

More Than 400 Scholars, Experts, and Human Rights Leaders Demand Release of Tunisian Political Prisoner R. Ghannouchi

International appeal now includes two former heads of state and hundreds of professors, experts from leading universities & institutions from 30 countries.

WASHINGTON, DC, UNITED STATES, July 15, 2026 /EINPresswire.com/ -- More than 400 former heads of state, scholars, human rights defenders, and civil society leaders from over 30 countries have signed an international appeal demanding the immediate and unconditional release of Sheikh [Rached Ghannouchi](#), the 85-year-old Tunisian scholar and [former speaker of parliament](#) sentenced in June 2026 to life in prison plus 30 additional years.

The appeal has drawn signatures from an unusually broad and ideologically diverse coalition, including Moncef Marzouki, former President of Tunisia; Abdullah Gül, former President of Turkey; and Mustafa Cerić, former Grand Mufti of Bosnia and Herzegovina — alongside more than 400 professors, scholars and experts (such as Larry Diamond, Francis Fukuyama, Michael McFaul, John Esposito, and Donald Horowitz) from leading universities and research institutions, and human rights organizations, across the United States, Europe, and the Muslim world.

“This is no longer a niche appeal. It is a global chorus of former presidents, parliamentarians, scholars, and human rights defenders, people who do not agree on much else, saying with one voice that an 85-year-old man should not die in prison for his political beliefs,” said Radwan A. Masmoudi, Ph.D., President of the Center for the Study of Islam and Democracy (CSID) and spokesperson for the campaign. “We are calling on the Tunisian government, and on every



FREE RACHED GHANNOUCHI

Former Speaker of Tunisia's Parliament. Political leader. Advocate for democratic participation.

For more than three years, Rached Ghannouchi has remained **imprisoned** amid growing international calls for his **release**.

Human rights advocates, political leaders, and civil society organizations continue to urge respect for **political freedoms**, due process, and **democratic pluralism** in Tunisia.

JOIN THE CAMPAIGN. RAISE YOUR VOICE. #FreeRachedGhannouchi

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Free Rached Ghannouchi campaign

government that values due process, to act now, before it is too late.”

Ghannouchi is the president of Tunisia's Ennahdha movement and served as speaker of the country's freely elected parliament from 2019 to 2021, when Kais Saied ordered the military to shut it down. He has been imprisoned since April 2023. His June 2026 conviction followed a closed-door trial that his own defense lawyers have called a judicial charade, built on a case resurrected years after its original defendant had already served a full

sentence, and resting on testimony from witnesses with documented motive to fabricate. In April 2026, he was hospitalized after a sharp deterioration in his health.



Rached Ghannouchi in the Tunisian parliament

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An 85-year-old scholar should not die in prison for his political beliefs. Over 400 world leaders, from the US, Europe, and the Muslim World, are demanding his immediate and unconditional release.”

*Radwan A Masmoudi,
Campaign Coordinator*

Signatories are explicit that supporting Ghannouchi's release does not require agreement with his political views. “Whether one agrees with all of his views is beside the point,” the appeal states. “The proper response to political disagreement in a democracy is debate, elections, and peaceful competition, not imprisonment.”

The campaign is calling on governments, parliaments, and international institutions to press Tunisian authorities — publicly and privately — for Ghannouchi's immediate release, and is inviting additional scholars, faith leaders, democracy and civil society activists to add their names at freerachedghannouchi.us/petition.

About the Campaign

[Free Rached Ghannouchi](https://freerachedghannouchi.us) is an international, non-partisan campaign of scholars, faith leaders, former officials, and civil society organizations. Learn more at freerachedghannouchi.us.

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