

**CROSS-REGIONAL STATEMENT  
OF THE GENEVA SUPPORT GROUP FOR WESTERN SAHARA  
34<sup>TH</sup> SESSION OF THE HUMAN RIGHTS COUNCIL**

**ITEM2: INTERACTIVE DIALOGUE WITH THE HIGH COMMISSIONER**

Mr President.

High Commissioner,

I have the honour to deliver this statement on behalf of the states constituting the Geneva Support Group for Western Sahara<sup>1</sup>.

The lack of action of this Council in protecting and promoting human rights in Western Sahara is of grave concern. The denial of the right of self-determination of peoples under colonial occupation constitutes a violation of the Charter of the United Nations and the two Covenants on human rights. This has been the case for the Sahrawi people for over five decades now.

We call once again for the holding of a referendum so that the Sahrawi people are able to pronounce themselves on their right to self-determination in light of relevant UN resolutions on the matter.

We urge the High Commissioner to visit Western Sahara at his earliest convenience and specifically to include an assessment of the human rights situation in Western Sahara in both his annual report to the Council and his oral updates at sessions of the Council. We call for the release of the report of the technical mission visit of 2015 and for the resumption of regular visits by the technical mission to Western Sahara.

We strongly urge providing a technical support and capacity-building programme for the Sahrawi National Commission on Human Rights, which is the only national human rights institution with legitimacy and competence in Western Sahara. We reiterate that the mandate of MINURSO be broadened to include a human rights component as is the case in all other peace-keeping missions.

I thank you.

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<sup>1</sup> Algeria – Angola – Bolivia – Cuba - East Timor - Ecuador – Mozambique – Namibia – Nicaragua – Nigeria - South Africa – Tanzania – Venezuela – Zimbabwe