



EMBASSY OF TUNISIA
1515 MASSACHUSETTS AVENUE, N. W.
WASHINGTON, D. C. 20005

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November 10th, 2008

Mr. Joel Simon
Executive Director
Committee to Protect Journalists
330 7th Avenue, 11th Floor
New York, NY 10001

Mr. Executive Director,

Following the publication of the Tunisia report by the Committee to Protect Journalists on September 23rd, 2008, allow me to convey, herewith, the response of the Tunisian Government to the allegations embedded in this report. The enclosed bilingual document addresses constructively the erroneous and unfounded characterization of the status of the freedom of the press in Tunisia.

I would also like to seize this opportunity, at a moment coinciding with Tunisia celebrating 21 years of continuous, steady and comprehensive reforms in all fields, to highlight the firm and irreversible commitment of my country to further anchor democracy, political pluralism and expand the scope of participation of all stakeholders at the national level. In this regard, various initiatives and measures have been taken, since 1987, to promote public freedoms, particularly the freedom of expression. However, your report is oblivious to the progress achieved in this arena.

The media landscape in Tunisia is liberal and pluralistic. The enhancement of freedom of expression and the proliferation of the venues of open debate, during the last 21 years, which has brought the number of newspapers and periodicals from 140 in 1987 to 240 currently, is an eloquent example of the genuine nature of the Tunisian government's commitment to a vibrant and diversified press. About 90% of the newspapers and magazines published in Tunisia are privately owned and editorially independent. The various samples of newspapers,

here enclosed, clearly support the veracity of this argument and could constitute a more objective alternative for a scientific study of the press landscape in Tunisia.

Allow me as well to emphasize the fact that no journalist has been jailed in Tunisia for the expression of his opinions since 1987. The series of editorials and press articles that I am pleased to bring to your attention with this letter, and which carry different perspectives, including those of the opposition, demonstrate that the print press often criticizes the government and freely exercises this right as it deems necessary.

While I am confident that these achievements made by Tunisia during the last 21 years cannot be ignored by any objective observer who believes that the promotion of democracy and the values of freedom are an ever ongoing process, I sincerely wish that you approach these issues through objective and constructive lenses.



The Chargé d'Affaires a.i

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Tarek Ben Youssef", is written over a horizontal line.

Tarek Ben Youssef