

Has the West Learned to Work with Tunisia?

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Despite the country’s authoritarian turn and flirtation with Russia and China, Western officials are unwilling to risk valuable cooperation on immigration and security issues.

Under President Kais Saied, Tunisia’s traditionally firm relationship with the West has been shaken. Over the past several years, Saied has conducted an authoritarian overhaul of the country’s institutions, leaving Western capitals unsure how to respond. On the one hand, reducing their material support would signal disapproval of these non-democratic actions. On the other hand, Saied’s accusations of Western “interference” and “conspiracy”—rhetoric that is typical of post-colonial states that view appeals to human rights as a form of Western imperialism—have successfully stripped Europe and the United States of leverage. The Middle East conflict that began on October 7, 2023, has worked in Saied’s favor by further fomenting anti-Western sentiment in the country. Yet, on another level, partnerships between Tunisia and the West are continuing apace. The general principle among Western actors seems to be: stay engaged, even if it’s tough...

[Read the full article on the National Interest website. \(https://nationalinterest.org/feature/has-west-learned-work-tunisia-211559\)](https://nationalinterest.org/feature/has-west-learned-work-tunisia-211559) ❖

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