

The General Assemblies Topic A Primary Sources

Situation in Western Sahara

Here are primary sources that your moderator or legal chair thought would be helpful in gaining an understanding of the topic. These are by no means all of the sources available, just sources we wanted to highlight.

Source #1: Proclamation of the First Government of the Sahrawi Arab Democratic Republic

This statement, dated 27 February 1976, marks the formation of the Sahrawi Arab Democratic Republic (SADR), officially declaring the sovereignty of Western Sahara. It recognizes the governmental and military leadership of the Frente POLISARIO, also known as the Polisario Front, over the territory recognized as Western Sahara, mostly inhabited by indigenous Sahrawis. The text professes SADR's desire for peace, unity and liberation, with an intention "to set up the fundamental institutions arising out of revolutionary legality, essential to succeed in the present struggle for liberty and to exercise truly democratic power". However, the closing line admonishes any foreign attempt to infringe upon this newly declared independence, warning that "for as long as this aggression lasts, until our people have completed the liberation of their national territory, there will be neither peace nor stability in this region."

<https://aceproject.org/ero-en/regions/africa/EH/western-sahara-occidental-sahara-proclamation-of>

Source #2: UNSC Resolution 690

This resolution was adopted unanimously at the 2984th meeting of the United Nations Security Council (UNSC) on 29 April 1991 in response to the Secretary-General's report on the situation in Western Sahara in 1990. Expressing support of collaborative efforts between the United Nation and the Organization of African Unity, it encourages the implementation of a "referendum for self-determination of the people of Western Sahara". This resolution also formally created the UN Mission for the Referendum in Western Sahara (MINURSO), which is still active in Western Sahara today. In May 1991, the General Assembly approved the budget of MINURSO, and after a brokered ceasefire in the area, the Mission was deployed in September 1991.

<http://www.securitycouncilreport.org/atf/cf/%7B65BFCF9B-6D27-4E9C-8CD3-CF6E4FF96FF9%7D/MINURSO%20SRES690.pdf>

Source #3: MINURSO

This is the website of the UN Mission for the Referendum in Western Sahara, MINURSO. The Mission was deployed in 1991, and is one of 12 active UN peacekeeping missions. An important part of MINURSO's mandate in Western Sahara is monitoring the ceasefire agreed to in 1997 by the Frente Polisario Military Forces and the Royal Moroccan Army: "Military Agreement No 1". This is overseen by United Nations Military Observers (UNMOs). The United Nations Mine Action Service (UNMAS) is also involved in removing landmines and explosive remnants of war (EWR) from the area, with additional funding being received from the Governments of Spain and Denmark. Additional information on the background of the conflict, the Mission, and its mandate can be found at this site, including a comprehensive history of the UN's intentions and involvement in the area over the past three decades. Security Council resolutions, statements, press releases, and Secretary-General reports on MINURSO can also be found here.

<https://minurso.unmissions.org/>

Source #4: Report of the UNSC Mission to Western Sahara from 3 to 5 June 1995

This report was presented by members of the Security Council Mission to Western Sahara to the President of the Security Council on 20 June 1995, outlining the state of the region and the progress of the settlement plan's implementation. Initial problems with the settlement plan are explored, including "the reduction of Moroccan troops, the confinement of troops of... the Frente POLISARIO, the release of political prisoners and detainees, the exchange of prisoners of war and the return of refugees." In Section II, Part B of the report, a meeting with Moroccan officials highlights the viewpoint of the Moroccan government on resolving the conflict and cooperation with MINURSO. Section II, Part C covers similar interactions with senior officials of the Polisario Front and local sheikhs. Both parties appear to blame the other for hold ups in the referendum process, although both support the repatriation of refugees and involvement of MINURSO. Meetings were also held with the Organization of African Unity and governments of Algeria and Mauritania. Key takeaways of the report include issues of mistrust and conditional reciprocity between parties, limited resources, fairness, acceleration of the identification process, and the importance of MINURSO's presence in reducing hostilities.

<http://www.securitycouncilreport.org/atf/cf/%7B65BF9B-6D27-4E9C-8CD3-CF6E4FF96FF9%7D/SC%20Mission%20S%201995%20498.pdf>

Source #5: Letter from Secretary-General of the Frente POLISARIO to the Secretary-General of the United Nations

This letter, dated 16 January 2020, is from Brahim Ghali, Secretary-General of the Polisario Front, on behalf of the Front, to the Secretary-General of the United Nations. The grievance cited is the "unlawful passing" of the African Eco Race through parts of Western Sahara, although Ghali also criticizes general Moroccan "escalation and provocations" in the occupied region. The Polisario Front continues to have strong feelings about an "illegal breach in the buffer strip in Guerguerat" and demands increased action on the part of the UN. Ghali asserts that the "Frente POLISARIO and the Sahrawi people can never accept that Morocco persists in its annexationist actions", blaming the United Nations for its complacency and "remaining silent" on the situation.

https://www.securitycouncilreport.org/atf/cf/%7B65BF9B-6D27-4E9C-8CD3-CF6E4FF96FF9%7D/S_2020_45.pdf

Source #6: Report of the Secretary-General: Situation concerning Western Sahara

This is the most recent report of the UN Secretary-General on the situation concerning Western Sahara, released on 3 October 2022. Every time the Security Council renews the mandate of the UN Mission for the Referendum in Western Sahara (MINURSO), a report by the Secretary-General on the state of the issue is provided before the expiration of the mandate. This report provides updates on the recent developments and political activities of the region, activities of MINURSO, humanitarian activities and human rights, financial standing, as well as recommendations for Western Sahara going forward. Current challenges to the Mission are worth highlighting, including "constraints on the MINURSO logistical supply and maintenance chain to team sites east of the berm", operational limitations due to the COVID-19 pandemic, and lack of access to certain regions and local interlocutors, as outlined in Section IV, Part E of the report. A breakdown of different countries' personnel contributions to MINURSO and a map of MINURSO activities in the region are also annexed to the report.

https://www.securitycouncilreport.org/atf/cf/%7B65BF9B-6D27-4E9C-8CD3-CF6E4FF96FF9%7D/S_2022_733.pdf