

PUBLIC

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UA 232/00

Health co

**TUNISIATAoufik CHAIEB, 45, teacher**

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Prisoner of conscience Taoufik Chaieb has been on hunger strike since 10 July in protest at his imprisonment, and is reported to be gravely ill.

According to his wife, who visited him today, and his fellow detainees at the 9 Avril Prison in Tunis, he can no longer stand up, he cannot move one of his legs and he is suffering from tachycardia (abnormally rapid heartbeat).

Taoufik Chaieb, who is married with four children aged 10 to 15, was first sentenced *in absentia* to 14 years' imprisonment in the early '90s. He was arrested in August 1996 and was tried three times on the same charges (belonging to an unauthorized association, though to be the unauthorized Islamist group *al-Nahda*, and holding meetings without authorization) and sentenced to a total of eight and half years' imprisonment. In each case he received an additional sentence of five years' "administrative control", under which he would have to report at a police station every day, to begin upon his release from prison.

Amnesty International considers Taoufik Chaieb a prisoner of conscience, who has not in any way used or advocated violence. The organization is concerned that Taoufik Chaieb, who has been imprisoned because he supports an unauthorized political group, has been sentenced after trials which did not meet international standards for fair trial. In particular, he was convicted of the same charges in three separate trials: under the internationally recognised principle of double jeopardy, no one may be tried twice for the same offence.

Taoufik Chaieb had already been on hunger strike for several weeks in May 2000 (see UA 130/00, 23 May 2000, MDE 30/11/00, and follow-ups, 7 June 2000, MDE 30/12/00; 12 June 2000, MDE 30/13/00)

#### **BACKGROUND INFORMATION**

There are up to 1000 political prisoners in Tunisia, most of them prisoners of conscience, imprisoned because of their known or suspected links with unauthorized Islamist political groups. The vast majority of these prisoners have been sentenced after unfair trials and several have been tried and sentenced more than once on similar charges.

Prison conditions in Tunisia fall short of minimum adequate standards. Hygiene is extremely poor, and prisoners rarely have access to showers and washing facilities. Cells are overcrowded, with most prisoners forced to share beds or sleep on the floor. Contagious diseases, particularly scabies, are widespread, and prisoners do not have access to adequate medical care.

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

- expressing concern about the health of prisoner of conscience Taoufik Chaieb and calling for him to be immediately and unconditionally released.

#### **APPEALS TO:**

Minister of the Interior

M. Abdallah KALLEL

Ministre de l'Intérieur

Ministère de l'Intérieur

Avenue Habib Bourguiba

2

1001 Tunis, Tunisia

**Telegrams: Ministre Interieur, Tunis, Tunisia**

**Faxes: + 216 1 340 888**

**e-mail: mint@ministeres.tn**

**Salutation: Monsieur le Ministre / Your Excellency**

Presidential Councillor for Human Rights

M. Dali JAZI

Conseiller Spécial auprès du Président de la République,  
chargé des droits de l'homme

Palais Présidentiel

Tunis

Tunisia

**Fax: + 216 1 571314**

**Salutation: Monsieur le Conseiller / Your Excellency**

**COPIES TO:**

M. Afif Hendaoui

Ministre Délégué chargé des Droits de l'Homme

Bureau du Premier Ministre

Place du Gouvernement

La Kasbah

1006 Tunis

Tunisia

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 15 September 2000.