

Understanding The News

Moroccans Celebrate Leadership And Reforms

(NAPSA)—Citizens of Morocco are marking a period of significant change and progressive developments. July 30th marks the 15th anniversary of King Mohammed VI ascending to the throne.

In that time, he has pressed forward with a broad range of democratic reforms begun during the reign of his late father, King Hassan II, to empower Moroccans and make the country a leader in Africa and the broader region, as well as maintain its strong ties with the United States and other allied countries.

Reforms At Home

At home, King Mohammed has pushed for reforming Morocco's family code (Moudawana) to reinforce women's rights and eliminate gender discrimination. He has also called for investigating past human rights abuses and compensating victims, as well as for creating an independent National Human Rights Council, with the power to improve Morocco's human rights record and laws to protect civilians.

King Mohammed has also worked to reduce poverty in rural areas, increase social and health services to marginalized communities—including education, electricity, health care and potable water—and create sustainable economic development projects that produce jobs and support communities.

Stability In The Region

Morocco's commitment to democratic progress and peaceful change has extended well beyond its borders. It has signed numerous cooperation agreements with neighbors in North and sub-Saharan Africa on a broad range of areas, including economic development, security, health, and religious tolerance.

In fact, Morocco's religious tol-



Recent celebration marked the achievements during King Mohammed VI's reign in Morocco.

erance and moderation are now being sought after by other African nations as a means to promote peaceful Islam and counter the extremism in the region.

Morocco has also continued to reinforce and deepen its strategic partnership with the U.S. and its regional partners. In addition to being designated as a major non-NATO ally, a Millennium Challenge Corporation compact recipient, and a Strategic Dialogue partner of the U.S., Morocco has been granted advanced status with the European Union, as well as entered into multiple free trade agreements with the U.S., the EU, and several Middle Eastern and North African (MENA) countries.

As Moroccans mark this significant anniversary, the North African nation continues to deepen its ties with America. "The United States and Morocco stand side by side," said Secretary of State John Kerry during his recent visit to Morocco, and are working together "to help shape a common future...a future defined by a shared prosperity and shared security that we can create together."

This information is conveyed by Beckerman on behalf of the Government of Morocco. Further information is available at the U.S. Department of Justice.