

EXTERNAL

AI Index: MDE 30/47/96

17 December 1996

Further information (6) on UA 236/94 (MDE 30/18/94, 17 June 1994) and follow-ups MDE 30/21/94, 22 September 1994; MDE 30/17/95, 21 August 1995; MDE 30/29/95, 5 December 1995; MDE 30/01/96, 5 January 1996; MDE 30/38/96, 19 November 1996 - Fear of unfair trial / Legal concern / Torture / Fear of torture / Prisoner of conscience

TUNISIANajib Hosni, lawyer and human rights activist

Najib Hosni, lawyer and human rights defender, was released conditionally by the Tunisian authorities on 14 December.

Najib Hosni, arrested in June 1994, had been kept in pre-trial detention for 18 months during which time he was tortured for three days in November 1995 at the Ministry of the Interior (see follow-up UA MDE 30/29/95, 5 December 1995). On 3 January 1996, despite any convincing evidence, he was sentenced to eight years' imprisonment and suspended from practising law for seven years on charges of "forgery" (MDE 30/01/96, 5 January 1996). On 14 November, in a second case brought against him whilst in detention, he was acquitted of the charges of "conspiracy" and "terrorism" for lack of proof (see MDE 30/38/96, 19 November 1996).

During over two years in prison, Najib Hosni has been awarded a number of human rights prizes, including a human rights award by the American Bar Association and an honorary law degree from a US university.

Amnesty International welcomes his release, which the organization had sought since his arrest, including in thousands of appeals from the Urgent Action Network. However, it remains concerned that the charges against him have not been dropped.

Najib Hosni has expressed appreciation for Amnesty International's action on his behalf. No further action by the Urgent Action Network is requested at present.