

EXTERNAL

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EXTRA 156/96

Prisoner of conscience

8 October 1996

TUNISIASalah Zeghidi, human rights defender

Amnesty International is gravely concerned at the arrest on 7 October 1996 of Salah Zeghidi, Vice-President of the *Ligue Tunisienne des Droits de l'Homme* (LTDH), Tunisian Human Rights League.

Salah Seghidi was arrested on his return to Tunisia from Paris, where on 4 October he had participated in a public meeting on the human rights situation in Tunisia, attended by other organizations including Amnesty International and the *Fédération Internationale des Droits de l'Homme* (FIDH), International Federation of Human Rights. He is reportedly being held in the Ministry of the Interior in Tunis.

Amnesty International believes that Salah Zeghidi is being detained solely because of his human rights activities. The organization considers him to be a prisoner of conscience and calls for his immediate and unconditional release.

BACKGROUND INFORMATION

Human rights defenders are being increasingly targeted in Tunisia, where the circle of repression continues to widen and restrictions on human rights activities have reached unprecedented levels.

Arrests, detentions of prisoners of conscience, torture and ill-treatment, unfair trials and systematic harassment have been increasingly used to punish, intimidate and silence political activists, government critics, human rights activists and relatives of prisoners of conscience in Tunisia. Amnesty International has continued to document and condemn such human rights violations in Tunisia, and to call on the Tunisian authorities to take concrete steps to put an end to such practices. However, despite the Tunisian Government's repeatedly stated commitment to respecting human rights, serious violations continue to be committed and human rights defenders have increasingly been the targets.

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

- expressing concern at the arrest of prisoner of conscience Salah Zeghidi and urging that he be immediately and unconditionally released;
- seeking assurances that while in detention he is being treated humanely in accordance with international standards for the treatment of detainees, and that he is being given access to his lawyers and family.

APPEALS TO:

1) President of the Republic
Président Zine El Abidine Ben Ali
Président de la République
Palais Présidentiel
Tunis/Carthage, TUNISIA
Faxes: 216 1 744 721
Telegrams: President, Tunis, Tunisia
Telex: 14900 prpsa tn 12163 ppsd tn

Salutation: Excellence / Your Excellency

2) Minister of Justice

M. Sadok Chaâbane
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 Chaâbane, Tunis, Tunisia

Salutation: Monsieur le Ministre / Your Excellency

3) Minister of the Interior

M. Mohamed Jegham
Ministre de l'Intérieur
Ministère de l'Intérieur
Av. Habib Bourguiba
Tunis, TUNISIA

Faxes: + 216 1 340 888

Telegrams: Ministre de l'Intérieur, Tunis, Tunisia

Telexes: 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
3ème étage, appt.10
1000 Tunis, TUNISIA

Faxes: +216 1 336 338

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 5 November 1996.