

UA 1/21, **UPDATE 2**, AI Index: MDE 29/4377/2021 of 6 August 2021
The original index is MDE 29/3481/2021 of 5 January 2021

MOROCCO PRISONER OF CONSCIENCE PROVISIONALLY RELEASED

Human rights defender and prisoner of conscience Maati Monjib was provisionally released on 23 March, but the charges against him have not been dropped. On 29 December 2020, Moroccan authorities arrested Maati Monjib and held him in arbitrary detention, after a Rabat court convicted him of "threatening the internal security of the State," and sentenced him to one-year imprisonment. His conviction was in retaliation for his critical stance towards the authorities and his work promoting the right to freedom of expression. Following his release, Maati Monjib has kept up his fight for human rights in Morocco.

No further action is requested. Many thanks to all who sent appeals.

On 23 March, academic and human rights defender Maati Monjib was provisionally released from Oukasha prison in Casablanca, Morocco but money laundering charges against him are still pending which puts him in danger of re-arrest and resumption of trial.

On 29 December 2020 Maati Monjib was arrested while having lunch at a restaurant in the Moroccan capital, Rabat. He was placed in pretrial detention on fraud and money-laundering charges. On 27 January 2021, he was unjustly sentenced for a case dating back to 2015 to one year in prison and a fine of 10,000 dirhams without undergoing a hearing or receiving a summons or any notifications to his defence team to allow for a fair and proper trial. On 4 March, he started a hunger strike, despite suffering a chronic heart condition and diabetes, to protest his detention and his sentencing in absentia in two separate cases brought against him in 2015 and 2020, in relation to the exercise of his rights to freedoms of expression and association, following years of unlawful digital surveillance and harassment through the criminal justice system.

Since his release from detention, Maati Monjib has continued to stand up for human rights and regularly attends rallies and events in support for those unjustly detained in Moroccan prisons, including journalist Omar Radi and Suleiman Raisouni.

The Moroccan authorities must recognize the legitimacy of human rights defenders and publicly support their work, acknowledging their contribution to the advancement of human rights. Individuals like Maati Monjib must not be punished for peacefully exercising their rights to freedom of expression and association. They must be allowed to carry out their vital human rights work free from harassment and reprisals from the authorities. Amnesty International will continue to campaign for the bogus charges still pending against Maati Monjib to be dropped.

The Urgent Action (UA), along with efforts by partner organizations, has pressured the authorities to

release Maati Monjib. The UA gained momentum especially during the time Maati Monjib started his hunger strike, in March. It was the best direct tool to address the authorities directly. Upon release, in a phone call with Amnesty International, Maati Monjib thanked everyone who took the time to express solidarity with him. He also promised as soon as he was released “to never stop standing up for just causes”.