

Western Sahara: Human Rights Violations reported between January 1, 2015 and June 30, 2015

Introduction

Reports and news coverage from the non-self-governing territory of Western Sahara suggest that Moroccan authorities continue committing serious human rights violations against the Sahrawi people. Sahrawis living in Western Sahara are subject to regular violations of their rights to be free from torture and arbitrary arrests, and their rights to assembly, expression, movement, and security.

On April 28, 2015 the United Nations Security Council voted to extend for another year the United Nations Mission for the Referendum in Western Sahara (MINURSO), the peacekeeping mission in Western Sahara.¹ However, the Council failed once again to expand MINURSO's mandate to include a human rights monitoring and reporting mechanism, as called for by Sahrawi civil society organizations. As a result, there is no international mechanism dedicated to human rights in Western Sahara.

In compiling this report, it must be noted that information regarding what is happening in Western Sahara is notoriously difficult to ascertain. There is a lack of international attention to the issue, meaning that mainstream news coverage is minimal. Morocco often blocks outside observers from traveling to the region. For the first two months covered by this report, this lack of access also extended to the current head of the MINURSO mission, who was forced to undertake her duties from outside the region. Morocco also engages in an aggressive media and lobbying effort designed to create a positive narrative about Morocco's role in Western Sahara and ultimately block any action that is not consistent with Morocco's policies. This includes denying there are any human rights abuses taking place in Western Sahara.

In order to demonstrate what allegations exist, and what violations the United Nations should monitor and investigate, Robert F. Kennedy Human Rights collects and reports these allegations on a bi-annual basis. What follows is an aggregation of human rights violations as reported on traditional and social media, as well as from sources on the ground, between January 1, 2015 and June 30, 2015.

In the period of time covered by this report, Robert F. Kennedy Human Rights identified over 70 separate instances of human rights violations, many involving multiple victims. Most of the abuses are violations of the right to be free from arbitrary arrest, the right to freedom of assembly and expression, and the right

¹ MINURSO was established in 1991 under UNSC Resolution 690 as part of the Settlement Plan, which paved the way for a cease-fire in the conflict over Western Sahara between Morocco and the Polisario Front. MINURSO's mandate at the time included its responsibility to conduct a referendum regarding Western Sahara's political future; there is, however, currently no plan to hold the referendum. MINURSO is also the only UN peacekeeping mission established since 1978 to operate without a human rights monitoring capacity. Although UNSC Resolution 1979 recommends that one should be established, this has not yet happened due to pressure from Morocco and its allies on the UN Security Council.

to freedom of movement. There are instances, however, of physical mistreatment and torture, landmine injuries and death, and death while in detention.

Among the cases covered in this report are:

- Mohamed Lamine Haidala, a young Sahrawi who died in February at the hands of several Moroccans in the city of El Aaiun. After he was beaten and stabbed, he was detained by police and denied proper medical treatment, eventually succumbing to his injuries more than a week after he was attacked. He was not given any medical diagnosis and when he died, his family was not given access to the body. Subsequently, his family members were harassed for participating in a demonstration seeking answers. His mother commenced a hunger strike that continued for more than one month, demanding an investigation, which the authorities so far have failed to conduct.
- Abdelbagi Aliyen Antahah, a Sahrawi prisoner, died while in solitary confinement as a result of torture and lack of medical attention by the prison administration. He was put in solitary confinement because he protested the terrible prison conditions. Similarly, Sahrawi political prisoner Abdelhay Cheihb died in prison in Tiznit as a result of the failure of the prison authorities to provide him with adequate medical attention.
- Three female Spanish activists who were members of the Spanish movement of solidarity with the Sahrawi people (CEAS-Sahara), namely María Ovejero Alonso, Raquel Salillas Redrado, and Lucía Callén Herrero, were expelled by the Moroccan authorities from El Aaiun. The purpose of their visit was to assess the human rights situation in Western Sahara.
- Moroccan police attacked the home of Aminatou Haidar, Sahrawi activist and 2008 RFK Human Rights Award Laureate. She, along with members of CODESA, staff members of Office of the High Commissioner for Human Rights and lawyers, Mr Al-Habib Al-Jazeera, Mr. Mohamed Abu-Khaled and Mr. Mohamed Fadel Al-Laili, were trapped in the home for two hours. A UN vehicle and a CODESA member's car were damaged during the attack.

Taken as a whole, the frequency and nature of the abuses paints a grim picture of the human rights situation in Western Sahara. Those who wish to organize, speak out against a government policy they disagree with, or advocate for political objectives face swift and harsh repression by Morocco. At the same time, the freedom of movement is curtailed and people are harassed or arbitrarily detained. The victims of these abuses have no credible avenue for seeking redress or airing their grievances.

Alleged Human Rights Violations

Arbitrary Arrests & Detainee Rights

As a signatory to the Convention against Torture and the International Covenant for Civil and Political Rights, specifically Articles 2.2 and 14-17, the Moroccan state is prohibited from using torture and is bound to respect the due process rights of detainees. Despite this, numerous reports of torture, arbitrary arrests, and police-initiated kidnappings in the Western Sahara continue to surface:

January 2: The health of Abdelkarim Bushelga deteriorated while in prison in El Aaiun, and he reportedly suffered from severe headaches and pain, which caused him to scream and cry. Despite his pain, prison authorities failed to provide adequate medical attention. Abdelkarim Bushelga

was arrested in El Aaiun in July 2014 and tortured in Moroccan prison for his political activism in defense of the rights of the Sahrawi people.²

January 8: The Sahrawi political prisoners of Gdim Izik group, namely Bashir Khada, Bekay Elarabi, Mohamed Khouna Babeitt and Abdel Jalil Laroussi, announced a hunger strike demanding their legitimate rights and improvements in their conditions inside Salé prison.³

January 8: The Sahrawi political prisoner Brahim Daudi, detained in Inzeghan prison, started an open hunger strike protesting ill-treatment by the prison administration, which had caused his health to deteriorate.⁴ In October 2014 it was reported that he had tuberculosis and asthma, for which he was not given proper medical attention by the prison authorities.⁵

January 25: Sahrawi political prisoner Abdul Khaliq Almuati began a hunger strike on January 15 to protest his ill treatment in the Moroccan prison in Ait Melloul, and to demand the right to a fair trial. The prison administration is reportedly pressuring him and other political prisoners to end their hunger strikes.⁶

January 27: Sahrawi prisoner Abdelbagi Aliyen Antahah, who had been in solitary confinement for nearly one week, died as a result of torture and lack of medical attention by the prison administration in Black prison in El Aaiun.⁷ He was put into solitary confinement on January 21 because he protested the terrible prison conditions.⁸ The two detainees who witnessed the torture, Jamal Ifli and Adda Rabagah, were moved to an unknown location after the death of Abdelbagi Aliyen Antahah.⁹

January 31 - February 8: On January 31 in El Aaiun, Mohamed Lamine Haidala was brutally attacked by five Moroccan residents and ultimately died as a result of the injuries he sustained. One of the accused was the owner of a furniture store located in front of Mr. Haidala's grandparents' home, which is where the incident took place. The five men, who were with their nephews and employees, insulted Mr. Haidala for being Sahrawi. Mr. Haidala reacted, and the owner of the furniture store threw a rock at his chest, which caused him to fall to the ground. At this point, the group of five Moroccans lunged at Mr. Haidala and began beating him; meanwhile one man stabbed him in the neck. Mr. Haidala soon lost consciousness during this attack. Police officers and an ambulance arrived at the scene and took Mr. Haidala to Mulay al-Hassan Ben Mehdi Hospital in El Aaiun while his attackers remained free. Police forces accompanied Mr. Haidala to the emergency room, where he received stitches without anesthesia or disinfectants. According to reports, Mr. Haidala sustained severe injuries to his head, neck, and right arm.

² Sahara Press Service, Deterioration of health of Sahrawi political prisoner,

<http://www.spsrasd.info/en/content/deterioration-health-sahrawi-political-prisoner>

³ Sahara Press Service, Sahrawi political prisoners initiate hunger strike in Salé prison,

<http://www.spsrasd.info/en/content/Sahrawi-political-prisoners-initiate-hunger-strike-salé-prison>

⁴ Sahara Press Service, Sahrawi political prisoner starts open hunger strike,

<http://www.spsrasd.info/en/content/Sahrawi-political-prisoner-starts-open-hunger-strike-0>

⁵ Adala UK Human Rights for Western Sahara, Sahrawi political prisoner in life threatening situation, <http://adala.uk.org/2014/10/16/sahrawi-political-prisoner-in-life-threatening-situation/>

⁶ Sahara Press Service, Sahrawi political prisoner suffers serious health situation,

<http://www.spsrasd.info/en/content/sahrawi-political-prisoner-suffers-serious-health-situation>

⁷ Sahara Press Service, Sahrawi prisoner dies in jail, <http://www.spsrasd.info/en/content/Sahrawi-prisoner-dies-jail>

⁸ Adala UK Human Rights for Western Sahara, Another Sahrawi dies in a Moroccan prison due to medical negligence, <http://adala.uk.org/2015/02/19/another-sahrawi-dies-in-a-moroccan-prison-due-to-medical-negligence/>

⁹ *Id.*

While writhing in pain, he was taken to the Central Police Station in El Aaiun and placed in a prison cell that contained no bed or sheets. Between the night of January 31, the day the attack first occurred, and the morning of February 2, Mr. Haidala was moved to and from the police station to the hospital three times and consistently received inadequate medical treatment. Officers did not allow Mr. Haidala's family to see him or inquire about his health until the morning of February 2, when he was taken to the hospital and injected with sedatives, then taken in front of a jury with the Attorney General, who asked for a medical certificate. Mr. Haidala's uncle, Sidi Haddi, went to get a medical certificate from Dr. Hashimi Noufel at Mulay al-Hassan Ben Mehdi Hospital, but the doctor refused to provide the certificate. Throughout this time, Mr. Haidala remained in court without any form of medical attention, food, or water. Upon his uncle's return without a medical certificate, Mr. Haidala was temporarily released and allowed to return to his family. It was reported that his attackers voluntarily went to the police station for interrogation, but were released within an hour. At home, Mr. Haidala was in so much pain that he could not sleep. His family had an ambulance take him back to Mulay al-Hassan Ben Mehdi hospital on the night of February 2, and Dr. Hashimi Noufel told Haidala's family that his health was normal and attempted to release him from the hospital after giving him oxygen and another sedative. His family refused to take him home that night, and he remained in the emergency room all night unattended and untreated. The following day, February 3, Mr. Haidala was transferred to Mulay al-Hassan II Hospital in El Aaiun where he spent the night screaming in pain and falling in and out of consciousness. He was treated by Dr. Karima Derghal, who initially evaluated Mr. Haidala's health over the radio while he was still at Mulay al-Hassan Ben Mehdi Hospital. Once Mr. Haidala arrived to Hassan II Hospital, she said his health was dire, and called for his immediate transfer to the Hassan II Hospital in Agadir. On February 5 he was moved to Agadir by ambulance. The hospital staff conducted preliminary tests for a possible surgery, but discovered an infection that seemed to be caused by internal hemorrhaging. Mr. Haidala ultimately suffered serious complications from the injuries he sustained on January 31, and he died on February 8, 2015 at approximately 3:50 pm after being consistently neglected at hospitals and medical clinics throughout El Aaiun and Agadir. Local police immediately confiscated Mr. Haidala's body upon his death, and then refused to conduct an autopsy and investigate the circumstances of his death.¹⁰

February 3: The Court of Morocco in El Aaiun sentenced Abdelfatah Dalal, a Sahrawi political prisoner, to one year imprisonment for participating in peaceful protests in Guleimim, southern Morocco, in August 2014. The peaceful protests were calling for Sahrawi peoples' right to exercise self-determination.¹¹

February 5: The Sahrawi prisoner, Abdelhay Cheihb, died in prison in Tiznit, Morocco. His health had deteriorated and the Moroccan prison administration did not provide adequate medical attention.¹²

¹⁰ Por un Sahara Libre, Marruecos entierra el cadaver de un saharai asesinado por colonos en ausencia de su familia, <http://porunsaharalibre.org/2015/02/marruecos-entierra-el-cadaver-de-un-saharai-asesinado-por-colonos-en-ausencia-de-su-familia/>; Press Conference, Takbar Haddi hunger strike, <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=ymlnFpd7RDY0>; Adala UK Human Rights for Western Sahara, Death of Sahrawi youth at the hands of Moroccan settlers, <http://adalauk.org/2015/02/18/death-of-sahrawi-youth-at-the-hands-of-moroccan-settlers/#more-1646>; Western Sahara Human Rights Watch, Another Sahrawi killed by Morocco in a continued and silent genocide against Sahrawi's, <http://www.wshrw.org/en/otro-saharai-asesinado-por-marruecos-en-un-continuo-y-silencioso-genocidio-contra-los-saharais/>

¹¹ Sahara Press Service, Sahrawi political prisoner sentenced to one year in prison, <http://www.spsrasd.info/en/content/Sahrawi-political-prisoner-sentenced-one-year-prison>

¹² Sahara Press Service, New Sahrawi prisoner dies in Moroccan jail, <http://www.spsrasd.info/en/content/new->

February 9: The family of Abdelkarim Bushelga, in prison in El Aaiun for participating in a peaceful protest for self-determination, claimed that he was suffering from severe mental health issues. His family reported that he had lost his memory and was in a state of hysteria. The family claimed that the prison refused to treat the underlying condition, and was instead forcing him to take calming medication.¹³

February 12: Former political prisoner and human rights activist Youssef Sidi Ifni Lembaidiy was arrested and detained in an unknown location. He reportedly chanted slogans in favor of Western Sahara independence while being arrested.¹⁴

February 17: The Court of Morocco in El Aaiun delayed for the third time in a row the trial of the Sahrawi prisoner Abdeljaleg Al-Markhi, who was arrested for his participation in various demonstrations calling for the right of Sahrawi people to self-determination and independence.¹⁵

February 18: Moroccan police kidnapped Lalla Al-Mosawi in El Aaiun, threatened to sexually assault her, and subjected her to torture for 10 hours. The woman was five months pregnant at the time, but the abuse resulted in a miscarriage.¹⁶

February 18: The Sahrawi political prisoner Abdellahi Boukyud commenced a hunger strike in protest of the physical assaults and verbal abuses he suffered in Moroccan prison in Tiznit. Abdellahi Boukyud is serving a 4-year prison term after being arrested in 2013 in Guleimim, southern Morocco, for his political views supporting the Sahrawi people's right to self-determination.¹⁷

March 3: Moroccan authorities refused to allow Sahrawi political prisoner Bashir Jada to attend a scheduled and approved medical examination outside the Salé prison.¹⁸

March 3: Authorities at the Salé prison refused to allow Sahrawi political prisoner, Adaich Daf, to have visitation rights.¹⁹

March 3 – April 9: On March 3, Moroccan prison authorities in Salé transferred Mbarek Daoudi, a Sahrawi political prisoner who had been on a hunger strike for 72 hours, to an unknown destination. He was imprisoned due to his political views in favor of Sahrawi people's right to

[Sahrawi-prisoner-dies-moroccan-jail](#); Adala UK Human Rights for Western Sahara, Another Sahrawi dies in a Moroccan prison due to medical negligence, <http://adalauk.org/2015/02/19/another-sahrawi-dies-in-a-moroccan-prison-due-to-medical-negligence/>

¹³ Por Un Sahara Libre, El preso político saharauí Abdelkarim Buchalga sufre pérdida completa de memoria en la cárcel de El Aaiún ocupado, <http://porunsaharalibre.org/2015/02/el-presopolitico-saharau-abdelkarim-buchalga-sufre-perdida-completa-de-memoria-en-la-carcel-de-el-aiun-ocupado>

¹⁴ Por Un Sahara Libre, Detención del Activista de Derechos Humanos, Yusef Lembaidiy, <http://porunsaharalibre.org/2015/02/detencion-del-activista-de-derechos-humanos-yusef-lembaidiy/>

¹⁵ Sahara Press Service, Trial of Sahrawi political prisoner adjourned until February 23rd, <http://www.spsrasd.info/en/content/trial-sahrawi-political-prisoner-adjourned-until-february-23rd>

¹⁶ Sahara Press Service, Sahrawi woman aborted under Moroccan torture, <http://www.spsrasd.info/en/content/Sahrawi-woman-aborted-under-moroccan-torture>

¹⁷ Sahara Press Service, Sahrawi political prisoner begins open hunger strike, <http://www.spsrasd.info/en/content/Sahrawi-political-prisoner-begins-open-hunger-strike>

¹⁸ Sahara Press Service, Moroccan authorities deprive Sahrawi political prisoner of his right to treatment,

<http://www.spsrasd.info/en/content/moroccan-authorities-deprive-sahrawi-political-prisoner-his-right-treatment>

¹⁹ *Id.*

self-determination.²⁰ Mr. Daoudi is a former member of the Moroccan military and now a supporter of greater rights for the people of Western Sahara. On March 9, a Moroccan military court²¹ sentenced him to three months imprisonment and imposed a fine of 1000 Moroccan Dirhams (approximately \$100).²² While he was officially charged with possession of a weapon, Mr. Daoudi believes that his sentence is the result of his stance on the Western Sahara conflict and his actions calling for the right of self-determination of the Sahrawi people.²³ On March 12, Mr. Daoudi began an unlimited hunger strike as a protest for being transferred to the Moroccan prison in Ait Melloul.²⁴ The prosecutor in the case appealed the three month sentence to the Appellate Court in Agadir and on April 9 was able to secure a longer jail term of six months.²⁵

March 4: Moroccan police came to the family home of Sahrawi activist and former political prisoner, Ghali Bouhala, in El Aaiun and forced him to get into their police car. Ghali Bouhala had previously been kidnapped and tortured by Moroccan security forces and had served three years in prison for taking part in peaceful demonstrations for the right of Sahrawi people to self-determination and independence.²⁶

March 24: Sahrawi prisoner, Ahmed S'bai, who is serving a life sentence, commenced a hunger strike to protest the inhumane conditions and mistreatment by the administration in Salé prison, and to pressure the prison administration to open an investigation into physical and psychological torture of human rights activists in the prison.²⁷

April 16: Abdelkhalik Elmarkhi, who is a member of the Sahrawi Committee for the Defense of Human Rights and Moroccan Association for Human Rights, commenced a hunger strike to protest being denied visits while in detention in Ait Melloul prison, and to protest the prohibition on communicating with his family and the outside world.²⁸ On May 6, he ended the strike after the authorities agreed to fulfill some of his demands and end ill treatment.²⁹

April 29: A Moroccan court in El Aaiun postponed until June 30 the trial of the Sahrawi political prisoners Mohamed Ali Saadi, Yusef Buzeid, Mohamed Karnit, Yasin Sidati, Aziz Hramch, and Hafed Toubali. They were arrested on May 4, 2013 for participating in a demonstration calling

²⁰ Sahara Press Service, Sahrawi political prisoner transferred to unknown destination,

<http://www.spsrasd.info/en/content/sahrawi-political-prisoner-transferred-unknown-destination>

²¹ Human Rights Watch, World Report 2015, http://www.hrw.org/sites/default/files/wr2015_web.pdf, p. 388.

²² Sahara Press Service, Political prisoner Mbarek Daoudi sentenced to 3 months in prison,

<http://www.spsrasd.info/en/content/political-prisoner-mbarek-daoudi-sentenced-3-months-prison>

²³ Front Line Defenders, Mbarek Daoudi sentenced to six month's imprisonment,

<https://www.frontlinedefenders.org/node/28544>; Adala UK Human Rights for Western Sahara, The Trial of Saharawi Activist Embarek Daoudi, <http://adala.uk.org/2015/03/12/the-trial-of-saharawi-activist-embarek-daoudi-09032015/>

²⁴ Sahara Press Service, Sahrawi political prisoner Mbarek Daudi begins unlimited hunger strike open,

<http://www.spsrasd.info/en/content/Sahrawi-political-prisoner-mbarek-daudi-begins-unlimited-hunger-strike-open>

²⁵ Front Line Defenders, Mbarek Daoudi sentenced to six month's imprisonment,

<https://www.frontlinedefenders.org/node/28544>

²⁶ Sahara Press Service, Moroccan occupying forces abduct Sahrawi activist,

<http://www.spsrasd.info/en/content/moroccan-occupying-forces-abduct-saharawi-activist>

²⁷ Sahara Press Service, Sahrawi political prisoner Ahmed S'bai starts unlimited hunger strike,

<http://www.spsrasd.info/en/content/Sahrawi-political-prisoner-ahmed-sbai-starts-unlimited-hunger-strike>

²⁸ Front Line Defenders, Update: Western Sahara – Abdelkhalik Elmarkhi resumes hunger strike,

<https://www.frontlinedefenders.org/node/28617>

²⁹ Front Line Defenders, Update: Western Sahara – Abdelkhalik Elmarkhi ends hunger strike,

<https://www.frontlinedefenders.org/node/28666#sthash.7RekFrr9.dpuf>

for the right of the Sahrawi people to self-determination. While they are now in temporary release status, Mohamed Ali Saadi, Yusef Buzeid, Mohamed Karnit, Yasin Sidati, Aziz Hramch spent five months in the Black Prison in El Aaiun, and Hafed Toubali spent six months in prison in Tiznit, Morocco.³⁰

May 2: Moroccan police in Dakhla detained four young Sahrawis, namely Mohamed Sidi Salem, Mansur Sbaai, Wannati Rabani, and Sidahmed Mabruk, together with the former Saharawi political prisoner Atiqu Barraï.³¹ They were arrested for their participation in several peaceful demonstrations calling for the right of the Sahrawi people to self-determination and denouncing the UN Security Council's Resolution 2218 on Western Sahara.³² On May 11, a Moroccan court in Dajla postponed their trial. Atiqu Barraï is a member of the Western Sahara Organization against Torture and an advocate for the right of self-determination of Sahrawi people.³³

May 20: Sahrawi political prisoner Bouamud Sidi began an open hunger strike demanding access to medical treatment and for improvements to conditions in the Moroccan prison in Taroudant.³⁴

June 6: Sahrawi activist Saleh Lbasir was arrested by Moroccan security forces on the basis of accusations obtained under torture and detained in the Black Prison in El Aaiun.³⁵

June 28: The Court of Morocco in El Aaiun sentenced Ghali Zigham, who was arrested in May, to eight months imprisonment for participating in peaceful demonstrations demanding the right to self-determination and expressing solidarity with political prisoners.³⁶

Entry Rights & Freedom of Movement

Bound by its signature to the International Covenant for Civil and Political Rights, specifically Articles 12-13, Morocco has a duty to respect the freedom of movement and to subject aliens to expulsion only in accordance with the law and under limited circumstances. Despite this, Moroccan authorities have subjected Sahrawi citizens and non-Sahrawi lawyers, human rights activists, and journalists to extensive instances of expulsion and severely limited their movement.

January 27: Three female Spanish activists, María Ovejero Alonso, Raquel Salillas Redrado, and Lucía Callén Herrero, who came to assess the human rights situation in Western Sahara, were expelled by the Moroccan authorities from El Aaiun. They were members of the Spanish movement of solidarity with the Sahrawi people (CEAS-Sahara).³⁷

³⁰ Sahara Press Service, Moroccan occupying authorities postpone trial of Sahrawi political detainees, <http://www.spsrasd.info/en/content/moroccan-occupying-authorities-postpone-trial-Sahrawi-political-detainees>

³¹ Adala UK Human Rights for Western Sahara, Urgent News from the City of Dakhla, <http://adalauk.org/2015/05/02/urgent-news-from-the-city-of-dakhla/>

³² Sahara Press Service, Trial of Sahrawi human rights defender adjourned until May 18, <http://www.spsrasd.info/en/content/trial-Sahrawi-human-rights-defender-adjourned-until-may-18th>

³³ Front Line Defenders, Western Sahara – Charges formalised at opening of trial against Atiqu Barraï, <https://www.frontlinedefenders.org/node/28714>

³⁴ Sahara Press Service, Sahrawi political prisoner Bouamud Sidi begins open hunger strike, <http://www.spsrasd.info/en/content/Sahrawi-political-prisoner-bouamud-sidi-begins-open-hunger-strike>

³⁵ Sahara Press Service, President of Republic calls UN to intervene for release of Salah Lebsir, <http://www.spsrasd.info/en/content/president-republic-calls-un-intervene-release-salah-lebsir>

³⁶ Sahara Press Service, Saharawi political prisoner sentenced to 8 months in prison, <http://www.spsrasd.info/en/content/saharawi-political-prisoner-sentenced-8-months-prison>

³⁷ Sahara Press Service, Spanish activists expelled from occupied El Aaiun,

February 22: Moroccan authorities expelled from Dakhla four Spanish activists, Patricia Gutiérrez, Luz María Rodríguez, Juan Francisco, and Pedro Santana. They had intended to inquire about the human rights situation and train Sahrawi activists.³⁸

February 24: The police forced Isabel Lourenço, European coordinator of the NGO Adala UK, to leave Western Sahara when she arrived in El Aaiun in support of Saharawi prisoners. The police also physically harassed her, damaged her laptop and prohibited her from making outside calls.³⁹

March 23: Police attacked Salha Butenguiza and Mahfuda Lakgir when they were visiting Western Sahara to report on the trial of Mahmoud El-Haissan. Salha Butenguiza is a journalist and member of the NGO Adala UK. Mahfuda Lakgir is an activist and member of the Gdeim Izik Committee.⁴⁰

March 30: Moroccan occupying authorities prevented two Norwegian activists, Thea Njastad and Martine Jahre, from travelling to Dakhla without providing them with convincing reasons. The activists had come to Boujdour to research the human rights situation in the occupied territories. They were particularly interested in obtaining the Sahrawi's views on the Moroccan presence in the territory and their energy operations.⁴¹ Moroccan security and military officials arrested them in Imitlan locality.⁴²

April 15: Moroccan police officers expelled French citizen and human rights activist Marion Martin from Western Sahara and forced her to return to Casablanca. The Police then came to her hotel and forced her to board a plane to Paris.⁴³

April 17: Moroccan police detained and interrogated five Germans in Marrakech for wearing t-shirts showing a map of Morocco without Western Sahara. They were taken to a police station and interrogated, and then forced to leave their t-shirts at the police station before being released.⁴⁴

April 27: Moroccan police officers pushed and intimidated the Adala UK member Sidi Ahmed Abdal Mohamed Fadel and his brother in El Aaiun, threatening to detain them if they did not leave the country. Additionally, a group of police monitored his family house.⁴⁵ He was also

<http://www.spsrasd.info/en/content/spanish-activists-expelled-occupied-el-aaiun>; CEAS-Sahara, Nueva expulsión del Sahara occidental, <http://ceas-sahara.es/spip.php?article1303>

³⁸ Sahara Press Service, Moroccan authorities expel Canary activists from occupied Dajla,

<http://www.spsrasd.info/en/content/moroccan-authorities-expel-canary-activists-occupied-dajla>

³⁹ Adala UK Human Rights for Western Sahara, Expulsion of Adala UK member from Western Sahara,

<http://adala.uk.org/2015/02/24/expulsion-of-adala-uk-member-from-western-sahara/#more-1665>

⁴⁰ Adala UK Human Rights for Western Sahara, Adala UK denounces increase in violence against human rights activists in Occupied Territories of Western Sahara, <http://adala.uk.org/2015/03/23/adala-uk-denounces-increase-in-violence-against-human-rights-activists-in-occupied-territories-of-western-sahara/>

⁴¹ The Norwegian Support Committee for Western Sahara, Norwegian delegation expelled from city in occupied Western Sahara, <http://www.vest-sahara.no/a49x2205>

⁴² Sahara Press Service, Morocco bans two Norwegian activists from visiting occupied city of Dakhla,

<http://www.spsrasd.info/en/content/morocco-bans-two-norwegian-activists-visiting-occupied-city-dakhla>

⁴³ Adala UK Human Rights for Western Sahara, Human Rights Violations continue during UN delegation visit,

<http://adala.uk.org/2015/04/21/human-rights-violations-continue-during-un-delegation-visit/>

⁴⁴ *Id.*

⁴⁵ Adala UK Human Rights for Western Sahara, A group of Moroccan plain clothes police officers is monitoring the family home of Adala UK member, <http://adala.uk.org/2015/05/01/a-group-of-moroccan-plain-clothes-police-officers-is-monitoring-the-family-home-of-adala-uk-member/>

followed by Moroccan police officers throughout his stay.⁴⁶

June 21: The Moroccan authorities banned Hamad Anasiri, a Sahrawi human rights activist, from attending the 29th session of the United Nations Human Rights Council in Geneva, despite having the necessary visa.⁴⁷

Freedom of Assembly & Expression

Morocco is bound by its international obligations to respect the rights of individuals to hold opinions and to exercise freedom of expression, as per Article 19 of the International Covenant for Civil and Political Rights, as well as to respect the rights of individuals to peaceful assembly, as per Article 21. Despite this, the Moroccan authorities continue to violently disperse peaceful protests in the Western Sahara.

January 2: Moroccan forces repressed a peaceful protest in Dakhla by chasing protesters and arresting four. The protesters were participating in a peaceful demonstration in which they raised the Western Sahara flag and demanded self-determination and independence for the Sahrawi people.⁴⁸

January 4: Moroccan forces repressed within half an hour a peaceful demonstration in Dakhla by a group of Sahrawis protesting the exploitation of natural resources and demanding better socio-economic conditions for Sahrawis.⁴⁹

January 5: Moroccan occupying authorities violently intervened in a peaceful sit-in organized by a group of unemployed Sahrawi graduates in El Aaiun. The graduates were demanding the right to work, the right to gather and organize peaceful demonstrations, and to benefit from all natural resources of Western Sahara.⁵⁰

January 10: Moroccan police physically and verbally abused several Sahrawi women holding a peaceful demonstration in El Aaiun. The police wore both uniforms and plain clothes and used sticks, punching and kicking the protestors, causing varying degrees of injuries.⁵¹

January 13: Moroccan judicial police summoned Ayache Deuihi to the security station in El

⁴⁶ Pravda.ru, Serious Human Rights violations by Morocco in Western Sahara,

http://english.pravda.ru/world/europe/24-06-2015/131076-morocco_violations-0/#sthash.d1nHO9aQ.dpuf

⁴⁷ Sahara Press Service, Saharawi delegation condemn preventing Sahrawi activist Anasiri from attending UNHRC 29th Session, <http://www.spsrasd.info/en/content/saharawi-delegation-condemn-preventing-sahrawi-activist-anasiri-attending-unhrc-29th-session>

⁴⁸ Sahara Press Service, Peaceful demonstration in occupied city of Dakhla demanding self-determination of Sahrawi people, <http://www.spsrasd.info/en/content/peaceful-demonstration-occupied-city-dakhla-demanding-self-determination-sahrawi-people>

⁴⁹ Por Un Sahara Libre, La población saharauí en Dajla ocupada, se manifiesta contra el expolio marroquí de los recursos naturales y denuncian exportaciones ilegales de pescado en mal estado a Alemania y Francia, <http://porunsaharalibre.org/2015/01/la-poblacion-saharai-en-dajla-ocupada-se-manifiesta-contra-el-expolio-marroqui-de-los-recursos-naturales-y-denuncian-exportaciones-ilegales-de-pescado-en-mal-estado-a-alemania-y-francia/>

⁵⁰ Sahara Press Service, Moroccan occupying authorities “violently” intervene against peaceful sit-in of unemployed Sahrawis, <http://www.spsrasd.info/en/content/moroccan-occupying-authorities-“violently”-intervene-against-peaceful-sit-unemployed-saharaw>

⁵¹ Sahara Press Service, Sahrawi women banned from their right to peaceful protest in occupied El Aaiun, <http://www.spsrasd.info/en/content/sahrawi-women-banned-their-right-peaceful-protest-occupied-el-aiun>

Aaiun. No reason for the summons was given.⁵² Ayache Deuihi is a Sahrawi blogger who had written about human rights violations committed by Moroccan authorities targeting Sahrawi people.

January 18: Moroccan forces prevented several Sahrawis, including Abdelhay Toubali and Ali Saadouni, from carrying out a peaceful march in El Aaiun.⁵³

January 20: Moroccan police repressed violently a protest in Smara by Sahrawis calling for independence. The police raided the homes of the protesters and the inhabitants were beaten.⁵⁴

January 25: Moroccan security forces attacked a peaceful protest in El Aaiun requesting equal employment for Sahrawis in front of the Moroccan Workers' Union. Among the people who were attacked was Babit El Kori, the president of the Tomorrow Association for Human Rights.⁵⁵

January 28 or January 31: During the filming of an interview with two former political prisoners who had participated in the Gdiem Izik protests, approximately 20 Moroccan police cars surrounded the home where the interview was taking place. The home belonged to Fatimatou Dahouar, a Sahrawi independence activist who had previously been forcibly disappeared in a Moroccan secret detention center. He had invited the journalists to use his home as the set of the interview. When Hayat El Khaldi, the journalist conducting the interview, and Mohamed Mayara and Zayou Abdelrehmane, the former political prisoners being interviewed, left the home, the officers began insulting them and spitting on their car. One high ranking officer, Banbrahim Brahim, reportedly threatened Mohamed Mayara by saying that he would kidnap him and his family and lock them in a secret detention center, just as they had with his father. Mohamed Mayara's father was disappeared in 1976 and died in detention in 1977. Another journalist who attended the interview, Mamine Hashimi, head of technical services at Equipe Média, was attacked by the police officers when he left the house a few minutes later. He suffered injuries that required medical attention. Two other journalists who had attended the interview, Leili Hamoud and Zerouali Mohamed Saleh, were forced to remain in the home until after midnight, when the police had left.⁵⁶

February 3: Moroccan security forces blocked a peaceful demonstration in El Aaiun by Sahrawi women in support of Sahrawi political prisoners, demanding recognition of Sahrawi people's right to self-determination, and to share in the benefits of the exploitation of their natural resources.⁵⁷

⁵² Por Un Sahara Libre, Bloguero saharauí requerido por la policía marroquí en El Aaiun ocupado, <http://porunsaharalibre.org/2015/01/bloguero-saharauí-requerido-por-la-policía-marroquí-en-el-aiun-ocupado/>; Sahara Press Service, Moroccan judicial police summons Sahrawi, blogger, <http://www.spsrasd.info/en/content/moroccan-judicial-police-summons-saharawi-blogger>

⁵³ Por Un Sahara Libre, La policía marroquí impide una marcha pacífica y reprime activistas saharauis de derechos humanos en El Aaiún ocupado, <http://porunsaharalibre.org/2015/01/la-policía-marroquí-impide-una-marcha-pacífica-y-reprime-activistas-saharauis-de-derechos-humanos-en-el-aiun-ocupado/>

⁵⁴ Por Un Sahara Libre, Los militares marroquíes arremeten contra manifestantes saharauis en la ciudad ocupada Smara, <http://porunsaharalibre.org/2015/01/los-militares-marroquíes-arremeten-contra-manifestantes-saharauis-en-la-ciudad-ocupada-smara/>

⁵⁵ Front Line Defenders, Morocco/Western Sahara – Human rights defender Babit El Kori assaulted, <https://www.frontlinedefenders.org/node/28008#.VNA3iO8wBH9.twitter>

⁵⁶ Por un Sahara Libre, Nueva agresión de las fuerzas de ocupación marroquíes a periodistas saharauis, <http://porunsaharalibre.org/2015/01/nueva-agresion-de-las-fuerzas-de-ocupacion-marroquies-a-periodistas-saharauis/>

⁵⁷ Sahara Press Service, Moroccan occupying authorities ban peaceful protests in El Aaiun,

February 8: Moroccan forces in civilian clothing and in uniform repressed a peaceful demonstration in El Aaiun that supported Sahrawi political prisoners and condemned the systematic suppression of Sahrawi people. The security forces used stones and sticks to disperse the demonstrators.⁵⁸

February 9: The Moroccan police intervened brutally against a demonstration in El Aaiun organized by the family of Mohamed Lamine Haidala following his death. Six people were injured, including four girls related to Mohamed Lamine Haidala, a young man, and Ali Saadouni.⁵⁹

February 10: Moroccan police kidnapped Ali Saadouni, who participated in the demonstration with Mohamed Lamine Haidala's family in El Aaiun. He was beaten and intimidated to not participate in demonstrations with Mohamed Lamine Haidala's family and not to divulge information about being tortured.⁶⁰

February 15: Moroccan occupation forces violently attacked Sahrawi demonstrators who participated in a peaceful sit-in in Smara in solidarity with political prisoners, chanting slogans demanding self-determination to Sahrawi people. At least two were hospitalised.⁶¹

February 16: A group of local NGOs convened a peaceful demonstration in El Aaiun to express solidarity with the family of Mohamed Lamine Haidala. The demonstration was rapidly put down, with a number of streets in the city, including Smara Road, blocked and filled with police. Police used water cannons to disperse protesters. Mehdi Benkadi was detained during the dispersal. Among those injured during the dispersal were: CODAPSO members Bad Mahjoub, Dagja Lachgar, and Najat Jnaibila, Committee of Culture members Mohamed Hamia and Rukaia Hawasi, as well as Ali Saadouni and Omar Duih.⁶²

February 18: Moroccan police in El Aaiun kidnapped a Sahrawi minor boy, Brahim Mraikl, for his alleged participation in peaceful demonstrations. The police beat and insulted him.⁶³

February 23: Security forces attacked dozens of Sahrawi protestors with stones as they participated in a peaceful demonstration in Smara demanding the right of self-determination for the Sahrawi people.⁶⁴

<http://www.spsrasd.info/en/content/moroccan-occupying-authorities-ban-peaceful-protests-el-aaiun>

⁵⁸ Sahara Press Service, Repression of peaceful demonstration in occupied city of El Aaiun, <http://www.spsrasd.info/en/content/repression-peaceful-demonstration-occupied-city-el-aaiun>; Sahara Press Service, Moroccan occupation forces still violate human rights, <http://www.spsrasd.info/en/content/moroccan-occupation-forces-still-violate-human-rights>

⁵⁹ Western Sahara Human Rights watch, Another Saharawi killed by Morocco in a continued and silent genocide against the Saharawis, <http://www.wshrw.org/en/otro-saharawi-asesinado-por-marruecos-en-un-continuo-y-silencioso-genocidio-contra-los-saharawis/>

⁶⁰ *Id.*

⁶¹ Sahara Press Service, Sahrawi demonstrators attacked in occupied Smara, <http://www.spsrasd.info/en/content/sahrawi-demonstrators-attacked-occupied-smara>

⁶² Por un Sahara Libre, Las fuerzas de ocupación marroquíes reprimen manifestación en El Aaiún ocupado, <http://porunsaharalibre.org/2015/02/las-fuerzas-de-ocupacion-marroquies-reprimen-manifestacion-en-el-aaiun-ocupado/#more-3182>.

⁶³ Sahara Press Service, Moroccan occupying forces kidnap Sahrawi minor boy, <http://www.spsrasd.info/en/content/moroccan-occupying-forces-kidnap-sahrawi-minor-boy>

⁶⁴ Sahara Press Service, Peaceful demonstration in occupied Smara demanding Sahrawi people's self-determination, <http://www.spsrasd.info/en/content/peaceful-demonstration-occupied-smara-demanding-saharawi-people's-self->

March 14: Moroccan occupying forces brutally repressed a peaceful demonstration organized by unemployed Sahrawis in El Aaiun, who demanded their right to work, live in peace, and realize self-determination through a free and fair referendum. The violence left 15 demonstrators injured.⁶⁵

March 18: Moroccan occupying forces repressed a peaceful demonstration in Dajla protesting Moroccan occupation in Western Sahara. The protesters chanted slogans calling for the right to self-determination for the Sahrawi people and protested the Moroccan autonomy plan. The forces also arrested 2 Sahrawi demonstrators, Sidi Ould Amar and Al-Wali Ould Sidi Salem.⁶⁶

March 20: Moroccan security forces maintained a strong presence in Dajla ahead of any potential demonstration by Sahrawi people demanding the right to freedom, independence and for the Moroccan forces to withdraw from Western Sahara.⁶⁷

April 14: Following a forceful repression of a demonstration calling for an independent UN human rights monitoring mechanism in Western Sahara, the Moroccan police attacked the home of human rights defender Aminatou Haidar.⁶⁸ Ms. Haidar was hosting United Nations representatives from the Office of the High Commissioner for Human Rights at her home to discuss human rights abuses in Western Sahara when the meeting came under attack by state authorities. Apart from staff members of Office of the High Commissioner for Human rights, there were members of CODESA and lawyers, Mr Al-Habib Al-Jazeera, Mr Mohamed Abu-Khaled and Mr Mohamed Fadel Al-Laili at her home.⁶⁹ Moroccan police and auxiliary forces reportedly threw rocks and other items at Ms. Haidar's home, causing significant damage. According to eyewitness reports, one of Ms. Haidar's companions was struck and injured when a rock smashed through Ms. Haidar's window. Ms. Haidar, her CODESA colleagues, and the UN delegation were trapped inside during the siege, which lasted for over two hours. A UN vehicle and a car belonging to a CODESA member were also reportedly damaged by Moroccan police. The attack appears to have occurred in relation to the forceful suppression of a peaceful protest in Ms. Haidar's neighborhood. After being attacked by Moroccan authorities, some protesters fled to Ms. Haidar's building and were pursued by police and auxiliary forces. When those who took refuge in Ms. Haidar's home left in the company of the UN representatives, they were filmed by plain-clothed Moroccan police. Police reportedly continued to attack the homes of Sahrawi residents throughout the evening. Members of Ms. Haidar's family who were not home during the

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⁶⁵ Sahara Press Service, Moroccan occupation forces repress peaceful demonstration of unemployed Sahrawis, <http://www.spsrasd.info/en/content/moroccan-occupation-forces-repress-peaceful-demonstration-unemployed-sahrawis>

⁶⁶ Sahara Press Service, Moroccan occupying forces crack down on peaceful vigil in occupied Dajla, <http://www.spsrasd.info/en/content/moroccan-occupying-forces-crack-down-peaceful-vigil-occupied-dajla>

⁶⁷ Sahara Press Service, Moroccan forces impose tight security siege on occupied Dajla, <http://www.spsrasd.info/en/content/moroccan-forces-impose-tight-security-siege-occupied-dajla>

⁶⁸ Robert F. Kennedy Human Rights, Home of Robert F. Kennedy Human Rights Award Laureate Aminatou Haidar is attacked; disturbing reports of police brutality against peaceful protesters in Western Sahara, <http://rfkcenter.org/home-of-robert-f-kennedy-human-rights-award-laureate-aminatou-haidar-is-attacked-disturbing-reports-of-police-brutality-against-peaceful-protesters-in-western-sahara-2>; Front Line Defenders, Western Sahara – Home of human rights defender Aminatou Haidar attacked, <https://www.frontlinedefenders.org/node/28580>

⁶⁹ Front Line Defenders, Western Sahara – Home of human rights defender Aminatou Haidar attacked, <https://www.frontlinedefenders.org/node/28580>; allAfrica, Morocco: Western Sahara - Home of Human Rights Defender Aminatou Haidar Attacked, <http://allafrica.com/stories/201504270818.html>

initial attack were unable to return home until the following morning due to safety concerns. By the time the violence had subsided, dozens of protesters had reported injuries.⁷⁰

April 15: Moroccan occupying forces violently intervened in a demonstration of Sahrawi people in El Aaiun calling for the establishment of UN mechanism to observe and protect human rights in Western Sahara. The violence left at least 40 people injured. Among those injured were: Ahmed Al-Hamya, Toubali Abdelhay, Ghali Bouhalla, Aziz Haidan, Said Waaban, Taghi Al-Machdoufi, Ahmed Ahaimad, Mahmud Lahwaidi, Abba Cheikh Bahaha, Mohamed Salem Bani, Al-Wali Ahl Abba, Fatimatu Dahwar, Najat Ajnaibila, Mariam Al-Bourhimi, Bachri Bataleb, Zainabu Ludiki, Abaiha Haddi, Salman Brya, Agzahra Lagraid, Leila Lilli, Um Asid Haddad, Musa Lansari, Kabarra Babit, Fala Chtuki, Tumana Dida, Bnaijara Salmbuha, Mahfuda Lefgir, Lkentawiya Babit, Aicha Babit, Dahba Sidamu, Ragia Hawasi, Ngia Mohamed Lamin, Sid Brahim, Izzana Amaidan, Maluma Abdallahi, Sukeina Saadi, Sweilma Larusi, Salima Limam, Al-Khalil Al-Ballawi, Teslem Daoudi, Salha Boutengiza, Al-Koria Daf, Al-Mahjub Al-Bad and Um Fadli Jawda.⁷¹

April 16: Moroccan security forces repressed a peaceful demonstration in El Aaiun organized by unemployed Sahrawis, following the visit of staff from the Office of UN High Commissioner for Human Rights to Western Sahara. They called on the international community to pressure Morocco to respect the human rights of Sahrawi people, including the right of human dignity and employment.⁷²

April 17: Moroccan police brutally attacked several Sahrawi protesters who were engaged in a peaceful demonstration in Smara, demanding self-determination and independence for the Sahrawi people, and expressing solidarity with the Sahrawi political prisoners. Hamadi Nasiri, a human rights activist and former political prisoner, was seriously injured in the attack.⁷³

April 22: Moroccan occupying authorities arrested the human rights activist Hamadi Nasiri, who was returning home after surgery. He had been severely injured when security forces cracked down on a peaceful protest in Smara on April 17 calling for the right to self-determination of Sahrawi people.⁷⁴

April 30: Moroccan occupying forces violently attacked two Sahrawi human rights activists, Fatma Bouasriya and Hamma Mbarek, while they held a peaceful sit-in in Al-Kayz.⁷⁵

⁷⁰ Robert F. Kennedy Human Rights, Home of Robert F. Kennedy Human Rights Award Laureate Aminatou Haidar is attacked; disturbing reports of police brutality against peaceful protesters in Western Sahara, <http://rfkcenter.org/home-of-robert-f-kennedy-human-rights-award-laureate-aminatou-haidar-is-attacked-disturbing-reports-of-police-brutality-against-peaceful-protesters-in-western-sahara-2>

⁷¹ Sahara Press Service, At least 40 people injured in Moroccan violent crackdown on Sahrawi demonstrators, <http://www.spsrasd.info/en/content/least-40-people-injured-moroccan-violent-crackdown-Sahrawi-demonstrators>

⁷² Sahara Press Service, Moroccan occupation forces repress peaceful demonstration of unemployed Sahrawis, <http://www.spsrasd.info/en/content/moroccan-occupation-forces-repress-peaceful-demonstration-unemployed-Sahrawis>

⁷³ Sahara Press Service, Brutal attack leaves several casualties in Smara occupied city, <http://www.spsrasd.info/en/content/brutal-attack-leaves-several-casualties-smara-occupied-city>

⁷⁴ Sahara Press Service, Moroccan occupying authorities arrest Sahrawi activist Ahmed Nasiri, <http://www.spsrasd.info/en/content/moroccan-occupying-authorities-arrest-Sahrawi-activist-ahmed-nasiri>

⁷⁵ Sahara Press Service, Moroccan forces intervene violently against Sahrawi citizens in occupied Smara, <http://www.spsrasd.info/en/content/moroccan-forces-intervene-violently-against-Sahrawi-citizens-occupied-smara>

May 3: Moroccan occupation forces brutally intervened in a peaceful demonstration in El Aaiun organized by a group of unemployed Sahrawi graduates who chanted slogans demanding their rights to employment guaranteed under international law. This demonstration was organized on the occasion of the World Day of Workers.⁷⁶

May 5: Moroccan security forces intervened in demonstrations in El Aaiun by Sahrawi people protesting the UN Security Council Resolution on Western Sahara and demanding an immediate end to Moroccan occupation of the territory. The protesters also called for the right of the Sahrawi people to freedom, self-determination and release of Sahrawi political prisoners.⁷⁷

June 6: Saleh Lbasir was abducted and persecuted by Moroccan forces for participating in peaceful demonstrations in Smara demanding human rights and the right to self-determination of the Sahrawi people.⁷⁸

June 14: Moroccan authorities assaulted Mohammed Jemei in El Aaiun for participating in a peaceful demonstration in support of Tekbar Hadi's hunger strike in Las Palmas, Spain, demanding inquiry into the death of her son Mohamed Lamine Haidala at the hands of Moroccan authorities.⁷⁹

Landmine Blasts

While not a signatory to the Anti-Personnel Mine Ban Convention, Morocco has a responsibility to protect its citizens and ensure their security regardless; the country's failure to take proactive measures to remove landmines from the Western Sahara has resulted in a number of serious injuries and casualties, most of which can be easily avoided. While conservative estimates suggest that 100,000 landmines have been left unattended in the Western Sahara, other estimates suggest that there may be as many as 7 million landmines.⁸⁰ According to the UN Security Council, as of March 2015, there were 57 cluster strike areas and 41 minefields to be addressed, most of which are located in areas where civilian activities have increased recently.⁸¹

January 28: One person was killed and three others were injured in a landmine explosion in Smara, a Sahrawi occupied city.⁸²

February 3: Ahmed Dailul and Badi Sidahmed were injured in a Blu-63 cluster bomb blast in Mijek, Western Sahara.⁸³

⁷⁶ Sahara Press Service, Peaceful demonstration of unemployed Sahrawis repressed in occupied El Aaiun, <http://www.spsrasd.info/en/content/peaceful-demonstration-unemployed-Sahrawis-repressed-occupied-el-aauiun>

⁷⁷ Sahara Press Service, Demonstrations in occupied Western Sahara in protest of recent UN resolution, <http://www.spsrasd.info/en/content/demonstrations-occupied-western-sahara-protest-recent-un-resolution>

⁷⁸ Sahara Press Service, Saharawi Jurists Union condemns Saleh Lbasir arrest, <http://www.spsrasd.info/en/content/saharawi-jurists-union-condemns-salehlbasir-arrest>; Sahara Press Service, President of Republic calls UN to intervene for release of Salah Lebsir, <http://www.spsrasd.info/en/content/president-republic-calls-un-intervene-release-salah-lebsir>

⁷⁹ Sahara Press Service, Sahrawi citizen assaulted by Moroccan forces in occupied city of El Aaiun, <http://www.spsrasd.info/en/content/sahrawi-citizen-assaulted-moroccan-forces-occupied-city-el-aauiun>

⁸⁰ REMMSO, Red de estudios sobre efectos de minas terrestres y muros en el Sahara occidental, Land mines and wall in Western Sahara, <http://www.remmso.org/english/>

⁸¹ UN Security Council, Report of the Secretary-General on the situation concerning Western Sahara, April 10, 2015, http://www.un.org/en/ga/search/view_doc.asp?symbol=S/2015/246

⁸² Sahara Press Service, Landmine blast in Mijek leaves 1 dead and 3 injured, <http://www.spsrasd.info/en/content/landmine-blast-mijek-leaves-1-dead-and-3-injured>

March 23: Amhamad Sidi Musa, a shepherd, was killed in a Blu-63 cluster bomb blast in Zazayat, Western Sahara.⁸⁴

May 1: In Skaikima, a Saharawi citizen, Amheiyiba Mohamed Saleh, was killed when the car her family was traveling in struck a landmine. Her husband, Ali Hussein and two children, Sahel Ali and Lâl-la Ali, were injured in the blast.⁸⁵

Other human rights violations

In addition to the aforementioned human rights violations, the Moroccan state, including the police and security forces, enjoy largely unchecked authority and thus, are often not held accountable for violations committed against Sahrawi citizens.

January 28: The El Aaiun house of Fatimetu Chahid, the President of the Observatory of Sahrawi Women and Children, was attacked by Moroccan police while Ms. Chahid was hosting a group of Spanish female human rights defenders.⁸⁶

April 1: Moroccan occupying authorities prevented for the second time Sahrawi citizen Mahfuda Lefgir, a mother of two children, from receiving social aid. This is part of a policy against Sahrawi citizens in harassing and cutting their salaries on the basis of their political views.⁸⁷ Ms. Lefgir was one of the people injured during a crackdown on protesters on April 15, in El Aaiun.⁸⁸

⁸³ Sahara Press Service, Two people injured in cluster bomb blast in Mijek, <http://www.spsrasd.info/en/content/two-people-injured-cluster-bomb-blast-mijek>

⁸⁴ Sahara Press Service, Landmine blast in Zazayat kills Sahrawi civilian, <http://www.spsrasd.info/en/content/landmine-blast-zazayat-kills-sahrawi-civilian>

⁸⁵ Adala UK Human Rights for Western Sahara, One dead and several injured in landmine explosion, <http://adala.uk.org/2015/05/02/one-dead-and-several-injured-in-landmine-explosion/>

⁸⁶ Por un Sahara Libre, Las fuerzas de ocupación marroquíes acosan a los activistas saharauis Fatimetu Chahid y Moh. Fadel Mamin, <http://porunsaharalibre.org/2015/01/las-fuerzas-de-ocupacion-marroquies-acosan-a-los-activistas-saharauis-fatimetu-chahid-y-moh-fadel-mamin/>

⁸⁷ Sahara Press Service, Moroccan occupying authorities confiscate Sahrawis' rights, <http://www.spsrasd.info/en/content/moroccan-occupying-authorities-confiscate-saharawis%E2%80%99-rights>

⁸⁸ Sahara Press Service, At least 40 people injured in Moroccan violent crackdown on Sahrawi demonstrators, <http://www.spsrasd.info/en/content/least-40-people-injured-moroccan-violent-crackdown-Sahrawi-demonstrators>

Conclusion

Given the difficulty in gathering information from Western Sahara, this list of human rights violations is likely not exhaustive. But the extent and severity of these alleged violations is an undeniable reminder of the vital purpose that a human rights monitoring mechanism would serve. The Office of the High Commissioner for Human Rights (OHCHR) has previously stated that the monitoring of the human rights situation in Western Sahara and the refugee camps in Tindouf, Algeria would be “indispensable.”⁸⁹

Robert F. Kennedy Human Rights reiterates its recommendations that parties to the Western Sahara conflict and the United Nations:

(1) Work with United Nations human rights mechanisms and OHCHR and facilitate an immediate mission to both Moroccan-controlled Western Sahara and Sahrawi refugee camps with unrestricted access to all stakeholders that would pave way for a independent and impartial understanding of the human rights situation in Western Sahara and the camps. This would assist to create the appropriate environment for peaceful negotiations in the future between the parties; and

(2) Work toward the inclusion of a permanent human rights monitoring and reporting mandate to MINURSO, which may also receive individual complaints and investigate alleged human rights violations.

It is only by empowering a fully-functioning body to record, investigate, and resolve alleged human rights violations that the international community will finally begin to fulfill its duty towards the Sahrawi people to, at minimum, guarantee their basic human rights.

Robert F. Kennedy Human Rights will report on human rights in Western Sahara every six months. The next report will cover the time period between July 1, 2015 and December 31, 2015, and will be published in January 2016.

⁸⁹ Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights, Report of the OHCHR Mission to Western Sahara and the Refugee Camps in Tindouf, September 8, 2006, <http://www.arso.org/OHCHRrep2006en.pdf>