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Morocco

# The grassroots protest movement in the Rif region

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### **Neither defamation nor repression will slow down the grassroots protest movement in the Rif. Only the expansion and radicalization of the struggle will make it possible to achieve gains and move towards emancipation.**

Seven months have passed since the start of the grassroots protest movement in the Rif region of northern Morocco. This movement takes root in the popular mobilization that took place in the region during the uprisings of February 20, 2011. It was revitalized by the crushing of the fisherman Mohsen Fikri in a dumpster truck in October 2016.

Rif's people claim the judgment of responsible for the death of Mohsen and five other Rifans killed in a banking agency during the events of 20 February 2011. They also call for the lifting of the militarization in the province of Al Hoceima which should be considered a disaster area, the halting of prosecutions and harassment of small farmers, and other social demands concerning health services, education and infrastructure according to the development model that Rif's inhabitants really want. This is a clear sign of the failure of the economic and social policies promoted by the State in this region, which translates in the destruction of the production structures, the pillage of maritime and forest resources, the weakness of major public services such as clinics, Universities, schools and the lack of jobs for the youth.

All this is the result of main choices of the State based on the need to pay back a huge public debt by reinforcing the austerity on social budgets, opening up the profitable sectors of our country to foreign capital, more tax relief in favor of the rich, the generalization of corruption, land-grabbing and the seizing of wealth by a minority.

These policies dictated by foreign decision-making centers are legitimized by "representative" institutions that have nothing democratic under a despotic regime, a façade government and a factitious parliamentary "majority". All mobilized to silence the voice of the Rif's population who clearly expressed their demands in the local committees of the protest movement.

They also mobilized the various governmental, security and media organs to defeat this intense mobilization, repression and arrest of activists, intimidation and defamation and trying to create imaginary and marginal conflicts between inhabitants of the region according to the principle of tyrants: divide and conquer. They seek to criminalize the protest movement, undermine its credibility and target its activists so that it does not serve as an example for other cities and regions of Morocco who live under the same conditions of marginalization, impoverishment and the flouting of dignity.

Last days events indicate that there has been a strengthening of the repressive arsenal in the Rif region, where a multitude of forces (police, gendarmerie and auxiliary forces) have been deployed. Hundreds of tents have been erected in the public squares and in the public institutions which serve as encampments. This suggests a violent repression in such manner of those already perpetrated by the regime against the struggles of Moroccan people, in particular against the historical resistance in the Rif.

We, Al Mounadil-a, a socialist revolutionary political current, consider the grassroots protest movement of the Rif as a real example of a struggle that must be followed by all the regions of Morocco in terms of : First, claims centered on social justice, dignity and the distribution of natural resources and wealth produced locally and nationally. Second, the creativity of combative forms of struggle that ensures continuity and collective participation in mobilization. And thirdly, the bottom-up democracy represented by the local coordination of the movement, which is spreading in the various zones of the Rif.

## The grassroots protest movement in the Rif region

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We support the struggle of the Rifans and we salute their firmness and determination against all those who fight their struggle and aspirations. We condemn the policy of intimidation and misinformation of the state and all those who help justify its lies. We hold the state responsible for any repressive intervention against the inhabitants of the rif in struggle. We call for the expansion of support and solidarity and the strengthening of the coordination committees to prevent the isolation of the movement by the State and we affirm that the satisfaction of the demands of the lower classes in Morocco for dignity, freedom And social justice is incompatible with tyranny and the system of corruption.

We, Al Mounadil-a, consider that the main task right now for the radical left and for all the organizations of struggle, in particular the unions, the organizations of unemployed youth and the associations which fight liberal policies, Is to support the grassroots protest movement in the Rif and work to extend it to the whole country. It is the regrouping of struggle forces and their solidarity and the expansion of international solidarity that will oblige the rulers to satisfy the demands of the populations by allocating the necessary budgets. It is an historic opportunity given by the resistance of the Rifans, inspired by the historical leader Abdelkrim al-Khattabi, to Moroccan lower classes to obtain fundamental improvements to their social conditions and to march on the path of their emancipation from Political despotism and capitalist exploitation.

***Victory for Rif's people struggle***

***Long live for people and struggle for freedom, dignity and social justice***

*Current Al Mounadil-a,*

*18 May 2017*

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