

**Question for written answer E-003693/2015
to the Commission (Vice-President / High Representative)**
Rule 130
Jørn Dohrmann (ECR)

Subject: VP/HR - Tunisia and reforms

The National Union of Tunisian Journalists called for the case of blogger Yassine Ayari to be moved to a civilian court after the permanent military court deferred its decision on the case to March. In November, the court had sentenced Ayari in absentia to three years in prison for defaming army officers and senior officials of the defence ministry. The penalty was reduced to one year in January, but his lawyers filed an appeal.

The cases unsettle many Tunisians who had hoped that the new political landscape would give them more freedoms, but, in practice, military courts retain the same power as under the regime of Zine el Abidine Ben Ali.

Although freedom of speech has increased since the 2011 revolution, a lack of reforms to the judiciary and the penal code and the persistence of the deep state hinder further advances. The deterioration in the security situation and the rise of former regime elements in government following the election of Nidaa Tounes risk reversing gains made during the revolution.

What actions is the VP/HR taking with the Tunisian authorities to speed up reforms in Tunisia?