

EXTERNAL

AI Index: MDE 30/57/97

11 December 1997

Further information on UA 142/97 (MDE 30/28/97, 14 May 1997) and follow-ups (MDE 30/30/97, 27 May and MDE 30/36/97, 6 June) - Prisoner of conscience / Fear of ill-treatment / Torture / Medical concern

TUNISIA Abdel Moumen BELANES, student

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Prisoner of conscience Abdel Moumen Belanes began an unlimited hunger-strike on 8 December 1997 to protest at his continued detention, the denial of his right to communicate with his defence lawyers and the poor conditions of his detention. Amnesty International is concerned for his health and that he may be at risk of torture and ill-treatment. He has previously suffered such treatment when he has undertaken hunger-strikes.

Abdel Moumen Belanes announced his hunger-strike on 10 December in Tunis's appeal court. He was brought to court with Ali Jallouli and Bachir Abid (both out on bail) for the appeal hearing of a case for which all three had been previously detained as prisoners of conscience in 1995. The hearing was postponed to 17 December.

Abdel Moumen Belanes has been detained since 6 March 1997 and is serving a one-year prison sentence (imposed on 8 April 1997 and confirmed by the appeal court on 4 June 1997) on charges of disturbing public order. The charge was based on accusations by the authorities that during a previous period of imprisonment as a prisoner of conscience in 1996 he had said that Tunisian newspapers were full of pictures of the President and Ministers.

Since June his defence lawyers have not been allowed to visit him, in violation of Article 70 of the Tunisian *Code de Procédure Pénale* (Code of Penal Procedures), which stipulates that detainees must have access to their lawyers at all times.

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

- urging that prisoner of conscience Abdel Moumen Belanes be immediately and unconditionally released, and seeking assurances that in the meantime he is not subjected to torture and ill-treatment;
- urging that he be allowed immediate access to his defence lawyers, in compliance with internationally recognized human rights standards and with Tunisian law (Article 70 Tunisian *Code de Procédure Pénale*, Code of Penal Procedures).

**APPEALS TO:**

1) M. Abdallah Kallel  
Ministre de la Justice  
Ministère de la Justice  
31 Boulevard Bab Benat  
1006 Tunis  
Tunisie

**Faxes: + 216 1 568 106**

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

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

2) M. Ali Chaouch

2

Ministre de l'Intérieur  
Ministère de l'Intérieur  
Avenue Habib Bourguiba  
1001 Tunis  
Tunisie

**Faxes: + 216 1 346 624**

**Telegrams: Ministre Interieur, Tunis, Tunisie**

**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  
Tunis, Tunisia

**Faxes: +216 1 336 338** (if voice, say: *je voudrais envoyer un fax, s'il vous plaît*)

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 30 January 1998.