

EXTERNAL

AI Index: MDE 30/20/95

EXTRA 118/95

Legal concern

10 October 1995

TUNISIA Mohamed MOUADDA, leader of opposition political party

Amnesty International is seriously concerned at the arrest and incommunicado detention of Mohamed Mouadda, the leader of the *Mouvement des Démocrates Socialistes*, MDS (Movement of Democratic Socialists), a legal opposition party in Tunisia.

Mohamed Mouadda was arrested at his home at 11.45pm on 9 October 1995 by a group of officers of the Tunisian security forces, who searched his home for over an hour without showing any search warrant or any arrest warrant. Mohamed Mouadda's telephone was cut for several hours after his arrest, and at present his family has not been able to obtain any information on his place of detention or charges against him. However, media reports quoting Tunisian judicial sources refer to Mohamed Mouadda's arrest as being based on "...his secret and compromising relations with a foreign state..." .

Mohamed Mouadda's arrest occurred after the MDS sent a letter to the President of Tunisia on 21 September raising the party's concerns about the current political situation in Tunisia, including restrictions imposed by the Tunisian authorities on political activities. On 8 October, the Political Bureau of the MDS had also issued an open letter to the President of Tunisia and a communique raising the same concerns.

Amnesty International is concerned that Mohamed Mouadda may be held solely on account of his peaceful political activities, and furthermore it fears that he is at risk of unfair trial.

BACKGROUND INFORMATION

Arrests, detentions, torture and ill-treatment, imprisonment of prisoners of conscience, unfair trials and systematic harassment have been increasingly used in Tunisia to punish, intimidate and silence opposition political activists, government critics, human rights activists and others in Tunisia over the past few years.

Amnesty International has continued to document and condemn such human rights violations in Tunisia, and to call on the Tunisian authorities to take concrete steps to put end to such practices. However, despite the Tunisian Government's rhetoric about its commitment to respecting human rights, no concrete action has been taken to address these concerns.

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

- expressing concern at the arrest and incommunicado detention of Mohamed Mouadda;
- calling on the authorities to immediately inform his family of his place of detention and of any charges against him, and to allow him access to his lawyer and relatives;
- seeking assurances that he is being treated humanely in accordance with international standards for the treatment of detainees;
- urging that he be immediately and unconditionally released if he is being held solely on account of his peaceful political activities;
- urging that if he is to be brought to trial, this be done in accordance with international standards for fair trial.

APPEALS TO:1) Minister of Justice

M. Sadok Chaâbane
 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 Chaâbane, Tunis, Tunisie

Salutation: Monsieur le Ministre / Your Excellency

2) Minister of Foreign Affairs

M. Habib Ben Yahia
 Ministre des Affaires étrangères
 Ministère des Affaires étrangères
 Place du Gouvernement
 La Kasbah, Tunis, Tunisia

Faxes: + 216 1 562 378 (via Bureau du Premier Ministre)

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

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

Salutation: Monsieur le Ministre / Your Excellency

COPIES TO:Tunisian Human Rights League

Me Taoufik Bouderbala, Président

Ligue Tunisienne des Droits de l'Homme, LTDH

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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 15 November 1995.