



NEWS RELEASE

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Moroccan Civil Society Organizations Make Recommendations to Combat Violence Against Women at the Upcoming United Nations Committee Against Torture

Geneva, Switzerland – On Monday, October 31, 2011, in collaboration with an alliance of Moroccan civil society organizations from diverse regions across the country¹, Global Rights, and The Advocates for Human Rights will issue a joint statement to the 47th Session of the United Nations Committee Against Torture (CAT).

“The Advocates is happy to be working with these organizations to improve human rights conditions for women in Morocco,” said Robin Phillips, The Advocates’ Executive Director. “Our joint report to the Committee Against Torture provides compelling recommendations that the Moroccan government can implement to protect women against violence.”

The CAT is an international treaty to combat torture throughout the world. Countries that have signed the treaty have the obligation to take steps to eradicate torture in their country. Every four years, countries are reviewed to ensure they are taking appropriate action. Morocco is currently being reviewed. The Committee has asked civil society organizations to submit reports highlighting concerns and recommendations.

“While the Moroccan government has taken steps to raise awareness about violence against women, there is still much to be done to stop violence against women,” said Stephanie Willman Bordat, Global Rights’ Maghreb Regional Director. “One step the Moroccan Government can take immediately is to

¹ Association Amal pour la femme et le développement (El Hajeb), Association el Amane pour le développement de la femme (Marrakech), Association Tawaza pour le plaidoyer de la femme (Martil), Association Tafiil Moubadarat (Taza), Association Tafoukt Souss pour le développement de la femme (Agadir), La Voix de la femme amazighe (Rabat), Espace Draa de la femme et du développement (Zagora), Association Bades (Al Hoceima), Association des jeunes avocats (Khemisset), and Espace Oasis Tafilalet pour le développement (Rissani).

pass a specific violence against women law that includes both criminal and civil provisions.”

Other recommendations for the Moroccan government include:

- Implementing its new Constitution that establishes the supremacy of international human rights conventions to which Morocco is a party;
- Amending Morocco’s Penal and Family Codes to explicitly criminalize conjugal rape; abolish criminal prosecutions for illicit sexual relations; and eliminate laws that criminalize those who assist or harbor married women, among other provisions; and
- Increasing police powers and resources to respond to violence against women, including adequate number of and sufficiently trained personnel.

“Our Moroccan partners are doing groundbreaking work on violence against women, which we hope their government will heed,” said Cheryl Thomas, the Director of The Advocates’ Women’s Human Rights Program. “It is so important for governments to listen to victims of violence and their advocates.”

The Moroccan organizations that will present the joint statement at the CAT will be the Association Amal pour la femme et le développement (El Hajeb), Association el Amane pour le développement de la femme (Marrakech), Association Tawaza pour le plaidoyer de la femme (Martil), Association Tafoukt Souss pour le développement de la femme (Agadir), and the Association des jeunes avocats (Khemisset).

For the entire report and recommendations, [click here for English](#). [Click here for Arabic](#).

The Advocates for Human Rights is a non-profit organization dedicated to the promotion and protection of internationally recognized human rights. With the help of hundreds of volunteers each year, The Advocates investigates and exposes human rights violations; provides representation to immigrants and refugees who have suffered human rights abuses; trains and assists groups that protect human rights; and works through research, education and advocacy to engage the public, policymakers, and children in human rights work. The Advocates for Human Rights holds Special Consultative Status with the United Nations. Learn more at www.theadvocatesforhumanrights.org.

Global Rights is an international human rights capacity-building organization that partners with local activists in Africa, Asia, and Latin America to increase access to justice for the poor and marginalized, promote women’s rights, and advance racial and ethnic equality. Learn more at www.globalrights.org.