



Australia Western Sahara Association

Working for justice for the Saharawi people

UN'S RESPONSIBILITY TOWARDS WESTERN SAHARA, AFRICA'S LAST COLONY

Tuesday 12 October 2021

Panellists: Jeremy Corbyn MP,
Francesco Bastagli, Senator Tim Ayres,
Golriz Ghahraman MP, Kamal Fadel,
Moderated by Lyn Allison.



More about the speakers:

Jeremy Corbyn was first elected to parliament in 1983 representing Islington North, and later served as Leader of Her Majesty's Official Opposition from September 2015 to April 2020.

His international interests are widespread with particular attention to human rights, peace and justice. He has travelled widely and continues to support those areas and many communities affected by unresolved conflict, including Western Sahara, which he has visited twice.

Jeremy Corbyn has travelled with All Party Parliamentary Groups, as well as the Interparliamentary Union and has witnessed different political systems and peoples and observed elections in some cases. He is currently a member of the Parliamentary Assembly for the Council of Europe, the UK Socialist Campaign Group and is a regular participant at the United Nations Human Rights Council (Geneva). In 2017 he received the Sean McBride

Peace Prize and in 2013 the Gandhi International Peace Award.

Francesco Bastagli was special representative of Kofi Annan for Western Sahara and head of MINURSO from August 2005 to September 2006. Before that, he had a long UN career ranging from refugee assistance to crime and drug control; he was also UN representative in Iran and head of UN civil administration in Kosovo. He resigned from his latest position in disagreement with UN inaction in Western Sahara and has since written and lectured in support of the Saharawi cause.

Tim Ayres is a Labor Senator for New South Wales and a member of the Senate Standing Committee on Foreign Affairs Defence and Trade. He has spoken about the situation in Western Sahara on the floor of the Australian Senate, emphasising the need to respect the will of the Saharawi people and their right to self-determination.

Golriz Ghahraman is an Iranian-Kiwi refugee and made history as the first ever refugee to be sworn in as an MP, having arrived in Aotearoa as a child asylum seeker with her family from Iran. Her studies at Oxford, and her career as a lawyer in New Zealand and overseas, have focused on enforcing human rights and holding governments to account. Her work has included restoring communities after war and human rights atrocities, particularly empowering women engaged in peace and justice initiatives. In New Zealand, she has successfully advocated on human rights issues before the Supreme Court. Before entering parliament as list MP for the Green Party, Golriz was active in the NGO community, volunteering her skills to advance justice reform, refugee and migrant rights, and for family carers of disabled persons.

Mr Kamal Fadel served in the Saharawi Embassies in Algeria, India and Iran. He served as the Saharawi Deputy Representative to the UK and was then appointed the Representative to Australia and New Zealand as the first Saharawi representative based in the region. Mr Fadel served as the first Saharawi Ambassador to the Republic of Timor Leste from 2009 to 2010. Mr. Fadel obtained an M.A. in International Relations, Kent University, UK. He was awarded a degree in law from the Legal Profession Admission Board and a Graduate Diploma of Legal Training from the College of Law in Sydney and was admitted as a solicitor in Australia in 2013.

Lyn Allison represented Victoria in the Australian Senate from 1996 to 2008, and was the leader of the Australian Democrats from 2004. Lyn has long advocated for the rights of refugees and asylum seekers, and she is the current President of Australia Western Sahara Association (AWSA).