



### [Racist Attacks have Increased in Tunisia Following a Speech by President Kais Saied](#)

The recent wave of racial violence in Tunisia is deeply concerning and highlights the need for urgent action to address the root causes of this phenomenon. Attacks against Black African migrants, asylum seekers, and refugees have been on the rise since President Kais Saied's speech on February 21, 2023, in which he accused African migrants of plotting to turn Tunisia more African and less Arab. This speech has fueled racist sentiments among Tunisians, resulting in violent attacks, robberies, and vandalism against Black African foreigners. Human Rights Watch has reported that President Saied's efforts to alleviate the harm caused by his speech have fallen short of what is needed to stop the spike in violence. While some measures have been announced, such as the immediate release of those detained without cause and a review of individual cases to ensure due process for everyone arrested, more needs to be done to address the underlying causes of this phenomenon.

Many Black African refugees, asylum seekers, and foreigners who have recently become homeless continue to camp out in front of the offices of international organizations because they feel safer there from these attacks and arbitrary detentions than elsewhere in Tunisia. Some feel as though they need to avoid public view elsewhere. It is essential that the Tunisian government takes concrete steps to protect the rights and dignity of these vulnerable populations and ensure that they have access to adequate housing and basic services. A rhetoric of demonizing any group of people is objectively wrong and people should not have to worry about physical appearances to feel accepted and safe. The rise in racial attacks against Black African foreigners is alarming and requires a strong response from the Tunisian government. Arbitrary detentions, evictions, and employment terminations must cease, and those responsible for racist attacks and abuses should be swiftly investigated and held accountable. Throughout history, there have been numerous instances where countries or political parties have blamed minority groups for socio-economic and political decline as a means to deflect responsibility and maintain power. The government must also work to address the underlying social and economic issues that fuel racist sentiments, including poverty, unemployment, and social inequality.

There are clear similarities between the situation of racial violence in Tunisia and the erosion of Tunisia's democratic institutions under President Kais Saied. In both cases, the government's actions have been criticized for limiting freedoms and targeting opposition figures. President Saied's moves to centralize power and limit the power of other branches of government have created a climate of fear and uncertainty in the country, much like the increase in racial attacks against Black African migrants. In both situations, there is also a concern that short-term stability is being prioritized over long-term democratic gains. The government's crackdown on dissent and opposition figures is seen as a dangerous course of action that threatens the country's democratic progress. Similarly, the rise in racial attacks against Black African foreigners is viewed as a threat to Tunisia's social cohesion and democratic values. Both situations highlight the importance of a genuine commitment to democracy and human rights and the interconnectedness of these two ideas. The erosion of democratic institutions and the increase in racial

violence both require a strong response from the government and the international community. It is important that Tunisia's government realizes the dangers of its current course and takes steps to reverse its repressive policies. It is also essential that the Tunisian government takes steps to promote understanding among all races and promote tolerance and respect for diversity. Education and awareness-raising campaigns should be implemented to promote intercultural dialogue and combat prejudice and discrimination. The international community has an important role to play in supporting Tunisia in its efforts to address the root causes of racial violence and promote understanding among all races. Governments, civil society organizations, and international organizations should use their influence to pressure the Tunisian government to take action to protect the rights of Black African migrants, asylum seekers, and refugees in Tunisia. They should also support efforts to promote intercultural dialogue and combat prejudice and discrimination.

In conclusion, the escalating racial violence in Tunisia is a matter of grave concern, and urgent action is needed to address the root causes of this phenomenon. The Tunisian government must take concrete steps to protect the rights and dignity of Black African migrants, asylum seekers, and refugees in Tunisia and promote understanding among all races. The international community must also remain vigilant to what is happening in Tunisia and support those who are fighting for their political rights, freedoms, and dignity. The success of Tunisia's democratic transition is too important to be sacrificed in the name of short-term stability. It is crucial that Tunisia's government reaffirms its commitment to the protection of the rights of all its citizens, regardless of their race or ethnicity. Only by working together can Tunisia put an end to this wave of violence and promote tolerance and respect for diversity.