

EXTERNAL

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EXTRA 128/97

Prisoner of Conscience / Health Concern

30 September 1997

TUNISIA Khémais Ksila, age 41, human rights defender

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Amnesty International is gravely concerned at the arrest in the afternoon of 29 September 1997, of Khémais Ksila, Vice-President of the *Ligue Tunisienne des Droits de l'Homme* (LTDH), Tunisian Human Rights League.

Khémais Ksila, who is married with three children, was arrested at his home in Tunis after returning from the LTDH office where he had begun a hunger-strike. On his return home he was accompanied by a group of friends because he already felt himself to be at risk of arrest. When his friends left, plainclothes members of the security forces arrested him, after refusing to show any arrest warrant to him and his family.

Earlier that day he had issued a public statement, announcing that he was starting an unlimited hunger-strike in protest at restrictions imposed on him by the Tunisian authorities and at the human rights situation in the country. Khémais Ksila is diabetic and has to take medication regularly, and there are concerns that his health will deteriorate as a result of his hunger-strike.

Khémais Ksila had his passport confiscated in August 1996 and was prevented from participating in human rights activities outside Tunisia. He has complained that he has been subjected to harassment, which has included his telephone line being intercepted and disconnected at times.

#### BACKGROUND INFORMATION

Arrests, detentions, torture and ill-treatment, imprisonment of prisoners of conscience, unfair trials and systematic harassment have been increasingly used in Tunisia to punish, intimidate and silence opposition political activists, government critics, human rights activists and others in Tunisia over the past few years. Amnesty International has continued to document and condemn such human rights violations in Tunisia, and to call on the Tunisian authorities to take concrete steps to put an end to such practices.

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

- expressing deep concern at the arrest of Khémais Ksila and urging that he be immediately and unconditionally released as a prisoner of conscience;
- seeking assurances that while in detention he be treated humanely in accordance with international standards for the treatment of detainees, and urging that he be given immediate access to his family, his lawyers, and to the necessary medical care.

#### 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**

**Faxes: +216 1 568 106**

**Telexes: 13000 maet tn (via Ministère de l'Intérieur)**

**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

**Telegrams: Ministre de l'Interieur, Tunis, Tunisia**

**Faxes: +216 1 340888**

**Telexes: 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 30 October 1997.