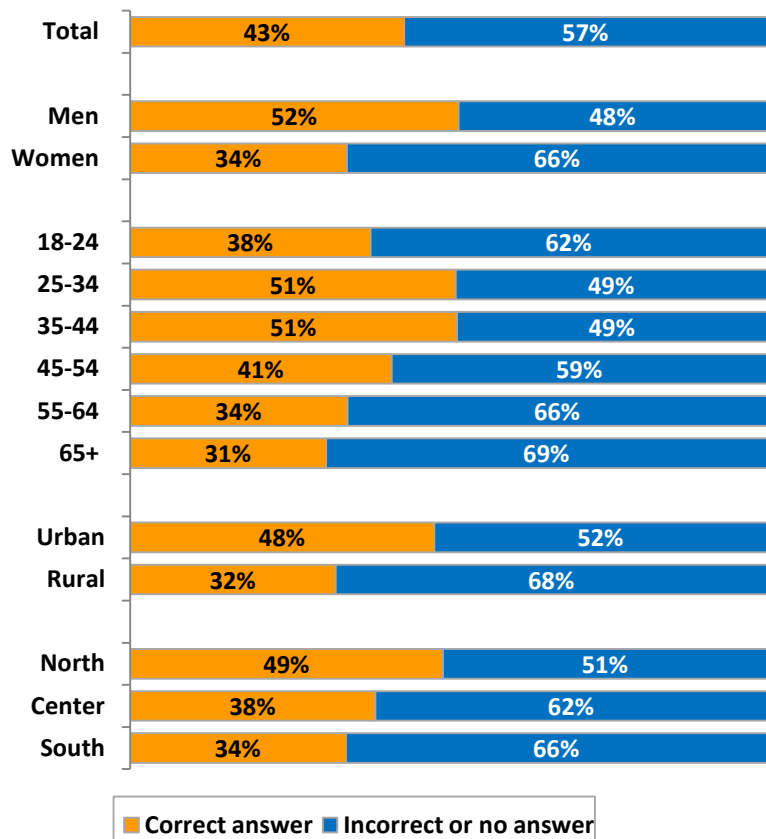
Figure 13 - "As you may know, this summer, elections will be held in Tunisia. Do you know what type of elections these will be?"

Constituent Assembly	43%
Presidential	23%
Legislative	2%
Parliamentary	1%
Don't know	31%

When breaking down this data by different demographics, we notice that knowledge levels about the next election vary between different groups (Figure 14). For instance, significantly more men than women were able to mention the type of election that will be held in the summer (52% of men vs. 34% of women). This shows that women should be targeted in voter education campaigns ahead of the election. In terms of age groups, the 25-44 seem more knowledgeable about election issues than respondents 18-24 or respondents 45 or older. Similarly, more respondents in urban areas (48%) were able to state the type of election than those in rural areas (32%).

When breaking down this data by region, we find that more respondents in the North region (49%) are likely to know the type of election than those in either the Center (38%) or the South (34%). While this data is based on only one question about the upcoming election, it surely indicates that overall knowledge of the upcoming election is limited across Tunisian society in general and it reflects gaps in knowledge for women, first-time voters, older voters, rural voters and voters based in the Center and the South regions.

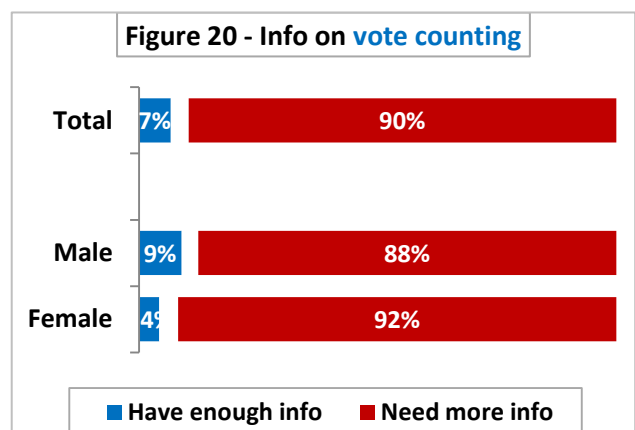
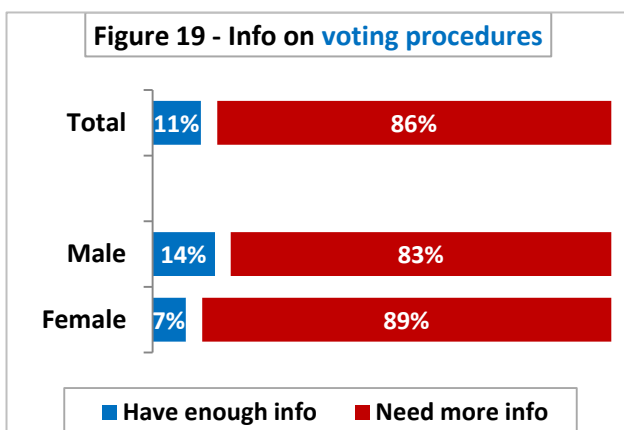
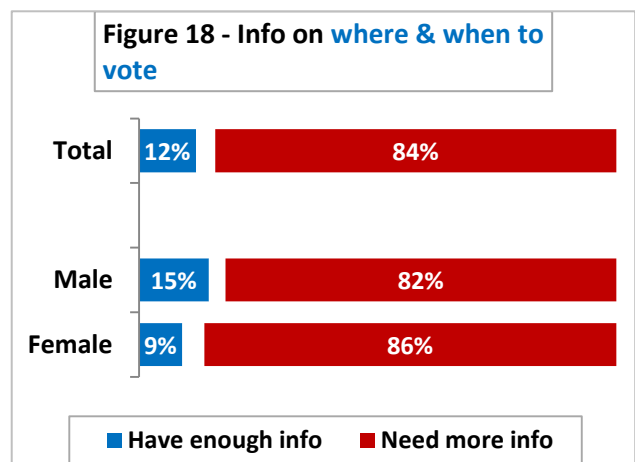
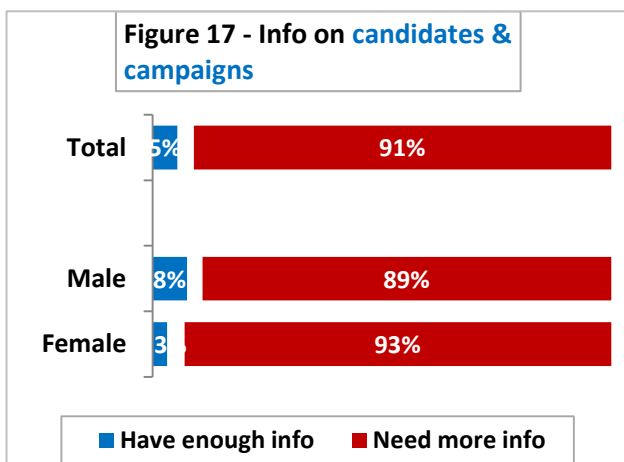
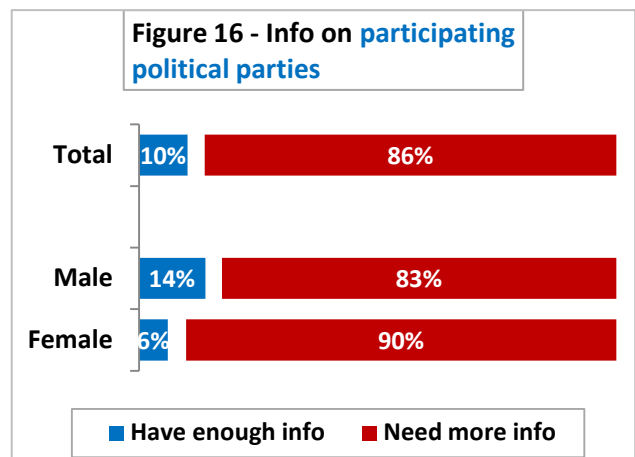
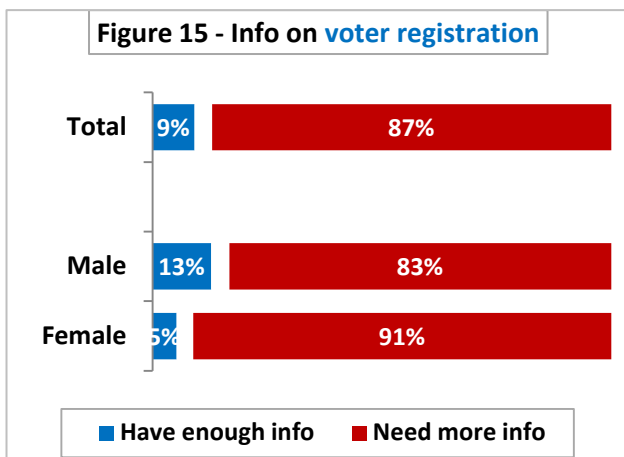
Figure 14 - Knowledge of the type of election held
% of total and respondents by sex, age, residential density, and region



When asked what date the elections in the summer will be held, 72% of respondents knew the month of the election. Of those, 49% percent were able to mention both the correct day and month and 23% percent knew only the month of the election, but not the date. The remaining 28% of respondents either mentioned the wrong month or had no answer.

Majority of Tunisians need more information about different aspects of the election process

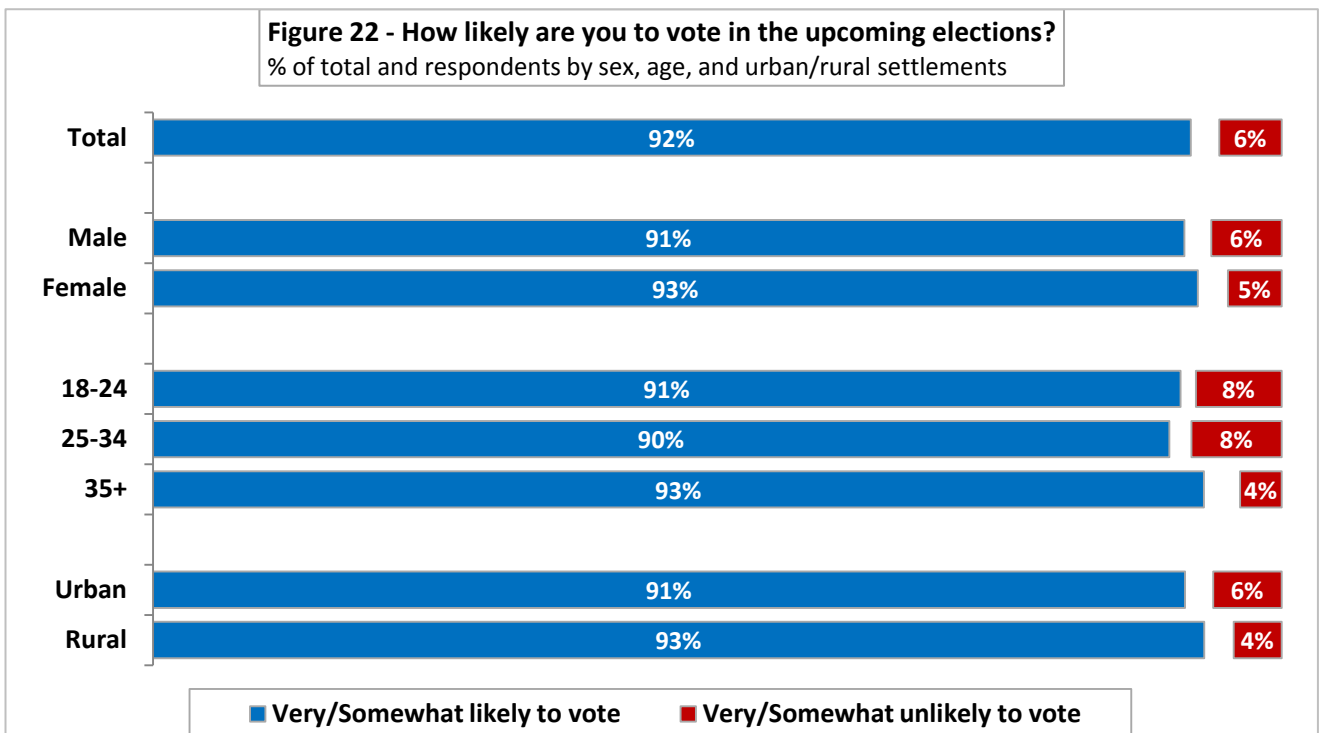
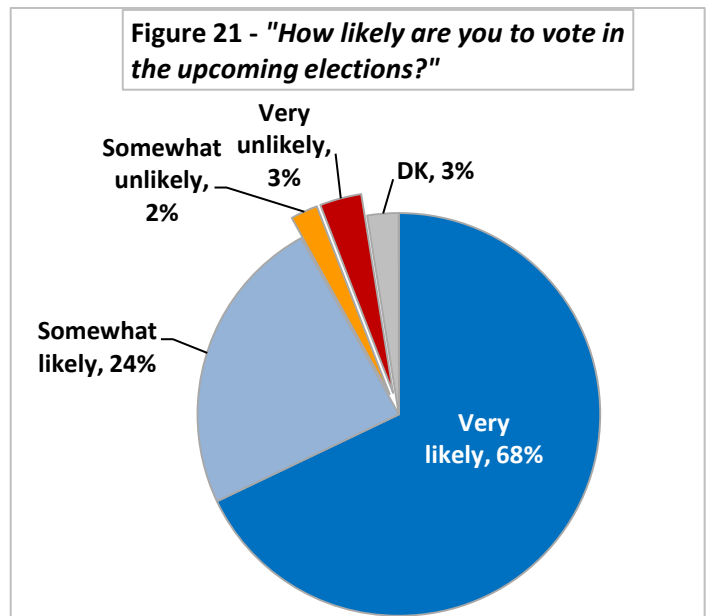
When presented with a series of election process aspects and asked if they needed more information or had enough information about them, large majorities of respondents (at least eight in 10) said they needed more information about each of these aspects which included voter registration, participating political parties, candidates and campaigns, where and when to vote, voting procedures and vote counting. For each of these aspects, we see that slightly more women need information than men do (Figures 15-20).



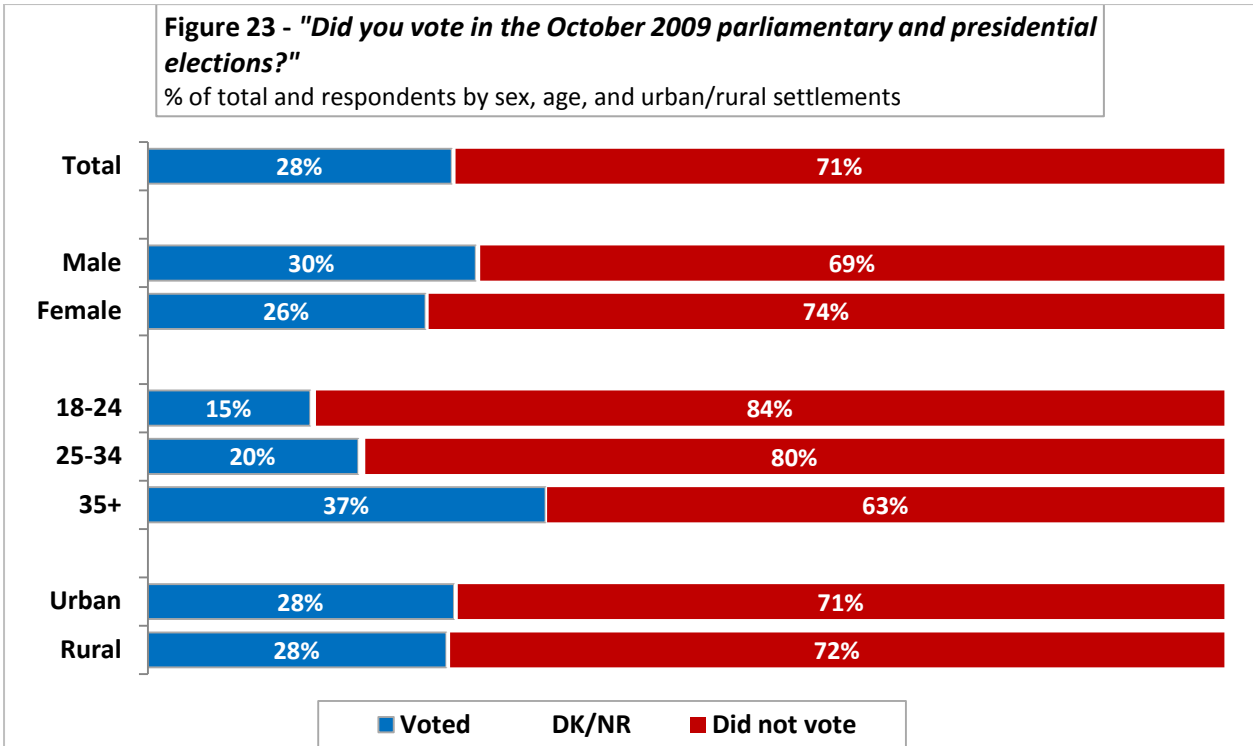
Overwhelming majority of Tunisians intend to vote in the upcoming elections

When asked if they intend to vote in the upcoming elections, an overwhelming majority (92%) of respondents said they are very (68%) or somewhat (24%) likely to vote and only 5% said that they are either very (3%) or somewhat (2%) unlikely to vote. This shows a strong willingness to participate in the elections on behalf of Tunisians (Figure 21).

When breaking down this data by different demographics, we do not observe significant differences between groups in their likelihood to vote by gender, age or urban and rural location since at least nine in 10 Tunisians say they are very or somewhat likely to vote in the next election (Figure 22).

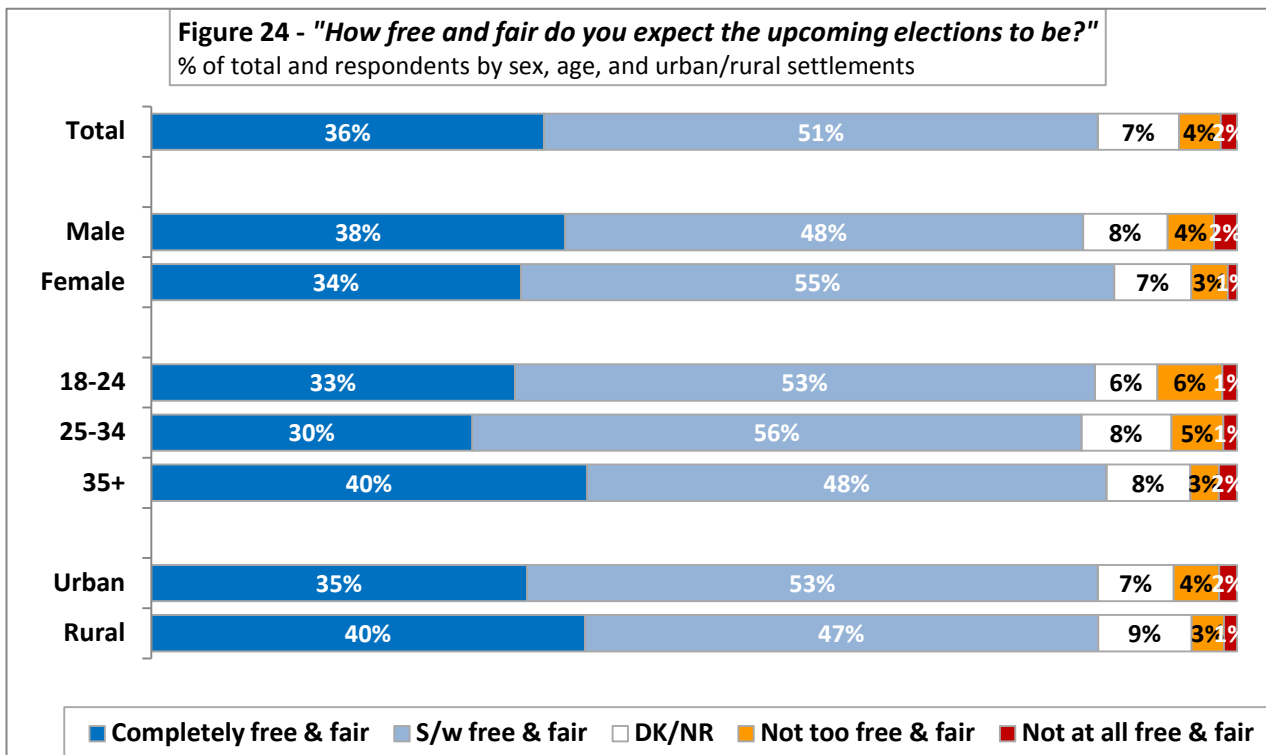


This is in sharp contrast with voting behavior before the Tunisian revolution. Indeed, when respondents were asked if they had voted in the October 2009 Parliamentary and Presidential elections, only 28% of respondents reported that they voted versus 71% who did not. Men’s participation was slightly higher than women’s (30% vs. 26%) and voter turnout was very low (20% or less) for respondents 18-34 (Figure 23).



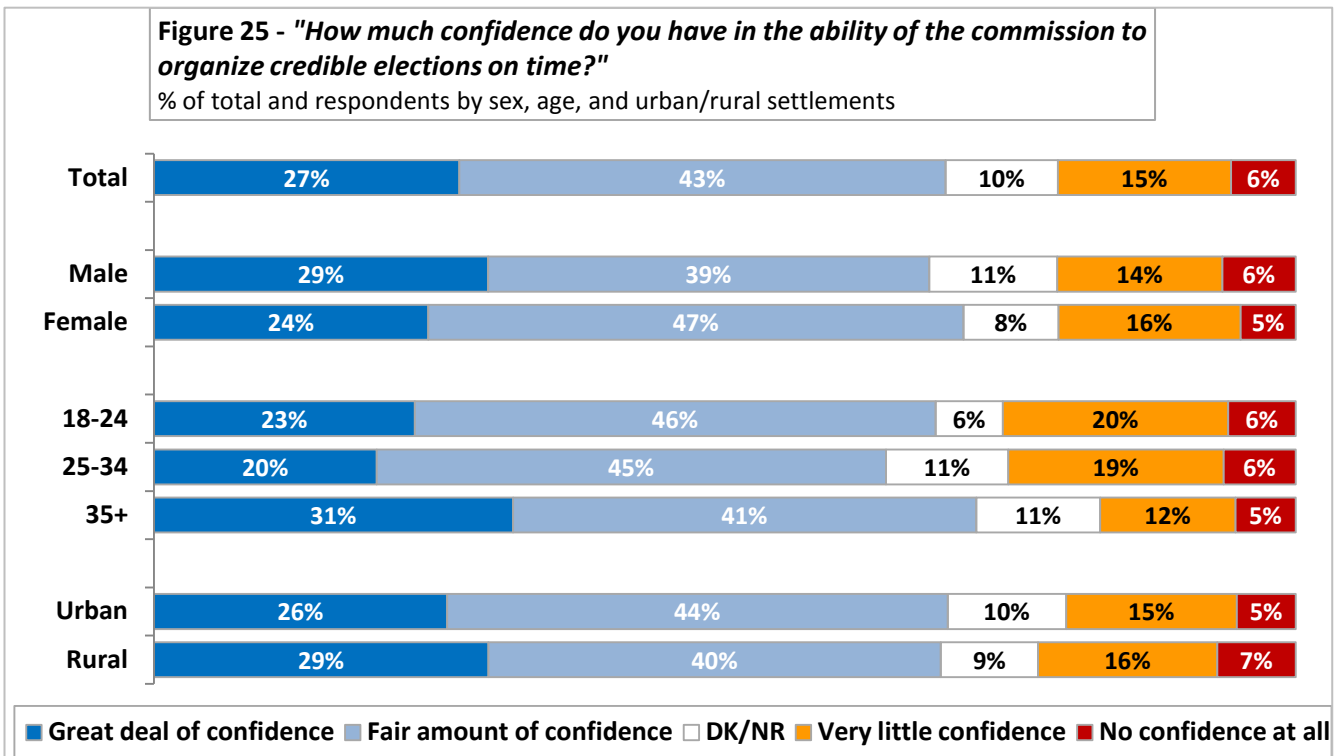
Majority of Tunisians are confident that the elections will be free and fair

When asked to what extent they expect the upcoming elections to be free and fair, 87% of respondents said that they expect it to be completely (36%) or somewhat (51%) free and fair. This assessment does not vary significantly between respondents by gender, age and urban/rural settlements (Figure 24).



Still within the context of the next elections, respondents were asked how much confidence they have in the ability of the commission in charge of administering the elections to organize credible elections on time. Similar to their expectations on whether elections will be free and fair, respondents seem generally confident in the ability of the commission to organize the elections. However, more respondents have a fair amount of confidence rather than a great deal of confidence. Indeed, 43% of respondents said they have a fair amount of confidence in the commission, while 27% said they have a great deal of confidence. This leaves 21% of respondents who said they have either very little (15%) or no confidence at all (6%) in the commission’s ability to organize credible elections on time.

When breaking down this data by different demographics, we notice that younger voters 18-34 seem slightly less confident in the commission’s ability than voters aged 35 or older. While 31% of voters aged 35 or older have a great deal of confidence in the commission’s ability, the proportion of voters with a great deal of confidence among the 18-24 age group is lower, at 23%, and even lower among the 25-34 age group at 20% (Figure 25).



Tunisians are cautiously optimistic about the fairness of the upcoming elections

Respondents were presented with a list of statements about the upcoming election and asked if they agree or disagree with each of these statements.

When asked if they agree or disagree that the results of the elections in Tunisia will accurately reflect the way people voted in the election, 75% agreed with the statement, leaving only 14% who disagreed (Figure 26). Similarly, a relatively large majority (70%) agreed that vote counting and tabulation will be done accurately. Nearly two-thirds of respondents (65%) agreed that the commission in charge of administering the election will ensure accuracy and completeness of the voter register, while 20% disagreed. When presented with the statement that every eligible voter will have an equal opportunity to participate in the election, 64% of respondents agreed while 23% disagreed. Respondents seemed split when presented with the statement that all parties and candidates will receive impartial treatment during the election process. Forty-six percent of respondents agreed while a sizable 39% disagreed.

This shows that Tunisian voters still have some doubts about the fairness of the election process in ensuring that all parties and candidates will be treated equally and impartially. It must also be noted, that for all these different aspects of the election, the extent of the agreement with these positive statements is cautious, with more respondents “somewhat” agreeing rather than “strongly” agreeing with each.

Figure 26 - "Please tell me if you agree or disagree with the following statements about the upcoming elections in Tunisia."

