



RESOLUTION ON WESTERN SAHARA

ADOPTED BY THE COUNCIL OF MEMBERS/
EXTRAORDINARY GENERAL ASSEMBLY
BRAGA, PORTUGAL, 17-20 NOVEMBER 2011

The **Arab Spring** was sparked one year ago in **Western Sahara** when the Moroccan security forces used violence to dismantle the protest camp *Gdeim Izik* that has been set up against the ongoing discrimination, poverty and human rights abuses against Western Saharan citizens.

The Western Saharan region had been a Spanish colony since 1958. On 14 November 1975, Morocco, Mauritania and Spain signed the “Tripartite Agreement” according to which Spain transferred the administration of Western Sahara to the other two countries. The “Green March” in 1975 meant the invasion of Western Sahara by Morocco, an occupation that has lasted until today. Part of the Western Saharan population remained at the occupied territories, and others had to abandon their country and subsist in refugee camps in the Algerian desert.

Since then there have been several relevant United Nations Security Council Resolutions concerning the Western Saharan situation. Through the unanimous adoption of resolution 1495 in 2003, the Council expressed its continued strong support for the efforts of the Secretary-General and his Personal Envoy, for their Peace Plan for self-determination of the people of Western Sahara as an “*optimum political solution*” on the basis of agreement between the two parties.

The European Parliament counts on several Resolutions asking Member States to work on the protection of the Saharawi population, and respect for their fundamental rights, including freedom of expression and freedom of movement. The EP has also expressed its support for a just and lasting solution to the conflict in Western Sahara, based on the rule of law and international law.

However, after decades of negotiations and resolutions, the only situation that remains is that the Saharawi people have not been able to exert their rights of self-determination in a fair and free referendum. Also, the violation of the human rights of the people in a Western Sahara occupied by Morocco is known and denounced by public opinion, international mass media and NGOs.

Nowadays, when many people from Arab countries have raised their voice claiming their right to decide on their future, the Saharawi people must also be heard. And the only possible and effective way to be heard is by having the opportunity to vote in a referendum in accordance with the UN resolutions and in particular with the Security Council resolution 1459.

The Sahara conflict needs to be resolved and therefore it needs our renewed efforts of support. Although resolutions have previously been adopted by the European Youth Forum, no action has been carried out in order to fulfil the acquired commitments.

Therefore we urge the European Youth Forum to carry out the necessary actions and pressure in order to:

Recognise and declare its support for the right of the Saharawi people to self-determination and independence after the existence of the conflict for more than 30 years,

Reaffirm its solidarity with the Saharawi youth in the occupied territories of Western Sahara, in the Saharawi refugee camps, and also with UJSARIO¹,

Call for a search for a just solution to the conflict through the holding of a referendum in accordance with the UN resolutions and in particular the Security Council resolution 1459,

Commit itself to raise the awareness of European youth on the Saharawi conflict,

Call further upon the member organisations to join the national and international solidarity movement with the Saharawi People, supporting their struggle for restoring their legitimate rights and backing their efforts at attaining a dignified, peaceful and prosperous future for coming Saharawi generations,

Commit itself to advocating towards the European Union and the United Nations in order to honour their commitments and to insist on a political and definitive solution to the conflict, a solution that respects the legitimate right of the Saharawi people to self-determination and independence,

Call upon all European youth organisations to include the conflict of Western Sahara on their political agendas and to devise and enhance programmes of technical co-operation and development for the Saharawi youth, and to foster and strengthen the existing bonds of friendship and co-operation with UJSARIO.

¹ UJSARIO: Youth Union of Saguía el Hamra y Río de Oro (Western Sahara Youth Union)