

PUBLIC

AI Index: MDE 30/12/98

30 April 1998

Further information on UA 59/98 (MDE 30/05/98, 24 February 1998) and follow-up (MDE 30/06/98, 26 February 1998, MDE 30/07/98, 6 March 1998 and MDE 30/10/98, 13 March 1998) - Fear of torture or ill-treatment/ Fear of further possible arrests/ Prisoners of conscience

TUNISIA Qais OUISLATI

Noureddine BENTICHA

Ali JALLOULI

Lotfi HAMMAMMI

Taha SASSI

Jalal BOURAOUI

Chedli HAMMAMMI

Rachid TRABELSI

Bourham GASMI

Haikal MANNAL

Ridha OUISLATI

Habib HASNI

Hinda AAROUI (F)

Imen DEROUICHE (F)

Najib BACCOUCHI

Charged in absentia:Hamma HAMMAMMI, husband of Radhia NASRAOUI

Abdelmajid SAHRAOUI

Fahem BOUKADDOUS

Radhia NASRAOUI, Lawyer representing the above

New Name: Afef BEN ROUINA (F)

Amnesty International has received information concerning the arrest, on 24 April 1998, of Afef Ben Rouina. She is currently in incommunicado detention raising fears that she could be at risk of torture or ill-treatment -- a practice widely used against detainees during secret detention.

The arrest of Afef Ben Rouina is reported to be connected to a wave of arrests (see above names) that took place subsequent to student protests in Tunis and other cities in February, calling for better conditions.

Afef Ben Rouina was on the run when arrested but had, according to sources, already been charged in her absence. Charges against the accused include: belonging to a criminal and terrorist gang, holding unauthorized meetings, inciting rebellion, insulting the President, spreading false information aiming to disturb public order, defamation against the authorities and distributing leaflets. Amnesty International considers all the detainees to be prisoners of conscience.

The other detainees held in secret detention after their arrests were reportedly tortured. They were transferred to prison after being charged.

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

- expressing concern at the arrest of Afef Ben Rouina on 24 April 1998 and seeking assurances that she will be treated humanely;
- expressing concern that she is being held in secret detention and that she may be at risk of torture or ill-treatment;

- urging that she be allowed immediate access to her family, lawyer and medical care if necessary;
- expressing concern that some of those arrested are reported to have been ill-treated during their secret detention and calling for the allegations to be promptly, independently and impartially investigated;
- urging that the 16 above-named detainees, considered to be prisoners of conscience, be immediately and unconditionally released, and that the charges against the other four be dropped.

APPEALS TO:

Minister of Justice

M. Abdallah Kallel
Ministre de la Justice
Ministère de la Justice
31 Boulevard Bab Benat
1006 Tunis, Tunisia

Telegrams: Ministre Justice, Tunis, Tunisia

Faxes: + 216 1 568 106

Salutation: Monsieur le Ministre / Your Excellency

Minister of the Interior

M. Ali Chaouch
Ministre de l'Intérieur
Ministère de l'Intérieur
Avenue Habib Bourguiba
1001 Tunis, Tunisia

Telegrams: Ministre Intérieur, Tunis, Tunisia

Faxes: + 216 1 346 624

Salutation: Monsieur le Ministre / Your Excellency

COPIES TO:

Tunisian Human Rights League

Me Taoufik Bouderbala, Président
Ligue Tunisienne des Droits de l'Homme, LTDH
7 Rue Pierre Curie
Tunis, Tunisia

Tel/faxes: + 216 1 336 338

and to diplomatic representatives of TUNISIA accredited to your country.

PLEASE SEND APPEALS IMMEDIATELY. Check with the International Secretariat, or your section office, if sending appeals after 11 June 1998.