



SANAD REPORT

2024-2025

SANAD Kef

Ave Mongi Slim,
Espace Zoghlemi
1er étage - Apt. 2
Le Kef 7100

Tél : +216 78 223 022

Fax : +216 78 225 052

www.omct-tunisie.org

SANAD Sfax

Ave Hedi Nouira,
Immeuble Baya Centre
1er étage - Apt. 14
Sfax 3000

Tél : +216 74 404 474

Fax : +216 74 404 478

SANAD Tunis

3, Rue Hassen Ibn Nooman
Cité Jardins, Tunis 1002

Tél : +216 71 791 114

Fax : +216 71 791 115

*Illustration by Youssef, 17 years,
participant at the dignity art competition, June 2025*



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SANAD, CONTINUOUS MULTIDISCIPLINARY CARE

SANAD is the comprehensive direct assistance program for victims of torture and cruel, inhuman or degrading treatment in Tunisia, established in 2013 by the World Organization Against Torture (OMCT). SANAD supports its beneficiaries through three counseling centers based in Kef, Sfax and Tunis.

OUR APPROACH



A warm welcome

When a person comes under SANAD's mandate, the team makes sure to provide a professional welcome, taking into account the effects of trauma. Aware of the distress and sense of insecurity felt by victims of torture and ill-treatment, the team presents SANAD's services and operating procedures. SANAD's team of frontliners communicate clearly and empathetically about the program's capabilities and limitations. For those who cannot be assisted within the program, SANAD refers them, if necessary, to other competent organizations.



A specific intervention plan

For each beneficiary, an individual plan is tailor-made. The plan focuses on the needs of the victim, based on his or her socio-economic situation and the impact of the trauma on his or her family and loved ones. The plan is put in place in consultation with the professionals involved and can be reviewed and readapted according to progress or challenges that may arise.



Individualized support

SANAD's team of frontliners accompanies beneficiaries, according to the established intervention plan, to specialized organizations and professionals as well as public administrations. In some cases, long-term support may be necessary, as the effects of torture are serious, multiple and long-lasting, and new needs may emerge during the care process. Furthermore, beneficiaries in situation of particular vulnerability - such as people with disabilities, women, minors and the elderly - require close support.



Coordination with partners

To ensure holistic, high-quality assistance, SANAD works with committed and competent professionals. SANAD has established a network of lawyers available to the program, to accompany beneficiaries in court. SANAD also guarantees access to health professionals such as doctors, psychiatrists, psychologists and social workers. Psychological care is provided by the organization Psychologues du Monde-Tunisie (PDM-T) and committed psychologists in a confidential and caring manner. A close and fruitful working relationship has been developed with specialized civil society organizations, notably Psychologues du Monde-Tunisie (PDM-T), the Tunisian League for the Defense of Human Rights (LTDH), Beity,

AMAL, the Tunisian Association for Justice and Equality (DAMJ), The International Legal Foundation (ILF), Médecins du Monde-Tunisie (MDM) and Avocats sans frontières (ASF), among others.

SANAD forges new partnerships to strengthen torture prevention and victim support: Alliance Against Torture (ACT).

SANAD, together with the LTDH, PDM-T, DAMJ, Génération Anti-Marginalization (GAM), Awledna and Ifriqiya gather in a context of transition marked by flagrant human rights violations and restrictions on freedoms. Together, the Alliance Against Torture seeks to raise public awareness of the many facets of state violence and advocate legislative reform.



Regular follow-up

SANAD maintains a regular dialogue with beneficiaries, as well as with all those involved in the direct assistance process, in order to evaluate intervention strategies and improve the quality of services provided. Quantitative and qualitative evaluation tools are put in place to achieve concrete results that help victims, and their families mitigate the impact of trauma and rebuild their lives.

A RESTRICTIVE CONTEXT

In recent years, Tunisia has suffered a significant setback in terms of human rights, marked by the actions of the administration of justice, which weigh heavily on the principles of the rule of law and hinder the expression of free voices. Targeted attacks on lawyers, human rights defenders, journalists and political opponents are on the increase. SANAD has observed an upsurge in institutionalized violence and an increase in discrimination, particularly against people on the move, especially those from sub-Saharan Africa. They frequently suffer combined and intersectional forms of discrimination, linked to their color of skin, irregular migration status, gender or sexual orientation, making them particularly vulnerable to torture, ill-treatment and other forms of institutionalized violence.

Since May 2024, the Tunisian authorities have resorted to various restrictions and control measures against civil society organizations and human rights defenders. In May 2024, a number of civil society actors were prosecuted and charged with criminal offenses,

including aiding people on the move. The prosecutions have reinforced financial controls and administrative obstacles, while creating a climate of fear and intimidation, leading to self-censorship, including within civil society organizations. Prosecutions and arrests are part and consequence of a public discourse aimed at demonizing civil society and restricting civic space, leaving a large population of underserved citizens and people on the move in isolation.

This worrying social situation is compounded by a critical situation of high numbers of detainees in prisons. Overcrowding of 150% and 200%¹ reflects massive recourse to preventive detention. Detention conditions are deplorable, with dilapidated infrastructures, insufficient food, poor hygiene, lack of health care and daily violence.

In this difficult context, SANAD remains firmly committed to defending victims of torture and any other cruel, degrading or inhuman treatment or punishment. SANAD's strength lies in its expertise in supporting victims of torture and ill-treatment. SANAD supports victims through the expertise of its legal and social coordinators. Their knowledge of the needs of the beneficiaries they work with on a daily basis ensures that the actions carried out best meet the realities on the ground and effectively help victims and their families to access their fundamental rights.

SANAD aims to provide comprehensive, tailor-made, free-of-charge direct assistance (social, psychological, medical, legal and socio-economic) to direct and indirect victims, as well as to deliver rigorous documentation of human rights violations with the aim to support the promotion of fundamental rights and freedoms.

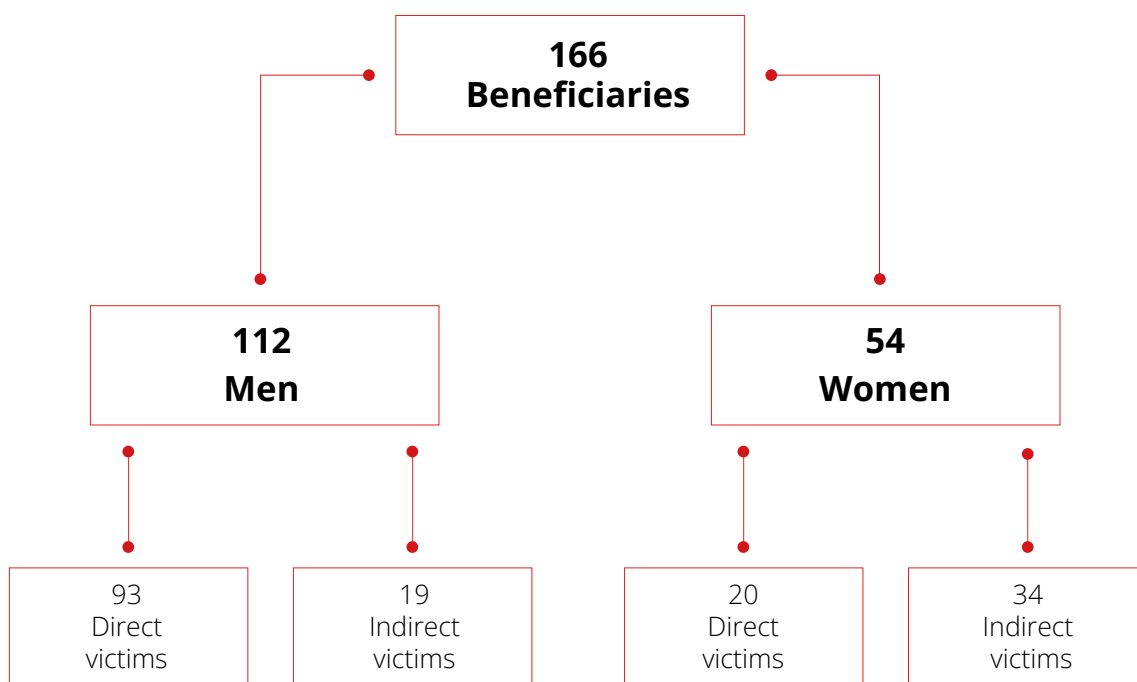
For the sake of simplicity and ease of reading, all references to people are made in both the masculine and feminine genders.

1. https://www.businessnews.com.tn/liste_pepites/tunisie--hausse-de-la-population-carcerales-de-10000-detenus-en-deux-ans,520,148092,3

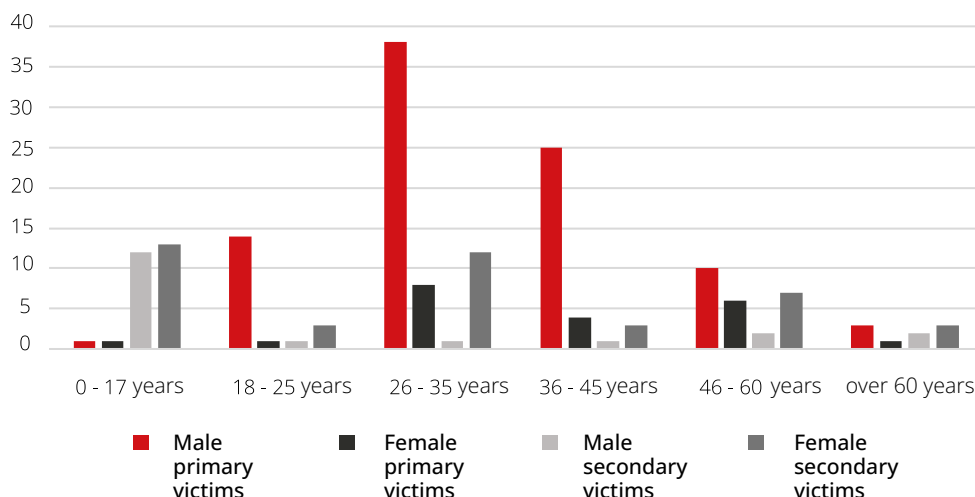
SANAD IN FIGURES

JUNE 2024 TO MAY 2025

From June 1, 2024, to May 31, 2025, SANAD took on board 166 new victims of torture and ill-treatment.



Men and women by age



The majority of SANAD beneficiaries are men, accounting for 62%. This figure illustrates a marked trend: institutional violence mainly affects men. However, women are not spared. Although they are less often direct victims, they make up a significant proportion of secondary victims, mainly the victims' wives, mothers, sisters or daughters. The traumas caused by torture have a profound effect on family dynamics, exposed to psychological suffering, deteriorating health of their loved ones and their economic and social exclusion. Women often find themselves obliged to take on new responsibilities, such as providing additional moral and economic support. They are neither prepared nor accompanied, which creates a crying need for psychological, social and sometimes legal assistance.

Moreover, 44% of SANAD beneficiaries are in the range of age of 26-35 years, revealing a worrying societal reality. An important number of a generation that is in a forging age is confronted with double marginalization: economic and institutional. These young people, often well-educated, project-driven and eager to contribute to society, live in a context of structural precariousness, lack of prospects and even implicit hostility towards them on the part of institutions. They are a classic target for law enforcement and too often are at risk of becoming victims of harassment and abuse of power. Police violence goes far beyond social or economic exclusion. It is an authoritarian response to legitimate distress.

Youth, who should be at the heart of development policies, are perceived as potential troublemakers rather than partners for change. The result is a deep rift between youth and the state, a loss of trust and a lingering sense of injustice.

In this context, SANAD should not be seen simply as a one-off aid program designed to alleviate vulnerability. SANAD is motivated by the recognition that behind every case there is a story of struggle, denial, invisibility and trauma.

23% of the persons assisted during the period covered by the report are between 36 and 45 years of age, an age group that represents an essential part of the country's economic, social and family capacity in full professional and civic maturity. However, they often operate in a precarious socio-economic context: family responsibilities, participation in production, community involvement. They continue to face forms of exclusion, precariousness and invisibility reflecting a crisis in the relationship between the individual and the state.

SANAD's approach is one of rehabilitation, recognizing broken paths, ignored expectations and accumulated frustrations. The aim is to rebuild a relationship of trust between the individual and the State.

12% of SANAD beneficiaries are minors. This finding highlights a worrying trend: the increasing trivialization of violence against children and adolescents, even by institutions that are supposed to protect them. Children are often abandoned by state protection systems and do not benefit from rehabilitation mechanisms tailored to their specific needs. They grow up with deep physical and psychological wounds.





1. SOCIAL ASSISTANCE

When the context exacerbates vulnerability, the challenges for social care are reinforced

SANAD accompanies beneficiaries facing extreme precariousness, social exclusion or profound family breakdowns. Survivors often have to cope with a fragmented and inaccessible system of public services, which exacerbates their vulnerability and complicates their reintegration process. Social fragility is exacerbated by the national economic and political context. Since the end of 2023, Tunisia has entered a recession, with an unemployment rate exceeding 15%, even reaching 37.7% among young people².

SANAD's social action is evolving in an increasingly difficult environment. On the one hand, the demand for social support continues to grow, while intervention capacities are shrinking. On the other, public institutions tend to withdraw from structured partnerships with human rights associations. At the same time, civil society organizations are seeing their scope for action restricted by financial limitations and increased government surveillance. This hampers collective and coordinated responses to emerging social needs. SANAD is committed to raising beneficiaries' awareness of their social rights, building their confidence in the system and helping them to better understand and use administrative procedures. SANAD believes that it is essential for the State to fully assume its role as guarantor of social protection. SANAD's social coordinators play a central role in this mission. Acting as mediators between beneficiaries and institutions, they provide essential information on existing assistance programs as well as the necessary support to help beneficiaries overcome bureaucratic obstacles, the slowness of which is one of the main challenges in meeting their immediate needs.

The profiles of SANAD beneficiaries are diverse and varied. SANAD acts as an ally, fostering respectful, inclusive and non-judgmental support. Together with the beneficiary, SANAD develops a personalized social intervention plan adapted to his or her situation and needs. Between June 2024 and May 2025, SANAD opened **54 new social files**.

SANAD guides beneficiaries through the administrative procedures before the various regional social affairs delegations in their areas. SANAD social coordinators provide constant follow-up and support for the beneficiaries, including regular assessment of their situation, assistance in compiling files and moral support to encourage their autonomy. Thanks to this approach, SANAD succeeded in facilitating the opening of social case files within the administration for a number of beneficiaries. However, despite the considerable efforts made throughout the year, only **two beneficiaries** were finally able to benefit from public social service programs within the last year. Admittedly, this close monitoring, based on a relationship of trust and rigorous support, has helped to improve the beneficiaries' situation and strengthen their access to essential services. For the other cases, the wait is mainly due to the slowness of administration.

2. Research developed jointly by the Ministry of Social Affairs, CRES and UNICEF on poverty and social policies in Tunisia, delivered in December 2024.
Employment and unemployment indicators, first quarter 2025 | INS

In addition, SANAD has stepped up the provision of exceptional assistance, notably by covering transport fees for the most disadvantaged to render themselves to public administration. This support, as practical as it is essential, has enabled many beneficiaries to gain easier access to public services, thereby reducing social and economic inequalities. To promote education and training as levers for emancipation, SANAD has supported **64 children and young people** by helping their families in difficulty to cover various school expenses and vocational training:

- School supplies, to ensure that every pupil has what they need in order to succeed. Tutoring for **13 children** at risk of dropping out of school, affected by violence that one of their parents suffered. SANAD provides these students with the means to progress, boosting their chances of success.
- Training registration fees for **3 youth**, to ease the financial burden on families and encourage further study. Transport and accommodation costs, notably in private university hostels, enabling young people far from training centers to follow their course in good conditions.

SANAD has also observed an alarming deterioration in prison conditions in Tunisia, mainly due to chronic overcrowding. Prison administration is no longer able to constantly guarantee sufficient or quality meals, forcing families to fill the gap by preparing «couffins» and sending money orders to enable their loved ones in detention to meet their basic needs in prisons. This transfer of responsibility from the state to families accentuates their precarious situation, especially as many of them are already struggling to cover transport costs required to visit their family in prison. To address this reality, SANAD has supported fifteen beneficiaries by covering transport costs for prison visits, enabling them to maintain family ties with their loved ones in detention.

At the same time, SANAD assists eligible families in compiling and submitting their administrative files to their regional social affairs delegations, so that they can benefit from available public aid. In addition, some families benefit from specific support to access employment or develop an income-generating activity, enabling them not only to meet the immediate needs of their detained relatives, but also to guarantee more stable and autonomous support over the long term.



Overcoming adversity. A story of success: *Eyad*

Eyad, a native of northern Tunisia, is currently being held on a common law charge. During his arrest in 2024, he was subjected to severe police violence before being handcuffed and taken to the police station. His family reports that he was brutally hit on the head and dragged to the ground, resulting in serious injuries requiring surgery. Despite several transfers to hospital, Eyad did not receive adequate medical care. His health deteriorated, with chronic pain and an open wound in his abdomen.

Before his incarceration, Eyad was the main breadwinner for his family, made up of his parents and his sister, a mother of three children abandoned by her husband. His detention and physical incapacity, caused by police violence, left his family in an utterly precarious situation.

SANAD stepped in to help the family through appropriate social and administrative support. In coordination with the Regional Directorate of Social Affairs (DRAS), SANAD applied for a permanent allowance and a free healthcare card in January 2025 on behalf of Eyad's sister, who finds herself without resources to



support her children. Together with the family, SANAD helps conceptualizing a grocery store microproject so that Eyad's mother will be able to provide a stable income for the family and for Eyad, who is at risk of bearing lifetime disability, to regain a degree of independence. His sister's three children have benefited from tutoring to ensure their educational continuity despite the family's difficulties.

This integrated intervention aims to meet the family's urgent needs while preparing for social and economic reintegration after Eyad's release from prison.

Overcoming adversity. A story of a challenge: *Aicha*

In the modest neighborhoods of a town in central Tunisia, Aicha, a widow with no income and three children, has been fighting for years to have her most basic rights recognized: access to minimal financial assistance and healthcare for herself and her children. Since 2016, she has been knocking on the administration's doors. One after the other, she submits an application for a financial allowance and a care booklet. But to no avail.



It was not until May 2024, at a meeting with the regional director of social affairs, that she finally received some semblance of an answer. She was briefly told that an allowance had been granted, only to

have it immediately cancelled again. The reason? Her status as the widow of a man accused of terrorism. No criminal case against her, no reprehensible act on her part, simply an affiliation which is enough to make her a pariah in the eyes of public administration.

This brutal and unjustified refusal reveals an institutional stigmatization fraught with consequences. Aicha, like many other women in her situation, is not asking for privileges, only respect for her rights as a Tunisian citizen. She is not asking for charity, but for equitable social justice that guarantees her children a possible future. She wants to be able to treat a fever, buy school supplies, or simply feed her family.

Aicha's case is a striking illustration of the dangers of an opaque administrative system, where arbitrariness can take the place of the law. It also highlights the urgent need to combat systemic discrimination based on an (alleged) criminal record. For it is women and children who pay the price.

In a state governed by the rule of law, social justice cannot be conditioned by origin, name or family history. Excluding vulnerable women and their children from social safety nets fuels their feelings of injustice, humiliation and marginalization, all of which threaten social cohesion.



2. PSYCHOLOGICAL ASSISTANCE

***The silent crisis of mental health
in a context of multiple crises
and institutional violence***

Long relegated to the background, mental health in Tunisia remains one of the most fragile elements in the healthcare system. While a handful of professionals, mainly concentrated in Tunisia's major cities, are trying to meet the growing needs of the population, a large part of the country, particularly inland, remains largely devoid of specialized services. Access to psychological support is often limited or non-existent.

The Covid-19 pandemic brutally highlighted the fragility of the system. Lockdowns, social isolation, economic uncertainty and the disruption of daily life have led to a marked rise in anxiety and depressive disorders, particularly among the young and vulnerable. However, behind the recent symptoms lie older, deeper, quieter wounds: those inflicted by torture and institutional violence. The psychological scars they leave - chronic anxiety, post-traumatic stress disorder, severe depression - are not easily absorbed over time. They confine, marginalize and slow down the process of reconstruction.

Against this backdrop, and five years after the Covid pandemic and in the midst of restrictive and liberticide politics, SANAD continues to provide specialized psychological support. Between June 2024 and May 2025, SANAD opened 35 psychological case files. Thanks to the mobilization of its network of professionals, and in partnership with Psychologues du Monde-Tunisie (PDM-T), 305 individual sessions and 40 family sessions (benefiting 4 families) were provided, testifying to a growing need for therapeutic support adapted to complex traumas.

At the same time, SANAD is trying to keep abreast of the worrying increase in the number of suspicious deaths occurring in places of deprivation of liberty, such as prisons or police custody. Between June 2024 and May 2025, SANAD took on six cases of suspicious death, marked by lack of transparency, opaque procedures and institutional silence. This context has resulted in acute psychological distress for the victims' families. The pain of losing a loved one in such circumstances is all the more profound because it is often compounded by the absence of truth finding, lack of access to justice and a feeling of impunity, making mourning impossible. Families, exposed to indirect institutional violence, are all too often left to fend for themselves.

In response to this psychosocial emergency, in November 2024 SANAD has set up a specific self-support group dedicated to the families of victims of suspicious deaths. The aim is to provide a secure, confidential space where family members can share their experiences, express their emotions and begin a collective process of recognition and resilience.

However, the lack of qualified mental health professionals and experts in complex torture-related traumas, particularly in the interior regions, remains a major obstacle when supporting SANAD beneficiaries.

In December 2024, SANAD organized training on medical and psychological documentation of torture in accordance with the Istanbul Protocol, in order to strengthen the skills of health professionals in documenting the psychological impact of torture and the trauma itself. And again, these efforts must be part of a global strategy led by Tunisian administration, with structural and sustainable investment in mental health. Such measures must guarantee equitable access to quality psychological assistance, and make mental health an effective priority in public policies of justice and reparation.

A story of success: *Bayrem's family*

Originally from northern Tunisia, Bayrem's family was struck by tragedy in June 2024, when their 27-year-old son died suddenly while in custody. Bayrem, the economic pillar of the household, was his family's main breadwinner. His sudden death left behind an immense void, both material and emotional.

The shock was made all the more violent by the fact that the family was not informed of his death until four days after the fact, and not by prison administration, but through calls from relatives offering their condolences. In search of answers, the family was sent from one prison to another, without clear information or support, before finding Bayrem's body in the morgue of the Charles Nicolle Hospital in Tunis.

Helmi, his twin brother, was particularly upset by the loss. Bayrem was not only his brother, but also his confidant and point of reference. Overcome by grief, Helmi isolated himself, taking drugs and seeking revenge on those he held responsible.

Faced with this distress, the SANAD team stepped in to provide appropriate psychological support. Helmi benefited from psychiatric support sessions, enabling him to begin a process of reconstruction, channel his anger and deal with his grief in ways other than hatred.

In the wake of this tragic loss, Bayrem's father and younger sister also received psychological support, thanks to coordination between the SANAD program and their local hospital. Through several support sessions, they were able to begin to express their pain, name their grief and begin a slow process of emotional healing. For her part, Bayrem's mother joined a discussion group dedicated to bereaved mothers, supported by SANAD. These forums enabled her to share her pain with other women facing similar losses. Gradually, she was able to express her emotions, lighten her burden and break the isolation imposed by grief.

The story of Bayrem's family bears witness to the administrative violence and lack of communication in a prison context, but also to the resilience that is possible when human and psychosocial support is put in place in time.



The story of a challenge: *Tayem*

Tayem is 39 years old. He was born and raised in southern Tunisia. He dreamed of a peaceful life with his wife, in his hometown, surrounded by family. But in 2015, everything changed. One morning, without warning, Tayem was arrested because of his dress code and religious appearance. He was accused of being affiliated to a Salafist movement, with no proof, no file, no defense. Three days in police custody. Those three days left scars that neither time nor silence could heal.

When he came out, Tayem was no longer the same man. Not just because of the physical pain, but because of the invisible weight he would start to carry, that of permanent suspicion.

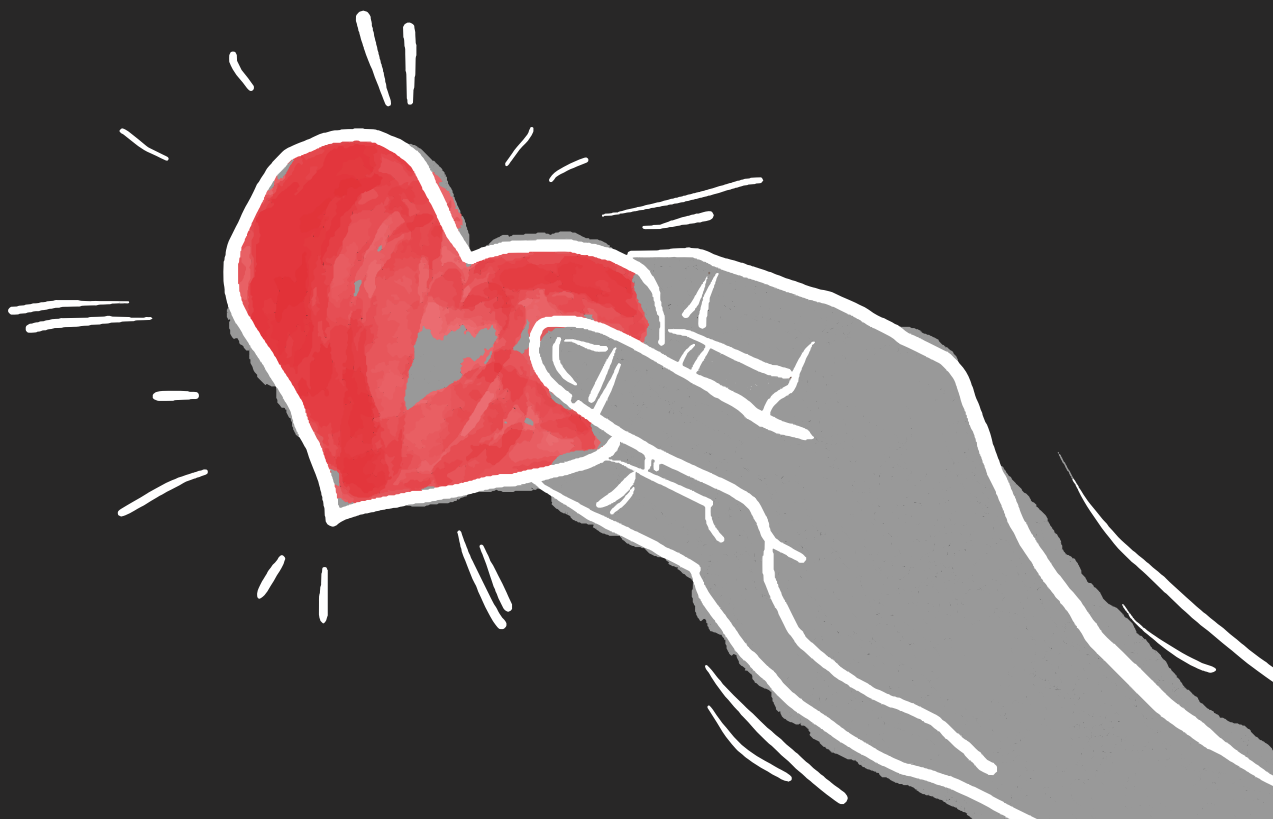
For years, he tried to rebuild his life. But in 2024, he discovers, almost by chance, that he's still registered with the Ministry of Interior. His name appeared on the "S17" list. Worse still, he learned that he was under de facto house arrest. Every move, even business ones, is monitored, controlled and sometimes even prevented. His life is under control, without judgment, without sentence. Just a suspicion that won't die. Tayem feels like living in a prison without walls.



His wife, who shares his daily life, watches helplessly as he slowly fades. Together, they decided to seek psychological help to heal the wounds. But in their region, there are no psychologists available for cases like theirs. There is a shortage of professionals, and those who do exist often lack the expertise needed to deal with the after-effects of police harassment.

Because of his house arrest and his "S17" registration, Tayem cannot leave his region to seek psychological counseling. He survives. What he is asking today is not pity, or justice even, he requests the right to be listened to. The right to no longer be defined by baseless accusation.

His story is not unique. It is a reminder that behind every "S17" file, every suspicion, every name forgotten in a database, there is the life of a person and of a family, and often, an unspoken pain.





3. MEDICAL ASSISTANCE

*Medical support for
SANAD beneficiaries is vital*

Tunisia's healthcare system is based on a relatively good geographical distribution of public primary and secondary care structures, as well as a very dynamic private healthcare sector.

However, despite this dense network, differences in service provision between the public and private sectors exist in terms of quality, acceptability and continuity of care. The COVID-19 pandemic highlighted structural weaknesses in the healthcare system, including lack of resources, shortage of medical staff and inequalities in access to care. Five years on, the Tunisian hospital system is increasingly precarious. There are many reasons for this, stemming from a combination of economic, political and social factors. This is particularly worrying in the interior regions, where medical infrastructure is deteriorating rapidly.

Marginalized populations, including victims of torture with physical injuries and psychological after-effects, face high costs for specialized examinations, such as MRI or surgery, and in-depth medical tests, and constitute an additional barrier for beneficiaries who often have no income or social security cover. People on the move find themselves in an even more precarious situation. Their access to the healthcare system is limited not only by financial costs, but also by administrative, linguistic and often discriminatory barriers.

For SANAD, access to medical care is critical and vital. Yet the impact of medical assistance facilitated by SANAD goes far beyond mere physical healing. For many beneficiaries, it's not just a matter of treating an injury or relieving pain; above all, it's a recognition of their suffering, which is generally ignored or denied. For SANAD beneficiaries, being cared for, listened to and treated in a respectful and caring environment is a form of validation of their experience, and often marks the first step towards a more global reconstruction process. From this perspective, collaboration with partners is essential to facilitate access to health services for all, including for people on the move, ensure their medical accompaniment, and guarantee them, as far as possible, dignified and equitable access to the care they need.

Between June 2024 and May 2025, SANAD accompanied **28 beneficiaries** to access consultations, medical examinations and long-term treatment for survivors with various after-effects: chronic illnesses linked to or intensified by the incident, neurological disorders, etc., thus enabling free or reduced-cost care.

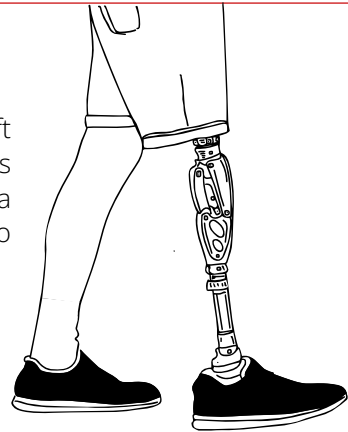
A story of success: *Bayrem and Youssef*

When Bayrem died in prison aged just 24, he left behind more than just an emotional void. He was working to support his family and save money to buy a new prosthesis for his 56-year-old father Youssef, who had lost a leg.

Today, Youssef lives with a motor disability, without a steady job and with the obligation of providing for the household. He suffers from diabetes and his mental health has seriously deteriorated since the loss of his son.

His prosthesis, worn, pierced and painful, was held together by tape. Each step became a physical pain, but also a silent reminder of his condition. He wasn't asking for a miracle, just to be able to stand again. It was against this backdrop that SANAD stepped in to provide individualized support. The SANAD team helped Youssef to complete an administrative file with the public health insurance (CNAM) and to make contact with the director of the orthopedic fitting center. Sensitized by Bayrem's story, the latter agreed to make a symbolic gesture of solidarity, reducing the cost of the prosthesis.

Three months after the procedure began, Youssef received his new leg prosthesis. Thanks to SANAD's support, supplemented by the CNAM, Bayrem's father today has a new, adapted and comfortable prosthesis. This support goes beyond classic medical assistance: it was a crucial step towards healing and rebuilding the family, even if they remain forever marked by the loss of their son. This support embodies the spirit of SANAD: making a path of resilience possible, even in the midst of pain.



Overcoming adversity. A story of a challenge: *Joséphine*

Joséphine, a 26-year-old woman on the move, saw her life suddenly turned upside down during a sea crossing to Europe. As her boat was leaving the coast, it was intercepted by Tunisian maritime security forces. The operation, carried out in an aggressive manner, consisted in deliberately creating strong waves around the passengers' boat, with the aim of toppling them. The boat capsized. Joséphine, trapped under the boat, was seriously injured: the motor propeller severed her right leg.

Transported to hospital, she underwent an emergency amputation and was hospitalized for two months. Once she had recovered, Joséphine had to leave the premises. Without resources or institutional support, Joséphine was able to count on the solidarity of her friends, who organized a collection to finance an ambulance ride and to return to her area of residence. Today, Joséphine uses a wheelchair and still requires regular medical care.

Joséphine faces an invisible obstacle: the impossibility of moving freely within the country to access treatment. In September 2024, she was able to count on the help of a member of her community to accompany her on a three-hour journey by public transport to the hospital with the appropriate service for her treatment. Unfortunately, at a roadside checkpoint, the police intercepted them and forced them to stop, preventing her from accessing the medical follow-up she needed.

Josephine now lives with constant physical pain and deep psychological distress. She dreams of receiving a prosthesis, of being able to walk again, of regaining some semblance of a normal life. This hope remains suspended: recognition of her fundamental right to access healthcare is intimately linked to her migratory status.





4. SOCIOPROFESSIONAL INSERTION

Repairing where the State withdraws

The socio-professional integration of SANAD program beneficiaries, particularly those registered under administrative control measures («S» list), is a complex and multi-dimensional undertaking in the current Tunisian context. Subjected to administrative control measures that are often arbitrary and intrusive, these persons see their freedom of movement hampered and their daily lives profoundly impacted. The police persecution that they are exposed to translated at times to harassment in the workplace and the entire direct environment, undermining their employability and permanently compromising their ability to regain their autonomy.

This stigmatization combined with structural precariousness, reinforced by major obstacles to access to public funding institutions, hampers their economic inclusion and autonomy. SANAD beneficiaries face the following realities:

1. The need for solid guarantors, that is difficult to meet for people in precarious situations or without a support network;
2. Lack of formal professional qualifications, which limits their credibility with financial institutions despite real skills often acquired informally;
3. The State has no program specifically dedicated to the socio-economic care of people on file, especially those targeted by security control measures; and finally,
4. Cumbersome and slow administrative bureaucracy, that discourages the process and delays effective access to financing.

These constraints are systemic and contribute to the exclusion of a significant proportion of SANAD beneficiaries from self-employment support schemes, keeping them in a highly vulnerable position.

These difficulties are even more acute for families who have lost a family member - often a young man - in suspicious circumstances involving state agents (often in places of deprivation of liberty or during law enforcement activities). In many cases, the victim was the family's main, if not sole, breadwinner. The victim's sudden disappearance leaves the family in a highly vulnerable situation, combining loss of income, psychological trauma and entry into a long legal process that is often opaque, slow and perceived as inaccessible. Families find themselves not only bereaved but also marginalized by a system that offers them little recourse and little support, while sometimes exposing them to additional forms of stigmatization.

This context is exacerbated by the gradual withdrawal of the welfare state and the growing reluctance of public institutions to collaborate with civil society actors, in a political climate marked by fear, mistrust and withdrawal. Public support systems - whether for social services, psychological assistance, professional integration or access to justice - are either inaccessible or inadequate, reinforcing families' feeling of abandonment.

SANAD's work is complementary to existing government schemes, providing individualized support to people in need of help in accessing their rights and appropriate services. SANAD stands out for its targeted, concrete approach to each beneficiary, taking into account their socio-economic reality.

Between June 2024 and May 2025, the SANAD team's social coordinators provided personalized, sustained support to **11 beneficiaries** in the design and implementation of income-generating micro-projects. These initiatives, tailored to the skills and aspirations of the people supported, now enable them to meet their families' basic needs and improve their financial independence.

In addition, **five beneficiaries** were able to access vocational training in pastry-making and hairdressing, opening up new prospects for sustainable integration into the job market. These actions testify to the tangible impact of the SANAD program on capacity-building for vulnerable people and their socio-economic inclusion.

A story of success: *Yazan's family*

Yazan was 23 years old. He lived in northern Tunisia with his parents, older brother and twin brothers. He was the main source of income for the whole family, already hard hit by poverty and illness.

In 2023, everything collapses. During a police raid on their neighborhood, he is tragically killed by a bullet. His death leaves a gaping void: that of a family pillar. The father, a 57-year-old blue-collar worker, is heavily in debt to cover legal costs, in the hope of obtaining truth and justice for his son. The mother, on the other hand, struggles daily with an incurable disease and several chronic illnesses, without regular access to the necessary treatments. The twin brothers, aged 21, have been living with mental disabilities since birth, dependent on family support. The eldest brother, married and himself suffering from an incurable disease, is unable to support everyone on his modest salary.

SANAD mobilized to provide a concrete response to the family's distress. Together with the family, SANAD set up a socio-professional integration plan, centered on the creation of a micro-project: a small traditional grocery store, run by the father with the help of the rest of the family. Thanks to this initiative, the father can not only consider paying off his debts, but above all offer his family lasting financial autonomy. The whole family is involved: the eldest brother participates



in the management, the twins contribute in their own way, and even the mother, despite her illness, has regained an active role in the household. This project represents a lifeline for a family deprived of other forms of support, all the more so as their application for social assistance - to obtain an allowance and free health care essential to the mother's treatment - has been refused by the Regional Directorate of Social Affairs (DRAS). Faced with this institutional refusal, SANAD stepped in to provide direct medical support to Yazan's mother. Aware of the seriousness of her condition, the team helped her to continue her treatment by covering the cost of imaging tests, medical analyses, medication and transport to specialist doctors.

Overcoming adversity. A story of a challenge: *Ghada et May*

Ghada and May are two determined women driven by a simple dream: to set up their own hairdressing salon, earn a decent living and turn the page on a past marked by injustice. Ghada and May have both been exposed to police violence: May is a directly target of administrative control measures that continues to weigh heavily on her daily life; Ghada, for her part, bears the consequences of police harassment suffered by her son, the victim of a police assault.

Despite these stigmas, they have chosen to rebuild their lives and become entrepreneurs. Ghada, in the Greater Tunis region, and May, in the south of the country. With SANAD's support, Ghada took the necessary steps to obtain a loan from the Banque Tunisienne de Solidarité (BTS). For her part, May, who had just completed a professional training course in hairdressing financed by SANAD, was preparing the formalities for launching her business, in particular obtaining the patent required for legally practicing.

However, their progress was soon hampered by the cumbersome nature of Tunisian administration. To finalize their applications, they had to obtain a certificate of professional competence. The prolonged absence of the examiner in charge of assessing them blocked the procedure for months. Without this attestation, Ghada could not access the loan, and May could not register her business. The two women found themselves at an impasse, deprived of the possibility of realizing their project because of a faulty system.

It was against this backdrop of institutional abandonment that SANAD stepped in. The program took over where the doors were closed. By directly financing their micro-projects, SANAD enabled Ghada and May not to give up on their dream. Thanks to this support, the two women were able to open their own hairdressing salon, each in their own region, and start a new professional life in complete autonomy. While waiting for her administrative situation to be regularized, May works in the salon with her mother, who already has a license. Together, they ensure their independence.

Their stories illustrate a fundamental issue: equitable access to employment and entrepreneurship.





5. SANAD'S CULTURAL ACTIVITIES

Art for resilience



As part of its multi-disciplinary support program, SANAD has over the years developed a program of cultural activities aimed at its beneficiaries, in particular children and women who are direct or indirect victims. These initiatives, far from being mere recreational moments, are part of a therapeutic approach, in which art becomes a vector for liberating speech and forging social ties.

Between June 2024 and May 2025, SANAD organized regular painting, music, karaoke and film workshops for **13 children**. These activities offered them a safe space to express themselves freely. The discussions that emerge following the screenings or creative workshops often give rise to deep, age-appropriate exchanges on subjects such as identity, justice, peace and family ties. In December 2024, one of the highlights was a painting competition between beneficiaries, which brought together **11 children** around a creative challenge and showcased everyone's imagination and talent. The event ended with a convivial reception and the presentation of prizes to all participants and most importantly boosted the children's self-esteem and enhanced their artistic efforts.

At the same time, similar cultural activities have been set up for women. **11 women** take part on a regular basis. These moments of sharing center around painting, singing or artistic creation. They have formed a supportive group, where each woman finds listening, comfort and understanding. These workshops help to gradually forge bonds of friendship between beneficiaries and lay the foundations for mutual emotional support, essential to the reintegration process.

SANAD also initiated several joint sessions between children and their mothers. These moments strengthened family dialogue in a caring and creative setting, where mothers were able to convey messages to their children in a gentle, symbolic way, while the children in turn were able to express their feelings and needs.

Through these cultural activities, SANAD reaffirms its conviction that art is an essential tool of resilience, capable of giving a voice to those who have been silenced.

A story of success: *Seline*

Seline, 13 years old. Since her mother is in prison, her grandfather is taking care of Seline. Their daily lives are not easy. With his modest pension, he can barely cover the basics, so enrolling Seline in a private club or paying for transport to an after-school activity is simply out of reach.

When she arrived at the painting workshop organized by SANAD, Seline was very reserved. She looked at the other children but didn't touch the brush or canvas. Without forcing her, little by little and over the course of several sessions, she eventually dipped the brush into the paint and began to draw. At first, she said nothing. Then, as time went by, she began to mix the colors and become more confident in her gestures.

The beauty is that it was through painting that she began to express herself. She still didn't speak much, but everything came through her brush. Her eyes changed when she discovered what she had painted, she said: «I didn't believe it was me who had done that... I didn't know I was capable of drawing like that». The activity had done her good. Her grandfather, very moved, confided: «Since her mother is in prison, I haven't seen her so happy. And me... I could never have given her that.

Cultural activities are important for children like Seline. They are not just moments of leisure, but a necessary complement to psychological counseling, offering an alternative form of expression.





6. LEGAL ASSISTANCE

***SANAD ELHAQ provides
top-notch local legal support
and excellent litigation services***

Once again, this year, SANAD Elhaq, SANAD's legal action group, sailed through troubled waters, buffeted by a worrying political context marked by multiple liberticidal initiatives. From success to failure, from disillusionment to hope, SANAD Elhaq's team and lawyers have joined forces to face the challenges and demonstrate resilience and diligence in order to best support beneficiaries in accessing their rights.

SANAD Elhaq is committed to providing its beneficiaries with comprehensive legal assistance. First and foremost, we provide simple and often effective local support to prevent violations, and to reassure and protect our beneficiaries. We regularly write to the Ministry of the Interior and the Ministry of Justice to obtain clarification on the situation of beneficiaries who are victims of arbitrary restrictions on their freedom, or who are in detention. We coordinate with our partners at the Instance nationale de prévention de la torture (INPT) and the Tunisian League in Defense of Human Rights (LTDH) to visit detainees and make sure they have access to medical care. SANAD Elhaq's lawyers also accompany beneficiaries during police summonses when the legality of the summons is questionable, or when there are fears that it may lead to intimidation.

The situation of several beneficiaries has thus improved, such as May, who was placed under administrative control by virtue of a court ruling in 2023, requiring her to report daily to the police station to sign a register. According to the ruling, this measure was due to end in August 2024, one year after the start of administrative control. However, despite the expiry of the control period, the local authorities continued to require May to report to the police station, without providing any legal justification for this obligation. SANAD Elhaq wrote to the Ministry of the Interior in mid-August 2024. A month later, May was summoned to the police station and informed that she would no longer be subject to administrative control.

In addition to local support, SANAD Elhaq's legal assistance also includes criminal and administrative litigation. This is the heart of our lawyers' work, and the longest, most technical and most symbolic form of assistance in the fight against impunity. It is also the most challenging and disillusioning, both for SANAD Elhaq and its beneficiaries. The results of SANAD Elhaq's litigation activity are a barometer of the state of the rule of law in Tunisia. And once again this year, the results are more than mixed...

Trials, but little justice...

Over the past year, SANAD Elhaq has monitored eleven trials concerning acts of torture, ill-treatment or homicide committed by security forces. Some of these have resulted in decisions, while others are still in progress.

Among the decisions handed down, some are relatively positive, without ever being totally satisfactory. This is the case, for example, of the decision handed down by a court of first instance in the case of Amine, assaulted in 2022 by his neighbor a police officer, following a neighbor dispute. Less than two years later, the assailant was sentenced to six months' suspended imprisonment and ordered to compensate the victim to the tune of almost 7,000 TND for moral and physical injury. Although the prison sentence could have been more severe and the compensation higher, the judgment is nonetheless to be welcomed, given the difficulty of winning cases of this kind.

Another case had a less satisfactory outcome from the point of view of the fight against impunity, but a fairly satisfactory one for the beneficiary, as in the trial of Mourad, who had been assisted by SANAD for five years. In January 2024, the police officer who had assaulted him following a private disagreement was sentenced in absentia to one year's imprisonment and 5,000 TND in compensation for violence. Seven months later, the accused lodged an appeal against his conviction and a new trial opened. The SANAD Elhaq team carried out extensive work to document in greater detail the harm suffered by the beneficiary. Shortly before the plea hearing, the beneficiary decided to withdraw his claim for compensation, as he had negotiated a settlement with the defendant. The conciliation between the victim and the agent worked in the latter's favor. On December 31, 2024, the court of first instance reduced his sentence to six months' suspended imprisonment. However, the defendant was prompted to offer the victim acceptable compensation due to the extensive documentation and legal argumentation work carried out by SANAD Elhaq's lawyer, which led him to fear a firm prison sentence.

Other trials ended in negative decisions, symptomatic of a major persistence of impunity and profound failings in the rule of law.

SANAD has been accompanying Dhafer in his quest for justice for over eight years. In 2016, the beneficiary, then aged 31, was arrested and taken to the police station, on the grounds that he was wanted for an old offence. At the police station, he alleged that he was sat on a chair, handcuffed with his hands behind his back and hit on the back of the head. He lost consciousness and had to be rushed to hospital. In the end, he spent 16 days in a coma and several months in hospital. He was off work for 180 days. A forensic medical assessment subsequently determined a 60% disability rate.

In October 2023, after six years of investigation, the examining magistrate qualified the assault on Dhafer as torture and referred the case to a criminal court for trial. This was a tremendous victory for SANAD. Unfortunately, after two hearings marked by the absence of the accused, the court acquitted him. This decision is astonishing given that defendants who abscond usually receive heavier sentences, which can then be reduced after lodging an objection. SANAD Elhaq appealed against the ruling, but the Court of Appeal upheld the lower court's decision. The lawyer has appealed to the Supreme Court, but no hearing has yet been scheduled, almost a year later.

Equally disappointing is the turn taken by the trial of the officers who violently assaulted members of a family with firearms, tear gas, kicks, punches and batons during a police raid on their home in 2018. In 2021, two brothers of the family were sentenced to two years' imprisonment respectively for assault on a public official and stone-throwing. The investigation into the assault of family members by security forces took longer. In September 2021, the examining magistrate qualified the assault as a simple offence of violence. The trial of the police officers opened before a correctional chamber in 2022. A year and a half later, the chamber decided to declare itself incompetent and refer the case to the public prosecutor, in view of the seriousness of the facts established by forensic examinations of the family members. It considered the facts to be a felony rather than a misdemeanor.

This decision by the correctional chamber was very positive, insofar as it is rare to see a court request that acts attributed to security force agents be qualified more severely. However, after the appointment of a new investigating judge, this judge decided to close the case very quickly with a decision to dismiss the case. SANAD Elhaq's lawyer has appealed against this decision.

Follow-up to investigations: a crucial step in the fight against impunity

Trial follow-up is only part of SANAD Elhaq's criminal litigation activity. It only concerns the rare cases where the investigation ends with the indictment of the public officials responsible for the attacks. Few cases reach this stage, and the bulk of SANAD Elhaq's criminal work consists of lodging complaints of torture or ill-treatment and pushing forward investigations, often for years.

Some investigations are de facto abandoned, without any official decision being taken to the point where beneficiaries sometimes lose motivation and withdraw. Other investigations stagnate due to the excessive number of cases entrusted to investigating judges, who give priority to cases in which defendants are in custody. Preventive detention of security agents is very rare in cases of torture and ill-treatment, so these cases are not given priority and can go on for years without any visible progress.

Still other investigations are completed within almost reasonable timescales, but in reality, turn out to be botched. SANAD Elhaq's lawyers are constantly urging magistrates to be diligent in gathering testimony and evidence.

SANAD Elhaq, mobilized in the defense of its beneficiaries

The bulk of SANAD Elhaq's criminal litigation consists of accompanying victims of torture and ill-treatment in their quest for justice. In exceptional cases, SANAD Elhaq also assists beneficiaries in the trials in which they have been accused. This is particularly the case when the issue of torture appears to be a crucial element of the defense strategy. Over the past year, we have inter alia assisted two beneficiaries prosecuted for homosexuality under article 230 of the penal code, one of whom was subjected to an anal test and the other to torture at the police station. SANAD Elhaq's legal research into these cases has led to the publication of a **legal note on article 230 of the penal code and anal testing in the light of international law**. It is intended to support lawyers defending people prosecuted for their presumed homosexuality.

SANAD Elhaq also regularly assists its beneficiaries in cases of prosecution for violation of arbitrary house arrest. For several years now, SANAD has been taking care of a large number of beneficiaries, both men and women, who are victims of police harassment because of them allegedly being a threat to public order. In general, these people are registered on administrative control files, while some are placed under house arrest. This restriction of freedom is arbitrary, as it has no legal basis. It is based on the 1978 presidential decree on the state of emergency, a text which is far too vague to provide a framework for restrictions on freedom, and which theoretically no longer has any legal authority since the end of the state of emergency declared shortly after its adoption. Besides, persons under house arrest are never officially informed of their assignment and know neither the rea-

son for it nor its duration. The psychological, material and moral damage caused by this drastic restriction of freedom is severe. Victims lose their jobs, are subjected to numerous checks and arrests, are marginalized in their neighborhoods and sometimes in their families. They cannot accompany their parents to the doctor, their children to extra-curricular activities, or take them on vacation, under threat of arrest and imprisonment if they leave the assigned area.

Between June 2024 and May 2025, SANAD Elhaq urgently appointed lawyers to assist several beneficiaries arrested for violating the summons. The lawyers in general win these cases, thanks to legal argumentation developed by SANAD Elhaq. But this does not stop the Ministry of the Interior from continuing to prosecute people on this basis.



The liability of the Tunisian State: a long but promising dispute

Torture and ill-treatment are committed by public officials, whose responsibility we seek to establish through criminal litigation. But these violations are first and foremost the responsibility of the State, which fails to take the necessary measures to prevent the commission of abuses by its agents, or to punish them. This is why, over the past year, SANAD Elhaq has lodged **twelve appeals** with the administrative court.

Among them, **three appeals** aimed at lifting registration under administrative control measures of three beneficiaries and putting an end to the arbitrary restrictions on their freedom resulting from this registration.

One of these appeals concerns Fethi, a 29-year-old beneficiary who moved to Libya over 10 years ago to set up a project. On his return to Tunisia in 2023, to visit his family and renew his passport, he was arrested at the border post on suspicion of terrorism and transferred to Tunis for questioning. He was eventually released and obtained his passport later that year. However, he learned that he was on the S17 list and forbidden to leave the country, without any justification. He wrote to the Ministry of the Interior, to no avail. He cannot return to Libya and run his business. As a result, he risks losing his source of income and will have to lay off his employees. SANAD Elhaq has lodged an appeal in order to obtain the lifting of his registration and has added a request for a stay of execution in the hope that Fethi will be able to return to Libya quickly to save his business.

We have also lodged **two applications** for full litigation on behalf of beneficiaries who have been placed under restrictive administrative control measures and who are suffering from intense police harassment that is having serious consequences on their private and professional lives, causing serious psychological, moral and material harm to them and their families.

Aicha, a widow and mother of three, lives in the center of the country. She has been under intense police control since her husband died in a clash with security forces almost 10 years ago. Since then, she has been stigmatized and regularly harassed by the police. She wanted to apply for social assistance in September 2022, but the officer refused to accept her on the grounds that she is «the wife of a terrorist». In the last 18 months, she has suffered arrest without any legal basis, a temporary stop on the public highway and four very traumatic home visits for her and her children. Her 12-year-old daughter had to stop her studies because of the trauma and is under psychiatric care. SANAD has been providing psychological and social support for Aicha and her children for almost two years. SANAD Elhaq has appointed a lawyer who has filed a summary application to obtain the suspension of Aicha's registration, as well as a full legal action to obtain its definitive cancellation and compensation for the harm suffered.

SANAD Elhaq has also lodged **two other appeals** with the Administrative Court concerning cases of suspicious death. Since its creation, SANAD Elhaq has taken on 26 cases of victims of death in custody. Few investigations lead to the establishment of the truth, and even fewer reach the trial stage. That's why we've started to turn to the administrative court, in the hope that it will establish the truth about the causes and circumstances of the death, and the responsibility of the administration.

Abdallah was beaten to death by National Guard officers at the Algerian border in December 2018. In early 2022, the main defendant was sentenced to 15 years' imprisonment for assault and battery resulting in death, and his co-accused to 10 years for complicity. At the appeal trial held the same year, the defendants' sentences were reduced to six years and two years' imprisonment, and the family's claim for compensation was rejected on the grounds that it should have been addressed to the state litigation representative and not to the defendants. This was the first time that a criminal court had rejected a claim for compensation on this dubious basis in a trial followed by SANAD Elhaq. In October 2024, SANAD Elhaq lodged a full appeal with the Administrative Court, seeking compensation for the material and moral damage suffered by Abdallah's widow, father and children.

In another case of suspicious death, SANAD Elhaq turned to the administrative justice system because of the obvious failings that marred the investigation carried out by the criminal justice system. Ibrahim was arrested in June 2018 for theft and detained in prison. During a visit of his father, Sadok, in prison in July, Ibrahim complained of severe abdominal pains. A request for an urgent visit by his lawyer went unanswered. A few days later, Sadok returned to the prison but was unable to see his son. He was summoned by the prison warden, who informed him that Ibrahim had collapsed and had to be transferred to Charles Nicole hospital. At the hospital, the family tried to see him but were informed by prison officers that Ibrahim had died, without specifying the cause or circumstances of death.

Sadok saw his son, Ibrahim, at the morgue and noticed bruises and wounds on his son's face. During the three-year preliminary investigation, the family had no official information on the cause of Ibrahim's death. A judicial investigation was finally opened in May 2021 but was closed a few months later without any substantial investigative act having been carried out. In March 2023, the case was closed on the basis of the autopsy report, which found numerous bruises on the body of the deceased but concluded that he had died of pulmonary edema. No investigation was carried out into the traces of violence, which are unmistakable evidence of an assault suffered in prison. Furthermore, the judge made no attempt to determine whether Ibrahim had received adequate medical care in prison. Pulmonary edema is not a sudden illness, and its symptoms should have been noticed and treated immediately. SANAD Elhaq has taken the case to the administrative court to obtain fair compensation for Ibrahim's family, starting by establishing the truth about his death.

Over the past year, several administrative disputes initiated in previous years came to a conclusion. SANAD Elhaq obtained **13 rulings**, four of which concerned requests for a stay of execution against administrative control decisions and arbitrary restrictions of freedom. Only one of the decisions obtained was positive. The administrative court ordered the administration to issue a criminal record extract to a beneficiary. The beneficiary had unsuccessfully applied for a B3 in 2020 and found himself unable to hold a job due to the administration's implicit refusal to issue him one. The other three decisions, on the other hand, were negative, reflecting the conservative approach of the president of the administrative tribunal, who concentrates decision-making power in the area of suspended sentences and tends to rule in favor of the Ministry of the Interior.

This is the case of the decision adopted by the court following the petition filed by Thameur, who has been suffering from arbitrary restrictions on his freedom for over 10 years. In 2014, during a traffic stop and while he was with his wife, officers informed him that he was on the "S17" list, without any explanation as to why. The following year, he was arrested by the anti-terrorist brigade and spent 15 days in police custody, during which he was tortured. He was eventually released by the examining magistrate and had his case dismissed. In 2016, Thameur was summoned by the police district, where he was notified that he is under house arrest in the small locality in which he resides. He was forced to sign a document without being able to read it or obtain a copy. As a result of this police harassment, his wife left him. Thameur relies on his brother to take care of their elderly parents. Above all, he finds it difficult to maintain regular contact with his 10-year-old son, who lives in another town with his mother. He has to ask police permission before each visit. On several occasions, police officers visited him at the hotel to check that he was indeed with his son. He has also received visits from the police at the training institute where he works and at his home. SANAD Elhaq's lawyer lodged an appeal and a request for a stay of execution of the house arrest. Unfortunately, the latter was quickly rejected on the grounds that there was no evidence that the house arrest entailed any risk of irreparable harm to Thameur.

The rejection of requests for a stay of execution by the president of the administrative court has dramatic consequences for the victims of arbitrary restrictions of liberty. They have to wait years for a court decision on the merits of the request to cancel the measures. In most cases, the court's decision is positive, because the restrictions on freedoms affecting persons under administrative control measures are manifestly arbitrary. At any rate, these decisions often come too late to prevent serious harm from occurring.

Aware of the seriousness of the damage caused by arbitrary restrictions of freedoms, SANAD Elhaq has begun to submit claims for compensation to the administrative court. This litigation strategy, which involves holding the State responsible for its arbitrary security policy, continues to bear fruit. The court has handed down four new rulings ordering the removal of the files and compensation of up to 7,000 TND in one case. However, the compensation amounts fall far short of the psychological, material, professional and sometimes physical damage caused by police harassment. More problematic still, the vast majority of decisions are not implemented.





7. LEGAL AND JUDICIAL ANALYSIS AT THE SERVICE OF LITIGATION

Justice in silos

SANAD Elhaq's litigation takes place in a political context marked by a worrying erosion of the rule of law. The separation of judicial and executive powers is being questioned. The increasing number of arrests and prosecutions of political opponents, journalists, lawyers, human rights activists and other critics of the regime points to the domination of the executive over the judiciary, which has been reduced to a tool at the service of the regime. This relationship of power is also evident in SANAD Elhaq's work. In fact, cases where we obtain the indictment and trial of public officials for acts of aggression are rare, in many cases the accused do not attend their trial and continue to work as security agents. When they are finally convicted, we have to wait for them to lodge an objection before they are finally tried by adversarial trial. Then again, even if they are finally convicted, the sentences are not implemented. SANAD observes that most of the agents accused in the trials fall under the auspices of the Ministry of the Interior or the Ministry of Justice. Their supervisory ministries are well aware that they have been prosecuted and convicted, but do not take any action, with the exception of a few one-off transfers.

The same applies to decisions taken by the administrative court, which are generally ignored by the Ministry of the Interior. This is particularly blatant in the case of administrative control measures and house arrest. Despite frequent decisions by the administrative court to suspend or annul these measures, the police continue their harassment and arbitrary restrictions on freedoms.

Abdel has been fighting for five years to get the Ministry of the Interior to comply with the administrative court's decision overturning his house arrest and registration as "S17". This Tunisian father of four has been living and working abroad since 2011. During a visit to Tunisia in 2015, he was informed orally of his house arrest and his registration under administrative control measures. His wife and children returned to live abroad, while Abdel began a legal battle to have the restrictive measures lifted. In 2017, he took his case to the administrative court, which issued two rulings cancelling the house arrest and registration in 2021. Both decisions were upheld on appeal in 2023. However, when he wanted to travel at the end of 2023, he was arrested and prosecuted for violating his house arrest, even though he had the administrative court's decision with him. The case was dismissed, but the restrictions on his freedom were not lifted. On three occasions in 2024, he tried to rejoin his family, without success.

Litigation concerning the jurisdiction of the military courts

In the face of the extension of military justice's jurisdiction over recent years, and as it involves cases of civilian victims or civilians prosecuted for their freedom of expression, often without any link to the military corps, SANAD Elhaq felt it necessary to provide lawyers with legal argumentation to challenge the jurisdiction of the military court. We have published a note (in French and Arabic) entitled **"Tunisian military justice in light of international standards for fair trials"**, accompanied by a video explaining the dangers of extending the jurisdiction of this exceptional court.

Le contentieux sur les conditions de détention

SANAD's beneficiaries include many persons who suffer ill-treatment in prison. Despite Tunisia's international commitments to the protection of human rights, many detainees suffer from poor and inhumane detention conditions, including prison overcrowding, deplorable sanitary conditions, inadequate access to healthcare, and other ill-treatment resulting from undignified conditions of detention. This situation raises crucial questions about the litigation that can be brought to ensure respect for prisoners' rights, and in particular about the role of the administrative judge in protecting these rights.

SANAD Elhaq has published a **Guide to Administrative Litigation relating to conditions of detention** and a **Note on international standards applicable to conditions of detention** to support the preparation of administrative litigation to challenge poor conditions of detention and seek redress for the resulting harm.





8. PROFILES OF BENEFICIARIES

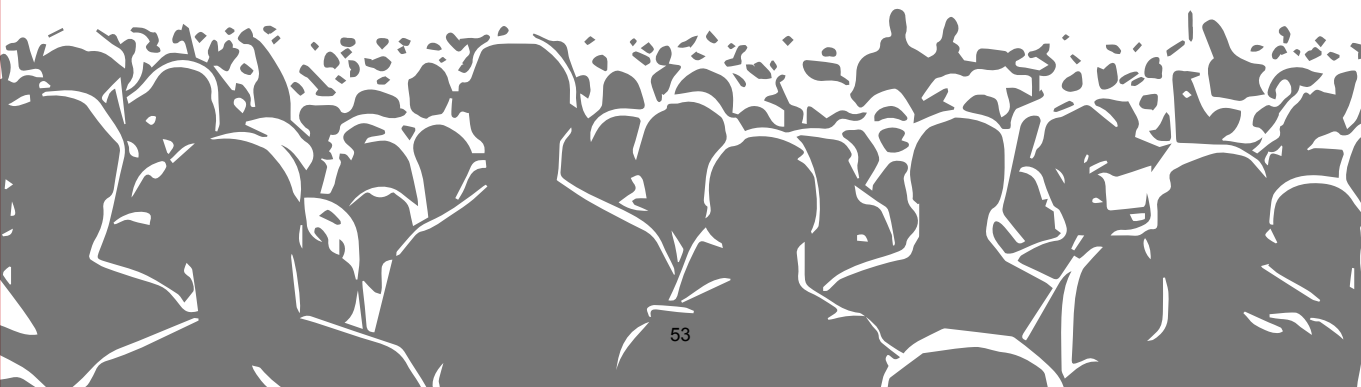
SANAD understands itself as a companion of victims of torture who do not have the means to access holistic rehabilitation on their own. The majority of beneficiaries come from disadvantaged backgrounds, exposed to a high risk of coming into conflict with the law or law enforcement. From the outset, these persons often have no access to social services or the public health insurance.

Beneficiaries of the SANAD program belong to underserved groups, such as persons to allegedly be a threat to national security («S» file) or members of the LGBTIQ+ community. Persons with the status of an «S» file are often young and stemming from disadvantaged backgrounds. Although not convicted, they are subject to severe restrictions that prevent them from gaining access to employment, social rights and freedom of movement. As for members of the LGBTIQ+ community, they face a double stigma - institutional and social - often compounded by violence, family rejection and major difficulties in accessing basic services.

People on the move transiting or residing in Tunisia tend to live in the shadows, fearing the authorities and security checks. Discrimination, stigmatization and marginalization are often accompanied by extreme poverty and an inability to access sustainable livelihoods, increasing their vulnerability to becoming victims of criminal networks.

Yet, the situation of those who defend civic space, who contribute to the well-being of society as a whole and who promote human rights, is becoming increasingly complicated. Faced with legal and administrative proceedings against defenders and their organizations, the stability of the activists' families is also jeopardized. The loss of regular income makes it harder to pay rent, bills, healthcare or schooling, plunging families into rapid precariousness. The result is chronic psychological stress and profound social instability. This is a strategy of indirect repression designed to dissuade civic engagement by targeting not only individuals, but also those around them.

SANAD accompanies these groups of people in their quest to rebuild their lives.





9. PATTERNS OF TORTURE

21 cases of torture and ill-treatment by the police

Between June 2024 and May 2025, SANAD documented the cases of 21 people assaulted by police officers in public space or at police stations.

Three of them were assaulted during soccer matches. In each case, the assaults were followed by arrest and prosecution. One of them, 18-year-old Fahmi, was violently slapped across the ears to force him to sign a report, to the extent that he suffered a perforated eardrum. He was remanded in custody and refused to lodge a complaint for fear of reprisals.

Two other men were assaulted while consuming alcohol on the public highway. In one case, the victim alleged that police officers had attacked him because he had filmed them confiscating bottles of alcohol from a group of young people. One of the officers electrocuted him with an electric shock device, then took him to the station.

Six other beneficiaries were assaulted at the police station while in custody, having been arrested for taking part in a demonstration or on suspicion of theft or drug use or drug sale.

This is the case of Eyad, a man in his thirties from northern Tunisia who was violently assaulted by police when he was arrested in the street in October 2024. The officers handcuffed him, then beat him, insulted him and dragged him to the police car in front of several witnesses. Eyad had to be transferred to hospital, where he was examined in the presence of five police officers and denied access to his medical records. His father went to the hospital. He was unable to talk to his son, but the latter told him that he was experiencing severe pain in his head, stomach and testicles. The officers tried to take him to the police station, that refused to accept him because of his health condition. He was taken back to hospital to spend the night before being transferred to prison, where his health deteriorated.

Women are not spared police violence, as illustrated by the case of Zaineb, a 23-year-old woman from the northwest of the country who was arrested in February 2025 because of her relationship with a young man arrested for drug trafficking. At the station, the officer tied her to a chair, slapped her across the face and neck and abused her. She was strip-searched before being taken to another location for a drug test. On her return to the police station, she found her underwear on the investigator's desk. She was then taken to court, where the judge ordered her release. That same evening, she went to hospital for treatment and to obtain a medical certificate attesting to the violence she had suffered. However, the doctor on duty, informed that the alleged perpetrators were police officers, refused to issue her with a medical certificate without a requisition from the police station. In five other cases, people were assaulted because they were asserting their rights or denouncing a violation.

Amina went to the police station to lodge a complaint against a man who had attempted to sexually assault her. According to her, the officer at the station knew the assailant and refused to take her complaint. At her insistence, he assaulted her and charged her with contempt.

Ons, aged 47, was beaten by officers as she was staging a sit-in in front of an administration building to protest against her dismissal. The officers arrested her and released her the same day.

Police violence often stems from a private dispute with a citizen and is seen as retaliation. In seven cases documented by SANAD, the victims had already had disputes with the offending officers.

Nadhem was working as a bouncer in a bar when, one evening in October 2024, he came across a plainclothes police officer with whom he had previously had a dispute. They exchanged a few words, then the officer went on his way. Shortly afterwards, as Nadhem went to buy cigarettes in a grocery store near the bar, a police vehicle carrying seven uniformed officers arrived. The officers got out of the vehicle and began to insult him and hit him on various parts of his body. They sprayed him with tear gas and stole all the money he had on him. Nadhem lost consciousness and had to be taken to hospital before being taken into custody. When his wife saw him in court two days later, he showed signs of violence on his face and neck and was limping. Nadhem was sentenced to six months' imprisonment for contempt of court.

In many cases of retaliation, police violence is accompanied by the fabrication of false charges, whether for contempt or drug use.

Sonia blew the whistle on a case of corruption in a north-western Tunisian governorate almost 13 years ago. A civil servant was dismissed for paying salaries corresponding to fictitious jobs, and the payment of illegal salaries was therefore stopped. Sonia's identity was revealed. One of the people who had previously benefited from this corruption asked her brother, a police officer with an important local position, to intervene. Since then, Sonia and her son, Sami, have suffered intense harassment from local police, with several violent searches and threats. Sami has been arrested several times on suspicion of drug use. The first time was when he was just 17 years old. Each time he was released by the judge for lack of evidence. But following the last arrest in February 2025, he was assaulted by the police and placed in preventive detention.

13 cases of torture and ill-treatment in prison

Torture and ill-treatment are not confined to police and national guard officers. Assaults also occur in prison. SANAD has documented the cases of six beneficiaries who have alleged that they were subjected to acts of violence in prison.

Adham, a drug addict, has been in prison for two years for drug trafficking. He did not benefit from the medical support required for his withdrawal, so much so that he suffered a stroke about a week after his incarceration and had to be hospitalized. He was then transferred to another prison where conditions were better. In February 2025, he was returned to the original prison. Adham was assaulted by guards shortly after his arrival. His wife wanted to meet the prison warden to protest against the assault on her husband and the lack of medical follow-up required by his state of health. A prison guard physically and verbally assaulted her to dissuade her from meeting the director.

Ramzi, aged 28, suffers from mental disorders and violent outbursts. A few months ago, his father went to the police station to ask for help in caring for his son. The police eventually arrested Ramzi and took him into custody. Shortly after his detention, his mother wanted to visit him in prison but was informed that her son had been placed in solitary confinement because he had made a lot of noise during the night. The following week, Ramzi was transferred to court. He showed signs of torture on his face, ears and head, and bruises all over the right side of his face and on his arms. He was unable to walk properly. He was released.

Apart from cases of assault, SANAD has observed a steady deterioration in prison conditions, linked to growing overcrowding in prisons. Lack of access to physical and psychological care is a major problem that can have serious, sometimes fatal, consequences.

Fouad, former director of a cultural center and trade unionist, was placed in detention in 2023 in a reprisal case initiated against him to punish him for criticizing the Minister of Culture. He has suffered from a foot problem since childhood, as well as back problems. The following year, he fell into a coma in prison and was transferred to hospital. His family was not informed until seven days later. A few days later, Fouad was taken back to prison. He lost consciousness again and had to be transferred back to hospital, where his foot was amputated.

Lack of access to healthcare led to a fatal outcome in the case of Hichem. The diabetic father of two was serving a prison sentence. He regularly received his insulin treatment until he was transferred to another prison without the family knowing why in July 2024. A week later, he was taken to hospital and returned to prison the same day. The next day, Hichem's wife and mother went to the prison to visit him, noting the presence of several police officers and the public prosecutor. The latter informed them of Hichem's death. A fellow prisoner later told the family that he had heard Hichem screaming and complaining of kidney pain after returning from hospital, just before he died. The cause of death remains unclear.

The problem of lack of access to psychological and psychiatric care is particularly acute for inmates who have been held in prison after being judged criminally irresponsible. Dozens of them, most of them men, are being held without any legal basis, awaiting involuntary admission to a psychiatric facility. This wait, justified by the lack of space in specialized facilities, can last for months, sometimes years. During this time, inmates generally do not receive adequate psychological care and psychiatric treatment, nor the required supervision. As a result, they can pose a danger to others, but above all to themselves. Over the past year, SANAD has documented three new cases with judgments of compulsory hospitalization being kept in prison.

Among them is Ali, who was arrested for acts of violence in April 2024 and found to be criminally irresponsible four months later. Despite this decision by an investigative judge, Ali was kept in prison. In November, he told his mother that he had been assaulted. SANAD Elhaq requested the LTDH to visit him in prison. At the time, he was still showing clear signs of the assault. He alleged that he had been handcuffed behind his back, dragged to the shower area, thrown to the ground, trampled on the face with military boots, and kicked on the right side and buttocks. He stated that he had not been given any medical care, nor had he been examined by the prison doctor. According to him, the attack was intended to punish him for protesting against detention conditions. Ali's mother lodged a complaint, an investigation was launched, and Ali was transferred to another prison.

6 cases of suspicious death

Between June 2024 and May 2025, SANAD documented six cases of suspicious death. In addition to the case of Hichem mentioned above, two others concern young men who died in prison, presumably after being assaulted, including Bayrem, aged 27, who died in June 2024 in circumstances that remain unclear. He was serving an eight-year sentence in a vice case. He had passed through several prisons during his imprisonment. Bayrem reported to his relatives that he had been assaulted several times by guards. During a visit shortly before his death, his family noticed traces of violence on his face. The family tried several times to contact the warden, to no avail.

In June 2024, Bayrem's father wanted to transfer money to his son in prison, but the transaction was refused. He tried to contact the prison for an explanation but received no reply. In the days that followed, he tried again to contact the prison, to no avail. Four days later, several of his acquaintances contacted him to offer their condolences for the death of his son. Shocked, he contacted prison management, where he was told that there were no inmates of that name in the prison. Bayrem's brother then contacted an acquaintance at the prison who told him that his brother had died.

SANAD has documented two other cases of suspicious death. One involved a 65-year-old married father who died of heart failure shortly after a violent police raid on his home that was carried out by mistake. Another case concerned a 26-year-old man, Jamal, who died while in police custody, probably as a result of violence inflicted by police officers.

Jamal had left to work in Tunis in May 2024. On the day he was due to return home, his parents tried to contact him, without success. They posted an announcement on Facebook to report their son missing. Someone replied that the person in the photo had been detained with him. In June 2024, Jamal was sentenced to a year in prison for theft and illegal entry onto private property. His father went to visit him in prison four days later. Jamal had a swollen nose and handcuff marks on his wrists. Someone had to help him walk. He confided that he had been beaten by police officers at the police station. Seventeen days later, Jamal's aunt received a call from the National Guard informing her that her nephew had died.

11 victims of violence based on sexual identity or orientation and ethnic origin

Among new beneficiaries assisted by SANAD since June 2024, eleven have been victims of violations, in Tunisia and sometimes even abroad, because of their origin or their sexual identity or orientation.

Marwen, a young queer man, was arrested one night in January 2025, in Tunis, along with two queer friends. They were beaten and insulted during their arrest, then at the police station and while in police custody, where they were subjected to an anal search. They were ill-treated in court custody and exposed to assaults by fellow inmates, before finally being released.

Joséphine, a 26-year-old Somali woman, fled her country where she was threatened with death by a militia leader whose advances she refused. With a group of other people on the move, she crossed Ethiopia and Sudan to Libya, where she was kidnapped by local militias and taken to the «Al Koufra» detention center. She spent a year there in extremely precarious conditions, suffering frequent physical assaults, receiving just one meal a day

and living in a deplorable sanitary environment. Militias held people on the move hostage to extort money from their families. As Joséphine didn't have the money to pay the militias, she was only released after a year. Traumatized by her experience in Libya, she decided to leave the country and set off on a journey to Algeria, walking on foot for two months, spending nights in the desert with other people on the move.

In April 2024, she managed to enter Tunisia. The following summer, with a small group of women, she attempted to cross the Mediterranean to Italy. After leaving the Tunisian coast, the boat was intercepted by the Tunisian coast guard. During the interception operation, the sea guard made circular movements that caused large waves near the migrants' boat, causing them to fall into the water. The boat eventually capsized, and Josephine fell underneath. The engine propeller severed part of her right leg. She had to be hospitalized, and her leg amputated.

23 victims of police harassment in the framework of administrative control measures

Security policy of preventing terrorism continues more than ever to wreak havoc. SANAD has documented 23 new cases of people registered and followed by the Ministry of the Interior because of their presumed threat to public order and, on this basis, subjected to administrative control measures restricting their freedom. While some are likely to owe their "listing" to a previous conviction for terrorism, or a trip to a conflict zone, others have no idea why they have been placed on the list.

What they all have in common is that they suffer arbitrary restrictions on their freedoms. In many cases, police control, always devoid of any legal basis, is so intense that it amounts to veritable harassment. The consequences for the lives of the victims and their families are serious: loss of employment, divorce, social stigmatization, obstacles to access health-care and social services, dropping out of school, etc. The material impact is considerable and can plunge families into poverty. The psychological impact is even more serious, sometimes reaching the same level of intensity as that caused by physical violence.

Three of the new beneficiaries are under house arrest, like Khaled, 39, from southern Tunisia, married with three young children. In 2012, he tried to join his brother in Italy. He passed through Algeria, Libya, Turkey, Greece and Bulgaria, before finally being forced to return to Tunisia. Shortly after his return, he was arrested and held in police custody for seven days, where he was interrogated by the anti-terrorist brigade. He was eventually released. Khaled was arrested again in 2014, and again in 2015, after the attack on the bus of the Presidential Guard, and each time he was quickly released. In 2016, the proximity post notified him of his house arrest. He has undergone several searches in recent years. At the end of one of them, in 2021, he was taken to the police station, where he was as-

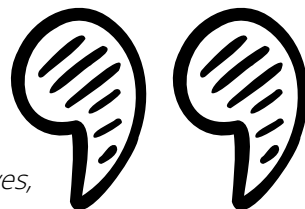
saulted and then transferred to the police station in Tunis, where he spent ten days in police custody before finally being released. Since then, Khaled has been questioned several times in the street or at the café and summoned to the station to undergo interrogation for intelligence purposes. During one of his visits to the police station, he was told that he was registered on the "S19" list.

Because of his assignment, he is unable to accompany his sick mother to medical appointments at the nearest hospital. Khaled himself suffers from skin problems that would require him to consult a specialist at the same hospital. However, because of the trauma he has suffered as a result of police assaults and threats, he avoids going to the station to ask for permission to leave the perimeter. His daughters are also traumatized and need to be accompanied by a psychologist from child protection.

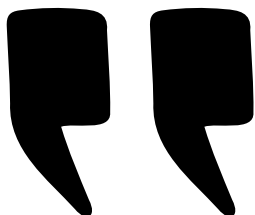


10. THE VOICE OF THOSE WHO ACCOMPANY

Imène : *Lending an attentive ear to the stories of others, sharing their pain, distress and injustice is a heavy burden to bear. Yet being able to bring about a change in their lives, accompanying them towards the light after the darkness,*



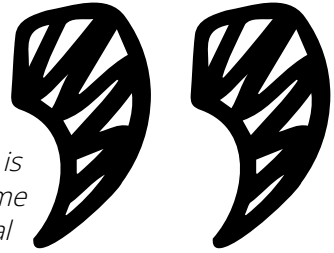
makes every painful moment lived alongside them a deeply precious and human experience. Documenting cases of torture and ill-treatment is an essential step, but the real question is: what is to be done with this entrusted pain? This is where the strength of the SANAD program lies. Our work is not limited to listening to victims and recording their testimonies; we mobilize all our resources and skills to make this first interview a starting point for reconstruction.



Souhir : *As legal coordinator for the SANAD program, I am daily confronted with the depth of the invisible wounds left by torture and ill-treatment. What I've learned from my interviews and the stories of our beneficiaries is that the psychological suffering is often much heavier to bear than the physical scars. Among the cases that have made a*

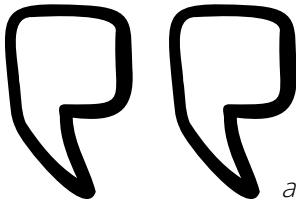
deep impression on me is that of Tamim, who has been under house arrest for 9 years without leaving his town, and who came knocking at SANAD's door to find his way back to justice. Despite the obstacles and slow procedures, he told me with determination: «Before coming to your program, I didn't dare resist the harassment. I felt alone, vulnerable, without support. But today, I feel supported. You are SANAD - ساند - to me (my support). I'm no longer alone, I know you're there, and I'm ready to continue this fight.»

Chaima : *It's been a few months now since I joined the SANAD team. The strength that emanates from the beneficiaries and families of victims of suspicious deaths is a source of daily learning. Today, I feel a deep joy every time I observe a legal breakthrough in a case. There is a special*



beauty in those moments when I announce to a beneficiary that a legal decision has been favorable to him or her.

And there's also a moving power in the conviction of a victim who chooses to pursue the aggressors and seek the truth, even if years go by and the proceedings drag on. Patience has always been their ally. It is ours too.

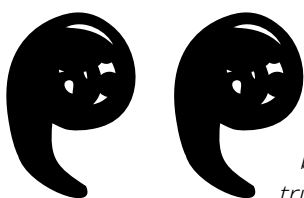
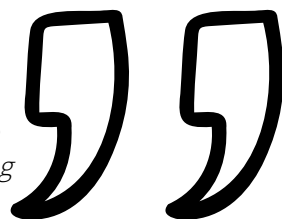


Sarah : *Behind every case is a story, often marked by violence, silence and the loss of bearings. My role as social coordinator puts me at the heart of these broken journeys, where it's not just a question of reaching out, but also of rebuilding. It's about dignity, recognition and justice.*

It enables those who have been silenced to regain a voice, a place and an identity within society. The rehabilitation process is often long and fraught with obstacles, but each recognized right gives new meaning to our action.

I'm particularly moved when I see that our interventions enable a person to regain a foothold, a role in their family, a status in society, or simply a form of appeasement. It's at times like these that I realize that our work, however difficult, is profoundly necessary.

Hassib : *As legal coordinator, my work is not limited to defending victims' legal rights. Above all, it's about rebuilding their confidence: in justice and in life. Because justice is more than just a verdict: it's an intimate and profound process of reconstruction.*



Sabrine : *As a social coordinator, I accompanied women shattered by pain, until they found the strength to stand up again. They had this strength within them, sometimes buried and suffocated by their wounds, but it never disappeared. Through listening, respect and trust, SANAD helped them bring it out. It wasn't a simple*

accompaniment, but a deep human connection. And every time a woman said to me: «Today, I'm stronger», I knew that my mission had real meaning.

Amal : *It's sometimes hard to see, day after day, the suffering, abandonment and injustice suffered by our beneficiaries. And yet, I'm deeply moved to see that a kind word, a suitable orientation or concrete support can be enough to rekindle a spark of hope in them.*

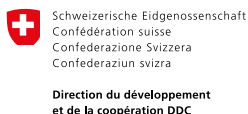


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Royaume des Pays-Bas

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