



TV

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UN IN ACTION

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WOMEN IN THE NEW TUNISIA

VIDEO

RACHIDA WALKS ACROSS FIELDS
WITH HER MOTHER

RACHIDA WALKING

WIDE SHOT FIELDS

HOUSE

EXT. SHOTS

RACHIDA ON CAMERA

AUDIO

RACHIDA: (In Arabic) F

"I never thought I would get out of prison and be free again. I just never thought that would happen..." (4)

NARRATION:

Twenty-eight year old Rachida Kouki spent eighteen months in jail for a crime she says she didn't commit. // Rachida was born here, in one of the poorest regions in Tunisia, North Africa. Her family's poverty forced her, aged just 14, out of school and into the capital city, Tunis. She found a job as a maid with a wealthy, influential family, relatives of Tunisia's all-powerful then-president, Ben Ali. But, like many domestic workers, Rachida was abused and exploited by her employers // who kept her imprisoned in this house. (45)

RACHIDA: (In Arabic) F

"I tried to run away and she called the police and they caught me. // They took me to the

police station and they started beating me with a stick.” (7.5)

NARRATION:

Beat her with impunity. Isolated from contact with the outside world, Rachida couldn't stand life in that house any longer. (7.5)

RACHIDA: (In Arabic) F

EXT. HOUSE

“I thought to myself, life in jail is better than life in her house.” (4.5)

NARRATION:

FOOTAGE OF FIRE

In a desperate plea for help, Rachida set fire to a small rug in the house, knowing she would be jailed but preferring that prison to life in this household. But she was accused of trying to kill the family and was immediately arrested. //Without any legal representation, Rachida was charged and sentenced – to life imprisonment. (26)

STREET SCENES TUNIS

Rachida and her family were not the only ones to suffer injustice. // For decades, the Tunisians had lived under President Ben-Ali's brutally repressive regime; corruption was rampant and many were living in grinding poverty. Tunisian people took to the streets demanding an end to the tyranny and sparking a wave of uprisings which began in Tunisia in late 2010 and swept across the region. (24.5)

PEOPLE DEMONSTRATING ON STREETS

STREET CELEBRATIONS

And in January 2011, Ben Ali was forced to flee, leaving the door open for the election of a

JAZZAR IN OFFICE

transitional government and new hope for women like Rachida. // Lawyer Hayet Jazzar appealed to the interim president for the miscarriage of justice to be rectified. (19)

JAZZAR ON CAMERA

HAYET JAZZAR: (In French) M

“The president of the Republic gave his pardon and Rachida was set free on 25 July 2012.”
(6.5)

NARRATION:

But although Rachida is now free, the struggle for many women is far from over. (6)

WOMEN IN MEETING

NARRATION:

And to make sure that women’s rights are also fully protected, the Association of Tunisian Democratic Women or ATFD, with funding from the United Nations Democracy Fund, has set up a monitoring centre to detect exactly the kind of discrimination Rachida suffered. Halima Jouini is a member of ATFD. (27)

HALIMA ON CAMERA

HALIMA JOUINI: (In French) F

“This monitoring centre is very very important for us, so that women have the same equal opportunities. // Because WITHOUT equal opportunities in education and in work, and without a decent salary and working conditions, you can’t say that there is true freedom and that we are all full citizens.” (20)

RACHIDA WITH FAMILY

NARRATION:

And Rachida, now that she is free, also hopes

to become a full citizen in the new Tunisia. (7)

RACHIDA: (In Arabic)

“I want to get a job and work. I want to do things I couldn’t do before // I want to help my family have the best life ever.” (10.5)

UN LOGO

This report was produced by Gill Fickling for the United Nations. (4.5)