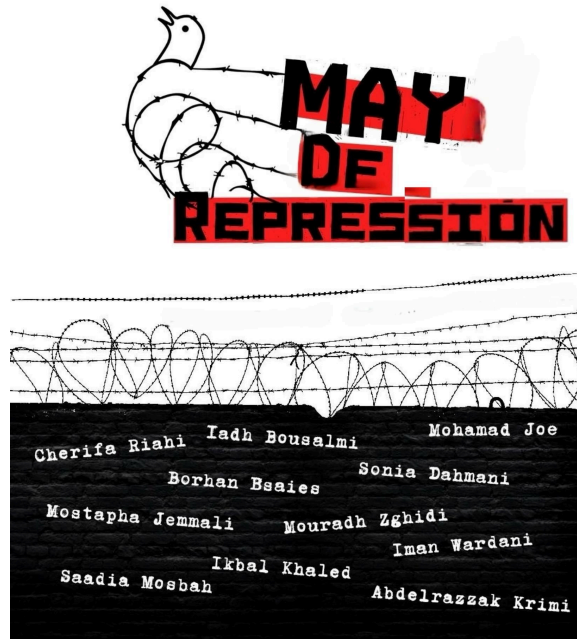


“May Of Repression”

#May_of_Repression #WeHaveNotForgotten



In May 2024, the Tunisian state witnessed a series of incitement and waves of arrests that targeted human rights defenders, solely for practicing their right to freedom of expression and exercising their civil activism.

In an atmosphere clouded by unjust trials and voices of incitement and threats, we are launching the “May of Repression” campaign, running from May 15 to 31, 2025, to remember, document, stand in solidarity, and demand the immediate release of all prisoners of conscience.

We echo the call for truth and freedom, believing that freedom of expression and civil activism are not privileges.

Rather, they are rights, for we have not forgotten and we will never forget.

Together, we preserve memory and
fuel resistance

Raise your voice for the detainees,
And protect the right to free
expression!

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Freedom To Mourad Zeghidi



One full year has passed since the detention of the Tunisian journalist Mourad Zeghidi, who was arrested on May 12, 2024, due to a few statements he delivered during a radio program. As he remains behind bars following his prosecution under Decree 54, in a case related to freedom of expression. He was initially handed a one-year sentence, later reduced to eight months; a sentence that should have ended in January, yet freedom continues to elude him.

And instead of ending this unjust captivity, Mourad was found facing additional serious charges related to money laundering, and he was once again dragged back into the judicial system, with the decision to prolong his detention. And for the third

time today, he is appearing before the investigating judge at the Court of First Instance.

Mourad Zeghidi's ongoing detention and prosecution on additional charges after completing a politically motivated sentence is a blatant violation of rights and freedoms, and a continuation of suppressing press freedom and free voices in Tunisia.

Mourad didn't commit any crime, he spoke out, thought freely, showed support for others, and he was simply put on trial for his opinion, not for committing any criminal act.

Freedom to Imen Ouardani



Imen Ouardani, a doctor in biology and deputy mayor of Sousse, has spent a year in unjust detention, punished for a wave of incitement that targeted civil society organizations and associations.

Since May 10, 2024, Imen Ouardani has continued to be held in detention, arrested based on a 2022 partnership agreement between the municipality of Sousse and the organization “Terre d’Asile Tunisie”.

A whole year has passed, and Imen remains imprisoned, facing charges related to money laundering, fraud, forming a conspiracy to facilitate the entry of foreigners, and abuse of office.

Despite evidence presented by her defense that contradicts the charges and proves that her case lacks any justification for her detention, and despite experts confirming in their reports that her financial accounts show no transactions linking the victim of the violation to the organization “Terre d’asile Tunisie”, she remains behind bars.

In a clear violation of her basic rights, Imen is being punished and remains behind bars, not for any crime she committed, but simply for fulfilling her duty and standing up for human values, which today are too often met with imprisonment.

Freedom to Mohamed Ikbel Khaled



Mohamed Ikbel Khaled, who served as the former mayor of the governorate of Sousse, and was elected in 2019, has remained behind bars over the past year owing to an incitement speech that targeted numerous organizations and associations of the civil society.

He was arrested on May 10, 2024, for signing a partnership agreement between the municipality of Sousse and the organization “Terre d’asile Tunisie”.

A whole year has passed since his arrest ,and Mohamed Ikbel is still under pre-trial detention, facing charges related to money laundering, fraud, forming a conspiracy to facilitate the entry of foreigners, and influence peddling.

And despite evidence presented by his defense team that contradicts these charges and proves that his case lacks any justification for his detention, with experts also confirming in

their reports that his financial accounts show no transactions linking the victim of violation to the organization “Terre d’asile Tunisie”, Mohamed Ikbel remains locked away from freedom’s light, in flagrant violation of his most basic rights, deprived of a fair trial and lacking any sound legal justification.

The incident Mohamed Ikbel Khaled faces is nothing less than an act of clear punishment for practicing his duty and for committing to humanitarian principles that must be valued and protected, amidst a period where morals such as solidarity, justice and human rights are criminalized rather than safeguarded, and those that advocate for such values are thrown blatantly behind bars, simply because they chose to stand where justice thrives and human worth is honored.

Freedom to Cherifa Riahi



Cherifa Riahi is a Human rights advocate and activist, and the former president of the organization “Terre d’Asile Tunisie”, has remained behind bars since May 2024, based on an incitement campaign that targeted numerous associations and organizations of civil society.

On May 7, Cherifa was placed in custody for 10 days, during which she was interrogated almost every day, and despite being extremely tired, she was often called in for questioning late at night, and on May 17, a formal prison warrant was issued against her.

Cherifa is facing charges of money laundering, conspiracy, and sheltering migrants, the same charges filed against 17 other people. However, as the investigation progressed, especially after an expert report in January 2025, the most serious charges, which include money laundering and conspiracy,

were dropped. And on February 26, 2025, the Indictment Chamber cleared the association and its legal representative. However, the Public Prosecutor objected to the decision, leaving the case uncertain due to judicial delays and possible political interference.

Beyond this long legal process is a heartbreaking story; in fact, Cherifa Riahi was arrested only two months after giving birth, leaving her newborn daughter behind. During her ten months in prison, she saw her baby only five times in short, non-contact visits, and only twice face-to-face, despite her family's many requests to allow more meaningful visits.

Cherifa Riahi's case is more than just a legal matter, It shows how humanitarian work can be treated as a crime, and punished with imprisonment.

Freedom to Borhen Bsaies



Borhen Bsaies, a Tunisian journalist, has been deprived of his freedom since May 11, 2024, after being arrested based on 16 different clips of radio and TV programs, in addition to numerous posts he shared on his account.

Borhen spent an entire, long year behind bars, convicted under Decree 54, in a case that impacts the core values of freedom of expression and opinion, as he was initially sentenced to 1 year in jail, and was later reduced to 8 months on appeal, which was expected to end in January 2025.

Despite that, he now faces additional serious charges related to money laundering and remains in detention following the decision to prolong his detention.

Detaining Borhen Bsaies and subjecting him to additional charges immediately after the termination of his sentence represents a blatant violation of rights and freedoms and reveals the ongoing determination of authorities to target press freedom in a transparent effort to stifle critical voices in Tunisia.

Borhen Bsaies remains behind bars today, not for committing any crime, but simply for exercising his fundamental right to freedom of expression.

Freedom to Mohamed Jouou



Mohamed Jouou is a civil society activist who has served as Terre d'Asile Tunisie's financial officer since October 2020.

He has been behind bars for over 384 days as a result of the charges brought against the organization.

Despite the issuing of a report by the judicial experts in January 2025, that proves his innocence of most serious charges, with the principal one being “Money laundering” , and even though a final court ruling cleared him of those charges, Mohamed Jouou is still deprived of his freedom with no legal reason or clear explanation.

Jouou’s continued detention, despite a court ruling in his favor, is a clear violation of basic legal principles and a serious infringement on his right to freedom and a fair trial. It also

highlights a worrying pattern of criminalizing civil activism and targeting human rights defenders.

This is happening in a political and social climate where civil society has faced more and more restrictions in recent years. At the same time, activists have been attacked with smear campaigns and accused of being traitors, often through official statements that create a hostile environment for anyone defending human rights.

Keeping Mohamed Jouou and other human rights defenders, especially those supporting migrants, specifically Sub-Saharan Africans, in prison sends a clear message of intimidation. It aims to silence anyone who stands up for humanitarian values, and it points to a troubling future for free speech and civil activism in Tunisia.

Freedom to **Iyadh Bouselmi**



Iyadh Bouselmi is the executive director of the organization “Terre D’asile Tunisie”, a former diplomat, and an international expert in migration cases. And instead of honoring him, the Tunisian state has chosen to punish him, simply for defending migrants' rights and human rights.

Since May 8, 2024, Iyadh has remained behind bars, following his arrest due to his humanitarian work, and his occupation as executive director in an organization related to cases of migration and refugees, where he was accused with serious charges, such as “money laundering” and “Conspiracy to commit offenses against property and people”.

And with the advancement of investigations, especially after the publication of the experts' report, which was released in January 2025 led to the dropping of the most serious charges, including money laundering. A final decision cleared all charges, clearly proving the integrity of the organization he heads.

Despite clear judicial vindication, Iyadh Bousselmi remains unjustly deprived of his freedom, more than 383 days into his detention without a shred of new evidence or any legitimate legal grounds to justify his continued imprisonment.

His ongoing detention, despite the organization he works for being cleared and the main charges against him dropped, reveals a troubling trend of targeting activists and human rights defenders. It also represents a blatant violation of the principles of a fair trial and the denial of a person's freedom simply for choosing to commit to migration and human rights causes.

Freedom to Iyadh Bousselmi

Freedom for all those who have made civic engagement a moral and human commitment

Freedom to Mustapha Djemali



Mustapha Djemali, a special Advisor to the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees and director and founder of the Tunisian Council of Refugees was arrested in May 3, 2024, reportedly following a raid on the association's office, which was reportedly due to the council's publication of an announcement inviting hotels to submit offers to accommodate asylum seekers and refugees.

A whole year has passed since Mustapha has been remaining behind bars and facing charges of "forming an agreement to guide, facilitate, assisting, or mediating by any means the illegal entry of a person into Tunisian territory, and sheltering individuals who entered or left the country illegally, as well as providing a place to house or hide them, exploiting his position or the authority granted to him under his job or role, and participating in such an agreement."

Mustapha Djemali, an 80-year-old senior, remains held in prison, without trial, despite the efforts of the defense team in providing medical reports detailing his deteriorating health condition, and testimonies from experts denying any administrative or financial infractions.

The ongoing detention of Mustapha Djemali without trial conveys a stark message that, in a stifling political climate, even acts of compassion can be branded as crimes.

Freedom to Saadia Mesbah



Saadia Mesbah is a human rights activist and president of the association “Mnemty”, that is dedicated to promoting awareness and combating racial discrimination and hate speech in Tunisia.

She has spent the past year behind bars, as she was arrested by Tunisian authorities on May 6, 2024, after her home and the association’s headquarters were raided. where she was held for ten days and charged with money laundering, without any clear evidence to support the accusations.

Since her arrest, Saadia has been subjected to a widespread smear campaign on social media, targeting her personally and professionally, including hate speech and organized incitement against her, which stems from her defense of migrants from Sub-Saharan African countries.

On November 7, 2025, her detention was extended for another four months, without respecting the legal rights guaranteed

by human rights laws, and without any clear progress in the case.

Saadia is in prison today because she chose to support marginalized groups, stood with migrants in Tunisia, and defended their rights.

Depriving her of her freedom shows the increasing pressure on people who stand up for human rights.

Freedom to Abderrazek Krimi



Abderrazek Krimi is a civil activist and the project manager of the Tunisian Refugee Council.

Since May 9, 2024, he has remained behind bars, following his detention due to the council's publication of an announcement inviting hotels to submit offers to accommodate asylum seekers and refugees.

What was purely an administrative procedure was transformed into a criminal case by the authorities, representing a blatant violation of the legitimacy of his work and the Tunisian International commitments to protect refugees.

Abderrazek Krimi faces charges under Articles 38, 39 ,and 41 of Law N.40 of 1975, related to passports and travel documents, with charges involving alleged conspiracy and facilitating illegal entry into the Tunisian territory, which are accusations that are not based on any actual criminal activities, but instead of his professional and humanitarian work.

Since his arrest, Abderrazek has not been subjected to a fair trial and has remained detained without a judicial order, in a clear violation of the legal and constitutional rights that separate human rights work from criminal charges. The injustice worsened when his mother passed away while he was in detention, as he wasn't allowed to say goodbye or attend her funeral. In protest of his ongoing unfair detention, he began a hunger strike in early February 2025.

The ongoing detention of Abderrazek Krimi without a trial, and without any actual evidence of committing a crime, signals a serious shift in Tunisia, where civil activism is increasingly at risk, with the state taking clear steps to punish humanitarian work and limit the activities of civil society.

We demand the immediate release of Abderrazek Krimi and ensure accountability to all those responsible for violating his freedom and fundamental rights.

Freedom to Sonia Dahmani



Sonia Dahmani is a Tunisian lawyer and media figure who was abruptly and violently arrested on May 11, 2024, following a raid on the “bar Association” by a group of police officers, due to some media statements she had made, and was imprisoned without questioning.

In June, the public prosecution filed additional charges in two separate cases, also based on statements she had previously given on television and radio, in which she addressed the conditions of prisons in Tunisia and the violations faced by inmates.

A detention order was issued against her in the first case, while she was released on bail in the second.

Sonia has suffered a full, long year in prison just because she spoke out against injustice. Since her arrest, she has faced harsh conditions meant to wear her down both mentally and physically, with almost no access to medical care, which led

her to develop diabetes and high blood pressure due to stress and poor nutrition.

She remains behind bars today, not for any crime committed, but for daring to raise her voice and unveil the shadows of injustice in Tunisia.

A full year of suffering, all for the courage to speak her truth.



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