

# AGAINST THE INSTRUMENTALIZATION OF FEMINIST FIGHTS

On Wednesday July 29, 2020, we, a group of Moroccan feminists, learned through a press release from the King's Prosecutor that journalist and activist Omar Radi is being prosecuted and detained on four counts: **indecent assault, rape, undermining the external security of the State, and threatening the internal security of the State.**

These accusations are the last development after several months of harassment on the part of police, some media outlets, and the judiciary:

## **1. Charge for contempt of court:**

Omar Radi was arrested on December 25, 2019 following a tweet published 8 months earlier, denouncing the heavy sentences against Hirak activists from the Rif region.

This was followed by 6 days of detention, then a conviction in March 2020 resulting in a 4-month suspended prison sentence for contempt of court, which he later appealed.

## **2. Defamation campaigns:**

In June 2020, following a widely publicized report from Amnesty International revealing that his phone was tapped with spyware from the NSO's Pegasus program, Omar Radi was the subject of smear campaigns in certain media outlets close to the regime for the past month.

## **3. Accusation of undermining state security:**

Since June 25, he has received 10 summons from the National Judicial Police Brigade (BNPJ) at a frequency of 2 summons per week on average for a "preliminary investigation into (his) allegedly receiving foreign funding in exchange for sensitive information." In these summons, Omar Radi was systematically requisitioned for 7 to 10 hours, only to be questioned for an average of half an hour.

During this investigation, Omar Radi has repeatedly claimed his innocence. On this subject, he replied in a statement published on July 4th: "My answer is unequivocal: I have never been in the service of a foreign power and never will be."

## **4. Accusations of drunkenness on the public space and violence:**

On July 7, additional charges were added for public drunkenness and violence after a night in police custody on July 6th following an altercation with the cameraman of a media that has continued to defame and harass him. This case will be judged during the month of September.

## **5. Charges of rape and indecent assault:**

Finally, on July 27th, Omar Radi was summoned by the royal gendarmerie in connection with allegations of rape. He was detained on July 29th for this complaint.

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Because the fight against rape and sexual violence is at the heart of our feminist struggle, the timing of this latest case raises many questions. We are campaigning for the voice of women to be heard, and for the most severe penalties to be imposed on sexual predators.

On the other hand, we firmly denounce any instrumentalization of the violence against women for political and security purposes.

Denouncing rape, sexual violence, and the instrumentalization of women's bodies also means refusing to see them used and instrumentalized in political affairs. Rape charges are not final whistles.

To remain silent is to take the risk that the words of the victims will no longer be heard, and that women will no longer be believed.

To remain silent and refuse to put accusations of this nature within their political context is to endorse the instrumentalization of our bodies and our struggle.

We will not accept being dispossessed of our struggles, nor that our feminist struggles be excluded from the larger struggles in which they are part: the struggle against domination, injustice, and inequality.