Head of Government Aziz Akhanouch
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Your Excellency,

I write to you to express my grave concern over the unjust imprisonment of feminist activist Ibtissame Lachgar who has been in arbitrary detention since 10 August 2025 simply for exercising her right to freedom of expression.

On 3 September 2025, the Rabat First-Instance Court found Lachgar guilty under Article 267-5 of the Moroccan Penal Code, which criminalizes "intentional insult to Islam or sacred symbols" via publications, including online. She was sentenced to two and a half years' imprisonment and a fine of 50,000 dirhams (approximately 5500 USD). On 8 October 2025, the Rabat Court of Appeal upheld the conviction and sentence.

She was arrested, placed in detention and prosecuted after she posted a photo of herself on social media wearing a black T-shirt reading "Allah is lesbian." In the accompanying caption, she wrote critical remarks about Islam and other religions. This contents of this post, which some individuals may find offensive, is protected expression under international human rights law which allows for the prohibition of expression only in very limited circumstances such as when it amounts to incitement to violence. This prosecution and conviction are contrary to Morocco's obligations under human rights law.

Lachgar is a cancer survivor and faces serious health complications, including a risk of losing the use of her left arm if she does not receive the urgent healthcare needed. Nonetheless, authorities denied multiple requests for her provisional release on medical grounds.

The charges, conviction, and ongoing detention of Ibtissame Lachgar violate her right to freedom of expression, protected under international human rights law. Her imprisonment for peacefully expressing her views constitutes an arbitrary restriction on dissent and feminist and LGBTI rights activism.

I urge you to immediately release Ibtissame Lachgar, quash her sentence and conviction which stem solely from her exercise of the right to freedom of expression. Pending her release, authorities must provide her with adequate healthcare that she urgently requires.

Yours sincerely,