

Dear

I am writing as a constituent to ask for an opportunity to brief you on the situation in Western Sahara.

The situation there is of great concern to me

Western Sahara is the last country in Africa on the UN list of territories still subject to a process of decolonisation.

The UN has been tasked with organising a referendum of self-determination. The process has really run into the sands and the UK government could do more to support the UN process.

The situation in Western Sahara may have been crowded out of the agenda by other conflicts, but it remains as serious as ever:

- around 180,000 refugees remain in desert camps which, with climate change, have experienced temperatures over 50 degrees
- Freedom House, the Washington-based monitor of human rights has assessed the situation in occupied Western Sahara as being worse than Iran and Afghanistan, and only very marginally better than North Korea, and
- with no progress towards a referendum on the territory's future, the cease-fire negotiated by the UN in 1991 has broken down.

Nevertheless, Morocco enjoys a trade agreement with the UK with no requirement for action on human rights. This means the Moroccan state can act with impunity and Saharawi risk paying the highest price for expressing their inalienable right to self-determination.

Earlier this month Omar Bahia Abdelmajid, a Saharawi human rights activist, was murdered in a Moroccan prison. Omar was illegally detained on 3rd November for protesting against the Moroccan occupation and in support of Saharawi self-determination. Witnesses saw him being beaten and within days he was dead.

The murder of a Saharawi for expressing his inalienable right to self-determination must be challenged. I would urge you to write to the foreign secretary asking the UK to raise the issue with the Moroccan embassy in London as well as asking our embassy in Rabat to investigate this case.

I would appreciate it if you would also consider joining the Western Sahara All Party Parliamentary Group by contacting Ben Lake MP for Ceredigion Preseli. He was the Chair of the APPG in the previous parliament.

If you would like to meet to discuss this further I would be happy to meet you.