ADVOCACY DOSSIER

IBRAHIM MRIKLI

إبراهيم مريكلي

At liberty **Western Sahara**

Ibrahim Mrikli was arrested in El Ayoun on 15 May 2020 and charged with insulting public servants, stone throwing, and violating quarantine rules, charges that rest on confessions he denies making, recorded during an interrogation his lawyer was not allowed to attend.

HuMENA.

Prepared by HuMENA for Human Rights and Civic Engagement · 8 November 2026

Case reference HM-EH-2026-032

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THE CASE AT A GLANCE

Ibrahim Mrikli was arrested in El Ayoun on 15 May 2020 and charged with insulting public servants, stone throwing, and violating quarantine rules, charges that rest on confessions he denies making, recorded during an interrogation his lawyer was not allowed to attend.

STATUS	**At liberty**
ARRESTED	**15 May 2020**
COUNTRY	**Western Sahara**
CHARGES	**Insulting public servants** **Stone throwing** **Violating quarantine regulations**

WE CALL ON THE AUTHORITIES TO:

WHAT WE ASK

01 Drop any charges that remain on record against Ibrahim Mrikli in connection with peaceful human rights work.

02 Confirm publicly that Ibrahim Mrikli faces no residual travel, financial, or professional restriction arising from this case.

03 Guarantee that Ibrahim Mrikli can resume that work without surveillance, summons, or further reprisal.

04 Provide effective remedy for the period of deprivation of liberty already served.

Latest updates on this case
Scan the code or visit:
https://humena.org/defenders/ibrahim-mrikli/

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DOCUMENTED VIOLATIONS

	INTERNATIONAL STANDARD
Arbitrary detention	International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights, Article 9
Denial of legal counsel	International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights, Article 14(3)
Judicial harassment	UN Declaration on Human Rights Defenders, Articles 9, 12
Physical assault	International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights, Articles 7, 9
Unfair trial	International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights, Article 14
Unlawful surveillance	International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights, Article 17

03

HOW THE CASE UNFOLDED

2019

ARREST

Earlier detention, two months

Ibrahim was detained for two months on charges of insulting public servants and stone throwing. This was the first in a series of judicial reprisals linked to his documentation work.

July 2019

CONVICTION

Four-month sentence imposed

Ibrahim was sentenced to four months' imprisonment on charges of insulting public servants and stone throwing, marking his second detention in the same year.

15 May 2020

ARREST

Arrested by plain-clothes officers

Ibrahim was stopped on his way to a pharmacy at 11 p.m. in El Ayoun and arrested by Moroccan police officers in plain clothes. He was taken to the Security Station and placed in solitary confinement overnight.

16 May 2020

INTERROGATION

Interrogation without counsel

Ibrahim was interrogated for two and a half hours. He was physically and verbally abused and told his lawyer could not be present. His phone was confiscated and searched.

17 May 2020

CONDITIONAL RELEASE

Charged and released on bail

Ibrahim was charged with insulting public servants, stone throwing, and violating quarantine regulations, based on alleged confessions he denies making. He was released on bail of 3,000 dirham.

4 December 2020

CALL BY OTHERS

Rights groups urge Morocco to drop the charges

A joint appeal by rights groups including Amnesty International and Front Line Defenders urged Morocco to drop the charges against him; his trial was still pending.

8 October 2021

HEARING

Hearing scheduled after 17 months

More than a year after charges were filed, a hearing was scheduled for 6 December 2021. The case had remained unscheduled throughout 2020 and much of 2021.

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THE FULL STORY

Background and Work

Ibrahim Mrikli is a photographer and human rights defender based in El Ayoun, the largest city in Western Sahara. He is a member of the Nushatta Foundation for Media and Human Rights, a locally based organisation established in 2013 that works on media activism and human rights advocacy in the disputed territory. Through his photography, Ibrahim documents human rights violations committed by Moroccan authorities, including arbitrary detentions, the use of force against protesters, and restrictions on freedom of expression and assembly.

Western Sahara remains a highly contested region. Morocco exercises de facto control over most of the territory, while the Polisario Front and its supporters advocate for self-determination. Human rights defenders and journalists working in the region face sustained surveillance, harassment, and judicial reprisals. Ibrahim's work with the Nushatta Foundation places him at the centre of this environment.

The Arrest

On 15 May 2020, at approximately 11 p.m., Ibrahim was walking to a pharmacy in El Ayoun when he was stopped and arrested by several Moroccan police officers in plain clothes. He was taken to the Security Station in El Ayoun and placed in solitary confinement overnight. He remained in isolation until 9 a.m. the following morning.

Ibrahim was then subjected to an interrogation lasting two and a half hours. During the session, officers physically and verbally abused him. He was explicitly told that his lawyer would not be permitted to attend. His mobile phone was confiscated and searched by the interrogating officers. Ibrahim refutes claims that he made any confessions during this process.

Charges and Release on Bail

On 17 May 2020, Ibrahim was formally charged with insulting public servants, stone throwing, and violating quarantine regulations. The charges were based on alleged confessions purportedly given during the interrogation two days earlier. Ibrahim denies making any such confessions. He was released the same day on bail of 3,000 dirham, approximately 300 euros.

The case remained unscheduled for more than a year. On 8 October 2021, a hearing was set for 6 December 2021. In December 2020 rights groups including Amnesty International and Front Line Defenders urged Morocco to drop the charges. No outcome of the 6 December 2021 hearing has been reported.

Pattern of Reprisals

This was not the first time Ibrahim has been detained on similar charges. In January 2019, he was held for two months. In July 2019, he was sentenced to four months' imprisonment. In both instances, he was charged with insulting public servants and stone throwing. The repeated use of these charges against him suggests a pattern of judicial harassment linked to his work documenting violations in Western Sahara.

Legal Context

The charges of insulting public servants and stone throwing are frequently deployed against activists, journalists, and human rights defenders in Western Sahara. They carry the appearance of ordinary criminal offences while functioning in practice as instruments of political control. The denial of legal counsel during interrogation and the reliance on disputed confessions compound violations of due process in Ibrahim's case.

His arrest during the COVID-19 pandemic, and the inclusion of a quarantine violation charge, further illustrate how emergency health measures have been instrumentalised to restrict the movement and work of defenders in the region.

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SAMPLE LETTER

Copy it, adapt it and send it from your own address.

Your Excellency,

I am writing about the case of Ibrahim Mrikli, photographer with the Nushatta Foundation for Media and Human Rights, documenting violations by Moroccan authorities in Western Sahara, who has been released. I am writing to ask that the case be closed properly and that no further reprisal follows.

In brief: Ibrahim Mrikli was arrested in El Ayoun on 15 May 2020 and charged with insulting public servants, stone throwing, and violating quarantine rules, charges that rest on confessions he denies making, recorded during an interrogation his lawyer was not allowed to attend.

I respectfully urge your authorities to:
1. Drop any charges that remain on record against Ibrahim Mrikli in connection with peaceful human rights work;
2. Confirm publicly that Ibrahim Mrikli faces no residual travel, financial, or professional restriction arising from this case;
3. Guarantee that Ibrahim Mrikli can resume that work without surveillance, summons, or further reprisal;
4. Provide effective remedy for the period of deprivation of liberty already served.

I will continue to follow this case until the record against Ibrahim Mrikli is cleared and no reprisal remains.

Respectfully,

[Your name]
[Your city, country]
8 November 2026