

URGENT ACTION

SAHRAWI ACTIVIST'S ARBITRARY DETENTION AND PROLONGED SOLITARY CONFINEMENT

Moroccan authorities arrested Saharawi activist Mustapha Dihani on October 21, 2025 on bogus terrorism charges and detained him in Salé 2 prison. Guards beat him in prison, and he was denied access to adequate health care. Prison authorities have held him in prolonged solitary confinement since he was first detained. His next trial hearing is scheduled for October 15, 2026. Moroccan authorities must immediately release Mustapha Dihani, investigate allegations of ill-treatment in detention, including to obtain forced confessions while in police custody, and end his solitary confinement pending his release.

TAKE ACTION:

- Write a letter to the government official(s) listed. Use the sample letter below as a guide or use your own words.
- [Click here](#) to report your action(s) on **UA 104.26**. We share this number with the officials we are trying to persuade.

Head of Government Fatima Ezzahra El Mansouri

Palais Royal Touarga Rabat 10070, Morocco

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Send a copy of your letter to the address below

CC: Embassy of Morocco in the United States

Ambassador Youssef Amrani

3508 International Dr NW,

Washington, DC 20008

Web Contact Form:

<https://us.diplomatie.ma/form/contact>

Your Excellency,

I am concerned about Saharawi activist **Mustapha Dihani** who has been arbitrarily detained for one year under unfounded charges of “membership in a criminal gang” and terrorism, based solely on confessions he repudiated before the investigative judge. He also told the judge that he had been threatened and ill-treated in police custody. Mustapha is held in solitary confinement and banned from speaking to other prisoners.

Mustapha reported to his family that guards in Salé 2 prison repeatedly beat him and deprived him of food for several days during his first months of detention. Prison authorities delayed the administration of painkillers for four days and denied him access to an independent doctor.

Mustapha's lawyer told his family that, during a visit on April 20, Mustapha had marked physical weakness and severe psychological distress. When his family visited him on August 16, Mustapha was experiencing severe trembling, recurrent panic attacks, acute chest pain, and nerve pain in his neck. He also expressed an intense fear of death, which he attributed to provocations by prison staff. His calls with his family were cut off when he tried to describe his ill treatment.

I urge you to ensure the immediate release of Mustapha Dihani. In the meantime, I call on you to end his solitary confinement and ensure that an effective investigation is opened into his allegations of ill-treatment in detention. Pending his release, he must be granted access to adequate health care and held in conditions that meet international standards.

Yours sincerely,

ADDITIONAL INFORMATION

Mustapha Dihani is a web-developer and IT specialist. He developed the website Wesatimes, a news platform covering politics in the Western Sahara, Sahrawi rights, and civil society. He also supported with the IT systems of other Sahrawi activist groups.

In September 2023, Mustapha Dihani left Western Sahara following systematic exclusion from public employment and sustained harassment of his family by Moroccan authorities. On October 30, 2023, Somaliland authorities arrested him after he irregularly crossed the border from Ethiopia. On October 6, 2025, Mustapha Dihani was released pursuant to a presidential pardon issued by the President of Somaliland. While traveling to a third country, he was detained during a stopover at Dubai airport. He was later forcibly returned to Morocco on October 21, 2025. On arrival in Casablanca, authorities placed him in pre-trial detention and denied him access to legal counsel until his sixth day in detention.

Mustapha Dihani has been charged with “membership in a criminal gang” and terrorism-related offenses under Morocco’s counterterrorism Law No. 03-03. Amnesty International has reviewed the referral order from the court and found that it relies on Mustapha’s confessions with no further material or credible evidence to substantiate the charges. The same referral order mentions that Mustapha denied all the allegations against him before the investigative judge. Law No. 03-03 (2003) fails to ensure adequate procedural safeguards for individuals investigated on terrorism-related charges. It notably allows prolonged police custody and defers access to legal counsel until the sixth day of detention, increasing the risk of torture and other ill-treatment. The law has been repeatedly criticized by [international human rights mechanisms](#), including the [UN Human Rights Committee](#), [the Committee against Torture](#), the [UN Special Rapporteur on torture and other cruel, inhuman, or degrading treatment or punishment](#) and the [UN Working Group on Arbitrary Detention](#).

Under the Moroccan Law No. 10.23, it sets out that the maximum period of isolation is twenty days, except for health reasons, extendable at most twice. Mustapha has been in solitary confinement for over 300 days, with no document establishing a legal basis for this continued extension. The same Law requires a medical examination at least three times per week for a detainee held in isolation. Such an examination has not been carried out even once on Mustapha. Article 131 of Law No. 10.23 also guarantees the right to complain and to seek redress.

International human rights standards, such as the United Nations’ Standard Minimum Rules for the Treatment of Prisoners, define solitary confinement as spending 22 hours or more per day without meaningful human contact. They provide that prolonged solitary confinement – over 15 consecutive days – is considered cruel, inhuman, or degrading treatment. The case of Mustapha Dihani forms part of a broader pattern of repression targeting human rights defenders and [pro-self-determination Sahrawi activists](#), who in recent years have been subjected to surveillance, [intimidation](#), restrictions on freedom of movement, and [criminal proceedings](#) based on national security-related charges.

PREFERRED LANGUAGE TO ADDRESS TARGET: Arabic, French, English, or your own language.

PLEASE TAKE ACTION AS SOON AS POSSIBLE UNTIL: April 13, 2027

NAME AND PRONOUN: Mustapha Dihani (He/Him)