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Date: Tue, 29 Apr 2008 12:36:57 +0000
To: "Association Beni Znassen - ABCDS" <abcds.asso@gmail.com>
Subject: Communiqué de l'ABCDS contre l'article diffamatoire du Journal
"Assabah"

Communiqué à l'opinion publique nationale et internationale
PRESS RELEASE TO NATIONAL AND INTERNATIONAL PUBLIC OPINION

In reference to the defamatory article aimed at the association Beni Znassen, 'ABCDS', and its president Mr Hicham Baraka, published in the columns of the Moroccan Arabic newspaper 'Assabah' on Saturday, April 26, 2008 (page 9), and entitled 'In a furious campaign against the image of Morocco, a Moroccan association has conducted a European tour on behalf of refugees which is damaging to Morocco', the association Beni Znassen Association for Culture, Development and Solidarity, 'ABCDS', wishes to voice its indignation, protest this disgraceful outrage, and denounce the accusations and insults directed by the author of the article against their organisation and their chairman.

This article is seen as a manoeuvre for the purpose of discrediting ABCDS and smearing and dishonouring the reputation of its activists. The author has chosen to give his article a boost by adding allegations that are unfounded and ascribed to never identified 'sources'. What is more, the chairman of ABCDS has never been contacted by that same author in order to ascertain his views. ABCDS can only interpret this defamatory article as part of a sponsored strategy that supports silencing independent voices through, among other means, threats and intimidation of those activists who are engaged in working for the rights of migrants and against repressive policies that do not respect fundamental human rights and construe that this is happening in any geographical space, wherever these strategies are decided upon and applied.

Conferences in London, Paris, as well as in Hamburg were organised within the framework of a European campaign conducted by ABCDS between 31 March and 21 April 2008 with the aim of making the players in European civil society connect with the human reality of sub-Saharan migrants left in limbo in Morocco in violation of their fundamental rights. We have blamed the countries of Europe and Morocco for the egregious outrages against the human rights and well being of those migrants who are victimised in the name of protecting the borders of Europe.

Furthermore, inasmuch as this manner of denunciation on the part of ABCDS is in conformity with the express will of the Kingdom of Morocco in its desire to see the question of human rights at the heart of its concerns, this article from 'Assabah' will cause more harm to the image of Morocco and an independent and responsible press than will a denunciation of the reality in Morocco that is known to all.

ABCDS refuses to shrink from the task of revealing the full consequences of the closure and militarisation of the borders to the fundamental rights of human beings faced with these consequences. It is indeed the author of this article and his journal who appear to be singularly and uniquely committed to a lack of knowledge and comprehension of this situation.

ABCDS is calling for all organisations in all spheres who share an identity of purpose to unite both in staying the course and driving forward a more dynamic approach for respecting human rights and supporting activists. It is calling on them to mobilise against the criminalisation of active solidarity and all the tough repressive measures that are inveighed against activists and their freedom of speech and opinion whether that be in Morocco or elsewhere.

ABCDS and Mr. Hicham Baraka wish to bring this to the attention of national and international public opinion: that they reserve the right to use all legal means in Morocco and in Germany to assure that everyone assumes responsibility for defamatory statements, including those who are blamed.