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POST PROJECT EVALUATIONS FOR THE UNITED NATIONS DEMOCRACY FUND

EVALUATION REPORT

UDF-18-806-MOR Monitoring Implementation of UN Treaty Bodies' Recommendations in Morocco

19 February 2024

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Disclaimer

The views expressed in this report are those of the evaluator. They do not represent those of UNDEF or any of the institutions referred to in the report

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EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

"Monitoring Implementation of UN Treaty Bodies' Recommendations in Morocco" was a unique project implemented by Le Médiateur pour la Démocratie et les Droits de l'Homme (MDDH) from July 1, 2020, to April 30, 2023. Based on an inclusive project design, activities were multi-scalar and participatory, as they were implemented in four regions working with a wide network of local and national-level civil society organizations, as well as parliamentary actors. This human rights project was relevant to the contemporary political context as the Implementing Partner was able to effectively and impactfully use advocacy skills and technical expertise to introduce human rights monitoring as a priority policy issue. Building on synergies from pervious UNDEF grants centered on youth and MDDH's strategic priorities, the Implementing Partner showed critical organizational capacity as well as coherence internally and externally. Material outputs remain in use beyond the intended beneficiaries, signaling a strong potential for sustainability. The UNDEF was well positioned in that human rights issues in Morocco can be viewed as sensitive, yet the project showcased their importance in debates about democratic development.

I. OVERALL ASSESSMENT

This report is the evaluation of the project titled, "Monitoring Implementation of UN Treaty Bodies' Recommendations in Morocco." It was implemented by Le Médiateur pour la Démocratie et les Droits de l'Homme (MDDH) headquartered in Rabat, Morocco from July 1, 2020, to April 30, 2023 (34 months), as the Implementing Partner's third UNDEF grant. The project benefited from a budget amounting 220,000 USD to carry out the following activities:

- 4 regional CSO meetings to introduce the project in (1) Rabat-Salé-Kenitra; (2) Tangier-Tetouan-Al Hoceima; (3) Daraa-Tafilalet; and (4) Sous Massa;
- 4 follow-up CSO capacity building workshops in the regions on theoretical and practical modules related to UN-treaty bodies' mechanisms of human rights;
- Advocacy campaigns in regions focused on by the project;
- A national-level workshop in Rabat to present 10 preliminary analyses;
- The creation of a CSO coordinating committee;
- Drafting of a monitoring handbook for CSOs, specific to UN treaty bodies' recommendations in Morocco;
- Drafting of a second monitoring handbook for parliamentarians;
- 1 day dialogue workshop in parliament in Rabat;
- Drafting of a handbook for parliamentarians, titled The Role of Legislators in implementing UN treaty-based bodies' recommendations in Morocco;
- A workshop in parliament for both houses to build the capacity of legislators in monitoring UN recommendations¹;

¹ This activity replaced Output 2.1 "CSO subgrants for awareness raising in targeted regions with members of parliament" per discussion with UNDEF (see July 31, 2023, Final Narrative Report).

- Establishment of publicly accessible electronic database, titled, *Rights Index Platform*, containing recommendations to facilitate monitoring; and
- A documentary film for advocacy.

The project aimed at reaching the following groups of project participants:

- Over 250 CSOs across Morocco;
- Elected members of parliament and legislative actors;
- Journalists, human rights activist and professionals.

The project's overall achievements are the development of a user-friendly and sustainable online platform of recommendations for monitoring the implementation of UN treaty bodies' intended for parliamentary actors, human rights professionals and researchers. Two handbooks for CSOs and parliamentary actors were drafted and remain in use, and during the project, MDDH was invited by parliamentarians to draft recommendations for changes in procedures regarding the position of human rights debates within the legislature. These achievements signal a strong potential for sustainability as well as lasting impact. In addition to sensitizing parliamentary actors to the treaty bodies and overall human rights context in Morocco, the project included the voices of diverse civil society actors in the development of recommendations within the platform. The project was based on an inclusive, participatory, and multi-scalar activity design that brought together human rights professionals from diverse backgrounds, regions, and generations, with project relevance observable at multiple levels. While clearly important to the contemporary political context in Morocco, MDDH effectively and impactfully used its advocacy skills and relevant technical expertise to introduce human rights monitoring as a priority policy issue at the legislative and CSO levels. This commitment to inclusivity underpinned all activities and systematically lent the project legitimacy among high-level decision makers and beneficiaries who underscored the project's relevance to the political context as well as the need for substantive project continuity for purposes of longterm sustainability and lasting impact.

Challenges to the project stemmed from disruptions caused by COVID-19 with Morocco applying one of the strictest lock-down policies and shifts in parliamentary composition following the 2021 elections. New political representation within the national assembly changed the flow of work, as previous project partners were replaced. The Implementing Partner was able to mitigate both challenges, relying on its strong organizational capacity as well as internal synergies with previous projects and redesigning elements of the overall project design to ensure **effectiveness and efficiency**. With respect to the human rights context, the **UNDEF was well positioned** to support an initiative that can be deemed as sensitive and thereby contributing to important debates about democracy and development in Morocco.

Drawn from a set of conclusions, key recommendations stress the positive impact of inclusive and participatory project designs in meeting overall objectives, and organizational capacity at local, regional, and national levels. Effective partnership strategies and subject-specific expertise are critical for developing mitigation strategies in cases of disruptions and delays. In-person meetings especially at local levels and in marginal regions are more productive than virtual meetings, while open-access on-line tools broaden beneficiaries and meet larger UN strategic objectives. Finally, prospects for sustainability that depend on regular content creation (updating human rights monitoring recommendations), need to take material and human resources into account, and potentially include these into core organizational strategies. Lessons Learned:

- 1. For sensitive topics such as monitoring government's performance on human rights, organizations that have strong expertise, hold inter-generational membership, and work effectively on both the grassroots and national level, are best placed to carry-out multi-scalar projects and gain support and trust by high-level decision-makers.
- Projects that require input from key decision-makers (in this case members of parliament) can start at the national level and then trickle to the grassroots level, for more impact.
- Inclusive project designs that rely on human rights actors from diverse professions and backgrounds have a high potential for reaching project objectives and mitigation strategies.
- 4. Activities that are based on discussions around complex themes and issues, and are organized in remote or marginal areas, are most impactful when held in person, rather than virtually.
- Material outputs are most useful when they hold long-term temporal value and become staple references, such as the handbooks and the Rights Index Platform. Material outputs that require regular content update need to be clearly and productively linked to sustainability strategies.
- 6. When projects fall on electoral calendars or are directly linked to elected officials, clear mitigation strategies need to be developed to avoid significant project interruptions.
- 7. Building on previous projects creates important synergies and benefits, such as working with former partners, relying on alumni networks, and learning from past experiences.

II. PROJECT CONTEXT AND STRATEGY

(i) Development context

The edification of a human rights regime in the Kingdom of Morocco began in earnest in the early 1990s, as Morocco exited the 'Years of Lead' (1960-1999), or period of sometimes violent conflict between the state and predominantly leftist and Islamist political activists committed to overthrowing the monarchy. Prior to 1990, the Monarchy of Hassan II had only signed and ratified three of the now ten UN treaty bodies (CERD, 1970; CESCR, 1979; CCRP, 1979). The relatively low-level interest placed in the issue were reflected in the three post-independence constitutions (1962, 1970, 1972) – none of which explicitly guaranteed basic human rights – the lack of government-level commitment, namely a dedicated ministerial position, and in significant legislation.

During the conditioned political opening of the 1990s, human rights protections were strengthened through several Monarchy-driven reforms, including foundation of the Advisory Council on Human Rights (Conseil Consulatif des Droits de l'Homme, CCDH), in 1990, the empowerment of the legislature in the 1992 and 1996 constitutions, the ratification of four more of the now ten UN treaty bodies (CEDAW, 1993; CAT, 1993; CRC, 1993; CMN, 1993). The CCDH was tasked to investigate human rights abuse and to recommend changes in Moroccan law to adhere to international conventions. In 1993, the monarchy appointed, for the first time, a minister delegate for human rights.

Victor of the 1997 legislative elections, a center-left coalition led by former opponent in exile, Abderrahman el-Youssefi, formed a government that would serve Mohamed VI from his ascension to the throne in 1999 to 2011. While during this long decade, human rights protections significantly increased, they largely remained the purview of the Monarchy and CCDH. Upon the latter's recommendations, in 1999, Mohamed VI created the Independent Arbitration Panel, which identified and indemnified thousands of citizens for regime sanctioned rights abuses. CCDH recommendations also led to the creation of a truth commission, the Equity and Reconciliation Commission (Instance Équité et Reconciliation, IER), with a two-year mandate (2004-2006) to investigate forced disappearances and arbitrary detention between 1956 and 1999 and make recommendations to the state. The IER investigated 20,000 cases, resolving 4,677 cases with reparations for 3,657 victims, distributing \$85 million. The IER also made recommendations, including a constitutional guarantee to human rights, ratification of the International Criminal Court Rome Statute, including the abolition of the death penalty, and the reduction of executive powers. Successive governments of the center-left coalition (1999-2011) maintained variations of a Ministry of Human Rights (e.g. Ministre délégué, Ministre chargé), culminating in the portfolio of Minister of State (second in hierarchy) attributed to a founder of the Moroccan Association for Human Rights (Association Marocaine des Droits de l'Homme, est. 1979). During the same period, the state signed STP (2007), ratified CRPD (2009), and accepted specific provisions for the CERD, CAT, CRC, and CRPD.

Against the backdrop of the 20 February 2011 social movement that called for democratization, Mohamed VI reformed the CCDH, baptized the National Council for Human Rights (Conseil National des Droits de l'Homme, CNDH), in March. CNDH was tasked with ongoing investigations of human rights abuse, while delivering annual reports to both chambers of parliament, and assisting in the creation and implementation of the mechanisms outlined in international conventions on human rights as well as the harmonization of existing legislation with those conventions. In July 2011, a new constitution was voted, which increased the legislature's powers, banned torture and enshrined basic human rights, and placed ratified international conventions and treaties above Moroccan law.

The moderate Islamist PDJ party won the 2011 elections and led a coalition government until 2021. The 2011 reforms strengthened gains made over the previous two decades to strengthen human rights, through expanded and strengthened dedicated government agencies. The PJD created a full Ministry of Human Rights in 2011 and from 2017 to 2021, the second position in government was given to that minister with rank of Minister of State. The government also ratified the remaining two UN treaty bodies (CED, 2013; and SPT, 2014). Subsequently, the current center-right coalition government (2021-present) partitioned the Ministry of Human Rights' various portfolios and accepted specific provisions for CCRP and CEDAW in 2022.

To date, Morocco has ratified all ten UN treaty bodies. Despite a significant and enduring improvement in human rights protections, structural issues vis-à-vis implementing UN treaty bodies' recommendations persist. Parliamentary action toward aligning recommendations to national law and mandating government agencies to equally implement those laws remains limited. Parliamentarians need training on the treaty bodies' recommendations, and information from civic organizations, while civic organizations need training on identifying and reporting human rights violations along with organic links to law makers. The Implementing Partner MDDH's 2020-2023 project sought to fill that lacuna by proposing a multi-scalar strategy of encouraging CSOs to work with MPs to identify recommendations for monitoring

human rights, while sensitizing law makers to the importance of human rights protections for Moroccan citizens.

(ii) The project objective

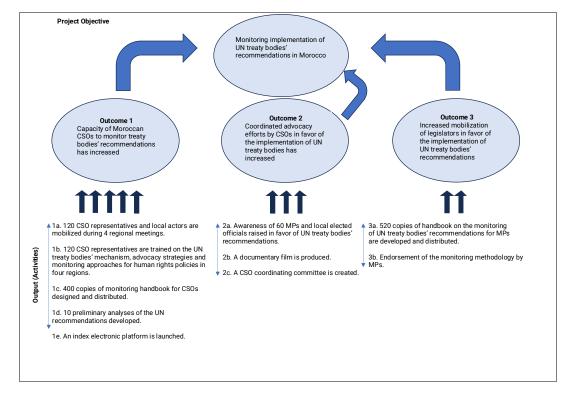


Figure 1: Intervention Logic - Project Objective, Outcomes and Outputs

The project titled, "Monitoring Implementation of UN Treaty Bodies' Recommendations in Morocco," was implemented by the Médiateur pour la Démocratie et les Droits de l'Homme (MDDH) headquartered in Rabat, Morocco from July 1, 2020, to April 30, 2023, constituting the Implementing Partner's third UNDEF grant. The total budget was USD 220,000 which was expended over a 34-month period, following two extensions of first 6 months, and then 4 months.

The key objective was to support the monitoring of governmental efforts to implement UN treaty bodies' recommendations through adopting a participatory inclusive approach that was based on the collective work of 120 CSOs and 30 parliamentarians. Civil society representatives from four regions and the capital Rabat were brought together with parliamentary actors to develop a unique monitoring mechanism, following capacity development initiatives on international human rights law, monitoring, and advocacy in: (1) Rabat-Salé-Kenitra; (2) Tangier-Tetouan-Al Hoceima; (3) Daraa-Tafilalet; and (4) Sous Massa, the latter three of which have experienced a significant increase in recurring social protests (*hirak*). The multi-scalar and geographically diverse project design sought to mobilize legislators to effectively exercise their roles and responsibilities in holding the government accountable for its commitments to implement UN treaty bodies' recommendations.

To achieve the proposed outcomes, the project included several activities:

4 regional CSO meetings to introduce the project;

- 4 follow-up CSO capacity building workshops on theoretical and practical modules related to UN-treaty bodies' mechanisms of human rights;
- · Advocacy campaigns in regions focused on by the project;
- National-level workshop in Rabat to present 10 preliminary analyses;
- The creation of a CSO coordinating committee;
- Drafting of a monitoring handbook for CSOs, specific to UN treaty bodies' recommendations in Morocco;
- Drafting of a second monitoring handbook for parliamentarians;
- 1 day dialogue workshop in parliament in Rabat;
- Drafting of a handbook for parliamentarians, titled The Role of Legislators in implementing UN treaty-based bodies' recommendations in Morocco;
- A workshop in parliament for both houses to build the capacity of legislators in monitoring UN recommendations²;
- Establishment of publicly accessible electronic database, titled, *Rights Index Platform*, containing recommendations to facilitate monitoring;
- A documentary film.

(iii) Project strategy and approach

To improve Morocco's performance on human rights, the project strategy brought together national and local civil society organizations with legislative actors in both houses of parliament to develop a multi-pronged monitoring mechanism.

		Project Strategy	
	Outcome 1 Capacity of Moroccan CSOs to monitor treaty bodies' recommendations has increased	Outcome 2 Coordinated advocacy efforts by CSOs in favor of the implementation of UN treaty bodies has increased	Outcome 3 Increased mobilization of legislators in favor of the implementation of UN treaty bodies' recommendations
Performance Indicators	 1A. At least 80% of participating CSOs and actors have accepted the proposed methodology. 1B. At least 50% of CSO participants understood how to access the status of implementation of the UN treaty bodies' recommendations. 1C. At least 150 CSOs declared the handbook is useful. 	 2A. At least 8 instances of press coverage published by local and national media on advocacy campaigns. 2B. 30 MPs have supported and interacted with CSO's advocacy campaigns at the local and national level. 	 3A. Effective number of all legislators and politicians that have participated in activities throughout the project. 3B. At least 50 MPs have declared that the handbook is useful for monitoring the implementation of the UN treaty bodies' recommendations. 3C. At least 10 oral and written questions presented by MPs based on the work done and presented in the electronic platform. 3D. At least 15 recommendations have been implemented (after the development of the monitoring mechanisms.

Figure 2: Project Strategy

² This activity replaced Output 2.1 "CSO subgrants for awareness raising in targeted regions with members of parliament" per discussion with UNDEF (see July 31, 2023, Final Narrative Report)

The project adapted an inclusive approach working with a significant network of CSOs as well as elected parliamentarians and delegates with the objective to create sustainable processes and support practices to monitor governmental efforts to implement UN treaty bodies' recommendations. The project design was based on four interrelated tracks: (1) mobilization of the participating CSOs; (2) capacity development programs; (3) effective monitoring by legislators; (4) dialogue, advocacy, and outreach with legislators. This multi-scalar design constitutes Morocco's first such monitoring mechanism with the strategic aim to enhance the government's performance with respect to international human rights law.

The inclusive project strategy for CSOs and parliamentary actors to jointly develop monitoring mechanisms, hinged on two separate scales: (1) at the local level, capacity development modules on international human rights law, monitoring, and advocacy in the four regions; and (2) at the national level, mobilizing legislators to effectively exercise their roles and responsibilities in holding the government accountable for its commitments to implement UN treaty bodies' recommendations.

III. EVALUATION METHODOLOGY

The purpose and objective of this evaluation was to conduct an in-depth analysis of the overall project UDF-18-806-MOR, with specific attention to achievements and lessons learned in the 34 months of implementation, from July 1, 2020, to April 30, 2023. The evaluation was conducted in a transparent approach with attention to the Implementing Partner's capacity as well as the overall development context in Morocco. This allowed for an in-depth assessment of the project rationale and justification, both its programmatic (outputs and outcomes) and financial dimensions. The variation of site visits and meetings with project partners brought additional value to fully assess impact as well as measure sustainability. To this extent, the evaluation was conducted in accordance with the Norms and Standards for Evaluations developed by the United Nations Evaluation Group, the OECD criteria of evaluation, and the UNDEF operational manual. Recommendations and lessons learned were developed from evidence-based findings following the desk review and field work.

Per the launch note, the evaluation was based on a comprehensive analysis of all narrative, financial, and activity-specific project documents, a relevant literature review, and field work in Morocco comprised of interviews with the Implementing Partner organization, local CSO project partners, CSO and legislative project participants, and legislative decision-makers. This post-project evaluation focuses on the impact of the activities towards achieving the principal objectives and gage its sustainability. Evaluation questions focused especially on project synergies, sustainability of human rights monitoring mechanisms, and the effect and impact of inclusive and participatory project design. Key questions revolved around whether the project design was sustainable at legislative and CSO levels, whether its participatory mechanisms were effective in producing meaningful human rights monitoring recommendations, and to what extent material outputs (handbooks and platform) have remained in use. **Evaluation questions are detailed in Annex I.**

In addition to the desk review of project documents, the evaluator conducted a secondary literature review including texts provided by the Implementing Partner during the field mission as well as a review of its past activities in civil society and human rights work. The evaluator held an introductory meeting with MDDH key staff and members of the Advisory Board at the Implementing Partner's offices in Rabat, Morocco (Prometheus offices) to discuss the overall project and the field mission plan. Throughout the field mission which involved interviews with CSO and legislative partners and beneficiaries, the evaluator focused on project-specific questions with attention to contextual challenges and opportunities. For questions of external coherence and synergies across other UN-funded projects, the evaluator was able to meet with a UN representative in Morocco.

There were no challenges to the evaluation. The Implementing Partner was eager to discuss the project, including its limitations and new possibilities, share project-specific and additional supporting documentations, facilitate meetings during the field mission with partners and contacts, and remained available for follow-up meetings and discussions post field mission.

IV. EVALUATION FINDINGS

(i) Relevance

The project's **relevance** is observable on several levels, both within its rationale as well as the design of its activities over almost three years in creating Morocco's first monitoring mechanism of UN treaty body recommendations to enhance the government's performance with respect to international human rights law. The project aligned with the needs and priorities for democratic development, as well as the human rights and policy communities. Its implementation was inclusive, combining existing knowledge among CSOs and legislators with capacity-building, advocacy, and mobilization initiatives to engage in dialogue and knowledge sharing in the development of a monitoring methodology titled the Rights Index Platform (herein "the platform") and tools for UN treaty bodies' recommendations. The platform is the first monitoring mechanism developed in Morocco, from which important lessons learned will be drawn for other such projects in the region or comparatively (see below). Specifically, relevance was clearly observable at three levels:

(1) Through an inclusive approach, the project worked towards the platform, a novel output with the potential for a wider reach beyond the original project goals and sustainable practice. Given serious project barriers linked to Morocco's strict COVID-19 policy on public gathering, as well as 2021 legislative elections that significantly shifted the political representation (and project beneficiaries), the project was able to achieve significant results in a relatively short time span. Two examples stand out: (1) MDDH was invited in 2023 to develop a proposal for parliament titled "Amendments to the internal regulations of the Parliament," that called on shifts in CSO-parliamentary relations to better monitor and align domestic legislations with international human rights law, and (2) USFP deputies relied on recommendations drawn from the platform for a September 2024 review session in Geneva on Morocco's September 10, 2021 report to the Committee on Enforced Disappearances.



Photo 1: Consultation meeting with legislatures on parliamentary handbook, March 9, 2022, at the Moroccan National Assembly, Rabat

(2) The project established an **inter-generational network** of committed human rights actors, including elected deputies, parliamentary staff, CSOs, activists and journalists and a new generation of activists from the February 14, 2011, movement (Morocco's Arab Spring) who since engaged in reformist activism. This generation-spanning network has garnered legitimacy and is thereby able to introduce proposals for human rights policy to decision-makers, develop monitoring mechanisms, and impact the overall public dialogue around human rights questions. The project prioritized working with decision-makers who are *willing* to effectuate promote change, and took opportunities such as parliamentary turn-over following the 2021 elections for new advocacy efforts and project buy-in among newly elected deputies. Finally, the inter-generational network brought to the project both visible organizations and marginalized communities, capturing a variety of priorities, demands, and grievances in the development of the project's material outputs.

(3) The project's **geographic scope** represented variation in priorities and perspectives, providing substantive issue-focused input from four diverse regions. The project's *impact* (see below) is most clearly observable at the Rabat-level, where the close proximity of national-level CSO leadership allows more frequent meetings with parliamentary actors, translating into tangible, observable effects. However, the decision to work with regional CSOs (as well as elected deputies from these regions) proved important in formulating variation in local needs and expectations from human rights legislation, and to understand differences in priorities especially given contextual political shifts in Morocco.

Interview research confirmed that questions of human rights and especially UN treaties bodies are *not* necessarily priorities for the average citizen nor a high priority issue within parliamentary debates, which focus primarily on pressing local, domestic issues. This however, presented a critical opportunity for advocacy among decision-makers. MDDH was able to bring together a vast network of activists and decision makers who introduced not only the question of human rights monitoring to public political debate, but also a userfriendly open-access platform that included recommendations for implementations from which decision-makers, researchers, and the public can draw.

(ii) Coherence

While the overall project objective and design were unique in the establishment of Morocco's first human rights monitoring mechanism, specific project element showed significant external and internal coherence.

Externally, the project builds upon decades of human rights work within the Moroccan context. This includes Morocco's adherence to a number of UN treaty bodies since 1970, and domestic initiatives by civil society and advocacy starting in 1990 with the CCDH and introduction of a sovereign transitional justice process in the 2000s. The MDDH project follows with other human rights initiatives that take a strong *reformist* approach, advocating for incremental and informed change through inclusive awareness-building at decision-making levels. The project adds value, introducing a novel monitoring mechanism through an inclusive participatory approach that integrates the voices of CSOs representing different priorities and needs, with input from parliamentary actors and elected deputies. The network that was built to advance this project included diverse individuals with strong commitments to human rights work in Morocco, including: former activists/unionists, long-standing civil society actors, international relations and law experts, decision-makers with human rights background, a new generation of human rights activists (MDDH).



Figure 3. CSO-designed project infographic for sensitization of UN treaty bodies in early project stage.

In addition to its compatibility with other human rights work in Morocco, project elements also complement current UN priorities in Morocco, especially within the 2023-2027 cooperation framework and the U.N. 2.0 agenda as it aligns on digital, innovation, and behavioral science pillars with respect to the platform.

Internally, MDDH relied on its database of CSO contacts developed from two previously UNDEF-funded projects and its resulting network of MDDH youth alumni³, through which it was able to grow and solidify an impressive network of CSOs and professional human rights experts. Such synergies with previous projects were critical during COVID-19 related lockdowns and movement restrictions, as MDDH was able to mobilize and expand its vast

³ These include "Youth for Democracy," and "Youth Web TV."

network of CSO contacts and mitigate real project delays. As an implementor, MDDH has developed into both a grassroots and establishment organization, allowing it to draw on different levels of activism: (1) at the grassroots-level, it identifies the needs and local priorities not evident at the national-policy level; and (2) at the higher decision-making level, it possesses the legitimacy to effectuate incremental reform.

(iii) Effectiveness

The project was largely implemented as envisioned, following two extensions and project activity modifications linked to several external impediments (COVID-19, legislative elections, shifting national priorities), and demands for more trainings by legislators. Because of the project design's elasticity, the Implementing Partner was able to adjust the project strategy, amend existing and add new activities, while progressing towards the overall project objective. Key to this was an effective partnership strategy, bringing together a variety of committed human rights actors from civil society, parliament, activism, and academia, all contributing to principal project activities and outputs.

In interview research, the Implementing Partner stressed how contextual impediments and limitations became opportunities (e.g. advocacy work among newly elected deputies following elections), whereas mitigation strategies such as moving CSO capacity-building workshops and trainings to virtual spaces proved more difficult, both substantially and technologically. In remote regions specifically, technological impediments prevented CSOs from participating regularly or as foreseen during early project design. Additionally, the Implementing Partner remarked that repeat activities with same CSOs did not necessarily assure regular attendance, thus affecting the building-block strategy of the project design around substance and capacity. Overall, the Implementing Partner and CSO partners stressed the irreplaceability of in-person meetings for effective dialogue and project fluidity.

Concrete achievements were most visible on the level of (1) CSO input for monitoring recommendations in the development of the handbook and the recommendations available in the platform, (2) advocacy on monitoring human rights treaty bodies on both CSO and parliamentary levels despite other national policy priorities; and (3) utilization of the platform especially by elected deputies, legislative staff, scholarly, and professional researchers. To date, both handbooks remain in use, are regarded as go-to references, while the platform is regularly consulted.

Parliamentary involvement as anticipated at project start, shifted over the duration of the project due to contextual shifts following legislative elections, and expressed needs for more training and capacity-building. While a larger number of legislative actors and elected deputies were ultimately reached through advocacy, fewer than anticipated parliamentarians

"The proposals set out by the Mediator for Democracy and Human Rights are part of an ongoing effort to develop an institutional legal framework that strengthens the role of parliament in protecting and promoting human rights in Morocco. These amendments aim to improve the Parliament's capacity to monitor, legislate, and oversee the implementation of international human rights recommendations, ensuring Morocco's continued commitment to international human rights standards. These proposals represent an important step in deepening Morocco's engagement with human rights within national and international spheres." *The Role of Legislators in implementing UN treaty-based bodies' recommendations in Morocco (2021-2026).* (From MDDH Memorandum, Rabat, 2023)

were actively engaged in the project, mainly due to competing pressing national policy priorities. As priorities around monitoring UN treaty bodies rank lower than debates regarding finance laws and other economic policy, the project encountered more difficulties in getting the anticipated buy-in of parliamentary actors. Nevertheless, because of the project's effective advocacy strategy, and development of user-friendly resources (parliamentary handbooks and the platform), the parliamentary buy-in proved significant on a substantial level. Legislative actors report regular use of the resources, while the monitoring recommendations are regularly consulted in the drafting of policy. MDDH was commissioned by legislative actors to provide recommendations to change internal parliamentary procedures and provide more capacity-building opportunities within parliament. This advocacy effort resulted in amendments to internal procedures of the Upper House (specifically, Article 90 in its previous form and Article 83 in the adopted version of 2023), in which the role of members of parliament in overseeing the implementation of recommendations from treaty-based bodies is now clearly defined. In this capacity, MDDH continues its work to establish a permanent parliamentary human rights committee.⁴ Such a committee would be central in overseeing government policies and actions related to human rights, particularly in relation to the implementation of recommendations stemming from international human rights mechanisms. Additionally, Morocco acceded to the first Optional Protocol to the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights (CCRP) on the submission of complaints and the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women (CEDAW) relating to the submission of individual complaints and inquiries procedures in April and July 2022, respectively. Both issues are regularly highlighted by the MDDH in its meetings with CSOs and MPs.⁵

(iv) Efficiency

The project was cost-efficient and benefited from the Implementing Partners' expertise, and MDDH's legitimacy as an intra-generational network. The multi-faceted knowledge and experience underpinning the project and represented by the diverse key partners (within CSO and parliament) and alumni was critical in early project stages, garnering trust by decision-makers, and allowing the Implementing Partner to adjust to serious contextual (COVID) and structural (elections, and national/regional policy priorities) challenges. The budget, following two modifications, was constructed in such a way that allowed the project to complete its projected activities, add an important initiative about internal parliamentary regulations, and meet its overall objective.

Efficiency is observable by the on-going usage of the two handbooks, and the regular public consultation of the platform. The Implementing Partner and project partners stated repeatedly that a larger percentage of the budget could have been allocated to the development and upkeep of recommendations that were eventually included in the platform, as well as a plan for regular substantive and analytical updates to the platform.

The Implementing Partner was able to develop efficient strategies to manage predictable (elections) and unpredictable (COVID-19 measures, policy-priorities) challenges, while adapting to political and public health-related contextual shifts. These were important in

 ⁴ At present, the Committee on Justice, Legislation, and Human Rights exists within both Houses of Parliament. However, its primary focus remains on legislation rather than human rights oversight and monitoring the implementation of recommendations resulting from international human rights mechanisms.
 ⁵ See MDDH's July 22, 2022, press release.

working towards the project outcomes, focusing on redesigning outputs and adjusting activities as needed.

(v) Impact

Impact is difficult to assess in the short-term, however, this evaluation takes into consideration a triangulation of data including project documents and in-person interviews to determine positive and negative trends. Overall, a ripple effect is observable in two areas: (1) MDDH's inclusive and participatory CSO-legislative strategy and its resonance around decision-makers; and (2) the continued usage of material project outputs. The need for inclusive CSO-led trainings around human rights monitoring in Morocco was stressed in interview research, as parliamentary actors lack the capacity to be up to date on human rights questions and monitoring strategies. Of note is the parliamentary handbook, which was catered specially to elected deputies who manage time constraints and priority rankings, while the platform continues to be in use (see more discussion in sustainability section) and a standing human rights commission is being debated.

Positive impact and its potential to have a catalytic effect is most visible in the project's advocacy effects especially at the national level. As project partners were involved at all levels of discussions regarding material outputs, the inclusive and participatory strategy underpinning the overall design lend the project legitimacy, especially at the legislative level. Unexpected impact also occurred following 2021 legislative election, which initially caused a project implementation delay due to new parliamentary make-up but resulted in collaboration with new beneficiaries. Awareness building for human rights legislation around gender questions (CEDAW), minority rights (especially Amazigh), garnered significant support through advocacy efforts as well as easily consultable recommendations through the platform. Monitoring mechanisms helped bring other issues to the fore, such as syndicalist, collective action, and labor rights,⁶ as well as the effects of 2015 penal code on liberty of expression, public space, as well as protests.

Interview research revealed that the platform and handbooks helped in the effort to prepare for monitoring government efforts to implement treaty bodies' recommendations, however, at the time of the evaluation it is too early to assess to what extent this exercise has been impactful in holding government accountable. Overall, beneficiaries at the CSO and legislative level did experience positive impact with respect to the platform because of the ease in which they can consult recommendations as well as the availability of MDDH to address concerns.

Negative impact, to the extent that it was observable, was registered in several interviews who commented on the projects' short implementation time, in addition to the expertise and labor required to update the recommendation with the publication of the scheduled state party reports and responses to the UN treaty bodies. Two interviewees stressed the importance of regular updates to secure the project's momentum at the parliamentary level. While the project design included a significant local-level CSO element, strict COVID-19 restrictions on public gatherings and mitigation strategies to hold CSO trainings virtually proved less impactful. While the content of local CSO trainings and workshops was well-developed by the Implementing Partner, the flow of CSO-level ideas to the overall scope of the project is more difficult to discern.

⁶ Interview with Asma El Amrani, President of the UMT group at the Upper House of Parliament.

(vi) Sustainability

The project has the potential for sustainability in that it worked on a long-term process and long-term mechanism, both of which fit squarely within MDDH's strategic priorities, strategic plans, and the broader human rights agenda in Morocco. As a novel and unique initiative, this monitoring project relied on synergies with the Implementing Partner's previous work in human rights and civil society strengthening. This set-up made it naturally prone to sustainability as exemplified by the on-going usage of the handbook in parliament both as an item for action and reference as well as the reliance of decision-makers and the informed public on the platform. One elected deputy from the USFP group reported using the platform to prepare oral comments in response to the Committee on Enforced Disappearances Expert Committee evaluation of Morocco's 2021 CED report.

CSO-parliamentary relations were sustained as the MDDH was invited by parliament to advise on changes to its internal regulations, allowing for easier involvement of CSO efforts for advocacy and capacity-building at the legislative level. MDDH recommended setting up a permanent parliamentary human rights commission, to facilitate discussions around monitoring of human rights treaty bodies as well as overall human rights issues.



Photo 2: Screen shot of the Rights Index Platform

At both the CSO and legislative level, new skills were consolidated because of capacitybuilding opportunities and advocacy. Legislative actors stressed the need for on-going CSO trainings in human rights monitoring and reporting, while CSO participants highlighted new knowledge gained about UN treaty bodies. Both stressed the role of associations and expert individuals in discussing and expanding recommendations.

Barriers to sustainability and project continuity were noted by both CSO and legislative actors. Continued funding is required to keep the database of recommendations up to date, both substantially and technologically. Despite the availability of human resources through the MDDH network, with the conclusion of UNDEF funding, the Implementing Partner no longer possesses the material resources to regularly update recommendations. Overall, the project was able to build an inclusive and participatory monitoring mechanism and raise significant awareness at both legislative and CSO level, however despite an overall willingness and ability to continue developing monitoring recommendations, the project's temporal value depends on sustained funding streams (public or through international donors).

(vii) UNDEF value added

For many of the project beneficiaries and partners, work on the MDDH project was the first engagement with UNDEF-funded activities. From interviews and observation, project participants noted that UNDEF was well-positioned to conduct monitoring work on UN treaty bodies' recommendations and on broader democracy initiatives in Morocco. The comparative advantage of UNDEF in working towards democracy via inclusive and participatory approaches that center civil society, was noted throughout. **UNDEF value-added** was especially important at high decision-making levels, where the UNDEF affiliation provided both legitimacy and trust. At the same time, the UNDEF brand was imperative to garner input from the local/regional CSO level, especially around advocacy efforts and trust in providing meaningful recommendations for human rights monitoring.



Photo 3: The Role of Parliament in Monitoring and Following Recommendations Issued by UN Mechanisms (bodies), (middle), in Moroccan National Assembly library

V. CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

Conclusion	Recommendation
Participatory and inclusive project design is imperative to effective and impactful initiatives that address sensitive issues, such as human rights monitoring, and that require high level-decision maker input. Activities within such projects showcase project relevance by clearly signaling commitments to democracy building to participants and beneficiaries.	Including a wide range of actors from different backgrounds who work on human rights increases the likelihood of meeting project objectives and provides the necessary tools to develop mitigation strategies.
MDDH's strength is dually at the grassroots and establishment level, giving the organization a comparative advantage and ensuring internal and external coherence and effectiveness , both for legitimacy and internal synergies over time.	Organizational capacity at multiple scales (national, regional, local) in addition to effective partnership strategies is central to carry-out and adjust, if needed, the project design.
Legislative electoral outcomes that shifted partnership relations affected project implementation and the timeliness of activities. Positive impacts included the ability to advocate among newly elected deputies from different political parties.	Projects that are linked to electoral cycles need solid mitigation strategies, especially if electoral outcomes can affect project activities and timing.
The inter-generational network of human rights professionals that guides the work of MDDH assured the project's substantive contribution, impact , and legitimacy at both local and national levels while underscoring UNDEF value added .	For projects that deal with sensitive topics, such as monitoring human rights performance, a combined expertise of multiple generations lends project credibility while also facilitating access and buy-in at various levels.
Significant impact was observable at the national-level in which legislative actors requested more capacity-building opportunities, and regularly used the project's material outputs in consulting policy. Local perspectives were important to include variation in priorities and opinions in trainings and in drafting recommendations.	Democracy projects must not necessarily prioritize or be constructed on bottom-up approaches to meaningfully include civil society and citizen voices. For objectives that are directly linked to national-level political elites, local advocacy and inclusion can occur at later project stages.
Regional CSO meetings were more impactful and relevant in-person rather than virtually. Connectivity and access issues in marginal areas changed the meeting and discussion culture.	When possible, meetings with local and grassroots CSOs should be held in person to facilitate trust and dynamic debate.
The Rights Index Platform is a critical public resource. It is relevant and sustainable in that it is regularly consulted in drafting proposed policy, reports, and studies.	Project outputs that are open access can attract more interest and serve as a resource beyond the intended beneficiaries. This impacts the democracy contribution while increasing UNDEF visibility.

Conclusion	Recommendation
The sustainability of the project is	Project sustainability that depends on
dependent on both the Implementing	continued content creation (in this case
Partner's strategic mission and priorities, as	updating monitoring recommendations for
well as the ability to secure funding for the	the platform) need to take material
continuity of the project if it requires	resources into account. The Implementing
resources to secure a ripple effect.	Partner could shift the project-based activity
	to its core strategy to ensure continuity.

VI. LESSONS LEARNED

- For sensitive topics such as monitoring government's performance on human rights, organizations that have strong expertise, hold inter-generational membership, and work effectively on both the grassroots and national level, are best placed to carry-out multi-scalar projects and gain support and trust by high-level decision-makers.
- Projects that require input from key decision-makers (in this case members of
 parliament) can start at the national level and then trickle to the grassroots level, for
 more impact. In this case, input from the grassroots level assured nuances in project
 activities and addressed different local needs, but project sustainability and impact
 were assured through the critical work with high-level decision makers.
- Inclusive project designs that rely on human rights actors from diverse professions and backgrounds have a high potential for reaching project objectives and mitigation strategies. In this case, the inclusion of established and new generation human rights activists from different regions, research-based professions (such as academics and journalists), legislators and policy professionals assured project impact and smooth overcoming of delays due to contextual challenges.
- Activities that are based on discussions around complex themes and issues, and are
 organized in remote or marginal areas, are most impactful when held in person, rather
 than virtually. In this project, moving to virtual spaces proved difficult, both
 substantially and technologically, as in these areas regular online attendance was
 difficult to organize remotely, and was further compounded by technological
 impediments, potentially weakening effectiveness.
- Material outputs are most useful when they hold long-term temporal value and become staple references, such as handbooks and online repertories. Material outputs that require regular content update need to be clearly and productively linked to sustainability strategies. This applies to the project's online resource the Rights Index Platform, because UN Treaty Bodies' Recommendations available within the portal require regular updates corresponding with the publication schedules of human rights reports.
- When projects fall on electoral calendars or are directly linked to elected officials which can shift, clear mitigation strategies must be developed to avoid significant project interruptions. In this case, the Implementing Partner was able to effectively use its advocacy skills to garner the attention of newly elected legislators and

legislative staff, ensuring project continuity while shifting a potential barrier to a critical opportunity by working with a different set of decision-makers.

 Building on previous projects creates important synergies and benefits, such as working with previous beneficiaries, relying on alumni networks, and learning from past experiences. In this case, the Implementing Partner relied on its participant network from previous UNDEF-funded programs to ensure an elastic project design that helped effectively adjust activities during pandemic-related lockdowns while enlarging the number of beneficiaries.

ANNEXES

DAC criterion	Evaluation Question	Related sub-questions	Indicator	Data Source	Data Collection Method	Limitation /Risk
Relevance	To what extent was the project, as designed and implemented, suited to context and needs at the project participant, local, and national levels?	 Were the objectives of the project in line with the needs and priorities for democratic development, given the context? To what extent did the inclusive project design reach project objectives? To what extent did changes in elected officials and delegates impact project and was parliamentary actor buy-in sustained post-elections? How were the parliamentary partners selected? Should another project strategy have been preferred rather than the one implemented to better reflect those needs, priorities, and context? Why? How were the locations of activities selected? Did the selected project regions represent a variation in need, or did they exemplify different levels of engagement between CSOs and parliamentary actors? Did the implementing partner consider electoral outcomes in a risk mitigation strategy? How appropriate are/were the strategies developed to deal with identified risks? Was the project overly risk-averse? To what extent did the intervention as designed enhance commitment to the implementation of UN Treaty Bodies' recommendations? 	1. Project indicators 2. Indicators relative to political context (barometer), human rights measures, and indicators relative to electoral context.	Project documentation, project staff and partners, project participants and local authorities	Desk and literature review, interviews	Fully understandi ng shifts in political, context on local and national levels.

Annex 1: Evaluation Matrix and Questions

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Coherence	How well did the project "fit"; i.e. to what extent was the project compatible with other projects and programmes in the country, sector or institution?	 Internal coherence: To what extent did the implementing partner ensure internal coherence, building synergies and interlinkages between the project and other initiatives carried out by the Implementing Partner? Did internal coherence result in significant lessons learned, in terms of beneficiaries, context and project design? External coherence: To what extent is there consistency with other actors' initiatives in the same context? To what extent is there complementarity, harmonization and coordination between the Implementing Partner/the project and other organizations/projects_working_on_buman 	relative to the	Project documentation, project staff and partners, project participants and local authorities, other donors	Desk and literature review, interviews	Scope of other projects and limitation in time to analyze these comprehens ively.
ŏ		• To what extent is there complementarity, harmonization and coordination between the	programs			

	To what extent was the	•	To what extent have the project's objectives	Project	Project	Desk and literature	Ability to
	project, as		been reached and how has this been	indicators	documentation,	review, interviews	meet as
	implemented, able to		measured over the years of implementation?		project staff and	,	many
	achieve objectives and		What is the implementing partner's own		partners,		diverse
	goals?		assessment of project achievements against		beneficiaries and		project
	9		indicators and targets?		local authorities		participants
			To what extent was the project implemented				with different
			as envisaged by the project document? If				experiences/
			not, why not? Was the human rights				diverse
SS			monitoring mechanism developed				background/
ue De			successfully, and does it remain in place?				different
ive			Were the project activities adequate to make				activity
oct			progress towards the project objectives?				involvement
Effectiveness			Did the partnership strategy with local CSOs				within the
ш			and parliamentary actors work in achieving				project for a
			project outputs and objectives?				comprehens
		•	What concretely has the project achieved?				ive
			Where it failed to meet the outputs identified				understandi
			in the project document, why was this?				ng of
		•	How did material outputs (monitoring				effectivenes
			manuals for CSOs and parliamentary actors,				s beyond
			online platform, documentary film) advance				reports.
			the project towards the overall objective?				
	To what extent was	•	Was there a reasonable relationship	Project	Project	Desk and literature	Available
	there a reasonable		between project inputs and project outputs?	indicators	documentation,	review, interviews	information
	relationship between	•	To what extent was the relationship between		contracts with	and further	in Final
	resources expended		resources expended and project impact		partners and their	documentation	Narrative
L .	and project impacts?		reasonable?		financial reports	requests	Report
Efficiency		•	Were project activities and material outputs				submitted
ier			cost-effective and was the budget				and missing
fic			constructed and implemented in such a way				information.
μ			that the project met its objective?				
		•	Did institutional arrangements promote cost-				
			effectiveness and accountability?				
		•	Was the budget designed, and then				
			implemented, in a way that enabled the				
			project to meet its objectives?				

 To what extent has the project put in place processes and procedures supporting the role of civil society in contributing to democratization, or to direct promotion of democracy? To what extent did the project integrate CSO and parliamentary actor work in an inclusive and impactful way? To what extent did the monitoring mechanism help observe government efforts to implement UN treaty body recommendations? Have the project participants experienced

				B I I I I	0
To what extent I project, as designed and implemented created what is be a continuing impetus towards democratic development? Attraction Attracting Attraction	 gned processes and systems that are likely to support continued impact? To what extent have project participants taken ownership of the monitoring 	indicators	Project staff and partners, project participants and local authorities	Desk and literature review, review of material project outputs, interviews, visit of the field and implemented projects	Qualitative assessment to identify which practices are on- going.

UNDEF value added	To what extent was UNDEF able to take advantage of its unique position and comparative advantage to achieve results that could not have been achieved had support come from other donors? And what was the specific contribution of UNDEF's Lessons Learned in this respect?	What was UNDEF able to accomplish, through the project that could not as well have been achieved by alternative projects, other donors, or other stakeholders (Government, NGOs, etc.). How was UNDEF able to rely on its position to add unique value and achieve results? Did project design and implementing modalities exploit UNDEF's comparative advantage in the form of an explicit mandate to focus on democratization issues? Was the UNDEF "brand" useful for participants and beneficiaries? Visibility: did all documents that were printed and distributed during the course of the project include UNDEF as the funder? UNDEF encourages Implementing Partners to continue using the UNDEF Lessons Learned database (undeflessonslearned.org) following project launch. To what extent did the use of	 Presence of UNDEF logo in important project materials and outputs self- evaluation by Implementi ng Partner compared to alternative projects. 	Outputs and materials	Review of documents, media mentions and social media posts	Ability to gather all the documents and understandi ng of the implementati on strategy with the other partners.
		launch. To what extent did the use of UNDEF Lessons Learned support or influence project implementation?				

Annex 2: Documents Reviewed

Project Documentation:

UDF-18-806-MOR Project Document and Budget "Monitoring Implementation of UN Treaty Bodies' Recommendations in Morocco"

UDF-18-806-MOR Narrative Progress Reports (NPR M2, NPR M3)

UDF-18-806-MOR Financial Reports (FUR M2, FUR M3)

UDF-18-806-MOR Milestone Verification Reports (MVR M2, MVR M3)

UDF-18-806-MOR Final Narrative Report and Annexes

UDF-18-806-MOR Extension Requests 1 & 2

Reports, Project Documents, Brochures and Handbooks produced by Implementing Partner

Additional Documentation:

A. El Hannouchi, 2023, *Parliament and Human Rights References and Practices*, Dar Al-Manahi, Casablanca

MDDH, 2023, The Role of Parliament in Monitoring and Following Recommendations Issued by UN Mechanisms (Bodies), Rabat

MDDH, 2022, "Press Release, July 22, 2022. (https://mediateurddh.org.ma/press-release/)

MDDH website. http://mediateurddh.org.ma

MDDH, La Situation des Droits et Libertés au Maroc pour l'année 2019 (June 2020)

MDDH Proposals Related to the Internal Procedures of the Lower and Upper Houses

S. Slyomovics, 2005, *The Performance of Human Rights in Morocco*, University of Pennsylvania Press, Philadelphia

J. Smolin, 2013, *Morocco Noir. Police, Crime, and Politics in Popular Culture*, Indiana University Press, Bloomington

UNHR, 2024, "Experts of the Committee on Enforced Disappearances Comment Morocco on its Transitional Justice Process, Ask Questions on Cases of Disappeared Migrants and on Criminal Investigations into Cases of Enforced Disappearances"

(https://www.ohchr.org/en/news/2024/09/examen-du-rapport-initial-du-maroc-au-ced-labsencedinfraction-specifique-de)

UNHR, 2021, "Committee on Enforced Disappearances Report Submitted by Morocco under Article 29 (1) of the Convention, due in 2015" CED/C/MAR/1

Annex 3: Schedule of Interviews

Jihad Balghzal	Project Manager, MDDH	October 28, 2024 10:00-11:30 at Prometheus Institute (Implementing Partner)
Youssef Ghouirgate, Ismail Azough, Abderazak El Hannouchi	MDDH General Secretary and Board Members	October 28, 2024 11:30-12:30 at Prometheus Institute (Implementing Partner)
Hayat Mechane	Former President of Association la Voix Femmes Amazigh	October 28, 2024 14.30-15.30, Rabat Medina
Malika Zakhini	Parliamentary Member of the USFP group at the Lower House	October 29, 2024 15:00-16:30 Office of the USFP Parliamentary Group at the Lower House
Ahmed Moufid	Director of the Parliamentary Center for Studies and Research	October 30, 2024 10:00-11:30 Lower House
Asmaa El Amrani	President of UMT Group at the Upper House and Director of the UMT Group	October 29, 2024 12:00-13:00 Office of the UMT Group at the Lower House
Sami El Moudni	President of Forum des Jeunes Journalistes	October 30, 2024 14:30-15:30
Youssef Bouallala	Office of the UN Resident Coordinator	October 30, 2024 16:00-17:30 United Nations Compound
Mohamed Nebou	Instance Marocaine des Droits de l'Homme	November 21, 2024 Virtual 15:00-16:00

Annex 4: Acronyms

CAT	Committee Against Torture
CCDH	Conseil Consulatif des Droits de l'Homme
CCRP	Human Rights Committee
CED	Committee on Enforced Disappearances
CEDAW	Committee on the Elimination of Discrimination against Women
CERD	Committee on the Elimination of Racial Discrimination
CESCR	Committee on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights
CMW	Committee on Migrant Workers
CNDH	Conseil National des Droits de l'Homme
CRC	Committee on the Rights of the Child
CRPD	Committee on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities
CSO	Civil Society Organization
IER	Equality and Reconciliation Committion (Instance Equité et Reconciliation
MDDH	Le Médiateur pour la Démocratie et les Droits de l'Homme
MP	Member of Parliament
OECD	Organization for Economic Development and Cooperation
PJD	Parti de la Justice et du Développement
SPT	Subcommittee on Prevention of Torture and Other Cruel, Inhuman or Degrading
	Treatment of Punishment
UN	United Nations
UNDEF	United Nations Democracy Fund
UNHR	United Nations Human Rights
USFP	Union Socialiste des Forces Populaires