

GLOBAL TORTURE INDEX 2025: TUNISIA FACTSHEET

OVERALL GLOBAL TORTURE INDEX SCORE:

HIGH RISK

The Global Torture Index 2025 is the first analysis designed to assess the risk of torture and ill-treatment across 26 countries worldwide. This 2025 factsheet for Tunisia includes an analysis of the country's overall performance, a breakdown by thematic pillars and key recommendations for driving meaningful change in the fight against torture and the promotion of human rights.

COLLABORATING ORGANISATIONS IN TUNISIA:

La Ligue Tunisienne des
droits de l'Homme (LTDH)

L'Association Tunisienne
pour la Justice et l'Égalité
(DAMJ)

SANAD Centre de
Conseil OMCT

Association
Ifriqiya

Association Tunisienne
Awledna (ATA)

Alliance Contre la
Torture (ACT)

AT A GLANCE

The human rights situation in Tunisia continues to receive sustained attention from the international community. For 2025, the Global Torture Index classifies the country as presenting a **high risk** of torture and ill-treatment, based on data collected in 2023 and 2024.

More than a decade after the revolution that put an end to decades of systematic torture and impunity, hopes of a lasting turnaround in respect to fundamental rights seem to be dwindling. Although Tunisia has ratified the vast majority of conventions and protocols relating to torture and has enshrined general principles in its 2014 and 2022 constitutions, these practices persist due to the lack of far-reaching reforms in the security and judicial systems.

Most legal frameworks remain unchanged, and torture and ill-treatment are still common practice, particularly in the context of actions by law enforcement agencies against the most vulnerable people.

The use of violence by law enforcement officers, both in public spaces and at police stations, remains commonplace. The same is true of prisons, where assaults by prison officers are exacerbated by the deleterious effects of overcrowding. In recent years, dozens of cases of suspicious deaths have been documented; trials targeting the LGBTQIA+ community have been opened based on degrading anal tests, and numerous cases of forced evictions, arbitrary arrests and displacements to border areas, as well as institutional violence against people on the move, have been reported. **Since May 2024, at least eight NGO employees and two former local officials have been arrested, and more than 40 people are under investigation because of their support for migrants and refugees.**

Prosecutions for torture and ill-treatment are rare; sentences are lenient and compensation for victims is inadequate.

Following the self-coup of 25 July 2021, initiated by the President of the Republic, the repression of civil society actors has intensified. The dismantling of democratic institutions, the restriction of freedom of expression, the prosecution and imprisonment of political opponents on baseless charges—[plotting against the state](#), terrorism, money laundering, corruption—have created a climate of fear. Added to this is the [harassment of human rights defenders](#), executive interference in the justice system and [the adoption of repressive laws banning all criticism](#).

GENERAL INFORMATION



Type of government:
Republic -
Presidential
system



**United Nations
Convention
Against Torture:**
[Ratified](#)



**OPCAT
ratification:**
Ratified



Population:
[11,887,412](#)



**People
deprived of
liberty:**
35,000
(Approximately)



**Prison population
(per 100,000
of national
population):**
[196](#)



**Pre-trial detainees /
remand prisoners
(percentage of
prison population):**
60%
(Approximately)



**Documented
Detained
Human Rights
Defenders:**
14



**Alerts Issued by
the Observatory
for Human Rights
Defenders in 2024:**
5



**Prison
Occupancy
level:**
[126.4%](#)



**Homicide rate
(per 100.000
people):**
Lack of data

THEMATIC PILLAR OVERVIEW



I. POLITICAL COMMITMENT

INDEX SCORE: CONSIDERABLE RISK

Tunisia has ratified the majority of conventions and protocols relating to the fight against torture, as well as the Rome Statute of the International Criminal Court, with the exception of the International Convention on the Protection of the Rights of All Migrant Workers and Members of Their Families. However, its actual commitment to the Committee against Torture (CAT) remains limited. None of the CAT's decisions following individual communications have been implemented. Although the authorities have participated in the periodic reviews and dialogues organised by the Committee, little concrete progress has been made in implementing its most recent recommendations. Tunisia's latest periodic report has still not been submitted, and dialogue with civil society organisations has been at a standstill since 2021. This trend is part of a broader disengagement, marked in particular by **the Tunisian authorities' decision to withdraw from the African Court on Human and Peoples' Rights**.

In legislative terms, Article 101 bis of the Criminal Code, amended in 2011, contains a definition of torture that does not comply with the definition set out in Article 1 of the Convention against Torture. In particular, it does not mention 'punishment' as one of the prohibited purposes and limits the reference to 'discrimination' to its racial dimension. Furthermore, Article 101 quater provides an exemption from punishment for public officials who denounce acts of torture 'in good faith', an ambiguous provision that potentially paves the way for impunity.

The National Authority for the Prevention of Torture (INPT), set up shortly after the 2011 revolution as a national prevention mechanism, is now operating in an increasingly hostile institutional context. **Deprived of full administrative and financial autonomy, it faces increasing threats of dissolution.** Although the INPT continues to play an active role through monitoring visits and the publication of reports, it has come up against numerous obstacles since the introduction of the state of emergency. The Ministry of the Interior has obstructed its access to certain places of detention, and the legal renewal of its membership, scheduled for May 2022, has still not been effected. In addition, the articles of the 2014 Constitution that enshrined the INPT's existence as a national preventive mechanism were removed in the new Constitution adopted in 2022, further weakening its institutional legitimacy.



II. ENDING POLICE BRUTALITY AND INSTITUTIONAL VIOLENCE

INDEX SCORE: HIGH RISK

In recent years, numerous cases of ill-treatment in the public space, sometimes followed by acts of torture, have been reported, resulting in serious injuries and, in some cases, death. **Violence is particularly frequent during stops, identity checks, searches and the dispersal of public gatherings.** This violence most often consists of kicks, punches and truncheon blows, and sometimes involves the illegal use of tasers, kinetic projectiles and chemical irritants. The lack of visible identification of officers on the ground hampers any accountability process. Although police vehicles are theoretically identifiable by their registration number, this obligation is rarely respected in practice. In addition, the zero-tolerance policy towards sexual violence committed by public servants remains largely unapplied. There are recurrent reports of threats, verbal abuse and sexual touching by police officers.

Abuses by law enforcement officers are often motivated by discriminatory considerations, and target people on the move, young people from marginalised neighbourhoods, LGBTQIA+ people, sex workers and people on the Home Office's list in particular because of their presumed danger to public order. However, a significant proportion of this violence also targets ordinary people, often because of confrontational exchanges with officers, either on or off duty. Abuse of the power conferred by the status of public official remains a central factor in the perpetuation of these practices.

Tunisian legislation governing the use of firearms and so-called less lethal weapons still does not comply with international standards. Apart from the adoption, on 16 March 2023, of a code of conduct for the forces of law and order, there is no public transparency on how these weapons are used.



III. FREEDOM FROM TORTURE WHILE DEPRIVED OF LIBERTY

INDEX SCORE: HIGH RISK

Procedural guarantees in police custody were theoretically increased with the adoption of Law 2016-5, which guarantees the right to a lawyer, to a medical examination and to notify a family member, besides establishing the conditions for renewing police custody. However, in practice, these guarantees are very often flouted, which encourages the use of violence, even torture. **Police officers often resort to slapping, punching, kicking, beating and handcuffing detainees for long periods, humiliating and threatening them to punish them and/or force them to sign confessions.**

In prison, assaults by prison officers remain frequent (repeated beatings all over the body, being kept handcuffed for hours on end, sexual assault, humiliation, etc.) and are often accompanied by deprivation of family visits and abusive solitary confinement. These practices are exacerbated by the deterioration in prison conditions due to overcrowding, a consequence of the excessive use of preventive detention. Not all prisoners have access to a bed; the food is inadequate and of poor quality and sanitary conditions are well below international standards. The situation is even worse in summer, when temperatures can reach over 40°C. Above all, access to healthcare is very poor and virtually non-existent for prisoners who have been assaulted by guards. **Over the last three years, several prisoners have died due to a lack of access to care or in suspicious circumstances.**

In police stations and prisons alike, officers accused of torture or ill-treatment are rarely suspended, while victims who lodge complaints sometimes suffer reprisals.



IV. ENDING IMPUNITY

INDEX SCORE: HIGH RISK

Impunity in Tunisia is one of the main causes of the persistence of torture, facilitated by legal loopholes, a lack of political will, procedural abuses and a judicial system with little independence. When a victim lodges a complaint, it can take weeks or even months for the prosecutor to open a preliminary investigation, which generally lasts for years, in contrast to other investigations that do not involve security agents as defendants. In addition, few officers are suspended from their duties or placed in pre-trial detention for the duration of the investigation, whereas the use of pre-trial detention is the norm in Tunisia. **Investigations are characterised by a lack of diligence in gathering evidence.** Forensic examinations, if ordered, are often carried out late and are generally limited in their findings and conclusions.

Most investigations are protracted for years, and very few go to trial. In these cases, the legal classification of the facts and the sentences handed down are derisory compared to the seriousness of the acts. **The charge of torture is systematically dismissed in favour of violence or some other lesser offence.** In many trials, the accused security officers fail to attend the hearings and are sentenced in absentia, even though they continue to work. Criminal court rulings are not enforced, nor are decisions by the administrative court to compensate victims of torture.

Moreover, the serious violations committed during the decades of dictatorship that preceded the revolution remain unpunished. Although Organic Law 2013-53 established a transitional justice process and led to the creation of the Truth and Dignity Commission (IVD), more than 200 cases referred to the specialised transitional justice chambers are still being tried. Six years after their opening in 2018, the trials have ground to a halt, blocked by political manoeuvres aimed at derailing the process. The OMCT is currently accompanying six victims and has referred the case to the Committee against Torture in order to remind Tunisia of its international commitments.



V. VICTIM'S RIGHTS

INDEX SCORE: VERY HIGH RISK

In Tunisia, no legal provision explicitly defines the notion of 'victim of torture'; only the crime of torture is codified in the Criminal Code. To obtain compensation before a criminal court, official recognition of the victim's status and conviction of the perpetrator are necessary. Before the administrative courts, the procedure requires proof of the State's responsibility. **The compensation awarded by the criminal and administrative courts is still grossly insufficient and decisions are rarely implemented.**

A procedure for compensating victims of torture has been introduced by the law on transitional justice. However, the many compensation decisions made by the Truth and Dignity Commission in this context have not been implemented due to the failure to establish the compensation fund provided for by the law.

Apart from compensation, in the absence of a dedicated legal framework, there is no guarantee of effective rehabilitation for victims. Judicial, medical and administrative staff are rarely trained in the specific needs of victims. Victims have to turn to the few specialist associations for access to multidisciplinary care that takes account of the violations they have suffered. The same applies to access to justice, in the absence of effective legal aid. There is no specific system in place to protect or support victims or witnesses.



VI. PROTECTION FOR ALL

INDEX SCORE: HIGH RISK

Over the past two years, Tunisia has seen a worrying increase in institutional violence and discrimination targeting people on the move from sub-Saharan Africa in particular. Following the xenophobic speech made by the President in February 2023, violations against them have multiplied, and include arbitrary detentions, expulsions to border areas and forced returns to Libya or Algeria. Minors are not exempt from these practices. **Between January and November 2024, 16,503 expulsions were recorded.** People rescued at sea are also denied access to international protection, asylum procedures or humanitarian assistance, exposing them to torture, trafficking and other forms of ill-treatment. In a climate of impunity fuelled by hate speech, verbal, physical, sexual and xenophobic violence continues. In the absence of support mechanisms and effective remedies, these people are forced to risk crossing to Europe or return to their countries of origin.

Since May 2024, the crackdown on the LGBTQIA+ community and queer activists has also intensified.

Backed by a discriminatory legal arsenal and supported by a hostile media discourse tolerated by the authorities, this repression manifests itself in the instrumentalisation of the security forces and the judiciary to criminalise gender identities and sexual orientations. Sentences range from one to four and a half years in prison, and those accused endure searches, violence in detention, harassment, surveillance, a ban on lawyers defending them and the use of torture through anal testing. Since October 2024, 84 judgements against LGBTQIA+ people have been recorded, including 24 based on article 230 of the Penal Code.



VII. RIGHT TO DEFEND AND CIVIC SPACE

INDEX SCORE: VERY HIGH RISK

Decree-Law No. 88 on associations, adopted shortly after the revolution to guarantee freedom of association, has been the subject of repeated attempts of regressive reform. In particular, **the proposals aim to restrict foreign funding of civil society organisations (CSOs) and impose new administrative authorisation**, thereby threatening the already fragile civic space. These dynamics further hamper the financial and administrative autonomy of CSOs, which operate in an increasingly hostile climate, particularly since the self-coup of 25 July 2021.

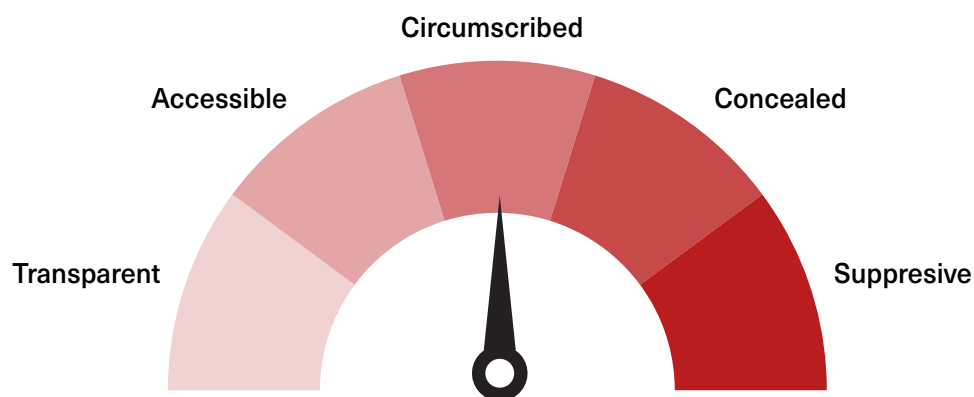
On the ground too, there has been a significant decline in freedom of expression. **Abusive arrests and prosecutions of journalists, human rights defenders and citizens peacefully expressing their opinions continue**, often based on vaguely worded charges, notably under Decree-Law 2022-54.

Associations and defenders are frequently the target of delegitimation campaigns, accused of treason by political actors close to the government, and exposed to coordinated media attacks, both online and offline. Several employees of non-governmental organisations have been subjected to politically motivated prosecutions, sometimes accompanied by arbitrary detention. Many political opposition figures are also subjected to similar measures, in a context of increasing repression of any dissident voices.

TRANSPARENCY AND ACCESS TO INFORMATION

The Global Torture Index rates the access to information and transparency available in each country when measuring and assessing the risks of torture and ill-treatment. It takes into account the availability of information, as well as the obstacles faced by civil society organisations in collecting data and their assessments in accessing information. Access to information must be guaranteed in every society, both in law and in practice, to ensure state transparency and accountability. It enables organisations, journalists, and individuals to request data on public bodies, protocols, and statistics on human rights violations. This indicator reflects the challenges in accessing information within a country, with each country and territory assigned a rating as **Suppressive, Concealed, Circumscribed, Accessible, or Transparent**.

Tunisia's score is **circumscribed** based on our evaluation of its current level of transparency and access to information.



ADVOCATING FOR CHANGE IN TUNISIA: KEY RECOMMENDATIONS

The Index includes 5 recommendations for Tunisia, taken from the [Index webpage](#), which will serve as references in upcoming editions to monitor achievements within the anti-torture movement.

1. To amend article 101 bis of the Criminal Code, which defines torture, to bring it in line with the definition set out in article 1 of the Convention against Torture and Other Cruel, Inhuman or Degrading Treatment or Punishment, and to amend article 101 quater of the Criminal Code to remove the exemption from punishment for public officials or assimilated persons who report such acts 'in good faith'.
2. Reduce prison overcrowding by limiting the excessive use of preventive detention, in particular by introducing a judge of freedoms within the courts, responsible for verifying that all detentions are legal, necessary and proportionate.
3. Decriminalise the illegal entry and residence of migrants and guarantee the full application of Organic Law no. 2018-50 of 23 October 2018 on the elimination of all forms of racial discrimination.
4. Repeal the articles of the Criminal Code criminalising gender identity and sexual orientation; put a definitive end to the practice of anal testing; amend criminal provisions based on vague notions such as 'good morals' or 'public morality', so that they can no longer be used as a basis for violating the rights of LGBTQIA+ people.
5. Protect freedom of association, as guaranteed by Decree-Law 88 on associations, and put an end to police, judicial and administrative harassment of human rights organisations and defenders. This includes repealing Decree-Law 54 on cybercrime to prevent its abuse against them.



FURTHER RESOURCES

For further information, the complete 2025 Torture Index—including detailed data visualisations, FAQs, the methodology, and more—can be accessed on our website: <https://www.omct.org/en/global-torture-index>. Should you have any questions, feel free to reach out to us at tortureindex@omct.org.

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