

Morocco - Petition: Free the Hirak political prisoners

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introduction

The death of Mohcine Fikri - a fish vendor crushed in a garbage truck on October, 28th, 2016 while trying to retrieve his confiscated merchandise in Al Hoceima - has paved the way for the rise of 'Hirak', a popular movement of the Rif that fights for social justice and the right to equal development. Since that date the northern region of Morocco has witnessed a historical turmoil. Despite the militarisation of the region and the state's manoeuvre to discredit the upheaval, Hirak was able to mobilise thousands of demonstrators in the north of Morocco.

However, the Moroccan state began a wave of repression that has not been seen for decades. Hence, in May and in a context of rising repression against the Movement of the Rif, fifty political prisoners, among them the leaders of Hirak, were transferred to the Oukacha prison in Casablanca. Consequently, and conscious of the difficulties that the families of the detained would face, a committee for the support of political prisoners was established on the 31 May 2017.

The Committee of Support for the Political Prisoners of Hirak [Casablanca] is a collective independent of all political organisations, unions, and associations. It is comprised of militants from different political, associative and union horizons and who defend the cause of political prisoners, and who stand against the criminalisation of social movements. The Committee calls for the immediate liberation of all of Hirak's political prisoners.

PETITION: Call for Solidarity with the People's Struggle in Morocco

The death on 28 October 2016 of Mohcine Fikri — a young fishmonger crushed while protesting the confiscation of his merchandise by officials in Al-Hoceima, a town of the region of northern Morocco known as the Rif — triggered a popular movement which has been shaking Morocco ever since. Over the past year, a vast number of Moroccans have come together in the Hirak, a peaceful movement calling for social justice and economic development.

The response of the Moroccan authorities has been brutal, killing another young man, arresting over 400 protesters, with over 300 of them kept in detention, including 15 minors and 7 journalists who were covering the events. The Hirak's political prisoners, including key figures of the movement such as Nasser Zefzafi, are facing charges that could lead to long jail sentences, up to the death penalty. Since September, 37 of them started an open-ended hunger strike against their detention and the brutality of the crackdown. Their situation has become critical with some of them taken to hospital.

The Moroccans are standing up for social justice. It is their inalienable right to protest peacefully. We hold the Moroccan authorities responsible for the lives of the detainees and demand the immediate release of all Hirak's prisoners and cessation of the repression of the popular protest.

Signed:

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