

Joint Statement of the Signatory Organizations on Western Sahara.

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Fifty years have passed since Morocco's military occupation of Western Sahara, yet the Sahrawi people remain deprived of their inalienable right to self-determination, in blatant violation of international humanitarian law and numerous United Nations resolutions, as well as the opinions of the International Court of Justice, the European Court of Justice, and the African Court on Human and Peoples' Rights, in addition to the 2002 Advisory Opinion of the UN Secretary-General's Legal Counsel and the 2015 Advisory Opinion of the African Union on the exploitation of Western Sahara's natural resources.

International law, particularly the 1975 Advisory Opinion of the International Court of Justice, confirms that Morocco holds no sovereignty over Western Sahara, which remains listed by the United Nations among Non-Self-Governing Territories, pending the completion of the decolonization process.

Following the withdrawal of Spanish colonial forces, Moroccan occupation forces invaded Western Sahara in October 1975. The Sahrawi people, represented by the Polisario Front—the legitimate and sole representative of the Sahrawi people—resisted the invasion, igniting a long-lasting conflict that concluded with the 1991 ceasefire agreement under the auspices of the United Nations and the African Union. This agreement explicitly called for a referendum on self-determination, which Moroccan occupation forces have systematically obstructed ever since. Since 2020, violations of the ceasefire have escalated openly, leaving the Sahrawi people once again facing renewed conflict under the alarming inaction of the international community and its failure to enforce international humanitarian law.

We, the undersigned organizations, call for the urgent completion of the decolonization of Western Sahara and affirm the following:

1. Grave and Systematic Human Rights Violations

- Commission of crimes against humanity, including extrajudicial killings, enforced disappearances, torture, political arrests and trials, forced displacement, demographic engineering, and systematic repression.
- Imposition of censorship, harassment, and violence against human rights defenders, including the Collective of Sahrawi Human Rights Defenders in Western Sahara (CODESA).
- Use of armed drones by Moroccan forces against civilians east of the Moroccan military separation wall, constituting a serious breach of international humanitarian law.

2. Forced Displacement and Social Fragmentation

- Half of the Sahrawi people live in refugee camps in Algeria under harsh climatic conditions, while the other half endures life under occupation or in exile, separated by a military wall, minefields, and a fortified military presence exceeding 120 Moroccan soldiers.

- Entire generations have grown up stateless, deprived of certainty of return, which deepens frustration and fuels instability.
- Forced loyalty policies in the occupied territories undermine the Sahrawi people's rights to identity and dignity.

3. Organized Plunder of Natural Resources

- Intensive exploitation of phosphate, fisheries, and agricultural resources in flagrant violation of international humanitarian law.
- Continued engagement of EU institutions and member states in unlawful trade agreements, despite repeated rulings of the European Court of Justice, most recently in October 2024, annulling such agreements.
- Participation in these practices amounts to complicity in the crime of occupation.

4. Geopolitical Interests Superseding Justice

- European governments continue to remain silent, prioritizing trade interests, migration management, and strategic alliances over compliance with international law.
- International powers deliberately treat Western Sahara as a geopolitical blind spot, ignoring the destructive effects of the conflict on stability in the Maghreb and Sahel regions.

5. Resilience of the Sahrawi Resistance and Renewed Hope

- Despite systematic repression, the Sahrawi people's struggle for their inalienable right to self-determination remains steadfast.
- Sahrawi women play a central role in maintaining social cohesion in refugee camps and leading resistance efforts in the occupied territories.
- Global solidarity movements continue to strengthen the Sahrawi demand for freedom, justice, and democracy.

We call upon the United Nations to:

- I. Strengthen its role in protecting human rights in Western Sahara by establishing an independent UN office to monitor the human rights situation and provide regular reports to the Security Council and General Assembly.
- II. Impose effective pressure on Morocco to end the occupation, including adopting enforceable measures obliging Moroccan forces to respect international humanitarian law.
- III. Ensure the Polisario Front is recognized as the representative of the Sahrawi people in all negotiations concerning the future of Western Sahara, in accordance with their right to self-determination under the UN Charter.

We call upon the European Union and its member states to:

- I. Ensure respect for international humanitarian law by supporting a democratic solution based on a referendum for self-determination, as outlined in the 1991 ceasefire agreement and international resolutions.

- II. Reject Morocco's claims of sovereignty or any unilateral attempt to impose division or the so-called "autonomy plan," as violations of the Sahrawi people's right to self-determination.
- III. Fully implement the rulings of the European Court of Justice by halting all economic activities exploiting resources from occupied Western Sahara and requiring European governments and companies to comply.
- IV. Condemn ongoing human rights violations, apply pressure for the release of Sahrawi political prisoners—including the Gdeim Izik group—and investigate and hold accountable those responsible for drone attacks targeting civilians.
- V. Provide urgent humanitarian assistance—particularly water and food—to Sahrawi refugee camps in Algeria, where conditions are worsening due to climate change and underfunding.
- VI. Establish international accountability mechanisms, including an independent human rights monitoring body, with regular reporting by the European Parliament on implementation of European Court of Justice rulings.
- VII. Apply political and economic pressure by linking EU partnership agreements with Morocco and all bilateral relations to respect for human rights and democratic principles.

We call upon the African Union to:

- I. Exert pressure on Morocco to end the military occupation and enable the Sahrawi people to exercise their right to self-determination.
- II. Support the Sahrawi people in refugee camps and occupied territories to preserve Sahrawi identity and strengthen social resilience.
- III. Activate African human rights committees to enhance accountability, condemn ongoing war crimes, crimes against humanity, and gross human rights violations, and actively contribute to the release of Sahrawi political prisoners from Moroccan prisons.