

Press Release

Carter-Ruck

Date: 17 May 2013

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Rached Ghannouchi receives apology and damages from the BBC

Rached Ghannouchi, the leader of the largest Tunisian political party Ennahda, has received an apology and substantial damages from the BBC.

The BBC apologised in relation to an article published from 21 November 2012 on the BBC News website in which it made false claims concerning supposed links with extremist groups and threats alleged to have been made by Mr Ghannouchi to frustrate the democratic process in Tunisia.

Following the apology, Mr Ghannouchi said:

"I am delighted that the BBC has apologised over these wholly false allegations. I welcome that the BBC has set the record straight and made clear that these allegations were entirely unfounded."

The apology, which was published on the BBC News website on 17 May 2013 and is accessible to readers world-wide, stated:

"Rached Ghannouchi

In a "Viewpoint" article by a contributor titled "Tunisia at Risk", posted on 21 November 2012, some statements were made about Rached Ghannouchi, the leader of the Tunisian Ennahda Party, which were incorrect. It was said that a video recording of a meeting between Mr Ghannouchi and some Salafists appeared to show him co-ordinating policy with them and that this suggested he condoned the violent attack by Salafists on the United States mission and the burning of the American School in Tunis in September 2012. It is accepted that Mr Ghannouchi did not condone the attacks and that the meeting with the Salafists had nothing to do with those subsequent events. The article also wrongly stated that Mr Ghannouchi had threatened, prior to the elections in 2011, to order troops on to the streets if the Ennahda Party did not get the results he expected. It is accepted that he did not make this statement. The BBC apologises to Mr Ghannouchi for these mistakes and for the distress they caused him."

The BBC has also paid a substantial sum in damages, together with Mr Ghannouchi's legal costs.

For further information please contact Cameron Doley (cameron.doley@carter-ruck.com) or Lawrence Northmore-Ball (lawrence.northmore-ball@carter-ruck.com), both on 020 7353 5005.

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