

14 May 2001

AI Index MDE 30/012/2001 - News Service Nr. 85

Tunisia:Néjib Hosni is released following campaign of solidarity

Néjib Hosni, a Tunisian lawyer and human rights activist, was released from El-Kef Prison on 12 May 2001. This follows a presidential pardon after nearly five months of imprisonment as a prisoner of conscience.

"Néjib Hosni's imprisonment enraged human rights defenders inside and outside Tunisia," Amnesty International said today. "The international campaign for his release has been a testament to global human rights solidarity."

Since his arrest, Amnesty International has campaigned relentlessly for his immediate and unconditional release. Soon after his release Néjib Hosni spoke to the organization and expressed his gratitude to all those who had campaigned so effectively on his behalf.

*Amnesty International remains concerned about the ongoing harassment of human rights defenders in Tunisia, which includes judicial proceedings against leading members of the *Ligue tunisienne des droits de l'homme* (LTDH) and the *Conseil national des libertés en Tunisie* (CNLT), as well as physical attacks on the leaders and activists of these and other civil associations. The organization calls on the Tunisian authorities to abide by international standards and end their campaign against human rights defenders.*

Background

Néjib Hosni was imprisoned in June 1994 on a trumped-up charge of forgery. After being sentenced without evidence in an unfair trial in 1996, to eight years in prison, he was conditionally released at the end of the same year following an international campaign of solidarity.

He was re-arrested in December 2000 and sentenced to 15 days in prison for "non-compliance" with a judicial decision which arbitrarily banned him from practising his profession as a lawyer for five years. Amnesty

International now expects the Tunisian authorities to allow Néjib Hosni to practice his profession as a lawyer without hindrance or harassment.

\ENDS

public document

For more information please call Amnesty International's press office in London, UK, on +44 20 7413 5566

Amnesty International, 1 Easton St., London WC1X 0DW web : <http://www.amnesty.org>