



WORKING FOR JUSTICE FOR THE SAHARAWI PEOPLE

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SAHARA ANALYSIS

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UN Security Council Extends MINURSO's Mandate Till 30 April 2017

Last Friday the United Nations Security Council on Friday adopted the resolution 2285 (2016) extending the mandate of the UN Mission for Referendum in Western Sahara (MINURSO) for one year until 30 April 2017.

The United States-drafted resolution was backed by 10 countries in the 15-member Security Council, while two voted against and three others abstained.



Yet again Morocco's supporters in the UNSC blocked criticism of Morocco and MINURSO being mandated to monitor human rights. However there was a positive development - this was the most divided Security Council in some years, revealing the problem of the impasse - of Morocco's obduracy - over the so-called question of Western Sahara. We always knew this situation was unlawful. The Security Council vote demonstrates this, that the will of the organised international community and the requirement of international law, has again been thwarted.

[Western-Sahara-Review-Spring-2016](#)

Articles:

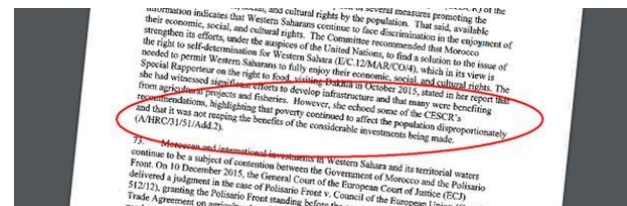
How National Interests Trump International Legality
Western Powers and the Decolonization of Western Sahara

Spain's Audencia Nacional Decisions — their import for justice in Western Sahara

Advancing self-determination over natural resources

Festivals and 'world music' caravans: the cultural battle for Western Sahara

Morocco Edits Secretary-General's Report



After consultation with Morocco, the document that Ban Ki-Moon was drafting has been stripped of all references to UN reports highlighting Saharawi marginalisation.

[An advance copy](#) of the UN Secretary General's report on Western Sahara, dated 18 April 2016, referred to the different UN bodies that have pointed to the lack of benefits to Saharawis of Morocco's economic projects in their occupied homeland, and the disproportionate poverty affecting the Saharawi people.

But [the final version of 19 April](#) of the Secretary General's report on Western Sahara – a well-known target of tough Moroccan lobbying – omits those references.

[To read more](#)

Ban Ki-Moon Sparked Diplomatic Crisis

Ban Ki-Moon has sparked a diplomatic crisis in Western Sahara... but a crisis may be just what's needed after decades of deadlock. Ban Ki-Moon's criticism of Morocco's 40-year "occupation" of Western Sahara during his visit to the territory on March 8, 2016 has sparked the most serious crisis in the region in decades. Morocco denounced the Secretary General's "biased" rhetoric, and "irreversibly" expelled U.N. peacekeepers stationed in Western Sahara. (cont.)

By Tom O'Bryan

[Journal of Middle Eastern Politics and Policy article >>](#)

Are you interested in hosting?

Aziza the teenage daughter of the vice president of the human rights organisation, ASVDH, wants to take English classes in London in July, Aug?

Contact the office for more information.

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Iceland agrees with CJEU - Excludes Western Sahara from Trade Deal

All four members states of EFTA, the European Free Trade Association - Norway, Switzerland, Iceland and Liechtenstein – conclude, in the same way as the Court of Justice of the European Union, goods from Western Sahara cannot be included in free trade agreements with Morocco.

In answer to the question whether or not goods from Western Sahara are part of the free trade agreement that Morocco has with the EFTA states, on 18 April the Icelandic Foreign Minister stated:

"The hon. MP asked whether the Minister agrees with the interpretation of the Norwegian and Swiss authorities that the free trade agreement between EFTA and Morocco does not cover goods from Western Sahara. This question has to my knowledge not been brought up in the Parliament before, although it is obviously in similar vein as the parliamentary resolution that I mentioned earlier. The question, however, has come up both in Switzerland and Norway, as it says in the query of the hon. MP. The position of both States has been that the agreement does not cover goods from Western Sahara, since the countries do not recognize the control of Morocco over the territory. To the extent that the matter has been discussed within EFTA, this sentiment has not been disputed, and Iceland and Liechtenstein have taken the position of Switzerland and Norway in this matter. Mr. Speaker. The answer to this question is clear. We agree with the interpretation of the Norwegian and Swiss authorities on the EFTA and Morocco FTA, that it does not cover goods from the territory of Western Sahara."

Translation from the Icelandic by WSRW
[To read more](#)

The High Court has referred WSC's legal claim against DEFRA and HMRC, regarding trade agreements with Morocco, to the Court of Justice of the European Union (CJEU).

On 10 December 2015, the Court of Justice of the European Union annulled the EU-Morocco agricultural agreement in so far as it applies to Western Sahara. The English translation is now [available on the Court's webpage](#).

Through [this link, please find an annotated version of the official translation by WSRW and Emmaus Stockholm](#), containing further factual background to the Court's decision.

Demonstration Against Plunder



On 14 April dozens of Saharawi demonstrated in Smara, occupied Western Sahara, against marginalisation in their wealthy homeland. Several are said to be injured. The demonstrators were calling for the right to self-determination over their own land, and the right to choose how their resources should be managed and the right to work.

[To read more](#)

Fundraising for the Legal Claim

Mark Thomas, comedian and political activist, dedicated a night of his May 2016 tour to support WSC's legal case at London's Tricycle Theatre. Mark's first half of the performance was full of irreverent, mischievous and hilarious tales of his challenge to commit 100 acts of minor dissent within one year. The Campaign's coordinator, John Gurr, was invited on stage to tell the audience about the WSC and the cause they were supporting that night and how important the campaign is. The second half of the set, entitled 'Trespass', involved Mark's inspiring, clever and very funny stories about his challenges to the increasingly encroaching proposed laws that are attempting to erode freedom and liberty in cities around the UK; from banning swearing in Salford to big businesses building and taking over public byways and streets. The set was an exhilarating ride of energetic indignant humour and adroitly made points via his wonderfully funny stories of acts of dissent. All profits from ticket sales for the evening, and from a collection on the night went to the WSC. Mark himself even handed out information flyers on the campaign in the interval. It was a fantastic evening. An enormous thank you to Mark for his support for the campaign.

Congratulations to **Jo Spearing** who, on Tuesday, completed her cycle ride around the Welsh coast from to Aberystwyth. She exceeded her target and raised over £1000 for the legal case. Thank you to Jo and to all who sponsored her.

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Unemployed Saharawi Dies Following Torture

One of the leaders of the protest movement of unemployed Saharawi, who for months have been targeting their campaigns against Morocco's state owned phosphate company OCP, has died after allegedly being tortured by the Moroccan police.



Brahim Saika was handcuffed to his hospital bed while in coma. The picture was taken by Saika's family members who were allowed to see him only once, from behind glass, during the week Saika spent in hospital.

On 1 April, Brahim Saika was arrested near his home in Guelmim, a town with a large Saharawi population in the south of Morocco. Saika had just met with trade unionists and unemployed Saharawis. The arresting police officers cited Saika's involvement with protests in the city as the reason for taking him into custody. Saika was taken to the local police station where he is said to have been tortured severely for hours on end.

After his ordeal, Saika started a hunger strike in protest of the treatment he had been subjected to. Five days later, his health had significantly deteriorated and he was taken to the hospital of his hometown Guelmim, from where he was taken to the hospital in Agadir.

Brahim Saika spent several days in coma before he died on Friday, 15 April, in the hospital of Agadir, supposedly due to the health complications arising from police torture and his subsequent hunger strike.

The authorities do not agree to the family's demand of an autopsy to determine the cause of death. The doctors purportedly told Saika's family that he died following a rat bite.

Brahim Saika was a former political prisoner, who spent four years in jail for his political views. Recently, he had emerged as one of the leaders of the group of unemployed Saharawi graduates, who protest against discriminatory employment practices and the systematic marginalisation of Saharawis by the Moroccan state.

[To read more](#)

Call to Investigate the Cause of Death

Following the death of Ibrahim Saika, a Saharawi prisoner of conscience, on 15 April 2016, his lawyer, has called for a thorough investigation into the cause of his death.

An initial hearing began on 18 April. All roads leading to the court where the hearing was to take place were cordoned off by the police to prevent Saharawi citizens from attending at this point in the process. Nevertheless, some of Brahim's family together with some of his colleagues from the Movement of Unemployed Saharawi Graduates and other activists managed to attend the hearing, chanting slogans condemning those responsible for Brahim's death.

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