

PUBLIC

AI Index: MDE 30/26/00

30 October 2000

Further information on UA 297/00 (MDE 30/22/00, 26 September 2000) and follow-ups (MDE 30/23/00, 2 October 2000; MDE 30/24/00, 12 October; MDE 30/25/00, 19 October 2000) - Health concern / Ill-treatment

TUNISIAFathi Karraoud

Abdelatif Bouhajila

Yacine Ben Zarti

Zuhair Yacoub

Abdallah Drissa

Noureddine Amdouni

Soufiane Hammami

Bashir Boujenah

Choukri Gargouri

Maher al-Khalsi

More than 50 others

New name: Lotfi Ferhati

Concern is mounting for the Tunisian prisoners on hunger strike, some of whom have not eaten for up to 64 days and are suffering severe health problems.

Fathi Kararoud, who has been on hunger strike since 3 September, was unable to walk and could hardly speak when he appeared in court on 27 October.

Abdallah Drissa, who has not eaten since 4 September, was hospitalised for one day on 24 October. When his family tried to visit him in prison on 27 October, they were refused access. They were told that his blood pressure had fallen below 8, and his pulse below 40.

Abdelatif Bouhajila's family were refused permission to visit him in prison on 24 October. Three days later, his lawyer was prevented from seeing him, even though she had a valid visiting permit issued by the competent judiciary authorities. He has been on hunger strike since 28 August and is apparently confined to a wheel chair. He has reportedly been ill-treated while on hunger strike.

The families of other prisoners on hunger strike, including Yacine Ben Zarti and Maher Khalsi, have also been refused permission to visit. Other detainees continue to join in the hunger strike, including Lotfi Ferhati, who began his hunger strike at the beginning of October.

On 28 October at least seven female relatives of the prisoners were arrested as they sought to raise the issue with the general assembly of the Tunisian Human Rights League (LTDH). They were taken to a nearby police station, where they were interrogated and made to sign interrogation records before being released.

At the end of its general assembly on 29 October, the LTDH called on the authorities to release the prisoners as a matter of priority, and to declare a general amnesty for the about 1000 prisoners of conscience detained in Tunisian prisons.

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

- expressing concern about the health of the prisoners on hunger strike, calling for them to be kept under medical surveillance, to be given appropriate medical care, and to be granted prompt and regular access to their families and lawyers;
- calling for all prisoners on hunger strike to be treated humanely, urging that they are not subjected to beatings, ill-treatment and other cruel, inhuman or degrading treatment.

APPEALS TO:

Minister of the Interior

M. Abdallah KALLEL

Ministre de l'Intérieur

Ministère de l'Intérieur

Avenue Habib Bourguiba

1001 Tunis, Tunisia

Telegram: Ministre Interieur, Tunis, Tunisia

Fax: + 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 11 December 2000.