



## **When Women Win**

*Democracy! The Podcast*

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### **Adrienne Ross 0:06**

Hi, and welcome to *Democracy! The Podcast* that shines the light on some of the darkest challenges facing the fight for democracy around the globe.

### **Joe Biden 0:16**

Democracy will and must prevail.

### **Adrienne Ross 0:20**

This podcast is brought to you by the Consortium for Elections and Political Process Strengthening direct from Washington DC, with support from our friends at the United States Agency for International Development through the Global Elections and Political Transitions Award. I'm your host, Adrienne Ross.

The first woman to serve as the United States Secretary of State and founder of the influential Albright Stonebridge group, Dr. Madeleine Albright joins us today to talk about why it matters when women win and what it's been like for her to have a seat at the table. We'll also talk with her about a dire threat facing women in public life, targeted violence, and we'll get an update on it from Peru. But first, before we sit down with the Secretary, we've got an in depth look at Tunisia's long tradition of being a leader in women's participation and representation. Communications Officer Amy Radlinski gets us started.

### **Amy Radlinski 1:21**

The Republic of Tunisia has long been one of the world's more promising spots for democracy. The northernmost country in Africa is home to the Tunisian National Dialogue Quartet, the 2015 Nobel Peace Prize winner that created a constitutional system when the country was on the brink of a civil war. And woman first earned the right to vote here in 1957. But some parts of the democracy have been slower to deliver, and many Tunisians today say they are frustrated by corruption, mismanagement of the COVID-19 response and a weak economy. Recently, anger boiled over into violent street protests, President Saied dismissed the Parliament and the nation's Prime Minister and turned COVID response over to the military. But as Tunisia struggles to find its democratic footing today, we applaud the Republic for its long history of success pursuing equal

representation. In fact, Tunisian women led the way in 2018 by winning 47% of representation in municipal assembly seats.

**Adrienne Ross** 2:20

Nicolas Kaczorowski and Rebeb Zaatour join us now to talk more about the role women play in Tunisia's politics. As the International Foundation for Electoral Systems' Country Director for Tunisia, Nicolas has supported a lot of elections, including the 2018 municipal election, the first since the Arab Spring in 2011. Nicolas, who calls Leon home, has also worked on democracy issues for the UN in East Timor and led the election department in Europe's Office of Democratic Institutions and Human Rights. His colleague Rebeb Zaatour is the project officer for IFES. She has grown up in Tunisia and today works with women who live in rural areas to help them understand their rights and responsibilities towards elections. They join us from Tunis. Nicolas, we would be remiss to talk about women's roles and rights in Tunisia without first talking about the current political turmoil, what have you witnessed on the ground?

**Nicolas Kaczorowski** 3:19

Thanks, Adrienne. What I would say is that I have witnessed mixed feelings, you know, about what happened on the 25th of July. On the one hand, a sense of happiness and relief, but also a sense of liberation. You know, you've seen celebrations on the streets on the 25th of July that clearly shows a popular support to the president's move. Tunisia has felt that democracy has not delivered on its promises to our citizens. Promises that the 2011 revolution has not been fulfilled. So, Parliament suffers also from a great distrust from the people and politicians seem to not care. Like there is a perception that they care more about their own interest and power than about citizens' needs. Finally, I think that citizens felt that someone heard them, heard their suffering, and that was the president by taking the actions he took on the 25th of July. On the other hand, there's a sense of concern, I think, and weariness this among, you know, some parts of the population. So, let's use it as call for vigilance about what happened. And in a way these events are thrown a certain level of constitutional legal and political uncertainty. So currently, parliament is suspended. There is no Prime Minister, there is no clear plan being announced on how to address the top concerns of the population, one being COVID but also unemployment, youth opportunities, but also economic reform.

**Adrienne Ross** 4:46

The election of women to office has really been impressive to watch in Tunisia over the last couple years, in particular. What do you attribute their success to?

**Nicolas Kaczorowski** 4:56

I would say aboard but also far beyond Tunisia, Tunisia has been seen as a leading country, you know, when it comes to women's participation and representation. I see several converging factors that could explain Tunisia's impressive record, this is by no means exhaustive, but I'll give you three. First, there is tradition of women activism, you know, since the 19<sup>th</sup> and 20<sup>th</sup> century in Tunisia, that was coordinated with the adoption of the code of personal standards in 1956, right at the independence of the country, which discusses the landmark in gender equality, you know, it provides a set of progressive laws that protects women's rights, certainly your first and only in the Arab world. The second is that Tunisia has bred well known and influential women's organizations, they know they've been fighting for decades for women's rights and greater gender parity. And finally, I would say that there is a conducive constitutional and legal architecture, you know, that has created the foundation, the legal foundation for supporting women's rights. And recall that the constitution proceeds the equality between women and men. And I like to quote Article 46 of the constitution that mandates equal representation of women in elected assemblies. You know why this is aspirational? And you know, we haven't reached that goal yet. It's a bold and ambitious objective that I think should be commended.

**Adrienne Ross 6:16**

It is very impressive, but I have to ask for all of the turnout that you've seen women running for office, there still is quite a disparity in voter turnout of women versus men at the ballot box. Is that right, Rebeb?

**Rebeb Zaatour 6:29**

Yes, that's absolutely correct. So, the turnout of rural women in elections is low as compared to men. And actually, this is due to many factors. I remember that in 2015, based on the results of the 2014 national elections in Tunisia, a Tunisian CSO conducted a survey with 5,200 rural women from five different governorates. The survey aims to understand the causes of this low turnout and as well to know, what are the obstacles that prevent rural women from voting and from registering. So, most of the responses were because of the high illiteracy rate in the remote and rural areas. We noticed that many rural women explained that they cannot exercise the rights as voters because they face challenges when they read the candidates electoral programs. Also, they have a lack of knowledge about elections. In addition, rural women in general have a lack of financial means to go to register or to vote. In some rural areas, men represent a hurdle for women to go and vote. They did not allow their wives, their mothers, or any female relatives to cast their ballots in elections, since from their perspective, elections are only for men.

**Adrienne Ross 8:04**

Well, and that, as you know, is not something that's unique to Tunisia. We've seen similar trends and other countries but your team recognized that something really needed to be done to help get these women to the polls. What did your team do?

**Rebeb Zaatour 8:21**

So, we started by recruiting a 300 woman ambassadors, we call them woman ambassadors, on elections, and we trained them on elections on decentralization, local governance and communication techniques. Their role was to go to the field and convince rural women who are living in remote areas to go and register and to vote in both election with 28 municipal elections, and the 29th municipal elections. The objective was to make the voice of woman heard by the local authorities and give them the floor to discuss the main challenges faced by the rural woman towards their municipality, such as the infrastructure, the electricity, the water, the pollution, etc. So IFES during these campaigns selected 12 governorates which have the highest percentage of illiteracy, according to the Tunisian Institute of statistics. The illiteracy rate is currently standing at 19.1% of the overall population.

**Adrienne Ross 9:30**

I understand you had quite a bit of work cut out for you in asking these women to come to the ballot and actually come out to vote. Can you tell us some of the stories and what you had to do to convince these ladies that their vote counted and mattered?

**Rebeb Zaatour 9:46**

Yeah, of course. I remember one rural woman from Vasia Governorate in Tunisia, she called Nisha. Nisha said that we had the wrong idea about election. Because of the political parties who were using our lack of knowledge for their interest, but thanks to the efforts made by the woman ambassadors, we increased our knowledge about electoral concepts and who are convinced about the importance of our participation. And we will not let anyone manipulate as there is also another woman from Tata she called Salma. She says that before the ambassadors showed up at my door, I decided not to vote anymore, because we have no jobs, no water. And I thought that every time we vote, there weren't any tangible results. It's only after ambassador's visit that I started to reconsider voting. She convinced me that I should make my voice heard. And now I will teach my children how to vote so that they have a better future.

**Adrienne Ross 10:58**

It's really transformative, isn't it? It's quite a cultural shift.

**Rebeb Zaatour 11:03**

Yeah, I found it very important that during our campaigns, many woman ambassadors face multiple challenges in getting men's permission to talk to their female siblings. In fact, rural women in general, need permission from their husbands to go and vote. And this made the conversation

between the ambassadors and the rural woman very difficult. Some men in some rural areas refused to allow their wives to participate in elections.

**Adrienne Ross** 11:36

We've seen many, many women run for office. And now we've heard Rebeb's story about trying to be more inclusive in society. What do you think the future holds?

**Nicolas Kaczorowski** 11:47

Yeah, I think that dimension should address now for Tunisia is not so much on participation, although there is progress to be made, but it's more on women's representation. Overall, Tunisia fares relatively well, when you look at the word, you know, Tunisia went but 73rd, US 67. So, you know, in terms of the number of women in Parliament, so they're not quite I mean, that they're doing quite well. However, the share of women in Parliament, you know, has decreased from 2014-2019. So, in 2014, there was about 31% of women represented parliament, it went down to a quarter with only 54 women MPs elected in 2019. So, the trend is not so positive there. But currently, there are some rumors going around the country that the President may actually appoint the first women Prime Minister in the history of Tunisia, I mean, those are still rumors, we'll see when the announcement is made, that they could be a government made of only women. I mean, that would be certainly a first.

**Adrienne Ross** 12:47

That would be an extraordinary announcement to hear. Do you think we'll ever see a woman elected president in Tunisia?

**Nicolas Kaczorowski** 12:54

You know, this is a this is a really tough question. And of course, it's up to Tunisian voters to decide. You know, we run a poll not too long ago and Tunisians when they ask, the voters express their readiness to vote for women, you know, if she's considered equally qualified as the man candidate, so it shows some openness to vote for a woman during the last presidential election. So back in 2019, only two candidates were actually women out of 26 candidates so it shows that political arena remains a man's affair in a way.

**Rebeb Zaatour** 13:26

Yes, of course. We are waiting for a Tunisian President Tunisian woman president actually,

**Adrienne Ross** 13:33

We'll keep our fingers crossed. And we'll certainly keep watching.

**Nicolas Kaczorowski** 13:36

Tunisia is leading. It has a leading role in women's rights and hope that we will continue to carry this weight and carry this leadership forward.

**Adrienne Ross** 13:46

Switching gears now we're going to talk about a very grave concern facing women in public life. It's often hidden and difficult to prosecute, but make no mistake, violence is happening to women in politics all over the globe. We're joined by Missy Reif from the Latin America team to better describe the problem. Missy, political violence can be experienced by anyone.

**Missy Reif** 14:07

Yes, from first time voters to seasoned Heads of State.

**Adrienne Ross** 14:11

Do we have any idea how many women a year this kind of violence affects?

**Missy Reif** 14:15

Honestly, that's a tough question because political violence can take many shapes and forms. Violence around the world, not just in Latin America, can be directed at people of all genders. However, this specific issue of violence against women in politics has three distinct characteristics. First, it targets women because of their gender. Second, the form of violence itself can be gendered as exemplified by sexist threats or sexual violence. And third, its impact is specifically to discourage women from being or becoming politically active. It encompasses all different forms like aggression, harassment, coercion, and intimidation against women as political actors simply because they are women.

**Adrienne Ross** 14:58

It's really frightening. We also know it's really effective in some countries. Can you share some examples of attacks you've witnessed in Peru?

**Missy Reif 15:06**

Yes. So, with USAID funding CEPPS partners supported the Jurado de Elecciones Nacionales or the National Elections Jury to develop some tools to track instances of violence against women in politics, and again, analyze this information to see what can be improved and future electoral processes. In Peru, the equality office of the Jurado noted that 52% of women candidates in the most recent congressional election reported experiencing some type of violence. Specifically, one report included someone sharing a candidate's phone number and address in order to threaten her and encouraging others to Dox her. Other examples included sexist comments, defamation of character. So again, I think it's important to remember that while bodily harm or sexual violence may be the most obvious instances of violence against women in politics, it can really take any form beyond just physical harm.

**Adrienne Ross 16:01**

Well, Missy, thank you so much for all your work on this we'll continue to keep track of your findings and keep an eye on the region.

**Missy Reif 16:08**

Thank you.

**Adrienne Ross 16:16**

For close up look at this global issue, we are joined now by a woman who has not only cracked the glass ceiling, but skyrocketed well into our stratosphere. A professor, author, diplomat and businesswoman, Madeleine Albright became the first woman to serve as the 64th Secretary of State under President Bill Clinton in 1997. That appointment made her the highest-ranking woman in the history of the US government at that time. Today, she is the founder of the influential Albright Stonebridge Group, a distinguished professor at Georgetown University, a seven time New York Times bestselling author, and she chairs the board of the National Democratic Institute, one of the Consortium's three principal partners. Among her extraordinary accomplishments, Secretary Albright has never stopped championing the endless challenges women face. She is here now to tell us why and why it matters when women win. Madam Secretary, Dr. Albright, thank you so much for making time for us today. I'd like to start today by talking about a terrible subject. But we see truly horrifying stories of women suffering violent retaliation for participating in public life. For the past several years now, you've been deeply committed to calling attention to this issue. Why is this focus so important for you?

**Dr. Madeleine Albright 17:35**

Well, this is a focus that I've had for quite a long time. When I was in office, I was concerned about trafficking in women and various issues that were coming up. And then when I was also in office, I went to a refugee camp near the Khyber Pass, and it was filled with women who had escaped Afghanistan. And they were telling stories about what had happened to their families, the violence against the families. And they would, they were telling stories about how their sisters or mothers had been beaten up, or stories about how one of their relatives jumped out a window in order to avoid being raped. And so, I was with them. And they were very much on my mind throughout the time that I was in office, and certainly since, and I knelt down to be very close to them, and I reached out to shake hands and, and then I said, I will never let you down. So, it has really been on my mind constantly. And especially given the kinds of things that we have seen recently going on. I do think that women have suffered a great deal, they suffered various times that the Taliban were in office, and they are now again, potentially the victims of major violence, which is why I think it's very important for those of us that have a voice to speak out against what's going on, and making sure that this is not what happens and then trying to help those women that had pasts where they have really been very vocal, and are probably now under greater threat to make sure that we can help get them out. And I am really, very encouraged by the fact that the women members of Congress are very dedicated to having this be a key issue for things that they talk about.

**Adrienne Ross** 19:32

Absolutely. And that leads us to our next our next question that I wanted to ask you about the importance of women in democracy and you have often been quoted as saying success without democracy is improbable. Democracy without women is impossible. How does that quote apply to Afghanistan and the United States and everywhere abroad?

**Dr. Madeleine Albright** 19:53

I think that's the thing that is important. First, even if I weren't a feminist, more than half the population have practically every country is female. And therefore, it is a waste of resource not to have women involved in active ways to make life better in their own countries. And I do think that what we are seeing in across the world, that women really do and can and must play a very important role. Democracy is for all the people. And I do think that it is essential to have women run for office, violence against women should not be the cost of that, because a lot of women then do have positions in government are then in fact, picked out by people who oppose it, and they are threatened. They personally are threatened, and their families are threatened. So, it is a matter of not only making sure that they run for office, but that they also are respected and don't have to worry about what happens to their families if they speak out.

**Adrienne Ross** 21:01

Right. And we've seen that as a great deterrent. Unfortunately, in many locations. Sometimes women's roles are trivialized, though. For instance, I'm re-reading your *Madam Secretary* book,



and you know, you talk about your early volunteer work, but sometimes don't we find that men in particular will say, Oh, that's, that's so nice, woman in charge. Why? Why is it really important that women have an integral role in places like the Situation Room, or lead on diplomatic negotiations?

**Dr. Madeleine Albright 21:31**

I really do think it's very important to have a woman's voice in the room, and actually more than one woman's voice, because part of the problem if you are the only woman in the room, and I must say that I felt subject to this myself, is I would want to say something and then I think, well, that'll sound stupid. And then some man says it, and everybody thinks it's brilliant. And you're mad at yourself for not saying something, and the men would support each other, you know, John would be speaking, and he say, well, as Joe thought or, you know, Bob thought. And so, I think it's important to have more than one woman in the room so we can really speak to each other, for each other, with each other, and really be there. But I do think that having women's views and women's voices in a room is absolutely essential for good decision making.

**Adrienne Ross 22:26**

Do you think that having women in the room changed the outcome in some way?

**Dr. Madeleine Albright 22:31**

I do think, you know, these are generalizations, but I do think that men and women think somewhat differently. I do think because women have to multitask just to exist, that women have more peripheral vision, in terms of kind of seeing the consequences of issues and understanding peripherally. Men, I do believe and again, this is a generalization, may think longer about one subject. And therefore, having the combination, I think is very important. I do think women are better at putting themselves into the other person's shoes, which is something that is absolutely essential for diplomacy, understanding what the other people are thinking and then caring. I do think that that is something that has made a big difference. Initially, I have to tell you, as the virus was spreading the countries that were doing the best for those run by women, Taiwan, New Zealand, Norway, Sweden, a number of countries that really did have active women.

**Adrienne Ross 23:39**

Do you think that we have enough women on the international scene right now?

**Dr. Madeleine Albright 23:43**

Well, no, I don't think we have enough women. And but I think the women that we have seen and had I'm very sorry that Angela Merkel's time is over in Germany, she has played a very, very large

role. And has, this sounds very patronizing, but has grown into it. I remember, I first met her when she took over the party, but then she became Chancellor. And that made a big difference because she played a very, very important role. I was watching the United Nations meeting yesterday, actually to talk about what had happened in Afghanistan. And obviously, the United States is represented again by a woman, by Linda Thomas Greenfield, but so is the United Kingdom. And the Deputy for Ireland is a woman and so I was the only woman on the Security Council at the time that I was in New York and, and I do think it makes a difference. And by the way, the thing that happened when I was ambassador to the UN, and it was one of the first times I didn't have to cook lunch myself, so I asked my assistant to get the other women ambassadors so that I could meet with them. And at that time, there were 183 countries in the United Nations. So, I get to my you know, place I lived and there are six other women there out of all of that, Canada, Philippines, Kazakhstan, Trinidad Tobago, Jamaica and Liechtenstein and me. So being the American, I decided that we had to form a caucus. And we call ourselves the G7. And we agreed always to take each other's telephone calls, we exchanged what our backgrounds were, what we were doing. But we did lobby together for something which was there was a new War Crimes Tribunal in terms of what had been happening in the Balkans and most of the crimes are being committed against women, rapes. And we were able to lobby to get two women judges on the first former Yugoslav court. And that made a difference, we also were able to get rape declared a weapon of war. So, I do think it makes a difference. And when there were men who said to me, why would you take a call from Liechtenstein instead of me, and I actually had the gall to say to this person will get yourself replaced by a woman, and I'll always take your telephone call.

**Adrienne Ross 26:12**

You have great stories. Do you have any others you can share with us?

**Dr. Madeleine Albright 26:16**

I have to tell you that one of the hard parts is what it was like to go into a meeting, man, oh, you wouldn't believe it, you travel abroad and it's a very important meeting. And the truth is that everything really does begin with small talk. So, men talk about, believe it or not, about their ties or something. And so, you know, they weren't used to dealing with a woman. And we would begin, and I would do some pleasantries and glad to be in your country and all that and we wouldn't get anywhere. So, I finally would say, Excuse me, but I have come a long way. So, I must be frank. And then I really made some very frank points, but you have to be able to read the room a little bit, and not automatically be angry, but try to figure out what you need to say and say it and really be very proud to represent your country, which I clearly was.

**Adrienne Ross 27:15**

Well, I'm going to have to use that Frank line myself sometime. You referenced in your book, I can't remember who asked you, but somebody asked you if you had trouble getting the men to listen to

you? And you said, absolutely not. I flew in on Air Force One with the United States seal emblazoned on the side. And that's a powerful moment that you recall in that book.

**Dr. Madeleine Albright 27:35**

Well, let me tell you how it all came up. What happened was when my name came up to be Secretary of State, because it was clear that Warren Christopher wasn't going to stay for a second term. So, there was a period of what I call the great mentioning, and my name was out there. And somebody said, well, a woman couldn't be Secretary of State, because Arab countries would not deal with a woman. So, what happened actually was the Arab ambassadors at the UN with whom I had dealt put out a statement saying we had no problems dealing with Ambassador Albright, we wouldn't have any problems dealing with Secretary Albright, then somebody at the White House and I never want to know who said, Yeah, Madeline is on the list, but she's second tier. So, I was sure that I would never get it. Anyway, I was named Secretary of State and I did arrive to deal with the Gulf Cooperation Council in Kuwait. And I did arrive in a very large plane that said, United States of America. And then we had our meeting. And I actually said, You've been very kind, perhaps you've noticed that I'm not dressed the way my predecessors were. And next time, we'll talk about women's rights, and we did, but I really do now have to tell the story of how come I did get to be Secretary of State. Because what happened was that once I was I traveled with First Lady Hillary Clinton and President Clinton. And we had this kind of thing that we did, where I would introduce her, she would introduce him, and we were somewhere abroad at an embassy. And President Clinton told the following story, that during the period of the time that there was a discussion about who would be the next Secretary, that Hillary would come to him and say, why wouldn't you name Madeline, she's most in tune with your views, and expresses them better than anybody else. And besides, it would make your mother happy. So that is how it happened.

**Adrienne Ross 29:33**

Let me just ask you one question about democracy right now, in general, democracy is experiencing a significant fight for its existence in so many countries all over the world. How do you make sense of what we're witnessing?

**Dr. Madeleine Albright 29:45**

Well, I think that there are questions generally about governance. And I have to say that what has happened is that in many places, kind of the social contract has been broken, where people gave up their individual rights in order to have the government take on certain duties, and at the part of the other side of the contract is that then the citizens have a responsibility to know what is going on and participate. And to some extent, a lot of those things, in some ways have broken down. And so that is the time that some kind of a strong leader steps in and says, I can do that better. I did write a book called *Fascism: A Warning* that really shows that when there are major disagreements, and there is some kind of a leader who says that he can solve the problem, there is a way that they

get ahead, and democracy really does suffer. I truly do believe that we are all the same, that people want to be able to make decisions about their own lives. And it may begin with where they live or send their children to school. But it then really grows into wanting to have a voice in how their country is run. And I think I see that is happening in some places. And I think that we can't just decide or give up and think that authoritarianism does things better, it does not.

**Adrienne Ross 31:18**

And you witnessed so many falls of democracy and in sort of that cyclical cycle in Eastern Europe while you were growing up.

**Dr. Madeleine Albright 31:26**

I was born in Czechoslovakia, which became a victim of fascism. And so, I spent the war in England, with my family, my father, who was a diplomat, working for the government in exile. And then later, Czechoslovakia was taken over by communists. So, I have seen the country I was born in being taken over by authoritarian governments twice. But I also have seen a moment of great hope and exhilaration with the fall of the wall and the end of the Soviet Union, where countries really began, the ones in Central and Eastern Europe, to see that they could have a life that did not divide them from democracy.

**Adrienne Ross 32:13**

Well, no wiser words. Thank you so much for joining me today. I really appreciate your time.

**Dr. Madeleine Albright 32:18**

Thank you so much for asking those really important questions, because they are the basis of where we have to go. And this is a new era. I believe it very strongly.

**Adrienne Ross 32:30**

Thank you, Madam Secretary.

**Dr. Madeleine Albright 32:32**

Very good to be with you, Adrienne. Thanks a lot.

**Adrienne Ross 32:37**

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