

Joint-Statement for a Western Sahara without violence and racism

Since 25 September 2011, the Saharawi civilians in Dakhla, in the south of Western Sahara, are facing brutal and oppressive attacks from Moroccan armed militias. These militias reside in the Alwakala neighbourhood, home to thousands of Moroccan settlers brought into the territory by the Moroccan government in 1991, to participate in the envisioned referendum in Western Sahara.

Saharawis' lives and physical safety are in danger, their houses raided and private and public property burned. The military has sealed off the road to Dakhla, thereby obstructing the media so as to hide the serious crimes committed with impunity by the Moroccan intelligence services and armed militias. This Moroccan aggression is rooted in racism, and has resulted in dozens of casualties among Saharawi, who try to flee the city to save their lives.

We note that the Moroccan authorities attempt to distort the facts on the events in Dakhla, as they have done many times before when they've also supported the armed militias in attacking Saharawi civilians and their properties.

As a result, the Saharawi Human rights NGOs and committees wish to announce the following;

1. Our absolute solidarity with the victims of the vicious attacks perpetrated by the armed militias of the Alwakala neighbourhood and the Moroccan authorities' agents.
2. Our condolences and solidarity with the family of the Saharawi martyr Maichane Mohamad Lamine Lahbib Echiaa, who has been kidnapped and beaten to death by the militias.
3. We denounce the Moroccan authorities' attempts to distort the Dakhla reality, and misinform the local and international public opinion.
4. We demand the Moroccan government allow an independent and fair investigation into all the crimes committed by the armed militias and the Moroccan secret services against the Saharawi civilians in Dakhla, Western Sahara.
5. We call on the United Nations and the UN Human Rights Council to send an international commission to investigate the grave violations of human rights committed by armed militias backed by the Moroccan authorities.
6. We ask the international community, NGOs and all the free voices to immediately act on the following:
 - a. Respect for human rights in Western Sahara, including the Saharawi people's right to self-determination. The political conflict and the military siege in Western Sahara must end.

- b. Work for a UN mechanism to protect the Saharawi civilians and report on the human rights situation in Western Sahara.
- c. An immediate response to the Saharawi civilians' demand to be protected from the armed militias and repression by the Moroccan state.
- d. Increase pressure on Morocco to:
 - i. Clarify the fate of abducted Saharawi;
 - ii. Release all the Saharawi political prisoners;
 - iii. Guarantee civil, political, economical, social and cultural rights for the Saharawi people, including their right to benefit from their natural resources.

Western Sahara, 29 September 2011

Signed by:

- Family of the Saharawi martyr Said Dambar
- CODESA (Collective of Saharawi Human Rights Defender)
- ASVDH (Saharawi association for victims of grave human rights violations committed by the Moroccan state)
- CODAPSO (Saharawi Committee to Defend Self-Determination)
- CSPRON (Saharawi committee for UN settlement plan and protection of Natural resources of Western Sahara)
- Gdeim Izik Coordination Committee
- Victims of enforced disappearance and arbitrary arrest in the Sahara
- Committee to Defend the Public Freedom and Human Rights in Western Sahara
- Saharawi Association to Protect Prisoners
- Saharawi Committee for the Defence of Human Rights in Smara, Western Sahara
- Organisation against Torture in Dakhla, Western Sahara
- Committee of families of kidnapped Saharawi
- FAFESA, Forum of Future for the Saharawi Women in Western Sahara
- Committee of Mothers of the 15 disappeared Saharawi
- Saharawi Committee for the Defence of Human Rights in Glaimim, South Morocco
- Freedom Sun for the Protection of Human Rights Defenders in Western Sahara
- Saharawi Centre to Protect the Collective Memory