



Media Release

LEICHHARDT FLIES THE FLAG FOR WESTERN SAHARA

Mayor of Leichhardt Council, Cr Jamie Parker today invited the Western Sahara community in Sydney to commemorate the raising of their flag at Leichhardt Town Hall at **9am on Friday, 27 February 2009** to mark the 33rd anniversary of the Saharawi Republic.

“Leichhardt Council will raise the flag of Saharawi Republic on their special day as a gesture of solidarity and friendship with the people of Western Sahara.

“This commemorates 33 years since the people of Western Sahara declared a republic in Western Sahara to fill the vacuum left by the withdrawal of Spain the then colonial power.

“This is also significant because it will be the first time the flag of the Saharawi Republic has been flown officially in Australia,” Cr Parker said.

Most of the territory of the Saharawi Republic (Western Sahara) is occupied by the Kingdom of Morocco which invaded the area in 1975. The invasion forced 165,000 Saharawi to flee their homeland and seek refuge in neighbouring Algeria where they have been living in dire condition ever since.

Over 100 UN resolutions have called for the organisation of a referendum of self-determination to allow the Saharawis to exercise their inalienable right to self-determination but Morocco has been able to obstruct the process and defy international legality.

“In 33 years the people of Western Sahara have achieved a great deal. Their state is a member of the African Union, is recognised by over 80 countries worldwide. In the refugee camps, they have established democratic institutions and have improved the rights of women and literacy rates in their nation are now about 90%, one of highest in Africa.

“Through the gesture of raising Western Sahara flag we are also raising our voices against the dreadful injustice caused to the innocent Saharawi people and extend strong support and solidarity with the people of Western Sahara who have suffered immensely during the past three decades.

“We raise our voices to urge our government to put pressure on Morocco to allow the organisation of a free and fair referendum of self-determination in Western Sahara as soon as possible,” Cr Parker Concluded.

Ends

Thursday, 26 February 2009

For further information/comment:

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