

*His Majesty, the King Mohammed VI  
Ibn Al Hassan,  
Roi du Maroc, Palais Royal,  
Rabat, Maroc*

*Copy to: the Embassy of the Kingdom of Morocco in Sweden  
The Foreign Ministry of Sweden*

Stockholm, Sweden 26 of November 2010

Your Excellency,

We are deeply concerned at the fact that the trial of 7 Sahrawi human rights defenders, has again been postponed amid violent scenes, including the harassment and intimidation of the defendants, the defence lawyers and international observers,

We have followed the case of Yahdih Ettarouzi, Saleh Labihi, Dakja Lashgar, Rachid Sghir, Brahim Dahane, Ali Salem Tamek and Ahmed Nasiri since they were arrested on the 8th of October 2009. We are concerned by reports of human rights defenders being arrested and brought to trial in Morocco because of actions that amount to peacefully exercising their right to freedom of expression and association. Mr Brahim Dahane has received the prestigious Human Rights Award in the name of Per Anger in Sweden and we are startled by the fact that he has been held in jail for over a year. The importance and rights of human rights defenders are expressed in international documents such as the Declaration on the Right and Responsibility of Individuals, Groups and Organs of Society to Promote and Protect Universally Recognized Human Rights and Fundamental Freedoms (Declaration on Human Rights Defenders) and the EU Guidelines on the Protection of Human Rights Defenders.

We call on the Moroccan authorities to ensure that human rights defenders are able to conduct their work without fear of harassment in compliance with their obligations under international human rights treaties, notably the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights, and in conformity to the UN Declaration on Human Rights Defenders.

We have monitored the trial set for the 15th of October as well as the 5th of November from a distance and in place. We were shocked by the disorder and lack of security at the trial of the 5th of November. Moroccan authorities have a duty to guarantee security and decorum in the courtroom to ensure a fair trial.

We call for the immediate and unconditional release of the 7 human rights defenders on the grounds that they were detained solely on the basis of their legitimate human rights work.

Yours sincerely,

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*Director, The Living History Forum*

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