

Meanwhile, Sall's popularity has plummeted. Despite the roll-out of an ambitious economic reform plan, Sall is attracting the same criticism that helped to bring Wade's rule to an end. Sall's brother Aliou Sall is mayor of the Dakar suburb of Guédiawaye, and his brother-in-law Mansour Faye is both mayor of Saint-Louis and water and sanitation minister. "With Karim Wade, it was just him and his father," says Abdou Lô. "With Macky Sall, it is the whole family." ●

Rose Skelton in Dakar

## MOROCCO

# Abortion outrage

A taboo subject has been broached and reforms may be forthcoming

The debate on abortion in Morocco is rapidly shifting, with a revised law expected soon after the completion of consultations. In early May, health minister El Houssein El Ouardi came out in favour of reforming the law to allow abortions in more cases, saying: "It is absolutely necessary to legalise abortion because it is not only a medical question but also a social one." Moroccan law only allows abortions in cases where the mother's life is at risk.

The issue was catapulted onto the front pages when French TV channel France 2 aired a documentary that featured professor Chafik Chraïbi, a gynaecologist and president of the *Association Marocaine de Lutte Contre l'Avortement Clandestin* (AMLCAC), which campaigns to end backstreet abortions. A month later, in January 2015, the health ministry fired Chraïbi from his job as head of the maternity ward at Les Orangers hospital in Rabat, where he had worked for 30 years.

Campaigners say that every day an estimated 800 women in Morocco choose to have abortions. As Moroccans often view single motherhood harshly, reports say that up to 150 children are abandoned by their parents each day. Moroccan law also forbids sexual relations outside of marriage.

Politicians are largely divided on the subject of abortion. Saâdeddine El Othmani, a psychiatrist and former general secretary of the governing Islamist *Parti de la Justice et du Développement*, said that "it should be possible and risk-free to perform abortion before the 120 first days of pregnancy, in cases of rape, incest or foetus malformation," basing his opinion on a 1990 fatwa from the Mecca jurisprudential council. He remains a lone voice in his party.

In March, health minister El Ouardi, a member of the progressive *Parti du Progrès et du Socialisme*, organised a meeting to discuss abortion. He talked with representatives from civil society and political and religious organisations as well as members of the *Conseil National des Droits de l'Homme* (CNDH), the consultative body on human rights issues. Chraïbi's association also organised a debate about the law on abortion where many women, including elected representatives, took a stand and denounced the situation in the country, strongly arguing for a change in the law.

The resulting din has reached the palace. King Mohammed VI has asked the ministers of justice and Islamic affairs, as well as the president of the CNDH, to set up a public consultation

and submit a reform proposal on the country's abortion law. Perhaps to test the water, some of these proposals have been leaked: local media report that abortion could be allowed in six specific cases: rape, pregnancy of a minor, incest, foetus malformation, when the mother suffers from intellectual disability and when the mother's life is at risk.

Yet for Chraïbi, the fight is not over: "I feel like I have won a battle, but I have certainly not won the war. Many tragic situations are finally going to be taken into account now, and this is a good thing. But I wish the law would have acknowledged the World Health Organisation definition of health, which is 'a state of complete physical, mental and social well-being and not merely the absence of disease or infirmity'. Without this clarification, what represents a health risk for the mother will remain at the judge's discretion, and that opens the door to grey areas," he tells *The Africa Report*. ● Nadia Rabbaa



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## RWANDA/TANZANIA

# Kagame vs. Kikwete

The East African neighbours are starting to rebuild their friendship

Rwanda's President Paul Kagame and Tanzania's President Jakaya Kikwete are slowly and quietly trying to make up after Kikwete outraged his counterpart with suggestions on how he should handle regional diplomacy. In April, Kagame said: "I didn't realise that things were so bad between us and Tanzania that when we talk to each other it becomes headline news. But yes, we are all in the East African Community, we work for one common objective of integration. People may have different views about different issues, but at the end of the day the interests are the same. There are common objectives." In reality, the two countries are competing for regional influence.

In May 2013, Kikwete said that Uganda, Rwanda and the DRC should launch parleys with rebels in eastern DRC in order to resolve the region's long-running armed conflicts. In response, Uganda reportedly expressed willingness to talk, while the Kinshasa government appears not have made a response – at least not openly. The Rwandan government,