

**Security Council**

Distr.: General  
20 January 2021  
English  
Original: French

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**Letter dated 19 January 2021 from the Permanent Representative of Morocco to the United Nations addressed to the President of the Security Council**

I have the honour to transmit herewith a copy of the letter that I addressed to the Secretary-General of the United Nations today (see annex), further to the communication sent to him by the Ambassador and Permanent Representative of South Africa on 29 December 2020 transmitting what the Ambassador referred to as “the decisions of the fourteenth extraordinary session of the African Union Assembly, on Silencing the Guns, including a decision on the question of Western Sahara”.

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

(Signed) Omar **Hilale**  
Ambassador, Permanent Representative



**Annex to the letter dated 19 January 2021 from the Permanent Representative of Morocco to the United Nations addressed to the President of the Security Council**

**Letter dated 19 January 2021 from the Permanent Representative of Morocco to the United Nations addressed to the Secretary-General**

On 29 December 2020, the Permanent Representative of South Africa wrote to you, transmitting what he called “the decisions of the fourteenth extraordinary session of the African Union Assembly, on Silencing the Guns, including a decision on the question of Western Sahara”.

That letter falsely suggests that the extraordinary summit of the African Union, on Silencing the Guns, was devoted exclusively to the question of Moroccan Sahara. The reality is totally different.

The South African move to single out the question of Moroccan Sahara unfortunately reveals a two-pronged attempt, at the procedural and substantive levels, to mislead the Secretary-General of the United Nations and the Security Council.

**At the procedural level**

The decision and declaration of the fourteenth extraordinary summit of the African Union, on Silencing the Guns, consist of 57 paragraphs. However, the question of Moroccan Sahara is only mentioned in one single paragraph, namely paragraph 15.

This paragraph appears in the preambular part, not the operative part, of the decision. Its content is declaratory in nature and is in no way operative.

The language of the paragraph on the question of Moroccan Sahara remains contentious, to this day, because it was introduced into the decision of the extraordinary summit under conditions marked by a lack of transparency and a violation of the summit’s rules and procedures. This led to questions and requests for official clarifications from Morocco and several other States members of the African Union. These complaints remain, until now, unanswered.

**At the substantive level**

South Africa has wilfully ignored the threats and conflicts that unfortunately hinder the development of our African continent and which, despite the controversy they caused at the extraordinary summit, appear in its decision and declaration. The same fate was reserved for bold political reforms and structural economic advances, such as the African Continental Free Trade Area. The unstated goal of South Africa is to focus the attention of the Secretary-General and the Security Council on one question from among the 40 or so topics raised during this summit, at the expense of the continent’s most important concerns, expectations and hopes.

Decision No. 693, adopted at the African summit held in Nouakchott on 1 and 2 July 2018, clearly recognized that the question of Moroccan Sahara is the exclusive responsibility of the United Nations. Consequently, by that decision, the mechanism of the Troika of the African Union was established with a limited role to “extend effective support to the United Nations-led efforts”.

The Kingdom of Morocco deeply regrets that South Africa, which held the office of the Chair of the African Union and the presidency of the Security Council when the letter was sent, has departed from the neutrality required by its duties, by

highlighting the question of Moroccan Sahara, and by sacrificing the global challenges of Africa, in these exceptional times of the coronavirus disease (COVID-19).

It is equally regrettable that South Africa is manipulating the African Union and diverting its decisions and declarations to serve its ideological and political agenda, which the historical, political and legal realities of the Moroccan identity of the Sahara flagrantly contradict; much more regrettable is the fact that the overwhelming majority of the States members of the African Union do not in any way share the position of South Africa on the question of Moroccan Sahara, which is totally out of step with the successive resolutions of the Security Council, including resolutions [2468 \(2019\)](#), [2494 \(2019\)](#) and [2548 \(2020\)](#), adopted while South Africa was a non-permanent member of the Security Council.

Lastly, the obsession of South Africa with focusing the attention of the Secretary-General and the Security Council on the question of Moroccan Sahara, while ignoring Africa's vital issues, does an irredeemable disservice to its aspirations with regard to Security Council reform.

Notwithstanding these manoeuvres, Morocco remains committed to the exclusively United Nations process, aimed at achieving a realistic, practicable and enduring political solution to the question of Moroccan Sahara, based on compromise, in accordance with Security Council resolutions adopted since 2007. These resolutions have encapsulated the pre-eminence, seriousness and credibility of the Moroccan autonomy initiative. That initiative is, and will remain, the only solution to this regional dispute, within the framework of the sovereignty and territorial integrity of the Kingdom of Morocco.

(Signed) Omar **Hilale**  
Ambassador, Permanent Representative

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