

PUBLIC

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Further Information on 173/06 (MDE 28/011/206, 20 June 2006) Incommunicado detention/fear of torture and other ill-treatment

ALGERIA

Two Algerian men, known as "V" and "I"

"V" and "I", who were deported from the UK to Algeria on 16 and 17 June, were released from detention in the afternoon of 22 June and have since joined their families in Algeria. They had been held incommunicado for six and five days respectively at an undisclosed location. Amnesty International has been able to speak to both men after their release and have received some limited information from them. However, they did not wish to give further details about their treatment in detention for fear of reprisals.

"I" said that he was not given any information about where he was detained, and did not wish to give any further details about the conditions of his arrest or detention or about those who detained him. "V" said that he was accompanied on his flight to Algeria by UK police officers and handed over to security forces who were waiting for him at Algiers airport. He was then transported by van to another location in the Algiers area, about half an hour's drive from the airport. "V" was not allowed to see where he was being taken, and he still does not know where he was held or by whom. He said that those who detained him still have some of his belongings, among them legal documents. He was told that he would be contacted by them in the coming days and should expect to be summoned, although he was not given information as to what will happen to him then.

The arrest and detention of the two men bear the hallmark of Algeria's military intelligence agency, the Department for Information and Security (Département du renseignement et de la sécurité, DRS). DRS officers operate in plain clothes, do not identify themselves to those they arrest or detain and routinely hold detainees at army barracks, which are effectively secret detention centres. DRS officers systematically take measures to keep the place of detention secret from the detainees and their families. While held by the DRS, detainees do not benefit from any protection from torture and other ill-treatment established under Algerian and international law.

Amnesty International has reason to believe that "V" and "I" were held at a barracks known as "Antar" which is situated in the Hydra district of Algiers and has been the main barracks used for detention in the Algiers area in recent years. There are persistent reports of torture and other ill-treatment at the barracks. According to testimonies, detainees are held in small, poorly ventilated cells without access to daylight; they are forced to sleep on concrete floors, sometimes with a blanket or simple mattress; and they are allowed little or no access to toilets and showers. Such conditions violate Algerian and international law and may constitute a form of cruel, inhuman or degrading treatment.

No further action is requested from the UA network. Many thanks to all who sent appeals. Amnesty International will continue to monitor the men's situation, and take further action as necessary.