

PUBLIC

AI Index: MDE 30/011/2006

12 April 2006

UA 85/06 Fear for safety

TUNISIA Lasad Juhri (m), human rights defender

Human rights defender Lasad Juhri has been harassed and intimidated by the security forces since he became one of the founder members of a new organisation set up to bring torturers to justice. He has been seriously assaulted before, and tortured in custody, and Amnesty International believes he is in danger.

He was one of around eight human rights defenders and lawyers who became the first members of Torture Victims against Impunity in late March. Since then he has received two written orders to report to a police station, but refused to respond because the orders did not say exactly where or when he should report. On 10 April at 8pm, around 10 police officers came to his apartment to ask why he had refused to report to a police station and asked him to go with them. He refused to go and managed to close the door to his apartment. The police knocked violently at the door for a few minutes and then left. Lasad Juhri phoned several lawyers and human rights defenders, who came to his apartment and spent most of the night with him to witness any violations by the security forces. A marked police car is now parked in front of his apartment building.

At 5pm on 10 April, Lasad Juhri's 19-year-old son had been summoned to a police station in connection with his application for a passport. The police told him that his application had been rejected, asked him why his father had refused to present himself at a police station, and insulted him.

On 28 March, Lasad Juhri found that the steering mechanism of his car had been tampered with to make the driver lose control of the vehicle. He reported this to the police. The people who did this are believed to have been members of the security forces or people following their orders.

Lasad Juhri was jailed as a prisoner of conscience and released in 1998 after spending more than six years in prison for membership of the banned Islamist organization *Ennahda*. He was tortured on several occasions between 1991 and 1994. As a result his right leg is now partially paralysed, and he has to walk with a crutch.

In August 2002, after repeated harassment and intimidation by the security forces, he was assaulted by plainclothes policemen (see UA 271/02, MDE 30/016/2002, 29 August 2002). This came after he became a founder member of a new organisation, the *Association Internationale de Soutien aux Prisonniers Politiques* (International Association for the Support of Political Prisoners).

RECOMMENDED ACTION: Please send appeals to arrive as quickly as possible, in Arabic, French or English or your own language:

- expressing concern that Lasad Juhri and his family have been harassed and intimidated by the security forces, and that his car has been tampered with in a manner that could have been fatal;
- asking the authorities to conduct a full investigation, and bring those responsible to justice;
- calling on the authorities to put an immediate end to the harassment of lawyers and human rights defenders.

APPEALS TO:

Président M. Zine El Abidine Ben Ali
Président de la République

Palais Présidentiel
Tunis
Tunisie

Fax: +216 71 744 721
+216 71 731 009

Salutation: Your excellency/Excellence

M. Rafik Belhaj Kacem
Ministère de l'Intérieur et du Développement Local
Avenue Habib Bourguiba
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Tunisie

Fax: +216 71 340 888
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E-mail: mint@ministeres.tn

Salutation: Your excellency/Excellence

COPIES TO:

M. Zakaria Ben Mustapha (Président)
Official human rights body reporting to the president
Comité supérieur des droits de l'homme et des libertés fondamentales
85 ave de la Liberté
1002 Tunis-Belvédère
Tunisie

Fax: +216 71 796 593
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Salutation: Dear Sir

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 24 May 2006.