



WORKING FOR JUSTICE FOR THE SAHARAWI PEOPLE

July 2016

## SAHARA ANALYSIS

No: 91

Western Sahara Campaign UK [www.wsahara.org.uk](http://www.wsahara.org.uk) email: [coordinator@wsahara.org.uk](mailto:coordinator@wsahara.org.uk)  
Manora, Cwmystwyth, Aberystwyth, SY23 4AF

### Break Down the UNpasse

WSC coordinated a joint letter that was recently sent to the UN Security Council members on behalf of Saharawi civil society organisations – both in the refugee camps and Occupied Territories – as well as international activist groups and NGOs.



The MINURSO peacekeeping mission, established to organize the referendum, must be restored to full functionality from its current depleted state. But that is not an end in itself – Security Council members shouldn't fool themselves into thinking that this is progress. It is emblematic of the longstanding diplomatic failure on Western Sahara that merely staving off a manufactured crisis is considered a success while the fundamental dynamics of the conflict remain unchanged.

Accordingly, the signatories called on the Council to adopt a more urgent and proactive approach to solving the conflict in Western Sahara during its meeting of 26 July 2016, by taking steps to:

Ensure that MINURSO returns to full functionality and is allowed to continue to do its original and ongoing work, in accordance with long established principles and practices of UN peacekeeping, including the establishment of a human rights monitoring mechanism.

Outline a process for direct, intensive, high-level and time-bound talks, without preconditions, between the POLISARIO Front and Morocco, in order to ensure a timely resolution of the conflict.

[To read the letter with signatories](#)

*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*

### We Mourn the Death of a Great Leader.

It was with great sadness that we learnt of the death of the President of the SADR and Secretary General of the POLISARIO Front, Mohamed Abdelaziz. In particular we recall his visits to the UK to so ably represent his people's struggle.

We are even sadder that he was never able to lead his people back to a free Western Sahara. The unwillingness of the international community to apply international law to resolve the Western Sahara conflict is shameful. We deplore the continued inability of the United Nations Security Council to act so that the Saharawi can express their inalienable right to self-determination.

The Western Sahara Campaign remains steadfast in our support for the Saharawi to determine their own future through our activities in the UK whilst we pause to mourn the death of Mohammed Abdelaziz and remember his contribution to his people's cause.

With the death of Mohamed Abdelaziz, the people of Western Sahara have lost a major figure in their history. He was a founder of the POLISARIO Front (Popular Front for the Liberation of Saguia el Hamra and Rio de Oro) in 1973, fighting first against the Spanish coloniser, then in 1975 battling the Moroccan invader. He succeeded the inaugural POLISARIO Front leader, El Ouali Mustapha Sayed, who died in action in 1976. Abdelaziz helped frame the constitution, while continuing to serve in the war against Morocco's occupation of Western Sahara. When elected president of the Saharawi Republic in 1982, he directed his attention towards building the state-in-exile in the refugee camps and, after 1991, moving towards a peaceful settlement of the conflict through diplomacy.

[To read an obituary](#)

Brahim Gali, was elected by an extraordinary congress of the Saharawi people as the new Secretary General of the POLISARIO Front, and President of the Saharawi Arab Democratic Republic.

## Morocco to Join the African Union?

Morocco has decided to return to African Union (AU), according to Moroccan newspaper Akhbar Alyoum. "A diplomatic source approached by Akhbar Al Yaoum has confirmed the desire of Morocco to resume its seat in the pan-African organisation," the paper reported.

[To read Morocco World News](#)

In response the Algerian Prime Minister Abdelmalek Sellal said "The Saharawi Arab Democratic Republic (SADR) is a founding member of the African Union (AU) and its suspension from the organization cannot be requested".

In a statement to the press on the sidelines of the closing ceremony of the Parliament's spring session, Sellal said that the request to expel the Saharawi Republic was "nonsense" because "we must not forget that the SADR is a founding member of the pan-African organization."

If Morocco wants to join the AU without any condition, "Algeria has no problem with it, but there are procedures to follow," he added.

[To read more](#)

The Norwegian NGO SAIH has published an English translation of its report on the need for a referendum in Western Sahara. It is well written, well designed, About 20 pages or so.

[To download the Report](#)

War on Want, the UK based campaign against world poverty has drawn attention to the economics of mining in the occupation of Western Sahara

[Read war on want report](#)

## The Court of Justice of the EU

On 19<sup>th</sup> July the CJEU heard the appeal by the EU Commission to reverse the Court's decision to halt imports from occupied Western Sahara through a trade deal with Morocco. Spain, France and Portugal made submissions in favour of Morocco. The court is expected to deliver its ruling on 13<sup>th</sup> September.



[To read more](#)

WSC's case against the UK government has now been referred to the CJEU. We are waiting to hear to learn the date for the hearing.

## Plantation Economy

Based on assessments of satellite images, WSRW has calculated how the plantations in occupied Western Sahara developed from 2003 until today



*Images showing the expansion of the plantation Sté Maraîchage du Sahara 3 at location N 23°36'14.07" W 15°47'28.12" in occupied Western Sahara. Photos: Google Earth.*

WSRW has published the research note 'The expansion of plantation infrastructure in occupied Western Sahara, 2003-2016' where they estimate the development of each of the 12 plantations in the territory Morocco holds under occupation.

WSRW found a large increase in infrastructure from 2003-2005 (168 ha) to the years 2010-2012 (859 ha). Since then, the acreage has increased even more.

[To read more](#)

## Childhood in Occupied Western Sahara

Soldiers, police officers, demonstrations and attacks are recurrent themes in Saharawi children's drawings. A child's drawing, as a spontaneous expression, represents a child's thought processes and its perceptions of the world around it.

Fear and sadness which children transmit through their creativity are a reflection on the systematic exposure to violence which the Saharawi are subjected to, particularly during childhood. The conflict has now lasted for over 40 years, meaning that several generations of children have never known peace.

Young people, who constitute a significant proportion of the Saharawi society in the Occupied Territories of Western Sahara, are forced to witness violent encounters on a daily basis which inevitably becomes part of them. Humiliations, detentions and torture are constant in the lives of Saharawi.

[To read the full article](#)

The Danish parliament has unanimously passed a [motion](#) that urges Danish companies & the Danish public sector not to trade with Africa's last colony.

*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*