



### [Saied's Crackdown on Critics Intensifies in Tunisia](#)

Tunisia, a country that was once lauded for its successful transition to democratic governance, is now facing a grave threat to its political freedoms and human rights. President Kais Saied's recent crackdown on dissent and the opposition has raised concerns about the sustainability of these practices and the future of Tunisia's democratic system.

The recent summoning of Rached Ghannouchi, the leader of the largest opposition party in Tunisia, is just one example of the ongoing repression of political rights and free speech. President Saied's practices have caused instability and uncertainty for Tunisia's democracy in several ways. First and foremost, he has repeatedly taken unilateral actions to centralize power and limit the power of other branches of government, including the judiciary and the parliament. In 2021, he suspended the parliament, where the largest opposition party held the majority of seats. He also dissolved multiple judicial watchdog groups. This move was widely seen as a "constitutional coup," and it has led to ongoing political and economic crises in the country. Since then, he has ruled by decree and pushed through a new constitution that enshrines his one-man rule. Saied claims his goal is aimed at preserving Tunisia from chaos, but they have been met with widespread condemnation from both domestic and international observers. Furthermore, President Saied has been accused of using the judiciary to target political opponents, including opposition leaders like Rached Ghannouchi. Ghannouchi, the leader of the country's largest opposition party, has been detained and questioned multiple times on politically motivated charges, including money laundering and incitement to violence. Many critics see these actions as an attempt to silence dissent and limit free expression in the country. The recent wave of arrests and detentions targeting President Saied's detractors has been widely condemned by human rights organizations and opposition leaders. The Union Générale Tunisienne du Travail (UGTT), one of the most powerful labor unions in the country, has accused the government of carrying out arbitrary detentions to "stifle voices." The opposition has also criticized President Saied's actions, accusing him of aiming to repress political dissent and limit free expression. Overall, President Saied's actions have eroded Tunisia's democratic institutions and created a climate of fear and uncertainty in the country. Without a robust system of checks and balances, the country's political stability and economic growth are at risk, and the ability of its citizens to exercise their rights and freedoms is severely curtailed.

The recent events in Tunisia have been alarming for those who value democracy and human rights. The government's crackdown on dissent and opposition leaders, including the detention of Rached Ghannouchi, shows a clear effort to suppress opposition and curtail free expression. This is a dangerous course of action that ultimately threatens the country's democratic gains. The timing of Ghannouchi's detentions and questioning about money laundering and incitement to violence, charges that his supporters claim are politically motivated, only adds to the sense that the government is trying to silence its opponents. These arrests often only target opponents of the government. The government's actions have been widely condemned by Tunisian opposition leaders and civil society organizations,

including UGTT. The country's democratic progress is under severe threat. The government may argue that its measures are aimed at preserving stability, but the reality is that repressing political dissent and limiting free expression is unsustainable in the long term. These tactics may work in the short term, but they will only serve to further undermine Tunisia's fragile democratic system. Tunisia needs a genuine commitment to democracy and human rights, not just the veneer of democratic governance. Steps need to be taken to reverse Saied's repressive policies. The international community must also pay attention to what is happening in Tunisia and support those who are fighting for their political rights and freedoms. Tunisia's democratic success is too important and cannot be sacrificed in the name of short-term stability. Tunisia has made significant progress since its 2011 revolution, and its democratic growth has been an inspiration to others in the region and across the globe. Action must be taken before these democratic gains are reversed.