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All the King's Men: The emergence of the Authenticity and modernity Party (PAM) in Morocco

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On October 20th 2010, the Moroccan Authenticity and Modernity Party (*Parti Authenticité et Modernité*, PAM; *Hizb al-Asala wa-l-Mu'asara*) announced yet another reformation of its two parliamentary groups in the House of Representatives and the House of Councillors. Despite not having contested the 2007 legislative elections, the PAM's parliamentary group in the Moroccan Chamber of Representatives (*Majlis al-Nuwwab*) by now counts an impressive 55 deputies among its members. Constituted by representatives originally elected under the banner of other parties, the PAM parliamentary bloc has grown to become the strongest single group in the *Majlis al-Nuwwab*. What attracts members of other parties to join the

PAM's parliamentary group? What is the new party's potential to fulfil its declared goal of "rationalizing" the fragmented Moroccan party system? And finally, how does the emergence of this group fit into the Moroccan history of divide and conquer within a context of fragmented party politics?

The origins of the party can be traced back to the establishment of the Movement of all Democrats (*Mouvement de Tous les Démocrates*, *Harakat li-kull al-Dimuqratiyyin*) in early 2008 following the initiative of former deputy Minister of the Interior Fouad Ali al-Himma, an advisor to and former classmate of King Muhammad VI and a prominent royalist figure. This group, originally open to members of all political parties, was transformed into a political party in early 2009 by the merger of five smaller parties, immediately dominating the local elections of June 2009, winning 21.7% of the votes – a remarkable feat given the fragmented nature of Morocco's party system. Moreover, by October 2010, the party commanded the allegiance of around 17% of deputies in the lower house and 27% in the upper house of the Moroccan Parliament, mainly due to the fact that numerous members of both chambers deserted their original parties and joined the PAM's parliamentary bloc.

This phenomenon of switching partisan allegiance known as transh-

u-mance in Moroccan political discourse seems to benefit the PAM disproportionately. Who are the parliamentarians joining this new group? A quick glance at the composition of the PAM's parliamentary bloc can help to answer this question. The modal "transhument" is a political newcomer serving in Parliament for the first time (with only ten PAM deputies serving a second or even third or fourth term). In terms of former partisan allegiances, members of the PAM parliamentary group are mainly drawn from the smaller pro-palace parties, although members of 13 political formations have joined the PAM, including two former members of the *Istiqlal* (Independence) party. Lastly, PAM deputies tend to be concentrated in rural, rather than urban constituencies and are thus based in parts of the country traditionally more supportive of pro-palace candidates and characterized by a strong impact of electoral clientelism. This last point was even more obvious in the local elections in which the PAM overwhelmingly won in rural constituencies. All of these points suggest that the new group is predominantly made up of political entrepreneurs who expect to profit from a relatively close association with the political elite (the *Makhzen*) offered by al-Himma's party. The PAM, in other words, seems to be a palace party in the making, and can thus be seen as a tool used by the palace to restructure the party system. Such an initiative is not without

precedent in Moroccan history. Rather, the Popular Movement (*Mouvement Populaire*, MP) founded in 1958, the Front for the Defence of Constitutional Institutions (*Front de Défense des Institutions Constitutionnelles*, FDIC) formed in 1963, and the National Assembly of Independents (*Rassemblement National des Independents*, RNI) emerging in 1978, all represented attempts to unify pro-palace forces in a single political party. That the current King is following these examples is also supported by other features of the process in which the PAM emerged. To begin with, the party label of "Authenticity and Modernity" itself resembles a slogan frequently used by the late King Hassan II and suggests a conscious effort by the party to link itself to the *Makhzen's* power structures. Although switching party allegiance is illegal for sitting deputies under Article 5 of the Moroccan Political Parties Law, most of the transhumants (with some notable exceptions) have not been legally prosecuted, despite vocal protest from (pro-palace and opposition) party elites.

This association of the party with the *Makhzen* as well as its strong showing in the 2009 local elections led to speculation about the role it will play in the next legislative elections scheduled for 2012. While it is very likely that the PAM will be an important player in the next legislature, interpretations that see the new pro-palace party as a dominant political force are probably exaggerated. Most importantly, the establishment of a dominating political force goes against established traditions of electoral politics in the kingdom. As the historical precedent of palace parties shows, such efforts could not be sustained in the past but tended to disintegrate rather quickly. Secondly, although the emergence of the PAM is certainly primarily meant to counter the Islamist Justice and Development Party (*Parti de la Justice et du Développement*, PJD) it immediately threatens the interests of smaller, pro-palace parties – a challenge these parties are unlikely to tolerate quietly.

Further electoral success of the PAM is thus likely to exacerbate elite conflict and will ultimately lead to a return to the traditional policy of fragmentation and balancing.

Western Sahara – the last African Colony: An endless story

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Since mid-October 2010, the Western Sahara conflict, the last and longest-running colonial conflict in Africa, has yet again caught the attention of the international media. While in Brussels EU bodies are just about to negotiate the renewal of the Fisheries Partnership Agreement between the EU and Morocco, thousands of Sahrawi people have left the cities of occupied Western Sahara and set up "dignity camps" in the desert. They protest against the discrimination they are facing in their own country and against the plundering of the country's resources, mostly phosphate deposits and fish stocks. The Fisheries Agreement will expire in March 2011, and because its purview includes territorial waters of occupied Western Sahara, it is highly controversial. In the summer 2009 the European Parliament's legal service concluded in its legal opinion that the agreement violates international law, whereas the Moroccan government keeps reiterating that the agreement is beneficial for all; yet, in fact, the Sahrawi people do not profit from it in any way.

By now, the Sahrawi people have become a minority in their own country: Since 1975, the Kingdom of Morocco

has been keeping vast areas of the former "Spanish Sahara" occupied and has relocated thousands of Moroccan settlers. While the Sahrawi people are discriminated against in all aspects of life, Moroccan settlers and particularly the Moroccan political elite – the *Makhzen* – reap all the benefits of exploiting the country's resources and thus its fisheries industry. Just as it has done in previous cases of peaceful protest in the colonized area, the Moroccan colonial administration continues to react with unacceptable harshness and brutality. For example, during the night of October 24th and 25th 2010, Moroccan occupational forces even shot a child, 14-year old EL-Garhi Nayem Foidal Mohamed Suedi.

Almost two weeks later, the Kingdom celebrated the so-called "Green March" for the 35th time. In 1975, attracting a lot of media attention, King Hassan had thousands of his poorest subjects cross the border into the Western Sahara "to bring home" this territory, a region that has actually never been "home". In fact, the International Court of Justice in its advisory opinion of October 16th 1975 did not find any legal attachment to Morocco before Spanish colonialism. Therefore, no legitimate reasons exist that justify the refusal to grant the Sahrawian population the expression of their self-determination in a free, fair and transparent referendum.

In the context of the annual royal staging of "the Green March" in early November 2010, the regime displayed some signs of nervousness, and currently all signs point towards an escalation in the occupied parts of the Western Sahara. Following the celebrations, Moroccan security forces raided a camp near Al-Aaiun, set numerous buildings on fire, caused the death of 20 people, injured more than 700, and deported approximately 160 Sahrawis. However, this incident does not seem to trouble the European Commission nor the emerging European External Action Service and its High Representative, Catherine Ashton. According to an EFE report of November 9 2010, representatives



of the European Commission and Morocco will soon be meeting in Brussels to discuss the renewal of the Fisheries Partnership Agreement, most likely in an atmosphere of "business-as-usual".

A sophisticated system of berms, equipped with highly modern weapons and mines, mostly of US and French construction, stretches over the 2400 km-long desertland and cuts off the Western Sahara from the eastern part of the desert, liberated and controlled by the Polisario Front. In so doing, throughout the years Morocco has increasingly expanded its access to the country's most important resources, namely phosphate, originating in the Bu Craa Mine in the northern region of Saguia El Hamra, and vast fish stocks, located off the 1000 km-long coast.

According to international law, this situation is unambiguous. On December 14th 1960, the UN General Assembly adopted resolution 1514 which stipulates the following: "[...] all peoples have the right to self-determination; by virtue of that right they freely determine their political status and freely pursue their economic, social and cultural development. [...] Immediate steps shall be taken, in Trust and Non-self-Governing Territories or all other territories which have not yet attained independence, to transfer all powers to the peoples of those territories, without any conditions or reservations, in accordance with their freely expressed will and desire [...] All States shall observe faithfully and strictly the provisions of the Charter of the United Nations, the Universal Declaration of Human Rights and the present Declaration [...]".

Like Spain, the previous colonial power, for the last 35 years the Kingdom of Morocco has been systematically ignoring this and other resolutions. The *Makhzen* continues to ignore any ceasefire agreement and successfully inhibit the referendum that the United Nation's Mission for the Referendum in Western Sahara (MINURSO) was supposed to implement since its creation in 1991. Yet, in spite of this

non-compliance policy, Morocco was never subjected to any major political consequences. Certainly, this would not be possible without the regime's reliance on its rather powerful allies. From the very beginning of its expansionist practices, Morocco could always rely on the support of France, as the political and economical bonds between the latter and its former "protectorate" are still strong. Against this background it is hardly surprising that since the creation of MINURSO, France has repeatedly diluted resolutions on a UN referendum for the Western Sahara and is constantly blocking all efforts to sanction the Moroccan regime for its obstructionist practices.

Together with UNWRA in Palestine and UNFICYP in Cyprus, the UN Mission for Western Sahara is the oldest UN mission. To date, the mission has not accomplished its objective of executing the referendum, a goal for which it was exclusively founded according to UN resolution 1514 and UN Security Council resolution 690 of April 19th 1991. This is mainly due to the existence of a "coalition of the willing", composed of the four permanent members of the UN Security Council, France, the United Kingdom, the United States, the Russian Federation, and Spain, which has hitherto successfully ensured that no resolution ever passed through the Security Council which could contradict its multifaceted interests. Supported precisely by this "coalition of the willing", in 2007 Morocco was successful in planting the idea of an "autonomy solution" within the Security Council. It was mainly thanks to the efforts of the then Permanent Representative of South Africa to the UN Dumisani Kumalo that the right to self-determination did not disappear completely from the Security Council's Resolution (S/RES/1754, 2007), as he relentlessly pointed to the distinction between autonomy and self-determination.

But what about the European Union (EU)? It can be argued that the EU has the means to de-escalate the conflict by complying with, and enforcing

its self-declared principles such as democratic rule, and the respect for human rights, the rule of law, and good governance. Such an approach would not only contribute positively to intra-Maghreb integration, but would be an important step towards stabilizing Morocco both culturally and economically. The Moroccan regime would finally be encouraged and enabled to reduce its extraordinarily high military budget and use the freed resources for the initiation of a sustainable development which could even serve as a model for all other Maghreb states.

Instead, the EU continues to blindly follow the outdated colonial and imperialist guidelines set by France and distances itself from its potential to successfully mediate between these regional actors. By supporting the Moroccan regime for years, the EU has already become a party to the conflict and is thus seriously undermining the UN's efforts to establish a sustainable and lasting peace in the Maghreb.

The Spanish enclave Melilla and international migration

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Growing tensions between Spain and Morocco in August 2010 are proof that the political affiliation of Melilla, the Spanish enclave situated on the northern coast of Morocco, remains a controversial issue. While Morocco regards enclaves such as Melilla, Ceuta and other Mediterranean isles as occupied territories and remnants of its colonial past, the Spanish sovereignty and character of the



autonomous city of Melilla are beyond dispute to the Spanish government.

A six to eight meter high fence surrounds Melilla, a city of 70.000 officially registered residents. 90% of these residents are Spanish citizens, half of Iberian origin and the other of Moroccan descent. Melilla has been a part of Spain since the Spanish military occupied northern Morocco in 1497. Furthermore, Melilla has in the meantime become part of the European Union and represents one of the most important European border posts for the prevention of irregular migration.

In a place such as Melilla, contradictions in European migration policies become particularly evident. On the one hand, there is an economic necessity for a renewed labor force, as shown by the demand for service workers and low skilled workers in order to counteract the impact of demographic change. On the other, increasingly restrictive legislation hinders legal immigration. This paradox endangers the lives and health of migrants and refugees, as the number of dying or injured refugees arriving at European border posts or in the Mediterranean shows.

In Melilla, migration is either pendulum migration or transit migration. Pendulum migration by Moroccan citizens from the neighbor region Nador is in part regulated by a frontier workers' convention and results in a 50% population increase during the day. Within this framework, a number of Moroccan citizens migrate mostly undocumented to Melilla (overstayers). As these persons are not officially registered, the actual number of people living in Melilla remains unknown. The dynamics of both forms of migration are influenced in particular by cross-border family ties and historical interconnections.

Moreover, since the beginning of 1990, Melilla has increasingly become a transit destination for migrants and refugees from other Maghrebi, sub-Saharan and Asian countries. These migrants and refugees gained public notoriety in Europe during the

summer 2005, when they attempted to climb over the Melilla fence in groups. Based on a recently published study by this author, the following aspects can be considered common factors that this group of people have in common: firstly, for these migrants and refugees, Melilla is not the final destination but merely serves as a transit destination; secondly, they can find basic minimum accommodation facilities, food and medical care in the "Centros de Estancia Temporal de Inmigrantes" CETI; thirdly, their social background can be described as upper lower class and lower middle class.

The journeys undertaken and decisions made by these migrants and refugees vary greatly. Many of them travel for years before arriving in Melilla. The various stops on their migration route are marked by insecurity, uncertainty, provisional arrangements and the lack of social networks. In addition to severe psychological stress, these factors can result in the casualization of the entire living situation. In most cases these people hide in the mountains around Melilla for months, but nowadays are more frequently detected by the Moroccan military and deported to the desert or the Algerian border. Consequently, the growing military presence of Moroccan security forces prevents native citizens from helping and supplying migrants and refugees living in clandestine camps in the mountains with food and vital goods. Within the context of EU action against irregular immigration – exemplified by its financial support of the military operations described above – possibilities of irregular immigration have become increasingly limited. However, three major forms of entry remain: the first option is to climb over the high-tech border fence that is part of the Integrated System of Border Surveillance (SIVE); the second option continues to be to resort to the practice of smuggling and using opportunities for illegal entry, particularly via the regular border post Beni Enzar, or to pseudo-legal entry based on the use of forged documents. Lastly, the third alternative is to swim through the

Mediterranean or to attempt entering by boat.

Only a fraction of migrants and refugees actually arrive in Europe, as they encounter obstacles during entry, are deported long before they reach European borders, or simply endure long drawn-out migration routes across different countries. Those that arrive in Melilla describe their living situation as very ambivalent. They criticize conditions in the camp (CETI), and point to the cramped provisional accommodation facilities, resulting in conflicts between the residents, blatantly unhygienic conditions, restricted freedom of movement, and a complete lack of privacy. In addition, they are segregated from the majority living in Melilla because they are forbidden to work, and the camp is remotely situated, thus hindering the creation of social and supportive networks. Migrants and refugees live in this camp for years while their status of residence remains unclear. Living continuously in transit prevents them from leading lives that aim at consistency and continuity.

Human rights obligations alone, which are made openly violated in places such as Melilla, may only be enforced if changes are in European migration policies. Here, global as well as economic power relations become evident and the resulting consequences are unacceptable from an ethical standpoint.

Acceptable migration policies must create the possibility of immigrating legally, based on an approach that does not just link immigration to the economic usability and macro-economic added value of migrants. It has to focus on the human element instead of focusing on the labor market, economic policies or foreign and security policy-related considerations. Undoubtedly, such a paradigm shift in migration politics requires a critical reappraisal of the colonial past and its consequences on the present.

New female voices within the Islamist movement in Morocco

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Women's rights and possibilities in Morocco were considerably improved in recent years. These changes are usually attributed to the combined efforts of the state and a long-time and consistent push of the liberal women's organizations, which are among the strongest and most professional throughout the Arab world.

The efforts of the liberal women's movement often clash with the Moroccan Islamist movement, most often referred to as a conservative and patriarchal force in society. Yet, the moderate current of the Moroccan Islamist movement is currently seeing a dynamic women's activism which rarely reaches international headlines, but which nevertheless has important potentials that permeate both the Islamist movement and Moroccan society more generally.

The liberal women's organizations are perceived by large parts of the population as representing a foreign 'feminist' approach which threatens local culture, values and, not least, religion. In contrast, the women's activists related to the Islamist movement enjoy a broader local presence and are part of a religiously embedded discourse which appeals to other and broader segments of the Moroccan public. Accordingly, this 'Islamist women's activism' may, potentially, impact significantly by reaching out to new and wider audiences. It also has the potential to challenge prevailing patriarchal and conservative stances in new ways and thereby contribute to an improvement of the situation and possibilities of Moroccan women in society.

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But what does this new Islamist women's activism really change? Given that it is based on a religious (Islamic) and not a liberal/secular framework, what are the problems it addresses – and the solutions it offers? Is this new women's activism simply a new way of religiously sanctioning female submission or does it profoundly challenge existing gender roles and provide new egalitarian visions and solutions?

In order to answer these questions, it is necessary to provide a brief overview of the new women's voice and activism within the moderate Islamist movement.

While this movement is quite heterogeneous and includes a broad spectrum of organizations and individuals, it is dominated by two currents. The first of these is related to the *Harakat al-Islâh wa-at-Tawhid* or Movement of Reform and Unity (MUR) and the *Hizb al-Adala wa-al-Tanmia* or Party for Justice and Development (PJD). The second is related to the *Jama'at al-Adl wal-Ihsan* or the Justice and Spirituality Association.

The most well known Islamist organization in Morocco is the MUR and its related political party, the PJD. Since the late 1990s, the PJD has been accepted into the formal political game in exchange for its recognition of the vast political (and religious) prerogatives of the Moroccan monarchy, including the status of the king as *emir al mouminin* or 'Commander of the Faithful'. Whereas the MUR/PJD are 'soft-liners' as regards their oppositional role and views of the monarchy, they are generally conservative 'hard-liners' with respect

to controversial socio-cultural issues such as alcohol, prostitution or homosexuality.

This conservatism is also reflected in the physical appearance of the different women's activists adhering to the MUR/PJD family, most of whom are veiled and wear Moroccan djellabas of discrete color and design. But does this conservative appearance mean that the women's activists affiliated to the movement are conveyors of conservative ideas?

The basic tenet guiding the women's activists related to the MUR/PJD is that Islam has in fact provided women with rights. Hence, in order to help and support women, one should not neither 'abandon Islam' nor invent rights. Rather, according to them, the challenge remains to know, respect and implement the rights already given to women by Islam. In their view, it is also necessary to push interpretations and practices as far as possible within a correct Islamic interpretation and in order to ensure this, they collaborate closely with local *ulama*. Another fundamental principle is that there is a complementarity between men and women and between rights and obligations. Women have the right to be provided for by their fathers or husbands, but they are also obliged to take care of their families and to contribute to their society.

Furthermore, women's activists related to the MUR/PJD state that they focus on the 'real' problems, which Moroccan women suffer from. They do this while explicitly distancing their approach from the supposedly 'fake' problems, which the secular/liberal women's organizations focus on. For example, during the heated debates of the *Moudawana*, activists belonging to the *Mounadamat Tajdid al-Wa'i al-Nisa'i* (Organization for the Renewal of Women's Awareness, ORWA) dismissed liberal calls for the abolition of polygamy by referring to its infrequent practice in current Moroccan society. Today, they similarly distance themselves from calls by liberal actors to reconsider aspects of the inheritance laws by evoking the argument that the liberal currents deal with marginal problems instead of dealing with 'real' problems, such as the problem that many Moroccan women do not receive the inheritance that they are entitled to according to the already existing Sharia-based inheritance laws. These activists are also highly concerned about the necessity of seeing and addressing women's problems

in their full context. In fact, they seem uncomfortable with focusing too specifically on women and prefer to deal with more general/comprehensive frames of understanding, be they the family or society at large. As regards the latter, they argue for example that marital problems are often a result of more general societal problems, such as poverty, drug abuse or unemployment. Against this backdrop it is unsurprising that in case of marital problems, they follow an approach which strives towards reconciliation, rather than focusing uniquely on the rights of the individual woman, as preservation of the marriage and the family remains a strong value and aspiration.

The most important women's association affiliated to the movement is the ORWA, which was established in 1992 by members of the MUR. The ORWA is a national organization and has its headquarters in Casablanca.

It remains a formally independent women's organization, although its long-time president Bassima Hakkaoui is also member of the consultative council of the MUR. Furthermore, Hakkaoui is a member of Parliament for the PJD and leads the Party's committee on women and the family.

The ORWA became publicly known when it played an important role during the recent debate on the Moroccan Personal Status Code, the so-called *Moudawana*. During the reform process, ORWA activists gained international attention by their staunch opposition against a large catalogue of 'women's rights' proposed by the then socialist

government. They opposed these rights because they judged them to be in contradiction with Islam and with Moroccan tradition. However, they gave their support to a reform proposed subsequently by the Moroccan king and 'Commander of the Faithful'. This reform also substantially improved the status of women within the family but in contrast to the proposal of the socialists, it was based only on Islamic references.

Whereas the ORWA is formally independent of both the MUR and the PJD, 35 smaller, local women's organizations spread out over the country form part of the so-called Az-Zahra network which is affiliated with the MUR. While for a long time it was presided by PJD-parliamentarian Soumeiya Benkhaldoun, the Az-Zahra network is currently headed by Bouteina Karouri. The range of membership and type of activities vary considerably between each of the local organizations, but they are generally focused on social

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work (literacy, professional training etc). Furthermore, ORWA organizes annual campaigns on ethical and moral issues, such as veiling, fighting drugs and pre-marital sex, etc.

Finally, within the PJD, women play a very visible role. The party has one of the highest percentages of female parliamentarians among all Moroccan parties, as six out of the party's current 46 MPs are women. This visibility does not necessarily reflect that women play an important role within the party itself, however. Only two women are members of the party's general secretariat and none of the six female MPs have been elected on regular terms, as they have all been elected through the 'national list', the latter of which was initiated by the Moroccan regime to ensure a minimum female parliamentary representation of 10%.

Yet, at any rate, the female PJD parliamentarians play an important *symbolic* role. They demonstrate that it is, in fact, possible for Moroccan women to reconcile motherhood (they are all married and mothers), faith (they are all veiled and practicing Muslims) and active participation in society and politics. As such, they are important new role models.

Al Adl wal Ihsan (Justice and Spirituality) is the other main Islamist organization in Morocco. It is a 'home-grown', Sufi-inspired Moroccan organization established and guided by its founder, Sheikh Abdessalam Yassine. Justice and Spirituality does not recognize the political prerogatives or the religious status of the monarchy and is therefore not accepted by the Moroccan authorities. Accordingly, it is very difficult to obtain precise information of the number of adherents and the geographical extent of the section as well as of the organization in general. It is generally acknowledged, however, that Justice and Spirituality is the biggest Islamist organization in Morocco and that it has the broadest local network and outreach.

The women's activists affiliated to Justice and Spirituality challenge common stereotypes of Islamist women. For one thing, they do so by their physical appearance. While most of them are veiled and wear modest/covering clothes, these are often very bright and colorful. More substantially, they challenge stereotypes by their clear presence and leadership role in the association. Besides their presence

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in the women's sections of the association and of the political circle, women on average constitute one third of leading figures within all the various sub-organizations of the association, including its decision-making bodies and its committee of *ulama*. This representation is the result of direct internal elections and not based on quota for women. The prominent position of women on all levels of the movement is a result of the thinking of Abdessalam Yassine, who in his multiple writings insists on the liberating nature of the Quranic message, the latter of which speaks of providing women and slaves with rights. His daughter Nadia founded the women's section and was one of the official spokespersons for several years. A perfectly francophone intellectual, she has for years been both the most internationally well-known figure of the movement

and a constant source of frustration for the Moroccan monarchy. In 2005 she caused anger by stating publicly her preference for a Moroccan republic. For the regime, as for many regular Moroccans, she remains contradictory and challenging – a veiled and devoted Islamist – but also a francophone intellectual and a declared republican with a strong women's voice.

With regard to the predominant worldviews of the women's activists related to Justice and Spirituality, the main tenet is rather similar to the tenets that characterize women that are affiliated to the MUR/PJD, namely that Islam empowered women, as it provides them with rights. However, in the view of women's activists associated with Justice and Spirituality, these rights were forgotten very early during what they call the '*Umayyad coup d'Etat*'. After the period of the four rightly guided caliphs, the politically and socially liberating message of Islam became subjected to political despotism and to misogynist interpretations. In their view, much of the following Islamic jurisprudence was made by men who were influenced by the political contexts of their time as well as by their own gender. As a consequence, interpretations that do not respect the rights given to women by Islam were generated and perpetuated.

Justice and Spirituality women's activists accordingly find themselves confronted with an enormous re-interpretative task: They need to go back to the sources, essentially the



Quran, the sound *hadith* and the *Sunna* of the prophet, in order to bring to light the rights given to women (and men) by Islam. In order to ensure women-friendly interpretations, the women's section of Justice and Spirituality is currently encouraging the formal education of 50 female Islamic scholars or *alimat*. However, these reinterpreted efforts not only concern gender roles and women's rights, but are an integral part of the overall political and oppositional aspirations of Justice and Spirituality, the latter of which does not recognize the concentration of religious, political and economic powers that are currently concentrated in the hands of the Royal Palace.

Besides the intellectual or re-interpretive efforts, the women's section also engages in a wide number of associational activities. The main areas of engagement as regards the promotion of women's education are similar to those of the women's activists of the MUR/PJD family.

The women's section supports a wide network of local women's associations involved in social work. They provide reading and learning skills to the many illiterate Moroccan women, notably among the elderly generations. In addition, activists teach basic crafts to women (such as sowing, baking, craft work etc.) in order to help the latter gain financial independence and to facilitate their participation in society. Through partnership with schools, orphanages and prisons, the section also operates with a view to support and guide young women. Finally, the section undertakes efforts to educate family members (both male and female) as regards the importance of mutual respect within the family. Yet, whereas the MUR and PJD are officially recognized socio-political actors, the women's activists affiliated to Justice and Spirituality are forced to work informally because the association is not recognized by the regime.

Further above, the question was raised what precisely is the impact of the new Islamist women's activism in Morocco. Is it simply a new way of religiously sanctioning female

submission or does it profoundly challenge existing gender roles and offer new egalitarian visions?

Undoubtedly, the answer to this question is far from being simple. First, the moderate Islamist movement in Morocco is heterogeneous and includes a broad spectrum of organizations and individuals, all of which wish to see Islam play a role in social and political life. This desire does however rest on different references and relates to rather highly different social, religious and political aspirations. Accordingly, the women's activism of these different Islamist organizations and actors varies considerably. For

instance, the re-interpretive work of women affiliated to Justice and Spirituality seems to be far more ambitious and challenging to traditional patterns of authority and interpretation than the work of women's activists affiliated to the MUR and PJD. In contrast, women's activists of the MUR/PJD have better chances to act as publicly visible role models in parliament and beyond given the official recognition of their movement.

Secondly, it is difficult to comprehend fully and thus categorize the significance of these different actors with respect to women's rights and empowerment more generally, as these aspirations fall in between, or may be rather beyond the liberal/secular vs. Islamist divide. On one hand, it is obvious that Islamist women's activists work within clear limits – for instance, clear verses of the Quran on issues such as polygamy or heritage are not to be contradicted. On the other hand, this new Islamist women's voice certainly has a highly significant potential because it has a broader local outreach and is more acceptable to broad segments of

the population than the liberal women's organizations and their secular/rights-based arguments. In a context marked by clear post-colonial animosity against the imposition of 'Western' models and ways, this 'home-grown' women's voice may well represent an important complement to the efforts of both the state and the secular/liberal women's organizations in Morocco in years to come.

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Timeline of Events

Algeria

3-4 October 2010 (Algiers):

The head of the British Diplomatic Service, Simon Fraser, met Deputy Minister for Maghreb and African Affairs Abdelkader Messahel on his first overseas trip. Bilateral relations were discussed.

5 October 2010 (Algiers):

Sudan's Defense Minister Abdel Rahim Hussein met with President Abdelaziz Bouteflika to discuss the referendum on the self-determination of southern Sudan.

6 October 2010 (Algiers):

President Abdelaziz Bouteflika met his Russian counterpart Dmitry Medvedev to discuss bilateral cooperation in the gas industry and in the military. Medvedev meant to convince Algeria to approve the sale of its biggest mobile telephone operator and BP's Algerian assets to Russian companies. Six deals were signed, including cooperation in the energy and transportation sector.

9-10 October 2010 (Sirte):

While addressing the Arab-African Summit, President Abdelaziz Bouteflika emphasized the importance of speeding up regional integration with a view to foster development.

12 October 2010 (Algiers):

The Emir of Kuwait, Sabah Al-Ahmad Al-Jaber Al-Sabah, met with President Abdelaziz Bouteflika to discuss bilateral relations. Seven cooperation agreements were signed in areas such as justice and commerce.

13 October 2010 (Algiers):

The speaker of the UAE Federal National Council, Abdul Aziz Al Ghurair, met with Abdelaziz Ziari, the Speaker of the Algerian National People's Assembly, with Prime Minister Ahmed Ouyahia, and with President Abdelaziz Bouteflika. The latter highlighted the UAE's peaceful initiative to resolve the issue of

the three islands of Abu Moussa and Greater and Lesser Tunbs occupied by Iran.

18-21 October 2010 (Algiers):

The UN Secretary General's Personal Envoy to the Western Sahara, Christopher Ross, met the Minister in charge of Maghreb and African Affairs, Abdelkader Messahel. Ross announced that a new round of talks between Morocco and Polisario on the future of the Western Sahara will be held in early November under the auspices of the UN. He also visited the Tindouf refugee camp in southwest Algeria and met President Abdelaziz Bouteflika. Ross said that the status quo in the disputed territory was "untenable".

18 October 2010 (Algiers):

After meeting French Justice Minister Michèle Alliot-Marie, President Abdelaziz Bouteflika said that Algerian-French relations "are fine".

18 October 2010 (Algiers):

Foreign Minister Mourad Medelci met with the director of the United Nations Industrial Development Organization (UNIDO), Kandeh Kolleh Yumkella, who visited the country for the first time.

20 October 2010 (Algiers):

The President of Benin, Boni Yayi Thomas, met with the Chairman of the National Council, Abdelkader Bensalah, and with Foreign Minister Mourad Medelci.

20-21 October 2010 (Khartoum):

The Minister Delegate for Maghreb and African Affairs, Abdelkader Messahel, co-chaired the third session of the Algerian-Sudanese Joint Committee with Sudanese Foreign Minister Ali Ahmed Karti. Messahel also met with Sudan's Vice-President Ali Osman Taha.

21 October 2010 (Algiers):

Prime Minister Ahmed Ouyahia stated that Algeria is determined to eradicate terrorism, but still extends a hand to Islamic extremists who renounce violence. Foreign Minister Mourad Medelci said that security in the Sahel was the sole responsibility of each country concerned.

24 October 2010 (Algiers):

Foreign Minister Mourad Medelci stated that Algeria regrets the "serious obstacles" facing the process of decolonization of Western Sahara.

24 October 2010 (Algiers):

The head of National Security (DGSN), General Abdelghani El Hamel, initiated major changes in his services, which affect three-quarters of the heads of security. The policy was adopted after President Abdelaziz Bouteflika gave his consent and it was implemented less than four months after El Hamel's appointment.

26 October 2010 (Berlin):

Transparency International's 2010 Corruption Perceptions Index ranks Algeria in 105th position out of 178 countries.

26 October 2010 (Algiers):

Foreign Minister Mourad Medelci met with Argentina's Deputy Foreign Minister Alberto Pedro D'Alloto, who stated that Argentina supports the UN's efforts in the Western Sahara.

3 November 2010 (Algiers):

President Abdelaziz Bouteflika met with the Managing Director of the International Monetary Fund, Dominique Strauss-Kahn. Foreign Minister Mourad Medelci and the Governor of the Central Bank of Algeria, Mohamed Laksaci, also attended the meeting.

3 November 2010 (Algiers):

Foreign Minister Mourad Medelci announced Algeria's diplomacy roadmap for 2011. It focuses on five topics: international peace and security, the fight against terrorism, mainly enhancing resolution 1904 of the UN Security Council, the Western Sahara issue, and the situation in the Middle East and Palestine.

9 November 2010 (Lisbon/Oeiras):

Prime Minister Ahmed Ouyahia and Portuguese Prime Minister José Socrates met for the 3rd Luso-Algerian Summit. Ouyahia also met Portuguese President Aníbal Cavaco Silva.



In a joint statement, both parties praised the noteworthy Portuguese-Algerian economic and financial cooperation and expressed their desire to strengthen the bilateral partnership, particularly concerning public works, transport, and information and communication technologies.

10 November 2010 (Algiers):

Algerian and US military officials held their 4th bilateral dialogue that ended with a multi-year accord to train personnel, to conduct joint exercises and to share counter-terrorism technology.

12 November 2010 (Algiers):

Foreign Minister Mourad Medelci and Minister Delegate to the Foreign Ministry in Charge of Maghreb and African Affairs, Abdelkader Messahel, met with Alistair Burt, the British Foreign Office Minister for the Middle East and North Africa. At the end of the meeting, it was announced that a Bilateral Committee for anti-terrorism cooperation would be created, meant to develop intelligence sharing and training. Burt urged Algeria to use its influence to persuade the Iranian government to resume the long-stalled nuclear talks.

16 November 2010 (Algiers):

Speaking with Algerian Prime Minister Ahmed Ouyahia, Iran's First Vice-President Mohammad Reza Rahimi said that Iran and Algeria could further boost bilateral relations, particularly in the field of oil and natural gas.

17 November 2010 (Algiers):

The first meeting of the Algerian-Italian Cooperation Group Against Terrorism was held, aiming to strengthen political, judicial, diplomatic, financial and operational partnerships. The meeting took place in the context of a bilateral counter-terrorism agreement that was signed in July.

18 November 2010 (Algiers):

In a message to Mohamed VI on the occasion of the 55th anniversary of the kingdom's independence, President Abdelaziz Bouteflika expressed his desire to strengthen relations between his country and Morocco.

22-23 November 2010 (Tehran):

Prime Minister Ahmed Ouyahia visited Iran at the invitation of Iran's First Vice-President Mohammad Reza Rahimi to discuss cooperation

between the two countries. Both co-chaired the first session of the Joint Committee of Algerian-Iranian cooperation and Ouyahia also met Iranian President Mahmoud Ahmadinejad. A total of 11 Memorandums of Understanding were signed.

Libya

2 October 2010 (Tripoli):

Chevron Corp and Occidental have not extended their five-year oil and gas licenses in Libya. The two companies were part of a first wave of foreign firms which entered Libya's energy sector after sanctions were lifted.

2 October 2010 (Tripoli):

Libya released two South Korean men arrested for allegedly violating religious laws, ending a diplomatic row with Seoul.

3 October 2010 (Sirte):

Muammar Gaddafi received Prime Minister of São Tomé and Príncipe Patrice Trovoada.

4 October 2010 (Tripoli):

The European Union's home affairs commissioner Cecilia Malmstroem and enlargement commissioner Stefan Fuele met with Libyan Interior Minister Abdelfattah al-Obeidi and Foreign Minister Moussa Koussa to discuss clandestine migration to Europe.

4 October 2010 (Tripoli):

Libya provided Mali with two reconnaissance planes to combat insurgents supported by al-Qaeda in the Islamic Maghreb (AQIM).

5 October 2010 (Brussels):

The European Commission offered Libya approx. €50 million in aid to stop the flow of illegal migrants to Europe and to protect refugees. The amount is below Libya's request, which amounted to €5 billion.

9-10 October 2010 (Sirte):

The second Arab-African summit took place. Muammar Gaddafi held bilateral talks with Sudan's President Omar el Bashir, among others. Gaddafi stated that Sudan's secession would be a dangerous precedent and he emphasized the need to hold the summit every

three years. Palestinian President Mahmoud Abbas took the opportunity to seek Arab support for possible fallback options in the event peace talks with Israel collapse. Arab League leaders voiced their support for Sudan, but did not mention the Middle East peace process.

12 October 2010 (Tripoli):

Muammar Gaddafi met with the adviser of the Belarus president in charge of national security, Victor Loukatchenko, to discuss bilateral ties.

12-13 October 2010 (Tripoli):

US Assistant Secretary of State for Political-Military Affairs, Andrew J. Shapiro, met with Libyan officials to discuss regional security developments and humanitarian issues.

14 October 2010 (Tripoli):

Libya concluded a deal worth US\$28 million with Transas Marine company for a radar system capable of monitoring its coastline, illegal migrants, and outbreaks of pollution.

19 October 2010 (Tripoli):

The Secretary of the Libyan general people's committee for Industry, Economy and Trade, Mohamed Hawejj, and the Chadian Trade and Industry minister, Youssouf Abassalah, agreed to increase bilateral trade and create a joint chamber of commerce and a businessmen's council.

21 October 2010 (Tripoli):

French Industry Minister Christian Estrosi met Prime Minister Al-Baghdadi Ali al-Mahmoudi. The parties signed several agreements on trade, and Estrosi expressed the French government's desire to expand cooperation with Libya in areas including nuclear energy. A Declaration of Intent was signed, aiming at the establishment of a "strategic partnership".

21 October 2010 (Tripoli):

Foreign Minister Moussa Koussa met Singapore's Foreign Minister Zainul Abidin Rasheed. Both agreed that their countries can become gateways to their respective regions.

22-23 October 2010 (Tripoli):

Venezuelan President Hugo Chavez visited Libya and met with Muammar Gaddafi. The two countries signed agreements in several fields



including joint investments, commerce, air and sea transports, energy, education and culture.

24 October 2010 (Tripoli):

The Speaker of the Lower House of Serbia, Slavica Djukic-Dejanovic, met with Abdel Kadar, General Coordinator of the Revolutionary Committee's Liaison Office.

24 October 2010 (Tripoli):

Libya hosted the third conference of the Chinese-Arab friendship association, entitled "towards promising horizons of Chinese-Arab friendship".

25 October 2010 (Tripoli):

The Gaddafi International Charity and Development Foundation announced projects worth eight million dollars destined to help Darfur refugees to return to their homes.

26 October 2010 (Berlin):

Transparency International's 2010 Corruption Perceptions Index ranks Libya in 146th position out of 178 countries.

27 October 2010 (Tripoli):

The Syrian Minister of Petroleum and Mineral Resources, Sufian Allao, met with the Chairman of Libya's National Oil Corporation (NOC), Shukri M. Ghanem. Both expressed their desire to establish joint investment projects in the oil and gas sectors.

2 November 2010 (Tripoli):

Shukri M. Ghanem, chairman of Libya's National Oil Corporation, declared that oil producers would be increasingly comfortable with crude prices of US\$100 per barrel in view of higher food prices and a weaker US dollar.

2 November 2010 (Tripoli):

Prime Minister Al Baghdadi Ali Al Mahmoudi and Minister of Defense and Chief of Staff of the Libyan Military Major-General Abu-Bakr Younis Jaber met with Serbia's Minister of Defense Dragan Sutanovac. The main topic of discussion was military and economic cooperation, as well as opportunities for improvement and development.

3 November 2010 (Tripoli):

According to local media, Prime Minister Al Baghdadi Ali Al Mahmoudi declared that foreign investors will only be allowed to operate

in Libya if they form a joint venture with a local partner.

4 November 2010 (Tripoli):

The Libyan government suspended Oea newspaper, owned by Muammar Gaddafi's reformist son Saif al-Islam. Oea had already been suspended in January this year. Moreover, 20 journalists from the Libya Press news agency, also part of Saif al-Islam's Al-Ghad media group, were arrested.

8 November 2010 (Tripoli):

Libya ordered a diplomat based at the United States embassy in Tripoli to leave the country within 24 hours due to breaching diplomatic rules.

8 November 2010 (Tripoli):

The 20 arrested journalists from Libya Press News were released. According to a Libyan government press statement, Muammar Gaddafi "gave instructions for the release of the Libya Press journalists and asked that an inquiry be opened into the matter".

11 November 2010 (Tripoli):

Oea newspaper reappeared with a new editor and a pledge of loyalty to Muammar Gaddafi. This was widely seen as a concession to conservatives in the ruling elite.

11 November 2010 (Tripoli):

In his capacity as chairman of the League of Arab States and the Maghreb Arab Union, Muammar Gaddafi mediated a diplomatic action to stop the clashes between Moroccan security forces and the Western Sahara demonstrators in Laayoune.

12 November 2010 (Tripoli):

The European Union expressed its objections to Libya over the possible attendance of the Sudanese president Omer Hassan Al-Bashir at the 3rd Africa-EU Summit, to take place on November 29th.

19 November 2010 (Tripoli):

Three human rights groups (Alkarama, Trial and Human Rights Watch) stated that torture was used in Libya and impunity was granted to perpetrators, citing for instance the case of an engineer who died shortly after his detention.

19 November 2010 (Gaborone):

During the African Union summit, Muammar Gaddafi argued in favour of the creation of the United States of Africa.

23 November 2010 (Tripoli):

Prime Minister Al Baghdadi Ali Al Mahmoudi and the Prime Minister of Ukraine Mykola Azarov co-chaired the 5th joint committee of Libya and the Ukraine.

29-30 November 2010 (Tripoli):

The 3rd Africa-Europe summit brought together close to 80 leaders, heads of state and governments from member countries of the African Union and the European Union, to discuss the adoption of the Second Action Plan [2011-2013] of the common Africa-EU strategy. Muammar Gaddafi warned the European Union that Africa would turn to other trade partners if the EU continues to impose terms for cooperation. Turkish Prime Minister Recep Tayyip Erdogan attended as honorary guest and received the Human Rights Award. The award was presented to him by the Gaddafi Human Rights Award International Committee.

Mauritania

13 October 2010 (Algiers):

The Emir of Kuwait, Sabah Al-Ahmad Al-Jaber Al-Sabah, met with President Mohamed Ould Abdel Aziz to discuss bilateral relations.

21 October 2010 (Nouakchott):

The Special Representative of the UN Secretary-General for the Western Sahara Christopher Ross met with President Mohamed Ould Abdel Aziz. Both stressed the need to overcome the present status quo in Western Sahara by encouraging negotiations without preconditions between the various parties.

24 October 2010 (Nouakchott):

During the opening session of a forum meant to devise a national counter-terrorism strategy, President Mohamed Ould Abdel Aziz expressed his determination to fight Al Qaeda in Islamic Maghreb (AQIM) and thanked his Malian counterpart Amadou Toumani Toure for crucial support in this regard.

**24 October 2010 (Montreux):**

Mauritania was represented at the 13th Francophone Summit by Minister Delegate to the Prime Minister for African Affairs Coumba Ba.

26 October 2010 (Berlin):

Transparency International's 2010 Corruption Perceptions Index ranks Mauritania in 143rd place out of 178 countries.

21 November 2010 (Nouakchott):

Prime Minister Moulaye Ould Mohamed Laghdaf laid the first stone of a US\$120 million complex for the fishing industry, financed by China. China's ambassador to Mauritania, Zhang Xun declared that Beijing has "worked to encourage Chinese businessmen to work in Mauritania in accordance with the country's new fishing policy".

28 November 2010 (Nouakchott):

Mauritania celebrated half a century of independence from France.

30 November 2010 (Nouakchott):

Prime Minister Moulaye Ould Mohamed Laghdaf met with a European Union delegation to discuss the political dialogue between the ruling government and opposition parties.

Morocco

2-3 October 2010 (Lisbon):

On the occasion of the Ministerial Meeting on resources for least developed countries (LDCs), Secretary of State to the Foreign Ministry Mohamed Ouzzine declared that Morocco is committed to supporting LDC efforts through a reinforced and renovated South-South cooperation.

2 October 2010 (Rabat):

A Moroccan Arab-language weekly went bankrupt and was forced to close, according to its publisher, who blamed "the highest circles of power" for organizing a boycott of advertisers. The media watchdog Reporters without Borders (RSF) declared that the boycott was launched in August 2009 after the

newspaper conducted an opinion poll on the monarchy.

5 October 2010 (Rabat):

Foreign Minister Taib Fassi Fihri expressed Morocco's support for Mustapha Salma Ould Sidi Mouloud – a former Polisario Police Inspector-General arrested in Algeria on September 23rd, weeks after he announced his intention to defend the Moroccan proposal to grant autonomy to the Western Sahara.

6 October 2010 (Western Sahara):

The Western Sahara's Polisario Front declared that it would free Mustapha Salma Ould Sidi Mouloud. The decision to release Mouloud "comes in response to the request of international human rights organizations," according to a statement from the Polisario Front.

9-10 October 2010 (Sirte):

While addressing the Arab-African Summit, King Mohammed VI urged Arab and African nations to dedicate themselves to renewing their support, after more than three decades of hesitation and inaction.

16 October 2010 (Marrakesh):

King Mohamed VI met with UN Secretary General Ban Ki-moon on the occasion of the Third World Policy Conference. Foreign Minister Taib Fassi Fihri and Assistant Secretary-General Taye Brook Zerihoun also attended the meeting.

16 October 2010 (Marrakesh):

On the sidelines of the Third World Policy Conference, Spanish Foreign Minister Miguel Ángel Moratinos highlighted the importance of agricultural agreements between Morocco and the European Union.

17 October 2010 (Jerusalem):

Israeli President Shimon Peres cancelled his trip to Morocco after King Mohammed VI refused to meet him personally. The visit was scheduled in the context of the World Economic Forum. Mohamed VI argued that the timing was not appropriate.

22-25 October 2010 (Casablanca):

King Mohammed VI received the United Nations Secretary-General's Personal Envoy for the Western Sahara Christopher Ross. The meeting prepared the next round of talks to

be held in November. Ross also met Foreign Minister Taib Fassi Fihri.

24 October 2010 (Montreux):

Morocco was represented at the 13th Francophone Summit by Prime Minister Abbas El Fassi.

25 October 2010 (Rabat):

According to Human Rights Watch, Morocco routinely holds suspected militants in secret detention where they are at risk of being coerced into making false confessions. The Moroccan government rejected these allegations.

25 October 2010 (Rabat):

Foreign Minister Taib Fassi Fihri met with Burundi's Foreign Minister Augustin Nsanze, who declared that Burundi decided not to recognise the Sahrawi Arab Democratic Republic (SADR). Several agreements were signed in the domains of political, economic, technical, cultural and educational cooperation.

26 October 2010 (Berlin):

Transparency International's 2010 Corruption Perceptions Index ranks Morocco in 85th position out of 178 countries.

26-28 October 2010 (Marrakesh):

The World Economic Forum on the Middle East and North Africa concluded with participants underscoring the urgent need for action to secure the future prosperity of the region. Over 1,000 leaders from 62 countries with a background in business, government, civil society and media took part in this meeting that was held under the theme "Purpose, Resilience and Prosperity".

28 October 2010 (Rabat):

Secretary of State for Foreign Affairs and Cooperation Mohamed Ouzzine met with Russian Deputy Minister of Justice Vasily Likhachev. This visit was held on the occasion of the 40th anniversary of the Moroccan-Russian association friendship agreement.

28 October 2010 (Rabat):

Secretary of State of Foreign Affairs and Cooperation Mohamed Ouzzine met with Saad Al-Otaibi, the Assistant Director-General of the UN Food and Agricultural Organization (FAO) for the Middle East.

**28 October 2010 (Budapest):**

Secretary of State of Foreign Affairs and Cooperation Latifa Akharbach met with Hungarian Foreign Minister Janos Martonyi and other senior officials to discuss bilateral relations and Hungary's agenda for its Presidency of the European Council. Morocco's EU Advanced Status was also discussed.

29 October 2010 (Doha):

The news station Al Jazeera declared that it had been ordered to suspend its TV operations in Morocco. Al Jazeera was accused of damaging the country's image. The Moroccan Communications Ministry said that the Qatar-based channel violated journalistic standards for accuracy and objectivity.

3 November 2010 (Madrid):

Foreign Minister Taib Fassi Fihri met with his newly appointed Spanish counterpart Trinidad Jiménez. Fihri criticized the Spanish media for biased coverage of the recent incidents in Western Sahara. In a press conference, Fihri expressed his concern about drug trafficking in Morocco, adding that he is aware of the involvement of Latin American cartels. This was the first meeting between Fihri and Jiménez.

7 November 2010 (Rabat):

King Mohammed VI justified his country's position on the Western Sahara by accusing Algeria of "threatening the integrity of the Moroccan territories, by backing the Polisario Front".

8 November 2010 (Laayoune):

Moroccan forces tore down a tent camp in the Western Sahara where approx. 20.000 people were protesting against "discrimination and deprivation at the hands of the Moroccan government".

9 November 2010 (New York):

The third round of informal negotiations between Morocco and the Polisario Front ended with an agreement on the resumption of trust-building measures and an announcement of future discussions. Algerian, Mauritanian and United Nations representatives followed the negotiations. Morocco stated that some progress was made while Polisario declared that no significant achievements were reached.

10 November 2010 (Puerto Vallarta):

The Secretary of State for Foreign Affairs, Latifa Akharbach, led the Moroccan delegation to the Fourth Global Forum on Migration and Development (GFMD). Akharbach said that Morocco adopted a "comprehensive approach" on the migration issue that privileges the defense of migrants' rights and that consolidates international cooperation in this field.

10-13 November 2010 (Tangier):

The MEDays 2010 forum took place under the high patronage of King Mohammed VI. The forum's topic was "The South: Between crisis and emergency".

11 November 2010 (Rabat):

Prime Minister Abbas El Fassi met with Colombia's Vice-President Angelino Garzon, who described Algerian-Colombian relations as being excellent. Garzon also welcomed the resumption of informal meetings between Morocco and the Polisario Front, under the aegis of the United Nations.

11 November 2010 (Tangier):

Foreign Minister Taib Fassi Fihri and his Serbian counterpart Vuk Jeremic signed agreements in culture, science, education and sport.

14 November 2010 (Rabat):

The Secretary General of the ruling Istiqlal Party and Prime Minister Abbas El Fassi strongly condemned statements by Spanish Popular Party Leader Mariano Rajoy, saying that they are "surprising and false statements that undermine our territorial integrity". Rajoy criticized Morocco with respect to the events of November 8th in the Western Sahara.

14 November 2010 (Rabat):

The second ministerial meeting of the Conference of African States Bordering the Atlantic was held under the chairmanship of Foreign Minister Taib Fassi Fihri.

15 November 2010 (Rabat):

Foreign Minister Taib Fassi Fihri met with his Georgian counterpart Grigol Vashadze.

15-17 November 2010 (Rabat):

German Foreign Minister Guido Westerwelle met with Foreign Minister Taib Fassi Fihri. The visit focused on energy but also on the Western Sahara.

16 November 2010 (Rabat):

Morocco defended its security forces following a raid at a protest camp in the Western Sahara in which at least 12 people were killed. Interior Minister Taieb Cherkaoui declared that police intervention at the camp near the town of Laayoune was peaceful.

17 November 2010 (Brussels):

Foreign Minister Taib Fassi Fihri offered to appear before the European Parliament to explain the incidents in Laayoune and to address the situation of Western Sahara. This offer was made at a meeting with President of the Freedoms and Justice Commission of the Parliament, Juan Fernando Lopez Aguilar.

18 November 2010 (Brussels):

Foreign Minister Taib Fassi Fihri called on different groups of the European Parliament to consolidate the dynamic of negotiations on the Western Sahara issue.

21 November 2010 (Dakar):

Speaking at the opening ceremony of the preparatory meeting for the 14th Moroccan-Senegalese Joint Commission, the Foreign Ministry's Secretary of State Mohamed Ouzzine called for a "fruitful, innovative and mutually advantageous" relation with Senegal.

22 November 2010 (Rabat):

Foreign Minister Taib Fassi Fihri met with Managing Director of the World Bank Sri Mulyani Indrawati, who declared that the measures taken by Morocco to handle the global economic crisis enabled it to better manage its impact.

25 November 2010 (Brussels):

The European Parliament adopted a resolution in favor of a UN investigation into the violence that accompanied the dismantling by Moroccan forces of a camp of Sahrawi protesters in Laayoune.

27 November 2010 (Madrid):

In an interview to the Spanish daily *El País*, Foreign Minister Taib Fassi Fihri classified the resolution approved by the European Parliament as "hasty and bias", and rejected a UN investigation. Fihri rejected any accusation of torture and disappearances of Saharawis following the publication of testimonies in the Spanish newspapers. For Fihri, MINURSO has no jurisdiction over human rights.

**28 November 2010 (Rabat):**

Hundreds of thousands of Moroccans demonstrated against the Spanish Popular Party and its critique of the raid of Moroccan security forces on a protest camp in Western Sahara. Prime Minister Abbas el Fassi attended the protest.

29 November 2010 (Marrakesh):

On the sidelines of the 10th Moroccan Tourism Conference, King Mohammed VI met with Qatar's Minister of State for International Cooperation Khalid bin Mohammed Al-Attayah.

30 November 2010 (Casablanca):

Foreign Trade Minister Abdelatif Maazouz and Turkey's Foreign Trade Minister Zafer Çağlayan met on the occasion of the Turkish-Moroccan Business Forum.

Tunisia

4-5 October 2010 (Tunis):

The Head of the British Diplomatic Service Simon Fraser met senior members of the Tunisian government to discuss bilateral relations, commercial and investment opportunities in sectors such as energy, English language teaching, financial services, and tourism.

6 October 2010 (Tunis):

On the sidelines of the Fourth Islamic Conference of Environment Ministers, Foreign Minister Kamel Morjane met with Ekmeleddin Ihsanoglu, Secretary General of the Organization of Islamic Conference (OIC).

6 October 2010 (Washington):

Prime Minister Mohamed Ghannouchi attended a round-table meeting on the characteristics of the Tunisian development model at the World Bank's (WB) headquarters. Ghannouchi reiterated to World Bank President Robert B. Zoellick his appreciation of President Ben Ali and of the Tunisian Government for its firm commitment to development in the world and in Africa. Ghannouchi also met with the Managing Director of the International Monetary Fund Dominique Strauss-Kahn.

6 October 2010 (Tunis):

The European Commission's Technical Assistance and Information Exchange Program

(TAIEX) and Tunisia's Trade and Handicrafts Ministry organized a workshop on piracy and counterfeiting. The Secretary of State for Foreign Trade Chokri Mamoghli stressed Tunisia's will to boost cooperation with European and Mediterranean states in the fight against counterfeiting.

8 October 2010 (Tunis):

President Ben Ali met with Sheikh Hamad Ben Khalifa Al-Thani, the Emir of Qatar. The meeting focused on strengthening bilateral cooperation, investment in megaprojects, as well as the development of trade relations.

9-10 October 2010 (Sirte):

While addressing the Arab-African Summit, President Ben Ali highlighted the need to optimize consultation and coordination.

11-14 October 2010 (Tunis):

On the occasion of the assistance drill "Assistex 3", organized by the Organization for the Prohibition of Chemical Weapons (OPCW), Foreign Affairs Minister Kamel Morjane met with the Organization's Director General Ahmed Uzumucu.

12 October 2010 (Tunis):

President Ben Ali announced a partial cabinet reshuffle that led to changes in the Ministries of Agriculture and Water, Trade and Handicrafts, State Domains and Land Affairs and that affected a number of the Prime Minister's delegate Ministers.

12 October 2010 (Tunis):

The Emir of Kuwait, Sabah Al-Ahmad Al-Jaber Al-Sabah, met with President Ben Ali to discuss bilateral relations.

14 October 2010 (Tunis):

Foreign Minister Kamel Morjane met with French Minister of Immigration, Integration, National Identity and Solidarity-based Development Eric Besson. Both expressed their intention to implement the bilateral agreement on the joint management of migration and solidarity-based development.

18 October 2010 (Tunis):

Minister of Agriculture, Water Resources and Fisheries Abdessalem Mansour met with a European delegation led by the Ambassador and Head of the European Union (EU) Delegation in Tunis, Adrianus Koetsenruijter. Experts from

the World Bank, the African Development Bank (AfDB) and the French Development Agency took part in the event. The meeting focused on steps taken to implement the components of the 12th Development Plan (2010-2104) in the areas of water resources mobilization, saving of drinking and irrigation water.

19 October 2010 (Tunis):

Prime Minister Mohamed Ghannouchi received Congolese Minister of Town Planning and Housing Cesar Lubamba Ngimbi.

20-21 October 2010 (Tripoli):

The Interior and Local Development Minister Rafik Belhaj Kacem met with his Libyan counterpart Abelfattah Younès Al- Obeidi.

22 October 2010 (Tunis):

Prime Minister Mohamed Ghannouchi met with the Chairman of the Board of Directors of Qatar Telecom, Sheikh Abdullah bin Mohamed bin Saoud Al Thani, with the purpose of discussing future investments.

24 October 2010 (Montreux):

Tunisia was represented in the 13th Francophone Summit by Foreign Minister Kamel Morjane.

26 October 2010 (Berlin):

Transparency International's 2010 Corruption Perceptions Index ranks Tunisia in 59th place out of 178 countries. Tunisia has the lowest rate of corruption among Maghreb countries.

28 October 2010 (Tunis):

The Tunisian-Libyan Higher Joint Executive Committee was chaired by Prime Minister Mohamed Ghannouchi and Libyan Secretary of the General People's Committee Al-Baghdadi Ali Al-Mahmoudi.

28 October 2010 (Tunis):

President Ben Ali met with the Secretary-General of the Arab League, Amr Moussa. The situation in the Arab world was the focus of the meeting. Moussa also met with Foreign Minister Kamel Morjane.

1 November 2010 (Tunis):

Foreign Minister Kamel Morjane met with Stefania Craxi, Italian Secretary of State for Foreign Affairs. Strengthening bilateral relations, the future of Tunisia-EU relations, and regional and international issues of mutual interest were the focus of these talks.

**5 November 2010 (Tunis):**

Secretary of State in the Foreign Minister's office in charge of American and Asian Affairs, Saida Chtioui, received South Korean Foreign Affairs and Trade Minister Kim Jae-shin. The agenda focused on bilateral relations

8-9 November 2010 (Malta):

Secretary of State for Foreign Affairs Abdelhafidh Harguem led a delegation to the First Alliance of Civilizations for the Mediterranean's regional meeting. Harguem said that the Alliance should be a pragmatic response to the inter-cultural dialogue, specifically in the fields of common education, youth, immigration and media.

10 November 2010 (Tunis):

President Ben Ali met Miguel Angel Moratinos, Spain's former Foreign Minister and now Special Envoy of the the Spanish Prime Minister. Moratinos delivered a written message from Spain's Prime Minister José Luis Zapatero focusing on boosting cooperation and dialogue in the Mediterranean region.

11-13 November 2010 (Hammamet):

Prime Minister Mohamed Ghannouchi opened the fifth edition of "ICTs-4-All Forum Tunis+5". This event was attended by the Secretary-General of the International Telecommunications Union (ITU), Hamadoun Touré, by the Secretary-General of the United Nations Conference on Trade and Development (UNCTAD), Supachai Panitchpakdi, by the Chairman of the World Alliance of Information and Communication Technologies (UN-GAID), Talal Abou Ghazala, ministers, heads of delegation, senior officials from several countries, and representatives of regional and international organizations.

12 November 2010 (Tunis):

Prime Minister Mohamed Ghannouchi received Libya's Planning and Finance Minister Abdelhafidh Zlitni. Both reviewed the co-operation programs adopted during the six-monthly meeting of the Tunisian-Libyan High Executive Commission, held last October in Tunis.

15 November 2010 (Tunis):

Foreign Minister Kamel Morjane met with Equatorial Guinea's Secretary of State for African Affairs Victoria Nsue Okomo, who also met the Secretary of State in the Foreign Minister's Office in charge of Maghreb, Arab and African Affairs, Abdelhafidh Herguem.

22-26 November 2010 (Gabon):

Coordinator-General of Economic Cooperation with African Countries Sadok Fayala led a delegation to Gabon and met with Gabonese Cabinet members to examine bilateral cooperation.

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1st

EDP ranks top 1 worldwide in the Dow Jones Sustainability Indexes, in the electricity sector. It reflects our role in the economical, environmental and social dimensions.

For the third consecutive year, EDP is listed on the Dow Jones Sustainability Indexes, the most widely quoted stock market indicators to track the financial and sustainability performance of companies. This year we are the worldwide leader in our business sector, a recognition that rewards EDP's commitment to sustainable development. A company capable of creating wealth without ever losing sight of the social and environmental aspects. This is the way EDP performs, which reflects all our employees and stakeholders engagement for a better future.



Gestão Ambiental Corporativa de Políticas, Planos Estratégicos, Informação e Desempenho das Organizações do Grupo EDP.



feel our energy