



WORKING FOR JUSTICE FOR THE SAHARAWI PEOPLE

September 2015

SAHARA ANALYSIS

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40 Years Too Long

In 1975 General Van Tien Dung led the Viet Cong into Saigon and the Vietnam war was over. In 1975 the Cod War raged between Iceland and the UK over fishing rights. In 1975 General Franco died. In 1975 Carl Douglas was Kung Fu Fighting at the top of the UK pop charts.

One of these events was deeply significant for the history of the Western Sahara - the death of Franco. There many events in the autumn of 1975 that retain deep significance for the Saharawi. In October 1975 the UN sent a mission to Western Sahara to examine the wishes of the population for the future. The visiting mission returned its report on 15th October, announcing "an overwhelming consensus" in favour of independence (as opposed to integration with Morocco or with Mauritania, or continued rule by Spain). On October 16, the International Court of Justice in The Hague declared that the Saharawi, as the true owners of the land, held a right of self-determination. Neither Morocco nor Mauritania accepted this, and on October 31, 1975, Morocco sent its army into Western Sahara.

On November 6, following the military invasion, Morocco launched the Green March. 350,000 unarmed Moroccans accompanied by the Moroccan Army converged on southern Morocco and waited for a signal from King Hassan II of Morocco to cross into Western Sahara. As a result of international pressure, Spain acceded to Moroccan demands, and entered bilateral negotiations. This led to the Madrid Accords, which was drawn up as Franco lay on his deathbed. The treaty divided the territory between Morocco and Mauritania in return for phosphate and fishing concessions to Spain. In the autumn of 1975 many Saharawi fled their own land before the invading forces and set up refugee camps Tindouf.

It is time for this wrong to be righted; the 40th anniversary is a perfect time to help the Saharawi cause. They say life begins at 40 – let's hope we get closer to the Saharawi securing their right to self-determination this year.

We would also appreciate your support for events organised for the 40th anniversary.

In partnership with the Embassy of the Bolivarian Republic of Venezuela, Sandblast is organising two highlight events at the Bolivar Hall. On October 30th English premiere screening of cutting edge film *'Life is Waiting: Referendum and Resistance in Western Sahara'* will be followed by a panel discussion where Labour leader contender Jeremy Corbyn is expected to speak. And on November 7th the final solidarity performance of music and spoken word will feature artists who have visited the Saharawi refugee camps.

War on Want are committed to publicising the 40th anniversary and are planning to help organize a demonstration outside the embassies of the culpable European nations who have stood by and allowed Morocco to illegally occupy the Western Sahara for 40 years. WSC will be meeting with the UK Government and is working to create a wider coalition of organisations to build an ever more effective international campaign.

If you want to act you can ...

Geneva Convention Swiss Support for POLISARIO

Almost unnoticed by the public the freedom movement for the Western Sahara won a big victory in June on an international level of justice. The Polisario Front committed itself to abide by the four Geneva Conventions and their additional protocols in its conflict with Morocco, thereby placing the conflict under the jurisdiction of humanitarian international law, which is legally binding for both parties.

To Read

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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



**THE FIGHT CONTINUES
WITH YOU**

You are invited to join people all over the world in a hunger strike chain (LINK) in solidarity with the mother of murdered Saharawi Mohamed Lamine Haidala. Haidala, a 21 year-old pro-independence activist, died in February after suffering a brutal attack by Moroccan settlers following which he was denied medical treatment by the Moroccan police. The Moroccan authorities have also denied Haidala's family access to his body.

In May, Haidala's mother Takbar Haddi staged a 36-day hunger strike demanding the Moroccan authorities release the body of her son. She temporarily ended the strike on June 19th and since this is has been continued by supporters all over the world in 24-hour shifts, and publicised widely on social media. The chain started in Spain and has been continued by supporters in Western Sahara, the Canary Islands, Portugal, Kenya, Germany, Mexico, El Salvador, Algeria, Chile, Argentina, Italy and Uruguay. People in the UK are asked to join the strike for 24 hours on any day from the 15th of September and share it on social media in order to publicise the campaign. You can also sign the online petition (LINK) asking the Moroccan Ministry of Justice and MINURSO to investigate the death. Contact info@wsaforum.org to commit your support.

Drilling for Oil in Western Sahara



Amid Saharawi protests, San Leon Energy began to drill an onshore well in occupied Western Sahara on 21 August. The well is located near Fom el Oued, just north of Western Sahara's capital city El Aiun.

[To read more](#)

President of the Western Sahara Republic, Mohamed Abdelaziz, has urged the immediate intervention of the UN to stop UK/Irish company San Leon Energy from drilling in partnership with Morocco in the occupied territory of Western Sahara.



"We urgently request that the Secretary-General condemn these activities, which are in clear violation of international law, and call on Morocco and complicit foreign companies to stop the illegal exploitation of the natural resources of Western Sahara," wrote President Abdelaziz in a letter to UN Secretary-General Mr. Ban Ki-Moon.

"If these measures are not taken, then the illegal exploration and exploitation of the Territory's resources will further undermine the UN's long-standing efforts to reach a peaceful solution that will provide for the self-determination of the people of Western Sahara, as required by numerous UN Security Council resolutions,"

[To read the letter](#)

ASVDH Allowed to Register

Human Rights Watch, 24 August 2015

(Rabat) – Moroccan authorities have for the first time allowed a Saharawi human rights organization fiercely critical of the government to legally register. ASVDH, the Saharawi Association of Victims of Human Rights Abuses has been applying for this registration for the last 10 years Human Rights Watch reports.

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