



Journalists fined over Islam joke

A court in Casablanca has given two Moroccan journalists suspended sentences of three years for defaming Islam and breaching public morality.

The journalists' weekly magazine, *Nichane*, had published an article entitled *How Moroccans laugh at religion, sex and politics*.

The court banned publication of the magazine for two months and fined Driss Ksikes and Sanaa al-Aji about \$8,000.

The journalists said the jokes they published were in common usage.

Their lawyer says they plan to appeal against the sentence.

The prosecutor had urged sentences of three to five years, saying journalists must balance liberties and responsibilities.

Their article had featured jokes about God, the prophets and the Moroccan king, which deeply insulted many ordinary Moroccans and their religion, says the BBC's Richard Hamilton in Casablanca.

The two journalists, backed by many international organisations, feel their prosecution was a blow to press freedom, says our correspondent.

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<http://news.bbc.co.uk/go/pt/fr/-/2/hi/africa/6262919.stm>

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