

EXTERNAL (for general distribution)

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UA 114/91 DEATH PENALTY/REPORTS OF ILL-TREATMENT

27 March 1991

ALGERIA: Rashid Bouhouche  
Abdenmour Laras  
Tahar Lyazed  
Moussa Djebbare

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The four men named above were sentenced to death by the criminal court of Algiers on 19 March 1991 after a trial which lasted 25 days. Two of them, Tahar Lyazed and Moussa Djebbare, were tried in absentia. All four were convicted of embezzling several million dollars of public funds from the Banque Extérieure de l'Algérie (External Bank of Algeria), as well as corruption and mismanagement. It is the first time since 1969 that death sentences have been passed in Algeria on defendants convicted of financial crimes. The defendants have appealed to the Supreme Court and this appeal is expected to take place within the next few months.

Rashid Mouhouche and Abdenmour Laras, both of whom are held in prison in Algiers, are reported to be kept chained by the hands and feet, as is said to be customary for death row prisoners in Algeria. This practice breaches international standards such as the United Nations' Standard Minimum Rules for the Treatment of Prisoners, which states in Article 33 that "*..chains or irons shall not be used as restraint*", and the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights (ICCPR), which states in Article 7 that "*No one shall be subjected to torture or to cruel, inhuman or degrading treatment or punishment*". Algeria ratified the ICCPR in 1989.

Amnesty International asked the Algerian Government in January 1991 for information on the number of prisoners currently on death row but has not received any reply. The organization opposes the death penalty in all cases as a violation of the right to life and the right not to be subjected to cruel, inhuman or degrading treatment and punishment, as proclaimed by the Universal Declaration of Human Rights. It is also appealing to the Algerian authorities to ensure that these two prisoners, and others who may be on death row are not subject to inhuman or degrading treatment, including being kept in chains.

**RECOMMENDED ACTIONS: Telegrams/telexes/express and airmail letters in ARABIC or FRENCH if possible:**

- expressing concern about the death sentences passed on these four men and urging the Algerian President to commute these death sentences if they are confirmed by the Supreme Court;
- requesting clarification of reports that these and other death row prisoners are kept chained in breach of international standards for the treatment of prisoners, and calling for them to be safeguarded against ill-treatment.

**APPEALS IN ARABIC OR FRENCH IF POSSIBLE TO:**

Son Excellence  
Président Chadli Ben Djedid  
Président de la République et Ministre de la Défense Nationale  
Présidence de la République  
El-Mouradia  
Algiers  
Algeria

**Telegrams: President Chadli Ben Djedid, Algiers, Algeria**  
**Telexes: 66044; 66088**

M. Ali Benflis  
Ministre de la Justice  
8 rue de Khartoum, El-Biar  
Algiers  
Algeria

**Telegrams: Ministre Justice Benflis, Algiers, Algeria**  
**Telexes: 61498**

M. Mohammed Salah Mohammedi  
Ministre de l'Interieur  
Palais du Gouvernement  
Algiers  
Algeria

**Telegrams: Ministre Interieur Mohammedi, Algiers, Algeria**  
**Telexes: 66341**

M. Mouloud Hamrouche  
Premier Ministre  
Palais du Gouvernement  
Algiers  
Algeria

**Telegrams: Premier Ministre Hamrouche, Algiers, Algeria**  
**Telex: 66217; 66221**

**COPIES TO:** diplomatic representatives of Algeria in your country.

**PLEASE SEND APPEALS IMMEDIATELY.** Check with the International Secretariat, or your section office, if sending appeals after 8 May 1991.