

EXTERNAL (for general distribution)

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UA 236/94 Possible prisoner of conscience / Fear of unfair trial 17 June 1994

TUNISIA

Najib HOSNI, lawyer and human rights activist

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Najib Hosni, a human rights lawyer from El Kef, was arrested on 15 June and is currently detained in El Kef Prison. He is apparently accused of falsifying a contract, but Amnesty International fears that he may be a prisoner of conscience, held because of his work in defending prisoners of conscience and other political prisoners. It also fears that he faces an unfair trial

Najib Hosni has over the past years been very active in the defence of prisoners of conscience accused of insulting the authorities, or of political activities on behalf of unauthorized political left-wing and Islamist opposition movements. He has also been active defending other civil liberties cases, such as individuals deprived of their passports on account of their, or their relatives' opinions or political activities. He is one of the defence lawyers for Moncef Marzouki, the former President of the Tunisian League for Human Rights detained as a prisoner of conscience since March 1994 (see UA 127/94, MDE 30/11/94, 30 March 1994 and follow-up).

Over the past year, Najib Hosni has been subjected to continuous harassment by the Tunisian authorities; following visits by international human rights observers, his office and house were put under police surveillance, his clients and staff were questioned by police, and his wife and children have been unable to obtain passports.

#### BACKGROUND INFORMATION

1994 has seen the human rights situation further deteriorate in Tunisia. Prisoners of conscience have been detained and imprisoned, and some were tortured during incommunicado detention. Women who recently signed a petition calling for the respect of freedom of expression have been interrogated and harassed, foreign journalists and observers have been expelled from Tunisia or denied access to the country, and some foreign newspapers have been banned since last April.

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

- expressing concern at the detention of Najib Hosni, who may be detained as a prisoner of conscience;
- urging the Tunisian authorities to provide clarification concerning his legal status and reasons for his detention;
- calling for his immediate and unconditional release if he has been detained solely on account of his work as a lawyer and human rights activist.

#### APPEALS TO:

**Salutation for all: Excellence / Your Excellency**

1) Minister of Justice  
M. Sadok Chaâbane  
Ministre de la Justice  
Ministère de la Justice  
Boulevard Bab Benat

Tunis, Tunisie

**Faxes: +216 1 568 106 or +216 1 567 070**

**Telexes: 13000 maet tn (via Ministère de l'Intérieur)**

**Telegrams: Ministre de la Justice Chaâbane, Tunis, Tunisie**

2) Minister of the Interior

M. Abdallah Kallal

Ministre de l'Intérieur

Ministère de l'Intérieur

Av Habib Bourguiba

Tunis, Tunisie

**faxes: +216 1 340888 or +216 1 348 365**

**telex: 13662 sdap tn**

3) Minister of Foreign Affairs

M. Habib Ben Yahia

Ministre des Affaires étrangères

Ministère des Affaires étrangères

Place du Gouvernement

La Kasbah

Tunis, Tunisie

**Faxes: +216 1 791005**

**Telexes: 14470 mafta tn, 14471 mafta tn, 14472 mafta tn**

**Telegrams: Ministre des Affaires étrangères Ben Yahia, Tunis, Tunisie**

**COPIES OF YOUR APPEALS TO:**

Ligue Tunisienne pour les Droits de l'Homme

21 Rue Imam al Bakri

TUNIS, Tunisie

M. Iadh Ouederni

Conseiller présidentiel pour les Droits de l'Homme

Attaché à la Présidence de la République

Palais Présidentiel

Tunis/Carthage, Tunisie

**faxes: +216 1 742 513 or +216 1 731 009**

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 29 July 1994.