

EXTERNAL (for general distribution)

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further information on 81/92 (MDE 30/14/92, 6 March 1992) - Legal Concern/Medical Concern/Fear of Torture

Tunisia:Azzeddine Hadj Belgacem

Amnesty International is gravely concerned that Azzeddine Hadj Belgacem who continues to be held in prolonged incommunicado *garde à vue* detention might be at risk of losing his eyesight.

Azzeddine Hadj Belgacem suffers from a serious eye problem with progressive degeneration of the retina which is likely to deteriorate if not treated. Doctors he had consulted have noted the seriousness of his case and have recommended laser treatment. Should Azzeddine Hadj Belgacem not receive immediate medical treatment his condition could deteriorate and result in blindness.

Azzeddine Hadj Belgacem was arrested on the 7 February 1992 and is being held incommunicado *garde à vue* detention at Gabes Police Station beyond the maximum 10-day period allowed by Tunisian law. No charges have as yet been brought against him but it is thought his detention might be linked to his imprisonment in 1987 on charges of membership of an unauthorized organization. It is believed that his eye condition dates back from his time in prison in 1987.

Amnesty International is concerned that he is being severely tortured while being held incommunicado detention. Over the past 18 months, thousands of Tunisians belonging to unauthorized organizations have been arrested, tortured and held incommunicado for protracted periods.

FURTHER RECOMMENDED ACTION: Please send telegrams/telexes/faxes/express and airmail letters:

- expressing concern that Azzeddine Hadj Belgacem who suffers from detached retina is not receiving medical treatment and that his condition will drastically deteriorate should he not receive any treatment;
- urging that Azzeddine Hadj Belgacem be immediately released unless charged with a recognizably criminal offence and brought to trial;
- expressing concern that Azzeddine Hadj Belgacem is being held in illegally prolonged *garde à vue* detention

APPEALS TO:

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1) Minister of the Interior

M. Abdallah Kallel

Ministre de l'Intérieur

Ministère de l'Intérieur

Avenue Habib Bourguiba

Tunis, Tunisie

Telegrams: Ministre Interieur, Tunis, Tunisia

Telexes: 13662 sdap tn

Salutation: Excellence

2) Minister of Justice

M. Abderrahim Zouari

Ministre de la Justice

Ministère de la Justice

Boulevard Bab Benat

Tunis, Tunisie

Telegrams: Ministre Justice, Tunis, Tunisia

Faxes: 216 1 568 106

Salutation: Excellence / Your Excellency

3) Governor

M. Moncef el-Louati

Kasr al-Waliya

Gabes

Tunisia

Telegram: Sayyed al-Wali, Gabes, Tunisia

Salutation: Sayyed al-Wali

COPIES TO:

First Presidential Counsellor for Human Rights

M. Sadok Chaabane

Conseiller présidentiel chargé des droits de l'homme

Palais Présidentiel

Carthage/Tunis

Tunisie

Fax: 216 1 744721 or 742513

PLEASE ALSO SEND COPIES OF SOME OF YOUR APPEALS, FOR INFORMATION, TO:

Human Rights Organization

Ligue tunisienne de défense des droits de l'homme

23 rue du Yemen

Tunis, Tunisia

Fax: 216 1 795 466

and also to diplomatic representatives of Tunisia in your country.

PLEASE SEND APPEALS IMMEDIATELY. Check with the International Secretariat or your section Office if sending appeals after 7 May 1992.