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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 express my grave concern over the ongoing arbitrary detention of artist Rached Tamboura solely for peacefully voicing his critical opinion through art.** His conviction is in contravention of international human rights treaties including article 19 of the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights and article 9 of the African Charter on Human and Peoples’ Rights to which Tunisia is a state party.

On 18 July 2023 security forces arrested Rached Tamboura after he painted a series of graffiti drawings of yourself, President Kais Saied, on the wall of the local authorities building. The series of graffiti meant to denounce comments made by yourself on 21 February during a National Security Council meeting, along with the Memorandum of Understanding signed with the European Union on migration, which triggered an upsurge in anti-Black racist violence in the country.

People have the right to express their dissent and should not be arbitrarily detained for exercising their rights.

On 31 January 2024, the Monastir Court of Appeals confirmed Rached Tamboura’s two-year sentence after a preliminary sentencing in December 2023 for «committing an offensive act against the president» and «producing and promoting false news with the aim of infringing on the rights of others, harming public security or national defence, or spreading terror among the population» under article 67 of the penal code and article 24 of Decree law 54 respectively.

**I therefore urge you to immediately release Rached Tamboura and to quash his conviction and sentence as it is based solely on the peaceful exercise of his right to freedom of expression and activism. Pending his release, ensure that he has access to adequate healthcare, in compliance with international standards and medical ethics, including the principles of confidentiality, autonomy, and informed consent. Moreover, I call on you to cease your targeted arrests of critics for the peaceful exercise of their right to freedom of expression.**

Yours sincerely,

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**Copie**

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