

## TERMS OF REFERENCE

<b>Mission:</b> Observation of the Sonia Dahmani hearing (3 <sup>rd</sup> criminal case)	<b>Duration of mission:</b> from 29 June to 1 <sup>st</sup> July
<b>Date:</b> 18 June 2025	<b>Recipient :</b> - Members of the International Observatory for Lawyers in Danger (OIAD)

### 1. Reasons for the mission and context of the hearings

The purpose of the mission is to attend the hearing of Ms Sonia Dahmani on 30 June 2025. This is the second so-called “racism” case, in which the lawyer is accused of having denounced, on a radio station, the endemic racism suffered by black people in Tunisia.

Sonia Dahmani has already been sentenced to two years' imprisonment for the same remarks made on television.

The lawyer was extracted on 9 June 2025 for trial, without her counsel being informed. She managed to obtain a postponement and the case, and its next hearing were set for 30 June 2025.

*Sonia DAHMANI has been a lawyer at the Court of Cassation for more than twenty-five years and has appeared on television and radio programmes as a journalist and columnist for almost ten years, in full compliance with the regulations in force, in particular Decree-Law no. 2011/79 of 20/08/2011 on the organisation of the legal profession.*

*She has never been the subject of any sanction or disciplinary procedure, regardless of the subject matter or the grounds for prosecution.*

*For years she has been fighting for democratisation and supporting human rights defenders. She is not a supporter of any political party, but as a citizen, lawyer and columnist, she still has the right to take a critical look at the political and social scene, and at how the exercise of power has evolved in Tunisia since the advent of change in 2011.*

*Since May 2024, Ms Dahmani has been the target of five legal proceedings for offences of opinion, linked to critical comments made during television or radio broadcasts. She is being prosecuted on the basis of decree-law no. 2022-54, widely denounced as liberticidal.*

*On 11 May 2024, she was brutally arrested in the House of Lawyers by hooded agents, following an ironic statement about the situation in the country. She was sentenced to one year in prison for "disseminating false news", then to a further eight months at a hearing held without debate or publicity on 10 September.*

*Her lawyers have encountered numerous obstacles in the exercise of her defence, and Ms*

*Dahmani has been subjected to humiliating conditions in detention. The last hearing on 17 October 2024 concerned the lawyer's comments denouncing racism in Tunisia, in particular the alleged existence of buses reserved for white people.*

## **2. Purpose of the mission**

The objective(s) of the assignment is/are as follows:

- Attend Sonia Dahmani's appeal hearing, scheduled for 30 June 2025;
- Monitor compliance with Sonia Dahmani's fundamental rights, in particular the right to a fair trial;
- Meeting threatened colleagues in Tunisia

## **3. Mission agenda**

*(Please note that this is a provisional timetable subject to change).*

The mission will take place from 29 June to 1<sup>st</sup> July in Tunis.

<b>29 June 2025</b>	
Time to be specified	Arrival in Tunis
<b>30 June 2025</b>	
Time to be specified	Audience
	Meeting with colleagues?
<b>1 July 2025</b>	
Time to be specified	Back to

## **4. Commitments of the candidate**

The candidate representing the OIAD on the mission must first sign a letter of commitment which specifies the following elements.

Prior to the assignment, the candidate undertakes to:

- Prepare a budget for the mission, which must be approved by the Observatory;
- Inform the consular authorities of the host country of their arrival and send a copy to the OIAD;
- Contact fellow lawyers in the host country and send a copy of the e-mail to the OIAD;
- When preparing the mission, take care not to endanger local contacts;
- Find out about the local context.

During the course of the assignment, the contractor must :

- Provide the OIAD with daily updates on the progress of the mission;
- Prepare one tweet per day related to the mission;

- Where possible, document the assignment with photographs that can be published.

After the assignment, the assignment holder must :

- Write a press release;
- Write a mission report according to OIAD's templates, to be submitted within 15 days of the end of the mission;
- Send photos of the mission;
- Send the full contact details of the people you meet;
- Provide a confidential report on diplomatic meetings or meetings that cannot be made public;
- Obtain the agreement of the persons mentioned in the public report;
- Write follow-up letters to the people met during the mission, with a copy to the OIAD.

## **5. Mission risks and mitigation strategies**

The validity of the delegate's passport must be checked: please note that many countries require passports to expire at least 6 months after the date of travel.

Delegates should agree on the security strategy to be adopted during the mission. In particular, they should inform the consular entities of their respective countries of their arrival in Tunisia and the purpose of their visit, as well as the participation of other members of the international delegation.

## **6. Expert's skills**

Relevant experience in the situation covered by the assignment would be an asset, in particular :

- **Knowledge of the legal procedures to be observed and the legal framework** (national, regional and international)
- **Experience in the field of human rights and/or the situation in the country of the assignment** (e.g. academic and non-academic research, journalism, advocacy, communication/campaigning, etc.).
- **Relevant experience in other contexts** (e.g. participation in other international delegations, judicial observation missions, experience in advocacy or with diplomats).

Language requirements: a high level of written and spoken French will be required to take part in the assignment. Fluency in other languages such as Arabic, English, Italian or Spanish would be an asset.

## **7. Local contacts**

*To be defined*

## **8. Estimated budget for the assignment**

The budget for this mission includes mission expenses, i.e. flights (economy class) and a per diem of 125 euros per night to cover accommodation, internal transport and meals. The OIAD will also cover the cost of a translator to assist the delegates during the mission if required. Once candidates have been selected by the OIAD Board, they should contact translation agencies and seek quotes.

#### Flight:

As the estimated budget for air transport varies greatly depending on the place of departure and arrival of the observers, it will be determined on a case-by-case basis before each mission.

Only economy class tickets will be refunded. If the observer orders tickets in a higher class, only the price of the economy class ticket for the same flight will be refunded by the OIAD.

#### Daily allowances :

This joint provisional budget can only include the per diems provided for in each country by the [French Ministry of the Economy](#):

Expenses	Unit	Quantity	Unit cost	Total
Transport				
Flight (return)	Ticket /person			
Per diem ( <i>including accommodation</i> )				
125 €/person/night				

Estimated total in euros	
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