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## WSC Newsletter July 2021



**Permission for Judicial Review | Controversial Mineral Exploration in Occupied WS | Morocco prepares for illegal mineral exploration | Natural Resources Sovereignty Act | US Exports gas to Occupied WS | Morocco Must Stop Targeting Human Rights Defenders | Imprisoned Activist Held Incommunicado | Human Rights Activist Sulatana Sidbrahim Jaya | National Commission for Prevention of COVID-19**

### WSC Granted Permission for Judicial Review

Following the permission hearing WSC has been granted a judicial review of the UK-Morocco Free Trade Agreement and its application to Western Sahara. We expect the substantive hearing will take place in the first quarter of next year. Thanks to the generosity of donors we have reached our initial fundraising target that enabled us to apply for the judicial review. Our target has now been increased to £18,000 with the costs of the continuing case.

#### Newsletters:

**WSC Newsletter August 22**  
**WSC Newsletter April 2022**  
**WSC Newsletter December 2021**  
**WSC Newsletter November 2021**  
 WSC Newsletter July 2021  
**WSC Newsletter May 2021**  
**WSC Newsletter March 2021**  
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**WSC Newsletter November 2020**  
**WSC Newsletter September 2020**  
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**WSC Newsletter July 2019**

While waiting for the court rulings - the ECJ Verdict

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ruling on the Polisario Front challenge to the EU-Morocco Free Trade Agreement is expected in September Western Sahara's natural resources continue to be exploited. Ignoring international law companies and governments do not seek the consent of the people of Western Sahara but make agreements with the occupying power Morocco.

Human rights abuses continue see the call by the UN Special Rapporteur and the Amnesty International action below.

Despite hostilities continuing since November last year the UNSC fails to take action. **SPLA units concentrate their attacks on the Amgala, Mahbes and Hauza sectors | Sahara Press Service (spsrad.info)**. And the UK government shows no sign of engagement. Despite repeated requests during the 16 months he has been in post James Cleverly has still not agreed to meet your elected representatives on the APPG. And he continues to avoid answering Parliamentary Questions.

"To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign, Commonwealth and Development Affairs, what assessment he has made of whether the transfer of Moroccan citizens into occupied Western Sahara is a breach of the Geneva conventions.

"To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign, Commonwealth and Development Affairs, what recent assessment he has made of whether Morocco's annexation of Western Sahara is a breach of international law."

His answer to both questions ". . . the UK regards the status of Western Sahara as undetermined. We support UN-led efforts to achieve a lasting and mutually acceptable political solution that provides for the self-determination of the people of Western Sahara."

How do you even discuss a mutually acceptable political solution' allowing for self-determination when Morocco refuses to take part in discussions if independence is even mentioned? The UN Charter calls for the right to self-determination. The choice of independence is required by ALL of the law which followed, flowing from UNGA Res. 1514 (XV) and also Res 1541 (XV) of 14 December 1960. Ministers keep quoting mutually acceptable political solution' but never address the issue of how this could be achieved.

### Controversial Mineral Exploration in Occupied Western Sahara

After a 6-year break, the Canadian mining company Metalex has introduced new formulations and updates in its 2020 and 2021 reporting, suggesting that its exploration activities in occupied Western Sahara could be resumed with a new agreement with Morocco.

**Western Sahara Resource Watch (wsrw.org).**

### Morocco prepares for illegal mineral exploration

Moroccan government's National Office of Hydrocarbons and Mines (ONHYM) has issued a **tender document** on its website revealing a plan to carry out mineral exploration in Western

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**WESTERN SAHARA CAMPAIGN UK**  
 The Western Sahara Campaign works in solidarity with the Saharawi people to generate political support in order to advance their right to self-determination and to promote their human rights. Our role is to lobby the UK Government and the EU. You can help us to ensure the UK does not ignore the voice of the Saharawi people.



**Follow the news about EU's illegal fisheries in Western Sahara**



The EU pays Morocco to fish in occupied Western Sahara.

Sahara.

**Western Sahara Resource Watch (wsrw.org).**

**With the EU Court of Justice's verdict on the legality of applying the EU-Morocco trade deal to occupied Western Sahara expected in September the EU Commission plans to visit the territory to assess the deal's impact.**

Polisario has issued a **press release** regarding the EU delegation in which it "denounces the harmful and irresponsible behaviour of the European Commission."

**Natural Resources Sovereignty Act ' of the Saharawi Arab Democratic Republic**

On 6 July 2019 the parliament of the Saharawi Arab Democratic Republic passed a law to "better ensure sovereign rights and protection of the natural resources" of Western Sahara. The law was published in the SADR official Gazette No.55. The law specifies that the "natural resources of the Saharawi Republic include those natural resources found in the land territory of the Republic" and "those resources in the maritime territory defined by Law No. 3 of 21 January 2009, the Law Establishing the Maritime Zones of the Saharawi Arab Republic.

Read the Act **here**.

**US Exports gas to Occupied Western Sahara**

The Joseph Wisdom (IMO. 9806732) was scheduled to arrive in the evening of 14 July 2021 at the harbour of El Aaiún, the capital city of Western Sahara. The ship carries LPG gas that was loaded in Philadelphia. It is the third known shipment from the USA city this year. WSRW has not recorded any gas exports from the USA to Western Sahara before May 2021.

The shipment of gas exports from Europe to Western Sahara has changed in recent years, with the **UK as the biggest exporter**.

**OHCHR - Morocco Must Stop Targeting Human Rights Defenders**

GENEVA (1 July 2021) Morocco must stop targeting human rights defenders and journalists standing up for human rights issues related to Western Sahara, and allow them to work without reprisals, Mary Lawlor, UN Special Rapporteur on the situation of human rights defenders, said today.

"I urge the Government of Morocco to cease targeting human rights defenders and journalists for their work, and to create an environment in which they can carry out such work without fear of retaliation," she said. "Not only do human rights defenders working on issues related to human rights in Morocco and Western Sahara continue to be wrongfully criminalised for their legitimate activities, they receive disproportionately long prison sentences and whilst imprisoned, they are subjected to cruel, inhuman and degrading treatment and torture," said Lawlor.

Lawlor said she has received reports that human rights defenders working on issues related to human rights in Western Sahara have been subjected to "intimidation, harassment, death threats, criminalisation, physical and sexual assault, threats of rape and surveillance." If these reports are confirmed, "they amount to violations of international human rights law and standards, and fly in the face of the Moroccan Government's commitment to the UN system as a whole."

She highlighted the case of woman human rights defender Sultana Khaya and her family, who have been prevented since November 2020 from leaving their home in El Aaiún. Sultana Khaya is president of the League for the Defense of Human Rights and Protection of Natural Resources in Boujdour and works for women's rights and the rights of self-determination in Western Sahara.

Read the article **here**.

**Imprisoned Activist Held Incommunicado  
AI Calls For Action.**

The Saharawi activist Mohamed Lamine Haddi has not been heard from him by his family or lawyer since 9 April, when he called them each to tell them that the prison authorities had threatened to put him in "cachot", a small, dungeon-like cell, if his family did not stop publicly calling for his release.

His health has been deteriorating since his 69-day hunger strike in January demanding an end to his ill-treatment. On 23 March, he told his family that prison guards ended his hunger strike by force-feeding him, that he did not receive any medical care during his hunger strike and that he was suffering partial paralysis, trembling, memory loss and severe pain. His lawyer is however deeply concerned that the lack of news from him since April indicates the worsening of his health.

Social media

Target Head of Government:

Twitter: **@ChefGov\_ma / @Elotmanisaad**

Facebook: **https://www.facebook.com/cg.gov.ma**.

Suggested messaging:

The family of Sahrawi activist Mohamed Haddi haven't heard from him since 9 April. His health is deteriorating after over three years in solitary confinement and no access to medical care. We call on the Moroccan authorities to investigate his prison conditions and end his solitary confinement. [Link to UA]

Moroccan authorities threatened to put Sahrawi activist Mohamed Haddi in an isolated dungeon cell if his family did not stop fighting for his release. Mohamed has been in solitary confinement for over 3 years. @ChefGov\_Ma must end Mohamed's solitary confinement and investigate his prison conditions.

**Occupied Aaiun, July 14, 2021 (SPS)**

The Association for the Protection and Dissemination of Saharawi Culture and Heritage, a NGO of the occupied areas, strongly condemned "the continuous and systematic crimes that the repressive apparatuses of the Moroccan occupation forces continue to perpetrate against the human rights activist Sulatana Sidbrahim Jaya and her family, in retaliation for their

political positions that demand the freedom and independence of the Saharawi people”.

**NGO condemns Moroccan crimes.**

**National Commission for the Prevention of COVID-19**

The National Commission for the Prevention of COVID-19 called for “strict respect of the precautionary and prevention measures of the coronavirus, because we are on the verge of entering a third wave of the pandemic”.

After analyzing the health situation in the camps, the institution in charge of monitoring the development of the pandemic announced that “We are seeing an increase in cases of COVID-19 and therefore, we urge all citizens to fully respect the precautionary and preventive measures that exist during the organization of political, social and cultural activities to avoid the spread of the pandemic”. SPS

**Commission calls for strict respect of precautionary measures.**

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