

Advocacy dossier

Saida El Alami

سعيدة العلمي

Imprisoned (serving sentence) **Morocco**

Saida El Alami is a blogger and human rights defender who uses social media to denounce corruption and restrictions on free speech in Morocco. Arrested in July 2025, she is serving a three-year sentence upheld on appeal in December 2025, which the UN Working Group on Arbitrary Detention found arbitrary in March 2026.

01

The case at a glance

Saida El Alami is a blogger and human rights defender who uses social media to denounce corruption and restrictions on free speech in Morocco. Arrested in July 2025, she is serving a three-year sentence upheld on appeal in December 2025, which the UN Working Group on Arbitrary Detention found arbitrary in March 2026.

Status **Imprisoned (serving sentence)**	Arrested **1 Jul 2025**	Country **Morocco**

Sentence Three years in prison and a fine of 20,000 dirhams (about 1,870 euros), upheld on appeal on 17 December 2025.

Charges Insulting a legally constituted body
Insulting the judiciary
Publishing and broadcasting false allegations

What we ask

We call on the authorities to:

01 Release Saida El Alami immediately and unconditionally.

02 Drop all charges related to the peaceful exercise of fundamental rights.

03 Ensure unrestricted access to legal counsel, family, and adequate medical care while in detention.

02

Documented violations

Each violation and the international standard it breaks.

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

Criminalisation of solidarity International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights, Articles 21, 22 UN Declaration on Human Rights Defenders, Article 5

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

Press freedom violation International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights, Article 19

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

03

How the case unfolded

23 March 2022

Arrest

Arrested in Casablanca over Facebook posts

Saida El Alami was arrested in Casablanca over Facebook posts criticising the security services and the judiciary.

29 April 2022

Conviction

Sentenced to two years in prison

A Casablanca court of first instance sentenced Saida El Alami to two years in prison and a fine for insulting public officials and bodies and spreading false allegations.

September 2022

Conviction

Appeal court raises the sentence to three years

The Casablanca Court of Appeal increased her sentence from two to three years in prison.

May 2023

Conviction

Sentenced to more prison time in a second case

While already in prison, Saida El Alami was sentenced to additional prison time in a second case, her lawyer said.

29 July 2024

Release

Released under royal pardon

Saida El Alami was released under a royal Throne Day pardon, before the end of her sentence. She resumed her activism and online commentary.

1 July 2025

Arrest

Arrested in Casablanca

Saida El Alami was arrested without warning by the National Judicial Police Brigade while walking on a street in Casablanca. She was taken into police custody for preliminary investigation.

3 July 2025

Hearing

Remanded in pre-trial detention

Saida El Alami appeared before the King's Prosecutor at Ain Sebaa Court of First Instance, who ordered her detention pending trial on charges of insulting a legally organized body, disseminating false allegations, and insulting the judiciary. Her lawyers report she was denied access to legal counsel.

8 July 2025

Hearing

Refuses to attend hearing

Saida El Alami refused to attend the scheduled hearing in protest against being denied legal representation during her appearance before the prosecutor. The trial was postponed.

14 July 2025

Hunger strike begins

Begins hunger and water strike

Saida El Alami began a hunger and water strike to protest the circumstances of her arrest and violations of her rights under Moroccan and international law.

15 July 2025

Hearing

Court appearance during strike

Saida El Alami appeared before the Casablanca Court of First Instance and informed the court of her hunger and water strike. She agreed to resume drinking water at the urging of the court and her defence team. The hearing was postponed to 23 July.

16 September 2025

Conviction

Convicted and sentenced to three years in prison

The Criminal Court of Ain Sebaa in Casablanca convicted Saida El Alami on all three charges: insulting a legally constituted body, insulting the judiciary, and publishing false allegations. It sentenced her to three years in prison and a fine of 20,000 dirhams.

17 December 2025

Appeal: judgment upheld

Casablanca Court of Appeal upholds the three-year sentence

The Casablanca Court of Appeal upheld her conviction, the three-year prison sentence and the fine of 20,000 dirhams.

25 December 2025

Ill-treatment

Reports reprisals in Oukacha prison over her engagement with the UN

While held in Oukacha prison in Casablanca, after she was questioned about her engagement with UN mechanisms, she said she was assaulted and humiliated in front of other detainees and her belongings were torn and soaked. Amnesty International reported, citing her family, that other prisoners insulted her and tore her clothes and that guards sprayed her with a water hose.

13 January 2026

Transfer between places of detention

Transferred to El Jadida 2 prison

Saida El Alami was transferred from Oukacha prison in Casablanca to El Jadida 2 local prison.

24 March 2026

UN opinion or decision

UN Working Group on Arbitrary Detention finds her detention arbitrary (Opinion 8/2026)

In Opinion No. 8/2026, adopted at its 105th session, the UN Working Group on Arbitrary Detention found her detention arbitrary, citing violations of her rights to liberty, a fair trial and freedom of expression, and expressed serious concern about reprisals linked to her use of UN mechanisms. It called for her immediate release, reparation and an independent investigation.

8 April 2026

Hunger strike begins

Hunger strike in El Jadida 2 prison

She began a hunger strike in El Jadida 2 local prison. Her family said it was a protest against harassment in prison; the prison administration said she gave no reason and that she ended the strike on 16 April 2026 after a visit by the deputy prosecutor. Amnesty International reported that her family could not contact her for two weeks and later found her in a wheelchair, extremely weak and dehydrated.

June 2026

Context

Hunger strike reported; prison administration denies it

The Committee for Justice reported that she was on an open hunger strike. The prison administration denied this and said she had resumed her meals.

9 July 2026

Call by others

Amnesty International calls for her release

Amnesty International issued an urgent action calling for the release of Saida El Alami.

October 2026

Detention conditions and health

Health problems after the hunger strike

El Alami had health problems after the hunger strike she began in October 2026.

12 October 2026

Context

Hunger strike in El Jadida 2 prison

She notified the prison administration of a hunger strike. The administration said she ended it voluntarily on 19 October 2026.

5 November 2026

Access to counsel denied

Her lawyers denied visits without explanation

The prison administration has refused her lawyers' visits since 5 November 2026, giving no explanation.

04

The full story

Update, 12 November 2026: Saida El Alami remains in El Jadida 2 local prison, serving the three-year sentence upheld on appeal on 17 December 2025, despite the UN Working Group on Arbitrary Detention finding her detention arbitrary in March 2026. She has gone on hunger strike several times in 2026, most recently from 12 to 19 October 2026, and her family reports that her health has seriously deteriorated.

Background and Work

Saida El Alami is a blogger and digital rights defender from Morocco who has used social media platforms and participated in peaceful street demonstrations to document and denounce corruption, abuses of power, and the narrowing of civic space in her country. Her work focuses on the systematic use of criminal law to suppress critical speech, particularly provisions targeting insult to state bodies and the dissemination of what authorities classify as false information.

On 23 March 2022, she was arrested in Casablanca over Facebook posts criticising the security services and the judiciary. On 29 April 2022 a Casablanca court sentenced her to two years in prison and a fine, and in September 2022 the Court of Appeal raised the sentence to three years. In 2023, while she was in prison, a second case added more prison time. The charges in those earlier cases were similar to those she was later convicted of: insult and false allegations related to her online commentary. She was released on 29 July 2024 under a royal pardon, before the end of her sentence. Upon her release, she resumed her activism, continuing to post commentary about due process violations and the use of the penal code to stifle dissent.

The Arrest

On 1 July 2025, officers from the National Judicial Police Brigade arrested Saida El Alami on a street in Casablanca without prior notice or warrant. The Moroccan Association for Human Rights reported that no criminal act had been observed or alleged at the time of her arrest. She was taken to a police station and held in preliminary investigative custody for two days.

On the morning of 3 July 2025, she was brought before the King's Prosecutor at the Ain Sebaa Court of First Instance. The charges were insulting a legally organized body, disseminating false allegations, and insulting the judiciary. The prosecutor ordered her placed in pre-trial detention. Her defence lawyers report that she was denied access to legal counsel during that appearance. A trial date was initially set for 8 July.

Legal Proceedings

Saida El Alami refused to attend the hearing scheduled for 8 July 2025. Her legal team stated that the refusal was a protest against the denial of her right to counsel when she appeared before the prosecutor five days earlier. The trial was postponed to 15 July.

On 15 July, she appeared before the Casablanca Court of First Instance and informed the court that she had begun a hunger and water strike the previous day. Her lawyers explained that the strike was intended to protest the circumstances of her

arrest and what they described as violations of Moroccan law and international human rights standards, particularly guarantees of freedom of opinion and expression. At the end of the hearing, under urging from both the court and her defence team, she agreed to resume drinking water. The court granted a further postponement to allow her lawyers additional time to prepare her defence, scheduling the next hearing for 23 July 2025.

On 16 September 2025, the Criminal Court of Ain Sebaa in Casablanca handed down its judgment. Saida El Alami was convicted on all three charges and sentenced to three years in prison and a fine of 20,000 dirhams, about 1,870 euros.

Criticism and Context

The Moroccan Committee for the Support of Political Prisoners condemned the verdict, describing it as part of a broader pattern of criminalizing peaceful expression. The organization noted that the continued deployment of penal code provisions to silence critics conflicts with Article 25 of the Moroccan Constitution, which guarantees freedom of opinion and expression, and with Article 19 of the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights, to which Morocco is a party.

The case reflects a sustained trend in Morocco of using vaguely worded criminal statutes, particularly those related to insult of state institutions and false allegations, to prosecute individuals who criticize public authorities or document human rights violations. Saida El Alami's prosecution follows her sentencing in 2022 and her imprisonment until a royal pardon in July 2024. Her re-arrest less than a year after that pardon underscores the precarious position of digital rights defenders and online commentators in Morocco, where prior punishment and even official clemency provide no protection from renewed prosecution for similar speech.

Latest updates on this case Scan the code or visit: https://humena.org/defenders/saida-el-alami/

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