

# **EIGHT STEPS FOR HUMAN RIGHTS**

## **AMNESTY INTERNATIONAL'S HUMAN RIGHTS MANIFESTO FOR MOROCCAN SENATORIAL ELECTIONS**

As Moroccans are poised to elect new members of Parliament's upper house, Amnesty International is calling on candidates to deliver real human rights reforms.

The Moroccan authorities have taken a series of positive steps in recent years, including the adoption of a new Constitution in 2011 that enshrines human rights, the ratification of the International Convention for the Protection of All Persons from Enforced Disappearance in 2013 and the accession to the Optional Protocol to the Convention against Torture in 2014. Yet Amnesty International continues to document reports of human rights violations as a result of shortcomings in Moroccan legislation and practice.

Amnesty International urges candidates to ensure that respect and protection for human rights is at the heart of the elections and to capitalize on the momentum generated by unprecedented plans to review the country's justice system to introduce comprehensive reforms which uphold human rights.

Here, Amnesty International sets out the eight steps every candidate should take to show their commitment to human rights.

### **AHEAD OF THE ELECTIONS, I PLEDGE TO:**

#### **1. STOP TORTURE AND OTHER ILL-TREATMENT**

All people under custody must have access to legal counsel of their choice and lawyers must be present during police interrogations of all suspects. Prosecutors and judges must promptly, independently and impartially investigate reports of torture and other ill-treatment when faced with signs or credible allegations, including by ensuring prompt medical examinations by independent medical doctors, and should be held accountable if they fail to do so. Those who report torture or other ill-treatment must be protected from reprisals. Any statement obtained under coercion including torture or other ill-treatment shall not be invoked as evidence in any proceedings, except against an alleged perpetrator. A truly independent and fully resourced National Preventive Mechanism must be instituted in accordance to the Optional Protocol to the Convention against Torture and access to places of detention should be granted to national and international human rights groups.

#### **2. END GENDER-BASED VIOLENCE**

A comprehensive law to address gender-based violence must be adopted. Discriminatory laws, policies, customs and practices must be amended, including provisions which distinguish punishment for perpetrators of rape based on a survivor's virginity and which criminalize sexual relations between unmarried consenting adults, thus deterring survivors of sexual violence from filing a complaint for fear of being themselves prosecuted. The definition of rape must be amended in line with international law and marital rape must be recognized as a specific criminal offence. Abortion must be decriminalized. Women and girls must have access to safe and legal abortion when their life and physical and mental health are at risk, in cases of rape or incest as well as in cases of severe or fatal foetal impairment.

Police, judges, lawyers and healthcare workers must be trained to respond to survivors in a sensitive, confidential, non-discriminatory manner.

### **3. COMBAT IMPUNITY**

Full, impartial and independent investigations into reports of human rights violations must be conducted and perpetrators of human rights violations brought to justice in fair trials, without recourse to the death penalty. The recommendations of the Equity and Reconciliation Commission must be immediately implemented, including a national strategy to combat impunity.

### **4. GUARANTEE THE INDEPENDENCE OF THE JUDICIARY**

Judges' security of tenure must be enshrined in law, with effective safeguards against political interference. The High Council for the Judiciary (*Conseil Supérieur du Pouvoir Judiciaire*) should function as an independent body and adopt clear procedures and objective criteria for the appointment, remuneration, tenure, promotion, suspension and dismissal of the members of the judiciary and disciplinary sanctions taken against them, in line with international standards.

### **5. UPHOLD THE RIGHTS TO FREEDOM OF EXPRESSION, ASSOCIATION AND PEACEFUL ASSEMBLY**

No one must be imprisoned or subjected to other criminal sanctions solely for exercising their right to freedom of expression, association or peaceful assembly. Laws which criminalize activities amounting to the peaceful exercise of the right to freedom of expression must be repealed, including provisions on defamation, slander and false reporting. Security forces must not use force unnecessarily or excessively when policing demonstrations. All arbitrary restrictions on the right to freedom of association must be lifted, and independent organizations granted official registration. Intimidation and prosecution of human rights defenders and activists on charges which appear to be politically motivated must stop.

### **6. PROTECT MIGRANTS, REFUGEES AND ASYLUM-SEEKERS**

The practice of unlawful expulsion and readmission of migrants, asylum-seekers and refugees to and from neighbouring countries must stop. In addition, unnecessary and excessive use of force against migrants, asylum-seekers and refugees as well as racial profiling and discrimination must be investigated and perpetrators of human rights violations must be held to account.

### **7. REALIZE ECONOMIC, SOCIAL AND CULTURAL RIGHTS**

Specific measures must be put in place to achieve progressively the full realization of economic, social and cultural rights for all, whilst prioritising the most marginalised and disadvantaged groups, to the maximum of the country's available resources and in a non-discriminatory way.

### **8. ABOLISH THE DEATH PENALTY**

The number of capital offences must be reduced with a view to abolishing capital punishment, in line with Article 20 of the Constitution which enshrines the right to life.

# SIGN HERE FOR HUMAN RIGHTS

SIGN BELOW TO SIGNAL YOUR COMMITMENT TO FIGHTING FOR HUMAN RIGHTS

**Please return this to**

Amnesty International Morocco  
20 rue Ouargha apartment 5  
Agdal – Rabat, Morocco  
Fax: 212 537 68 10 48

## **ABOUT AMNESTY INTERNATIONAL**

Amnesty International is a global movement of more than 7 million supporters, members and activists in more than 150 countries and territories who campaign to end grave abuses of human rights. Our vision is for every person to enjoy all the rights enshrined in the Universal Declaration of Human Rights and other international human rights standards. We are independent of any government, political ideology, economic interest or religion and are funded mainly by our membership and public donations.