



Morocco — Va-PoReg Country Report

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06/06/1666 Start Autocratic Monarchy: On 06/06/1666 the Sharifi Moroccan State was founded. It was invaded by France in 1830 and the 1906 Treaty of Algeciras recognized Morocco's independence. Wars from 1907 to 1912 divided Morocco into four zones of influence: Spanish Morocco in the north, French Morocco, the Spanish enclaves of Tafaya and Ifni and the international city of Tangiers.¹ According to LIED no multiparty executive and legislative elections were held. According to Polity5, during this period, the executive held unlimited authority with no institutionalized constraints on decision-making power.

03/30/1912 Continuation Autocratic Monarchy [semi-sovereign, external affairs under France, Electoral Democracy]: On this date, the Treaty of Fez established the Sharifi Moroccan State as a French Protectorate while Spain on 11/27/1912 established a smaller protectorate on the coast area along the Strait of Gibraltar except from Tangier (Ikeda 2015). The Treaty saw the protection of the sovereign from internal opposition, and provided that only the French Resident-General could represent Morocco in foreign countries (Ikeda 2015). Under the Treaty of Fez, French rights in Morocco included, inter alia, the right to station military forces in the territory and the right to appoint a French Resident to oversee all matters concerning foreigners in Morocco (Crawford 2006). According to LIED no multiparty executive and legislative elections were held during this period. For the relevant regime period, V-Dem's JCE is interpreted by us as indicating that judicial constraints on the executive were limited, while V-Dem's LCE is classified by us as indicating that legislative constraints on the executive were moderate.

03/02/1956 Continuation Autocratic Monarchy [as independent country]: On this date French and Moroccan negotiators finally signed an official acknowledgement of Moroccan independence (Wyrzten 2016). This act placed the nation under the governance of the traditional Sultan, Mohammed V (Geddes/Wright/Frantz 2014: 79).² According to our observations and LIED no multiparty executive and legislative elections were held until 1963. From 1956 to 1960, as per Polity5's categorization, the executive experienced minimal limitations on decision-making, placing it in the first intermediate category. Furthermore, LIED identifies political liberties as absent, and V-Dem's PCLI is also classified by us as indicating that political liberties were absent until 1955. From 1956 onwards, V-Dem's PCLI is classified by us as indicating that political liberties are not really present. On 05/17/1963, the first parliamentary elections in Morocco were held. These elections followed the approval of the country's constitution in a referendum the previous year, marking a significant step towards establishing a popularly elected legislative body in Morocco.³ In the same elections universal suffrage was introduced.⁴ According to the constitution, Morocco was a constitutional monarchy from that point on with a bicameral parliament, that consists of the House of Representatives and the House of Councilors. The king takes on a central role as head of state, as he is empowered to appoint the prime minister, dissolve the parliament or call for new elections. According to LIED only multiparty legislative elections were held until 1964. On 06/20/1965, Hassan II suspended the 1962 constitution, dissolved parliament, and imposed a state of emergency that remained in effect until 1970.⁵ According to LIED no multiparty executive and legislative elections were held until 1970. On 08/21/1970 parliamentary elections were held in Morocco, following the adoption of a new constitution in July. The newly formed Assembly of Representatives consisted of 240 members: 90 elected directly in single-member constituencies, 90 chosen by local councilors, and 60 selected by four professional colleges. A total of 293 male candidates contested the election. Although

the Istiqlal Party and the National Union of Popular Forces officially boycotted the elections, some candidates still participated. Voter turnout was reported at 85%.⁶ According to LIED only legislative elections, which weren't multiparty, were held until 1972. Neither the suffrage nor the power of the parliament are sufficient in our observation for the classification as a constitutional monarchy. On 03/01/1972, a constitutional referendum was held in Morocco, following an attempted coup in July 1971 that pushed King Hassan II to accept the need for a broader government. The new constitution replaced the 1970 version, which had limited directly elected parliamentary seats to 90 out of 240. The referendum passed with 98.8% approval and a 93% voter turnout. The constitution was promulgated on 03/10. Although elections were initially planned for May, they were indefinitely postponed and eventually held in 1977.⁷ According to LIED no multiparty executive and legislative elections were held until 1977. On 06/03/1977 this date parliamentary elections were held in Morocco. The previous elections took place in 1970, but Parliament was dissolved in March 1972, followed by the approval of a new constitution in a referendum that same month. Although fresh elections were initially planned for May, they were later postponed indefinitely. A total of 1,022 candidates participated in the election, including 456 independents, while the rest represented seven political parties. Independents ultimately secured the majority of seats, winning 141 in total. Voter turnout stood at 82.36%.⁸ According to LIED multiparty executive and legislative elections were held until 1982. In 1983, Hassan II called off the planned elections due to political unrest and an economic crisis.⁹ On 09/14/1984 this date, parliamentary elections took place in Morocco, after being postponed from their original date in September 1983 due to concerns regarding the future of Western Sahara. The number of directly elected seats increased from 176 to 199, while the indirectly elected seats rose from 88 to 102. Of these, 60 were elected by local councillors, 32 by professional bodies, and 10 by workers' organizations.¹⁰ According to LIED only multiparty legislative elections were held from 1984 onward. In 2011 a new constitution elevated the prime minister to the „head of government“ and ensured he was selected from the party that received the most votes in election, rather than just chosen by the king.¹¹ However, the king retained his position as the head of two critical councils—the Council of Ministers and the Supreme Security Council—responsible for formulating security policy. Although the prime minister has the option to chair these councils, they are only permitted to do so according to the agenda determined by the king.¹² The 2021 election marked several significant changes due to a new electoral law. The law eliminated the electoral threshold, which was previously set at 6% for local lists and 3% for national lists, replaced by regional ones. The new law allocates seats based on registered voters rather than actual ballots cast, ensuring that no party in a district can secure more than one electoral seat, regardless of the number of votes received.¹³ According to LIED political liberties remained absent, whereas V-Dem's PCLI classifies political liberties as ambiguous from 1997 to 2012, somewhat present in 2013 and 2014 and again as ambiguous since 2015. In 1963 and 1964, as per Polity5's classification, the executive's authority was subject to minor institutional constraints. From 1965 to 1976, based on Polity5's assessment, the executive operated with unlimited authority, facing no institutional checks on power. Between 1977 and 1991, the executive faced weak constraints, classified as Intermediate Category 1 between unlimited authority and slight limitations. From 1992 to 2010, based on Polity5's assessment, the executive faced slight limitations on power. Between 2011 and 2018, the executive experienced moderate limitations on authority, placing it in the second intermediate category. For the relevant regime period, V-Dem's JCE is interpreted by us as indicating that judicial constraints on the executive were moderate until 2016 and robust thereafter, while V-Dem's LCE is classified by us as indicating that legislative constraints on the executive were moderate until 1989 and robust thereafter. The regime became a borderline case between a constitutional and an autocratic monarchy. Based on the scores ranging from 8 to 10, we interpret FH as rather not free for the relevant regime period.

Autocratic Monarchy as of 07/01/2025 continued.

Additional Sources (Cavatorta 2009, Hammoudi 1999, Jamal 2012, Moore 1970, Waterbury 1970, Ottaway/Choucair-Vizoso 2008, Kechichian 2008, Bank 2004)

Notes

¹ <https://globalfinancialdata.com/morocco>

² <http://www.state.gov/r/pa/ei/bgn/5431.html>

³ https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/1963_Moroccan_general_election

⁴ https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Women%27s_suffrage

⁵ https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/1965_Moroccan_riots

⁶ https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/1970_Moroccan_general_election

⁷ https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/1972_Moroccan_constitutional_referendum

⁸ https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/1977_Moroccan_general_election

⁹ <https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Morocco#History>

¹⁰ https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/1984_Moroccan_general_election

¹¹ https://www.constituteproject.org/constitution/Morocco_2011

¹² https://web.archive.org/web/20110620210534/http://news.yahoo.com/s/ap/20110617/ap_on_re_mi_ea/ml_morocco_king

¹³ https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/2021_Moroccan_general_election

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