

18 November 2020

Morocco: Defamation campaign against woman human rights defender Karima Nadir

Woman human rights defender **Karima Nadir** has been subjected to a sexualised defamation campaign in recent weeks. This campaign has specifically focused on and used Karima Nadir's identity as a single mother to stigmatize her.

Karima Nadir is a Moroccan woman human rights defender and the co-founder of 490 Collective, which is a feminist movement that works to abolish sexist regulations in the Moroccan legal system. The collective derives its name from its denunciation of Article 490 of the Moroccan Penal Code, which criminalises non-marital sex. Karima Nadir is the former Vice President of the Association des droits numériques - ADN (Association for Digital Rights), which focuses on privacy and surveillance issues and defends internet freedoms and freedom of expression.

In recent weeks, Chouf TV, which is closely linked to Moroccan authorities, has led a sexualised defamation campaign against Karima Nadir. Chouf TV is one of the largest online TV platforms in Morocco and has more than eighteen million followers on its various online platforms. On 1 November 2020, Chouf TV published a defamatory article about Karima Nadir on its website and circulated it on its Instagram and Facebook accounts. The article accused Karima Nadir of alcohol and drug use during her pregnancy, condemned her for being a single mother and attacked her work defending single mothers' rights in Morocco. The same article also accused Karima Nadir of being a 'neglectful' mother because her son does not use his biological father's surname, and was anonymously sent to the human rights defender's 13 year old son. On 25 October 2020, Chouf TV published a similar article which attacked the identity and work of Karima Nadir as a woman human rights defender. In 2015 Karima Nadir was previously targeted for her human rights work in 2015 when she was subjected to interrogation by the National Brigade for the Judicial Police.

Sexualised defamation campaigns are a significant challenge to women human rights defenders in Morocco. They aim to intimidate women and dissuade them from continuing their human rights work. Front Line defenders is deeply concerned regarding this defamation campaign against Karima Nadir, as it believes she is being victimised solely as a result of being a woman human rights defender.

Front Line Defenders urges the Moroccan authorities to:

1. Publicly condemn the defamation campaign against woman human rights defender Karima Nadir;
2. Cease targeting all women human rights defenders in Morocco and guarantee in all circumstances that they are able to carry out their legitimate human rights activities without fear of reprisals and free of all restrictions including judicial harassment.

Front Line Defenders respectfully reminds you that the United Nations Declaration on the Right and Responsibility of Individuals, Groups and Organs of Society to Promote and Protect Universally Recognized Human Rights and Fundamental Freedoms, adopted by consensus by the UN General Assembly on 9 December 1998, recognises the legitimacy of the activities of human rights defenders, their right to freedom of association and to carry out their activities without fear of reprisals. We would particularly draw your attention to Article 6 (b): *“Everyone has the right, individually and in association with others: (b) As provided for in human rights and other applicable international instruments, freely to publish, impart or disseminate to others views, information and knowledge on all human rights and fundamental freedoms,”* and to Article 12 (2): *“The State shall take all necessary measures to ensure the protection by the competent authorities of everyone, individually and in association with others, against any violence, threats, retaliation, de facto or de jure adverse discrimination, pressure or any other arbitrary action as a consequence of his or her legitimate exercise of the rights referred to in the present Declaration.”*

Please inform us of any actions that may be taken with regard to the above case.

Yours sincerely,

A handwritten signature in blue ink that reads "Andrew Anderson".

Andrew Anderson
Executive Director