

# Morocco under King Mohammed VI: 15 Years of Leadership in Promoting Reform

2014 marks the 15<sup>th</sup> anniversary of King Mohammed VI's reign. Since ascending the throne in 1999, King Mohammed VI has consolidated, 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 over the past 15 years include:
  - **The 2004 Moroccan Truth & Reconciliation Commission (IER)**, which was the first truth and reconciliation commission established in the Arab world. The independent investigative body shed light on human rights violations that took place 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 checks totaling \$193 million. The King accepted all of the IER recommendations and the government has worked to pass the necessary legislation to implement them.  
[http://www.cndh.ma/sites/default/files/documents/rapport\\_final\\_mar\\_eng-3.pdf](http://www.cndh.ma/sites/default/files/documents/rapport_final_mar_eng-3.pdf)  
<http://www.state.gov/g/drl/rls/hrrpt/2005/61702.htm>
  - **The 2004 reform of the family code, the *moudawana***, which is 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 of the family with their husbands, and equal rights to property upon divorce. This law ushered in profound changes in Moroccan society, and helped to promote women's participation in society and politics to reinforce their rights and eliminate gender discrimination in private and public affairs. This reform set the stage for rapid advancement of women in Moroccan business and politics.  
<http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Mudawana>
    - By 2011, the number of women in Morocco's Parliament more than doubled. Mbarka Bouaida, Morocco's Minister Delegate for Foreign Affairs & Cooperation, is a former Parliamentarian and a rising star in Moroccan politics. She represented her country in the Atlantic Dialogues and during King Mohammed VI's recent visit to the US, and described the family code reform as "revolutionary."  
<http://www.blog.learningpartnership.org/2010/10/morocco-mbarka-bouaida/>; <https://www.ndi.org/morocco>
    - *Jeune Afrique's* article, "The 25 Most Influential Businesswomen in Africa" featured 8 Moroccans – more than any other country.  
<http://economie.jeuneafrique.com/regions/international-panafricain/16878-les-25-femmes-les-plus-influentes-du-business-en-afrique.html>
  - **A series of free and fair parliamentary and local elections**, in which large numbers of Moroccans voted, validating the key elements of the nation's ongoing reforms and political transformation, elevating women and youth candidates to positions of leadership, and empowering local communities to take more control of their future.  
[http://moroccoonthemove.com/wp-content/uploads/2014/02/Press\\_Release\\_Elections\\_7July09FINAL.pdf](http://moroccoonthemove.com/wp-content/uploads/2014/02/Press_Release_Elections_7July09FINAL.pdf)  
<http://moroccoonthemove.wordpress.com/faq-moroccos-2011-parliamentary-elections/>

- **The 2011 reform of the Constitution**, which was an effort to consolidate democracy in Morocco, devolve power to the regions, broaden individual freedoms, solidify the rule of law, and strengthen human rights. The Constitution, adopted by a national referendum, enshrined several key changes to Morocco's political system, advancing democratization by strengthening the principle of separation of powers and bringing all stakeholders into the political process. The Constitution:
  - Establishes that the Head of Government will be 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.

<http://moroccoonthemove.wordpress.com/faq-moroccos-2011-parliamentary-elections/>

- **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 human rights violations; and examine and make recommendations on how to bring legislation in line with the Constitution, international human rights treaties, and international law.

<http://www.cndh.ma/?lang=en>

- CNDH, Morocco's active civil society, and liberalizing government work together to address ongoing human rights challenges through both judicial and legislative mechanisms. In the past year alone, Morocco has made significant advances in its human rights policies in the areas of migration, women's rights, and the court system.
  - In November 2013, Morocco adopted a policy providing protections for migrants and asylum seekers. This policy change was the result of an investigation and subsequent recommendation by CNDH to reform Morocco's immigration policy.
  - In January 2014, the Moroccan parliament voted unanimously to amend existing statutes 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, which will exclude civilians from being tried in military courts. The policy change was the result of CNDH recommendations to bring the law in line with the principles of the Constitution.

[http://magharebia.com/en\\_GB/articles/awi/features/2013/11/14/feature-02](http://magharebia.com/en_GB/articles/awi/features/2013/11/14/feature-02)

<http://www.theguardian.com/global-development/poverty-matters/2014/feb/07/ngo-change-morocco-rape-law>

<https://za.news.yahoo.com/morocco-adopts-law-end-military-trial-civilians-173527970.html>

- 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.  
<http://foreignaffairs.house.gov/hearing/subcommittee-hearing-us-policy-towards-morocco>
- At the conclusion of a May 2013 visit to Morocco, the 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.”  
<http://www.ohchr.org/EN/NewsEvents/Pages/DisplayNews.aspx?NewsID=14652&LangID=E>

## Development

Human, social, and economic development in Morocco is a very high priority for King Mohammed VI. Under his rule, Morocco has undertaken a multi-year strategy for promoting human development and greater economic growth to improve the lives of its citizens.

- Some of the most important development initiatives of the past 15 years include:
  - The commitment in 2000 to the United Nations Millennium Development Goals – reaching a set of human development indicators set by the international community and doing so in an inclusive manner. Morocco is on the path toward achieving all of the MDGs – improving the lives of its citizens, promoting equality, and ensuring that the benefits of development impact even the most marginalized populations. Morocco looks set to achieve all eight principal MDGs, including reducing extreme poverty, providing potable water to all parts of the country, promoting maternal and child health, and achieving universal primary education and gender equality, by the target date of 2015.  
<http://www.undp.org/content/rbas/en/home/library/MDGs/morocco-mdg-report/>
    - 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.  
[www.fao.org/news/story/en/item/235416/icode/](http://www.fao.org/news/story/en/item/235416/icode/)
  - 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.gov.ma/index.php/en/>

## Diplomacy

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

- Under his leadership, Morocco has become increasingly engaged in the Maghreb and Africa and has contributed positively to the stability of the region and the promotion of values and interests that are shared by the US across the continent.
  - Morocco is a key ally of the new Malian government and in late 2013 launched a program to train 500 imams from Mali to promote religious moderation. Morocco has since signed agreements to train imams from Libya, Tunisia, Côte d'Ivoire, Gabon, Guinea, the Maldives, and Nigeria.
- Under the King's leadership, Morocco has deepened its partnership with the US and other regional partners in Europe, Africa, and the MENA region. In addition to being designated as a non-NATO ally, a 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.
- On the 15<sup>th</sup> Anniversary of the reign of King Mohammed VI, Morocco stands as a leading partner for the US in the region due to its long history of shared values, common interests in human, social, and economic development, and commitment to regional security and stability.

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