

TUNISIA ANNOUNCES 'NATIONAL DIALOGUE', WITHOUT OPPOSITION

Relevant for: International Relations | Topic: India- West Asia

Tunisian President Kais Saied has announced the launch of “national dialogue” to help resolve a political crisis following his controversial power grab, but excluding critical Opposition groups.

Mr. Saied, a former law professor elected in 2019 amid public anger against the political class in the North African nation, sacked the government on July 25 last year, later moving to rule by decree in moves opponents dubbed a “coup”.

In a speech late on Sunday, Mr. Saied said a commission would manage “the national dialogue”, a measure demanded repeatedly by the G7 nations and EU.

Mr. Saied’s proposed talks will include four groups which, together as the “National Dialogue Quartet”, jointly won the Nobel Peace Prize in 2015 for its work in building what was, at the time, the only democracy that emerged from the 2011 Arab Spring.

The four groups are the Tunisian General Labour Union (UGTT), the Tunisian Confederation of Industry, Trade and Handicrafts (UTICA), the Tunisian Human Rights League and the Tunisian Order of Lawyers.

On Sunday, UGTT leader Nouredine Taboubi appealed to Mr. Saied to launch the national dialogue.

However, Mr. Saied ruled out participation of those “who sabotaged, starved and mistreated the people”, suggesting it would not include parties and civil society organisations which have denounced his seizure of power.

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