

Tunisia's Ennahdha is at a crossroads

It is too early to announce the end of Tunisia's democratization — or the end of its Islamist party, Ennahdha.

In the aftermath of President Kais Saïed's July 25 move to suspend parliament and sack the prime minister, the situation in the country remains highly fluid, changing almost by the hour.

On August 4, Ennahdha's Shura Council finally convened after seven delays. The entire country appeared to watch and wait with bated breath for the party to reveal its next move, confirming that Ennahdha remains a key player in Tunisia's political scene.

The meeting was held in response to increased pressure from influential figures within Ennahdha, such as Samir Dhiab, Abdelhafid Makki, and Mohamed Ghannouchi, who had long been calling for leadership change and greater democratization within the party as part of the so-called "Group of 100." Khalid Baouni — once a rising figure in the party who was not long ago defending Ennahdha leader Rached Ghannouchi publicly — announced his resignation from the party's executive office.

In public appearances and on social media, these figures and others have been fiercely critical of the party's leadership and its internal reform and reform, urging the party to learn some lessons from the events of July 25.

In the days leading up to the Shura Council, they have been pondering how best to respond once "loyalty" to the president's "exceptional measures" to minimize the damage to the country's democracy and the functioning of its elected institutions, as well as to Ennahdha itself. Some have gone as far as to call on Ghannouchi to resign from the party's leadership position.

The internal political division threatened the integrity of the department of the Shura Council. One, spearheaded by reformist-leaning youth, demanded the dissolution of the executive office. Another, which was united in response to the former, agreed to the necessity of a "crisis leadership" formed and operated in conjunction with the party's existing institutions.

The official statement issued after the Shura meeting mentioned its passing for "constitutional camp" matched by President Saïed, has also demonstrated the party's openness to reform.

In the statement, Ennahdha made clear that it understands the



popular anger manifested in the events of July 25. It admitted that there is a need for self-critique and internal reform. It also expressed a commitment to proceed to joint the fight against corruption. Moreover, it demonstrated that it is open to dialogue with other political actors in the country, including the president.

The communiqué was a quiet "calming" of the party before July 25. It signalled more confidence than clarity. With the statement, the party seemed to offer an olive branch not only to President Saïed, but also to other political parties that have been fiercely critical of its performance, especially since July 25. Its balanced message leaves room for a rejection of leadership change and a call for party reform.

For Ennahdha, in national politics as well as party politics, important challenges undoubtedly loom on the horizon. The Arab Spring opened wide an arch of possibilities for the Tunisian people. Namely, it allowed them to reject and exercise equal citizenship rights, especially by the right to choose who rules them. Furthermore, the post-2011 ruling offered an opportunity for "accountability" to emerge as a motto for democratic renewal. A result, the opposition took democracy within Tunisia's democratic-making institutions and inside political parties, including Ennahdha, which became a point of contention. The "Group of 100" episode, as well as the fallout since July 25, have perhaps best illustrated this reality.

Ennahdha's latest Shura Council did not put to bed the internal dissent within the party. Widely shared Facebook posts expressed doubt on the party as a leader in the state. Yet, Ennahdha remains a major force in Tunisia's political scene, at least until a reformed and renewed party emerges from the meeting.

It may take up to two to six months for the "state of exception" to be rolled back and legitimate political institutions restored. Kais Saïed's dragging foot, increasingly reconfiguring and controlling power.

Early elections appear to be a possibility, or coalition that may not include Ennahdha. Ennahdha's opponents appear to be planning what is being dubbed the "Third Republic" (Al-Thaluthiya al-Jadida).

Ennahdha's internal political division is a lot less certain than Ennahdha's on the surface. However, even something has long been what Ghannouchi does best. Even at his age, he is more adept at political maneuvering than those around him. It seems the Shura Council's meeting of July 25 is an opportunity for internal reform to be initiated to preserve Ghannouchi's position.

Today, Ghannouchi is particularly in demand. He is reportedly under house arrest or detention.

And what comes after 25 July does not seem to be for him to be the Tunisian's recipient of repression and constitutionalism's threatened separation of powers.

Algeria

Chinese, Russian militaries hold drills in northwest China



BEIJING: Chinese and Russian military forces are engaged in joint exercises in northwestern China as tensions between the two ancient states and uncertainty over stability in Afghanistan.

The exercises, involving ground troops and air forces, are due to continue through Friday in the Northern Hui Autonomous Region.

The region borders to Xinjiang, where China has denied over 1 million Uyghurs and members of other Muslim minorities in what it calls a campaign against terrorism and extremism.

Sinister charges came from a treaty with Afghanistan, and Beijing concerned about violence spill-

ing over its border if the Taliban take control in the country following the pullout of U.S. troops.

While not part of a formal alliance, Russia and China have aligned their military and foreign policy largely in opposition to those of the U.S. and its allies.

The official Xinhua News Agency said the exercises began Friday and were presided over by Li Zuofeng, a member of the ruling Communist Party's Central Military Commission.

The exercises come as "Japan's joint anti-terrorism operations" between the Chinese and Russian militaries and demonstrate the firm determination and strength of the two countries to jointly safeguard international and regional security

and stability," Xinhua said, citing Chinese and Russian officials, who said the exercises are "high-level strategic partnership of coordination for new era and off-the-intelligence mutual trust, pragmatic exchange and coordination between the two countries."

China's deputy ambassador, Dai Bing, responded by accusing the U.S. of obscuring "the biggest threat to peace and stability in the South China Sea" and calling for the U.S. to "stop its unilateral maritime security."

China, Taiwan and ASEAN members Brunei, Malaysia, the Philippines and Vietnam have overlapping claims in the disputed waters and have been locked in

to many preconditions, a meeting seems to be played with its own rules. It is viewed by a large segment of the public and some even on the party as a burden to the state. Yet, Ennahdha remains a major force in Tunisia's political scene, at least until a reformed and renewed party emerges from the meeting.

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Algeria

Japan and Singapore launch alternative energy initiatives

MELBOURNE, Australia — Some Asian countries' military are getting up for a new energy. Singapore is already increasing their use of renewable energy, with an ongoing drive to reduce the use of solar power at bases and facilities.

The economic pressures of East Asia, such as Japan and South Korea, have for a long time underscored the vulnerability of their energy supply, and now it is a key priority for the region. Japan's primary energy source is oil, which is primarily imported from the Middle East through a number of maritime chokepoints.

The need for energy security is even pressing for their military. Japan's complex national security tasks that include deterring Chinese aggression, preparing for a nuclear-armed North Korea and recovering humanitarian disasters. As alternative energy sources become increasingly viable, these countries and their militaries are increasing efforts to invest in them.

Japan on July 13 released a white paper that, for the first time, mentioned climate change. The document said that climate change will directly impact the demand to deploy forces for rescue operations, as well as threatening the safety of equipment and bases.

The whitepaper warned that shortages of drinking food and land caused by the effects of climate change — melting ice, sea level rise and drought — could cause severe damage to Japan's economy and society. It also pointed out that Japan's military has been increasing its efforts to improve its natural resources. In addition, more frequent extreme weather events could cause severe damage to Japan's economy and society. However, it is seeking to diversify its energy sources by increasing the use of solar energy and other renewable sources. The government has also pledged to reduce its greenhouse gas emissions level after 2030 and

to reduce its carbon footprint. Singapore's military is also looking into the use of solar energy and other renewable sources. The government has also pledged to reduce its greenhouse gas emissions level after 2030 and to reduce its carbon footprint.



Team GB still too white and suburban, ...

Sally Mandley, the chief executive of UK Sport, said Tokyo had already produced incredible role models for diversity — with the Games hailed as the rainbow Olympics, while Team GB took more women than men for the first time and Alex Thompson made history by becoming the first black woman to swim for Great Britain.

Alex Thompson became Team GB's first black woman in Tokyo after competing in the women's 100m freestyle swimming event. Photograph: Mike Egerton/PA

But the body recognises much more has to be done, and has set the goal to make Team GB's 100th anniversary a milestone for diversity. "This is an absolute priority for us and our sports have been a huge success story for us," he said, adding that while 1964 a British Olympic champion had to prove they had two white parents.

Transforming the composition of the UK's Olympic and Paralympic teams to reflect the population is not only good for sport, he said. "If we can fix some of these problems in sport, then that genuinely provides a model for how they can be fixed in other areas of society."

But progress was "painfully slow and difficult", said Grant.

But the Japan Self-Defense Force is already increasing their use of renewable energy, with an ongoing drive to reduce the use of solar power at bases and facilities.

The government eventually wants the forces to be 100 percent powered by renewable energy by 2030.

On the smaller Southeast Asian island of Singapore, the nation is turning its military into a more energy-efficient force. Singapore's port is highly dependent on the maritime trade that passes through it.

Other features of the larger include the use of sustainable materials in construction, a smart water-harvesting system, the use of solar panels on the roof of the hangar, and generating up to 1,225 megawatt-hours of electricity per year, or 50 percent more electricity than a common hangar.

The new hangar is expected to be a similar hangar for the Air Force's Lockheed Martin C-130 Hercules transport aircraft. Unveiled in 2017, the structure features the use of mirrors to direct sunlight into the hangar to maximize the use of natural light. It also uses solar panels and wind-powered turbines to improve natural ventilation.

Singapore's Army has also commissioned solar energy hangars at various military camps, and the service is seeking to diversify its energy sources by increasing the use of solar energy and other renewable sources. The government has also pledged to reduce its greenhouse gas emissions level after 2030 and to reduce its carbon footprint.