

URGENT ACTION

HUMAN RIGHTS DEFENDER BEHIND BARS

Moroccan human rights defender and blogger Saida El Alami is serving an unjust three-year prison sentence solely for exercising her rights to freedom of expression and peaceful assembly. On 1 July 2025, plain-clothes police officers arrested her in Casablanca after she livestreamed a protest concerning death in custody. On 16 September 2025, the Criminal Court of Ain Sebaa in Casablanca sentenced her to three years in prison and a fine of 20.000 dirhams (approximately 1870 euros) for social media posts and public statements criticizing the authorities and exposing alleged corruption and human rights violations. On 17 December 2025, the Casablanca Court of Appeal upheld her conviction and sentence. Moroccan authorities must immediately and unconditionally release Saida El Alami and quash her conviction.

TAKE ACTION: WRITE AN APPEAL IN YOUR OWN WORDS OR USE THIS MODEL LETTER

Head of Government Aziz Akhannouch

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Your Excellency,

I am writing to express my grave concern regarding the prolonged imprisonment of human rights defender and blogger Saida El Alami. According to court documents reviewed by Amnesty International, the charges against Saida El Alami stem from dozens of Facebook posts and videos in which she criticized alleged corruption, denounced arbitrary detention, advocated for the release of individuals detained for politically motivated reasons, commented on prison conditions and human rights violations, and questioned the independence of the judiciary. The authorities relied on these posts as evidence to convict her on charges of "insulting a body regulated by law", "insulting public officials while carrying out their duties", and "broadcasting and distributing false allegations without consent" according to Articles 263, 265, and 2-447 of the Moroccan Penal Code. This conviction and sentence contravene international human rights law which protects the right to criticize public officials, state institutions and judicial actors.

According to family members, Saida El Alami has been subjected to harassment and ill-treatment throughout her detention. While held in Oukacha prison in December 2025, other prisoners insulted her, tore her clothes and prison guards sprayed her with a water hose. Following her transfer to Dar Beida prison in January 2026, the harassment continued, including threats made by other prisoners and periods of prolonged isolation during which she was denied access to the prison yard for up to three weeks at a time. Family members report that detention conditions are harsh, with excessively high temperatures in cells and poor hygiene. Since her imprisonment, Saida El Alami's health has significantly deteriorated. According to her family, she has developed diabetes and high blood pressure, lost more than 20 kilograms, and had difficulties walking. In April 2026, after a hunger strike, her family was unable to contact her for two weeks and only saw her again after publicly raising concerns about her whereabouts. When they were finally allowed to visit, they found her in a wheelchair, appearing extremely weak, with pale skin and bleeding lips caused by severe dehydration. According to family members, her physical and mental health remains extremely concerning and she does not have adequate access to healthcare or medication.

I urge you to immediately and unconditionally release Saida El Alami and quash her conviction which stems solely from the exercise of her human rights. Pending her release, ensure she has access to adequate healthcare, provided in line with medical ethics, regular access to her family and lawyers, and is held in conditions that meet international standards.

Yours sincerely,

ADDITIONAL INFORMATION

Saida El Alami is a human rights defender and blogger known for being outspoken on corruption, human rights violations and freedom of expression in Morocco. She is a member of the collective “Femmes Marocaines Contre la Détention Politique”, a movement of women human rights defenders that denounces politically motivated detentions.

Authorities have repeatedly targeted Saida El Alami for her peaceful activism and online expression. Police [arrested](#) her on 23 March 2022, a day after sharing a social media post criticizing security officials for making inquiries about her with her neighbors. She had also published an earlier post denouncing alleged corruption in the judiciary. The Casablanca court prosecutor charged her with “insulting a body regulated by law”, “insulting public officials while carrying out their duties”, “contempt of judicial decisions”, and “broadcasting and distributing false allegations without consent” under articles 265, 263, 266 and 2-477 of the Penal Code, respectively. She was sentenced in April 2022 to two years’ imprisonment. Her sentence was later increased to 3 years on appeal in September 2022. She was released in July 2024 following a royal pardon.

During the proceedings in her latest prosecution, Saida El Alami and her lawyers raised concerns about violations of her fair trial rights, including restrictions on access to legal counsel as she was not able to see her lawyer for 48 hours when she was first arrested. On 14 July 2025, she undertook a hunger strike to protest her arrest and prosecution, which she considered arbitrary and linked to her human rights activism.

Saida El Alami’s unjust imprisonment reflects the continued use of criminal laws in Morocco to prosecute human rights defenders, journalists, bloggers, and activists simply for expressing their opinions. For example, prominent human rights lawyer and former Minister of Human Rights Mohamed Ziane has been imprisoned since November 2022 following convictions on charges that Amnesty International described as stemming from his work defending activists, journalists and victims of human rights violations. In April 2026, following a retrial ordered by the Court of Cassation, the Rabat Court of Appeal reinstated a five-year prison sentence against him in a separate case related to the alleged misappropriation of funds from the Moroccan Liberal Party, ensuring his continued imprisonment.

Saida El Alami’s imprisonment violates Morocco’s obligations under international human rights law. Morocco is a state party to the ICCPR, whose Article 19 protects the right to hold opinions without interference and the right to freedom of expression. The African Charter on Human and Peoples’ Rights, to which Morocco is also a party, similarly guarantees the right to express and disseminate opinions under Article 9. International human rights bodies have consistently affirmed that criticism of public officials, state institutions and government policies is protected speech and that no one should be arrested, prosecuted or imprisoned solely for peacefully expressing their views.

In March 2026, the UN Working Group on Arbitrary Detention [concluded](#) that the imprisonment of Saida El Alami is arbitrary and contrary to Morocco’s international human rights obligations. It called on the Moroccan authorities to immediately release her, provide her with an enforceable right to compensation and other reparations, and investigate the violations committed against her.

PREFERRED LANGUAGE TO ADDRESS TARGET: Arabic, French, English

You can also write in your own language.

PLEASE TAKE ACTION AS SOON AS POSSIBLE UNTIL: 9 January 2027

Please check with the Amnesty office in your country if you wish to send appeals after the deadline.

NAME AND PRONOUN: Saida El Alami (She/Her)

LINK TO PREVIOUS UA: First UA