

President Zine El Abidine Ben Ali's Address to Tunisian people

Carthage, 13 February 2002

President Zine El Abidine Ben Ali made, this evening, an address to the Tunisian people. Here is the full text of this statement:

In the name of God, the Merciful, the Compassionate. "

Fellow citizens,

We have examined, today, during the Cabinet meeting, the Constitutional Reform bill, in accordance with what we announced on the occasion of the 14th anniversary of the Change

This is a bill through which we saw to it, as it was specified in the cabinet meeting's communique, that the human liberties and rights be granted a privileged place. We were also keen on reinforcing the guarantees instituted by the Change.

In this Reform bill, we also consecrated the role of the state and society in strengthening the values of solidarity, mutual help and tolerance, given the particular importance we give to these values in our civilisational project.

Through this fundamental constitutional reform in which we preserved the presidential nature of our republican regime, we aspire to hoist the Tunisian experience to a new stage likely to boost governmental action, in addition to the creation of a second chamber beside the chamber of the deputies and the consolidation of the constitutional council's prerogatives.

Fellow citizens,

The will of the people stands above any other will. It represents in our eyes the reference in the materialization of our national aspirations and in the definition of our major choices.

We have hereby announced, today, in addition to introducing the Constitutional Reform bill to the Chamber of Deputies, our decision to submit this draft reform to a referendum, in accordance with article 77 of the constitution, so that the reform be the consecration of our people's choice and aspirations".