

EXTERNAL

AI Index: MDE 30/23/97

UA 122/97 Prisoner of conscience / Fear of further POCs 29 April 1997

**TUNISIA Mohamed MOUADDA, former leader of opposition political party  
and other conditionally released prisoners of conscience**

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Amnesty International is seriously concerned by the news that Mohamed Mouadida, former leader of the opposition *Mouvement des Démocrates Socialistes* (MDS, Movement of Social Democrats) was placed under house arrest on 14 April 1997.

His arrest followed months of harassment against him from the Tunisian authorities since he was conditionally released from prison in late 1996. Amnesty International believes that he is once again a prisoner of conscience, imprisoned solely on account of his non-violent political activities. His arrest has heightened concern for other conditionally released prisoners of conscience who continue to face official harassment.

Mohamed Mouadida 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 of 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 (see EXTRA 118/95 (MDE 30/20/95, 10 October 1995) and follow-ups). Since his release, Mohamed Mouadida has been submitted to constant surveillance and harassment by the authorities. He was banned from political activities, his phone was cut off on 6 March, he was prevented on a number of occasions from leaving his house and was also prevented from receiving visitors on several occasions: two US diplomats were turned away from his house on 7 March by the police and foreign journalists were prevented from visiting him at the beginning of April.

Mohamed Mouadida issued a public statement on 9 April, 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.

Other former prisoners of conscience have also continued to face official harassment since they were conditionally released from prison in late 1996.

They include two who, like Mohamed Mouadida, had been the subject of repeated international appeals from members of the Urgent Action Network. They were both conditionally released on 14 December 1996: Najib Hosni, lawyer and human rights activist (UA 236/94, MDE 30/18/94, 17 June 1994); and Mohamed Hedi Sassi, a supporter of the illegal *Parti communiste des ouvriers tunisiens* (PCOT), Tunisian Workers' Communist Party.

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

- protesting at the house arrest of Mohamed Mouadida and urging that the restrictions placed upon him be immediately lifted and that he be allowed unconditional freedom of movement;
- protesting at the practice by the Tunisian authorities of subjecting released prisoners of conscience to continuous harassment;
- calling for all human rights and political activists to be able to carry out their non-violent activities and associations free from fear of arrest and intimidation, in accordance with international human rights standards.

**APPEALS TO:**

1) Minister of Justice

M. Abdallah Kallel  
Ministre de la Justice  
Ministère de la Justice  
Boulevard Bab Benat  
Tunis, Tunisia

**Faxes: +216 1 568 106**

**Telexes: 13000 maet tn (via Ministère de l'Intérieur)**

**Telegrams: Ministre de la Justice, Tunis, Tunisie**

**Salutation: Monsieur le Ministre / Your Excellency**

2) Minister of the Interior

M. Mohamed Ben Rejeb  
Ministre de l'Intérieur  
Ministère de l'Intérieur  
Av. Habib Bourguiba  
Tunis , Tunisia

**Fax: +216 1 340888**

**Telegrams: Ministre de l'Interieur, Tunis, Tunisia**

**Telex: 13662 sdap tn**

**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

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 20 June 1997.