

# *Western Sahara Media Activist Walid Fatal Sentenced to 14 Months in Prison*

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Rabat, December 7 (RHC)-- In news from the Morocco-occupied Western Sahara, 22 year-old media activist Walid Fatal has been sentenced by a Moroccan court to 14 months in prison for filming a peaceful protest in the city of Smara last November 25 on International Day for the Elimination of Violence Against Women.

Twenty protesters, mostly women, were injured by police at the protest, according to the Sahrawi women's group FAFESA. The court found Fatal guilty of obstructing a public road and attacking a police officer, but Fatal claims he was only filming the protest for the Sahrawi media group Smara News.

He is one of several media activists recently arrested and tried by Morocco in the Western Sahara, where independent journalists are frequently harassed. Last month, Reporters Without Borders called on Moroccan authorities to stop violating the rights of Sahrawi and foreign journalists and to end all reporting restrictions in Western Sahara, a territory occupied by Morocco for 41 years.



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