

Terrorism charges against Ali Anouzla condemned

Reporters Without Borders condemns the terrorism charges that were brought yesterday against Ali Anouzla, a news website editor who was arrested in Rabat eight days ago after [posting an article containing a link to a video posted by Al-Qaeda](#) in the Islamic Maghreb (AQIM).



Ali Anouzla

"We call for Ali Anouzla's immediate release and the withdrawal of all the charges," Reporters Without Borders said.

Confusing journalism with inciting terrorist acts

"By placing him in pre-trial detention on these charges, the Moroccan authorities have shown that they are confusing journalism with inciting terrorist acts, that they are ignorant of the essence of journalistic work and despise the crucial importance of independent media in a political system.

"Their blindness to the nature of journalism makes us concerned for the future of freedom of information in Morocco. Anouzla is paying a high price for his independence, his readiness to speak freely and his commitment to media freedom."

The editor of the Arabic-language version of the news website Lakome, Anouzla was brought before an investigating judge in Rabat on Wednesday after a week in police custody in Casablanca, and was charged with "material assistance" to a terrorist group, "defending terrorism" and "inciting the execution of terrorist acts". He was taken to Salé detention centre, near Rabat, after the hearing.

"He has been officially charged and is in pre-trial detention," Anouzla's lawyer, Omar Benjelloun, told Reporters Without Borders, adding that the investigating judge now has up to five months to conduct his investigation.

After Anouzla was arrested in Rabat on 17 September, the prosecutor-general said his arrest was "as a result of the

dissemination of an AQIM video inciting others to commit terrorism acts."

"Morocco: kingdom of corruption and despotism"

In fact, Anouzla posted an article reporting that AQIM had posted a 40-minute propaganda video on the Al-Andalus site that was solely about Morocco. Entitled "Morocco: kingdom of corruption and despotism", the video attacked the monarchy and called for Jihad in Morocco, Anouzla's article explained.

The link in his article was actually a link to the blog of Ignacio Cembrero, a journalist with the Spanish daily El Pais, who had posted a link to the video in his blog.

The Moroccan justice ministry announced on 17 September that it was planning to bring a complaint in Madrid against El Pais for publishing the video. But more than a week has gone by with no sign of the announced complaint.

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