



MOVEMENT CONTINUES TOWARDS CONFLICT RESOLUTION IN SADR

Activities undertaken by the Polisario Front, the Kingdom of Morocco and the good offices of the UN and the OAU since late December 1988 have resulted in some recent advances toward a negotiated resolution of the conflict in Western Sahara.

1. December 23, 1988, the Executive Committee of the Polisario Front reviewed the declaration made by King Hassan II that he desired to meet with the Polisario Front. This suggestion by the King was viewed by the Front as a response to their numerous calls for direct negotiations. The Executive Committee decided to send a high-level Polisario delegation to meet with the King.
2. January 4-5, 1989, the Polisario delegation led by Bachir Mustapha Sayed and including Mahfoud Ali Beiba and Brahim Ghali, met twice with King Hassan in Marrakesh, Morocco.
3. January 10, 1989, M. Hector Gross Espiell, Special Representative of the UN Secretary-General for Western Sahara began an exploratory tour of the region. Gross Espiell's visit ended January 19. During his visit he met with SADR President Abdelaziz and King Hassan.
4. January 28, 1989, the SADR President Abdelaziz declared a unilateral Polisario truce for the month of February.
5. Throughout January 1989 King Hassan agreed that he would meet a second time with representatives of the Polisario Front, but gave no definite date for the meeting.
6. In early February 1989 the UN Secretary-General met with Mouloud Said, the Polisario representative to the UN.
7. At the end of February 1989, since there had been no second meeting with King Hassan, the Polisario Front ended its unilateral truce and resumed military operations on all fronts.
8. M. Issa Diallo and General Timoty Dubuama, military advisor to the UN Secretary-General, visited Morocco and the Western Sahara during the month of March 1989.
9. March 24, 1989, Mouloud Said, Polisario Representative to the UN met with UN Secretary-General Javier Perez de Cuellar concerning resolution of the conflict in Western Sahara.
10. March 27, 1989, Bachir Mustapha Sayed, along with Mouloud Said and Mohamed Boukhari, met with the UN

Secretary-General in New York to reaffirm the Polisario Front's readiness to give "a new dynamic to the joint UN/OAU peace process." It was reported at that meeting that the UN military team had not finalized its report.

11. The UN Secretary-General is expected to tour the region of the conflict in June 1989. He will meet with SADR President Mohamed Abdelaziz and King Hassan II.

12. An official diplomatic source reports that a second meeting of King Hassan II and a high level delegation of the Polisario Front will take place in June 1989.

13. Polisario sources announce that the Polisario Front has decided to free some 200 Moroccan prisoners of war. This will be completed in early June. (It is believed that Morocco is holding 500 Sahrawi prisoners of war in addition to the over 700 citizens who have been jailed/disappeared. The Sahrawis hold about 2,500 Moroccan prisoners of war.)

14. PEACE IN 1989 ??????????

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CONCERN FOR SAHRWAI CIVILIANS WHO HAVE DISAPPEARED GOES ON

The Sahrawi Red Crscent has published a list of Sahrawi civilians who disappeared in southern Morocco or in the occupied territories of the Western Sahara between 1975 and 1987. The list gives family name, first name, age, occupation, and date and place of arrest. Although all of this

information is not available on all who have disappeared, this list of over 720 individuals clearly documented to be missing is an indication of the extent of the problem.

Some 64 individuals from El Aiun, Oued Saguia, Oued El Guezeh, Smara, Assa, Zak, Tan Tan, Tarfaya, Lebouirat, Foulahsen and Taroudart are reported missing in 1975 and these men and women are persons with various professions: nomads, persons raising animal herds, shopkeepers, bureaucrats and students.

In 1976 the number of the documented missing rose to 268. In 1977 the number listed is 41; in 1978, 20; in 1979, 15; in 1980, 45; in 1981, 49; in 1982, 8; in 1983, 39; in 1984, 10; in 1985, 19; in 1986, 50; in 1987, 88. Besides the above list of towns in the 1975 part of the report, additional towns or areas from which Sahrawis are reported arrested and missing are Agadir, Dakhla, Goulimine, Oujda, Rabat, Daoura, Ouel El Gazah, Souk Ejmal, Meknes, Bir Lahlou, Amgala, Ametti, Tiznit, Inezgane, Ouarzagate, Kenitra, Khouribga, Lemseyed and Casablanca.

For additional information, write the Polisario Front Office in North America: P.O. Box 53213, Washington, D.C.

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THE SPSC LETTER is published quarterly in Ada, Ohio, USA.

Donations of \$5 are requested. Checks or moneyorders may be sent to the SPSC LETTER, 217 East Lehr Avenue, Ada, Ohio 45810, USA. THANK YOU!

AROUND THE WORLD WITH THE
SADR

1. The European Committees Coordination for Help to the Sahrawi People held meetings in February and May 1989. The February meeting was set to plan and coordinate the May 1989 International Meeting. Included among the European Support Committees who attended the meetings were members from Spain, the Netherlands, Great Britain, Germany, Switzerland, Italy, France, Belgium, as well as representatives from the European Parliament.

2. The latest Non Aligned Countries Coordinating Bureau's Resolution on the Question of Western Sahara, which was issued after their recent meeting in Harare, Zimbabwe, May 22, 1989 reaffirms the commitment of these nations to the OAU/UN peace process. It states:

The ministers

Reaffirming that the settlement of the conflict of Western Sahara lies in the application of the United Nations General Assembly resolution 1514 (VX) on the granting of independence to colonial countries and peoples;

Recalling the right of the people of Western Sahara to self-determination and independence;

Considering that OAU resolution AHG/Res. 104 (XIX) and United Nations General Assembly 43/33 Resolution remain the appropriate framework for the exercise of that right and for a just and definitive solution

to the conflict in Western Sahara;

Welcome the acceptance in principle by the two parties to the conflict, the Kingdom of Morocco and the Polisario Front, on August 30, 1988, of the joint proposals of the Chairman of the OAU and the Secretary-General of the United Nations for the organization of a referendum on self-determination for the people of Western Sahara under the auspices of the UN in cooperation with the OAU;

Welcome the appointment of a special Representative on Western Sahara by the United Nations Secretary-General in conformity with Security Council Resolution 621 (1988);

Take note with satisfaction of the progress made in the framework of the joint process of good offices undertaken by the UN and the OAU and encourage the Chairman Head of State of the OAU and the UN Secretary-General to pursue and intensify their efforts in view to resolve the remaining problems and create the necessary conditions for a referendum for self-determination for the people of Western Sahara, a referendum without any military or administrative constraints;

Welcome the meeting of Marrakesh between his Majesty King Hassan II and a high-level delegation of the Polisario Front and express their conviction that the continuation of this direct dialogue between the two parties will contribute to the joint process of good offices and to the restoration of peace in Western

Sahara, as well as to the stability and security of the region.

3. The European Parliament issued a statement on Western Sahara on March 15, 1989. The following is part of that statement from Brussels:

The European Parliament...

Considers that the climate of war has provoked since 1976, a deterioration in the economical, political and social situation among the Sahrawi people and that this situation must urgently cease;

Considers that the peoples' right to self-determination, as recognized internationally, constitutes an imperative rule, which must be respected and should not be put into question and reaffirms its support to the Sahrawi people's right to self-determination and independence;

Reiterates its support to UN General Assembly resolutions, namely Resolutions 40/50 (1985), 42/78 (1987) and 43/33 (1988), and to OAU Resolutions, namely Resolution AHG/Res. 104 (1983), and to the good offices proposed by the UN Secretary-General and to the ongoing negotiations;

Considers the negotiations between the Kingdom of Morocco and the Polisario Front and the holding of a referendum with required guarantees, without any external pressure and under the auspices of the United Nations, represent the unique possibility to securing an end to the tragedy endured for ten years by the Moroccan and Sahrawi peoples;

Takes note of the positive responses of the concerned parties, the Kingdom of Morocco and the Polisario Front to the UN Secretary-General's peace proposal;

Welcomes the recent meeting of Marrakesh between the Moroccan sovereign, King Hassan II, and the representatives of the Polisario Front, and see these facts as a gesture of good will to both parties;

Takes note with satisfaction of the increasing cooperation between the States of the Maghreb, which will facilitate the holding of the consultation in Western Sahara;

Urges the Member-States and the European political cooperation to use their influence to promote the necessary conditions for the organization of a genuine consultation as projected by the actions of the UN Secretary-General;

Considers that the peaceful solution to the conflict will help establish a real cooperation between the states of the Maghreb in the perspective of the Union of the Arab Maghreb as an economic and political project which will allow the countries of the region to find a coherent solution to their structural, political, social and economic problems and to become a stable and privileged partner of the Community;

Invites the Council and the Commission to provide the necessary support for the edification of the Union of the Arab Maghreb, which will undoubtedly offer the adequate framework for the deep relation with the Community in the field

of trade, technical as well as finance;

Invites the Commission to increase from now on its humanitarian assistance in the field of food, transport, infant nutrition and education to the population of the Sahara and namely to the refugees, through the UNHCR, ICR, and NGO, to alleviate the conditions of life of the population and so that the referendum will take place in the best conditions;

Urges the Member-States and the European political commission to use its leverage to promote the necessary conditions to the opening of direct negotiations between the Kingdom of Morocco and the Polisario Front;

Urges the European political commission to do everything in its power to fashion a common position on the situation in Western Sahara and to maintain this position within conferences and international bodies in which they participate;

Invites the presidency of the European political commission to officially present the plenary meeting of the European parliament and its observations with this resolution, in conformity with section I, paragraph 7, 2 aliena of the the decision of February 28, 1986.

Invites the Chairman to transmit the present resolution of the Commission to the Council, the Chairmanship of the European political commission, to Morocco, Algeria, Mauritania, Mali and to the Secretary-General of the Polisario Front and to the UN Secretary-General.

PEACE IN 1989

4. A plan to dump toxic wastes in Tarfaya, Morocco, an area that borders the northern boundary of the Western Sahara was reported by The Guardian of Great Britain on May 15, 1989. The British-backed consortium (Midco) plans to export 2,000 tons of toxic waste per day.

The paper reported that Claude Cornet, a Canadian employee of the consortium, who has a family connection with the King, had expressed doubts about the project. The idea of the project is to burn the waste and create electricity. Cornet noted that in the meetings he had attended on the project that he felt members of the consortium glossed over technical difficulties and the danger to the environment, particularly to the underground freshwater reservoir that lies beneath Tarfaya and further south. Commenting on that danger, one Sahrawi noted that contamination of that fresh water source could affect a large region, including the Western Sahara and several neighboring states.

5. A delegation of the SADR led by the SADR Ambassador to Venezuela, Mr. Hamdi Boueha, participated in the 14th conference of the political parties of Latin America held in Quito, Ecuador, during the first week of April 1989. At the end of its session, the Conference adopted a declaration and resolution on Western Sahara. Major parts of the declaration urged King Hassan to continue direct dialogue with the Polisario Front and appealed to Latin American governments who have not yet recognized the SADR to join the 22 countries of the region who have done so.

SADR IN THE NEWS IN THE USA

1. Madjid Abdullah, Polisario Front Representative to North America, noted in an interview with James M. Dorsey of The Washington Times, March 6, 1989, that Polisario proposals for arrangements for a referendum in Western Sahara are similar to arrangements for the peaceful transition in Namibia. Abdullah stated that Polisario proposals include a gradual withdrawal of about 90% of Moroccan troops and police forces from the Western Sahara prior to the referendum, demobilization of Polisario guerilla units, dismantling of Moroccan administration of the territory and replacement with a temporary UN sponsored governing body or a tripartite entity involving Morocco, the Polisario Front and the UN, and exclusion from the referendum an estimated 120,000 Moroccan settlers.

Abdullah noted King Hassan II wants to resolve the Sahara problem before eventually turning over power to his son, Mohamed. The King is reported to have said that the transition to peaceful duties for the Moroccan Armed Forces is a delicate problem.

2. Anne Lippert, SPSC LETTER editor, was interviewed on Voice of America December 12, 1988 concerning the downing of the American plane over Western Sahara. She was again interviewed by VOA on January 3 concerning the direct negotiations between King Hassan and the Polisario Front.

3. Carlos Wilson, a US journalist who has reported on the

conflict in Western Sahara, was interviewed about the conflict on "News Focus," The World Service of The Christian Science Monitor, September 1, 1988.

4. US objectives for US Security Assistance Programs in Morocco for 1990 now include as one objective "to encourage a negotiated settlement in Western Sahara." Morocco's consolidated FMS debt was \$348,580,000 as of September 1988 and is predicted to hit \$830,320,000 by 1998.

5. In February 1989 the US government considered the sale of 24 F-16 fighters and 100 sidewinder air-to-air missiles to Morocco. The projected sale was protested in the US by members of the SPSC and of the RAINBOW LOBBY. As a representative of the LOBBY noted: "Morocco is the 11th largest recipient of US aid and the 2nd after Egypt on the African continent." She also noted that the US has "granted over \$1 billion in military hardware to Morocco since the start of the war." She noted that in 1988 "the Reagan administration sold Morocco 100 M48A5 tanks and supporting equipment despite the protests" of many in Congress. She also noted that "this wasteful war has devastated the Moroccan economy whose national debt is \$18 billion, "one of the world's worst at 93% of gross domestic product. There is widespread poverty...and significant unemployment." (Quote from Foreign Operations, Export Financing and Related Programs Appropriations for 1990, Appropriations Committee, 1989.)

PEACE IN 1989
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OBSERVATIONS FROM THE OCCUPIED
WESTERN SAHARA

by C.H.

The following is a report of a member of the Amherst, Massachusetts based Institute for International Cooperation and Development who visited two towns in the occupied territory of the Western Sahara, El Aiyun and Smara, in early 1989.

While traveling to the towns of El Aiun and Smara as tourists during the early part of 1989, my companions and I encountered blatant evidence to contradict the recent push by King Hassan II and the Moroccan tourist industry to portray the occupied territory as fit for vacationing and investment dollars, the ultimate proof of a region's stability. Even to the eyes of one wholly ignorant of the history of conflict in the area, there was no doubt that the occupied Western Sahara is still very much a land of war and repression.

Our first experience of Morocco's internal policy of repression and surveillance of the Sahrawis occurred in Casablanca in Morocco proper, where, by accident, we stayed in an inexpensive hotel frequented by young Sahrawis who migrate to Morocco for work. The night clerk saw us talking to some of the Sahrawis. The next day we were questioned by two men in dark suits. We never saw any of the Sahrawis again.

The first leg of our overland trip to the occupied Western Sahara began with standard train service to Marrakech,

Morocco. We made connection with the special "express bus" on the CTM line at 1:00 A.M. Besides ourselves and a few Moroccans who left the bus at southern Moroccan towns like Tarfaya and Tan-Tan, the rest of the bus was Sahrawis.

All vehicles going to the Western Sahara may be stopped and the passengers searched. The established checkpoints begin just north of Tan-Tan. We were pulled off the bus at each checkpoint and questioned. The interrogation of the Sahrawis was not so easy as ours. They were usually young Sahrawi men and women returning from a work period in Morocco and were asked to give a detailed account of their trip to the "north."

At the final checkpoint just outside El Aiun is a stepped-up security check. Everyone must get off the bus and be interrogated by the side of the road while every item of luggage is thoroughly searched. We saw women asked to tear apart bread and foodstuffs. Clothing is unpacked and left on the ground. Anyone possessing anything as threatening as a kitchen knife is pulled aside for more severe questioning.

A few hours after our arrival in El Ayoun we realized we couldn't stay long. We had no possible alibi to explain why tourists would be wandering through the overcrowded, under-sanitized, poor neighborhoods of the town. In our few hours of wandering it was easy to see that the Main Street touted by George Moffet in his article for the Christian Science Monitor, April 12, 1989,

"Morocco: Winning Hearts and Minds," with the airport, sports stadium, King's palace courtyard and garden at one end, the expensive hotels, cafes and bus station along the way, and the couple of dozen rows of new half-completed, unoccupied apartment buildings at the other end belie the poverty and miserable living conditions for the majority of people in El Aiyun. One has only to stray two blocks off this path of development in any direction to encounter the stench of human waste, mud streets, piles of garbage and a distant, silent people who have little work, pay double the Moroccan national price for all foods and cannot leave the region without identity papers issued by the Gendarmerie.

By the second day, after a tense night in a cheap hotel used mostly by Moroccan soldiers, we decided to keep moving. We found out there is regular transport to Smara via landrovers which leave several times daily, whenever the drivers have a load of ten passengers.

It was nearly dusk by the time our driver had a load of ten, mostly military men and a few, silent women. The fare was 50 dirhams (the equivalent of \$6.50) for the four-hour, 220 kilometer ride over the narrow, half-buried road to this legendary town. It is a fortune that few Sahrawis can afford.

On the way out of El Aiyun we saw the rows of incomplete condominiums. No signs of recent construction were visible. The dwellings stood on barren desert. There were

no signs of electric, water or sewer lines.

We were stopped at a checkpoint at the eastern edge of the city and there we saw our first wall. It appears to be one of the original walls built to protect El Aiyun from the marauding Polisario attacks that occurred in earlier days of the conflict. This checkpoint smelled of waste and was full of swarming black flies. It was manned by two gendarmes and four national security guards with semi-automatic rifles. We learned later that we were lucky to get through the checkpoints to Smara. Moroccan propaganda has advertised that the towns of occupied Western Sahara are open and ready for tourists, but no one in the Ministry of the Interior had anticipated tourists who would venture overland in regular transport. At each checkpoint we were greeted with confused suspicion, but let pass because of our American passports.

The long, rough ride in the landrover took us within 100 meters of the famed conveyor belt connecting the phosphate rich Bou Craa with Port Laayoune. The belt was not working and appeared buried by sand drifts in places. We also saw remnants of other sand walls before night fell.

Nothing in El Aiyun prepared us for Smara. Arriving at 11:00 P.M. that night we found the four hotels already completely booked by military personnel. We were then taken to pitch our tent in the courtyard of the commissary, the police barracks of the region. While the others slept, I drank tea for

two hours with two police inspectors.

The next day Smara was revealed to be a virtual barracks town. Thousands of unarmed Moroccan military personnel in army drabs wandered from cafe to cafe, chain-smoking, staring vacantly into space. The town of Smara is much cleaner than El Aiun. There is no smell of waste, no garbage, but the town is far more silent. The only sign of Sahrawis was the school children walking back and forth from school.

I can not go into detail about what occurred to us next because it would jeopardize the lives of some people in the occupied territory. I can only summarize what we learned:

-That Smara in particular, but all towns in the occupied territory, have networks of secret police that report on the activities of Moroccan soldiers as well as Sahrawi nationals.

-That living conditions for Moroccan soldiers are virtually as bad as those of Sahrawis.

-That all drinking water must be bought from camouflage-painted tanker-trucks that cruise the town's streets in the early morning before continuing on to the front.

-That soldiers posted to the grueling and tense conditions of guarding the wall get only six days leave in Smara per month.

-That many young Moroccan men are making 20-30 year contracts with the army because it is seen as one of the few stable job opportunities for the under-educated poor in the precarious Moroccan economy.

-That the Moroccan rank

and file are visibly demoralized, weary, and not the least taken in by cries of "Historic Morocco." The general feeling is that some diplomatic compromise will be reached very soon. A goal is to "not be killed" in "these last few days." A dream is to be posted to the "interior" of Morocco, closer to home.

-That Morocco is expanding its efforts to build up its military rather than civil infrastructure in the occupied territories. In Smara there is the airstrip, a huge munitions depot and a steady influx of troops who are being housed in prefabricated barracks that are being put up outside the town.

We left Smara after 2 1/2 days there and left El Aiyun and the occupied territories later in the same day. It is clear to this observer that the occupied territories of Western Sahara are a war zone where human rights are being violated daily.

Amherst, May 1989

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7TH CONGRESS OF POLISARIO FRONT STARTS MEET ON APRIL 28, 1989

The 7th Congress of the Polisario Front, the "Congress of Martyr Sidi Athman Sid Ahmed," who was killed in action in September 1988, began April 28, 1989 with the motto, "Struggle and Unity for National Independence and Peace." Major decisions of the Congress were to support the UN/OAU peace process, to call for continued direct negotiations with Morocco, and to affirm continuing the independence struggle if Morocco refuses to continue with direct negotiations.

PUBLICATIONS UPDATE.....

pp. 20-40.

1. "Sparkles of Hope in North Africa," David Brombart, Interco Press, No. 238.

Three page article summarizes efforts in recent years to bring about peace in Western Sahara. It is a clear article. Interco Press is located at 815 Sixteen Street N.W. in Washington, D.C.

2. "Edging Slowly towards peace," Lothar Heinrich, The Middle East, April 1989, p. 21.

Heinrich reports on the breakthrough of the meeting in early 1989 between King Hassan of Morocco and representatives of the Polisario Front.

3. "Saharan Statesmanship," Gary Abramson, AFRICA REPORT, March-April, 1989, pp. 52-55.

A discussion of the diplomatic efforts of the Polisario Front and the Moroccan Government to resolve the question of Western Sahara. The question is raised if 1989 will be the year of "reconciliation in North Africa."

4. "Hunt for Toxic Waste Goldmine," and "Top Secret toxic plant for Sahara," Paul Brown, The Guardian (England), May 15, 1989, pp. 1 & 9.

Toxic waste disposal plan for southern Morocco near northern frontier of Western Sahara threatens all underground freshwater source in this area of northwest Africa.

5. "Polisario," Jeremy Harding, GRANTA, Spring 1989,

Journalist talks about his two experiences in going from the liberated territory of the Western Sahara through the wall to the occupied territory of the Western Sahara with Polisario freedom fighters.

6. "America's Secret African War," Carlos Wilson, On the Issues, The Journal of Substance for Progressive Women, Volume XI, 1989, pp. 12-17.

Journalist who has written about a number of liberation movements for 20 years describes the conflict in Western Sahara, his own trips to the area and U.S. involvement. Good expose.

7. "The War in Western Sahara: U.S. Policy in Conflict with U.S. Interest," Cheri Attix, B.A. thesis for Scripps College, December 1988.

This unpublished thesis contains four major chapters, a series of maps related to matters in the conflict and a group of appendices that illustrate and document assertions of the thesis. A very thorough study with good documentation.

8. "Chapter 52: Western Sahara," Human Rights Directory and Bibliography (AFRICA), Human Rights Internet Reporter, Special Issue, Volume 12, No. 4, Winter 1988/1989, pp. 252-253.

HRI has been reporting on the Western Sahara conflict for years. It does a bibliography and includes information on some support groups.