

8.1 ACFID Resolution 1/2019

RESOLUTION on Western Sahara

Pre-Amble

Noting that Western Sahara is a former Spanish colony, located in northwest Africa and is illegally occupied by Morocco since 1975. It has striking similarities with East Timor.

Noting that the Saharawi have been receiving international humanitarian support since they were dumped in the desert in Western Algeria in 1975; the post-colonial conflict has lasted at least 48 years and there is no obvious solution with the current political situation in Morocco.

We also note that the UN has been trying to organize a referendum of self-determination in the Western Sahara for the past 28 years without success due Morocco's obstructions.

According to human rights organisations, thousands of Saharawis have been killed and hundreds disappeared since Morocco occupied the territory. In addition, 165.000 Saharawis were forced to flee their country and seek refuge in neighbouring Algeria. They have been living in refugee camps in hostile conditions for the past 25 years dependent on humanitarian assistance.

ACFID Conference condemns the gross violations of human rights in the occupied territories of Western Sahara and demands the release of all political prisoners and civil society activists from their unlawful detention.

ACFID Conference also calls for an end to the plunder of Western Sahara's natural resources and the damage to its environment particularly unlawful fishing and groundwater depletion;

Furthermore, ACFID Conference expresses its deep concern for the delay in organizing the referendum of self-determination in Western Sahara. text goes here. For example, ACFID and its Members remain concerned about human rights in the following countries and encourage Australia to engage in dialogue and make strong national and/or joint statements in relation to each of these situations. As a member of the HRC, Australia must be a strong voice in promoting human rights, and in speaking out when violations occur.

Resolutions

ACFID Council calls on Members to:

- i. Support the right of the Saharawi people to self-determination and independence;
- ii. Stand in solidarity with the people of Western Sahara and provide all due assistance in their struggle for freedom and dignity.

ACFID Council calls on the Australian Government to:

- i. Ensure that there is sufficient humanitarian and development assistance to the Saharawi refugees
- ii. Extend all due assistance to the UN in its efforts to organise a free and fair referendum for the people of Western Sahara;
- iii. Raise human rights abuses during its bilateral meetings with the Moroccan authorities and urge them to respect the basic rights of the people of Western Sahara;
- iv. Declare imports of resources from occupied Western Sahara not permitted until the decolonisation of the Territory is completed;

ACFID Council calls on the UN to:

- i. proceed with the implementation of the peace plan and the organization of the referendum of self-determination without further delay;
- ii. extend the mandate of its mission in Western Sahara (MINURSO) to include human rights monitoring and reporting and to pressure Morocco to allow international observers, NGOs and the media to visit the Territory without any restrictions;
- iii. establish a UN Council for the Natural Resources of Western Sahara to legislate for and oversee the development of natural resources in the Territory until the decolonisation process is achieved.

Moved: Kate Lee, EO, Union Aid Abroad – APHEDA

Seconded: Michelle Higelin, CEO, ActionAid