

# URGENT ACTION

## OPPOSITION FIGURE ARBITRARILY DETAINED

On October 3, 2023, days after expressing her interest in running for the next presidential elections, security forces arrested opposition figure Abir Moussi. She had been trying to submit an appeal against presidential decrees related to the upcoming local elections claiming a lack of transparency in the electoral process. Security forces arrested Abir Moussi and drove her to an unknown location. On October 5, she was questioned by an investigative judge related to a series of security-related allegations and the judge ordered her pre-trial detention. The Tunisian authorities must immediately release Abir Moussi and drop the charges against her as they are based solely on the peaceful exercise of her rights to freedom of expression, association, and assembly.

### TAKE ACTION:

- Write a letter in your own words or using the sample below as a guide to one or both government officials listed. You can also email, fax, call or Tweet them.
- [Click here](#) to let us know the actions you took on **Urgent Action 114.23**. It's important to report because we share the total number with the officials we are trying to persuade and the people we are trying to help.

#### President of the Republic Kais Saied

Route de la Goulette  
Site archéologique de Carthage, Tunisie  
Email: [contact@carthage.tn](mailto:contact@carthage.tn)  
Twitter: [@TnPresidency](https://twitter.com/TnPresidency)

#### Tunisian Ambassador to the United States

Her Excellency Mrs. Hanene Tajouri Bessassi  
1515 Massachusetts Avenue, NW, Washington DC  
20005  
Email: [AT.Washington@Tunisianembassy.org](mailto:AT.Washington@Tunisianembassy.org)

Your Excellency,

I urge 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 September 24, 2023, Abir Moussi shared a press release expressing her interest in running in the next presidential elections. On October 3, 2023, police officers arrested her in front of a public administration office.

Abir Moussi's lawyers stated 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. According to her lawyers, during her first night in custody, officers detaining Abir Moussi ignored her requests for medicine she is supposed to take daily, which resulted in health complications that landed her in the hospital days later. Abir Moussi now faces the death penalty for exercising her right to freedom of expression and peaceful assembly. On November 28, 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.

Yours sincerely,

### **ADDITIONAL INFORMATION**

**Abir Moussi** (48) is a lawyer and the president of the Free Destourian Party (PDL) and a prominent opposition figure to President Kais Saied. She was a member of Parliament from 2019 to 2021. According to her lawyers, Abir Moussi's health is deteriorating in detention and may continue to worsen after she started a hunger strike on November 28.

On October 5, Abir Moussi was interrogated by an investigative judge at the Tunis Court of First Instance under charges of seeking to "change the form of government", "inciting violence on the Tunisian territory", and "attack with the aim of provoking disorder" under Article 72 of the Penal Code, and "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 now faces the death penalty under Article 72 of the Penal Code for peacefully exercising her rights to freedom of expression, assembly, and association.

On July 25, 2021, President Saied claimed emergency powers that he said were granted to him by Tunisia's 2014 Constitution. Since February 2023, the Human Rights situation in Tunisia has been rapidly deteriorating as several opposition figures have been targeted. Authorities opened criminal investigations against at least 74 opposition figures and other perceived enemies of the president, including at least 44 people accused of crimes in connection with the peaceful exercise of their human rights. This crackdown on opposition threatens human rights including the rights to freedom of expression, association and peaceful assembly in Tunisia, rights protected under Articles 19, 21 and 22 of the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights and Articles 9, 10 and 11 of the African Charter on Human and Peoples' Rights to which Tunisia is a state party.

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

**PLEASE TAKE ACTION AS SOON AS POSSIBLE UNTIL:** February 1, 2024

**NAME AND PRONOUN:** Abir Moussi (she/her)