

Press Release

The ALECA Agreement Exited through the Door of Popular Rejection, Only to Return through the Window of Foreign Aid!

(Translated)

The Tunisian Presidency announced in an official statement on Sunday, 16/07/2023, the signing of a memorandum of understanding on Comprehensive and Strategic Partnership between Tunisia and the European Union in several areas, including trade enhancement and combating irregular migration, with a value exceeding 750 million euros. This came following a meeting at the Carthage Palace in Tunisia, where President Kais Saied met with the President of the European Commission, Ursula von der Leyen, and the Prime Ministers of Italy, Georgia Meloni, and The Netherlands, Mark Rutte. This was the same delegation that visited Tunisia on 11/06/2023 to discuss the issue of illegal immigration, while also hinting at the possibility of providing assistance to Tunisia in other areas.

In fulfilment of our duty to hold rulers accountable based on Islam and to adopt the interests of the people of Tunisia, it is important for us at the Media Office of Hizb ut Tahrir in Wilayah Tunisia to clarify the following to the public opinion:

Firstly, the memorandum of understanding signed with the European Union at the Carthage Palace is a satanic gateway to return to the ALECA Agreement for Deep and Comprehensive Free Trade Agreement (DCFTA) which emerged from the door of popular rejection only to re-enter through the window of European aid. Instead of apologizing to the people of Tunisia for decades of colonization and imposition of economic guardianship in vital sectors, we see European leaders persisting in their deceit. They not only engage in media deception about the true purpose of their visits but also exert their influence and hasten the attempt to pass this colonial agreement under a new deceptive title, taking advantage of Tunisia's crisis and with the complicity of pseudo-governors.

As a reminder, the notorious ALECA Agreement is an extension of the partnership between Tunisia and the European Union that commenced in 1995, and it has brought nothing but woes to our country. Tunisia lost at least 2.4% of its gross domestic product between 1996 and 2013, and during the same period, 55% of its industrial fabric evaporated. Will the believer be bitten twice from the same hole?! Will the wise people of Tunisia accept engaging once again in a path that destroys the economy and undermines the competitiveness of local products, not to mention obstructing any developmental program that emanates from the will of the nation? And who led the Tunisian economy to the brink of the abyss and to the point of begging at the doorstep of international financial institutions other than the European colonizer?!

Secondly, the evidence indicates that this memorandum of understanding is indeed an active attempt to revive the ALECA Agreement, which has been indefinitely postponed since the government of Youssef Chahed, and its postponements are almost countless. However, we deem it necessary to highlight two points in this statement:

1- Those who are familiar with the main axes of the Comprehensive and Strategic Partnership agreement, as published by the Ministry of Foreign Affairs, will find that it is based on the principles and foundations of the Comprehensive and Deep Free Trade Agreement

(DCFTA). Therefore, the issue of irregular migration has been employed as a lure to expedite the signing from the Tunisian side, especially after many parties in Tunisia rejected ALECA. This is because the issue of irregular migration is just a drop in the ocean compared to the deal that the European delegation secured. According to this memorandum, which covers various areas, the most significant ones include trade, agriculture, and control of water resources, telecommunications technology, and connecting Tunisia to Europe in the field of energy. It also stipulates participation in an investment forum planned to be held in the coming autumn to gather investors and financial institutions and develop tourism and the digital sector, as stated by the President of the European Commission.

2- We must not overlook the statement made by the Minister of Economy and Planning, Samir Said, in Djerba during the Francophonie Summit, where **he emphasized that the ALECA agreement between Tunisia and the European Union is just a matter of time and that it is currently under study with the European side.** This was also reaffirmed recently by the President of the Tunisian Union of Industry, Trade, and Handicrafts (UTICA), Samir Majoul, on the occasion of the official signing of the Tunisia Export Team Charter, which outlines the planning for the next thirty years.

Thirdly, the agreement includes assistance to Tunisia amounting to 105 million euros, earmarked for combating irregular migration. Additionally, there is an allocation of 150 million euros to support the country's budget, as Tunisia is facing a significant debt burden, equivalent to approximately 80% of its gross domestic product, and is experiencing liquidity shortages.

As for the statements of the three European officials during their first visit about providing Tunisia with full financial assistance of 900 million euros in the form of a loan over the coming years, it was merely a means to test the waters of the Tunisian authorities and pave the way for full acceptance of the agreement's content. These ominous aids are still conditional upon Tunisia reaching an agreement with the International Monetary Fund (IMF) to obtain a new loan and comply with all its stipulations, which some refer to as "**reforms.**" In this regard, von der Leyen only stated that **Brussels is ready to provide this assistance once the conditions are met** (AFP).

Fourth, the attempt of European colonial leaders to pass the ALECA Agreement in this cheap manner and to make it conditional on an agreement with the IMF for providing financial assistance, with priority given to funding related to immigration, reflects the colonial mindset driving the European leaders. This approach undermines all the slogans of sovereignty and independence that President Kais Saied claims. Additionally, Italy's announcement of the Tunisian President's attendance at a meeting dedicated to immigration and development in the Italian capital, Rome, on the coming Sunday, 23/07/2023, is further evidence that the Tunisian President has no real control over his decisions. It shows that this conference is solely a European initiative, contrary to what the President and his team have been promoting throughout the past period, as we revealed in our previous statement on 12/07/2023.

Fifth, Europe, which is targeted in its food and energy security following the Russo-Ukrainian war, is still seeking **solutions and alternatives** to meet its basic needs, especially in terms of grains and energy resources. It aims to rescue its economies and technological companies threatened by the American-Chinese competition. Additionally, there might be a **reconstruction project** taking shape under the American administration's guidance. It is natural for these capitalist countries to pursue such goals at the expense of their colonies. They do not limit themselves to exporting the pressure they face to these colonies, as seen in the immigration issue, but also impose loans on their colonies to alleviate the impact of the crisis faced by capitalism. Therefore, it is not surprising that Italian Foreign Minister, Antonio Tajani, called for supporting stability in Libya, Tunisia, and Sub-Saharan Africa during his participation in the NATO summit in Lithuania on 12/07/2023 **through a real Marshall Plan.**

Sixth, the assistance they claim to provide to Tunisia regarding the immigration issue is, in reality, nothing more than military funding to oblige Tunisia to combat irregular migration and bear the burden of repatriating migrants on behalf of Europeans. This means that Tunisia will turn into a security outpost to guard the southern European continent. As for linking Tunisia to Europe in the energy sector, it is a cunning plot that signifies nothing but further exploitation, control, subservience, and humiliation. The renewable energy program is a malicious and devilish scheme that will allow more global corporations to infiltrate and dominate renewable energy sources. Once these corporations gain control and exploit fossil fuels, which all studies confirm will deplete by the end of this century, North Africa will become the primary supplier of alternative energy to Europe. Tunisia, unfortunately, will only serve as a source of cheap labor and provide the infrastructure that will cost Tunisians multiple times more due to the crushing loans that exacerbate the deficit and poverty.

Seventh, it has become evident to anyone with insight and awareness that the capitalist system in Tunisia is nothing more than a tool to protect Europe's interests, serve its leaders, rescue its economy, and submit to the demands and economic priorities of its corporations at the expense of the country and its citizens. How else can we interpret their acceptance of these "protections" and embracing a new era of subservience, all while inviting European leaders to a Marshall Plan that brings to mind the idea of the old Financial Commission's plan?

Doesn't the president and those around him see that Tunisia is the loser in every measure and in the eyes of both heaven and earth? Hasn't his team of advisors looked into the report by the Dutch experts' center Ecorys, commissioned by the European Union, which confirmed that the deep and comprehensive free trade agreement with Europe will have negative effects on many sectors of the Tunisian economy, leading to a significant increase in imports from the EU and a general decline in exports?! How can these rulers drown the country in debt and borrow to import the same capitalist solutions and sterile policies that have shackled the nation and led it to this dead-end? Have they genuinely believed the deception of "qualifying" the economic sectors to face European product competition, or have they become mere employees of colonial circles, turning begging and subservience into official economic policies?!

In conclusion, we earnestly urge our people in Tunisia, the descendants of the companions and conquerors, to disavow this corrupt capitalist regime and its policies and symbols. We offer them sincere advice to embrace Islam, its principles, beliefs, and system. Let them work with those striving to liberate the country from colonialism once and for all and establish the Islamic State, the Khilafah Rashidah (rightly guided Caliphate). It is the command of our Lord, the source of our strength, and our salvation. The Khilafah will remove the illusory borders and return Tunisia to its natural embrace within the best Ummah raised for mankind. They should be certain that they are destined for a clear victory when they hold firmly to the strong rope of Allah and sever the ties with the colonial kuffar. As Allah (swt) says: **﴿إِنْ تَنْصُرُوا اللَّهَ يَنْصُرْكُمْ وَيُثَبِّتْ أَقْدَامَكُمْ﴾** **“if you support Allah, He will support you and plant firmly your feet.”** [Muhammad:7].

**Media Office of Hizb ut Tahrir
in Wilayah Tunisia**