

Aware of the continued detention of Sonia DAHMANI pending her trial before the Tunis Court of Appeal, following her sentencing to one-year imprisonment by the Tunis Criminal Court for an offence of opinion following her statements on the Carthage+ channel,

Aware of the circumstances in which the hearing of 20 August was held and, more particularly, of the refusal of the prison administration to organise the extraction of our colleague, preventing her from appearing at the hearing of 20 August and exposing her to the risk of being judged in absentia and without the possibility for her lawyers to defend her, in flagrant violation of the essential principles of the right to a fair trial,

The undersigned:

TAKE NOTE of the postponement finally ordered of the hearing to 10 September 2024, a hearing in which a delegation of French lawyers will participate as observers,

CONDEMN in the strongest possible terms the disgraceful treatment suffered by our colleague Sonia DAHMANI, who was subjected to body search and forced to wear flip-flops instead of her own shoes, as well as a long white veil imposed on women prosecuted for sexual offences, even though there is no legal provision for such particularly humiliating requirements, before her extraction was refused,

RECALL that the right to a fair trial requires that those subject to trial be able to appear before their judges,

DEMAND the adoption of all necessary measures to guarantee access to justice, the right to a fair trial and respect for the rights of the defence,

EXPRESS their unconditional support for Sonia DAHMANI, who is being prosecuted simply for exercising her freedom of expression,

DENOUNCE the misuse of the freedom-destroying decree-law no. 2022/54 of 13 September 2022 against colleagues in order to suppress their freedom of expression,

RECALL the solidarity of the undersigned and of the entire French Bar in support of the dozens of Tunisian lawyers harassed, prosecuted, arrested and some of whom have been subjected to acts of torture simply for exercising their profession, as well as of the Tunisian Order of Lawyers, a watchdog for fundamental freedoms, which is mobilising to preserve the rule of law and prevent attacks on lawyers, despite a particularly difficult context.

