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9 January 2026

Tunisia: Ayachi Hammami facing imminent danger to his life whilst on hunger strike

Front Line Defenders is gravely concerned by the imminent threat posed to the life of human rights defender and lawyer, **Ayachi Hammami**. The defender has entered the thirty-eighth day of an open-ended hunger strike, in protest against his ongoing detention at El Mornaguia prison and arbitrary restrictions imposed on visits from his lawyer.

[Ayachi Hammami](#) is a prominent Tunisian human rights lawyer and defender. For decades, he has represented victims of human rights violations and lead national efforts to uphold democracy, judicial independence, and fundamental freedoms. The defender has actively participated in the leadership of multiple human rights organisations in Tunisia and across the region.

On 6 January 2026, following a family visit, Ayachi Hammami's relatives [expressed](#) serious concerns about the continuing deterioration of his health and as a result, the threat now posed to his life and physical integrity. During the visit, his family informed him of the petition launched to implore him to suspend his hunger strike. He expressed his thanks and gratitude to all supporters of the petition (more than 700 signatories up to now), stressing that he was determined to continue his hunger strike, particularly in protest against the arbitrary restrictions imposed on visits from his lawyer, which remain in force without any legal justification.

On 2 December 2025, authorities in Tunisia [arrested](#) the human rights defender at his home in Tunis to enforce a five-year prison sentence for 'belonging to a terrorist organisation' based on [false accusations](#) in a high profile case. Upon his arrest, he announced via a [video](#) posted on social media, that he had begun a hunger strike in protest against the injustice of his detention and to express his ongoing struggle to secure freedoms and democracy in Tunisia.

Front Line Defenders is deeply alarmed by the continued denial of Ayachi Hammami's full and unrestricted right to communicate with his lawyers. It constitutes a serious violation of the right to access legal representation and the right to defence, as guaranteed under national law and international human rights standards. This continued denial places his life in serious danger, given the significant deterioration of his health and the voiced intention to continue his hunger strike.

The organisation echoes the calls made by Ayachi Hammami's family and legal team, asking the authorities in Tunisia to take full responsibility for his life, safety and physical integrity. Front Line Defenders underscores their obligation to guarantee immediate access to urgent and independent medical care, to respect his human dignity, and to ensure detention conditions in line with international standards.

Front Line Defenders calls on international human rights mechanisms and professional bodies, in particular, bar associations in Tunisia and the wider region, to intervene urgently, prioritise the case and use all available means to press for Ayachi Hammami's release.

Front Line Defenders urges the authorities in Tunisia to:

1. Immediately and unconditionally release Ayachi Hammami;

Front Line Defenders Board of Directors

Kieran Mulvey, Roja Fazaeli, Verónica Vidal, Eamon Gilmore, Dermot Hayes,
Nicolas Marcoux, Clément Nyaletsossi Voule, Felogene Anumo, Gayathry S.
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Front Line Defenders International Advisory Council

James L. Cavallaro, Maryam Elahi, Michel Forst, Hina Jilani, Mary Lawlor

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2. Guarantee urgent access to specialised and independent medical care without delay;
3. Remove the arbitrary restrictions imposed on visits from his lawyer and guarantee his full right to defence and access legal assistance;
4. Cease the judicial harrassment of human rights defenders in Tunisia and ensure in all circumstances that they are able to carry out their legitimate human rights activities without fear of reprisals and free of all restrictions.

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