

INTERNATIONAL UNIVERSITY OF RABAT

Master's Degree in Democratic Governance
Democracy and Human Rights in the Middle East and North Africa
2015/2016

The Role of the CNDH in Protecting Freedom of Speech in Morocco

An analysis of the CNDH's memorandum on the draft legislation of the 2014
Press Code

Internship Report
EIUC GC DE.MA

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Abstract

This research report sets out to examine the effectiveness of the role of Morocco's National Human Rights Institution, the *Conseil National des droits de l'Homme* (CNDH), in protecting the freedom of speech. The effectiveness is investigated through a thorough analysis of the recommendations of the CNDH on the draft legislation of the Press Code of 2014. By comparing the recommendations of the CNDH with those of the NGO Reporters Without Borders on the same draft legislation as well as with the CNDH's work on women's rights, it attempts to investigate whether the CNDH effectively protects the freedom of speech. The analysis shows that the CNDH prioritizes certain human rights issues, such as women's rights, over more sensitive topics such as the freedom of speech. This prioritization coincides with the priorities of the royal authority. This results from two procedures that undermine the independency of the CNDH: firstly, the CNDH directly reports to the king and secondly, the king appoints the CNDH's president and board members who set the priorities of the Council's work on human rights. Accordingly, the effectiveness of the CNDH in protecting the freedom of speech can be considered as limited.