

URGENT ACTION

HUNGER STRIKER'S HEALTH IN GRAVE DANGER

Ali Aarrass has been on hunger strike since 25 August. He is understood to be in a critical condition and in urgent need of appropriate medical care.

Ali Aarrass has been on hunger strike since 25 August, and his health is understood to have deteriorated seriously. His family have told Amnesty International that he is suffering acute pain in his head, liver and kidneys, and that on 13 October he was taken to the prison infirmary on a stretcher, as he could not stand. The medical staff who examined him said he needed to go to hospital, but he has yet to be transferred from Salé II prison, near the Moroccan capital, Rabat.

Please write immediately in Arabic, French or your own language:

- Calling on the Moroccan authorities to ensure Ali Aarrass has immediate access to a qualified health professional to provide health care in compliance with medical ethics, including the principles of confidentiality, autonomy, and informed consent;
- Calling on them to ensure Ali Aarrass is protected from further ill-treatment, to order a prompt, independent and impartial investigation into the ill-treatment he has said he suffered on 29 September, and to bring those responsible to justice;
- Urging them to implement the August 2013 decision of the Working Group on Arbitrary Detention (WGAD) which called on them to release Ali Aarrass immediately and give him adequate compensation.

PLEASE SEND APPEALS BEFORE 30 NOVEMBER 2015 TO:

Director of General Administration for
Prison Administration and Reinsertion

Mohamed Saleh Tamek
Angle avenue Arar et rue El-Jouz
Hay El Riyad, Rabat
Morocco
Fax: +212 5 37 71 26 19
Salutation: Dear Sir

Minister of Justice and Liberties

Mustafa Ramid
Ministry of Justice and Liberties
Place El Mamounia – BP 1015
Rabat
Morocco
Fax: +212 5 37 73 47 25
Salutation: Your Excellency

Ambassador of Belgium to Morocco

S.E.M. Frank Carruet
4-6, Avenue Mohammed El Fassi
Tour Hassan
10100 Rabat
Morocco
Fax: +212 5 37 76 70 03

And copies to:

Also send copies to diplomatic representatives accredited to your country. Please insert local diplomatic addresses below:

Name Address 1 Address 2 Address 3 Fax Fax number Email Email address Salutation Salutation

Please check with your section office if sending appeals after the above date. This is the first update of UA 219/15. Further information:

<https://www.amnesty.org/en/documents/mde29/2597/2015/en/>

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ADDITIONAL INFORMATION

Ali Aarrass has been on hunger strike since 25 August in order to urge the Moroccan authorities to release him, two years after the UN WGAD called on the authorities to release him immediately. The WGAD concluded that he had been convicted solely on the basis of "confessions" extracted under torture. His hunger strike is also a protest against significant delays in the judicial authorities' investigation into his torture allegations, as well as the failure of the Court of Cassation, Morocco's supreme judicial authority, to reach a decision in his case, nearly three years after he appealed against his conviction.

Finally, Ali Aarrass also went on hunger strike to protest against the way he said he was treated from July 2015 onwards by the head guard in his prison block. Ali Aarrass told his family that the head guard prevented him from having access to either the prison doctor or personal hygiene products, and taunted him by having a meal delivered to his cell during his hunger strike. According to Ali Aarrass' family, the head guard was transferred in September to another post in the same prison.

Ali Aarrass has been detained in Morocco since 14 December 2010, when he was forcibly returned from Spain. He has said he was held incommunicado and tortured for 12 days in a secret detention centre run by the General Directorate for the Surveillance of the Territory (*Direction générale de la surveillance du territoire*, DST) in Témara. He was previously the subject of UA 198/13 (<https://www.amnesty.org/en/documents/mde29/009/2013/en/>). He is serving a 12-year prison sentence handed down after he was convicted of participating in and procuring arms for a criminal group known as the "Belliraj network". The court had relied on a "confession" which he said was obtained through torture.

Morocco's judicial authorities announced on 21 May 2014 that they were conducting an investigation into his torture allegations, two days after the UN Committee against Torture found Morocco in breach of the Convention against Torture in relation to Ali Aarrass. Ali Aarrass underwent a medical examination in November 2014 over several days, without an independent monitor present, as proposed by his lawyers and, separately, Amnesty International. His lawyers have not yet received the medical examination report.

The UN Human Rights Committee decided in July 2014 that Spain had breached its obligations under the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights by extraditing Ali Aarrass to Morocco, in spite of warnings by the UN and Amnesty International. It asked Spain to award Ali Aarrass adequate compensation and take all possible measures to work with the Moroccan authorities to ensure he was well treated in Morocco. In 2015, the Committee against Torture also expressed concern about the extradition and called on Spain to investigate his torture allegations.

Ali Aarrass is asking the Belgian authorities to grant him consular assistance, which they have failed to provide on the grounds of his dual citizenship. In September 2014, the Brussels Court of Appeal instructed the Belgian authorities to provide Ali Aarrass with consular assistance. The Belgian authorities have appealed before the Court of Cassation.

Name: Ali Aarrass

Gender m/f: m

Further information on UA: 219/15 Index: MDE 29/2702/2015 Issue Date: 19 October 2015