

Joint Statement of Solidarity

(February 21, 2025)

Since the organization of the Queer Declaration Conference on January 31, 2024, Damj - The Tunisian Association for Justice and Equality has been facing an intensifying digital smear campaign orchestrated by political groups and pro-government social media pages. These campaigns have called for the dissolution of Damj and the suspension of its activities, accompanied by hate speech and incitement to violence against the queer community and organizations advocating for gender and sexual rights. As part of this campaign, arrests have continued, affecting more than 84 members of the LGBTQI+ community in recent months.

The pace of this repression has escalated to directly target Damj activists, particularly trans activist Mira Ben Salah, coordinator of the association's southern office. She has been subjected to a wave of attacks through repeated social media posts inciting violence and calling for her imprisonment. Additionally, pro-government platforms have disseminated her personal information—including her phone number and home address—while vilifying her political views, civic engagement, and activism within the queer movement.

This campaign has coincided with a surge in attacks on the association's hotlines in the south. The violence has not been confined to digital platforms; it has also included harassment by law enforcement officers in Sfax, extending to Mira's family. These actions aim to exhaust, intimidate, and pressure her into withdrawing a criminal complaint she had previously filed against officers of the Ministry of Interior. Over the past week, this campaign has received significant amplification through television and radio programs, including RDVU on Attessia TV, Hasad 24 on Zitouna TV, and MFM Radio. These programs have actively constructed inflammatory narratives against Damj and its activities, broadcasting images of its activists while leveling accusations of undermining national stability and corrupting society and family values. This incitement has contributed to shaping public opinion against the right to free association, advocating for the dissolution of NGOs, and calling for the prosecution and imprisonment of their members.

In response to these alarming developments, the undersigned organizations:

- Express their full support for Damj, all queer activists and organizations, and in particular, trans activist Mira Ben Salah.
- Reaffirm that the right to association is a fundamental legal and civic right, protected under international conventions and national laws, most notably Decree 88 of 2011, a key achievement of the Tunisian Revolution.
- Call on the Ministry of Interior and regional security authorities to restrain their officers, cease the harassment of civil society organizations, and fulfill their legal duty to ensure security and public order in accordance with the law. Furthermore, we demand the implementation of administrative accountability measures against security officers who violate the Code of Conduct for Internal Security Forces and other applicable laws.
- Demand an immediate end to arbitrary arrests based on Articles 230 and 22G bis, as well as other legal provisions that infringe on individual freedoms.
- Urge media institutions, including journalists and editors-in-chief, to uphold professionalism, neutrality, and adherence to the ethical standards outlined in the Journalistic Code of Ethics.

Signatory Organizations:



- 1) Damj - The Tunisian Association for Justice and Equality
- 2) Tunisian Coalition of Trans Rights
- 3) Amnesty International - Tunisia
- 4) World Organization Against Torture (OMCT)
- 5) Tunisian Association of Democratic Women (ATFD)
- 6) Lawyers Without Borders (ASF)
- 7) Tunisian League for Human Rights (LTDH)
- 8) Tunisian Forum for Economic and Social Rights (FTDES)
- 9) Lina Ben Mhenni Association
- 10) Legal agenda - Tunisia
- 11) Calam Association
- 12) Tunisian Organization Against Torture
- 13) Tunisian Coalition to Abolish the Death Penalty
- 14) Al Bawsala
- 15) We Youth Organization
- 16) Beity Association
- 17) Aswat Nissa (Voices of Women)
- 18) Intersection Association for Rights and Freedoms
- 19) Tunisian Association for the Defense of Individual Freedoms
- 20) Tunisian Association for Rights and Liberties
- 21) Africa Association
- 22) Awladna Association
- 23) Fanni Raghman Anni (Art Despite Everything) Association
- 24) Committee for the Respect of Freedoms and Human Rights in Tunisia
- 25) Nashaz Association
- 26) Tawhida Ben Cheikh Group
- 27) Al Karama Association