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Note to the Secretary-General
(through the Deputy Secretary-General)

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TUNISIA: AFTERMATH OF THE ATTACK OF 24 NOVEMBER

1. The attack on 24 November against a bus carrying Presidential Guards in Tunis, resulting in 13 deaths and dozens of injuries, is a further indication of the extent of the threat of extremist violence facing the country. This marks the third significant incident this year, following the attacks on the Bardo Museum on 18 March and on foreign tourists in Sousse on 26 June, all of them claimed by Daesh affiliates. While some emergency measures were lifted in October, the Government has now reinstated a nationwide state of emergency, imposed a curfew in the larger Tunis region for 30 days, and closed the border with Libya for 15 days. This latest attack also comes on the heels of a political crisis within the largest party, *Nidaa Tounes*, that could threaten the stability of the Government at this critical moment.

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2. The Government remains focused on the twin tasks of promoting economic growth and employment as well as combatting extremist elements. Many of these elements have found a safe haven in the Chaambi Mountains area near the Algerian border. While carrying out frequent deadly assaults on security forces in that area, they have also demonstrated their capacity to attack targets in the capital and beyond. The authorities consider that the political and security vacuum in Libya facilitates this violence. It should also be noted that Tunisians remain among the largest components of foreign fighters within Daesh and its affiliates, and it seems that many Tunisian supporters of Daesh are ready to focus their efforts more locally. While there is no concrete proof of support to Daesh among the poor and the unemployed outside the capital, the presence of such support should not be dismissed, even if its extent remains unknown.

3. Earlier this month, *Nidaa Tounes* was plunged into crisis, when 32 out of 86 of its members of Parliament announced their resignation from its parliamentary bloc. While this resignation is not yet official, it could have significant impact. If this were to go through, the Islamist *Ennahda* party would become the largest party in parliament and a new Government might need to be formed. In any event, this episode has highlighted the fragility of *Nidaa Tounes*, a party made up from a wide spectrum of secularists including leftists, trade unionists and members of the now dissolved party of former President Ben Ali, seemingly united by their desire to deprive *Ennahda* of electoral victory but with little in common otherwise. Indeed, one of the major fault lines of the current crisis was over cooperation with *Ennahda*. It is unclear whether the two factions within the *Nidaa Tounes* will be able to overcome their issues.

4. In the medium and long term, in order to effectively deal with the challenges of economic development and security, Tunisia will require far-reaching internal reforms, which the government has been slow to push forward. President Essebsi acknowledged this in a national address on 29 November. While the 2011 revolution has brought about much greater political freedom, the governing structures, including those related to the economy and security services, have not witnessed the required transformation.

5. There is little incentive to initiate economic reforms, since the short-term impact would be greater unemployment. To date, Tunisia has not been able to secure the external financing required to offset such adverse results. Moreover, the increasing number of terrorist attacks makes reform of the security sector less likely than ever. US Secretary of State John Kerry recently visited Tunisia and promised US support for the security services and economic assistance, but these alone will not suffice. While foreign support is critical and a few major investment projects could go a long way, partners will need to work patiently and

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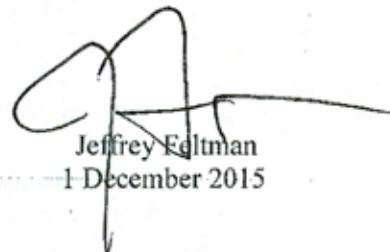
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commit to the long term. That being said, Tunisia has to weigh offers of security assistance from the US and Europe carefully, given the sensitivities of more powerful neighbours.

6. In a letter dated 2 April 2015 addressed to the United Nations Counter-Terrorism Executive Directorate (CTED), the Minister of Foreign Affairs of Tunisia called for UN support in drafting the new National Strategy on Counterterrorism. This strategy has been drafted and will be presented at an event in December. DPA, in coordination with the RC's Office, will continue to monitor the situation closely.



Jeffrey Eglman
1 December 2015

cc.: Ms. Clark
Mr. Fernandez-Taranco
Mr. Kobler
Mr. Laborde