

19 April 2019

Morocco: Judicial harassment of journalist and human rights defender Omar Radi

On 18 April 2019, at 8:30 am, human rights defender and journalist Omar Radi appeared at the headquarters of the National Brigade of Judicial Police of Casablanca (BNPJ), following the receipt of a summons in the early evening of 16 April 2019. The human rights defender had not been informed of the reason behind the summons.

[Omar Radi](#) is a freelance journalist and human rights defender from Morocco. He is a member of the association [Attac Maroc](#), working on human rights movements and social justice.

The investigation was ordered by the general prosecutor of Casablanca in relation to an allegation of offending a judge, made against Omar Radi. The preliminary interrogation on 18 April 2019 started at 9:30 am and lasted for four hours. The human rights defender was interrogated about his Twitter posts from 15 April 2019, that were critical of the judge who ruled in the case of Hirak El-Rif. The general prosecutor did not press any charges against Omar Radi.

The protests of the Hirak El-Rif or El-Rif movement began in the city of Al Hoceima in the Rif region in October 2016. The protesters were demanding social justice and an end to the systematic marginalization of the Rif region by the state. The leaders of the movement were convicted for “undermining the internal security of the state”, organising “undeclared” protests and other security-related charges, and received long prison sentences, upheld by the Court of Appeal in Casablanca on 5 April 2019.

The case of Omar Radi is part of a wider pattern of repression against people advocating for social justice in the Rif region. In February 2018, human rights defender and lawyer [Abdessadeq El Bouchtaoui](#) was convicted to 20 months in prison on charges related to his 114 Facebook posts addressing the judicial apprehension of Hirak activists, the disproportionate sentencing of protesters, violations of freedom of expression, and excessive use of force in the wake of Hirak El-Rif protests.

Front Line Defenders is concerned about the interrogation of journalist and human rights defender Omar Radi by the police as it believes that this is clearly related to his peaceful work on the defence and promotion of human rights, as well as his exercise of the right to freedom of expression in Morocco.

Front Line Defenders urges the authorities in Morocco to:

1. Immediately cease all further harassment of human rights defender **Omar Radi**;
2. Cease targeting all human rights defenders in **Morocco** and guarantee in all circumstances that they are able to carry out their legitimate human rights activities without fear of reprisals and free of all restrictions including judicial harassment.

Front Line Defenders respectfully reminds you that the United Nations Declaration on the Right and Responsibility of Individuals, Groups and Organs of Society to Promote and Protect Universally Recognized Human Rights and Fundamental Freedoms, adopted by consensus by the UN General Assembly on 9 December 1998, recognises the legitimacy of the activities of human rights defenders, their right to freedom of association and to carry out their activities without fear of reprisals. We would particularly draw attention to Article 6 (c): *“Everyone has the right, individually and in association with others: (c) To study, discuss, form and hold opinions on the observance, both in law and in practice, of all human rights and fundamental freedoms and, through these and other appropriate means, to draw public attention to those matters“*, and to Article 12 (2): *“The State shall take all necessary measures to ensure the protection by the competent authorities of everyone, individually and in association with others, against any violence, threats, retaliation, de facto or de jure adverse discrimination, pressure or any other arbitrary action as a consequence of his or her legitimate exercise of the rights referred to in the present declaration.”*

Please inform us of any actions that may be taken with regard to the above case.

Yours sincerely,



Andrew Anderson
Executive Director