

RELEASE IN FULL

From: Abedin, Huma <AbedinH@state.gov>
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To: H
Subject: Fw: UPDATE: Tunisian prime minister pledges to quit politics (AP)

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To: NEWS-NEA; NEWS-Mahogany; Gray, Gordon; Brown, Natalie E
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Subject: UPDATE: Tunisian prime minister pledges to quit politics (AP)

TUNIS (AP) - PM Ghannouchi said in an interview on Tunisian television he will leave power after a transition phase leading to legislative and presidential elections "in the shortest possible timeframe."

"My role is to bring my country out of this temporary phase and even if I am nominated I will refuse it and leave politics," Ghannouchi said.

Ghannouchi did not say why he is leaving politics or specify when the elections would be held. He said the elections must be a success "to show the world that our country has a civilization."

The prime minister also pledged that all of the assets held abroad by Ben Ali's regime had been frozen and would be returned to Tunisia after an investigation. He did not elaborate.

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