



MONTHLY BULLETIN

The Specialised Criminal Chambers in Transitional Justice in Tunisia

These newsletters aim to shed light on trial proceedings and integrate diverse narratives to highlight victims' experiences by combining legal analysis and lived-experiences. They seek to foster public engagement and raise collective awareness while emphasizing the importance of accountability and supporting victim-led efforts. This initiative comes to bridge the gap between technical judicial reporting, with a focus on providing more accessible and comprehensive resources to the broader public, including victims and grassroots organizations, to ensure that their voices are adequately heard. The initiative may also serve as an advocacy tool.

This work stems from the sacrifices and documentation efforts of victims themselves, affirming their unwavering commitment and enduring pursuit of truth and the completion of the transitional justice process in Tunisia.

IN THIS ISSUE:

This special issue provides a comprehensive overview of accountability efforts within Tunisia's transitional justice process following the conclusion of the 2024–2025 judicial year — a year marked by stagnation and limited tangible progress. It highlights the main indicators and underlying causes of this paralysis, while also considering the opportunities that the future may hold for reviving the process and ensuring its continuity.

Overview of cases and hearings

The judicial accountability process was launched with the first SCC session held on May 29, 2018, a historic moment that renewed hope for thousands of victims and survivors. These chambers go beyond holding perpetrators accountable — they serve crucial roles :

1. **Truth-seeking** : Documenting systematic violations and patterns.
2. **Memorialization** : Recording victims' testimonies for future generations.
3. **Institutional reform** : Exposing institutional failures that enabled violations.
4. **Ensuring non-recurrence** : Establishing deterrent judicial precedents.
5. **Restitution** : Publicly and officially acknowledging victims' suffering.

Amid large public and civil society engagement, Tunisia seemed poised to write a new chapter in accountability and truth-seeking after decades of impunity. **Yet, after more than seven years, none of the 204 cases referred to 13 SCCs** — including 138 gross human rights violations and 66 corruption-related cases — **have been resolved**. What began as a promise of justice has turned into a cycle of repeated delays and institutional stagnation, turning the process itself into a new violation against victims.

Seven years on : General Indicators

204
REFERRED
CASE
FILES



0
RULINGS
ISSUED



20+
SESSIONS
HELD
PER
CASE



12-13
INACTIVE
CRIMINAL
CHAMBERS



237
PENDING
ARREST
WARRANTS



30 000
VICTIMS
AWAITING
REDRESS



Timeline of the judicial accountability process :

2018/2019

A promising start :
Regular sessions, strong presence of victims and civil society.

2022/2023

The first signs of stagnation : Absence of the annual judicial rotation.

2023/2024

A blank judicial year : Transfer of 7 presiding judges, near-total paralysis.

2024/2025

Another blank year : Only the Tunis chamber was partially active.

At the core of the crisis : Interlocking setbacks

The current state of stagnation stems from a web of interrelated obstacles :

At the judicial level :

- Legal *quorum* issues.
- Lack of specialized training in TJ.
- Judges maintaining regular duties without workload reduction.

At the procedural Level:

- Absence of perpetrators : Warrants and travel bans remain unenforced.
- Excessive delays : Some cases saw over 20 sessions with no progress.
- Weak investigations : 131 case files were referred without complete indictments.
- Non-cooperation by the Ministry of Interior : Refusal to provide requested information.

As to stakeholders :

- Weak legal representation : Absence of lawyers and poor coordination.
- Declining victim participation : Growing frustration, high costs, lack of support, and stigmatization.
- Reduced civil society engagement : Shrinking funding and abandonment of previous initiatives.

As to political will:

- Unclear stance : The official position on the process remains ambiguous.
- Failure to implement the TDC's recommendations and reliance on alternative mechanisms such as Reconciliation (Decree No. 13/2022), which threatens accountability.

Obstacles	Proposed measures
Lack of legal <i>quorum</i>	• Reduce workload to allow full dedication of chamber members. • Establish mandatory continuous TJ training. • Appoint reserve judges to ensure chamber stability.
Insufficient evidence	• Activate the supplementary investigation mechanism in accordance with Articles 116 and 143 of the Code of Criminal Procedure. • Establish a program to collect testimonies from living victims regarding violations that occurred in the distant past.
Alleged perpetrators' absenteeism	• Enforce Article 142 of the Code of Criminal Procedure for fleeing alleged perpetrators : issue arrest or detention warrants and authorize asset seizure. • Enforce Article 110 of the Penal Code to hold accountable officials who fail to execute arrest warrants, with penalties of up to six months' imprisonment. • Prepare and publish monthly reports showing the number of summonses issued and the status of warrant executions.
Conditions of SCC hearings	• Upgrade courtroom infrastructure and technical equipment and encourage media coverage to enhance transparency and strengthen advocacy efforts.
Case backlogs and continuous adjournments	• Implement a monitoring and follow-up system, with reports on procedural progress.
Excessive judicial delays	At the national level : • Issue default judgments when service of summons is proven or impossible. • Accelerate adjudication of cases with complete indictments. At the international level: • Establish judicial precedents to push the state to comply with its obligations through strategic litigation. • Engage UN treaty bodies via civil society shadow reports or individual complaints. • Communicate with UN HRC special procedures, such as the Special Rapporteur on the promotion of truth, justice, reparation, and guarantees of non-recurrence.
Legal representation issues	• Launch training programs for lawyers in TJ. • Activate legal and judicial aid (Organic Law - Article 13). • Hold regular meetings to discuss joint defense strategies.
Declining victim participation	• Deploy mobile support units across regions to provide comprehensive psychosocial assistance. • Organize group therapy sessions to break isolation. • Create a digital platform to coordinate attendance at hearings and revive field initiatives, such as the <i>Truth-Seeking Caravan</i>.
Lack of media coverage and threats to memory	• Engage alternative media to monitor cases and share reliable information. • Support informal, victim-led documentation efforts. • Launch digital advocacy campaigns, for example, publishing one victim's story daily.

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In previous issues

- **January | The crime of torture**

Explore the mechanisms available to victims of torture in Tunisia and the main international protection frameworks.

[English](#) | [Arabic](#)

- **February | Corruption-related violations**

Learn how Tunisian law defines corruption, how the State is considered a victim, and explore relevant cases.

[English](#) | [Arabic](#)

- **March | Women without freedom : A history of gendered abuse**

Discover the realities of violations committed against women since 1955 and women's pivotal role in Tunisia's Transitional Justice process.

[English](#) | [Arabic](#)

- **April | Events of the Freedom and Dignity Revolution (2011)**

Revisit the major violations committed against protesters and activists during the revolution, as well as the findings of official investigations and relevant case referrals by the Truth and Dignity Commission.

[English](#) | [Arabic](#)

- **May | Overview of the judicial accountability process seven years later**

Explore the main indicators of stagnation in the judicial accountability process of Transitional Justice after seven years, its impact on victims and collective memory, and the available UN human rights mechanisms.

[English](#) | [Arabic](#)

- **June | Memory preservation**

Trace the path of memory preservation in Tunisia — from legal frameworks to grassroots initiatives that resist oblivion and honor victims.

[English](#) | [Arabic](#)

- **July | The right to reparation**

Examine the status of victims' right to both individual and collective reparation under Tunisian and international law, along with emerging alternative initiatives.

[English](#) | [Arabic](#)

- **August | Victim participation in Transitional Justice processes**

Explore the role of victims in shaping Transitional Justice processes, and what Tunisia and other international experiences can teach us.

[English](#) | [Arabic](#)

- **September | The TJ accountability process in Tunisia : Outcomes and prospects**

Review key developments, persistent challenges, and the steps needed to revive and strengthen judicial accountability.

[English](#) | [Arabic](#)

Acknowledgements

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May this collective effort continue beyond 2025, with the active engagement of all stakeholders and a strengthened shared commitment to truth, justice, and memory.

 We kindly invite you to:

- ◆ **Explore** the insights and analysis featured in this issue ;
- ◆ **Share** this newsletter with colleagues and partners in the legal and human rights communities to foster a broader dialogue on transitional justice ;
- ◆ **Subscribe** for monthly updates delivered directly to your inbox ;
- ◆ **Engage** with us by sharing your feedback and suggestions to help us better serve our community.

Your participation strengthens our collective commitment to justice and accountability.