

Côte d'Ivoire urges settlement of Sahara issue under Moroccan autonomy plan

Côte d'Ivoire called, on Saturday in New York, for settling the artificial conflict over the Moroccan Sahara as part of UNSC resolutions and the autonomy plan under Morocco's sovereignty.

Concerning the Sahara issue, the Côte d'Ivoire "urges the parties to the conflict to show a spirit of compromise to solve this dispute under the relevant UNSC resolutions and the Moroccan autonomy initiative," said Côte d'Ivoire's permanent representative to the UN, ambassador Claude Bouah-Kamon during the general debate of the 70th UN General Assembly.

The Ivorian diplomat affirmed his country's support for the talks process under the UN aegis.

Bouah-Kamon, who warned against internal and regional conflicts prevailing in several parts of the world, called on the international community to pay attention to the situation in the Middle-East, Syria, Libya and the Sahara.

MAP 04 October 2015

Position of Swedish government is counterproductive, European deputy

The position of the Swedish government, which is about to adopt a draft law to recognize "SADR" fake entity, is counterproductive, said on Tuesday Gilles Pargneaux, socialist deputy at the European parliament.

This is a useless and counterproductive gesture while the international community has agreed that any solution to that regional conflict goes through the UN, on the basis of the Moroccan initiative to grant broad autonomy to the Saharan provinces, the Euro-deputy told MAP.

This is the only credible solution which will spare the region instability and ensure free movement of people and goods, he added, underlining the need to put an end to this "no man's land" mainly on the Algerian part which is prejudicial to security in the Sahel-Saharan region.

For the European deputy, this stand runs counter international law. "We cannot recognize a State which has no legal existence", he added.

The European deputy said that he will send, on behalf of the Morocco-EU Friendship Group, an official letter to the Swedish government to explain that it is going on the wrong way.

MAP 29 September 2015

Spain: son of polisario officer denounces mysterious disappearance of father in Algeria, holds polisario responsible

The son of a polisario high-ranking officer Ahmed Khalil, who was tasked with monitoring human rights and security in the camps of Tindouf, denounced the mysterious disappearance of his father on the Algerian soil, holding the polisario separatists responsible for his abduction.

"The polisario leadership is the first responsible for the disappearance of my father since Jan. 2009 when he was in Algeria, said Rachid Khalil who has been living in Saint Sebastian (north of Spain) since 2005, adding that his family did not receive any news of Ahmed Khalil for 6 years.

"We want justice", the young Sahrawi told Spanish news agency Eropapress, condemning the oppression and lack of freedom on the camps of Tindouf (south-western Algeria).

Rachid Khalil added that he thinks his father is kept in an Algerian military prison, while blasting over the blackout on this case by the polisario leadership and Algerian authorities.

Rachid Khalil lodged a complaint last October with the Working Group on Enforced or Involuntary Disappearances in Geneva concerning his father.

MAP 19 July 2015

Spanish paper unveils political use by pro-polisario father of common law offence

The allegations made by Takbar Haddi, whose son died in a brawl with his neighbours in Laayoune, are rather a desperate attempt at the political use of a common law offence, Canarian paper La Provincia said.

Incited by Algeria and the Polisario separatists, Haddi attempts at attaching a political aspect to the death of his son, Mohamed Lamine Haidalla, in order to allege that human rights are violated in the Sahara, the paper said.

La Provincia adds that using common law offences for propaganda purposes is a common practice among the polisario separatists.

Haidalla, an ex-convict, died in a hospital in Agadir following a brawl with his neighbours last February 8.

The paper denounced that some members of Haidalla's family are intent on erroneously portraying this death as a case of "freedom martyrdom".

The author of the article Manuel Vidal, who travelled to Layoune to collect testimonies from several people, confirms that the deceased is known for his delinquency and hostility.

Haidala was forsaken by his mom since 2004 and had no political motives, said the paper, adding that he was arrested by the police twice since March 2012 for his involvement in drug use, drunkenness, vandalism and violence involving knives.

In this respect, La Provincia highlights the hypocrisy of the parents of Haidallah as the father was living in the Canary Islands since 2004, while the mother who pretends to defend the right of her son has actually forsaken him for 10 years as she married another man in the Canary islands.

The same paper explains that this desperate attempts at the political use of a common law offence comes after the Polisario was dealt a heavy blow following the issuing of a report by the EU's anti-fraud office (OLAF) slamming the polisario and its mentor Algeria for embezzling humanitarian aid and maintaining the population in the Tindouf camps in harsh living conditions.

MAP 30 June 2015

International NGO Draws Attention of UN Special Rapporteur on Women's Rights in Tindouf

OCAPROCE International on Thursday drew the attention of UN Special Rapporteur on the sufferings and violations against women in Tindouf camps, south-western Algeria.

"These women endure the deportation of their kids to remote places where they are indoctrinated into a hate-based ideology. These vulnerable women have to endure this physical and psychological violence in silence", the Sahrawi activist Aicha Douihi said during a plenary session, in Geneva, of the Human Rights Council devoted to an interactive dialogue with the UN Special Rapporteur on anti-violence against women.

Ms. Douihi underlined that these women suffer from a precarious human situation, being victims of sexual exploitation and forced procreation, under an inhuman policy that aims to increase a population that is indoctrinated to hate their bothers in the Saharan provinces.

"It in a climate of fear that some of them, who have managed to escape and reunite with their families in Morocco, have told us about the acts of rape, kidnapping, and forced labour they were subjected to on a daily basis in a territory deprived of the essential conditions to a decent life."

The representative of the NGO said that women in the kingdom's southern provinces "benefit from legislations that guarantee their protection and rights, as reflected by the regular collaboration with special Rapporteurs.

MAP 19 June 2015

Algeria's diversionary tactics, main obstacle to settling Sahara issue – former US diplomat

The Algerian regime continues to hinder UN efforts to find a political, lasting, realistic and mutually acceptable solution to the Sahara issue through resorting to diversionary moves, former US diplomat specialising in the Maghreb Robert Holley told MAP.

Speaking on the backdrop of the desperate speech by Algeria's Prime Minister Abdelmalek Sellal on Sunday before the 25th African Union Summit, Holley slammed Algeria for not responding the UN Security Council calls to support a negotiated political solution to the Sahara issue.

To the contrary, the Algerian regime continues to use diversionary tactics which aggravates the stalemate in settling the issue and perpetuates the status quo, Holley said.

MAP 15 June 2015

Cote d'Ivoire reiterates "firm" support to Morocco's autonomy proposal for Sahara.

Cote d'Ivoire reiterated "firm" support to Morocco's proposal to grant autonomy to the southern provinces, "as part of Morocco's sovereignty, unity and the integrity of its territory".

Cote d'Ivoire reiterates firm support to Morocco's autonomy proposal for Sahara (joint statement)

05 June 2015

Ivoirian president, Alassane Ouattara "reiterated Cote d'Ivoire's firm support to Morocco's proposal to grant large autonomy to the Sahara region,, as part of Morocco's sovereignty, unity and the integrity of its territory", said the Morocco-Cote d'Ivoire joint statement published at the end of the friendship and work visit paid by HM King Mohammed VI to the west African country.

The Ivoirian head of state also "praised Morocco's efforts to reach a final settlement to the regional conflict over the Moroccan Sahara", the release goes.

HM the King left Cote d'Ivoire this Friday heading to Gabon, fourth and last leg of an African tour that also included Senegal and Guinea-Bissau.

MAP 05 June 2015

Polisario, Driver of Instability in Region- Senegalese Pundit

The activities of the Polisario separatists are one the key drivers of instability in the Maghreb and the Sahel, said Babacar Diallo, President of the African geopolitical institute (IAGEO).

"Consistent reports point that the Polisario is not only involved in trafficking activities, but is also implicated in coordinating with terrorist groups notably AQIM," Dialo was quoted by news websites Dakaractu and Mediafrik as saying.

The connivance between the Polisario and AQIM adds to the threats posed by the surge of potent terrorist groups in the region such as the Maghreb branches of the Islamic State self-proclaimed by AL Baghdadi in Iraq, Dialo said.

The Polisario acts as a hindrance to any effort to achieve regional integration in the Maghreb, deploring Dialo, adding that the artificial dispute over the Sahara has been maintained due to the intransigence of the Polisario and its mentors thus hijacking the economic and social progress of the Maghreb as a regional grouping and jeopardising the region's security and stability.

In this respect, he highlighted Morocco's autonomy proposal as a solution that will pave the way for a new era in the Maghreb integration process.

Settling the Sahara issue and reinvigorating cooperation between the countries of the Maghreb Union is conducive to achieving lasting stability in the region including the Sahel, said Dialo.

In this connection, Dialo noted the ambivalence of some countries in the region who continue to support the Polisario to perpetuate the artificial dispute over the Sahara, adding that this represents a serious threat to peace and security in the Maghreb.

After giving a brief overview of the history of the artificial dispute over the Sahara, Dialo called on the African Union to review its stance on Morocco's territorial integrity.

Admitting an imaginary republic was an "unacceptable historical mistake" which the African Union should acknowledge and address, he said.

Diallo deplored that the African Union is being manipulated by some African countries to serve their hegemonic aims through countering and undermining Morocco's territorial integrity.

MAP 25 May 2015

UNSC resolution 2218 on Sahara, 'failure of Algerian diplomacy', Spanish website

The latest resolution by the UN Security Council on the Sahara, extending the MINURSO mandate, is a failure of the Algerian diplomacy, wrote Spanish website "Nuevatribuna.es".

The call by the UNSC on Algeria to join efforts seeking to find a political solution to the Sahara conflict and allow a census of populations in the camps of Tindouf (south Algeria) is a setback for the Algerian diplomacy, it said.

The resolution 2218, approved unanimously on Apr. 28 by the UNSC member states, is a clear example of the failure of all maneuvers by Algeria to hamper any political solution to the Sahara conflict, it added.

The author also recalled that the said resolution highlights undeniable efforts by Morocco to uphold human rights on its soil through local committees under the national council for human rights (CNDH).

MAP 09 May 2015

Embezzlement of Tindouf camps humanitarian aid: European parliament ends fraud of Algiers and polisario

The European Parliament, which convened in a plenary session in Strasbourg, called on Wednesday for assessing the aid sent by the EU and adjusting it to the real needs of the Tindouf camps, as well as conducting a census for the camps populations, thus putting an end to the fraud by Algeria and the polisario who were exposed in the report by the European Anti-Fraud Office (OLAF) which revealed huge and organized embezzlement of international humanitarian aid at the expense of populations in captivity.

In a resolution on a report concerning the EU 2013 general budget, the parliament asked the European commission to shed light on measures taken in response to OLAF report on embezzlement, pressuring it to make sure that the incriminated Algerian and polisario officials stop having access to the European financial aid.

The European Parliament voiced also concern over the absence of a census of Tindouf camps populations, south western Algeria, for nearly 30 years, underlining that this is an abnormal and unique situation in the history of UNHCR.

In a statement to MAP, Morocco's ambassador to the EU Alem Menouar commended the vote by the said parliament which is in line with the Budgetary Control Committee, and its condemnation of mass and systematic embezzlement of aid.

The Taxpayers Association of Europe had launched a call, yesterday, on the EU to make sure that the humanitarian aid sent to the Tindouf camps is not embezzled by Algerian and polisario leaders.

MAP 29 April 2015

International Forum on Sahara Stresses Pertinence of Autonomy as Solution to Sahara Issue

Participants at the international forum on the Sahara highlighted, on Wednesday in Laayoune, the pertinence of the autonomy initiative as a sound basis for resolving the artificial dispute over the Sahara.

The Forum's final statement stresses the need for transcending the unfounded allegations of the Polisario by adopting a realistic approach in favour of the autonomy initiative as a basis for a peaceful solution to the dispute over the Sahara.

The participants in the Forum, held under the theme: "the Sahara, 40 years on", said that the autonomy proposal represents an opportunity for building a better future for the people held against their will in the Polisario-administered camps of Tindouf (south-western Algeria).

They also highlighted the international endorsement of Morocco's autonomy proposal which has been hailed for its credibility.

The participants laid emphasis on the large-scale investment projects in the southern provinces which further evidences Morocco's commitment to modernising the region.

They also highlighted the importance of the participatory approach adopted by Morocco in managing public affairs in the southern provinces through collective management structures.

On this occasion, they called on the international community to interfere in breaking the siege imposed on the afflicted population in the camps of Tindouf while deploring that serious human rights violations continue to be inflicted in total impunity in the camps.

The forum was an opportunity to shed light on a range of themes including the Sahara before 1976 and the autonomy from a point of view of international law.

Map 02 April 2015

Russia position vis-à-vis Sahara issue, 'wise'- Moroccan Ambassador

Morocco's ambassador to Moscow Abdelkader Lachhab described, on Thursday, Russia's stand regarding the Sahara issue as "a wise position" that favours a political, mutually acceptable solution to the conflict.

Speaking to Russian news agency Spoutnik, Lachhab pointed to the regional character of the artificial dispute over the Sahara which "results in the interference of regional players in the internal affairs of Morocco with the aim of achieving hegemony in the region."

The Moroccan Ambassador shed light on Morocco's efforts to put an end to the dispute, notably through the autonomy initiative which offers a political, lasting and just solution, recalling that the autonomy plan was welcomed by the international community as a "serious and credible" proposal.

Lachhab deplored that the other parties continue to stick to obsolete and unrealistic options in opposition to UN resolutions. In this regard, he decried that the population in the camps of Tindouf in southern Algeria continue to be held by the Polisario militias against their will deprived of basic living conditions.

The Moroccan diplomat pointed to the violation of UN resolutions by the Polisario and its mentor Algeria who continue to obstruct the conduct of a census of the population held in

these camps so that they continue inflating the numbers to take advantage of international humanitarian aid that they embezzle.

The fraudulent practices and the embezzlement of international humanitarian aid was recently denounced by several NGOs who warned of that the Polisario leadership enrich themselves by trading in the suffering of the camps' population, he said.

On bilateral relations with Russia, the Ambassador recalled the strategic partnership binding the two countries since 2002, noting economic ties are steadily growing notably during the last two years.

MAP 20 March 2015

Sahara: HM King Abdullah II Reiterates Jordan's Position In Favor Of Morocco's Territorial Integrity, Joint Statement

HM King Abdullah II of Jordan reiterated his country's position in favor of Morocco's territorial integrity, said a joint statement issued on Thursday following the official working visit to the Kingdom by the Hashemite sovereign and HM Queen Rania Al Abdullah, at the invitation of HM King Mohammed VI.

The Jordanian sovereign underlined that the Moroccan autonomy proposal, for the settlement of the artificial dispute over the Moroccan Sahara, is the basis for any negotiated solution between the parties involved, said the statement.

HM King Abdullah II lauded, on this occasion, the reform process led by HM King Mohammed VI which helped Morocco achieve huge progress in development and in the political field, it added.

MAP 12 March 2015

MEP Calls On EU To Stand Up For Efficient Management Of Security In Tindouf

French Socialist MEP Gilles Pargneaux on Monday called on the European Union to stand up for an efficient management of borders, populations and security in Tindouf camps, south-west Algerian.

"The embezzlement of humanitarian aid sent to Tindouf camps casts a harsh light on the Sahara conflict and stresses the need for EU to stand up for an efficient management of borders, populations and security in Tindouf camps", Pargneaux said at a meeting of the Committee on Budgetary Control of the European Parliament.

In this regard, Mr Pargneaux stressed that the autonomy plan proposed by Morocco to settle the regional dispute over the Sahara provides an efficient answer to all these questions related to populations in Tindouf and regional security.

MAP 23 February 2015

European Parliament's Committee On Budgetary Control Calls On EU To Adapt Aid To Real Needs Of Population In Tindouf

The Committee on Budgetary Control of the European parliament called on the European Commission to adapt the aid it sends to Tindouf camps to the real needs of the population on grounds of the embezzlement by Algeria and the Polisario that was disclosed in a report by the European anti-fraud office (OLAF).

In a draft report on the 2013 general EU budget, the Committee called for an immediate adaptation of the EU aid to meet the needs of the population in the camps in a way that prevents embezzlement.

This call comes after the OLAF disclosed a report on mass embezzlement of humanitarian aid by polisario and Algerian officials.

The report deplored that only a small part of the aid finds its way to the Tindouf camps, while the rest is sold in foreign markets to enrich Algerian and polisario officials.

The report mentioned that the overestimation of the population of the camps as one of the reasons facilitating the embezzlement of humanitarian aid.

The EU sends humanitarian aid to the camps since 1975 on the basis of numbers provided by Algerian authorities estimating the camps' population at 155,000.

Algeria and the polisario continue to maintain the status-quo by refusing a census of the population in the camps by the UN.

MAP 19 February 2015

Swiss Pundit Warns Of Repercussions Of Aid Embezzlement In Tindouf On Regional Peace In Maghreb

The embezzlement of humanitarian aid sent to Tindouf by Algerian regime and the polisario separatists represents a "source of conflict" and casts a shadow on peace in the Maghreb, Swiss regional expert on MENA region, Jean-Marc Maillard, said on Monday.

The embezzlement of humanitarian aid "is reflective of a sad reality that can only be a source of conflicts," he told MAP.

He deplored that the humanitarian aid is perpetrated in full connivance between the "Algerian regime and its polisario henchmen" while expressing "concerns regarding peace in the Maghreb."

He pointed out to the disclosure of a report by the European Anti-Fraud office (OLAF) which laid bare the fraudulent diversion of humanitarian aid by Algeria and the polisario leadership to the detriment of the population held against their will in the camps of Tindouf.

This embezzlement aids to the diversion of the revenues of hydrocarbon resources in Algeria by a handful of officials, he noted.

The Swiss expert also raised questions on the repercussions of the fall in oil prices on the Algerian financial resources and its hydrocarbon-based economy, saying that "the opportunist practices, that were denounced in the OLAF report, reflect a lack of vision with regard to the future in the Algerian regime and the impasse in which it is currently trapped."

The 2007 OLAF report, which was made public last week, slams the Polisario leadership and Algerian authorities for organised embezzlement of aid which is diverted from the port of Oran.

MAP 03 February 2015

HRW World Report 2015 Exposes Intimidation Practices Against Anti-Polisario Protesters

The World report 2015 by NGO Human Rights Watch (HRW) exposed the intimidation practices and harassment against anti-polisario protesters in the camps of Tindouf in the Algeria territory.

The report, presented on Thursday in Rabat at a press conference, said that people who openly and publicly criticize the polisario in the camps of Tindouf are harassed and intimidated.

The report recalled the case of Mahjouba Hamdidaf who was held captive for several months away from her adoptive family, underlining the existence of similar cases.

The report deplored that the Algerian government did not admit explicitly its responsibility for protecting the human rights of populations living on its own lands in the polisario-run camps.

MAP 29 January 2015

Tindouf Camps: Algeria's Refusal Of Population Census Encourages Aid Embezzlement, Euro-Deputy

Algeria's obstinate refusal to allow a census of population held captive in the camps of Tindouf encourages mass and organized embezzlement of international humanitarian aid, Euro-deputy Gilles Pargneaux said on Friday.

"We should be aware that the overestimation of population in the camps of Tindouf helped to set up this European food aid embezzlement and resale system," said Pargneaux in response to the issuing of a report by the European Anti-

Fraud Office (OLAF) which shows fraudulent practices by Algeria and the polisario to embezzle humanitarian aid for Sahrawis in the camps.

Pargneaux underlined that the said report throws light on the main problem in the Sahara issue: a census of population in captivity in the Tindouf camps, which Algeria and Polisario reject categorically despite the UN repeated requests.

The embezzlement of European aid (10 million euros yearly) for the camps population by Polisario dignitaries is simply outrageous, said Pargneaux, who is a member of the Budget control committee at the European Parliament and chairman of the EU-Morocco friendship group within the same body.

The OLAF report slams Algeria and the Polisario which have been embezzling humanitarian aid for decades to the detriment of the population held against their will in the camps of Tindouf.

The report notes that organized embezzlement starts in the Algerian port of Oran where a large part of humanitarian aid is diverted away from the intended beneficiaries in the camps.

MAP 23 January 2015

The EU Set To Curb Embezzlement Of Aid Sent To Tindouf Camps- European Commissioner

The EU took a series of measures to curb the massive embezzlement of humanitarian aid sent to the population in the Polisario-run camps of Tindouf in south-western Algeria, Vice-President of the European Commission for Budget and Human Resources Kristalina Georgieva said.

Georgieva made the statement in a response to a written question by a member of the European Parliament on the embezzlement of humanitarian aid by Algeria and the Polisario following the disclosure of a report conducted in 2007 by the European Anti-Fraud Office (OLAF) which showed decades-long fraudulent diversion of humanitarian aid sent to the population in Tindouf.

"On the basis of the recommendations put forward by OLAF, the European Commission took a set of measures to reduce the risk of these fraudulent practices," said Georgieva.

These measures include the strengthening the control instruments used by European Commission's Humanitarian Aid and Civil Protection department (ECHO) and its international partners and promoting transparency at all the level of logistics and distribution, she said.

In light of the OLAF report, the Commission has also proceeded to a meticulous assessment of the needs of the population in specific areas relating, inter alia, to health, water, food and hygiene and decided, she said.

With a view to curbing the diversion of aid, the EU official went on to say, the European assistance will be limited to goods with short-term expiry dates which makes them less likely to be embezzled given the challenges they pose in terms of stockage and transportation.

The OLAF report slams Algeria and the Polisario which have been embezzling humanitarian aid for decades to the detriment of the population held against their will in the camps of Tindouf.

The report notes that organised embezzlement starts in the Algerian port of Oran where a large part of humanitarian aid is diverted away from the intended beneficiaries in the camps.

Among the factors that facilitate such embezzlement is the overestimation of the numbers of the refugees and consequently the aid, the OLAF explained in the report.

Neither Algeria nor the Polisario allowed a census of the population of the camps, deplors the OLAF.

The OLAF estimated the number of the population held in the camps at 90,000 in 2005.

MAP 23 January 2015

Germany Supports 'Lasting, Mutually Acceptable Political Solution' To Sahara Issue

German Foreign Minister Frank-Walter Steinmeier said, here Thursday, that his country supports a "lasting and mutually acceptable political solution to the Sahara issue".'

"The German minister stressed the consistent position of his country regarding the Sahara issue, highlighting Germany's support to the United Nations efforts to achieve a lasting and mutually acceptable political solution," said a joint statement issued Thursday in Marrakech, following the visit of the chief of German diplomacy.

"Both sides noted that the United Nations Security Council deemed serious and credible Morocco's efforts to promote the search for a solution" to the artificial conflict over the Moroccan Sahara, said the joint statement.

On the other hand, the German minister hailed the progress made by Morocco to consolidate the rule of law and good governance. "Both sides agreed that concrete projects, included in the 'strengthening democratic process Partnership' program, are to be initiated in these fields," the joint statement added.

MAP 22 January 2015

Sahara Issue: Neutrality & Objectivity, Consubstantial With UN Involvement, Says Peter Pham

Neutrality and objectivity are consubstantial with the UN involvement to find a final political solution to the Sahara issue, Director of the Africa Center at the Atlantic Council, Peter Pham, said Thursday.

"It is crucial to recognize and remember that the mission of MINURSO has always been to adhere fully to the principles of neutrality and non-interference in the affairs of sovereign

states," Pham said in comments to the phone call between HM King Mohammed VI and UN Secretary-General Ban Ki-moon, at the initiative of the latter.

This expert on African issues recalled that "some parties tried to exploit the UN mission to do something it is not and it should not be, a risky approach that could undermine regional stability".

In this regard, he hailed the UNSG who stressed during the phone conversation with the Sovereign that MINURSO will continue its mission in strict compliance with its current mandate, recalling that "Ban Ki moon had recognized the importance of respecting the mandate of the mission, and deemed Tindouf camps a time bomb".

MAP 22 January 2015

Sahara: Egypt Reaffirms Attachment To Morocco's Territorial Unity And Support For Autonomy Initiative

Egyptian Foreign Minister Sameh Choukri reaffirmed Egypt's attachment to Morocco's territorial unity and its support for the autonomy initiative submitted by the Kingdom to put an end to the Sahara conflict.

Concerning the Sahara issue, the Egyptian Foreign Minister reaffirmed Egypt's attachment to Morocco's territorial unity and to a UN-brokered solution for this issue, as well as its support for UNSC resolutions on the Moroccan autonomy project and the serious and credible effort by Morocco to move ahead towards the settlement of this conflict, wrote a joint statement on Friday on the occasion of the visit to Morocco by the Egyptian Foreign Minister.

For his part, the statement went on, foreign minister Salaheddine Mezouar reaffirmed Morocco's position in support of the process of democratic change in Egypt and of the road map adopted by the Egyptian people, after the revolution of June 30, to elect democratic institutions starting with a referendum on a new constitution which was approved early 2014, following the election of his excellency president Abdelfettah Al Sissi last June during free and fair elections, mirroring the will of the sweeping majority of the Egyptian people to hold the legislative elections scheduled March 2015.

MAP 16 January 2015

Guinea Bissau Reiterates Support For Moroccan Sahara

Speaker of Guinea Bissau's national assembly Cipriano Cassama reiterated, on Wednesday in Rabat, his country's support for the Moroccan Sahara.

"I came to reiterate the support of my country and of Guinea Bissau's parliament for the Moroccan aspect of the Sahara," Cassama told MAP after a meeting with minister delegate for foreign affairs Mbarka Bouaida.

Guinea Bissau's stance over the Sahara issue is clear and unequivocal, he said, underlining the fact that the two countries share the same viewpoints on many issues of common interest.

The Speaker of Guinea Bissau's national assembly also voiced his gratitude to HM King Mohammed VI and to the Moroccan people for the Kingdom's assistance in favor of Guinea Bissau.

MAP 24 December 2014

Sahara: EU For Just, Lasting And Mutually Acceptable Political Solution

The EU encouraged, on Tuesday, all the parties involved in the Sahara issue to reach a just, lasting and mutually acceptable political solution.

In the final statement of the 12th session of the Morocco-EU Association Council, the Union recalled its attachment to settling the Sahara conflict and its full support to efforts by the UNSG and its personal envoy to help reach a just, lasting and mutually acceptable political solution by all the parties concerned.

It also encouraged all the parties to continue working with the UNSG personal envoy to move forwards in the search for such a solution, while showing realism and a spirit of compromise.

The EU voiced the hope that efforts for a better Maghreb integration will contribute to making headway in this area. It also expressed its attachment to human rights and recalled obligations incumbent on each party, hailing the reinforcement and the constitutionalization of the National Council for Human Rights (CNDH).

MAP 16 December 2014

Advanced Regionalisation, Transition To Autonomy In Southern Provinces

Advanced regionalisation represents a transitory period towards autonomy in the Southern Provinces, President of the National Assembly for Independents (RNI) Salaheddine Mezouar said on Saturday in Dakhla.

Under Morocco's advanced regionalisation plan, administrative prerogatives will be devolved from the center to the regions to pave the way for autonomy in the southern provinces, Mezouar said during a meeting with RNI members in the southern Oued Eddahab-Lagouira region.

Regionalisation as a mode of governance proved to be efficient in several developed countries insofar as it enabled the local population to well manage their day-to-day affairs, he said.

Mezouar stressed the link between advanced regionalisation and the new development model based on justice, prosperity and equity, noting that, in line with Royal instructions, the southern provinces will feature prominently in Morocco's regionalisation efforts.

The RNI president also pointed out to the contrast between the situation in the southern provinces and the abject living conditions in Tindouf camps, which, he said, is a "tinder box waiting to explode."

In this respect, Mezouar deplored the role played by Algeria in perpetuating the conflict.

Morocco remains committed to finding a solution to this regional dispute within the UN process, recalled the RNI President.

MAP 14 December 2014

Socialist International Rejects Polisario's Membership

The Polisario separatists and their mentors were dealt a heavy blow by the Socialist International (SI) which rejected their membership application on Saturday in Geneva.

The polisario's demand was dismissed by the ethical committee of the SI. "The delegations present in Geneva are fed up with the propaganda orchestrated by the Polisario," explained Habib El Malki, president of the administrative commission of the Social Union for Popular Forces (USFP).

The SI is taken into consideration the realities on the ground in the southern provinces, El Malki said.

Members of the SI will be visiting the southern provinces to learn about the latest developments and get in touch with the local population.

MAP 13 December 2014

Discontent In Tindouf Camps Facilitates Integration Of Youth In Jihadist Groups, Elcano Royal Institute

Discontent prevailing in the camps of Tindouf, south of Algeria, opens the door to the radicalization of the young population which might facilitate its integration in jihadist groups, said Spanish Think tank Elcano Royal Institute.

The lack of political progress and discontent in the camps open the door to the radicalization of the young population, said the Institute in a report on Tuesday.

This situation, which is added to the youth's disregarding of polisario's ideas, might facilitate their integration in jihadist militia of Al Qaeda in the Islamic Maghreb (AQIM), said the report entitled "Spain, a look towards the south".

Presented in the presence of Spanish defense minister Pedro Morenes, the report underlined also the mobilization, over the past months, in the camps of Tindouf due to the worsening of

material and humanitarian conditions following the decline of international aid for local populations.

On the Sahara issue, the report underlined that Spain continues its support to a UN-brokered solution, recalling that the Spanish government opposed in 2013 a proposal by Washington to include human rights monitoring in MINURSO mandate.

MAP 09 December 2014

UN Lauds Morocco's Support For Sahel Region

UN Regional Humanitarian Coordinator for the Sahel Robert Piper lauded, on Tuesday in Rabat, Morocco's priceless support for the Sahel region, affirming that the UN-Morocco partnership will grow stronger in the future.

At a joint press briefing with minister delegate for foreign affairs Mbarka Bouaida, the UN official expressed his gratefulness to Morocco for its support to UN teams operating in this region which is facing huge humanitarian challenges and suffers from malnutrition, epidemics and civilians' displacement because of armed conflicts.

He said that he is proud and satisfied with the partnership between Morocco and the United Nations in the Sahel region, adding that Morocco's efforts in international bodies for the development of the Sahel are commendable.

Bouaida underlined efforts by HM King Mohammed VI for stability and development of the African continent. She also underscored Morocco's solidarity-based approach towards Sahel countries, which was shown in humanitarian aids sent to Mali and the setting up of a military field hospital in Bamako.

Bouaida also stressed how important it is for Morocco to strengthen cooperation with regional bodies such as the Community of Sahel-Saharan States (CEN-SAD) and underlined the commitment of the Kingdom to support measures taken by the Economic Community of African States (ECOWAS).

MAP 11 November 2014

Sahara: International Community Should Not Be Fooled By Algerian Activism, Charles Saint-Prot

The artificial conflict over the Sahara issue is clearly the product of a foreign state's meddling which aims to destabilize Morocco by supporting a pseudo-separatism, said director of the Paris Geopolitical Studies Observatory Charles Saint-Prot, urging the international community not to be fooled or turn a blind eye on Algerian activism.

Reacting to the royal speech on the 39th anniversary of the Green March, Saint-Prot told MAP that HM the King reminded people of the true nature of the Moroccan Sahara issue

which is not a decolonization issue since Morocco has recovered its Saharan provinces, noting that the sovereign asked each one to shoulder its responsibilities especially Algeria which is a main party to the conflict.

The international community should clearly support Morocco's autonomy plan which is the only way to put an end to a conflict representing a serious factor of destabilization and insecurity in the Sahel-Saharan region, he said.

He added that the royal speech is a reaffirmation of Morocco's territorial unity, noting that the sovereign insisted on the Kingdom's determination to keep its inalienable sovereignty over all the national territory.

MAP 08 November 2014

Sweden Reiterates Support For UN-Led Negotiations On Sahara Issue

Sweden reiterated its support for the negotiations process on the settlement of the Sahara issue under the aegis of the United Nations, Swedish foreign minister Margot Wallstrom said.

"The Swedish government is following with interest the assessment of the situation as a whole", Swedish top diplomat said Tuesday at the parliament, adding: "We must also listen to the voices of those who are against the option of separatism.

"The Sahara issue is absolutely not to be compared with the Palestinian issue", the Swedish FM made it clear as she referred to calls by enemies of the Kingdom's territorial integrity who called Sweden to recognize the so-called SADR similarly to Stockholm's recognition of the State of Palestine.

The remarks of Wallstrom came after several Sweden-based Moroccan NGO's and Moroccan-born Swedish citizens stepped up efforts to enlighten the new Swedish government on the history and origins of the artificial dispute over the Moroccan Sahara.

05 November 2014

Moroccan Sahara: Sweden Shows Separatists Red Card

Sweden has shown the red card to separatists who dream to see the Scandinavian country take a stand contrary to international law, history, geography and the aspirations of the majority of Sahrawi populations.

Before parliament, Swedish foreign minister Margot Wallstrom reaffirmed her country's support for the talks process under way to settle the Sahara issue under the UN aegis.

"The Sahara issue cannot be compared to the Palestinian issue," said Wallstrom hinting at the calls made by the foes of Morocco's territorial integrity saying that Sweden should recognize SADR after it had recognized the State of Palestine.

"We should also listen to those who are against the option of separatism," she added.

MAP 06 November 2014

Sahrawi Activist Urges For Rapid Action To End Polisario's Repression Against Demonstrators In Tindouf

Sahrawi activist Mustapha Salma Ould Sidi Mouloud has called the international community to interfere urgently to end the despicable repression by the Polisario militias against the demonstrators and populations in the Tindouf camps, south-western Algeria.

In a written release, Salma, who is banned for returning to Tindouf for having openly supported Morocco's autonomy proposal, said the Polisario militias violently cracked on the demo, staged on Saturday in front of the Polisario leader's office in the locality of Rabbouni.

He went on that a dozen of demonstrators have been injured and 13 people have been arrested in the last two days and detained in the "Dhibiya" prison in Tindouf where they are denied all contacts with their relatives.

Detainees refuse to be treated by health professionals sent by the Polisario and threaten to stage a hunger strike starting on Tuesday. They are also requiring "the dispatching of a mission of the High commissioner for refugees or any other independent organization" said the Sahrawi militant who is based in the Mauritanian capital since the polisario expelled him from the camps two years ago.

MAP 04 November 2014

Madrid Satisfied With Release Of Sahrawi Woman Held Captive In Tindouf

The Spanish foreign affairs ministry voiced, on Wednesday, its satisfaction with the release of young Sahrawi woman Mahjouba Mohamed Hamdidaf, held captive since last summer in the camps of Tindouf (south-western Algeria).

A spokesperson of the Spanish ministry, quoted by "Europapress" news agency, said he was glad of the happy ending of this woman's story.

Mahjouba is currently in Algiers waiting to be brought home to Spain, said the news agency.

The young Sahrawi woman, who has been working for the London-based "Marie Curie Foundation Care" and intended to pursue her studies in the British capital, visited last summer the camps of Tindouf in order to see her biological parents.

MAP 29 October 2014

UNSC Holds Semiannual Consultations On Moroccan Sahara

The United Nations Security Council held, on Monday, its semiannual consultations on the Moroccan Sahara issue pursuant to its resolutions.

During these consultations, behind closed doors, the 15 member states followed a report by the United Nations Under-Secretary-General for Peacekeeping Operations Hervé Ladsous, the UN SG Personal Envoy Christopher Ross and MINURSO Special Representative Kim Bolduc.

No statement was made to the press about these consultations.

MAP 28 October 2014

Spain Demands 'Swift Solution' To Situation Of Sahrawi Woman Held Captive In Tindouf, Foreign Affairs Ministry

The Spanish government demanded a swift solution to the situation of young Sahrawi woman Mahjouba Mohamed Hamdidaf, who is held captive in the camps of Tindouf since last summer.

A statement by the Spanish foreign affairs ministry, issued on Thursday, said that the government is following "with a lot of interest" this issue and demands a swift and positive solution to the situation of young Sahrawi woman Mahjouba (23y) who holds the Spanish nationality since 2012.

Mahjouba, who has been working for the London-based "Marie Curie Foundation Care" and intended to pursue her studies in the British capital, visited last summer the camps of Tindouf in order to see her biological parents. Once she arrived there, she was stripped of her passport and money to prevent her from returning to Europe as scheduled on Aug. 18.

MAP 23 October 2014

Sahara: Afro-Asian Peoples' Solidarity Organization Expresses Support To Morocco's Autonomy Plan

The 9th conference of the Afro-Asian Peoples' Solidarity Organization (AAPSO), which took place Sunday in Colombo, Sri Lanka, expressed the organization's support to Morocco's autonomy plan in the Kingdom's southern provinces.

"The congress supports the peaceful efforts for the settlement of the Sahara issue through the (Moroccan) autonomy initiative", the final statement of this meeting said.

The congress decided to hold its 10th edition in 2016 in Morocco and appointed the President of the Moroccan commission for peace and solidarity at AAPSO Talaa Saud Atlassi as a member of the permanent secretariat of the organization.

This meeting was an opportunity for the Moroccan delegation to highlight the relevance of the autonomy plan as a final political solution to the artificial dispute over the Sahara, which negatively affects relations between Morocco and Algeria and threatens international peace and solidarity, Atlassi told MAP.

MAP 20 October 2014

Moroccan, Spanish NGOs Urge Demos Saturday To Protest Against Captivity Of Young Sahrawi Mahjouba In Tindouf

Moroccan and Spanish associations as well as political parties' sections in Catalonia (north-eastern Spain) called to stage demonstrations to protest against detaining, since last summer, a young Sahrawi holding the Spanish nationality in the camps of Tindouf (south Algeria), in breach of basic principles of human rights and people's free movement.

Coordinator of Morocco's USFP party in Spain Mohamed Idrissi, who is in charge of coordinating these demos, expressed his firm condemnation of holding Mahjouba Mohamed Hamdidaf (23y) against her will in the polisario-run camps while she had been holding the Spanish nationality since 2012.

For its part, the Spanish Socialist Workers' Party (PSOE-opposition) called on the international community to intervene to set Mahjouba free. Spokesperson of the party Trinidad Jiménez said in a statement to the press that PSOE called upon the Spanish government to strive double hard in order to allow the young Sahrawi woman resume her normal life.

In the same vein, France-based "Association des Tribus Sahraouies Marocaines en Europe" blasted over the woman's detention by the polisario in blatant violation of human rights basic principles.

The case of this young Sahrawi woman, which was submitted to the UN special rapporteur on violence against women, stole the limelight and was behind the creation of a platform of support urging the immediate release of Mahjouba.

The platform has already issued a manifesto signed by over 4,000 people and submitted it to the Spanish foreign affairs ministry.

According to the newly-created body, Mahjouba is detained against her will and being watched 24/7. It also said that the woman received death threats in case she attempted to escape.

Faced with this situation, the captive woman sent an SOS to the international community to help free her and help her join her adoptive family in Valencia, it added.

Mahjouba, who has been working for the London-based "Marie Curie Foundation Care" and intended to pursue her studies in the British capital, visited last summer the camps of Tindouf in order to see her biological parents. Once she arrived there, she was stripped of her passport and money to prevent her from returning to Europe as scheduled on Aug. 18.

The Spanish foreign affairs ministry is taking the necessary steps to solve this problem, meanwhile, the province of Valencia decided to suspend all agreements and aids for the polisario until the affair is resolved.

MAP 17 October 2014

UN Settlement Plan For Sahara, 'Inapplicable' : Eric Jensen

Former Special representative of the UN Secretary General Erik Jensen reiterated Thursday in New York the "inapplicability and non-feasibility of the UN settlement plan for the Moroccan Sahara issue.

After recalling the major historical stages of this artificial conflict before the 193 UN member states during a meeting of the UN 4th Commission, Jensen said that the 40-year old census made by Spain, as well as the identification process of the settlement plan conducted by MINURSO have also failed and led to the same conclusion: the inapplicability of the UN peace plan.

The former UN official, a connoisseur of the Sahara issue who has led MINURSO from 1993 to 1998, recalled Morocco's autonomy initiative presented in 2007 as part of the Kingdom's positive reaction to UN calls for a political solution.

Besides the autonomy plan, Jensen added, the many reforms engaged in Morocco, such as the new constitution, the establishment of the Economic and social council and the reforms undertaken against corruption as well as the regionalization project are all points that strengthen Morocco's autonomy plan.

Jensen said that the autonomy option had been raised during meetings he had planned back in 1996 in Geneva and Rabat between Moroccan officials and representatives of the Polisario.

The Polisario leaders were predisposed to discuss with the Moroccan delegation the autonomy option, he recalled.

"No need to remind how crucial the settlement of the Sahara issue is for peace and development of the Maghreb given the growing threats on security in the Sahel region", Jensen pointed out.

"After all these years of disappointment, time has come to compromise", he concluded.

MAP 10 October 2014

Polisario Has No Legitimacy To Represent Sahrawis: Moroccan MP

New York (UN), Oct. 10 (MAP) - The Polisario Front has no legitimacy to represent the Sahrawis before the UN fourth Committee, said Moroccan MP Ahmed Lakhrif.

"The Polisario has neither the legitimacy nor the capacity to represent or speak on behalf of the Sahrawis, wherever they are", Sahrawi member of the House of Advisors added.

"From this podium, I would like to say that the Polisario does not represent me as it does not represent the thousands of Sahrawis in the southern provinces and those in the Tindouf camps", Lakhrif stressed in his address before the UN 4th Committee.

The vice president of Laayoune city council also denounced the persecution perpetrated by the greedy leaders of the Polisario who "exploit human misery to perpetuate the status quo", calling on the international community to "support the population in the Tindouf camps in their struggle to freedom".

MAP 10 October 2014

Sahara: Algeria Betrays Itself In Front Of Pertinence Of Morocco's Answers Before UN Fourth Committee

Morocco reiterated before the UN fourth committee its steadfast attachment to the political process in the Moroccan Sahara, which necessarily depends on the UN Secretariat's neutrality and MINURSO's impartiality, warning that any attempt to override this mandate will endanger the presence of the mission itself and condemning Algeria's involvement in this issue.

As part of its right to respond to some delegations which called for broadening the MINURSO mandate to include a human rights mechanism or for self-determination, Morocco's deputy permanent representative to the UN Abderrazzak Laassel underlined that Morocco is against any alteration of principles and parameters governing whether the presence of MINURSO in the Sahara or facilitating political negotiations, and warned that any attempt to override the MINURSO mandate would put at risk the presence of the mission itself.

The Moroccan diplomat expressed his astonishment about Algeria's use of its right to respond without being named or cited by Morocco while it claims that it is not a party to the dispute over the Sahara.

Laassel denounced Algeria's stance of misreading UN resolution 1514 and recalled that the Sahara issue is dealt with by the UNSC under Chapter VI of the UN Charter for peaceful settlement of disputes and not as a matter of decolonization as claimed by Algeria which made reference to the latest report by the UNSG. The Moroccan diplomat recalled also that the UNSC has, in a wise gesture, overlooked the report's deviations.

MAP 08 October 2014

Sahara: Burkina Faso Hails Moroccan Autonomy Initiative, Credible And Realistic Alternative

Burkina Faso hailed, on Monday before the UNGA, the Moroccan autonomy initiative as a credible and realistic alternative for a final solution.

On the Sahara issue, Burkina Faso commends the Moroccan initiative for an advanced autonomy status in the Sahara which is a credible and realistic alternative for a final and acceptable solution for everyone, said Burkina Faso's state minister, foreign minister Djibrill Yipene Bassole who was speaking before the 193 member states gathered as part of the 69th UNGA.

MAP 30 September 2014

Sahara: Bahrain Reiterates Its Support To Morocco's Territorial Integrity

Bahrain on Monday reiterated its full support to Morocco's territorial integrity and the autonomy initiative proposed by the kingdom to reach a final political settlement of the Sahara issue.

"We reiterate our historical and unwavering position of principle of solidarity with the brotherly Kingdom of Morocco and our full support to the autonomy initiative for the Moroccan Sahara under Morocco's sovereignty and territorial integrity," Bahraini Foreign Minister Sheikh Khalid Bin Ahmed Bin Mohamed Al Khalifa said before the 193 members States of the UN General Assembly.

"Our choices are clear, our vision is global and our strategy is thorough and consistent with our regional, Arab and international context," said the Bahraini chief diplomat, whose remarks were reported by the Bahraini news agency.

He added that Bahrain will continue to work for the stability, peace, security, development, human rights protection and the rejection of terrorism, violence and hatred.

MAP 29 September 2014

Sahara: Gabon Reiterates Support For Moroccan Autonomy Initiative

Gabonese President Ali Bongo Ondimba reiterated his country's support to the Moroccan autonomy initiative for the Sahara, describing it as "courageous and realistic" plan proposition.

"My country reiterates its support for the Moroccan (autonomy) initiative, which we consider as a courageous and realistic proposition that could lead to a lasting settlement" of this issue, Gabon's President said in his address to the 69th UN General Assembly.

MAP 28 September 2014

President Obama's 'Explicit Support' For Morocco's Autonomy Plan For Sahara, Recognition Of Regional Leadership Of HM The King, Peter Pham

The "explicit support" of President of the United States Barack Obama for Morocco's autonomy plan for the Sahara, under Moroccan sovereignty, which was the "highlight" of the summit that brought together at the White House president Obama and HM King Mohammed VI, is a recognition by Washington of the Sovereign's regional leadership and stabilizing force in Africa, said Peter Pham, director of the Africa Center at the Atlantic Council.

Obama's explicit support for the soundness of the Moroccan autonomy plan, which is in line with the policy adopted by the last three US administrations, is an acknowledgement by the USA for the regional leadership of HM the King and his stabilizing force in the continent, the expert on African Affairs told MAP.

It is also a recognition, at its real value, of the constructive role played by Morocco in order to reach a final solution to this artificial conflict, he pointed out, noting that this support goes beyond the Sahara issue to include a strong partnership between Washington and Rabat in order to establish a triangular cooperation in Africa, mainly in the sectors of security and development.

From Washington, which will host early August the US-Africa Leaders Summit, one can only welcome the genuine commitment of HM the King, both in the immediate environment of the Kingdom, as evidenced by the royal visit to Tunisia, or at the African continent level through several tours by the Sovereign since his accession to the throne, he added.

MAP 16 July 2014

Decision Of AU To Appoint So-Called 'Special Envoy' For Moroccan Sahara, Serious Provocation To Morocco, Argentinean Political Pundit

The decision by the African Union to appoint a so-called "special envoy" for the Moroccan Sahara is a grave provocation towards Morocco, said Argentinean political expert Adalberto Carlos Agozino.

In an article entitled "ridiculous decision", released on Tuesday by Argentinean independent news agency "Total News", the Argentinean academic added that the AU's illegal decision is prejudicial to the sovereignty of Morocco and an "interference" in the UN prerogatives, the only body tasked with finding a solution to the artificial conflict over the Moroccan Sahara.

Morocco is absolutely not concerned by this "unilateral" decision from an organization that has admitted, at the instigation of Algeria, the so-called "SADR", a fake entity devoid from all attributes of sovereignty as defined by the international law, said Carlos Agozino, professor at John F. Kennedy University in Buenos Aires.

The African Union has no right to intervene in the Sahara issue which is now in the hands of the United Nations, noted Carlos Agozino, author of "Geopolitics of Sahara and Sahel", wondering why the AU in meddling in an issue which does not come under its competence, whereas it has never managed to resolve any problem of the continent since its inception.

MAP 16 July 2014

Polisario Facing "Unprecedented Challenge To Its Leadership" (Jane's)

The leading Jane's publication, specializing in military, aerospace and transportation topics, reports "an increasing number of protests in the Sahrawi camps of Tindouf Province as a result of "increasing disillusionment" among population.

"The Polisario Front is facing an unprecedented challenge to its leadership of the Sahrawi independence movement in Western Sahara," writes the Magazine in a story dedicated to the troubled situation in the Tindouf camps, stronghold of the Polisario in Southwestern Algeria.

Noting that "this comes at a time of increasing disillusionment among Sahrawi people", the publication also predicts that "attacks by the new Sahrawi groups are likely to focus on Polisario assets and personnel".

It also reports "the emergence of at least one splinter group actively opposed to Polisario control", amid growing challenges to the separatist group's leadership and "increasing number of protests in the Sahrawi refugee camps of Tindouf province, western Algeria".

It also reports that with the help of Algeria's intelligence services, the Polisario militia men are operating arbitrary arrests to crack down on these dissident movements, pointing out that the +Movement of Youth for change+ is determined to carry on the armed struggle against the Polisario leadership.

The emergence of dissident movements in the Tindouf camps brings a flat denial to the Polisario lies over its alleged representation of Sahrawis, Janes concludes in its analysis, before warning over the radicalization and the upsurge of Jihadist ideas in the camps.

MAP 08 July 2014

PACE Adopts Draft Resolution On Sahara, Commends Moroccan Human Rights Achievement

The Parliamentary Assembly of the Council of Europe (PACE) adopted, on Wednesday, a draft resolution on the Sahara, affirming the pre-eminence of a political solution as a framework to overcome this dispute, noting with satisfaction efforts made by Morocco to promote and protect human rights.

A statement by the lower house said on Friday that the PACE adopted a draft resolution number 2004 on the Sahara on the basis of a report by Swiss MP Liliane Maury Pasquier entitled "parliamentary contribution to the resolution of the Sahara conflict" by 86 votes in favor, 4 against and 9 abstentions, calling for a political solution to the conflict and lauding Morocco's human rights achievements, after rejecting some false amendments introduced by the rapporteur of the legal committee seeking to add human rights supervision to the MINURSO mandate.

Most parliamentary delegations refused broadening the MINURSO mandate to include human rights supervision since it compromised the balance of the draft resolution which was adopted by the PACE political committee during its meeting in May 2014 in Athena, it said.

The same source notes that the vote took place thanks to the vigilance of members of the Moroccan parliamentary delegation attending this session, namely Mohamed Yatim and Nezha El Ouafi from the Party of Justice and Development, Mehdi Bensaid from the Authenticity and modernity party, Omar Hjira from the Istiqlal Party, Mohamed Bouhriz from the national Rally of Independents party, Mohamed Amer from the Socialist Group and Mokhtar Gambo and Mohamed Berkia from the Popular Movement party.

MAP 28 June 2014

Autonomy Initiative Under Moroccan Sovereignty, 'Perfect Solution' For Just, Lasting Settlement Of Sahara Conflict, Analysis

The autonomy initiative under Moroccan sovereignty is the "perfect solution" for a just and lasting settlement of the artificial conflict over the Sahara, said Chilean political analyst and executive secretary of the "Center for the Study of Popular Democracy" (CEDEPU-CHILE), Antonio Yelpi Aguilar.

For the Chilean analyst, this solution is the only way to reduce tension and ensure stability in the region.

In his recently published analysis, Antonio Aguilar Yelpi criticized the involvement of the Algerian regime that prevents any initiative for a political settlement of the Sahara issue, and promotes instability in the Maghreb and the Mediterranean regions. The author of the analysis also denounced the financial support from Algiers to so-called "SADR".

The analyst welcomed the efforts made by Morocco to fight terrorism, warning against the Polisario's terrorist activism in the Maghreb and the Sahel-Saharan region.

MAP 03 June 2014

NAM Expresses Support For UN-Led Negotiations Process On Moroccan Sahara

The Ministerial Conference of the Non-Aligned Movement (NAM) stressed, Thursday following its meeting in Algiers, support for the process of negotiations on the regional dispute over the Moroccan Sahara under the aegis of the United Nations in order to achieve a "mutually acceptable political solution."

NAM foreign ministers "welcomed the process of negotiations held under the auspices of the Secretary General and the commitment of the parties to continuing to show political will and work in an environment conducive to dialogue in order to enter a phase of more intensive negotiations," said the final declaration of NAM's Conference in Algiers.

The ministers also stressed the importance to ensure the implementation of the last nine resolutions of the Security Council (1754 to 2152) which emphasize the serious and credible character of the Moroccan autonomy initiative.

MAP 29 May 2014

Moroccan Official Warns In Washington Against Polisario Members' Involvement With AQIM And MUJAO

Terrorist groups preying on the Sahel-Sahara region are, henceforth, allying with separatism advocates and at least 100 members of the Polisario are actively committed with the Al Qaeda in the Islamic Maghreb and the Movement for oneness and jihad in West Africa (MUJAO).

The warning came from Morocco's general delegate for the penitentiary administration and reintegration, Mohamed Salah Tamek, who co-chairs the security work group of the Morocco-US strategic dialog.

He stressed that "this alliance is all the more alarming as the AQIM and MUJAO rings have taken such a scope that it also includes the Boko Haram terrorist group which has kidnapped over 200 hundred girls as well as the Chabab movement in Somalia, author of the explosion against a mall in Nairobi in 2013."

Tamek who was speaking during a conference held by the American think-tank "The Washington Institute for Near East Policy" on "Morocco's approach in the fight against violent terrorism", urged for more efficient international counter-terrorism action and securing that all local Al Qaeda branches do not take profit of effects of the Arab spring to gain foothold in countries of the sub-region.

He also called for more resolved involvement in promoting democracy and liberal movements and re-considering education and religious policies through a moderate and tolerant approach.

Tamek further noted that authorities need to expand laws on the fight against financial support to terrorism and intensify technical cooperation at the regional and international levels.

He also underscored Morocco's "concrete engagement", under the leadership of HM King Mohammed VI, in promoting cooperation in the fight against terrorism with countries of the sub-region, recalling that the Sovereign, himself, underlined this approach and urged for mutually-profitable south-south economic cooperation during the speech he delivered at the official inauguration of Malian president Boubacar Keita, in September 2013.

Tamek cited among aspects of this fruitful anti-terrorism cooperation, cooperation in religious matters with Mali and the training of 500 Malian imams in Morocco, in addition to the fact that several other countries, including Cote d'Ivoire, Niger, Libya, Tunisia and Guinea-Conakry that have requested Morocco's help to train their imams.

MAP 13 May 2014

Algeria And The Polisario Are Attempting To Torpedo Morocco's Autonomy Plan (Head Of Sahara Consultative Council)

The Polisario separatists and their Algerian sponsors are endeavoring by all means to torpedo the autonomy plan in the southern provinces, presented by Morocco in order to reach a political, final and mutually-accepted solution to the artificial Sahara conflict, said president of the Royal Consultative Council for Sahara affairs (CORCAS), Khalihenna Ould Errachid.

Ould Errachid, who was guest to MAP forum, stressed that "the Polisario and Algeria initially attempted to play down Morocco's autonomy plan, before attempting to torpedo it.

For the CORCAS president, the negotiations process is no longer apt to reach a solution. He explained that the separatists and their Algerian sponsors, in their endeavor to go back to obsolete plans that proved impossible to implement, such as the Baker plan and the referendum, are attempting to torpedo the whole process.

He also recalled that HM King Mohammed VI has repeatedly stressed that Morocco will not remain idle as the other side is adamant in refusing any consensus-based settlement, stressing that the Moroccan autonomy plan will help the population to manage their own affairs in a democratic and autonomous way, under the sovereignty of Morocco.

He also pointed out that the autonomy plan marked "a turning point in the history of the region" and "a remarkable novelty that took by surprise all enemies of Morocco's territorial integrity".

Morocco's efforts since the conflict broke out have earned the kingdom the respect of the United Nations Organization and of the international community which welcomed the Moroccan autonomy proposal as "serious, credible and realistic", he said, insisting that the autonomy plan now stands as "the only vision likely to bring adequate answers and the appropriate solution to the Sahara issue".

Ould Errachid further noted that Sahrawis have also welcomed the proposal which consolidated the Sahrawis' confidence in Morocco's ability to achieve the development to which they aspire.

The CORCAS president underscored the old ties binding the Sahrawis to Morocco, both at the affective, family, economic, cultural and historical levels, noting that such links do not exist between the Sahrawi populations and the Tindouf camps in Algeria.

At the African level, he pointed out that all African countries are focused on their development plans, except for Algeria, South Africa and Nigeria which support the Polisario thesis, stressing that not a single Asian country supports the separatism thesis while Venezuela, overwhelmed with its own domestic problems, is the only Latin-American country to show a clear support to the Polisario.

MAP 15 April 2014

Documentary Shows Algeria's Evident Responsibility In Plight Of Tindouf Camps Populations

A documentary titled "Polisario: the identity of a front" shows clearly Algeria's responsibility in the plight of populations sequestered by the polisario in the Tindouf camps (southwestern Algeria).

The 90 mn-long documentary by Hassan Bouharrouti, screened for the first time in Morocco at the Moroccan news agency "MAP", smashed the lies spread by the Polisario and shed light on the separatists' abuses, using testimonies.

The documentary shows clearly that the Polisario, initially established to fight the Spanish occupation of the Sahara, was used by Algeria to serve its hegemonic aspirations in the region.

Algerian leaders should grow aware that the time when they were dreaming of a central role for their country in the region has gone, said head of the Moroccan center for strategic studies, Mohamed Benhammou, who comments that Algeria's strategy is meant to "maintain indefinitely the status quo".

The expert also added in a debate that followed the documentary screening that the future of Maghreban integration depends on settling the issue, before denouncing the exploitation by Algeria and its substitute, the Polisario, of the human rights card in the southern provinces at a time the populations in the camps are experiencing the most appalling conditions and are denied the most basic humanitarian rights

The same remark was echoed by spokesman of the association of Moroccan Sahrawi tribes in Europe, (ATSME), Lahcen Mahraoui, who deplored the horrible living conditions in which these populations have been living for over 39 years

They are living in an isolated and militarized region and the humanitarian aid sent to the camps is skimmed by the leaders who sell the aid to get richer and richer, said the ATSME president who also deplored obstacles to freedom of movement.

It is high time the Polisario adhered to the political process to settle this artificial conflict instead of sticking to a referendum that has been buried by the international community, he said, stressing that the Moroccan proposal to grant large autonomy to the Sahara under Moroccan sovereignty is a win-win solution.

MAP 11 April 2014

Sahara: Moroccan Autonomy Plan 'Serious, Credible, And Realistic', Obama Administration Tells Congress

The Sahara autonomy plan under the Moroccan sovereignty is "serious, credible and realistic," reaffirmed "clearly" US Deputy Assistant Secretary of State for Near East Affairs, William Roebuck, at a hearing in the US Congress devoted to US policy vis-à-vis Morocco.

"Concerning the Moroccan autonomy plan, we clearly stated that the plan is serious, credible and realistic and is a potential approach that can satisfy the aspirations of the peoples of the Sahara to manage their own affairs in peace and dignity," said the senior U.S. official before the subcommittee in charge of the Near East and North Africa within the Foreign Affairs Committee of the House of Representatives.

The U.S. policy towards the Sahara issue "thus remains unchanged throughout the past years," said Roebuck, adding that Washington supports the process led by the United Nations that aims to achieve a peaceful, lasting and mutually acceptable settlement.

He said Washington also supports "the work done by the Personal Envoy of the Secretary General of the UN and the efforts by the United Nations" on the matter.

He on the other hand urged the parties "to work towards a resolution" to end the conflict.

MAP 10 April 2014

Moroccan Sahara: House Of Advisors Expresses Deep Concern, Regret After Motion Passed By Italian Senate

The House of Advisors expressed on Wednesday its deep concern and regret following the adoption by the Italian Senate on April 3, of a motion on the Moroccan Sahara.

In a statement, the House of Advisors described the motion as "blatantly biased and strange" particularly when the Italian government which is preparing to hold the rotating presidency of the European Union, expressed its determination to establish a strong and ambitious European policy vis- à-vis the countries of the Mediterranean area.

The House of Advisors reserves the right to take all the steps and measures it deems appropriate to address this "unfriendly" motion, the statement added.

The statement noted that this motion contains erroneous facts and biased interpretations contrary to the resolutions of the Security Council of the UN and the willingness of the parliaments of both countries to promote bilateral cooperation in all areas.

MAP 10 April 2014

Moroccan Autonomy Initiative: Relevant Solution To Sahara Issue, Gabonese Ambassador

Gabon has expressed its unequivocal support for the Moroccan autonomy initiative for the Sahara, describing it as a very relevant and wise solution to achieve a final settlement for this regional dispute, said Thursday in Rabat, Ambassador of Gabon to Morocco, Abu Razzaq Guy Kambogo.

Gabon will continue to reiterate its position on the Moroccan Sahara. (...) Gabon is closely and firmly attached to the territorial integrity of Morocco, the diplomat noted at a press conference on the results of the recent visit by HM King Mohammed VI in Gabon, as part of an African tour.

Gabon is making every effort to ensure that this issue is resolved based on the very relevant proposal submitted by Morocco, he said, adding that it is a peaceful and appropriate solution which concerns the development of Morocco as a whole and its stability.

27 March 2014

Poland Supports Political Settlement To Sahara Issue Under UN Aegis

Poland supports a political settlement to the Sahara issue under the United Nations organization aegis, said Polish under-secretary for foreign affairs Artur Nowak-Far.

The Polish official who met Friday in Warsaw a delegation from the Moroccan upper chamber, led by speaker Mohamed Cheikh Biadillah, commended Morocco's democratic choices as a model for the region

"Morocco is a stable country and we support its efforts to carry out smart economic and political reforms, he said, noting that Morocco, which remained respectful of its longstanding traditions, is open onto modernity and stands out for its "ability to overcome obstacles".

The Polish under-secretary also praised Morocco's efforts in human rights, stressing that his country "notes with satisfaction efforts to defend human rights.

On bilateral cooperation, Nowak-Far recalled that Polish representatives, in the two parliamentary chambers, voted in favor of the Morocco-European Union fisheries agreement and called for boosting economic cooperation and exchanges between the two countries which have shown resilience in adverse economic conditions resulting from the 2008 crisis.

Haïti withdraws recognition of "sadr" phoney entity

The government of Haïti announced the official withdrawal of its recognition of the "sadr" phoney entity to preserve the dynamic spurred by the Moroccan proposal to grant extensive autonomy to the Sahara region.

A statement from Haïti's foreign affairs ministry said that this decision seeks to encourage the settlement of the issue by the UNSC and support efforts made by the UNSG and his personal envoy to reach a final, mutually-acceptable political solution by the parties.

The government of the republic of Haïti encourages the parties to continue talks with goodwill to preserve the dynamic spurred by the Moroccan proposal to grant extensive autonomy to the Sahara region and reach a solution based on realism and the spirit of compromise, pursuant to relevant resolutions by the UNSC, said the statement.

Moroccan Sahara: Ban Ki-Moon Commends HM The King's Support To UN Efforts

The UN Secretary-General, Ban Ki-moon, expressed, on Tuesday, his "gratitude for the support" of HM King Mohammed VI to UN efforts to find a solution to the regional dispute over the Moroccan Sahara.

"The Secretary-General expressed gratitude for the support of His Majesty and the Government of Morocco to United Nations efforts to broker a solution" to the dispute over the Moroccan Sahara, said a statement issued following a meeting at UN Headquarters in New York between Ban and Taib Fassi Fihri, advisor to HM the King.

Fassi Fihri handed the UN Secretary-General a message from HM King Mohammed VI. The message, Fassi Fihri said, touches on "the developments in the Moroccan Sahara issue."

During the meeting, the Secretary-General called on Morocco to "continue to work with his Personal Envoy Christopher Ross and with MINURSO."

The Secretary-General "hoped that bilateral relations between Morocco and Algeria would continue to improve," the statement concluded.

Advanced Regionalization And Autonomy Projects, A Solution For The Sahara Conflict (Algerian Researcher)

MAP- Advanced regionalization and autonomy projects are not a solution to the Sahara conflict, but also a step to move forward to integration in the Maghreb, said on Saturday Algerian writer, critic and researcher, Said Elhadef. These Moroccan projects will help rehabilitate regional affairs and develop and promote regions, as is the case in several democratic countries, he said during a conference on "the Grand Maghreb, common development for a united future".

He also noted that the closure of land borders between Morocco and Algeria is an obstacle to the movement of the two peoples and a barrier to other countries like Tunisia and Libya, insisting that some circles are seeking to prevent union and rapprochement between the two Maghreban countries.

The same conclusion was made by chairman of the Tunisian Maghreban Republican Party, Mohamed Boussiri Bouebdelli, who called for dismantling customs barriers in order to promote the free movement of goods and people and promote economic, scientific and cultural exchanges, stressing that countries of the region have no other alternative but to embrace their Maghreban geographic context.

The Maghreban union is a dream cherished by people of the region, he added stressing that it is a must to face problems of unemployment, social disparities and extremism and terrorism threats. The conference was held at the initiative of the Moroccan league for the defense of Moroccan territorial integrity.

'Perilous Desert' Book Warns Of Growing Al-Qaeda Threat In Africa's Sahara And Sahel Region,

MAP- A new book published by the Carnegie Endowment says Al-Qaeda "has found an attractive base of supporters and recruits" in the Sahara/Sahel, echoing a May 13 UN Security Council warning that an "Arc of Instability" across the region could become a launch pad for international terrorist attacks

"The geopolitical significance of the Sahara is becoming painfully clear," according to a new book, *Perilous Desert: Insecurity in the Sahara*, published by the Carnegie Endowment for International Peace and edited by North Africa experts Frederic Wehrey and Anouar Boukhars. The book formally launched on Wednesday at an all-day conference of experts, warns of increasing inroads by al-Qaeda in the Islamic Maghreb (AQIM) and its allies in

terrorism and trafficking across the Sahara/Sahel region, including in Libya, Mali, Mauritania, and the Polisario-run refugee camps near Tindouf in Algeria, which represent "a tinderbox waiting to explode." According to *Perilous Desert*, "while the world's attention was fixed on the momentous events in Tunisia, Egypt, and Libya after the outbreak of the +Arab Spring+, the desert states to the south were undergoing their own transformations with major global implications." Although "long overlooked by policymakers and scholars," the "states of the Sahara suffer from a 'perfect storm' of afflictions -- weak governance, rampant corruption, endemic poverty, ethnic and societal cleavages, and inaccessible terrain -- that give room for transnational crime and Islamist militant groups to proliferate and flourish." The recent "series of high-profile events," including the murder of a US Ambassador in Libya, French intervention after the al-Qaeda-backed conquest of N. Mali, and hostage seizure and shootout at the Algerian gas facility, "point to a new front in the struggle against al-Qaeda -- what some have called 'an arc of instability' stretching from Western Sahara to Somalia and north into the Sinai."

Al-Qaeda's North Africa affiliate "has found an attractive base of supporters and recruits among the region's disenfranchised," in Mali, Libya, Niger, Mauritania, and Algeria, including frustrated fighters and youth in the refugee camps controlled by the Polisario Front. *Perilous Desert* provides an "in-depth analysis of the factors shaping the Sahara" -- with chapters on Libya, Mali and Algeria, Mauritania, organized crime in the Sahel, and the Western Sahara conflict -- all of which contribute to increased instability and insecurity that "raises urgent concerns for the broader Sahara and the West." In a chapter on the Western Sahara, Carnegie scholar Anouar Boukhars writes that the unresolved W. Sahara conflict has "negatively impacted trans-Saharan security."

The under-governed areas abutting the Western Sahara, especially northern Mauritania and the Polisario-administered camps in southwest Algeria, are becoming major hubs for drug trafficking, the smuggling of contraband, and the circulation of weapons." Boukhars notes that "there is growing evidence to suggest dangerous connections between criminal organizations, AQIM, and the Sahrawi refugees in Tindouf," and that "in February 2013, the Malian foreign minister confirmed the presence of Sahrawi combatants from the Tindouf camps among the groups that fled the French-led intervention, which was launched to counter an advance of insurgents from northern Mali toward the capital." Boukhars adds: "a study conducted by Altadis (a European tobacco company) revealed that 'Sahrawis are involved in a vast network of smuggling ... using various routes, passing through the W. Sahara to Algeria via Tifariti and Bir Lahlou, oases controlled by the Polisario Front.'" While "this illegal activity has existed for decades," the problem today is "these illicit activities occur in the context of the expansion of AQIM, growing interdependence of organized criminal networks and state officials, and rising social and ethnic conflict."

In the book's conclusion, Boukhars and Carnegie senior associate Frederic Wehrey write that "fragile and failing states pose real threats to international security. They can provide training bases and safe havens for al-Qaeda and its affiliates as well as offer violent extremists an environment suited for generating large profits from smuggling and illicit trafficking." They note that, across the region, "past approaches have focused on building the capacity of the security sector." To successfully counter the threat from al-Qaeda and allied militant extremists and transnational criminal networks in the Sahara, they offer a series of policy recommendations for how the international community can work closely with local states to institute and continue reforms that also address "the underlying institutional and social roots of insecurity."

In late February the Inter-University Center for Terrorism Studies, IUCTS, issued another study, which reported that al-Qaeda was establishing a new hub in the Sahara/Sahel for jihadi recruits and a potential launching pad for terrorist attacks much closer to US and European shores. Among other recommendations, the IUCTS study called for long-term solutions to reduce potential criminal and terrorist recruiting in the Polisario-run refugee camps in Algeria.

The United African Congress (UAC), a major organization of the African diaspora in the USA, pledged to militate to "defend the Moroccan Sahara case among the US public opinion".

The UAC president, Sidique Wai, said Saturday in Tangiers during a meeting held by Moroccan opposition party, PAM, "the association is militating for a united Africa and opposes all plots to parcel out its countries".

The UAC which defends the interests of some 3.5 million African immigrants in the USA also expressed solidarity with the Moroccans sequestered in the Tindouf camps (southwestern Algeria).

The UAC is ready to bring its support and collaboration to all initiatives meant to promote better knowledge about this issue, stressing it is time to end the artificial conflict around the Moroccan Sahara and the plight of the victims forcibly held in the Tindouf camps.

The United African Congress, is a not-for-profit organization in the United States with its headquarters in New York City and branches in Georgia, Ohio, California, Atlanta and Connecticut. Founded in 1998, the UAC is an umbrella organization representing the interests of African immigrants throughout the USA.

Morocco fully satisfied at discussions between senior Moroccan and US officials based on exchange of letters between HM the King, Obama

MAP - The Kingdom of Morocco reiterates, once again, its satisfaction at the adoption by the UN Security Council of the recent resolution on the MINURSO.

Morocco expresses, in this respect, full satisfaction with discussions between senior Moroccan and U.S. officials on the basis of the exchange of letters on this subject between HM King Mohammed VI and President Barack Obama.

The Sovereign had sent a letter to President Obama, dated April 12, 2013, in which he expressed the importance of the Sahara issue to the Kingdom and its people, and highlighted the risks that would result from any change in the mandate of MINURSO.

UNSC Resolution On Sahara, Another Political Victory For Morocco, Head Of Government

The resolution adopted unanimously on Thursday by the UN Security Council on the Moroccan Sahara is "another victory for Morocco at the political level," said head of government, Abdelilah Benkirane.

Communication Minister and Government Spokesperson, Mustapha El Khalfi, who was speaking Friday at a press conference following the government's weekly meeting, noted that Benkirane commented, in the beginning of this meeting, on the decision of the Security Council regarding Morocco's national cause, considering that the Kingdom "has achieved another victory on the political front, especially as the resolution did not contain any provision undermining the sovereignty of Morocco over the Sahara, and avoided any expansion of the MINURSO's prerogatives to include the monitoring of human rights.

"Morocco is a pioneer in the field of human rights and respects international standards," said Benkirane, stressing that "what has been raised in this regard is only a political manoeuvre to disrupt the process of negotiations which is conducted under the auspices of the UN, to solve this conflict that has lasted too long."

He also welcomed the mobilization of all Moroccans under the leadership of HM King Mohammed VI, who made all the necessary efforts to thwart such a move, noting that the enemies of the country's territorial integrity "need to know that this issue concerns the whole nation, and that they will never undermine our territorial integrity."

Benkirane reiterated Morocco's will to continue the process of "serious negotiations" under the leadership of HM King Mohammed VI, in order to find a lasting and mutually acceptable political solution to this conflict.

26 April 2013

Spain "Satisfied" With UN SC Resolution On MINURSO Mandate

Spain has expressed its satisfaction at the unanimous adoption of the UN Security Council resolution extending for one year the mandate of MINURSO.

"The Spanish government expresses its satisfaction at the unanimous adoption ,Thursday, of the Security Council resolution 2099, which extends for one year the mandate of MINURSO," the Spanish Ministry of Foreign Affairs and cooperation said in a statement on Friday.

Spain reaffirms its "commitment" to promoting and defending human rights in the Sahara and in the Tindouf camps, the statement added.

In addition, Spain reiterates its support for a "just, lasting and mutually acceptable solution" to the conflict in accordance with the provisions consistent with the principles and objectives of the UN Charter, the statement said.

The Security Council calls anew on Algeria to allow the registration of the population of the Tindouf camps.

The UN Security Council also reaffirmed the credibility of the Moroccan proposal presented on 11 April 2007 to the UN Secretary-General.

26 April 2013

France Welcomes Adoption Of UN Security Council Resolution On Sahara

France welcomed on Friday the adoption of a UN resolution providing for the extension of the UN Sahara mission (MINURSO), saying the text is "satisfying", particularly regarding human rights where Morocco has achieved "progress".

"We encourage the progress made (in human rights) and encourage Moroccan authorities to continue on this path", said spokesman of the French foreign department, Philippe Lalliot, in a press briefing.

The spokesman insisted that France "has not changed" its "constant" stance on the Sahara issue, since the start of negotiations on a new resolution draft, which, in its new wording, calls parties to carry on efforts of promoting and protecting human rights.

In addition to supporting the mission of the UN secretary general's personal envoy for the Sahara, Christopher Ross, the spokesman reiterated that France's stance is "well-known".

Last week, the spokesman recalled that France has a "clear and constant" stance on the Sahara issue and praised "considerable headway" made by Morocco in human rights.

"First, we consider that the statu-quo does not serve the interests of anyone. Second, we have for long been supporting a fair, lasting and mutually agreed-up solution", said the spokesman recalling that his country "is backing the Moroccan autonomy plan proposed in 2007 as a serious, and credible basis for a negotiated settlement, in accordance with the UN security council resolutions".

26 April 2013

UN Resolution On Sahara: "Wisdom Has Prevailed", Says Moroccan Foreign Minister-Delegate

Morocco welcomes the unanimous adoption of resolution 2099 of the Security council that shows that "it is the voice of wisdom that prevailed", said here on Thursday minister delegate for foreign affairs and cooperation, Youssef Amrani.

"The adoption of this resolution text confirms the relevance of the consensus-based approach adopted by the Security Council and the Sahara friends groups to encourage a political solution, based on reality and compromise", the minister-delegate told MAP.

"The final wording of this resolution is the fruit and the crowning of the decisive impetus given by HM King Mohammed VI who has always been personally and fully involved for the preservation and defense of the nation's supreme interests," he added.

The official further stressed that the sovereign's leading action consisted in several aspects, including a large mobilization of all the country's live forces to reaffirm the national unanimity enjoyed by the Sahara issue, in addition to proactive and specific contacts with international influential actors, direct contacts and visits of top delegations to several member states of the Security Council.

Amrani also welcomes the resolution as a text that reiterated the pre-eminence of the Moroccan proposal to grant large autonomy to the Sahara, a former Spanish colony retrieved by Morocco in 1975.

It also insisted the importance of negotiation "in good will as the only means to reach a solution, on the basis of realism and compromise".

The text further recognizes "the scope and importance of HM the King's bold decisions and measures to promote and protect human rights as well the Kingdom's interaction with the special procedures of the UN human rights council.

This is a real token of the member-states' confidence in Moroccan human rights institutions, said the Foreign minister-delegate and shows that nothing justifies any modification of the MINURSO mandate to encompass human rights monitoring.

Amrani also pointed out that the resolution renews the call for a population census in the Tindouf camps, stronghold of the Polisario in southwestern Algeria, and encourage Algeria to maintain dialogue with the HCR to this end.

The resolution also underlines the importance of cooperation between the Arab Maghreb Union (Algeria, Libya, Mauritania, Morocco and Tunisia) in order to end the present deadlock in the Sahara issue and move forward to a political solution.

26 April 2013

Statement Of The Royal Palace Spokesman Following The Adoption By The UN Security Council Of The Resolution On The Moroccan Sahara

Following the adoption by the UN Security Council of the resolution on the Moroccan Sahara, the spokesman of the Royal palace, Mr Abdelhak Lamrini, read out on Thursday the following statement:

"The Security Council unanimously adopted this Thursday April 25, 2013 the resolution on the Sahara.

The new resolution comes as a continuation of previous resolutions adopted since 2007. Once again, the Council is confirming the pre-eminence of the autonomy initiative presented by Morocco and outlines parameters for a final political settlement based on realism and compromise.

The resolution crowns a process of several initiatives and contacts conducted by HM King Mohammed VI, may God assist Him, with Heads of state, messages conveyed by Royal envoys to various capitals and an information campaign on the Moroccan stance concerning various aspects of the Security Council resolution 2012 and Moroccan expectations as to the resolution of April 2013.

This process was coupled with a strong mobilization of all the Nation political actors and live forces, reflecting the ever-renewed national consensus on this national issue.

The Kingdom of Morocco takes note with satisfaction of this resolution that firmly confirms the unavoidable parameters of a political settlement, strongly preserves perspectives for a promising resumption of negotiations and outlines, in a clear and final way, the framework for addressing other aspects of this regional conflict.

Indeed, the Security Council confirms, in this resolution, that the MINURSO mandate and activities will be maintained in their current state, in accordance with assurances and guarantees expressed to His Majesty the King by Mr. Ban Ki Moon, Secretary General of the United Nations, during the phone conversation held on August 25, 2012.

The regional nature of this dispute is, henceforth, clarified and outlined through the direct and precise call made to neighboring States to be more resolutely involved, in order to end the present deadlock and move forward to a final political solution.

Therefore, Algeria is called to invest, in a constructive manner, in the quest of a political solution to this regional conflict.

Likewise, the resolution recognizes that the dispute settlement, combined with cooperation between the UMA member-States, will contribute to stability and security in the Sahel region.

The resolution does not stipulate any mechanism implying directly or indirectly, any sort of international human rights monitoring.

It recognizes the stages covered by Morocco in the consolidation of the National human rights council as well as the Kingdom's voluntary interaction with special procedures stemming from the Human rights council. It is a recognition of the initiatives and national efforts conducted by His Majesty the King, may God assist Him.

Consequently, this full and entire recognition of the adopted reforms gives evidence that the national framework remains the appropriate one for addressing human rights issue. The Security Council is thus giving a clear reply to recurrent attempts to exploit human rights at the service of a known political agenda.

Meanwhile, the Security Council has reiterated its request for a census of the Tindouf camps population, encouraging, for the first time, efforts made to this end. This is directed to the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees and to the host State, Algeria, in accordance with the 1951 Convention related to the status of refugees. Implementation of this obligation, which is based on humanitarian considerations, is becoming increasingly necessary in a threatening context of insecurity and instability prevailing in the Maghreb-Sahel space.

Morocco hopes that the other parties will fully shoulder their responsibilities in keeping with the resolution, will seize the renewed opportunities it offers and engage, sincerely and resolutely in a genuine resumption of the negotiation political process.

As the region is facing major security challenges, settling the regional dispute over the Moroccan Sahara is, henceforth, a crucial strategic must for peace and stability in the region and a requirement for the economic and social development of the Maghreb countries."

25 April 2013

Altering MINURSO Role Runs Counter To Morocco's Achievements In Participatory Democracy, Says National Interest

Politicize the role of the UN mission in the Sahara, MINURSO, to include monitoring human rights runs counter to the "palpable" achievements made by Morocco in all areas, the US magazine The National Interest wrote on Friday.**p**

"There is not a dimension in which Morocco has not improved in the last ten years: participatory democracy, fighting corruption, advancing the cause of women, enshrining the rights of all the different religious and ethnic groups, opening the economy for young entrepreneurs, improving infrastructure, and protecting the environment by being a world leader in renewable energy," said the author of the article, Talal Belrhiti, a former political consultant in Washington DC.

Yet, the author continued, despite these accomplishments, "Moroccans are not congratulating themselves. Everyone in Morocco feels that this is not enough and that more needs to be done."

In Morocco, "the changes are not just theoretical, they are palpable," especially in the field of business, civil society, enhancing participatory democracy and development projects across the Kingdom, including in the Sahara, Belrhiti said.

In this connection, he deemed that seeking to politicize human rights "only will weaken a rare example in the region of a country that has chosen the path of authentic, gradual, relentless and unmistakable progress."

Seeking to politicize human rights "in regular times is perplexing enough, but to do so at an unstable time, when the international coalition is still fighting Al Qaeda remnants in Mali and the Sahel, calls into question the wisdom" behind initiatives aimed at altering the MINURSO mandate "and shows that it is haphazard rather than strategic and coordinated," he insisted.

The author recalls that the Sahara dispute dates back to the Cold War, when Morocco sided with the West against the Soviet Union, pointing out that "this strategic choice created domestic Marxist adversaries of the state, some of whom with Soviet, Algerian and Libyan backing went on to create a secessionist guerilla group called the Polisario and declare war on Morocco."

The article concluded that instead of "seeking to tie the hands of an invaluable ally in the region," it is better to examine the details of "the only sensible way forward: autonomy for the Sahara within Moroccan sovereignty."

Altering MINURSO Mandate Would Aggravate Tension In The Region, Freedom For All Warns

Any change in the mandate of MINURSO to include monitoring human rights could exacerbate tensions in the region, the British Association Freedom for All has warned.

Stability prevailing in the southern provinces of Morocco shows that it is not necessary to expand the mandate of MINURSO to include monitoring the situation of human rights, Tanya Warburg, president of the association, told MAP on Friday.

She cautioned that any changes to the mandate of the UN mission might exacerbate tensions in the region.

Warburg highlighted the actions of the National Council for Human Rights (CNDH), particularly in the southern provinces.

She also underscored the "huge progress" made by Morocco in the field of human rights in recent years.

The activist stressed that Morocco, which enjoys high esteem internationally for its openness and for its human-rights record, should not be treated on an equal footing with the separatist Polisario.

The Tindouf camps, where this group is hosted in the south-western Algeria, are subjected to a state of siege, with access to these camps virtually impossible, even for staff of the High Commission for Refugees, she said.

Moroccan Parliament Deems Altering MINURSO Mandate "Flagrant Violation Of National Sovereignty"

Altering the mission of MINURSO to include monitoring human rights in the Sahara is "a serious threat to the national entity that can in no way be ignored" and "a flagrant violation of national sovereignty," the Moroccan Parliament warned on Friday.

The Parliament issued a statement after a series of urgent meetings of both Houses, House of Representatives and House of Councillors.

It called on the international community and the UN Security Council to handle these developments with the wisdom and insight needed to preserve the UN-sponsored negotiation process aimed at achieving a realistic, consensual political solution to the Sahara issue, in response to the expectations of the international community.

"The Parliament of the Kingdom of Morocco, which follows with great concern the recent actions meant to alter mend the MINURSO mission in the southern provinces, strongly condemns these maneuvers undermining Morocco's sovereignty over its land," the statement said.

Resolution On Sahara Issue: Negotiations Under Way -US State Department Official

Negotiations are ongoing over the renewal of the mandate of MINURSO in the Sahara, an official of the U.S. State Department has told MAP.

The U.S. official made the clarification in response to the statement of the Spanish Foreign Minister, José Manuel García-Margallo, on Sunday, that Madrid was expecting "a new draft U.S. resolution".

Margallo had said that Spain expects "a new draft U.S. resolution" to renew the mandate of the UN mission in the Sahara, which "could meet with consensus" of members of the Group of the Friends of the Sahara.

The Spanish daily "El Pais" reported, Saturday on its website, that Spain deems "non viable" the US proposal to extend the mandate of MINURSO to include monitoring human Rights in the Sahara, a proposal flatly rejected by Morocco.

The U.S. ambassador to Morocco, Samuel Kaplan, admitted that the proposal to extend the powers of the MINURSO has caused consternation and anger in Morocco, and tension between the two countries, but expressed confidence in the quality of bilateral relations and their ability to overcome disputes.

22 April 2013

Altering MINURSO Mandate: Spain "Expects New US Resolution Acceptable By All Members": Spanish FM

Spanish Foreign Minister, José Manuel García-Margallo, said Sunday that Spain expects "a new U.S. resolution" on the extension of the UN mission in the Sahara, which "could enjoy consensus" of the Group of the Friends of the Sahara.

"We expect a new US resolution that could enjoy the consensus of all members," Margallo told the Spanish press after his meetings with various Jordanian officials in Amman.

On Madrid's position over the U.S. proposal, the minister pointed out that the Group of the Friends of the Sahara consists of France, the United States, the United Kingdom, Russia and Spain. The new U.S. proposal "was not accepted by two members of the group," which "makes it difficult to be adopted, bearing in mind that the rule within the group is consensus," he said, quoted by Spanish EFE news agency.

The Spanish daily "El Pais" reported Saturday on its website that Spain considered "non viable" the US proposal to extend the mandate of MINURSO to include monitoring human Rights in the Sahara, a proposal flatly rejected by Morocco.

21 April 2013

Proposal To Broaden UN Sahara Mission Mandate, A Blatant Interference In Morocco's Internal Affairs (UMT Trade Union)

The Moroccan democratic union (UMT) has strongly rejected the US proposal to broaden the mandate of the UN Sahara mission (MINURSO) as "a blatant interference in Moroccan internal affairs".

The trade union rejected, in a statement, the proposal to include human rights monitoring in the MINURSO mandate, stressing that the MINURSO mandate was outlined in an agreement signed by the two parties.

The UMT which expressed "great astonishment and deep disappointment" at this proposal inspired by enemies of Morocco's territorial integrity said it has sent a message to the UN Secretary General calling for repelling this proposal and has also got in touch with the US union AFL/CIO to promote the American labor's awareness on the legitimacy of Moroccan claims over the Sahara.

Sahara: German Parliament Votes Against Proposal To Support Enlarging UN Sahara Mission To Human Rights

The German parliament (Bundestag) turned down on Thursday a proposal from two major opposition parties calling for Germany's support to a proposal to extend the mandate of the UN Sahara mission (MINURSO) to human rights issues.

The motion was tabled by The Socialist Democratic and the green groups, two major opposition parties in Germany.

The motion asked the German government to support at the UN Security Council the proposal to include in the MINURSO mandate "human rights monitoring and endowing the region with a human rights mechanism".