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Members of the

**Geneva Support Group for Western Sahara**

**Invite all interested persons to assist to a High-Level video-conference on**

**60th Anniversary of UNGA Resolution 1514 (XV):**

**its application in Western Sahara**

**Tuesday 15th September 2020 – starting at 15:00**

**Panelists:**

***H.E. Mr. B. Ghali –*** *President, Sahrawi Arab Democratic Republic*

***H.E. Ms. N. Nandi-Ndaitwah –*** *Deputy Prime Minister and Minister of International Relations and Cooperation, Republic of Namibia*

***H.E. Ms. A. Xavier Reis Magno*** *– Minister of Foreign Affairs and Cooperation, Timor Leste*

***H.E. Amb. N. J. Mxakato-Diseko*** *– Permanent Representative in Geneva, Republic of South Africa*

***Mr. F. Bastagli –*** *Former UNSG Special Representative to Western Sahara and Head of MINURSO (2005/06)*

***Mr. Oscar Kasya –*** *Chairman, Pan African Club Think Thank (Uganda)*

***Mr. J. Schuster –*** *MEP Germany - President, European Parliament Intergroup for Western Sahara*

***Mr. Abba Al-Hassain*** *– President, Sahrawi National Commission of Human Rights*

**Moderator:**

***Mr. F. D. Fernandes*** *– Chargé d’affaires a.i. in Geneva, Timor Leste*



Statement by

Honourable Netumbo Nandi-Ndaitwah

Deputy Prime Minister and Minister of International Relations and

Cooperation of the Republic of Namibia

At High-level videoconference organized in the margins of the

45th UN Human Rights Council

15 September 2020

60th Anniversary of UNGA Resolution 1514(XV)

Its Application in Western Sahara

**Thank you Moderator,**

**Excellencies,**

**Distinguished participants,**

**Ladies and Gentlemen,**

1. Allow me from the onset to thank the Ambassadors of the Geneva Support Group for organizing this important panel discussion which is aimed at identifying concrete proposals for an expeditious implementation of United Nations General Assembly Resolution 1514 entitled the “***Declaration on the Granting of Independence to Colonial Countries and Peoples.”***
2. It is indeed a privilege and honor to participate in the deliberations today, and I am particularly pleased to note the Support Group has adapted to the new normal to ensure that its important work has not been halted due to the ongoing global pandemic.
3. Earlier this year in March, Namibia celebrated 30 years of her Independence, peace, stability and freedom, and we continue to chart our own path towards sustainable development for the benefit of all our citizens. While we endured a difficult past of colonial oppression, we will always be grateful to the international community for their efforts which contributed immensely towards our independence. As aptly described by our President, H.E. Dr. Hage G. Geingob: ***“Namibia is a child of international solidarity, midwifed by the United Nations.”***

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1. Having gone through this experience, we are absolutely convinced that with the same amount of vigour and energy the international community, through the United Nations, will be able to ensure that our Saharwi brothers and sisters exercise their inalienable right to self-determination, just like in the case of Namibia and many other countries who have gained independence since the adoption of the United Nations Charter and the Declaration on the Granting of Independence to Colonial Countries and Peoples, as well as other relevant international instruments which entrench this fundamental human right, including the international covenants on civil and political rights, and economic, social and cultural rights.
2. It is, however, imperative to note that the right to self-determination is so entrenched and pronounced that it has become part of contemporary customary international law. It is has achieved the status of a peremptory norm from which derogation is not permitted. All States, irrespective of their diplomatic relations with the occupy power, therefore, have a duty under international law to ensure that the people of Western Sahara exercise their right to self-determination and independence and not to create conditions which would impede the realization of this right, such as the recent action by some States who have established consulates in Western Sahara in recognition of the occupying power’s illegal occupation. Such action can be seen as a breach of international obligations as they go against the ruling of the International Court of Justice in 1975, which held that no tie of territorial sovereignty ever existed between Morocco and Western Sahara. The same conclusion applies to States who are cooperating or allowing their entities to cooperate with the occupying power in the plundering of the natural resources of Western Sahara.
3. Given the status of the right to self-determination under international law, it is thus inconceivable that the people of Western Sahara have not been afforded the opportunity to exercise this right 75 years after the formation of the United Nations and 60 years after the adoption of the Declaration on the Granting of Independence to Colonial Countries and Peoples. The international community, through the United Nations, must stand up and ensure that the people of Western Sahara exercise this right. Action through the Security Council to implement the UN Settlement Plan has not produced the desired result, 29 years after this Plan was adopted. The General Assembly, which compromises of all UN Member States, must, therefore, come to the table and ensure this right for the people of Western Sahara, by taking immediate steps and without any preconditions and reservations. The case of Western Sahara is not only a matter of peace and security but it is also a case of decolonization and implementation of a fundamental human right.
4. The General Assembly cannot continue playing the game of wait and see what the Security Council does because inaction or indecisive action entrenches the current illegal status quo and it emboldens the occupying power to continue with its human rights violations in the territory.
5. There is certainly a case for the General Assembly to step in and protect the natural resources of Western Sahara from illegal exploitation by foreign economic interest, something similar to the action taken by the United Nations Council for Namibia, before our independence, on the question of exploitation of uranium and other natural resources in Namibia by the then South African Apartheid Government and a number of Western multinational compies. This action was later endorsed by the United Nations General Assembly in 1981 through its resolution entitled “***Activities of foreign economic and other interest which are impeding the implementation of the Declaration on the Granting of Independence to Colonial Countries and Peoples in Namibia and in all other Territories under colonial domination and efforts to eliminate colonialism, apartheid and racial***

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***discrimination in Southern Africa.”*** We are of the view that similar action should be initiated for Western Sahara, and of course the discussions can start in the main committees or subsidiary organs of the General Assembly such as the third/fourth committee and the Human Rights Council.

1. I also wish to take this opportunity to urge the Geneva Support Group to look at every mechanism of the Human Rights Council for purposes of promoting the right to self-determination and independence of the people of Western Sahara. Forums such as the Forum on Business and Human Rights and Negotiations on a legally binding instrument on the activities of multinational companies should be fully exploited to raise importance of respecting human rights in Non-Self Governing Territories. In the same vein, one cannot realize the right to development without self-determination, as such discussions within the Human Right Council and Third Committee on the Right to Development provide valuable platforms to raise issues surrounding the right to self-determination for the people of Non Self Governing Territories, including Western Sahara.
2. In conclusion, I reaffirm on behalf of the Republic of Namibia, our unequivocal and unwavering commitment to the cause of the people of Western Sahara to attain their right to self-determination and national independence. And we call on the international community to support the course of the people of Western Sahara.

I thank you Moderator.

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**Commission Nationale Sahraouie des Droits de l’Homme**

**M. Abba Al Hussain, Président**

**60ème anniversaire de la résolution 1514 (XV) :**

**son application au Sahara occidental**

**Visioconférence - Mardi 15 septembre 2020**

Excellences, Mesdames, Messieurs,

Je tiens avant tout à remercier les organisateurs de cette réunion de donner l’opportunité à la Commission Nationale Sahraouie des droits de l’Homme dans cette enceinte. Je remercie également toutes les personnalités qui participent à cette visioconférence pour le soutien qu’ils affichent pour le respect du droit international au Sahara occidental.

En effet, alors qu’en 1966 déjà l’Espagne, Puissance Administrante du Territoire, s’était engagée à organiser un référendum d’autodétermination et que les accords entre le Front Polisario et le Royaume du Maroc ont conduit à la création de la Mission des Nations Unies pour le Référendum au Sahara occidental (MINURSO), le peuple Sahraoui se trouve encore aujourd’hui divisé entre celles et ceux qui survivent dans des campements au milieu du désert, à la merci de la générosité internationale et celles et ceux qui subissent la discrimination et la répression de la Puissance Occupante, le Royaume du Maroc, sur leur propre terre.

L’adoption de la résolution 1514 par l’Assemblée générale de l’ONU en décembre 1960 a ouvert la voie à la libération des peuples qui vivaient sous le joug de la colonisation : synonyme d’exploitation des personnes et des ressources, de violences physiques et psychologiques, synonyme de soumission à un pouvoir systématiquement répressif.

C’est la condition dans laquelle vit encore aujourd’hui, à l’aube du troisième millénaire, le Peuple Sahraoui : soumis à des violations systématiques de ses libertés et droits fondamentaux de la part d’une Puissance qui occupe illégalement son Territoire depuis 45 ans maintenant.

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Dans ce contexte, il convient également de souligner les violations graves des normes du Droit International Humanitaire depuis l’invasion du territoire en 1975 et qui se perpétuent aujourd’hui encore. À ce propos, je dois témoigner de l’incapacité du Comité International de la Croix Rouge à faire respecter le Droit International Humanitaire au Sahara occidental occupé et sa réticence à participer aux programmes de déminage et de recherches des Sahraouis disparus au Sahara occidental. Je dois également regretter le silence complice de la plus grande partie des Hautes Parties Contractantes qui ne semblent pas intéressées à remplir leur obligation de faire respecter les Conventions de Genève, comme cela est prévu par l’article premier commun aux quatre Conventions.

La résolution 1514 affirme clairement qu’ « il sera mis fin à toute action armée et à toutes mesures de répression, de quelque sorte qu'elles soient, dirigées contre les peuples dépendants, pour permettre à ces peuples d'exercer pacifiquement et librement leur droit à l'indépendance complète » et que « des mesures immédiates seront prises, dans les territoires non autonomes qui n'ont pas encore accédé à l'indépendance, pour transférer tous pouvoirs aux peuples de ces territoires, sans aucune condition ni réserve, conformément à leur volonté et à leurs vœux librement exprimés ».

Nier l’exercice du droit à l’autodétermination à un Peuple d’un Territoire Non Autonome, c’est lui nier la jouissance de tous ses droits civils, politiques, économiques, sociaux et culturels, y compris son droit au développement. C’est pourquoi, encore récemment, le Comité des droits de l’homme et le Comité des droits économiques, sociaux et culturels ont exprimé leur préoccupation relative à l’absence de solution concernant le droit à l’autodétermination du Territoire Non Autonome du Sahara occidental et par le fait que la participation des Sahraouis à l’utilisation et à l’exploitation des ressources naturelles n’a pas été respectée.

En effet, le développement des activités économiques au Sahara occidental ne bénéficie qu’aux colons marocains, aux compagnies financières, industrielles et commerciales marocaines et étrangères qui opèrent dans le Territoire en laissant le Peuple Sahraoui à l’écart. Il convient ici de condamner le rôle néfaste joué par la Commission et le Parlement européens qui, en flagrante violation des décisions de la Cour de Justice de l’Union Européenne et en contradiction avec leurs propres principes fondamentaux concernant les relations internationales, persistent à légitimer la spoliation illégale des ressources naturelles du Peuple Sahraoui.

La répression des forces d’occupation à l’encontre de ceux qui revendiquent publiquement le droit à exercer le droit inaliénable du Peuple Sahraoui à l’autodétermination est sévère. Arrestations et détentions arbitraires, harcèlement des familles, torture, procès inéquitables, condamnations prononcées sans preuves sont les instruments utilisés par la Puissance Occupante.

Il nous faut saluer ici le travail des juristes et avocats qui appuient les démarches des victimes Sahraouies devant les instances internationales et qui conduisent à des décisions importantes sur le plan juridiques, mêmes si la Puissance Occupante se refuse à les exécuter.

Ainsi, le Rapporteur spécial contre la torture, après sa visite effectuée en septembre 2012 avait souligné que trouvé que la torture et les mauvais traitements étaient pratiqués pour extorquer des aveux et que les agents de la force publique faisaient un usage excessif de la force à l’égard des manifestants. Il avait aussi fait état de témoignages crédibles sur la pratique de la torture et des mauvais traitements dans la prison de Laâyoune, notamment les viols, les passages à tabac et la mise à l’isolement pendant plusieurs semaines, en particulier de détenus accusés de participation aux activités en faveur de l’indépendance.

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De la même manière, le Groupe de travail sur les détentions arbitraires, après la visite effectuée au Sahara occidental en décembre 2013, avait fait état de nombreuses plaintes faisant état d’un usage excessif systématique de la force pour réprimer les manifestations et arrêter les manifestants ou les personnes soupçonnées de participer à des manifestations en faveur de l’autodétermination de la population sahraouie. Depuis lors, le Groupe de travail a dû se pencher sur plusieurs plaintes individuelles et il est arrivé à établir que les plaignants ont été pris pour cible et ont été victimes, en violation du droit international, de discrimination en raison de leurs opinions politiques concernant le droit à l'autodétermination du peuple sahraoui.

Depuis plusieurs années, le Rapporteur spécial sur les défenseurs des droits de l’homme est saisi par différents cas de harcèlement à l’encontre des défenseurs des droits humains sahraouis, mais la Puissance Occupante n’entend pas répondre positivement aux demandes légitimes des victimes.

Je dois également rappeler que le Comité contre la torture a pris une décision concernant le cas de Ennaâma Asfari, reconnu comme victime de torture, arrêté et ensuite condamné à 30 ans de réclusion dans le cadre de la répression de la manifestation de Gdeim Izik de 2010 qui a vu 15 autres défenseurs des droits humains sahraouis condamnés à des peines allant jusqu’à la réclusion à vie sur la base d’aveux extorqués sous la torture.

En ma qualité de Président de la Commission Nationale Sahraouie pour les Droits de l’Homme, je saisie cette occasion pour dénoncer l’activité illégale développée par l’institution nationale marocaine des droits humains en dehors des frontières du Royaume du Maroc, dans le Territoire Non Autonome. Je tiens également à condamner tous ceux qui expriment leur appréciation pour la présence inefficace, inutile et surtout illégale d’une institution représentant la Puissance Occupante dans le Territoire occupé.

Alors la question est posée : comment appliquer la résolution 1514 au Sahara occidental ?

L’Union Africaine, dont son ancêtre, l’Organisation pour l’Unité Africaine, a été étroitement associée aux accords de cessez-le-feu qui ont conduit à la mise en place de la MINURSO, semble malheureusement se désengager du processus, malgré qu’en janvier 2013 le Conseil Exécutif de l’Union demandait à la Commission de prendre toute mesure utile pour l’organisation du referendum. Dans les faits, la dernière résolution adoptée par le Conseil de sécurité ne fait plus mention de l’Union Africaine.

Le Comité spécial chargé d'étudier la situation en ce qui concerne l'application de la Déclaration sur l'octroi de l'indépendance aux pays et aux peuples coloniaux, année après année, se contente d’écouter les points de vue de dizaine de personnes sans se décider à demander une visite sur place, malgré que cela rentre dans ses attributions.

De la même façon, l’Assemblée générale de l’ONU se contente depuis des lustres désormais à prendre note de l’impuissance du Conseil de sécurité, sans assumer ses propres responsabilités vis-à-vis du seul Territoire Non Autonome qui, dans les faits, n’a pas de Puissance Administrante et qui se trouve sous occupation militaire illégale.

Le Conseil de sécurité lui-même est rendu impuissant par la logique de son fonctionnement, qui permet à une seule puissance, la France, de bloquer le processus pour défendre la position de son ancienne colonie, le Royaume du Maroc, pensant à tort de défendre ainsi ses propres intérêts. De ce fait, la MINURSO en est réduite à un rôle de témoin silencieux des exactions et des violations du droit international commises par la Puissance occupante.

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Le Secrétaire général de l’ONU, après la démission de l’ancien Président de la République d’Allemagne de son poste d’Envoyé Personnel ne semble pas être en mesure de dénicher une autre perle rare qui assume ce rôle ingrat de négociateur soumis aux dictats imposés par une Puissance occupante et par sa puissance protectrice.

Sachant que le Peuple Sahraoui, même porté à bout par la répression marocaine, souhaite obtenir son indépendance de manière pacifique et dans le respect de la Charte des Nations Unies et de ses résolutions pertinentes, dont la résolution 1514, afin de siéger aux côtés des autres Peuples des Nations Unies, la Commission Nationale Sahraouie des Droits de l’Homme appelle les amis du Sahara occidental à organiser sur sol africain une Conférence internationale qui établirait la feuille de route permettant au Peuple Sahraoui d'exercer pacifiquement et librement son droit à l'indépendance complète, en conformité avec la résolution 1514.

Enfin, après vingt-neuf ans depuis l'entrée en vigueur du plan de règlement africain des Nations Unies et du cessez-le-feu, le Peuple Sahraoui est déterminé à prendre les mesures nécessaires pour défendre ses droits légitimes et à faire en sorte que la mission de la MINURSO remplisse son mandat et accomplisse ses tâches conformément aux principes généraux applicables aux opérations de maintien de la paix des Nations Unies. . Par conséquent, nous attendons de l'ONU qu’elle adopte des mesures concrètes et sérieuses pour la mise en œuvre intégrale et stricte du Plan de paix, permettant à notre peuple d'exercer son droit inaliénable à l'autodétermination et à l'indépendance, facilitant ainsi le parachèvement du processus de décolonisation de la dernière colonie d'Afrique.

Je vous remercie.

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**PERMANENT MISSION OF THE DEMOCRATIC REPUBLIC OF TIMOR-LESTE**

**TO THE UNITED NATIONS OFFICE AND OTHER INTERNATIONAL ORGANIZATIONS**

**IN GENEVA**

**High-Level Binar Side-event at the 45th session of the HRC**

**15 September 2020**

***60th Anniversary of UNGA Resolution 1514 (XV): Its application in Western Sahara***

**Statement delivered by Honorable Minister Adaljiza Magno**

Your Excellencies,

Distinguished panellists,

Ladies and gentlemen,

Dear colleagues,

It is an honour for me to participate in this High-Level side on the celebration of the 60th Anniversary of UNGA Resolution 1514 (XV).

Western Sahara is listed as a Non-Self-Governing Territory since 1963, three years after the adoption of UNGA Resolution 1514 (XV).

Timor-Leste remains steadfast in its commitment to support the struggle for independence of Western Sahara. Our nations shared a common history, as we too were a territory listed as a Non-Self-Governing Territory and went into a painful period of war.

The Government and the people of Timor Leste have always shown a very strong commitment to the Saharawi people and the authorities of the Sahrawi Arab Democratic Republic and we deeply regret the lack of international political will surrounding the situation of Western Sahara. Moreover, we regret to see that the United Nations have not yet successfully led a peaceful solution for the region.

Although efforts are being made, we, again, deplore that until now no Special Envoy for Western Sahara has been appointed and that little attention has been given to the suffering of Sahrawis.

Western Sahara remains the last colony in Africa, a territory that the United Nations recognizes to be under the illegal occupation. Still, how can nations justify their inactivity towards finding a peaceful and just solution for Western Sahara?

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Fifty-four years after the UNGA asked Spain, in its capacity as Administering Power, to organize a referendum in Western Sahara allowing the Sahrawis to exercise their right to self-determination and to independence, and 29 years after the establishment of MINURSO, the people of Western Sahara hasn’t yet been given the opportunity to exercise their right to self-determination.

I welcome the realization of this side-event and join my voice to others in urging for a timely end of foreign occupation in Western Sahara. Serious violations of human rights are being committed in Western Sahara and Timor-Leste encourages the Office of the High Commissioner of Human Rights to pay due attention to this situation. Timor-Leste stands ready to support the countries involved in the conflict to enter into a constructive and genuine dialogue.

Timor-Leste may be critical of the shortcomings of the United Nations’ system because it knows, first-hand, the potential that the system has. We became the first country to become independent in the XX century and we feel morally obliged to support other nations in their quest for exercising their right to independence.

For Timor-Leste is clear that a solution will not be achieved until there is strong political will from parties to the conflict, from neighbouring countries and from senior officials of the United Nations system. It is up to us, friends of Western Sahara, to raise our voices in their defence, to give them voice in places where they are voiceless and to ensure that the noise is so loud that it can no longer be ignored.

I thank you.

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**ADDRESS BY HER EXCELLENCY**

**AMBASSADOR NOZIPHO MXAKATO-DISEKO**

**OF SOUTH AFRICA**

**60TH ANNIVERSARY OF UNGA RESOLUTION 1514 (XV)**

**AND ITS APPLICATION IN WESTERN SAHARA**

**Videoconference on the margins of the 45th UN Human Rights Council**

**15 September 2020**

Moderator,

Your Excellency President Ghali of the Sahrawi Arab Democratic Republic,

Your Excellency Deputy Prime Minister Nandi-Ndaitwah of Namibia,

Your Excellency Minister Reis Magno of Timor-Leste,

Distinguished panellists,

Colleagues, comrades and friends,

I thought it appropriate to start my contribution this afternoon by referring to a portion from a speech delivered by the late Oliver Tambo when he opened the 42nd Annual Conference of the African National Congress in 1953. OR said and I quote:

*“Our interest in freedom is not confined to ourselves only. We are interested in the liberation of all oppressed people in the whole of Africa and in the world as a whole. … Our active interest in the extension of freedom to all people denied it makes us ally ourselves with freedom forces in the world.”*

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Moderator,

The process of 20th century decolonisation consisted of two overlapping projects. The first was the project of nation-building. The second was the remaking of the world. For African sovereign statehood and nationhood to be sustainable the global order had to be deimperialised and deracialised. In January 1960 at the All-African Peoples’ Conference in Tunis anti-colonial leaders were so confident of their cause that they set 1963 as the deadline for the total decolonisation of Africa, a date that was not randomly chosen because it marked the 100th anniversary of President Abraham Lincoln’s Emancipation Proclamation that freed the slaves. The linkage emphasised how these leaders set decolonisation within the context of broader struggles against enslavement and situated it alongside uprisings in the African diaspora as far back as the Haitian Revolution and even earlier revolts against slavery.

The subject of our side-event today is Resolution 1514 of 1960. A close reading of this resolution reveals exactly how powerful and uncompromising it is. Preambular paragraph 11 states that “all peoples have an inalienable right to **complete** freedom”; PP12 states that colonialism “in **all its forms and manifestations**” must be brought to an end; operative paragraph 1 declares that “the subjection of peoples to alien subjugation, domination and exploitation **constitutes a denial of fundamental human rights**, is **contrary to the Charter** of the United Nations and is an impediment to the promotion of world peace and cooperation”; and OP4 speaks of dependent peoples exercising their right to **complete independence”**.

Resolution 1514 is buttressed by a number of subsequent resolutions: Resolution 1803 of 1958 established permanent sovereignty over natural resources; Resolution 2621 of 1970 declared the continuation of colonialism in all its forms and manifestations to be a crime; Resolution 32/14 of 1977 reaffirmed the legitimacy of liberation struggles by all available means, including armed struggle.

The positions of UN Secretaries-General amplify these resolutions. Secretary-General Ban Ki Moon stated that decolonisation remained unfinished business, and Secretary-General Antonio Guterres stated earlier this year in a report assessing the Third International Decade for the Eradication of Colonialism that Western Sahara would remain on the agenda of the UN General Assembly as an issue of decolonisation.

Moderator,

There are a number of matters that, if taken up strategically and with rigour, may open up avenues for added momentum on Western Sahara. The UN Under-Secretary-General for Legal Affairs and the UN Legal Counsel confirmed in his legal opinion issued at the request of the UN Security Council on 29 January 2002 that the Madrid Agreement of 1975 “did not transfer sovereignty over the territory, nor did it confer upon any of the signatories the status of an administering power – a status which Spain alone could not have unilaterally transferred”. This means in essence that Spain is still the *de jure* administering power of Western Sahara as also confirmed by the ruling of the Spanish National Court of 4 July 2014. This means that even though it is not *de facto* the administering power, Spain continues to have the obligations set forth in Articles 73 and 74 of the UN Charter. Former Prime Minister Felipe Gonzalez himself recognised that the 1975 agreement was illegal and illegitimate in a speech he delivered as Secretary-General of the Spanish Socialist Party in the refugee camps in Tindouf on 14 November 1976. This means further that Morocco remains an occupying power of parts of Western Sahara as confirmed by the UN General Assembly in Resolution 34/37 of 1979 and Resolution 35/19 of 1980.

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I want to make another critical point that we tend to overlook: the International Court of Justice stated in paragraph 81 of its advisory opinion of 1975 that Western Sahara had not been a land belonging to nobody, *terra nullius*, at the time of colonisation; it had been inhabited by peoples having their own social and political organisation, and it was in these peoples that sovereignty over the territory had been invested. Sovereignty over Western Sahara is vested in its people and only they have the right to decide its status.

Moderator,

The struggle for the liberation of South Africa is also instructive. After Vietnam’s victory over imperialism the African National Congress drew lessons from that struggle and formulated Four Pillars of Struggle. These were political mass struggle; armed struggle; clandestine underground struggle; and the weapon of international solidarity. Although separate, they were meant to develop and combine in a dialectical manner so that each would mutually strengthen the other. Of the four, it was undoubtedly international solidarity that tipped the scales in favour of the liberation movements.

My final point is the critical importance of the metaphysical in decolonisation, the so-called “cognitive empire”, the “empire of the mind”. Colonisers deploy three interrelated cognitive techniques: the first is to invade the mental universe of their targets and colonise their minds. The second is to detonate a “cultural bomb” producing various forms of alienation in the colonised people and a loss of confidence in their history, culture, indigenous knowledge, names, languages and ultimately in themselves. The third technique involves removing the hard drive of prior African knowledge and collective memory and downloading into African minds the software of foreign replacements. Taken together, the end result of this is epistemological colonisation and cultural schizophrenia. This must be avoided at all costs.

Moderator,

I started with a quote from Oliver Tambo. I wish to do likewise in concluding. On 3 September 1979 Oliver Tambo addressed the Sixth Conference of Heads of State or Government of the Non-Aligned Countries in Havana, Cuba. On that occasion Tambo highlighted the tragic irony of Western Sahara. He said:

*“We would have thought that our brothers and sisters in the OAU and friends of the people of Africa could have persuaded King Hassan that the course he has embarked upon is not deserved by the people of Morocco. We cannot understand. The experience of the people of Western Sahara is the first kind of experience that we can think of since the struggle for decolonisation started in Africa. No African country that we know of has done what has been done to the people of Western Sahara. But be that as it may, the reality is that the Polisario is having to fight for the liberation of Western Sahara not from Spain but from a brother African country. We have no doubt that the struggle of the people of Western Sahara will be victorious.”*

I thank you.

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**Video-conference organized in the margins of the 45th session of the HRC by the Geneva Support Group for Western Sahara**

**15th September 2020**

**Mr. John Ngabirano**

**National Coordinator of Pan African Club think tank**

**Uganda, East Africa**

***60th Anniversary of UNGA Resolution 1514 (XV):***

***its application in Western Sahara***

Distinguished Participants, Ladies and Gentlemen, all Protocol observed,

Solidarity Greetings to you all, from Uganda – East Africa

**Introduction**

Since replacing Spain as the Colonizer of Western Sahara in 1976, Morocco has continued to control the territory using force to execute systematic human rights abuses against the Saharawi people. Examples include committing murders, torture and detention of pro-independence activists without trial, suppression of free speech and illegal exploitation of Saharawis’ resources.

The Moroccan authorities have also continued to block journalists from gaining access to the territory in addition to obstructing human rights groups both domestic and international in order to prevent investigations and reporting of the abuses.

Therefore, talking the UNGA Resolution 1514 (XV) application in Western Sahara, it is a very urgent issue because allowing these abuses to continue even for a day is extremely painful and should not be tolerated.

**Moroccan occupation of Western Sahara in the African context**

As Africa, we fought and defeated colonialism and apartheid in almost the whole continent with collective solidarity under the ideology of Pan-Africanism mostly in the 1960s to 1990s. Accordingly, the founding principles and values of the African Union (AU) are premised on Africa’s liberation. In particular, objective number two of the AU states; ***“to defend the sovereignty, territorial integrity and independence of its member states”.***

Therefore, any attempt to accept Morocco’s colonialism over Western Sahara would be to betray our principles of liberation, our African values and turning our back to our history of fighting for freedom. It would also create a pretext for bigger strong countries to invade smaller neighbors and annex them by force in total violation of the AU principles and Charter as well as basic common sense and the logical will of the African people.

Western Sahara is the only remnant of direct colonialism and apartheid in Africa. This implies that Africa is not free until one of its members is not free. This continuing predicament of illegal occupation and colonialism is a big dent on the Pan African freedom-fighting legacy of our generation.

As far as we are concerned, the Western Sahara case is an Africa’s issue because as Africa, we are comrades, brothers and sisters. This is why, accepting our generation to go down in history as having not done enough when one of us was in the gallows of colonialism with its ugly evils of oppression, exploitation and extermination, is something we are not going to accept.

**Proposals for an expeditious implementation of UNGA Resolution 1514 (XV) in Western Sahara**

* The UN should urgently organize the long-awaited referendum in Western Sahara with an option of independence on the ballot. This referendum must be free and fair and the indigenous Saharawis must be the only eligible voters.
* In the meantime, the UN Security Council should expand the mandate of the UN Mission in Western Sahara to include the component of monitoring the human rights situation in order to stop the glaring human rights violations and impunity.

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* Since the AU’s predecessor, the OAU was the originator of the peace plan which the UN is trying to implement, the AU should follow up the UN efforts including the application of UNGA Resolution 1514 (XV) in Western Sahara. In this case of painful delay for example, the AU should hold the UN accountable and demand for answers about the process which both parties agreed on.
* Back home, the AU should expedite the decolonization process of Western Sahara pursuant to its philosophy of a free Africa. It should ensure that Western Sahara’s decolonization issue is a standing item on the agenda of all AU Summits at which regular reports should be presented with a plan and follow-up mechanisms which will be regularly evaluated. This will enable the AU to effectively follow-up with the UN on this urgent issue of decolonization.
* In addition, it is important that the UN should put in place a monitoring mechanism aimed at stopping the exploitation of Saharawi’s resources. That mechanism should entail remedial measures including penalties against any violations of the moratorium on the exploitation of the Saharawis’ resources.
* The United Nations should impose sanctions on Morocco for breach of the most fundamental basic rules prohibiting aggression and occupation. I would like to emphasize that Morocco’s defiance is against the international law, African Union Charter, the United Nations, international Courts of law as evidenced in the 1975 advisory opinion by International Court of Justice and the European Court in 2016 on the Moroccan occupation of Western Sahara. The impact of the continued none-compliance by Morocco is loss of faith in these institutions and international legal instruments by the Public and States as well as building a culture of defiance against the same. This is likely to take us back to the Pre-the League of Nations scenarios, which culminated in regrettable destruction of lives and property worldwide.
* On the part of the African Union, it should take up the recommendations by a fact-finding mission of the Pan African Parliament issued in 2013 in Midrand, South Africa which called for sanctions against Morocco. Additionally, the AU should suspend Morocco’s membership to the AU until Morocco respects the rights of the Sharawis of self-determination as enshrined in the principles and values of the AU.
* African and world leaders, activists and organizations across the globe should unrelentingly persist to make clarion calls to the United Nations that enough is enough. We should do all in our means to put to an end the remnant colonialism and brutal apartheid in Western Sahara.

**Note:** I am much aware [just like many participants in this event if not all] that the above proposals and many more, have been made several times to the United Nations and the African Union by well-credible leaders, activists and organizations. You will probably not find any useful proposal on resolving the Western Sahara conflict, which has not been made before!

Therefore, my most important appeal today is that we should **graduate from** **proposing** to **protesting** the lack of implementation of the fair and just proposals that are already piled up.

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**Message to Morocco and her allies**

Direct colonialism is no-longer fashionable today. Gradually, you will find that you are putting in a lot more and gaining much less due to widespread resistance! Gone are the years when **greed** and **ego** of a group or a countrywould determine the destiny of other sovereign territories with profits. Today, we are in a generation of partnerships for mutual benefit, which is more civilized, morally correct and sustainable. You do not have to cut-off yourselves from this positive and progressive global trend. You can do business with Western Sahara without killing the Saharawis, you do not have to oppress them or to deprive them of their human rights including resources, and no one will condemn you.

**Conclusion**

The application of the UNGA Resolution in Western Sahara is a multi-stakeholders issue including all mankind and his various formations globally. This is because, being a humanitarian case, the issue of Western Sahara is a universal concern and thus makes all human beings living on planet Earth today blameworthy if it remains unresolved. For that matter, I strongly commend the effort by the organizers of this conference. Back home as Pan African Club, we shall continue doing our best and I am glad to inform you that there are many people and organizations in Africa and globally who are committing to making a contribution and I am sure many more will continue coming on board until victory for the Saharawis’ independence.

***Long live the nation of Western Sahara, Long live Africa, And Long Live Mankind.***

**Thank you!!**

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**High-level videoconference organized in the margins of the**

**45th UN Human Rights Council**

**15 September 2020**

**60th Anniversary of UNGA Resolution 1514(XV)**

**Its Application in Western Sahara**

**Mr. Pernando Barrena**

**Member of the European Parliament**

Good evening President Ghali, dear panellists and everyone online.

My name is Pernando Barrena, I belong to Euskal Herria BILDU, a left-wing political party from the Basque Country that struggles for independence. I am a member of the European Parliament as well, and I also take part in the Western Sahara Support Intergroup of the Parliament.

Basques have kept long standing solidarity ties with the Sahrawi people. Our movement was the first one in Europe declaring support to the Sahrawi Arab Democratic Republic in 1976, and Basques feel widespread sympathy for the Sahrawi people.

This December will mark the 60th anniversary of the 1514 (XV) resolution of the United Nations General Assembly that opened the age of decolonizing and brought independence for 81 countries.

In my opinion is crystal-clear that the case of Western Sahara fits perfectly in the contents of the Resolution as it verbatim says that “the subjection of peoples to alien subjugation, domination and exploitation constitutes a denial of fundamental human rights, is contrary to the Charter of

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the United Nations and is an impediment to the promotion of world peace and co-operation”. It also states that “repressive measures against dependent peoples shall cease in order to enable them to exercise peacefully and freely their right to complete independence” and asks for the “transfer of all powers to those territories in accordance with their freely expressed will and desire”.

I must say that according to my opinion these brief points of the mentioned document bind up all the ingredients of the necessary approach to the Western Sahara conflict resolution. We are taking of concepts like:

* occupation of a land by alien interest, which is contrary to democracy, UN principles and peace and stability in the region;
* -the end of repressive measures and respect to human rights and finally,
* the exercise of the right to decide or self-determination right as a democratic cornerstone for conflict resolution worldwide, namely in Western Sahara.

At this point, it is crucial to say that Spain owns a bold responsibility in this situation as it is the former occupying country and still the de jure colonial administrative power responsible for the decolonizing process. Spain got rid of the Western Sahara in 1975 in a shameful runaway that has not still been assumed by the Spanish authorities. It is time for them to make it, and the now in office PSOE-Podemos coalition Spanish government should do its duty and correct this historic mistake.

But on the other side, we cannot forget that as long as Spain stands for being the former de jure colonial administrative power, the Sahrawi affair is not just a Spanish debt, but a European issue to be confronted and brought to a fair resolution.

Europe cannot pass over Morocco’s behaviour and think about the triggering of the human rights article contained in the EU-Morocco Trade agreement.

Morocco’s occupation of the Western Sahara; tough repression against the Sahrawi population; and the perpetual denial or the self-determination referendum approved by the United Nations; those facts mount a bold threat against Europe’s southern gate security and bring therefore a huge lack of stability for the region.

The European bodies cannot ignore these facts; we will keep on asking for the enforcement of the sentence of the European Court that stated that Sahrawi goods cannot be taken as Moroccan ones as regards to the European Union-Morocco trade agreement. And we will advocate in favour of the fulfilment of the United Nations compromise in 1991 for a self-determination referendum.

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Beyond the legitimate will of the Sahrawi people, I firmly believe that freedom for Western Sahara will suit Europe’s own interest as regards to security of the Union’s borders and peace and stability in the MENA region. We Europeans cannot longer accept Morocco’s never-ending threat-based behaviour as regards to migration, drug trafficking or Jihadism.

The role of the Western Sahara Intergroup Support of the European Parliament, and the Parliament itself will be of particular importance, as a way for positive political pressure towards the European Commission and the Member States policy on this matter.

I would like to finish this speech with a brief reminder of the tough situation of the Sahrawi political prisoners in Moroccan jails. Covid19 disease adds serious concerns about health safety in jails. Let me ask for the immediate release of political prisoners all over the world and namely the Sahrawi political hostages.

Thanks so much.

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**High-Level Videoconference in the margins of the**

**45th session of the UN Human Rights Council**

**15 September 2020**

***60th Anniversary of UNGA Resolution 1514 (XV):***

***Its application in Western Sahara***

**Mr. Francesco Bastagli**

**Former representative of the UN Secretary-General in Western Sahara**

**and Head of MINURSO (2005/2006)**

Thank you.

Many important points have been made so far providing a good background on the difficulties confronted by the Saharawi cause.

At the UN there is a stalemate. The challenge for the Sahrawis and all those who care for their just cause is how to go about overcoming this stalemate. As suggested in your agenda, I will flag some specific actions that could be undertaken to prompt UN Member States into action. I will stick to two points in particular.

On the first point. As you all know, in the UN and even in the EU and elsewhere, when it comes to Western Sahara there is a decision-making monopoly on the part of a few countries. This comes with two characteristics. First, those countries are very influential in the Organisation and, second, for different reasons, they are all supportive of Morocco’s interests and agenda.

The best way to exemplify this situation is the so-called group of friends of the Secretary-General on Western Sahara. The five members of the group meet in advance of sessions of the Security Council or General Assembly, whenever Western Sahara is discussed, setting the tone of the forthcoming discussion, doing the lobbying, drafting the resolutions that ultimately will determine what the UN does or doesn’t do in Western Sahara. These member states consist of four permanent members of the Security Council – Russia, United Kingdom, United States and France, plus Spain.

Albeit the group is informal in nature, its influence is extremely high. As long as they will continue to exercise a *de facto* control over UN proceedings concerning Western Sahara, it will be extremely difficult to change the situation. So, how do you try to break their monopoly? There is a variety of practical avenues. One in particular stems from the observation that the make-up of this group is an absurdity; talking about decolonisation, you have the UK, France, Spain, and two other countries like Russia and the United States that have a history of maybe not vast colonialism, but interference and hegemonic behaviour. Plus, in the group dealing with an African issue there is not a single African member, neither is there

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any country that has recently lived through a process of decolonisation, which is the matter at hand. This is nonsense. Actually, it smacks of neo-colonialism. How to change that? The group is self-convened; nothing impedes any country in Africa to request to participate in the informal sessions of the group of friends. And the argument will be for any country that comes forward in this sense, saying: we can contribute the perspective of Africa in this area, we can contribute the experience of decolonisation. Today, we have heard Namibia, we have heard South Africa; there is nothing, nothing that would impede either government to request kindly, with copy to the Secretary General who should feel embarrassed by the current setup, to join in on the activities of the group of friends. This is but one example of what could be done to shake up a routine that, as long as it continues, is a major obstacle to justice.

These things are very specific; I am trying to talk about the practicalities. We heard the Namibian representative saying we should ask for this and that. Let us put these in practical terms – as a minimum embarrassing those few Western and Northern countries that are managing the process – and, beyond that, gaining access and playing a role that pertains to Africa and African countries.

A further line of action is to establish and support other groups as an alternative option – such as the Geneva group that convened this meeting. These groups are very important on specific issues such as human rights and the like. Their limitation concerns membership because in the group of friends we have four permanent members in the Security Council which of course carries a lot of weight. But we must welcome any other initiative that provides different, alternative voices within the UN debate.

There is a problem which is complementary to the one mentioned so far. While there are a few friends of Morocco that run the show, you have the silence or collusion of the other UN members. And sometimes I think that their behaviour – the behaviour of the vast majority of UN members – is as irresponsible and as shameful as that of Morocco’s friends. There is a lot of rhetoric going around – but who is actually doing something to demand and actively engage in an effort to ensure that the UN fulfils its sacred obligations to the oppressed people of Western Sahara?

What arguments can be used to convince other member states to engage? We are not talking of friends of Western Sahara only. We want to draw in countries that care for the United Nations in general, that care for what the United Nations stands for, and that care for the principles of the UN Charter. So, the argument is not just who is pro and who is against, but it is for those who care for what the UN should stand for, such as decolonization and basic human rights. Any country that claims to believe in the UN ideals must be interested in this topic because it has to do with the integrity of the Organisation, the upholding of certain universal principles of law and justice and so on. These are arguments that could be pushed more with many countries, for example the Scandinavian countries, noting, by the way, that Norway is currently in the Security Council.

Another argument to draw more attention and participation is the regional situation. The Maghreb union is getting nowhere; the region, contrary to a certain narrative, is made less stable and less developed because of the lack of answers to the question of Western Sahara.  And related to that, another argument to be used

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in the UN is that of conflict prevention. In the UN there is a lot of rhetoric of conflict prevention – meetings, documents, proposals and so on. Well, Western Sahara is one of the few textbook cases of possible conflict prevention activities by the UN. Member states, if they care for this concept, as they say, should then take a much greater interest in the question of Western Sahara.

These are some of the considerations that should be pursued in trying to broaden the debate and engage new voices, because as long as *de facto* those four or five counties run the show, no matter what statements of principle are made, it will be very difficult to enter into the specifics of what gets decided or what is done or not done.

My second point concerns the UN venues where to act. Of course, the paramount forum is the Security Council. Ultimately, the political solution to the question of Western Sahara will have to come through the Security Council.  The Council holds the key, but one must also recognise that the Security Council is the least friendly setting to the Saharawi cause in the UN. The reasons are many, but just to give you an example, take the issue of human rights. For almost fifteen years, the Council has been lobbied to broaden the mandate of MINURSO to address human rights. Fifteen years, to no avail! This thing needs to be confronted; it is a fact. The permanent member opponents of the amendment to the mandate are not just Morocco’s friends, France or the United States. Russia and China do not want the UN to meddle in human rights, no matter where, so that their refusal has nothing to do with Western Sahara, but is there, nonetheless. So, you have a challenge there. Without renouncing your efforts in the Security Council on human rights and other topics, you have to open up alternative avenues.

The UN is like a piano, you have to play all keys. Besides the Security Council, there is the General Assembly, there are the Committees of the General Assembly, there are programmes, projects, specialised agencies. All of them have mandates that pertain one way or another to the interests, needs and concerns of the people of Western Sahara. So, the front of the struggle for the recognition of Saharawi rights must be broadened. I am not saying that nothing is being done at the moment, but so far efforts have disproportionally focussed on the Security Council. By all means let us continue with the Council but let us also broaden and open on the other fronts.

Take for example a body that has been mentioned in passing: The Fourth Committee of the General Assembly. The Committee deals with decolonisation. Every year it reviews the situation in countries/territories that have still not been able to determine their own future. As you are probably aware Western Sahara is the major recognized non-self-governing territory in the world today. Yet, discussion in the Fourth Committee is evanescent and inconclusive. The yearly Secretary-General’s report on Western Sahara is a second class version of that submitted to the Security Council and, contrary to what happens with all other self-governing territories, the Committee is not given adequate information on the many issues that should concern the UN in accordance to Chapter 11 of its Charter, where the obligations of the Organization towards non-self-governing territories pending self-determination are listed.

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There is no information for the Committee because there is no administering power, as is the case with the other non-self-governing territories. Yet, the obligations set out in the UN Charter are still there. A number of things could be done to enable the Organization to fulfil its duty towards the people of Western Sahara pending self-determination. One thing would be a request on the part of the Fourth Committee for the Secretary General to provide, in the absence of an administering power, the same information that is provided by the administering powers in the case of other territories. There would be nothing wrong with that, in fact it is a logical tool for the fulfilment of what the UN Charter calls a ‘sacred obligation’ towards a non-self-governing people.

At the moment the debate on Western Sahara in the General Assembly, in the Fourth Committee and elsewhere in the UN takes place in a vacuum of independent, super partes information. Diplomats and civil servants talk about the present and future of a people without a face – there are no bones, no flesh, and no blood for the Sahrawi drama. Around this issue, just bare-knuckled politics. A determined effort is needed to pry open the system so that, pending a settlement, within the UN there is an input of information and analysis across the board, as required by Chapter 11 of the Charter: on the health, education, economic development, institution building of the Sahrawi people. And based on that information, programmes of assistance are required under different UN mandates and declarations. None of this infringes upon the final response, the political one. But pending that, the UN is not fulfilling lots of other obligations re the Sahrawis.

So, to continue with our example; as mentioned one option could be asking the Secretary General to fill the gap of information, reporting and ultimately protection and advocacy. This could be done in different ways, for instance by adding a second leg, separate from MINURSO (that mandate wouldn’t be touched), to the responsibilities of the Special Representative of the Secretary-General in Laayoune. A less intrusive approach would be for the Committee to pass the burden of considering the various options on the executive branch of the Organisation; a resolution could simply request the Secretary General to make proposals to the next session of the General Assembly on how best to meet the obligations set out in the UN Charter. I don’t want to get into details but for similar considerations apply to most UN entities, committees, special agencies – UNDP, WHO, FAO and many more.

A much greater engagement in bodies other than the Security Council is important for a number of reasons. First, contrary to the Security Council in these bodies there is no veto power. Decisions can be made by majority vote and the support for Western Sahara that exists in many countries can be better leveraged. Second, decisions ensuring some basic rights of the Sahrawis in human rights, health, education etc. shouldn’t affect the sensitivities of Morocco’s friends – or it can be logically argued they don’t – in the sense that they will not prejudge any political outcome. Third, a new impetus of information and action by the Organisation would also constitute a testimonial, reminding everyone of the existence of the problem in its various implications, whether for those under occupation, or in the camps.

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What does this require? Again, in practical terms: this requires work. Work on the part of Sahrawi diplomacy, on the part of the countries that care for this issue, on the part of NGOs and so on. The work consists of thinking ahead, whatever the meeting or the organization, looking at what one can get out of the session, coordinating, arguing the case with member states and seeking alliances, preparing documentation. This process must be initiated well in advance: by the time a meeting is held, it is too late to do anything of lasting impact.

These things can be done, these things have been done. There is a lot of experience accumulated on a variety of humanitarian, developmental and political issues showing that results can be achieved even in difficult environments such as, for the Sahrawi cause, today’s United Nations.

I thank you for your attention.

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**Saharawi Arab Democratic Republic**

**H.E. President Brahim GHALI**

**60th Anniversary of UNGA resolution 1514 (XV):**

**its application in Western Sahara**

**15th September 2020**

Ladies and Gentlemen,

Allow me, first of all, in my name and on behalf of the Sahrawi people, to sincerely thank you for inviting us to participate with you in this important conference.

I take the opportunity to highly praise the remarkable solidarity work the Geneva Support Group is doing. It has become a prominent diplomatic group advocating for the cause of the Sahrawi people. You do not only represent leading countries in combating colonialism and all forms of exploitation and injustice, you also represent your peoples and all the peoples of the world, who yearn for freedom and who see in the just struggle of the Saharawi people an example of a small people in numbers but big in steadfastness and determination in defense of its inalienable rights.

Your group is a very important addition, and we are sure that it is moving steadily in order to push the international community, especially the United Nations, to assume its historical and moral responsibilities towards Western Sahara, the last colony in Africa.

Ladies and Gentlemen,

The theme of your important conference today represents a conclusive evidence of the quality and value of the activities that you continuously carry out. The UN Settlement Process in Western Sahara, stalled since 1991, constitutes the most visible case of the failure of the United Nations to fulfill its obligations and responsibility for international peace and security on a just basis.

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Nearly three decades after the enter into force of the ceasefire and the subsequent deployment of the United Nations Mission for the Referendum in Western Sahara, the referendum has not yet been organized, mainly due to the absence of a real political will on the part of the UN Security Council and the intransigence of the occupying power, the Kingdom of Morocco.

During these thirty years the Sahrawi people have committed to a just peace as a strategic option. In this time, the Frente Polisario made practical proposals and guarantees to the Kingdom of Morocco as a contribution to the cost of the peace bill. Yet, instead of cooperating positively, Morocco is persistently ignoring the international legality, pushing the whole process into a dark path and leaving us with no option but to take our current decision in October 2019, after the UN Security Council adopted its last resolution. In fact, we took the decision to reconsider our engagement in the political process in its current form where the United Nations mission - MINURSO - gradually becomes a tool for consolidating Moroccan colonialism instead of ending it. The 15th Congress of the Frente POLISARIO adopted this decision last December 2019.

We are now in the process of taking practical steps to translate this political position into concrete measures on the ground in order to correct this anomaly and restore the original mission of MINURSO, which is to organize a referendum on self-determination for the Sahrawi people.

Our commitment to peace and to a peaceful settlement is a solid position, but it is not a commitment to a false peace, where MINURSO becomes an umbrella under which Sahrawi civilians are tortured without international protection, the natural resources of our people are unashamedly plundered, the suffering of our people in refugee camps and Diaspora persists and our people continue to be deprived of their inalienable right to self-determination and independence.

Ladies and Gentlemen,

There is no solution, neither today nor tomorrow, without consulting the Sahrawi people, the exclusive owner of the right to decide on the final status of their country. Any vision outside this framework will be doomed to failure because it is illegal and therefore rejected by the Sahrawi people.

The Frente Polisario, as the legitimate representative of the Sahrawi people, will not allow the current situation to continue and will not allow any path that undermines the Sahrawi people right to self-determination and independence in any way.

We derive our legitimacy from our people, and we invite everyone to read history, specifically our history. Just as we overpowered the 1975 plan that aimed at eliminating us and belittling us, today while we are in a better organizational diplomatic and international solidarity situation, we are able to meet the challenge and impose the will of our people for freedom and emancipation.

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History has taught us that victory is always on the side of the peoples who are struggling for their freedom no matter how long it takes. You are Ministers and Ambassadors of countries and peoples who have gone through similar liberation experiences and know very well that history does justice and gives victory to struggling peoples because freedom and justice are the natural state, colonialism and aggression are mere anomalies.

I thank you for the opportunity and for your tremendous efforts, and we will soon meet you in the capital of our country when the sovereignty of our people over all its national soil is completed.

Peace, mercy and blessings of God are upon you all.

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