



Narratives of Phosphogypsum Reclassification in Tunisia: Is an Environmental Toxin Becoming a Developmental Antidote?

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April 2026

Introduction

For decades, phosphogypsum contamination has served as stark evidence of environmental injustice in Tunisia. During his meeting with the Tunisian Minister of Industry, Mines, and Energy on 4 March 2025, President Kais Saied stressed the need to “find a definitive solution to the phosphogypsum dilemma” in Gabès, asserting that “science is sufficient to prove that this substance is not hazardous”.¹ Less than a day after these directives were received, a closed-door cabinet meeting was held during which it was decided to “remove phosphogypsum from the list of hazardous waste” and classify it as a produced material suitable for use in various fields under “strict conditions”.²

The issue concerns the reclassification of industrial waste resulting from the processing of natural phosphate, which contains the following elements in its chemical composition:

- Main components: gypsum ($\text{CaSO}_4 \cdot 2\text{H}_2\text{O}$) and phosphoric acid residues.³
- Metal contaminants: heavy metals such as cadmium (Cd), zinc (Zn), lead (Pb), chromium (Cr), and arsenic (As).
- Radioactive elements: uranium (U-238) and radium (Ra-226), with variable concentrations depending on the phosphate ore.⁴

Communities affected by its being dumped into the sea by factories suffer this injustice acutely; this dumping has led to numerous environmental, health, and economic problems, perhaps most notably the destruction of fish stocks and rare seagrasses in Gabès.⁵ Previously, Gabès had been the home to the largest *Posidonia* meadows – vital seagrass ecosystems – in the Mediterranean.⁶ In addition, commercial and artisanal activities have been harmed, cancer and respiratory diseases have become more prevalent, and infections among the local population have increased.⁷ The findings of the July 2024 environmental and social audit report on the Gabès Chemical Complex pointed to numerous violations that confirmed the company’s noncompliance and failure to adhere

to the principles of sustainable industrial development, including the excessive cadmium levels in Tunisian phosphogypsum, which were over the regulatory limit of 106.02 NT.⁸ This raises serious questions about phosphogypsum, and has led to a local dispute.

On this basis, the announced decision transcends its own technical nature to become a symbolic event with its own implications and meanings, making the decision to reclassify toxic waste an act of political boldness that is uncommon in the context of Tunisian environmental policymaking. The narratives promoted by the regime are no less important than the decisions that were adopted as a political narrative that reveals broader processes related to how the authorities frame problems and, consequently, propose solutions within scientific and political frameworks.⁹

This paper falls under the narrative policy framework, which seeks to deconstruct narrative structures and their associated facts as social constructions of meaning and understand their components and implications at the micro, mid, and macro levels.¹⁰ The importance of narrative policy analysis increases at a time when we, as researchers in the Arab region, find ourselves confronted with authoritarian regimes that deliberately engage in the continuous obfuscation and concealment of information, official data, and the alliances and networks surrounding the policymaking process. In the Tunisian case, the regime tends to promote its policies through Facebook posts, decrees, and speeches laden with rhetoric and emotion. This makes the narrative framework of policies the optimal analytical entry point for deconstructing the narrative of the reclassification of phosphogypsum, including its instrumental objectives, from within the authoritarian text itself.

This paper seeks to answer fundamental questions: How did the Tunisian regime construct its narrative to downplay the dangers of phosphogypsum? What role did these narratives play in shaping environmental policy in Tunisia?

To answer these questions, the paper is divided into six main sections. The first section reviews the series of announced measures surrounding the reclassification decision. In the second section, we examine the decision as a corrective measure responding to local demands. The third section is devoted to deconstructing the narrative structure of the decision. The fourth section analyzes the discursive alliances that support the official narrative. The fifth section examines the discursive and symbolic mechanisms devised by the authorities to suppress alternative narratives. The final section focuses on the neoliberal dimension of the decision to remove phosphogypsum from the list of toxic substances.

Announced Government Measures: A Foundational Moment in the Construction of the Official Narrative

To grasp the deeper significance of the decision to reclassify phosphogypsum in Tunisia, we must first analyze the series of decisions outlined in the government communiqué of 5 March 2025, as this marks a pivotal moment in the construction of the official narrative. From the very first sentence, the government announces its “future program for the development of phosphate production, transport, and processing” for the period 2025-

2030, describing it as a pillar of both “development” and “the economy, whose role and status must be restored”.¹¹

During closed cabinet meeting, the government expressed its determination to: “establish industrial units for the production and purification of phosphoric acid with high annual production capacities”; “create pilot units for the production of green ammonia in Gabès”; “[establish] treatment plants for emitted effluents to improve the environmental situation”; “[increase] factory activity to 80% of design capacity by 2028”; and “[provide] financial support to the chemical complex and [exempt] it from certain fees”.¹² This in reality meant ensuring the continuity of this industrial enterprise’s operations and supporting its strategic direction.

Thus, the government removed a series of legislative and regulatory barriers that had hindered the state’s ability to utilize and monetize this resource: it approved the “removal of phosphogypsum from the list of hazardous industrial wastes” and classified it as a “produced material”.¹³ They did this without elaborating on the text of the decision included at the end of the statement, even though it constitutes the backbone upon which most of the aforementioned decisions and measures were based. Furthermore, the government chose to announce its decisions in a *restricted council*. This detail transforms this from a routine moment into an analytical subject: it lends the decisions an urgent and specialized character, encompassing a specific group of actors to the exclusion of others, and thereby creating a reform narrative that appears on the surface to be a response to popular demands.

Reform “In Line With Local Demands”

The current administration is proposing to remove phosphogypsum from the list of hazardous waste as a modernizing and developmental initiative designed to transform an environmental hazard into an economic opportunity that serves the public interest. It should be noted that this proposal builds on prior rhetoric and discourse leading to the official announcement of the new measures. This is a project that President Saïed has endorsed on more than one occasion, first in statements from 2020 and 2024 that reveal a gradual shift in the state’s founding discourse on reform – a discourse that lends the event its moral dimension. The framing shifts from phosphogypsum as an environmental problem and a cause of health hazards, most notably “the spread of cancer in the region”,¹⁴ to discussing it as a necessary “resource that can be exploited in light of the difficult financial situation the country is facing”.¹⁵

For its part, the new government statement emphasizes the government’s proactive role and its reliance on a “comprehensive strategy” that takes into account economic, financial, and environmental aspects by seeking to provide employment opportunities and decent working conditions at industrial facilities in the mining basin and Gabès regions.^{16,17} The government speaks of its intention to “spread prosperity to all” and achieve a “desired shift” in the phosphate sector generally through “increasing production capacity” and “seeking new export markets”.¹⁸ This shift in the visions, approaches, objectives, and logic with which the authorities manage the issue appears to be a politically timed attempt at structural change that would make its implementation more visible.

In this way, the environmental definition of the substance – as a toxic waste – is replaced by an economically, developmentally, and investment-oriented definition that frames the issue as a case of mismanagement of resources that could better be repurposed and revalued. From this perspective, it becomes necessary to analyze the narrative structure of the phosphogypsum reclassification policy to understand how the policy is constructed as a narrative.

The Narrative Structure of the Decision

Public policy analysis, viewed as narratives aimed at persuasion and domination, seeks to deconstruct the discourse of decision-makers and identify four fundamental and decisive elements in every narrative: the context surrounding the decision, the key figures involved, the plot through which the policy was enacted, and the meaning or solution that emerges as a necessary response to the problem.

Here, the state's narrative emerges against a long history of environmental and economic tensions that have been building since the 1970s; the launch of industrial activity at the Gabès Chemical Complex specifically – and the start of the accumulation and disposal of tons of phosphogypsum, whether through dumping or storage – caused a severe environmental crisis in the region. Faced with this legacy, the current government has framed the problem as the result of the historical corruption that has plagued Tunisia – depleting the environment and the economy – and particularly the phosphate sector and its derivatives.

Since every narrative requires heroes, villains, and victims to be complete, the main protagonist in the case at hand is President Saïed, who presents himself as Tunisia's savior and a "man of history" who embodies the people, the state, the law, and history alike.¹⁹ As he purports, he will fill a void and meet urgent needs by announcing an alternative policy in which "good intentions" and rational action prevail over the conspiracies of the past and the outdated theories previously employed. The government – specifically the Ministry of Industry, Mines, and Energy – serves as the implementing body, while the Ministries of Health and of Equipment and Housing act as supporting bodies. Additionally, the Scientific Committee has emerged as an auxiliary reference body to lend scientific legitimacy to the decision, alongside a second entity, the Gabès Chemical Complex, which acts as the responsible agent and executor of the valuation mission. The role of the villain is cast as the political systems and decisions adopted by the regimes before 25 July 2021, most notably the classification decision itself as well as the orders that halted the conversion and transport of the material.^{20,21} Civil society, too, represents an adversary that must be tamed both symbolically and materially to ensure narrative continuity. To establish the triad necessary for any narrative construction, the current regime's discourse has defined the victims as the local population of Gabès, or those harmed by the policies of undervaluation on the one hand and the crisis-ridden Tunisian economy on the other.

The authorities base their political decisions on causal mechanisms that place the blame on those who benefit from the fragile economic situation. The regime constructs its narrative around the mechanisms of helplessness and conspiracy: that is, the transition from a dire situation long-considered unchangeable until its eventual shift and

transformation.²² It is a plot not without drama that presents the problem as a lingering, long-standing crisis, requiring a break with the past and casting doubt on all prior knowledge regarding phosphogypsum classification.

The moral value of the decision lies in the fact that it is part of a “national liberation war” that the authorities have been waging for years to “purge the country of corruption”.²³ Accordingly, the decision to reclassify phosphogypsum and revise its legislative framework is a practical and necessary solution for “revitalizing the economy”, “generating wealth”, and “preserving the environment”.

Based on the analysis of the reclassification policy’s narrative structure, we will seek to identify the alliances that contributed to supporting the decision and securing its political passage.

Rhetorical Alliances That Support Authoritarian Narratives

According to the narrative analysis of policies, building discursive alliances and coalitions of support is a fundamental pillar for establishing any narrative and ensuring its continuity. Here, in an initial phase, the Minister of Industry, Mines, and Energy emphasized the legitimacy of the announced decision as “the result of an extensive scientific report” that, according to her, is based on “150 scientific references from 1995 to 2023, with the aim of covering the chemical, physical, and radiological aspects of the material” and completely denying the presence of any radioactive materials or actual risks to public health.²⁴ A technical discourse took an explanatory or corrective approach to the “manufactured” misconceptions stemming from the old classification, which, according to her, produced “a state of chronic social panic” (*une psychose de phosphogypse*).²⁵ The minister here is an example of a rational, supportive actor who decides how to promote the decision and when to end the debate surrounding it. We infer this from her statement: “This is not a matter for debate; that is why the government has focused on the scientific aspect that is convincing.”²⁶ In this way, the authorities do not merely issue directives but engage in a mobilization process aimed at establishing a single narrative.

The presence of the appointed scientific body as an ally aligns with the political authorities’ efforts to establish legitimacy.²⁷ The proactive promotion of the potential benefits of phosphogypsum, and the recommendations calling for a review of the legislative framework governing its classification during a 2023 seminar at the University of Gafsa, was intended to increase certainty.²⁸ This is evident in a statement by Imam Aloui, one of the appointed members to this scientific body, to National Television Channel 1: “Tunisia is no longer classified as high-risk... and we call on people to adopt practices that will reduce stockpiling, which causes most of the problems.” This statement came in the wake of a parliamentary hearing initiated by the Committee on Industry, Trade, Natural Resources, and Energy to examine the above-mentioned scientific report’s findings and assess the feasibility of implementing them on the ground.²⁹

The media also played a central role in reproducing the authoritarian narrative by relaying decisions and speeches without adding critical scrutiny or analysis of the content. The official narrative increasingly leveraged media support to promote “value creation” and

economic development while undermining the mobilization and advocacy campaigns.³⁰ This was in addition to a wave of media statements, mostly broadcast on private channels, focused primarily on praising the President's achievements and commending "his unparalleled courage, unlike his predecessors" in his handling of the Gabès protest movement.³¹

New alliances emerged with the entry of new actors who redrew boundaries and expanded the scope of social acceptability. The speech by Minister of Equipment and Housing Salah Zouari revealed another possible approach in discussing "the potential use of phosphogypsum for forestation... and environmental restoration".³² Additionally, a speech by Health Minister Mustafa Al-Farjani acknowledged that "the state seeks to transform the environmental crisis in Gabès into a new development model". He emphasized the importance of using phosphogypsum in the circular economy and turning it into a "source of innovation", adding: "The executive branch, led by the President of the Republic, is not based on promises but on action, achievement, and construction."³³ He concluded by announcing the state's intention to "establish a specialized cancer center in the region".³⁴

Through these categorical statements, which cast doubt on previous statements by the regime, the actors engaged in a supportive narrative alliance that shifted the debate from accountability to argumentation and persuasion using a technical and scientific approach that brooked no doubt. They served the state's narrative of itself as the savior from pollution and the bearer of solutions that was deployed to justify its economic policies.

In general, the official narrative regarding the reclassification of phosphogypsum rests on three fundamental pillars: the ability to reframe the environmental problem, and defend and promote the reframing; the reproduction of legitimacy through the dissemination of reports that contradicted previously used scientific references; and the mobilization of a number of institutions supporting the new narrative and suppressing alternatives.

Suppressing Counternarratives Issued by Civil Society

The power of the dominant narrative is only fully realized once it has monopolized the agora, the symbolic space where narratives compete for legitimacy and recognition.³⁵ It is then determined who possesses the rights to appear and to speak, and the conditions for exercising these rights – a form of producing "symbolic power", to use Pierre Bourdieu's term.³⁶ Thus, since the initial announcement of the decision to reclassify phosphogypsum, the official discourse has produced alternative narratives that place human health and the environment at the heart of the battle against the authoritarian narrative.³⁷

The regime's narrative focused on suppressing all critical voices raised by environmental movements and independent scientific groups; it ignored scientific studies and formed a committee that development and water resources expert Hussein al-Rahili described as "tailor-made".³⁸ This epistemological selectivity ensured the regime's ambition to monopolize the truth. In this way, individuals become voiceless bodies, according to Hannah Arendt's conception, and any "communicative act" or knowledge that classified phosphogypsum as a "toxic" or "hazardous" substance threatening the environment and public health was excluded.³⁹

The official narrative made no secret of its stance toward civil society, particularly in its treatment of the Gabès environmental protests that primarily demanded a reversal of the recent government decisions and the immediate dismantling of polluting industrial facilities.⁴⁰ The regime's reliance on a security-driven approach of intimidation and physical punishment – especially as public tensions escalated – did not deter it from narratively framing the issue and casting the protests as part of a web of conspiracies and political maneuvers designed to destabilize the country. The government spoke of “opponents and conspirators... who are showered with money from abroad so they can serve as paid and ‘rabid’ mouthpieces,” directly accusing the Gen-Z movement of inflaming the situation.⁴¹ There was also extensive use of rhetorical and figurative devices, such as using the contrasting poetry and satire of Jarir and al-Farazdaq, two famous Umayyad poets from the 7th century; the president quoted a verse by Jarir that said: “Al-Farazdaq claimed he would kill a square, so rejoice in your safety, O square” as a sarcastic response to civil society opponents and politicians participating in the environmental protest movement.⁴² The president even invoked historical symbols and figures as a form of moral dispute: “In Gabès, if Daghbaji were alive, he would stand with the people with his historic heroic steadfastness to confront those conspiring against the Tunisian people.”⁴³ In the same context, the official spokesperson for the National Guard stated in an interview with Tunisian National Television that parties were exploiting the environmental situation in Gabès “with the aim of carrying out acts of sabotage”.⁴⁴

Through this discourse, the authorities transformed every movement against them into an act of deceit and betrayal, putting the environmental activists or citizens who raised the slogan, “I want to breathe”, through a symbolic test of patriotism and loyalty. This changes the activist from a rights-holder fully aware of the scale of the injustice to a “foreign-funded entity” within civil society, as portrayed by the regime and its narratives. In this way, the authorities redrew the boundaries of legitimate action to impose social control and secure their vital sphere of influence. Ultimately, protest becomes tantamount to opposition to the regime, the “objective” truth, and “objective” science. Environmental movements are thus in constant defensiveness and subject to successive legal accountability.

The Reclassification of “Toxic Substances”: A New Neoliberal Turn?

The decision to reclassify phosphogypsum reveals a hidden aspect of environmental policymaking and its framing in Tunisia. What stands out in our analysis of the official narrative is the existence of institutions that construct narratives and assign labels within closed, exceptional spaces. We no longer speak of “toxic and radioactive waste” as much as we now speak of a “productive material” that is part of a living project based in extractive industries and investment calculations centered primarily on the “economics of cheap commodities”.⁴⁵

The validity of this analysis is reinforced by a statement made by the Tunisian Minister of Equipment and Housing in parliament when he announced an agreement with a Chinese technical team to oversee the chemical complex rehabilitation program.⁴⁶ The Chinese ambassador to Tunisia announced an implementation plan for investment projects and affirmed his country's readiness to cooperate with Tunisia in the areas of pollution control

and the recycling of chemical industries.⁴⁷ In the same context, a board member of the Chinese Association for Middle East Studies promoted the concepts of “green development”, “toxic waste management”, and “gas filtration” with the aim of “providing a better life for citizens” and “achieving mutual benefit”.⁴⁸

These statements reveal a veiled neoliberal political orientation that prioritizes negotiation with external actors over domestic ones; it draws inspiration from them to devise fanciful solutions and reforms and promotes them through a discourse that Bourdieu might describe as “powerful and hard to resist”.⁴⁹ This logic may become even clearer – and more complex – in the parallel decision presented by the authorities regarding their efforts to “produce green ammonia in Gabès”, which suggests a strong desire to position themselves within the emerging energy market based primarily on the massive export of green hydrogen destined for the EU⁵⁰. These projects have been rhetorically polished to mask the greenwashing, and constitute a modern form of appropriation of energy resources and land without serious consideration of pollution or depletion of local resources.⁵¹ The Tunisian authorities, in managing the environmental crisis in Gabès, distanced themselves from the protesters’ reality; they throw dust in their eyes and used violence against their bodies, voices, and ideas. It is as if these decisions are too big to fail – neither for the sake of truth as a principle nor for environmental justice as a foundational condition of social justice.

Conclusion

The decision to reclassify phosphogypsum in Tunisia can be considered at two levels. The first refers to a superficial reading produced by the official narrative, which presented it as a pivotal turning point in the management of environmental policies and public intervention – that is, a shift from a legacy of corruption and environmental and economic marginalization to a new process of valorization, reconstruction, and reform. However, within the limits of a policy narrative analysis, this perception remains tied to the logic of political appearance – that is, what politics says about itself. On a second level, a closer look at the official narratives surrounding the decision reveals other, more compelling indications. The decision to reclassify phosphogypsum is not understood as a break with previous political choices, but rather as a reframing of the problem in a new light – through the language of scientific knowledge and technical expertise – to ensure the priorities of production and growth, without any attempt to dismantle the roots of the crisis and its structural causes or to incorporate central issues such as class and colonial history.

This analysis leads us to the conclusion that narratives are a political act par excellence and a fundamental analytical approach to understanding the limits and potential for change in public policy. Consequently, the process of deconstructing narratives associated with environmental policies in general is not merely an interpretive exercise but a distinctive methodological tool for exploring the state and its real and false heroics, especially when it comes to vital and environmental rights that cannot be postponed or compromised.

¹ رئاسة الجمهورية التونسية، «لقاء رئيس الجمهورية قيس سعيّد مع السيدة فاطمة ثابت حرم شيبوب، وزيرة الصناعة والمناجم والطاقة»، 4 مارس/أذار 2025، متاح على <https://www.carthage.tn/fr/node/8344>

² الصفحة الرسمية لرئاسة الحكومة التونسية على الفيسبوك، يوم 5 آذار/مارس 2025. متاح على

<https://www.facebook.com/share/v/1BTEiRMaLi/>

³ Nesrine Ayeb et al., "Caractérisation du phosphogypse issu de l'industrie phosphatière du Groupe Chimique Tunisien et sa distribution dans l'eau et le sédiment du golfe de Gabès", Revue FSB, vol. XVIII, 2020, pp. 69-70.

https://www.researchgate.net/publication/348183007_CHARACTERISATION_DU_PHOSPHOGYPSE_ISSU_DE_L'INDUSTRIE_PHOSPHATIERE_DU_GROUPE_CHIMIQUE_TUNISIEN_ET_SA_DISTRIBUTION_DANS_L'EAU_ET_LE_SEDIMENT_DU_GOLFE_DE_GABES

⁴ Moncef Zairi and Mohamed Jamel Rouis, "Impacts environnementaux du stockage du phosphogypse à Sfax", Bulletin des laboratoires des ponts et chaussées, no. 219, 1999, pp. 29-40.

⁵ فرانس 24، «شهادات من مواطنين تونسيين عن التلوث الكارثي في قابس»، 17 أكتوبر/تشرين الأول 2025، متاح على

<https://youtu.be/1J1PqhZp3qs?si=gWhW7jvxVS8y1U3r>

⁶ Posidonia seagrass meadows provide vital marine habitats and ecosystems. See "Posidonia Seagrass", World Wildlife Fund for Nature, available at

https://www.wwf.gr/en/our_work/nature/marine/posidonia_seagrass/

⁷ The fight over phosphogypsum historically is not new or unique to Tunisia. In his 1980 study on the working class and the impact of industrial activity on the environment, French sociologist Denis Duclos refers to the period following 1968 and the wave of environmental movements that ensued. In his analysis, he highlights the emergence of new alliances in France that brought together environmental activists, fishermen, and certain segments of the labor movement opposed to the discharge of phosphogypsum into the Seine River and demanding that it be stored instead on land for reuse. This solution raised several concerns and objections in Europe due to the potential risks it posed. A study conducted by American researcher Jaclyn Lopez in 2022 on the phosphogypsum crisis and the regulatory failures of the US's Environmental Protection Agency revealed numerous environmental and health threats facing the most marginalized communities living near onshore phosphogypsum storage sites. With the relocation of production centers to countries in the global south, tensions related to phosphogypsum management have spread to countries such as Tunisia, particularly as protests against industrial pollution have intensified following the revolution.

⁸ Groupe Chimique Tunisien, "Réalisation d'une mission d'audit environnemental et social (E&S) des sites du Groupe Chimique Tunisien (Gabès, Skhira, et M'dhilla 1) P-TN-BB0-010", July 2025, available at https://www.afdb.org/sites/default/files/rapport_audit_es-gct-gabes-def_16_08_2025.pdf (Groupe Chimique Tunisien, "Audit E&S").

⁹ Carol Bacchi, "Introducing the 'What's the Problem Represented to be?' Approach", in *Engaging with Carol Bacchi: Strategic Interventions & Exchanges*, ed. By A. Bletsas and C. Beasley, University of Adelaide Press, 2012, pp. 21-24, available at <https://www.cambridge.org/core/books/abs/engaging-with-carol-bacchi/introducing-the-whats-the-problem-represented-to-be-approach/9DA4129832FD5D496BF66BC1DCA51F>

¹⁰ Elizabeth A. Shanahan, Michael D. Jones, Mark K. McBeth, and Claudio M. Radaelli, "The Narrative Policy Framework", in *Theories of the Policy Process*, Routledge, 2018, pp. 173-213, available at <https://www.taylorfrancis.com/chapters/edit/10.4324/9780429494284-6/narrative-policy-framework-elizabeth-shanahan-michael-jones-mark-mcbeth-claudio-radaelli>

¹¹ Groupe Chimique Tunisien, "Audit E&S".

¹² These measures are inextricably linked to the issue of the energy transition and green hydrogen in Tunisia, addressed in the sixth section; Groupe Chimique Tunisien, "Audit E&S".

¹³ The government's decisions regarding phosphoric acid provided the logistical framework and practical foundation through which phosphogypsum could be transformed into a marketable resource, because producing of one ton of phosphoric acid requires five tons of phosphogypsum.

¹⁴ رئاسة الجمهورية التونسية، «لقاء قيس سعّيد مع رئيس نقابة الصيد الساحلي بقابس وكاتب عام شط السلام للتنمية

المستدامة»، 6 أكتوبر/تشرين الأول 2020، متاح على <https://www.carthage.tn/fr/node/4289>

¹⁵ رئاسة الجمهورية التونسية، «لقاء رئيس الجمهورية قيس سعّيد مع السيد حبيب عبيد، وزير البيئة»، 5 سبتمبر/أيلول 2024،

متاح على <https://www.carthage.tn/ar/...>

¹⁶ The text of the statement carries a clear connotative weight that can be discerned in the effort expended in selecting expressions, terminology, and verbs that support the authority's narrative: the words "establish", "implement", and "work" each appear five times in the statement.

¹⁷ The mining basin and Gabès regions face numerous development challenges, the most significant of which is the lack of potable water that is typically used in phosphate refining processes.

¹⁸ Groupe Chimique Tunisien, "Audit E&S".

¹⁹ Khalfaou Sahbi, "A Primer on Populism", in *The Power of One*, Hamadi Redissi (ed.), Diwen Éditions, 2023, pp. 17-32.

²⁰ Centre International des Technologies de L'Environnement de Tunis, "Décret n° 2000-2339 du 10 octobre 2000 : Décret n° 2000-2339 du 10 octobre 2000, fixant la liste des déchets dangereux (JORT n° 86 du 27 octobre 2000), available at <http://www.citet.nat.tn/Portail/doc/SYRACUSE/40562>;

²¹ الجمهورية التونسية، القانون عدد 37 المؤرخ في 2 يونيو /حزيران 1997، المتعلق بالأحكام المنظمة للنقل والتحويل عبر

الطرق، متاح على <https://lejuriste.ahlamontada.com/t545-topic>

²² Duval Rodrigues Neto Damasio and Márcio Barcelos, "Stories in the Agenda: A Narrative Policy Framework Study", *Revista de Administração Pública*, Vol. 54, No. 6, December 2020, available at <https://doi.org/10.1590/0034-761220190395x>

²³ Maha Bouhleb and Jamie Furniss, "Le président 'propre' : déchets et propreté comme métaphores politiques", *Confluences Méditerranée*, Vol. 2, No. 125, 2023, pp. 169-182, available at <https://shs.cairn.info/revue-confluences-mediterranee-2023-2-page-169?lang=fr>

²⁴ This report was issued in a record time of approximately seven months. A review of its content reveals that it is based primarily on a theoretical approach lacking any direct fieldwork; its authors relied on repurposing selected excerpts from reports and studies conducted in other contexts and countries, with the aim of supporting the validity of the decision to reclassify phosphogypsum in Tunisia: Scientific Committee, "The Valorization of Phosphogypsum: Opportunities for Regional Economic Development" (French), May 2024, available at https://kashfmedia.com/wp-content/uploads/2025/08/754279340-Final-CS-Report-on-the-PG-May-2024-1_compressed-compressed-compressed_compressed-1.pdf

²⁵ Tunisie Numérique، « وزيرة الصناعة: الفوسفوجيبس مادة غير خطيرة و لا تُمَثَل خطرًا على صحة المواطن»، 12 مارس/آذار 2025، متاح على (TN) <https://youtu.be/YOm6FuBrU1?si=ZrvtkVM8cVQcrsP>، "وزير الصناعة"

²⁶ TN، "وزارة الصناعة".

²⁷ The members were appointed in their personal capacity and therefore do not represent the institutions to which they belong. Three of them hold senior official positions within the Ministry of Industry, Mines, and Energy and the Ministry of the Environment; four experts specialize in the environment and sustainable development; and seven others work as research professors at universities.

²⁸ "Valorisation des phosphogypses", Web Manager Center, 15 December 2023, available at <https://www.webmanagercenter.com/2023/12/15/518082/518082/>

²⁹ الصفحة الرسمية لمجلس نواب الشعب، «جلسة استماع إلى اللجنة العلمية المكلفة بدراسة مادة الفوسفوجيبس»، 23 أبريل/نيسان 2025، متاح على https://arp.tn/ar_SY/blog/1/post/8983

³⁰ موزاييك أف أم، «اللجنة العلمية: يجب تثمين الفوسفوجيبس والتوقف عن سكبها في خليج قابس»، 23 أبريل/نيسان 2025، متاح على <https://www.mosaiquefm.net/ar...>

جوهرة أف أم، «قابس تشهد انتعاشة ملحوظة في القطاع السياحي»، 28 مايو/أيار 2025، متاح على <https://www.jawharafm.net/ar/article/.../105/276461>

³¹ In early October 2025, Tunisia witnessed the largest environmental movement in the country's history: protests began in the city of Gabès and spread to the capital after daily cases of suffocation and fainting among students and residents escalated due to their exposure to toxic gases emitted by the chemical complex's industrial activities

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³² Tunisie Numérique، «كلمة وزير التجهيز بمجلس النواب حول الأوضاع في قابس»، 20 أكتوبر/تشرين الأول 2025، متاح على <https://www.youtube.com/live/PgBQvMASJsk?si=xdThMhymzkcfePHb>

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