

# Ennahda's Tight Rope Act on Religion

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## ABOUT THE AUTHORS



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**T**he following is an excerpt from an article that appeared in the 2012 Foreign Policy compilation *Islamists in a Changing Middle East*. To read the rest of the article, download the PDF. In addition, the full multiauthor compilation is available from the Foreign Policy (<http://www.foreignpolicy.com/ebook/iicw-thank-you>) website (<http://www.foreignpolicy.com/ebook/iicw-thank-you>).

On November 13, 2011, the Tunisian Islamist party Ennahda -- fresh off its win in the October elections -- came under fire following a rally in Sousse, Tunisia with Houda Naim, a member of Hamas. Ennahda's general secretary, Hammadi Jebali, who became the new Prime Minister, made some controversial remarks about the return of the Caliphate. Jebali stated: "My brothers, you are at a historic moment...in a new cycle of civilization, God willing...we are in sixth caliphate, God willing." This quickly raised alarm bells with Tunisia's secular and liberal elements who had been warning prior to the elections about Ennahda's purported double speak: saying one thing publicly while saying something more nefarious privately to its followers. This is not the first controversy that Ennahda has been embroiled in since they won a little more than 40 percent of seats to draft the constitution in the constituent assembly... ❖

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