

# Reporters Without Borders

<http://www.rsf.org/morocco-moroccan-appeal-court-upholds-25-10-2011,41275.html>

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Middle East & North Africa - Morocco

A depressing verdict

## Moroccan appeal court upholds editor's prison sentence

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Reporters Without Borders deplores the ruling by a Casablanca appeal court yesterday upholding a one-year prison sentence and fine of 1,000 dirhams (90 euros) imposed on **Rachid Nini**, editor of the daily *Al-Massae* for disinformation.

The journalist, who has served half the sentence, and his legal team refused to attend the hearing, recalling that his original conviction was based charges under the criminal code, not on press law.

Nini, held since 28 April, was convicted on 9 June (see [article](#)) over the publication in *Al-Massae* of reports accusing prominent figures of corruption, including associates of the king. He also published news stories about intelligence chief Abdellatif Hammouchi. In addition, he called for the repeal of the anti-terrorism law.

A member of his legal team told Reporters Without Borders that he was surprised and saddened by the appeal verdict and expressed the hope that his client would be pardoned during the Islamic festival of Eid al-Kebir, in accordance with tradition. The festival falls in November this year.

Reporters Without Borders believes the rejection of Nini's appeal does not bode well for press freedom in Morocco, since it runs counter to promises made by the king to journalists and the media.

In contrast to Tunisia where no journalists are now held in prison, the conviction of Nini shows that Morocco is in dire need of reforms to ensure a climate favourable to journalists.

Reporters Without Borders strongly urges the immediate release of Nini, who has been jailed in violation of press law.

The press freedom organization, whose first request in late June to visit him was rejected by the prosecutor's office on a legal technicality, is still awaiting a response to its second request lodged in mid-September.

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