

UA 24/02

Prolonged**ALGERIA Boubaker KAMAS (m)**

Boubaker Kamas was arrested at his home in the eastern wilaya (province) of Constantine on 9 January. He has not been seen since, although by law he should have been brought before a court within 12 days, or released. Amnesty International fears that he may have "disappeared", and is seriously concerned for his safety.

Three men in plain clothes came to his house, in the town of El Khroub, at about 10pm. They introduced themselves as members of the *Sécurité militaire* (Military Security), a security service more formally known as the *Département du renseignement et sécurité* (Department of Information and Security), and arrested him. The authorities have denied all knowledge of his arrest, although his family have asked them repeatedly for information.

Boubaker Kamas is believed to have Islamist political sympathies. He served a five-year prison sentence in the 1990s after being convicted of belonging to a "terrorist" group, but is not known to have advocated or committed acts of violence. At the time of his conviction, the vast majority of trials where people were convicted of links with "terrorist" groups fell far short of international standards for fair trial.

BACKGROUND INFORMATION

Under Algerian law detainees may be held incommunicado for a maximum of 12 days (Article 51 of the Code of Penal Procedure). During this time their families and lawyers should be told where they are detained and allowed to communicate with them. However, in practice the provisions of this law are routinely violated, as those arrested are systematically held in secret detention, often much beyond the 12-day limit, until they are either brought before the examining magistrates or released without charge. It is while they are in secret detention in police, gendarmerie and military security centres that detainees are most at risk of torture, ill-treatment and "disappearance".

Some 4,000 people have "disappeared" after arrest by the security forces since 1993 and to date they remain unaccounted for. Their families have been searching to find out what has happened to them ever since. Despite repeated government promises to carry out investigations into "disappearances", not one individual case has been fully and independently investigated. "Disappearances" are still being reported, although the number has gone down considerably since 1998.

RECOMMENDED ACTION: Please send appeals to arrive as quickly as possible, in French, Arabic, English or your own language:

- expressing concern that Boubaker KAMAS, arrested on 9 January 2002, is still in secret detention;
- urging that he be granted immediate access to his family and lawyers and to any medical attention he requires;
- urging that he be immediately released unless he is charged with a recognizably criminal offence, in which cases he should be brought immediately before the judicial authorities, in compliance with Algerian law and international human rights treaties ratified by Algeria.

APPEALS TO:

Interior Minister
M. Yazid ZERHOUNI

Ministre de l'Intérieur
Ministère de l'Intérieur et
des Collectivités Locales
18 rue Docteur Saâdane
Alger
Algeria

Telegrams:Ministre Interieur, 18 Rue Docteur Saadane, Alger, Algeria

Faxes: + 213 21 736106

Salutation:Monsieur le Ministre / Your excellency

Minister of Justice

M. Ahmed OUYAHIA
Ministre de la Justice
Ministère de la Justice
8 Place Bir Hakem
El Biar
Alger
Algeria

Telegrams:Ministre Justice, 8 Place Bir Hakem, Alger, Algeria

Faxes: + 213 21 922195

Salutation:Monsieur le Ministre / Your excellency

Head of Military Security

Général-Major Mohamed Mediène
Département du renseignement et sécurité
Ministère de la Défense Nationale
BP 184
Alger-Gare
Alger
Algeria

Telegrams: General Mohamed Mediène, BP 184, Alger, Algeria

Salutation:Dear General Mediène

COPIES TO:

State Human Rights Institution reporting to the President

Maître Mustapha Farouk Kasentini
Commission nationale consultative de promotion et de protection des droits
de l'Homme
Palais du Peuple
Avenue Franklin Roosevelt
Alger
Algeria

Faxes: + 213 21 239005 / 239037 / 230311

and to diplomatic representatives of Algeria accredited to your country.

PLEASE SEND APPEALS IMMEDIATELY. Check with the International Secretariat,
or your section office, if sending appeals after 7 March 2002.