ADVOCACY DOSSIER

# YADH BOUSSELMI

عياض البوسالمي

**At liberty** **Tunisia**

Director of Terre d'Asile Tunisie, an organisation supporting asylum seekers, refugees and migrants. Arrested on 8 May 2024 over the organisation's work, he spent about 20 months in pretrial detention until a Tunis court convicted him on 5 January 2026 of aiding the irregular stay of foreigners, gave him a two-year suspended sentence and released him.

HuMENA.

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

Case reference HM-TN-2024-008

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# THE CASE AT A GLANCE

Director of Terre d'Asile Tunisie, an organisation supporting asylum seekers, refugees and migrants. Arrested on 8 May 2024 over the organisation's work, he spent about 20 months in pretrial detention until a Tunis court convicted him on 5 January 2026 of aiding the irregular stay of foreigners, gave him a two-year suspended sentence and released him.

| | |
|---|---|
| STATUS | **At liberty** |
| ARRESTED | **8 May 2024** |
| COUNTRY | **Tunisia** |
| SENTENCE | **Two-year suspended prison sentence (Tunis Court of First Instance, 5 January 2026).** |
| CHARGES | **Sheltering persons entering or leaving Tunisian territory illegally (convicted)**<br>**Helping or facilitating the irregular entry, exit, movement or stay of a foreigner (convicted)**<br>**Money laundering and forming a group to attack persons and property (dropped by the investigating judge)** |

WE CALL ON THE AUTHORITIES TO:

## WHAT WE ASK

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

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

03 Guarantee that Yadh Bousselmi 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/yadh-bousselmi/

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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<br>UN Declaration on Human Rights Defenders, Article 5 |
| **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

**8 May 2024**

ARREST

### Arrested as director of Terre d'Asile Tunisie

On 8 May 2024, Yadh Bousselmi, the current director of Terre d'Asile Tunisie (the Tunisian branch of French NGO France Terre d'Asile), was arrested in connection with the organisation's humanitarian work with refugees and migrants. He was placed in pretrial detention.

**January 2025**

REFERRAL TO TRIAL

### Heaviest charges dropped, referred to trial

The investigating judge dropped the heaviest charges, including money laundering, and referred him to trial.

**February 2025**

CONTEXT

### Indictment Chamber confirms charges

On the prosecution's appeal, the Indictment Chamber confirmed charges against him and five other staff members of Terre d'Asile Tunisie.

**15 December 2025**

HEARING

### First hearing held; release requests rejected

the first hearing was held on 15 December 2025 before the Bab Bnet Court of First Instance, and requests for release were rejected

**5 January 2026**

CONVICTION

### Convicted of aiding migrants; two-year suspended sentence

On 5 January 2026, the Tunis First Instance Criminal Court convicted Bousselmi alongside co-defendants Sherifa Riahi and Mohamed Joô on charges of "sheltering individuals entering or leaving the Tunisian territory illegally" and "knowingly helping or attempting to facilitate the entry, exit, movement or irregular stay of a foreigner in Tunisia." The court imposed a two-year suspended prison sentence.

**6 January 2026**

RELEASE

### Released the night of the verdict

Released on the night of 5 to 6 January 2026, immediately after the Tunis Court of First Instance handed down a two-year suspended sentence. He had been held in pretrial detention since May 2024 on charges relating to his work with asylum seekers, refugees and migrants.

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# THE FULL STORY

## Background and Work

Yadh Bousselmi is the director of Terre d'Asile Tunisie, the Tunisian branch of the French NGO France Terre d'Asile, which supports asylum seekers, refugees and migrants.

## Arrest and Detention

Yadh Bousselmi was arrested on 8 May 2024, during a wider crackdown on organisations working with refugees and migrants, and placed in pretrial detention. He was held until the night of 5 to 6 January 2026.

## Legal Proceedings

In January 2025 the investigating judge dropped the heaviest charges, including money laundering, and referred him to trial. In February 2025, on the prosecution's appeal, the Indictment Chamber confirmed charges against him and five other staff members of the organisation. The trial opened on 15 December 2025 before the Tunis Court of First Instance, which refused requests for release. On 5 January 2026 the court convicted him of sheltering persons entering or leaving Tunisia illegally and of facilitating the irregular stay of foreigners, and gave him a two-year suspended prison sentence. He was released that night. No appeal 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 Yadh Bousselmi, director of Terre d'Asile Tunisie, an NGO supporting asylum seekers, refugees and migrants 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: Director of Terre d'Asile Tunisie, an organisation supporting asylum seekers, refugees and migrants. Arrested on 8 May 2024 over the organisation's work, he spent about 20 months in pretrial detention until a Tunis court convicted him on 5 January 2026 of aiding the irregular stay of foreigners, gave him a two-year suspended sentence and released him.

I respectfully urge your authorities to:
1. Quash the conviction and drop any charges that remain on record against Yadh Bousselmi in connection with peaceful human rights work;
2. Confirm publicly that Yadh Bousselmi faces no residual travel, financial, or professional restriction arising from this case;
3. Guarantee that Yadh Bousselmi 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 Yadh Bousselmi is cleared and no reprisal remains.

Respectfully,

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