

INTERNAL

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To: Medical professionals
From: Medical Officer / Research Department - Middle East
Date: 7 November 1990

MEDICAL LETTER WRITING ACTION

Continuing hunger-strike MOROCCO

KEYWORDS

Theme: forcible feeding/hunger-strike/incommunicado detention

SUMMARY

Two Moroccan political prisoners, **Hassan AHARRAT** and **Noureddine JOUHARI**, remain in incommunicado detention in the basement of Averroes Hospital, Casablanca, more than five years after commencing a hunger-strike. Throughout this time they have been forcibly fed and are reported to have received injections of sedatives without consent. Conditions are said to be unhygienic with clothing, bedding and gastric tubing all being changed infrequently. A third prisoner from this group who finally gave up his hunger-strike in February 1990 has been returned to Kenitra prison where he is said to be making a slow recovery. Three prisoners who ended an eight month hunger-strike in Rabat in February 1990 are also said to be still showing the after-effects of their long period without food. AI is urging that those still on hunger-strike be permitted visits by family and legal counsel and that they receive any medical care they require from qualified medical personnel.

RECOMMENDED ACTIONS

Letters from medical professionals, preferably written Arabic, French, English or your own language, should be sent to at least one of the addresses below:

- expressing deep concern at continuing reports that Hassan Aharrat and Noureddine Jouhari are being held in basement rooms in Averroes Hospital bound to their beds with no natural light and in poor conditions (including infrequently changed bed linen, clothing and gastric tubing; minimal medical care being given by guards rather than medical personnel; and the injection of sedatives without the consent of the prisoners);
- urging that the prisoners be admitted to a normal ward of the hospital and that they be permitted to discuss their health with medical personnel able to act with clinical independence and that they be allowed visits by their families and lawyers;
- calling on the Moroccan authorities to find a humane solution to the prisoners' strike in order to prevent further risk of permanent damage to their health;
- urging the Moroccan Government to establish an independent inquiry into the complaints of inhuman treatment in Moroccan prisons which had led to this hunger-strike.

If you have written earlier on these cases you should mention this in your letters.

ADDRESSES

Minister of the Interior

M. Driss Basri
Ministre de l'Intérieur
Quartier Administratif
RABAT
Morocco

Minister of Public Health

M. Tayeb Benchehich
Ministre de la Santé Publique
335 Avenue Mohammed V
RABAT
Morocco

King of Morocco

Sa Majesté
Le Roi Hassan II
Palais Royal
RABAT
Morocco

Copies to:

Organisation Marocaine des Droits de l'Homme
24, avenue de France
Quartier Agdal
RABAT
Morocco

Comité de Coordination de l'Association et
la Ligue Marocaine des Droits de l'Homme
10, place des Alaouites
RABAT
Morocco

EXTERNAL

File Index: MDC 29/21/90
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MEDICAL CONCERN

**Continuing hunger-strike
MOROCCO**

Two Moroccan students remain on hunger-strike in the basement of a Casablanca hospital more than five years after first refusing food. For most of this period they have been forcibly fed by gastric tube. The two men, Hassan Tharrat and Nouredine Jouhari, began their hunger-strike in June 1985, in protest, in part, against lack of medical care following torture. According to Amnesty International's information, they are being kept incommunicado in separate basement rooms in Averroes Hospital in Casablanca in degrading conditions. The most recent reports available to Amnesty International suggest that both men are bound to their beds and left unwashed; clothing and bedding is said to be infrequently changed and the gastric tube used to feed the prisoners to be left in place for prolonged periods before changing. Their rooms are guarded and access to medical care is limited to whatever aid is provided by guards who, at least at until recent times, were reported to receive advice from doctors on any medical care necessary.

It is now six years since the families of Hassan Tharrat and Nouredine Jouhari have been permitted to see the prisoners who have been denied any social contact or access to lawyers throughout the period of the hunger-strike. Amnesty International considers that the isolation imposed on the two prisoners, exacerbated by the context of the hunger-strike and forcible feeding, constitutes a form of cruel, inhuman and degrading treatment or punishment. The organization is urging that the prisoners be granted access to family, lawyers and to doctors with clinical independence is calling on the Moroccan authorities to find a humane solution to the prisoners' hunger-strike in order to prevent further risk of permanent damage to their health. It is also urging the Moroccan Government to establish an independent inquiry into the complaints of inhuman treatment in Moroccan prisons which have led to the hunger-strike.

Moulay Tahar Douraidi, a prisoner who had been held with the other two, ended his hunger-strike in August 1989 after more than four years without voluntarily taking food. However, in December 1989 he went on strike again, stating that promises made by the authorities had not been kept. He ended his strike and was transferred to Kenitra Central Prison in February 1990. He is reported to be making a slow recovery.

Other hunger-strikers - Hassan Alami Bouti, Abdelfattah Boukourou, and Benabdessalem Abdelilah - who started to refuse food in Rabat in June 1989 and finished their hunger-strike in February 1990 were reported to be in extremely poor condition by the time they agreed to end their protest, with serious communication and perceptual problems. They are now believed to be in Kenitra prison and continue to show signs of compromised health. Currently, Hassan Alami Bouti is said to be unable to walk alone or to talk. His digestive system is said to be affected, and he has dental and eyesight problems. Abdelfattah Boukourou, who was already in hospital suffering from diabetes when he began the strike, is reported to suffer from disturbed sleep and impaired memory, and to walk with difficulty.

Abdelhaq Chbada, a fourth prisoner who also began a hunger-strike in June 1989, died on 19 August 1989 on the 64th day of his strike.