

# Tunisia national day

## Determined to succeed in its transition

Tunisia is highly appreciative of Japan's continuous support and cooperation

Farhad Khif  
AMBASSADOR OF TUNISIA

As Tunisia today celebrates the 58th anniversary of its independence, I would like to take



this auspicious occasion to express my great pleasure in addressing the distinguished readers of The Japan Times.

I would also like to convey my best wishes to all Tunisian expatriates in Japan, for whom this day is indeed a special and important occasion.

In the wake of the commemoration of the third anniversary of the Great East Japan Earthquake in March 2011, I would like to reiterate, on behalf of the government and people of Tunisia, the expression of Tunisia's deep solidarity and compassion to Their Imperial Majesties Emperor Akihito and Empress Michiko, members of the Imperial family, and to the government and the people of the friendly nation of Japan, who garnered admiration and respect worldwide for the courage, dignity and cohesion they demonstrated in that difficult time.

During the same period, Tunisia experienced a victorious revolution that has been the object of admiration and attention all over the world. But even though Tunisia was facing many challenges, Tunisians were touched by the disaster that struck Japan and were keen to express their sympathy and solidarity and give assistance to the affected people.

In this context, last year, the Embassy of Tunisia in Tokyo celebrated Tunisian Independence Day and a Tunisia-Japan solidarity day in Ishinomaki, Miyagi Prefecture, in collaboration with the city of Ishinomaki and the Tunisian-Japanese incorporated organization HOPE.

I would like to take advantage of this opportunity to give an overview on the process of democratic transition in Tunisia. Indeed, following a broad consensus, the National Constituent Assembly has recently adopted a new constitution that has been highly praised around the world.

In January, the new head of the government, Mr. Mehdi Jomaa, presented the priorities of his government focused mainly on ensuring the necessary conditions, by the end of the year, for the organization of free and fair elections and carrying out reforms in order to tackle social and economic challenges.

For its part, Japan has been supporting the Tunisian Revolution, as a strong and reliable



Borj Cedria Technopark is an example of Tunisian-Japanese cooperation. EMBASSY OF TUNISIA

partner that has always been on the side of Tunisia. In fact, despite being geographically very far away from each other, Japan has been an important partner to Tunisia for many years. The bilateral relationship between Tunisia and Japan began in 1956 when Japan approved Tunisia's independence.

Japan supports the efforts of Tunisia to carry out the political reforms and the establishment of good government. Japan also supports the social and economic aspirations of the Tunisian people, the improvement of the business climate, the reduction of regional disparities and job creation for young people. In this regard, I would like to express our gratitude to the government of Japan for its pledge to finance two projects in Tunisia worth a total of ¥48 billion, announced when Nobuo Kishi, parliamentary senior vice minister of foreign affairs, visited Tunisia on March 10 and 11.

I would also like to praise Japanese government agencies and institutions, particularly the Japan International Cooperation Agency, which is working to develop new cooperation projects; JETRO, which is aiming to develop exchanges in the field of business and investment; and the Japan Bank for International Cooperation for facilitating Tunisian access to the samurai bond market.

I should also mention the excellent cooperation in the field of higher education and scientific research, in particular with the University of Tsukuba and the Alliance for Research on North Africa (ARENA), while hoping to further diversify and develop this cooperation.

In terms of Investment and partnership, Tunisia offers many advantages, and we are looking forward to welcoming more Japanese companies. A great deal of effort is going into returning Tunisia to its position as "the trading hub of the Mediterranean Sea," as it was once known in Carthaginian times.

It's also my hope that more Japanese tourists will visit Tunisia to discover its beautiful and diverse nature, delicious cuisine and rich cultural and historical heritage, from Hannibal's Carthage to modern-day Tunisia. In this context, I would like to pay tribute to the Japan Association of Travel Agencies and JTB for Tunisian tourism promotion.

As Tunisia embodies aspects of both the Middle East and Africa, while having a high level of technology for the region, Japan can play a major role in triangular collaboration and South-South cooperation between Tunisia and nearby countries.

On the occasion of the par-

ticipation in TICAD V, the visit paid to Japan last June, by H.E. Dr. Mohamed Moncef Marzouki, president of the Republic of Tunisia, gave new impetus to the excellent Tunisian-Japanese relations.

The year 2013 witnessed the exchange of several other high-



Sidi Bou Said village is a major tourist attraction known for its extensive use of blue and white hues. EMBASSY OF TUNISIA

level visits. We look forward to the continuous intensification, in 2014, of the Tunisian-Japanese concertation on various issues of common interest and on the important role of Japan in supporting the democratic process in Tunisia.

While expressing my most sincere appreciation to The Japan Times and all our sponsors for making this media initiative possible, I would like to convey my deepest thanks to all the friends of Tunisia in Japan for their continuous support and valuable goodwill to further enhance the relations between our two countries.

In this year of the 58th anniversary of the establishment of diplomatic relations between Tunisia and Japan, I wish for a long life for the Tunisia-Japan friendship.



Members of parliament wave the Tunisian national flag and sing the national anthem at a plenary session devoted to the adoption of the constitution on Jan. 26. EMBASSY OF TUNISIA

## Democratic evolution in Tunisia on right track

Yoshiro Mori  
FORMER PRIME MINISTER OF JAPAN

On the occasion of the 58th anniversary of the independence of the Republic of Tunisia, it gives me a great pleasure to extend my warmest congratulations and best wishes to the Tunisian people and the country's leadership.

Since the Revolution in January 2011, Tunisia has been making commendable efforts to overcome the challenges on the path of its democratic transition



and the establishment of a state of law based on solid and modern institutions.

Japan was among many countries in welcoming the first free and transparent elections in Tunisia in October 2011. Japan also welcomed the adoption, in January 2014, by the National Constituent Assembly of a new constitution, and expressed its willingness to continue to support the reform efforts in Tunisia.

In this context, I would like to express my deep appreciation for the strong will of the government and its ongoing efforts for the organization, by the end of this year, of the elections which will crown the political

process that began with the revolution and will make Tunisia a model of successful democratic transition.

Furthermore, I would also like to take this opportunity to renew my sincere gratitude for the rush of sympathy and solidarity the Tunisian government and Tunisian people demonstrated in the aftermath of the Great East Japan Earthquake in March 2011.

The strong bonds of friendship between our two countries were also illustrated during the visit of H.E. Dr. Moncef Marzouki, president of the Republic of Tunisia, to Japan in June 2013 on the occasion of TICAD V. The bilateral meeting he had on that

occasion with Prime Minister Shinzo Abe was an opportunity to reiterate the determination of both countries to further consolidate the relations of friendship and cooperation in all fields of common interest.

Tunisia was among the countries that warmly congratulated Japan on the selection of Tokyo to host the Olympic and Paralympic Games in 2020 and expressed its willingness to contribute to the success of such an international event.

I would like to express, once again, my congratulations on this occasion while wishing a long life for the Japanese-Tunisian friendship.

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