

## AFRICA RISK CONSULTING

### Morocco Monthly Briefing February 2021

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#### Morocco Summary 16 February 2021

*Morocco's parliament prepares to submit an agenda to the Algerian parliament over Algeria's recent manoeuvres and hostility toward King Mohammed VI (1999-present) and Moroccan interests. The Haut Commissariat au Plan (HCP) (high commission for planning) reports that Morocco's unemployment rate increased from 9.2% in 2019 to 11.9% in 2020. Morocco launches its Covid-19 vaccination campaign, Africa's first national inoculation programme, with the region's most advanced vaccination plan targeting vaccination of 80% of its adult population. Germany-based NGO Transparency International ranks Morocco 86<sup>th</sup> out of 180 countries surveyed in its 2020 Corruption Perceptions Index (CPI), with a score of 40, one point lower than its 2019 score of 41. The government announces it will begin construction of five large dams with a total storage capacity of 525 million cubic metres in 2021. A Dutch-Moroccan partnership is collaborating on a pilot project to produce drinking water from humidity in the air.*

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#### Morocco denounces Algerian hostility ...

Morocco's House of Representatives (lower house of parliament) is preparing to submit an agenda to Algeria's parliament in response to its recent manoeuvres and hostility toward King **Mohammed VI** (1999-present) and Moroccan interests.<sup>1</sup> While recent developments are not likely to culminate in war, they escalate tensions between two countries that have had a bitter relationship over the past decades. Prime minister **Saad Eddine El Othmani** published a **Tweet** on 13 February condemning a broadcast by Algerian television channel **Echourouk** insulting the Moroccan king.<sup>2</sup> The programme caricatured King Mohammed VI, stirring controversy and anger among Moroccan officials and citizens. El Othmani attributed such insults to Algeria's resentment of its neighbour's "*continuous successes in different levels, including the dossier of the Moroccan Sahara*". Morocco's **Conseil national de la Presse (CNP)** (national press council) and **Fédération marocain des éditeurs de journaux (FMEJ)** (federation of newspaper publishers) have strongly condemned Echourouk for using a satirical programme to attack Morocco and debase its king.<sup>3</sup>

House of Representatives speaker **Habib El Malki** and other officials voiced similar disapproval. Like El Othmani, El Malki attributed the anti-Morocco discourse from Algeria's officials and media to Morocco's success in recent years on the diplomatic front.<sup>4</sup> El Malki claimed that despite Morocco's efforts to call for a union and genuine reconciliation in the region, Algeria has continued to oppose and challenge Morocco's sovereignty. El Malki called on Algeria to act rationally and abandon its unnecessary crusade on Morocco and its institutions, describing it as "*a waste of time*" against the **Maghreb** union project.<sup>5</sup>

Recent tensions between the two neighbouring countries stem from the former **United States (US) Donald Trump** (2017-2021) administration's recognition of Moroccan sovereignty over the **Western Sahara** on 10 December. While Morocco claimed this as a significant victory, experts commented that the move was unlikely to result in widespread support for Morocco's claim to the territory.<sup>6</sup> Moroccan

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<sup>1</sup> Morocco World News, 14 Feb 2021

<sup>2</sup> Morocco World News, 14 Feb 2021

<sup>3</sup> Morocco World News, 14 Feb 2021

<sup>4</sup> Morocco World News, 14 Feb 2021

<sup>5</sup> Morocco World News, 14 Feb 2021

<sup>6</sup> Al Jazeera, 11 Dec 2020

forces and the **Polisario Front**, an armed group demanding independence for the Western Sahara, have been fighting for decades over the vast disputed territory, bordering Morocco, **Mauritania** and Algeria, that was previously under **Spanish** control.<sup>7</sup> Algeria has been accused of supporting separatism in Morocco. The **United Nations** brokered a ceasefire in 1991 but a planned referendum on independence was never held and the final status of the territory remained unresolved.<sup>8</sup> However, in December the US became the first country in the world to recognise Morocco's claim over the entire Western Sahara and reaffirmed Morocco's proposal to grant limited autonomy to **Sahrawis** under overarching Moroccan control, noting:<sup>9</sup>

*"The United States believes that an independent Sahrawi State is not a realistic option for resolving the conflict and that genuine autonomy under Moroccan sovereignty is the only feasible solution."<sup>10</sup>*

In a press briefing following the **34<sup>th</sup> African Union Summit** on 7 February, Morocco's foreign minister, **Nasser Boutita**, said Algeria has demonstrated that it is a real party to the Sahara dispute and should face the consequences of its anti-Moroccan stance.<sup>11</sup> Boutita cited a hostile campaign by Algeria's state apparatus in support of the Polisario while claiming to be an observer country.<sup>12</sup> Boutita noted that the Sahara issue has become a national cause in Algeria. Anti-Moroccan sentiment in Algeria reportedly began in reaction to the diplomatic inroads made by Morocco, starting with the opening of consulates and embassies in the Sahara, Morocco's securing of the **Guerguarat** border crossing with Mauritania, and the US recognition of Morocco's sovereignty over the Sahara.<sup>13</sup>

### Covid-19 hits employment figures ...

Morocco's unemployment rate increased from 9.2% in 2019 to 11.9% in 2020, according to a report from the **Haut Commissariat au Plan (HCP)** (high commission for planning) released on 3 February.<sup>14</sup> HCP statistics reveal the economic impact of **Covid-19**; the rate at which Morocco recovers, including upticks in employment and business resilience, will depend on how quickly the government can bring the virus under control.

The HCP study, which covers all sectors of the population, reveals that the overall unemployment rate increased by 2.7 points from January 2019 to December 2020. Unemployment rose by 5.9% in rural areas and 15.8% in urban areas.<sup>15</sup> The total number of unemployed people increased by 29% to 322,000 with the study noting that *"this increase is the result of an increase of 224,000 unemployed people in urban areas and 98,000 in rural areas"*.<sup>16</sup> The rate of unemployment increased by 2.9 points to 10% for men and 2.7 points to 16.2% for women. In 2020, the total number of unemployed people reached 1.3 million against 1.1 million in 2019.

The HCP study attributed the increase in unemployment to several factors, citing a number of socio-economic crises that led to many losing their jobs. The HCP reported that the labour market deteriorated as a result of the pandemic, causing destruction of jobs, a drop in working hours, and an increase in the unemployment rate.<sup>17</sup> Measures to curb the spread of Covid-19 resulted in the shutdown of many companies in Morocco.<sup>18</sup> By as early as May 2020, the pandemic had forced 56% – approximately 142,000 – of companies in Morocco to suspend their commercial and trading activities (see

<sup>7</sup> Al Jazeera, 11 Dec 2020

<sup>8</sup> Al Jazeera, 11 Dec 2020

<sup>9</sup> Al Jazeera, 11 Dec 2020

<sup>10</sup> Al Jazeera, 11 Dec 2020

<sup>11</sup> North Africa Post, 7 Feb 2021

<sup>12</sup> North Africa Post, 7 Feb 2021

<sup>13</sup> North Africa Post, 7 Feb 2021

<sup>14</sup> Morocco World News, 3 Feb 2021

<sup>15</sup> Morocco World News, 3 Feb 2021

<sup>16</sup> High Commission for Planning, 3 Feb 2021

<sup>17</sup> Morocco World News, 3 Feb 2021

<sup>18</sup> Morocco World News, 3 Feb 2021

ARC Briefing Morocco May 2020).<sup>19</sup> By the end of 2020, more than 16% of local companies had closed, either temporarily or permanently.

Morocco's economy lost 432,000 jobs in 2020, in comparison to 165,000 jobs created in 2019.<sup>20</sup> Job loss affected all sectors and both rural and urban areas – 295,000 people in rural and about 137,000 in urban.<sup>21</sup> The agriculture, forestry and fishing sectors lost 107,000 jobs, the industrial sector 273,000 jobs, the crafts industry 37,000 jobs and the construction sector 9,000 jobs.<sup>22</sup> The number of working hours per week dropped from 494 million to 394 million, while the average number of working hours per person per week dropped from 42.3 to 37.5.<sup>23</sup>

The HCP noted that the employment rate also fell, decreasing from 41.6% to 39.4% at the national level (-2.2 points).<sup>24</sup> In urban areas it dropped by 1.6 points (36.9% to 35.3%) and by 3.2% (30.3% to 27.1%) in rural areas.<sup>25</sup> The drop is more prevalent among men (2.6 points) than among women (1.9 points).<sup>26</sup>

### ... as national Covid-19 vaccination campaign launches

Morocco became **Africa's** first country to launch a national Covid-19 inoculation programme when it began its vaccination campaign on 29 January.<sup>27</sup> The health ministry announced that it had vaccinated close to 1.4 million people across the country as of 14 February, aiming to reach herd immunity against Covid-19 within five months.<sup>28</sup> The government plans to vaccinate 80% of its adult population – 25 million of its 36.5 million inhabitants – free of charge, on the orders of King Mohammed VI, who received the first injection of the campaign.<sup>29</sup>

The large-scale operation requires significant logistical and human resources. The mass immunisation operation includes 2,888 vaccination stations and the deployment of mobile units to factories, campuses, offices and prisons.<sup>30</sup> The health ministry said it would mobilise over 12,000 health professionals as well as the military, and deploy a computerised register to target the population and track health status after vaccination.<sup>31</sup> The campaign begins just as confirmed cases are dropping, reportedly because of a dip in testing.<sup>32</sup> As of 16 February, Morocco had registered 478,595 confirmed Covid-19 cases, with 459,549 recoveries and 8,491 deaths.<sup>33</sup>

The government announced in December that Morocco had bought 65 million doses of Covid-19 vaccines from **British-Swedish** pharmaceutical company **AstraZeneca** and **China-based** pharmaceutical company **Sinopharm** to inoculate 80% of its population.<sup>34</sup> Morocco received 2 million doses of the AstraZeneca vaccine from **India's Serum Institute** on 22 January and half a million doses of the Sinopharm vaccine on 27 January. A second batch of 4 million doses of the AstraZeneca vaccine arrived from India on 11 February and a second batch of 500,000 Sinopharm vaccines on 16 February.<sup>35</sup>

<sup>19</sup> The Morocco Times, 30 Apr 2020

<sup>20</sup> High Commission for Planning, 3 Feb 2021

<sup>21</sup> High Commission for Planning, 3 Feb 2021

<sup>22</sup> Morocco World News, 3 Feb 2021

<sup>23</sup> Morocco World News, 3 Feb 2021

<sup>24</sup> High Commission for Planning, 3 Feb 2021

<sup>25</sup> High Commission for Planning, 3 Feb 2021

<sup>26</sup> Morocco World News, 3 Feb 2021

<sup>27</sup> Africa News, 29 Jan 2021

<sup>28</sup> Morocco World News, 12 Feb 2021

<sup>29</sup> Arab News, 25 Dec 2020

<sup>30</sup> Morocco World News, 9 Jan 2021

<sup>31</sup> Morocco World News, 14 Jan 2021

<sup>32</sup> Morocco World News, 12 Feb 2021

<sup>33</sup> Worldometers, accessed 16 Feb 2021

<sup>34</sup> Arab News, 25 Dec 2020

<sup>35</sup> Morocco World News, 15 Feb 2021

Morocco carried out advanced trials of the Sinopharm vaccine in the country last year, and there are plans for local production of the vaccine.<sup>36</sup> Morocco is among 92 low and middle income countries supported by the **COVAX** facility, an international effort to ensure the vaccines reach developing countries.

### Morocco falls in corruption ratings ...

Perceived corruption in Morocco has worsened, according to the latest report of **Germany-based NGO Transparency International (TI)'s 2020 Corruption Perceptions Index (CPI)**, released on 28 January.<sup>37</sup> The index ranks 180 countries and territories by their perceived levels of public sector corruption according to experts and businesspeople, using a scale of 0 to 100, where 0 is highly corrupt and 100 is very clean.<sup>38</sup> The 2020 CPI ranked Morocco 86<sup>th</sup> out of 180 countries, assessed with a score of 40, compared to its score of 41 with a rank of 80 in 2019.<sup>39</sup> Morocco is tied in 86<sup>th</sup> position with India, **Burkina Faso, Trinidad and Tobago, and Timor-Leste.**<sup>40</sup>

TI CPI Rankings for Morocco					
	2020	2019	2018	2017	2016
<b>Ranking</b>	86/180	80/180	73/180	81/180	90/176
<b>Score</b> (out of 100)	40	41	43	40	37

While Morocco dropped by one points in TI's 2020 rankings, it still ranks above the **Middle East and North Africa (MENA)** regional average of 39 points. Morocco trails **Tunisia** (69<sup>th</sup> with 44 points) but outperforms **Libya** (173<sup>rd</sup> with 17 points) as well as **Egypt** (177<sup>th</sup> with 33 points) and **Algeria** (104<sup>th</sup> with 36 points).<sup>41</sup>

TI 2020 CPI Rankings for North Africa					
	Tunisia	Libya	Egypt	Algeria	Morocco
<b>Ranking</b>	69/180	173/180	177/180	104/180	86/180
<b>Score</b>	44	17	33	36	40

The 2020 index focused on contextualising national Covid-19 responses in relation to corruption. The CPI report noted that while the Moroccan government has taken exceptional measures in response to the Covid-19 pandemic, it has not demonstrated sufficient oversight. The CPI report mentions special exemptions for which government has not faced accountability pressures, which could lead to *"significant risks for mismanaged funds and corruption"*.<sup>42</sup> The report also noted *"numerous violations of free speech and press, including the arrest and imprisonment of journalists who criticise public authorities"*.<sup>43</sup> TI's report concluded that corruption in Morocco has contributed to the poor state of healthcare in the country and an ineffective response to the pandemic.<sup>44</sup>

While the TI report is not particularly favourable to Morocco, recent developments in the country show a more positive outlook. The **Legislation Committee of the First Chamber of Parliament**

<sup>36</sup> Arab News, 25 Dec 2020

<sup>37</sup> Morocco World News, 29 Jan 2021

<sup>38</sup> Transparency International's 2020 CPI Report

<sup>39</sup> Transparency International's 2020 CPI Report

<sup>40</sup> Morocco World News, 29 Jan 2021

<sup>41</sup> Transparency International's 2020 CPI Report

<sup>42</sup> Morocco World News, 29 Jan 2021

<sup>43</sup> Morocco World News, 29 Jan 2021

<sup>44</sup> Morocco World News, 29 Jan 2021

on 25 January finalised a detailed review of the draft law on anti-corruption and the role of the **Instance Nationale de la Probité, de la Prévention et de la Lutte contre la Corruption (INPPLC)** (council on probity, prevention and fight against corruption).<sup>45</sup> The draft law broadens the definition of corruption and grants more authority to the INPPLC. The government is set to adopt the new anti-corruption bill in February before the end of the current parliamentary session.

### Dam construction projects target water insecurity

Morocco will begin construction of five large dams with a total storage capacity of 525 million meters in 2021. The projects aim to address Morocco's risk of water scarcity and vulnerability to climate change, which the **World Bank** highlighted in its latest *"Climate Risk Country Profiles"* released on 12 February.<sup>46</sup> Equipment and water minister **Abdelkader Amara** told the upper house of parliament on 9 February that the dam construction is expected to cost the country 4.8 billion Moroccan dirhams (\$538m).

The project is part of the 2020-2027 national water plan, which aims to increase total water storage capacity from the current capacity of 19 billion cubic metre to 27 billion cubic metres.<sup>47</sup> Amara said three of the dams will be built in the provinces of **Azilal**, **Agadir** and **Figuig**, while two will be constructed in **Beni-Mellal** province – the **Imfout** dam in **Settat** will be upgraded.<sup>48</sup> The water reservoirs will mostly be replenished with rainwater.

Amara noted that within the national water strategy framework, only 26 of the 60 new dams planned have so far been built or are currently under construction.<sup>49</sup> Of the 23 large dam projects launched between 2009-2020, at a cost of \$3.1 billion and with a 6.2 billion cubic metre capacity, seven are operational while 16 others are still under construction.<sup>50</sup> Five of these were initiated in 2020. Morocco currently has 149 large dams with a total capacity of 19 billion cubic metres, and 133 small dams used for drinking water and irrigation.<sup>51</sup>

Morocco faces a serious threat of water stress in the future. In its climate risk profile for Morocco, the World Bank noted that beyond the dangers of water scarcity and resource management, two thirds of Morocco's beaches are at risk of coastal erosion.<sup>52</sup> A report by the **Centre of Mediterranean Integration (CMI)** released on 4 February assessing climate change in Morocco similarly concluded that the country faces serious challenges in terms of water scarcity and material security.<sup>53</sup>

In a further bid to reduce Morocco's water insecurity, the **Netherlands** and Morocco are collaborating on a pilot project to produce drinking water from humidity in the air. **Office National de l'Électricité et de l'Eau Potable (ONEE)** (national office for electricity and drinking water (ONEE) general director **Abderrahim El Hafidi** met with Dutch ambassador to Morocco **Jeroen Roodenburg** on 1 February to discuss the project.<sup>54</sup> The project focuses on the production of drinking water,

*"... from unconventional resources (air humidity and brackish water) and this, with a view to supplying small communities devoid of surface water resources".<sup>55</sup>*

The Dutch-Moroccan partnership agreement provides for the testing and installation of five pilot units at different sites across Morocco. The first pilot is being tested at the **Rabat** office of the **International Institute for Water and Sanitation**. The first test results will be available within a

<sup>45</sup> Morocco World News, 25 Jan 2021

<sup>46</sup> World Bank Group, 12 Feb 2021

<sup>47</sup> Afrik 21, 12 Feb 2021

<sup>48</sup> North Africa Post, 11 Feb 2021

<sup>49</sup> Morocco World News, 10 Feb 2020

<sup>50</sup> Morocco World News, 10 Feb 2020

<sup>51</sup> North Africa Post, 11 Feb 2021

<sup>52</sup> World Bank Group, 12 Feb 2021

<sup>53</sup> Morocco World News, 12 Feb 2021

<sup>54</sup> News Africa Now, 2 Feb 2021

<sup>55</sup> News Africa Now, 2 Feb 2021

month and will identify the three main decision-making parameters for expanding the initiative on a larger scale, including the cost, quantity and quality of the water produced.<sup>56</sup>

### Planner

Feb 2021 **(Morocco)** Scheduled adoption of the new anti-corruption bill;

Feb-May 2021 **(Morocco)** National vaccination programme;

2021 **(Morocco)** Scheduled construction of five new dams;

2021 **(Morocco)** Scheduled legislative, regional and local elections;

2021 **Oued Zem (Morocco)** Scheduled opening of automotive testing centre;

Q4 2021 **Marrakech (Morocco)** 24th **General Assembly of the World Tourism Organization (UNWTO)**

2022 **Marrakech (Morocco)** **International Monetary Fund** and **World Bank** annual meetings to take place in Morocco;

### Chronology

16 Feb 2021 **Rabat (Morocco)** *Morocco World News*. Morocco receives 500,000 **Sinopharm Covid-19** vaccines produced in **China**;

14 Feb 2021 **New York (United States)** *Morocco World News*. Morocco's ambassador to the **United Nations, Omar Hilale**, stresses the need to hold accountable countries that allow the use of child soldiers in armed conflicts;

14 Feb 2021 **Marrakech (Morocco)** *Morocco World News*. German federal enterprise **Deutsche Gesellschaft für Internationale Zusammenarbeit (GIZ)** (German corporation for international cooperation) (**GIZ**) and agrifood and luxury cosmetics trade association **Menara Cluster** conclude a partnership agreement to create an innovation centre dedicated to Morocco's food and cosmetics industry;

14 Feb 2021 **Rabat (Morocco)** *Morocco World News*. Morocco's **Covid-19** numbers continue their steady downward trend in the midst of a national vaccination campaign in which almost 1.4 million citizens have received their first dose of Covid-19 vaccine;

13 Feb 2021 **Rabat (Morocco)** *Econostrum News*. **United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization (UNESCO)** study reports Morocco has recorded one of the largest women graduation rates in the world in the field of engineering with women making up 42.2% of total engineering graduates in the country;

13 Feb 2021 **Ouagadougou (Burkina Faso)** *Mena24TV News*. Morocco's ambassador to **Burkina Faso, Youssef Al-Salawi**, is admitted to a local medical centre for treatment after gunmen on motorcycles attack him in Ouagadougou;

13 Feb 2021 **Rabat (Morocco)** *Morocco World News*. **World Bank Maghreb** and **Malta** department director **Jesko S. Hentschel** says that Morocco's budget deficit in 2020 remains under control compared to most of its neighbouring countries;

13 Feb 2021 **Khemisset (Morocco)** *Mining Review*. Morocco's government awards a licence to global mining company **Emmerson Plc** to construct a potash plant near **Khemisset**, 94 km from **Rabat**;

12 Feb 2021 **Rabat (Morocco)** *Morocco World News*. Industry minister **Moulay Hafid Elalamy** emphasises the importance of promoting local industrial manufacturing;

12 Feb 2021 **Rabat (Morocco)** *Morocco World News*. **Libya's** prime minister, **Abdul Hamid**

<sup>56</sup> News Africa Now, 2 Feb 2021

**Mohammed Dbeibeh**, in a telephone conversation with Morocco's foreign affairs minister, **Nasser Bourita**, welcomes Morocco's continued support for Libya's national reconciliation;

12 Feb 2021 **Rabat (Morocco)** *Morocco World News*. **Mohamed 6 Polytechnic University (UM6P)**, the **Pasteur Institute (IPM)** and the **Fondation OCP (FOCP)** mobilise resources to launch three initiatives related to improving Morocco's virology sector as part of an agreement signed in April 2020;

12 Feb 2021 **Rabat (Morocco)** *Anadolu Agency*. The health ministry extends the national vaccination campaign to people aged 65 and over;

12 Feb 2021 **Washington (United States)** *World Bank Group Report*. The **World Bank** highlights Morocco's vulnerability to climate change in its latest "*Climate Risk Country Profiles*", citing the dangers of water scarcity and resource management and the risk of coastal erosion of two thirds of Morocco's beaches;

12 Feb 2021 **Agadir (Morocco)** *Morocco World News*. Moroccan construction company **Jet Contractors** has earned the first contract for the rehabilitation project of the historical **Kasbah Fortress of Agadir**, known as **Agadir Oufella**;

11 Feb 2021 **Rabat (Morocco)** *Morocco World News*. King **Mohammed VI** asks government to take urgent measures to avoid recurrence of painful incidents such as the **Tangier** factory flooding;

11 Feb 2021 **Rabat (Morocco)** *Morocco World News*. **United States** embassy in Morocco *charge d'affaires* **David Greene** issues a statement of condolences to the families of victims who died as a result of flooding in an illegal textile production unit in **Tangier** on 8 January;

11 Feb 2021 **Rabat (Morocco)** *Reuters*. Morocco receives a second batch of **AstraZeneca Covid-19** vaccine from India following two million doses received on 22 January; Morocco received half a million doses of the Chinese **Sinopharm** vaccine on 27 January;

10 Feb 2021 **Rabat (Morocco)** *Morocco World News*. The **House of Representatives** unanimously adopts a bill to establish the legal framework to regulate collaborative financing and crowdfunding;

10 Feb 2021 **Casablanca (Morocco)** *Morocco Telegraph*. French aeronautics company **Le Piston Français (LPF)** inaugurates a new factory near Casablanca for production of mechanical aeronautics parts;

10 Feb 2021 **Rabat (Morocco)** *Morocco World News*. **Israel's** foreign ministry extends condolences to Morocco after floods in an illegal sweatshop in **Tangier** claimed the lives of 28 people;

10 Feb 2021 **Tangier (Morocco)** *Auto Economic Times*. **French** automotive manufacturer **Renault** shuts down its industrial unit in **Tangier** due to a global shortage of semiconductors and chips,

9 Feb 2021 **Rabat (Morocco)** *Afrik 21*. Equipment, transport, logistics and water minister **Abdelkader Amara** says the government will launch construction of five new dams in 2021;

9 Feb 2021 **Rabat (Morocco)** *Morocco World News*. The education ministry announces plans to raise awareness of energy efficiency as Morocco seeks to reduce its energy consumption by 20% by 2030.;

9 Feb 2021 **Rabat (Morocco)** *The Times of Israel*. A Moroccan delegation arrives in **Israel** as part of Morocco-Israel rapprochement;

9 Feb 2021 **Rabat (Morocco)** *Morocco World News*. The **United States Federal Bureau of Investigation (FBI)** and the **Central Intelligence Agency (CIA)** congratulate Morocco's security services for their achievements in the field of counterterrorism;

- 8 Feb 2021 **Marrakech (Morocco)** *Morocco Shafaqna*. **Hungary's** ambassador to Morocco, **Miklos Trombler**, and newly appointed honorary consul in Marrakech **Abdelaziz Dahbi**, inaugurate the new honorary Hungarian consulate in Marrakech;
- 8 Feb 2021 **Rabat (Morocco)** *Morocco World News*. **Coordination nationale des enseignants contractuels** (contractual teachers' association) announces plans to hold a new series of strikes across the country seeking the government to meet the educators' "*unanswered demands*";
- 8 Feb 2021 **Canary Islands (Spain)** *Morocco Shafaqna*. **Spain** halts **Moroccan** immigrants' protests in the **Canary Islands**;
- 8 Feb 2021 **Rabat (Morocco)** *Morocco World News*. Health ministry announces it will maintain the use of the China's **Sinopharm Covid-19** vaccine for the population aged 60 and over;
- 8 Feb 2021 **Rabat (Morocco)** *Assahifa*. High level **Morocco-Spain** meeting is postponed again amid silent diplomatic rift between **Rabat** and **Madrid** after Spain postponed the scheduled high-level meeting in December due to the **Covid-19** crisis;
- 8 Feb 2021 **Rabat (Morocco)** *Morocco World News*. The Moroccan **Car Importers Association** announces it recorded a 6.6% increase in car sales in Morocco during the month of January;
- 8 Feb 2021 **Rabat (Morocco)** *Morocco World News*. The health ministry says it has vaccinated 550,149 people against **Covid-19** as of 8 February;
- 8 Feb 2021 **Tangier (Morocco)** *BBC News*. At least 24 workers have died due to flooding in an illegal textile production unit in **Tangier**, northern **Morocco**;
- 7 Feb 2021 **Rabat (Morocco)** *Morocco World News*. The government of Morocco extends its congratulations to Libyan parties after **Libya's Political Dialogue Forum** selected a temporary executive authority under the auspices of the **United Nations**;
- 7 Feb 2021 **Rabat (Morocco)** *Assahifa*. **World Health Organization (WHO)** plans to send 1,881,600 doses of the **AstraZeneca Covid-19** vaccine to Morocco as part of its **COVAX** facility;
- 7 Feb 2021 **Rabat (Morocco)** *Morocco World News*. The directorate of external treasury and finance says **Morocco's** electricity production decreased by 4.1% at the end of 2020;
- 7 Feb 2021 **Rabat (Morocco)** *Morocco World News*. Foreign affairs minister **Nasser Bourita** renews **Morocco's** commitment to continue to support the **African Union's (AU)** ongoing process of institutional reforms;
- 6 Feb 2021 **Casablanca (Morocco)** *The World News*. Morocco launches the **Bouskoura** decontamination station for persistent organic pollutants (POPs), located 20 km south of **Casablanca** and the first of its kind in **Africa** and the **Arab** world;
- 6 Feb 2021 **Nouaceur (Morocco)** *The World News*. Morocco launches construction on the country's first **Institute for Training in Transport and Logistics Jobs (IFMTL)**, located in **Nouaceur**, 30 kilometres south of **Casablanca**;
- 5 Feb 2021 **Agadir (Morocco)** *Morocco World News*. Government says it is putting together a national plan to address the consequences of recent devastating floods, and seeking to avoid devastation resulting from future natural disasters;
- 5 Feb 2021 **Rabat (Morocco)** *Morocco Shafaqna*. Prime minister **Saad Eddine El Othmani** says Morocco's administrative reforms look promising, with "*very encouraging*" results when it comes to the processing of investment proposals and other administrative documents;
- 5 Feb 2021 **Rabat (Morocco)** *Morocco World News*. The **Foreign Exchange Office** announces that Moroccan diaspora remittances reached MAD 67.99 billion (\$7.54 billion) in 2020;
- 5 Feb 2021 **Rabat (Morocco)** *CPat.com*. International provider of distance learning for the

airline and aviation industry **CPaT Global LLC** secures a new contract with Morocco's flagship carrier, **Royal Air Maroc**;

5 Feb 2021 **Rabat (Morocco)** *Morocco World News*. Equipment, transport, logistics, and water minister **Abdelkader Amara** says Morocco has increased its focus on the maintenance and modernisation of infrastructure in recent years, growing its annual average budget for investment in roads, bridges, and expressways by 27% since the period of 2012-2016;

4 Feb 2021 **Rabat (Morocco)** *NKC African Economics*. The **Haut Commissariat au Plan (HCP)** (high commission for planning) reports Morocco's unemployment increased from 9.2% in 2019 to 11.9% in 2020;

4 Feb 2021 **Rabat (Morocco)** *Garda World*. Government extends the state of health emergency for the 11<sup>th</sup> time;

4 Feb 2021 **Rabat (Morocco)** *Morocco World News*. The health ministry announces it is allowing health officials to use the **AstraZeneca** vaccine on population aged 65 and above;

4 Feb 2021 **Rabat (Morocco)** *Morocco World News*. Morocco calls for creation of an **African** platform for genomic monitoring of the **Covid-19** virus to curb its spread across the continent.

3 Feb 2021 **Marrakech (Morocco)** *North Africa Post*. Morocco will host the 24th **General Assembly of the World Tourism Organization (UNWTO)** in **Marrakech** in Q4 2021;

3 Feb 2021 **Casablanca (Morocco)** *Morocco World News*. The Italian consulate general in **Casablanca** announces suspension of maritime links between **Italy** and **Morocco** from 3 February until further notice but says air links between Italy and Morocco will continue to operate;

2 Feb 2021 **Rabat (Morocco)** *Afrik 21*. **Portugal** and **Morocco** sign an agreement to cooperate on green hydrogen development;

2 Feb 2021 **Rabat (Morocco)** *News Africa Now*. The **Netherlands** and **Morocco** to collaborate on a pilot project for the production of drinking water from humidity in the air;

2 Feb 2021 **Rabat (Morocco)** *Morocco World News*. Prime minister **Saad Eddine El Othmani** announces the government is increasing its public investments in 2021 to roughly 230 MAD billion (\$25m);

2 Feb 2021 **Rabat (Morocco)** *Morocco World News*. Cybersecurity company **Kaspersky** says **Morocco** is ranked among the top 10 countries for the highest volume of malware attacks;

2 Feb 2021 **Rabat (Morocco)** *Morocco World News*. **Morocco** and the **Democratic Republic of the Congo** pledge to further their diplomatic relations in discussions over Africa's future security challenges;

1 Feb 2021 **Rabat (Morocco)** *Morocco World News*. Republic of **Congo** president **Denis Sassou N'Guesso** asks for Morocco's inclusion in the **African Union's Contact Group on Libya**;

1 Feb 2021 **Rabat (Morocco)** *North Africa Post*. Government extends the nationwide night curfew for two additional weeks, starting 2 February at 9 pm;

31 Jan 2021 **Rabat (Morocco)** *Morocco World News*. Health minister **Khaled Ait Taleb** says Morocco's **Covid-19** vaccination programme is running smoothly and has so far registered no major concerns;

30 Jan 2021 **Rabat (Morocco)** *Morocco World News*. **Chinese** technology company **Huawei's Moroccan** branch, **Huawei Maroc**, appears among the 2021 top employers in the world;

30 Jan 2021 **Kenitra (Morocco)** *Morocco World News*. **International Atomic Energy Agency (IAEA)** in Vienna designates Morocco's **National Center for Nuclear Energy, Science and Technology (CNESTEN)** as the first **IAEA African Center of Excellence** in the fields of water

resources, environmental protection, and industrial applications;

29 Jan 2021 **Rabat (Morocco)** *Morocco World News*. **L'Observatoire national du développement humain (ONDH)** (national observatory for human development) releases results of a study showing that 28.5% of people aged 15 to 24 are unemployed, not in education, nor receiving vocational training;

28 Jan 2021 **Rabat (Morocco)** *Morocco World News*. **Germany-based Transparency International's 2020 Corruption Perceptions Index (CPI)** ranks **Morocco** 86th out of 180 countries;

28 Jan 2021 **Rabat (Morocco)** *Africa News*. Morocco launches its national vaccination campaign against **Covid-19**;

28 Feb 2021 **Rabat (Morocco)** *Morocco World News*. **Spain's King Felipe VI** highlights the "*closeness and friendship*" of his country's relations with **Morocco**;

27 Jan 2021 **Rabat (Morocco)** *Morocco World News*. **Morocco** receives half a million doses of the **Sinopharm** vaccine produced in **China**;

26 Jan 2021 **Rabat (Morocco)** *Morocco World News*. Delegate minister in charge of higher education and scientific research **Idris Aouicha** announces that **Morocco** will establish 21 new universities with merit-based admissions in the coming two years as demand for higher education increases;

22 Jan 2021 **Rabat (Morocco)** *IOL News*. Morocco's first batch of 2 million **AstraZeneca's Covid-19** vaccine arrives from **India**.

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