

President of the Republic Kais Saied

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Your Excellency,

I write to ask you to immediately release opposition figure Abir Moussi and drop all charges against her. Abir Moussi is being investigated for a range of offenses under the Penal Code and the Data Protection Law and is being held in Manouba's women prison.

On 24 September 2023, Abir Moussi shared a [press release](#) expressing her interest in running in the next presidential elections. Just days later, on 3 October 2023, police officers arrested her in front of a public administration office annexed to the Presidential Palace after she attempted to submit an appeal against presidential decrees to the relevant administration but was prevented from doing so. Abir Moussi protested the arbitrary denial by insisting on staying in front of the administration building and live streaming this on Facebook.

According to eyewitnesses and her lawyers, security forces detained her and took her to an undisclosed location for about two hours before her legal representatives traced her to a police station in La Goulette, a neighbourhood in the capital Tunis. Abir Moussi's lawyers also told Amnesty International that she sustained physical injuries after the police used excessive force during her arrest. The lawyers said that the authorities had denied them access to their client during police interrogation, in clear breach of her due process rights, and were only subsequently informed of the prosecution's decision to hold her in pre-trial detention after being in police custody for 48 hours. According to her lawyers, during her first night in custody, officers detaining Abir Moussi ignored her requests for medicine she is supposed to take at a precise time daily, which resulted in health complications that landed her in the hospital days later.

On 5 October, Abir Moussi was interrogated by an investigative judge at the Tunis Court of First Instance in relation to charges of seeking to "change the form of government", "inciting violence on the Tunisian territory", and "assault with the aim of provoking disorder" under Article 72 of the Penal Code, a conviction punishable by the death penalty, as well as under charges related to "processing of personal data without the consent of the data subject" and "interference with the freedom to work" under Articles 27 and 87 of the Data Protection Law. She was held in custody and after peacefully protesting the denial to access a public administration office annexed to the Presidential Palace on 3 October 2023.

Abir Moussi now faces the death penalty for exercising her right to freedom of expression and peaceful assembly. Increased use of criminal law to prosecute opposition political activists in retaliation for their peaceful political engagements has cast a chilling impact on the civic space. On 28 November 2023, Abir Moussi's lawyers announced that she started a hunger strike to protest her arbitrary detention.

I urge you to immediately release Abir Moussi and drop all charges against her as they stem from her peaceful political activism. Pending her release, she must be granted regular access to her family, lawyers and adequate medical care, and held in conditions that comply with international standards for the treatment of prisoners.

Yours sincerely,