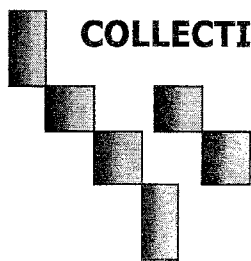


COLLECTIVE OF HUMAN RIGHTS ASSOCIATIONS IN THE SAHARA



THE VIOLATION OF HUMAN RIGHTS

IN THE CAMPS OF TINDOUF

**Anatomy of the repressive apparatus
of the polisario**

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SUMMARY

VIOLATIONS OF HUMAN RIGHTS IN THE CAMPS OF TINDOUF

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Presentation

Concocting cunningly the image of a revolutionary movement, the collective expression of "underprivileged people" who fight for their survival facing a strong and expansionist country and taking advantage of the complicity of some circles, the Polisario which never ceased to mislead the international opinion, using a range of artifices going from trickery to lying, is today held prisoner of its own logic, compelled to reveal its true face and obliged to recognize that its venturesome action has failed.

After having forced a part of its people to go into exile, depriving them from all their possessions and packing in them into four sinister camps isolated from the rest of the world, in the Tindouf area, in the south of Algeria, the small group of adventurers who was going to become the Polisario, turned out into a Party-State, a duplicate of military and policy organizations, the remnants of a dreadful notorious age.

Since 27 years, a reduced group, made of executives, constitutes the Polisario leadership or rather the Polisario. What remains, that is to say the civilian people made up of not only the Sahraoui people, but also of the Algerian Tuareg, and natives of Mauritania and Mali estimated at 40.000 persons and confined into the camps, is submitted to the police surveillance. It is politically and military controlled, spied on its slightest actions, undergoing thus large sessions of indoctrination and psychological conditioning. This population is today illegally confined, hostage of a group of adventurers.

In order to understand the martyrdom of those people, the polisario repressive machinery must be stressed upon. Apart from some 3.000 agents of the "official security", responsible for the camps' watch, the small civilian society is divided into «political cells «made up of less than 10 people. The chief of each cell, being under the control of a political police chief, must submit him a daily report. Thus, the slightest action is reported to the highest authority which can act ruthlessly. Even children are watched over by the Polisario. Separated from their parents, they are organized into committees and have even their own school police.

Through those methods, the polisario succeeded in terrorizing a population who knew only fear, mistrust and hatred. It must be pointed out that all the travels outside the camps are done under authorization. Moreover the military security is controlling outside the camps. In order to complete this description, the polisario has its police barracks, an additional repression instrument for controlling illegally the confined people.

This prison environment is due to the Polisario. If this latter act in this manner, it is that it considers the sequestered persons as a good it can market as it pleases, mainly towards humanitarian organizations.

It is not surprising that the Polisario boasts about being one of the rare movements still alive for so long. What the Polisario does not reveal, is at what price he gains this longevity?

Since its creation, the Polisario has never ceased to imprison, to torture and to eliminate physically those who dare express their disapproval. Since 1975 to nowadays, purges have marked the dreadful history of this movement. They aimed at the indoctrination of protesters who belong to all the tribes.

In these prisons and detention centers, all kinds of torture have been practiced and vary from physical suffering to the marking of victims with red iron with the Polisario initials, "F.P", a method particularly prized by the Polisario executioners.

The accounts of the rescued persons included in the present work are a good illustration of those practices that human conscience can only condemn.

Any action of repression, as organized as it can be, ends up in an unbearable situation, produces its own antidote and is denounced by those who make of it a governing authority.

The Polisario, ignoring world and regional mutations and betrayed by his old allies, sinks more and more into a repressive logic towards illegally confined people who have always borne the brunt of their political mistakes and are still thinking about their native country, the Kingdom of Morocco. In spite of the strengthening of the watch inside the camps, the Polisario knows an unprecedented sapping illustrated by the desertion of thousands of persons. Many people have joined their native country at the risk of their life. Some of them have held the highest offices within the leadership of this movement; others were ordinary soldiers or were living in the camps, but they have discovered their jailers' trickery.

Held up to public obloquy and confronted to an unprecedented internal crisis, the Polisario can count only on the help and the support of those who refuse stubbornly to see this terrible reality.

**Collective of the Human Rights
Associations in the Sahara**

THE VIOLATION OF HUMAN RIGHTS IN THE CAMPS OF TINDOUF

I- THE PHENOMENON OF SEQUESTRATION

The initial experience of the Polisario as far as the violation of human rights is concerned has started as from the year 1975.

Indeed, since this date, the group of elements that constitutes the leaders of the movement has been confronted to the lack of social foundation. So, in order to make up this "insufficiency", the Polisario has adopted the policy of abduction by force and kidnappings of families as a whole or members of them being in transhumance in the desert or in the urban centers of the Sahara.

The organization complied with a process concentrating on two steps :

- 1- A group of polisario in charge of the kidnapping operation neutralized a family or members of a family, they gathered them in a secret place to proceed afterwards to their conveying towards Tindouf.
- 2- The kidnapped persons were received in a place called "Sebti" (5 KM at the south of Tindouf) by Mohamed Abdelaziz, responsible of the Tindouf Bureau, Secretary General of the Polisario at present. After a short stay in "Sebti", each family or member of family was oriented towards one of the camps recently installed.

The geographical area of this countryside stretched out in the interior of the Sahara, to the north of Mauritania and of Mali and sometimes even to the south of Algeria.

Thousands of families' victims of this action continued to suffer their pain in the region of Tindouf, place where the Polisario compelled them to stay separated from the other members of their family, prevented from their rights to move over and to enjoy their goods.

II- ENROLMENT AND INDOCTRINATION

The eradication and the forced breaking off with the traditional way of life were not to let the victims without willingness to reject their new conditions of life.

So, and in order to face this situation, the Polisario has adopted its policy known of all, the policy of enrolment and indoctrination of each person living in the camps.

To this effect, a structure inspired from the Albanian communist model was set up in order to take into charge all the packed in against their will in the region of Tindouf.

The goal of this structure is to break the bonds within the family by setting apart each member in a political-military cell where he undergoes permanently indoctrination and brain washing by the - political commissioners "AARIF".

Children and women are the category the most targeted by this practice.

The indoctrination lessons have for aim to give the appropriate training so as that the person (the child for example) can no more identify himself to his family. In this way, the religious and moral values of the society are destroyed.

Getting rid of these moral values and excluded from the family education, the person is relegated to a stage of an instrument used blindly by the organization of the Polisario.

It is within this context that thousands of children have been sent since 1976 to Libya and Cuba in order to carry on their studies and receive an ideological indoctrination.

Among the last mentioned, hundreds have left their families at the age of 8 and came back only at 20. In most of these cases, once back, these persons did not recognize their parents and rejected them for the fact that they belong to another civilization.

Hundreds of families who have opposed the sending of their children for indoctrination abroad have been repressed (auto-critic before the political commissioner with the recognition of having committed a "sin" towards the organization; condemnation in the case of women to build hundreds of bricks, and imprisonment for the man or the women.

Another blackmail of pressure upon these families consists of threatening them of preventing them from the distribution of food for a given period of time.

In case of persistence of the family in maintaining her child in her charge, the answer is the choice between either the sending of the child to Cuba for example, or the enlistment in the army from the age of 12 years.

Those among the children who are not send for indoctrination abroad are imposed an education based on hatred and mind of savageness (for example, as a lesson of mathematics in the small classes, they ask the child: you have in the clip of your gun 20 cartridges; you have killed 10 Moroccans with 10 bullets, how many cartridges remain in the clip.

III- COMPULSORY POLYGAMY WITHIN THE CAMPS

One of the permanent concerns of the Polisario is to occupy his Combatants who, as time passes by, go round in circles and put into question the organization of the Polisario.

In view of «satisfying " them, the Polisario has made polygamy compulsory; moreover, the operation of marriage is undergone in degrading conditions for the woman who is unable to oppose it. In such a way, the political commissioner, in each encampment, in the presence of the responsible of the camp and of the political commissioner of the troop draw up a list of all the girls, divorced women and widows, gathers them by force in a place, seated face obligatory unveiled in front a horde of combatants, who could not marry because of certain of their personal defects.

As in a she-goat market, the "man" chooses his future wife even against her will; this action ends up always with the intervention of the security forces to impose to the women to go with the man who has chosen her.

This situation has given rise to several cases of suicide and madness among women. Many cases of voluntary abortion have taken place because of the repulsion women felt towards the husbands being imposed to them.

IV- HUMILIATING TREATMENT OF OLD PERSONS

The destruction of the family as a social cell by the Polisario has come up, among other things, to the marginalization of the role of the old persons, very respected within the traditional society.

The exploitation of this category of persons is done in a political context decided by the leaders of the Polisario by obliging them to accomplish hard and humiliating works (Cleaning of camps, night guarding, and garbage collect ...).

The assignment of each one of these old people is preceded by a paramilitary training at the school of discipline and brain washing, a school called " 12 October " where he is obliged, during the period of enlistment, to separate from the attributes of his religious identity (shaving of beard, wearing of the combat uniform instead of the Boubou, non respect of the prayer's times) which makes the situation unbearable for an old Muslim.

V- VIOLATIONS OF THE RIGHTS OF MOVEMENT AND ENJOYMENT OF PERSONAL GOODS

Camps are laid out in a geographical area at the south of Tindouf over 170 KM. Each camp is divided in a gathering of tents ("Daira") with limited borders. The distance between the "Daira" varies between 200 and 500 meters.

Moving from one "Daira" to another can only be done by an authorization of the political commissioner, this authorization is issued in counterpart of provided services (denunciation of meetings against the leaders of the Polisario, this denunciation does spare neither the father, nor the mother or the brother and the son, they all participate in the collective works decided by the Polisario, etc ...).

For instance, a girl may have her mother ill in the next "Daira" but can not have the authorization to join her for the reason that she has not accomplished the services asked for (informing, denunciation, etc ...).

The same system is applied in case of movement from one camp to another.

Often in this context, it may happen that a person asks for the 5 authorization to go, by urgent necessity, in the neighbor country or abroad for medical care, so this person is obliged to leave his children as hostages in the camps to make sure that he is going to come back.

For example, families (women and children) of persons having run away from the camps can not join them. More than this, these families are kept under close watch.

As far as the enjoyment of the personal goods is concerned, even if we are in a Muslim society run by the Holy book which makes of the private property a sacred right, the Polisario forbids to the sequestered persons the possession of the private goods only because it is against the " Revolution ".

As for example, the big amounts granted by the Spanish authorities to their pensioners in the camps are not paid entirely to the eligible persons, just under the pretext that their possession by individuals may favor the private property.

Even the appearance of well being is repressed, so, at a certain moment, women who wore convenient veils (Melhfa) are arrested by the "Popular Committees" and have their veil snatched and burnt out.

VI- COMPULSORY WORKS

The system of work does not comply with any regulation and is opposite to the standards in force in the civilized societies.

Everybody works for the organization of the Polisario but without a lucrative counterpart.

There is no respect of either the age of work, the working hours, or the industrial hygiene.

VII- LACK OF LAWS AND LEGAL SYSTEMS WITHIN THE POLISARIO

This serious gap makes it difficult to think about the consideration of the human rights within the Tindouf camps.

The population of the camps is submitted to the most absolute arbitrary. No law is in force and this result in the total lack of judgment of the imprisoned persons.

Even the laws of the host country (Algeria) are not applied in the Sahraoui camps of Tindouf.

VIII- THE REPRESSION SYSTEM OF THE POLISARIO

As any totalitarian system, the Polisario imposes itself by crackdown.

The location of victims is issued through a structure of control and indoctrination of the masses (Cells- Chef of Cell or AARIF -Popular Committee - Chief of Section -Political Commissioner of the camp up to the Chief of the Military Security, organism of information and crackdown).

Each person is followed as described here below:

- Making out of his file centralized at the directorate of the Military Security;
- This person must absolutely belong to a cell of 8 persons. Each one of them should inform the responsible of the cell of the activities of the other members of the cell;
- The responsible of the cell belongs to a committee called "Corporals Meeting" "AARIF";
- The Corporals assembly is run by a political commissioner to whom the corporals should be accountable for the activity of the population and their respective geographical responsibilities;
- The committee of the political commissioner is directed by the responsible of the camp (Wali) who is accountable both to the "Minister of Interior" and to the "Director of the Military Security";
- The indicted person (being a subject of denouncement), who shows opposition to the ideology of the polisario, is kidnapping by night by agents of the military security and imprisoned in underground cells (caves and holes) out in the desert, far from the camps where he is tortured.

Most of the imprisoned persons die in prison.

From 1975 to 1989, there has been no release of the imprisoned persons. It was thanks to the uprising of October 1988 and the pressure of certain international

organizations that some of the victims left the secret detention places of the Polisario and have regained their freedom.

IX- INDOCTRINATION OF THE POPULATION WITHIN THE CAMPS OF TINDOUF

1. The political organization of the Polisario front (P.F.).

Since 1975, the F. Polisario exerts a wide and permanent indoctrination on the population of the Tindouf camps by means of a machine operating a rigorous control, a systematic propaganda and an urgent call to denouncement.

Through this political organization the Polisario aims at:

- The mobilization of the masses;
- The wide surveillance and control;
- To sow suspicion and encourage denunciation according to the motto: "ATTABLIGH LAISSA OUICHAYA" (Informing is not denouncing).

This police and repressive organization is conceived according to the very powerful organization chart (going from the bottom to the top) of the initial cell directed by an "AARIF" through the political commissioner or the secretary of the revolutionary orientation. The Political Commissioner General, to come up at the end to the responsible of the permanent secretariat of the political bureau, key-person of the political organization of the F. Polisario.

This structure is called within the Polisario by the designation "Political Commissionership"

At the level of the "army", this organization is even more penetrating as far as each "Katiba" (company), " Fassila " (Section) deal severely with the military political commissioner, directed by the political commissioner general at the level of the " Failak " (military sector or regiment) who receives his orders from the responsible of the "Political Commissionership of the army" member of the political bureau and from the "directorate of the military security" also member of the P.B

In the same way as at the civil level, these two persons receive their orders from the responsible of the permanent secretariat of the political bureau.

On the other hand, a civil police is instituted at the level of the camps of the "refugees" in charge of the maintenance of order and of the control of inlets and outlets of the camps. It is made up of the majority of old people and depends on the "Ministry of Interior".

2. Aspects of this political organization

In order to better grasp it, it is necessary to observe from bottom to top going through the initial cell, the chief of the initial cell "AARIF", the political commissioner, the political commissioner general until we come to the responsible of the permanent secretariat of the political bureau, key-person of the political organization of the Polisario F.

a) The initial cell

It is made of 5 to 10 persons, women for the most part.

b) The chief of the cell "AARIF"

The "AARIF" who are mostly women, preside over the weekly meetings of the cells during which each member is called up to present an oral or a written report on the socio-political or security situation which has prevailed within his " Hay " (district) during the week.

At the end of the meeting, the "AARIF" congratulates the most co- operative cell's members, addresses remarks and reproaches to the others and asks all of them to be vigilant within the framework of the motto : "ATTABLIGH LAISSA OUICHAYA" (Informing is not denouncing).

The denunciation of such or such person is done separately and privately with the "AARIF",

c) The political commissioner

Appointed by the responsible of the permanent secretariat of the political bureau, he chairs the " AARIF's Council " (the chiefs of the cells) the meetings of whom take place at the end of each week after the cells' meetings.

He listens to the different interventions of the "AARIF" and makes a summary of the oral and written forwarded reports.

The political commissioner acts at the level of the "DAIRA" (district).

d) The political commissioner general.

He is the "Wali" (chief of the camp) of whom the belonging to the political bureau is compulsory. He chairs the council of the political commissioners of different "DAIRA" of his "WILAYA", of which the (meetings also take place at the end of the week. He gathers and synthesizes their reports and addresses them with his notes and suggestions to the responsible of the permanent secretariat of the political bureau.

e) The responsible of the permanent secretariat of the political bureau.

He is absolutely a member of the Executive Committee. He is the key-person of the whole political organization of the Polisario.

He receives the reports of the political commissioners general, have them processed by his services and takes the appropriate decisions.

The serious decisions are taken together with the other members of the political bureau, and are ratified by the members of the executive committee headed by the secretary general of the Polisario.

Since the month of June 1991, the "executive committee" and the "political bureau" have been encompassed in one entity called the "national secretariat".

X- IMPRISONEMENTS, TORTURE AND ELIMINATION WITHIN THE POLISARIO

A. Imprisonments.

As soon as it was created, the Polisario has set up among its structures a repressive and fearsome security service with a two-headed aspect:

- The directorate of the military security
- The permanent secretariat of the political bureau (replaced since June 1991 by the " National Secretariat ").

The chiefs of these organs are feared and use a despotic power.

The masses are infiltrated and closely controlled by the several agents of these services.

The leaders of the Polisario, hegemonists and dictatorials, do not allow any trends of the critical or opposing public opinion. Any person reported as taking an opposite opinion against the drawn line of conduct or even criticizing the line is arrested, tortured and imprisoned during long years.

The prison called "ERRACHID" set up far from the camps out in the desert is conceived in several caves with a very narrow surface area that allows only one person.

Excuses to arrest a person are numerous and also as fallacious as all of them.

Indeed, anxious to eliminate their real and potential opponents, the leaders of the Polisario invent up from time to time networks "CHABAKA " which they accuse of secret dealings with the " enemy ", announce their breaking up and so imprison the undesirable persons.

A given fault even not intentional (example: damaging of a vehicle or a loss of a weapon, etc ...) is considered as an act of sabotage against the revolution and is subject to imprisonment and torture.

This kind of «accusation " is in a general way expressed against persons designated in advance.

The majority of the members of the Nomenklatura of the Polisario known for their bad morality, have a vindictive attitude towards any person (women specially) who refuses to abide by their immoral wishes. The husband, the brother or the father of the woman subject to this desire, and who tries to intervene to save the honor of his relative, is labeled as a troublemaker and is imprisoned at the first occasion.

B. The methods of torture

Torture is the daily language of the monstrous services of repression of the Polisario. It operates as follows:

Blindfold the eyes

It gives a different perception of space and a permanent uncertainty. The Polisario avoids that the imprisoned persons know their jailers and know each other.

Handcuffs and ropes

It is a continual discomfort and a kind of mutilation of the person. Some prisoners have been handcuffed during more than two years (example: Tarouzi Ahmed O. Ahmed Aicha).

The step of the torturer

The torturer sows panic among the prisoners and addresses them in a very depressing language: («stand up dog N° 3...-" come over here dog N° 6, etc...).

Electricity

It is applied on the genitals, the open cuts, the ears and fingers. One must mention on that subject, the example of the tortured Sheikh Ould Sheikh Slama of Ahl Maalainaine who has lost the use of his genital organ.

Cigarettes

They are used to burn the sensitive parts of the victim's body. Some torturers go as far as tattooing the initials "P.F." Polisario Front on the back of the prisoners.

Nails

They are moved out by a blow of clippers: on this matter, we should mention the case of the tortured Loud Ould Tajdrar, of the Rguibat.

Teeth

In their brutality, torturers break the prisoners' teeth, as it was the case for: Ahmed Zoubeir -Ahmed Bazaid Ould Badda and Ahmed Ould Ahmed Aicha.

Syringe

It is used to inject to the tortured hot salted water so as to better irritate him and make him mental defective after harsh headaches. Several prisoners have died under torture.

C. The torturers

Sid Ahmed El Batal, former «director of the military security» remains the most cruel person who has put his diabolic stamp on the repression services of the Polisario, for which he has been the director from 1976 to 1982. It is said that he has cold-bloodedly killed with his pistol a little girl in 1976, who was considered a nuisance because she was fatherless and motherless.

He is hated from the inhabitants of the camps of Tindouf, who were glad when he went blind in 1984 after an injury during a clash with the Royal Armed Forces.

XI. REPRESSION DURING THE EVENTS OF OCTOBER 1988

All over the week of 13 to 20 October 1988, the camps of the "refugees" have been the scene of popular uprising against the tyranny of the directing Nomenklatura of the Polisario.

The populations, men, women and children fed up with the bad behavior of the executive committee members, Mohamed Abdelaziz, Bachir Mustapha Sayed, Brahim Ghali, Mohamed lamine Bouhali, Mohamed lamine Ahmed, Mahfoud Ali Beiba and other members of the political bureau, depressed by the tireless action of the services of propaganda and repression of the Polisario finally rouse up so as to put an end to their sufferings.

The protestors had scanned cheers in favor of His Majesty the King and slogans against the leaders of the Polisario

Faced with this situation, and charged by Algeria to re-establish order at all costs (Algiers having just witnessed the October 5, 1988 riots, the leaders of the Polisario carried out a savage crackdown operation against women, children and old persons.

1- The repression

Directed by the military officer Mohamed Lamine El Bouhali, -member of the "Executive Committee" and "Minister of Defense" the crackdown was of an uncommon violence.

Well informed about the preparation of these protestations, the executive committee of the Polisario mobilized, some time in advance, the troop whose majority of members, especially young men ("Al Achbal "): ("LION CUBS") had been made under pressure, in a state of alert and gathered in the military instruction base "Chahid Haddad" " (50 KM at the south of Rabouni) where they had been seriously conditioned.

As the protestations started, the troop divided in four contingents sent into the camps, taking of course the precaution to send in a camp the members of the contingent native of the other camp, in order not to have to oblige the members of the troop to crack down on their own families.

The board of the repression operations had been placed under the orders of Mohamed Lamine Bouhali, helped by Brahim Ahmed Mahmoud Biabdillah, called "GREGAOU" coordinator of the general staff services of the armed troop of the Polisario ("ALPS").

The repression groups sent in the four camps were under the command of :

- **Dakhla camp:** Mahfoud Ahmed Zine, former major assistant of the 4th military region, member of the political bureau;
- **Aousserd camp:** Khtaibi Ould Sid Ahmed Sidi, called "LAGRAA" (Rguibat Bouihat), Major of "KATIBA" (Company).
- **Laâyoune camp:** Mehdi Ould Hammouya (Laaroussyinne), Major of "Katiba" at the 6th military region.
- **Smara camp:** Bouzid "LAAOUAR" (Rguibat Bouihat), Chief of "KATIBA" at the 4th region.

The crackdown was so brutal that the protestors, savagely bludgeoned, blown with Kalashnikov rifle's butts and big electrical ropes, witnessed many of them fall severely injured, children, women, and old persons included (many women, about thirty from the Dakhla camp, severely beaten, became subject to miscarriage).

The so many persons arrested were led to the camps set outside the principal habitation camps, where they were imprisoned in terrible conditions and tortured for more than 20 days.

2- Testimony of Mohamed Fadili Salek, former member of the Political Bureau of the Polisario and adviser of Mohamed Abdelaziz (Secretary General of the Polisario), who returned back to Morocco in 1992:

The uprising of October 1998, a blessed event, was a cry against enslavement, degradation, scorned dignity, dictatorship, despotism and arbitrary.

This cry of haro, burst forth from the depths of the confined families in the camps of servitude and disgrace against scorned dignity, dictatorship, despotism and arbitrary:

Men, women, children and old persons have shouted in a single voice -enough, enough arbitrary -enough injustice -enough tyranny and violence -enough exploitation of the sufferings, of tears and deprivation of the sequestered persons -it is quite enough what they have endured -enough widows, orphans and mothers crying their children killed in the prime of life.

Mohamed Abdelaziz and his henchmen have filled up the prisons with victims of their sadism and have transformed the camps into concentration and forced labor centers:

They have separated the husband from his wife, the mother from her child and the child from his brother.

They have forbidden any expression of ideas opposite to those that they laud and do allow only the echo of their statements and blind and exclusive obedience to their capricious orders.

They have transformed schools and hospitals into places of debauchery and prostitution.

So, it was obvious that a day will come to put an end to the dictatorship of the des pots and to their Machiavellian practices.

It was the raging and powerful uprising to which all the tribes with their components have taken part, making in this way the sorcerer suffer the effects of his own satanic deeds. The base has shown rebellion towards the leaders provoking an earthquake that has dissipated the dreams, demolished the "SMARA", the "DAKHLA" and the "AOUSSERD" camps and broken the ivory tour of Mohamed Abdelaziz.

Voices have come out of the storm and have shouted out "DOWN WITH THE POLISARIO ", "LONG LIVE THE KING". The Protestors have shred the photos of Mohamed Abdelaziz, have burnt the colors of the Polisario and have realized the miracle to break the yokes, give back sight to the blind, hearing to the deaf and speech to the dumb. It was a human deluge defying all the obstacles.

Mohamed Abdelaziz and his henchmen, far be it from them to abdicate, have reacted through violence and revenge, which have brought terror at its very high level.

In view of perpetrating the wild crackdown, they have decreed the black-out in the camps and forbidden any circulation of people, people who had never been free in tact, so transforming the encampments into sequestration camps where the victims could not go out or pay visits to each other.

Mohamed Abdelaziz and his faithful followers Brahim Ghali and Mohamed Lamine Bouhali, major of the military units have launched the crackdown to subdue innocent protestors without protection, ill treating pregnant women, smashed the teenagers' faces, scratched the eyes of many protestors and militants and causing injuries to hundreds of others.

The persons arrested, among whom are women from whom they have taken away and thrown down to earth their babies, were chucked out in lorries like sand bags and were driven to the incarceration centers set, for this purpose, all around the camps.

In these camps other armed groups were moving along, sowing terror, taking on the inhabitants, all becoming suspects in their eyes, no one was saved from their ill-treatment, not even the disabled and the women observing the period of widowhood.

Within the imprisonment centers, the sadism of Mohamed Abdelaziz and of his henchmen showed all its horror and exerted torture under all its most cruel forms on the injured persons knowingly abandoned to their sufferings in that cold nights of the garrigue of Lahmada, the lack of berths, blankets and clothes making their conditions even more unbearable.

Once Mohamed Abdelaziz was informed of the outcome of the crackdown and the trashing inflicted on those poor people, he made obvious his joy and declared with ecstasy "Good, they will not forget it for quite a while".

Many of unfortunate imprisoned and of innocent people without protection were put subject to questioning under the most humiliating torture so that they acknowledge they were supposed traitors acting on behalf of foreign forces.

The camps turned into middle age war fields where we could only hear cries of horrified women, and where we can see the rest of torn clothes, tent sheet destroyed and women's hair pulled out scattered over a ground sticky of blood where lies women's and men's undressed bodies with ribs and legs broken.

Mohamed Abdelaziz and his set of sadists, far from assessing the inflicted tortures as sufficient have set up what they called "self-criticism".

They lead innocent persons before hundreds of members of their armed army rabble, making pretence of trial suggesting to their victims who felt menaced, to admit the accusations that they will stuck them in order to better humiliate them and degrade their dignity before an audience of killers and wild persons.

The mask is worn out showing the satrap Mohamed Abdelaziz and his henchmen, who are interested by nothing but enrichment to the detriment of the suffering and pain of hundreds of thousands of innocent women and children.

They have committed horrible crimes against humanity that make any good conscience shudder, and that should be denounced and condemned sooner or later.

XII. TESTIMONY OF THE RESCUED PERSONS OF THE POLISARIO DETENTION CAMPS

The accounts listed here below draw an image on the violation of the human rights within the Tindouf Camps.

1. International Amnesty

✦ Report of February 1993

"International amnesty is worried about the abuses of the Front of the Polisario including the detention of prisoners of conscience, long secret detentions, tortures and deaths in the Tindouf camps and prisons in Algeria. Among those who could be still imprisoned or missing are Sidi Ould Tajdert, imprisoned since 1983 and Casa Ould Salek Hadj Mokhtar, imprisoned since 1975.

In reply to International Amnesty, the President of the Front of the Polisario, Mohamed Abdelaziz has denied all of this. Nevertheless, International Amnesty persists in thinking that the reports relating to the period between 1976 and 1991 concerning torture, treatment of sick persons, the dead and the prisoners of conscience are all well founded and consequently, call the Front of the Polisario to stop such abuses.

✦ Report of April 18, 1996

"Since 1981, International Amnesty voices its preoccupations as to the abuses committed in the camps of refugees situated in the region of Tindouf, in the south of Algeria, which is under the control of the POLISARIO.

The abuses have spread in these camps until 1998. We pointed out notably, cases of long arbitrary imprisonment, of torture and of deliberate and arbitrary homicides of well-known opponents of the so-called front of the Polisario "

"Many persons have been arrested and charged of conspiracy to the benefit of enemy countries against the responsible persons of the Front of the Polisario, notably

in the 70's and the beginning of the 80's. A good number of persons who have been arbitrarily imprisoned, for some cases during several years, have obtained their freedom at the end of the massive protestations of 1988 against the political crackdown exerted within the camps.

The prisoners have been usually tortured and ill-treated and prevented from any contact with their relatives. Even though the situation of the human rights has been seemingly improved within the camps after the events of 1988, International Amnesty International has received information showing out abuses, and notably tortures and ill-treatment inflicted on the prisoners till 1992.

"Let's mention among these imprisoned persons at the end of the 80's, Khalif Laroussi Zaougai, arrested in 1987 since his arrival in the camps, and Salama Khbaou arrested at the end 1989, three months after his arrival in the camps. The two men could have been imprisoned until mid 91.

"Many persons were dead during imprisonment, seemingly because of tortures and ill-treatments of which they were the victims. It was among others, the case of El Mehdi Othman Souayah, who could have been imprisoned in 1976 and died during imprisonment at the end of 1977, and Mohamed Moussa Ould Mokhtar, who could have been arrested at the beginning of 1983 and died during imprisonment some years later.

The responsible persons of the front of the Polisario have not provided any precise information on the imprisonment, the cases of torture and of ill treatments or the persons dead during imprisonment. Since the beginning of the 90's they have acknowledged that these abuses have been committed in the past.

Statement of Pierre Sané, secretary general of Amnesty International to the newspaper "l'Economiste" on April 27th, 2001:

"I have always said to my Moroccan interlocutors that it is not easy for us to have access to the Tindouf camps because the Algerian government does not allow it. The day when we will be authorized to do it, we will send immediately a delegation to carry out an investigation".

2. The American Senator George Pickart

In his report called «Democratization, Human Rights and Political Islam in North of Africa and in the Middle East», that he has submitted in February 1993, to the Foreign Affairs Commission of the American Senate at the end of a trip that has led him to Tindouf, George Pickart emphasizes :

"Former members of the Polisario declare that the Polisario is guilty of serious violations of human rights in the camps, among which there are political murders, torture and deprivation from the liberty of expression and movement. The circumstances and constraints of time have not allowed checking the accusations relating to the human rights abuses. Nevertheless, as far

as the issue of knowing whether the refugees enjoy the freedom to move around is concerned, a Polisario cabinet member has declared that the permission to move is necessary".

3. The speech of Mohamed Abdelaziz before the External Relations Committee of the Polisario.

The Secretary General of the Polisario, Mohamed Abdelaziz has come up to admit the existence of the breaking of the human rights within the Tindouf Camps.

This concern has been evoked at a large scale in his speech during the meeting of the External Relations Committee held on May 10, 1991 in Rabouni and during which he tried to justify through allegations and subterfuges, the reasons of violation of human rights of which the populations of the camps of Tindouf are victims.

The analysis of the part reserved to the human rights in the aforementioned speech of Mohamed Abdelaziz (the content of which is mentioned here below) shows clearly the repressing and the terrorist nature of the Polisario and his will to continue misleading the international public opinion.

Beginning of the quotation:

"...The executive committee has discussed another issue, that relating to the human rights, within jails etc..

As you may know, the Executive Committee, during its meeting at the beginning of the year, has entrusted a cell so as to tackle this issue.

In this way, it was possible for the Executive Committee to know that the Sahraouis imprisoned by the Polisario were made up of three categories:

1. The first category is composed of Sahraouis enlisted in the ranks of the enemy forces and was imprisoned with these forces since 1976.
2. The second category is composed of Sahraouis having preferred not to be freed and not to take part in our militarism. This category is still imprisoned by the Front of the Polisario.
3. The third category is composed of Sahraouis who were in charge of missions by the enemy. They are suspected or convinced to be paid by the enemy, this category is imprisoned hoping to preserve the struggle and to save the nation, knowing that each Sahraoui is liable to be involved in an action against his nation, but this category may change her mind and change her conviction and therefore she is handled in such a way to be liberated in order to militate together with her nation.

The last 18 years may have led to abuse and mistakes, unpredictable for the Polisario.

This abuse and negligence of which are responsible the leaders of the front are

not dishonest acts but result from the reality of some problems.

This is to tell you the burden of the issue of treason and elimination of the agents who are at the enemy's pay.

In fact, the Front of the Polisario has confronted this phenomenon because the Sahraoui nation is not made up of angels, all the more, the colonialist practices are still the same.

However that may be, the Popular Front is looking at the lists of dead persons to examine their cases.

The cell commissioned by the Executive Committee will carry on her works. She will forward the lists accompanied with the circumstances of death of the Sahraouis people.

So, all the Sahraouis will be discharged except for those enlisted in the enemy's army who were invited to chose between their freedom and their imprisonment and who have decided for imprisonment..." end of the quotation.

4. Baba Mustapha Sayed, former representative of the polisario in Canada brother of Ouali Mustapha Sayed founder of this organization.

"In its edition N° 1955 of June 30, 1998, the magazine "Jeune Afrique" has published an article called "Pourquoi je quitte le Polisario" "What for I leave the Polisario?" relating to the resignation from this separatist organization of Baba Mustapha Sayed, former representative of the Polisario in Canada.

In this article, Baba Mustapha Sayed has indicated notably what follows:

"The front is in an advanced state of decay. Its leadership is mediocre, without collective political project and corrupted by the use of a non shared power, does consider the legitimate struggle of the Sahraoui people for their imprescriptible rights of self-determination only as a good will that generates personal profits and privileges for him".

"In order to dispose of their future, the Sahraouis must cast off the yoke of the Polisario and get rid of its tribal and archaic leadership that prevent them from enjoying their most elementary rights».

"Before crossing the Rubicon, I have had several discussions with my comrades, including Mohamed Abdelaziz, they listened to me politely, but I was invited to come to Tindouf, in the camps to settle down my problem, that is to say to go to prison or even worse"

"Since the perspective of the referendum of self-determination has aggravated the struggle for the power within the Polisario defections of the Sahraouis have taken

the proportion of mass exodus towards Morocco.

"Mohamed Abdelaziz is surrounded with a clique of sycophants who move in brand new Toyotas 4X4, and who have at their disposal drivers and cooks, whereas poverty spreads all around. Everything is tribalized: the very single assignment, the smallest bonus".

"Several hundreds of prisoners are in the camps of Tindouf. I knew this a great deal before, but I kept silent. Formerly it was "Batal" Sid Ahmed who directed the Military Security that was in charge of finding out the suspects. Now it is Abdelaziz himself who carries out this task".

5. Bahi Mohamed Ahmed, Moroccan writer and journalist, originating from Sahara, held prisoner during 10 years in algerian and polisarrio prisons

Bahi Mohamed Ahmed, a member of Rguibat Tribe, has been held prisoner by the Algerian and Polisario military security from 1987 to 1996.

Being a victim of a trap set by the Algerian military security which criticized his attachment to the Sahara's Moroccaness and the fact that he defended this view through his writing, Bahi who was living in France, was invited by the Polisario to attend in the Tindouf camps (Algeria) the festivities celebrating the 11th anniversary of the foundation of the pseudo-Arab Democratic Sahara Republic (ADSR).

Upon his arrival to Rabouni (Headquarters of the Polisario), he was arrested on February 7th, 1987 by the Algerian military security under the false charge of assassination attempt of Mohamed Abdelaziz, secretary general of the Polisario and president of the pseudo-adsr. He was subjected to questioning and torture within the Algerian and Polisario detention centers.

After his escape and his return to the homeland, the Kingdom of Morocco, Bahi Mohamed Ahmed has published in September 1996, an excellent book in two volumes under the title: "10 years in the secret detention centers" (Boukili edition, Kénitra), which constitutes an appalling testimony on the systematic violations of the human rights by the Polisario in the Tindouf camps, in the south of Algeria.

6. Testimony of a former reformed torturer and of a victim

A- The reformed torturer

It is the former assistant of the Polisario Security Departmental Head, M. Ahmed CHRIF. The Following is his declaration:

"I am Ahmed Moulay M'Hamed, more known under the name of Ahmed Chrif. I was born in 1954 in Haggounia, in the region of Laâyoune of the Moroccan Sahara. I recently came back to the homeland, the Kingdom of Morocco. At the end of 1975 I integrated the Polisario where I have acted since a long time as an Executive in the

security and repression service and then immediately an assistant to the responsible of this service. I also was in charge of accompanying the foreign delegations that were visiting the Tindouf camps at the south of Algeria, in order to prevent any possible action of the Sahraouis of the camps, to get in touch with the foreigners so as to put forward complaints of the abuses of the leaders of the Polisario against the populations who are under its hold.

I was also sent many times on assignment at the representations of the Polisario to call to order the opponents and bring to Tindouf the elements nourishing defection desire from the ranks of the organization.

On the other hand, and in my authority of Executive of the Security service of the Polisario, I confirm all the national and international accusations held against the Polisario in the field of Violation of the Human Rights.

Indeed, many persons were killed under torture, other have vanished in the Saharan confines of Lahmada of Tindouf where they have been coldly assassinated. Others, suspected of opposition to the dictatorial line of conduct fixed by the Polisario have been killed by the Military Political Commissioners during battles in the Sahara and introduced to their families as martyrs of the armed struggle for independence.

I also hold a precise testimony of control and indoctrination of the masses operated by the Polisario at the Tindouf camps. In fact, all the families, groups of families, parts of tribes and tribes are infiltrated by agents of the military security of the Polisario, who regularly proceed through the encouragement of the system of informing, i.e. the denunciation of any act, even though a trivial one that does not comply with the general line of conduct stipulated by the leaders of the Polisario.

The person being so denounced is immediately arrested, handcuffed and led with eyes blindfolded in secret detention places in the desert where he or she is tortured.

I also draw the attention on the abuses of the Polisario leaders perpetrated against women in the camps: the youngest among them are submitted to the caprices of the Nomenklatura members. In case of refusal, they are exposed as well as their families to reprisals.

I am ready to give my testimony with minute details to the international organizations dealing with Human Rights to bring the solicited clarifications.

Considering this situation, I call upon all the Human Rights international organizations requesting them to undertake serious investigations within the Tindouf camps avoiding as possible, to get misled by the guides of the Polisario.

B- The victim

It is Mr. Saadi El Ouali Salek called "Mandela". Former opponent of the Polisario, he has spent 14 years of imprisonment in the detention secret place situated in the region of Tindouf called "Place of imprisonment Errachid ", managed by the Military Security of the Polisario.

Here is his testimony

"My case is dramatic, only Alfred Hitchcock could, if he were alive, and if he would hear me, make out of it a novel-film.

I spent 14 years of prison in the caves of the region of Tindouf, called pretentiously by the Polisario the Errachid Prison.

On July 1st, 1976 in the night whereas I was sleeping, not quietly I should say, because I was an opponent to the political line of conduct of the Polisario, I was roughly waked up by four henchmen of the Security service who were introduced in my tent in the Tindouf camps. They tied my hands and feet and gagged me, blindfolded my eyes and threw me without consideration in a land Rover, which runs out in the desert for more than one hour.

Coming to a place made up of caves bear on the ground surrounded with a wall (I knew this afterwards), I was submitted for more than 10 days to a very tight questioning. The jailers used against me all the methods of torture, from the flagellation to the use of the electrical current. They reproached me to criticize the leaders of the Polisario and to be against the revolution.

During 14 years, I had hands tied up and eyes blindfolded. They did allow me the use of my hands only for my personal needs and once a day to eat a miserable bowl of lentils. I never had access to medical care, I only managed to remain alive thanks to God the Almighty, to the fact I was young (I had a good physical constitution) and to my determination to remain alive in order to defy the henchmen and the torturers of the Polisario and to show to the leaders of this organization that justice and equity always prevail on barbarism and injustice.

During 14 years of imprisonment, during which I was a dead alive and an alive buried, I learnt how much the leaders of the Polisario were inhuman and merciless. They mislead the international opinion by smooth and humanist discourses that hide in reality the harm and hatred that are in their hearts.