

# MOROCCO

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## I. GENERAL INFORMATION

The kingdom of Morocco is an Islamic, democratic and social constitutional hereditary monarchy. Since the enthronement of his majesty King Mohamed VI on 23 July 1999, Morocco has seen major changes in different domains, including changes in its political structures. The constitution set up in 1962 and officially adjusted in 1970, 1972, 1992 and 1996 continues to uphold the king as both the head of state and spiritual leader. *Political system*

As head of state, King Mohamed VI has the right to appoint the prime minister. He can also appoint and remove from office the members of the cabinet. He can dissolve parliament, arrange new elections and rule by decree. Since the reform of the constitution in 1996, parliament has comprised two chambers: the Assembly of Representatives (Chambre des Représentants) and the Assembly of Councillors (Chambre des Conseillers). The current 325 representatives in the Assembly of Representatives are elected directly every five years. All citizens at the age of 18 and above are allowed to vote. The 270 councillors are elected by local and regional councils that are elected directly. Every three years, one-third of the councillors are elected. The power of parliament is very limited, but has been reinforced by reforms of the constitution in 1992. Therefore, it has at present the right to fix the budget, propose laws, question ministers and convoke research committees. It can also overthrow the government by an act of impeachment.

The constitution stands to establish basic civic rights. These include freedom of movement and settlement in all parts of the kingdom, freedom of opinion, freedom of expression in all its forms, freedom of public gathering, freedom of association and the freedom to belong to any union or political group of one's choice (chapter 1, article 9). The constitution states that all Moroccan citizens are equal before the law, that men and women shall enjoy equal political rights, that secrecy of personal correspondence shall be preserved, that opportunities for employment in public offices and positions shall be uniformly open to all citizens, that all citizens shall have equal rights in seeking education and employment and that the right of strike shall be guaranteed (chapter 1, articles 5, 8, 11, 12, 13 and 14). *Constitution*

These rights are not fully established in practice however. Freedom of the press and freedom of assembly, for instance, are not permitted completely. Moreover, the constitution underscores, in many of its sections, key lines on the expression of critical opinions concerning the king, the Moroccan state, religion (Islam), as well as Morocco's claims for the Western Saharan territories.

The Moroccan constitution indicates that political parties, unions, districts, councils and trade chambers shall participate in the organisation and representation of the country's citizens and that there shall be no one-party system (chapter 1, article 3). Political parties in Morocco, however, do not have any special functions. They can build coalitions but, as mentioned above, the king has the ultimate power to choose the prime minister and members of the government. Political parties in Morocco do not operate within the constitutional underlying structure which, for instance,

characterizes the functioning of political parties in Germany, according to article 21 of the German Basic Law (Grundgesetz). Apart from article 3, parties are not mentioned in the constitution. Nevertheless, political parties in Morocco do receive public funds, as will be discussed below.

*State of democracy* Morocco defines itself as a constitutional monarchy, though it cannot be called a liberal democratic or constitutional monarchy in the European sense of the term, for the fundamental reason that all important decisions concerning political directions and political staff are taken by the king. Morocco has taken a different path towards (liberal) democracy ever since King Mohammed VI – who peacefully acceded to the throne upon the death of his father – implemented a number of reforms (See *The Washington Times*, 29 December 2005). He formed the Equity and Reconciliation Commission to examine alleged abuses during his own father's reign and to provide reparations to those who had suffered or whose family members had suffered under his rule (Slyomovics 2001). Elections, for their part, are increasingly moving towards fairer and more transparent conditions. However, behind these publicly fair elections, heavy trading for votes and fraud in parliamentary elections occur (Herb 2004). Ahmed El Hamzaoui commented in his book *Transition to Democracy in Morocco* that it "is no use holding elections that are eventually contested on account of falsification and bribery" (Hamzaoui 2007).

Morocco has unquestionably seen improvements in civil liberties in recent years, notably with regard to freedom of expression and association, but the expansion of political liberties has lagged far behind (Sweet 2001). Transgressions are severely penalized when discovered. Candidates' phones are monitored during elections to prevent any possible corruption. Aware of the workings of the government in this regard, some candidates have sought to change the language of trading. Some have been arrested for having been heard to use code phrases such as "did you give hay [money] to the sheep [people]?" In spite of these violations of principle rights, there is a serious sense of commitment to better instil the pillars of democracy in the political sphere. The king has intervened to declare infringements during elections highly punishable.

As regards education, the government is working to recruit more degree holders and to incorporate more women into political life (Maddy-Weitzman 2005). In this respect, Morocco can be said to be one of the pioneers of the Arab world ready to break with its gloomy past, to accelerate its democratic procedures and to redress the tarnished picture it has had for so long – indeed, a scenario which was foretold by John Damis more than thirty years ago (Damis 1972). However, observers of the Moroccan political scene continue to await the materialization of what has been called "the rebirth of political life".

The parliamentary elections of 7 September 2007 were claimed to have been the most transparent and fairest in Moroccan history (Schiller 2007). The Ministry of the Interior, it was highlighted, did not try to influence the results nor "purchase" votes with money or political pressure. Certainly this was the reason behind the low participation rate: compared to 52 per cent in 2002, only 37 per cent of the voters cast their ballot. When considering the invalid and empty ballot papers, only one of four entitled to take part in elections voted for a candidate. The Parti Istiqlal (PI), the winner of the 2007 elections, received 52 seats (48 in 2002). Its leader (secretary-general) is Abbas Al-Fassi, the current prime minister. His party leads a coalition government which also includes the Union Socialiste des Forces Populaires (USFP), Partie du Progrès et du Socialisme (PPS) and Rassemblement National des Indépendants (RNI). Further to this, the PI is likely to depend on the support of the newly founded party of the former deputy minister of the interior, Fouad Ali El Himma, which actually recently withdrew its support of the government.

*Separation of powers* The state powers and the division between them are as follows:

- Executive power: As mentioned above, the king has the executive power in the political system of Morocco. According to article 23 of the Moroccan constitution, the king is inviolable and holy. He presides over the council of ministers, enjoying the right to appoint and remove from office the prime minister (chapter 2, articles 24 and 25). He also determines all ministerial posts (with

the approval of the prime minister and with consideration of the majority in parliament). However, the key portfolios – the so-called “departments of sovereignty” – are given to technocrats without seeking the advice of the government. The king can also dissolve parliament, suspend the constitution, arrange new elections and rule by royal decree (*Dahir*). He is commander-in-chief of the army and chief of the general staff, as well as the country’s religious leader. Moreover, he is the highest institution in foreign affairs; all state contracts must be presented to him. The government itself only plays a minor role in Morocco.

- Legislative power: Since 1996, parliament has consisted of two chambers, the Assembly of Representatives and the Assembly of Councillors. These scarcely influence the formation of the government however, as the king appoints all ministers and secretaries of state without being bound by the constitution to the majority in parliament, even with the electoral results in 2007 taken into account. A system with checks and balances, as in Western democratic and constitutional monarchies such as Britain or Spain, does not exist. Despite its efforts for decentralization, Morocco remains a centralized state.
- Judicial power: Similar to the legislative power, judicial power is independent, though only in theory. Judicial power is administered by the High Council of Justice with members such as the general attorney, the first president of the Supreme Court (Cour Suprême), the royal chief law officer, as well as the president of the civil rights chamber. Up to now, the king’s influence on the Supreme Court has been huge. Likewise, he can order judges by decree (UNDP). The Supreme Court is divided into five chambers: constitutional law, civil law, criminal law, administrative law and social law.

The chamber for constitutional law consists of the president of the Supreme Court, along with three judges, appointed by the first chamber of parliament, the Assembly of Representatives, and by the king. The constitutional branch of the Supreme Court is empowered to “determine the constitutionality of legislation, excluding royal legislation. In addition, the Constitutional chamber is authorized to review the legality of election procedures” (UNDP).

The 325 representatives in the Assembly of Representatives are elected directly every five years. All citizens at the age of 18 and above are allowed to vote. 295 seats are assigned according to results in the 295 constituencies. The rest of the seats are distributed according to a national list. This list serves as a means for political parties to increase the number of women in parliament. The current government, consisting of the Parti Istiqlal, the Union Socialiste des Forces Populaires, the Partie du Progrès et du Socialisme and the Rassemblement National des Indépendants is led by Prime Minister Abbas Al-Fassi (of the PI). It was supported in parliament by the Partie Authenticité et Modernité (PAM), which recently withdrew its support of the government. Currently, the Moroccan government is without a clear majority.

*National assembly*

One-third of the 270 councillors in the Assembly of Councillors are elected every three years for nine-year terms of office. They are elected by local and regional directly elected councils. 162 councillors (three-fifths) are elected in each region by an electoral college, consisting of various representatives of regional authorities (local and regional councils). Of the other 108 councillors, one-fifth is elected by an electoral college in each region consisting of representatives of professional organizations and worker associations, and one-fifth by employee representatives, elected on a national level (chapter 3, article 58).

In brief, parliament has two main tasks: firstly, legislation, that is, voting for the budget; and secondly, surveying the government, by fact-finding committees (Commissions d’enquête), for example. With regard to legislation, “(f)or a limited period of time, and for a defined purpose, the Government may be empowered by the law to take, by decree, measures normally falling within the purview of the law” (article 45). The supervision of the government mainly involves the establishment of fact-finding committees (Commissions d’enquête). “Apart from the standing committees referred to in the foregoing paragraph, parliamentary fact-finding committees may be established on the King’s initiative or upon the request of the majority of the members of one of the two Houses and within each House, with the mission of inquiring about specific facts and

submitting findings thereon to that House" (article 42). Fact-finding committees shall always be temporary, make a report and be governed by an organic law.

The main challenge to the Moroccan parliament is the strong position of the executive, dominated by the king. Although given some rights and responsibilities, the king is the central element behind all important decisions, while the government takes the subordinate position of carrying out the decisions. Therefore, the power of parliament in the political system of Morocco is also limited, despite regular discussions on strengthening its role.

Given the fact that Moroccan representatives in parliament often change, and given the frequent creation of new political parties as well as spin-offs, it is difficult to link Moroccan parties to parliamentary groups. Therefore, the following table (last updated 6 May 2009) shows parliamentary groups (the parties mainly represented within the parliamentary group are given in brackets) and their current seats (Moroccan Parliament 2009).

**Table 1 | CURRENT DISTRIBUTION OF SEATS IN THE ASSEMBLY OF REPRESENTATIVES**

Parliamentary group	Seats <sup>(1)</sup>	Present status
Groupe Rassemblement et de Modernité (PAM and RNI)	85	PM/supp. <sup>(2)</sup>
Groupe Istiqlalien de l'Unité et de l'Egalitarisme (PI)	55	PPM/GS
Groupe Justice et Développement (PJD)	46	O
Groupe de la Mouance (MP)	41	O
Groupe Socialiste (USFP)	41	GJ
Groupe Constitutionnel (UC)	26	O
Groupe d'Alliances de Forces Progressistes et Démocratiques (PPS)	19	GJ
Députés du Parti Travailleiste (PT)	4	O
Députés de la Gauche Démocratique Unifiée (PSU)	4	O
Députés sans Appartenance Politique (SAP)	3	O

<sup>(1)</sup> Number of seats of a total 324.

<sup>(2)</sup> Recently, the PAM withdrew its support of the government. Currently, the Moroccan government is without a clear majority.

Abbreviations: PM/supp. = party/parliamentary group supporting the prime minister/government

PPM/GS = party/parliamentary group of the prime minister and senior partner in government

GJ = party/parliamentary group is junior partner in the government

O = party/parliamentary group is in opposition.

As mentioned above, Prime Minister Abass Al-Fassi is the president of the Parti Istiqlal, the senior partner in government with the Union Socialiste des Forces Populaires, the Parti du Progrès et du Socialisme and the Rassemblement National des Indépendants. At the time when the parliamentary elections were conducted in 2007, the Parti Authenticité et Modernité did not exist. It was founded later on the initiative of the former deputy minister of the interior, Fouad Ali El Himma, who succeeded in getting several MPs of other parties on board. The PAM – i.e., the parliamentary group Groupe Rassemblement et de Modernité of 85 members of parliament – is now the strongest

parliamentary group in the Moroccan parliament. Yet the PAM is not part of the government; it was supporting the government and the prime minister in parliament, but recently withdrew its support, meaning that the Moroccan government is currently without a clear majority.

The most important changes within the past five years – i.e., since the parliamentary elections in November 2002 – are, apart from the creation of numerous new parties, spin-offs, alliances and re-namings, the low participation rate of voters (51 per cent in 2002, and only 35 per cent in 2007) and the decline of the Union Socialiste des Forces Populaires. The USFP is now only the fourth strongest parliamentary group in 2007 with 41 seats (together with the Groupe de la Mouance), while in 2002 it achieved most of the seats.

## II. PARTIES AND THE PARTY SYSTEM

### II.1 Party System

Political parties are permitted under chapter 1, article 3 of the constitution, but in the past the strategies of division and co-optation employed by King Hassan II rendered them largely ineffective. Since 2006, there has been a new law (*Dahir no. 01-06-18 du 15 moharrem 1527 [14 February 2006] portant promulgation de la loi no. 36-04 relative aux partis politiques*) that regulates party organization (Moroccan Law on Political Parties). Accordingly, political parties in Morocco are to participate in a democratic manner in the management of public affairs (article 1). Any party founded on religious, linguistic, ethnic or regional principles is prohibited (article 4). Furthermore, the law regulates internal party administration, i.e., concerning party meetings and statutes and the requirement to declare them to the Ministry of the Interior (article 11 and the following). As to internal democracy (elections and selection processes), the law does not give any precise information. Only articles 21 and 24 point out that the party constitution has to correspond to democratic rules. In addition, article 25 specifies that the party statute must contain the election process of the candidates. Furthermore, there is a regulation for party financing (article 28 and the following), the result of which is that Moroccan political parties are financed by membership fees, donations, earnings of social or cultural activities and public funds. Public funds are paid if the party gets at least 5 per cent of votes at national elections. It will lose its rights to subvention by not respecting certain requirements, e.g., failing to hold a party conference over a period of five years (article 40).

*Legal regulation*

The new law on political parties assigns parties a new role and function insofar as it is their responsibility to “organize and represent the citizens” (article 3). However, it imposes unfeasible conditions and procedural complexities for party organization: the need to submit a file to the Ministry of the Interior, including a validated licence with three signatures by three of the founding members and three copies of the draft of the statute, as well as the draft programme; and a written commitment of at least 300 founding members, who must be enrolled in the electoral regulations and distributed according to their headquarters, across half of the regions of Morocco (article 8). Given the slow pace of administrative and bureaucratic work of administrative departments in Morocco, the amount of required documents and further information parties have to submit in order to get the new law licensed may prevent parties from two of the major objectives of democratic regimes, namely, competition for access to power and the application of party programmes (TelQuel).

With respect to national elections, political parties must be authorized by the Ministry of the Interior. Moroccan expatriates are not permitted to vote in legislative elections. The Islamist *Partie de la Justice et du Développement* (PJD) levelled sharp criticism at the government for not including opposition parties in debates. The new electoral code regulates the organization of parties, but tasks emerge mainly from the guidelines of the parties themselves. In 2007, the Moroccan ministers of the interior and justice declared strict organizational and legal measures to pursue the corruptors of political life in the country, including referring them to court in order to safeguard the credibility of the legislative elections that were held in September 2007.

The new electoral law has initiated various rules regulating party organization, including the fact that parties must have a clear written programme (article 20) to help to distinguish between different parties' ideologies and to facilitate the process of classification. The fact that parties must be organized on the basis of democratic principles is conceived to allow all members to participate actively in the management of different party organs. The adoption of democratic standards to select and recommend candidates for the various electoral consultations is designed to contribute to the development of democracy and the decline of parties oriented primarily towards their leaders. In addition, parties should stipulate in their statutes the proportion of women and youth to be involved in the governing body of the party (article 22). This is to help inject new blood into the veins of political life. The new law has also prevented the phenomenon of political nomads (members travelling from party to party), which spoiled the political and parliamentary life of Morocco (article 5).

*Party financing* More importantly, the new law has linked the financial amount of support for each political party with the number of parliamentary seats obtained by the party and the number of votes obtained in the elections (article 35). This will inevitably push parties to compete with others in elections as long as the number of votes and seats guarantees financial profitability. In the same vein, parties are prevented from receiving any direct or indirect funding from local communities, public institutions or companies in which the state holds all or part of its capital (article 30). This may contribute to the achievement of the independence of the parties, lessening their dependence on the authority of these institutions.

In order to control such a financial network more effectively, the Supreme Council of the Mandate, an institution responsible for controlling the financial practices of political parties, is charged to monitor the accounts of political parties, annual fee subsidies and to indict a total or partial use of subsidies granted by the state for purposes other than those that were initially granted for as punishable and as an act of embezzlement (articles 37 and 38). This is designed to improve the financial transparency of political parties. Equally, any party that has not held a conference within four years is deprived of the annual subsidy (article 40). This regulation exists in order to contribute to the renewal of political leadership and to the type of movement and activity in partisan work. As a general rule, the financing and organization of the parties combine the contribution of public funding and contribution of party members in the financing of the activities of their party, as well as the imposition of what is called "the tax" on those who hold senior positions on behalf of the party.

*Relevant parties* Over the past five years there has been an increasing number of political parties in Morocco, especially due to spin-offs and the creation of new parties. Based on the current parliamentary representation, the following political parties can be considered as relevant (in alphabetical order):

- Mouvement Populaire (MP);
- Parti Authenticité et Modernité (PAM);
- Parti Istiqlal (PI);
- Parti de la Justice et du Développement (PJD);
- Parti du Progrès et du Socialisme (PPS);
- Parti Socialiste Unifié (PSU);
- Parti Travailleiste (PT);
- Rassemblement National des Indépendants (RNI);
- Union Constitutionnelle (UC);
- Union Socialiste des Forces Populaires (USFP).

The other political parties in Morocco are quite small and have only a weak representation in the Moroccan parliament. They often fuse ad hoc with other parties, or rather parliamentary groups, such as the Parti de l'Environnement et du Développement (PED), which is part of the parliamentary group Groupe Rassemblement et de Modernité. Beyond this, there are some MPs wearing the abbreviation SAP ("sans appartenance politique"), which means that they do not have a party ticket.

As the Moroccan party system is highly fragmented with a high rate of change between parliamentary groups, it is necessary to regularly consult the list of parliamentary groups on the website of the Moroccan parliament in order to stay up-to-date.

The following table classifies the Moroccan parties according to their ideological orientation. As it is sometimes impossible to allocate them clearly (e.g., the PI represents both religious and conservative values), some parties appear twice (Svec 2007).

*Party families*

**Table 2 | IDEOLOGICAL COMPOSITION OF THE PARTY SYSTEM**

	<b>Name</b>	<b>Present situation<sup>(1)</sup></b>	<b>Situation prior to present<sup>(2)</sup></b>
Rural parties	Mouvement Populaire (MP) <sup>(3)</sup>	O	GJ
	Rassemblement National des Indépendants (RNI) <sup>(3)</sup>	PM/supp. <sup>(6)</sup>	PM/supp.
Labour parties	Union Socialiste des Forces Populaires (USFP)	GJ	GS <sup>(4)</sup>
	Parti du Progrès et du Socialisme (PPS)	GJ	GJ
Parties with religious values, programmes and voters	Parti Istiqlal (PI) <sup>(3)   (5)</sup>	PPM/GS	GJ
	Parti de la Justice et du Développement (PJD)	O	O
Conservative parties	Parti Istiqlal (PI)	PPM/GS	GJ
Liberal parties	Union Constitutionnelle (UC)	O	O
	Mouvement Populaire (MP)	O	GJ
Green/environmental	Parti de l'Environnement et du Développement (PED)	PM/supp. <sup>(6)</sup>	O
Others	Parti Authenticit� et Modernit� (PAM)	PM/supp.	NR

<sup>(1)</sup>Based on parliamentary elections 2007.

<sup>(2)</sup>Based on parliamentary elections 2002.

<sup>(3)</sup>MP, RNI and PI are patronage parties with strong roots in rural areas.

<sup>(4)</sup>Leading political force but PM was without party ticket.

<sup>(5)</sup>Not classical religious, but refers to Islamic values.

<sup>(6)</sup>Within the parliamentary group Groupe Rassemblement et de Modernit .

Abbreviations: PM/supp. = Party/parliamentary group supporting the prime minister/government

PPM/GS = Party/parliamentary group of the prime minister and senior partner in government

GS = Party/parliamentary group is senior partner in government

GJ = Party/parliamentary group is junior partner in government

O = Party/parliamentary group is in opposition | NR = no parliamentary representation.

The three main reasons behind the formation of particular parties in Morocco are the following:

*Origins of parties*

- Parties are the result of ideological clashes in society, e.g., between Islamists, nationalists and labour;
- Parties are a mixture of traditionally grown and stable milieux, along with people running for office and patronage relationships, a phenomenon which can be found in Morocco with notable parties, i.e., a conglomeration of people with high local influence;
- Parties have an ethnic or religious basis (such as the Berber MP or Islamist PJD), but this in fact is not allowed in Morocco owing to the possibility of provoking regional and ethnic clashes.

*General significance of parties* According to the liberal (Western) conception of a democracy, political parties play a central role as a bridge between society and the political system. They are an instrument for the expression and aggregation of interests representing the people on a political level. They also serve as mobilizers of the people, i.e., they recruit political staff and form the government (Axtmann 2004). In Morocco, however, political parties are basically vehicles for individual candidates to pursue their material and power-related ends. Only restrictively, they also serve as a terrain where the particular political ideologies (Islamic, labour, etc.) are entertained.

*Voter-party relations* People vote, there or thereabouts, within similar mindsets and ambitions. Generally, ideological reasons govern people's voting decisions, but it is worth referring again to the high rate of patronage, i.e., that votes are bought with money. As mentioned above, the parliamentary elections in 2007 were regarded as the fairest ever held in Morocco. The Ministry of the Interior played a fair and neutral role that astonished most observers, local and global. Ironically, this could have been one of the reasons behind the low-voting statistics (37 per cent) because few parties were able "buy" votes and the vote market broke down (Lanz 2007). The other traceable reason behind such low participation in the ballot is attributable to the general dissatisfaction with and disenchantment about politics in the country and the political class (especially in urban areas).

This rationalizes the unstable relations between parties and voters. During the past five years, these relations have become less stable because of the absence of closeness between the party and the voter and the intersection of their interests. Here the awareness of the individual (in the degree of interaction) is based on a complete retreat from the party, and from all political practices that lack real supervision. This is a political gap and a clear example of a lack of political faith and of an ominous setback and move away from politics, as witnessed in the elections of 2007. Furthermore, the increase in the practice of parties' insincere interactions with the electorate, the absence of accountability, parties' general selfishness and the corruption within the system all contribute to exacerbate voter apathy.

## II.2 Individual Parties

*Party membership* Researchers interested in political parties in Morocco will notice the absence of statistics concerning the number of members in these parties. A study of a sample of four parties, namely the Parti Istiqlal, Partie de la Justice et du Développement, Mouvement Populaire and Union Constitutionnelle, reveals that each of these parties does not have precise information about its number of members. Yet it is observed by journalists that while membership is rising in some parties like the PI, it is decreasing in others, particularly after the division of old established parties and the formation of new ones (CEPPS/IRI 2005).

It is also almost impossible to find trends in the evolution of membership. At regular intervals, parties split off, reform, ally under a new name or are prohibited. Even within the parliament, sudden, ad hoc parliamentary groups spring up (such as the example of the Parti Authenticité et Modernité described above).

For the same reasons, we cannot give any precise information on the parties' member structure. Only the Parti de la Justice et du Développement can be considered as party of the urban middle-class.

Morocco's major parties are broadly connected to the following social strata:

- Parti Istiqlal: Considered a party of old, established families, with a good network of notable political players. The PI represents a broad voter class.
- Parti de la Justice et du Développement: Recruits its supporters mainly from liberal professions (such as lawyers and doctors). The Islamic ideology of the PJD is a lute for different urban social classes.



- Union Socialiste des Forces Populaires: Mainly a party of intellectuals (such as academics and teachers). Its left-wing ideology no longer serves as a lute so that it shifts more and more to a party of long-established families.
- Mouvement Populaire, Rassemblement Nationale des Indépendants and Union Constitutionnelle: These parties of notables do not have any clear profile as they were originally initiated by the royal palace.
- Parti Authenticit  et Modernit : An artificial creation formed by the king's friend and former Deputy Minister of the Interior Fouad Ali El Himma. It is essentially a bastion against Islamists, albeit without a clear profile.

According to article 20 of the law regulating party organization in Morocco (Elections-Maroc.com), *Party organization* it is compulsory for parties to have a statute and a programme. The statute makes clear the rules regarding the party's management and its administrative and financial organization. It also explains the mechanisms and methods adopted by the party. The programme shall contain the basis, aims, values and philosophy that the party expresses, with the values also conforming to those ordained by the constitution.

Indeed, party members have access to such statutes, for they are both available online on the parties' websites and through booklets. Normally, a statute is not made by one individual but through a general assembly of the party members and leaders. Within this process, the party therefore agrees on not only statutes but also programmes. Additionally, all decisions must be taken in accordance with democratic principles (article 21).

Parties in Morocco, as is the case in other countries, are not centralized in one particular area or region. They are rather diffused across all Moroccan regions. Parties in this sense possess local branches, albeit ones which generally remain passive save during an election period.

Beside these local branches, political parties in Morocco have associated organizations, e.g., the Parti Istiqlal with La Jeunesse Istiqlalienne (Istiqlali Youth) and Femme Istiqlalienne (Istiqlali Woman). They also have labour wings and organizations that tackle illiteracy, education and human development, e.g., the Moroccan Union for Workers, and the Moroccan League of Basic Education and Struggle Against Illiteracy, controlled by the PI.

However, the Parti Istiqlal, the Union Socialiste des Forces Populaires and the Parti de la Justice et du D veloppement are in reality not fully represented in rural areas. Furthermore, it is important for a political party to reach the hearts of citizens, i.e., not only to those who understand politics but to the illiterate and the depoliticized as well. This explains why parties also seek to establish relationships with collective civil society organizations, such as the Parti de la Justice et du D veloppement with the Islamic group Mouvement Unit  et R forme (MUR).

Political parties are organized in the form of a pyramid. At the top is the general secretariat, *Internal decision-making* followed by the regional leadership and the local branches. Additionally, all parties have executive committees comprised of their main political figures. However, the question as to who is the most influential party decision-maker differs from one party to another.

The Parti Istiqlal looks to its inner-party sub-groups, that is, influential families. Conversely, for the Union Socialiste des Forces Populaires and the Parti de la Justice et du D veloppement, it is the party convention that counts, along with the party leader and other influential figures. Internal relationships within the parties are commonly characterized by a hierarchical, top-down or patronage-driven style.

Candidates of the parties are nominated in the various constituencies during election times. The ideological identification of the voter with the party is, at least in part, crucial in cities, but is often more rudimentary in rural areas where patronage structures are still strong, i.e., it often occurs

that within an electoral district, all the candidates of one party win. As regards the integration of women, there is a national list (30 seats or 10 per cent) that is in effect reserved for women candidates.

*Stability of party ideology/programmes* The main parties in Morocco generally keep their names. The Parti Istiqlal is the oldest and most traditional party. With strongholds in areas like the city of Fez or in Western Sahara, it reflects primarily nationalist and conservative values. Some parties have disappeared however – temporarily – while they form alliances with other parties, others have dissolved and been later re-founded, and others even forbidden, such as the Parti Al Badil Al Hadari, which was banned in 2008 due to terrorist activities (*La Gazette Du Maroc* 2008). Sometimes parties spontaneously form alliances prior to upcoming elections, as for example in 2007 when the Parti National Démocrate (PND) and the Parti Al Ahd (PAA) merged to become the PND-PAA alliance and indeed the previously mentioned example of the alliance of the parliamentary group the Parti Authencité et Modernité.

As regards the integration and mobilization of voters, the programmes of the party are of no significance (with the exception the Parti de la Justice et du Développement). Considering the patronage and often non-programmatic orientation of the parties, it goes without saying that party committees do not undertake efficient long-term programmatic work. They only work on election programmes or define basic principles.

*Communication* Political parties use different media to communicate with their voters, clientele and members. The majority of political parties make use of what is called the “partisan press”. Through their own newspapers, political parties voice their programmes and agendas and define their structures and bodies. Parties also invest a great deal in designing websites that are accessible to internet users. In advertising campaigns, other media are used. They can be visual in nature, namely advertising spots broadcasted on television and the radio. Written media take the form of flyers, posters and billboards. Oral media (face-to-face communication) are also used where party members visit public spaces to convince voters about a party’s programmes through personal conversations, caravans and festivals.

Since the 2007 elections, only big parties such as the Union Socialiste des Forces Populaires, the Parti Istiqlal, the Parti de la Justice et du Développement, the Mouvement Populaire and the Rassemblement Nationale des Indépendants have been able to take advantage of professional agencies for their advertising campaigns. Nevertheless, a pioneering party in seeking the services of a professional agency is the Parti du Progrès et du Socialisme, which started the tradition in 1995. The budget for campaigning is estimated at between 3 and 4 million MAD (dirham) and covers communication operations, including electoral campaigns. Despite the investment of significant efforts into political campaigns, particular problems still persist and hinder the effectiveness of political communication. One of these problems pertains, according to Houria Habib, coordinator of the Citizenship Caravan during the 2007 legislative elections, to the lack of faith among youth in the importance of the whole electoral process (Magharebia). Similarly, illiteracy constitutes a further impediment to the success of the parties’ political communications. According to Abdessamad Hassad, a researcher working on the impact of illiteracy on democracy and development, only about 300,000 people read one of the 700 newspapers or magazines published in Morocco (IPS). Access to the internet is another problem, given that the estimated number of internet users in Morocco in 2007 was about 21 per cent according to the World Economic Forum.

*Relationship between party and parliamentary groups* The relationship between party and parliamentary groups is quite strong for parties like the Parti Istiqlal, the Union Socialiste des Forces Populaires and the Parti de la Justice et du Développement. However, this is not the case with the Rassemblement Nationale des Indépendants, Mouvement Populaire and other (particularly smaller) parties. As mentioned above, even during legislative periods, MPs often change from one parliamentary group to another so that ultimately the exchange between parliamentary groups and parties should be considered as rather weak.

### III. GENERAL ASSESSMENT

In this report we have tried to determine the state of Morocco's multiparty democracy. Though Morocco follows democratic mechanisms like those implemented in Western democratic countries, these mechanisms are not practised in the way they should be, a situation which has culminated in a weak parliament and ineffective political parties. In general, parties' organizational strength, social entrenchment and their capacity for and success in integrating and socializing voters are low. Their activity between elections and their programmatic foundations vary from one party to another, but they are often based strongly on patronage structures.

The main obstacle to the institutionalization of party democracy is – in our opinion – the strong position of the king in the political system of Morocco. He is the central element of Moroccan domestic and external affairs and takes all important decisions, leaving parliament and political parties in the inferior position of simply implementing the decisions. Without strengthening the role of parliament and the government, Moroccan voters will remain uninterested in the elections and parties will not be able to enter a democratic competition for the future of the country.

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