

EXTERNAL (for general distribution)

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UA 181/95 Fear of Torture/Ill-treatment

26 July 1995

ALGERIA Saghir BOUHADIDA , journalist and lecturer
Djamleddine FAHASSI, journalist

Saghir Bouhadida, a former journalist at the daily *al-Khabar* and currently assistant lecturer at the Institute of Social Sciences and at the Institute of Information and Communication in Algiers, was arrested by members of the security forces on 11 June 1995 in the Chevalier district of Algiers. He was arrested with two students at about 7 pm on his way home from the Institute of Social Sciences in the Hydra district. The two students were released after three days of incommunicado detention in an unknown location, where they were reportedly held blindfolded. To date his family and lawyer have not been able to obtain any information regarding his place of detention or reason for his arrest.

Djamaledine Fahassi, a journalist for the Algerian radio *Chaîne III*, is reported to have been arrested by members of the security forces near his home in the al-Harrache district of Algiers on 6 May 1995. Despite repeated inquiries with the local authorities, his family has not been able to obtain any information on his whereabouts. He had been previously arrested at the beginning of 1992 and held in a military camp in Ain Salah in the desert in the south of Algeria for six weeks, and was then released without charge or trial. He was again arrested a few months later and sentenced to three months' imprisonment by the Military Court for writing an article in *al-Forkane* newspaper, an Islamist newspaper which has since been banned, in which he had criticized the Algerian military.

Amnesty International believes both men could be at risk of torture and ill-treatment.

BACKGROUND INFORMATION

The practice by the Algerian security forces of detaining those arrested in illegally prolonged incommunicado detention is widespread. Detainees are often tortured and ill-treated while held incommunicado in Police, Gendarmerie and Military Security centres, and their families are never informed of their relative's place of detention while they are held in incommunicado detention, which is often illegally prolonged for weeks and even months. It is during this period, when detainees are held completely cut off from the outside world without access to their families, lawyer and medical care, that detainees are most at risk of torture, ill-treatment and "disappearance". When detainees are finally brought before the courts, complaints of torture by detainees and their lawyers are not investigated; to date no independent investigation has been carried out into the numerous cases raised. In addition, scores of people who were arrested as far back as 1993 have "disappeared" and remain unaccounted for; others have been extrajudicially executed and later reported by official sources to have been killed in armed clashes.

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

- expressing your concern that Saghir Bouhadida and Djamleddine Fahassi are being held in incommunicado detention without access to their families and

lawyers, and stressing that Article 9(3) of the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights, ICCPR, to which Algeria is a state party, states that: "Anyone arrested or detained on a criminal charge shall be brought promptly before a judge...";

- urging the Algerian authorities to clarify their whereabouts and legal status to their family, and to allow them immediate access to their families and lawyers, and to medical care if necessary;

- seeking assurances that they are being humanely treated, explaining that Amnesty International has repeatedly raised its concerns with the Algerian authorities about the widespread torture and ill-treatment of detainees held incommunicado by members of the security forces.

APPEALS TO

1) President

M. Liamine ZEROUAL
Président de l'Etat
Présidence de la République
El Mouradia
Alger
Algérie

Telegrams: Président Zéroual, Alger, Algérie

Telexes: 66044/66088

Faxes: + 213 2 60 96 18/66044/66088

Salutation: Monsieur le Président/Dear President

3) Minister of Interior

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

Telegrams: Ministre Chérif, Alger, Algérie

Telexes: 66341

Faxes: + 213 2 736106

Salutation: Monsieur le Ministre/Dear Minister

2) Minister of Justice

M. Mohamed ADAMI
Ministre de la Justice
Ministère de la Justice
8 Place Bir Hakem
El-Biar
Alger
Algérie

Telegrams: Ministre Adami, Alger, Algérie

Telexes: 61498

Faxes: + 213 2 796557

Salutation: Monsieur le Ministre/Dear Minister

PLEASE ALSO SEND COPIES OF YOUR APPEALS to the following Human Rights Organizations:

Observatoire national des droits de l'homme
Palais du Peuple

Avenue F. Roosevelt
Alger, Algérie
Faxes: + 213 2 601042

Ligue algérienne des droits de l'homme
40-42 Rue M'Hidi Larbi
Place Emir Abdelkader
Alger, Algérie

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 6 September 1995.