



FEDERATION OF
YOUNG EUROPEAN GREENS

Freedom for the Western Sahara

Adopted by FYEG General Assembly at its meeting in June 2015 in Tbilisi

As Greens we have always supported the anti-colonialist struggles of those who have been under the control of often European countries. Even today, colonialism is still visible on the maps. The Western-Sahara, under Moroccan occupation, is one of these cases, whose liberation has been demanded on countless occasions by the UN Special Committee on Decolonisation. We the Greens in Europe demand the freedom of Western-Sahara and an end to this case of colonialism just outside our borders.

Western Sahara was a Spanish colony under the fascist Franco regime until its fall in 1975. When it was turned over to Morocco and Mauritania to be divided between the two countries, the Liberation Front for Western Sahara took on their fight for independence. The scattered majority of the population of Western Sahara had to flee to refugee camps in Algeria. The guerilla warfare continued until 1992, when the UN brokered a cease-fire under the condition that a referendum by the Sahrawis on self-determination could take place. Since then, the population of the Western Sahara is still waiting for their referendum.

Meanwhile, between 90.000 and 125.000 people live in refugee camps in Tindouf, in south of Argel and in the middle of the Sahara Desert. The life conditions there are far from being dignified and the most common feelings amongst the sahwari youth are resignation and desperation. The International Community pay no attention to this quiet conflict which has Morocco, France and Spain as the main actors avoiding to find a fair solution to the conflict by celebrating the referendum as was agreed in the UN framework.

On the other hand, the situation in the Western-Sahara - or occupied territories, as named by the Sahrawi - is even worse than in the refugee camps. Systematic Human Rights violations, enforced "disappearances", torture, arbitrary detentions and executions on the part of Moroccan authorities are commonplace, as is the lack of freedom of speech, association and assembly.

The military architecture established within Western-Sahara by Morocco is huge. They have built a triple, 2700 kilometer long wall against the Western-Sahara Population. The wall is surrounded by anti-personnel mines and barbed wire, and has around 40.000 Moroccan soldiers stationed around it. The wall is also used to deter refugees coming from other African countries and therefore is often ignored in the European political sphere. The militarisation of the Sahara needs to end.

Morocco clings to the Western Sahara also because it is a resource-rich region. Western Sahara has the biggest sources of phosphate, the main ingredient for modern fertiliser supporting industrialised agriculture worldwide. 6% of Morocco's GDP comes only from the exports of Western Saharan phosphate. Other resources include fish stocks (74% of the Moroccan fishery production comes from Western Saharan waters) and more than 80.000 tons of agricultural products. Recently western

companies have started to explore possible sites for oil exploitation. The wealth of Western Sahara is also its curse, and European countries are part of this economic exploitation. As an example, the Development Agency of France (the country investing the most in Morocco) has built a modern harbour in the capital of the Western-Sahara so the resources can be shipped more easy out of the country.

The Western Sahara needs proper recognition by the international community and international awareness of their struggle. We congratulate the Swedish Red-Green Government on their intention to recognise Western-Sahara, which we believe is a brave and important step that other European countries should follow. However, we regret that United Nations do not follow this path and have denied again this April, the supervision of human rights violations by MINURSO.

We believe the debate about the liberation of Western-Sahara needs to be present on the European Level. We European Greens stand in solidarity with the Sahrawis, and demand the following:

- A fair referendum on self-determination of the Western Sahara has to be conducted without delay. The basis for electorate must be the voting list established by the United Nations in 1996.
- The United Nations Mission for the Referendum in the Western Sahara (MINUSRO) mandate needs to be extended from only observing the cease-fire to also observing and reporting on human rights violations in the Western-Sahara territory
- We urge France to stop blocking United Nations Security Council to take action regarding the current situation in Western Sahara. The UN has to ensure the security and the respect of human rights in the country, as well as for the refugees. It should also take steps towards a democratic way out of the crisis.
- Morocco currently holds many people including political activists in detention without due procedure. There are plenty accounts of grave Human Rights violations, including torture, perpetrated by the Moroccan police forces. We demand the release of the political prisoners from their unlawful detention.
- In particular we demand the liberation of the political prisoners from Gdeim Izik, who have been judged by a military court for having lead the start of the Spring Arab Revolution in Aiuun at the end of 2010 and who are currently on hunger strike.
- The European Union is currently supporting the occupation in various ways. The EU has for instance supplied the Moroccan government with border control technology to detect refugees that cross the Moroccan border. This technology is used at the wall against the Sahrawis. The EU must stop the proliferation of any kind of technology that is used in this war against the Sahrawis.
- The EU-Morocco Fisheries Agreement allows European trawlers preferential access to Moroccan waters, including those bordering the Western Sahara. We demand the European trawlers refrain from fishing in Western-Sahara waters before the conclusion of treaties regulating such usage with the Sahrawi exile government.
- We demand appropriate reparation to be paid to the Western-Sahara people for all the resources that have been exploited by Moroccan and international companies.

