

14 November 2007

His Royal Highness King Mohammed VI  
King of Morocco

Your Royal Highness

**Re: Abou Elkassim Britel**  
**Italian national detained in Prison de Acco Bousia, Casablanca, Morocco.**

FTI is a non-governmental organisation that works to promote fair trials according to international standards of justice and to defend the rights of those facing criminal charges in countries other than their own.

We are supporting the case of Mr Abou Elkassim Britel, an Italian national imprisoned in Casablanca after being sentenced to 9 years imprisonment in January 2004 for membership of a subversive organisation and for activities including the holding unauthorised meetings.

We are deeply concerned that Mr Britel is imprisoned in Morocco on an unsafe conviction obtained through torture and join Italian and European members of Parliament in respectfully requesting that he be granted a Royal pardon.

**Background**

Mr Britel was arrested in Pakistan in March 2002 and interrogated by Pakistani and US officials, before being handed over to Moroccan authorities, detained and tortured in a secret detention facility in Temara, released without charge and then rearrested at the border crossing in the Spanish North African enclave of Melilla as he was making his way back to Italy in May 2003.

Mr Britel had been under investigation in Italy prior to his arrest in Pakistan. This appears to have been an important element in the charges brought against him in Morocco. However, in spite of two years' surveillance and a lengthy judicial investigation into his activities, he was not charged in Italy. The prosecuting magistrate requested judicial proceedings against Mr Britel to be shelved (dated 28 July 2006) due to "absolute lack of grounds of evidence of charge, which may be used in trial". The order by the judge for preliminary proceedings decreeing the end of judicial proceedings (doc. 9745/06, dated 29 September 2006) stated that "the checks that have been undertaken, telephone interceptions and checks on bank accounts have not provided any support to the allegations".

In Morocco, Mr Britel was refused access to his lawyer prior to trial, so was unable to provide him with instructions. Confessions were used that had been obtained through torture. No prosecution witnesses were presented for cross-examination and no witnesses or documentary evidence were allowed to be presented behalf of the defence.

Mr Britel was found guilty and sentenced to 15 years in prison. This was reduced to 9 years on appeal.



He has permanent scaring and suffers from terrible pain in his bones and has damage to an eye and ear; he will suffer the physical consequences for the rest of his life.

Royal Pardon

Members of Parliament from Italy and the European Parliament have requested that the Moroccan Royal Cabinet grant a pardon to Mr Britel.

We support this request and respectfully submit that Mr Britel be released immediately to ensure that this grave miscarriage of justice continues no further.

Yours sincerely

Fair Trials International