



STATEMENT

European rapacity at the cost of European and international law A call to the European Parliament and the Council of Europe to prevent EU plundering of a people's fish in Western Sahara

28th November 2018

The European Commission is pushing the EU Council and the European Parliament to conclude a new Fisheries Partnership Agreement with Morocco that illegally includes occupied Western Sahara and the Sahrawi waters despite the consecutive rulings from the Court of justice of the European Union (CJEU).

The CJEU has twice (on [21 December 2016](#) and [27 February 2018](#)) recalled that Western Sahara is “separate and distinct” from Morocco and that Morocco has no sovereignty over the territory of Western Sahara. The Court has also decided the *consent* of the people of Western Sahara as the principle pre-condition for the exploitation of natural resources in Western Sahara as a non-self-governing territory.

Despite the CJEU rulings and our people's unified expression of refusal, the European Commission is aiming to steal our fish - the Saharawi people's fish - through illegally including the Western Sahara and the Saharawi waters in agreement with the occupying power (Morocco). The agreement has been submitted to the European parliament for its consent. Therefore, you, Honourable Members of the European Parliament, will decide whether or not to participate in this institutional act of robbery against our people (the Saharawis) and act of irresponsibility towards your own people (the Europeans) by paying millions of Euros from EU tax payers' money to Morocco for fish that is not even theirs, according to your Court of Justice.

We would like to remind you that half of our people live in refugee camps in the most unlivable part of the world and eat one can of sardines per month provided by (EU funded) UN humanitarian aid, while this very same people is the legal owner of Africa's richest fisheries resources. If you vote in favour of the deal, we will understand that you want us to stay forever as refugees, the EU will continue to pay for humanitarian aid and to continue the instability in this strategic part of north Africa.

The other half of our people live under repression suffering from all kind of human rights violations and are excluded from the so-called “economic development”. There are no jobs in fisheries for us, as confirmed by the European Commission itself in its reports. Syndicates of Sahrawi fishermen are not even authorized to register by the Moroccan occupying forces. By voting in favour of the deal, you will aggravate our repression and exclusion.

Also, the Fisheries Partnership Agreement means more demographic engineering by Morocco: our fish is caught and sold by Moroccan settlers brought in by Rabat in support of its annexation scheme. By voting in favour, you are accomplice in population transfer in the non-self-governing territory of Western Sahara which is an international crime justiciable in front of the International Criminal Court (ICC).

This deal only applies to the part of Western Sahara that is illegally occupied by Morocco and leaves out the part that is governed by the Front POLISARIO, including its access to the sea. By voting in favour, you are harming the principle of territorial integrity of Western Sahara and national unity of the Saharawi people intrinsic to the process of self-determination, which is yet to be exercised.

In relation to the so called “consultations” claimed by the European Commission, the majority of our NGOs – the Saharawi Civil Society – were never invited to those talks. Two of us were invited after the Commission had concluded the deal with Morocco which we consider the wrong party to give consent to agreements that apply to our occupied homeland. In the meanwhile, the civil society does not have the representation status, which is the exclusive competence of the POLISARIO Front that is recognized by the UN as the sole legitimate representative of the people of Western Sahara. No other body than the POLISARIO Front could express the consent of our people and this remains our position reiterated in our previous statements and letters sent to the European Parliament, the European Commission, the EEAS and the Council of Europe. Several of us have faced direct and grave consequences for having engaged in the earlier consultations with the EEAS on the agricultural deal and have had to apply for asylum. As a nation of already so many refugees and IDPs, we cannot afford to see more of our people face this fate due to the irresponsibility of the European Commission.

In sum, we call upon all MEPs, members of PECH Committee and the member States to vote against the proposed Fisheries Partnership Agreement that aims to illegally include Western Sahara in its territorial scope. Save our fish and our people, save Europe’s legal foundations and its honour.

Signed by the Saharawi civil society NGOs:

Occupied territory of Western Sahara:

1. The collective of Saharawi Human Rights Defenders (CODESA)
2. Association for Monitoring of Resources and for Protection of the Environment in Western Sahara (AMRPENWS)
3. Saharawi Committee for the Defense of the Self-Determination of the People of Western Sahara (CODAPSO)
4. The Saharawi Association for Victims of Grave Violations Committed by the Moroccan State (ASVDH)
5. The Saharawi Association for the Protection and Dissemination of the Saharawi Culture and Heritage
6. Saharawi Media Team
7. National Television Team
8. The Saharawi Center for Media and Communication
9. The Association for the Protection of Saharawi Prisoners in Moroccan Prisons
10. Western Sahara Times

11. Bentili Media Center
12. Committee for Support the Peace Plan and Protection of Natural Resources in Western Sahara
13. Committee of the Mothers of the 15 Abductees
14. Association for Justice and Human Rights
15. The Saharawi Center for Save Memory
16. The Saharawi Observatory for the Child and Women
17. Forum for the Future of Women
18. Renunciation Moroccan Nationality Group
19. The field coordination of the unemployed Saharawi graduates
20. Bentili Media Center
21. Gdim Izic Coordinating for Peaceful Movement
22. Committee of Victims of the Agdaz and Magouna
23. Independent Media Commission
24. The Saharawi Association for Persons with Disabilities in Western Sahara
25. Committee of the Families of the Saharawiss Missing
26. The Saharawis Association for the Defense of Human Rights and the Protection of Resources in Bujdour
27. Freedom Sun Organization in Smara
28. Saharawis Committee for the Defense of Human Rights in Samara
29. Organization Against Torture in Dakhla, western Sahara
30. The Saharawi committee for the defence of human rights in Zag
31. The Saharawi committee for human rights monitoring in Assa
32. The Saharawi committee for the defence of human rights in Glaimim
33. The Saharawi organization for the defence of freedoms and dignity
34. El Ghad for human rights

Saharawi refugee camps:

35. Comisión Nacional Saharaui de Derechos Humanos (CONASADH)
36. Unión Nacional de Mujeres Saharaui (UNMS)
37. Unión Nacional de Trabajadores de Saguia El Hamra y Rio de Oro (UGTSARIO)
38. Unión Nacional de la Juventud de Saguia El Hamra y Rio de Oro (UJSARIO)
39. Unión Nacional de Estudiantes de Saguia El Hamra y Rio de Oro (UESARIO)
40. Unión de Juristas Saharaui (UJS)
41. Unión de Periodistas y Escritores Saharaui (UPES)
42. Observatorio Saharaui de Recursos Naturales
43. Asociación de Familiares de Presos y Desaparecidos Saharaui (AFAPREDESA)
44. Grupo Non-Violence Active (NOVA SAHARA OCCIDENTAL)
45. Asociación de Víctimas de Minas (ASAVIM)

46. Asociación de Abogados Saharauis (UAS)
47. Campaña Saharaui para la sensibilización sobre el peligro de Minas (SCBL)
48. The Saharawi campaign against the plunder SCAP
49. The Union of Saharawi Engineers (UISAH)
50. The Union of Saharawi farmers

Saharawi Diaspora :

51. Saharawi association in the USA (SAUSA)
52. VZW de vereniging van de Saharawi gemeenschap in Belgie – Belgium
53. Association culture Sahara – centre de France
54. Association des femmes Saharawi en France
55. La league des jeunes et des etudiants Saharawi en France
56. Association de la communauté Saharaoui en France
57. Association culturelle franco-Saharaouie
58. Association des Sahraouis en France
59. Association des Sahraouis de Bordeaux
60. L'union des ingénieurs Sahraoui
61. Asociación de abogados saharauis en España
62. Asociación de médicos saharauis en España
63. La liga de deportistas saharauis en España
64. La liga de periodistas saharauis en España
65. Comunidad Saharaui en las palmas
66. Asociación de saharauis en Tenerife
67. Asociación de saharauis en Fuerteventura
68. Colectivo saharauí en Lanzarote
69. Asociación de saharauis en bal
70. Asociación ARDI HURRA en Sevilla
71. Asociación de saharauis en Iebrija
72. Colectivo de saharauis en Jaén
73. Asociación de saharauis en Jerez de la frontera
74. Colectivo sah en Estepona
75. Comunidad Saharaui en Granada
76. Asociación amal centro Andalucía
77. Comunidad Saharaui en Murcia
78. Asociación de saharauis en Alicante
79. Asociación de Zamur Valencia
80. Comunidad Saharaui en Catalunya
81. Comunidad Saharaui en Aragón

82. Asociación de saharauis en valdepeñas
83. Comunidad Saharai en Castilla la Mancha
84. Asociación de saharauis en Ávila
85. Comunidad Saharai en Castilla y León
86. Asociación de saharauis en Navarra
87. DISABI Bizkaia
88. Sahara Euskadi Vitoria
89. Sahara Gasteiz Vitoria
90. Amal nanclares
91. Tawasol Iludio
92. Tayuch Amurio
93. Colectivo saharai en GIPUZKOA
94. La liga de estudiantes en España
95. Green Western Sahara Association