MOROCCO

by the American Bar Association Rule of Law Initiative (updated April 2018)

Summary of Reparations Efforts and Programs

Morocco has a reparations program to address the period of authoritarianism from 1959 through 1999. Reparations measures have drawn on truth commission recommendations, which have only bound the government to implement the ones related to compensation. In addition to compensation, programs have included community reparations for collective harms suffered by certain communities as a result of repression, lack of public services, or the presence of state detention centers.

Context

From 1961 to 1999, King Hassan II ruled Morocco and many gross human rights violations occurred, especially enforced disappearances, under his regime.¹ Moroccan officials denied these violations until domestic and international pressure prompted Hassan II to constitute the Advisory Council on Human Rights (ACHR)² in 1990.³ In 1998, the investigation announced its findings that during Hassan II's reign, 112 Moroccans were disappeared, 56 of whom were dead. Accepting the conclusions, Hassan II charged the ACHR with constructing a plan to solve the outstanding cases within six months.⁴

As the ACHR performed its duties, Morocco experienced other significant human rights advances. Following international pressure, in 1991, Hassan II closed and demolished Tazmamart, a notorious secret detention center, and released the 341 prisoners detained there.⁵ That same year, he also approved a reparations program for the families of disappeared persons. In 1994, Hassan II granted amnesty to more than 400 political prisoners.⁶

When Hassan II died in 1999, he left the throne to his son, King Mohammed VI.⁷ Mohammed VI created the Independent Arbitration Commission for the Compensation of Moral and Material Harm Suffered by Victims of Disappearance and Arbitrary Detention, and by their Beneficiaries within the ACHR in 1999, tasking it with receiving applications for compensation from victims of enforced disappearances (or their surviving relatives) and victims of arbitrary detentions. The Independent Arbitration Commission was further directed to determine the amount of compensation the state owed those victims.⁸

On January 7, 2004, King Mohammed VI established the Equity and Reconciliation Commission (ERC),⁹ which aims to achieve national reconciliation and address the human rights violations that occurred from 1959 to 1999.¹⁰ For the next 23 months, the ERC investigated enforced disappearances, arbitrary arrests and detentions, torture, and sexual violence. It resolved 742

cases of enforced disappearances and provided compensation to 9,779 victims.¹¹ At the end of its tenure, the ERC prepared a report with its findings about human rights violations and recommendations on reparations, including community reparations in 11 regions.¹² The ERC presented its final report to King Mohammed VI in November 2005.¹³

Sources of Reparations

The ERC formed the basis of Morocco's reparations program. It derived its powers from the ACHR's October 16, 2003 recommendations to Hassan II on establishing the ERC, King Mohammed VI's speech on January 7, 2004 to coincide with the creation of the ERC, and the royal decree of April 10, 2004 that laid out the mandate, structure, and powers of the ERC. The decree specified that the ERC would encompass the work started by the Independent Arbitration Commission, which operated from 1999–2003. The ERC would report to the King and look at enforced disappearances and arbitrary detentions committed from Morocco's independence in 1956 until Hassan II's death in 1999.¹⁴ The ERC was empowered to research and clarify the facts in unsolved cases of enforced disappearances and to propose adequate measures for handling deaths.¹⁵ Some critics noted the problematic exclusion of related human rights violations, such as torture, from the ERC's mandate.¹⁶

The ERC determined the amount of compensation the state should pay victims for the violations and harms suffered from enforced disappearances and arbitrary detentions.¹⁷ It made proposals to ensure medical, psychological, and social rehabilitation for victims in need and helped victims resolve their legal, employment-related, and property-related problems.¹⁸ Finally, the ERC suggested measures on commemoration and guarantees of non-repetition by restoring the country's confidence in the rule of law and human rights, among other things.¹⁹

The ERC comprised 16 commissioners plus the president. Of the 17 commissioners, 8 were also members of the ACHR and 6 were former political prisoners; of the 6 former prisoners, 2 had been forced into exile and another had been sentenced to death in absentia. The ERC had three working groups: seven commissioners sat in the reparations group, six in the investigations group, and three in the study and research group. In addition to the commissioners, the ERC had a paid staff of about 100 people to help receive complaints, process information, and perform other tasks. At the Rabat headquarters, the ERC maintained a psychiatrist, a nurse, and a social worker to assist victims with their health needs caused by the harms they suffered.²⁰

However, the ERC was significantly limited in other ways, namely by its inability to publicly name officials implicated in or responsible for the commission of human rights violations. Furthermore, the ERC lacked statutory powers to enforce the cooperation of state actors, and the government was only obligated to implement measures on compensation. State institutions are not required to abide by—or even seriously consider—non-compensatory recommendations.²¹

After the ERC's mandate ended in November 2005, King Mohammed VI directed the ACHR to follow up on the ERC's work and execute its recommendations.²²

Reparations Efforts and Programs

The Basic Principles and Guidelines on the Right to a Remedy and Reparation for Victims of Gross Violations of International Human Rights Law and Serious Violations of International Humanitarian Law, adopted by the United Nations (UN) General Assembly in 2005, directs states to provide victims with five forms of reparations: restitution, compensation, rehabilitation, satisfaction, and guarantees of non-repetition.²³

1. Restitution

Restitution aims to restore the victim to their situation before they had been violated. For example, enabling a victim's return to their place of residence, returning property, and restoring citizenship are acts of restitution.

Restoration of liberty

The ERC dismantled obstacles faced by individuals whose freedom of movement had been restricted. It prepared a list of names of such victims and worked with the Ministry of Interior to respect and protect their right to hold a passport and to leave and return to Morocco.²⁴

Enjoyment of human rights, identity, family life, and citizenship

Morocco used collective reparations to deal with violations perpetrated within communities and the socioeconomic vulnerability of communities caused by authoritarianism.²⁵ The ERC recommended collective reparations in 11 regions in 2005 to remedy past abuses suffered by those communities as a result of repression, lack of public services, or the presence of former secret government detention centers. The 11 regions were Figuig, Nador, El Hoceima, Errachidia, Khenifra, Ouarzazate, Zagora, Hay Mohammadi (in Casablanca), Tantan, Azilal, and Khémissat.²⁶ This collective reparations program had economic and symbolic dimensions, which were implemented with funding from Morocco and the European Union.²⁷ The economic dimension sought to address the economic and social needs of affected communities, including through socioeconomic development and by improving the situation of women and children.²⁸ Some stakeholders felt that Morocco was undertaking development in the guise of reparations, possibly resulting from the government's failure to publicize the economic development-type initiatives as reparations with the purposes of acknowledging victims and their suffering and of taking responsibility.²⁹

Restoration of employment

The ERC identified individuals who were suspended or fired from public or semi-public sector employment whose cases had not been settled and recommended measures for the government to take, such as the restoration of employment or compensation.³⁰ Pursuant to a directive by the Prime Minister on May 4, 1999, the government reinstated some victims of arbitrary detention or forced exile who had lost their public sector jobs because of the violation. In April 2009, the government reported to the UN that fewer than 100 individuals benefited from the restoration of employment, while the ACHR informed Amnesty International that approximately 1,000 victims received such restitution. The contradicting numbers illustrate challenges related to data transparency and statistics regarding employment restitution.³¹

2. Compensation

When damage is economically assessable, states should provide compensation.

General compensation

The ERC was mandated to give compensation for material and moral damages.³² By August 2007, the ACHR reported that 23,676 people had obtained compensation, totaling US\$193 million.³³ However, it is unclear if the current reparations scheme has adequately met victims' needs.³⁴

Physical or mental harm

The ERC adopted a gender-sensitive approach to reparations, proposing equal payments instead of following Moroccan inheritance law, which allocates daughters half the amount granted to sons. It also accounted for the disparate harms suffered by women due to entrenched discrimination against women who were arbitrarily detained and/or raped. Positively, the government accepted and implemented the ERC's progressive gender-sensitive recommendations.³⁵

Lost opportunities, including employment, education, and social benefits

The ERC identified individuals who were suspended or fired from public or semi-public sector employment whose cases had not been settled and suggested measures for the government to take, such as compensation or the restoration of employment.³⁶

Material damages and loss of earnings, including loss of earning potential

Loss of earning potential was a major problem in Morocco because killings and enforced disappearances typically targeted men, leaving their families without an income or a male head-of-household. Since previous compensation schemes based on traditional inheritance law prevented women from receiving compensation for the enforced disappearances or deaths of their husbands, the ERC awarded wives compensation as the spouses of the victims, thus overlooking their gender.³⁷

3. Rehabilitation

Rehabilitation involves redressing victims through, for instance, the provision of medical, psychosocial, and legal services.

Medical and psychological care

The ERC prioritized medical rehabilitation and sought to address victims' specific medical problems. In order to determine rehabilitation measures for physical and moral harm, the ERC examined victims' medical documents and assessed the nature and extent of their harms suffered in a preliminary report on the medical situation of victims of grave human rights violations. The report recommended strategies for the permanent treatment of victims, particularly those suffering from age-related chronic diseases or disabilities. The ERC proposed that 9,779 victims get medical treatment.³⁸ The government executed the recommendations on medical and psychological rehabilitation, including urgent care for some and long-term treatment for all, within one year of the ERC's final report. In June 2007, the implementing agency and the Ministry of Health, Ministry of Economy and Finance, and social service office signed an agreement on the provision of free, long-term care to victims and their families.³⁹

Legal and social services

The ERC suggested that state and non-state stakeholders come together to determine solutions regarding the social reinsertion of victims and professional rehabilitation programs.⁴⁰ In June 2007, the implementing agency and the Ministry of Health, Ministry of Economy and Finance, and social service office signed an agreement on the distribution of vocational training.⁴¹

4. Satisfaction

Satisfaction includes a wide range of measures, such as ceasefires, truth-seeking and documentation,⁴² the search for missing or disappeared persons, and memorialization.

Verification of the facts and full and public disclosure of the truth

Even though King Mohammed VI considered the ERC to be a truth commission, it cannot publicly name officials found to have been implicated in or responsible for the commission of grave human rights violations.⁴³ That said, the ERC's process entailed elements of truth-seeking and -telling to some degree. Between December 2004 and May 2005, the ERC held seven public hearings in the most-repressed areas, during which victims testified. An eighth hearing planned for Western Sahara was postponed and ultimately cancelled, reportedly because of unrest there in May 2005.⁴⁴ The ERC's failure to reschedule and hold a public, televised hearing in Western Sahara, where the marginalized Sahrawi people live, or to recognize their disproportionate historical suffering in its final report has exacerbated the Sahrawi people's distrust in the government.⁴⁵

While domestic human rights organizations, politicians, political activists, union officials, and the media commended the public hearings, they expressed reservations about their format and content. In particular, many criticized the "pact of honor" between public witnesses and the ERC, which forbade witnesses from naming suspected perpetrators.⁴⁶ This restriction was very problematic since many officials suspected of involvement in or perpetration of grave human rights violations have remained in high-level government positions. Certain violations even continued during the ERC's inquiries.⁴⁷ Moreover, although the ERC held several closed meetings with former officials who might have been able to provide information about specific cases and offer their perspectives on events under investigation, the information from the meetings has not been publicly disclosed.⁴⁸ Notably, King Mohammed VI's version of the ERC's final report contains the names of individuals identified as suspected human rights abusers, but he is under no obligation to release this information.⁴⁹

Search for the missing, disappeared, and killed

The search for missing persons is ongoing but appears to be winding down as the ACHR resolves more and more cases.⁵⁰ As of 2016, there were still 66 unresolved cases.⁵¹ Starting in October 1998, under Hassan II, the ACHR published the names of 112 disappeared persons, at least 30 of whom had died in Tazmamart in the 1970s and 1980s.⁵² The government had acknowledged their deaths only four years earlier, when authorities issued death certificates to most of their families.⁵³

After that and until 2005, the government did not make further progress in the search for missing or disappeared persons. Then, on October 9, 2005, the ERC announced that it located the burial places of 50 men and women who disappeared from the 1970s through the early 1990s. Most of them were from Western Sahara, and all had died in one of three remote secret detention centers: Agdz, Kalaat M'gouna, or Tazounit. Their families were told about their deaths before the

government made public announcements, demonstrating Morocco's commitment to sensitively providing closure to various communities.⁵⁴

Judicial and administrative sanctions against persons liable for the violations

The ERC was not a judicial mechanism. Accordingly, it could not determine individual responsibility or recommend investigations and prosecutions.⁵⁵

Commemorations and tributes to the victims

Morocco used collective reparations to deal with violations perpetrated within communities and the socioeconomic vulnerability of communities caused by authoritarianism.⁵⁶ The ERC recommended collective reparations in 11 regions in 2005. This collective reparations program had symbolic and economic dimensions. The symbolic measures focused on memory preservation, including through the construction of memorials and the transformation of former detention centers into social, cultural, and economic centers.⁵⁷

Inclusion of an accurate account of the violations in training and educational materials

The public hearings aimed to inform Moroccans about state-perpetrated violations and to acknowledge the suffering and the dignity of victims.⁵⁸

Additionally, the ERC held thematic seminars to complement the public hearings with contextual information about four decades of violations and to debate the institutional reforms necessary to guarantee non-recurrence. For one month (February 15–March 15, 2005), the ERC hosted and broadcasted five thematic seminars featuring scholars and policy analysts on state television during primetime. The seminars were "Democratic Transition in Morocco," "Eliminating Violence as a Means of Governing," "Political, Economic, and Social Reform," "Cultural and Educational Reform," and "Legislative, Executive, and Judiciary Reform."⁵⁹

The ERC also planned to create a database of human rights violations that were committed in Morocco under Hassan II based on information sheets submitted by victims.⁶⁰

5. Guarantees of non-repetition

Guarantees of non-repetition center on institutional reform, such as vetting and lustration processes.

Due process, fairness, and impartiality in civilian and military proceedings

The revised Code of Criminal Procedure of 2003 improved defendants' fair trial rights by allowing defendants to appeal their sentences on the basis of facts, among other things. Previously, defendants could only appeal based on the misapplication of the law by a lower court.⁶¹

Independence of the judiciary

The justice system has often denied defendants in politically sensitive cases their fair trial rights. As such, the ERC recognized the need for judicial reform and made several recommendations on this point; no progress had occurred as of 2009.⁶² With the Arab Spring and the February 20 protest movement in Morocco, action on judicial reform improved.⁶³ A new constitution, adopted in 2011, enshrines judicial independence and calls for necessary judicial reforms.⁶⁴ Since then, one significant development was the October 2017 transfer of the Office of the Public Prosecutor (OPP) from the Ministry of Justice, which is in the executive branch, to the judicial branch. Proponents believed this relocation would free the OPP from political influences that have impacted the Ministry of Justice, but critics were concerned by the consequent loss of parliamentary oversight over the OPP. Starting from the first debates, the whole process to move the OPP took six years.⁶⁵ As of December 2017, Morocco has not undertaken comprehensive judicial reform and decision-makers were still debating future reforms.⁶⁶

Mechanisms for preventing and monitoring social conflicts and their resolution

In 1990, Hassan II created the ACHR, which was replaced in 2011 by the National Human Rights Council,⁶⁷ a national human rights institute. The International Coordination Committee of National Human Rights Institutions in Geneva accredited the National Human Rights Council with an "A" status due to its full compliance with the Paris Principles, the international standards for national human rights institutions. The National Human Rights Council has monitored and investigated human rights violations. It is also empowered to intervene in tense situations to prevent individual and/or collective violations.⁶⁸

Review and reform of laws contributing to human rights violations

King Mohammed VI's regime revised laws to increase due process, fairness, and impartiality in the legal and justice system. The largest legal reform was arguably the adoption of a new constitution in 2011, which incorporated all ERC recommendations on political reform but only a few on legal and institutional reforms.⁶⁹

Other legal reforms occurred since the ERC began its work. In 2004, King Mohammed VI proposed an overhaul of the family code; Parliament's approval led to the abolition of most provisions that discriminated against women in matters of marriage, divorce, and custody of

children.⁷⁰ The next year, on October 20, 2005, Parliament passed two laws criminalizing torture and allowing penalties of 30 years to life imprisonment for civil servants convicted of torturing other civil servants, judges, security agents, witnesses, minors, victims, or pregnant women and of 5 to 10 years for civil servants torturing other individuals.⁷¹

More recently, in July 2016, Morocco passed the Press and Publications Code, which revamped the Press Code of 2002 and removed imprisonment as a penalty for press offenses such as insulting the King or malicious publication of false news. Under the new code, courts may only issue suspensions or fines. However, the authorities can still prosecute journalists under the penal code.⁷²

⁴ HRW, *Morocco's Truth Commission*, 9.

¹⁵ Decree No. 1.04.42 of April 10, 2004 (approving the statutes of the ERC) (Morocco), Article 9.2, available at HRW, *Morocco's Truth Commission*, 18.

¹⁶ HRW, *Morocco's Truth Commission*, 3.

²³ Basic Principles and Guidelines on the Right to a Remedy and Reparation for Victims of Gross Violations of International Human Rights Law and Serious Violations of International Humanitarian Law, U.N. Doc. A/RES/60/147 (December 16, 2005), available at

http://www.ohchr.org/EN/ProfessionalInterest/Pages/RemedyAndReparation.aspx.

Council, 2005), 24, http://www.ccdh.org.ma/sites/default/files/documents/rapport_final_mar_eng-3.pdf.

²⁵ ERC, Summary of the Final Report, 21–22.

²⁶ International Coalition of Sites of Conscience, "Transforming Sites of Detention: A Review of and Roadmap for Reparations and Memorialization in Morocco" (unpublished report, 2011), 8.

¹ International Center for Transitional Justice (ICTJ), "Morocco Still a Model for Justice in MENA, but Questions Remain," February 8, 2016, https://www.ictj.org/news/morocco-still-model-justice-mena-questions-remain.

² Also known as the Conseil Consultatif des Droits de l'Homme (CCDH).

³ Human Rights Watch (HRW), *Morocco's Truth Commission: Honoring Past Victims During an Uncertain Present* (New York: HRW, 2005), 8, https://www.hrw.org/sites/default/files/reports/morocco1105wcover.pdf.

⁵ ICTJ.

⁶ HRW, *Morocco's Truth Commission*, 7.

⁷ ICTJ.

⁸ HRW, *Morocco's Truth Commission*, 10.

⁹ Also known as the Instance Equité et Réconciliation (IER).

¹⁰ HRW, *Morocco's Truth Commission*, 2.

¹¹ ICTJ.

¹² ICTJ.

¹³ ICTJ.

¹⁴ HRW, Morocco's Truth Commission, 18.

¹⁷ HRW, Morocco's Truth Commission, 18.

¹⁸ Decree No. 1.04.42, Article 9.5, available at HRW, *Morocco's Truth Commission*, 19.

¹⁹ Decree No. 1.04.42, Article 9.6, available at HRW, *Morocco's Truth Commission*, 19.

²⁰ HRW, Morocco's Truth Commission, 20–21.

²¹ HRW, Morocco's Truth Commission, 3.

²² Amnesty International, *Broken Promises: The Equity and Reconciliation Commission and Its Follow-up* (London: Amnesty International, 2008), 6, https://www.amnesty.org/download/Documents/40000/mde290012010en.pdf.

²⁴ Equity and Reconciliation Commission (ERC), *Summary of the Final Report* (Rabat: National Human Rights

²⁷ International Coalition of Sites of Conscience, 9–10.

²⁸ International Coalition of Sites of Conscience, 7–13.

²⁹ International Coalition of Sites of Conscience, 15–17.

³⁰ ERC, Summary of the Final Report, 24.

³¹ Amnesty International, 42–43.

³² HRW, *Morocco's Truth Commission*, 19.

³³ United States Institute of Peace (USIP), *Truth Commission: Morocco* (Washington, D.C.: USIP, 2004), https://www.usip.org/publications/2004/12/truth-commission-morocco; Jennifer Rubin, "Moroccan-style"

Democracy," Right Turn (blog), Washington Post, June 3, 2014, https://www.washingtonpost.com/blogs/right-

turn/wp/2014/06/03/moroccan-style-democracy/?utm_term=.349fac394937.

³⁵ Priscilla Hayner, *Unspeakable Truths: Transitional Justice and the Challenge of Truth Commissions*, 2nd ed. (New York: Routledge, 2011), 172–173.

- ³⁶ ERC, Summary of the Final Report, 24.
- ³⁷ ICTJ.
- ³⁸ ERC, Summary of the Final Report, 25–26.
- ³⁹ Hayner, 172–173.
- ⁴⁰ ERC, Summary of the Final Report, 24.
- ⁴¹ Hayner, 172–173.

⁴² Documentation involves the verification of the facts, which contributes to an accurate account of violations and the disclosure of the truth.

- ⁴³ HRW, Morocco's Truth Commission, 2–3.
- ⁴⁴ HRW, Morocco's Truth Commission, 34.
- ⁴⁵ Amnesty International, 5–6.
- ⁴⁶ HRW, Morocco's Truth Commission, 34.
- ⁴⁷ HRW, Morocco's Truth Commission, 3.
- ⁴⁸ HRW, Morocco's Truth Commission, 33–34.
- ⁴⁹ HRW, Morocco's Truth Commission, 19.

⁵⁰ US Department of State, "Morocco," in 2017 Human Rights Reports (Washington, D.C.: US Department of State, 2017), 2, https://www.state.gov/documents/organization/277501.pdf.

⁵¹ ICTJ.

⁵² Amnesty International, 5.

⁵³ Amnesty International, 12.

- ⁵⁴ HRW, Morocco's Truth Commission, 38–39.
- ⁵⁵ ICTJ.

⁵⁶ ERC, Summary of the Final Report, 21–22.

- ⁵⁷ International Coalition of Sites of Conscience, 7–13.
- ⁵⁸ HRW, Morocco's Truth Commission, 35.
- ⁵⁹ HRW, Morocco's Truth Commission, 36.
- ⁶⁰ HRW, Morocco's Truth Commission, 40.
- ⁶¹ HRW, *Morocco's Truth Commission*, 7.

⁶² Amnesty International, 59.

⁶³ Abdellatif Chentouf, "Morocco's Pursuit of Judicial Independence," Carnegie Endowment for International Peace, November 28, 2017, http://carnegieendowment.org/sada/74848.

⁶⁴ Caitlin Dearing Scott, "Morocco: The Ongoing Debate Over Judicial Reform in Morocco," AllAfrica,

http://allafrica.com/stories/201712040194.html.

⁶⁵ Chentouf; Dearing Scott.

⁶⁶ Dearing Scott.

⁶⁷ Also known as the Conseil National des Droits de l'Homme (CNDH).

⁶⁸ "About Us," Kingdom of Morocco National Human Rights Council, accessed May 9, 2018,

http://www.cndh.org.ma/an/about-cndh/about-us.

⁶⁹ ICTJ.

⁷⁰ HRW, Morocco's Truth Commission, 7.

⁷¹ Freedom House, "Morocco," in *Countries at the Crossroads 2006* (New York: Freedom House, 2006), https://freedomhouse.org/report/countries-crossroads/2006/morocco.

⁷² HRW, The Red Lines Stay Red: Morocco's Reforms of Its Speech Laws (New York: HRW, 2017),

https://www.hrw.org/report/2017/05/04/red-lines-stay-red/moroccos-reforms-its-speech-laws; Freedom House,

"Morocco," in Freedom in the World 2017 (New York: Freedom House, 2017),

https://freedomhouse.org/report/freedom-world/2017/morocco.

³⁴ Amnesty International, 6.