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### **Tunis: Woman human rights defender Rania Amdouni sentenced**

On 4 March 2021, the District Court of Tunis sentenced woman human rights defender **Rania Amdouni** to six months in prison. She has been convicted with “violating the general morals”, “insulting a governmental employee”, and “being drunk in public places” and is currently being detained at Manouba Women’s Civil Prison.

[Rania Amdouni](#) is an artist, woman human rights defender, and member of Damj (the Tunisian Association for Justice and Equality). Her human rights work focuses on achieving gender equality and empowering women in Tunisia. She also defends the rights of marginalised and vulnerable groups, including the LGBT+ community.

On 4 March 2021, the District Court of Tunis, sentenced Rania Amdouni to six months in prison. The woman human rights defender was convicted of “violating the general morals”, “insulting a governmental employee”, and “being drunk in public places”, under articles 125, 315 and 316 of the Tunisian Penal Code.

On 1 March 2021, the Public Prosecution had ordered Rania Amdouni’s detention until her initial court hearing on 4 March, before the District Court in Tunis. Since being detained, Rania Amdouni has not been allowed to contact her family, and according to her lawyer, has not been provided with the medical assistance she requires to ensure her physical and psychological well-being.

On 27 February 2021, Rania Amdouni visited Al-Safier police station in Tunis to file a complaint against the harassment she has recently been subjected to. Whilst attempting to file the complaint at the station, police officers searched Rania Amdouni. Upset by the way the police had treated her, Rania Amdouni had an argument with the police officers, which resulted in her being arrested by the officers.

The harassment that Rania Amdouni was attempting to make a complaint against reportedly included repeated incidents of verbal abuse by a group of unknown individuals who came to her home and verbally harassed her, and threatened to set fire to her apartment. According to her lawyer, the woman human rights defender has previously submitted several complaints to the police in response to these incidents, however to date no investigations into these complaints have been opened.

Rania Amdouni was also recently the target of an online smear campaign by members of police unions, following her participation in demonstrations against police repression in January 2021. The woman human rights defender’s photo, accompanied by degrading comments, and other personal data such as her address, was reportedly disseminated on social media through the Facebook accounts of various police unions. She had previously lodged a complaint against the police in August 2020, following an incident in the center of Tunis. Rania Amdouni’s identity card was confiscated by the police, who also reportedly made homophobic insults about her and physically assaulted her.

Rania Amdouni and other LGBT+ human rights defenders have reportedly been subjected to targeted mistreatment by police whilst participating in the recent protests in Tunis, including physical and verbal abuse. They have also been subjected to online harassment by unknown individuals in [social media posts](#), [revealing their personal information](#), including their home addresses and phone numbers, and “outing” them, including Rania Amdouni herself. Other online

posts have included hate-speech against them based on their sexual orientation or gender identity, and others posted their photos with messages inciting violence against them.

Front Line Defenders is deeply concerned regarding the detention of woman human rights defender Rania Amdouni whilst attempting to file a police complaint, and the continued police crackdown against LGBT+ activists and human rights defenders, and peaceful protesters in Tunis. Front Line Defenders believes that Rania Amdouni's imprisonment and harassment solely as a result of her peaceful and legitimate human rights work.

### **Front Line Defenders urges the Tunisian authorities to:**

1. Immediately and unconditionally release Rania Amdouni, and quash her conviction, as Front Line Defenders believes that she is being held solely as a result of her legitimate and peaceful work in the defence of human rights;
2. Ensure that the treatment of Rania Amdouni, 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. Take all necessary measures to guarantee the physical and psychological integrity and security of Rania Amdouni whilst detained, and provide her with the necessary medical treatment;
4. Allow Rania Amdouni immediate and unfettered access to her family;
5. Carry out an immediate, thorough and impartial investigation into the verbal harassment, threats and online defamation campaign against Rania Amdouni, with a view to publishing the results and bringing those responsible to justice in accordance with international standards;
6. 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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