LABOUR MARKET PROFILE

Tunisia

2026

Key Labour Market Indicators

Population
12 mio

Workforce
4 mio

Informal Employment
37%

Trade Union Rights Violations
5 out of 5

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LABOUR MARKET PROFILE
Tunisia 2026
FACT SHEET

Labour Force Participation Rate
45%

54%
of population covered by at least one social protection benefit

Trade Union Density
20%

63%
of employees covered by CBAs

Child Labour Rate
2%

18%
Working-age population (15-24 years)

17%
Poverty Rate

23%
of youth not in education, employment or training

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PREFACE

The Danish Trade Union Development Agency (DTDA) is the development organisation of the Danish trade union movement. DTDA's work aligns with the International Labour Organization's global Decent Work Agenda (DWA), based on its four pillars: creating decent jobs, guaranteeing rights at work, extending social protection, and promoting social dialogue. The overall development objective is to eradicate poverty and support the development of just and democratic societies by promoting the DWA.

The DTDA collaborates with trade union organisations in Africa, Asia, Eastern Europe, Latin America, and the Middle East. The programmes' immediate objective is to assist the partner organisations in becoming change agents in their own national and regional labour market context, capable of achieving tangible improvements in the national DWA conditions and the labour-related Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs).

The labour market profile brings insights to the labour market model and its trends, status, and challenges. It is prepared in collaboration with national partner organisations, providing annual narrative progress reports as part of programme implementation and monitoring. National statistical institutions and international databanks (e.g., ILOSTAT and NATLEX, World Bank Open Data, and other internationally recognised labour-related global indexes) are also used as sources of data and information.

The profile is regularly updated to reflect the latest developments. Labour Market Profiles for more than 20 countries are available on DTDA's website, ensuring stakeholders have access to the most recent information: https://www.dtda.dk/.

The DTDA supports development programmes in Tunisia in collaboration with the Union Générale Tunisienne du Travail (UGTT).

danish trade union development agency

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EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

Tunisia's economic development model is struggling to deliver inclusive growth, while poverty levels are rising. High consumer price inflation has eroded workers' purchasing power and stalled real increases in minimum wages. Persistently high structural unemployment continues to weigh on the labour market, contributing to informality, emigration, social unrest, and weak economic dynamism. These bearings further narrow the income tax base, creating tensions between expanding social protection and maintaining labour market flexibility.

A landmark labour law reform introduced in 2025 is reshaping the employment framework and restructuring labour relations. Although the reform pursues several positive objectives, implementation risks remain, including criticism over legal ambiguities and limited consultation with social partners. Although the country has a relatively high compliance with the basic workers' rights in paper, it lands at the rock bottom among the worst countries in the world to work in. Additionally, several key trade agreements contain weak or no labour provisions, limiting external pressure to strengthen workers' rights protections.

Tunisia has historically benefited from an advanced system of social dialogue, but it has slowed in recent years due to political instability, institutional tensions, and economic weakening. Collective bargaining coverage remains comparatively high, exceeding the OECD average, which is supported by a wage-setting system closely linked to tripartite processes. This framework gives trade unions and employers' organisations a central role in labour market governance. Recent challenges have negatively affected the effectiveness and dynamism of collective bargaining more than the formal existence of coverage itself.

Tunisia's workforce benefits from a relatively young and educated population undergoing demographic transition. Significant labour market barriers persist, though, including widespread informality, high unemployment, and mounting pressures linked to digital transformation and climate vulnerability. These conditions are reflected in high levels of emigration, which are closely associated with deeper structural problems such as limited job creation, regional inequality, and economic instability.

Educational attainment among Tunisian workers has improved in recent decades, but it has not translated into stronger labour market outcomes. Despite relatively high education levels, youth unemployment remains elevated due to persistent mismatches between the skills provided by the education system and those demanded by employers. The technical and vocational education and training (TVET) system remains highly centralised, contributing to institutional rigidity and slow adaptation to evolving labour market needs and social partner input.

Ongoing reforms of the social protection system in Tunisia aim to create a broader and more inclusive framework, although insurance coverage remains incomplete and far from universal in practice. Among others, the country has achieved remarkable growth in pension coverage in recent years, reaching 100% legal coverage by the beginning of the 2020s, leading among Northern Africa countries. Effective coverage of broader social contribution and non-contribution benefits remain constrained by widespread informality, irregular contribution patterns, and protection gaps affecting vulnerable workers. Gradually, the country is in a progressive expansion phase toward universal social protection.

COUNTRY MAP

Source: National Online Project.

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ECONOMIC PERFORMANCE

Key Findings

- Tunisia's economic development model is stagnating.
- High inflation erodes the real value of workers' earnings → poverty has been on the rise.
- Narrow tax base undermines the welfare system's financial scope.
- Highly climate-vulnerable country → Lack Fully Green Jobs Strategy.

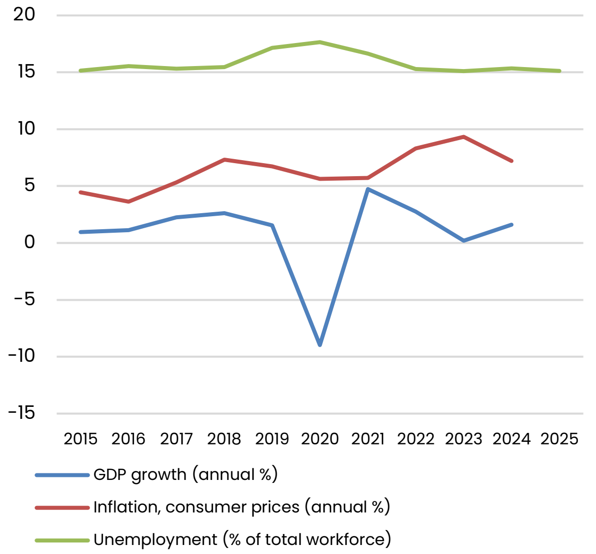
Strained Economic Development Model

Tunisia's economic development model — based on export-oriented manufacturing, tourism, and state involvement — has become increasingly strained and unable to deliver strong growth or sufficient jobs. Since the Tunisia Revolution in 2011, the country has faced slow economic growth, high unemployment, alongside declining competitiveness in global markets (see Figure 1). Structural issues such as a dual economy (formal vs. informal), regional inequalities, and inefficient state-owned enterprises, combined with political instability, have hindered reform efforts. It not only supports that the model is stagnating but also need of transformation toward a more dynamic and inclusive economy.

High Inflation Erodes Earnings

In Tunisia, the inflation in consumer prices in recent years creates multiple, interconnected economic and social encounters (Figure 1). It brings negative effects on the labour market, mainly by eroding incomes, increasing pressure on wages, and weakening job creation. This situation creates a difficult cycle of falling real incomes, rising wage demands, lower investment, and more informal, insecure employment (see more in the Status of Working Conditions section).

Figure 1: Gross domestic product, inflation, and unemployment growth trends in Tunisia, %, 2015-2025



Source: World Bank Group, World Development Indicators.

Structural High Unemployment

As just indicated, Tunisia's unemployment situation remains persistently high and structurally problematic. It even has one of the highest rates within the Middle East and Northern Africa (MENA).[1] It has wide-ranging consequences for the labour market and broader economy (see also in the Youth sub-section). This circumstance leads to informality, migration, social unrest, and weak economic dynamism.

Rising Poverty

The latest official national poverty line – the minimum annual income/consumption needed to cover basic food and essential non-food needs – was registered at 17% of population in 2021, an increased by two percentage point since 2015.[2] This worrisome trend is due to weak economic development, high unemployment, and inequality. It further pushes more workers into informal, low-paid, and insecure jobs, reinforcing a cycle of low productivity and limited economic opportunity.

Narrow Income Tax Base

Tunisia's income tax system is generally viewed as distorted, unevenly distributed, and under strain. It brings consequences for how its labour market functions. Since weak tax collection reduces government revenue, it directs less funding for public employment programmes, investments in infrastructure and training initiatives. It further places a disproportionate burden on formal workers while leaving much of the economy untaxed. These circumstances stick with informality, distorts hiring decisions, and limits the creation of stable, high-quality jobs.

EPZs Constrain Unionism

Tunisia's Export Processing Zones (EPZs), or offshore sector, remain an important source of export-oriented industrial jobs, concentrating in textiles and light manufacturing. It has provided formal employment opportunities, especially for women. These jobs' role has weakened due to rising costs and global competition.

Although unionism in Tunisia's EPZs is legally permitted, trade unions have been haunted by various labour rights abuses, relaxation of regulations on working conditions, and the absence of measures to combat unfair dismissal. This situation reflects that unionisation rates in these zones are very low compared with other sectors in Tunisia. The main obstacles to unionisation are precarious employment contracts, high staff turnover and the legal and/or implicit restrictions imposed on trade unionism by EPZ companies to maintain their competitiveness.[3]

Just Transition Agenda

Highly Climate-Vulnerable Country

Tunisia is considered highly vulnerable to climate change, particularly due to rising temperatures, water scarcity, and increasing frequency of droughts.

These environmental degradation factors are increasingly affecting labour market outcomes. Some of the main impacts include job losses and instability in agriculture; for instance, environmental degradation reduced crop yields, increased income volatility, and pushed workers into seasonal or precarious employment. Many workers get pushed to migrate towards cities, putting pressure on job creation in urban areas. This latter situation particularly contributes to expansion of informal and low-quality jobs, leaving many workers with weak job security and social protection coverage.

Lack Fully Green Jobs Strategy

Tunisia has developed multiple climate and energy transition strategies and recognises the need for green jobs and a just transition. However, a genuine Just Transition has been slow and uneven, partly due to weak policy coordination and competing political and economic interests, while efforts remain fragmented and project based. This situation has delayed the development of a fully integrated national just transition strategy.

Demands for Just Transition Agenda

The trade union movement in Tunisia is involved in the growing regional and global push for a Just Transition (see Appendix Table 4). At the national level, trade unions are central to shaping such a transition, emphasising public sector control, job security, and social justice over privatisation. Unions have actively resisted foreign-led, large-scale renewable projects, advocating for decentralised, community-owned energy models to prevent "green colonialism" and protect worker rights.[4]

Social dialogue in Tunisia's energy sector led to a plan for phasing out phosphates mining with protections for miners.[5] Although several approved bills in 2026 could create an important renewable energy employment ecosystem, critics fear the aims may produce temporary jobs without building deep domestic industrial capacity.[6]

LEGAL FRAMEWORK

Key Findings

- A landmark legal reform in 2025 reshapes the labour framework → policy shift towards stronger worker protection.
- Non-binding labour provisions in regional trade agreements limit their ability to improve labour standards.
- Workers' basic rights are enshrined in the Constitution.

Reforming Labour Market Legal Framework

Tunisia's labour market legal framework has been based on a state-led model, concentrated in a comprehensive **Labour Code of 1966**, with several amendments. But in May 2025, the country adopted **Law No. 9-2025**, a landmark reform that significantly reshaped the labour framework (see Box 1).

The new law marks a clear policy shift toward stronger worker protection, aiming to reduce informality and precarious work, formalise employment relationships, and align with decent work principles. On the other hand, it reduces flexibility for employers, risking lower hiring, and increased informality if firms avoid compliance. Implementation challenges surfaced concerning administrative capacity constraints and legal ambiguities.

Box 1: Legal Labour-Related Reforms

The main features of Tunisia's Law No. 9-2025, which is one of the most significant overhauls of the country's employment framework in decades, include positive reforms such as:

- Permanent contracts become the norm.
- Strong restrictions on subcontracting.
- Mandatory regularisation of workers.
- Stronger job security protections.
- Employer obligations and compliance.

The law was adopted with limited consultation with social partners (trade unions and employers' organisations), leading the reform into political controversy and implementation uncertainty.

Laws Protect Workers' Rights

In Tunisia, workers' basic rights are enshrined in the Constitution. The right to freedom of association is regulated by the Labour Code, and the right to collective bargaining and the right to strike are recognised by law but strictly regulated.[7] Some legal barriers that restrict workers to practice their rights are detected (see Appendix Table 2).

Weak Labour Provisions in RTAs

Tunisia has signed several regional and free trade agreements, although most contain limited or no labour provisions. Although EU–Tunisia trade relations include references to labour standards and social cooperation, these provisions are largely non-binding. The requirements rely on dialogue rather than enforceable mechanisms, limiting their impact on labour market outcomes

At the regional level, the African Continental Free Trade Area (AfCFTA) and the Greater Arab Free Trade Area have no binding labour standards or sanctions mechanism tied to workers' rights. Although these agreements could create jobs, they could also increase precarious work, weaken bargaining power, and intensify competition on labour costs. Trade unions across Africa, through the Tunis Declaration, have called for the inclusion of labour rights and social clauses in the AfCFTA to ensure alignment with international labour standards and the Decent Work Agenda.[8]

Generally, the weak and largely non-binding labour provisions in Tunisia's regional trade agreements limit their ability to improve labour standards. This stance contributes instead to persistent labour market dualism, wage pressures, and uneven job quality outcomes.

Gaps Between Law and Practice

Although Tunisia's labour market has a strong legal framework, enforcement capacity remains weak, while structural barriers such as informality, corruption, and economic pressures limit its effectiveness. By the same token, labour regulations have limited practical reach, particularly among vulnerable workers, contributing to persistent labour rights violations and broader economic inefficiencies.

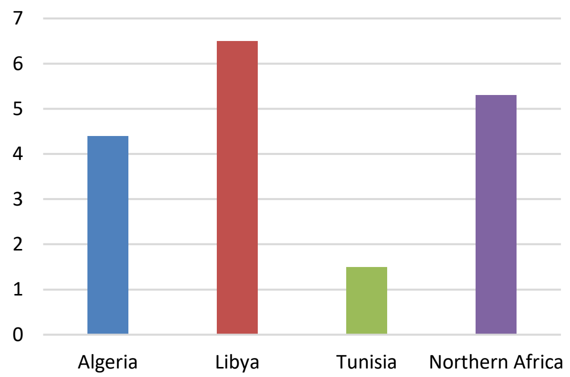
Ratified ILO Conventions

International Labour Organization (ILO) conventions enumerate international principles and rights at work. Appendix Table 3 shows that nine out of ten Fundamental Conventions and three of four Governance Conventions have been ratified, and 15 of 178 Technical Conventions are up-to-date and actively promoted. The latest ratified convention was the Promotional Framework for Occupational Safety and Health Convention (C187) in 2021.

Relatively High Rights Compliance

The Sustainable Development Goals indicator 8.8.2 measures compliance with fundamental labour rights. Based on ILO textual sources and national legislation, Tunisia's scoring has been stable during the last decade, landing well compared with other Northern Africa countries (Figure 2).

Figure 2: Level of national compliance with labour rights among Tunisia and neighbouring countries, 2024



Note: The value ranges from 0 to 10, with 0 being the best possible score, indicating higher levels of compliance with freedom of association and collective bargaining rights, and 10 the worst.
Sources: International Labour Organization, ILOSTAT.

Observing Workers' Rights Violations

The ILO's independent supervisory system body – the Committee of Experts on the Application of Conventions and Recommendations (CEACR) – has observations and direct requests for conventions. For instance, the CEACR registered and monitored several cases of serious violations of trade union rights by the authorities. [9] Other cases concern acts of anti-union discrimination and significant obstacles to collective bargaining in the private and public sectors.[10]

SOCIAL PARTNERS

Key Findings

- Strong governance institutions encounter limited ability to influence the real labour market.
- Tunisia is among the worst countries for workers → complicating unionism.
- Employers' organisations are constrained by the broader economic crisis and political shifts.

The social partners constitute the tripartite labour governance system, and the central institutions are summarised below:

Government

Ministry Authority for Labour Issues

The Ministry of Employment and Vocational Training (MEVT) oversees labour-market policy, job placement, and active labour market programmes. The ministry further supervises the public employment service (ANETI), which connects jobseekers to vacancies. Although MEVT is a central actor in tackling unemployment, especially youth unemployment, its programmes are often criticised for limited placement effectiveness and mismatch with private-sector needs.[11]

Key Institutions Under MEVT

Under MEVT a network of specialised agencies and training bodies operates to implement labour-market policy on the ground. Here are the most important ones:

- **National Agency for Employment and Self-Employment (NAES)** promotes public employment services, running job centres across the country, as well as plays a role in entrepreneurship support.

- **Agency for Vocational Training (AVT)** operates a large network of vocational training centres.

- **National Centre for Training of Trainers and Engineering of Training (NCTTET)** trains instructors and designing curricula and developing training methodologies.

- **National Centre for Continuing Training and Professional Promotion (NCCTPP)** delivers lifelong learning programmes, financing continuous training for employees, and certification of acquired skills.

- **National Observatory of Employment and Skills (NOES)** delivers labour-market data collection, and skills forecasting and analysis.

Although the relatively comprehensive institutional labour governance framework, its effectiveness is constrained by weaknesses in enforcement, institutional capacity, and the functioning of social dialogue. A central constraint is job creation outside the public system rather than the absence of institutions.

Coordination with Ministries

The MEVT is involved in social and labour relations governance with other ministries, especially **the Ministry of Social Affairs (MSA)**. The MAS manages labour relations, worker protection, and social dialogue, acting as a mechanism for labour regulation and employment relations. Even though it is important for labour standards and helps maintain social stability, it has demonstrated limited direct effect on job creation.

Institutional Governance Weaknesses

Tunisia's labour-market ministries and agencies face a set of structural challenges. These are not just technical issues; they reflect broader economic and governance constraints. Or stated differently, the main issue is not the lack of institutions, but their limited ability to influence the labour market, mirroring in too few quality jobs, mismatch between skills and demand, and fragmentation and weak coordination.

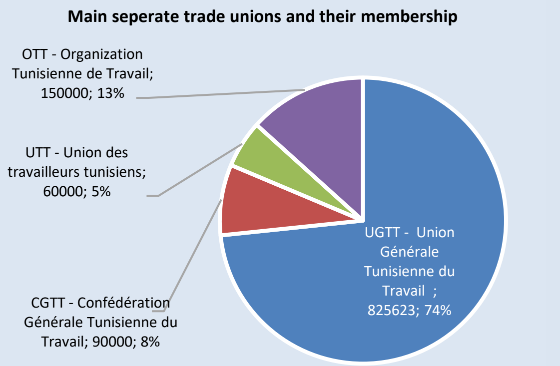
Trade Unions

Trade Unions Play a Central Role

Tunisia's trade union movement has been among the strongest and most politically influential in the Arab world. In recent years, its position has come under increasing pressure amid the country's economic difficulties and changing political landscape.

Tunisia's trade union movement is dominated by the Tunisian General Labour Union (UGTT). In addition to its role as a trade union confederation, UGTT has evolved as an important political and social actor, engaging in collective bargaining, social dialogue with the government and employers, and political mediation.

Box 2: Status of Trade Unions in Tunisia



- Trade unions organise at least 1.1 million workers.[12] The trade union density rose during the 2010s but lost pace at the beginning of the 2020s, landing at about 20% of total employment.[13]

- The trade union movement remains powerful, but it is shifting from a peak of influence (post-2011) to a more contested and fragile position today.

Challenged Unionism

The Tunisia Revolution in 2011 succeeded in toppling a regime and opening political space. However, it has not yet delivered stable democracy or economic transformation, and many of its gains are now under pressure. In recent years, tensions between the government and UGTT have challenged the functioning of social dialogue and collective bargaining.

Unionism is further complicated by several other factors, such as a large informal economy, constraints on collective bargaining and social dialogue, political pressure on trade union activities, and internal challenges within the dominant UGTT.

No Guarantee of Rights

Tunisia is ranked 5 out of 5 (5 is the worst) on the 2026 Global Rights Index, which is among the worst countries in the world to work in. While the legislation may spell out certain rights, workers have effectively no access to these rights and are therefore exposed to autocratic regimes and unfair labour practices.[14]

This situation is reflected in freedom of expression and assembly denied. The UGTT has also chosen to become a political opponent of the authorities rather than a partner, as it once was. Unionists encounter arrest and prosecution, and state interference in collective bargaining. Laws even imposed draconian restrictions on strike actions.[15]

Employers' Organisations

Actors in the Industrial Relation System

Employers' organisations in Tunisia are structurally strong but constrained by the broader economic difficulties and political shifts, limiting their impact on job creation and labour-market outcomes.

Organised employers are mainly represented by the Tunisian Confederation of Industry, Trade and Handicrafts (UTICA). Other organisations exist but have more limited influence (See Box 3). Overall, they play a key role in economic policy and social dialogue, but their impact is constrained by economic challenges

Box 3: Main Employers' Organisations

- **Tunisian Confederation of Industry, Trade and Handicrafts (UTICA)** is the dominant and most influential employers' organisation. They represent most private-sector firms, playing a key role in negotiations with government and unions.

- **Confederation of Tunisian Citizen Enterprises (CONECT)** is a newer alternative organisation (post-2011), representing a segment of businesses seeking different policy approaches.

- **Tunisian–American Chamber of Commerce** focuses on trade, investment, and international business links, but less involved in labour negotiations.

Negatively Shifting Industrial Relations

The employers' organisations in Tunisia are operating under pressure due to a series of aspects, such as weak economic growth and investment, a difficult business environment fuelled by labour tensions with unions, fragmentation of representation, and reduced influence in centralised political system.

SOCIAL DIALOGUE

Key Findings

- A multi-layered legal framework for social dialogue → practical impact is limited by institutional constraints and informality.
- Establishing a high collective bargaining coverage.
- Fragmented dispute resolution and underdeveloped ADR system constrained by weak capacity, legal gaps, and limited inclusion of informal workers.

The role of social dialogue in addressing labour-related socio-economic issues encompasses negotiation, consultation, and the exchange of information among governments, employers, and workers. Its functioning depends on mutual trust, institutional capacity, and an enabling legal environment.

Social Dialogue Model

Tunisia's social dialogue model is often cited as one of the most developed in the Arab region, particularly because of the role played by represented workers, employers, and the government in negotiating economic and social policies. Legal foundations of social dialogue are governed mainly by the Labour Code, guaranteeing workers' basic rights in paper. These rights align broadly with international standards promoted by the ILO conventions' standards and institutionalised tripartism.

Key Social Dialogue Tripartite Forums

The country has the institutions for structured social dialogue (see Box 4). The system functions largely through casual, negotiation-driven processes, It is shaped by political context, rather than strictly through formal forums.

Box 4: Central Tripartite Institutions
The leading tripartite cooperation institutions in Tunisia are listed below: • **National Social Dialogue Council (CNDS)** is the main institutionalised tripartite forum, established by law in 2017 → activity has been uneven, especially since 2021. • **National tripartite negotiations** → most influential in practice. • **Sectoral joint committees** → core bargaining level. • **Ad hoc crisis dialogue platforms** → politically decisive

Status of Social Dialogue

As demonstrated, social dialogue is institutionally well established, with formal tripartite structures and strong participation from social partners. It has played an important role in shaping labour policies and supported political stabilisation, particularly in the period following the 2011 revolution. However, its results is unbalanced, as processes often suffer from weak implementation, limited follow-up, and fragile trust between stakeholders.

In practice, social dialogue remains more functional at the national level than at the workplace level. The latter is underdeveloped due to gaps in the legal framework, low awareness, and the dominance of informal and small enterprises.

On the positive side, collective bargaining coverage rate has been relatively high. It even rose during the 2010s, landing at 63% in 2019,[16] which was doubled of the Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development (OECD) average of 34%.[17]

On the negative side, weaknesses contribute to labour market tensions, including frequent strikes and disputes, just as limit the impact of dialogue on working conditions and productivity.

Overall, while social dialogue is a central feature of Tunisia's labour market governance, its capacity to deliver consistent and inclusive outcomes remains constrained.

Industrial Relations Dispute System

Tunisia's labour dispute resolution system is formally established and institutionally structured. It relies on a combination of conciliation, mediation, and tripartite arbitration mechanisms. Alternative dispute resolution (ADR) mechanisms also exist. However, they remain hybrid and underdeveloped, functioning more as an extension of administrative and tripartite dispute handling rather than as a flexible, independent system. In the Appendix section, a brief process flow diagram of the country's system shows how it technically functions.

Operational Constraints

The formal dispute system faces considerable limitations. These include court congestion, limited mediation capacity, and insufficient training of judges, reducing the effectiveness and timeliness of dispute resolution. In addition, institutional and administrative barriers, including tensions over representation in tripartite bodies, further weaken the system's inclusiveness and credibility (see more in Box 5).

Informal Workers Sidelined for ADR

Limited access for informal workers to the dispute system in Tunisia causes dependence on formal employment structures. Since informal workers are still representing at least one third of all employed (see more in the Informal Workers sub-section), a large part of workforce is excluded from the system.

Box 5: Dispute System's Challenges

The labour dispute resolution system in Tunisia is formally structured but only partially aligned with modern ADR practices:

- ADR mechanisms are institutionally embedded but not fully developed as independent systems.
- No voluntary or flexible ADR frameworks outside formal structures.
- Judicial bottlenecks and limited mediation capacity.
- Informal workers lack access to formal dispute resolution.
- Political and institutional constraints weaken trust and effectiveness.

Constrained Conflict Mitigation

The dispute resolution system provides a formal framework for managing industrial conflicts, supporting labour market stability in principle. Its limited efficiency contributes to prolonged disputes and unresolved conflicts, though, increasing the likelihood of strikes and workplace tensions. These hurdles reduce predictability for employers and workers and can negatively affect productivity and investment conditions. Put differently, while the system exists and functions, its constraints limit its capacity to effectively mitigate labour conflicts and support stable labour relations.

STATUS OF WORKING CONDITIONS

Key Findings

- Tunisia's wage system is linked to national-level social dialogue and tripartite processes → fragmented, unevenly institutionalised, and at this time weakened.
- Real minimum wage growth is stalled → eroding the purchasing power of low-income workers.
- Most unskilled and informal workers often earn below a decent standard of living.

Working conditions directly affect workers' well-being, productivity, and job satisfaction. The state of these conditions has broader implications for the labour market, influencing economic performance, employment patterns, and social stability.

Multi-Tiered Wage System

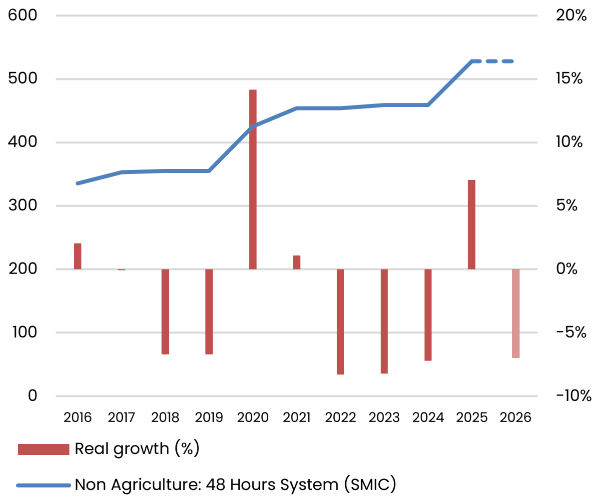
Wage-setting in Tunisia is partly anchored in national social dialogue. Collective bargaining agreements play a central role and are periodically shaped through national negotiations between social partners. These agreements often include wage adjustments linked to inflation and typically exceed the statutory minimum wage. However, wage formation remains decentralised in practice, with strong sectoral and enterprise-level bargaining.

Although tripartite institutions are active, their influence has weakened in recent years due to political and economic instability, limiting the consistency of coordinated wage-setting.

Minimum Wage Limitations

Setting minimum wage is based on a state-regulated system with separate rates for agricultural and non-agricultural workers (distinct rates for 40-hour and 48-hour workweeks), adjusted periodically through tripartite negotiations. The minimum wage sets the wage floor, applying primarily where collective agreements do not set wages, and serves as a reference point in the formal sector. This system is encountered by irregular adjustments, often lagging inflation (see Figure 3). Weak enforcement, especially in the informal economy, further complicates the applications of the system.

Figure 3: Nominal Monthly Minimum Wage (Tunisian dinar) and Its Real Growth (%) in Tunisia, 2016-2026



Source: WageIndicator.org; DTDA estimations on real minimum wage growth.

Low Earnings Among Informal Workers

Tunisia's informal economy absorbs workers who might otherwise remain unemployed. But this group of workers is more vulnerable of rising prices for food, housing, and other essentials. This contributes to labour-market segmentation between relatively protected formal employment and more vulnerable informal work.

Pressures on Wage Tax Systems

Tunisia's wage tax system functions effectively within the formal sector, where it supports public revenue collection and social protection through a progressive structure. However, its overall effectiveness is limited by the country's large informal economy, which significantly reduces coverage and weakens its redistributive impact. High labour costs linked to taxation and social contributions could also discourage formal employment, reinforcing labour market segmentation and informality.

TRENDS THAT AFFECT THE LABOUR MARKET

Key Findings

- The employment structure is gradually shifting.
- Productive, formal job creation is not keeping pace with labour supply.
- The Fourth Industrial Revolution is not yet deeply embedded in the economy.

The workforce is shaped by a combination of structural challenges and evolving global trends. The following contemporary issues influence employment dynamics, job quality, and labour market inclusivity:

Workforce Increasingly Constrained

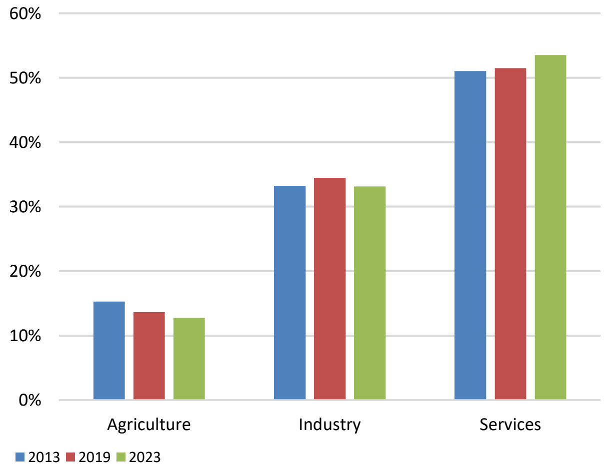
Tunisia's population growth has slowed markedly in recent decades, reflecting a demographic transition toward lower fertility and a gradually ageing population. Today, the population represents 12.3 million, the second lowest among Northern Africa countries.

The population shift has moderated the expansion of the workforce: although the working-age population remains relatively large, labour supply growth is decelerating. Alongside this, structural constraints — particularly low labour-force participation (notably among women) and persistently high youth unemployment — limit the effective utilisation of this workforce.

Incomplete Workforce Structural Shifts

The country's workforce has undergone slow but structural shifts from agriculture towards services and urban-based employment (see Figure 4). This transformation remains incomplete, with a large share of workers concentrated in informal and low-productivity activities. By the same token, rising educational attainment has not been matched by labour demand, contributing to skills mismatches and high unemployment among educated youth (see more in the Youth and Education & Training sections in the profile). These dynamics have reinforced a segmented labour market characterised by disparities between formal and informal employment, limited productivity growth, and persistent labour market pressures.

Figure 4: Employment by economic activity trend in Tunisia, %, 2013-2023



Source: Tunisia Labour Force Surveys.

4IR Lost Pace

Tunisia has demonstrated initial drive in information and communications technology (ICT) and digital education, but has lost momentum in advancing the Fourth Industrial Revolution (4IR) phenomenon. The limited diffusion of new technologies across firms and weak private sector engagement in training have constrained the development of high-skilled employment opportunities. Therefore, the labour market continues to face significant skills mismatches, particularly affecting educated youth, while productivity gains and structural transformation remain limited.

Key barriers to 4IR development include dominance of public sector in training systems, limited innovation uptake in enterprises, and broader economic and political instability.

Box 6: Trade Unions and the 4IR in Tunisia

Trade unions' role in 4IR is complex, often focusing on defending workers against the rapid, often disruptive, implementation of new technology:

- **Energy Sector Resistance:** Energy unions affiliated with the UGTT have actively resisted the digitisation and privatisation of the energy sector.
- **Defence of Labour Rights:** As 4IR demands more flexibility, unions have fought against the casualisation of work and the reduction of labour protections that accompany digital industrialisation.
- **The "Social Pact" Approach:** The union has tried to use the National Council for Social Dialogue to negotiate a "social pact" to ensure that the adoption of 4IR technologies does not lead to mass layoffs or worsening labour conditions.

THEMATIC DIMENSIONS SETTING THE WORKFORCE

Cross-cutting issues notably affect the labour market when intersecting with various economic, social, and environmental dimensions, impacting workers and employers across multiple sectors.

Informal economy

The informal economy plays a dual role in labour markets – providing a critical employment buffer with a structural constraint on labour productivity, wages, and social protection.

Informality Remains Relatively High

About 37% of employment in Tunisia operate in the informal economy, dominating in agriculture but also trade, transport, small-scale manufacturing, and services.[18] This group is characterised by small businesses, self-employment, casual labour, and family-based enterprises, often without formal registration. These informal workers often face low-income security, weak legal protections, and limited access to social protection.

Formalise Labour Market Initiatives

The country has introduced multiple formalisation initiatives, including social protection expansion and integrate informal workers into formal systems by improving access to rights, protections, and legal frameworks. Implementation remains partial and slow in practice. It impacted only gradual reductions in informality by the statistical registers, echoing limited improvement in formal job creation at scale. Although formalisation policies in Tunisia have laid the institutional groundwork, it has not yet transformed the labour market. Barriers stick with structural constraints, like weak economic growth, high unemployment, and persistent informality incentives.

Tripartite Informal Economy Forum

The tripartite informal economy forum is not a fully operational, institutionalised body. It exists mainly as a policy concept and series of initiatives, rather than a permanent forum. In practice, informal economy issues are handled through broader tripartite dialogue structures and ad hoc projects, which weakens its impact on labour market formalisation.

Organising Informal Workers

Organisation of informal workers in Tunisia remains limited and fragmented, despite some gradual progress since 2011. While the UGTT has made efforts to extend representation beyond the formal sector, most informal workers are still outside traditional union structures. Instead, they organise through associations, NGOs, or small cooperatives. Coverage is uneven across sectors and constrained by the nature of informal work, weak legal recognition, and low incentives to formalise. In this context, informal workers continue to have little influence in social dialogue and labour market policymaking. Although organisations are emerging, they are fragmented and fragile, and not yet strong enough to shape labour market policies at scale.

Migration

Migration flows significantly influence Tunisia's labour market by shaping labour supply and demand, wage levels, skills distribution, and social dynamics.

Security-Driven Migration

Tunisia's migration framework has shifted toward strict, security-oriented border management, heavily influenced by agreements with the EU to curb irregular migration. It links with a strong legacy of control-oriented laws and weak labour integration mechanisms. It is worth noting that the country lacks a comprehensive national asylum law, leading to severe human rights concerns, including arbitrary detention, forced expulsions, and violence against sub-Saharan migrants.[19]

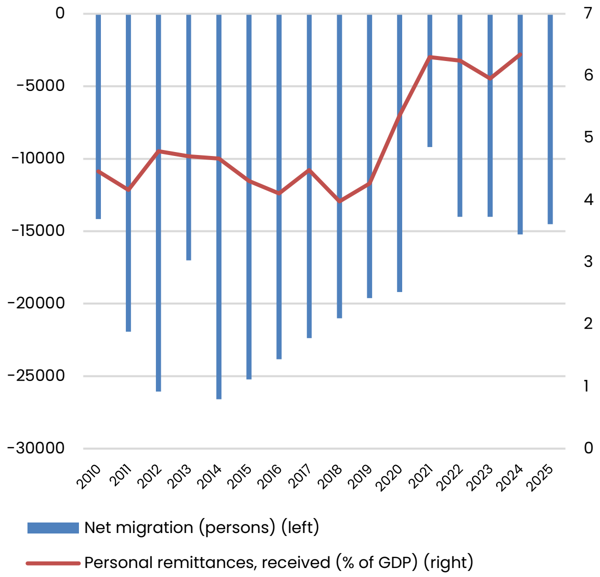
The migration landscape indirectly brings labour market impact, such as inward migration reinforces informality and segmentation, and outward migration contributes to skills loss and structural imbalances.

Household Income — Migration Pillar

The country's migration flows are primarily driven by job-seeking, characterised by strong outward migration. It encompasses a mix of low-skilled and skilled workers, triggering some brain drains, coexisting of regular and irregular pathways. Usually, migration acts as both a labour market safety valve (reducing domestic pressure) and a source of structural challenges (skills loss, informality).

Tunisia's high emigration outflow, which could be called as exporting workers, supports high remittance inflows (money sent home by migrants) (see Figure 5). It is worth mention that remittances rose during the 2020s because more emigrated and better financial transaction channels expanded. These remittances support livelihoods and reduce labour market stress, but they do not fundamentally improve job creation or formalisation. It can even dampen incentives to participate in low-quality employment.

Figure 5: Net Migration and Personal Remittance Trend in Tunisia, 2010-2025



Source: The World Bank, World Development Indicators.

High Urbanisation, Weak Job Creation

Regarding internal migration, the country's rural exodus is long-standing, gradual, and economically driven. It is with no major displacement crises but persistent movement from interior rural areas to coastal cities. Although it is largely urbanised at 70% of population,[20] it has not been matched by sufficient job creation, mirroring in high urban unemployment, informal work, and persistent regional inequalities.

Trade Unions and Labour Migration

Tunisia's trade union movement has increasingly engaged in migration issues, but its involvement remains selective and still developing. Growing political tensions between the UGTT and the current government have weakened the UGTT's ability to influence national migration policies in recent years.[21]

The UGTT actively advocates for the rights of Tunisian workers abroad, including social protection portability and protection against exploitation. They have participated in policy dialogue and international cooperation. It has also shown growing attention to migrant workers, particularly around labour rights and anti-discrimination.

As indicated, trade union involvement is evolving but not fully institutionalised or comprehensive. For example, trade unions' practical support structures remain limited in scale concerning services for migrants, and systematic organising of foreign workers.

Child Labour

Child labour has several adverse effects on the labour market. It provides a source of cheap labour, allowing employers to pay lower wages. This factor is often connected with a lack of decent wages and job opportunities, forcing families to rely on child labour for survival. These child labourers grow into unskilled adults and are more likely to remain in low-paying, unstable jobs.

Framework Combating Child Labour

Tunisia has a relatively solid legal basis to combat child labour, broadly aligned with international standards. At the policy level, national strategies and action plans – especially the current National Action Plan on Child Labour (NAP-TN) – target prevention of child labour, school retention, and support for vulnerable families. Social protection and education policies also play a central role in prevention.

Child Labour is Relatively Low

According to available data, Tunisia has one of the lowest child labour (i.e., economic activity) rates in the region: It is estimated at 2% for children aged 5–17, which was four percentage points lower than the Middle East and Northern Africa average of 6%.[22] What supports the relatively low child labour rate in the country concern several factors, such as education access, legal protections, social policies, urbanisation, and social norms.

Factors Stick with Child Labour

Child labour in Tunisia persists mainly in vulnerable contexts where poverty, school dropout, regional inequality, and informality intersect. Children are more likely to work when families face economic hardship, especially in rural areas where access to education and services is weaker. The informal economy and family-based agricultural work further enable child labour, while uneven enforcement of labour laws and certain social norms allow it to continue.

Trade Unions and Child Labour

Trade unions in Tunisia are engaged but not leading actors in combating child labour. Their role is supportive more through policy dialogue and advocacy rather than operational. Accordingly, child labour remains a peripheral issue within their broader labour agenda.

Gender

Gender shapes labour market dynamics, affecting employment opportunities, wages, job security, and economic growth.

Progressive Gender Framework with Persistent Gaps

Tunisia has one of the most advanced legal frameworks for gender equality in the Arab region. It is supported by strong constitutional and legal foundations; for instance, the 2014 Constitution guarantees equality before the law and equal opportunities between men and women. The Labour Code explicitly prohibits gender discrimination in employment and ensures equal treatment. Broader employment laws further reinforce equal pay principles (at least for equal work), protection against harassment, and maternity protections.

Although Tunisia's framework is comprehensive and rights based, it is incomplete translation into real labour market equality. It results in continued gender gaps in participation, pay, and job quality.

Trade Unions and Gender Equity

The trade union movement in Tunisia are actively engaged in promoting gender equality, mainly through advocacy, participation in policy dialogue, and efforts to strengthen women's representation within unions. They have helped increase the visibility of gender issues and contributed to incremental improvements in labour protections, particularly for vulnerable women workers.[23]

Gender equality is not fully mainstreamed across union activities; for instance, women remain underrepresented in leadership, and unions have limited reach in the informal and rural sectors. Therefore, their impact on reducing structural gender inequalities in the labour market remains partial and uneven.

Employment Gender Disparities

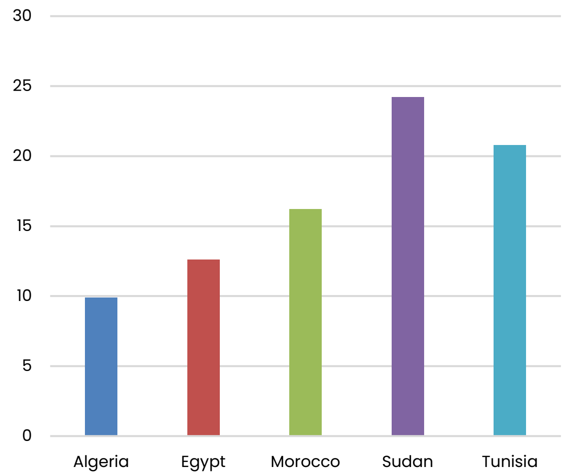
Tunisian women encounter a combination of structural, economic, and social barriers. They result in low participation, high unemployment, and concentration in informal and low-quality jobs. For example, the gender wage gap is at least 10%, with women often earning less than men for similar work, particularly in the private sector.[24] Despite high educational attainment among women, they face significant labour market discrimination, occupational segregation, and low participation rates (approx. 27% in 2025).[25] These factors signal that despite strong legal equality, real labour market outcomes remain unequal.

Status of Women's Leadership

Tunisian women have strong educational attainment and legal rights, yet their presence in leadership positions across the labour market remains limited and uneven. For example, they are underrepresented in senior roles in both the private and public sectors, with a persistent invisible barrier restricting advancement despite growing participation in mid-level positions.

Structural barriers — such as gender norms, unequal care responsibilities, and limited access to networks — continue to constrain progress, meaning that gains in education and employment have not fully translated into leadership representation. Figure 6 shows that Tunisian women hold around 21% of managerial positions, performing comparatively well regionally but still far from parity.

Figure 6: Proportion of women in managerial position in Tunisia and other Northern Africa countries, %, latest data



Note: Comparing data from the countries could diverge from different national survey structures and periods.
Source: International Labour Organization, ILOSTAT.

Youth

Youth is the labour market's future backbone, playing a central role in shaping employment trends, productivity, and economic growth.

Moderate Youth Cohort

Tunisia does not exhibit a pronounced youth bulge; rather, it is undergoing a demographic transition towards a more mature and gradually ageing population. It leads pressure on labour supply is easing. From another perspective, youth labour market outcomes remain weak, reflecting structural challenges rather than an excess supply of young workers. Looking ahead, population ageing is likely to increase the importance of raising labour force participation and improving the utilisation of existing human capital, particularly among women and youth.

Fragmented Youth Policy Framework

The country's employment policy framework incorporates youth through a range of cross-sectoral programmes. However, they have been complicated by spread across several ministries, rather than coordinated through a single national strategy.[26] Several initiatives are promoted, such as youth quotas in electoral processes, livelihood programmes, and social protection schemes, aiming to improve inclusion and labour market access. Nonetheless, these proposals impact is constrained by inadequate coordination and limited alignment with labour market needs.[27]

Youth Employment Characteristics

The youth share of workforce is falling, landed very low of 9% in 2023.[28] This trend reflects deep structural hurdles, including high youth unemployment, skills mismatches, weak school-to-work transitions, and limited job creation. A significant proportion of young people remain outside both employment and education, while many others are absorbed into informal and precarious work. These factors, combined with fragmented policy responses and institutional barriers, have reduced the labour market's capacity to integrate youth, resulting the lowest youth employment ratio in Northern Africa.

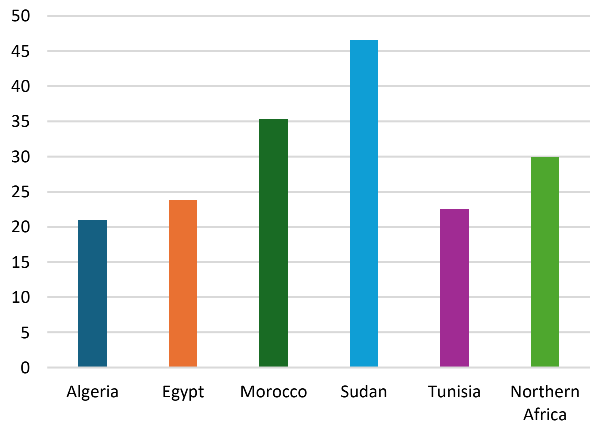
Alarming High Youth Unemployment

The youth unemployment rate was on the rise, peaking in 2020. It turned down to 38% in 2025 but remains almost double of Northern Africa average of 21%.[29] As indicated, this stance is primarily driven by structural labour market imbalances, including a mismatch between education and labour demand, insufficient formal job creation, and weak school-to-work transition systems.

High Detachment from Labour Market

The not-in-education, employment, or training (NEET rate) is considered a more severe condition than unemployment, as they include young people who have stopped actively seeking work. Based on recent data, Tunisia's NEET rate is relatively low compared with the Northern Africa average (see Figure 7). These circumstances still reflect discouragement and detachment from the labour market, reducing the effective labour supply. A segment of the youth population becomes instead economically inactive, weakening labour force participation rates and long-term employability.

Figure 7: Proportion of youth (aged 15-24 years) not in education, employment or training in Tunisia and Northern Africa countries, %, latest year



Source: International Labour Organization, ILOSTAT.

Trade Unions and Youth

The trade union movement in Tunisia plays a central role in addressing labour market challenges, but their engagement with youth labour issues is not fully developed. Although unions advocate for improved working conditions and employment opportunities that benefit young workers, youth are not systematically represented as a distinct constituency within union structures or social dialogue mechanisms. High levels of informality and precarious employment further constrain union outreach to young workers, limiting their effective inclusion in collective representation.

EDUCATION AND TRAINING

Key Findings

- Tunisia delivers education but not employable graduates due to limited alignment with labour market needs.
- The TVET system is highly centralised, leading to mixed effects.
- Trade unions have limited involvement in TVET training design and limited role in work-based learning governance.

Education connection to the labour market refers to the relationship between the education system, vocational training programmes, and the market's needs. It highlights how education and skills development prepare individuals to meet employers' demands, improve employability, and support economic growth.

Education System Reforms

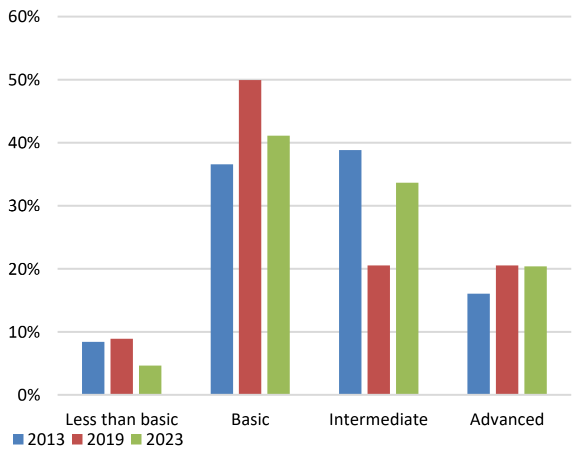
Tunisia's education system has historically been one of the strongest in Northern Africa. It benefits from high access and significant public spending, free compulsory schooling (ages 6–16), and a large share of youth reach secondary or tertiary levels, creating a relatively skilled population.

Most reforms of this system during the last decade target improving employability and skills relevance (see Appendix Table 5). However, their impact is constrained by weak private-sector demand, social preference for academic paths, and implementation gaps.[30] Or stated differently, the country has good educational coverage, but it faces uneven quality and weak alignment with economic needs. This situation leads to frustration and emigration pressures.

Workers Getting Better Educated

Tunisian workers are getting better educated, especially at the intermediate level (see Figure 8). But, as indicated, they often encounter problematic influence on labour market performance. Despite high levels of educational attainment, high youth unemployment and NEET rate remain elevated because a mismatch between skills taught and those demanded by employers.

Figure 8: Tunisia's employment by education trend, %, 2013-2023



Source: Tunisia Labour Force Surveys.

Education Outpacing Job Creation

The education system's emphasis on theoretical learning, limited several factors, such as vocational pathways. There are also weak links with the private sector contribute to long school-to-work transitions, overqualification, and a high prevalence of informal or low-quality jobs. Many graduates prefer public-sector employment, creating bottlenecks, while returns to education are uneven and declining.

Vocational Training

Centralised System, Mixed Results

Tunisia's technical and vocational education and training (TVET) system is legally well-structured. However, the central TVET laws – Law No. 93-10 (1993) and the Law No. 2008-10 (2008) – are not up to date in content of new global challenges. For instance, they are only partially aligned with rising issues like the 4IR and climate change. Most adaptation is happening through policies, projects, and incremental reforms—not through updated key laws.

The TVET system is highly centralised, leading to mixed effects. On the positive side, it creates a system that is stable and controlled. On the negative side, it turns rigid and slow to evolve, especially in a fast-changing labour market landscape.

Fragmented Governance TVET Model

The TVET governance is centralised and state-led controlled by the Ministry of Employment and Vocational Training, bringing strategic decisions concentrated at ministerial level. The ministry governs through an institutional ecosystem, with a wide range of institutions, including Tunisian Agency for Vocational Training (ATFP), among others.[31]

Although the country does not lack TVET institutions, a challenge lies in coordinating them into an integrated, demand-responsive system. Reforms are currently debated, trying to move it toward a more decentralised, employer-responsive, and coordinated system, but implementation is still in transition.

Trade Unions Limitation in TVET

Trade unions are formally integrated into TVET governance, especially in social dialogue structures, sectoral collective agreements, and advisory bodies on employment and training. Their role is mainly on wages, occupational standards, and working conditions. Taking into consideration the centralised system, unions have a more indirect influence on skills demand and occupational profiles. It results in their impact on TVET is limited in practice, including weak involvement in curriculum and training design, limited role in work-based learning governance, and focus on wages rather than skills systems.

TVET System Faces Double Challenge

Tunisia's TVET system struggles with low enrolment and weak attractiveness, limiting impact on employment outcomes. According to the latest data available, share of all Tunisian students in secondary education enrolled in vocational programmes reached 9.1%, which was two percentage points lower than the Middle East & North Africa (MENA) at an average of 11%.[32] On the other hand, Tunisian firms offering formal training has been higher than MENA average, 27% vs. 20%, respectively; but far below EU average of 44%.[33]

This situation reflects that although the TVET system is present, it is underutilised; not a dominant pathway for workers, prompting weakness in lifelong learning.

TVET Impact on the Labour Market

As indicated, Tunisian students are preferring academic education rather than vocational training, triggering persistent skills mismatch. Employers often lack candidates with job-relevant and practical skills, not to mention training systems struggle to adapt to sector needs and technological change. It brings the labour market with a "skills mismatch" problem.

Even though TVET is intended to improve employability, its capacity to adapt to labour market needs is limited. Weak employer involvement reduces job outcomes, by the same token work-based learning is not widespread enough to ensure job readiness. As a consequence, TVET does not consistently lead to employment. This circumstance is echoed in the alarming high youth unemployment, linking with mismatch between education and labour demand. This indicates weak school-to-work transition, including for TVET graduates.

These structural labour-market issues affect outcomes even beyond TVET itself, such as training for informal workers is largely outside the formal system, relying on traditional learning and small-scale programmes.

SOCIAL PROTECTION

Key Findings

- Structural hurdles undermine reforms to improve the social protection system.
- Coverage is strong where jobs are formal → About half of the workforce remains outside the system.
- A remarkable hike in pension coverage → challenging future pension obligations, weak taxation, and retirement rules.
- Informal workers are only partially covered → many individuals rely on informal coping strategies.

Social protection and the labour market are closely connected to develop a country's welfare, as social protection programmes play a central role in enhancing the well-being of workers, promoting job security, and reducing poverty.

State-Led Social Protection System

Tunisa's social protection system is recognised as comprehensive, state-led social protection system that includes social insurance (e.g., pensions, health, maternity), social assistance (cash transfers, subsidies), and labour-market programmes. An overview of the structure of Tunisia's' social protection system is available in Appendix Table 6.

From Untargeted to Inclusive Systems

Ongoing reform of the social protection system aims to shift from broad, untargeted protection towards more efficient and inclusive systems. These alterations focus on reducing universal subsidies, expanding targeted cash transfers, addressing pension deficits, and expanding coverage toward informal workers.

These reforms support formalisation incentives; for instance, expanding social insurance coverage can encourage workers and firms to enter the formal sector. It could over time not only broaden the tax base but also improve job quality. Major hurdles are that firms still avoid formalisation due to a lack of awareness and/or incentives, weak job creation on the formal sector, and structural unemployment. Politically sensitive, like resistance of subsidy cuts, could trigger strikes and delayed reforms.

Uneven Social Protection Coverage

The coverage of Tunisian workers by social protection is strong for formal workers but significantly limited overall due to widespread informality. Data suggest that at least one out of two (54%) of population is covered by at least one social protection benefit, which has been on the rise in recent years. Mothers with newborns receiving maternity benefits also grew while unemployed receiving unemployment benefits remains very low. Overall, the coverage is broad but incomplete; far from universal.

Table 1 below glimpses the status of the country's linkage between social protection services and the labour market, besides in comparison with the regional averages.

Table 1: Proportion of population covered by social protection services in Tunisia and Northern Africa (NA), %, latest data

Indicator	Tunisia	NA
Population covered by at least one social protection benefit	54%	35%
Persons above retirement age receiving a pension	100%	55%
Persons with severe disabilities collecting disability social protection benefits	12%	19%
Unemployed receiving unemployment benefits	3.0%	2.9%
Mothers with newborns receiving maternity benefits	22%	10%
Labour force covered in the event of work injury	30%	49%
Children/households receiving child/family cash benefits	29%	30%
Poor persons covered by social protection systems	78%	-
Vulnerable persons covered by social assistance	25%	20%

Source: International Labour Organisation, ILOSTAT.

Remarkable Pension Coverage Growth

Tunisia's demographic landscape is characterised as aging, moving away from a young population. The standard retirement age is 60 years, with at least 120 months of contributions. As the population ages, there will come more pensioners and relatively fewer contributors. Taking into consideration that the country's old-age dependency ratio is about 14%, and life expectancy is now around 77 years, people draw pensions for a long period.

Projections suggest that this demographic scene will bring higher pension spending, relatively reduce the number of people paying regular contributions, and larger deficits in pension funds. This will further bring more pressure on the state budget and reforming options, such as raise the retirement age, increasing contributions, among others.

The pension system coverage increased from 34% in 2015 to 100% in 2021, supporting a broad legal coverage through mandatory social insurance schemes. However, effective coverage remains incomplete due to high levels of informality and irregular contribution histories. On this background, legal entitlement to pension protection does not always translate into effective pension coverage in practice.

The minimum monthly pension is 67% of the legal monthly minimum wage, currently equalling dinar 354 (US$122). This level helps reduce poverty among formal retirees and adjusts with wage changes. It continues often too low relative to living costs. Or stated differently, it is an important social safety mechanism, but not strong enough on its own to ensure adequate living standards for all retirees.

Informal Social Protection

Despite Tunisia has promoted many social protection mechanisms, access is concentrated among formal-sector and public employees.

Instead, informal workers are only partially covered by targeted assistance programmes. Therefore, many individuals rely on informal coping strategies, such as family support networks, irregular income diversification, and continued work despite health or economic risks. These gaps are particularly pronounced for vulnerable groups, notably women and rural workers, reinforcing existing inequalities.

Recent social protection reforms have aimed to expand coverage and improve to target informal workers. But it continues to function more as a set of ad hoc survival mechanisms than as a comprehensive and inclusive system.

APPENDIX: ADDITIONAL DATA

Table 2: Legal reservations in Tunisia concerning the industrial relations' rights

Right to organize
• Restrictions on workers' right to form and join organisations of their own choosing. • Restrictions on trade unions' right to organise their administration. • Categories of workers prohibited or limited from forming or joining a union, or from holding a union office. • Barriers to the establishment of organisations, including restrictions on trade unions' right to establish branches, federation and confederation or to affiliate with national and international organisations. • Workers between the ages of 16 and 18 may only join trade unions with the consent of their father or guardian.
Right to collective bargaining
• Barriers to the recognition of collective bargaining agents. • On 9 December 2021, the government issued a circular No. 20 to all ministries and government institutions which prohibits anyone from negotiating with the unions without the formal and prior authorization of the Head of Government. • Restrictions on the principle of free and voluntary bargaining. • Restrictions on the scope of application and legal effectiveness of concluded collective agreements.
Right to strike
• Strike action must be approved by the Central Workers Union in order to be legal. • Undue interference by authorities or employers during the course of a strike. • Discretionary determination or excessively long list of "essential services" in which the right to strike is prohibited or severely restricted. • Ban or limitations on certain types of strike actions, including wildcat strikes are illegal and workers in any service may be requisitioned if their strike action is likely to affect the normal functioning of an essential service. • Undermining of the recourse to strike actions or their effectiveness, such as excessive civil or penal sanctions for workers and unions involved in non-authorised strike actions and excessive sanctions for damages caused by strike actions.

Source: International Trade Union Confederation, Survey of Violations of Trade Union Rights, Tunisia Legal, May 2026.

Table 3: Status of ratified ILO Conventions in Tunisia

Subject and/or right	Convention	Ratification date
Fundamental Conventions		
Freedom of association and collective bargaining	C087 - Freedom of Association and Protection of the Right to Organise, 1948	1957
	C098 - Right to Organise and Collective Bargaining Convention, 1949	1957
Elimination of all forms of forced labour	C029 - Forced Labour Convention, 1930	1962
	C105 - Abolition of Forced Labour Convention, 1957	1959
Effective abolition of child labour	C138 - Minimum Age Convention, 1973	1995
	C182 - Worst Forms of Child Labour Convention, 1999	2000
Elimination of discrimination in employment	C100 - Equal Remuneration Convention, 1951	1968
	C111 - Discrimination (Employment and Occupation) Convention, 1958	1959
Occupational safety and health	C155 - Occupational Safety and Health Convention, 1981	-
	C187 - Promotional Framework for Occupational Safety and Health Convention, 2006	2021
Governance Conventions		
Labour inspection	C081 - Labour Inspection Convention, 1947	1957
	C129 - Labour Inspection (Agriculture) Convention, 1969	Not ratified
Employment policy	C122 - Employment Policy Convention, 1964	1966
Tripartism	C144 - Tripartite Consultation (International Labour Standards) Convention, 1976	2014
Technical Conventions (Up-to-Date)		
Working Time	C014 - Weekly Rest (Industry) Convention, 1921	1957
Protection of children and young persons	C077 - Medical Examination of Young Persons (Industry) Convention, 1946	1970
	C124 - Medical Examination of Young Persons (Underground Work) Convention, 1965	1967
Wages	C095 - Protection of Wages Convention, 1949	1958
Working time	C106 - Weekly Rest (Commerce and Offices) Convention, 1957	1958
Social Security	C118 - Equality of Treatment (Social Security) Convention, 1962	1965
Occupational safety and health	C120 - Hygiene (Commerce and Offices) Convention, 1964	1970
Freedom of association	C135 - Workers' Representatives Convention, 1971	2007
	C151 - Labour Relations (Public Service) Convention, 1978	2014
	C154 - Collective Bargaining Convention, 1981	2014
Vocational guidance and training	C142 - Human Resources Development Convention, 1975	1989
Labour Administration and inspection	C150 - Labour Administration Convention, 1978	1988
Employment policy and promotion	C159 - Vocational Rehabilitation and Employment (Disabled Persons) Convention, 1983	1989
Seafarers	C185 - Seafarers 'Identity Documents Convention (revised), 2003	2016
	MLC - Maritime Labour Convention, 2006	2017

Source: International Labour Organization, NORMLEX, Tunisia, May 2026.

Table 4: The main demands of the African trade unions in the declaration statement calling for the Just Transition agenda, 2023

Main demands in the declaration statement calling for the Just Transition agenda
1. Decent work and quality jobs: Trade unions insist on the creation of quality jobs as part of climate change policies. They demand that these jobs uphold labour rights and prioritise decent working conditions for all. This includes investments in skills development and training for workers to adapt to emerging green industries.
2. Social protection: Workers adversely affected by climate change must benefit from social protection measures, including income support, access to health care, education, and training to facilitate their professional reorientation. Trade unions are committed to protecting the most vulnerable workers and communities from the potential impacts of climate policies.
3 Worker Participation: Workers must be involved in the development and implementation of climate-related policies and projects, as they have valuable insights into the realities of their industries and communities.
4. Community Engagement: Local communities and stakeholders must be involved in decision-making on climate initiatives. Priority should be given to investment in sustainable infrastructure, green technologies and community resilience.
5 Gender equity: Trade unions demand that gender considerations be integrated into climate policies, recognising that women are often the most affected by the effects of climate change. They call for the empowerment of women through training, leadership and gender-sensitive policies.
6. Investment in green jobs: Trade unions call for substantial investment in green technologies, renewable energy and sustainable agriculture. They believe this investment will boost economic growth, create jobs and help preserve the environment.
7. Labour rights and just transition plans: Trade unions demand that labour rights be enforced and upheld in the context of climate policies, including the right to organise and the right to collective bargaining. Comprehensive just transition plans must be developed to outline pathways for affected workers and communities through the transition period.
8. Reskilling and Upskilling: Trade unions call for reskilling and upskilling programmes to equip workers with the skills needed for the transition to green industries by adapting to the needs of the labour market.
9. Support for impacted industries: The industries most vulnerable to the impacts of climate change policies should be given targeted support and resources to help them transform their operations while safeguarding jobs.
10. Transparency and accountability: Trade unions call for transparency in the allocation of resources and the distribution of benefits resulting from climate initiatives. They also call for accountability mechanisms to be put in place to hold stakeholders accountable for meeting their just transition commitments.

Source: *ITUC-Africa, Africa Climate Summit*: *African trade unions call for a just transition.*

Table 5: Key Reforms Linking Education to the Labour Market in Tunisia

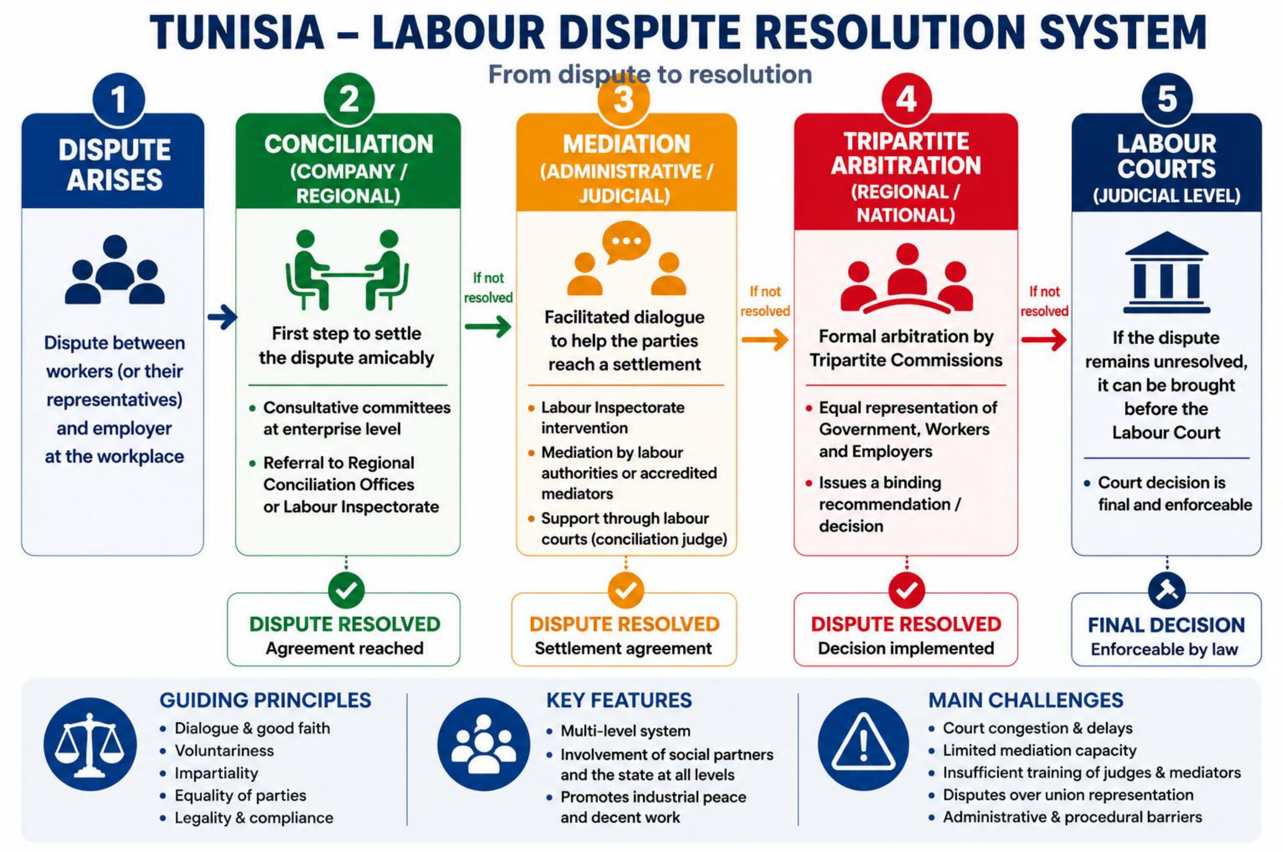
Reform Area	Main Measures	Results / Challenges
Curriculum & Pedagogy Reform	Shift toward competency-based learning; inclusion of soft skills (communication, problem-solving).	Slow implementation; teaching still largely theoretical.
Vocational Education & Training	Expansion of technical institutes (ISETs); promotion of apprenticeships and dual training; modernization of training centers.	VET still seen as "second choice"; limited employer involvement.
Higher Education Reform	Development of applied degrees; stronger focus on STEM and professional programs; entrepreneurship education.	Weak university–industry collaboration; oversupply of graduates persists.
Active Labour Market Policies (ALMPs)	Internship programs; wage subsidies; employment support schemes; start-up incentives.	Limited long-term impact; often temporary or low-quality jobs.
Private Sector & Employer Engagement	Attempts to involve employers in training design; sectoral partnerships.	Still underdeveloped; coordination gaps remain.
Digital & Skills Modernization	ICT integration in education; digital skills programmes.	Uneven access; digital divide across regions.
Entrepreneurship Promotion	Start-up support programs; innovation hubs; business training in universities.	Administrative barriers and financing constraints limit success.
Governance & System Coordination	Reforms to improve coordination between ministries (education, employment, training).	Fragmentation still an issue; reforms not fully integrated.

Sources: DTDA research.

Table 6: The structure of Tunisia's' social protection system

Pillar	Scheme / Institution	Type	Main Functions	Coverage
Social Insurance	Caisse Nationale de Sécurité Sociale (CNSS)	Contributory	Pensions, health insurance, family benefits (private sector)	Formal private-sector workers
	Caisse Nationale de Retraite et de Prévoyance Sociale (CNRPS)	Contributory	Pensions and social benefits (public sector)	Civil servants and public employees
Health Protection	National health insurance system	Mixed (contributory + subsidised)	Healthcare coverage, reimbursement, subsidised care	Formal workers + vulnerable groups
Social Assistance	Programme National d'Aide aux Familles Nécessiteuses (PNAFN)	Non-contributory	Cash transfers, access to subsidised healthcare	Poor and vulnerable households
Subsidy System	Food & energy subsidies	Non-contributory	Price support for basic goods (food, fuel, energy)	Universal (not targeted)
Labour Market Programmes	Agence Nationale pour l'Emploi et le Travail Indépendant (ANETI)	Active labour market policies	Employment services, training, job insertion programmes	Job seekers, youth, unemployed

Sources: DTDA research.



Sources: DTDA research.

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