



TUNISIA

CITIZENS CALL FOR A GENDER-EQUAL WORLD : A ROADMAP FOR ACTION¹



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WHAT DO RESPONDENTS IN TUNISIA THINK ABOUT GENDER EQUALITY?

- ➔ **The vast majority of respondents in Tunisia declare that gender equality is “important” to them personally (77 percent),** with fewer (11 percent) considering it “unimportant.” More female respondents (88 percent) than their male counterparts (66 percent) consider it “important” to them personally.
- ➔ This contrast is larger among female and male respondents aged 18 to 24 (a difference of 42 percentage points), compared to those aged 45 and older (33 percentage points). Those who consider gender equality “unimportant” are concentrated on the right of politics — as 23 percent of respondents who consider themselves right-leaning feel gender equality is not “important” to them personally.
- ➔ **Sixty-six percent of respondents in Tunisia think gender equality in Tunisia is “better” today than it was 25 years ago.** Younger respondents are more likely to think that gender equality has gotten “better” than older respondents (76 percent, aged 18 to 24; 63 percent, aged 60 and older).
- ➔ **Forty-five percent think that the Tunisian government “should do more” to promote gender equality,** 40 percent think it is “doing the right amount,” and 10 percent think it is “doing too much.” Of the 45 percent who think the government “should do more,” more respondents believe that “a lot more” should be done (27 percent) than “a bit more” (18 percent).
- ➔ **Thirty-nine percent of respondents in Tunisia claim that the government should “focus efforts on marginalized women to leave no one behind (for example, ethnic minorities, LGBTQIA+ individuals, disabled women, refugees and migrants).”** This view is held more strongly among female (43 percent) than male respondents (35 percent), as well as older respondents (59 percent among aged 60 and older, compared to 37 percent among aged 18 to 24).

¹ This country data sheet captures findings from a public perception survey on gender equality for Tunisia. This work is co-led by Focus 2030 and Women Deliver. The survey was executed through an online poll, conducted by Deltapoll, in 17 countries. Approximately one thousand respondents in each country were surveyed in July/August 2020. Demographic data collected included: gender, age, income level, education level, last vote in national elections (where applicable), ethnicity (where applicable), migrant status, and region of residency. In Tunisia, 1,009 respondents were surveyed, including 381 female respondents, 618 male respondents, and 10 respondents who identified “in another way.” Of the 1,009 respondents, 242 were aged 18 to 24, 649 were aged 25 to 44, 90 were aged 45 to 59, and 28 were aged 60 and older. Please see www.focus2030.org and www.womendeliver.org for more information.

² Text in italics and quotes reflect survey response options presented to respondents.

- ➔ As to the explanations for gender inequality in Tunisia, many factors are considered important, with few standing out as commanding widespread support. **The most agreed-upon reason for gender inequality is “because of religion and culture that do not treat women and men as equals” (32 percent).** The second most selected reason for gender inequality, selected by 29 percent of respondents, is “because boys and girls are treated differently growing up,” with female respondents finding this considerably more important than male respondents (41 percent and 17 percent, respectively). The third most widely-held explanation for gender inequality is “because unpaid care, domestic work, and parental responsibilities are not shared equally between women and men” (28 percent), with female respondents also considering this more important than male respondents (36 percent, female; 21 percent, male).



GENDER-BASED VIOLENCE

- ➔ **Ending gender-based violence is the top priority for respondents in Tunisia,** with 33 percent choosing “end violence against women” as their first choice for government action to improve gender equality in the country. Sixty-four percent choose this as a top-three priority.
- ➔ To address gender-based violence, respondents in Tunisia believe that **the government should “combat the economic exploitation of women” (62 percent) and “increase accountability for [perpetrators of] physical and sexual crimes against women” (61 percent).** Forty-eight percent of respondents also support “funding programs to support women who have experienced violence.”
- ➔ **Eighty-three percent of respondents in Tunisia feel at risk, or know someone who feels at risk, of assault or harassment** in some place or other. The most common situation to feel at risk, or know someone who feels at risk, is in “public spaces,” where 71 percent of male respondents and 74 percent of female respondents feel at risk or know someone who feels at risk. Those aged 60 and older are also more likely to feel at risk, or know someone who feels at risk, in “public spaces” (84 percent). **Among female respondents aged 18 to 24, 79 percent feel at risk, or know someone who feels at risk, of assault or harassment in “public spaces,”** and only four percent do not feel at risk, or know someone who feels at risk, of assault or harassment anywhere.
- ➔ **Twenty-two percent of female respondents in Tunisia have had “their freedom of movement restricted by family or a partner,”** and this rises to 24 percent for female respondents aged 25 to 44.
- ➔ Forty-two percent of respondents in Tunisia believe it “acceptable” for “women to always obey their partner,” with male respondents deeming this more “acceptable” (47 percent) than their female counterparts (36 percent). A significant proportion believe that it is “unacceptable” to “whistle at a woman in the street or touch her without her consent” (89 percent).



ECONOMIC JUSTICE AND RIGHTS

- ➔ **Promoting women’s economic justice and rights is the second most highly-ranked priority**, with 17 percent of respondents selecting *“implement access to well paid jobs, equal pay, financial independence, and property rights”* as a top priority for government action. Fifty percent choose this as a top-three priority.
- ➔ **In order to improve women’s broader economic opportunities and decision-making powers, 62 percent of respondents think the government of Tunisia should “prevent violence and sexual harassment in the workplace,” and 54 percent think it should “guarantee social protection and decent working conditions for women in low paying jobs.”**
- ➔ Forty-eight percent of female respondents in Tunisia feel that they have experienced at least one type of discriminations in their life. Sixteen percent *“have not or will not receive the same inheritance as [their] male relatives,”* and 14 percent *“did not have the same access to promotion opportunities as male peers.”* Additionally, thirteen percent of female respondents report that they *“have not been paid as much as [their] male counterparts,”* and seven percent have cited *“difficulty accessing education and professional training compared with male peers or relatives.”*
- ➔ Letting *“women do the majority of housework, childcare, and elderly care”* is *“unacceptable”* for 43 percent of respondents in Tunisia, with female respondents finding this more *“unacceptable”* (55 percent) than males (32 percent). Additionally, to *“ask a woman in a job interview whether she has, or would like to have, children,”* is *“unacceptable”* for 52 percent of respondents, with female respondents finding it more *“unacceptable”* (57 percent) than male respondents (47 percent). Seventy-nine percent also find it *“unacceptable”* that *“women earn less than men for the same work,”* with female respondents finding this more *“unacceptable”* (86 percent) than male respondents (71 percent).
- ➔ The economic impact of the pandemic seems to have affected female and male respondents similarly in Tunisia, with both reporting they have *“faced unexpected financial hardship”* (23 percent, female; 24 percent, male), *“lost [their] job”* (11 percent, female; eight percent, male), and *“received unemployment benefits and/or any other form of financial support from [their] country’s government”* (six percent, female; seven percent, male) at almost the same rate. **Gender differences do arise in household work, however, with 58 percent of female respondents stating their “time doing household work has increased” compared to 39 percent of male respondents.** Age differences also exist in terms of education, with respondents aged 18 to 24 more likely to have reduced their *“time pursuing education or training”* as a result of the Covid-19 pandemic (37 percent).



FEMINIST MOVEMENTS AND LEADERSHIP

- ➔ **Feminist movements and leadership is respondents' third most cited priority**, with 13 percent ranking *"improve women's participation and leadership in politics, and cultural and social movements"* as a top priority. Fifty-one percent choose this as a top-three priority.
- ➔ **Thirty-nine percent of respondents believe that the Tunisian government should "support specifically young women's participation in politics and movements."** Additionally, **35 percent think that their government should "support women's political leadership and participation,"** with slightly more male respondents supporting this measure (37 percent) than their female counterparts (33 percent). Thirty-two percent also think that their government should *"support women's participation in peace processes and as human rights defenders,"* with female respondents more in favor of this measure (35 percent) than male respondents (29 percent).
- ➔ **Sixty-two percent of respondents "agree" that "imposing gender quotas in all political decision-making bodies is a good way to advance gender equality in Tunisia,"** with 15 percent disagreeing.



TECHNOLOGY AND INNOVATION FOR GENDER EQUALITY

- ➔ **Technology and innovation for gender equality is the fourth most cited priority**, with 11 percent ranking *"invest in technology to improve women's access to health services, education, and economic opportunities"* as a top priority. Forty-five percent choose this as a top-three priority.
- ➔ **To promote the use of technology and innovation for gender equality in Tunisia, 53 percent of respondents think that the government should "invest in technology that helps deliver healthcare and other services virtually for girls and women."** Forty-three percent of respondents also support *"increasing the safety of digital spaces for girls and women"* and *"addressing barriers preventing girls and women from accessing, designing, and developing technology."*



FEMINIST ACTION FOR CLIMATE JUSTICE

- ➔ **Feminist action for climate justice is the fifth most cited priority by respondents**, with three percent ranking *"promote women's participation in climate change action"* as a top priority for the government to focus on to improve gender equality. Seventeen percent choose this as a top-three priority.
- ➔ When asked directly about promoting women's efforts to respond to climate change, **52 percent of respondents think that the Tunisian government should "promote the training and hiring of women in jobs related to climate change,"** and **49 percent think that their government should "increase girls' and women's participation in the development of solutions to tackle climate change."**



BODILY AUTONOMY AND SEXUAL AND REPRODUCTIVE HEALTH AND RIGHTS³

- ➔ **Bodily autonomy and sexual and reproductive health and rights is the sixth most cited priority**, with only two percent of respondents in Tunisia ranking “provide access to contraception and family planning, good maternal health, and sex education in schools” as a top priority for the government to focus on to improve gender equality. Twelve percent choose this as a top-three priority.
- ➔ **Three percent of female respondents in Tunisia have ever had “difficulty accessing [their] chosen method of contraception.”** An even smaller percentage of them (one percent) have had “difficulty accessing abortion and post-abortion care” in their lifetime. In Tunisia, one percent of respondents have had “difficulty accessing contraception and other sexual health services” during the Covid-19 pandemic. Similarly, one percent of respondents have had “difficulties accessing abortion options and/or post-abortion care” during the pandemic.



FINANCING FOR GENDER EQUALITY

- ➔ **Sixty-six percent of respondents in Tunisia hold the view that the government “should increase funding for gender equality in Tunisia.”** Sixty-four percent believe that the government “should increase its funding for international projects and organizations fighting for gender equality around the world.” Again, more female than male respondents support increased funding, both for national projects (73 percent, female; 60 percent, male) and international projects (73 percent, female; 56 percent, male). Additionally, a higher proportion of older respondents aged 60 and older support funding for gender equality projects generally, whether domestically (86 percent) or abroad (81 percent).
- ➔ **Sixty-four percent of respondents in Tunisia “agree” that “achieving gender equality is essential to end poverty in all countries,”** compared with 15 percent who “disagree.”



WHAT ACTIONS ARE RESPONDENTS IN TUNISIA WILLING TO TAKE?

- ➔ To encourage policymakers to tackle gender inequality around the world, 43 percent of respondents in Tunisia are willing to “promote gender equality in everyday conversations and interactions,” this was higher among male respondents (47 percent) than their female counterparts (40 percent). Thirty-seven percent would also be willing to “vote in an election for a candidate supporting gender equality,” this was also slightly higher for male (39 percent) than female respondents (35 percent). Additionally, 32 percent of respondents would “share information about gender equality on social media.” Only 12 percent say they would not be willing to consider taking any of the actions proposed.

³ Respondents in Tunisia expressed concern about the sensitive and private nature of the issue of bodily autonomy and sexual and reproductive health and rights. Subsequently very few respondents answered questions related to this area and eventually the decision was made to remove this from the survey itself.



IMPACT OF THE COVID-19 PANDEMIC

- ➔ The health impact of the Covid-19 pandemic in Tunisia has broadly fallen on female and male respondents equally, with five percent of female and nine percent of male respondents citing experiencing *“physical illness”* and 10 percent of female and 15 percent of male respondents experiencing *“difficulties accessing medical treatments, medicines, and health and hygiene supplies.”*
- ➔ However, gender has an impact when it comes to respondents citing that they *“experienced emotional stress or mental health issues.”* Notably more female respondents (28 percent) than male respondents (13 percent) have experienced this during the Covid-19 pandemic. The intersection of age and gender is shown to have an impact, with more female respondents aged 18 to 24 (37 percent) reporting they have *“experienced emotional stress or mental health issues”* than their male counterparts (27 percent).
- ➔ Thinking about the impact of Covid-19 on gender equality, 65 percent of respondents *“agree”* that *“the government’s response to support people through the Covid-19 pandemic in Tunisia has met the needs of women and men equally.”* Seventeen percent of respondents *“disagree”* with this statement.
- ➔ Eighty-nine percent of respondents in Tunisia also *“agree”* that *“women should be involved in all aspects of the global health response and recovery efforts to Covid-19, including in the development of policies and treatments,”* with more female respondents supporting this statement (92 percent) than their male counterparts (86 percent).
- ➔ Seventy percent of respondents *“disagree”* that *“inequality between women and men will rise as a consequence of Covid-19,”* and 10 percent *“agree”* with this statement. Disagreement with the statement is held more by female (73 percent) than male respondents (68 percent).

This country data sheet is a supplement to Citizens Call for a Gender-Equal World: A Roadmap for Action, a global report on the findings from a 17-country public perception survey on gender equality. For the full report and all country data sheets, please visit: www.focus2030.org and <http://womendeliver.org/citizens-call-for-a-gender-equal-world/>.