

PUBLIC

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21 January 2003

Further information on UA 325/02 (MDE 18/013/2002, 4 November 2002) Forcible return

LEBANON/ TUNISIA

Tareq Souid (m), aged 30

Tareq Souid may be forcibly returned to Tunisia in the next few days. The Lebanese authorities have set the deadline for his deportation as 27 January if no other country agrees to offer him asylum.

All attempts at resettlement in a third country under emergency procedures of the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR) have so far failed. Six countries have reportedly refused to accept Tareq Souid's application for resettlement as presented by the UNHCR.

On 27 December Tareq Souid was released from military hospital where he was held since his last attempted deportation to Tunisia on 1 November. He is reportedly no longer facing charges from the Lebanese authorities.

Tareq Souid, who left Tunisia in 1993, is a political sympathizer with the unauthorized *Ennahda* (Renaissance) opposition movement in Tunisia. If he is returned to Tunisia, Tareq Souid would be at risk of arrest, torture and unfair trial.

While Lebanon is not a party to the 1951 Convention relating to the Status of Refugees, it is nonetheless bound by the principle of *non-refoulement*, which prohibits the forcible return of persons to a country where they would be at risk of grave human rights abuses such as torture.

RECOMMENDED ACTION: Please send appeals to arrive as quickly as possible, in Arabic, French, English or your own language:

- expressing concern that Tareq Souid may be returned to Tunisia in the next few days;
- urging the authorities to ensure that Tareq Souid is not forcibly returned, directly or indirectly, to Tunisia;
- noting that Tareq Souid is a refugee, recognized by UNHCR as having well-founded fear of persecution if he were returned to Tunisia;
- recalling that Lebanon is bound by the principle of *non-refoulement*, a principle of customary international law binding on all states, irrespective of whether they have ratified the 1951 Convention relating to the Status of Refugees;
- calling on the authorities to ensure that all steps are taken, including access to a lawyer, UNHCR and third country consular officials, to facilitate Tareq Souid's emergency resettlement to a third country, as a matter of urgency, and to guarantee his safety, well-being and respect for his human rights, pending resettlement;
- urging the authorities to ensure that no refugees or asylum seekers of other nationalities are forcibly returned in violation of international human rights law.

APPEALS TO:

Mr Jamil al-Sayyed
Director of the General Security
Directorate of the General Security
Badaro, Beirut
Lebanon

Fax: +961 1 422 850

Salutation: Dear Mr Jamil al-Sayyed

His Excellency Rafiq Hariri
Prime Minister
Office of the Prime Minister
Grand Sérail
Rue des Arts et Métiers
Sanayeh, Beirut, Lebanon
Telegram: Prime Minister Hariri, Beirut, Lebanon
Fax: + 961 1 865 630
Salutation: Your Excellency

His Excellency Elias al-Murr
Minister of Interior and Municipal Affairs
Ministry of Interior and Municipal Affairs
Grand Sérail
Rue des Arts et Métiers
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Fax: + 961 1 754 200 (if someone answers, ask for the fax)
Salutation: Your Excellency

COPIES TO:

diplomatic representatives of Lebanon accredited to your country.

PLEASE SEND APPEALS IMMEDIATELY. Check with the International Secretariat, or your section office, if sending appeals after 4 March 2003.