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<http://www.rsf.org/morocco-journalist-says-he-will-be-morocco-18-05-2015,47903.html>

Middle East/North Africa - Morocco

Persecuted

Journalist says he will be "Morocco's first undocumented Moroccan"

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Reporters Without Borders is appalled by the way the Moroccan authorities continue to persecute Ali Lmrabet, a satirical newspaper editor who wants to resume publishing newspapers in Morocco now that his ten-year ban on working as journalist has expired.

Ali Lmrabet, who has dual French and Moroccan nationality, is being [denied](#) the residence certificate he needs to get a new national ID card and to renew his passport, which expires on 24 June. Without these documents, he cannot move ahead with his declared intention to relaunch his newspapers.

A Reporters Without Borders "[Information Hero](#)" and winner of the Reporters Without Borders - Fondation de France [Prize](#) in 2003, Lmrabet used to edit *Demain* and *Demain Magazine*, publications that were banned in 2003.

Officially, he has been able to resume working as a journalist in Morocco since 11 April. He was [banned](#) from working for ten years after being convicted of libel.

But the authorities in the northern city of Tétouan have been [refusing](#) to give him a residence certificate since 20 April. In a [statement](#) issued on 5 May, quoting the interior minister, the Tétouan local administration [said](#) it had been established that Lmrabet does not live at the Tétouan address he gave, which is his father's home.

The Tétouan 2nd district police station had nonetheless [issued](#) the certificate to Lmrabet on 22 April, only to demand it back the next day.

According to the information obtained by Reporters Without Borders, Lmrabet possesses all the documentation he needs to get a residence certificate. His address is indeed his father's and it is the one that appears in his passport.

"We are perplexed by the series of bureaucratic obstacles that are being imposed on Ali Lmrabet," Reporters Without Borders deputy programme director Virginie Dangles said.

"It is not clear why the Moroccan authorities are refusing to issue him this certificate. We urge them to provide him with the requested certificate so that he can renew his documents."

Journalism blocked

The Moroccan Association for Human Rights (AMDH) – which is backing him and whose president testified on his behalf – has [asked](#) the Moroccan government to intercede at the national and local level but has not received an answer.

Lmrabet is convinced that the authorities are refusing him a residence certificate in order to prevent him from publishing again.

"I am going to become Morocco's first undocumented Moroccan," he told Reporters Without Borders. "I would like to think that, although this government does not like me, it cannot prevent me from having identity papers."

His lawyer, Lahbib Mohamed Hajji, confirmed that Lmrabet's papers had the same address as his fathers. Denying him a residence certificate is a violation of his right as a citizen, Hajji said.

Reporters Without Borders has repeatedly phoned and emailed the communication ministry in an attempt to get its version, but the ministry has not as yet responded.

Morocco is ranked 130th out of 180 countries in the 2015 Reporters Without Borders [press freedom index](#).
