**Geneva Support Group for the Protection and Promotion**

**of Human Rights in Western Sahara**

**(GSGPPHRWS)**

[**www.genevaforwesternsahara.org**](http://www.genevaforwesternsahara.org)

**Press Release**

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

**Declaration on the Granting of Independence**

**to Colonial Countries and Peoples**

**The international community must put an end to the illegal occupation of Western Sahara by the Kingdom of Morocco**

**Bir Lehlu / Geneva, 14th December 2020**

In celebrating the sixtieth anniversary of the adoption of resolution 1514 (XV), the Geneva Support Group for the Protection and Promotion of Human Rights in Western Sahara (256 member-organisations) strongly condemns the persistent illegal occupation and annexation of a large part of Western Sahara by the Kingdom of Morocco.

Paragraph 4 of the Declaration states that: *“All armed action or repressive measures of all kinds directed against dependent peoples shall cease in order to enable them to exercise peacefully and freely their right to complete independence and the integrity of their national territory shall be respected.”*

It is worth to remind that Western Sahara was listed by the UN General Assembly as Non Self-Governing Territory in 1963 and that in 1966 the former colonial Power and subsequently Administering Power of the Territory, Spain, received a mandate from the UN General Assembly (res. 2229 – XXI) to determine the procedure for the holding of a referendum with a view to enabling the indigenous population of the territory to exercise freely its right to self-determination: a mandate that Spain never fulfilled.

In October 1975, the International Court of Justice released its Advisory Opinion on Western Sahara. In its concluding remarks, the Court stated that the materials and information presented to it do not establish any tie of territorial sovereignty between the territory of Western Sahara and the Kingdom of Morocco and that it has not found legal ties of such a nature as might affect the application of resolution 1514 (XV) in the decolonization of Western Sahara and, in particular, of the principle of self-determination through the free and genuine expression of the will of the peoples of the Territory.

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It is also worth to remind that, on the very same day the Kingdom of Morocco launched the invasion of the Territory, the UN Security Council (res. 380 – 06/11/1975) called upon Morocco immediately to withdraw from the Territory of Western Sahara all the participants in the march.

On 21 November 1979, the UN General Assembly (res. 34/37) deeply deplored the aggravation of the situation resulting from the continued occupation of Western Sahara by the Kingdom of Morocco and urged it to terminate the occupation of the Territory. At the same time, the UN General Assembly recognised the Polisario Front as the representative of the people of Western Sahara. Indeed, nowadays, the Polisario Front is recognised at the highest level of the UN as the interlocutor in the self-determination’s process of the people of Western Sahara.

The Geneva Support Group for the Protection and Promotion of Human Rights in Western Sahara, while expressing its greatest concern after the breakdown of the ceasefire in force since 1991 in the Non-Self-Governing Territory of Western Sahara, profoundly regrets that the UN Mission for the Referendum in Western Sahara has not been able yet to fulfil its core mandate: the organisation of the referendum of self-determination.

The Geneva Support Group for the Protection and Promotion of Human Rights in Western Sahara underscores that during the 16 years of conflict (1975 – 1991), the Occupying Power committed a large number of serious violations of Human Rights and breaches of International Humanitarian Law. These violations became systematic during the occupation period that followed; they are intimately connected to the repression exerted against anyone advocating for the implementation of the inalienable right to self-determination.

With the reactivation of the conflict, the repression of the Moroccan Occupying Forces have stepped up reprisals against the Saharawi population and in particular against human rights defenders and journalists who try to report on the crackdown against civilians in a territory closed for several years to any independent observer, including the Office of the High Commissioner for Human Rights.

Right before the end of ceasefire this past November 13, several prominent Sahrawi activists, including award-winning Aminatou Haidar, had been targeted for harassment and increased surveillance for creating a new organization named Instancia Saharaui conta la Ocupación Marroquí (ISACOM). Following the resumption of the conflict on 13 November, a total of 25 young Saharawis have been arrested in response to street protests in support of the Sahrawi right to self-determination. Saharawi journalists are targeted by the Occupying Power, including those belonging to journalists’ organisations Equipe Media and Nushatta Foundation.

The Geneva Support Group for the Protection and Promotion of Human Rights in Western Sahara calls on the attention of the international community to its responsibility for the persistent illegal occupation of Western Sahara by the Kingdom of Morocco. The former colonial Powers France and Spain and the United States, must stop with their policy of complicity with the colonial enterprise of the Kingdom of Morocco in Western Sahara.

Stressing that Western Sahara is the only Non-Self-Governing Territory without a recognized Administering Power and that it is also the only one under illegal military occupation, the Geneva Support Group for the Protection and Promotion of Human Rights in Western Sahara recalls the terms of operative paragraphs 2 and 3 of General Assembly draft resolution A/C.3/75/L.47 adopted last 19 November 2019, entitled "Universal realization of the right of peoples to self-determination":

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1. *Declares its firm opposition* to acts of foreign military intervention, aggression and occupation, since these have resulted in the suppression of the right of peoples to self-determination and other human rights in certain parts of the world;
2. *Calls upon* those States responsible to cease immediately their military intervention in and occupation of foreign countries and territories and all acts of repression, discrimination, exploitation and maltreatment, in particular the brutal and inhuman methods reportedly employed in the execution of those acts against the peoples concerned.

While condemning in the strongest terms the contempt the Kingdom of Morocco shows for the Saharawi people and their representative, the Polisario Front, the Geneva Support Group for the Protection and Promotion of Human Rights in Western Sahara urges:

* the International Committee of the Red Cross to monitor violations of the norms of International Humanitarian Law and in particular of the Fourth Geneva Convention;
* the UN High Commissioner for Human Rights to urgently dispatch a monitoring mission to the Occupied Western Sahara and to present a report at the next session of the Human Rights Council;
* the UN Human Rights Council to pay particular attention to the violations of human rights, including the right to self-determination, resulting from the military occupation of Western Sahara by the Kingdom of Morocco, pursuant to operational paragraph 5 of the above-mentioned draft resolution A/C.3/75/L.47 and to create a mandate of Special Rapporteur on zhe situation in the occupied Western Sahara;
* the Special Rapporteur on the situation of human rights defenders, the Special Rapporteur on the right to peaceful assembly and freedom of association, the Special Rapporteur on the promotion and protection of the right to freedom of opinion and expression, the Special Rapporteur on extrajudicial, summary or arbitrary executions, the Special Rapporteur on torture and other cruel, inhuman or degrading treatment or punishment, the Special Rapporteur on the independence of judges and lawyers, the Working Group on Arbitrary Detention and the Working Group on Enforced or Involuntary Disappearances to urgently consider the information that may be submitted to them in the context of this conflict;
* the Secretary General of the United Nations to personally assume the role of facilitator so that MINURSO, the only United Nations Mission whose main mandate is the implementation of a fundamental human and peoples' right, can finally organise a free referendum in compliance with UNGA resolution 1514 (XV), which is the only way to find a just and lasting political solution for the self-determination of the people of Western Sahara.

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**Signatories**

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Sahraouis de Les Mureaux, Association des Sahraouis de Mantes-la-Jolie, Association des Sahraouis de Montauban, Association des Sahraouis de Perigueux, Association de Solidarité avec le Peuple Sahraoui (ASPS), Association de la Vie Maghrébine pour la Solidarité et le Développement (AVMSD), Associazione bambini senza confini, Associazione Jaima Sahrawi per una soluzione giusta e non violenta nel Sahara Occ., Associazione Nazionale di Solidarietà con il Popolo Saharaui, Associazione di solidarietà con il Popolo Saharawi Kabara Lagdaf, Australia Western Sahara Association (AWSA), Bentili Media Center, Bremer Informationszentrum für Menschenrechte und Entwicklung (biz), Bureau International pour le Respect des Droits Humains au Sahara occidental (BIRDHSO), Campaña Saharaui para la sensibilisación sobre el peligro de Minas (SCBL), Cantabria por el Sáhara, Central Unitaria de Trabajadores de Chile, Centro Brasileiro de Solidaridad con los Pueblos y Lucha por la Paz, CEBRAPAZ, Centro de Documentación en Derechos Humanos “Segundo Montes Mozo S.J.” (CSMM), Centro Saharaui por la Salvaguardia de la Memoria, Colectivo Saharaui en Estepona, Colectivo Saharaui en Gipuzkoa, Colectivo Saharaui en Jaén, Colectivo Saharaui en Lanzarote, Comisión Ecuménica de Derechos Humanos de Ecuador (CEDHU), Comisión General Justicia y Paz, Comisión Media Independientes, Comisión Nacional de los Derechos Humanos de la República Dominicana (CNDH-RD), Comisión Nacional Saharaui por los Derechos Humanos (CONASADH), Comitato “Selma2.0”-odv, Comité d’Action et de Réflexion pour l’Avenir du Sahara Occidental, Comité de Amistad con el pueblo Saharaui – Argentina, Comité de Apoyo por el Plano de Paz y la Protección de los Recursos Naturales en el Sáhara Occidental, Comité Belge de soutien au Peuple Sahraoui, Comité de Defensa del Derecho de Autodeterminación (CODAPSO), Comité de Familiares de los 15 Jóvenes Secuestrados, Comité de Familiares de Mártires y Desaparecidos, Comité de Familiares de los Presos Políticos Saharauis, Comité de Jumelage et d'Echange Internationaux / Gonfreville l'Orcher, Comité de Protección de los Defensores Saharauis – Freedom Sun, Comité de Protección de los Recursos Naturales, Comité Saharaui de Defensa de Derechos Humanos (Glaimim), Comité Saharaui de Defensa de Derechos Humanos (Smara), Comité Saharaui de Defensa de Derechos Humanos (Zag), Comité Saharaui por el Monitereo de los Derechos Humanos (Assa), Comité de Solidaridad Oscar Romero, Comité Suisse de soutien au Peuple Sahraoui, Comité de Victimas de Agdaz y Magouna, Comunidad Saharaui en Aragón, Comunidad Saharaui en Asturias, Comunidad Saharaui en Balmaseda, Comunidad Saharaui en Cantabria, Comunidad Saharaui en Castilla y León, Comunidad Saharaui en Castilla la Mancha, Comunidad Saharaui en Catalunya, Comunidad Saharaui en Cordoba, Comunidad Saharaui en Jerez y Cadiz, Comunidad Saharaui en La Rioja, Comunidad Saharaui en Las Palmas, Comunidad Saharaui en Madrid, Comunidad Saharaui en Murcia, Comunidad Saharaui en Navarra, Coordinadora Estatal de Asociaciones Solidarias con el Sáhara (CEAS – Sáhara), Coordinadora de Gdeim Izik para un Movimiento Pacífico, Coordinadora de los Graduados Saharauis Desempleados, Coordinadora d´Organizacións No-Governamentals de Cooperaciò al Desenvolupament (CONGDIB), Coordinadora de las ONGs en Aaiún, Coordinadora Saharaui de Derechos Humanos de Tantan, Der Elefant e.V., Diaspora Saharaui en Bizkaia Disabi, Emmaus Åland, Emmaus Stockholm, Equipe Média, European Association of Lawyers for Democracy and World Human Rights (ELDH), Federació ACAPS de Catalunya, Federació d’Associacions de Solidaritat amb el Poble Sahrauí del País Valencià, Federación Andaluza de Asociaciones Solidarias con el Sahara (FANDAS), Federación de Asociaciones de Amigos del Pueblo Saharaui de Extremadura (FEDESAEX), Federación de la Comunidad de Madrid de Asociaciones Solidarias con el Sahara (FEMAS Sahara), Federación Deportistas Saharauis en España, Federación Estatal de Instituciones Solidarias con el Pueblo Saharaui (FEDISSAH), Fédération sportive des Sahraouis en France, Fondation Frantz Fanon, Forum Futuro de la Mujer Saharaui, Freiheit für die Westsahara e.V., Fundación Constituyente XXI,

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Fundación Mundubat, Fundación Sahara Libre-Venezuela, Fundación Sahara occidental, Fundación Latinoamericana por los Derechos Humanos y el Desarrollo Social (Fundalatin), Giuristi Democratici, Global Aktion - People & Planet before profit, Groupe Non Violence Active (NOVA SAHARA OCCIDENTAL), Grupo por la renuncia de la Nacionalidad Marroquí, Habitat International Coalition, Housing and Land Rights Network, Human & Environment e.V., Ibsar Al Khair Association for the Disabled in Western Sahara, Indian Council of South America (CISA), International Association of Democratic Lawyers (IADL), International Educational Development, Inc., International Fellowship of Reconciliation (IFOR), International Platform of Jurists for East Timor, Kabara Lagdaf, LESTIFTA - Amigos del Pueblo Saharaui de Teruel, Liberation, Liga de Abogacia Saharaui en España, Liga de Defensa de los Presos Políticos Saharaui, Liga de Estudiantes Saharauis en España, Liga de Medicos Saharauis en España, Liga de Mujeres Saharauis en España, Liga Nacional dos Direitos Humanos, Liga de Periodistas Saharauis en España, Liga Saharaui de defensa de Derechos Humanos y Protección de RW-Bojador, Ligue des Jeunes et des Etudiants Sahraouis en France, Ligue pour la Protection des Prisonniers Sahraouis dans les prisons marocaines (LPPS), Mouvement contre le racisme et pour l’amitié entre les peuples (MRAP), National Television Team, Nigerian Movement for the Liberation of Western Sahara, Nomad SHRC, Norwegian Support Committee for Western Sahara, Observatoire des Médias Saharaouis pour documenter les violations des droits de l’homme, Observatorio Aragonés para el Sáhara Occidental, Observatorio Asturiano de Derechos Humanos para el Sáhara Occidental (OAPSO), Observatorio Saharaui por el Niño y la Mujer, Observatorio Saharaui de Protección del Niño, Observatorio Saharaui de Recursos Naturales, 1514 Oltre il muro, Organización Contra la Tortura en Dakhla, Organización Saharaui por la Defensa de las libertades y la dignidad, Pallasos en Rebeldía y Festiclown, Paz y Cooperación, Plataforma de Organizaciones Chile Mejor Sin TLC, Por un Sahara Libre, Proyecto Audiovisual: La Saharaui Colombiana, Right Livelihood Foundation, Saharaui Unterstützungsverein Wien, Saharawi Advocacy Campaign, Saharawi Association for Persons with Disabilities in Western Sahara, Saharawi Association in the USA (SAUSA), Saharawi Campaign against the Plunder (SCAP), Saharawi Center for Media and Communication, Saharawi Media Team, Saharawi Voice, Sahrawis förening i Sverige, Salma e.V., Sandblast Arts, Schweizerisches Unterstützungskomitee für die Sahraouis Bern, Sindacato Español Comisiones Obrearas (CCOO), Solidariedade Galega col Pobo Saharaui (SOGAPS), Stichting Zelfbeschikking West-Sahara, Tayuch Amurio, The Icelandic Western Sahara Association, The Norwegian organization for justice and development, The Swedish Western Sahara Committee, TIRIS - Associazione di Solidarietà con il Popolo Saharawi, Uganda Solidarity Movement with Western Sahara, Unión de Asociaciones Solidarias con el Sáhara de Castilla y León, Union des Ingénieurs Sahraouis, Unión de Juristas Saharauis (UJS), Unión Nacional de Abogados Saharauis, Unión Nacional de Estudiantes de Saguia El Hamra y Rio de Oro (UESARIO), Unión Nacional de la Juventud de Saguia El Hamra y Rio de Oro (UJSARIO), Unión Nacional de Mujeres Saharauis (UNMS), Unión Nacional de Trabajadores de Saguia El Hamra y Rio de Oro (UGTSARIO), Unión de Periodistas y Escritores  Saharauis (UPES), US Western Sahara Foundation, VZW de Vereniging van de Sahrawi Gemeenschap in Belgie, Werken Rojo - Medio de comunicación digital, Western Sahara Resource Watch España (WSRW España), Western Sahara Times, World Barua Organization (WBO), World Peace Council.

NGOs enjoying UN-ECOSOC status