

EXTERNAL

AI Index: MDE 30/18/97

10 April 1997

Further information on UA 208/96 (MDE 30/23/96, 22 August 1996) and follow-up (MDE 30/24/96, 27 August 1996, MDE 30/34/96, 10 October, MDE 30/11/97, 7 March 1997, MDE 30/14/97, 12 March, MDE 30/15/97, 19 March, MDE 30/16/97, 26 March, MDE 30/17/97, 2 April) - Fear of ill-treatment / Probable prisoners of conscience / Fear of arrest as POC / "Disappearance" / Prisoner of conscience / Health concern

TUNISIA Abdel Moumen BELANES, student

Amnesty International is becoming increasingly concerned for the health of prisoner of conscience Abdel Moumen Belanes, detained on 6 March 1997, who has been on hunger-strike since 17 March. He has reportedly still not received a medical examination, in spite of requests made by his defence lawyers.

There are also fears that Abdel Moumen Belanes, who was tortured during a previous period of detention as a prisoner of conscience at the end of 1995 and was apparently threatened with torture during secret detention in March 1997, may be subjected to further ill-treatment as a result of his hunger-strike. Prisoners on hunger-strike in Tunisia have often been punished by being held chained and undressed in solitary confinement.

Abdel Moumen Belanes was sentenced on 8 April 1997 to one year's imprisonment. He had been tried on 1 April on charges of disturbing public order. His lawyers have stated that they will be lodging an appeal against the verdict.

Amnesty International is concerned that the trial of Abdel Moumen Belanes was not conducted in accordance with international standards for fair trial. A request by the defence lawyers to cross-examine the only defence witness, a prison guard, was turned down by the court. The defence lawyers further stated, that in spite of repeated requests to the court, they were not provided with copies of statements made by the prison guard and the Director-General of the Prisons Administration, both of which were mentioned in the charge sheet.

Please continue action on behalf of Abdel Moumen Belanes. Further appeals should:

- continue to call for Abdel Moumen Belanes to be immediately and unconditionally released as a prisoner of conscience;
- express deep concern for his health, noting reports that he has not received a medical examination in spite of requests by his defence lawyers, and urging that an examination be allowed to take place immediately;
- seek assurances that he will not be subjected to any torture or ill-treatment;
- reiterate concern that the trial of Abdel Moumen Belanes was not held in accordance with international standards for fair trial.

APPEALS TO:

1) Minister of Justice
M. Abdallah Kallel
Ministre de la Justice
Ministère de la Justice
Boulevard Bab Benat
Tunis, Tunisia

Faxes: +216 1 568 106

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

Telegrams: Ministre de la Justice, Tunis, Tunisie
Salutation: Monsieur le Ministre / Your Excellency

2) Minister of the Interior

M. Mohamed Ben Rejeb

Ministre de l'Intérieur

Ministère de l'Intérieur

Av. Habib Bourguiba

Tunis, Tunisia

Fax: +216 1 340888

Telegrams: Ministre de l'Interieur, Tunis, Tunisia

Telex: 13662 sdap tn

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

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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 27 May 1997.