

EXTERNAL (for general distribution)

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Fear of Torture

22 December 1992

ALGERIA

Ahmed BENTCHIKOU

Amnesty International is concerned about the treatment of Ahmed Bentchikou, a 21-year-old builder's merchant, who was arrested on 29 November 1992 and has since been held incommunicado in *garde à vue* detention beyond the maximum 12-day-period allowed under recent Algerian anti-terrorist law. Amnesty International fears he may be at risk of ill-treatment or torture in incommunicado detention.

Ahmed Bentchikou and four elder brothers were summoned to the central police station (Commissariat Central) in Algiers at 9am on 29 November 1992. During the previous night police had searched the house, allegedly looking for a wanted man, but found nothing. The four brothers were allowed to leave, but Ahmed Bentchikou was detained and family members who have inquired since at the police station have not been told where he is being held and were not given any reason for his continued detention.

BACKGROUND INFORMATION

Since the state of emergency was declared in Algeria in February 1992, several thousand suspected supporters of Islamic opposition groups have been detained without charge or trial in internment camps and hundreds more have been arrested in government sweeps against suspected members of armed groups who were said to be responsible for the killing of nearly 200 members of the security forces since February this year. On 1 October 1992 a new anti-terrorist law was introduced, under which at least 1,200 people have been arrested to date. This law increased the maximum period of *garde à vue* detention (when a defendant is held incommunicado without access to his family or a lawyer) from 8 days to 12 days. Amnesty International has received reports of ill-treatment and torture of detainees and is concerned that incommunicado detention without access to family, lawyers or independent doctors creates conditions in which ill-treatment or torture arise.

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

- seeking information on the whereabouts and legal status of Ahmed Bentchikou;
- urging the Algerian authorities to ensure that Ahmed Bentchikou is allowed immediate access to his family and lawyer and to medical care if necessary;
- seeking assurances that he is not being ill-treated while he is being held incommunicado in *garde à vue* detention;

- urging the Algerian authorities to ensure that all those recently arrested are allowed prompt access to their families and lawyers and to medical care if necessary, in compliance with both Algerian and international laws.

APPEALS TO:

1) Minister of the Interior

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M. Mohammed HARDI
Ministre de l'Intérieur
Ministère de l'Intérieur et des collectivités locales
Alger
Algérie
Telegrams: Ministre de l'Intérieur Hardi, Alger, Algérie
Telexes: 66341
Faxes: 213 2 618802 / 213 2 645793
Salutation: Excellence / Your Excellency

2) President of the High Council of State

M. Ali KAFI
Président du Haut Comité d'Etat
Palais du Gouvernement
Alger
Algérie
Telegrams: M. Ali KAFI, Président du Haut Comité d'Etat, Alger, Algérie
Telexes: 66217 / 66221 / 66044 / 66088
Salutation: Excellence / Your Excellency

3) Minister of Justice

M. Mohamed TEGUIA
Ministre de la Justice
Ministère de la Justice
8 rue de Khartoum
El-Biar, Alger
Algérie
Telegrams: Ministre de la Justice, TEGUIA, Alger, Algérie
Telexes: 61498
Faxes: 213 2 796557
Salutation: Excellence / Your Excellency

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 60 10 42

Ligue algérienne des droits de l'homme
40-42 rue Larbi ben M'Hidi
Alger

Algérie

Ligue algérienne pour la défense des droits de l'homme

19 rue Abane Ramdane

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 2 February 1993.