



Australia Western Sahara Association

Working for justice for the Saharawi people

AWSA PO Box 849, Rozelle NSW 2039 www.awsa.org.au info@awsa.org.au

Visit by human rights advocate from Western Sahara, Press Release 28/08/19

A prominent Western Sahara human rights advocate **Tecber Ahmed Saleh** will visit Australia in September to talk about the plight of her country, Western Sahara - Africa's last colony.

Tecber was born in a refugee camp in Algeria where her family has lived for more than 40 years. They fled there when Morocco invaded Western Sahara in 1975. Tecber has studied in the USA and Spain and is a highly qualified, international spokesperson for Western Sahara.

"This will be the first time a young Saharawi leader from the Saharawi refugee camps has visited Australia" said Lesley Osborne, Secretary of the Australia Western Sahara Association (AWSA), which is hosting Tecber's visit.

Tecber will speak about the long wait for the promised United Nations referendum, life in the camps, the exploitation of her country's natural resources and about the human rights abuses suffered by Saharawi people living in the territory occupied by Morocco. "This is a longstanding de-colonisation issue. It is crucial for the stability of the North African region that it is settled" Ms Osborne added.

Western Sahara is sometimes described as 'the East Timor of Africa' due to the parallels between the two. When Spain abandoned its former colony in 1975, Morocco invaded the territory.

Western Sahara is strategically positioned to impact on the Maghreb region of northern Africa as well as southern Europe. The territory is also important due to its abundance of natural resources, particularly fisheries and phosphates, which have been imported by Australian companies.

White House National Security Advisor, John Bolton, is putting pressure on the UN, Morocco and Polisario to resolve the Western Sahara conflict. The UN mission in the territory is due for renewal in October and the US is threatening a veto if the UN cannot make progress towards a resolution of one of the longest running conflicts in the world.

Tecber's dates:

Sydney: 2 – 6 September and 22 – 27 September

Melbourne: 9 – 13 September

Canberra: 16 – 20 September

To arrange a meeting or interview with Tecber please contact:

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See attached flyer for information about Ms Tecber Ahmed Saleh

Australia Western Sahara Association presents:

TECBER AHMED SALEH



Tecber Ahmed Saleh lives in the Saharawi refugee camps in south-west Algeria and will visit Australia to talk about Western Sahara, Africa's last colony.

Tecber works in the Ministry of Health in the Saharawi refugee camps where she was born. She will speak about the conditions of life in the camps and the larger political issues facing Western Sahara.

In 1975 Morocco invaded Western Sahara. Saharawis fled the occupation and now 173,600 remain in the refugee camps. The Saharawi continue their non-violent struggle, waiting for the United Nations referendum of self-determination agreed in 1991.

As an advocate for the Saharawi cause, Tecber has written and contributed to articles to raise awareness about the plight of her people.

Tecber studied Biology in the USA and holds a Master's degree in Clinical Laboratory Science from Pompeu Fabra University in Barcelona. She has attended medical research conferences and co-authored research in the professional journal *Toxics*.

Tecber will visit Australia from 1-27 September 2019. In Australia she is available to speak at events and give media interviews. For more information see www.awsa.org.au, email info@awsa.org.au, or call Lesley Osborne on 0439 363 010.

