



The Tahrir Institute  
for Middle East Policy

**Committee to Protect Journalists  
The Tahrir Institute for Middle East Policy**

**Joint Stakeholder Submission to the UN Human Rights Council  
Universal Periodic Review – Kingdom of Morocco**

**41<sup>st</sup> Session (November 2022)**

**Press Freedom and Freedom of Expression in Morocco**

**Committee to Protect Journalists (CPJ)** is an independent nonprofit organization that promotes press freedom worldwide. CPJ defends the right of journalists to report the news safely and without fear of reprisal.

Contact:

P.O. Box 2675, New York, NY 10108, USA

Phone: +1 (212) 465-1004

Website: [www.cpj.org](http://www.cpj.org)

Email: [info@cpj.org](mailto:info@cpj.org)

**The Tahrir Institute for Middle East Policy (TIMEP)** is dedicated to centering localized perspectives in the policy discourse to foster accountable, transparent, and just societies in the Middle East and North Africa. TIMEP was founded in 2013 in Washington, DC; it has a network of expert fellows located throughout the world. TIMEP is a registered 501(c)(3) nonprofit in the District of Columbia.

Contact:

Website: [www.timep.org](http://www.timep.org)

Postal address: 1717 K Street NW, Suite 900, Washington, DC, 20006, USA

Phone: +1 (202) 967-8589

Email: [info@timep.org](mailto:info@timep.org)

## Introduction

This joint submission documents a deterioration in the state of press freedom in the Kingdom of Morocco, facilitated by the legal framework, as well as violative practices. The information presented in this submission is based on evidence collected by the Committee to Protect Journalists (CPJ) and the Tahrir Institute for Middle East Policy (TIMEP) in consultation with local human rights defenders, journalists, and lawyers.

*Note:* This report covers incidents taking place in Morocco; it does not include incidents taking place in Western Sahara, which are being reported on separately by other partners.

## Prior Relevant UPR Recommendations

1. Morocco underwent its first UPR cycle in April 2008, its second UPR cycle in May 2012, and its third UPR cycle in May 2017.
2. Across its second and third UPR cycles, Morocco supported 19 recommendations made by States that are relevant to this submission and concern press freedom and/or freedom of expression. These recommendations have yet to be sufficiently implemented and they include recommendations to:
  - a. Take action to ensure the right to freedom of expression, including press freedom (129.79<sup>1</sup>, 129.80<sup>2</sup>, 129.82<sup>3</sup>, 129.95<sup>4</sup>; A/HRC/21/3) (144.114<sup>5</sup>; A/HRC/36/6);
  - b. Bring the Criminal Code in line with Morocco's international legal obligations, pertaining to freedom of expression (144.112<sup>6</sup>, 144.116<sup>7</sup>; A/HRC/36/6);
  - c. Make revisions to the Press Code to allow enjoyment of freedom of expression (129.85<sup>8</sup>, 129.87<sup>9</sup>, 129.90<sup>10</sup>, 129.91<sup>11</sup>, 129.92<sup>12</sup>, 129.96<sup>13</sup>; A/HRC/21/3) (144.115<sup>14</sup>; A/HRC/36/6);
  - d. Decriminalize press crimes and prevent arrests of individuals for expressing opinions including through social media (129.86<sup>15</sup>; A/HRC/21/3); and
  - e. Guarantee the protection of the right to freedom of expression, including press freedom, Western Sahara (130.11<sup>16</sup>, 130.12<sup>17</sup>; A/HRC/21/3) (144.117<sup>18</sup>; A/HRC/36/6).
3. In its third UPR cycle, Morocco noted four recommendations made by States concerning freedom of expression and press freedom, including recommendations to end the prosecution of journalists for exercising their rights to freedom of expression<sup>19</sup>; to refrain from referring to other laws beyond the Press Code on issues involving freedom of expression<sup>20</sup><sup>21</sup>; and to create a safe and enabling environment for civil society and human

rights defenders, including in and in relation to Western Sahara<sup>22</sup> (144.119; 144.118, 144.113, 144.120, A/HRC/36/6).

## **Situation for Press Freedom in Morocco (Particularly Since UPR 3rd Cycle)**

### **Legal Framework**

4. Morocco's international legal obligations, including under the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights (ICCPR), and its constitution commit it to protecting the right to freedom of expression, which includes freedom of the press.
5. Articles 25, 27, and 28 in the **2011 Constitution** are the primary articles establishing the rights to freedom of expression, information, and the press. Article 25 states that: "The freedoms of thought, of opinion, and of expression under all their forms are guaranteed...The freedoms of creation, of publication and of presentation [exposition] in literary and artistic matters and of scientific and technical research are guaranteed." Under Article 27, "citizens have the right of access to information held by the public administration, the elected institutions, and the organs invested with missions of public service"; it adds, "the right to information may only be limited by the law." Article 28 states that "the freedom of the press is guaranteed and may not be limited by any form of prior censure. All have the right to express and to disseminate freely and within the sole limits expressly provided by the law, information, ideas and opinions."<sup>23</sup>
6. Morocco's **Penal Code** sets forth a number of penalties for vaguely-defined expression-related offenses. A 2016 amendment added punishments for speech against Morocco's monarchical form of government, Islam, and the country's territorial integrity. Prior-relevant offenses in the Code included provisions criminalizing insults or privacy violations committed against the King or members of the royal family and failure to display the respect and reverence due to the King; the promotion of acts of terrorism; the defamation of judicial decisions with intent to undermine the authority or independence of the judiciary; and the defamation of public bodies and public officials in the performance of their duties.<sup>24</sup> A Penal Code provision prohibiting "claiming or using a title associated with a profession that is regulated by law ... without meeting the necessary conditions to use it," has previously been used to target journalists without press credentials.<sup>25</sup> In recent years, Moroccan authorities have also instrumentalized sex-related charges from the Penal Code to target journalists critical of the state.<sup>26</sup>
7. Morocco's 2016 **Press and Publishing Code** is made up of Law 88-13 on the Press and Publishing, Law 89-13 on the Status of Professional Journalists, and Law 90-13 on the Establishment of the National Press Council.<sup>27</sup> Among other things, the Code replaces custodial sentences for journalists set out in the prior Press Code, continues and enhances the system of notification for a newspaper or electronic site seeking to publish, and recognizes confidentiality of sources. However, the Code restricts who can be a director of journalistic publication,<sup>28</sup> requiring a relevant university degree to hold such a position;

requires a shooting permit for electronic publications seeking to produce audiovisual content; and subjects publications that publish in Morocco and are more than one-third foreign-owned to a system of prior authorization. Article 71 of the Press Code, which criminalizes speaking ill of the monarchy or Islam, has come under critique by civil society and other observers.<sup>29</sup> Additionally, although the Code does eliminate custodial sentences for journalists, it does not preclude journalists from being sentenced to jail time under other legal frameworks, including the Penal Code for example.

8. Morocco's audiovisual regulatory agency is the High Authority for Audiovisual Communication (HACA), established in 2002.<sup>30</sup> **Law No. 77-03 on Audiovisual Communication**, amended most recently in 2015 and 2016, grants HACA the authority to monitor programming, hear complaints regarding content on radio and television, and issue licenses, among other responsibilities.<sup>31</sup>
9. The **Law No. 03-03 on Combating Terrorism** sets forth a broad definition for the crime of terrorism and stipulates hefty penalties.<sup>32</sup> The law has been criticized due to its broad definitions that have been used to justify the detention of non-violent offenders, including journalists<sup>33</sup> for their exercise of freedom of expression.<sup>34</sup> The law also gives the authorities the power to filter and delete content that is deemed to "disrupt public order by intimidation, force, violence, fear, or terror."<sup>35</sup>
10. **Law 31-13 on the Right to Access Information** governs the right to access information in Morocco.<sup>36</sup> While the law, adopted in 2018, does introduce a culture of freedom of information and makes some positive steps toward establishing transparency between the public and the state, some observers have noted a lack of political will toward full implementation.<sup>37</sup> Additionally, in its text, the law places restrictions on what requested information can be used for, carves out a lengthy list of 13 categories of information that may be exempted from information disclosure, and does not sufficiently guarantee the independent functioning of the National Commission on the Right of Access to Information.<sup>38</sup>
11. In March 2020, the Moroccan government introduced **Draft Law 22-20**, a law governing social media that was temporarily suspended in May 2020.<sup>39</sup> The text, which was widely critiqued by civil society, set forth vague definitions and established punishments for "anyone who deliberately uses social networks, open broadcast networks, or similar networks to publish or promote electronic content containing false information." It also tasked network providers with restricting access to and suppressing online content that pose a threat to security and public order within 24 hours.<sup>40</sup>

## **Press Freedom Violations**

1. Since Morocco's last UPR in May 2017, the situation of press freedom in the country has deteriorated significantly, especially following the anti-government protests, referred to as

Hirak Rif, that took place in the northern region of Rif between October 2016 and June 2017.

2. Between May 1, 2017, to January 31, 2022, CPJ recorded a significant rise in state efforts in **arbitrarily detaining journalists for their work using laws unrelated to journalism, censorship, expelling foreign journalists, and surveilling journalists whom authorities see as a threat**. This occurs alongside a crackdown on freedom of expression more generally.
3. The following section breaks down CPJ's findings thematically in respect to rights violated and corresponding threats faced by local and foreign journalists in Morocco, with demonstrative cases in each subsection. The subsections cover violations or impediments to the realization of the rights to:
  - a. Imprisonment and arbitrary detentions using laws unrelated to journalism
  - b. Weaponizing sex-related charges to arrest and prosecute journalists
  - c. Judicial harassment of journalists
  - d. Censorship
  - e. Expelling foreign journalists from Morocco
  - f. Using digital surveillance tools to monitor journalists
  - g. Using state aligned media to publish surveillance tools findings on journalists

#### **A. Imprisonment, Arbitrary Detentions, and Judicial Harassment of Journalists**

4. Since May 2017, following the Hirak Rif protests, CPJ's research shows that **the number of imprisonment, arbitrary detentions, and prosecutions of journalists by Moroccan authorities**, on vague charges unrelated to media laws nor in line with basic tenets of international human rights law, has risen significantly.
5. On June 6, 2017, security forces arrested video journalist **Mohamed al-Asrihi** in Trogout town, over his coverage of the Hirak for opposition news website *Rif24*; prosecutors charged him with receiving foreign funding; and on June 26, 2018, a court sentenced him to five years in prison.<sup>41</sup>
6. Police arrested journalist **Hamid al-Mahdaoui**, a reporter for the news website *Badil*, on July 20, 2017, as he traveled to the Rif area to cover protests. On June 28, 2018, a court sentenced him to three years in prison and a fine of 3,000 dirhams (US\$315) after convicting him of failure to denounce a crime threatening national security.<sup>42</sup>
7. On August 18, 2017, a Moroccan court sentenced video blogger **Mohamed Taghra** to ten months in prison for criminal defamation after he published a report on local police corruption in the country's central Souss-Massa region.<sup>43</sup>
8. On May 4, 2021, police in Tiznit city arrested journalist **Mohamed Boutaam**, director of news website *Tizpress*, after he responded to a summons for questioning, on charges of

interfering in a government job without authorization. Prosecutors ordered his detention pending trial.<sup>44</sup>

9. Journalist and historian **Maati Monjib** was arrested on December 29, 2020, when plainclothes security forces arrived in two cars to arrest him shortly after he sat down to lunch at the restaurant. On January 27, 2021, the court of first instance in Rabat convicted Monjib of fraud and endangering state security and sentenced him to one year in prison and a fine of 10,000 dirhams (US\$1,116).<sup>45</sup>

## **B. Weaponizing sex-related charges to arrest and prosecute journalists**

10. Since 2018, CPJ's research also shows that **authorities have increasingly been using trumped-up sex-related charges to imprison journalists**, and thus weaken public and international support for them. These journalists have not had fair trials, as courts refused to consider any evidence brought by the defendants, and instead, relied on articles published by state-aligned tabloids to be the basis of their verdicts.<sup>46</sup>
11. On February 23, 2018, authorities arrested editor-in-chief of the opposition newspaper *Akhbar al-Youm* **Taoufik Bouachrine**, at the paper's headquarters in Casablanca on multiple anti-state and sex-related charges. On November 9, 2018, a court sentenced Bouachrine to 12 years in prison and a fine of 200,000 Moroccan dirhams (US\$20,980) after convicting him of sexual assault, rape, and human trafficking. In 2019, an appeals court increased Bouachrine's sentence to 15 years in prison for human trafficking, abuse of power for sexual purposes, rape, and attempted rape of at least 14 women.<sup>47</sup>
12. In September 2019, **Hajar Raissouni**, a reporter at the same newspaper who extensively reported on the HIRAK Rif protests, was sentenced to a year in prison for allegedly having sex outside marriage and an illegal abortion.<sup>48</sup> She was arrested on August 31, 2019, as she was leaving her doctor's office with her fiancé in Rabat.<sup>49</sup>
13. Like Bouachrine's case, authorities arrested journalist **Soulaiman Raissouni**, Bouachrine's successor as editor-in-chief of *Akhbar al-Youm*, on May 22, 2020, from his home in Casablanca, on allegations of sexual assault. On July 9, 2021, an appeals court convicted him of sexual assault and sentenced him to five years in prison and a fine of 100,000 dirhams (US\$11,205).<sup>50</sup>
14. Similarly, authorities arrested **Omar Radi**, an investigative reporter at local news website *Le Desk*, in July 2020, when he responded to a summon for questioning over a journalistic investigation he was working on, on charges of receiving funds linked to foreign intelligence services. Radi was summoned nine other times, and during the last summons on July 29, 2020, authorities added a new rape charge, and ordered his detention pending trial. On July 19, 2021, a Casablanca court convicted Radi of sexual assault and undermining state security through espionage and illegally receiving foreign funding and sentenced him to six years in prison, and a fine of 200,000 dirhams (\$20,690).<sup>51</sup> Radi's sentence was upheld by the Casablanca's Court of Appeal on March 4, 2022.<sup>52</sup>

### C. Judicial harassment of journalists

15. Authorities have not only imprisoned and prosecuted journalists using sex-related charges, but they have also **judicially harassed local journalists and intimidated witnesses**.
16. While Taoufik Bouachrine was accused of allegedly having raped 14 women who were introduced as plaintiffs to the case, five of them stated that Bouachrine was innocent. One of these women was journalist **Afaf Bernani**, who also worked at *Akhbar al-Youm*. The day after Bouachrine's arrest, police interrogated Bernani for eight hours as a witness to Bouachrine's alleged rape of another colleague in his office at the newspaper. After she insisted that she witnessed no such incident, police falsified her testimony to say that Bouachrine had raped her too. Bernani filed a complaint at the supreme court that the police falsified her testimony, and in June 2018, authorities, instead, sentenced her to six months in prison for perjury and defamation.<sup>53</sup>
17. On July 19, 2021, convicted journalist **Imad Stitou**, a freelance journalist who formerly worked with Omar Radi at *Le Desk*, with complicity in Radi's alleged sexual assault, and issued him a one-year prison sentence, but suspended six months of that sentence. This verdict is in retaliation of Stitou who testified in court that he was with Radi the night the alleged rape had occurred and that he witnessed no such incident.<sup>54</sup> Stitou's sentence was upheld by the Casablanca's Court of Appeal on March 4, 2022.<sup>55</sup>

### D. Censorship

1. Since the last UPR, authorities have increasingly interfered to **prevent reporting of some media content**.
2. On January 2, 2018, a court in Rabat, convicted four local journalists with disclosing unpublished information concerning a parliamentary commission of inquiry, and handed down each journalist a six-month suspended prison sentence and a fine of 10,000 dirhams (\$2,733). **Mohamed Ahdad**, a reporter with the independent daily newspaper *Al-Massae*, was charged and sentenced along with **Abdelhak Belachger**, a reporter at the daily *Akhbar al-Yaoum*, as well as two journalists from the news website *Al-Jarida 24*: reporter **Kawthar Zaki** and Rabat bureau chief **Abdallah Sakhir**. This was in relation to a 2017 complaint filed by the president of the House of Councilors, Morocco's upper house of parliament, concerning the journalists' reporting on alleged corruption within a 2016 parliamentary commission investigating the bankruptcy of the nation's pension fund.<sup>56</sup>
3. Moreover, journalist **Omar Radi** believed he was being targeted by authorities due to his work with the Bertha Foundation, where he was working on a project documenting land expropriation. Authorities had summoned him at least ten times for questioning on his work for this project and with the foundation.<sup>57</sup>

4. Authorities have been **imposing bureaucratic and administrative obstacles on local independent news outlets**, which makes it difficult for these outlets to operate and thrive in the country.
18. On March 14, 2021, *Akhbar al-Youm* announced that it was closing the outlet for financial reasons, citing that authorities had denied them emergency funding allocated to other media during the COVID-19 pandemic. The outlet reported heavily on the Hirak Rif protests, corruption, human rights, and political prisoners.<sup>58</sup>

#### **E. Expelling foreign journalists from Morocco**

19. Authorities have also been increasingly **expelling foreign journalists out of the country to censor their outlets' coverage of political events in Morocco**, especially the Hirak Rif protests.
20. On May 30, 2017, police arrested **Algerian journalist Djamel Alilat**, a reporter for the daily French-language Algerian newspaper *Al-Watan*, as he left a protest in Al-Nador town in Rif, where he went to cover protests. Police held him for more than 36 hours at a local police station and questioned him about his work. Then they escorted him to the Casablanca airport and deported him to Algeria.<sup>59</sup>
21. Similarly, in July 2017, plainclothes policemen arrested **Spanish journalists José Luis Navazo**, the director of the Spanish-language news website *El Correo Diplomático*, and **Fernando Sanz**, a reporter at the same website, from the house they were staying at in Tetouan city in the Rif, where they were on a reporting mission. Police held them in Tetouan's police headquarters for an hour before escorting them to the Tarajal crossing in Ceuta (Sebta) and deporting them, without any interrogation or explanation.<sup>60</sup>
22. Like Navazo and Sanz, plainclothes policemen arrested **British journalist Saeed Kamali Dehghan**, a reporter for the Guardian, while he was covering the Hirak in the Rif region, on September 27, 2017, and expelled him from the country the following day without giving any reason for the move.<sup>61</sup>
23. In 2019, authorities in Berkane city in Rif, arrested freelance **Dutch journalist Gerbert van der Aa** on February 15, and expelled him from the country, saying that he was working "illegally." Van der Aa was in Rif reporting on the protests in the region, which he has been covering since 2016.<sup>62</sup>

#### **F. Using digital surveillance tools to monitor journalists**

24. In addition to the aforementioned incidents, **Moroccan authorities have also leveraged surveillance technology, such as Pegasus, which is the cellphone spyware sold by the Israeli firm NSO Group**, to further rights violations against journalists, among others.



25. Following a December 2016 court order, police began tapping journalist **Hamid al-Mahdaoui's** phone, along with the phones of **30 other individuals**, as a part of a court investigation into individuals who were suspected to have links with Hirak Rif.<sup>63</sup>
26. In 2019, CPJ interviewed **several Moroccan journalists, including Hicham Mansouri, Alli Lmrabet, Saida ElKamel, Samia Errazouki, and Omar Radi**, who described electronic devices malfunctioning in ways that they believe indicate they are under surveillance. **Many reported having their private conversations publicized without consent** in an apparent attempt to discredit their independent reporting; some left the country or the profession as a result. The surveillance and exodus of independent reporters have dealt a serious blow to press freedom in Morocco, where journalists have been harassed for decades.<sup>64</sup>
27. Amnesty International found<sup>65</sup> that Moroccan activist, historian, and the co-founder of the Moroccan Association for Investigative Journalism, **Maati Monjib**, has been targeted by Pegasus since October 2017.<sup>66</sup>
28. On June 22, 2020, Amnesty International released a report<sup>67</sup> alleging that the Moroccan government used Pegasus, a software developed by Israeli cybersecurity company NSO group, to hack **Omar Radi's** phone between January 2019 and January 2020.<sup>68</sup>
29. According to the Pegasus Project, **Soulaiman Raissouni** was selected for possible surveillance with the Pegasus spyware from 2017 to 2019. The reporting also mentions **Omar Radi, Maati Monjib, and Hajar Raissouni.**<sup>69</sup>

#### **G. Exposing surveillance tools findings on journalists in state-aligned media to defame and harass journalists**

30. CPJ's research shows that local privately-owned state-aligned news websites like *Chouf tv*, and *Barlimane*, have published private conversations and correspondence of journalists **Taoufiq Bouchrine, Soulaiman Raissouni, Hajar Raissouni, Omar Radi, and of their family members.**
31. These news outlets were also the first to accuse journalists **Bouachrine, Raissouni, and Radi** of rape, without any evidence. These articles were used in court as the sole evidence of the accused being guilty.<sup>70</sup>
32. In 2021, **Soulaiman Raissouni's** wife, Kholoud Mokhtari, told CPJ in an interview that her Raissouni used to receive text messages from unknown numbers threatening him to stop writing about certain topics that he would be privately investigating, or "he will be sorry."<sup>71</sup>

## **Recommendations**

**In light of the aforementioned findings, CPJ and TIMEP call on States participating in the UPR process to make the following recommendations for Morocco to:**

1. Craft legally binding regulations to ensure that Morocco's media regulations, laws, and state practices are brought in line with international human rights standards and Article 19 of the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights.
2. Authorities must establish and implement an effective and independent national action plan that protects journalists' right to practice their profession, which would include *inter alia* all security sector and judicial reforms necessary to do so.
3. Respect and implement Articles 25, 27, and 28 in the 2011 Constitution, which are the primary articles establishing the rights to freedom of expression, information, and the press.
4. Implement judicial reforms to amend the penal code to prohibit the questioning and prosecution of journalists under laws not related to media or journalism; and amend the penal code, which sets forth several penalties for vaguely defined expression-related offenses and revoke the 2016 amendment that added punishments for speech against Morocco's monarchical form of government, Islam, and the country's territorial integrity.
5. Release all imprisoned journalists, drop all charges against them, and stop arresting journalists for their work.
6. Stop weaponizing women's issues and rights to prosecute and smear journalists in efforts to quash their critical reporting.
7. Conduct impartial investigations into all cases of attacks, surveillance, harassment, and intimidation of local and foreign journalists and hold those responsible to account.
8. Stop government interference in media content and halt the prosecution of journalists over their coverage of political events.
9. Stop drafting new restrictive media laws to further censor journalists and media outlets.
10. Government officials should direct local authorities to stop targeting journalists covering protests and denounce them for doing so.
11. Start a dialogue with relevant stakeholders and civil society to promote an open and free press where journalists may report on a full spectrum of political, social, and economic issues without fear of retribution.
12. Stop expelling foreign journalists covering political events in Morocco, and formally invite all expelled journalists to return to work in Morocco; commit to returning all revoked accreditations to said journalists.

13. Criminalize the practice of surveilling and monitoring journalists with surveillance spyware, bar the use of these spyware on journalists, and sanction actors who have engaged in or facilitated spying on journalists.
14. Prohibit news outlets from publishing private content concerning journalists, and implement judicial reforms to stop judges and prosecutors from considering unreliable publications as the sole evidence against journalists in court and ensure fair trials for all.

---

<sup>1</sup> Continue its action to promote freedom of expression and to accelerate the adoption of new law of press (Sudan).

<sup>2</sup> Take immediate steps to implement the new Constitution's provision that international human rights are to be fully respected, including press freedom, freedom of expression, assembly and association (Sweden).

<sup>3</sup> Finalize, in collaboration with press associations and rights groups, a legal framework that ensures full freedom of expression (United States of America).

<sup>4</sup> Take actions to ensure the right to freedom of expression as established by the Constitution (Mexico).

<sup>5</sup> Fully ensure the freedoms of expression and association and take all necessary measures to ensure that human rights defenders can carry out their missions (France).

<sup>6</sup> Ensure that the relevant provisions of the Criminal Code are brought into line with the obligations of Morocco under the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights, in particular with regard to freedom of speech and opinion (Zambia).

<sup>7</sup> Review Criminal Code provisions regarding freedom of expression, in conformity with article 19 of the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights (Netherlands).

<sup>8</sup> Revise the Press Code so that it would be in conformity with the international standards and take necessary measures to effectively apply the principles of freedom stipulated in the Constitution (Belgium).

<sup>9</sup> Turn the draft new Press Code into a significant progress on the area of freedom of opinion and expression (Chile).

<sup>10</sup> Revise the Press Code and other relevant legislation so that they would allow the enjoyment of freedom of information in line with international standards (Estonia).

<sup>11</sup> Delete from the Press Code sentences involving deprivation of liberty and revise the criminal provisions in the area of freedom of expression so that no journalist or human rights defender can be arrested for a simple fact of having expressed his opinion (France).

<sup>12</sup> Revise the Press Act and abolish provisions that lead to a restriction of freedom of opinion and expression and freedom of religion and belief and take measures in order to allow for free, impartial and objective media (Germany).

<sup>13</sup> Revise the press law to comply with international standards concerning the media freedoms (Slovakia).

<sup>14</sup> Continue the work to enhance freedom of expression through the implementation of the law establishing the National Press Council (Qatar).

<sup>15</sup> Decriminalize press crimes and prevent arrests of individuals for expressing opinions including through social media (Canada).

<sup>16</sup> Give particular attention to all measures to improve the human rights situation in Western Sahara, in particular develop and implement independent and credible measures to ensure full respect for human rights and guaranteeing such basic rights as freedom of association and expression (Ireland).

<sup>17</sup> Take measures to ensure the adequate protection of human rights in the Western Sahara in light of the reported cases of enforced disappearances, torture and ill-treatment, restrictions on freedom of expression, association and assembly by Moroccan security forces (Spain).

<sup>18</sup> Ensure the Constitution's provisions on freedom of the press, freedom of opinion and expression and freedom of assembly and association are respected, including for people who want to express their views on the situation of and in Western Sahara (Sweden).

<sup>19</sup> End the prosecution of and release journalists and other individuals detained solely for exercising their rights to freedom of expression, peaceful assembly and association (United States of America).

<sup>20</sup> Refrain from referring to laws other than the press code when dealing with infractions of the freedom of expression (Denmark).

<sup>21</sup> End the prosecution of journalists under the Criminal Code for peacefully exercising their right to freedom of opinion and expression and for ensuring the right to information (Sweden).

<sup>22</sup> Create and maintain, in law and in practice, a safe and enabling environment for civil society and human rights defenders, including in and in relation to Western Sahara, through a revision of the Criminal Code and remove

---

limitations on freedom of expression, review the system for registration of associations and notification of assemblies and consistent application of rules to all peaceful assemblies irrespective of their topic (Ireland).

<sup>23</sup> Morocco 2011, Constitution, [https://www.constituteproject.org/constitution/Morocco\\_2011?lang=en](https://www.constituteproject.org/constitution/Morocco_2011?lang=en).

<sup>24</sup> “The Legal Framework on Freedom of Expression in Morocco,” January 2019, [https://erim.ngo/wp-content/uploads/2021/03/Rapport\\_liberte%CC%81\\_dexpression\\_EN-final.pdf](https://erim.ngo/wp-content/uploads/2021/03/Rapport_liberte%CC%81_dexpression_EN-final.pdf).

<sup>25</sup> “Morocco/Western Sahara: Law Misused to Silence Reporters,” May 16, 2019, <https://www.hrw.org/news/2019/05/16/morocco/western-sahara-law-misused-silence-reporters>.

<sup>26</sup> Aida Alami, “In Morocco, Press Freedom Advocates Say Sex Charges are Used to Silence Journalists,” <https://nieman.harvard.edu/articles/in-morocco-press-freedom-advocates-say-sex-charges-are-used-to-silence-journalists/>.

<sup>27</sup> “الجريدة الرسمية نصوص عامة.” [http://www.sgg.gov.ma/Portals/1/lois/Loi\\_88.13\\_Ar.pdf?ver=2017-02-16-110716-810](http://www.sgg.gov.ma/Portals/1/lois/Loi_88.13_Ar.pdf?ver=2017-02-16-110716-810).

<sup>28</sup> “قانون جديد للصحافة بالمغرب.. تحصين للمهنة أم تقييد للحرية?” <https://institute.aljazeera.net/ar/ajr/article/547>

<sup>29</sup> “The Red Lines Stay Red,” Human Rights Watch, May 4, 2017, <https://www.hrw.org/report/2017/05/04/red-lines-stay-red/moroccos-reforms-its-speech-laws>.

<sup>30</sup> “Morocco: High Authority of Audiovisual Communication (HACA) >> GlobalEDGE: Your Source for Global Business Knowledge,” <https://globaledge.msu.edu/global-resources/resource/10496>.

<sup>31</sup> “LOI N° 77-03 SUR LA COMMUNICATION AUDIOVISUELLE,” <https://wipolex.wipo.int/en/text/567556>.

<sup>32</sup> “Internet Filtering in Morocco,” [https://opennet.net/sites/opennet.net/files/ONI\\_Morocco\\_2009.pdf](https://opennet.net/sites/opennet.net/files/ONI_Morocco_2009.pdf).

<sup>33</sup> “Journalist Charged Under Anti-Terrorism Law,” Amnesty International, <https://www.amnesty.org/es/wp-content/uploads/2021/06/mde290132013en.pdf>.

<sup>34</sup> Human Rights Watch, “Refworld | Morocco.” <https://www.refworld.org/cgi-bin/texis/vtx/rwmain?page=topic&docid=523ffdfb4&skip=0&tocid=50ffbce5220&toid=50ffbbe5226&querysi=morocco&searchin=fulltext&sort=date>.

<sup>35</sup> “Morocco: Freedom of the Net 2021,” Freedom House, <https://freedomhouse.org/country/morocco/freedom-net/2021>.

<sup>36</sup> News, “Morocco Elaborates Legislation on Right of Access to Information.” <https://www.morocoworldnews.com/2020/06/306127/morocco-elaborates-legislation-on-right-of-access-to-information>.

<sup>37</sup> “Power to the People?” <https://carnegieendowment.org/sada/82835>

<sup>38</sup> “The Legal Framework on Freedom of Expression in Morocco,” January 2019, [https://erim.ngo/wp-content/uploads/2021/03/Rapport\\_liberte%CC%81\\_dexpression\\_EN-final.pdf](https://erim.ngo/wp-content/uploads/2021/03/Rapport_liberte%CC%81_dexpression_EN-final.pdf).

<sup>39</sup> “Morocco.” <https://www.article19.org/resources/morocco-social-media/>.

<sup>40</sup> “The Online Regulation Series | Morocco,” Tech Against Terrorism, <https://www.techagainstterrorism.org/2020/11/05/the-online-regulation-series-morocco/>.

<sup>41</sup> CPJ, “Mohamed al-Asrihi,” <https://cpj.org/data/people/mohamed-al-asrihi/>

<sup>42</sup> CPJ, “Hamid al-Mahdaoui,” <https://cpj.org/data/people/hamid-al-mahdaoui/>

<sup>43</sup> CPJ, “Moroccan video blogger sentenced to 10 months in prison,” September 14, 2017, <https://cpj.org/2017/09/moroccan-video-blogger-sentenced-to-10-months-in-p/>

<sup>44</sup> CPJ, “Moroccan journalist Mohamed Boutaam arrested over corruption reporting,” May 7, 2021, <https://cpj.org/2021/05/moroccan-journalist-mohamed-boutaam-arrested-over-corruption-reporting/>

<sup>45</sup> CPJ, “Moroccan journalist Maati Monjib sentenced to 1 year in prison,” January 28, 2021, <https://cpj.org/2021/01/moroccan-journalist-maati-monjib-sentenced-to-1-year-in-prison/>

<sup>46</sup> CPJ, “Morocco’s new tactic to punish journalists: charge them with sex crimes,” March 18, 2021, <https://cpj.org/2021/03/moroccos-new-tactic-punish-journalists-charge-sex-crimes/>

<sup>47</sup> CPJ, “Taoufik Bouachrine,” <https://cpj.org/data/people/taoufik-bouachrine/>

<sup>48</sup> CPJ, “Morocco’s new tactic to punish journalists: charge them with sex crimes,” March 18, 2021, <https://cpj.org/2021/03/moroccos-new-tactic-punish-journalists-charge-sex-crimes/>

<sup>49</sup> CPJ, “Moroccan authorities arrest journalist Hajar Raissouni,” September 12, 2019, <https://cpj.org/2019/09/moroccan-authorities-arrest-journalist-hajar-raiss/>

<sup>50</sup> CPJ, “Soulaiman Raissouni,” <https://cpj.org/data/people/soulaiman-raissouni/>

<sup>51</sup> CPJ, “Omar Radi,” <https://cpj.org/data/people/omar-radi/>

<sup>52</sup> Morocco World News, “Moroccan Court Upholds 6-Year Prison Sentence for Omar Radi,” March 4, 2022, <https://www.morocoworldnews.com/2022/03/347427/moroccan-court-upholds-6-year-prison-sentence-for-omar-radi>

- 
- <sup>53</sup> CPJ, “Morocco’s new tactic to punish journalists: charge them with sex crimes,” March 18, 2021, <https://cpj.org/2021/03/moroccos-new-tactic-punish-journalists-charge-sex-crimes/>
- <sup>54</sup> CPJ, “Moroccan journalist Omar Radi sentenced to 6 years in prison; Imad Stitou convicted of complicity, July 19, 2021, <https://cpj.org/2021/07/moroccan-journalist-omar-radi-sentenced-to-6-years-in-prison-imad-stitou-convicted-of-complicity/>
- <sup>55</sup> Morocco World News, “Moroccan Court Upholds 6-Year Prison Sentence for Omar Radi,” March 4, 2022, <https://www.morocoworldnews.com/2022/03/347427/moroccan-court-upholds-6-year-prison-sentence-for-omar-radi>
- <sup>56</sup> CPJ, “Morocco hands local journalists suspended prison sentences, expels Dutch journalist,” April 8, 2019, <https://cpj.org/2019/04/morocco-hands-local-journalists-suspended-prison-s/>
- <sup>57</sup> CPJ, “Omar Radi,” <https://cpj.org/data/people/omar-radi/>
- <sup>58</sup> CPJ, “Morocco’s new tactic to punish journalists: charge them with sex crimes,” March 18, 2021, <https://cpj.org/2021/03/moroccos-new-tactic-punish-journalists-charge-sex-crimes/>
- <sup>59</sup> CPJ, “Morocco deports Algerian journalist,” June 1, 2017, <https://cpj.org/2017/06/morocco-deports-algerian-journalist/>
- <sup>60</sup> CPJ, “Morocco deports Spanish journalists,” July 27, 2017, <https://cpj.org/2017/07/morocco-deports-spanish-journalists/>
- <sup>61</sup> CPJ, “Moroccan authorities detain, expel British journalist,” September 29, 2017, <https://cpj.org/2017/09/moroccan-authorities-detain-expel-british-journalist/>
- <sup>62</sup> CPJ, “Morocco hands local journalists suspended prison sentences, expels Dutch journalist,” April 8, 2019, <https://cpj.org/2019/04/morocco-hands-local-journalists-suspended-prison-s/>
- <sup>63</sup> CPJ, “Hamid al-Mahdaoui,” <https://cpj.org/data/people/hamid-al-mahdaoui/>
- <sup>64</sup> CPJ, “Moroccan independent journalists describe climate of pervasive surveillance, harassment,” July 1, 2019, <https://cpj.org/2019/07/moroccan-independent-journalists-describe-climate/>
- <sup>65</sup> Amnesty International, “Morocco: Human Rights Defenders Targeted with NSO Group’s Spyware,” October 10, 2019, <https://www.amnesty.org/en/latest/research/2019/10/morocco-human-rights-defenders-targeted-with-nso-groups-spyware/>
- <sup>66</sup> CPJ, “Q&A: Moroccan press freedom advocate and NSO Group spyware target Maati Monjib,” October 29, 2019, <https://cpj.org/2019/10/moroccan-press-freedom-nso-group-target/>
- <sup>67</sup> Amnesty International, “Omar Radi: the Moroccan journalist who won’t be silenced,” June 22, 2020, <https://www.amnesty.org/en/latest/news/2020/06/omar-radi-moroccan-journalist-refuses-to-be-silenced/>
- <sup>68</sup> CPJ, “Omar Radi,” <https://cpj.org/data/people/omar-radi/>
- <sup>69</sup> Forbidden Stories, “The Pegasus Project,” <https://forbiddenstories.org/case/the-pegasus-project/>
- <sup>70</sup> CPJ, “Morocco’s new tactic to punish journalists: charge them with sex crimes,” March 18, 2021, <https://cpj.org/2021/03/moroccos-new-tactic-punish-journalists-charge-sex-crimes/>
- <sup>71</sup> CPJ, “Morocco’s new tactic to punish journalists: charge them with sex crimes,” March 18, 2021, <https://cpj.org/2021/03/moroccos-new-tactic-punish-journalists-charge-sex-crimes/>