

25 January 2021

Tunis: human rights defender Ahmed Ghram detained

On 17 January 2021, Tunisian police raided the house of human rights defender Ahmed Ghram and arrested him. Ahmed Ghram is facing the charge of 'incitement to civil disobedience', regarding several of his Facebook posts, one of which he shared on the same day he was detained.

[Ahmed Ghram](#) is a Tunisian human rights defender and member of the Tunisian League of Human Rights. He is also a blogger, whose work focuses on promoting youth rights and citizen participation in Tunis.

On 17 January 2021, several Tunisian police officers raided the house of human rights defender Ahmed Ghram and subsequently arrested him. According to his lawyer, no arrest warrant was presented during the raid, but was issued after he was arrested. Ahmed Ghram was the victim of a violent arrest and was subjected to verbal abuse by the police officers making the arrest. During the raid, the police confiscated his laptop and mobile phone. Ahmed Ghram was taken to a local police station in the capital Tunis where he was interrogated without the presence of his lawyer. The Public Prosecutor accused him of 'disobedience' regarding a Facebook post he shared which criticised the arbitrary detention of hundreds of peaceful protesters and called for the Tunisian authorities to release them. The Public Prosecutor ordered for the human rights defender to remain in detention until his upcoming hearing session which is scheduled to be held on 28 January 2021 before the Misdemeanor Court in Tunis.

On 18 January 2021, Ahmed Ghram was transferred to the civil prison of Mornag. According to his lawyer, the human rights defender is scheduled to have his first lawyers visit since his detention on 22 January 2021. The human rights defender suffers with his mental health and his doctors believe his detention could have a serious impact on his well-being. While in detention, Ahmed Ghram has been permitted to see his mother, who is a doctor and who has been able to medically assist her son in prison. According to his lawyer, the Tunisian police violated the Criminal Procedures law and the Tunisian Constitution by arresting Ahmed Ghram. On 22 January 2021, his lawyer submitted a request to the Public Prosecutor to release Ahmed Ghram conditionally.

Human rights defender Ahmed Ghram has been frequently harassed by the Tunisian authorities; his social media accounts are under the police surveillance and he has frequently faced digital attacks.

The arrest of Ahmed Ghram is part of a wider crackdown on Tunisian human rights defenders and peaceful protesters since the start of peaceful demonstrations on 14 January 2021 against the economic crisis in Tunis. Peaceful demonstrations also took place in December in Tunis against the draft law 25/2015 that would give security forces higher authority and would exempt them from criminal liability in the case of the use of force. This sparked the organisation of large protests that were met with heavy repression by police.

Front Line Defenders, is deeply concerned about the detention of human rights defender Ahmed Ghram, and the wider crackdown against human rights defenders and peaceful protesters in Tunis. Front Line Defender believes that the arrest of Ahmed Ghram is a result of his peaceful and legitimate human rights activities.

Front Line Defenders calls the Tunisian authorities to:

1. Immediately and unconditionally release Ahmed Ghram, and drop the charge against him as Front Line Defenders believes that he is being held solely as a result of his legitimate and peaceful work in the defence of human rights;
2. Ensure that the treatment of Ahmed Ghram, while in detention, adheres to the conditions set out in the *'Body of Principles for the Protection of All Persons under Any Form of Detention or Imprisonment'*, adopted by UN General Assembly resolution 43/173 of 9 December 1988;
3. Return the Ahmed Ghram's personal items which were confiscated during the raid, as they have not been linked to any criminal activity;
4. Cease targeting all human rights defenders in Tunis and guarantee in all circumstances that they are able to carry out their legitimate human rights activities without fear of reprisals and free of all restrictions including judicial harassment.

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