

EXTERNAL

AI Index: MDE 29/09/97

UA 388/97 "Disappearance"/Fear of torture and ill-treatment/Legal concern/possible prisoners of conscience 10 December 1997

MOROCCO/WESTERN SAHARA Ali Salem Mohamed Salem El Mami, (*alias* Tamek), born in 1974
Youssef Abderrahman

Amnesty International has been informed that Ali Salem Mohamed Salem El Mami (*alias* Tamek) and Youssef Abderrahman were arrested on 2 December 1997, in Dakhla, Western Sahara, by members of the Moroccan security forces. They were reportedly arrested for their support of the *Frente Popular para la Liberación de Saguia el Hamra y Río de Oro* (Polisario Front), a movement seeking the independence of Western Sahara. Their families have no information concerning their whereabouts or legal status. It is feared they may be at risk of torture and ill-treatment during their secret detention.

BACKGROUND INFORMATION

During the past few years dozens of alleged or suspected supporters of the Polisario Front have been held in secret detention during which time some have reportedly been ill-treated and tortured. Although Moroccan law limits *garde à vue* (incommunicado) detention to 48 hours, this law is routinely violated in Western Sahara.

Ali Salem Mohamed Salem El Mami was previously arrested in 1992 and sentenced, with four others, to five years' imprisonment for attempting to flee Western Sahara. The Polisario Front has its support base in refugee camps in Algeria. Their trial violated international standards for fair trials.

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

- expressing concern at the "disappearance" of Ali Salem Mohamed Salem El Mami (*alias* Tamek) and Youssef Abderrahman, following their arrest on 2 December 1997;
- expressing concern that they may be at risk of torture and ill-treatment whilst held in secret detention, and asking that they be allowed immediate access to their families, lawyers and independent medical assistance if necessary;
- urging that they be immediately and unconditionally released if they are held for the non-violent expression of their beliefs.

1) Minister of the Interior

M. Driss BASRI

Ministre de l'Intérieur

Ministère de l'Intérieur

Quartier Administratif

Rabat

Morocco

Telegrams: Minister Driss, Rabat, Morocco

Telex: 36731

Faxes: +212 7 76 20 56/76 64 89/76 68 61

Salutation: Excellence/Your Excellency

2) Minister of Justice

M. Omar Azziman

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Ministre de la Justice
Ministère de la Justice
Rue Beyrouth
Rabat, Morocco

Telegrams: Ministre Azziman, Rabat, Morocco

Faxes: +212 7 738 940/723 710

Salutation: Excellence/Your Excellency

COPIES TO:

The president of the Consultative Council for Human Rights (Official Human Rights Body):

M. Driss Dahak

Président du Conseil Consultatif des Droits de l'Homme (CCDH)

Place des Chouhada, B.P. 1341

Rabat

Morocco

Faxes: +212 7 726856

and to diplomatic representatives of MOROCCO/WESTERN SAHARA accredited to your country.

PLEASE SEND APPEALS IMMEDIATELY. Check with the International Secretariat, or your section office, if sending appeals after 21 January 1998.