



## Security Council

Distr.  
GENERAL

S/1998/1184  
17 December 1998  
ENGLISH  
ORIGINAL: ENGLISH AND FRENCH

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LETTER DATED 17 DECEMBER 1998 FROM THE PERMANENT REPRESENTATIVE  
OF MOROCCO TO THE UNITED NATIONS ADDRESSED TO THE PRESIDENT OF  
THE SECURITY COUNCIL

On instructions from my Government, I have the honour to bring to your attention and to the attention of the members of the Security Council certain provisions of the draft resolution contained in document S/1998/1183 which run counter to the provisions of the Settlement Plan and infringe our national interests.

In the draft resolution's third preambular paragraph, the Security Council welcomes the stated position of the Government of Morocco and "the formal acceptance by the POLISARIO Front to implement the package of measures contained in paragraph 2 of the report of the Secretary-General" (S/1998/1160).

This preambular paragraph does not accurately reflect the actual state of affairs. The Moroccan Government did indeed welcome the Secretary-General's arbitration in favour of the 65,000 applicants. With regard to the package of measures proposed by the Secretary-General, however, the Moroccan Government has already drawn the attention of the Security Council to the fact that the simultaneity of the identification and appeals processes is not in conformity with the Plan. It has also communicated to the Secretary-General its position on the various protocols submitted to it and is awaiting his response.

As to commending the other party for its acceptance of the package of measures, such praise is, to say the least, unjustified.

Nowhere does the draft resolution mention the four years that have been lost because of the other party, the last year being the year that has elapsed since Houston.

Nor does the draft resolution mention that the recommendation made by the Secretary-General in November 1995, which was the subject of a resolution (issued provisionally) and resolved the problem of the tribal groupings in a fair and equitable manner, was simply withdrawn under pressure from certain quarters.

In any event, the main feature of the Secretary-General's package of measures, simultaneity, does not affect the other party, since identification of the applicants presented by that party has already been completed.

Furthermore, the protocol on refugees concerns one of the host countries, rather than the other party.

Under paragraph 1 of the draft resolution (S/1998/1183), the Security Council would decide to extend the mandate of the United Nations Mission for the Referendum in Western Sahara (MINURSO) until 31 January 1999 to allow for further consultations on the Secretary-General's proposals.

It would be preferable not to limit those discussions by preventing any discussion of the problems encountered, as is the intention in the last phrase of paragraph 1, which asks that the integrity of the measures proposed not be undermined, nor the main elements of the Secretary-General's package called into question.

The Moroccan Government does not share the view expressed by the Security Council in paragraph 2 of the draft resolution that the implementation of the Secretary-General's proposal on simultaneity "could clearly demonstrate the willingness of the parties to accelerate the referendum process".

Indeed, the Moroccan Government has already drawn the Council's attention to the fact that this simultaneity is not in conformity with the Settlement Plan.

Furthermore, in its response to the Secretary-General, the Moroccan Government has drawn attention to the negative repercussions of the implementation of this proposal in its present form with respect to the political situation and the maintenance of order in the region.

We hope that the Security Council will take the legitimate concerns of the Moroccan Government into consideration in the draft resolution in order to make it possible for it to abide by the resolution with little difficulty once it is adopted.

I should be grateful if you would have the text of this letter circulated to the members of the Security Council and issued as a document of the Council.

(Signed) Ahmed SNOUSSI  
Ambassador

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