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Morocco

**Al-Mounadil/ah Newspaper
threatened with suspension,
and its website with closure:
No to stifling the freedom of
expression!**

Publication date: Thursday 6 February 2020

- News from around the world -

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The following statement, published on 30 January 2020, explains the Moroccan judiciary's threat to close the revolutionary socialist newspaper and website, *al-Mounadil-a* ("the Militant"). As the *al-Mounadil-a* editorial board suggests below, such threats are parts of a wider attack by the state against the the left and progressive forces in the country.

Jailed Movement of the Rif activists; police attacks against those calling for an 'Euros' economic alternative' in Jerada; the arrests of critical journalists (Hajar Raissouni, Omar Radi); the imprisoning not only of rappers for daring to say 'ash al-Sh'ab ('Euros' Long live the People'), but even of their school-aged fans for merely repeating the line. All such incidents over the last period - as reported on and decried in *al-Moundail-ah* - show that the threats against the paper and website are not only serious, but indeed existential.

Clearly, the international left must support the editors, writers and readers of *al-Mounadil-a* with the same resolve - we cannot match the courage - that they have themselves shown in their support for the ever-growing victims of state repression in the country."

The head of *al-Mounadil/ah* newspaper recently received a summons to appear in the Agadir magistrates court regarding the paper's compliance with the Press Law.

Compliance involves a number of conditions, including a professional journalist card, in turn requiring social security registration. Meeting all these conditions requires financial capabilities out of the reach of a militant newspaper reliant on returns from sales, the support of its readers and supporters, and the sacrifices of those dedicated to its continuance - something that takes both time and effort.

Subsequently, a summons arrived from the King's Deputy to a trial on 3 February 2020.

After that followed a second summons, to an urgent case on 5 February 2020, threatening to block the *al-Mounadil/ah* website and close the newspaper.

New technologies have broken the monopoly of those with the financial means to print newspapers and produce entire radio and television channels. Publishing a newspaper requires means only available to a minority, and leads to both surveillance and stifling [of editorial independence], which even the liberal press are subjected to (*Le Journal Hebdomaire*, for example). As for radio and television, they are only accessible to large capitalists. But, with the internet has come the possibility that any citizen can publish an electronic newspaper or open a broadcast channel, expanding the possibilities for expression. This expansion is disturbing - frightening even - to anyone who fears free expression, in a country ruled through political tyranny.

The fundamental aim of the emerging restrictions is to limit this freedom. If the goal was simply regulating the media sphere, then the state has the full ability to do so without restricting the freedom to create websites, since it monitors even personal Facebook accounts.

Controlling the press - that is, the silencing awkward voices - is the manifest aim of the very number of conditions in the Press Law. Is it not sufficient that the website's owner's identity is known to the concerned authorities, such that the latter is easily able to pursue them when in violation of publishing law?

Is there not, in court testimony allowing the publishing of al-Mounadil/ah newspaper for 15 years, sufficient proof of the legality of a website of the same name? Is there indeed a substantial difference between printing on paper and publishing electronically? The *al-Mounadil/ah* website is an electronic version of a print newspaper, published since its file was first given to the courts in 2004.

Either way, the restrictions will not succeed in gagging voices; the advancement of technology will make a mockery of anyone that tries.

We will continue our militant duty to our class and to the entirety of the oppressed in this country: Whilst the *al-Mounadil/ah* website is blocked, we will continue to communicate through various social media platforms (Facebook, Twitter, YouTube, etc), whilst continuing efforts to fulfill the conditions required the Press Law.

The militant media has resisted with your support and sacrifices, and it is in desperate need of this support and sacrifice to continue its duty to raise the awareness of our class and all of the oppressed, to raise raise their level of organisation, and their striving for a freedom, wide and profound.

- The al-Mounadil/ah Editorial Board

5 February 2020

Source [Alliance of Middle Eastern and North African Socialists](#). In [Arabic](#).

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