

Administration of Barack Obama, 2015

Statement Congratulating the 2015 Nobel Peace Prize Recipients

October 9, 2015

On behalf of the American people, I congratulate Tunisia's National Dialogue Quartet on winning the Nobel Peace Prize. This brave coalition of workers, industry, lawyers and human rights advocates is an inspiring reminder that lasting peace and security can only be achieved when citizens are empowered to forge their own future and that democracy is both possible and necessary in the North Africa and the Middle East.

In the 5 years since a Tunisian fruit vendor set himself on fire to protest an oppressive dictatorship, the Tunisian people have made remarkable strides in building an inclusive democracy, and the Quartet has played an indispensable role. When the promise of the Jasmine Revolution was in doubt, the Quartet helped to bring Tunisians together in a peaceful dialogue. With the Quartet's support, Tunisians voted in free elections, forged a new constitution that upholds human rights and equality for all people, including women and minorities, and formed a national unity Government, including secular and Islamist parties, showing that democracy and Islam can indeed thrive together.

Today's award is therefore also a tribute to the perseverance and courage of the Tunisian people who, in the face of political assassinations and terrorist attacks, have come together in a spirit of unity, compromise and tolerance. I welcomed President Caid Essebsi, Tunisia's first democratically elected President, to the White House this year to reaffirm America's support for Tunisia's democracy, and I have been proud to meet with Tunisian students: young men and women who are working to create more opportunity and prosperity in their country. In a region gripped by so much tumult and violence, Tunisia points the way to a better future, one in which stability is pursued through peaceful dialogue, not violence and division.

Just as the world must support the Tunisian people, we must stand with civil society groups around the world who advocate, often at great risk to themselves, for the human rights and inherent dignity of every human being. In this never-ending work for justice and peace, these fearless men and women have a steadfast partner in the United States of America.

Categories: Statements by the President : 2015 Nobel Peace Prize recipients.

Names: Caid Essebsi, Beji.

Subjects: Decorations, medals, and awards : Nobel Prize; Tunisia : Democracy efforts; Tunisia : National Dialogue Quartet, Nobel Peace Prize; Tunisia : President; Tunisia : Relations with U.S.

DCPD Number: DCPD201500711.