

EXTERNAL (for general distribution)

AI Index: MDE 30/26/91

UA 374/91

DEATH IN CUSTODY

Distr: UA/SC  
4 November 1991

TUNISIA

Rachid Chammakhi

---

Amnesty International is gravely concerned at the recent death in custody of Rachid Chammakh. He was arrested on 24 October 1991 and held incommunicado; on 28 October 1991 the authorities notified his family that he had died from jaundice. The family was only allowed to see his body under strict police surveillance for a few minutes just before the burial the following day; the body reportedly bore signs of autopsy and scars on the face. No death certificate was given to the family. Amnesty International has received allegations that Rachid Chammakhi was tortured in detention and is concerned that he may have died as result of his treatment in detention.

#### BACKGROUND INFORMATION

Rachid Chammakhi, a 28-year old supporter of the illegal Islamic movement, Hizb al-Nahda, was sentenced in absentia to three months' imprisonment for distributing leaflets on 28 February 1991. He remained in hiding and on 15 July 1991 he undertook legal proceedings to contest his sentence; the retrial was set for 19 August 1991, but was postponed to 25 October 1991. On 23 October 1991 his wife was reportedly detained and ill-treated and his house and his sisters' houses were searched; he was arrested the following day at 6.30 am from his sister's house. The police returned to his home on 25 October to get some telephone numbers and on 26 October to look for a video recorder. On 28 October Rachid Chammakhi's father was called to the police station where he was told that his son had died from jaundice. The family spent the day trying to obtain permission to take Rachid's body home before the burial. On 29 October the body was carried to the family home by a police car escorted by five other police cars. It was only after the family insisted that the body was taken into the house for a few minutes under strict police surveillance. Police officers then escorted the body to the place of burial, where there was heavy presence of police forces. Amnesty International has received allegations that Rachid Chammakhi was tortured and ill-treated after his arrest and is concerned that he may have died as a result.

Rachid Chammakhi is at least the seventh political detainee to die in suspicious circumstances whilst held incommunicado in garde à vue detention within the past six months. Amnesty International has asked the Tunisian authorities to set up inquiries into the circumstances of each of these deaths in custody, to make public the findings, and to bring to justice anyone found responsible. So far the organization has received no formal clarification from the authorities on any of these deaths.

#### RECOMMENDED ACTION: Telegrams/telexes/faxes/express and airmail letters in French or Arabic, if possible:

- expressing concern at the death in custody of Rachid Chammakhi;
- 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 any investigations into the six recent deaths in custody

be made public and those found responsible be brought to justice.

page 2 of UA 374/91

**APPEALS TO: (in French or Arabic, if possible)**

- 1.**  
Son Excellence **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 **Excellence**  
Ministre de l'Interieur  
Ministère de l'Interieur  
Avenue Habib Bourguiba  
Tunis, Tunisie  
**Telegrams: Ministre Interieur, Tunis, Tunisia**  
**Telexes: 13662 sdap tn**
- 3.**  
Ambassador Rachid Driss **Ambassador**  
President du Comité Superieur 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, Tunisia**  
**Faxes: + 216 1 270646**  
**+ 216 1 796593**
- 4.**  
M. Sadoq Chaâbane **Excellence**  
Conseiller Présidentiel chargé des  
Droits de l'Homme  
Palais Présidentiel  
Carthage/Tunis, Tunisie  
**Telegrams: Conseiller Presidentiel Chaabane, Palais Presidentiel, Carthage, Tunisie**  
**Faxes: + 216 1 744721 or 742513**
- 5.**  
M. Abderrahim Zouari **Excellence** Ministre  
de la Justice  
Ministère de la Justice  
Boulevard Bab Benat  
Tunis, Tunisie  
**Telegrams: Ministre Justice, Tunis, Tunisia**  
**Faxes: + 216 1 568 106**
- 6.**  
M. Habib Ben Yahia **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:** Diplomatic representatives of Tunisia in your country.

**PLEASE ALSO SEND COPIES OF SOME OF YOUR APPEALS, FOR INFORMATION, TO:**  
Ligue Tunisienne pour la Défense des Droits de l'Homme

23 rue du Yemen  
Tunis, Tunisia

**Faxes: + 216 1 795 466**

**PLEASE SEND APPEALS IMMEDIATELY.** Check with the International Secretariat or your section Office if sending appeals after 16 December 1991.