

EXTERNAL (for general distribution)

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~~Further information on UA 352/91 (MDE 30/25/91, 21 October 1991) and follow-up MDE 30/02/1992 of 10 January 1992 - Death in Custody~~

TUNISIA:Faisal Barakat

Amnesty International has received a sworn statement from a British Professor of Forensic Medicine which gives an expert opinion on the medical autopsy of Faisal Barakat. This appears to show that Faisal Barakat was killed as a result of systematic beating and torture.

In January 1992 Amnesty International received eye witness testimony that Faisal Barakat, an activist in the illegal Islamist movement *Hizb al-Nahda* (Renaissance party), was seen at Nabeul Police Station before his death. Witnesses stated that Faisal Barakat was beaten and tortured for four to five hours without a break on 8 October 1991.

The Tunisian Government responded to Amnesty International's demands for an investigation into the death in custody of Faisal Barakat by denying that he had ever been arrested. Government authorities have consistently stated that he died in a road accident.

Amnesty International has recently received a sworn statement from a British Professor of Forensic Medicine which analyses the autopsy report of Faisal Barakat. The forensic doctor's report states that "the pattern of injuries described in the autopsy report is inconsistent with the deceased having died in a road traffic accident".

It concludes that "[Faisal Barakat] died as a result of the forceful insertion of a foreign object at least 6 inches into the anus. Prior to his death he had been beaten about the soles of his feet and buttocks...the entire pattern of injury is that of a systematic physical assault and very strongly corroborates the allegation of ill-treatment and torture that has been made".

At least ten other deaths in circumstances suggesting that torture was the cause of death have been reported since April 1991. Amnesty International has called for independent, impartial investigations into each of these deaths in custody. None have so far been publicly investigated by the Tunisian authorities.

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

- expressing concern that no public inquiry has yet been set up into the circumstances of the death in custody of Faisal Barakat and the continual denial by the Tunisian authorities that he had ever been taken into custody;

- urging that an immediate investigation be set up into the death of Faisal Barakat

and that the findings be made public;

- urging that those responsible for his death be brought to justice and the family be compensated;

- urging that public and impartial investigations into the eleven recent deaths in custody be immediately held and that those found responsible be brought to justice.

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APPEALS TO:

1. President:

Son Excellence

Excellence / Your Excellency

Président Zine El Abidine Ben Ali

Président de la République

Palais Présidentiel

Tunis/Carthage, Tunisie

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2. Minister of the Interior:

M. Abdallah Kallel

Excellence / Your Excellency

Ministre de l'Intérieur

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Telegrams: Ministre Interieur, Tunis, Tunisia

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3. First Presidential Counsellor for Human Rights:

M. Sadok Chaabane

Excellence / Your Excellency

Conseiller Présidentiel chargé

des Droits de l'Homme

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4. Minister of Justice:

M. Abderrahim Zouari

Excellence / Your Excellency

Ministre de la Justice

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COPIES TO:

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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 15 April 1992.