

EXTERNAL

AI Index: MDE 30/34/97

4 June 1997

Further information on UA 149/97 (MDE 30/29/97, 27 May 1997) - Fear of torture/ill-treatment/Prisoner of conscience

TUNISIARachida BEN SALEM (f)

Amnesty International has learnt that prisoner of conscience Rachida Ben Salem was transferred on 31 May 1997 from the Ministry of the Interior in Tunis, where she had been held in incommunicado detention, to Mannouba women's prison, also in the capital.

She was brought before the *juge d'instruction* (investigating judge) on 2 June 1997, and was reportedly charged, together with at least five other individuals, with belonging to a criminal gang. This charge is increasingly being used against known or suspected supporters of unauthorized political opposition groups. It carries a heavier sentence than the charge of belonging to or supporting an unauthorized association, which was previously more commonly used against political opponents.

Rachida Ben Salem was reportedly not subjected to ill-treatment during her incommunicado detention in the Ministry of the Interior. However, she was allegedly insulted and had her hair pulled during periods of interrogation in two police stations following her arrest.

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

- calling for the immediate and unconditional release of Rachida Ben Salem as a prisoner of conscience;
- expressing concern that she was reportedly subjected to ill-treatment in two police stations prior to her detention in the Ministry of the Interior, and urging that she not be subjected to further ill-treatment.

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
Faxes: + 216 1 336 338

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 16 July 1997.