

Details on the New Tunisian Cabinet

By Keian Razipour

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On September 11, the Tunisian parliament approved a new cabinet led by Prime Minister Youssef Chahed of the Nidaa Tounes party. Chahed came to power in August 2016 as Tunisia's sixth head of government since January 2011. This is the second cabinet change under Chahed, and Tunisia's ninth since January 2011. Chahed's new cabinet has 28 ministers. Five of them served in government or in the ex-ruling party, the Democratic Constitutional Rally (RCD), under toppled dictator Zine El Abidine Ben Ali (1987-2011), the largest number of such cabinet members since the 2011 revolution. Five cabinet members are women.

I. Governments and Cabinet Changes Since 2011

- January - February 2011: Prime Minister Mohamed Ghannouchi (political affiliation: RCD at the time, now independent)
 - One Cabinet
- February 2011 - December 2011: PM Beji Caid Essebsi
 - One Cabinet
- December 2011 - March 2013: PM Hamadi Jebali (Ennahda)
 - One Cabinet
- March 2013 - January 2014: PM Ali Laarayedh (Ennahda)
 - One Cabinet
- January 2014 - February 2015: PM Mehdi Jomaa (Independent)
 - One Cabinet
- February 2015 - August 2016: PM Habib Essid (Independent)
 - Two Cabinets: February 2015 - January 2016 and January 2016 - August 2016
- August 2016 - Present: PM Youssef Chahed (Nidaa Tounes)
 - Two Cabinets: August 2016 to September 2017 and September 2017-present

II. Cabinet Members in Chahed's New Government Who Served Under Ben Ali

[Radhouane Ayara](#) - Minister of Transportation

- Political affiliation: Nidaa Tounes
- New position, previously was in Chahed's government as Secretary of State for Immigration and Tunisian Expatriates (2016-2017)
- Governor of Kef (2015-2016)
- Served under Ben Ali as:
 - Social Attache with the Consulate General of Tunisia in Bonn, Germany (2005-2009)
 - Consul at the Consulate General of Tunisia in Bonn, Germany (2009-2011)

Hatem Ben Salem - Minister of Education

- Nidaa Tounes
- New cabinet member
- Served under Ben Ali as:
 - Minister of Education (2008-2011)
 - Secretary of State to the Minister of Foreign Affairs in charge of Maghreb and African Affairs (2003) and European Affairs (2004)
 - Tunisian Ambassador to Senegal, Guinea, Gambia, Cape Verde, Turkey, and the United Nations (1996-2000)
- Former member of the RCD party
- Ben Salem was appointed in 2015 as director of the Tunisian Institute of Strategic Studies, a quasi-government think tank

Mohamed Ridha Chalghoum - Minister of Finance

- Nidaa Tounes
- New cabinet member
- Previously served as chief of staff to Prime Minister Chahed (appointed in June 2017)
- Served under Ben Ali as:
 - Minister of Finance (2010-2011)
- In a financial investigation into members of the RCD by the Tunisian Court of Justice's 9th Indictment Chamber, Chalghoum's name was [cleared](#) in 2013 and it was determined that all transactions in his bank account "were legal and that all the money transferred to his account only came from his salary."

Adel Jarboui - Secretary of State for Immigration and Tunisian Expatriates

- Nidaa Tounes
- New cabinet member
- Previously served as chief of staff to the Minister of Education (April-August 2017)
- Held various posts in the RCD:
 - Deputy Secretary General in charge of Youth, Education, and Culture (2010)
 - Secretary General for the Southern Region
 - National Board Member of the Student Organization (2000-2003)
 - Sfax Region Treasurer of the Student Organization (1998)

Abdelkrim Zbidi - Minister of Defense

- Independent
- New cabinet member
- Served under Ben Ali as:
 - Secretary of State for Scientific Research and Technology (1999-2000)
 - Minister of Public Health (2001)
- Appointed in 2011 by then-prime minister Beji Caid Essebsi as Minister of Defense

- Resigned in 2013 after a public clash with then-President Moncef Marzouki about the September 2012 [attack](#) on the U.S. Embassy in Tunis
- Was a candidate for the post of prime minister in 2014, but was vehemently [refused](#) by Marzouki
- Previously had ties to the RCD
- Zbidi is not from the military apparatus, he comes from a health and science background

II. New Ministers/State Secretaries

The following ministers and state secretaries are either new to this cabinet or were in Chahed's first cabinet and given a different portfolio in the recent reshuffle

[Faouzi Abderrahmene](#) - Minister of Vocational Training and Employment

- Afek Tounes party
- New cabinet member
 - Vice President and a founding member of Afek Tounes

[Sonia Bechikh](#) - Secretary of State to the Minister of Health

- Independent
- New cabinet member
- CEO of the National Office for Families and Population (ONFP) (2017)
- Director of the National Center for Educational Training of Health Professionals

[Omar Behi](#) - Minister of Commerce

- Independent
- New position
- Previous position in Chahed's government:
 - Secretary of State to the Minister of Agriculture and Water Resources in charge of Agricultural Production (2016-2017)
- Vice President of the Tunisian Union of Agriculture and Fisheries (UTAP) (2013-2016)

[Hichem Ben Ahmed](#) - Secretary of State for Foreign Trade

- Afek Tounes
 - Was an early member of Nidaa Tounes but left the party in 2016
- New position
- Previously served in Chahed's government as Secretary of State for Transport (2016-2017)

[Lotfi Brahem](#) - Minister of Interior

- Independent but viewed as close to Nidaa Tounes
- New cabinet member
- Previously [was](#) [Fr] the Commander-in-Chief of the Tunisian National Guard (2015-2017)

- Some state that he has ties to Kamel Letaief, a controversial political figure and former close friend of Ben Ali

Slim Chaker - Minister of Health

- Nidaa Tounes
- New cabinet member
- Minister of Economy and Finance under PM Habib Essid (2015-2016)
- Minister of Youth and Sports under PM Essebsi (2011)
- Secretary of State in charge of Tourism under PM Ghannouchi (2011)

Slim Feriani - Secretary of State for Industry and Small and Medium-Sized Enterprises (SMEs)

- Independent
- New cabinet member
- Business background
- Was the CEO of Financing Bank for Small and Medium Enterprises (BFPME)

Hatem Chahreddine Ferjani - Secretary of State for Economic Diplomacy

- Nidaa Tounes
- New cabinet member
 - Former spokesman for the party's foreign coordination office

Imed Hammami - Minister of Industry and SMEs

- Ennahda
 - Party spokesperson since 2015
- New position
- Previous position in Chahed's government:
 - Minister of Employment and Vocational Training (2016-2017)

Khaled Kaddour - Minister of Energy, Mines and Renewable Energies

- Independent
- New cabinet member
- Former Director General of Energy at the Ministry of Industry
- CEO of Italo-Tunisian Oil Company, SITEP (2008-2011)

Mabrouk Korchid - Minister of State Property and Land Affairs

- People's Movement party
- New position
- Previous position in Chahed's government:
 - Former Secretary of State to the Minister of Finance in charge of Public Property and Land Affairs (2016-2017)

Taufik Rajhi - Minister in the Prime Minister's Office in Charge of Large-Scale Reforms

- Ennahda Party
- New cabinet member
- Previously an economic advisor to Chahed (2017)

Sarra Rejeb - Secretary of State to the Minister of Transport

- Independent
- CEO of the Tunisian National Railway Company (SNCFT) (2016-2017)
- CEO of Tunisair (2015-2016)
- CEO of Tunis Transport Company (TRANSTU) (2012-2015)

Abdelkoddus Saadaoui - Secretary of State for Youth

- Afek Tounes
 - Spokesperson for the party
- New cabinet member

III. Cabinet Members Retaining Their Positions

The following people retained their positions in Chahed's reshuffle:

Ahmed Adhoum - Minister of Religious Affairs

- Has ties to Marzouki and CPR party
- Previously served as
 - Minister of State and Land Affairs under PM Essebsi (2011)
 - Secretary of State to the Minister of Finance in charge of State Domains (2011)

Mehdi Ben Gharbia - Minister for Relations with Constitutional Institutions, Civil Society and Human Rights Organizations

- Independent
 - Previously affiliated with Ennahda in the past
 - Also used to be affiliated with Al-Joumhour party
 - Created the center-left Democratic Alliance party, then later quit to become an independent
- Member of Parliament (2014-2016)

Majdouline Cherni - Minister of Youth and Sports

- Nidaa Tounes
- Previously served as Secretary of State in charge of the Dossier of the Martyrs and Wounded of the Revolution under PM Essid (2015-2016)

Iyed Dahmani - Minister for Relations with Parliament and Representatives of the People

- Al-Joumhour
- Member of Parliament (2014-2016)

Selma Elloumi Rekik - Minister of Tourism

- Nidaa Tounes
- First appointed as Minister of Tourism by PM Essid in 2015

Ghazi Jeribi - Minister of Justice

- Independent
- Served as Minister of Defense under PM Jomaa (2014-2015)
- President of the High Committee on Administrative and Financial Control at the Administrative Tribunal and President of the Chamber responsible for disputes concerning authorizations for political parties (2007-2011)

Khemaies Jhinaoui - Minister of Foreign Affairs

- Nidaa Tounes
- Career diplomat
- Previously, diplomatic and foreign affairs advisor to President Essebsi (2015-2016)
- Secretary of State for Foreign Affairs (2011-2012)

Slim Khalbous - Minister of Higher Education and Scientific Research

- Independent
- Previously served as Interim Minister of Education (May-August 2017)

Mabrouk Korchid - Minister of State and Land Affairs

- People's Movement
 - One of the founding members of the party and a former spokesperson

Naziha Laâbidi - Minister of Women, Family and Children

- Independent
- Director of the advancement of women in the Ministry of Women, Family and Children (2005-2011)
 - Left the ministry to become an independent consultant

Zied Ladhari - Minister of Investment and International Cooperation

- Ennahda
- Previous position in Chahed's government: Minister of Industry and Commerce (2016-2017)
- Minister of Vocational Training and Employment (2015-2016) under PM Essid
- Lawyer

Anouar Maâroutf - Minister of Communication Technologies and the Digital Economy

- Ennahda
- Advisor to Mongi Marzouk, former Minister of Communication Technologies and the Digital Economy (2012-2013)

Mohamed Salah Arfaoui - Minister of Equipment, Housing and Spatial Planning

- Independent
- First appointed by PM Essid in 2015

Samir Taieb - Minister of Agriculture, Water Resources and Fisheries

- Al-Massar (Voie Démocratique et Sociale) party
 - Secretary General since 2014

Mohamed Trabelsi - Minister of Social Affairs

- Independent
- Was the Deputy Secretary of the Tunisian General Labor Union (UGTT) in charge of teaching and then communication and international relations

Mohamed Zine El Abidine - Minister of Culture

- Independent
- Former vocal Ben Ali supporter who had [praised](#) [Fr] his regime