



Australia Western Sahara Association

Working for justice for the Saharawi people

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UN High Commissioner for Human Rights
Palais des Nations
CH-1211 Geneva 10
Switzerland

Action needed by UN to protect Saharawi citizens

This statement is issued by the Australia Western Sahara Association (AWSA), an association committed to raising awareness of the plight of the Saharawi and their right to a referendum for self-determination as Africa's last colony.

AWSA calls for urgent action by the UN Commissioner for Human Rights to intervene and protect Saharawis who are under violent attack by Moroccan settlers in the city of Dakhla in occupied Western Sahara. It is understood that the Moroccan security forces and police have not acted to protect the lives and property of the indigenous Saharawi. The city is under a virtual military siege, numerous young people have been arrested and detained, and at least one Saharawi has been killed with numbers of others seriously injured.

These violations of human rights and violent discrimination against Saharawis will continue until the United Nations mission in Western Sahara is given the responsibility for monitoring human rights in the territory, and conducting the referendum for self-determination becomes a more urgent priority for the UN.

In the meantime AWSA urges the UN Commissioner for Human Rights to inquire into the circumstances of this latest violence in Western Sahara and the responsibility of the Moroccan authorities for the continuing oppression and abuse of human rights.

ASWA also expresses solidarity with the people of Western Sahara, and with their right to protest discrimination and oppression and to be able to exercise a choice about the future of their country.

Lyn Allison
ASWA President

Cc Minister for Foreign Affairs
Parliament House, Canberra ACT 2600