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Tunisian National Organizations and Their Role in Supporting the Algerian Revolution (1954–1962): A Study in Mechanisms of Popular Support

Tunuslu Ulusal Örgütler ve Cezayir Devrimi’ni Desteklemedeki Rollerini (1954–1962): Halk Desteği Mekanizmaları Üzerine Bir İnceleme

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Abstract

This study examines the role of Tunisian national organizations in supporting the Algerian Revolution during the period (1954–1962), analyzing the forms of popular support provided alongside the official backing of the Tunisian state. The study addresses the core problem of revealing the nature, mechanisms, and impact of this role in serving the Algerian Revolution, drawing upon French archival documents, Algerian and Tunisian primary sources, and oral testimonies. The findings demonstrate that Tunisian national organizations—headed by the General Union of Tunisian Students (UGET), the General Tunisian Labour Union (UGTT), women's organizations, and the Tunisian Scouts, in addition to professional associations—contributed to supporting the revolution through multifaceted mechanisms. These included political and media mobilization, defending the Algerian cause in regional and international forums, organizing Algerian students and workers, providing refugee relief, fundraising, and supplying headquarters, training, and material and logistical assistance, thereby enhancing the revolution's resilience and continuity. The study concludes that Tunisian national organizations constituted a fundamental pillar in

Özet

Bu çalışma, 1954–1962 yılları arasında Tunuslu ulusal örgütlerin Cezayir Devrimi’ne verdikleri desteği incelemekte ve Tunus devletinin resmi desteğinin yanı sıra sunulan halk desteğinin çeşitli biçimlerini analiz etmektedir. Araştırma, Fransız arşiv belgeleri, Cezayir ve Tunus’a ait birincil kaynaklar ile sözlü tanıklıklardan hareketle söz konusu desteğin niteliğini, mekanizmalarını ve Cezayir Devrimi üzerindeki etkisini ortaya koyma temel problemi üzerine yoğunlaşmaktadır. Araştırmanın bulguları; başta Tunus Genel Öğrenci Birliği (UGET) ve Tunus Genel İşçi Birliği (UGTT) olmak üzere kadın örgütlerinin, Tunus izci teşkilatlarının ve çeşitli meslek kuruluşlarının çok boyutlu mekanizmalar aracılığıyla Cezayir Devrimi’ni desteklediğini göstermektedir. Bu destek mekanizmaları; siyasi ve medyatik seferberliği, Cezayir davasının bölgesel ve uluslararası platformlarda savunulmasını, Cezayirli öğrenci ve işçilerin örgütlenmesini, mültecilere yardım sağlanmasını, bağış kampanyalarının düzenlenmesini ve merkez, eğitim, maddi yardım ve lojistik destek sunulmasını kapsamıştır. Bu faaliyetler, devrimin dayanıklılığının güçlendirilmesine ve kesintisiz biçimde sürdürülmesine önemli katkılar sağlamıştır.

the external support system of the Algerian Revolution, and that their contribution transcended mere moral solidarity to encompass impactful practical roles, as corroborated by French archival records that document colonial surveillance of these activities. Ultimately, understanding Tunisian support for the Algerian Revolution requires incorporating the vital roles of civil society and national organizations as a genuine manifestation of Maghrebi solidarity and an active force in sustaining the revolution until independence.

Keywords: Algerian Revolution, Tunisian National Organizations, Popular Support, General Union of Tunisian Students (UGET), General Tunisian Labour Union (UGTT).

Çalışma, Tunuslu ulusal örgütlerin Cezayir Devrimi'nin dış destek sisteminin temel dayanaklarından birini oluşturduğu sonucuna ulaşmaktadır. Bu örgütlerin katkıları yalnızca manevi dayanışmayla sınırlı kalmamış, devrimin gidişatı üzerinde etkili olan somut ve uygulamaya dönük roller de içermiştir. Fransız arşiv belgelerinde sömürge yönetiminin bu faaliyetleri yakından izlediğinin kaydedilmesi de söz konusu desteğin önemini doğrulamaktadır.

Sonuç olarak Tunus'un Cezayir Devrimi'ne verdiği desteğin kapsamlı biçimde anlaşılması, sivil toplum kuruluşları ile ulusal örgütlerin üstlendiği hayati rollerin araştırmalara dâhil edilmesini gerektirmektedir. Bu örgütlerin faaliyetleri, Mağrip dayanışmasının gerçek bir tezahürü ve Cezayir Devrimi'nin bağımsızlığa kadar devam etmesini sağlayan etkin bir güç olarak değerlendirilmelidir.

Anahtar Kelimeler: Cezayir Devrimi, Tunuslu ulusal örgütler, halk desteği, Tunus Genel Öğrenci Birliği (UGET), Tunus Genel İşçi Birliği (UGTT).

Introduction

The Algerian Revolution (1954–1962) represented one of the most prominent national liberation movements of the twentieth century. Its impact was not confined to internal Algerian territory; rather, it extended across its Maghrebi, Arab, and international surroundings, where it garnered diverse forms of political, military, and humanitarian support (Dahesh, 2004; Srhir, 2010). Tunisia occupied a special position in this support network due to geographic proximity and deeply rooted historical ties binding the Algerian and Tunisian peoples. Tunisia's role was not limited to hosting revolutionary institutions and offering strategic depth; it extended to mobilizing all segments of Tunisian society to contribute actively to the Algerian liberation struggle (Ben Soltane et al., 2007; Ouamane, 2017).

In this context, Tunisian national organizations—foremost among them student, trade union, women's, scouting, and professional unions—played a prominent role in supporting the Algerian Revolution. They did so through refugee relief, fundraising, defending the Algerian cause in regional and international forums, organizing Algerian students and workers, and providing material and moral support, rendering them one of the most important pillars of popular support for the revolution (Ben Youssef, 2003; Katouta, 2013–2014).

Despite the historical importance of this role, most academic studies have focused primarily on official Tunisian state support for the Algerian Revolution. Consequently, the contributions of Tunisian national organizations remained scattered across general historical accounts without receiving an independent, systematic study examining their precise nature, mechanisms, and overall impact. Relying on French archival documents alongside Algerian and Tunisian primary sources and oral testimonies, this study seeks to uncover the nature of the role assumed by Tunisian national organizations in supporting the Algerian Revolution between 1954 and 1962, trace the key mechanisms and domains of this support, and evaluate its contribution to sustaining revolutionary resilience and consolidating Maghrebi solidarity.

To achieve these objectives, the study answers the following core research question: To what extent did Tunisian national organizations contribute to supporting the Algerian Revolution, what were the key mechanisms adopted to achieve this support, and what impact did this support leave in service of the revolution? In addressing this question, the study analyzes the major Tunisian national organizations involved, evaluates their political, humanitarian, and social contributions, and integrates archival and historical evidence to offer a comprehensive vision of this popular support within the broader framework of Maghrebi solidarity.

Methodology

This study adopts a qualitative historical research design to examine the role of Tunisian national organizations in supporting the Algerian Revolution between 1954 and 1962. The historical method was selected because the research seeks to reconstruct, interpret, and evaluate past activities through archival evidence, contemporary publications, official documents, scholarly literature, and oral testimony. Rather than measuring support quantitatively, the study investigates its organizational forms, operational mechanisms, principal actors, and contribution to the continuity of the Algerian liberation struggle.

The study is guided by the following central question: To what extent did Tunisian national organizations contribute to the Algerian Revolution, through which mechanisms was this support delivered, and how did it influence the revolution's external resilience? The unit of analysis consists of the documented activities of Tunisian student, trade-union, women's, scouting, commercial, agricultural, and professional organizations. Particular attention is given to the General Union of Tunisian Students, the General Tunisian Labour Union, the National Union of Tunisian Women, the Tunisian Scouts, and relevant professional and economic associations.

The source base combines primary and secondary historical materials. Primary sources include French military and intelligence records preserved in the Service Historique de la Défense in Vincennes, France; documents and statements associated with the National Liberation Front; contemporary issues of *El Moudjahid*; organizational resolutions; and an oral-history interview with Mujahid Tayeb Sedira conducted on December 27, 2021. The French archival materials include intelligence bulletins, operational reports, assessments of FLN activities in Tunisia, and records concerning student, labour, refugee, and cross-border activities. Secondary sources include scholarly books, journal articles, theses, dissertations, and conference proceedings addressing the Algerian Revolution, Tunisian support, Maghrebi solidarity, student activism, trade-union cooperation, refugee relief, and scouting organizations.

Sources were selected purposively according to their direct relevance to the research question. A document was included when it provided verifiable information about a Tunisian organization, a form of support offered to Algerian revolutionary institutions or populations, the beneficiaries of that support, or the French colonial administration's response to such activities. Materials dealing exclusively with official interstate relations were used only when they helped contextualize or clarify the activities of non-state organizations. Repetitive accounts lacking identifiable documentary or scholarly foundations were not treated as independent evidence.

The collected evidence was subjected to external and internal source criticism. External criticism was used to establish each document's provenance, date, issuing institution, archival reference, and relationship to the events under examination. Internal criticism focused on the purpose, terminology, intended audience, perspective, and potential bias of each source. French military and intelligence records were treated with particular caution because they were produced within a colonial security apparatus and frequently described revolutionary actors through politically charged terminology. Such language was not adopted as the researcher's own analytical vocabulary. The evidentiary value of these records lies principally in the activities, organizations, locations, dates, and institutional concerns they document.

Triangulation was employed to strengthen the credibility of the historical interpretation. Claims derived from French archival documents were compared, where possible, with Algerian and Tunisian publications, organizational histories, academic studies, and oral testimony. Convergence among institutionally and politically distinct sources was treated as stronger historical support than an assertion appearing in a single record. When sources differed in emphasis or interpretation, the disagreement was considered in relation to their institutional origins and historical purposes instead of being concealed.

The evidence was analyzed through qualitative thematic analysis. Relevant information was extracted and classified according to the organization involved, the period of activity, the intended beneficiary, the form of support, and the documented or inferred function of the activity. The principal analytical categories included political and media mobilization, regional and international advocacy, student organization, trade-union cooperation, refugee relief, fundraising, medical assistance, institutional training, provision of premises, and material and logistical support. These categories were developed through repeated engagement with the source material and were subsequently used to compare the roles of different organizations.

The analysis proceeded chronologically and thematically. Chronological reconstruction was used to situate activities within major developments of the Algerian Revolution and Tunisian independence. Thematic comparison was then employed to identify similarities, differences, and complementarities among the organizations. This combined procedure made it possible to determine whether the documented actions constituted isolated expressions of sympathy or an interconnected and sustained system of popular support.

The oral testimony was used as a complementary source, particularly in relation to medical and logistical assistance along the Algerian–Tunisian border. It was not treated as independently conclusive evidence. Its statements were interpreted in light of the time elapsed since the events and were compared with documentary and published materials where possible. Participation in the interview was voluntary, and the testimony was used for scholarly historical purposes with the interviewee's informed consent.

The study distinguishes between evidence directly documented in the sources and the researcher's historical interpretation. Descriptions of headquarters, training, donations, strikes, organizational cooperation, and international representation are grounded in the cited materials. Broader conclusions concerning the structure and significance of Tunisian popular support were developed through comparison and synthesis of this evidence.

Several methodological limitations must be acknowledged. The surviving archival record reflects institutional processes of selection, preservation, and access and may not represent the full range of activities undertaken by Tunisian society. French records may exaggerate, misclassify, or omit particular events because of their intelligence and security objectives. Conversely, retrospective national narratives may emphasize solidarity while giving limited attention to disagreements or organizational constraints. The use of one oral testimony also prevents broad generalization from personal recollection. These limitations were addressed through source criticism, triangulation, and cautious interpretation, but they cannot be eliminated entirely.

The study does not claim to quantify the total material value or causal effect of Tunisian support. Its purpose is to reconstruct the documented mechanisms through which national organizations contributed to the Algerian Revolution and to assess their historical significance within the broader system of Maghrebi solidarity.

The Role of Tunisian National Organizations in Supporting the Algerian Revolution

Tunisian national organizations, across their diverse orientations and social functions, represented a vital component of popular support for the Algerian Revolution. Their activities spanned political and media mobilization, trade union and humanitarian aid, and the structured organization of Algerian students, workers, and refugees. Although operating in different societal domains, these organizations converged around the shared objective of serving the Algerian cause, creating a nurturing popular environment that sustained the revolution and enhanced its capacity for endurance (Bouguerioua, 2018; Katouta, 2013–2014).

1. The General Union of Tunisian Students (UGET) and Its Role in Supporting the Algerian Revolution

The Tunisian student movement initially emerged in Paris, where the General Union of Tunisian Students (UGET) held its first founding conference in July 1955. In the same year, another student movement held its founding conference in November 1955 under the name 'Voice of the Muslim Student' (Voix de l'Étudiant Musulman). These two organizations subsequently merged in July 1956 to unify student efforts (Hassan El Louleb, 2012).

Tunisian students promptly extended support and solidarity to their Algerian counterparts. Following the outbreak of the Algerian Revolution on November 1, 1954, Tunisian students championed the Algerian cause in general and student-related issues in particular, defending them through all available avenues of struggle (Ben Youssef, 2003). During UGET's national conference held at the Zitouna quarter from July 26 to 29, 1955, the Algerian cause stood at the core of the agenda. The conference issued an official statement condemning the injustice, brutal force, oppression, and arbitrary measures inflicted upon the Algerian people, while declaring full solidarity with Algerian students studying in France (Hassan El Louleb, 2012).

Algerian students, organized under the General Union of Algerian Muslim Students (UGEMA), received official recognition from both the Tunisian government and UGET. Tunisian authorities granted UGEMA dedicated headquarters in Tunis to conduct their organizational activities freely. Furthermore, UGET recognized UGEMA as the sole official representative of Algerian students, inviting them to participate in all student and trade union activities held across Tunisia (Hassan El Louleb, 2012).

Tunisian support extended beyond providing headquarters and academic scholarships for Algerian students in Tunisia; it reached higher diplomatic levels. Tunisian authorities facilitated direct contact between Algerian student leaders and ambassadors of states supporting the Algerian cause. In this regard, a French intelligence document from the Second Bureau (Bureau 2) dated July 1, 1957—extracting data from the FLN operational logbook in Tunis—noted that the Egyptian Ambassador extended an official invitation to Mr. Mohamed Lakhdar Essaihi, President of UGEMA, for a high-level meeting on Tuesday, June 25, 1957 (Service Historique de l'Armée de Terre [SHAT], 1957).

While Algerian students inside Algeria operated under severe police surveillance, threats of arrest, and persecution by the French colonial administration under the pretext of threatening public order, Algerian students in Tunisia enjoyed freedom of action. Backed by Tunisian authorities and UGET, they actively participated in international and regional youth and student conferences. A French intelligence report from the Second Bureau at the Bizerte base headquarters, dated January 31, 1959, highlighted that UGEMA

representatives based in Tunis regularly attended African and European student conferences, distinguishing themselves through impactful and assertive interventions (SHAT, 1959b).

Given the severe assassination threats against Algerian revolutionary leaders abroad—particularly in Tunisia, where the French terrorist organization 'La Main Rouge' (The Red Hand) operated actively—Tunisian authorities provided identity documents and passports to revolutionary leaders and student representatives to ensure their safe international travel (Ouamane, 2017; SHAT, 1959c).

UGET consistently denounced the policy of terror and repression imposed on the Algerian population, re-asserting its unwavering backing of Algerian youth. It officially protested against decisions deploying Tunisian soldiers within the French army to fight Algerian freedom fighters and demanded that the Tunisian government put an immediate end to such abuses. To further solidify solidarity, UGET invited UGEMA to attend the Maghrebi Student Conference alongside the National Union of Moroccan Students (UNEM). The conference issued a joint declaration expressing a collective resolve to reignite the struggle for full Maghrebi unity, viewing it as a pivotal stepping stone toward future integration (Hassan El Louleb, 2012).

At the conclusion of the Maghrebi Student Conference on August 23, 1958, the delegates issued key recommendations heavily centered on the Algerian cause: (1) declaring that building the Arab Maghreb inherently depends on Algerian independence and cannot be delayed; (2) urging the governments of Tunisia and Morocco to direct their political actions toward liberating Algeria by mobilizing popular forces and national resources; and (3) demanding the formation of a unified Maghrebi front to establish a common policy toward France based on its stance regarding the Algerian problem (Hassan El Louleb, 2012).

The role of Tunisian students transcended union statements, resolutions, and demonstrations; it reached the highest form of solidarity as Tunisian students joined the ranks of the revolution alongside their Algerian brothers. Numerous Tunisian students studying in France secretly joined National Liberation Front (FLN) cells, either voluntarily or directed by the Neo-Destour Party, embodying the principle of shared Maghrebi struggle. Prominent among them were Hédi Baccouche (President of the Neo-Destour Federation in France) and Chédli Bouzakoura, who coordinated closely with FLN representatives in France and with Tunisian Ambassador Mohamed Masmoudi, who issued official Tunisian passports to Algerian militants traveling across Europe (Ben Youssef, 2003).

Consequently, many Tunisian students suffered arrest, imprisonment, torture, expulsion from universities, and police persecution. Notable figures included Chédli Bouzakoura, Hédi Baccouche, Béchir Salem Belkhiria, Sadek Ben Djemaa, Fouad Mebazaa, and Dr. Mongi Ben Hamida (Ben Youssef, 2003). Furthermore, young Tunisian medical doctors in France and Tunisia actively enlisted in the revolution, rendering invaluable services along the Algerian-Tunisian border by treating wounded National Liberation Army (ALN) soldiers, caring for refugees, and training Algerian paramedics—choosing revolutionary service over comfortable professional careers (Sedira, 2021).

Tunisian student solidarity assumed various forms. When the FLN called for a general student strike beginning May 19, 1956, Tunisian students launched an open-ended strike from classes and exams in solidarity. UGET organized solidarity days for Algeria, participated in UGEMA congresses in Paris, and joined Algerian students in hunger strikes at the Al-Zaytuna Mosque. This sustained student engagement served as a major asset for the FLN, aligning directly with the external policy guidelines articulated at the Soummam Conference of 1956, which emphasized continuous contact with Algerians residing in Tunisia and Morocco, student union cooperation, and economic coordination (National Liberation Front [FLN], n.d.).

2. The General Tunisian Labour Union (UGTT)

The concept of Maghrebi trade union solidarity originated in the 1940s when Tunisian labor leader Farhat Hached called for establishing independent trade unions in Algeria, Tunisia, and Morocco, and federating them into a North African labor union during the North African Student Association Conference in Tunis in 1947 (El Safi, 2017). This vision was further reinforced during the Arab Maghreb Conference held in Cairo (February 15–22, 1947), which stressed freedom for all three countries and called for unifying labor, social, cultural, and economic organizations across the Maghreb (Dahesh, 2004).

Guided by these principles, Tunisian workers championed the Algerian cause. The General Tunisian Labour Union (UGTT) actively urged Algerian workers to organize an independent national trade union, pledging full backing for their admission into the International Confederation of Free Trade Unions (ICFTU/CISL) (Zehani, 2021). Following the founding of the General Union of Algerian Workers (UGTA) on February 24, 1956, the organization received extensive Tunisian governmental and trade union support. A French intelligence report from January 1959 observed that Tunisia had become 'the operational homeland of the rebellion and the

ideal conduit for contacts between international organizations and the external FLN structure,' noting that UGTA operated under the patronage of the ICFTU and benefited immensely from the generosity and facility provided by UGTT (SHAT, 1959c).

Tunisia served as a solid operational base where UGTA conducted its political and trade union struggle. UGTT provided headquarters for UGTA to carry out its operations. Utilizing facilities provided by the Tunisian government and UGTT, along with aid from the ICFTU, UGTA systematically trained a core cadre of trade unionists recruited from among Algerian refugees and youth in Tunisia, preparing them politically and organizationally within UGTT branches (Zehani, 2021; SHAT, 1959c).

This supportive political environment enabled UGTA to strengthen ties with international organizations and diplomatic missions supporting the Algerian cause, securing substantial financial assistance. As recorded in French military reports, the ICFTU granted UGTA in Tunis \$150,000 in 1958 and awarded over 150 educational scholarships to Algerian unionists in 1959, while the United States Information Service (USIS) in Tunis supplied educational equipment and books. By 1959, UGTA membership in Tunisia exceeded 20,000 enrolled members (SHAT, 1959c).

UGTT support extended to all Algerians entering Tunisia, viewing relief as a human obligation prior to a union duty. UGTT mobilized its regional branches across Tunisia to receive and shelter Algerian refugees while keeping their whereabouts strictly confidential. A French military report from the High Command in Tunisia (Second Bureau) covering September 5–20, 1955, documented that UGTT issued directive instructions to its border cells along the Algerian-Tunisian frontier to welcome, host, and assist Algerian insurgents ('outlaws') to the maximum extent possible, maintaining total secrecy even at the cost of their lives (SHAT, 1955).

Following the French hijacking of the plane carrying five key Algerian revolutionary leaders on October 22, 1956, UGTT Executive Board representative Ahmed Ben Salah convened an emergency meeting, issuing a fiery statement condemning the act, calling on Maghrebi leaders to intensify the common struggle, urging international free bodies to take a decisive stand, and declaring a general 24-hour strike across Tunisia (Bouguerioua, 2018). Furthermore, UGTT repeatedly protested against the arrest of Algerian union leaders, sending official telegrams of protest to the French Prime Minister and the Governor-General in Algeria (Zehani, 2021).

Tunisian dockworkers actively demonstrated solidarity by refusing to unload shipments of weapons and ammunition destined for French forces fighting the Algerian Revolution, threatening to destroy the munitions if forcibly unloaded (Zehani, 2021). During 'Algeria Day' on March 30, 1958, UGTT participated alongside the Tunisian government, the Neo-Destour Party, and civil society in fundraising campaigns for the revolution and issuing statements demanding official recognition of Algeria's right to independence (Srhir, 2010).

At international forums, such as the 40th Session of the International Labour Conference in Geneva, the UGTT delegation led by Ahmed Tlili conducted extensive pro-Algerian propaganda among international delegates, exposing French violations of labor freedoms and human rights in Algeria (El Safi, 2017). UGTT thus provided indispensable humanitarian, military, financial, media, and organizational backing to the Algerian Revolution.

3. Women's Organizations

Popular solidarity reached a profound level of societal cohesion during the liberation war, culminating in shared suffering under French retaliatory measures, most notably exemplified by the Sakiet Sidi Youssef bombardment of February 1958 (Katouta, 2013–2014; Ouamane, 2017). In this context, Tunisian women played a pivotal role in backing the Algerian cause and alleviating the plight of refugees.

The National Union of Tunisian Women (UNFT) conducted international and regional awareness campaigns advocating for an end to the destructive war in Algeria in accordance with the UN Charter. Following the October 1956 plane hijacking, UNFT condemned the act and organized relief drives for refugees crossing into Tunisia, particularly after France initiated the electrified Challe and Morice defense lines. Archival records note generous individual and organizational donations: Mrs. Qamar, wife of Mohsen El Ayachi from Halfouine, donated three fully furnished rooms; UNFT provided 1 million francs for Algerian refugees in Ain Drahem in 1957; and Mrs. Latifa Bint Hassan from Akouda donated 12,000 francs, 2,000 kg of couscous, 30 liters of oil, chickpeas, and raisins (Katouta, 2013–2014).

As French military operations intensified along the eastern Algerian border to establish forbidden zones, massive waves of Algerian refugees fled into Tunisia. Tunisian families welcomed refugee families into their homes, sharing food and shelter. Many Tunisian families adopted orphaned Algerian children, with Tunisian women raising them alongside their own children (Katouta, 2013–2014).

This social and humanitarian role preserved the social cohesion of refugee communities, providing the Algerian Revolution with a secure popular sanctuary inside Tunisian territory.

4. The Tunisian Scouts (Les Scouts Tunisiens - ST)

The Tunisian Scouts (ST) actively extended support to the Algerian Revolution and refugees, while aiding the Algerian Scouting movement in fulfilling its patriotic role. Cooperation between Tunisian and Algerian scouts dated back to September 1949, when representatives of the Algerian Muslim Scouts (SMA) attended the Tunisian Muslim Pioneers Conference (EMT) in Tunis, where SMA was honored with chairing a general session (Abou Omrane & El Djidli, 2008; Kherbachi, 2018).

During the Revolution, the Tunisian Scouts assisted in training Algerian scouting cadres. In March 1958, Algerian scout leader Ba Ayoub Asmawi participated in the Wood Badge training course in Tunisia. Numerous SMA members attended summer camps in Cap Bon, leading to the formation of the 7th SMA Clan in Tunisia, which initially included Tunisian leaders and scouts to ensure technical expertise (Kherbachi, 2018; Algerian Muslim Scouts [SMA], n.d.).

ST made its premises, equipment, and training camps available to Algerian youth, training them as paramedics, nurses, and cubs with quasi-military skills. Some served the revolution within Tunisian territory, while others joined active combat inside Algeria (Kherbachi, 2018). Simultaneously, the ST General Command issued directives instructing all local troops to collect donations and convert scout camps into refugee shelters and supply depots (Kherbachi, 2018).

Furthermore, professional and economic organizations contributed significantly. The Tunisian Merchants Union assisted in establishing the General Union of Algerian Merchants (UGCA), supporting its famous eight-day strike (January 28 – February 4, 1957) and denouncing French repression against Algerian traders (Srhir, 2010). Similarly, the National Union of Tunisian Farmers (UNAT) provided generous agricultural donations and financial aid to Algerian refugees throughout the war (Ben Soltane et al., 2007).

Conclusion

This study demonstrates that Tunisian national organizations played a pivotal and multifaceted role in supporting the Algerian Revolution during the period (1954–1962). Their contribution extended far beyond moral sympathy, manifesting in concrete practical actions across political mobilization, media dissemination, trade union support, humanitarian relief, and the structured organization of refugees, students, and workers. This diversity created an integrated network of popular support that reinforced the official backing provided by the Tunisian state.

Furthermore, the findings highlight that despite differing organizational structures and societal functions, Tunisian national organizations unified around the paramount goal of liberating Algeria. Each organization operated effectively within its domain of expertise, broadening the base of popular support and strengthening the revolution's endurance against French colonial military and political pressures.

French archival documents, combined with Algerian and Tunisian sources, confirm that this popular mobilization was neither spontaneous nor limited in scope; rather, it was systematically monitored by French intelligence services, which viewed Tunisian national organizations as key operational components of the FLN's external support network. Ultimately, fully comprehending Tunisian support for the Algerian Revolution requires examining civil society and national organizations as enduring symbols of Maghrebi solidarity and active partners in the journey toward Algerian independence.

Declarations

Ethics Approval: This study is primarily based on historical and documentary research involving published materials, archival records, official documents, and a previously conducted oral-history interview. It did not involve experimental procedures, medical information, or vulnerable participants. Formal institutional ethics approval was not required under the applicable regulations governing historical and archival research.

Consent to Participate: The oral testimony used in the study was provided voluntarily for scholarly and historical research purposes. Informed consent was obtained from the interviewee before the interview was conducted and the testimony was used.

Consent for Publication: The interviewee consented to the scholarly use and publication of the information attributed to him in the manuscript.

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Conflict of Interest: The author declares that there are no financial, professional, institutional, or personal conflicts of interest that could have influenced the research or its conclusions.

Data Availability Statement: The historical evidence supporting the findings is derived from the archival collections, official documents, published sources, and oral testimony identified in the reference list. Access to the French archival documents is subject to the regulations and access conditions of the Service Historique de la Défense in Vincennes, France. The interview material may be available from the author upon reasonable request, subject to ethical and privacy considerations.

Author Contributions: Mostefa Bensilette was solely responsible for the conceptualization, historical methodology, archival investigation, collection and interpretation of sources, manuscript preparation, critical revision, and approval of the final version.

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Use of Generative Artificial Intelligence: Generative artificial intelligence tools were used for language refinement, translation, structural organization, and editorial assistance. They were not used as primary historical sources or as substitutes for archival analysis. The author reviewed and verified the manuscript and assumes full responsibility for the accuracy of its evidence, citations, interpretations, and conclusions.

Genişletilmiş Özet

Giriş

Cezayir Devrimi (1954–1962), yirminci yüzyılın en etkili ulusal kurtuluş hareketlerinden biri olmuş ve etkileri Cezayir sınırlarının ötesine geçerek Mağrip, Arap dünyası ve uluslararası alana yayılmıştır. Devrimin devamlılığı yalnızca Cezayir içindeki siyasi ve askerî mücadeleye değil, komşu ülkelerde oluşturulan dış destek ağlarına da bağlı olmuştur. Coğrafi yakınlığı, ortak tarihsel deneyimleri ve iki toplum arasındaki köklü kültürel bağlar nedeniyle Tunus, bu destek sisteminde özel bir konuma sahip olmuştur. Tunus devletinin resmî desteğinin yanında, ülkenin öğrenci, işçi, kadın, izcilik, ticaret ve meslek örgütleri de Cezayir davasına önemli katkılarda bulunmuştur.

Mevcut tarih yazımının büyük bir bölümü, Tunus hükümetinin Cezayir Devrimi'ne yönelik siyasi ve diplomatik tutumuna yoğunlaşmıştır. Buna karşılık Tunuslu ulusal örgütlerin katkıları çoğunlukla genel tarih çalışmalarındaki dağınık bilgiler arasında kalmış ve bağımsız bir inceleme konusu olarak yeterince ele alınmamıştır. Bu durum, devlet dışı aktörlerin devrimin dış destek sistemindeki konumunun tam olarak anlaşılmasını güçleştirmektedir.

Bu çalışma, 1954–1962 döneminde Tunuslu ulusal örgütlerin Cezayir Devrimi'ne sundukları desteğin niteliğini, araçlarını ve etkilerini incelemektedir. Araştırma; Tunus Genel Öğrenci Birliği, Tunus Genel İşçi Birliği, Tunus Ulusal Kadınlar Birliği, Tunus İzçileri ve çeşitli meslek kuruluşlarının faaliyetlerine odaklanmaktadır. Temel araştırma sorusu, bu örgütlerin Cezayir Devrimi'ni hangi mekanizmalar aracılığıyla desteklediği ve söz konusu desteğin devrimin dayanıklılığına nasıl katkıda bulunduğudur.

Çalışma, halk desteğinin yalnızca manevi dayanışma veya siyasi söylem olarak değerlendirilmemesi gerektiğini savunmaktadır. Tunuslu ulusal örgütlerin faaliyetleri; siyasi seferberlik, uluslararası savunuculuk, mülteci yardımı, mali destek, örgütsel yapılanma, eğitim ve lojistik yardım gibi somut uygulamaları kapsamıştır. Bu yönüyle araştırma, Cezayir Devrimi'nin tarihini sivil toplum ve Mağrip halk dayanışması perspektifinden yeniden değerlendirmeyi amaçlamaktadır.

Yöntem

Araştırmada nitel tarihsel araştırma yöntemi benimsenmiş; belge incelemesi, kaynak karşılaştırması ve tarihsel bağlamlandırma teknikleri kullanılmıştır. Çalışmanın kaynak tabanı Fransız arşiv belgeleri, Cezayir ve Tunus'a ait birincil kaynaklar, resmî belgeler, süreli yayınlar, kitaplar, akademik makaleler, lisansüstü tezler, konferans bildirileri ve sözlü tarih tanıklığından oluşmaktadır. Farklı kaynak türlerinin birlikte kullanılması, örgütlerin faaliyetlerinin hem sömürge yönetiminin kayıtları hem de Cezayir ve Tunus perspektiflerinden incelenmesine imkân sağlamıştır.

Araştırmanın temel arşiv materyalleri, Fransa'nın Vincennes kentindeki askerî tarih arşivinde korunan belgelerden oluşmaktadır. Bu belgeler arasında Fransız İkinci Bürosu tarafından hazırlanan istihbarat raporları, Cezayir Ulusal Kurtuluş Cephesi'nin Tunus'taki yapılanmasına ilişkin değerlendirmeler, öğrenci ve işçi faaliyetleri hakkındaki raporlar ve sınır bölgelerine ilişkin istihbarat bültenleri bulunmaktadır. Ayrıca *El Moudjahid* gazetesinde yayımlanan açıklamalar ve Mağrip dayanışmasına ilişkin kararlar birincil kaynak olarak değerlendirilmiştir. Mücahit Tayeb Sedira ile gerçekleştirilen sözlü tarih görüşmesi de tıbbi ve lojistik desteğin anlaşılmasında tamamlayıcı bir kaynak olarak kullanılmıştır.

Kaynaklar, Tunuslu örgütlerin doğrudan Cezayir Devrimi'ne yönelik faaliyetlerini belgelemesi şartıyla amaçlı biçimde seçilmiştir. Elde edilen bilgiler örgüt türü, destek mekanizması, hedef grup, faaliyet alanı ve devrim üzerindeki işlevi bakımından tematik olarak sınıflandırılmıştır. İnceleme; siyasi ve medyatik seferberlik, öğrenci dayanışması, sendikal örgütlenme, insani yardım, mali destek, eğitim, sağlık hizmetleri ve lojistik yardım temaları çerçevesinde yürütülmüştür.

Fransız istihbarat belgeleri, sömürge yönetiminin siyasi amaçları ve güvenlik dili dikkate alınarak eleştirel biçimde değerlendirilmiştir. Bu belgelerde kullanılan sömürgeci nitelermeler araştırmacının görüşü olarak benimsenmemiştir. İddialar mümkün olduğunca Cezayir, Tunus ve Fransız kaynaklarının karşılaştırılması yoluyla doğrulanmıştır. Böylece tek taraflı bir tarihsel anlatının önüne geçilerek çok kaynaklı ve bağlamsal bir yorum geliştirilmiştir.

Bulgular ve Tartışma

Araştırmanın bulguları, Tunuslu ulusal örgütlerin Cezayir Devrimi için bütünlük bir halk desteği ağı oluşturduğunu göstermektedir. Bu ağdaki her örgüt kendi toplumsal ve kurumsal kapasitesine uygun bir işlev üstlenmiş, ancak bütün faaliyetler Cezayir'in bağımsızlığı ortak hedefinde birleşmiştir. Destek, yalnızca açıklamalar ve dayanışma gösterileriyle sınırlı kalmamış; örgütlenme, uluslararası temsil, mali kaynak sağlama, mülteci yardımı, eğitim, sağlık ve lojistik alanlarına yayılmıştır.

Tunus Genel Öğrenci Birliği, Cezayirli öğrencileri temsil eden UGEMA'yı resmî bir ortak olarak kabul etmiş, teşkilata merkez sağlamış ve üyelerinin bölgesel ve uluslararası öğrenci toplantılarına katılmasını kolaylaştırmıştır. Tunuslu öğrenciler boykotlar, grevler, bildiriler ve ortak konferanslar aracılığıyla Cezayir davasını savunmuştur. Bazı öğrenciler FLN ağlarıyla doğrudan iş birliği yapmış; genç Tunuslu hekimler ise sınır bölgelerinde yaralıların ve mültecilerin tedavisine katkıda bulunmuştur.

Tunus Genel İşçi Birliği, Tunus'u Cezayir Genel İşçi Birliği için önemli bir örgütsel merkez hâline getirmiştir. Merkez, eğitim ve uluslararası bağlantı olanakları sağlamış; Cezayirli sendikacıların yetiştirilmesine destek olmuştur. Liman işçilerinin Fransız birliklerine gönderilen askerî yükleri boşaltmayı reddetmesi, sendikal dayanışmanın somut bir örneğidir. UGTT ayrıca protestolar, grevler, bağış kampanyaları ve uluslararası konferanslardaki faaliyetleriyle Cezayir davasının görünürlüğünü artırmıştır.

Tunuslu kadın örgütleri ve aileler, Cezayirli mültecilerin karşılanması, barındırılması ve temel ihtiyaçlarının karşılanmasında belirleyici roller üstlenmiştir. Tunus İzicileri ise merkezlerini, kamplarını ve ekipmanlarını Cezayirli gençlerin kullanımına açmış; sağlık, yardım ve örgütsel becerilere yönelik eğitimler vermiştir. Tüccar ve çiftçi örgütleri de bağış, gıda ve mali kaynak sağlamıştır.

Fransız arşivlerinin bu faaliyetleri düzenli biçimde izlemesi, sömürge yönetiminin Tunuslu ulusal örgütleri FLN'nin dış destek ağının etkili unsurları olarak değerlendirdiğini göstermektedir. Bulgular, devlet desteği ile halk desteğinin birbirinden bağımsız değil, karşılıklı biçimde güçlenen iki yapı olduğunu ortaya koymaktadır.

Sonuç ve Öneriler

Araştırma, Tunuslu ulusal örgütlerin 1954–1962 yılları arasında Cezayir Devrimi'nin dış destek sisteminde temel bir konuma sahip olduğunu ortaya koymaktadır. Öğrenci, işçi, kadın, izcilik, ticaret, çiftçi ve meslek örgütleri; siyasi savunuculuk, uluslararası seferberlik, insani yardım, mali destek, örgütsel eğitim ve lojistik hizmetler aracılığıyla devrimin dayanıklılığını güçlendirmiştir. Bu katkılar, Tunus halkının Cezayir davasına yönelik desteğinin geçici veya yalnızca duygusal bir dayanışma olmadığını göstermektedir.

Her örgüt kendi uzmanlık ve toplumsal faaliyet alanı içinde hareket etmiştir. Öğrenci birlikleri Cezayir davasını gençlik ve üniversite çevrelerine taşıırken sendikalar işçileri örgütlemiş ve uluslararası işçi hareketiyle bağlantılar kurmuştur. Kadın örgütleri mülteci yardımının toplumsal temelini oluşturmuş, izcilik teşkilatları gençlere eğitim ve lojistik destek sağlamış, meslek kuruluşları ise maddi kaynakların seferber edilmesine katkıda bulunmuştur. Bu işlevsel çeşitlilik, Tunus'taki halk desteğinin düzenli ve tamamlayıcı bir yapıya sahip olduğunu göstermektedir.

Çalışmanın sonuçları, Cezayir Devrimi'nin bölgesel boyutunu açıklamak için resmî diplomatik ilişkilerin ötesine geçilmesi gerektiğine işaret etmektedir. Gelecekteki araştırmalarda Tunuslu kadınların, öğrencilerin, işçilerin, sağlık çalışanlarının ve sınır topluluklarının rolleri ayrı arşiv çalışmalarına konu edilmelidir. Tunus ve Cezayir'deki yerel arşivler, aile koleksiyonları, sendika kayıtları, süreli yayınlar ve sözlü tarih tanıklıkları sistematik biçimde toplanmalı ve dijitalleştirilmelidir.

Ayrıca Fransız istihbarat belgeleri, Tunus ve Cezayir kaynaklarıyla karşılaştırılmadan kullanılmamalıdır. Sömürge arşivlerinin dili, amacı ve olası önyargıları kaynak eleştirisi yoluyla açıkça değerlendirilmelidir. Benzer araştırmalar Fas'taki halk örgütleriyle karşılaştırmalı biçimde yürütülerek Mağrip dayanışmasının bölgesel yapısı daha geniş bir çerçevede incelenebilir.

Son olarak üniversiteler, tarih araştırma merkezleri ve arşiv kurumları Cezayir Devrimi'nin toplumsal ve sınır aşan tarihine ilişkin ortak projeler geliştirmelidir. Tunuslu ulusal örgütlerin deneyimi, Cezayir'in bağımsızlık mücadelesinde sivil toplumun yalnızca destekleyici değil, sürecin devamlılığını sağlayan etkin bir tarihsel aktör olduğunu göstermektedir.

Ethical Approval

This study is based exclusively on the analysis of published texts, documentary and archival sources, and secondary literature. It does not involve human participants or animal subjects, and therefore ethics committee approval was not required. All sources are cited in accordance with academic integrity and copyright principles.

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Declaration of Generative AI and AI-Assisted Technologies

The authors declare that no generative artificial intelligence (AI) or AI-assisted technologies were used in the design of the study, data collection, analyses, or interpretation of the scientific content of this manuscript. Any language-editing support was reviewed and verified by the authors, who take full responsibility for the content of the published article.

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