

PUBLIC

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Further information on UA 125/98 (MDE 28/24/98, 21 April 98) - Disappearance / Fear of refoulement

ALGERIA Mohamed Naceur el-Hani, lawyer, aged 29

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Mohamed Naceur el-Hani was released from detention by the Tunisian authorities on 25 April 1998, 10 days after being handed over to them by Algerian security forces. He has now rejoined his wife and two-year-old son at their home near the capital, Tunis.

Mohamed Naceur el-Hani, a Tunisian lawyer, was abducted from his home in Algeria on 15 April by unidentified men in plain clothes, believed to be Algerian security forces, and taken to the Tunisian Interior Ministry in Tunis the following day. No reason was given for his arrest.

During the first five days of his detention he was beaten during interrogation. Following that, as a possible result of the response by the urgent action network, his harsh treatment stopped. The officer in charge explained that this was because the human rights situation in Tunisia had improved.

On 23 April, he was shown a summons relating to the four-month jail sentence he served in Tunisia in 1992 for belonging to an unauthorised association -- Jeunesse Scolaire, a student union -- and was told that this was his "only problem". He was also criticized for residing in Algeria since 1992 and for requesting refugee status from the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR).

Thanks to all who sent appeals on behalf of Mohamed Naceur el-Hani. No further action is required by the UA network though Amnesty International will continue to monitor his safe-keeping in Tunisia.