

Terror's Reach

Do politics come before economics, or economics before politics? The question is probably not susceptible to a definitive answer, but this doesn't prevent us from wondering.

Recently, I saw Tunisian olive oil on the shelves of my local supermarket in France for the first time in more than ten years. It was attractively presented, of excellent quantity, and cheap. To my chagrin, it sold out rapidly.

The Tunisian product that I buy frequently in the supermarket is *harissa*, the highly spiced relish that you stir into your couscous. I noticed recently that a tube of it was now astonishingly cheap, almost the cheapest thing to buy in the whole supermarket, the same price as a single lime.

The economic reason for the sudden appearance of Tunisian olive oil and the cheapness of the *harissa* is no doubt the devaluation of the Tunisian dinar, by about 33 percent in a year. And the cause of this? Most probably the two terrorist attacks on tourists, the first in [on a beach](#), in which 60 people were killed. Not surprisingly, the tourist industry, the source of a large proportion of Tunisia's foreign currency revenue, has been severely affected: arrivals from France, for example (the nationality of the largest number), are down by 60 percent.

In other words, I had my Tunisian olive oil and cheap *harissa* from the supermarket thanks to the Islamic extremists who killed 60 tourists so brutally. This is a case of a hurricane causing the flap of a butterfly's wing.

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