

EXTERNAL

AI Index: MDE 30/45/97

26 August 1997

Further information on UA 149/97 (MDE 30/29/97, 27 May 1997) and follow-up (MDE 30/34/97, 4 June 1997) - Fear of torture / Ill-treatment / Prisoner of Conscience

TUNISIA Rachida BEN SALEM

Amnesty International has learned that the trial, to last one day, of prisoner of conscience Rachida Ben Salem is due to take place on 28 August 1997. She is charged with belonging to an unauthorised association (the charge of belonging to a criminal gang has been dropped).

Rachida Ben Salem was arrested on 18 May with her two daughters (aged five and seven) near the Libyan border. She was reportedly intending to cross into Libya, from where she was hoping to journey to join her husband, a political refugee in Holland. She was held in incommunicado detention in the Ministry of the Interior in Tunis until 31 May before being transferred to Mannouba Women's Prison, also in the capital. She was reportedly insulted and had her hair pulled during her secret detention in the police station immediately following her arrest.

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

- calling for Rachida Ben Salem's trial to be held in full accordance with international standards for fair trial;
- expressing concern that Rachida Ben Salem was arrested and detained as a result of her desire to leave Tunisia in order to flee persecution and reminding the Tunisian authorities that the right to leave one's country is guaranteed by Article 13 of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights;
- reiterating that Rachida Ben Salem is a prisoner of conscience and calling for her immediate and unconditional release;
- expressing concern at allegations that Rachida Ben Salem was ill-treated during secret detention in police custody, and urging that these allegations be promptly, impartially and independently investigated and 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

Telegrams: Ministre de la Justice, Tunis, Tunisie
Telexes: 13000 maet tn (via Ministère de l'Intérieur)
Faxes: +216 1 568 106
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

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Telegrams: Ministre de l'Interieur, Tunis, Tunisia
Telexes: 13662 sdap tn
Faxes: +216 1 340888
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.