

Analysis: Dismal election turnout puts Tunisia president's legitimacy under spotlight

TUNIS, Dec 18 (Reuters) - The ultra-low turnout of 8.8% in Tunisia's parliamentary election on Saturday may prove a defining moment in the struggle between President Kais Saied and a fragmented but increasingly confident opposition that accuses him of a coup.

Opposition politicians said Tunisia's lowest ever turnout stripped away any facade of democratic legitimacy for Saied's political project and called directly for his ouster.

The election was for a mostly toothless legislature that is a part of a top-down political system Saied has imposed since he seized most powers and sent tanks to shut down the previous parliament in July 2021.

"After 90% of Tunisians abstained there is no doubt that Saied's project was largely rejected. Now the options are limited for a president who can no longer constantly sing of legitimacy in the way he used to," said Ahmed Idriss, head of the Tunis Institute for Politics.

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