

URGENT ACTION

OPPOSITION FIGURE UNJUSTLY SENTENCED

On 13 March 2026, the Tunis Court of Appeal sentenced opposition figure Abir Moussi to ten years in prison on the basis of unfounded accusations of attempting to change the form of the state and “inciting violence” and disorder. In addition to her existing two-year prison sentence in another case. The Tunis Court of First Instance initially sentenced her in December 2025 to 12 years imprisonment following a grossly unfair trial based on the same accusations. Abir Moussi has been unjustly imprisoned since 3 October 2023 when police officers arrested her after she attempted to submit an appeal against presidential decrees on electoral districts. The Tunisian authorities must immediately release Abir Moussi, quash her sentence and drop the charges against her as she is imprisoned solely on the peaceful exercise of her human rights.

TAKE: WRITE AN APPEAL IN YOUR OWN WORDS OR USE THIS MODEL LETTER

President of the Republic Kais Saied

Route de la Goulette

Site archéologique de Carthage, Tunisie

Email: contact@carthage.tn/ Twitter: @TnPresidency

Your Excellency,

I write to you to express my grave concern over the unjust sentencing of opposition figure Abir Moussi who has already spent two years and five months imprisoned simply for exercising her human rights, including her right to peaceful assembly.

On 3 October 2023, police officers arrested Abir Moussi 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. She was contesting President Saied's decisions regarding electoral districts and organizing local elections, arguing that the decrees lacked transparency. Abir Moussi protested the arbitrary denial by insisting on staying in front of the administration building until it closes to document the refusal of the authorities on a [Facebook livestream](#).

On 12 December 2025, the Tunis Court of First Instance sentenced Abir Moussi to 12 years in prison on bogus charges of “attempting 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. On 13 March 2026, the Tunis Court of Appeal reduced her prison sentence to 10 years. The reduced sentence includes 9 years for attempting to change the form of the state and inciting violence and provoking disorder, 6 months for processing personal data without authorization and 6 months for obstruction of work. These accusations appear to stem solely from her peaceful political activity and public criticism of government actions. The accusations that she incited violence or attempted to undermine the state are entirely unfounded and unsupported by credible evidence.

Criminalizing such peaceful conduct represents a serious violation of Tunisia's obligations under international human rights law, including protections for freedom of expression, peaceful assembly, and political participation.

I urge you to immediately release Abir Moussi, quash her sentence and drop all charges against her as she is imprisoned solely for her peaceful political activism and the exercise of her right to freedom of expression. Pending her release, she must be granted regular access to her family, lawyers and adequate healthcare.

Yours sincerely,

ADDITIONAL INFORMATION

Abir Moussi, 48, is a lawyer and president of the Free Destourian Party (PDL), known for her vocal opposition to President Kais Saied. She served in Parliament from 2019 to 2021. On 3 October 2023, shortly after expressing interest in the presidential race, Abir Moussi was arrested by security forces while trying to submit an appeal against presidential decrees at an office near the Presidential Palace in Carthage. Prevented from filing the appeal, she protested by holding an impromptu sit-in outside the building and live streaming it on Facebook.

On 5 August 2024, The Tunis Court of First Instance sentenced Abir Moussi to two years in prison based on public statements she had made in November 2022 and January 2023 criticizing the legislative electoral process under Decree-Law 54 following a complaint filed by the High Independent Authority for Elections (ISIE). On 22 November 2024, The Tunis Court of Appeals reduced her sentence from two years to 16 months in prison and she completed her unjust sentence on 26 May 2025, meaning she should have been released from prison. However, on 12 June 2025, the same court sentenced her in a separate case to an additional two years in prison following a second ISIE complaint also under Decree-Law 54.

On 5 October, an investigative judge interrogated Abir Moussi at the Tunis Court of First Instance and ordered her pre-trial detention 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 and Article 136 of the Penal Code. However, the allegations of violence are unfounded. Evidence from a Facebook live stream and witness testimonies indicate that Abir Moussi was peacefully protesting the police’s arbitrary decision to prevent her from submitting an appeal against the presidential decrees.

Between December 2022 and March 2023, the Independent High Authority for Elections (ISIE) filed four complaints against Abir Moussi with the Tunis general prosecutor under Decree law 54. The complaints are based on Abir Moussi’s critical statements about ISIE’s handling of elections. She accused the election commission of rigging the legislative elections. On 5 July 2024, an investigative judge questioned Abir Moussi about the ISIE complaint regarding her statements from November 2022 and January 2023, where she alleged that legislative elections were “rigged” and the number of elected deputies was incomplete. The judge ordered her pre-trial detention and then referred her to trial under Article 24 of Decree Law 54 for “deliberately using information and communication networks and systems to produce, promote, publish, transmit or prepare false news, statements, rumours or documents that are artificial, falsely attributed to others with the aim of attacking the rights of others, harming public security or national defence, or spreading terror among the population.” On 5 August 2024, Abir Moussi appeared for trial, where her defence team’s requests for postponement and provisional release were denied. The court convicted her to two years in prison, violating her rights to a fair trial and freedom of expression.

Abir Moussi faces additional criminal charges under Articles 15, 245, 220 and 306 of the Penal Code, in a separate case following a complaint by the International Union of Muslim Scholars on 10 May 2022, after two protests outside their Tunis office. The complaint includes charges of property damage, theft, defamation, spreading false news and public intimidation. Abir Moussi was questioned by an investigative judge on 12 June 2024. According to international human rights law, defamation should be handled as a civil matter, not criminal, and should never result in imprisonment. Public officials seeking redress for defamation should do so in civil, not criminal, courts. Abir Moussi who suffers from arthritis and back pain was transferred on two occasions to separate prisons, each time further away from her family and lawyers. Initially imprisoned in the Manouba prison in Tunis, Abir Moussi was first transferred to the Belli prison in February 2025, in the governorate of Nabeul, 44 kilometres from Tunis. In June 2025, she was transferred a second time to the Bulla Regia prison in the governorate of Jendouba, 157 kilometres from Tunis. Her lawyers have raised concerns about these transfers which isolate Abir Moussi from her family and legal counsel, harming her right to adequate defence.

PREFERRED LANGUAGE TO ADDRESS TARGET: Arabic, French and English
You can also write in your own language.

PLEASE TAKE ACTION AS SOON AS POSSIBLE UNTIL: 25 September 2026
Please check with the Amnesty office in your country if you wish to send appeals after the deadline.

NAME AND PRONOUN: Abir Moussi (She/Her)

LINK TO PREVIOUS UA: <https://www.amnesty.org/en/documents/mde30/0405/2025/en/>