

01 July 2015 – Tangier – Boukhalef : Eviction operation targeting black non-nationals

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01Press Release – Rabat, July 1st 2015 Tangier – Boukhalef :
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24 hours after the authorities issued an ultimatum to “sub-Saharan foreign nationals [who] have invaded and illegally occupied apartments belonging to others in the Boukhalef district’s Al Irfane neighbourhood, in Tangier,” law enforcement began to evict black non-nationals living in the neighbourhood. Numerous sub-Saharan nationals were forced to board buses headed to other Moroccan cities, such as Rabat and Taroudant. As of the morning of July 1st, two people were taken to the hospital : a person injured during the law enforcement operation, and another who died after falling out of the building. The circumstances of this death are highly similar to that of Moussa Seck in October 2013, as well as that of Cédric Bété in December of the same year. GADEM is concerned by the increasingly intolerant climate in Morocco, as well as by the hatred directed towards black non-nationals. It also expresses its concern over the illegal and discriminatory nature of these evictions :

By announcing and conducting an operation targeting exclusively black non-nationals, haven’t the authorities discriminated on the basis of national origin and/or skin colour ?

Moroccan authorities have themselves acknowledged that these evictions exclusively targeted black non-nationals : is illegally occupying an apartment something only black non-nationals stoop to ? Are they all assumed to be squatters ? Moroccan authorities seem to assume that all black residents of Boukhalef are squatting, while some are legal leaseholders or at least have informal agreements with their landlords. The latter practice remain common in Morocco.

GADEM has identified at least one family who was evicted even though they had a legal lease, due to a request by their neighbours.

GADEM also wishes to point out that evictions are normally subject to a specific legal process :

- 1) Each owner is required to initiate legal proceedings individually. We question whether this process was undergone by the owners of every apartment targeted by law enforcement, especially given that some of these owners reside abroad.

- 2) Even if the occupants of a given property have no legal right to reside in it, the owner must file an eviction complaint with the civil court – the only authority empowered to order evictions. The decision has to then be communicated to the occupants. If they do not leave immediately, the owner can then request that the prosecutor call upon law enforcement to conduct the eviction. Has this process been followed for each and every eviction that has taken place since last night ? One can be skeptical, since the authorities only gave 24 hours to black non-nationals living in Boukhalef to leave before resorting to force. It is also worth noting that authorities traditionally forego the use of force in eviction procedures during Ramadan.

A number of hateful articles targeting black non-nationals – and in particular those living in Boukhalef– were published these past weeks by Arabic-speaking online media. GADEM

considers these news outlets instrumental to the recent rise of intolerance and racial hatred. They are therefore responsible, along with the authorities, for the violation of the rights of black non-nationals.

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