

**Journalist from Western Sahara
tells his story**

Malainin Lakhali

*Secretary General of the Union of Saharawi
Journalists and Writers, human rights activist*



**Sydney/Canberra
13 June - 7 July 2007**

Africa's last colony: for 30 years the people of Western Sahara have been striving for self-determination. Morocco has blocked the decolonisation process, obstructing the UN referendum. Recent negotiations between the Kingdom of Morocco and the Polisario Front under the auspices of the United Nations, signal a new phase in the continuing conflict. Will these developments deliver self-determination for the indigenous people of Western Sahara?

Sydney Canberra 12 June to 7 July Wednesday 13 June

12.30 - 2.00 University of NSW Australian Centre for Human Rights,
Faculty of Law Building (near Anzac Pde), 2nd Floor, Seminar
Room

Human rights issues in occupied Western Sahara

RSVP required to: ahrc@unsw.edu.au

Fri 22 June

11.00 - 1.00 Australian National University Law School, Coombs Extension
Lecture Theatre (Rm 1.04 building 8), Fellows Rd, ANU

***Self-determination for the indigenous people of
Western Sahara? Africa's last colony***

Sun 24 June

12.30 - 3.00 ***Meet Malainin Lakhali*** at 36 Darling St Balmain

***Fundraiser Lunch with Federal Member for
Sydney, Tanya Plibersek***

RSVP: 02 9810 5372 or 02 98108603
or email lesleyosborne@bigpond.com

Fri 29 June

6.30 - 7.45 Gaelic Club, Devonshire St, Surrey Hills

***Politics in the Pub: Western Sahara - Malainin Lakhali
with Meredith Burgmann, until recently President of the
Legislative Council of NSW***

Tues 3 July

6.00 - 7.00 Unions NSW Training Rms, 377-383 Sussex St Sydney

***Apheda/AWSA public seminar: Getting the Western
Saharawi story out from the camps***

See AWSA's website for the full program: <http://www.awsa.org.au>

Contacts and Media

If you would like to interview Malainin or invite him to speak to your students or your organisation, or for more information please contact:

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Nick O'Neill 9810 8603 Yvette Andrews 0408 281 810

Profile of Malainin Lakhali

Malainin Lakhali was born in 1971 four years before Morocco invaded his country, Western Sahara. The Spanish had left their colony before holding a referendum of self-determination. He lived through the ensuing war (1975-1991), the UN brokered cease-fire and preparations for a referendum of self-determination – which is still to happen. In 1999 the Moroccan occupying forces cracked down on a peaceful sit-in by Saharawis. Malainin, by then an English graduate of Agadir University, was sought by police as a suspected ring-leader of the Saharawi resistance. With previous experience of Moroccan prisons he decided that instead of living under cover, he would make a break for freedom. He escaped through the minefields and the military wall, which divides Moroccan-occupied Western Sahara from the territory held by the national independence movement, the Polisario Front. Since August 2000 he has been living in the Saharawi refugee camps near Tindouf in SW Algeria, working: as a teacher, a translator for the Saharawi Press Service, a journalist and as secretary-general of UPES, the Saharawi writers' and journalists' union. Through this work he supports his friends still living in the occupied zones, bringing the human rights abuses they suffer daily to the attention of the world.

Malainin has been invited by the Australia Western Sahara Association, assisted by:

Australian Council of Trades Unions, Unions NSW, Union Aid Abroad - Apheda, Australian Services Union, Maritime Union of Australia, Australian Workers' Union, Australian Manufacturing Workers' Union, Community and Public Sector Union, Media Entertainment and Arts Alliance, International Federation of Journalists, UnionsWA.

Australia Western Sahara Association
Working for justice for the Saharawi people

