

Tunisia National Day

The promise of a new Tunisia

Kais Darragi
AMBASSADOR OF TUNISIA

A 60th anniversary is always a unique milestone. Called *kanreki* in Japanese, it represents the completion of a cycle and is a joyous occasion that celebrates longevity and marks a new beginning or re-birth.



As we are commemorating a double *kanreki* with the 60th anniversary of Tunisia's independence and the 60th anniversary of diplomatic relations between Tunisia and Japan, we are celebrating a moment of accomplishment and maturity. By tradition, *kanreki* is also a time to reflect, evaluate a past cycle and chart a fresh course for a new beginning.

Over the last 60 years, Tunisia has made significant strides on the path of development. Lacking natural resources, it invested heavily in education and human development and embarked on a modernization process that has produced a substantial educated middle class, a high rate of female literacy and a vibrant and diversified economy.



The Temple of Juno Caelestis archaeological ruins can be found in the ancient Roman city of Dougga. EMBASSY OF TUNISIA



The winners of the 2015 Nobel Peace Prize, Tunisian National Dialogue Quartet members pose in Oslo, Norway, on Dec. 10. EMBASSY OF TUNISIA

To complete a six-decade record of achievements, Tunisia has finally joined the concert of free and democratic nations after a peaceful, albeit difficult transition. Like Japan, Tunisia has managed to reconcile between its identity, heritage, universal values of democracy and human rights. Unlike other countries in the region, democratic yearnings did not lead to chaos, but were harnessed constructively into a model of coexistence between diverging political parties. Such a unique consensual approach to democracy has won international acclaim, culminating in the 2015 Nobel Peace Prize award-

ed to the National Dialogue Quartet, a group of four civil society organizations that helped guide Tunisia to full-fledged democracy.

Having succeeded in its democratic transition, Tunisia is now in the process of overhauling its economy through a series of major reforms that include a new investment legislation based on international best practices to bolster domestic and foreign investment.

Despite a difficult regional context, Tunisia has shown resilience and success in the face of a blind terrorist scourge that struck Tunisia, as well as European capitals and cities. With strong popular support and with relentless efforts by the government and security forces, Tunisia is now a much safer place for Tunisians and tourists alike.

Japan and Tunisia have been close friends for the past 60 years and have been united in pursuit of a peaceful free world and cooperation among nations. Although we are in different parts of the world, geography has never been a barrier for us. The geographical distance between our two countries has not affected our friendship; instead through

cooperation and exchanges, our friendship has prospered into a mature partnership.

When the Great East Japan Earthquake and tsunami struck five years ago, Tunisia was there to support and show sincere solidarity, as a token of friendship and expression of gratitude to Japan, a long-standing friend and ally that has never failed us.

I particularly look forward to building on the economic and political bonds between Tunisia and Japan. We are determined to further deepen the close economic ties between our countries and broaden cooperation in areas of trade and investment, entrepreneurship, higher education and science and technology, to mention but a few sectors.

We have many success stories to build on with a long history of cooperation and an expanding Japanese presence in Tunisia. With their investment in the production of cable harnesses for the automotive industry, Yazaki and Sumitomo have been serving in recent years as the flagships of Japanese investment. Thanks to a new business-friendly environment in Tunisia, I am confident that more Japanese companies will follow suit and establish operations in a new land of opportunity.

Equally promising is bold and ambitious cooperation in science and technology between researchers from both countries, spearheaded by the University of Tsukuba and other Japanese universities. Over the last five years, more than 80 research papers were jointly published and many patents were registered. These men and women, who are emboldened with a vision and a common sense of purpose, are shaping the future of our relationship.

Looking forward to a new



cycle of friendship and cooperation, I am confident that the enduring friendship between Tunisia and Japan and that Tunisia's new democratic destiny will help forge a common purpose toward a shared vision and a community of interests. It is my sincere desire that 2016 will be conducive to more efforts to enhance relations between our two countries and to explore new avenues for cooperation and partnership.

City of Seto enjoys strong and friendly relationship

Yasunori Ito
MAYOR OF SETO



On behalf of the citizens of Seto, Aichi Prefecture, I would like to extend my warmest congratulations and best wishes to the friendly Tunisian people and their government on the occasion of the 60th anniversary of independence of the Republic of Tunisia.

I am very pleased to see the Republic of Tunisia has been seeing great success in the democratic transition process since the revolution in January 2011. We, as a friend of Tunisia, stand with the Tunisian people in hoping that the republic consolidates democracy and becomes an inspiration for other states looking for a better model of governance.

The relationship of the city of Seto and the Republic of Tunisia dates back to 1997, when Seto dispatched delegations to Nabeul to seek support for our candidacy as the host city of the 2005 World Exposition.

After seven years of administrative and cultural interaction, a sister cities agreement was signed in 2004 in Nabeul. On Nov. 8, 2014, Seto, with the active contribution generously offered by the Embassy of Tunisia in Tokyo, held a commemorative event to celebrate the 10th anniversary of the twinning with Nabeul.

I am convinced our relationship with Nabeul and the Republic of Tunisia has been promoting friendship and mutual understanding between the people of our two countries. In wishing for further reinforcement of the friendly relations between Japan and Tunisia, I would like to express once again my deepest congratulations and wishes for the prosperity of the people of Tunisia.

**Congratulations
to the People of
the Republic of Tunisia
on the 60th Anniversary
of Their Independence**



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TEL: +216-71-854-854 FAX: +216-71-854-019

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