

TERMS OF REFERENCE

Mission: Judicial observation mission for the Ahmed Souab hearing	Duration of the mission: from 30 October to 1 st November 2025
Date: 31 October 2025	Recipient: - Members of the International Observatory for Lawyers in Danger

1. Reasons for the mission :

The purpose of this mission is to attend the hearing of Me Ahmed Souab on 31 October 2025, who will be tried following an anti-terrorist investigation.

Additional meetings may be arranged with other colleagues under threat.

2. Summary of the political and legal context of the mission

Ahmed Souab is a lawyer and former magistrate, renowned for his integrity and unwavering commitment to the principles of justice. His professional career and reputation for incorruptibility have earned him great respect within the profession and in public opinion.

In the so-called "conspiracy" case, Mr Souab was one of a group of lawyers defending the defendants. At the end of a particularly sensitive hearing, he publicly declared that "*lawyers were not the only ones with a knife to their throat, but that magistrates were in the same situation*", expressing a shared concern about the pressure being put on those involved in the judicial system.

These comments were interpreted by the authorities as an attack on the judiciary. As a result, Mr Souab was arrested, brought before the examining magistrate and then charged, which caused a stir in civil society, the bar and the general public.

His arrest and the proceedings against him also attracted the attention of the international community¹. The United Nations Special Rapporteurs expressed their concern and indignation at the treatment meted out to Mr Souab, believing that the situation raised serious questions about respect for fundamental rights, lawyers' freedom of expression and the independence of the judiciary.

3. Objective of the mission

¹ International Observatory for Lawyers in Danger, Alert: Ahmed Souab, 25 April 2025 and 25 August 2025, available [online](#).

The objective(s) of the mission is/are as follows:

- To attend Ahmed Souab's hearing, scheduled for 31 October 2025
- To meet with threatened colleagues in Tunisia

4. **Mission agenda**

(Please note that this is a provisional timetable subject to change).

The mission will take place from 30 October to 1st November 2025 in Tunis. *Agenda to be defined*

30th October 2025	
Time to be confirmed	Arrival in Tunis
31st October 2025	
Time to be confirmed	Hearing
31st October 2025	
Time to be specified	Meetings with colleagues
1 November 2025	
Time to be specified	Return

5. **Mission commitments**

The candidate representing the OIAD on the assignment will sign a letter of commitment beforehand, specifying the following points.

Prior to the mission, the candidate undertakes to:

- Prepare a budget for the mission, which must be approved by the Observatory;
- Inform the consular authorities of the host country of their arrival and send a copy to the OIAD;
- Contact fellow lawyers in the host country and send a copy of the email to the OIAD;
- When preparing for the assignment, do not put local contacts at risk;
- Get to know the local context.

During the assignment, the assignment holder must

- Provide the IADO with daily updates on the progress of the mission;
- Prepare tweets/releases related to the assignment;
- Where possible, document the mission with photographs for publication.

After the assignment, the assignment holder must

- Write a press release;
- Write a mission report according to the OIAD templates, to be submitted within 15 days of the end of the mission;
- Send photos of the mission;
- Send full contact details of people met;
- Provide a confidential report on diplomatic meetings or meetings that cannot be made public;
- Ensure the agreement of the people mentioned in the public report;
- Write follow-up letters to the people met during the mission, with a copy to the OIAD.

6. Mission-related risks and mitigation strategies

The validity of the delegate's passport must be checked: please note that many countries require passports to expire at least 6 months after the date of travel.

Delegates should agree on the security strategy to be adopted during the mission. In particular, they should inform the consular entities of their respective countries of their arrival in Tunisia and the purpose of their visit, as well as the participation of other members of the international delegation.

7. Skills of the mission holder

Relevant experience in relation to the subject of the assignment would be an asset, in particular :

- **Knowledge of the judicial procedures to be observed and the legal framework** (national, regional and international)
- **Experience in the field of human rights and/or the situation in the country of the assignment** (e.g. academic and non-academic research, journalism, advocacy, communication/campaigning, etc.).
- **Relevant experience in other contexts** (e.g. participation in other international delegations, judicial observation missions, experience in advocacy or with diplomats).

Language requirements: a high level of written and spoken French will be required to participate in the mission. Fluency in other languages such as Arabic, English, Italian or Spanish would be an asset.

8. Local contacts

The local contact(s) is/are : Bâtonnier Chawki Tabib

To be defined

9. Estimated budget for the assignment

The budget for this mission includes mission expenses, i.e. flights (economy class) and a per diem of 125 euros per night to cover accommodation, internal transport and meals. The OIAD will also cover the cost of a translator to assist the delegates during the mission if required. Once candidates have been selected by the OIAD Office, they should contact translation agencies and ask for quotes.

Flight:

As the estimated budget for air travel varies greatly depending on the observers' place of departure and arrival, it will be determined on a case-by-case basis before each mission.

Only economy class tickets will be reimbursed. If the observer orders tickets in a higher class, only the price of the economy class ticket for the same flight will be reimbursed by OIAD.

Per diems:

This joint provisional budget can only include the per diems provided for in each country by the [French Ministry of the Economy](#):

Expenses	Unit	Quantity	Unit cost	Total
Transport				
Flight (return)	Ticket/person			
Per diem (<i>including accommodation</i>)				
125 €/person/night		2	125	250€

Estimated total in euros	
-----------------------------	--