

2 November 2021

Tunisia: Prominent LGBTIQ+ rights defender attacked by police and security personnel

On 21 October 2021, human rights defender **Badr Baabou** was attacked in Tunis on his way home by a police officer in plain-clothes and an internal security officer in uniform. On 25 October 2021, the human rights defender registered a complaint about the incident at the Public Prosecutors Office in the First Instance Court in Tunis.

[Badr Baabou](#) is a Tunisian human rights defender, co-founder and Chairman of the organisation Damj (the Tunisian Association for Justice and Equality) and co-chair of the M-Coalition, a regional HIV/AIDS advocacy network devoted to the needs of the LGBTIQ+ community in the Middle East and North Africa region. He is the winner of the [2019 Front Line Defenders award](#).

At 9PM on 21 October 2021, as Badr Baabou was on his way home, he was stopped and attacked by two officers, one police officer who was in plain-clothes and a security officer who was in uniform. The officers took the human rights defenders wallet, mobile phone, identification documents and work laptop. Badr Baabou reported that the officers threatened him with death and cursed at him for his work defending LGBTIQ+ rights. After taking his possessions, the officers continued to assault the human rights defender, claiming to bystanders that “[they’re] the police” and that what was happening is the penalty for those who insult and file complaints against them.

On 25 October 2021, Badr Baabou registered a complaint at the Public Prosecutor’s Office in the First Instance Court at Tunis. He has filed complaints against the officers involved in the attack, the director general of national security and the leader of the province of Tunis.

Front Line Defenders is deeply concerned about the attack against Badr Baabou and the consistent threats and harrasments suffered by the human rights defender and other LGBTIQ+ rights defenders in Tunisia. Front Line Defenders believes that Badr Baabou is being targeted solely as a result of his peaceful and legitimate human rights activities.

Front Line Defenders urges the authorities in Tunisia to:

1. Carry out an immediate, thorough and impartial investigation into the assault of Badr Baabou, with a view to publishing the results and bringing those responsible to justice in accordance with international standards;
2. Return all items confiscated from Badr Baabou during the attack;
3. Guarantee in all circumstances that all human rights defenders in Tunisia are able to carry out their legitimate human rights activities without fear of reprisals and free of all restrictions [including judicial harassment].