

EXTERNAL

AI Index: MDE 30/62/97

22 December 1997

Further information on UA 122/97 (MDE 30/23/97, 29 April 1997) and follow-ups (MDE 30/40/97, 3 July, MDE 30/41/97, 9 July, MDE 30/43/97, 18 July and MDE 30/44/97, 22 July) - Prisoner of conscience / Health concern and new concern: Ill-treatment

TUNISIA Mohamed Mouadda, former leader of opposition political party

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Amnesty International is seriously concerned that Mohamed Mouadda, former leader of the *Mouvement des Démocrates Socialistes*, Movement of Social Democrats (MDS), was arrested on 19 December 1997 and again on 20 December and charged with 'conspiring to overthrow the government' and 'collaborating with foreign agents'. On 20 December he was released pending a court appearance in February. However, he is now under house arrest and his telephone has been cut off.

Mohamed Mouadda was arrested from his home in Tunis by members of the security forces at around 4.30pm on 19 December and was taken to the Ministry of the Interior. He was interrogated about a recent visit he made to Europe and was released after around five hours. He was reportedly ill-treated during this interrogation.

He was arrested again at around 8am on 20 December, and later that day he was brought before the *juge d'instruction* (examining magistrate) in Tunis and reportedly charged with 'conspiring to overthrow the government' and 'collaborating with foreign agents'. He was released pending a court appearance on 21 February. However, he has been put under house arrest, and his telephone line has been cut. Amnesty International believes that he is a prisoner of conscience, targeted solely because of his non-violent activities as an opponent of the government.

Mohamed Mouadda was previously imprisoned as a prisoner of conscience on 11 October 1995. He was sentenced in February 1996 to 11 years' imprisonment after an unfair trial on charges including threatening the external security of the state and intelligence with agents of a foreign power aimed at undermining Tunisia. He was conditionally released from prison on 30 December 1996.

After his release, Mohamed Mouadda was subjected to constant surveillance and harassment by the authorities. He was banned from political activities, his phone was cut off, he was prevented on a number of occasions from leaving his house and was also prevented from receiving visitors on several occasions. Mohamed Mouadda issued a public statement on 9 April, protesting at the human rights abuses he has suffered and at the increasing restrictions imposed by the authorities on political and civil liberties and the freedom of expression and information in the country. On 14 April, following the release of this statement, he was put under house arrest until 22 July.

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

- protesting at the house arrest imposed on Mohamed Mouadda and urging that the restrictions on him be immediately lifted and that he be allowed unconditional freedom of movement;
- urging that a full, independent and impartial inquiry be carried out into reports that Mohamed Mouadda was ill-treated during interrogation;

- calling for all human rights and political activists in Tunisia to be able to carry out their non-violent work free from fear of arrest and intimidation, in accordance with international human rights standards.

**APPEALS TO:**

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

**Faxes: + 216 1 568 106**

**Telegrams: Ministre Justice, Tunis, Tunisie**

**Salutation: Monsieur le Ministre / Your Excellency**

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

**Faxes: + 216 1 346 624**

**Telegrams: Ministre Interieur, Tunis, Tunisie**

**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** (if voice, say: *je voudrais envoyer un fax, s'il vous plaît*)

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 February 1998.