

EXTERNAL

AI Index: MDE 30/19/97

10 April 1997

Further information on UA 271/95 (MDE 30/30/95, 8 December 1995) and follow-ups (MDE 30/02/96, 11 January 1996; MDE 30/08/96, 9 April; MDE 30/09/96, 23 April; MDE 30/10/96, 3 May; MDE 30/11/96, 13 May) - Possible prisoner of conscience / Torture / Health concern

TUNISIA Bachir ABID, student

Amnesty International has received information that Bachir Abid, a member of the executive bureau of the *Union générale des étudiants tunisiens*, UGET (Tunisian Students' General Union) was acquitted by the *Tribunal de première instance* (Court of the First Instance) in Sfax on 2 April 1997, and is at liberty.

He had been retried by the court on 19 March 1997 in connection with the 1994 case in which he had been sentenced *in absentia* to 10 months' imprisonment on charges including the possession of leaflets by the unauthorized *Parti communiste des ouvriers tunisiens*, PCOT (Tunisian Workers' Communist Party). According to Tunisian law, those who have been tried and sentenced *in absentia* have the right to retrial.

Bachir Abid had previously been detained as a prisoner of conscience for four months from November 1995 to March 1996, during which time he was reportedly tortured during a period of secret detention in the Ministry of Interior in November 1995. No investigations are known to have been carried out into these allegations.

No further action by the UA Network is requested, although participants may wish to send letters:

- welcoming the acquittal on 2 April 1997 of Bachir Abid;
- expressing concern that no investigation is known to have been carried out into allegations that Bachir Abid was reportedly tortured during a previous period of detention as a prisoner of conscience;
- calling for a full, independent and impartial investigation to be carried out into the torture allegations without delay.

1) Minister of Justice

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Salutation: Monsieur le Ministre / Your Excellency

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Salutation: Monsieur le Ministre / Your Excellency

COPIES TO:

Tunisian Human Rights League

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and to diplomatic representatives of Tunisia accredited to your country.