

JOINT PRESS STATEMENT

MOROCCO: Raid on the premises of the Moroccan Association of Human Rights (AMDH) and assault against a human rights activist

Paris – Geneva - Copenhagen, 19 February 2015 – The Observatory for the Protection of Human Rights Defenders, a joint programme of FIDH and OMCT, along with the Euro-Mediterranean Human Rights Network (EMHRN) and the Euro-Med Federation against Enforced Disappearances (FEMED), condemn the raid on the premises of the Moroccan Association of Human Rights (*Association marocaine des droits humains* – AMDH) and the assault against one of its members by the Moroccan security forces.

During the evening of Sunday 15 February 2015, Moroccan security forces accompanied by about forty individuals in plain clothes armed with metal bars, broke into the premises of the AMDH which had been surrounded by the security forces since the morning. During the raid, a member of the secretariat and of the association's administrative committee, Ms. **Rabea Bouzidi**, was physically and verbally assaulted. While attempting to wrest from her the keys of her apartment and those of the premises of the association, four men fell her and maintained her on the ground where she could no longer breathe. She was then brought to hospital in worrying conditions. The security forces had already tried to enter the premises earlier that day but had been prevented by the association president, M. El Haij, who demanded that they produce a warrant.

This raid was due to the presence on the premises of the AMDH of two French journalists, Jean Louis Perez and Pierre Chautard, of the Première Ligne Agency, who had come to propose to the members of the association to interview them about the "20 February Movement". The two journalists were in Morocco to work on a documentary on the Moroccan economy for France 3.

The authorities confiscated their material, including their cell phones, on the ground that they had not yet received an authorisation, despite a request the journalists had submitted several weeks earlier.¹ On February 16, they were forced to leave Morocco without their material, including their reporting.

The Observatory, the EMHRN and the FEMED condemn the assault against Ms. Rabea Bouzidi and the raid on the premises of the AMDH, as they both constitute a serious obstacle to the exercise of freedom of association. Our organisations are concerned about the acts of violence committed by the security forces against human rights defenders and, more generally, deplore the increasing restrictions on freedoms of information, association and assembly in Morocco during the last several months.²

Our organisations call on the Moroccan government to ensure the security of both the members and the premises of all the human rights organisations and to guarantee in all circumstances the right to freedom of association of human rights defenders, in particular those that the journalists may have met, in conformity with article 29 of the Moroccan Constitution, article 22 of the International Covenant on civil and political rights (ICCPR) and article 5.b of the Declaration on human rights defenders adopted by the United Nations General Assembly on 9 December 1998.

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1 The journalists, who had submitted an authorisation request to the authorities, believed however they were operating legally, as they had not received any reply. They were preparing to follow up on their authorisation request on 16 February.

2 See press statements of the Observatory dated 29 July 2014 and 7 October 2014, and of the EMHRN dated [2 October 2014](#), as well as the open letter of the EMHRN to the Ministry of Interior Mohamed Hassad of [26 November 2014](#) (French only) and the open letter to the European Union dated [5 December 2014](#) (French only).

HYPERLINK

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