



Press release: Four complaints for torture filed against Morocco before the UN Committee against Torture

Geneva, Paris, 10 June 2022 - On Thursday, June 9, four complaints denouncing violations of the provisions of the United Nations Convention against Torture were filed against the State of Morocco before the UN Committee against Torture (CAT) in Geneva.

For over a year, the International Service for Human Rights (ISHR), ACAT-France, Attorney Joseph Braham, with the support of Ms Julie Baleynaud, Attorney Laurence Greig, and the League for the Protection of Sahrawi Political Prisoners in Moroccan Prisons (LPPS) have been preparing these complaints before the CAT on behalf of four plaintiffs. The four of them are **Sahrawi human rights defenders who have endured severe acts of torture at the hands of the Moroccan authorities.**

With the support of the LPPS, the organisations and attorneys mentioned above were able to communicate with the families of the imprisoned Sahrawi defenders - most notably during an international delegation's visit to Rabat in May 2022. Despite **surveillance, censorship and threats by Moroccan authorities, recently revealed through the PEGASUS affair**, relatives of the detained expressed their hopes: "We cannot leave our sons abandoned in Moroccan prisons."

The four plaintiffs are Mohamed Lamine Haddi, Hassan Dah, Abdelmoula El-Hafidi and Mohamed Bani. They have been **detained for six to twelve years based on confessions obtained under torture, in violation of international law and in the absence of a fair trial.** These complaints symbolise the plaintiffs' hope that the torture they suffered, in complete violation of Morocco's international obligations, be recognised.

Morocco, a self-proclaimed international human rights champion and [active supporter of the Convention against Torture Initiative](#), nevertheless systematically resorts to torture domestically, especially targeting Sahrawi defenders. Like many prisoners, the plaintiffs were forced to sign confessions under duress.

The plaintiffs remain in illegal detention based on confessions obtained through torture, where they **continue to be routinely subjected to inhuman and degrading treatment**, often prompting them to go on hunger strikes. Some of them like **Mohamed Lamine Haddi** have been held in solitary confinement for up to five years. Although they are the victims of surveillance and threats, the plaintiffs' relatives are mobilised: "We are constantly experiencing repression and intimidation. We are used to it".

In 2016, Morocco was found guilty by the UN Committee against torture (CAT) for the torture inflicted on a fellow Saharawi human rights defender, [Naâma Asfari](#), one of the spokespersons for the peaceful protest camp set up in Gdeim Izik in 2010. In November 2021, Morocco was again found guilty for the torture inflicted on another three Sahrawi detainees ([M.B. v. Morocco](#), [Sidi Abdallah Abbahah v. Morocco](#), [Omar N'Dour v. Morocco](#)).

To this day, Morocco has not followed upon the decisions of the CAT, and the detention conditions remain the same for these prisoners. The LPPS, ISHR and ACAT-France **call on Morocco to comply with the decisions of the Committee against Torture, to release all prisoners convicted based on confessions obtained under torture and to ensure their right to reparations.**

For media enquiries, please contact:

ACAT France: Louis Linel communication@acatfrance.fr
+33 1 40 40 74 10, +33 6 27 76 83 27

ISHR (Geneva): Vincent Ploton, v.ploton@ishr.ch, +41 78 2001937

Attorney **Joseph Braham:** +33 1 44 54 38 90

Attorney **Laurence Greig:** + 33 6 37 60 36 38