TUNISIA

- **TUN-06:** Abir Moussi (Ms.)
- **TUN-COLL-01:** 63 parliamentarians

Inter-Parliamentary Union
For democracy. For everyone.

Tunisia

Decision adopted unanimously by the IPU Governing Council at its 218th session (Arusha, 9 October 2026)



Abir Moussi (centre), President of the Free Destourian Party (*Parti destourien libre* – PDL), at the Tunisian Assembly headquarters in Tunis on 26 January 2021. © FETHI BELAID/AFP

TUN-06 – Abir Moussi (Ms.)

Alleged human rights violations

- ✓ Threats, acts of intimidation
- ✓ Arbitrary arrest and detention
- ✓ Lack of due process at the investigation stage and lack of fair trial proceedings
- ✓ Violation of freedom of opinion and expression
- ✓ Violation of freedom of assembly and association
- ✓ Violation of freedom of movement
- ✓ Abusive revocation or suspension of the parliamentary mandate
- ✓ Failure to respect parliamentary immunity
- ✓ Other acts obstructing the exercise of the parliamentary mandate
- ✓ Impunity

A. Summary of the case

Ms. Abir Moussi, former member of the Assembly of People's Representatives of Tunisia, was the victim in 2019 and 2021 of acts of verbal and physical violence and sexist, degrading insults, directly linked to the exercise of her parliamentary mandate. The abuse suffered by Ms. Moussi is allegedly based on the one hand, on the fact that she is the leader of an opposition political party and, on the other, on her gender. Ms. Moussi also received serious death threats, which she reported to the police, who had provided her with security when she was still a member of parliament.

Case TUN-06

Tunisia: Parliament affiliated to the IPU

Victim(s): Former female member of the opposition

Qualified complainant(s): Section I.(1)(a) of the Committee Procedure (Annex I)

Submission of complaint(s): October 2020

Recent IPU decision: February 2026

IPU mission(s): - - -

Recent Committee hearing(s): Hearing with the Tunisian delegation to the 149th IPU Assembly (October 2024)

Recent follow-up:
- Communications from the authorities: Letter from Speaker of the Assembly of People's Representatives (May 2024)
- Communication from the complainant: September 2026
- Communications to the authorities: Letter to the Speaker of the Assembly of People's Representatives (September 2026)
- Communication to the complainant: September 2026

Although the complainant's allegations were supported by videos and excerpts from social media posts that helped identify the alleged perpetrators, including two former members of parliament, Mr. Seifedine Makhlouf and Mr. Sahbi Smara, these two members were sentenced only on 26 March 2025 to one year and to six months in prison, respectively. The complainant lodged an appeal against the judgment, arguing that the gravity of the offences warranted a more severe sentence.
In addition to the verbal and physical violence to which she was subjected, Ms. Moussi was also stripped of her parliamentary mandate on 30 March 2022 when the President of the Republic decided to dissolve the Tunisian parliament. Since that date, the violations of Ms. Moussi's rights to freedom of expression and to demonstration have continued to increase.

On 3 October 2023, a few days after expressing her interest in the presidential elections, Ms. Moussi was arrested while attempting to lodge an appeal against the presidential decrees on the organization and conduct of local elections scheduled for December 2023, citing a lack of transparency in the electoral process. On 5 October 2023, the investigating judge ordered that she be remanded in custody on charges of "attempting to change the form of government", "inciting violence on Tunisian territory" and "aggression with the aim of provoking disorder", as stipulated in Article 72 of the Tunisian Criminal Code, and of "processing personal data without consent of the person concerned" and "interfering with freedom of labour", as stipulated in Articles 27 and 87 of the Data Protection Act and Article 136 of the Tunisian Criminal Code, respectively.

On 30 January 2024, the investigating judge decided to drop the proceedings relating to Article 72 but continued to remand Ms. Moussi in custody on the basis of the two other charges. On 24 December 2024, the indictment division of the Tunis Court of Appeal closed the investigation and referred Ms. Moussi to the criminal division to be tried. The criminal division of the court of first instance found her guilty in this case on 12 December 2025 and sentenced her to 12 years in prison. On 13 March 2026, the Court of Appeal reduced this sentence to 10 years in prison. The Court of Cassation rejected Ms. Moussi's appeal on 29 September 2026.

Ms. Moussi is also the object of two complaints filed in 2022 and 2023 by the Independent High Authority for Elections (*Instance supérieure indépendante pour les élections* – ISIE), accusing her of having criticized both the process for organizing the legislative elections of 2024 and the functioning of the electoral body. In respect of the 2022 ISIE complaint, on 5 August 2024 Ms. Moussi received a two-year prison sentence under Article 24 of Decree-Law No. 54. On 22 November 2024, the appeal court reduced the prison sentence to 16 months. Ms. Moussi filed a cassation appeal, and the Court of Cassation referred the case back to a different panel of the Court of Appeal. On 18 February 2026, the Court of Appeal confirmed Ms. Moussi's conviction but reduced her sentence from 16 to six months in prison. Ms. Moussi completed this sentence on 26 May 2025.

In respect of the second ISIE complaint, the Court of Cassation allegedly rejected Ms. Moussi's cassation appeal on 30 January 2025, and the case was therefore referred back to the criminal division of the court of first instance. The trial was supposed to take place on 25 March 2025, but the former member of parliament and her lawyers boycotted the hearing, denouncing numerous judicial irregularities. On 12 June 2025, Ms. Moussi was sentenced at first instance to two years in prison. On 30 December 2025, the Tunis Court of Appeal confirmed this sentence. On 29 September 2026, the Court of Cassation rejected the cassation appeal.

In their letter to the IPU received on 20 December 2023, the parliamentary authorities stated that they did not have official information on the judicial cases in progress, as these proceedings fell within the remit of the judicial authorities, in accordance with the principle of the separation of powers. The parliamentary authorities also refuted the allegations that the proceedings brought against Ms. Moussi were political in nature, stating that these allegations were unfounded, without, however, providing any arguments to that effect.

At the Committee's request, it met with the Tunisian parliamentary delegation twice in 2024, during the 148th and 149th IPU Assemblies. During these two meetings, the Tunisian delegation did not provide any substantial information on the situation of Ms. Moussi. The IPU's request to send a mission to the country has remained unanswered by the authorities.

In November 2024, the United Nations Working Group on Arbitrary Detention issued an opinion in which it concluded that Ms. Moussi's detention was arbitrary, since it resulted from the exercise of her political rights and freedoms, and that the charges against her were not supported by any factual or legal evidence. Like the IPU, the Working Group called for Ms. Moussi's immediate release.

The complainant also stated that Ms. Moussi's detention conditions were deplorable, with limited access to medical care and constant supervision, including during her meetings with her lawyers. On 12 February 2025, Ms. Moussi started a hunger strike to protest against her detention conditions, resulting in a brief hospital stay.
In August 2026, the complainant stated that Ms. Moussi was transferred to hospital after her health had deteriorated while in prison. Despite the Committee's requests, the parliamentary authorities have not provided any information on this case since 2024.

B. Decision

The Governing Council of the Inter-Parliamentary Union

1. *Deeply regrets* the continued lack of concrete information from the Tunisian authorities on the case of Ms. Moussi;

2. *Deplores* the continued detention of Ms. Moussi and the confirmation on appeal of her conviction of 10 years of prison instead of 12 for exercising her right to freedom of expression and opinion while carrying out her parliamentary mandate;

3. *Condemns* the fact that this sentence is disproportionate to the acts of which Ms. Moussi is accused and the fact that there is no basis or concrete evidence to justify such a severe sentence; *is deeply concerned* about the potential repercussions of this decision and the deterrent effect that it could have on the political participation of Tunisian women and their ability to fully exercise their mandates and publicly express their opinions, in a context in which women parliamentarians can be exposed to specific forms of violence, intimidation and pressure owing to their political engagement;

4. *Recalls* that the United Nations Working Group on Arbitrary Detention, in its opinion issued in 2024, concluded that Ms. Moussi's detention was arbitrary and called upon the authorities to release her immediately; *urges* the Tunisian authorities to release Ms. Moussi and discontinue all proceedings against her;

5. *Stresses* once more that, while respecting the independence of the judiciary and the principle of separation of powers, the parliamentary authorities have both the duty and the authority to exercise their oversight role by monitoring the case of Ms. Moussi as a former member of parliament, and ensuring that her right to a fair trial is respected;

6. *Firmly reiterates* its request to the Tunisian authorities to welcome a mission from the Committee, as soon as possible, being of the opinion that such a mission would be a concrete opportunity to strengthen dialogue and cooperation with the Tunisian authorities, would enable the Committee to speak directly with the various stakeholders and better understand the situation on the ground, and would make a decisive contribution to identifying, together with the authorities, solutions that would lead to the definitive resolution of Ms. Moussi's case, as well as those of several former Tunisian members of parliament;

7. *Requests* the Secretary General to convey this decision to the Speaker of the Assembly of People's Representatives, the complainant and any third party likely to be in a position to supply relevant information;

8. *Requests* the Committee to continue examining this case and to report back to it in due course.

Inter-Parliamentary Union
For democracy. For everyone.

Tunisia

Decision adopted unanimously by the IPU Governing Council at its 218th session (Arusha, 9 October 2026)



Tunisian security forces guard the entrance to the national parliament in Tunis, on 1 October 2021. © Anadolu Agency via AFP

TUN-07 – Seifedine Makhlouf
TUN-08 – Maher Zid
TUN-09 – Maher Medhioub
TUN-10 – Yosri Dali
TUN-11 – Fethi Ayadi
TUN-12 – Awatef Ftirch (Ms.)
TUN-13 – Omar Ghribi
TUN-14 – Faiza Bouhlel (Ms.)
TUN-15 – Samira Smii (Ms.)
TUN-16 – Mahbouba Ben Dhifallah (Ms.)
TUN-17 – Mohamed Zrig
TUN-18 – Issam Bargougui
TUN-19 – Samira Chaouachi (Ms.)
TUN-20 – Belgacem Hassan
TUN-21 – Kenza Ajela (Ms.)
TUN-22 – Emna Ben Hmayed (Ms.)
TUN-23 – Bechr Chebbi
TUN-24 – Monjia Boughanmi (Ms.)
TUN-25 – Wafa Attia (Ms.)
TUN-26 – Jamila Jouini (Ms.)
TUN-27 – Mohamed Lazher Rama
TUN-28 – Nidhal Saoudi
TUN-29 – Neji Jmal
TUN-30 – Zeinab Brahmi (Ms.)
TUN-31 – Mohamed Al Azhar
TUN-32 – Noureddine Bhiri
TUN-33 – Rached Ghannouchi
TUN-34 – Tarek Fetiti
TUN-35 – Imed Khemiri
TUN-39 – Noomane El Euch
TUN-40 – Abdelhamid Marzouki
TUN-41 – Ayachi Zammal
TUN-42 – Samir Dilou
TUN-43 – Habib Ben Sid'hom
TUN-44 – Mabrouk Khachnaoui
TUN-45 – Bechir Khelifi
TUN-46 – Nouha Aissaoui (Ms.)
TUN-47 – Latifa Habachi (Ms.)
TUN-48 – Ferida Laabidi (Ms.)
TUN-49 – Mohamed Affas
TUN-50 – Abdellatif Aloui
TUN-51 – Mehdi Ben Gharbia
TUN-52 – Rached Khiari
TUN-54 – Moussa Ben Ahmed
TUN-55 – Oussama Khlifi
TUN-56 – Ghazi Karoui
TUN-57 – Mohamed Fateh Khlifi
TUN-58 – Ziad El Hachemi
TUN-59 – Sofiane Makhloufi
TUN-60 – Majdi Karbai
TUN-61 – Anouar Ben Chahed
TUN-62 – Yassine Ayari
TUN-63 – Ghazi Chaouachi
TUN-64 – Ahmed Mechergui
TUN-65 – Mohamed Ben Salem
TUN-66 – Lazhar Akremi
TUN-67 – Ali Laraiedh
TUN-68 – Ahmed Ameri

TUN-36 – Walid Jalled
TUN-37 – Safi Said
TUN-38 – Iyadh Elloumi
TUN-69 – Sayed Ferjani
TUN-70 – Sahbi Atig

Alleged human rights violations

- ✓ Threats, acts of intimidation
- ✓ Arbitrary arrest and detention
- ✓ Lack of due process at the investigation stage and lack of fair trial proceedings
- ✓ Violation of freedom of opinion and expression
- ✓ Violation of freedom of assembly and association
- ✓ Violation of freedom of movement
- ✓ Abusive revocation or suspension of the parliamentary mandate
- ✓ Failure to respect parliamentary immunity
- ✓ Other acts obstructing the exercise of the parliamentary mandate

A. Summary of the case[1]

Case TUN-COLL-01

Tunisia: Parliament affiliated to the IPU

Victim(s): 63 members of the opposition (49 men and 14 women)

Qualified complainant(s): Sections I.1(a) and (b) of the Committee Procedure (Annex I)

Submission of complaint(s): August, September and October 2021

Recent IPU decision: February 2026

IPU mission(s): - - -

Recent Committee hearing(s): Hearing with the parliamentary authorities during the 149th IPU Assembly (October 2024)

Recent follow-up:
- Communication from the authorities: Letter from the Speaker of the Assembly of People's Representatives (May 2024)
- Communication from the complainants: September 2026
- Communications to the authorities: Letter to the Speaker of the Assembly of People's representatives (September 2026)
- Communication to the complainants; September 2026

This case concerns 63 former members of the Assembly of People's Representatives of Tunisia who, according to the complainants, are victims of arbitrary prosecutions after expressing their opposition to the exceptional measures adopted by President Kaïs Saïed since 25 July 2021.

More generally, the suspension and dissolution of parliament in 2021 and 2022, respectively, by President Saïed had an impact on the 217 members of parliament elected in 2019, who were deprived of their parliamentary immunity, allowances, medical insurance and freedom of movement, including to receive medical treatment.

According to the complainants, the Public Prosecutor ordered an investigation into the 120 former members of parliament for an attempted coup d'état and conspiracy against justice, after they took part in an online plenary session shortly before the official dissolution of the Assembly. Proceedings against these members of parliament are still ongoing, and the executive authorities confirmed in a letter dated 11 October 2022 that the individuals concerned were under investigation.

Moreover, according to the complainants, the dissolution of parliament had additional consequences for some members of parliament elected in 2019 from the *Ennahda* and *Al Karama* blocs, who were directly targeted because of their opposition to President Saïed.

Mr. Nourredine Bhiri, who had initially been arrested and detained on 31 December 2021 before being released on 8 March 2022, was again arrested on 13 February 2023 by officers from the national terrorist crimes investigation unit. On 18 October 2024, Mr. Bhiri was sentenced to 10 years in prison on charges of endangering State security, inciting civil disorder and calling for insurrection. The charges against him relate to a post on social media that was attributed to him, although Mr. Bhiri and his defence team dispute the existence of this post, claiming that it has never been proven.

On 3 July 2024, Mr. Makhlouf was arrested in Algeria for the irregular crossing of Algerian borders and was sentenced to three months in prison. While in detention, Mr. Makhlouf applied for asylum with the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR) in Algeria on 18 July 2024. On 13 January 2026, the Tunisian authorities sentenced him in absentia to five years in prison in connection with the

[1] For the purposes of this decision, the term "opposition" refers to members of parliament belonging to political groups or parties with limited decision-making power who are opposed to the ruling power.

case of conspiracy against State security. While awaiting a response from UNHCR to his asylum application, Mr. Makhlouf was returned by the Algerian authorities on 18 January 2026 to Tunisia, where he is serving his sentence.

Similarly, Mr. Mehdi Ben Gharbia was placed in detention on 20 October 2021 on money-laundering charges, even though the legal period of six months had expired. In its Opinion No. 50/2023 of 26 September 2023 concerning the case of Mr. Ben Gharbia, the United Nations Working Group on Arbitrary Detention considered that Mr. Ben Gharbia's detention was arbitrary, based on the information provided by the complainants. The Working Group also called on the Tunisian authorities, who have not sent their official observations to the United Nations mechanism, to release Mr. Ben Gharbia immediately and pay him compensation for the damage suffered. Between January and November 2025, Mr. Ben Gharbia was sentenced to a cumulative total of 16 years of prison for financial and administrative corruption.

As for Mr. Rached Ghannouchi, former Speaker of Parliament, he has been charged in at least 12 cases that the complainants maintain are politically motivated. On 15 May 2023, he was sentenced by Tunisia's anti-terrorism court to a one-year prison term for public statements he had made in 2022. On 5 February 2025, Mr. Ghannouchi was sentenced to 22 years in the Instalingo case. On 10 November 2025, the United Nations Working Group on Arbitrary Detention adopted Opinion No. 63/2025 regarding Mr. Ghannouchi's situation and concluded that his detention was arbitrary, in particular due to violations of his rights to freedom of expression and a fair trial, as well as to discriminatory measures based on his political opinions. The Working Group called on the Tunisian authorities to release him immediately.

In February 2026, Mr. Ghannouchi was sentenced to 20 years of prison in connection with the case of conspiracy against State security. On 1 June 2026, the former Speaker of Parliament was sentenced to life imprisonment, together with an additional penalty of 30 years' imprisonment for having created a "secret security apparatus" in service of *Ennahda*, the party that governed the country starting in 2011. When added together, Mr. Ghannouchi's prison sentences total 107 years, in addition to a sentence of life imprisonment.

Mr. Sayed Ferjani and Mr. Ahmed Mechergui were allegedly arrested on 27 February and 19 April 2023, respectively, in connection with the investigation against Mr. Ghannouchi in the Instalingo case. On 5 February 2025, Mr. Sayed Ferjani was sentenced to 13 years' imprisonment.

Similarly, Mr. Ahmed Ameri and Mr. Mohamed Ben Salem were reportedly arrested in March 2023 for "organizing an illegal border crossing" "and illegally holding currency". On 11 March 2025, they were sentenced to two- and three-years' imprisonment respectively. Mr. Ben Salem was allegedly released in July 2026. Ghazi Chaouachi was arrested in February 2023 in connection with a plot against State security. In November 2025, the appeals court upheld a 20-year prison sentence against him.

Mr. Ali Laraiedh, the former Prime Minister, was arrested on 19 December 2022 on vague terrorism charges. The complainants state that he is being held in detention without having appeared before a judge. He was sentenced in May 2025 to 34 years in prison in connection with the so-called case of networks for transporting Tunisian fighters to conflict zones abroad, for purposes described as terrorism by the authorities. Finally, former member of parliament Mr. Sahbi Atig was allegedly arrested on 6 May 2023 and prosecuted for corruption and money laundering. In June 2025, he was sentenced to 15 years in prison for offences related to money-laundering, the unlawful possession of currency, and false testimony. His sentence was upheld on appeal. According to the complainants, the aim of all these cases is to silence former members of parliament who publicly criticized the Head of State.

In March 2025, Mr. Ayachi Zammal was sentenced to over 32 years' imprisonment in cases relating to sponsorships during the presidential elections. However, on 23 July 2026, he was released after receiving a presidential pardon to mark the 69th anniversary of the proclamation of the Republic.

At the Committee's request, a meeting was held between the latter and the Tunisian delegation twice in 2024, during the 148th and 149th IPU Assemblies. During these two meetings, the Tunisian delegation did not provide any substantial information on the situation of the former members of parliament, their conditions of detention or the status of the legal proceedings, citing the same arguments about the separation of powers. The IPU's request to send a mission to the country has remained unanswered by the Tunisian authorities.

The Tunisian authorities, in their various communications to the IPU, have essentially stated that matters regarding legal proceedings fell within the remit of the judicial authorities, without providing any concrete information on the ongoing proceedings or any information that would address the allegations raised since 2024.

B. Decision

The Governing Council of the Inter-Parliamentary Union

1. *Deeply regrets* the continued lack of concrete information from the Tunisian authorities on the situation of the former members of parliament included in this case;

2. *Deplores* the continued detention of nine former Tunisian members of parliament in connection with cases whose circumstances and underlying facts remain unclear to date; and *also deplores* the severe prison sentences imposed on them on the basis of vague allegations of undermining State security, following proceedings marred by serious judicial irregularities;

3. *Is particularly concerned* by the numerous convictions of the former Speaker of Parliament, Mr. Ghannouchi, and by the prison sentences imposed on him, which total 107 years of prison plus life imprisonment; *emphasizes* that these convictions appear to have resulted from proceedings that were seriously marred by irregularities, in particular the failure to comply with international standards regarding the right to a fair trial;

4. *Takes note* of the opinion issued in November 2025 by the United Nations Working Group on Arbitrary Detention regarding Mr. Ghannouchi's situation, in which it concluded that his detention was arbitrary, in particular due to violations of his rights to freedom of expression and a fair trial, as well as to discriminatory measures based on his political opinions, and called on the Tunisian authorities to release him immediately; *concurs* with these findings; and *urges* the Tunisian authorities to release Mr. Ghannouchi;

5. *Urges* the Tunisian authorities, once again, to immediately release the other former members of parliament detained for expressing opposition to the exceptional measures adopted by the President of the Republic and drop all charges against them and all other former members of parliament concerned in this case;

6. *Takes note* of the release of Mr. Ben Salem and Mr. Zammal; *stresses*, nevertheless, that these two former members of parliament were prosecuted for exercising their right to freedom of expression and should not have been prosecuted on such serious charges; and *wishes* to receive updated information from the Tunisian authorities on their situation and that of the former members of parliament who were released;

7. *Firmly reiterates* its request to the Tunisian authorities to welcome a mission from the Committee, as soon as possible, being of the opinion that such a mission would be a concrete opportunity to strengthen dialogue and cooperation with the Tunisian authorities, would enable the Committee to speak directly with the various stakeholders and better understand the situation on the ground, and would make a decisive contribution to identifying, together with the authorities, solutions that would lead to the definitive resolution of all cases concerning Tunisian former members of parliament;

8. *Requests* the Secretary General to convey this decision to the Speaker of the Assembly of People's Representatives, the complainants and any third party likely to be in a position to supply relevant information;

9. *Requests* the Committee to continue examining this case and to report back to it in due course.