

EXTERNAL (for general distribution)

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Further information on UA 109/91 (MDE 30/13/91, 25 March 1991) - Fear of Torture in Prolonged Incommunicado Detention

TUNISIA:Sadiq Shourou

Mohammed Moncef Al Triqi
Abdelaziz Al Buzouadi
Mohammed Ben Salem

Amnesty International has learned that Mohammed Ben Salem was released on 26 March 1991. He was held incommunicado in prolonged garde à vue detention following his arrest on 24 February 1991. A former lecturer in the Faculty of Agriculture in Tunis University - now working as an engineer - and a member of the legislative council of Hizb al-Nahda (Renaissance), a non-recognized Islamic group, he had been detained along with other members or sympathizers of Hizb al-Nahda.

However, Sadiq Shourou, Mohammed Moncef Al Triqi and Abdelaziz Al Buzouadi remain incommunicado in garde à vue detention. Amnesty International is concerned that they may be at risk of torture or ill-treatment.

BACKGROUND INFORMATION

Sadiq Shourou, a lecturer in the Faculty of Medicine at Tunis University, was arrested on 23 February 1991. He is said to be a sympathiser of the non-recognized Islamic group Hizb al-Nahda (Renaissance).

Mohammed Moncef Al Triqi, Head of the Tunis section of the Association for the Protection of Human Rights and Public Liberties and a member of Hizb al-Nahda, was arrested on 17 February 1991.

Abdelaziz Al Buzouadi, a former teacher working as a journalist for Al-Fajr, the weekly newspaper of Hizb al-Nahda, was arrested on 23 February 1991.

The above-named have now been held incommunicado in garde à vue detention well beyond the maximum 10-day period permitted under Tunisian law. Moreover, Tunisian law states that garde à vue detention must be renewed by the Procureur de la République (State Prosecutor) after four days; there is no evidence that this condition was complied with in any of these cases. Their families and lawyers have sought information of their whereabouts and legal status from the police and the Ministry of Interior but have not succeeded in obtaining any information.

Amnesty International is concerned that these people may be at risk of torture or ill-treatment, especially in light of the numerous reports of torture and ill-treatment in garde à vue detention received over the past few months.

Since September 1990 several hundred supporters and suspected sympathizers of Hizb al-Nahda have been arrested, many of whom, especially those held in garde à vue detention beyond the 10-day legal period, have alleged that they were tortured or ill-treated in police custody.

FURTHER RECOMMENDED ACTION: Telegrams/telexes/faxes/express and airmail

letters in FRENCH OR ARABIC, if possible.

- welcoming the release of Mohammed Ben Salem but continuing to express concern that Mohammed Moncef Al Triqi, Sadiq Shourou and Abdelaziz Al Buzouadi remain in prolonged garde à vue incommunicado detention, and that they are at risk of torture or ill-treatment;

- asking the reason for their arrest and details of any charge or pending trial procedures against them;

- urging that, if they are not charged with a recognizably criminal offence and promptly brought to trial, they should be released;

- urging the government to reveal their whereabouts and to allow them prompt access to legal counsel, to their families, and to medical care, if necessary.

APPEALS TO:

Son Excellence
Président Zine El Abidine Ben Ali
Président de la République
Palais Présidentiel
Carthage
Tunis, Tunisia
Telegrams: President Ben Ali, Tunis, Tunisia
Telexes: 14900 PRPSA TN; 12163 PPSD TN
Faxes: +216 1 74 4721

M. Abdelhamid Escheikh
Ministre de l'Intérieur
Ministère de l'Intérieur
Place du Gouvernement
Tunis
Tunisia
Telegrams: Ministre Interieur, Tunis, Tunisia
Telexes: 13662 sdap TN

M. Chedli Neffati
Ministre de la Justice
Ministère de la Justice
Boulevard Bab Benat
Tunis
Tunisia
Telegrams: Ministre Justice, Tunis, Tunisia
Telexes: (via Ministre de l'Extérieur) 13000 MAET TN
Faxes: + 216 1 56 8106

COPIES TO: Diplomatic representatives of Tunisia in your country.

PLEASE ALSO SEND COPIES OF SOME OF YOUR APPEALS, FOR INFORMATION, TO:
Ligue Tunisienne pour la défense des droits de l'homme
1, rue Canada
Tunis
Tunisia

PLEASE SEND APPEALS IMMEDIATELY. Check with the International Secretariat, or your section office, if sending appeals after 15 May 1991.