

PRESS RELEASE: TWO WORLD FAMOUS SURF SPOTS UNDER MAJOR THREAT FROM REAL ESTATE PROJECT

NGOs, local associations and the surf community fear fatal consequences

Representatives of the surf community around Agadir are expressing severe concerns and outrage at the current construction of a new building complex for tourists on the coast in the rural municipality Taghazout. The new construction which will harm both the environment and the local population, violates Moroccan law and endangers the globally renowned surf spots « La source » and « Mystery », both unique spots.

The interest group campaigning to save these surf spots is led by Surfrider Foundation Maroc (SFM), an association founded by surfers dedicated to protecting Morocco's coastal environment which is considered a natural heritage. The Confederation of Moroccan Touristic Surf Enterprises (CEMST) is likewise involved in this campaign.

The new construction when considered from an environmental standpoint the 81-12 law (which came into effect in June 2015 and aims to protect the coast), is clearly being disregarded. The 81-12 law was passed to ensure:

- the protection and combat against erosion ;
- the reduction of pollution and coastal degradation ;
- **the setup of a zone bordering the coast with a length of 100m where construction projects of any kind are illegitimate ;**
- the involvement of civil society members.

Another potential violation of the law 12-03 that requires an impact analysis before the construction of a touristic complex, especially those located at the coast, is also highly possible. Further to this, access to the beach and the surf spots that annually attract thousands of tourists from all over the world are under major threat.



The civil society is campaigning against the real estate project that threatens major touristic natural reserves

How important are the coast, waves and surfing for this region?

The waves « La source », « Mystery », « Killer Point » and « La pointe des Ancres » are rated as the best waves on the Moroccan coast. They are a true natural asset and should be recognized as a natural heritage. A collection of four such world class surf spots on a less than one kilometer stretch of shoreline can be found nowhere else around the world, making this area truly unique. Surfers, both beginners and professionals, often travel long distances in order to visit Taghazout and local communities and businesses profit from these numerous surf spots along Agadir's northern coast. In Taghazout and the surrounding area, a whole industry has developed because of these unique surf spots: surf camps, rental shops, surfboard repair shops, hostels, restaurants, car rental outlets, local handicrafts, hotels, etc. Today, the whole region and its local inhabitants are making a living thanks to the waves and are reliant on the surf tourism.

And our environment?

We feel obliged to express some major concerns which need to be investigated. This kind of construction work directly on the coastal edge causes numerous impacts that could have worrying consequences for the coast: we fear there will be a modification the shoreline due to the foundation work for the building and pollution caused by the construction work leading to a degradation of the sea water quality caused by possible discharges of sewage into the ocean.

What are our demands?

The surf and coastal community that SFM represents demand with immediate effect that the local population and businesses are consulted before such projects are authorised. We are in full agreement that investments are necessary for the development of this region, however, they need to be planned sustainably, acknowledge our natural heritage, and respect the coastal law. While we would like to be assured that the access to the beach will remain guaranteed, we expect that any impact analyses consider and address our above concerns and that it will be made possible for the local community to express their opinion about such construction projects. Our suggestion is that the local community be systematically consulted through the framework of public inquiry.



Some photos of the current construction work that obviously disregards the coastal law