

PUBLIC

AI Index: MDE 30/23/00

2 October 2000

Further information on UA 297/00 (MDE 30/22/00, 26 September 2000) - Health concern

TUNISIA Fathi Karraoud
 Abdelatif Bouhajila
 Yassine Ben Zarti
 Ahmed Amari
 Zuhair Yacoub
 Abdallah Drissa
 Noureddine Amdouni
 At least 10 others

New name: Soufiane Hammami

Hunger striker Abdelatif Bouhajila has declared that he will stop eating and drinking altogether until his lawyers are allowed to meet with him. He has been on hunger strike for 36 days, but until now he had been taking sugar water. If he stops drinking he could die within days.

He made the announcement during a 29 September trial hearing. He was too weak to stand, and fainted in court.

After 40 days on hunger strike prisoners risk permanent damage to their health, though they may live another few weeks after this turning point. While the striker's mental faculties can remain sharp, a number of physical problems may arise, including hearing loss, deteriorating eyesight and kidney problems.

Yassine Ben Zerti was not able to walk and had to be supported by two policemen in court. Another of Bouhajila's co-defendants, Soufiane Hammami, is now known to have been on hunger-strike since 4 September.

One of the prisoners named above, Ahmed Amari, has stopped his hunger strike. All the rest are continuing.

Amnesty International has learned that the group of prisoners in Tunis protesting at detention conditions, including Noureddine Amdouni and Abdallah Drissa, have been transferred to other prisons, known for their harsh regimes.

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

- expressing concern about the health of the prisoners named above;
- calling for Abdelatif Bouhajila to be given immediate access to his lawyers;
- calling for all prisoners on hunger strike to be placed under constant medical surveillance.

APPEALS TO:

Minister of the Interior
M. Abdallah KALLEL
Ministre de l'Intérieur
Ministère de l'Intérieur
Avenue Habib Bourguiba
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,

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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 13 November 2000.