

Reporters Without Borders

<http://www.rsf.org/morocco-blogger-gets-two-year-jail-15-06-2012,42803.html>

Middle East/North Africa - Morocco

Another blogger targeted Blogger gets two-year jail sentence on trumped-up drug charges

15 June 2012

[Read in Arabic \(بالعربية\)](#)

Reporters Without Borders strongly deplores the two-year jail sentence that a Marrakech court imposed yesterday on well-known blogger **Mohamed Sokrate** on trumped-up charges of drug possession and trafficking. He was also fined 5,000 dirhams (450 euros).

Arrested on 29 May as he was leaving an Internet café, Sokrate was tried and convicted with unusual speed. The trial began on 7 June but was adjourned until yesterday at the defence's request.

"The trumped-up charges brought against Sokrate seem to mark a new stage in the Moroccan government's campaign against freedom of expression, in which several bloggers have already been arrested and convicted," Reporters Without Borders said. "We are very disturbed to see criminal charges being brought against bloggers again."

Aged 31, Sokrate is well known for his defence of secularism and civil liberties as well as his criticism of the government. He was a member of the 20 February Youth Movement in 2011 and was one of the young people to be invited to participate in the Institutional Reform Committee.

His lawyers and family dismissed the charges as fabricated. In a video posted online, his mother insisted that he had absolutely no links with drug circles and attributed his arrest to his political activities.

One of his lawyers, Taher Abouzaid, said the proceedings against him were marked by many procedural errors. He also criticized the court's refusal to hear testimony from those who witnessed the arrest of his father and brother. Several sources said they were arrested just to get Sokrate to sign a police statement.

A solidarity campaign is being waged online and many Moroccan fellow-bloggers have expressed their support for Sokrate.

Abouzaid filed an appeal this morning. At least 20 days must elapse before an initial hearing can be held before an appeal court.

Follow the solidarity campaign:

on Twitter: [#Freesokrate](#)

on Facebook : <https://www.facebook.com/groups/m.sokrat>

Sokrate's Twitter account: <https://twitter.com/#!/mohammedsokrat>

Sokrate's blog: <http://mc-sokrat.maktoobblog.com/>

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