

PUBLIC

AI Index: MDE 30/14/98

9 June 1998

Further information on UA 122/97 (MDE 30/23/97, 29/04/97) and follow-up (MDE 30/40/97, 3 July; MDE 30/41/97, 9 July; MDE 30/43/97, 18 July; MDE 30/44/97, 22 July; and MDE 30/62/97, 22 December 1997) - POC/Health concern

TUNISIA Mohamed Mouadda, former leader of political opposition party, aged 60

There are grave concerns for the health of Mohamed Mouadda, who was admitted to hospital on 8 June 1998.

Mohamed Mouadda's health has deteriorated badly since he began a hunger strike on 3 June in protests against his house arrest. He suffers from painful wasting of the left knee, a complication resulting from an operation of the meniscus three months ago, and of paralysis of the left shoulder with heightened pain-sensitivity. Since the beginning of his hunger strike, his blood pressure has increased and he experiences increased sensitivity to pain in his neck. He is also believed to have developed a stomach ulcer.

On 21 May 1998, Mohammed Mouadda was brought before the examining magistrate in Tunis. His lawyers asked for the restrictions against him to be lifted but the judge refused.

BACKGROUND INFORMATION

Mohamed Mouadda was previously imprisoned as a prisoner of conscience on 11 October 1995. He was sentenced in February 1996 to 11 years' imprisonment after an unfair trial on charges including threatening the external security of the state and intelligence with agents of a foreign power aimed at undermining Tunisia. He was conditionally released from prison on 30 December 1996.

After his release, Mohamed Mouadda was subjected to constant surveillance and harassment by the authorities. He was banned from political activities, his phone was cut off, he was prevented on a number of occasions from leaving his house and was also prevented from receiving visitors on several occasions. Recently he was not allowed to receive his relatives at home. Mohamed Mouadda issued a public statement on 9 April 1997, protesting at the human rights abuses he has suffered and at the increasing restrictions imposed by the authorities on political and civil liberties and the freedom of expression and information in the country. On 14 April 1997, following the release of this statement, he was put under house arrest until 22 July 1997.

He was re-arrested on 19 and 20 December 1997 and "charged with conspiring to overthrow the government" and "collaborating with foreign agents". He was released and placed under house arrest, his telephone was cut off. Mohamed Mouadda is without income: his bank account, where he receives his pension after he was forced to take an early retirement, was seized.

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

- urging that the house arrest and other sanctions imposed on Mohamed Mouadda be immediately lifted;
- seeking assurances that he be given all necessary medical care;
- expressing concern that he be allowed unconditional freedom of movement, association or expression.

APPEALS TO:

M. Abdallah Kallel

Ministre de la Justice, Ministère de la Justice
31 Boulevard Bab Benat, 1006 Tunis, Tunisie

Faxes: + 216 1 568 106

Telegrams: Ministre Justice, Tunis, Tunisie

Salutation: Monsieur le Ministre / Your Excellency

M. Ali Chaouch

Ministre de l'Intérieur
Ministère de l'Intérieur
Avenue Habib Bourguiba
1001 Tunis , Tunisie

Faxes: + 216 1 346 624

Telegrams: Ministre Interieur, Tunis, Tunisie

Salutation: Monsieur le Ministre / Your Excellency

COPIES TO:

Tunisian Human Rights League

Me Taoufik Bouderbala, Président

Ligue Tunisienne des Droits de l'Homme, LTDH

7 Rue Pierre Curie

Tunis, Tunisia

Faxes: +216 1 336 338 (if voice, say: je voudrais envoyer un fax, s'il vous plaît)

and to diplomatic representatives of Tunisia accredited to your country.

PLEASE SEND APPEALS IMMEDIATELY. Check with the International Secretariat, or your section office, if sending appeals after 21 July 1998.