

URGENT ACTION

FREE UNJUSTLY JAILED POLITICAL OPPONENTS

On 4 July 2026, a court convicted Ennahdha party secretary general Ajmi Ourimi of "failing to report information relating to a terrorist offence" and Ennahdha party member Mosaab Gharbi of providing shelter to a person suspected of terrorism-related offences. Both were sentenced to three years in prison. Tunisian police arrested the two men along with party member Mohamed Ghannoudi during a routine identity check at a road control point on 13 July 2024. Authorities later alleged that Ghannoudi was wanted by the police in connection with a terrorism investigation and opened proceedings against all three on suspicion of "participating in a terrorist group" and "providing support to a person suspected of involvement in terrorist acts." Authorities referred Ajmi Ourimi and Mosaab Gharbi to trial on charges relating to "participation in terrorist activities", "provision of assistance or shelter to a person suspected of terrorism", "failure to report suspected terrorism-related conduct" and "complicity in terrorist acts" under Articles 13, 34 and 37 of the 2015 counterterrorism law and Article 32 of the Penal Code. Mohamed Ghannoudi remains in pretrial detention and has yet to be referred to trial. Authorities must immediately quash the convictions and sentences against Ajmi Ourimi and Mosaab Gharbi and drop the charges against Mohamed Ghannoudi and release them as their detention stems solely from their political affiliation.

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

President of the Republic Kais Saïed

Route de la Goulette

Site archéologique de Carthage, Tunisie

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

Your Excellency,

I write to express my grave concern regarding the arbitrary detention of Ennahdha Secretary-General Ajmi Ourimi and two other party members, Mohamed Ghannoudi and Mosaab Gharbi, who have been held in arbitrary detention since July 2024 on terrorism-related charges that are unsupported by credible evidence and linked to their political affiliation. The charges are related to the exercise of their human rights, and they should therefore be released. In addition, Mohamed Ghannoudi has been held in pretrial detention for 23 months, exceeding the legal limit for pretrial detention of 14 months under Tunisian law and should also be released for that reason.

After several months of investigation following their arrest in July 2024, the judge dismissed the charge of forming a terrorist group for lack of evidence, yet Ourimi and Gharbi remained in pretrial detention for investigation on accusations related to intending to provide shelter and failing to report suspected "terrorism" activity. No evidence of their involvement in any recognizable crimes under international law was brought against them. They were referred to trial on 30 June 2026, convicted on 4 July 2026 of terrorism-related activities, and sentenced to three years' imprisonment.

Their prosecution and conviction must be viewed within a broader pattern of prosecutions targeting members of the Ennahdha party since the dissolution of parliament in 2022, often relying on counterterrorism legislation and resulting in recurring violations of fair trial guarantees.

I urge you to immediately release Ajmi Ourimi, Mohamed Ghannoudi and Mosaab Gharbi, quash the convictions and sentences against Ajmi Ourimi and Mosaab Gharbi and drop all charges against Mohamed Ghannoudi, as their detention appears to result solely from the exercise of their rights and political affiliation.

Yours sincerely,

ADDITIONAL INFORMATION

On 13 July 2024, police arrested opposition party Ennahdha Secretary-General Ajmi Ourimi in the Mannouba governorate, along with two other party members, Mohamed Ghannoudi and Mosaab Gharbi, during what appeared to be a routine identity check at a road control point.

The three men were placed in pretrial detention pending investigation under Articles 13, 34 and 37 of Organic Law No. 26 of 2015 on Counterterrorism (as amended by Law No. 9 of 2019), as well as Article 32 of the Tunisian Penal Code. These provisions criminalize the formation or participation in a group linked to terrorist activities (Article 13), the provision of assistance such as sheltering, concealing, or facilitating the escape of a person allegedly involved in terrorism-related offences (Article 34), the failure to report information related to terrorist activity (Article 37), and complicity in the commission of an offence (Article 32). The use of terrorism-related accusations is common in cases of Ennahdha detainees.

According to the case file, the three individuals were travelling to the countryside for what they described as personal business when they were stopped at a National Guard checkpoint. Upon verification of their identities, the authorities indicated that Ghannoudi was subject to an arrest warrant in connection with a “terrorism”-related investigation. All three were subsequently arrested on suspicion of forming or participating in a group linked to “terrorist activities” and of providing support to individuals suspected of involvement in “terrorist acts.”

During questioning by police and later the investigative judge, Ghannoudi stated he was never notified or summoned to appear before investigative authorities and was unaware of any warrant against him. Gharbi and Ourimi denied knowing he was wanted or intending to shelter him and gave consistent accounts of their movements. The prosecution failed to provide any evidence to the contrary. During the investigation, the investigative judge questioned the three individuals about the nature of their relationship, their political activities, whether they had intended to provide Ghannoudi with shelter, the circumstances of their travel arrangements, as well as Telegram groups identified on their phones and books found in their homes that were searched after their arrests. However, they were not presented with any evidence substantiating the allegations of involvement in any criminal activity.

After several months of investigation, the judge dismissed the charges relating to the formation of a terrorist group due to lack of evidence. Despite that, Ourimi and Gharbi were charged with intent accompanied by preparatory acts consisting of providing a place of shelter to a person allegedly linked to terrorist crimes, hiding him, facilitating his escape, preventing his detection, and benefiting from the proceeds of his actions, as well as failure to report terrorist activity. Ghannoudi was not charged in this case, as the judge considered that he was already under investigation for the same terrorism-related charges in a separate proceeding; he remains in pretrial detention. The trial of Ourimi and Gharbi started on 30 June 2026, after they spent 23 months in pretrial detention, exceeding the 14-month legal limit permissible under Tunisian law.

On 4 July 2026 the Tunis Court of First Instance convicted Ourimi of failing to report information relating to a terrorist offence under Article 37 of the Organic Law No. 26 of 2015 on Counterterrorism and sentenced him to three years in prison. The same court sentenced Gharbi to three years in prison after convicting him of providing shelter to a person suspected of terrorism-related offences under Article 34 of the same law. The defence argued in court that the prosecution failed to present any credible evidence supporting the charges.

In recent years, the Tunisian authorities have increasingly relied on counterterrorism legislation and state security-related charges to arbitrarily prosecute and detain opposition figures, including senior members of the Ennahdha party leadership. Courts have conducted mass trials based on insufficient evidence or unfounded accusations, resulting in repeated violations of fair trial guarantees.

In April 2023, shortly after former Ennahdha secretary general Rached Ghannouchi's arrest, security forces shut down all Ennahdha party offices across the country. Mondher Ounissi, who replaced Rached Ghannouchi as head of the party, was also arrested and detained a few months later, in September 2023, and is being prosecuted in a separate case on conspiracy-related charges. Following Mondher Ounissi arrest,

Ajmi Ourimi assumed the position of Secretary-General of the party in November 2023. This documented pattern of targeting Ennahdha members, together with the broader repression of perceived political opponents in Tunisia, indicates that this case, like others, appears aimed at punishing members of political groups in order to limit their political activities, silence dissent and restrict political pluralism.

In a recent opinion concerning Tunisia in the case of Rached Ghannouchi, the UN Working Group on Arbitrary Detention recalled that judicial independence is a sine qua non condition for the right to a fair trial, as guaranteed under article 10 of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights and article 14 of the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights (ICCPR). The Working Group further expressed particular concern regarding the numerous reports indicating an erosion of judicial independence in Tunisia since 2021, creating a context in which fair trial rights cannot be adequately protected.

PREFERRED LANGUAGE TO ADDRESS TARGET: French, Arabic

You can also write in your own language.

PLEASE TAKE ACTION AS SOON AS POSSIBLE UNTIL: 16 January 2027

Please check with the Amnesty office in your country if you wish to send appeals after the deadline.

NAME AND PRONOUN: Ajmi Ourimi (He/Him), Mohamed Ghannoudi (He/Him), Mosaab Gharbi (He/Him)

LINK TO PREVIOUS UA: <https://www.amnesty.org/en/documents/mde30/0942/2026/en/>