

## **MEDIA ADVISORY**

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## **Morocco Looks Back on the Past with an Eye to the Future**

*Truth Commission Final Report Unveils Truth and Determines Responsibility for Past Abuses  
Human Development Report Outlines Country's Development Goals for 2025*

### **Equity and Reconciliation Commission (IER) Final Report**

NEW YORK, January 19, 2006—From the 1950s to the 1990s, thousands of Moroccans were illegally detained, imprisoned, tortured, or forcibly 'disappeared' by state actors. In April 2004, King Mohammed VI formally established the first truth-seeking body in the Middle East and North Africa region: a 17-member Commission charged with investigating this era and providing compensation to victims and their families. A human rights activist and leader who spent 17 years as a political prisoner in one of Morocco's secret detention centers, Mr. Driss Benzekri was appointed Commission President by the King.

Over 18 months, the Commission received more than 22,000 applications for consideration and held victim-centered, public hearings televised throughout the country. The IER presented its final report to the Royal Palace on November 30th, 2005. Two weeks later, the King mandated the public dissemination of the several hundred-page report, marking a crucial moment in Moroccan history. Determining the responsibilities of state and other actors for the abuses and outlining an extensive reparations plan for victims and their families, the report sets out concrete recommendations that provide Morocco with a momentous opportunity to advance victims' rights and prevent future abuses.

Since December 2003, the International Center for Transitional Justice (ICTJ) has worked closely with the IER, providing ongoing technical assistance and advice, and has also actively engaged with Moroccan human rights organizations, the media, and victims' groups, stressing their role in monitoring the Commission and assisting victims.

### **Human Development Report**

On August 20, 2003, King Mohammed VI commissioned a multi-disciplinary effort to examine human development in Morocco over the preceding 50 years and to map out a plan and concrete goals for Morocco's economic and political development over the next 20 years. The report—released by its steering committee in advance of Morocco's fiftieth anniversary of independence on March 2, 2006—articulates a vision of "Morocco today,

at peace with itself and its past," poised with "confidence and determination" to move forward on the "path towards a heightened level of human development." The Royal Palace conceived of this initiative as providing a comprehensive framework for Morocco's development, which would include follow-up on the IER's conclusions and implementation of its recommendations.

The Permanent Mission of the Kingdom of Morocco to the United Nations and the ICTJ invite you to a press briefing on two groundbreaking reports that examine Morocco's past with a view to building a future based on civil, political, social, and economic rights and the rule of law.

**FRIDAY, 20 JANUARY 2006: 10:00 – 10:45 am**

Press Briefing and Q&A (United Nations Secretariat Building, Room S-226)

Introduction: Karim Medrek, Legal and Press Counselor, Permanent Mission of the Kingdom of Morocco to the UN.

Briefing:

- Driss Benzekri, President of the Moroccan Equity and Reconciliation Commission; and President of the Moroccan Consultative Council on Human Rights (CCDH)
- Ahmed Herzenni, Member of the Scientific Committee that contributed to the Human Development Report

**MEDIA CONTACTS**

Please RSVP for press briefing, by 9pm, Thursday, 19 January 2006.

To RSVP, to set up one-on-one meetings, or for more information, contact: Suzana Grego at +1 (917) 438-9331 or [sgreg@ictj.org](mailto:sgreg@ictj.org).

All members of the press who do not have UN Media Accreditation must contact: UN Media Accreditation and Liaison Unit/DPI. Tel: +1 (212) 963-6934 or +1 (212) 963-6937.

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