

STATEMENT OF SUPPORT FOR OMAR RADI, BERTHA CHALLENGE FELLOW

At Bertha Foundation the year 2020 will always be remembered for two events: the outbreak of Covid and its devastating impact on the most vulnerable people across the world and the year that Omar Radi, Moroccan investigative journalist and Bertha Challenge Fellow, was subjected to lengthy and relentless state sponsored harassment, which ultimately led to his imprisonment in July 2020. Almost a year to the day, on 19 July 2021, he was sentenced to six years in prison on spurious charges of rape and espionage.

Bertha Foundation, after more than a decade fighting for a more just world, knows that the world is becoming increasingly repressive and dangerous for journalists.

The Bertha Challenge fellowship has supported some of the bravest and most talented journalists and activists working across 26 different countries. Omar, together with the 2020 cohort, investigated how the relationship between property, profit and politics contributes to land and housing injustice. His work focussed on how the Moroccan state is using expropriation of tribal lands for its own enrichment.

Today we know that Omar, together with hundreds of other journalists and activists from around the world, was a victim of the NSO Group, the Israeli company responsible for the Pegasus spy virus enabling authorities to literally track and record every aspect of somebody's life. Omar was first summoned by the Moroccan authorities two days after Amnesty International revealed that his phone was infected by the Pegasus virus.

Omar is a kind and loyal colleague with a deep love for justice and truth and for marginalised and landless people of his country, Morocco. At Bertha we are proud to be associated with him and we are deeply concerned that the Moroccan government did not allow for a fair trial as evidenced by an [independent report](#) from the Clooney Foundation. Further, the fabricated charges of Bertha Foundation as a foreign agent in collusion with Omar are part of a broader pattern of governments around the world to avoid accountability and cast aspersions. The Bertha Challenge is a global fellowship program for activists and investigative journalists. We hold our professions and the codes and ethics guiding us, in the highest regard.

We remain in unfaltering solidarity with him and will continue to fight for his freedom and the freedom of journalists throughout the world.

Bertha Foundation staff and Bertha Challenge Fellows:

Tony Tabatznik, Bertha Foundation Founder

Laura Horwitz, Bertha Foundation CEO

Yaşar Adanali, Turkey, 2020 Bertha Challenge Fellow

Abiose Adelaja, Nigeria, 2021 Bertha Challenge Fellow

Cinderella Alhoms, Bertha Justice Initiative Fellowship Coordinator

Nobesuthu Beya, Bertha House Cowork Community Manager

Lenin Chisaira, Advocates4Earth, Zimbabwe, 2021 Bertha Challenge Fellow



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Juan Donoso, Chile, 2021 Bertha Challenge Fellow
Dr. Monica Elias Mhoja, Tanzania, 2020 Bertha Challenge Fellow
Leilani Farha, Canada, 2020 Bertha Challenge Fellow
Glenda Giron, El Salvador, 2020 Bertha Challenge Fellow
Catie Harvey, Bertha Challenge Fellowship Coordinator
Nnaemeka Ikegwuonu, Nigeria, 2020 Bertha Challenge Fellow
Dan Ilic, Australia, 2021 Bertha Challenge Fellow
Andrea Ixchíu, Guatemala, 2021 Bertha Challenge Fellow
Pearlie Joubert, Bertha Challenge Co-Director
Antonia Juhasz, USA, 2021 Bertha Challenge Fellow
Adrian Kawaley-Lathan, Bertha Foundation Creative Director
Alex Kelly, Australia, 2021 Bertha Challenge Fellow
Narrira Lemos de Souza, Brazil, 2021 Bertha Challenge Fellow
Maeve McClenaghan, UK, 2020 Bertha Challenge Fellow
Yasna Mussa, Chile, 2021 Bertha Challenge Fellow
Ncedisa Nkonyeni, Bertha House Director
Protus Onyango, investigative journalist, Kenya, 2020 Bertha Challenge Fellow
Rudra Pangeni, investigative journalist, Nepal, 2020 Bertha Challenge Fellow
Zsuzsanna Pósfai, Hungary, 2020 Bertha Challenge Fellow
Bhrikuti Rai, Center for Investigative Journalism Nepal, Nepal, 2021 Bertha Challenge Fellow
Sammy Richards, Bertha Foundation Communications Coordinator
Jared Roussouw, South Africa, 2020 Bertha Challenge Fellow
Charles Saki, investigative journalist, Zimbabwe, 2021 Bertha Challenge Fellow
Elfie Seymour, Northern Ireland, 2020 Bertha Challenge Fellow
Shveta Shah, Program Director, Bertha Justice Initiative
Sotiris Sideris, Greece, 2020 Bertha Challenge Fellow
Gavin Silber, Bertha Challenge Co-Director
Harry Sitole, Bertha Retreat Co-Manager
Lerato Sitole, Bertha Retreat Co-Manager
Michael Snyder, USA, 2021 Bertha Challenge Fellow
Angeles Solis, USA, 2021 Bertha Challenge Fellow
Charice Starr, USA, 2020 Bertha Challenge Fellow
Puah Sze Ning, Malaysia, 2021 Bertha Challenge Fellow
Monica Tanouye, Bertha Foundation Grants Manager
Rory Winters, The Detail, Northern Ireland, 2020 Bertha Challenge Fellow
Elroi Yee, Malaysia, 2021 Bertha Challenge Fellow
Federico Zuvire, Culture Hack Labs, México, 2021 Bertha Challenge Fellow