

Advocacy dossier

Maâti Monjib

المعطى منجب

At liberty **Morocco**

Maâti Monjib is a French and Moroccan historian who has led associations defending press freedom and investigative journalism in Morocco. A royal pardon in July 2024 covered his 2021 conviction, but a money-laundering investigation remains open and he was stopped from leaving Morocco again in March and June 2026.

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The case at a glance

Maâti Monjib is a French and Moroccan historian who has led associations defending press freedom and investigative journalism in Morocco. A royal pardon in July 2024 covered his 2021 conviction, but a money-laundering investigation remains open and he was stopped from leaving Morocco again in March and June 2026.

Status **At liberty**	Arrested **1995**	Country **Morocco**

Sentence One year in prison (Rabat Court of First Instance, 27 January 2021); covered by a royal pardon in July 2024.

Charges Threatening the internal security of the State (convicted 2021, pardoned 2024)
Fraud (convicted 2021, pardoned 2024)
Money laundering (separate investigation opened October 2020, still open)

What we ask

We call on the authorities to:

01 Immediately lift the travel ban imposed on Maâti Monjib and on any family members affected by the same order.

02 Restore valid travel documents and remove any border-watch flags placed in connection with peaceful human rights work.

03 Comply with the ICCPR Article 12 guarantee of freedom of movement.

04 Immediately unfreeze the personal and organisational accounts of Maâti Monjib.

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Documented violations

Each violation and the international standard it breaks.

Arbitrary detention International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights, Article 9

Asset freeze UN Declaration on Human Rights Defenders, Article 13

Defamation and smear campaign International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights, Article 17
UN Declaration on Human Rights Defenders, Article 12

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

Prolonged pretrial detention International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights, Article 9(3)

Threats and intimidation UN Declaration on Human Rights Defenders, Article 12

Travel ban International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights, Article 12

Unfair trial International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights, Article 14

Unlawful surveillance International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights, Article 17

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How the case unfolded

1995

Arrest

First arrest

He was arrested for the first time and released after a human rights campaign.

2015

Charge filed

Charges first brought

Moroccan authorities charged Monjib and six other activists with threatening the internal security of the State and fraud, in a case linked to a journalism training centre he ran.

October 2015

Hunger strike begins

Hunger strike over travel ban

After being stopped from flying to Norway for an international journalism conference, Monjib began a hunger strike against the travel ban and police harassment, his second in a month. After a week he was admitted to hospital in Rabat. The Interior Ministry linked the ban to a financial investigation into the Ibn Rushd centre he headed.

2017

Context

Targeted with Pegasus spyware

His phone was targeted with NSO Group's Pegasus spyware from 2017, as Amnesty International revealed in October 2019.

April 2019

Asset freeze imposed

Bank account and credit card frozen without notice

His bank account and credit card were frozen without prior notice, leaving him without income. France 24 dates the measure to April 2019.

7 October 2020

Investigation opened

Money-laundering investigation opened

The Rabat prosecutor opened a money-laundering investigation into him and members of his family after a referral from the financial intelligence unit.

29 December 2020

Pretrial detention ordered

Arrested and placed in preventive detention

Police arrested Monjib without a warrant at a restaurant in Rabat. An investigative judge at Rabat First Instance Court ordered his preventive detention on a charge of money laundering, without a lawyer present.

27 January 2021

Ruling in absentia

Conviction in absentia

The Court of First Instance in Rabat convicted Monjib of threatening the internal security of the State and sentenced him to one year in prison. Neither he nor his lawyers were permitted to attend.

4 March 2021

Hunger strike begins

Hunger strike begins

Monjib began an open-ended hunger strike in El Arjat 2 prison to protest his detention and the irregularities in judicial proceedings.

23 March 2021

Conditional release

Conditional release

Monjib was conditionally released, though legal proceedings and restrictions continued.

8 April 2021

Hearing

Appeal hearing rescheduled

The Appeals Court in Casablanca rescheduled the hearing from 8 April to 10 June 2021.

30 September 2021

Hearing

Appeal rescheduled amid heavy security

Monjib arrived at the Administrative Court of Appeal in Rabat; approximately two hundred security agents surrounded the courthouse. The hearing was rescheduled to 2 December 2021.

2 December 2021

Hearing

Appeal hearing before Administrative Court

Monjib's case was scheduled to be heard before the Administrative Court of Appeal in Rabat alongside other defenders charged with threatening state security.

1 March 2023

Dismissal or expulsion

Suspended from university post without pay

Mohammed V University notified Monjib that he was suspended from teaching at the Institute of African Studies in Rabat until further notice and without pay. He called the decision illegal and held a 48-hour hunger strike from 8 to 10 March 2023.

29 July 2024

Pardon

Royal pardon of the 2021 conviction

He was among the journalists and activists pardoned by the King. A separate money-laundering investigation stays open.

April 2025

Travel ban imposed

Barred from travelling to a Sorbonne lecture

He was barred from leaving Morocco to give a lecture at the Sorbonne and began a hunger strike.

30 March 2026

Travel ban imposed

Blocked from boarding flight

At Rabat-Salé airport, border police prevented Monjib from boarding despite presenting an official university summons.

31 March 2026

Hunger strike begins

Announces hunger strike

Announced a hunger strike to protest the travel ban and the continuing freeze on his assets.

4 June 2026

Travel ban imposed

Stopped again at Rabat-Salé airport

After checking in for a flight to France, where he was due to speak at a Campus Condorcet conference in Paris on the independence of the Maghreb countries, Monjib was stopped by an officer who said his name was flagged in the system. It was his second blocked journey since 30 March 2026.

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The full story

Update, 12 November 2026: Maâti Monjib is at liberty but remains barred from leaving Morocco: on 4 June 2026 he was again stopped at Rabat-Salé airport on his way to a conference in Paris, his second blocked journey since 30 March 2026. The money-laundering investigation against him remains open and his bank accounts remain frozen; no newer development was found when this record was checked.

Background and Work

Maâti Monjib is a French and Moroccan historian and journalist who has dedicated his career to press freedom and anti-corruption work in Morocco. He serves as President of Freedom Now, an association defending freedom of expression and journalism, and co-founded the Moroccan Association for Investigative Journalism (MAIJ), which investigates and exposes corruption.

His work centres on creating institutional support for investigative reporters and defending the rights of journalists operating under pressure. This sustained focus on transparency and accountability has made him a target of state security agencies.

The 2015 Charges and Their Resurfacing

In 2015, Moroccan authorities first brought charges of "threatening the internal security of the State" against Monjib and several other human rights defenders. The case lay dormant for years before resurfacing in 2020 with additional allegations.

On 29 December 2020, police arrested Monjib without a warrant at a restaurant in Rabat, and an investigative judge at Rabat First Instance Court ordered his preventive detention on a new charge of money laundering. An investigation session was scheduled for 20 January 2021.

Conviction in Absentia

On 27 January 2021, the Court of First Instance in Rabat convicted Monjib of threatening the internal security of the state and sentenced him to one year in prison. The hearing was conducted in absentia: neither Monjib nor his lawyers were permitted to attend. The verdict was delivered without the defendant present to contest the charges or cross-examine evidence.

Hunger Strike and Conditional Release

Monjib was held in El Arjat 2 prison in Salé, near Rabat. On 4 March 2021, he began an open-ended hunger strike to protest his detention, the conviction, and the procedural irregularities that had marked the case. The strike continued for weeks.

He was conditionally released on 23 March 2021, though the legal proceedings against him remained active. Multiple appeal hearings followed, each rescheduled. An 8 April 2021 hearing before the Appeals Court in Casablanca was postponed to 10 June 2021.

Appeals and Ongoing Restrictions

On 30 September 2021, Monjib arrived at the Administrative Court of Appeal in Rabat for another hearing. Approximately two hundred security agents surrounded the courthouse, half of them helmeted and armed with sticks and shields. The deployment appeared designed to prevent any public gathering in his support; the agents dispersed after Monjib

and his lawyer left.

The hearing was rescheduled again to 2 December 2021 due to the absence of other co-defendants. His case was to be heard alongside several other defenders facing the same charge of threatening state security.

Asset Freeze and Defamation

Monjib's bank account and credit card were frozen without prior notification, leaving him without access to income. State-owned media outlets have conducted defamation campaigns against him, accusing him of inciting violence and embezzling civil society funds. These smear campaigns have accompanied the judicial harassment, amplifying the pressure on him and his family.

International Context

Monjib's case exemplifies the pattern of judicial harassment facing defenders of press freedom in Morocco. The resurfacing of old charges, the use of national-security statutes to criminalise journalism advocacy, the asset freezes, and the coordinated media defamation campaigns together illustrate the toolbox deployed against those who challenge official narratives.

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

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