

EXTERNAL

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"Disappearance"/ Fear of torture/
Possible prisoner of conscience

28 April 1997

TUNISIA

Ahmed BERRAMILA

Rachid ENNAJAR

Monji SOUAB

Jilani HAMMAMI

- trade unionists

Four trade unionists, arrested in recent days, have "disappeared" in secret detention in Tunisia. Amnesty International considers them to be prisoners of conscience and fears for their safety.

All four men are members of the *Union générale des travailleurs tunisiens* (UGTT, Tunisian General Workers' Union). Rachid Ennajar, a member of the UGTT's agricultural workers' branch, was arrested on 21 April. He is also a member of the *Ligue tunisienne des droits de l'homme* (LTDH, Tunisian Human Rights League). Monji Souab, also a member of the LTDH, was arrested on 23 April, and Jilani Hammami, a member of the UGTT's post and telecommunications workers' branch, was arrested on 24 April. Ahmed Berramila, former deputy Secretary General of the union, was arrested on 26 April. He was suspended from the UGTT as a result of a letter sent by him and three other former members of its executive bureau to the head of the union concerning its internal affairs.

The four men were among seven trade unionists arrested between 21 and 26 April 1997 (the other three have since been released) in connection with the publication of a public appeal on 9 April 1997 signed by 202 Tunisian citizens, among them trade unionists, professionals, university lecturers, teachers, medical doctors, lawyers and journalists. Their appeal protested at increasing restrictions imposed by the authorities on political and civil liberties, freedom of expression and information and trade union rights in Tunisia and at the impact on Tunisian citizens of the country's deteriorating economic situation. The signatories called on the authorities to take the necessary measures to address this situation and to abide by international standards.

A further petition was issued by a number of trade unionists reiterating similar concerns.

BACKGROUND INFORMATION

Arrests, detentions, torture and ill-treatment, imprisonment of prisoners of conscience, unfair trials and systematic harassment have been increasingly used in Tunisia to punish, intimidate and silence opposition political activists, government critics, trade unionists and human rights activists and others in Tunisia over the past few years.

Amnesty International has continued to document and condemn such human rights violations in Tunisia, and to call on the Tunisian authorities to take concrete steps to put an end to such practices.

RECOMMENDED ACTION: Please send telegrams/telexes/faxes/express/airmail letters in French, Arabic, English or your own language:

- expressing concern at the "disappearance" of Rachid Ennajar, Monji Souab, Jilani Hammami and Ahmed Berramila following their arrest;
- seeking information about their current place of detention and legal status, and asking that they be allowed prompt access to their families, lawyers and to independent medical assistance if necessary;

- urging that they be immediately and unconditionally released as prisoners of conscience, held solely on account of the peaceful expression of their opinions.

APPEALS TO:

1) Minister of Justice

M. Abdallah Kallel
Ministre de la Justice
Ministère de la Justice
Boulevard Bab Benat
Tunis, Tunisia

Faxes: +216 1 568 106

Telexes: 13000 maet tn (via Ministère de l'Intérieur)

Telegrams: Ministre de la Justice, Tunis, Tunisie

Salutation: Monsieur le Ministre / Your Excellency

2) Minister of the Interior

M. Mohamed Ben Rejeb
Ministre de l'Intérieur
Ministère de l'Intérieur
Av. Habib Bourguiba
Tunis , Tunisia

Fax: +216 1 340888

Telegrams: Ministre de l'Interieur, Tunis, Tunisia

Telex: 13662 sdap tn

Salutation: Monsieur le Ministre / Your Excellency

COPIES TO:

Tunisian Human Rights League
Me Taoufik Bouderbala, Président
Ligue Tunisienne des Droits de l'Homme, LTDH
7 Rue Pierre Curie
TUNIS, Tunisia

Faxes: + 216 1 336 338

and to diplomatic representatives of Tunisia accredited to your country.

PLEASE SEND APPEALS IMMEDIATELY. Check with the International Secretariat, or your section office, if sending appeals after 15 June 1997.