

PUBLIC

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Fear of "disappearance" / Fear for safety 29 October 1998

ALGERIA Abdelkrim Torchi
Saddek Aichouni

There are concerns for the safety of Abdelkrim Torchi and Saddek Aichouni who it is feared may have "disappeared" following their recent arrests.

Both men were reportedly arrested in separate incidents at their respective homes in Algiers, the capital, on 20 October 1998, in the presence of other members of the family. No arrest warrants were produced and no reason given for the arrests.

Abdelkrim Torchi's arrest was carried out by uniformed members of the security forces who arrived at his home in four cars. Saddek Aichouni's arrest was carried out by men in plain clothes. One, however, was identified by onlookers as a policeman employed at the local *commisariat* (police station). The *commisariat*, however, has subsequently stated it has no record of his arrest.

The two men were previously arrested in November 1997 and, after appearing in court the following month, were remanded in custody until their release, without charge, nine months later. There have been many reports of people being released from detention and subsequently "disappeared" by security forces.

BACKGROUND INFORMATION

Over the past six years, tens of thousands of people have been killed in Algeria by security forces, paramilitary militia groups and by armed groups defining themselves as "Islamic groups". Tens of thousands have also been arrested by security forces and thousands subsequently remain unaccounted for.

Members of the security forces carrying out arrests do not generally wear an identifying uniform, display any other form of identity, or produce warrants of arrest. Following arrest, suspects are usually held in secret detention.

During this time the security forces and authorities will deny their families any information concerning their whereabouts. This is often only eventually known by families when their detained relative appears in court, possibly weeks or months later.

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

- expressing concern at the "disappearance" of Abdelkrim Torchi and Saddek Aichouni and urging the authorities to ensure that thorough investigations are carried out to establish their whereabouts;
- urging that, if in the custody of the security forces, they be treated humanely and granted access to their families and lawyers of their choice.

APPEALS TO:

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

Telegrams: Ministre Interieur, Alger, Algérie
Faxes: + 213 2 736106
Salutation: Monsieur le Ministre / Dear Minister

M. Ahmed NOUI
Ministre de la Justice par intérim
Ministère de la Justice
8 Place Bir Hakem
El-Biar, Alger
Algérie

Telegrams: Ministre Justice, Alger, Algérie
**Faxes: + 213 2 922560 / 925557 / 796557 / 722560 (if voice answers
please ask for fax tone)**
Salutation: Monsieur le Ministre / Dear Minister

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 / 239037

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 10 December 1998.

**"No one shall be subjected to arbitrary arrest,
detention or exile."**

Article 9, Universal Declaration of Human Rights

Visit the Amnesty International UDHR campaign website on <http://www.amnesty.excite.com>