



WORKING FOR JUSTICE FOR THE SAHARAWI PEOPLE

August 2014

SAHARA ANALYSIS

No: 83

Western Sahara Campaign UK www.wsahara.org.uk email: coordinator@wsahara.org.uk

Vital Resources

Exploiting the natural resources of Western Sahara is important, even vital, to Morocco in its occupation of Western Sahara.

Financially phosphates contribute most to the cost of maintaining the occupation. But the Fisheries Agreement (see next page) and other trade with the EU is far more important politically. When governments engage with Morocco to exploit resources that belong to the Saharawi it is not a neutral act. It contravenes the Geneva Convention and other international law relating to the duty of non-recognition in cases of occupation. POLISARIO are challenging the EU's agreements with Morocco in the European Court of Justice.

This autumn the stakes will be raised as the US firm Kosmos starts drilling for oil.

Under the Fisheries Partnership Agreement the EU will pay Morocco 30 million Euros each year for fishing rights in the waters of Western Sahara, and fishermen will pay the Moroccan government 10 million Euros annually.

In total, that amount exceeds the entire multinational humanitarian aid package which the Saharawi, the owners of those fish receive. The Saharawi living in refugee camps suffer from long term malnutrition.



A report by WSRW

On average over half a million litres of petroleum are supplied to the occupied Western Sahara each day.

The petroleum is mainly used by the Moroccan administration, army and settlers and to support the plunder of the territory's rich natural resources. Without these oil imports the illegal occupation would be practically impossible to maintain. The petroleum originates from refineries in Spain.

[Download the report 'Fuelling the occupation' here.](#)

Morocco Withdraws From Negotiations

July 25. The Polisario Front condemned Morocco's refusal to continue the negotiations conducted by the Special Envoy of the United Nations Secretary General, Christopher Ross, intended to find a just solution to the Saharawi issue.

In a communiqué made public at the end of a meeting of the bureau of its national secretariat chaired by President Mohamed Abdelaziz, the Polisario Front called on the United Nations to assume its responsibilities regarding the decolonization of Western Sahara.

Despite Morocco's action the Polisario Front expressed "its satisfaction" with the gains of the Saharawi cause at African and international levels, reiterating its commitment to continuing the cooperation with the international community to enable the Saharawi people to exercise their legitimate right to self-determination and independence.

[To read more.](#)

Remove "The Wall of Shame"

International campaign against the wall of the Moroccan occupation in Western Sahara.

This is a new Saharawi led campaign to gather all possible international support to force Morocco to demilitarise its wall of occupation in Western Sahara and neutralise and remove the entire arsenal of destruction that it contains including landmines and explosive remnants of war.

<http://removethewall.org/>

Ban Anti-personnel Mines

The Parliamentary Assembly of the Council of Europe has called on Morocco to accede to the UN Convention on the Prohibition of Anti-personnel Mines.

At its plenary session in Strasbourg in June the Assembly of the Council of Europe adopted its report on "[The Parliamentary Contribution to resolving the Western Sahara Conflict](#)".

[To read more](#)

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

Fisheries Agreement

The King of Morocco has now ratified the fisheries agreement that allows EU vessels to fish in the waters of Western Sahara.

Last year the EU negotiated a fisheries agreement with the Kingdom of Morocco for waters which are not Moroccan. That deal passed its last formal hurdle as the Moroccan king personally signed the agreement.



On 10 December 2013 many Saharawi were injured by Moroccan police as they demonstrated against the EU's plans to pay Morocco to fish in the waters of Western Sahara. On the same day – the first anniversary of the Nobel Peace Prize being awarded to the EU – the Parliament voted to support the deal and pay millions of Euros to Morocco in an agreement that undermines the UN peace efforts.

POLISARIO Challenges Agreement

[The Official Journal of the European Union published on 16 June 2014](#) the case brought by the Frente Polisario to annul the EU-Morocco fisheries agreement.

The agreement is considered to violate international law by several legal opinions, EU member states and EU parliamentarians.

Polisario has now sought the annulment of the agreement. A similar case is already on the table of the ECJ: [Last year Polisario took the agriculture/fisheries protocol to the same court.](#) The cases are being dealt with in parallel.

[To read more](#)

A [communiqué released by the European Commission 15 July 2014](#) highlighted the Commission's problematic position; it labels the fishing grounds as "Moroccan waters". The communiqué from the Commission also states that the agreement will benefit "Moroccan fishermen" – who evidently have moved into the territory in violation of the Geneva Conventions. No mention whatsoever is made to Western Sahara or the Saharawi people.

Oil



The construction of the rig ship 'Atwood Achiever' has been completed at a shipyard in South Korea. Sea trials for the vessel have recently started off the coast of Korea.

In a few weeks, the ship is due to travel from South Korea to occupied Western Sahara, where the first drilling in the territory is scheduled to commence later this year, despite the UN stating it would be in violation of international law.

[To read more](#)

The US oil company Kosmos Energy in a recent statement claimed that it has the right to drill in Western Sahara - in opposition to the opinion of the UN legal office.

In 2002, as a licence to drill offshore Boujdour, Western Sahara was issued to an oil company, [the UN legal office stated](#) that any further exploration would be in violation of international law if it is to the contrary of the wishes of the people of the territory. Despite this, in 2006, the licence was transferred to Kosmos Energy, which is now planning to start drilling later this year.

[To read more](#)



Photo: Boujdour, close to where the drilling on the Boujdour offshore block is due to take place.