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Your Excellency,

I write to urge you to ensure the immediate and unconditional release of woman human rights defender Saadia Mosbah who has been arbitrarily detained since May 2024. She is the president of anti-racist organization Mnemty ["My dream"], founded in 2013.

On 19 March 2026, the Tunis Court of First Instance sentenced Saadia Mosbah to eight years in prison and a fine of over TND 120,000 [about EUR 36,000]. She was prosecuted alongside eight other staff members and associates of Mnemty on unfounded financial criminal charges related to their human rights work. Five of them were sentenced to prison terms ranging from one to three years; they risk arrest if their convictions are confirmed on appeal. The criminal convictions and prison sentences against Saadia Mosbah and her five colleagues must be immediately quashed.

The defendants were convicted of unsubstantiated charges of money laundering and "illicit enrichment". The investigation did not uncover any illegal sources of funding and relied on an abusive interpretation of the provision of "illicit enrichment" which lacks clarity. International human rights law and standards provide that to protect the presumption of innocence the burden of proof rests on the authorities to prove a criminal charge beyond reasonable doubt.

Prior to the judicial investigation, Mnemty faced a smear campaign led by pro-government social media accounts, amidst a surge in antiBlack and xenophobic discourses from public officials that has triggered racist violence. This context highlights the racial motives in the targeting of Saadia Mosbah and Mnemty, whose leading staff members are Black. The case also unfolded against the backdrop of a broader crackdown against human rights organizations and the stigmatization of anti-racism activists and civil society organizations working on migration, accused of treason and corruption by Tunisian officials. This has had a chilling effect on human rights defenders, undermining their safety and their rights to freedom of expression and association.

Once in prison, Saadia Mosbah reported facing racial discrimination including a racist physical assault by a prison guard that constitutes ill-treatment, possibly amounting to torture, and a lack of adequate medical care. The other defendants were also subjected to racial discrimination during the investigation, in violation of their right to a fair trial and to be protected from discrimination.

I urge you to ensure the immediate release of Saadia Mosbah and that the conviction and sentence against her and the five other Mnemty staff are quashed. I call on you to ensure that a thorough, independent, impartial, transparent and effective investigation is opened into the allegations of racist ill-treatment against Saadia Mosbah, which may amount to torture. I also urge you to cease using the criminal justice system against human rights defenders and to respect the rights to freedom of expression and association.

Yours sincerely,