



WORKING FOR JUSTICE FOR THE SAHARAWI PEOPLE

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SAHARA ANALYSIS

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Moroccan intimidation and repression continue in Occupied Western Sahara

Nothing has changed on the ground in Western Sahara. Arbitrary arrest and violent intimidation by the Moroccan police continue against Saharawi activists.

Despite the Security Council decision 2152 which underlines the importance of improving the respect for human rights in Western Sahara, the occupying Moroccan authorities pursue their aggressive policy against activists for independence.

In El Aaiun

On 15 May 2014, following a call from the Coordinator of Human Rights Associations and Committees in occupied El Aaiún, and despite the blockade imposed by the Moroccan occupying forces, more than 100 Saharawi citizens arrived on Smara Street to protest against the occupation of the territory, the plundering of the natural resources and to demand the release of Saharawi political prisoners.

Moroccan Security officers had taken up positions on the roofs of buildings in order to prevent journalists and cameramen from filming the demonstrators and their treatment by the occupying forces.

Demonstrators, mostly women and minors were injured in the attack by the police, as well as three journalists.

On 13 May 2014, a Moroccan police patrol arrested the Saharawi Lehmad Mohamed because he was wearing a T-shirt of the Algerian football team. The police officers tried to force Lehmad Mohamed to say that he was a Moroccan. As he refused, they took him in a van to Akdeim Izik, on the outskirts of El Aaiún, where he was tortured.

On the same day, the Saharawi activist Salek Zraignat was abducted by another patrol in front of his family's house. He was taken to the Police Prefecture, where he was tortured and interrogated for 5 hours about his pro-independence activities.

In occupied Smara

On 7 May 2014, the Saharawi activist Ghali Zougham, aged 30, was beaten up by the police and the auxiliary forces after having installed the flag of SADR on the roof of a building. According to the Saharawi activist Salek El Batel, member of the Committee for the Defence of Human Rights in Smara, the police officers surrounded Zougham and used their boots to kick him, beat him with clubs and stones on his head and his back while he was on the ground.

On 11 May 2014, Mohamed Baber was arrested. According to witnesses, police officers beat up the Saharawi activist publicly before taking him in a police car to the Police Prefecture where he was tortured. On 13 May 2014, the investigating judge ordered that he should be held in the prison of El Aaiún, the Black Prison, on the charges of "forming a criminal group with the aim of committing crimes against persons and money, obstructing traffic"...

Follow WSC on twitter

WSC has increasingly been making use of social media to mobilise supporters and influence decision-makers. During our recent MINURSO human rights monitoring campaign, we used twitter to organise three actions targeting the UK Foreign Secretary, the French ambassador to the UN, and the US ambassador to the UN. Hundreds of people joined in, tweeting a variety of messages calling on the three leaders to give MINURSO the power to monitor human rights. We even solicited a response from the French ambassador, showing how effective these tools can be in reaching decision-makers.

Please help us build on our success using social media platforms. You can follow the Western Sahara Campaign at [@wscuk](https://twitter.com/wscuk) and the Western Sahara Action Forum at [@wsaforum](https://twitter.com/wsaforum). The more followers we have, the more impact we'll have.

The WSC works in solidarity with the Saharawi people to generate political support in order to advance their right to self-determination and promote their human rights

Sharks Still Under Threat



Pictures taken in Boujdour harbour, occupied Western Sahara, in April demonstrate that vulnerable shark species are still being caught by the Moroccan fleet in the territory - in spite of international rules and regulations calling for their protection.

The shark in the foreground is a blue shark (*Prionace glauca*), while the others are Shortfin Makos (*Isurus oxyrinchus*).

The International Union for Conservation of Nature (IUCN) considers both species to be vulnerable. The [Blue Shark is listed as "near threatened"](#) and the [Shortfin Mako as "vulnerable"](#).

The sharks seem to have been landed by local fishermen - which in Western Sahara would mean by Moroccan fishermen who have settled permanently or seasonally in the occupied territory. The catch includes young animals, which have never reproduced before. That makes this kind of fishery highly destructive and unsustainable.

Unwelcome

On 19 April Joanna Allan, member of WSRW (UK) and Kristina Nygaard (USA) were arrested by the Moroccan police at a checkpoint in El Aaiun, occupied Western Sahara. Their bus was pulled over at one of the many checkpoints on the roads to the city. They were asked to step out and were told by the police that "they are not welcome". The police then drove them to Agadir, in Morocco where they were released.

Joanna Allan and Kristina Nygaard had traveled to Western Sahara to study the human rights situation of the Saharawi people and to learn more about the activities of Kosmos Energy and other companies involved in the natural resources exploitation.

They were the 34th and 35th foreign visitors to be deported between the 11th and 19th April.

Clear message from Saharawi: Kosmos, leave Western Sahara!



19 April Saharawi gathered in Zaragoza, Spain, to protest against Kosmos Energy - the American oil company that has announced it will commence drilling for oil in occupied Western Sahara.

Kosmos Energy plan to start drilling in October or November this year. A drill rig to that purpose is expected to arrive in occupied Western Sahara in September. The rig is currently still at anchor in South Korea, where it was built by US company Atwood Oceanics. Kosmos will lease the rig for three years at a rate of 595,000 USD a day. Kosmos' partners in the undertaking are Scotland's Cairn Energy and Morocco's ONHYM (National Office of Hydrocarbons and Mining).

The UN Security Council's legal Counsel produced a legal opinion on oil exploration and exploitation in Western Sahara in 2002. The conclusion was unequivocal: any such activity is in violation of international law if not in accordance to the wishes and the interests of the Saharawi people.

Kosmos to WSRW: We're not doing anything wrong. We disagree

In a position paper issued earlier this year Kosmos made it clear that it is happy to accept the Moroccan government as a spokesperson for the Saharawi people it oppresses.

WSRW wrote to Kosmos: "It is not up to Kosmos to determine whether or not its activities would be beneficial, or in the interest or the wishes of the Saharawi people, nor is it for Moroccan King, government or any of the institutional bodies to make such assertions. It is the Saharawi people, the sole and original inhabitants of Western Sahara, who have the right to self-determination over their territory and its natural resources. The wishes of the Saharawi people cannot be ignored, and are a key-point to understanding the entire concept of self-determination".

[To read more and the Kosmos reply](#)
[To read the letter from WSRW](#)

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