

# Tunisia: “Common Good Before Private Profit!”

A Peasant Struggle for Land in Jemna

Tuesday 21 July 2020, by [MAHMOUD Ines](#) (Date first published: 1 July 2020).

**The screams for “work, freedom and national dignity”, echoing in the streets throughout Tunisia in 2011, have brought about political and democratic change, that led not only to the abolition of the former dictatorship, but more importantly to a new constitution and gain of political-democratic civic rights. The Tunisian revolution of 2011 has marked a crucial point in Tunisian history. With uprisings, sparked in Kasserine, then later in the interior regions of Tunisia, Tunisians spread their resistance countrywide against decades of authoritarian, corrupt rule under Zine El Abidine Ben Ali, as well as against the difficult socio-economic conditions they had to live in. The revolt led to further uprisings in the entire Arab region. Throughout the nation, the spirit of regaining sovereignty and freedom was (re)awakened: not only over the political and democratic space taken from the people, but over all aspects of political life, as well as the economic sovereignty Tunisians had been deprived of, from the time of French colonialism until power was taken by the autocratic government of the Democratic Constitutional Rally (RCD). This regaining of sovereignty equally included the claim of sovereignty over land.**

In Jemna, an oasis with a population of 7,000 in the south of Tunisia, this spirit of self-determination materialized the demands of the revolution for work, freedom, and dignity in an inspiring land rights struggle, as well as the implementation of a unique experience of collective self-management and voluntarism. We could see peasants, whose land was taken from them under colonialism and later managed by corrupt landowners under the dictatorship, who in the course of the revolution reclaimed the land of their ancestors and founded an association to collectively manage both the oasis and the revenues from date production. In the past eight years, this led the community to great prosperity and investments in the farm, local infrastructure, educational institutions, and other public services initiated through democratic decisions among the peasants and workers of the oasis.

[Read the full article.](#) Page 14.

---

**Ines Mahmoud**

[Click here](#) to subscribe to our weekly newsletters in English and or French. You will receive one email every Monday containing links to all articles published in the last 7 days.

---

**P.S.**

Rosa Luxemburg Stiftung

<https://www.rosalux.de/en/publication/id/42655/action-matters>