

**Tunisia: Investigate Killing of Opposition Figure  
Second Assassination of Leftist Coalition Member  
By Human Rights Watch  
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(Tunis) – Tunisian authorities should thoroughly, speedily, and transparently investigate the assassination on July 25, 2013, in Tunis, of the prominent opposition figure Mohamed Brahmi. Brahmi was the second opposition leader to be assassinated since the ouster of president Zine el-Abidine Ben Ali in January 2011.

The first was Chokri Belaid, who belonged to the same leftist Popular Front coalition as Brahmi, and who was gunned down in a similar fashion on February 6. Authorities say they have arrested suspected accomplices but not the actual killers, and have brought no one to trial.

“Mohamed Brahmi is the second opposition political figure in six months gunned down in the streets,” said [Eric Goldstein](#), deputy Middle East and North Africa director at Human Rights Watch. “The authorities need to actively pursue the killers and make clear that political assassination will not be a part of [Tunisia’s](#) democratic transition.”

Brahmi was an outspoken critic of the government, in which the Islamist Ennahdha is the leading party in a coalition with two other parties, Ettakatol and the Congress for the Republic. No one has claimed responsibility for the killing.

Brahmi was a member of the National Constituent Assembly representing the electoral district of Sidi Bouzid, the birthplace of the Tunisian uprising. He was secretary general of the leftist nationalist party The Popular Current until July 7, when he left the party and announced plans to form a new party.

Preliminary information gathered by Human Rights Watch researchers indicates that the assailants shot Brahmi at point-blank range several times at around noon as he was getting into his car in front of his home in the El Ghazala neighborhood of Tunis.

A neighbor, whose house faces Brahmi’s, told Human Rights Watch that she heard a first shot, then several successive shots as if from an automatic gun. She ran out of her house with her husband and son and saw Brahmi sprawled across the car seat, his daughter holding his hand. The neighbor said that another neighbor transported Brahmi to the Mahmoud Materi hospital in Ariana, where doctors declared him dead.

Brahmi’s son, Adnen, told Human Rights Watch researchers that he heard a first and a second gunshot, and then several other shots as if from a machine gun. He and his sister ran out of the family’s house and when he arrived at the car, he said, he saw two men riding away on a motorcycle at the very end of the street.

July 25 is Republic Day in Tunisia, a national holiday commemorating the proclamation of an independent republic in 1956.

The killers of Belaid, who led the leftist Democratic Patriotic Party, also shot him at close range several times as he was getting into his car on the morning of February 6 near his home in the Menzah 6 neighborhood of Tunis.

At that time, the Interior Ministry said that the two people who carried out the killing had fled on a motorcycle. The investigations into this assassination have led to the arrest of four people suspected of complicity in the killing, the ministry has said. It said that eight others, including the actual assassins, remain at large.

Tunisia has had repeated incidents of political violence and assaults by people who appear to be motivated by an extremist Islamist agenda, apparently because of the victims’ political or cultural views.

In numerous cases, the authorities appear to have taken insufficient action to investigate and prosecute those responsible, and to prevent further threats to the victims’ lives and security. Human Rights Watch

[documented](#) several cases in which victims had filed complaints at local police stations or before judges, but never received any indication of follow-up to their cases.

“Tunisia’s pluralistic politics has been an asset to its democratic transition thus far,” Goldstein said. “That transition will go off the rails if assassins can liquidate politicians with impunity.”

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