

7 June 2000

Further information on UA 130/00 (MDE 30/11/00, 23 May 2000) - Health Concern/Prisoners of Conscience

TUNISIA Abdelmoumen Belanes

Fahem Boukaddous
Taoufik Chaieb
Sadok Chourou
Samir Dillou
Fathi Karraoud
Abdellatif Mekki
Fathi al-Ouarghi
and dozens of others

The hunger strike movement that began in the 9 Avril Prison in Tunis on 28 May 2000 has now spread to various prisons throughout Tunisia. The hunger strike was started by prisoners who had been sentenced for alleged membership of *al-Nahda*, an unauthorized Islamist group. They are calling for the release of all political prisoners and for an end to political trials and to administrative surveillance of former political prisoners.

Those on hunger-strike in 9 Avril Prison include Youssef Belaidi, sentenced to 14 years' imprisonment in 1990, Mohamed Msidi, sentenced to 21 years' imprisonment and disabled as a result of torture, and Mondher al-Bejaoui, suffering from a heart condition. In Borj al-Roumi prison in Bizerte, prisoners on hunger strike include Daniel Zarrouq, a leading member of *al-Nahda* sentenced to 21 years' imprisonment and suffering from a stomach ulcer, Mourad al-Boughanmi sentenced to more than ten years' imprisonment and who suffers from hepatitis B, Ridha al-Albouchi, sentenced to 11 years' imprisonment and disabled as a consequence of torture. In Kasserine prison, prisoners on hunger strike include Mustafa al-Asfaoui, a veterinary doctor arrested in 1991 and Abdellatif Oueslati, sentenced to nine years' imprisonment and suffering from a stomach ulcer. Mohamed Trabelsi, detained in Sfax prison and sentenced to life imprisonment, is at risk of becoming blind.

Abdelmoumen Belanes has now been on hunger strike for 31 days.

Fahem Boukaddous ended his hunger strike after one week for medical reasons. Amnesty International has received confirmation that Sadok Chourou, Samir Dillou and Abdellatif Mekki are still on hunger strike but we have not been able to confirm if Taoufik Chaieb, Fathi Karraoud and Fathi al-Ouarghi are continuing their hunger strike.

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

- expressing concern about the health of the above mentioned prisoners and seeking assurances that all prisoners on hunger strike be given any necessary medical care;
- urging that prisoners of conscience Abdelmoumen Belanes and Fahem Boukaddous be immediately and unconditionally released and that all other prisoners, who are possible prisoners of conscience convicted in unfair trials, be released unless they are promptly retried in full accordance with international standards for fair trial.

APPEALS TO:

Minister of the Interior

M. Abdallah Kallel

Ministre de l'Intérieur

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COPIES TO:

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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 19 July 2000.