

## Press Release

Cairo & Beirut: 6 July 2017

### Ali Anouzla chosen as the human rights and freedom of expression defender of July 2017

The Arabic Network for Human Rights Information (ANHRI), Maharat Foundation, and the Gulf Centre for Human Rights (GCHR), in cooperation with IFEX, have chosen the prominent Moroccan human rights defender **Ali Anouzla** as the Defender of Human Rights & Freedom of Expression for the month of July 2017, as part of the campaign entitled “Supporting Human Rights Defenders and Freedom of Expression.”



Ali Anouzla is a powerful human rights defender and one of the most prominent brave journalists in Morocco. He is known for his courage in defending freedom of expression and media freedoms in general, as well as his writings as he does not hesitate to cross red lines and criticise the authorities.

Ali Anouzla is the editor-in-chief of the Arabic edition of news website “Lakome2”, an independent newspaper that deals with civil liberties and human rights, and aims to protect the right to information, as well as “defending freedom of expression and citizenship values.”

Anouzla, along with his fellow human rights defender **Moa'tiMongeb**, contributed to the establishment of Freedom Now, an association which is concerned with protecting the freedom of the press and expression alongside human rights in Morocco. But the Moroccan authorities rejected their request to register the association in May 2014. He also helped compile reports monitoring the violations committed against freedoms- particularly press freedom- in Morocco.

Anouzla won the RaifBadawi Award for Courageous Journalists in 2015. The jury deemed him “one of the few independent journalists in Morocco; because he always covers and exposes human rights violations through his press reports by challenging his region’s taboos and criticising the policies of his country.”

Due to his courageous stance defending freedom of expression, Anouzla faced judicial prosecution several times. In 2009, he was interrogated based on a complaint filed by the late Libyan dictator Muammar Gaddafi after the rights defender wrote about the way Gaddafi sought power, calling it a “coup.”

In 2009, Anouzla was brought to trial after he wrote about the health of Morocco’s King. Also, his newspaper “Al JaridaAl-Oula” faced manifold harassment, which eventually led to its closure, although it was one of the most important newspapers in Morocco.

#Remembered&supported

Morocco

Supporting Human Rights Defenders and Freedom of Expression

Ali Anouzla

Runs "Lakome2" the electronic newspaper after the closure of "Al JaridaAl-Oula"

Campaign "Supporting Human Rights Defenders and Freedom of Speech"

Previously, the campaign Supporting Human Rights Defenders and Freedom of Expression, launched in last February, chose prominent woman human rights defender and brave Tunisian journalist **NazihaRjiba**(also known as “Om Zied”) to be the first nominee. She was followed by prominent human rights defender and blogger **Ahmed Mansoor** from the United Arab Emirates, who has been arbitrarily detained, to be the campaign’s human rights defender of the month of March. Then came human rights lawyer **GamalEid** from Egypt, named activist of the month of April, followed by rights defender **HanaaEdwar** from Iraq, selected to be the campaign’s rights defender of the month of May. The three journalists of the Omani newspaper “Azamn”, **Ibrahim Al-Maamari, Yousef Al-Haj, and Zaher Al-Abri**, were named defenders of human rights and freedom of expression for the month of June.

For more information about the campaign, please visit the websites of the Arabic Network for Human Rights Information (ANHRI), Maharat News, and the Gulf Centre for Human Rights:

<http://anhri.net/?lang=en>  
[www.maharat-news.com](http://www.maharat-news.com)  
<http://www.gc4hr.org>