

URGENT ACTION

HUMAN RIGHTS LAWYER ON TRIAL

On February 12, 2026, the appeal trial of human rights lawyer Ahmed Souab will open before the Tunis Court of Appeal. The Tunis Court of First Instance had last October sentenced him to five years in prison following a grossly unfair trial that only lasted seven minutes. Since his arrest on April 21, 2025, the health of 69-year-old Ahmed Souab has significantly deteriorated in prison. He is currently detained in El Mornaguia prison, outside of Tunis. Since his conviction was related solely to his work as a lawyer and the exercise of his right to freedom of expression, Tunisian authorities must quash Ahmed Souab's unjust conviction and immediately and unconditionally release him. Authorities must ensure that human rights lawyers are able to freely carry out their work in a safe and enabling environment without any reprisals.

TAKE ACTION:

- Write a letter to the government official(s) listed. Use the sample letter below as a guide or use your own words.
- [Click here](#) to report your action(s) on **Second UA 93.25**. We share this number with the officials we are trying to persuade.

President of the Republic Kais Saïed

Route de la Goulette
Site archéologique de Carthage, Tunisie
Email: contact@carthage.tn
Twitter: @TnPresidency – Facebook

Send a copy of your letter to the address below

**CC: Tunisian Embassy in the United States
Ambassador Hanène Al-Tajouri Bessassi**

1515 Massachusetts Avenue, NW,
Washington DC 20005

Email: AT.Washington@Tunisianembassy.org

Your Excellency,

I am concerned about the unjust conviction and sentencing of human rights lawyer **Ahmed Souab**. He was sentenced solely for exercising his right to freedom of expression and carrying out his professional duties. Ahmed Souab's arrest and prosecution are in retaliation for his criticism of the lack of due process and independence of the court regarding the 'conspiracy case' in which he was representing three defendants.

On October 31, 2025, the Tunis Court of First Instance sentenced him to five years in prison following a grossly unfair trial. Ahmed Souab's trial, which only lasted seven minutes, was held without his physical presence as the court extended its decision to hold terrorism trials remotely citing a vague "imminent danger". The right of a defendant to be present at trial may be temporarily restricted only in exceptional circumstances.

Ahmed Souab's health has significantly and rapidly deteriorated after nine months of arbitrary detention in El Mornaguia prison.

I urge you to quash Ahmed Souab's unjust conviction and sentence and immediately and unconditionally release him. Pending this, I urge you to ensure that Ahmed Souab is provided with access to adequate healthcare, including in hospitals outside the prison, as required. I also call on your government to immediately cease targeted arrests of human rights defenders and allow them to freely carry out their human rights work in a safe and enabling environment without any reprisals.

Yours sincerely,

ADDITIONAL INFORMATION

Ahmed Souab is a prominent Tunisian lawyer and human rights defender. He previously served as a judge at the Administrative Court and was a vocal critic of the dismantling of the rule of law following President Saied's July 25, 2021 power grab. He represented several high-level victims of violations like **Sonia Dahmani** in addition to lawyers and political opposition activists **Ghazi Chaouachi** and **Ridha Belhaj**, both defendants in the "conspiracy case".

On April 19, 2025, Ahmed Souab spoke in a press conference outside the Tunis Court of First Instance after the "[conspiracy trial](#)" was concluded in which 37 defendants including political opposition leaders were wrongfully sentenced on bogus charges of counter terrorism and conspiracy against the state. He had served as a lawyer representing several of the defendants and in his remarks, he criticized violations of due process that had taken place during the trial, executive interference in the judicial process, and the lack of independence of the court. Two days later, the Counter-Terrorism Brigade [arrested Ahmed Souab](#) and interrogated him in relation to these comments. The counterterrorism police unit held him in incommunicado detention for 48 hours, denying him access to his family and lawyer, before presenting him to the investigative judge of the Judicial Pole for Counterterrorism in Tunis.

On April 23, 2025, the judge ordered his pre-trial detention for six months pending investigation despite the lack of evidence suggesting involvement in any recognizable crime under international law. On June 30, 2025, the investigative judge concluded the investigation and formally charged him with "disclosing and spreading information directly or indirectly, by any means, for the benefit of terrorist organizations, or individuals connected to terrorist crimes, with the aim of assisting or facilitating their commission, or benefiting from them, or refraining from reporting them, or threatening to commit them. Such acts consist of providing or disclosing intentionally, to others, information that could endanger the safety of certain persons, or failing to report them,". Additional charges were brought against him related to using telecommunications networks and communications.

Ahmed Souab's defense team appealed the judge's decision but on July 17, the accusation chamber indicted him under the above-mentioned charges and referred him to trial. His arrest and prosecution came in direct retaliation for his work in defense of victims of human rights violations and the legitimate exercise of his right to freedom of expression and professional activities. By conflating legal advocacy with terrorism, the Tunisian authorities further undermine the right to fair trial, [judicial independence](#), and create a climate of fear that restricts human rights defenders from carrying out their essential work. In recent years, Tunisian authorities [have prosecuted or harassed several lawyers](#), solely for defending political prisoners or publicly criticizing the judiciary and the executive.

PREFERRED LANGUAGE TO ADDRESS TARGET: Arabic, French, English, or your own language.

PLEASE TAKE ACTION AS SOON AS POSSIBLE UNTIL: July 6, 2026

NAME AND PRONOUN: Ahmed Souab (He/Him)

LINK TO PREVIOUS UA: <https://www.amnestyusa.org/urgent-actions/tunisia-lawyer-arbitrarily-detained/>