



13 July 2010

Press Release

The Embassy of the Saharawi Republic to the United Republic of Tanzania welcomes the decision by Zanzibar International Film Festival (ZIFF), to remove the so-called “Stolen” film from the program of its 13th Festival which is taking place in Zanzibar on 10-18 July 2010.

ZIFF’s Board decided not to screen “Stolen” during the Festival after close and thorough consideration of all the information and representations made by the Saharawis affected by the film including the family of Fetim Sellami a key figure in the film.

The Saharawi Ambassador to Tanzania, H.E. Mr. Brahim Salem Buseif said that “the Saharawi people are deeply grateful to the Board of the Festival for their wise and fair decision”. He added that “this film aims to create confusion and spread lies about a people who have suffered a great deal during the past 35 years. It also aims to hurt the Saharawi legitimate struggle for freedom and dignity.”

“Stolen” purports to have discovered modern-day slavery in the Saharawi refugee camps near Tindouf in Algeria. But authorities such as the United Nations have worked in the Saharawi camps for decades and have found no evidence of such unfounded allegations. Human rights organizations, NGOs, and thousands of journalists and foreign visitors to the Saharawi camps have never found evidence of slavery in the Saharawi refugee camps.

“Stolen” is full of misleading and deceptive allegations and there are many serious flaws in the film such as mistranslations, invented subtitles and fictitious scenes.

The Producer of the film Mr. Zubrycki admitted recently that there were some scenes of the film where re-enactments were shot in Australia, yet they weren’t stated on screen as being re-enactments. He also admitted that the film’s tapes were not buried in the desert as claimed in the film.

Morocco invaded and illegally occupied most parts of Western Sahara (the Saharawi Republic) in 1975 and continues to plunder its natural resources including phosphates and fisheries. Because of that occupation, almost every Saharawi family is separated with members on each side of the military wall which seals the occupied territories of Western Sahara from the outside world. Morocco continues to undertake horrendous human rights abuses and hamper United Nations efforts to organize a referendum of self-determination in the Territory in accordance with international legality.

The Saharawi Republic is a founding member of the African Union (AU) and enjoys close ties of friendship, cooperation and solidarity with the United Republic of Tanzania.

For further information regarding the film “Stolen” please check:
<http://awsa.org.au/wp-content/uploads/2009/08/critique-of-stolen-ii.pdf>

P.O. BOX 105119 DAR ES SALAAM
PHONE: +255 22 2780868 FAX: +255 22 2780296

Email embsadr@gmail.com: