

Network of Concerned Historians					NCH
Campaigns					
Year original	Year follow-up	Circular	Country	Names	
2015		77	Morocco	<i>Maâti Monjib</i>	
	2015			<i>follow-up 1</i>	
	2015			<i>follow-up 2</i>	
	2016			<i>follow-up 3</i>	

Announcement

Moroccan historian **Maati Monjib** and six others are now facing trial before the Tribunal of First Instance in the capital Rabat on charges of receiving foreign funds with intent to undermine Moroccan institutions and endanger national security. They face up to five years' imprisonment if sentenced. Their crime was to have organized training sessions in the use of a smartphone app called Story Maker, within the Ibn Rochd Center and AMJI with the support of the Dutch NGO Free Press Unlimited, and to have received funds from abroad to finance this project. The trial is due to start on 23 March 2016.

The Support Committee for the Seven Activists asks you to sign a new petition for Maati Monjib and his fellow activists at this link:

https://secure.avaaz.org/fr/petition/Premier_Ministre_du_Maroc_Ministre_de_la_Justice_Ministre_de_l_interieur_Abandon_des_charges_retenues_a_la_encontre_des_sep/?fzhgvgb&pv=0

Please find below:

1. the text of the petition in English;
2. a summary of the case compiled by NCH.

Please note that the petition can be read in English, French and Arabic at the link above.

For previous NCH campaigns for Maati Monjib, please see:

<http://www.concernedhistorians.org/ca/77.pdf>
<http://www.concernedhistorians.org/ca/77f1.pdf>
<http://www.concernedhistorians.org/ca/77f2.pdf>

TEXT OF PETITION

PETITION REQUESTING THE MOROCCAN GOVERNMENT TO DROP ALL CHARGES AGAINST THE SEVEN HUMAN RIGHTS ACTIVISTS

We, the undersigned, members of the National Support Committee of the Seven Moroccan Activists:

- 1) believe that (a) training in responsible journalism is an activity that promotes free expression, (b) training in investigative journalism aims at allowing the exercise of a legitimate right to access information and allows media to play their role as a watchdog for democracy, (c) receiving funds from abroad to finance activities promoting human rights in no way can be used as a pretext to attempt to block the free exercise by citizens of their civil and political rights.
- 2) condemn the ongoing campaign against the rights of association and free speech in Morocco.
- 3) demand from the Moroccan Government to drop all charges against the seven activists as these charges are only pretexts to attempt to silence the promotion of human rights, which is at the heart of their action.
- 4) invite all citizens around the world who share in these values to join us by signing this petition.

SUMMARY OF THE CASE COMPILED BY NCH

(11 March 2016)

Maâti Monjib ([1960]–) is a historian of political ideas and of the Maghreb. Born in Morocco, he got his first Ph.D. in France (North African politics) and another one in Senegal (African political history). He is a member of the Institut des Études Africaines (IEA; Institute for African Studies) at Mohamed V University in Rabat and the chairman (since early 2014) of the Rabat-based pluralist NGO Freedom Now–Comité pour la protection de la liberté de la presse et d'expression and the Association marocaine pour un journalisme d'investigation (AMJI; Moroccan Association of Investigative Journalism).

After the death of King Hassan II in 1999, Monjib returned to Morocco to work at the University of Mohammed V-Rabat. Between 2007 and 2010, he initiated a dialogue between left-wing democrats and moderate Islamists. He was a founding member of the support council of the 20 February Movement, which organized protests in Morocco at the beginning of the Arab Spring. He founded and directed the Ibn Rochd Center for Studies and Communication in Rabat which trained hundreds of Moroccan journalists in investigative techniques and civic journalism. In November 2014, he shut down the institute after repeated interference from the state. Freedom Now, established in 2011, was refused registration by the authorities, reportedly because it is perceived as an anti-royalist front. Monjib had criticized the monarchy in columns in the foreign press in the past.

Since 2013, a long campaign of harassment and intimidation has been waged against him, including threats and defamatory articles in newspapers and on news sites. On 31 August 2015, he was detained

briefly at the airport when returning from France. He was told that he was under investigation for “endangering state security.” On 14 September 2015, he was interrogated by the Brigade Nationale de la Police Judiciaire (BNPJ) and accused of tarnishing Morocco’s image abroad, using foreign funds to promote a foreign agenda and sabotaging the credibility of state institutions. His associates have also been questioned. On 16 September 2015, he went on hunger strike for the first time (until 19 September) after being barred from leaving Morocco for a conference in Barcelona. Authorities declared that they imposed the ban because of their investigation into suspected financial wrongdoing in the Ibn Rochd Center. The IEA board refused to give him permission to travel to Norway to attend two academic events related to his expertise. On 6 October 2015, he went on hunger strike at the headquarters of the Moroccan Association for Human Rights, Rabat, to protest against the restrictions against his freedom of movement and his academic freedom. On 20 October 2015, the secretariat of the National Committee to Support Maati Monjib issued a statement reporting a rapid deterioration in his health after fourteen days of hunger strike, and called for a show of solidarity with Monjib on 21 October in front of parliament. During his hunger strike, he collapsed twice and he was hospitalized. On 29 October 2015, Monjib suspended his hunger strike after authorities ended the travel ban. Instead, he was charged with receiving foreign funds with the intent to undermine Moroccan institutions and endanger national security. His trial before the Tribunal of First Instance in Rabat was due to start on 23 March 2016; he and six others faced up to five years’ imprisonment if sentenced. Their crime was to have organized training sessions in the use of a smartphone app called Story Maker, within the Ibn Rochd Center and AMJI with the support of the Dutch NGO Free Press Unlimited, and to have received funds from abroad to finance this project.

Also in late 2015, Monjib sued the Moroccan website “Le360” for defamation in Paris following several articles over the previous months that denigrated him and his family. This trial was due to start in late January 2016.

Monjib is the author of *La Monarchie marocaine et la lutte pour le pouvoir: Hassan II face à l'opposition nationale* (The Moroccan Monarchy and the Struggle for Power: Hassan II Facing the National Opposition) (Paris: L'Harmattan, 1992), *A Political Biography of Mehdi Ben Barka*, with Z. Daoud (Paris: Éditions Michalon, 1996–2000), and editor of *Islamists Versus Secularists in Morocco*, ed. (Amsterdam: IKV, 2009).

Sources: Maâti Monjib, Personal communication (11 & 13 & 15 October 2015); “Situation personnelle de l'historien de nationalités française et marocaine Maâti Monjib” (Profile, October 2015); Freedom Now, [Petition text](#) (11 September 2015); Comité international de soutien à Maâti Monjib, Communiqué (15 November 2015); Biographical notes, [Codesria](#) and [Carnegie Endowment for International Peace](#); Charlotte Bozonnet, “L'universitaire marocain Maati Monjib en grève de la faim,” *Le Monde* (16 October 2015); Paul Schemm “Moroccan Journalist on Hunger Strike, Barred From Leaving,” [AP](#) (17 September 2015); Reporters without Borders, “[Monarchy's Red Lines Gag](#)

[Morocco's Independent Media](#)” (17 September 2015); Middle East Studies Association, “[Letters on Morocco](#)” (13 October 2015); Wagdy Sawahel, “[Academic on Hunger Strike over Travel Ban, Harassment](#),” *University World News* (22 October 2015); Wagdy Sawahel, “[Academic Suspends Hunger Strike as Travel Ban Is Lifted](#),” *University World News* (5 November 2015); Aziz El Yaakoubi, “[Moroccan Intellectual Suspends Hunger Strike, Faces Charges: Lawyer](#),” *Reuters* (29 October 2015); Le comité international de soutien à Maâti Monjib, “Maâti Monjib porte plainte contre le site ‘Le360’ pour diffamation” (press release; 10 January 2016); “[Pétition pour l’abandon des poursuites contre les sept militants marocains des droits humains](#)” (13 January 2016).