

670 Moroccan Artists Express Trust in Institutions, Denounce 'Hostile' Petition

Many of the petitioners fought to advance human rights in Morocco during the country's "years of lead."



Moroccan Artists Divide - 670 Denounce 400 Others Over 'Hostile' Petition.



By **Taha Mebtoul** -
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Rabat – Almost 700 well-known Moroccan artists released a petition today expressing trust in Moroccan institutions, amid claims of political persecution in Morocco seemingly aligned with foreign agendas.

The 670 well-known Moroccan artists, including musician Moulay Ahmed Alaoui, painter Mohamed Melehi, and architect Rachid Andaloussi, issued a petition titled "[Moroccan artists and creators trust their country's institutions.](#)"

Lauding Morocco's human rights advances and COVID-19 response

"We Moroccan artists ... are attached to work for a better Morocco, under a constitutional monarchy," reads the petition by Morocco's major artistic figures.

The petitioners went on to highlight the commitment of a number of them in favor of freedoms during Morocco's "years of lead," and "how far Morocco has come in the field of respect for human rights."

The 670 petitioners also seized the chance to shed light on the Moroccan government's efforts in curbing the spread of COVID-19, calling for nationwide involvement.

Counter-petitioning

The initiative follows a petition by 400 signatories who claim to be Moroccan artists. Their "[This Shadow Looms](#)" petition, from August 10, alleges political persecution and repression of artists in Morocco. Many of the signatories are unknown in the Moroccan art scene.

The 670 artists express respect for "the opinion and commitment of some of the signatory artists" of the August 10 petition. However, they point out that the "overwhelming majority of the names" are not major contributors to Morocco's artistic heritage.

Moroccan singer and composer Nouamane Lahlou, among the 670 renowned artists, condemned the defamatory petition in an August 18 Facebook post.

"I have been practicing creativity and criticism in my country for three decades. I do not remember anyone who has ever talked to me or blamed me for my [songs]. I sang about unemployment and homeless children, among other issues, and nobody has oppressed my opinion," he wrote.

Lahlou also questioned the legitimacy of the signatory "artists," saying that "from the 400 artists who signed the petition, I only know three."

Read also: [Singer Nouamane Lahlou Condemns Disinformation Campaign Against Morocco](#)

The artists' petition also denounces the "instrumentalization" of the artistic community as a whole, as the signatories' opinions do not apply to the majority of Moroccan artists.

The petitioners call for "constructive criticism and not postures that only provide food for thought to those who target our country," hinting at impure intentions behind the defamatory August 10 initiative.

The 400 "artists" [previous petition](#) focused heavily on the arrest of Moroccan journalists Omar Radi and Hajar Raissouni, as well as shutting down several protests focused on social demands.

Morocco arrested [Radi](#) on July 29 for his alleged involvement in a "violent rape case" and for "receiving funds linked to a foreign agent."

Meanwhile, Raissouni received a one-year prison sentence from the court of Rabat for undergoing an illegal abortion and sex outside marriage, before King Mohammed VI granted her a royal pardon in October 2019.

For Radi's case, the 400 petitioners, which include author Abdellatif Laabi, filmmaker Faouzi Bensaidi, and singer Oum, stated in the petition that "if Omar is being harassed by the police and the defamatory media, it is because he has conducted an investigation into economic policies and the state's predation of land."

Meanwhile, the defamatory petition attributed the arrest of Raissouni to the fact that she covered the Hirak protests in northern Morocco.

Notably, Moroccan musicians Abdelouahab Doukkali, Abdelhadi Belkhayat, Naima Samih, Latifa Raafat, Mohammed El Ghawi, and Saida Charaf also signed the new petition.