

AWSA membership application

Please fill out this form and return via post or email

Name

Address

Phone

Email

- I support the aims of the Australia Western Sahara Association:
<http://awsa.org.au/wp-content/uploads/2017/10/AWSA-Rules-AGM-2017.pdf>

I would like to:

- receive regular e-bulletins from AWSA
 volunteer
 donate \$.....

I enclose/transfer my subscription fee of:

- \$100 (Organisations)
 \$50 (NGOs)
 \$25 (Individuals – employed)
 \$10 (Individuals – concession)

Payment information

- Cheque: please make payable to AWSA
- Electronic Funds Transfer:
 - NSW (national office):
BSB 814282, Account 10701775
 - VICTORIA:
BSB 814282, Account 10754108

NB: Membership is for the financial year (1 July to 30 June).

What does AWSA do?

AWSA is a not-for-profit incorporated association established to raise awareness and promote the Saharawi cause in Australia. In particular it campaigns for:

- A UN referendum of self-determination.
- Access to jobs, housing and education for indigenous Saharawis in occupied zones.
- Monitoring of human rights, on both sides, by the UN.
- Protection of the country's natural resources for the Saharawi people.

To do this:

- AWSA lobbies government and industry.
- Organises educational and cultural events.
- Appeals for aid to the refugees and human rights defenders.

What can you do?

- Join AWSA
- Write to your MP
- Write to Incitec-Pivot Ltd
- Ask your trade union to affiliate
- Invite a speaker to your group
- Make a regular donation for the Saharawi refugees via Union Aid Abroad-APHEDA
www.apheda.org.au

Contact details

W: www.awsa.org.au

E: info@awsa.org.au

M: AWSA National Office
PO Box 849
Rozelle NSW 2039

M: AWSA
PO Box 264
Carlton North VIC 3054

Australia Western Sahara Association (AWSA)



*Working for justice for
the Saharawi people*

Western Sahara: Africa's last colony



Western Sahara is the land of the Saharawi people. It was first colonised by Spain in the late 1800s. When Spain withdrew in 1975 Morocco and Mauritania invaded sparking a war between the Polisario Front, the Saharawi independence movement, and its two neighbours. Whilst Mauritania withdrew in 1979, Morocco continued the war until a ceasefire was brokered by the UN and African Union in 1991.

In 1975 the International Court of Justice held that Western Sahara was not *terra nullius* at the time of its colonisation by Spain and that neither Morocco nor Mauritania had sovereignty over it. The Court held that the Saharawis had the right to self-determination.

Since its invasion, Morocco has constructed a 2,500km-long wall dividing Western Sahara into the coastal zone occupied by Morocco and the interior part held by the Polisario Front, giving Morocco control over 80% of Western Sahara. The wall is guarded by some 100,000 to 150,000 Moroccan soldiers and is heavily mined.

Self-determination

The UN Mission for the Referendum in Western Sahara (MINURSO) was established in 1992 to prepare for a referendum in which the people of

Western Sahara would choose between independence or integration with Morocco. The referendum has never taken place, with Morocco refusing to envisage anything other than Western Saharan autonomy within Morocco.

Refugee camps

Following the 1975 invasion, many Saharawis fled and set up refugee camps near Tindouf in south-west Algeria where up to 165,000 Saharawis now live supported by the UN and other humanitarian aid organisations.



The Saharawi people have their own democratically elected government which is recognised as the legitimate government of Western Sahara by over 80 countries worldwide and is a member of the African Union.

The Saharawis have built their own schools and hospitals in the camps but are constantly challenged by harsh desert environment, including flash flooding, which in October 2015 destroyed around 75% of infrastructure and essential services in the camps.

Saharawis under Moroccan rule

The Saharawis who remained in the Moroccan-occupied part of Western Sahara have constantly faced arrest, imprisonment, death and “disappearance” at the hands of Moroccan occupying forces. The UN mission’s mandate

does not extend to the monitoring of these rights abuses.

In October 2010 a mass protest camp of 20,000 Saharawis at Gdeim Izik, in the Moroccan-occupied part of Western Sahara, called for fairer allocation of jobs and housing and an end to Moroccan exploitation of their natural resources. The camps were destroyed by Moroccan officials and hundreds of protestors were arrested.

Leading activists received sentences ranging from 20 years to life imprisonment in the 2017 retrial.



Exploitation of natural resources

Western Sahara is rich in mineral resources, especially phosphate, and has one of the best fishing grounds in the world. Currently its off-shore oil and gas resources are being explored.

Morocco illegally exports phosphates mined in the occupied territory across the world, including to Australia. In 2016, 1.8 billion tonnes were exported, equating to US\$214 million worth of phosphates. 105,000 tonnes (US \$12.1 million in value) of this was imported by Australian company, Incitec Pivot Ltd.

AWSA has been influential in stopping a further two Australian companies from importing Western Sahara phosphates.

Development of Western Sahara’s significant natural resources will play an important part in developing a self-reliant, democratic and progressive independent State.