

URGENT ACTION

ABUSED PRISONER NEEDS URGENT MEDICAL CARE

Male prisoner, Ramzi Romdhani has stated that he was tortured on 24 and 25 December. He sustained serious eye injuries that could cause blindness unless treated immediately. He is at further risk of torture and other ill-treatment.

Ramzi Romdhani told his brother, during a visit on 31 December, that he was tortured on 24 and 25 December after he had been transferred to the Department of State Security (DSS) of the Ministry of Interior in the Tunisian capital, Tunis, from the Mornaguia Prison, in the outskirt of Tunis. He said he was tortured for two days and interrogated in connection with other cases. He told his brother that he was beaten, had his nails and fingers burned and his head plunged repeatedly in hot water for about 30 minutes. He was beaten on his eyes and sustained serious eye injuries. During the visit, his brother was able to observe several bruises on his body and burns on his fingers.

Following his return from the DSS to Mornaguia Prison, Ramzi Romdhani was examined by the prison doctor who diagnosed that he must undergo surgery to avoid losing his sight. It is not known whether he has been permitted an operation.

In April 2009, Ramzi Romdhani is reported to have been tortured and otherwise ill-treated by officers at Mornaguia Prison (see UA 130/09, Fear of torture or other ill-treatment, 19 May 2009), where he is serving a sentence of 29 years' imprisonment imposed under the 2003 anti-terrorism law in nine separate cases on the same charges. Prison officers beat him with sticks, kicked him while wearing military boots, inflicted cigarette burns on his body, and plunged his head repeatedly into a bucket of water causing him to fear drowning and eventually to lose consciousness.

In August 2009, he was beaten by prison guards and then taken to the DSS where he is reported to have been tortured, including with electric shocks, suspension and simulation of hanging.

PLEASE WRITE IMMEDIATELY in Arabic, French or English or your own language:

- Demand that the Tunisian authorities ensure that Ramzi Romdhani has access to the medical care he needs;
- urging them to ensure that he is not subjected to further torture or ill-treatment;
- calling on them to open a thorough, independent and impartial investigation into Ramzi Romdhani's allegations of torture and other ill-treatment and bring any officials found responsible to justice.

PLEASE SEND APPEALS BEFORE 16 FEBRUARY 2010 TO:

Minister of Interior
Rafik Haj Kacem
Ministry of Interior
Avenue Habib Bourguiba
1000 Tunis
Tunisia
Fax: + 216 71 340 888
Salutation: Your Excellency

Minister of Justice and Human Rights
Bécher Tekkari
Ministry of Justice and Human Rights
31 Boulevard Bab Benat
1006 Tunis - La Kasbah
Tunisia
Fax: + 216 71 568 106
Salutation: Your Excellency

And copies to:
Ridha Khemakhem
General Coordinator for Human Rights
Ministry of Justice and Human Rights
31 Boulevard Bab Benat
1006 Tunis - La Kasbah
Tunisia

This is the first update of UA 130/09. Also send copies to diplomatic representatives of Tunisia accredited to your country. Please check with your section office if sending appeals after the above date.

**AMNESTY
INTERNATIONAL**



URGENT ACTION

MEDICAL CARE NEEDED AFTER PRISONER TORTURED

ADDITIONAL INFORMATION

Amnesty International has received numerous reports of torture and other ill-treatment by the Tunisian security forces. In virtually all cases, allegations of torture are not investigated and the perpetrators are not brought to justice. Individuals are most at risk of torture when held incommunicado. The most commonly reported methods of torture are beatings on the body, especially the soles of the feet; suspension by the ankles or in contorted positions; electric shocks; and burning with cigarettes. There are also reports of mock executions, sexual abuse, including rape with bottles and sticks, and threats of sexual abuse of female relatives.

As a state party to the Convention against Torture and Other Cruel, Inhuman or Degrading Treatment or Punishment, Tunisia is under an obligation to prevent torture and to "ensure that its competent authorities proceed to a prompt and impartial investigation, wherever there is reasonable ground to believe that an act of torture has been committed in any territory under its jurisdiction".

Tunisian Anti-terrorism Law has been repeatedly criticized by UN human rights bodies and local and international human rights organizations as overly general and broad, and could be used as a repressive measure to curtail legitimate dissent. Similar concerns were reiterated by the Human Right Committee in March 2008 in its concluding observations regarding Tunisia.

Further information on UA: 130/09 Index: MDE 30/001/2010 Issue Date: 05 January 2010

