

Academic Freedom for Professor

Maati Monjib



Maati Monjib, a historian and member of the Scientific Committee of CODESRIA, has been on hunger strike since last week to protest against the travel bans imposed on him by Moroccan authorities, which has prevented him from participating in scientific meetings and exercising his academic freedom.

Monjib, a political analyst and human rights activist, was a founding member of the 20 February Movement Support Council, which sought reform in Morocco during the Arab Spring. From 2010 to 2012, he was the Vice-President of CODESRIA's Scientific Committee.

On August 31, 2015, on his return from Montpellier, France, he was held up by authorities at Mohamed V Airport in Casablanca. This is one of a series of provocations to which he has been subjected in recent times.

Recently, the authorities in his country again prevented him from travelling to take part in scientific conferences he was invited to attend in Europe, in flagrant violation of the tenets of academic freedom. Indeed, Article 4 of the Kampala Declaration on Intellectual Freedom and Social Responsibility clearly states:

"Every African intellectual shall enjoy the freedom of movement within his or her country and freedom to travel outside and re-enter the country without let, hindrance or harassment. No administrative or any other action shall directly or indirectly restrict this freedom on account of a person's intellectual opinions beliefs or activity."

As such, CODESRIA, as a pan-African organization of social science researchers, with a core mandate to promote the development of the social sciences as well as academic and intellectual freedom in Africa, stands against the restrictions to the freedom to travel for scientific purposes which Maati Monjib suffers.

CODESRIA believes that such a situation is a serious human rights violation. Such persecution is unacceptable and detrimental to the right of African researchers to pursue legitimate research activities, scientific dissemination and free expression of their views on current issues.

CODESRIA is concerned about the recurrence of abuses perpetrated against members of the community of researchers and lecturers on the continent, which contributes to a climate of persecution that counters a serene and productive academic and social life.

CODESRIA expresses solidarity with one of its most prominent members. Similarly, it invites the Moroccan authorities to stop any action that could restrict the academic and fundamental freedoms of Professor Maati Monjib. CODESRIA recalls that the Kingdom of Morocco has signed and ratified binding international treaties, including the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights (signed January 19, 1977 and ratified May 3, 1979).

CODESRIA is deeply concerned about the health of Professor Maati Monjib, and requests an immediate cessation of the unacceptable harassment being suffered by Professor Maati Monjib.

Finally, CODESRIA invites its members and the entire African community of researchers, lecturers and other stakeholders in academia to remain vigilant and stand firm against all forms of academic freedom violations in Africa and its diaspora.

Done in Dakar, Senegal, 15 October 2015.

Dr. Monjib is a political historian (University of Mohammed V-Rabat). Born in Morocco, he got his first Ph.D. in France (North African Politics) and another one from Dakar University in African political History. He published articles and studies on MENA and Africa. He taught in Morocco, Senegal and US universities. He published: *The Moroccan Monarchy and the struggle for power*: Paris, L'Harmattan, 1992, a *Political Biography of Mehdi Ben Barka* (with. Z. Daoud): Paris, Editions Michalon, 1996-2000, and *Islamists versus Secularists in Morocco* (ed.): Amsterdam, IKV, 2009. He is currently preparing a Political biography of the West-African leader Mamadou Dia.

Monjib has been the initiator and facilitator of bargaining debates between Islamists and secular activists in Morocco 2007-2010. He has also organized the Press Now Investigative Journalism Prize in 2007-9 in Morocco.

He is also founder and director of Ibn Rochd Center for Studies and Communication (Rabat-Morocco).

Former Fulbright Scholar- In- Residence (2005-2006) he also spent four month as a Patkin Fellow at the Brookings Institution in Washington-DC.

In 2010, the Executive Committee of CODESRIA appointed Dr. Monjib a member of the Scientific Committee of CODESRIA. He was then elected Vice-President of the Scientific Committee, a position he held from 2010 to 2012.