

الجمعية المغربية للحقوق والحريات الدينية The Moroccan Association of Rights and Religious Freedom



Speech of "the Moroccan Association of Rights and Religious Freedom"
In the 13th session of Forum on Minority Issues

Thank you, Mrs. President

I am Jawad El Hamidi, a representative of the Moroccan Association of Rights and Religious Freedom.

First of all, I am pleased to express on behalf of the Moroccan Association of Rights and Religious Freedom our pride in participating in the 13th session of the Forum on Minority Issues.

Mrs. President

Members of minorities in Morocco have the right to freedom of religion or belief and freedom of expression, opinion, and association, without being subjected to any restrictions that are inconsistent with international legal standards, or exposing them to hate speech.

Unfortunately, domestic laws do not ensure that these rights are effectively protected and do not recognize minority communities. On the contrary, the Moroccan government has persisted in prosecuting individuals for insulting Islam, expelling foreigners from the country under the guise of preaching Christianity, and not recognizing associations of religious minorities and LGBT people.

In this context, marked by the suppression of freedoms using the Penal Code and the security agencies of the Ministry of Interior, government ministers, people receiving monthly government salaries, and anti-minority

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clerics, launched a campaign of online hate speech, and used local newspapers for the same purpose.

Our association has already reviewed dozens of publications, including newspaper articles and statements made by government officials that compare people belonging to minorities to some animals and viruses, and claim that minorities would cause conflict and impair security and stability, which confirms the government's connection to online hate speech.

Mrs. President

Our association recommends to the Moroccan government, through Forum on Minority Issues, the following:

- Adopt legislative and policy measures protecting people from online hate speech on the Internet, freedom of opinion and expression, and the right to active participation in public life. Therefore, Morocco should consider suspending the implementation of discriminatory and politicized laws, which it has identified in its latest reports.
- Ensure the right of members of minorities to prosecute inciters of hatred on the grounds of religion or belief, within the various Moroccan courts. So far, all minority people trying to protect themselves from hatred by going to the courts have been directly threatened by the Moroccan police.

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- We call on the Moroccan government to reaffirm its commitment to protecting minority communities, whom it does not recognize, from hate speech, and operationalize the right of these vulnerable groups to freedom of religion or belief and freedom of expression, opinion, and association.

Our association has discovered that the Constitution, the Penal Code, and the Law on Associations require that in order to enjoy human rights, including the right to form associations, this must be done without “offending” Islam, the King, and Western Sahara.

- We once more demand the removal of these three restrictions relating to Islam, the King and Western Sahara, which the government employs to arrest people, suppress their freedom of expression, and curtail their rights.

Such political/religious restrictions target not only minorities, but all vulnerable groups, and the foundations of democratic societies.

In general, our association generally affirms that society as a whole, including both its minorities and majorities, must be involved in efforts to enhance the preservation and enjoyment of human rights ratified by Morocco, while ensuring special care for vulnerable groups: minorities, especially religious ones, LGBT people, indigenous peoples and immigrants.

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