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Morocco: Ongoing judicial appeal concerning the dissolution of Racines

On 31 January 2019, the human rights organization **Racines** presented their appeal to the Court of Appeal in Casablanca, requesting that the Civil Court of First Instance’s decision to dissolve the organization be reversed. In December 2018, the Civil Court had ordered that Racines be dissolved for having “undermined State institutions and the Islamic religion”.

[Racines](#) is a Casablanca-based non-profit organization, advocating for the integration of culture into public policies. Racines organises programmes across Morocco, and reports on issues relating to culture, including on art for social change and on freedom of artistic expression. It defends the use of culture as a tool for citizen emancipation and seeks to act collectively to create an equitable democracy.

On 26 December 2018, the Civil Court of First Instance of Casablanca ordered that Racines be dissolved. The decision was linked to the Moroccan web-based talk show ‘1 Dîner 2 Cons’. Racines habitually lends their premises to ‘1 Dîner 2 Cons’ and in August 2018, an episode that included criticism of the King of Morocco was recorded in Racines’ premises and subsequently broadcast online. The Civil Court stated in their decision that the episode included “dialogues that seriously undermined State institutions and the Islamic religion”.

The case reached the Civil Court by way of the governor of Casablanca-Anfa. On 9 October 2018 the governor, acting on behalf of the Interior Ministry, wrote to Casablanca’s general prosecutor requesting that Racines be dissolved on the basis of their “participation” in ‘1 Dîner 2 Cons’. According to the governor, Racines had “organized an activity, including interviews interspersed with clear offenses towards institutions, in which political opinions were expressed that are very remote from the purposes for which the association was created”. As a result, on 13 November 2018, the general prosecutor requested that the Civil Court of First Instance of Casablanca dissolve Racines.

Racines is continuing its operations while it waits for the Court of Appeal to hear the case. Racines’ legal representative believes that the Ministry of the Interior is trying to put an end to Racines’ activities.

Front Line Defenders expresses concern at the ongoing judicial harassment of Racines and believes that the judicial order to dissolve the organisation is solely a result of their peaceful and legitimate work in the defence of social and cultural rights and of their efforts to provide for the exercise of the right to freedom of artistic expression in Morocco.

Front Line Defenders urge the authorities in Morocco to:

1. Reverse the decision ordering the dissolution of Racines;
2. Guarantee in all circumstances that all human rights defenders in Morocco are able to carry out their legitimate human rights activities without fear of reprisals and free of all restrictions, including judicial harassment.