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TUNISIA: AMNESTY INTERNATIONAL WELCOMES THE RELEASE OF HAMMA
HAMMAMI AND MOHAMED KILANI

Hamma Hammami and Mohamed Kilani, leading figures of the illegal *Parti communiste des ouvriers tunisiens*, PCOT (Tunisian Workers' Communist Party), were released yesterday, on the occasion of the eight anniversary of President Zine el Abidine Ben Ali's coming to power.

Amnesty International welcomes their release, but remains concerned that hundreds of others remain detained, and that serious human rights concerns have not yet been addressed.

Hamma Hammami, arrested in 1994, was serving a prison sentence of eight years for supporting the PCOT, holding unauthorized meetings, carrying a false ID card and assaulting the police officers who arrested him. Mohammed Kilani was imprisoned in 1995 on charges of supporting the PCOT and holding unauthorized meetings; he was later also charged with possessing a leaflet by the unauthorized Islamist opposition party, al-Nahda, and was sentenced to a total of seven years' imprisonment.

On 2 November Amnesty International issued a report entitled, *Repression thrives on impunity*, detailing its concerns about continuing human rights violations, including the imprisonment of prisoners of conscience, torture and ill-treatment during often illegally prolonged incommunicado detention, unfair trials, and deaths in custody.

This expanding circle of repression is increasingly used to silence, intimidate and punish political opponents, government critics, victims of human rights violations, their relatives, lawyers, human rights activists, journalists and others.

Amnesty International reiterates its call on the Tunisian authorities to release immediately and unconditionally all prisoners of conscience, retry or release political prisoners convicted in unfair trials, put an end to the imposition of administrative control on released prisoners of conscience, and investigate thoroughly cases of torture and ill-treatment during incommunicado detention and in prisons.

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