



المجلس الوطني لحقوق الإنسان
National Human Rights Council



**Message from the President
of the National Human Rights
Council of Morocco
concerning Covid-19**



In these painful and difficult times that we are going through, I would first like to extend, on behalf of the National Human Rights Council of Morocco, our condolences to the families and loved ones of the victims of the Covid-19 pandemic.

We have not yet started to understand all the consequences of this pandemic, which will undoubtedly affect all levels of human activity on our planet, be it at the economic, social, cultural, demographic or political level. It has also impacts on our existential aspects by the anxiety it has triggered, the loss and damage it has caused and the new dynamics it has created. The unprecedented crisis we are experiencing has already changed our habits, our priorities and is changing our approach to addressing new human rights challenges.

The number of confirmed cases of coronavirus infection worldwide has exceeded one million this week, and tens of thousands of people have unfortunately lost their lives. While the rapidity of the spread of Covid-19 poses challenges to all humanity, hitherto confident in its fixed models, it above all revived the sense of the values of solidarity, compassion, the collective instead of the individual, to deal with this virus. We are therefore in the midst of a pivotal moment in the history of humanity, which has found itself obliged to review its behavior and revise its philosophy.

In Morocco, one of the first observations to be drawn from the dramatic events we are going through is the multiplication of messages of compassion and support, through which we have been able to overcome the cleavages, go beyond expectations, inspire action, and bring about the fundamental and ancestral values of Moroccan society, including those of altruism, solidarity and national mutual aid. Individualism emerging in Moroccan society has given way to collective will to face this invisible enemy. The momentum recorded in support of the Special Fund dedicated to the management of the corona virus pandemic in favor of vulnerable groups is one of the most shining examples.

In the same vein, the CNDH welcomes the Royal amnesty granted, for humanitarian reasons, to 5,654 detainees, including the most vulnerable groups: the elderly, women, minors and those suffering from chronic diseases.

There is no doubt that this pandemic is not only a health problem, but it also constitutes very great challenges in the management of fundamental rights and development-related issues. This pandemic has also brought to light, once again, the harmful effects of the spread of fake news, which, *inter alia*, heightens a feeling of anxiety, uncertainty and disorientation, and hinders the efforts of states to limit covid-19 damages.

Since the outbreak of this crisis, the CNDH has taken the necessary preventive measures for its staff. These actions also extend to awareness-raising, complaint handling, monitoring, protection of rights, in particular those of vulnerable groups. Several of these actions are now shared internationally and nationally with networks of NHRIs and via its electronic platforms. Ten (10) awareness-raising videos and nine (09) press releases or work notes were posted on these platforms.

It is the first time that the CNDH of Morocco has been called upon to act in the context of a health crisis to assist in the preservation of life in the context of an emergency.

During this ordeal, the protection of human rights is faced with the challenge of applying the law on the ground and where the daily management of the situation cannot be summed up in right-related questions.

Another challenge specific to the crisis we are experiencing is that of communication, which has been impacted by containment measures. Thus, the CNDH of Morocco, like all NHRIs, is called to reflect and act to guarantee the rights of citizens.

The exceptional context in which the CNDH operates will undoubtedly lead it to develop new practices inspired by the evolution of the situation on the ground. The sharing of these practices would contribute to the development of general guidelines for the management of health emergencies, based on a bottom-up dynamic.

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