

EXTERNAL (for general distribution)

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DEATH IN CUSTODY

21 October 1991

TUNISIA:

Faisal BARAKAT

Amnesty International is gravely concerned at reports that Faisal Barakat, a 25-year old student at Tunis University, has died while he was held in garde à vue detention in police custody in the town of Nabeul. Amnesty International has received allegations that Faisal Barakat was tortured during garde à vue detention and that this may have caused his death.

Faisal Barakat, a 25-year-old student of maths and physics at Tunis University, was arrested between the 8 and 10 October 1991 from the place where he was hiding with four other men, and was held incommunicado in garde à vue detention. Around the 17 October 1991 his family was reportedly told by the Tunisian authorities that Faisal had died because of an accident. The family were given no further explanation. However, his family were given a medical certificate from Nabeul hospital dated 11 October 1991. The certificate stated that the result of the examination of the body of an unknown person showed concussion and bruises on various part of the body including the soles of the feet.

BACKGROUND INFORMATION

Faisal Barakat is a well-known member of the illegal Islamic movement Hizb al-Nahda and of the recently banned student union, the Union Generale Tunisienne des Etudiants, (UGTE). He had appeared in an interview on Tunisian television condemning the Tunisian Government for its handling of the events of 8 March 1991, when several students were reportedly killed or injured after clashes with the police. He subsequently went into hiding and was tried in absentia and sentenced to 6 months' imprisonment for offences including membership of an illegal organization. At the beginning of October 1991, his brother Jamal Barakat was arrested by the police reportedly as a means of putting pressure on Faisal to give himself up. His brother remains detained without charges.

During the past six months at least five individuals are reported to have died whilst held in garde à vue detention in Tunisia. Amnesty International has received numerous allegations that these people may have died as a result of torture. The organization has appealed to the Tunisian Government on each occasion seeking clarification on the circumstances of these deaths and asked to be informed of the results of any investigation carried out. The Tunisian authorities have not responded to these requests so far.

RECOMMENDED ACTION: Telegrams/telexes/faxes/express and airmail letters in FRENCH or ARABIC, if possible:

- expressing concern at the death in custody of Faisal Barakat;

- urging that a public inquiry be set up into the circumstances of his death, and that the findings be made public;

- urging that if the allegations of torture leading to his death are found to be true, those responsible be brought to justice and the family be compensated;

- urging that the findings of the investigations into the five recent deaths in custody be made public and those found responsible be brought to justice.

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APPEALS TO:

1. Son Excellence [Salutation: Excellence]

Président Zine El Abidine Ben Ali
Président de la République
Palais Présidentiel
Tunis/Carthage, Tunisie

Telegrams: President Ben Ali, Tunis, Tunisia

Telexes: 14900 prpsa tn; 12163 ppsd tn

Faxes: + 216 1 74 4721

2. M. Abdallah Kallel [Salutation: Excellence]

Ministre de l'Interieur
Ministère de l'Interieur
Place du Gouvernement
Tunis, Tunisie

Telegrams: Ministre Interieur, Tunis, Tunisia

Telexes: 13662 sdap tn

3. Ambassador Rachid Driss [Salutation: Ambassador]

Président du Comité Supérieur
des Droits de l'homme et des Libertés Fondamentales
24 Rue Docteur Kalmet
Mutuelleville
Tunis, Tunisie

**Telegrams: Ambassador Rachid Driss, 24 rue Docteur Kalmet, Mutuelleville,
Tunis, Tunisie**

Faxes: + 216 1 270646 or + 216 1 796593

4. M. Abderrahim Zouari [Salutation: Excellence]

Ministre de la Justice
Ministère de la Justice
Boulevard Bab Benat
Tunis, Tunisie

Telegrams: Ministre Justice, Tunis, Tunisia

Faxes: + 216 1 568 106

5. M. Habib Ben Yahia [Salutation: Excellence]

Ministre des Affaires Etrangères
Ministère des Affaires Etrangères
Place du Gouvernement

La Kasbah

Tunis, Tunisie

Telegrams: Ministre Affaires Etrangeres, Tunis, Tunisia

Telexes: 14470/1/2 mafta tn

COPIES TO:

Ligue Tunisienne pour la Défense des Droits de l'Homme

23 rue du Yemen

Tunis, Tunisia

Fax: + 216 1 795 466

and 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 5 December 1991.