



Know  
Before  
You  
Go

## MOROCCO

# A Guide to Keep You Safe Abroad

Provided by Sexual Assault Support and  
Help for Americans Abroad (SASHAA)

*Updated May 2017*



**SASHAA**  
Sexual Assault Support &  
Help for Americans Abroad

Let's be perfectly clear, the number one way to prevent sexual assault is to **not rape**. While the responsibility of ending sexual gender-based violence is on the perpetrators, this guide will offer general safety tips, country-specific information, and resources to help prevent and prepare travelers for the possibility of sexual assault abroad.

## GENERAL SAFETY TIPS:

1. Use the **buddy system** and travel with friends!
2. Be aware of **social and cultural norms**. For example, looking at someone in the eyes when you speak to them is perfectly normal in the U.S., but in another country that could signify you're interested in the person.
3. **Recognize controlling behavior** when entering a relationship. Most rape survivors recall feeling "uncomfortable" about some of their partner's behaviors such as degrading jokes/language or refusal to accept "no" as an answer, whether in a sexual context or otherwise.<sup>2</sup>
4. **Avoid secluded places** where you could be more vulnerable. Meet new people in public spaces and let a trusted friend know where you'll be beforehand.
5. **Trust your gut**. Many victims have a "bad feeling" right before an assault takes place.



## ALCOHOL AND DRUG AWARENESS:

- Always watch your drink being poured and carry it yourself, even to the bathroom.
- "Drug-facilitated sexual assault drugs," also referred to as club drugs or roofies may turn your drink slightly salty, bright blue, or cloudy. Effects such as distorted judgment, lost sense of time, sight, sound, identity, and consciousness can be felt within 15 minutes and may last up to 4 hours.<sup>3</sup>
- As a predominantly Islamic nation, alcohol is illegal to drink as a Muslim in Morocco and buying it in city Medinas is generally impossible. In more modern times, some Moroccan women have started to drink in sophisticated bars or cafes, which were previously reserved for only men.<sup>4,5</sup>

## CULTURAL INFORMATION:

**Major Religions:** 99% Muslim (virtually all Sunni, .1% Shia), 1% other.<sup>6</sup>

**Legal System:** Morocco is a constitutional, democratic and social monarchy. The King is the Supreme Representative of the Nation. Moroccan law is based on French Civil Law and strongly influenced by Islamic (Shari'a Law) and Jewish religious traditions.<sup>7</sup>



**Dress:** Be aware that many locals, especially in rural towns, may be offended by clothes that do not fully cover legs and shoulders. "Modest dress" according to Muslim tradition requires all women to be covered from wrist to ankle and men from over the shoulder to below the knees. The younger generation of women may wear a headscarf rather than a veil to cover themselves.<sup>5</sup>

**Social/Cultural Norms:** Women hold very little engagement in public life. Men may harass Western women or even directly ask for sex as they may misunderstand or make assumptions about Western cultures and attitudes around sex. If you find yourself in this scenario, causing a scene in public is socially acceptable, as locals make great attempts to lie or cover up any potentially shameful situation.<sup>5</sup>

**Gender Equality:** In almost every aspect of Moroccan life, the status of men is higher than women. Morocco is ranked very poorly in terms of gender equality worldwide at 137th out of 144 countries in a 2016 survey by the World Economic Forum.<sup>8</sup>

## Sexual Assault and the Law: Moroccan Context

Family law in Morocco is based on Islamic Law, also known as Shari'a law. In the last few decades, there has been a movement to grant women more equal rights, as Moroccan laws have "various legal gaps, are insufficient to prevent, investigate, and punish violence against women, are discriminatory, and rarely enforced by the justice system in cases of sexual harassment, rape, and domestic abuse."<sup>19</sup> The penalty for rape ranges from five to 30 years' imprisonment. A sexual assault conviction may result in a prison sentence of up to one year and a fine of 15,000 dirhams (\$1,800). Unfortunately, judges remain inadequately trained about, or are unwilling to enforce, the reformed family law.<sup>10</sup>

### If You Experience Sexual Assault...

Don't blame yourself! **Sexual assault is never the fault of the victim.** You may be unsure of how to proceed, and that's okay. First, consider taking the following actions:

1. If you are in a safe place, **call someone you trust** to be with you. If you are not safe, call someone you trust to come and get you.
2. Do **self-collection of evidence**. Put all of the clothes you were wearing, bed sheets, and so on in a paper bag. If you have any injuries, **take pictures**. If there is semen present, collect what you can in a hotel glass or cup and put it in the paper bag.
3. **Call a SASHAA advocate** internationally toll free, 24 hours a day, 7 days a week. They can help you through the ordeal, honoring your decisions. (See Resources)

### Medical Care and Reporting Sexual Assault in Morocco

It is legal to report sexual assault to law enforcement in Morocco, however, Morocco's rape laws are not well enforced, investigated, or prosecuted. Victims must have visible, physical injuries to establish non-consent to rape, making it difficult to conduct a full investigation or have proof for an actual conviction.<sup>10</sup> For these reasons, and many other religious and circumstantial reasons, women in Morocco often do not report sexual assaults due to social stigmas and fear of being prosecuted for "illicit sexual activity." Furthermore, local police authorities and justice systems tend to not respond adequately to complaints of harassment and various other forms of violence against women. Few VAW cases make it to court due to failures within the judicial system, or inability to proceed with a proper crime investigation report, protect victims and hold perpetrators accountable.<sup>11</sup>

#### LGBTQ VICTIM CONCERNS



Homosexual activity, same-sex marriage, and right to change legal gender is all illegal in Morocco, punishable by fine or prison. There are no legal protections against LGBT discriminations either.<sup>12</sup> Although, homosexual activity is seldom enforced for locals as it is not uncommon among premarital men in the country, being a secretive and convenient form of sexual contact since they are denied intimate contact with women.<sup>13</sup> Police have more recently began enforcing the law though, so be discrete and avoid public displays of affection. Also be wary of social apps that connect local gay men as robbery and assault have been reported in recent years.<sup>14</sup>

#### POST EXPOSURE PROPHYLAXIS, EMERGENCY CONTRACEPTION, AND ABORTION.

##### Q. Are post exposure prophylaxis and emergency contraception available?

**A:** Yes, available with prescription and accessible at pharmacies or IPPF-affiliated system. Women in Morocco have the legal right to use contraception, but since premarital sex is heavily stigmatized, EC use is less culturally acceptable.<sup>15, 16</sup>

##### Q: Is abortion legal in Morocco?

**A:** As of June 2016, abortion is legal only in cases of incest, rape, birth defects, and if the mother's life is in danger. Illegal abortions are prevalent in Morocco and the new law hopes to lower the number of illegal cases. Shar'ia law does not allow abortion except if the mother is in danger, thus abortion is still culturally and religiously controversial.<sup>17</sup>

## Resources

### SASHAA

#### SASHAA International Crisis Line:

To call our confidential, toll-free, International Crisis Line first dial the country specific AT&T access code for **Morocco (002-11-0011)**. Then, at the prompt, enter our phone number: **866-USWOMEN (866-879-6636)**.

#### Crisis Email:

To reach a SASHAA advocate, you can email us at [crisis@866uswomen.org](mailto:crisis@866uswomen.org). All crisis emails will be responded to within 24 hours. However, if you need to get in touch with us immediately, please call the international toll-free crisis line.

#### Live Chat:

SASHAA online chat services are available 24/7 at our website <https://sashaa.org>.

### ANNAJDA CENTERS

#### Women Victims of Violence Centers:

**RABAT:** Av Hassan II Imm. 425, Appt. 3, Diour Jamaâ  
Tel: 05-37-70-09-64  
Email: [uaf1987@gmail.com](mailto:uaf1987@gmail.com)

**MARRAKECH:** Massira 1 CN ° 94  
Residence Yassine Appt N ° 13  
Tel: 05-24-34-00-18  
Email: [uaf.marrakech@gmail.com](mailto:uaf.marrakech@gmail.com)

**FEZ:** Imb 7 appt 4 , Rue Al Yarmouk, Lidou  
Tel: 05-35-64-06-92  
Email: [uaffes@yahoo.fr](mailto:uaffes@yahoo.fr)

**CASABLANCA:** 174, Rue Saint Laurent, Residence Rizk  
Tel: 05-22-81-61-34 / 47  
Email: [uafannajdacasa@gmail.com](mailto:uafannajdacasa@gmail.com)

### U.S. EMBASSIES

#### U.S. Embassy Rabat

KM 5.7, Avenue Mohamed VI, Soissi, 10170  
Tel: +(212) 0522-64-20-99  
Emergency After-Hours: +(212) 661-13-19-39  
Email: [Webmaster.Rabat@state.gov](mailto:Webmaster.Rabat@state.gov)

### EMERGENCY NUMBERS

Police: 19 | Ambulance/Fire: 15

### NON-GOVERNMENTAL

#### Global Rights – Maghreb Office

3, rue Oued Zem appt. 4, Rabbat Hassan  
Tel: 212.537.66.04.10/49  
Email: [stephw@globalrights.org](mailto:stephw@globalrights.org)  
Website: [www.globalrights.org](http://www.globalrights.org)

#### Amnesty International/Morocco

Adresse: 281, Avenue Mohammed V Moudaraj,  
2ème étage- n°23 Rabat  
Tel: (212-37) 72-82-33/20-77-25  
Email: [admin-ma@amnesty.org](mailto:admin-ma@amnesty.org)

#### Centre des droits de la Femme (CEDF)

Bloc 5 n°35 Youssoufia el Gharb-Rabat  
Tel :037-65-33-89  
Email: [Cedf\\_29@hotmail.com](mailto:Cedf_29@hotmail.com)

#### Groupe Universitaire d'études Féminines

Faculté des Lettres et des Sciences Humaines,  
Université Med V, Rabat  
Tel: (212-37) 77-18-93/73

#### Hillary R. Clinton Women Empowerment Center

Al Akhawayn University Ave. Hassan II B.P 104, Ifrane  
Tel: (212-55) 86-21-21  
Email : [wecenter@alakhawayn.ma](mailto:wecenter@alakhawayn.ma)  
Website: <http://www.alakhawayn.ma>

### ASSOCIATION DÉMOCRATIQUE DES FEMMES:

#### ADFM: Rabat Office:

Street Ibn Mokla, n 2 Orangers district, Rabat  
Tel: + 212 537 70 60 81 / + 212.5.37.73.71.65  
Email: [association.adfm@menara.ma](mailto:association.adfm@menara.ma)

#### ADFM: Casablanca Office:

79 Rue Jaber Bnou Hayane, Residence Casa Anfa,  
5th floor. Apartment 22-23 , Boulevard dAnfa.  
Tel: +212 522 20 51 52  
Email: [adfm.ong@gmail.com](mailto:adfm.ong@gmail.com)

#### ADFM: Marrakech Office:

02, Imm D Allotment Akiod, 40 000 Semailia  
Tel: +212.5.24.43.57.48 / +212.6.62.40.16.76

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