



Security Council

Distr.: General
16 August 2019

Original: English

Letter dated 13 August 2019 from the Permanent Representative of Namibia to the United Nations addressed to the President of the Security Council

I should be grateful if you would kindly have the present letter and its annex, a letter from Brahim Ghali, the Secretary-General of the Frente POLISARIO, to the Secretary-General of the United Nations regarding the serious developments in the buffer strip in southern Western Sahara, issued as a document of the Security Council and circulated to the members of the Council.

(Signed) Neville **Gertze**
Ambassador
Permanent Representative



Annex to the letter dated 13 August 2019 from the Permanent Representative of Namibia to the United Nations addressed to the President of the Security Council

Bir Lehlou, 12 August 2019

It is with great alarm that I report on a new development, which I believe will have serious ramifications for the United Nations-supervised ceasefire in Western Sahara.

Over the past two days, Moroccan authorities have placed a group of Moroccan security and intelligence agents at a site along the “paved road”, illegally constructed by Morocco within the buffer strip in Guerguerat, southern Western Sahara. Moroccan authorities recently constructed a hut to house the group (as shown in the attached picture), and they are poised to build additional illegal constructions in the area.

The presence of Moroccan agents in the buffer strip is a serious violation of the ceasefire and military agreement No. 1. It is also a provocative and destabilizing action that will inflame an already tense situation and further jeopardize security in the region.

We, the Frente POLISARIO, strongly condemn Morocco’s serious violation of the ceasefire and call upon you and the Security Council to ensure that Morocco immediately removes all its agents from the buffer strip and dismantles any constructions in the area. We also call upon the United Nations Mission for the Referendum in Western Sahara (MINURSO) to closely monitor the situation on the ground to ensure Morocco’s full compliance with its obligations under the ceasefire and related military agreements. The latest events in the buffer strip underline once again the need for a permanent presence by MINURSO military observers in the area to ensure strict observance of the ceasefire and related agreements.

Moroccan authorities clearly plan to establish a permanent presence in the buffer strip, in violation of the ceasefire and military agreement No. 1. This latest move indicates that Morocco remains intent on extending its illegal occupation into the remaining part of Western Sahara, including the southernmost town of La Güera. It was no coincidence that Morocco’s recent incursion into the buffer strip took place precisely 40 years after Morocco illegally occupied southern Western Sahara, which was evacuated by Mauritania following the peace agreement with the Frente POLISARIO in August 1979.

While remaining fully committed to our obligations under the ceasefire and related military agreements, we, the Frente POLISARIO, reserve our legitimate right to act in response to all provocative actions by the occupying Power, Morocco, which aim to destabilize the buffer strip or any other part of the Territory.

We reiterate our principled position regarding the ceasefire and related agreements, as contained in Security Council document [S/2018/910/Rev.1](#) of 24 October 2018, and in our official communications and statements on the matter.

The root cause of the growing tension in Guerguerat is the existence of the illegal breach made by Morocco across the buffer strip, which represents a persistent violation of the ceasefire and military agreement No. 1. Neither the ceasefire agreement of 1991 nor the military agreement No. 1 of 1997 included any provisions authorizing the creation of breaches or crossing points for “commercial traffic” or other activities along the Moroccan military wall. The breach was negotiated neither between the two parties nor between the parties and the United Nations. The Frente POLISARIO has never approved it, and its existence seriously undermines the fragile peace forged with the entry into force of the United Nations-backed ceasefire.

Following the crisis caused by Morocco's plans to construct a paved road across the buffer strip in August 2016, Security Council resolution 2351 (2017) recognized "that the recent crisis in the buffer strip in Guerguerat raises fundamental questions related to the ceasefire and related agreements", and encouraged "the Secretary-General to explore ways that such questions can be resolved" (para. 3). The recurring tension in the buffer strip, as evidenced by the latest events, is a reminder that these fundamental questions remain unresolved. As long as the underlying cause of the tension (i.e. the existence of the illegal breach across the buffer strip) remains unaddressed, the situation in the area will remain unstable and a threat to international peace and security.

We therefore call upon you and the Security Council to act robustly in the face of Morocco's new attempt to alter the status quo in the buffer strip. If left unchecked, Morocco's actions will imperil peace and security in the Territory and undermine the already fragile United Nations peace process on Western Sahara.

(Signed) **Brahim Ghali**
Secretary-General of the Frente POLISARIO


