



Brussels, 19 March 2021

Ms. Claudia Wiedey,

Ambassador of the European Union Delegation in the Kingdom of Morocco

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RE: release of Hirak Rif prisoners during public health crisis

Dear Ms Claudia Wiedey,

We would like to bring to your attention on the situation of the Hirak political prisoners notably on the health problems faced by Nasser Zefzafi who, as you know, was one of the finalist of the 2018 Sakharov Prize for Freedom of Thought.

Last February, Nasser Zefzafi started a hunger strike in protest due to the prison conditions. A few days later, he was found unconscious in his cell and neither he nor his relatives have had access to the medical report. Furthermore, the physical condition of several Hirak Rif prisoners is severely weakened by intermittent hunger strikes. We have also been informed that Mahmoud Bouhannouch, the youngest political prisoner in the Hirak, is suffering harassment and systematic violation of his rights, and those who denounce that, such as the lawyer Khalid Ameza, are being prosecuted.

We would like to emphasize the risk that the political prisoners are facing in the context of the Coronavirus pandemic given the precarious conditions of prisons, and to reiterate the urgent need to comply with UN High Commissioner for Human Rights, Ms. Michelle Bachelet's calls to release political prisoners and those detained for expressing critical or dissenting views.

We therefore call on you, as EU ambassador, to react to this situation through a public statement demanding: access to adequate medical care for the Hirak political prisoners, regular and adequate opportunities for communication with their families and lawyers and, in accordance with the recommendations made by Ms Bachelet, ask for the release of all Hirak political prisoners. Finally, following the EU Guidelines on Human Rights Defenders we would also like to request the EU delegation in Morocco to provide all the necessary support to the Hirak political prisoners including visiting them in jail and to meet with their lawyers to understand the exact legal situation.

Sincerely,

Miguel Urbán Crespo, MEP the Left group

François Alfonsi, MEP GREENS/EFA

Margrete Auken, MEP GREENS/EFA

Pernando Barrena Arza, MEP the Left group

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Marisa Matias, MEP the Left group

Ana Miranda, BNG spokesperson in Europe

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Ernest Urtasun, MEP GREENS/EFA

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