

Australia Western Sahara Association (Victoria)

inc no: A0047692T

NORWEGIAN COMPANY DISINVESTS FROM WESFARMERS WHILE SHIP DOCKS IN GEELONG TODAY.

Norwegian insurance company, Kommunal Landspensjonskasse Mutual Insurance Company (KLP) has blacklisted Wesfarmers on account of its trade with Morocco in phosphate pillaged from Western Sahara.

In an interview with the Australian Financial Review in December 2005 the then Opposition foreign affairs spokesman and current Australian Prime Minister Mr. Kevin Rudd said that "he saw parallels between the federal government's handling of the AWB scandal and the Western Sahara shipment." And added "I would be dumbfounded if the Australian government had allowed commercial relationships between another Australian company and Morocco, in breach of international law."

"KLP excludes the fertiliser producer Wesfarmer as a result of illegal import of phosphate from Western Sahara. The area is occupied by Morocco, and in 2002 the UN declared all extraction of natural resources in West Sahara as illegal", an article states in the Norwegian business daily, *Dagens Næringsliv* on 3 December. It gives KLP's new blacklist of unethical companies no longer in its investment portfolio. (see http://www.vest-sahara.no/index.php?parse_news=single&cat=49&art=719)

KLP's ethical guidelines require it to disinvest from Wesfarmers because its subsidiary fertiliser company, CSBP imports phosphate from Morocco sourced in Western Sahara. Under UN guidelines and international law, the natural resources of a "non-self-governing country", waiting to be decolonized, belong to the indigenous people of the territory, in this case the Saharawi people. "Wesfarmers (is) excluded due to violations of KLP's ethical guidelines and because they have not rectified criticisable conditions or in other way signalled a way to solve their problem" says Mari Thjømøe, president for economy and finance, according to a press release (in Norwegian) http://www.klp.no/web/klpno.nsf/pages/OmKLPPressePressemeldinger.html?open&disp_key=5FFD63935E2C25D6C12573A6002F219D .

working for justice for the Saharawi people

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"Wesfarmers CSBP based in Fremantle is one of three Australian companies engaging in this trade. One might expect the others to become blacklisted too", comments Cate Lewis of the Australia Western Sahara Association. They are Incitec Pivot based in Melbourne and Impact Fertilisers based in Tasmania.

Incitec Pivot is the biggest Australian importer of this Saharawi phosphate rock used in its super phosphate product called SuPerfect. "Today (4 December), indeed, she continued, a ship called Sparrow is due to dock in Geelong with yet another shipment of the illegal cargo."

Ms. Lewis said: "we call on the new Federal Government to put an end to this illegal, immoral and unethical behaviour of the Australian companies. The stealing of Western Sahara phosphate must end now."

For further information please contact:

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PS Please note American Professor and expert on Middle East and North Africa, Stephen Zunes will launch a book that has just been published on Western Sahara titled *International Law and the Question of Western Sahara* edited by Karin Arts and Pedro Pinto Leite. The launch will take place at the prestigious Institute of International Law and Humanities (IILAH) in the Melbourne Law School.

TIME AND LOCATION:

Date: Friday, 7 December 2007

Time: 5.30pm for a 6.00pm start
(6.00 - 7.00pm)

Location: Room 920, Level 9
Melbourne Law School
185 Pelham Street, Carlton
Institute for International
Law and the Humanities

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