

## Middle East Studies Association of North America, Inc.

The University of Arizona · 1232 North Cherry Avenue · Tucson, Arizona 85721

22 December 1994

President Zine Abidine Ben Ali  
President of the Republic  
Presidential Palace  
Tunis/Carthage  
Tunisia

Your Excellency:

We are writing to express our deep concern about the decision to prevent Dr. Moncef Marzouki from attending the December 7, 1994, Human Rights Watch Award Ceremony in New York, at which he was scheduled to receive an award for his outstanding contributions to human rights. Barring Dr. Marzouki from travelling to New York is merely the most recent in a sequence of measures designed to punish and harass him for his outspoken human rights advocacy.

The Middle East Studies Association comprises 2400 academics worldwide who teach and conduct research on the Middle East and North Africa. The association publishes the respected *International Journal of Middle East Studies* and is committed to ensuring respect for the principles of academic freedom and human rights throughout the region.

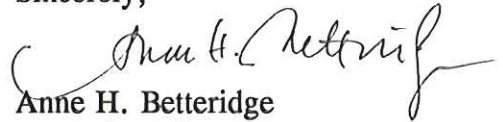
We wrote previously to protest Dr. Marzouki's detention. We were gratified to learn of Dr. Marzouki's July release from detention, even while believing that his detention was never justified in the first place. However, we were disturbed to learn that he has since been placed under close surveillance, his home telephone has been disconnected, and his communications with others have encountered interference. It appears that a ban had been imposed on all publications by Marzouki, as well. At the public-sector school of medicine where he works, Dr. Marzouki had been placed in a state of enforced idleness. He had, we learn, already been relieved of many of his responsibilities and also blocked from participation in research projects before the decision was made to revoke the leave that he needed for his trip to New York.

We note with regret that the decision to prevent Dr. Marzouki from travelling to receive the well-deserved award for his human rights work is far from an isolated occurrence. It coincides with confiscations of the passports of other Tunisians who are internationally known for their human rights work and with the jailing of one of Tunisia's distinguished human rights attorneys, Maitre Najib Hosni. In context, barring Dr. Marzouki from leaving Tunisia appears to be a part of a governmental clampdown on independent human rights advocacy. This clampdown is in breach of basic obligations undertaken by Tunisia as a party to international human rights conventions.

page 2...re: M. Marzouki

We respectfully urge that all repressive measures directed at non-governmental human rights activists like Dr. Marzouki cease forthwith. We further urge that the Tunisian government recommit itself to observing the principles of the International Bill of Human Rights.

Sincerely,



Anne H. Betteridge  
Executive Director

cc: M. Sadok Chaâbane, Ministre de la Justice  
M. Habib Ben Yahia, Ministre des Affaires étrangères  
M. Iadh Ouederni, Conseiller présidentiel pour les Droits de l'Homme  
Ambassador Ismail Khelil