

## Human Rights Abuses & Other Criminal Violations in Western Sahara committed by **Morocco**

The illegal occupation of Western Sahara by Morocco has led to a bloody war, destruction and loss of human lives. Also, as in any colonial occupation, torture and human rights violations by the occupier led to a great amount of suffering and humiliation of thousands of innocent civilians.

"It is my view that a prolongation of the current deadlock ( in the peace process ) if not reversed, might lead to a deterioration of the situation in Western Sahara, as signaled by continued demonstrations and allegations of human rights abuses. I am concerned, in particular, at reports of heavy-handed response (of Moroccan forces) to the recent demonstrations in the Territory, including the arrest and detention of several individuals. International and local observers as well as defence counsel were allowed to attend trials; however, concerns regarding respect for fair trial standards were raised." **UN Secretary-General, in his report concerning the situation in Western Sahara (11 April 2006)**

"Since May 2005, the territory of Western Sahara, particularly the town of Laayoune, has been rocked by a series of demonstrations. In many of them, Sahrawi (Western Saharan) demonstrators have expressed their support for the Polisario Front or called for independence from Morocco. These views are anathema to the Moroccan authorities, which have not only responded in a heavy-handed manner to the protests, thereby exacerbating tensions, but also widened the scope of the repression by arresting and detaining long-standing human rights activists who were monitoring and disseminating information on the crackdown." **Morocco / Western Sahara: Sahrawi human rights defenders under attack (Amnesty International report, 24 November 2005).**

"Moroccan authorities tightly control press access to Western Sahara. Journalists are welcome if they travel accompanied by government officials. However, Moroccan and foreign journalists who want to cover the region independently can face numerous hurdles. Moroccan authorities summarily expel reporters from the region. During protests in Laayoune in May, authorities expelled several reporters and prevented others from entering the city. Even Moroccan journalists who defy Morocco's position on the Western Sahara face legal harassment." **Worst of the Worst: The World's Most Repressive Societies 2006, Freedom in the World 2006, Freedom House's annual global survey on political rights and civil liberties.**

"It is essential that the Moroccan authorities set out a clear framework for journalists covering Western Sahara, avoiding indirect control methods such as having to inform the interior ministry prior to their arrival in Laayoune" **Journalists working in Western Sahara face assaults, arrests and harassment. Reporters Without Borders, June 2005.**

## BURNED ALIVE



Salek Saidi, a 21-year-old, was burned alive by Moroccan security agents on May 28th, 2006. Police poured gasoline over his body and set him on fire. Saidi's body sustained severe burns after his arrest. He was arrested for his activity in favor of a referendum on self-determination and for having raised a Saharawi flag. This degree of cruelty against innocents civilians constitutes not only an unacceptable violation of human rights but also demonstrates that Morocco did not abide by any international law or principle to which it should be as a member of the newly created UN Council on Human Rights.



**STUNNING PRISON CONDITIONS: LA CARCEL NEGRA: "Black Prison" in El Aaiun, Western Sahara**



Unhygienic and grossly overcrowded prisons, the communal cells are often poorly ventilated and badly lit, and lack adequate washing facilities. Inmates are packed together, even in filthy toilette rooms, with no space to stretch or move around. Extreme humiliation of prisoners, most prisoners held without trial or charge, and others serving draconian sentences up to 30 years. Torture and inhumane punishment are rife at these prisons, which are run by Morocco's oppressive security apparatus.



## BROKEN BODIES, SHATTERED MINDS: TORTURE & ILL-TREATMENT OF WOMEN



Saharawi women human right defenders in the occupied territories of Western Sahara - like the internationally known **Mrs. Aminettu Haidar** (top left) - are victims of torture and violence by Moroccan forces. Violence and discrimination against women is not only violation of fundamental human rights, but is also an obstacle to the achievement of equality, development and peace in the community in every country (Resolution 54/134, 3rd General Assembly, 1999). This is true for Western Sahara too.

## TORTURE OF DETAINEES



On 8 June 2006, members of the Moroccan Royal Gendarmerie abducted Sahrawi citizen **Mohamed Freik** (top left). He was taken to 50 kms. outside of Laayoune around 23h GMT in a Gendarmerie jeep to their barracks where he spent three days blindfolded, undergoing intense interrogation. He was then taken to an unknown destination where he was tortured with electric shocks, beatings, verbally abused and forced to breath in chemical laden water. Mr Freik was held there incommunicado until 14 July.



## TORTURE OF DETAINEES



**Testimony of former Sahrawi political prisoner Bachir Yaya :** On 16 June 2006, around 21:00GMT, I was the victim of an arbitrary arrest by agents of the GUS [Group Urbain de Sécurité]. I was on Smara boulevard, close to the Maatallah neighborhood, in the company of former political prisoner **Malainin Targui** (below). A blue van stopped close to us and two agents came out to throw us in the car without any explanation. The police officers tortured us in the back of the car before taking us to the torture centre where we underwent all forms of infernal and inhuman torture during 24 hours. They poured a flammable liquid on my genitals and extinguished cigarettes on my body. They sexually attacked me and forced me to sign a document, not knowing the nature of its contents. I was then taken to the edge of the city where I was left in my deplorable state. Some civilians took me home in their car. I visited the doctor who recommended a period of thirty days of incapacity.



## TORTURE OF DETAINEES



On August 31, 2006, the former Sahrawi political prisoner **Sidi Mohammed Alouate** (above) was victim of a criminal act committed by Moroccan police. This happened around 20h00 GMT as he was passing by the Almoravid school on Smara Avenue in the company of his brother Hamza Alouate. Approximately seven Moroccan agents in civilian clothes grabbed S.M. Alouate and led him towards a vehicle of the Urban Security Group (GUS). While in transit, he was blindfolded and his hands were bound behind him. He was taken outside El-Ayoune, savagely tortured and then dumped in the Saqiyah El-Hamra river at 03h00.

## TORTURE OF DETAINEES



The body of **Boucetta Mohamed Barka** (left), known as Chaybani, DNI 59210 SH, 35 years old, killed on Nov. 28, 2002, in the civil prison of El Aaiun. His body carries traces of torture, multiple hematoma and burn marks. When his family picked up his dead body he was still wearing handcuffs.

Barka was reported to have been arrested and detained by police officers often over the last three or four years before his death. On several occasions he was allegedly ill-treated by Moroccan security agents who interrogated him on suspicion of pro-independence activities.





Saharawi political prisoners' pictures, like those of **Hmad Hamad** (right) are evidence of the frequency and severity of human rights abuses committed by the Moroccan security apparatus.

"For decades, Saharawis who have defied Moroccan government have been arrested, killed, disappeared, and tortured." **Freedom House, Worst of the Worst: The World's Most Repressive Societies 2006**

## Some of Moroccan officers who tortured and/or supervised the torture of Saharawis



- **Abou Hassan Ichi: Commander of the Groups of Urban Security (GUS).**
- **Abdellah Abhiri: Commander-in-chief of the rapid forces of intervention.**
- **Hamid Bahri: vice-prefect of El Aaiun, person in charge for the department of security.**
- **Mustafa Maaza: Pasha and vice-prefect of the Governor of El Aaiun.**
- **Ahmed Salim: provincial chief of DST (direction of the territorial surveillance).**
- **Buceicha Moulud: police chief of DST.**
- **Drunk-Aabeid Karrab: a high official in charge for the Wilaya of El Aaiun.**
- **Maati Mudrik: Commander of Moroccan police in El Aaiun.**
- **Brahim Bensami: Security chief in El Aaiun.**
- **Azzozi Abdelkader : Chief, General Affairs division, Province of Smara**
- **EL Gord Lahsen : Secretary-general, Provincce of Smara**
- **Imad Mustapha Fakhri : Commissar of GUS**
- **EL Arbidi Salaheddine : Chief, General Affairs division, Pashawiah**
- **Ishak Mohamed : Police Officer**
- **Sarii Sliman : Police inspector**
- **Hassan Elghaffari: Police insp**
- **Faysal Houssein : Police inspector, among others.**