



**Address by Ms. Amina Bouayach, CNDH
Chairperson**

Side Event

**Bridging Justice, Reform and Memory in Transitional
Justice Processes**

Palais des Nations, Geneva

September 25, 2024



Excellency, President of the UN Human Rights Council,

Ladies and gentlemen,

Welcome everyone, and thank you for joining us to celebrate this anniversary of truth, justice, equity, and reconciliation.

This year, we honor a journey—the journey of a country that, 20 years ago, made the choice to fully reconcile with its past. It decided to acknowledge its past and to build on the past to empower a better future.

Together with our partner, the African Center for Democracy and Human Rights Studies, and with the support of the Permanent Mission of the Kingdom of Morocco, we have chosen to hold this event to share our experience with transitional justice—one that helped build a shared foundation for a diverse society.

Twenty years ago, Morocco took an unprecedented step, not just in the region but globally. It became one of the few nations to voluntarily confront its past—investigating abuses, acknowledging suffering, offering reparations, preserving memory, delivering justice, and committing to reform.

This reform was not only about righting the wrongs of the past but about ensuring a future where human rights are protected and justice is upheld for all—a reform driven by the shared determination of both the State and society to safeguard freedom.



Ladies and gentlemen,

Although my time is limited, I want to highlight some key lessons:

First, transitional justice is not one-size-fits-all. Context, dynamics, and final outcome matter.

Morocco's experience played a critical role in supporting broader reforms. It helped maintain peace and stability, foster democratization and gender equality, and establish the rule of law.

By investigating past abuses and how they occurred, we were able to prevent the recurrence of serious human rights violations. Since then, no systematic cases of torture, enforced disappearances, or other major violations have been registered.

Fundamental freedoms are now managed differently. To give a concrete example: every year, over 20,000 peaceful protests take place with no serious violations. In cases where issues arise, the rule of law is applied fairly, showing a complete change in how rights and freedoms are handled.

Preserving collective memory is crucial in any transitional justice process. It does not only honor the victims but also strengthens society's resilience. Morocco has made very significant efforts and initiatives in this area; and several memory sites are set to open or re-open very soon.

Victims' stories and biographies have been published and made available to the public. Transitional justice archives have been collected, digitized, and totally



preserved, in acknowledgement of the victims' suffering. **We will never forget.**

Ladies and gentlemen,

As I mentioned earlier, Morocco's transitional justice is a cornerstone of a broader reform. When His Majesty the King Mohammed VI announced constitutional reform in 2011, he made transitional justice recommendations a central pillar, grounded in Morocco's international human rights commitments.

Human rights, once ignored or violated, are now at the heart of Morocco's governance. The national bill of rights, embedded in the Constitution, now guides the actions of both state and non-state actors, ensuring accountability and compliance.

When I speak of the impact of transitional justice, I'm referring to a broader, far-reaching transformation, not just a few sectors.

Morocco's inclusive and participatory approach to transitional justice, which engaged civil society and key stakeholders, has become a model for broader reforms. It was the only approach in revising the constitution, promoting regionalization, and modernizing the family code. This same approach reformed the electoral process, ensuring free and fair elections through effective monitoring by national and international NGOs and ballot reform, creating a more level playing field for the opposition and enhancing political representation for all.



Ladies and gentlemen,

Morocco's approach to reform bridges the past and future, linking memory with justice in a continuous, evolving process. Our experience with transitional justice has paved the way for further progress, reminding us that reform is never a straight path but one shaped by the ever-changing dynamics of human rights in society.

Reform is a journey, not a destiny.

Thank you.
