

19 January 2021

Tunis: Detention of human rights defender Hamza Nasri

On 18 January 2021, the Tunisian police arrested human rights defender **Hamza Nasri** following his participation in a peaceful demonstration against the deteriorating economic situation in Tunisia. The Public Prosecutor accused Hamza Nasri of 'committing an act that violates the public morals'.

[Hamza Nasri](#) is a Tunisian human rights defender and member of the Tunisian Association for Justice and Equality (Damj). He works as a programme coordinator with the association on promoting vulnerable rights in Tunisia.

On 18 January 2021, Hamza Nasri participated in a peaceful demonstration in Tunisia against the deteriorating economic situation in the country. After the demonstration, as Hamza Nasri made his way back to his car, he was followed by the police and arrested. According to the human rights defender's lawyer, he was provided with incorrect information from Bab Souika police station and Bab El-Bhar police station regarding Hamza Nasri's location after his arrest. Bab Souika police station later announced that they will be opening an investigation into the human rights defender's actions during the demonstration. The Public Prosecutor in Bab Souika police station accused Hamza Nasri of 'committing an act that violates the public morals' in relation to him raising his middle finger during the peaceful demonstration, and ordered his detention for 48 hours. On 20 January 2021, the human rights defender will appear before the Court of First Instance in Tunisia.

On 14 January 2021, hundreds of protesters and activists were detained during several peaceful demonstrations in Tunisia, commemorating the 10th anniversary of the Tunisian Revolution. Several protesters were injured as a result of the use by Tunisian police of tear gas to suppress them. Human rights defender Hamza Nasri injured his leg during the demonstrations, and according to his lawyer he was offered medical treatment but he refused, as the injury is not serious.

Hamza Nasri has been previously targeted by the Tunisian police. On 8 December 2020, the human rights defender was [detained](#) on the charge of 'damaging properties' and detained for two days, in relation to his participation in a peaceful demonstration in front of the Tunisian Parliament. The peaceful demonstration was in protest against the hate speech made by a member of the Parliament on 3 December 2020, in which he discriminated against the LGBT+ community and the feminist movement in Tunisia. Hamza Nasri has not yet been given a rescheduled trial date regarding this case.

Front Line Defenders is deeply concerned regarding the detention of Hamza Nasri, as it believes that he is being detained solely as a result of his peaceful and legitimate human rights activism.

Front Line Defenders urge the Tunisian authorities to:

1. Immediately and unconditionally release Hamza Nasri, 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 Hamza Nasri 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. 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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