



FACTSHEET:
MOROCCO

2/3 of women
(6 MILLION)
have experienced **EITHER**
PSYCHOLOGICAL OR
sexual violence
IN THEIR LIFETIME -UN WOMEN 2011



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General Facts

- Morocco is constitutional monarchy under which the king can dissolve parliament and dismiss or appoint the prime minister.¹
- Population of 32,309,239 people with Muslim 99% (majority Sunni Muslim), Christian 1%, Jewish about 6,000
- 31 % of men and 57% of women are illiterate with unemployment rate of 21.9%
- Due to unrest and protests in 2011, the king Mohammed VI drafted a new constitution that gave a few powers to the parliament and prime minister and called for early parliamentary elections. A prominent moderate Islamist party, the Justice and Development Party, subsequently won the largest number of seats becoming the first Islamist party to lead the Moroccan Government
- Morocco ratified the Convention on the Elimination of All forms of Discrimination Against Women in 1993, but has not yet ratified the Optional Protocol. The country has not signed or ratified the Protocol to the African Charter on Human and Peoples' Rights on the Rights of Women in Africa²

Women's Rights

- Since 1999, when Muhammad VI inherited the throne from his father, there have been constitutional and legal changes in a variety of issues such as the status of women, poverty, etc. Nevertheless, due to social and cultural norms, it has been hard to implement these changes.³

¹ "Morocco Profile: King: King Mohammed VI" *BBC*, May 28th. 2012

<http://www.bbc.co.uk/news/world-africa-14121440>

²"SIGI: Morocco" *OECD Development Centre*

http://genderindex.org/country/morocco#_ftn21

³ "SIGI: Morocco" *OECD Development Centre* http://genderindex.org/country/morocco#_ftn21; Fatima Sadiqi, "Morocco" in Sanja Kelly, Julia Breslin (ed.) *Women's Rights in the Middle East and North Africa: Progress Amid Resistance* (New York / Lanham: Freedom House / Rowman and Littlefield Publishers, Ltd. 2010) pg. 320



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- A new family law Moudawana drafted in 2004 enshrines equality between men and women.⁴
- Divorce is an equal right between man and women. A women can divorce for the same reasons that a man can and only with mutual consent. The man can only obtain a divorce through a court and only after a judge leads the couple through a conciliation process. However often times if he women cannot prove or bring a “substantial reason for divorce the judge will often tell her to return to her spouse
- After 15 years of age, the child of divorced parents can choose by which parent he/she wants to live⁵
- Legally women are allowed to travel without permission of husband , father or other male guardian. However, deeply ingrained cultural norms sometimes end in restricting women’s freedom to travel⁶ –
- There is no legislation specifically outlawing and/or protecting woman from domestic violence, although efforts are being made by the government and law enforcement to prevent and protect women.
- Polygamy is not outlawed, but a husband must obtain permission from a judge and provide his financial records. He must also assure the court that he

<http://books.google.com/books?id=r4ZklzclVZsC&printsec=frontcover#v=onepage&q=%20318&f=false> ;

“Morocco: A Look At Women's Rights 5 Years After Reforms”, *Huffington Post*, July 10th, 2009
http://www.huffingtonpost.com/2009/06/09/morocco-a-look-at-womens_n_213362.html

⁴ “Morocco eyes law on rape and child marriage”, *Al-Arabiya*, March 14th, 2013

<http://english.alarabiya.net/en/perspective/2013/03/07/Morocco-eyes-law-on-rape-and-child-marriage-.html>

⁵ “SIGI: Morocco” *OECD Development Centre*

http://genderindex.org/country/morocco#_ftn21

⁶ Fatima Sadiqi, “Morocco” in Sanja Kelly, Julia Breslin (ed.) *Women's Rights in the Middle East and North Africa: Progress Amid Resistance* (New York / Lanham: Freedom House / Rowman and Littlefield Publishers, Ltd. 2010) pp. 318–319



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will treat all of his wives fairly and that he has received the consent of the first wife.⁷

- Traditions of honor make it very difficult for victims to come forth with complaints of sexual violence⁸

Abuses

- Marriage under the age of 18 and forced marriage is illegal without the permission of a judge according to the 19th article of the Morocco family code.⁹ However, in practice underage and forced marriage is a huge problem in Morocco with 10 percent of young Moroccan women having been married before the age of 18.¹⁰
- The number of child marriages performed in 2010 were 35,000¹¹
- Rape is a criminal offense in Morocco. However, in article 475 of Moroccan family law there is a stipulation that allows the rapist to marry his victim in order to avoid prosecution and shaming the victim's family. After Amina Filali committed suicide after being forced to marry her rapist in 2011, major protests erupted

⁷ "SIGI: Morocco" *OECD Development Centre*

http://genderindex.org/country/morocco#_ftn21; Fatima Sadiqi, "Morocco" in Sanja Kelly, Julia Breslin (ed.) *Women's Rights in the Middle East and North Africa: Progress Amid Resistance* (New York / Lanham: Freedom House / Rowman and Littlefield Publishers, Ltd. 2010) pp. 318-319; "Bias in Penal Code puts women and girls in danger in Morocco", Amnesty International, March 1st, 2013 <http://www.amnesty.org/en/for-media/press-releases/bias-penal-code-puts-women-and-girls-danger-morocco-2013-03-01>

⁸ "SIGI: Morocco" *OECD Development Centre*

http://genderindex.org/country/morocco#_ftn21;

⁹ Article 19 in the "The Moroccan Family Code(MOUDAWANA) of February 5th, 2004" translated by *Global Rights: Partners of Justice*

http://www.globalrights.org/site/DocServer/Moudawana-English_Translation.pdf

¹⁰ "SIGI: Morocco" *OECD Development Centre under "Discriminatory Family Code"*

http://genderindex.org/country/morocco#_ftn21; Mohamed Hikal, "Morocco inches closer to amend law on rape child marriage", *Morocco News Tribune*, March 8th, 2013

<http://morocconewstribune.com/morocco-inches-closer-to-amend-law-on-rape-child-marriage/>

¹¹ "Morocco eyes law on rape and child marriage", *Al-Arabiya*, March 14th, 2013

<http://english.alarabiya.net/en/perspective/2013/03/07/Morocco-eyes-law-on-rape-and-child-marriage-.html>



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and a change in the law has been proposed. Marital rape is not a criminal offense.¹²

- A 2011 survey showed that 2/3 (6 million out of 9.5 million) of women has experienced some type of violence in their lifetime. 48.4 percent (4.6 million) had been psychological violence and 25% was sexual violence (1.5 million)¹³
- Inheritance rules remain unequal- daughters inherit only half of what sons do. If there are no sons the inheritance is still divided amongst Aunt's and Uncles.¹⁴

Women's Rights Organizations

- Moroccan Association of Human Rights
<http://www.amdh.org.ma/En>
- The Democratic Association of Moroccan Women
<http://www.adfm.ma/?lang=en>
- The Center for Women and Democracy
<http://www.womenanddemocracy.org/about.html>
- Women in Technology
http://www.womenanddemocracy.org/programs_id_morocco_resources.html
- Union de L'Action Feminine (UAF, WAU)
- AFEM Association of Women Entrepreneurs of Morocco

¹² "Morocco to change rape marriage law", *Al-Jazeera*, January 24th, 2013

<http://www.aljazeera.com/news/africa/2013/01/2013123225637555571.html>,

"Bias in Penal Code puts women and girls in danger in Morocco", *Amnesty International*, March 1st, 2013

<http://www.amnesty.org/en/for-media/press-releases/bias-penal-code-puts-women-and-girls-danger-morocco-2013-03-01> ;

"SIGI: Morocco" *OECD Development Centre*

http://genderindex.org/country/morocco#_ftn21

¹³ "Moroccan Government Releases Extensive Gender-Based Violence Study", *UN Women*, January 10th, 2011

<http://www.unwomen.org/2011/01/moroccan-government-releases-extensive-gender-based-violence-study/>

¹⁴ "SIGI: Morocco" *OECD Development Centre*

http://genderindex.org/country/morocco#_ftn21



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<http://afem.ma/>

- Hillary Rodham Clinton Women's Empowerment Centre (HRCWEC)
<http://www.aui.ma/old/VPAA/hrcwec/index.htm>

Reports

Fatima Sadiqi, "Morocco"

http://www.freedomhouse.org/sites/default/files/inline_images/Morocco.pdf

SIGI "Morocco"

http://genderindex.org/country/morocco#_ftn17

"Bias in Penal Code puts women and girls in danger in Morocco", Amnesty International, March 1st, 2013

<http://www.amnesty.org/en/for-media/press-releases/bias-penal-code-puts-women-and-girls-danger-morocco-2013-03-01>