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President of the Republic

Kais Saied

Route de la Goulette

Site archéologique de Carthage

Tunisie

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Your Excellency,

**I write to you to urge you to immediately release Sihem Bensedrine and drop the criminal charges against her as they are based on her work as President of the Truth and Dignity Commission (IVD) which documented and referred to prosecution the crimes committed under previous regimes. Sihem Bensedrine is a human rights defender and a journalist who has long denounced human rights violations in the country.**

Sihem Bensedrine has been under investigation since February 2023 following a complaint by a former IVD board member alleging forgery because revisions had been made to the IVD final report after it was submitted to the President in December 2018. On 7 March 2023, an investigative judge charged Sihem Bensedrine with forgery, fraud and abuse of official capacity and banned her from traveling. On 1 June 2024, the judge ordered Sihem Bensedrine’s pre-trial detention and she was taken into custody on the same day.

Sihem Bensedrine’s prosecution appears to be a form of reprisal against the work of the IVD and her detention is arbitrary. Sihem Bensedrine must not be punished for exposing allegations of human rights abuses and corruption committed by past regimes. Tunisian authorities must uphold and ensure her human rights and protect her and the IVD members from reprisal including in the form of civil or criminal prosecution brought against them because of their work or the content of their reports.

**I urge you to immediately release Sihem Bensedrine, drop all the charges against her and end the misuse of the criminal justice system to target her. Pending her release, she must be granted regular access to her family, lawyers and adequate medical care, and held in conditions that comply with international standards for the treatment of prisoners.**

Yours sincerely,

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**Copie**

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