

PUBLIC

AI Index: MDE 30/27/98

10 December 1998

Further information on UA 59/98 (MDE 30/05/98, 24 February 1998) and follow-up (MDE 30/06/98, 26 February 1998, MDE 30/07/98, 6 March 1998, MDE 30/10/98, 13 March 1998, MDE 30/12/98, 30 April 1998 and MDE 30/17/98, 25 June 1998)
- Health concern / Prisoners of conscience

TUNISIA	Qais OUISLATI	Noureddine BENTICHA
	Ali JALLOULI	Chedli HAMMAMI
	Lotfi HAMMAMI	Taha SASSI
Jalal BOURAOUI	Haikal MANNAL	
Rachid TRABELSI	Bourham GASMI	
Ridha OUISLATI	Habib HASNI	
Hinda AAROUI (f)	Imen DEROUCHE (f)	
Najib BACCOUCHI	Afef BEN ROUINA (f)	

Charged in absentia: Hamma HAMMAMI, husband of Radhia NASRAOUI (below)
Abdelmajid SAHRAOUI
Fahem BOUKADDOUS
Radhia NASRAOUI, Lawyer representing the above

The 16 above-named detainees, most of them students, have now been on hunger-strike since 1 December 1998 in protest at their continued detention. Some of them are now reported to be seriously ill.

In early December, Lotfi Hammami and Najib Baccouchi were transferred from a prison in Tunis, the capital, to Borj al-Roumi prison in the north of the country where they have been placed in damp, cold cells. These conditions have apparently worsened the already poor state of health of Lotfi Hammami. Najib Baccouchi is reported to have been in the prison hospital with abnormally low blood pressure (hypotension) and, according to his lawyer, is so weak that he is having difficulty speaking. Bourham Gasmi is reported to be seriously ill and to be vomiting blood as a result of a stomach ulcer.

The detainees were arrested between February and April 1998 in connection with student strikes calling for improvements in student conditions. They have been charged with: belonging to a criminal and terrorist gang, holding unauthorized meetings, inciting rebellion, spreading false information aiming to disturb public order, defamation against the authorities and distributing leaflets. Most of them have reportedly been ill-treated during incommunicado detention and Lotfi Hammami was seriously tortured during secret detention. They have been on hunger strike on a few occasions since being in prison, calling for their release.

The same charges have also been brought, in absentia, against the other four people named above. Hamma Hammani has gone into hiding and is being sought by police. Radhia Nasraoui and Abdelmajid Sahraoui are awaiting trial -- neither are allowed to leave Tunis. There is no further news concerning Fahem Boukaddous.

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

- expressing concern about the health of the 16 detainees named above and seeking assurances that they be given all necessary medical care;
- urging that they be immediately and unconditionally released as prisoners of conscience and that charges against the four others be dropped.

- reminding the government of Tunisia of its commitment to the Universal Declaration of Human Rights, in particular Article 5: "No one shall be subjected to torture or to cruel, inhuman or degrading treatment or punishment."

APPEALS TO:

If a voice answers a fax number please say: "je voudrais envoyer un fax, s'il vous plaît".

Minister of Justice

M. Abdallah Kallel
Ministre de la Justice
Ministère de la Justice
31 Boulevard Bab Benat
1006 Tunis, Tunisie

Telegrams: Ministre Justice, Tunis, Tunisie

Faxes: + 216 1 568 106

Salutation: Monsieur le Ministre / Your Excellency

Minister of the Interior

M. Ali Chaouch
Ministre de l'Intérieur
Ministère de l'Intérieur
Avenue Habib Bourguiba
1001 Tunis, Tunisie

Telegrams: Ministre Interieur, Tunis, Tunisie

Faxes: + 216 1 340 888

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

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 21 January 1998.

***"No one shall be subjected to torture or to cruel,
inhuman or degrading treatment or punishment"***

Article 5, Universal Declaration of Human Rights

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