

EXTERNAL

AI Index: MDE 28/14/98

UA 36/98

Fear for safety / "Disappearance" /
Legal concern

6 February 1998

ALGERIA **Karim Khelili, 35, mentally handicapped**

On 4 February 1998, Karim Khelili, who has a mental handicap, was arrested by security forces and is currently detained incommunicado. Amnesty International is concerned he may be at risk of torture and ill-treatment and that he may be denied the specialist medical care he requires.

Karim Khelili was arrested at his grand-mother's home, in the Beaulieu district of El Harrache on the outskirts of Algiers, in the evening of 4 February. The security forces then escorted him to parent's home which they proceeded to search. At this point Karim allegedly had bruises on his face and appeared in a state of extreme confusion and anxiety. After having found a photograph belonging to Karim, depicting a group of Algerian soldiers from a nearby barracks, the security forces took both him and his brother Farid away. His brother was released a few hours later after having reportedly been subjected to threats of torture. Karim's parents have contacted various Algerian authorities in the past 36 hours but have been unable to obtain any information concerning their son's whereabouts or legal status.

Karim Khelili is in need of constant supervision. As a hobby, he reportedly collects photographs taken in the photographic shop of one of his brothers.

Karim Khelili appears to have been arrested as a consequence of his father's involvement in human rights work. Mahmoud Khelili, a human rights lawyer, has been very active in the defence of political activists since the beginning of political violence in Algeria in 1992.

BACKGROUND INFORMATION

In the past six years tens of thousands of people have been killed in Algeria by security forces, paramilitary militia groups and armed opposition groups defining themselves as "Islamic groups". Tens of thousands have also been arrested and hundreds have "disappeared" subsequent to their arrest. Members of the security forces carrying out arrests do not usually wear any uniform or identify themselves as such and, if contacted by the relatives of those detained, generally deny all knowledge of that person. Families therefore have no means of obtaining information concerning detained relatives until they are brought before the courts, often weeks or months after their arrest.

In the cases where people arrested have "disappeared" the majority remain unaccounted for - some are later been found dead, or, reported killed in circumstances never clarified.

RECOMMENDED ACTION: Please send telegrams/faxes/express/airmail letters in French, Arabic, English or your own language:

- expressing deep concern at the arrest and "disappearance" of Karim Khelili on 4 February 1998, who appears to have been targeted as a result of the human rights work carried out by his father;
- calling for his immediate and unconditional release if he is not to be charged with an internationally recognizable legal offense;
- urging that Karim Khelili be allowed immediate access to his family, lawyers, and adequate medical care.

APPEALS TO:

M. Mustafa BENMANSOUR
Ministre de l'Intérieur
Ministère de l'Intérieur
18 rue Docteur Saâdane
Alger
Algérie

Telegrams: Ministre L'Intérieur, Alger, Algérie

Faxes: + 213 2 736106

Salutation: Monsieur le Ministre / Your excellency

M. Mohamed ADAMI
Ministre de la Justice
Ministère de la Justice
8 Place Bir Hakem
El-Biar, Alger
Algérie

Telegrams: Ministre Justice, Alger, Algérie

Faxes: + 213 2 922560

Salutation: Monsieur le Ministre / Your excellency

COPIES TO:

M. Kamel REZZAG-BARA
President
Observatoire National des Droits de l'Homme (ONDH)
Palais du Peuple
1 Av. Franklin Roosevelt
Alger
Algérie

Faxes: + 213 2 239005 / 239017

and to diplomatic representatives of ALGERIA accredited to your country.

PLEASE SEND APPEALS IMMEDIATELY. Check with the International Secretariat, or your section office, if sending appeals after 20 March 1998.