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Implementation of the Declaration on the Granting of Independence to Colonial Countries and Peoples

Question of Western Sahara

Report of the Secretary-General**

Summary

The present report, covering the period from 1 July 2024 to 30 June 2025, is submitted pursuant to General Assembly resolution [79/98](#).

* [A/80/150](#).

** The present report was submitted to the conference services for processing after the deadline for technical reasons beyond the control of the submitting office.



I. Introduction

1. On 12 December 2024, the General Assembly adopted, without a vote, resolution [79/98](#) on the question of Western Sahara. The present report, covering the period from 1 July 2024 to 30 June 2025, is submitted in accordance with paragraph 7 of that resolution, in which the Assembly invited the Secretary-General to submit to it at its eightieth session a report on the implementation of the resolution.
2. The Security Council addresses Western Sahara as a matter of peace and security, calling in successive resolutions for a “just, lasting and mutually acceptable political solution, which will provide for the self-determination of the people of Western Sahara”. The Special Political and Decolonization Committee (Fourth Committee) of the General Assembly and the Special Committee on the Situation with regard to the Implementation of the Declaration on the Granting of Independence to Colonial Countries and Peoples address Western Sahara as a Non-Self-Governing Territory and an issue of decolonization.
3. Pursuant to Security Council resolution [2703 \(2023\)](#), the Secretary-General submitted a report to the Council on the situation concerning Western Sahara ([S/2024/707](#)) on 1 October 2024. In the report, he described the situation on the ground; the status of the political negotiations on Western Sahara; the implementation of resolution [2703 \(2023\)](#); and the existing challenges to the operations of the United Nations Mission for the Referendum in Western Sahara (MINURSO), as well as steps taken to address them. On 31 October 2024, the Security Council adopted resolution [2756 \(2024\)](#), renewing the mandate of MINURSO until 31 October 2025 and requesting the Secretary-General to provide a report on the situation in Western Sahara well before the end of the mandate period. A separate report will be prepared and submitted as requested.

II. Main developments

4. On 9 July 2024, the President of France, Emmanuel Macron, sent a letter to King Mohammed VI, indicating that France considers that “autonomy under Moroccan sovereignty is the framework within which the issue [of Western Sahara] must be resolved ... [and that] for France, the [Moroccan autonomy proposal] now constitutes the only basis for achieving a just, lasting and negotiated political solution in accordance with the resolutions of the United Nations Security Council”. On 26 July, the Frente Popular para la Liberación de Saguía el-Hamra y Río de Oro (Frente POLISARIO) issued a statement condemning the French decision in the “strongest possible terms”.
5. On 4 October, the Court of Justice of the European Union issued two judgments in which it confirmed a previous similar General Court decision in 2021 and found that the fisheries and agriculture trade agreements made between the European Union and Morocco in 2019 were unlawfully concluded by the European Union. The Court considered that the people of Western Sahara had not consented to the agreements, which were thus concluded in breach of the principles of self-determination and of the relative effect of treaties. In a statement issued the same day, Morocco indicated that it “does not consider itself in any way concerned by the decision”, which it considered contained “legal errors and suspicious errors of fact”.
6. In a joint communiqué issued on 1 June 2025 by the United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland and Morocco, the United Kingdom stated that it considered the Moroccan autonomy plan to be “the most credible, viable and pragmatic basis for a lasting resolution of the dispute” and expressed its readiness to support the Personal Envoy of the Secretary-General for Western Sahara in reaching

such a resolution. In a statement issued the same day, the “Sahrawi Arab Democratic Republic” expressed “its deep regret and disappointment” regarding the communiqué, while noting that the United Kingdom had not recognized Moroccan sovereignty over the Territory.

III. Situation on the ground

7. During the reporting period, the situation in Western Sahara continued to be characterized by tension and low-intensity hostilities between Morocco and Frente POLISARIO.

8. Most firing incidents reported to MINURSO by the parties continued to be concentrated in the north of the Territory, near Mahbas. At the request of the Royal Moroccan Army and with the Army’s escort, MINURSO continued to visit sites adjacent to the berm where incidents were alleged to have taken place, and in most cases observed traces of exploded artillery ammunition. Most of the shots verified by MINURSO landed in remote areas, causing no significant damage.

9. On 9 November, one firing incident took place in the town of Mahbas near civilian commemorations that were taking place to mark the forty-ninth anniversary of the Green March. No casualties were reported. On 11 November, MINURSO investigated the incident location and located the debris of four rockets. In a letter to the Secretary-General on 12 November, the Permanent Representative of Morocco stated that Morocco “reserves the right to take all measures and actions it deems appropriate in order to put an end to these threats and aggressions targeting its peaceful citizens, its territorial integrity and its national sovereignty” and “in full compliance with Article 51 of the Charter of the United Nations”.

10. On 6 April, a 155 mm projectile fired by the Royal Moroccan Army landed approximately 2 km from the operational site in Tifariti of an implementing partner of the Mine Action Service. No casualties or damage to property occurred. The Special Representative of the Secretary-General for Western Sahara and Head of MINURSO and the MINURSO Force Commander subsequently contacted the Moroccan Coordinator with MINURSO and the Commander of the Royal Moroccan Army’s southern zone, respectively, to express concern at the incident. On 7 April, the Army responded by renewing security assurances for “all MINURSO personnel”, indicating that additional instructions were issued to Army liaison officers to “scrupulously” coordinate activities with MINURSO team sites.

11. On 27 June, four rocket fire explosions, including one that landed 200 m from the Smara team site, were determined by MINURSO to have been launched from approximately 40 km east of the berm. The Special Representative sent separate letters to Frente POLISARIO to express deep concern about the incident and to reiterate a call for a cessation of hostilities. On 28 July, the Frente POLISARIO Coordinator with MINURSO responded, reiterating the “commitment [of Frente POLISARIO] to the safety and security of MINURSO military observers and personnel”. Also on 28 July, the Commander of the Royal Moroccan Army southern zone wrote to the MINURSO Force Commander denouncing the firing against the city of Smara as an act of “overt hostility”.

12. MINURSO also continued to investigate alleged aerial strikes at locations east of the berm, in coordination with Frente POLISARIO liaison officers and through the assistance rendered by the Mine Action Service. During the reporting period, MINURSO was able to conduct investigations at the alleged sites on 11 occasions, 8 in the Mijek area and 3 in the Agwanit area. On one of the occasions, MINURSO determined that two deaths had occurred, one of an artisanal gold miner from Mali

and one of a person from Mauritania, both men, according to eyewitnesses. MINURSO also investigated one artillery strike in the Mijek area and determined that three deaths had occurred, two of Mauritians and one of a Sudanese person, all of whom were artisanal gold miners according to eyewitnesses.

13. East of the berm, previously reported constraints on the MINURSO logistical supply and maintenance chain eased considerably, enabling the Mission to better sustain its team sites through regular resupply. On average, MINURSO was able to deploy one logistical ground convoy per month to resupply its team sites east of the berm. However, their deployment remained subject to prior authorization from Frente POLISARIO on a “provisional and exceptional” basis.

IV. Update on the political process

14. During the reporting period, the Personal Envoy undertook consultations on the issue of Western Sahara with Morocco, Frente POLISARIO, Algeria, Mauritania, members of the Security Council, members of the Group of Friends on Western Sahara and other interested actors with a view to constructively advancing the political process.

15. In 2024, the Personal Envoy engaged with regional actors, including the Ministers for Foreign Affairs of Morocco, Mauritania and Algeria in New York in September on the margins of the high-level week of the General Assembly, and the leadership of Frente POLISARIO in Rabouni on 3 October.

16. In 2025, the Personal Envoy continued his engagements with all concerned. He travelled to Rabat on 24 March for a meeting with the Minister for Foreign Affairs of Morocco, Nasser Bourita; to Nouakchott on 3 April for meetings with the President of Mauritania, Mohamed Ould El-Ghazouani, and its Minister for Foreign Affairs, Mohamed Salem Ould Merzoug; to Rabouni on 5 April for a meeting with the Secretary-General of Frente POLISARIO, Brahim Ghali; and to Algiers on 14 January and 6 April for meetings with the Minister for Foreign Affairs of Algeria, Ahmed Attaf. The Personal Envoy conducted further consultations in Brussels in May 2025, including with the Ministers for Foreign Affairs of Algeria and Mauritania on 20 May and with representatives of Frente POLISARIO on 22 May.

17. The Personal Envoy also met with a State Secretary of the German Federal Foreign Office in Berlin on 12 August; with senior British officials in London on 18 September and 1 April; with senior French officials in Paris on 20 September; with senior Italian officials in Rome on 25 February; with the Slovenian State Secretary for Multilateral Affairs in Ljubljana on 5 March; and with the acting Under Secretary of State for Political Affairs of the United States of America in Washington, D.C., on 10 April. In these meetings and interactions, the Personal Envoy noted with appreciation the expressions of support by his interlocutors for the efforts of the United Nations to facilitate a political settlement to the situation in Western Sahara.

18. In accordance with Security Council resolutions [2703 \(2023\)](#) and [2756 \(2024\)](#), the Personal Envoy gave briefings to the Council on 16 October and 14 April in closed consultations. On both occasions, he received broad support from members of the Council for his efforts. While in New York, the Personal Envoy met with senior United Nations officials and representatives of Morocco, Frente POLISARIO, Algeria, Mauritania and Council members.

V. Mine action

19. During the reporting period, MINURSO continued its mine action activities to provide emergency disposal of explosive ordnance, assistance to investigations at sites of alleged aerial strikes east of the berm, support for ground convoy movements, route verification and combined explosive ordnance risk education. Between 1 July 2024 and 30 June 2025, 1,385,558 m² of land was released and 335 items of explosive ordnance were found and destroyed.

VI. Humanitarian activities and human rights

20. In 2025, the Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees, the United Nations Children's Fund, the World Food Programme and the World Health Organization, along with non-governmental organizations, scaled back humanitarian assistance to Sahrawi refugees in the five camps near Tindouf in Algeria, namely Awsard, Boujdour, Dakhla, Laayoune and Smara, due to a shifting funding landscape and budget cuts by donors. These reductions have had an impact on essential and life-sustaining activities, such as food, gas, education, water, sanitation and hygiene, and nutrition. The preliminary results of the 2025 nutrition survey revealed worsening conditions, with global acute malnutrition prevalence nearing 13 per cent and stunting prevalence at over 30 per cent, despite a contribution from the host Government aimed at offsetting a 30 per cent cut in World Food Programme food rations. While the first year of the 2024–2025 Refugee Response Plan brought visibility and some funding gains, major needs remained and, at the time of writing, an estimated \$103.9 million was still required in 2025. The funding reduction has an impact on the entire population of Saharawi refugees, with children and women being particularly affected by various levels of malnutrition, and effects on primary education and targeted youth support programmes.

21. In May, the biannual donor mission to the Tindouf camps included private sector participation for the first time, aimed at diversifying funding sources.

22. The confidence-building measures, pursuant to Security Council resolution [1282 \(1999\)](#) and subsequent resolutions, to allow family links between Sahrawi refugees and their communities of origin in the Territory, remained on hold.

23. The Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights (OHCHR) has not been granted access to the Territory since 2015 despite its repeated requests for a visit to the region in line with Security Council resolutions, most recently resolution [2756 \(2024\)](#). The lack of independent, impartial, comprehensive and sustained human rights monitoring remains a major obstacle to comprehensively assessing the situation. International observers, including parliamentarians, researchers, journalists and lawyers, reportedly continue to face entry restrictions, with dozens denied entry or expelled during the reporting period.

24. OHCHR has received reports of an increasingly shrinking civic space and restrictions on Sahrawis' rights to freedom of expression, association and peaceful assembly. Moroccan authorities reportedly suppressed protests and events supporting self-determination, with a particularly notable impact on Sahrawi women human rights defenders, who lead associations and peaceful protests and actively exercise their right to freedom of association and assembly.

25. On 20 March, United Nations special procedure mandate holders sent a communication to Morocco, expressing concerns over alleged violations affecting 79 Sahrawi activists. In the communication, they also referred to alleged human rights violations linked to coastal development projects that entail large-scale land

acquisition, destruction of private property and displacement.¹ In its reply in May 2025, the Government of Morocco denied the allegations.²

26. The Gdeim Izik group remains dispersed in prisons outside Western Sahara, serving lengthy sentences. In November 2024, the Working Group on Arbitrary Detention noted no action by the Government of Morocco to implement its opinion 2023/23 and highlighted deteriorating conditions of detention, including isolation, limited family contact and restricted medical access.³ OHCHR also received reports of similar allegations against other Sahrawi detainees, including discriminatory treatment, and at least one reported death in custody.

27. The Special Committee on the Situation with regard to the Implementation of the Declaration on the Granting of Independence to Colonial Countries and Peoples considered the question of Western Sahara at the 5th and 6th meetings of its 2025 session, held on 10 June 2025.

VII. Observations and recommendations

28. I remain deeply concerned by developments in Western Sahara. The continued deterioration of the state of affairs is alarming and unsustainable and calls for an urgent reversal with a view to avoiding any further escalation. I renew my call on all concerned to work towards changing course without delay, with the facilitation of the United Nations and the support of the broader international community, towards a just, lasting and mutually acceptable political solution.

29. As the fiftieth anniversary of the conflict is approaching, this challenging context continues to make it more urgent than ever to reach a political solution to the question of Western Sahara. I maintain my belief that it is possible to find a just, lasting and mutually acceptable political solution that will provide for the self-determination of the people of Western Sahara in accordance with Security Council resolutions 2440 (2018), 2468 (2019), 2494 (2019), 2548 (2020), 2602 (2021), 2654 (2022), 2703 (2023) and 2756 (2024).

30. I commend my Personal Envoy for Western Sahara, Staffan de Mistura, my Special Representative for Western Sahara and Head of MINURSO, Alexander Ivanko, and their staff for their dedicated efforts and commitment.

¹ Communication AL MAR3/2025, available at <https://spcommreports.ohchr.org/TMResultsBase/DownloadPublicCommunicationFile?gId=29772>. See also communication AL MAR1/2025, available at <https://spcommreports.ohchr.org/TMResultsBase/DownloadPublicCommunicationFile?gId=29685>.

² Reply of Morocco to communication AL MAR 3/2025, available at <https://spcommreports.ohchr.org/TMResultsBase/DownloadFile?gId=39015>. See also its reply to communication AL MAR 1/2025, available at <https://spcommreports.ohchr.org/TMResultsBase/DownloadFile?gId=38955>.

³ Report of the Working Group on Arbitrary Detention (A/HRC/57/44), dated 22 July 2024.