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Oral statement of the International Commission of Jurists (ICJ) in the interactive dialogue with the Special Rapporteur on Counter-terrorism and Human Rights

This is a joint statement.

Mr. Special Rapporteur,

Our organizations concur with your denunciation that vague and overbroad laws, purportedly countering terrorism, have become States' "tool of choice to suppress critics".

In Tunisia, throughout 2025 the authorities continued to resort to the so-called Counter-Terrorism Law of 2015 to arbitrarily arrest, detain and prosecute political opponents, lawyers, judges and prosecutors for merely expressing their views or discharging their professional duties. In many such cases, the Tunisian authorities used legal provisions purportedly "countering terrorism" to restrict detainees' right to a defence and to hold them in police custody for extended periods of time without judicial oversight.

Emblematically, in November 2025, 34 political opponents, lawyers and public figures had their convictions for purported "terrorism-related offences" upheld on appeal in the so-called Conspiracy Case, despite the authorities failing to produce any evidence of, let alone establish, their criminality. Many of those convicted remain arbitrarily detained.

Additionally, numerous judges and prosecutors, who were arbitrarily dismissed, remain under investigation on spurious "terrorism-related charges" solely for decisions taken in the course of their legitimate work. Nearly four years have passed since these cases were initiated and, despite the fact that they have yielded no evidence to warrant the charges, the investigations continue. Meanwhile, earlier this month, one arbitrarily dismissed judge was convicted and sentenced on so-called terrorism-related charges in criminal proceedings that were widely denounced as politicized and unfair. As a result, he remains arbitrarily detained.

Special Rapporteur, how can the Global Counter terrorism strategy's review help better address entrenched situations like the one in Tunisia, especially considering your latest report's findings?

Thank you

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