



Australia Western Sahara Association

Working for justice for the Saharawi people

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26 March 2012

UN Secretary General
The Honourable Ban Ki-Moon
Secretary General
760 United Nations Plaza
United Nations
New York, NY 10017

Secretary General

You will be aware that MINURSO – the UN mission in Western Sahara – is the only UN peacekeeping mission established since 1978 without a mandate to monitor human rights. This means that Morocco has been able, with impunity, to occupy Western Sahara and subject the Saharawis to arbitrary arrest, disappearances, false imprisonment, unfair trials, torture and the death penalty.

In April the UN will consider the renewal of MINURSO and I write to urge you to support that renewal and, importantly, to press for human rights monitoring to be included to protect the civilian population there. The measures adopted last year have proved completely inadequate and ineffective.

One independent expert on cultural rights has paid a day visit to Dakhla in the course of the year. Morocco has been allowed to block the visit of an observer on torture. Crowdmap has created a record of human rights abuses in occupied Western Sahara in an attempt to fill the UN's deficiency : <https://westernsahara.crowdmap.com/reports> which I urge you to consider.

Twenty three Saharawis in Salé prison arrested for their alleged role in the protest at Gdeim Izik near El Aaiun in October-November 2010, have not been brought to trial, although well over 12 months has elapsed since they were taken into custody.

Moroccan-occupied Western Sahara, the part of Western Sahara east of the berm under control of the Polisario Front and the Saharawi refugee camps near Tindouf in south-west Algeria should all be monitored by the UN.

I visited the refugee camps 11 years ago as a Senator in the Australian Parliament. Around 160,000 Saharawi men, women and children have lived in tents in these desolate camps for 37 years, waiting, like those in the occupied territory, for Morocco to honour the UN peace treaty it signed in 1991. It's little wonder that the people of Western Sahara are afraid of what Morocco will do to them next and feel abandoned by the rest of the world.

I would be obliged if you could do your utmost to see that human rights monitoring is included among the duties of MINURSO and that sovereignty is resolved quickly and to the satisfaction of the Saharawis.

I wish you well in your deliberations.

Yours sincerely,

Lyn Allison
AWSA President



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