

# Reform and Policy under King Mohammed VI

Since ascending the throne in 1999, King Mohammed VI has strengthened, accelerated, and broadened democratic reforms begun during the reign of his father, King Hassan II, to empower individual citizens and the institutions that represent them. He has also strengthened Morocco's longstanding alliance with the US. And he has deepened and enhanced Morocco's ties with Africa in an effort to promote security, economic development, stability, and religious tolerance in the region.

## Reform

- Some of the hallmark achievements include:
  - **The 2004 Moroccan Truth & Reconciliation Commission (IER)**, the first [truth and reconciliation commission](#) in the Arab world. The independent investigative body shed light on human rights violations in Morocco from 1956 to 1999, examining Morocco's [past and the circumstances that permitted the abuses](#). After many public hearings and testimonies, 23,676 Moroccans received compensation totaling \$193 million. The King accepted all of the IER recommendations, and the government has worked to pass the necessary legislation to implement them.
  - **The 2004 reform of the family code, the [moudawana](#)**, one of the most progressive laws on women's and family rights in the Arab world. It raised the minimum age of marriage for girls from 15 to 18 and gave wives joint responsibility for the family with their husbands and equal rights to property upon divorce. This law helped to promote women's participation in society and politics.
    - The government instituted quotas to improve women's political participation. As a result, women currently make up [17%](#) of the House of Representatives in Parliament. And new [laws](#) adopted since then have increased women's representation at the local and regional level – with a 27% requirement in Communal Councils and a 1/3 requirement in Regional Councils.
  - **A series of free and fair parliamentary and local elections in 2011 and 2015**, in which large numbers of Moroccans voted, validating the key elements of the nation's ongoing reforms and political transformation and empowering local communities to take more control of their future.
  - **The 2011 reform of the Constitution**, which aimed to consolidate democracy in Morocco, enshrined several key changes to Morocco's political system. Adopted by a national referendum, the Constitution:
    - Establishes that the Head of Government is appointed from the party that wins the most seats in Parliamentary elections.
    - Expands the powers of the Head of Government and the Parliament, giving them broad legislative powers.
    - Empowers Moroccans with more control and leadership at the local government level—making local and regional officials directly accountable to voters.
    - Establishes independent agencies to guarantee civil and human rights protections.
    - Establishes an independent judiciary with a newly mandated Constitutional Court.
    - Mandates the devolving of power to the local and regional levels, a process which began with historic elections in 2015 of local officials.
  - **The 2011 reform of Morocco's national human rights oversight body, the National Human Rights Council (CNDH)**, establishing its autonomy, enlarging its investigative and monitoring powers, and reinforcing its pluralistic composition. [The Council](#) has the power to investigate

allegations of human rights violations; act as an early warning mechanism to prevent violations; and make recommendations on how to bring legislation in line with the Constitution, international human rights treaties, and international law.

- Through the combined efforts of CNDH, Moroccan civil society, and government leaders, Morocco made significant human rights advances in the areas of migration, women's rights, and the court system.
  - In November 2013, Morocco adopted a [new policy](#) providing protections for migrants and asylum seekers. This change was the result of an investigation by CNDH and its subsequent recommendations to reform Morocco's immigration policy.
  - In January 2014, the Moroccan parliament voted unanimously to [amend the law](#) so that rapists can no longer be exonerated by marrying their victims.
  - In March 2014, the Council of Ministers, chaired by King Mohammed VI, approved the [draft law on military justice](#) prohibiting military trials for civilians.
  - In August 2015, Morocco [legalized](#) a known anti-regime NGO in the Sahara, part of a series of rulings authorizing previously unrecognized NGOs that marked a step in improving freedom of association in the country.
- In a statement made at a [Congressional hearing on US-Morocco relations](#), Deputy Assistant Secretary of State for Near Eastern Affairs at the State Department William Roebuck stated, "We are pleased to see this commitment made concrete in the Moroccan government's initiative to reform the Military Code of Justice and to exempt civilians from trial by military tribunals through a draft law which has moved to Parliament for approval. We have also remarked on the growing role of the National Council on Human Rights (CNDH) as a credible and proactive defender of human rights, and are encouraged by the Council of Government's decision to strengthen the CNDH by ensuring that government agencies address complaints directed to it. Both of these measures are important steps forward in strengthening the protection of human rights in Morocco and in realizing the promise of the 2011 Constitution."
- At the conclusion of a May 2013 visit to Morocco, [United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights Navi Pillay stated](#), "Morocco is undergoing an important transition and is setting high standards through its Constitution and laws. In my exchanges with the authorities, including His Majesty King Mohammed VI and various ministers, it was clear that there is the political will at the highest levels to continue efforts to set a firm human rights foundation for Moroccan society."

## Development

Under King Mohammed VI, Morocco has undertaken a multi-year strategy for promoting human development and greater economic growth to improve the lives of its citizens.

- Morocco achieved all of the United Nations [Millennium Development Goals](#), which set a standard for improving the lives of citizens, promoting equality, and ensuring that the benefits of development impact even the most marginalized populations. Key achievements include reducing extreme poverty, providing potable water to all parts of the country, promoting maternal and child health, and achieving universal primary education.
  - Morocco won recognition from the UN for outstanding progress in fighting hunger, by reaching international targets ahead of an end-of-2015 deadline. The MDG-1 hunger target requires

- countries to halve the proportion of hungry people in the population before the end of 2015 compared to the level in 1990
- 2006 launch of the multibillion dollar National Initiative for Human Development (INDH) to reduce poverty in rural areas, increase social and health services -- including education, health care, electricity, and potable water -- to marginalized communities, and create sustainable economic development projects. The plan was renewed in 2012 for another five years.  
<http://www.indh.ma/fr/index.asp>

## Diplomacy

King Mohammed VI's commitment to promoting peace, security, stability, reform, interfaith dialogue, and sustainable development goes beyond Morocco's borders.

- In March 2015, Morocco launched the Mohammed VI Institute for the Training of Imams, Morchidines, and Morchidates, which aims to prepare the next generation of Muslim religious leaders from across the region to counter extremist interpretations of Islam. The [program](#) trains imams from Morocco and abroad to preach, practice and teach moderate Islam -- a unique and powerful weapon against violent extremism. In addition to 150 Moroccan imams and 100 Moroccan morchidates, the [Institute](#) is currently training 447 imams and morchidates from Africa and Europe, including 212 from Mali, 37 from Tunisia, 100 from Guinea, 75 from Côte d'Ivoire, and 23 from France.
- Under the King's leadership, Morocco has deepened its partnership with the US, as well as with partners in Europe, Africa, and the MENA region. In addition to being designated a non-NATO ally, a two-time Millennium Challenge Corporation compact recipient, and a Strategic Dialogue partner of the US, Morocco has advanced status with the European Union, as well as multiple free trade agreements with the US, the EU, and several MENA countries.

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