

College of the Holy Cross

## CrossWorks

---

Montserrat Annual Writing Prize

Montserrat (First-Year Program)

---

4-8-2021

### Mamfakinch

Annabel DeGroat

College of the Holy Cross, aldegr24@g.holycross.edu

Follow this and additional works at: [https://crossworks.holycross.edu/mont\\_prize](https://crossworks.holycross.edu/mont_prize)



Part of the [African Studies Commons](#), [Political Science Commons](#), [Politics and Social Change Commons](#), [Social Influence and Political Communication Commons](#), and the [Social Media Commons](#)

---

#### Recommended Citation

DeGroat, Annabel, "Mamfakinch" (2021). *Montserrat Annual Writing Prize*. 6.  
[https://crossworks.holycross.edu/mont\\_prize/6](https://crossworks.holycross.edu/mont_prize/6)

This Article is brought to you for free and open access by the Montserrat (First-Year Program) at CrossWorks. It has been accepted for inclusion in Montserrat Annual Writing Prize by an authorized administrator of CrossWorks.

Annabel DeGroat

2,550 Words

Professor Langohr

14 December 2020

*Mamfakinch*, a citizen media group, covered a wide array of issues in Morocco ranging from rape to the conflict in the Riff. The group excelled at compiling information on key news stories and later developed various modes of addressing them in live reports, social media campaigns, and in public debates. Their narratives helped diversify a media environment dominated by the state and amplified the voices of citizens agitating for change. That being said, *Mamfakinch* refused to contest Morocco's claims to the Western Sahara and chose to cut out people from the group who challenged such claims. In this sense the Western Sahara proved to be one of society's red lines that *Mamfakinch* refused to cross. While influential, *Mamfakinch* was short-lived and the government was able to reassert its dominance over citizen media. However, the group's legacy demonstrates that youth digital cultures can have the power to mobilize large sectors of society, hold their governments responsible, and can command change from their political elites.

Prior to the February 20th, 2011 Movement many digital platforms were dominated by the state<sup>1</sup>, but starting in the 1990s independent digital platforms began to emerge as access to technology expanded and government restrictions on content led to an increasing demand for

---

<sup>1</sup> Errazzouki, Samia. "Under Watchful Eyes: Internet Surveillance and Citizen Media in Morocco, the Case of Mamfakinch." *The Journal of North African Studies*, vol. 22, no. 3, 21 Apr. 2017, pp. 361-85, doi:10.1080/13629387.2017.1307907. Accessed 30 Nov. 2020, 365.

alternative media<sup>2</sup>. While government media restrictions tightened following 2008<sup>3</sup>, Journals such as *Le Journal Hebdomadaire (The Weekly Journal)* and to a lesser extent the website *Talk Morocco* began to emerge and set a precedent for challenging the status quo and encouraging discourse among citizens<sup>4</sup>. However, these two media platforms were short lived. *Le Journal* ended after they overstepped society's "red lines" with their scalding criticisms of the royal family, the monarchy, Islam, and Morocco's claim to the Sahara<sup>5</sup>. *Talk Morocco* faded out of the public eye in 2012 after three years of operating on the margins of society<sup>6</sup>. While short lived, these media organizations set a precedent of challenging state control over the media. By publishing articles that openly criticized the state and encouraging honest debate over improvements that could be made in their country, *Talk Morocco* and *Le Journal* asserted Moroccans' right to a free press. This break from state media marked the beginning of an ever-shifting dynamic between state power and citizen media as both vie for influence over the emerging digital culture in Morocco<sup>7</sup>.

It is in this environment that *Mamfakinch* emerged to fill the void *Talk Morocco* and *Le Journal* left behind. *Mamfakinch* appealed to many Moroccans as it offered an analysis of domestic political affairs that were separate from the state<sup>8</sup>. *Mamfakinch* went online on February 17, 2011 during the midst of Morocco's February 20th movement within the broader scope of the Arab

---

<sup>2</sup> Errazzouki, "Under Watchful Eyes: Internet Surveillance and Citizen Media in Morocco, the Case of Mamfakinch", 365.

<sup>3</sup> Koprowski, Agatha. "Restrictions on the Press under King Mohammed VI and Morocco's Obligations under International and Domestic Laws on Freedom of Expression." *Muslim World Journal of Human Rights*, vol. 7, no. 2, 2011, p. [i]-31. HeinOnline. 1.

<sup>4</sup> Errazzouki, "Under Watchful Eyes: Internet Surveillance and Citizen Media in Morocco, the Case of Mamfakinch", 365.

<sup>5</sup> Errazzouki, "Under Watchful Eyes: Internet Surveillance and Citizen Media in Morocco, the Case of Mamfakinch", 366.

<sup>6</sup> Errazzouki, "Under Watchful Eyes: Internet Surveillance and Citizen Media in Morocco, the Case of Mamfakinch", 366-367.

<sup>7</sup> Errazzouki, "Under Watchful Eyes: Internet Surveillance and Citizen Media in Morocco, the Case of Mamfakinch", 381.

<sup>8</sup> Iddins, "Mamfakinch: From Protest Slogan to Mediated Activism", 3587.

Spring. The media organization takes the name of the protest slogan “mamfakinch!” which translates to “no concessions!” in English<sup>9</sup>. This slogan was chanted in response to government corruption and their stifling of opposition parties<sup>10</sup>.

The media group had three co-founders, one of which was Hisham Almiraat<sup>11</sup>. While the media group was at first largely composed of middle-aged men with professional careers as lawyers or doctors<sup>12</sup>, the group later expanded to include twenty-year-old men and women who were either part of *Mamfakinch*'s thirty bloggers or their ten to twelve core bloggers<sup>13</sup>. Unlike the founders of *Mamfakinch*, newer members came from a more diverse set of backgrounds. Some were college students who had previous experience with journalism or activism. Others had careers outside of government or media<sup>14</sup>.

What tied this diverse group together was their shared ideology and commitment to civic engagement. *Mamfakinch* members were primarily activists who used media, such as blogs, articles, and social media platforms like Facebook, to agitate for reform, amplify the demands of the February 20th Movement, and to increase information accessibility<sup>15</sup>. The Moroccan activist bloggers demanded four basic rights from their government: democracy, liberty, respect for human rights, and freedom of the press<sup>16</sup>. Unlike Egyptians or Tunisians who sought to overthrow their respective regimes during the Arab Spring, Moroccan protestors and *Mamfakinch* members sought to reform the existing system with the hope that Morocco will transition from an absolute

---

<sup>9</sup> Iddins, Annemarie. "Mamfakinch: From Protest Slogan to Mediated Activism." *International Journal of Communication*, vol. 12, 18 Dec. 2017, pp. 3580-99, doi:1932-8036/20180005. Accessed 30 Nov. 2020, 3586.

<sup>10</sup> Iddins, "Mamfakinch: From Protest Slogan to Mediated Activism", 3586.

<sup>11</sup> Iddins, "Mamfakinch: From Protest Slogan to Mediated Activism", 3586.

<sup>12</sup> Errazzouki, "Under Watchful Eyes: Internet Surveillance and Citizen Media in Morocco, the Case of Mamfakinch", 367.

<sup>13</sup> Iddins, "Mamfakinch: From Protest Slogan to Mediated Activism", 3586.

<sup>14</sup> Errazzouki, "Under Watchful Eyes", 368.

<sup>15</sup> Iddins, "Mamfakinch: From Protest Slogan to Mediated Activism", 3586.

<sup>16</sup> Errazzouki, "Under Watchful Eyes", 368.

monarchy to a parliamentary monarchy. This can be seen with their open letter to their King Mohammed VI where they advocated for a new parliament, the creation of a representative committee, and a democratic constitution that replaces the current regime with a parliamentary monarchy<sup>17</sup>.

*Mamfakinch* covered more than just the February 20th Movement, they also reported on social justice and women's rights issues in their country. This can be seen with their coverage on the Amina Filali story where they encouraged debate over rape and sexual harassment and placed pressure on the Moroccan government to change the controversial Article 475 of the Moroccan Penal Code<sup>18</sup>. At the age of sixteen Amina Filali committed suicide by ingesting rat poison after being forced to marry her rapist by her family and being abused in a village near Larache, Morocco<sup>19</sup>. Her suicide laid bare the faults in the Moroccan government's Article 475. The article did not directly address rape but instead stipulated that if a minor is abducted or deceived "without violence, threat, or fraud" the perpetrator can either face five years in prison or can avoid persecution by marrying his victim<sup>20</sup>. Thus, this law was often interpreted by many as allowing rapists to avoid prosecution by marrying their victim.

Amina Fileli's story roused outrage at the government, encouraged public debate over the taboo subjects of rape and sexual harassment, and led to demands for change. While this can be seen with protests on the street, the place where the movement truly flourished was on digital platforms like the #RIP Amina Facebook page<sup>21</sup> and *Quandisha*, "a collaborative women's e-zine" that encouraged debate<sup>22</sup>. As Annemarie Iddins argues, it is in this environment that *Mamfakinch*

---

<sup>17</sup> Iddins, "Mamfakinch: From Protest Slogan to Mediated Activism", 3586.

<sup>18</sup> Iddins, "Mamfakinch: From Protest Slogan to Mediated Activism", 3587.

<sup>19</sup> Iddins, "Mamfakinch: From Protest Slogan to Mediated Activism", 3587.

<sup>20</sup> Iddins, "Mamfakinch: From Protest Slogan to Mediated Activism", 3588.

<sup>21</sup> Iddins, "Mamfakinch: From Protest Slogan to Mediated Activism", 3592.

<sup>22</sup> Iddins, "Mamfakinch: From Protest Slogan to Mediated Activism", 3591.

played a critical role in raising global and domestic awareness of the issue at hand, dispelling stereotypes about Muslim women, and applying pressure to the government<sup>23</sup>.

This can be seen on March 14, 2012 when *Mamfakinch* member Zineb Belmkaddem live tweeted the sit-in in front of the parliament, which later made it onto the state news on 2M<sup>24</sup>. Outside of the state, many *Mamfakinch* contributors did all they could to attract foreign media attention to the Amina Filali story in Morocco. This can be seen with *Mamfakinch* contributor Samia Errazzouki who took part in a panel discussion about Filali on Al Jazeera's "The Stream"<sup>25</sup>. While their voice alone did not cause foreign media outlets like Al Jazeera, Le Monde, the BBC, and The New York Times to report on Filali's story, their contribution did play a role in garnering international and domestic attention<sup>26</sup>. The media group also played a part in counteracting claims that women are oppressed in Morocco because of "a backward and violent religion"<sup>27</sup>. *Mamfakinch* contributor Almiraat tweeted on March 17 that the #RIPamina case has nothing to do with "Islamic law [being] enforced on women"<sup>28</sup>. Rather, as *Mamfakinch* contributor and former lawyer Ibn Kafka stated, it has to do with "its Gallicization"<sup>29</sup>. In this way, *Mamfakinch* covered unfolding events relating to Filali in the country, attracted international attention, and engaged in discourse countering claims that the oppression of women in Muslim society is rooted in Islam. While they alone did not bring about parliament's elimination of Article 475, they played a crucial role in a broader social movement that agitated for and achieved change.

---

<sup>23</sup> Iddins, "Mamfakinch: From Protest Slogan to Mediated Activism", 3588.

<sup>24</sup> Iddins, "Mamfakinch: From Protest Slogan to Mediated Activism", 3589.

<sup>25</sup> Iddins, "Mamfakinch: From Protest Slogan to Mediated Activism", 3590.

<sup>26</sup> Iddins, "Mamfakinch: From Protest Slogan to Mediated Activism", 3588.

<sup>27</sup> Iddins, "Mamfakinch: From Protest Slogan to Mediated Activism", 3590.

<sup>28</sup> Iddins, "Mamfakinch: From Protest Slogan to Mediated Activism", 3590.

<sup>29</sup> Iddins, "Mamfakinch: From Protest Slogan to Mediated Activism", 3590.

Another issue *Mamfakinch* covered was the Berber protests for state recognition of their language and culture in the northern Rif region of Morocco<sup>30</sup>. The Rif is a mountain range stretching across northern Morocco<sup>31</sup> and is inhabited by the Berber tribes (the Northern Rifians, the Southeastern Shluh, and the central Berraber)<sup>32</sup>. The Berbers gained independence from French colonial rule in 1957 and were later annexed by Morocco<sup>33</sup>. The Berbers speak three distinct dialects of the Berber language: Rifi in the Rif, Tamazight in the Middle and central High Atlas and the Sahara, and Tashilhit in the High Atlas and the Anti Atlas<sup>34</sup>. While the Berbers do not seek autonomy from their government, they do seek better integration of their culture and Tamazight language into mainstream Moroccan society<sup>35</sup>. This is because they feel that the Arab language and culture dominates society at the expense of marginalizing their own language and culture<sup>36</sup>. Feelings of cultural repression and economic marginalization under Moroccan rule have pushed many Berbers to agitate their government for more sincere attempts at recognizing the Berber language and preserving its culture.

During the state sponsored media blackout of Berber protests in the Rif in January and February of 2012, *Mamfakinch* took the initiative of covering the events as they unfolded. This can be seen with the launching of their “#MediatizeRif” social media campaign which compelled their government to end their censorship of the protests and state violence occurring in the Rif<sup>37</sup>.

---

<sup>30</sup> Canada: Immigration and Refugee Board of Canada, *Morocco: Brief history of the Berbers including their origins and geographic location*, 16 November 2000, MAR35753.E, available at: <https://www.refworld.org/docid/3df4be668.html> [accessed 14 December 2020]

<sup>31</sup> The Editors of Encyclopaedia Britannica. "Rif." *Encyclopædia Britannica*, 24 July 2008, [www.britannica.com/place/Rif-mountains-Morocco](http://www.britannica.com/place/Rif-mountains-Morocco). Accessed 14 Dec. 2020.

<sup>32</sup> Canada: Immigration and Refugee Board of Canada, *Morocco: Brief history of the Berbers*.

<sup>33</sup> Canada: Immigration and Refugee Board of Canada, *Morocco: Brief history of the Berbers*.

<sup>34</sup> Canada: Immigration and Refugee Board of Canada, *Morocco: Brief history of the Berbers*.

<sup>35</sup> Canada: Immigration and Refugee Board of Canada, *Morocco: Brief history of the Berbers*.

<sup>36</sup> Canada: Immigration and Refugee Board of Canada, *Morocco: Brief history of the Berbers*.

<sup>37</sup> Iddins, “Mamfakinch: From Protest Slogan to Mediated Activism”, 3588.

After tweeting, “MAP [the state news organization] doesn’t want to cover what’s happening? No worries. Citizens will take care of it #MediatizeRif,” they posted their own live coverage of the protests and their commentary on the events<sup>38</sup>. In this way *Mamfakinch*’s coverage of the conflict in the Riff helped provide a coherent narrative of the protests and their objectives that helped counteract State censorship of the event. The aggregation of news stories, the live updates with commentary, and the open political debates under *Mamfakinch* helped the group counterbalance the state’s censorship on what stories got told and the manner in which they were spun to favor the state.

However, it is important to note that there were certain red lines that *Mamfakinch* refused to cross and contesting Morocco’s claims to the Western Sahara was one of them. The conflict in the Western Sahara began after Spain, who had previously colonized the region, withdrew in 1975<sup>39</sup>. This created a power grab between Morocco, Mauritania, and the Polisario Front over the mineral rich region, with Morocco annexing the region in the same year<sup>40</sup>. While Mauritania has relinquished their claims to the Western Shara, conflict continues between the Polisario Front and Morocco because both sides are steadfast in their objectives to annex the region<sup>41</sup>.

While access to the region's abundant reserves of uranium, phosphate, and iron ore plays a notable part in the two parties' contest over the region, other factors are also at play<sup>42</sup>. The Polisario Front (a rebel national independence group) is vehement about having Morocco withdraw from

---

<sup>38</sup> Iddins, “Mamfakinch: From Protest Slogan to Mediated Activism”, 3588.

<sup>39</sup> “Western Sahara Conflict in 500 Words.” *Aljazeera*, 11 Dec. 2020, [www.aljazeera.com/news/2020/12/11/western-sahara-conflict-in-500-words](http://www.aljazeera.com/news/2020/12/11/western-sahara-conflict-in-500-words). Accessed 14 Dec. 2020.

<sup>40</sup> “Western Sahara Conflict in 500 Words.” *Aljazeera*.

<sup>41</sup> Branigin, William. “Mauritania Ends Role in Sahara War.” *The Washington Post*, Washington Post, 7 Aug. 1979, [www.washingtonpost.com/archive/politics/1979/08/07/mauritania-ends-role-in-sahara-war/bed5ff18-8e88-4d4c-b0dc-be9cc3232d27/](http://www.washingtonpost.com/archive/politics/1979/08/07/mauritania-ends-role-in-sahara-war/bed5ff18-8e88-4d4c-b0dc-be9cc3232d27/). Accessed 14 Dec. 2020.

<sup>42</sup> Branigin, “Mauritania Ends Role in Sahara War”.

the Western Sahara, a region they believe is rightfully theirs<sup>43</sup>. For Morocco the conflict has become “a matter of vital national interest”<sup>44</sup>. Enmeshed in the country’s historic and religious fabric, the Western Sahara has become a part of what it means to be Moroccan<sup>45</sup>. Between the tenth and the seventeenth century Morocco possessed control over “the Western Sahara, Mauritania, southwest Algeria, and even Mali”<sup>46</sup>. This all changed during the colonial period where many of these territories were taken from Morocco<sup>47</sup>. Since then, many Moroccans have come to terms with the loss of their once vast empire and have accepted it “as a fait accompli”<sup>48</sup>. However, this excludes the Western Sahara which many believe should be rightfully restored to Morocco<sup>49</sup>. Likewise, the Moroccan government views the Western Sahara as its “last chance to recover some of its despoiled territory”<sup>50</sup>.

It was in this environment that Samia Errazzouki, Moroccan American *Mamfakinch* journalist, had been ejected from *Mamfakinch* after challenging Morocco's claims to the Western Sahara<sup>51</sup>. Samia had visited a Sahrawi refugee camp outside of Tindouf, Algeria where she saw

---

<sup>43</sup> France 24. "W. Sahara 'Does Not Belong' to Morocco, Says Polisario Front, Blasting Trump Declaration." *France 24*, 12 Nov. 2020, [www.france24.com/en/africa/20201211-w-sahara-does-not-belong-to-morocco-says-polisario-front-blasting-trump-declaration](http://www.france24.com/en/africa/20201211-w-sahara-does-not-belong-to-morocco-says-polisario-front-blasting-trump-declaration). Accessed 14 Dec. 2020.

<sup>44</sup> United States, Congress, House, CIA. *The Moroccan Perspective on the Western Sahara*. Government Publishing Office, 11 Nov. 2012. *CIA*, [www.cia.gov/library/readingroom/docs/CIA-RDP08C01297R000100090001-3.pdf](http://www.cia.gov/library/readingroom/docs/CIA-RDP08C01297R000100090001-3.pdf). Accessed 14 Dec. 2020. House Report RDP08C01297R000100090001-3. 1.

<sup>45</sup> CIA, *The Moroccan Perspective on the Western Sahara*, 1.

<sup>46</sup> CIA, *The Moroccan Perspective on the Western Sahara*, 1.

<sup>47</sup> CIA, *The Moroccan Perspective on the Western Sahara*, 1.

<sup>48</sup> CIA, *The Moroccan Perspective on the Western Sahara*, 2.

<sup>49</sup> CIA, *The Moroccan Perspective on the Western Sahara*, 2.

<sup>50</sup> CIA, *The Moroccan Perspective on the Western Sahara*, 2.

<sup>51</sup> Errazzouki, Samia. "Mamfakinch." College of the Holy Cross, 12 Dec. 2020, Worcester. Lecture.

firsthand the costs the Western Sahara War (1975–1991) had on the Sahrawi people<sup>52</sup>. After her visit she then participated in an interview with the ezine *Jadaliyya* where she discussed the repression and displacement of the Sahrawi people by the Moroccan government and the state's use of violence in the Western Sahara<sup>53</sup>. Samia was later fired from *Mamfakinch* by email<sup>54</sup>. Thus, while *Mamfakinch* covered a range of issues in their country from rape to state media blackouts, they were not tolerant of other people's opinions that challenged Morocco's claims to the Western Sahara. As Samia noted, challenging such claims is often seen as "an attack on Morocco's national integrity"<sup>55</sup>. It is important to note that this rejection of opposing viewpoints on the Western Sahara conflict is not confined to *Mamfakinch*, but rather represents a broader social issue in the country. This can be seen with journalist Nazha el-Khalidi who was arrested by the Moroccan government after recording a pro-independence demonstration in the Western Saharan city of Laayoune<sup>56</sup>.

While the waning Feb 20th Movement began to weaken *Mamfakinch*, government spyware sent to the group and the subsequent trial of founding member Hisham Almiraat<sup>57</sup> were the two events that ultimately brought an end to the media group. *Mamfakinch* lost momentum after the Feb 20th Movement began to dwindle because the group no longer had a consistent supply of stories to report on<sup>58</sup>. The government sponsored spyware known as Remote Control System (RMS) accelerated their decline because it instilled paranoia and fear in many<sup>59</sup>. Members received

---

<sup>52</sup> Errazzouki, Samia. "Quick Thoughts: Samia Errazzouki on Western Sahara." *Jadaliyya*, 17 June 2014, [www.jadaliyya.com/Details/30839](http://www.jadaliyya.com/Details/30839). Accessed 14 Dec. 2020.

<sup>53</sup> Errazzouki, "Quick Thoughts: Samia Errazzouki on Western Sahara".

<sup>54</sup> Errazzouki, "Mamfakinch".

<sup>55</sup> Errazzouki, "Mamfakinch".

<sup>56</sup> Martín-Fradejas, Yaiza, and Cristina Abellan-Matamoros. "'I'm Being Attacked for Being a Journalist': Morocco Criticised over Press Freedom in Western Sahara." *Euro News*, [www.euronews.com/2019/07/11/i-m-being-attacked-for-being-a-journalist-morocco-criticised-over-press-freedom-in-wester](http://www.euronews.com/2019/07/11/i-m-being-attacked-for-being-a-journalist-morocco-criticised-over-press-freedom-in-wester). Accessed 14 Dec. 2020.

<sup>57</sup> Errazzouki, "Under Watchful Eyes", 378.

<sup>58</sup> Errazzouki, "Under Watchful Eyes", 373.

<sup>59</sup> Errazzouki, "Under Watchful Eyes", 376.

the spyware as an email attachment that gave the government access to the person's "microphone and webcam in addition to recording keyboard strokes"<sup>60</sup> when the link was clicked. Some *Mamfakinch* members went public about the government's invasion of their privacy<sup>61</sup>, but their publicity was short lived as fear and paranoia began to spread throughout the group and many either cut back on their reporting or left the group<sup>62</sup>. As former Mamfakinch reporter Yassir Kazar stated, while some people were unperturbed by the government surveillance "others remain traumatized, especially if technology was not their cup of tea in the first place"<sup>63</sup>. In February 2014 Mamfakinch stopped publishing<sup>64</sup>. The following year on September 15, 2015 founding member Hisham Almiraat was put on trial for "undermining national security"<sup>65</sup>. *Mamfakinch* was not the only media organization targeted by the government. *Lakome*, *Goud*, and *Febrayer* were also subject to government hacking<sup>66</sup>. Thus, the government's covert repression of *Mamfakinch* brought the group to an end and reasserted the state's control over Morocco's digital culture. Today the Moroccan government allows independent media organizations to report on economic and social policies, but when their voices become too critical or they threaten to mobilize large sectors of society the government represses them<sup>67</sup>. The red lines (such as the monarch, Morocco's claim to the Western Sahara, Islam, and the Riff) that existed prior to the Feb 20th Movement remain in place in society<sup>68</sup>.

---

<sup>60</sup> Errazzouki, "Under Watchful Eyes", 377.

<sup>61</sup> Errazzouki, "Under Watchful Eyes", 378.

<sup>62</sup> Errazzouki, "Under Watchful Eyes", 381.

<sup>63</sup> Iddins, Annemarie. *No Concessions: Independent Media and the Reshaping of the Moroccan Public*. 2017. University of Michigan, PhD dissertation. Accessed 14 Dec. 2020. 227.

<sup>64</sup> Iddins, *No Concessions*, 224.

<sup>65</sup> Errazzouki, "Under Watchful Eyes", 378.

<sup>66</sup> Iddins, *No Concessions*, 227.

<sup>67</sup> Freedom House. "Freedom in the World 2020 - Morocco." *Freedom House*, [freedomhouse.org/country/morocco/freedom-world/2020](https://freedomhouse.org/country/morocco/freedom-world/2020). Accessed 14 Dec. 2020.

<sup>68</sup> Freedom House. "Freedom in the World 2020 - Morocco".

While the outlook for a free press in Morocco may seem grim, it is important to note that *Mamfakinch*, among many other citizen media groups, grew out of a space that was carved out for them by previous digital groups such as *Talk Morocco* and *Le Journal* that challenged state media. Just as these digital platforms created a space for a free press in Morocco, *Mamfakinch* and other independent media groups helped widen this space by demonstrating the power that citizen media groups can wield in challenging the state. By being able to engage in discourse with both the domestic and international communities, *Mamfakinch* grew in power and influence in Morocco and was able to pressure their political elites for change. Their platform gave citizens a voice in their political system and amplified their demands. While short lived, *Mamfakinch's* legacy demonstrates that youth digital cultures can have the power to mobilize large sectors of society, hold their governments responsible, and can command change from their political elites.

## Works Cited

- Branigin, William. "Mauritania Ends Role in Sahara War." *The Washington Post*, Washington Post, 7 Aug. 1979, [www.washingtonpost.com/archive/politics/1979/08/07/mauritania-ends-role-in-sahara-war/bed5ff18-8e88-4d4c-b0dc-be9cc3232d27/](http://www.washingtonpost.com/archive/politics/1979/08/07/mauritania-ends-role-in-sahara-war/bed5ff18-8e88-4d4c-b0dc-be9cc3232d27/). Accessed 14 Dec. 2020.
- Canada: Immigration and Refugee Board of Canada, *Morocco: Brief history of the Berbers including their origins and geographic location*, 16 November 2000, MAR35753.E, available at: <https://www.refworld.org/docid/3df4be668.html> [accessed 14 December 2020].
- The Editors of Encyclopaedia Britannica. "Rif." *Encyclopædia Britannica*, 24 July 2008, [www.britannica.com/place/Rif-mountains-Morocco](http://www.britannica.com/place/Rif-mountains-Morocco). Accessed 14 Dec. 2020.
- Errazzouki, Samia. "Mamfakinch." College of the Holy Cross, 12 Dec. 2020, Worcester. Lecture.
- Errazzouki, Samia. "Under Watchful Eyes: Internet Surveillance and Citizen Media in Morocco, the Case of Mamfakinch." *The Journal of North African Studies*, vol. 22, no. 3, 21 Apr. 2017, pp. 361-85, doi:10.1080/13629387.2017.1307907. Accessed 30 Nov. 2020.
- Errazzouki, Samia. "Quick Thoughts: Samia Errazzouki on Western Sahara." *Jadaliyya*, 17 June

- 2014, [www.jadaliyya.com/Details/30839](http://www.jadaliyya.com/Details/30839). Accessed 14 Dec. 2020.
- France 24. "W. Sahara 'Does Not Belong' to Morocco, Says Polisario Front, Blasting Trump Declaration." *France 24*, 12 Nov. 2020, <https://www.france24.com/en/africa/20201211-w-sahara-does-not-belong-to-moroccosays-polisario-front-blasting-trump-declaration>.
- Freedom House. "Freedom in the World 2020 - Morocco." *Freedom House*, [freedomhouse.org/country/morocco/freedom-world/2020](http://freedomhouse.org/country/morocco/freedom-world/2020). Accessed 14 Dec. 2020.
- Iddins, Annemarie. "Mamfakinch: From Protest Slogan to Mediated Activism." *International Journal of Communication*, vol. 12, 18 Dec. 2017, pp. 3580-99, doi:1932-8036/20180005. Accessed 30 Nov. 2020.
- Iddins, Annemarie. *No Concessions: Independent Media and the Reshaping of the Moroccan Public*. 2017. University of Michigan, PhD dissertation. Accessed 14 Dec. 2020. 227.
- Koprowski, Agatha. "Restrictions on the Press under King Mohammed VI and Morocco's Obligations under International and Domestic Laws on Freedom of Expression." *Muslim World Journal of Human Rights*, vol. 7, no. 2, 2011, p. [i]-31. HeinOnline.
- United States, Congress, House, CIA. *The Moroccan Perspective on the Western Sahara*. Government Publishing Office, 11 Nov. 2012. *CIA*, [www.cia.gov/library/readingroom/docs/CIA-RDP08C01297R000100090001-3.pdf](http://www.cia.gov/library/readingroom/docs/CIA-RDP08C01297R000100090001-3.pdf). Accessed 14 Dec. 2020. House Report RDP08C01297R000100090001-3. 1.
- "Western Sahara Conflict in 500 Words." *Aljazeera*, 11 Dec. 2020, [www.aljazeera.com/news/2020/12/11/western-sahara-conflict-in-500-words](http://www.aljazeera.com/news/2020/12/11/western-sahara-conflict-in-500-words). Accessed 14 Dec. 2020.

