

ADVOCACY DOSSIER

IMEN OUARDANI

إيمان الورداني

At liberty **Tunisia**

Imen Ouardani is a former deputy mayor of Sousse who headed the municipality's equal opportunities committee. She was detained in May 2024 over the municipality's partnership with Terre d'Asile Tunisie, an association that assists migrants and refugees, and held for about 20 months. On 5 January 2026 a Tunis court gave her a two-year suspended sentence and she was released.

HuMENA.

Prepared by HuMENA for Human Rights and Civic Engagement · 8 November 2026

Case reference HM-TN-2026-003

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THE CASE AT A GLANCE

Imen Ouardani is a former deputy mayor of Sousse who headed the municipality's equal opportunities committee. She was detained in May 2024 over the municipality's partnership with Terre d'Asile Tunisie, an association that assists migrants and refugees, and held for about 20 months. On 5 January 2026 a Tunis court gave her a two-year suspended sentence and she was released.

STATUS	**At liberty**
ARRESTED	**10 May 2024**
COUNTRY	**Tunisia**
SENTENCE	**Two years in prison, suspended (Tunis Court of First Instance, 5 January 2026).**
CHARGES	**Money laundering** **Fraud** **Forming a conspiracy to bring foreigners into Tunisia** **Abuse of office**

WE CALL ON THE AUTHORITIES TO:

WHAT WE ASK

01 Quash the conviction and drop any charges that remain on record against Imen Ouardani in connection with peaceful human rights work.

02 Confirm publicly that Imen Ouardani faces no residual travel, financial, or professional restriction arising from this case.

03 Guarantee that Imen Ouardani can resume that work without surveillance, summons, or further reprisal.

04 Provide effective remedy for the period of deprivation of liberty already served.

Latest updates on this case
Scan the code or visit:
https://humena.org/defenders/imen-ouardani/

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DOCUMENTED VIOLATIONS

	INTERNATIONAL STANDARD
Arbitrary detention	International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights, Article 9
Criminalisation of solidarity	International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights, Articles 21, 22 UN Declaration on Human Rights Defenders, Article 5
Defamation and smear campaign	International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights, Article 17 UN Declaration on Human Rights Defenders, Article 12
Judicial harassment	UN Declaration on Human Rights Defenders, Articles 9, 12
Prolonged pretrial detention	International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights, Article 9(3)
Unfair trial	International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights, Article 14

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HOW THE CASE UNFOLDED

10 May 2024

ARREST

Summoned and placed in detention

Imen Ouardani was summoned to the National Guard unit at El Aouina and placed in detention the same day on the prosecutor's order, in the Terre d'Asile Tunisie case.

15 December 2025

HEARING

First hearing; requests for release rejected

The first trial hearing was held on 15 December 2025 before the Tunis Court of First Instance. Requests for release were rejected and the case was adjourned to 5 January 2026.

5 January 2026

CONVICTION

Convicted with a two-year suspended sentence

Convicted by the Tunis Court of First Instance in the Terre d'Asile Tunisie case, alongside civil society actors and another former public official, and given a two-year suspended sentence.

5 January 2026

RELEASE

Released the night of the verdict

Released on the night of 5 to 6 January 2026 after the suspended sentence was handed down.

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THE FULL STORY

Background and Work

Imen Ouardani holds a doctorate in biology. She served as deputy mayor of Sousse and headed the municipal committee on equal opportunities. In late 2022 the municipal council approved a partnership with Terre d'Asile Tunisie, a Tunisian association that assists migrants and refugees, to open a local office in Sousse; the agreement was signed in 2023.

Arrest and Detention

On 10 May 2024 she was summoned to the National Guard unit at El Aouina and placed in detention the same day on the prosecutor's order. The case against her concerns the municipality's partnership with Terre d'Asile Tunisie. She was charged with offences including money laundering, fraud, forming a conspiracy to bring foreigners into Tunisia, and abuse of office. She spent about 20 months in pretrial detention, including at Manouba civil prison.

Trial and Release

Her trial opened on 15 December 2025 before the criminal chamber for financial corruption at the Tunis Court of First Instance, which rejected requests for release and adjourned the case to 5 January 2026. On that day the court gave the five detained defendants in the Terre d'Asile Tunisie case, including her, two-year suspended prison sentences. She was released that night. No appeal ruling has been reported.

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SAMPLE LETTER

Copy it, adapt it and send it from your own address.

Your Excellency,

I am writing about the case of Imen Ouardani, former deputy mayor of Sousse and head of the municipal equal opportunities committee in Tunisia, who has been released. I am writing to ask that the case be closed properly and that no further reprisal follows.

In brief: Imen Ouardani is a former deputy mayor of Sousse who headed the municipality's equal opportunities committee. She was detained in May 2024 over the municipality's partnership with Terre d'Asile Tunisie, an association that assists migrants and refugees, and held for about 20 months. On 5 January 2026 a Tunis court gave her a two-year suspended sentence and she was released.

I respectfully urge your authorities to:
1. Quash the conviction and drop any charges that remain on record against Imen Ouardani in connection with peaceful human rights work;
2. Confirm publicly that Imen Ouardani faces no residual travel, financial, or professional restriction arising from this case;
3. Guarantee that Imen Ouardani can resume that work without surveillance, summons, or further reprisal;
4. Provide effective remedy for the period of deprivation of liberty already served.

I will continue to follow this case until the record against Imen Ouardani is cleared and no reprisal remains.

Respectfully,

[Your name]
[Your city, country]
8 November 2026