

Headlines:

- **World's Rich Get Richer**
- **Government Prevent Strategy Faces Review**
- **Tunisia 8 Years on**

Details:

World's Rich Get Richer

The world's wealthiest individuals grew richer last year while the wealth of the bottom half of the world's population went backwards, according to new calculations by Oxfam. The charity estimates in what has become its annual attempt to shine a spotlight on planetary wealth inequality, to coincide with the gathering of many of the international economic and political elite in Davos for the World Economic Forum. Using data from Forbes Magazine, which keeps track of the fortunes of the richest individuals on the planet, the charity calculates that the total wealth of around 2,000 dollar billionaires rose by 12 per cent between March 2017 and March 2018. It contrasted this with estimates from analysts at the Swiss bank Credit Suisse which suggest that between the middle of 2017 and the middle of 2018 the total dollar wealth of the bottom half of humanity – some 3.8 billion people – fell by around 11 per cent. "The way our economies are organised means wealth is increasingly and unfairly concentrated among a privileged few while millions of people are barely subsisting," said Matthew Spencer, Oxfam's Director of Campaigns.

Government Prevent Strategy Faces Review

The British government's anti-Islam Prevent strategy is to be independently reviewed after ministers gave into longstanding pressure to address concerns over its impact on communities. The Security Minister, Ben Wallace, announced the review in the House of Commons but threw down the gauntlet to critics of the strategy to produce "solid evidence of their allegations", accusing them of using "distortion and spin". In allowing an 'independent review' of Prevent to go ahead the Government has conceded that the policy lacks any trust or credibility. Instead of scrapping a fundamentally misguided policy that is not fit for purpose, a 'review' will likely attempt to lend it a new lease of life to this failed strategy.

Tunisia 8 Years on

Tunisia witnessed the largest strike in the country's modern history with more than 670,000 participants, as unpopular reforms and inequality drive growing discontent. This took place in the same week as Tunisians were celebrating the anniversary of the 2011 revolution that deposed Zine El Abidine Ben Ali. Eight years after the revolution, Tunisia is heading into a politically tumultuous year. While discussions on state institutions, religion and security have dominated political discourse in the years since the revolution, economic issues are now increasingly defining and dividing the country's political system. This week's events are a sign of things to come. The one-day strike, called by the Tunisian General Labour Union (UGTT), included public sector workers across the country, alongside employees in state-owned companies. Primary demands included an increase in public sector wages, safeguards against privatisation and a departure from the government's economic reform programme, which has been closely aligned with the demands of international financial institutions.