

EXTERNAL (for general distribution)

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Fear of Torture

20 February 1992

TUNISIA:

Noureddine MASDI

Amnesty International is gravely concerned for the safety of a Tunisian member of the illegal Islamic movement of Hizb al-Nahda (Renaissance party). Noureddine Masdi has not been seen since the 27 January 1992 and the organization fears he is being tortured in incommunicado detention.

Noureddine Masdi was arrested at the beginning of October 1991 and held at Nabeul Police Station where he was allegedly tortured. He came for trial before the Court of First Instance at Grombalia in December 1991 but was released because of an error in a police statement which gave the arrest date as 22 November 1991, although the police chief's signature is dated 15 November 1991. He was rearrested on 24 January 1992, reportedly tortured by the "poulet rôti" method (the position whereby the detainee is suspended from a stick like a chicken on a spit and then, usually, beaten) and released two days later with a summons to return to the police station on 27 January 1992. He apparently returned to the police station and has not been seen since. Requests by family and lawyers for both information and access have been ignored by the Tunisian authorities.

BACKGROUND INFORMATION

At least 8,000 supporters of Hizb al-Nahda, have been arrested and detained over the last year. Most of these have been held in prolonged incommunicado detention. Arrest dates have been systematically falsified in order to make it appear that the legal 10-day limit of incommunicado *garde à vue* detention is being adhered to. Hundreds have been tortured and at least nine of these political detainees have died in circumstances that strongly suggest that they died under torture.

Noureddine Masdi may have been held at Nabeul Police Station during the time Faisal Barakat and Rachid Chammakhi were tortured to death, in October 1991. The Tunisian Government has stated that Faisal Barakat died in a road accident and Rachid Chammakhi died of liver failure. Amnesty International, however, has recently received eyewitness testimony that both men were seen prior to their deaths at Nabeul Police Station and that fellow detainees could hear the noise of beating and screaming coming from the interrogation chambers (see UA 352/91, MDE 30/25/91, 21 October 1991 and follow-up MDE 30/02/92, 10 January 1992 and UA 374/91, MDE 30/26/91, 4 November 1991 and follow-up MDE 30/01/92, 10 January 1992).

RECOMMENDED ACTION: Please send telegrams/telexes/faxes/express and airmail letters (in French or Arabic, if possible):

- expressing concern that Noureddine Masdi has not been seen since he reported to Nabeul Police Station on 27 January 1992 and that he may have been held in *garde à vue* detention for longer than the 10-day maximum limit;

- urging that his family and lawyers be allowed immediate access to him and that he receives

all necessary medical care;

- expressing concern at reports that Nouredine Masdi was severely tortured while being held at Nabeul Police Station in October 1991 and January 1992 and urging the Tunisian authorities to investigate these reports and ensure that those responsible for the torture be brought to justice;

- urging that Nouredine Masdi be immediately released unless he is brought to trial and charged with a recognizable criminal offence.

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APPEALS TO:

1) President:

Son Excellence
Président Zine El Abidine Ben Ali
Président de la République
Palais Présidentiel
Tunis/Carthage, Tunisie
**Telegrams: President Ben Ali, Tunis,
Tunisia**
Telexes: 14900 prpsa tn; 12163 ppsd tn
Faxes: 216 1 74 4721

Salutation: Excellence / Your Excellency

2) Minister of the Interior:

M. Abdallah Kallel
Ministre de l'Interieur
Ministère de l'Interieur
Avenue Habib Bourguiba
Tunis, Tunisie
**Telegrams: Ministre Interieur, Tunis,
Tunisia**
Telexes: 13662 sdap tn

Salutation: Excellence / Your Excellency

3) President of the Higher Council for Human Rights and Fundamental Liberties:

Ambassador Rachid Driss
Président du Comité Supérieur des Droits de l'homme et des Libertés Fondamentales
24 Rue Docteur Kalmet
Mutuelleville
Tunis, Tunisie
**Telegrams: Ambassador Rachid Driss, 24
rue Docteur Kalmet,
Mutuelleville, Tunis, Tunisie**
Faxes: 216 1 270646 or 216 1 796593

Salutation: Excellence / Dear President

COPIES TO:

4) First Presidential Counsellor for Human Rights:

M. Sadoq Chaâbane
Conseiller Présidentiel chargé des Droits de l'Homme
Palais Présidentiel
Carthage/Tunis
Tunisie
**Telegrams: Conseiller Présidentiel chargé
des Droits de l'Homme, Palais
Présidentiel, Carthage/Tunis,
Tunisia**
Faxes: 216 1 744721 or 742513

Salutation: Excellence / Your Excellency

5) Minister of Justice:

M. Abderrahim Zouari
Ministre de la Justice
Ministère de la Justice
Boulevard Bab Benat
Tunis, Tunisie
**Telegrams: Ministre Justice, Tunis,
Tunisia**
Faxes: 216 1 568 106

Salutation: Excellence / Your Excellency

6) Chief of Police Nabeul Police Station:

Chief of Police Nabeul Police Station
Nabeul
Tunisie
**Telegrams: Nabeul Chief of Police, Nabeul,
Tunisie**

Salutation: Monsieur / Dear Sir

Human Rights Organization:

Ligue Tunisienne pour la Défense des Droits de l'Homme

23 rue du Yemen

Tunis, Tunisia

Faxes: 216 1 795 466

and to diplomatic representatives of Tunisia in your country.

PLEASE SEND APPEALS IMMEDIATELY. Check with the International Secretariat or your section Office if sending appeals after 2 April 1992.