

EXTERNAL

AI Index: MDE 30/43/96

10 December 1996

Further information (2) on UA 247/96 (MDE 30/35/96, 25 October 1996, MDE 30/37/96, 7 November 1996) - Health concern / Prisoner of conscience

TUNISIA Mohamed Hedi Jouini, carpenter, aged 36

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Mohamed Hedi Jouini discontinued his hunger strike at the end of November 1996. He had been on unlimited hunger strike since about 24 September to protest against being sentenced twice on the same charges.

On 2 January 1996 Mohamed Hedi Jouini was sentenced *in absentia* to three and a half years' imprisonment charged with membership of an unauthorized organization (the unauthorized Islamist party *al-Nahda*) and participation in unauthorized meetings. He had been tried *in absentia* for the same acts in 1993 and sentenced to one year and three months' imprisonment. Since 1991 Mohamed Hedi Jouini has been repeatedly convicted and imprisoned for the peaceful exercise of his rights to freedom of expression and association (see MDE 30/35/96, 25 October 1996).

At the beginning of December 1996 the Court of Appeal examined his case and on 5 December it announced that it had annulled Mohamed Hedi Jouini's 1993 conviction to one year and three months' imprisonment, but had upheld his 1996 conviction to three and a half years' imprisonment.

Mohamed Hedi Jouini had discontinued his hunger strike in the understanding that the Court of Appeal would annul both sentences and that he would be released. He has now exhausted all legal avenues for an overturning of the 1996 sentence.

Amnesty International considers Mohamed Hedi Jouini a prisoner of conscience, imprisoned solely for his conscientiously-held beliefs, and continues to call for his immediate and unconditional release. Other parts of the movement will campaign to achieve this objective, but no further action by the UA Network is requested for the moment.