

MOROCCO

INTERNATIONAL INTELLECTUAL PROPERTY ALLIANCE (IIPA)

2026 SPECIAL 301 REPORT ON COPYRIGHT PROTECTION AND ENFORCEMENT

Special 301 Recommendation: IIPA recommends that Morocco be placed on the Watch List in 2026.¹

Executive Summary: Piracy levels in Morocco remain persistently high across most creative industries. The proliferation of illegal Internet Protocol TV (IPTV) and streaming services, many of which originate from or are facilitated through Morocco, continues to cause substantial harm to rights holders and presents a persistent challenge. These services target both domestic and foreign consumers, underscoring the cross-border nature of the piracy problem and its broader trade and commercial implications for Morocco's international partnerships. Morocco's piracy problem uniquely extends to the rampant availability of physical pirated products in markets such as *Derb Ghallef* in Casablanca. Enforcement against copyright piracy in both digital and physical forms remains limited, constrained by weak implementation mechanisms, procedural delays, and the absence of specialized digital enforcement tools. The existing customs recordation system remains inadequate to empower authorities to address digital piracy in a timely and effective manner. Though positive dialogue between rights holders and key authorities has increased governmental willingness to engage on and awareness of the impact of digital piracy, authorities have yet to consistently act on the matter despite possessing the necessary legal authority and tools to do so. This inconsistent intervention, combined with low public awareness of copyright and its economic importance, has allowed digital piracy to persist across the market. Education of the public on the harms of infringement and the rights of copyright holders could significantly decrease the piracy rate. IIPA urges Morocco to strengthen enforcement efforts, further engage in public and institutional education on copyright, and revise its legal framework to support more effective and timely action against digital piracy.

PRIORITY ACTIONS REQUESTED IN 2026

Enforcement

- Establish clear procedures for the investigation, prosecution, and adjudication of online/digital piracy cases.
- Strengthen the public and institutional awareness of the economic and cultural harm caused by copyright piracy, specifically in the digital environment.

Legal Reforms

- Modify the current customs recordation system to allow rights holders longer than ten working days to initiate legal proceedings.
- Encourage adoption of a legal framework to enable swift administrative and judicial actions against illegal IPTV and streaming services.
- Make amendments to Moroccan law that clarify the Bureau Marocain des Droits d'Auteur et Droits Voisins's (BMDAV's) powers to preserve and strengthen rights holders' autonomy in the management of their rights.
- Make amendments to Moroccan law to ensure the rights of broadcasting and communication to the public of performers and phonogram producers are scoped as exclusive rights.
- Affirmatively declare that copyright protection extends to foreign works and rights holders, and is not limited to Moroccan citizens and residents.

ENFORCEMENT

¹ For more details on Morocco's Special 301 history, see previous years' reports, at <https://iipa.org/reports/reports-by-country/>. For the history of Morocco's Special 301 placement, see <https://www.iipa.org/files/uploads/2026/01/Appendix-C-FINAL-2026.pdf>.

Morocco has an extremely high rate of piracy for films, television, and music. Between November 2024 and October 2025 Morocco was ranked 7th for the most visits to piracy sites across Africa, according to MUSO. During the same period, piracy sites saw over 63.9 million visits. In 2024 alone, Morocco registered more than 950 million visits to infringing streaming, hosting, and Peer-to-Peer (P2P) sites. Stream-ripping sites are the most popular piracy choice in the country, with more than 29.9 million visits made across several stream-ripping sites including the two most prominent, *savefrom.net* and *notube.lol*. BitTorrent sites also remain a key piracy issue in Morocco with over 7.8 million visits according to MUSO. Popular BitTorrent sites include *1337x.to* and *yts.mx*.

Social acceptance of the purchase and sale of pirated content contributes greatly to the spread of infringing activity. For example, in June 2023, cafés and restaurants were charged for licenses to utilize copyrighted works in their businesses (e.g., playing music in a café). The owners of these establishments filed a complaint with the Court of First Instance in Rabat against the BMDAV, a federally-created collective management organization (CMO) with financial autonomy, alleging that it was acting without a basis in law.² These business owners claimed that the radio stations or television stations performing the works to the public were the only entities responsible for licensing the material. This dispute illustrates both the need for clearer public communication regarding rights and obligations as well as the central role the BMDAV plays in Morocco's copyright ecosystem.

The current level of achievable enforcement in Morocco remains inadequate to meaningfully reduce digital piracy dominated by illegal streaming and IPTV services. Many rampant illegal IPTV services operating in and through Morocco have continued to evolve and professionalize, with some offering business cards, installation assistance, and ongoing customer support to project an appearance of legitimacy. Though certain IPTV services are linked to networks outside of Morocco, substantial elements of the infrastructure, subscriber management, and distribution activity are operated out of and/or by Moroccan nationals who target both domestic and international audiences. Annual subscriptions to these illegal services remain inexpensive, typically between 150 and 500 dirhams (approximately US\$50 - \$150), which fuels widespread adoption. Further, access to these services has become easier and more flexible. In addition to simple browser-based interfaces, consumers can use dedicated IPTV applications, mobile and smart-TV apps, Android APKs, and common IPTV player software, all of which do not require specialized hardware beyond a connected device. This multi-platform accessibility significantly lowers barriers to entry for users and reduces operational risk for sellers, enabling the IPTV ecosystem to expand rapidly.

A flea market in Casablanca, *Derb Ghallef souk*, is a hub for physical pirated content with over 1,500 storefronts.³ Infringing copies of copyrighted works are sold within this market for redistribution nationally. Consumers are attracted to pirated copies of works because of a lack of awareness of the law and the cheap cost of infringing works in these marketplaces. Due to the size and the longevity of markets like *Derb Ghallef* (which has existed since the beginning of the 1900s),⁴ the availability of physical pirated goods is rampant in the large cities of Morocco. This extra layer of availability for pirated content, not present in many other countries today, further highlights the scale of this issue in Morocco.

- **Establish clear procedures for the investigation, prosecution, and adjudication of online/digital piracy cases.**

Progression of Filings

² See Bladi.net, *Morocco Café Owners Challenge Music and TV Royalty Fees in Court*, June 21, 2023, available at <https://en.bladi.net/morocco-cafe-owners-challenge-music-and-royalty-fees-court.102701.html#:~:text=In%20a%20tug%20of%2Dwar%20with%20the%20Moroccan%20Copyright,are%20summoned%20by%20the%20BMDA%20to%20pa%20v/>.

³ See Aziza Belouas, *La Vie Eco*, In *Derb Ghallef*, activity is not about to resume, shopkeepers are worried, October 5, 2020, available at <https://www.lavieeco.com/influences/societe/a-derb-ghallef-lactivite-nest-pas-pres-de-reprendre-les-commerçants-sinquietent/>.

⁴ See Stay Here, *Discovering the Derb Ghallef Market: A Journey to the Heart of Casablanca* (June 7, 2024), available at <https://stayhere.ma/en/blog-en/2024/06/07/discovering-the-derb-ghallef/>.

Enforcement actions rarely progress beyond preliminary stages due to structural and procedural limitations. Nonetheless, Morocco remains a strategic jurisdiction for testing copyright enforcement in North Africa. In the past few years, the Motion Picture Association (MPA) initiated several test filings via the Judicial Police. Since 2022, many of the cases filed by rights holders have not advanced beyond this investigation phase with the Judicial Police, highlighting the need for clearer procedures and stronger prosecutorial engagement. These types of formal filings are separate from any parallel attempts by rights holders to resolve matters amicably, which operators often circumvent by shutting down the visible front end of their services and reappearing under new domains. Until recently, no digital piracy case had progressed in Morocco. The *Beinmatch* streaming case in the city of Nador represents the initial First Instance Judgment and criminal conviction, demonstrating that meaningful progress is possible when a case is prioritized and moves beyond the investigative stage. In other jurisdictions, however, cases continue to advance slowly, partially because some prosecutors do not yet view digital piracy as a priority. While no additional case outcomes were issued in 2025, the test filings have helped identify procedural gaps and reinforce the need for consistent prosecution pathways so that cases can advance beyond the investigation phase and lead to meaningful judicial outcomes.

While ongoing follow-up continues, IIPA encourages Moroccan officials to clarify streamlined procedures for digital piracy cases. Continued training, capacity building, and sustained engagement with authorities will be essential to improving outcomes. Morocco would benefit from adoption of international procedural best practices for enabling the rapid dismantling of digital crimes through swift orders to block infringing domains or apps, directions to telecom operators to disable access, expedited freezing of bank assets, and quick preservation of digital evidence. For instance, courts in countries such as France, the Netherlands, and more recently, Egypt have used these tools effectively to shut down major pirate operations. Similar mechanisms would significantly strengthen Morocco's capacity to address digital piracy and remain aligned with international enforcement standards.

Expert Appointment Process

Under Article 65.2 of Morocco's Copyright Law, copyright infringement may be subject to proceedings ordered by the Public Prosecutor's Office without a complaint from a private party or rights holder.⁵ Although not technically mandatory in the aforementioned setting, an expert report is crucial to initiate any civil action where technical details are paramount. For example, a report from an independently appointed expert can fill the court's knowledge gaps surrounding technical similarity between the copyrighted work and the infringing work, the operation of IPTV or streaming platforms, or the nature of digital evidence.

Even when available experts lack in-depth knowledge of digital piracy, their reports remain critical to guide investigations and legal proceedings effectively in all settings. Currently, the timeline for expert appointments is technically subject to a deadline of ten days to one month, but these deadlines are rarely met due to a limited pool of available experts. Rights holders can request the appointment of an expert through the national court, but this process can take two to three months. Some experts decline appointments, citing insufficient technical knowledge of digital piracy, which delays investigations and/or legal proceedings and allows infringing activities to persist unabated.

In some cases, alternative evidence—such as bailiff reports and investigation minutes—can provide a sufficient basis for the Judicial Police to open a criminal investigation independently of expert reports. However, if the Prosecutor takes the case to court, the court may still order an expert report if deemed necessary. To enhance the effectiveness of copyright enforcement in Morocco, it is imperative to address the existing bottlenecks in the expert appointment process. This can be achieved by expanding the pool of knowledgeable experts, improving their technical training in digital piracy, and strengthening bailiff training as they play a key role in documenting online infringement. In parallel, expediting the expert appointment process via targeted legal and procedural reforms would help ensure that cases progress and long periods during which infringing activities continue unchecked are reduced.

⁵ See Law No. 2-00 on Copyright and Related Rights, WIPO LEX, available at <https://www.wipo.int/wipolex/en/text/567196> (2000).

- **Strengthen the public and institutional awareness of the economic and cultural harm caused by copyright piracy, specifically in the digital environment.**

The lack of understanding of basic copyright principles across consumers, private stakeholders, federal officials, local law enforcement, and judges creates significant resistance to comply with copyright laws. To address this general lack of understanding, it is critical to raise awareness of the actual costs of copyright infringement across these groups. Recent and planned capacity building initiatives, many of them involving the BMDAV as a key partner, are steps in the right direction, but more is needed.

General Public & Private Stakeholders: Many Moroccans are unaware that consuming pirated content is illegal or do not see the direct connection between piracy and the harm it causes to the local creative economy. A targeted campaign to educate consumers on the legal, ethical, and financial consequences of piracy could make a significant difference. For example, public service announcements on popular social media platforms, in schools, and in public spaces could explain the legal risks involved and promote affordable legal alternatives for accessing content. Additionally, partnerships with local celebrities or artists could add a personal touch, emphasizing the real-world impact piracy has on their work. Highlighting the consequences of piracy in a national conversation and offering practical solutions would begin to reduce the prevalence of copyright infringement and foster a more supportive environment for the creative industries in Morocco. Similarly, steps to educate local citizens on the illegality and risks of illegal IPTV services could greatly reduce the pervasiveness of these illegal streams. This lack of awareness, the ease with which Moroccans can subscribe to illegal IPTV services, the low cost of these illegal services, and the professionalism of the sellers all contribute to rampant infringement. Though awareness is slowly improving among the public, steady follow-up will be necessary to see concrete action in the coming period.

Among private stakeholders in Morocco, similar productive educational efforts are needed. Focused programs like those conducted by the Court of Algiers in February 2023 to educate copyright industry members on the protection of intellectual property (IP) for the Internet provide a useful model. Comparable initiatives in Morocco, carried out in cooperation with the BMDAV and industry groups, would help to ensure the private sector is not inadvertently contributing to the piracy ecosystem.

Federal Enforcement Officials: A key challenge is the technical knowledge necessary, but often lacking, in federal law enforcement to collect and interpret digital evidence. This gap can cause significant delays in cases involving IPTV and illegal streaming services, allowing operators to continue and suspects to evade capture. To prevent such delays and ensure more effective responses, Morocco should introduce specialized training programs in collaboration with international experts like INTERPOL. These programs would educate law enforcement officers on tracing illegal streams, detecting pirated content, and identifying the financial networks behind these operations. Further, regular training sessions of federal enforcement officials tailored to the unique challenges posed by illegal IPTV operations and other digital piracy services can provide officials with the knowledge and tools necessary to identify, investigate, and prosecute infringers. Overall, improving the education of Moroccan federal enforcement officials should result in faster and better results for the progression of cases.

Local Law Enforcement & Judges: Similarly, training local law enforcement and judges on digital piracy is a critical step in curbing the spread of illegal content in Morocco. As digital piracy evolves with technology, so must the knowledge and skills of those responsible for enforcing the law. Many law enforcement officers and judges may not be fully aware of the complexities involved in modern digital piracy cases, including how illicit streaming services operate, how content is distributed, and the methods used to conceal these activities. This lack of expertise often hampers effective enforcement and prosecution, leading to reluctance to apply criminal sanctions.

Judges and local law enforcement would also benefit from targeted training. Providing the judiciary with a deeper understanding of global piracy trends, relevant legal frameworks, and effective enforcement strategies would enable them to make more informed rulings. Equipping both law enforcement and the judiciary with these essential skills would not only improve Morocco's ability to investigate and prosecute digital piracy but would also serve as a significant deterrent to such crimes. In February of 2023, the U.S. Patent and Trademark Office organized a workshop in Casablanca to educate local prosecutors and judges on digital copyright infringement, illegal services, and methods of identification of the anonymous operators of these illegal entities. Additional productive educational efforts should follow throughout the country.

In a positive development, the Alliance for Creativity and Entertainment in collaboration with the French National Institute of Industrial Property (INPI), INTERPOL and the BMDAV organized a one-day seminar in December 2025, dedicated to training stakeholders and authorities on digital piracy, investigative techniques, and practical enforcement tools. This initiative convened key national and regional actors to strengthen coordination, enhance technical capabilities, and promote a unified approach to combatting online copyright crime in Morocco. Seminars such as these can serve as a template for replication moving forward.

LEGAL REFORMS

- **Modify the current customs recordation system to allow rights holders longer than ten working days to initiate legal proceedings.**

Under Morocco's current customs recordation system, rights holders or their representatives may file requests with the Central Administration of Customs to seize or suspend pirated goods at the ports of entry in Morocco.⁶ The BMDAV may also file these requests in the case of copyrighted goods. Once customs has detained goods as requested, the rights holder has just ten days from the date of notification to request a formal order for a seizure to continue until a bailiff can visit the port to inspect the goods. If this order is not filed, the goods are released after the ten-day period. Ten days is far too short as rights holders need additional time to investigate these issues and prepare before initiating proceedings. Additional time is even more critical for foreign rights holders or those who are not physically located in Morocco, for whom this narrow time frame is especially restrictive. IIPA urges Morocco to update the customs recordation system to increase the time for rights holders to initiate legal proceedings.

- **Encourage adoption of a legal framework to enable swift administrative and judicial actions against illegal IPTV and streaming services.**

The BMDAV cannot initiate action against known infringers or investigate complaints lodged by rights holders. Law No. 25-19 on the Moroccan Copyright and Neighboring Rights Office has clarified the status of the BMDAV as a legal entity under public law with financial autonomy to investigate reports of infringement.⁷ Morocco should adopt a new legislative or regulatory framework that clearly sets out the BMDAV's mandate in the digital environment, providing for swift administrative and judicial remedies against illegal IPTV and streaming. Such a framework should ensure that, when rights holders lodge complaints, the BMDAV and other competent authorities are required to initiate enforcement or affirmatively decline actions requested. This kind of transparent, structured process would strengthen accountability and support a more consistent enforcement environment that reinforces the BMDAV's central role as Morocco's Copyright Office.

- **Make amendments to Moroccan law that clarify the BMDAV's powers to preserve and strengthen rights holders' autonomy in the management of their rights.**

⁶ See Law No. 17-97 on the Protection of Industrial Property, Article 176.4.

⁷ See Law No. 25-19 on the Moroccan Copyright and Neighbouring Rights Office, WIPO LEX, available at <https://www.wipo.int/wipolex/en/legislation/details/21930> (2022).

The current collective rights management system and enforcement mechanisms in Morocco grant the BMDAV a legal monopoly for the management and enforcement of all forms of copyright exploitation.

Rights holders have historically been uncertain about the specific enforcement role the BMDAV plays in digital piracy matters, as the practical procedures for submitting complaints or coordinating investigations through the Office have not been clearly defined. As a result, rights holders have traditionally filed complaints directly with the Judicial Police, the Public Prosecutor, or other competent authorities. Nonetheless, the overall number of complaints related to copyright infringement remains high. However, the absence of clear operational guidance on how the BMDAV can support or initiate enforcement actions, particularly in online cases, has limited the ability of rights holders to use the BMDAV as a centralized point of coordination. The piracy problem in Morocco will continue to escalate without meaningful action to remedy the structural, legal, and institutional concerns noted in this submission.

In a positive development, over the past year, rights holders have initiated a constructive dialogue with the BMDAV and enforcement authorities, highlighted by a joint seminar in December 2025 on digital piracy which opened the door to stronger cooperation and training. To build on this progress, Morocco should clarify the BMDAV's operational role and establish predictable procedures for submitting and processing complaints, helping to translate this emerging engagement into more consistent and effective enforcement outcomes, and to allow rights holders autonomy in exploiting their rights and choosing collective management methods.

Article 4 of Law 25-19 requires rights holders to become members of the BMDAV, a state-run CMO. BMDAV provides all collective rights management services per Law 25-19, which precludes rights holders from establishing their own CMOs.⁸ The provisions in Law 25-19 ultimately restrict rights holders from deciding whether to manage their rights individually or collectively.

The effects of the requirement for rights holders to join the BMDAV CMO are not limited to Morocco. This is because the newly adopted Article 49.1 of the Copyright Law could be interpreted to extend the scope of the BMDAV licenses, including licenses covering related rights, outside of Morocco. Further, the powers of the BMDAV extend to enforcement of copyright and related rights, thus running the risk of depriving copyright owners of legal standing if interpreted as their licensing power was. IIPA urges the Moroccan government to eliminate the requirement for rights holders to receive collective management of their rights under the BMDAV and further ensure licenses do not extend outside of the country. Morocco should introduce a system that (i) allows rights holders to decide which rights they want to manage individually and which ones they want to entrust the management of to a CMO; (ii) allows rights holders to create and control their CMOs; and (iii) grants rights holders freedom to enforce their rights directly or through a third party of their choice.

- **Make amendments to Moroccan law to ensure the rights of broadcasting and communication to the public of performers and phonogram producers are scoped as exclusive rights.**

Morocco should provide sound recording producers with exclusive rights, rather than mere remuneration rights, for broadcasting and communication to the public. Exclusive rights enable record companies to negotiate commercial terms for the public performance and broadcast of sound recordings.⁹

Article 59.6 of the Copyright Law contains a distribution key, which unfairly prejudices phonogram producers for collections of the private copying levy. Phonogram producers are allocated only 10% of these collections, versus

⁸ See Law No. 25-19 *Relative au Bureau Marocain des Droits D'Auteur et Droits Voisins*, WIPOLEX, available in French at <https://www.wipo.int/wipolex/en/text/587394> (2022).

⁹ See id.

35% for authors and performers respectively.¹⁰ This distribution key is arbitrary and does not accurately reflect the economic value of the rights at issue. Given that the BMDAV manages exclusive rights, there is concern that this distribution key may be the basis of distributions of monies collected from other exploitations. Article 59.6 should be reevaluated and if necessary revised to ensure an economically proportionate and fair distribution to rights holders.

- **Affirmatively declare that copyright protection extends to foreign works and rights holders, and is not limited to Moroccan citizens and residents.**

Article 67 of Morocco's Copyright Law establishes the scope of copyright protection that could potentially prejudice foreign work and rights holders. Phonograms specifically are limited to (i) those, the producer of which is a national of Morocco, (ii) those, the first fixation of which took place in Morocco, and (iii) those produced for the first time in Morocco.¹¹ Article 68 of Morocco's Copyright Law gives international treaties (such as the WIPO Performances and Phonograms Treaty) to which Morocco is party precedence over the national law in the case of a conflict. To eliminate all doubt, Article 67 should affirmatively declare that foreign nationals of nations that are parties to treaties to which Morocco is also party are entitled to the same scope of copyright protection under Morocco's Copyright Law as Moroccan nationals.

¹⁰ See Law No. 79-12 Complétant la loi no. 2-00 Relative aux Droits D'Auteur et Droits Voisin, WIPO LEX, available in French at <https://www.wipo.int/wipolex/en/text/570011> (2014).

¹¹ See Law No. 2-00 on Copyright and Related Rights, WIPO LEX, available at <https://www.wipo.int/wipolex/en/text/567196> (2000).