



United Nations MINURSO

United Nations Mission for
the Referendum in
Western Sahara

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MINURSO newsletter

Dynamism

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The UN Security Council adopts unanimously the resolution 2044 (2012) regarding western Sahara conflict

On 24 April 2012, the Security Council adopts unanimously the resolution 2044 (2012) regarding western Sahara conflict whereby it extends MINURSO mandate till 30 April 2013. The full text of the resolution reads as follows:

The Security Council,

Recalling and reaffirming all its previous resolutions on Western Sahara,

Reaffirming its strong support for the efforts of the Secretary-General and his Personal Envoy to implement resolutions 1754 (2007), 1783 (2007), 1813 (2008), 1871 (2009), 1920 (2010), and 1979 (2011),

Reaffirming its commitment to assist the parties to achieve a just, lasting, and mutually acceptable political solution, which will provide for the self-determination of the people of Western Sahara in the context of arrangements consistent with the principles and purposes of the Charter of the United Nations, and noting the role and responsibilities of the parties in this respect,

Reiterating its call upon the parties and States of the region to cooperate more fully with the United Nations and with each other and to strengthen their involvement to end the current impasse and to achieve progress towards a political solution,

Welcoming the efforts of the Secretary-General to keep all peacekeeping operations, including MINURSO, under close review and reiterating the need for the Council to pursue a rigorous, strategic approach to peacekeeping deployments,

Expressing concern about the violations of existing agreements, and calling on the parties to respect their relevant obligations,

Taking note of the Moroccan proposal presented on 11 April 2007 to the Secretary-General and welcoming serious and credible Moroccan efforts to move the process forward towards resolution; also taking note of the Polisario Front proposal presented 10 April 2007 to the Secretary-General,

Encouraging in this context, the parties to demonstrate further political will towards a solution including by expanding upon their discussion of each other's proposals,

Taking note of the four rounds of negotiations held under the auspices of the Secretary-General and the continued rounds of informal talks, and welcoming the progress made by the parties to enter into direct negotiations,

Welcoming the progress made by the parties in discussing innovative negotiating approaches and discrete subjects, their commitment to deepen the discussions on these and other issues, and the 9 November 2011 meeting of the parties on natural resources and progress made towards demining,

Welcoming the positive conclusion of the 12-16 September 2011 UNHCR-sponsored seminar on Hassaniya culture and the agreement by the parties to hold two additional seminars in 2012, as well as the holding of a UNHCR-facilitated high-level meeting on Confidence Building Measures for Western Sahara on 24-25 January 2012,

Stressing the importance of improving the human rights situation in Western Sahara and the Tindouf camps, and encouraging the parties to work with the international community to develop and implement independent and credible measures to ensure full respect for human rights, bearing in mind their relevant obligations under international law,

Welcoming the opening of National Council on Human Rights Commissions operating in Dakhla and Laayoune, and the steps taken by Morocco in order to fulfil its commitment to ensure unqualified and unimpeded access to all Special Procedures of the United Nations Human Rights Council,

Also welcoming the implementation of the enhanced refugee protection program developed by the Office of the UN High Commissioner for Refugees in coordination with the Polisario Front, which includes refugee and human rights training and awareness initiatives,

Reiterating the request that UNHCR maintain its consideration of a refugee registration in the Tindouf refugee camps,

Looking forward to the implementation of the updated plan of action on confidence building measures adopted in Geneva 24-25 January 2012, including the inauguration of family visits by land, use of new information technology to facilitate communication links between families, and the continuation and expansion of the existing programme by air, and encouraging the parties to cooperate with the Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees in implementing their agreement,

Welcoming the commitment of the parties to continue the process of negotiations through the United Nations-sponsored talks,

Recognizing that the consolidation of the status quo is not acceptable, and noting further that progress in the negotiations is essential in order to improve the quality of life of the people of Western Sahara in all its aspects,

Affirming support for the Secretary-General's Personal Envoy for Western Sahara Ambassador Christopher Ross and his work in facilitating negotiations between the parties, welcoming his ongoing consultations with the parties and neighbouring states, and looking forward to his regional visit in the near future, including to Western Sahara, as per the communiqué of the Informal Meeting on Western Sahara 11-13 March 2012,

Affirming support for the Special Representative of the Secretary-General for Western Sahara and Head of MINURSO Hany Abdel-aziz,

Having considered the report of the Secretary-General of 11 April 2012 (S/2012/197),

1. Decides to extend the mandate of MINURSO until 30 April 2013;

2. Reaffirms the need for full respect of the military agreements reached with the United Nations Mission for the Referendum in Western Sahara (MINURSO) with regard to the ceasefire and calls on the parties to adhere fully to those agreements;

3. Calls upon all parties to cooperate fully with the operations of MINURSO, including its free interaction with all interlocutors, and to take the necessary steps to ensure the security of as well as unhindered movement and immediate access for the United Nations and associated personnel in carrying out their mandate, in conformity with existing agreements;

4. Welcomes the parties' commitment to continue the process of holding small, informal talks in preparation for a fifth round of negotiations, and recalls its endorsement of the recommendation in the report of 14 April 2008 (S/2008/251) that realism and a spirit of compromise by the parties are essential to achieve progress in negotiations;

5. Calls upon the parties to continue to show political will and work in an atmosphere propitious for dialogue in order to enter into a more intensive and substantive phase of negotiations, thus ensuring implementation of resolutions 1754 (2007), 1783 (2007), 1813 (2008), 1871 (2009), 1920 (2010), and 1979 (2011) and the success of negotiations, *inter alia*, by continuing their discussion of the ideas in paragraph 120 of the Secretary General's report (S/2011/249);

6. Affirms its strong support for the commitment of the Secretary-General and his Personal Envoy towards a solution to the question of Western Sahara in this context and calls for an intensified pace of meetings and strengthening of contacts;

7. Calls upon the parties to continue negotiations under the auspices of the Secretary-General without preconditions and in good faith, taking into account the efforts made since 2006 and subsequent developments, with a view to achieving a just, lasting, and mutually acceptable political solution, which will provide for the self-determination of the people of Western Sahara in the context of arrangements consistent with the principles and purposes of the Charter of the United Nations, and noting the role and responsibilities of the parties in this respect;

8. Invites Member States to lend appropriate assistance to these talks;

9. Requests the Secretary-General to brief the Security Council on a regular basis, and at least twice a year, on the status and progress of these negotiations under his auspices, on the implementation of this resolution, challenges to MINURSO's operations and steps taken to address them, and expresses its intention to meet to receive and discuss his briefings and in this regard, further requests the Secretary-General to provide a report on the situation in Western Sahara well before the end of the mandate period;

10. Welcomes the commitment of the parties and the neighbouring states to hold periodic meetings with the Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees to review and, where possible, expand confidence-building measures;

11. Urges Member States to provide voluntary contributions to fund confidence-building measures that allow for visits between separated family members, as well as for other confidence-building measures agreed upon between parties;

12. Requests the Secretary-General to continue to take the necessary measures to ensure full compliance in MINURSO with the United Nations zero-tolerance policy on sexual exploitation and abuse and to keep the Council informed, and urges troop-contributing countries to take appropriate preventive action including pre-deployment awareness training, and other action to ensure full accountability in cases of such conduct involving their personnel;

13. Decides to remain seized of the matter.

MINURSO celebrates the International Women's Day

On Tuesday, 8 March 2011, SRSG and Head of MINURSO Hany Abdel-Aziz chaired a town hall meeting to observe officially the International Women's Day. He reads the UNSG message on the occasion and congratulated all women hailing their contribution particularly in peacekeeping. Amel El Bech, Focal Point for Best Practices Gender and HIV/AIDS made a presentation on gender balance and hand painting art of "Henna" for ladies were provided. To animate the gathering, food and cookies were served and music was played.



MINURSO celebrates Ghana National Day, SRSG Hany Abdel-Aziz praises Africa and Ghana's contributions.



On 06 March 2012, MINURSO celebrated the 55th anniversary of Ghana National Day. The ceremony was inaugurated with a military parade within MINURSO HQ in Laayoune during which the flag of Republic of Ghana was raised next to that of the United Nations. In the evening, Ghana UNMOs organized a party at MINURSO cafeteria for the Mission personnel where a brief history of the country was presented. During the ceremony, SRSG Mr. Hany Abdel-Aziz gave a speech hailing particularly the contribution of Ghana as a Troop Contributing Country to MINURSO with a contingent comprising 10 Military Observers and 07 soldiers. He further recalled his experience with highly disciplined men and women from Ghana serving in various peacekeeping missions as military, police and civilian staff, praising the commitment of Ghana and its people in their contribution to the Organization's values.

HANY ABDEL-AZIZ UNDERLINES THE SIGNIFICANCE OF DE-MINING ACTIVITIES IN WESTERN SAHARA



On 3 and 4 April 2012, MINURSO marked the International Day for Mine Awareness and Assistance in Mine Action with a programme by MACC (Mine Action Coordination Centre) to remember landmine and UXO victims as well as acknowledge the sacrifices of mine action workers around the world. The SRSG and Head of MINURSO Hany Abdel-Aziz chaired the ceremony and read the Secretary General's message on the occasion.

SRSG underlined the significance of de-mining activities in Western Sahara as a key aspect of MINURSO's Mandate and among the Mission's accomplishments. The MACC team delivered its 2011-2012 report of activities (which includes Landmine Safety Trainings programmes for 1,153 UN personnel) before screening a United Nations Mine Action Service Video Lend Your Leg which sensitized staff on the effects of UXOs, ERW and cluster bombs on civilians. A minefield demonstration was also staged. MINURSO also marked the occasion in Tindouf, Algeria.

As of 31 December 2011, 20,342,607 m² of land were cleared in the Territory and between 1 January and 3 April 2012, the figure was 1,390,350 m² for a grand total of 21,732,957 m² of land. The Moroccan Army (FAR) is reported to have cleared and demined 3,544 sq km between January 2007 and 29 February 2012. Between 2007 and 2010, MINURSO destroyed 20,835 items including anti-tank and anti-personnel mines, unexploded ordnances and cluster bomb units. From January 2007 to January 2012, the FAR has destroyed 29,547 items including anti-tank and anti-personnel mines, unexploded ordnances and cluster bomb units.

As part of MINURSO's efforts to improve Mine Safety and Security in Western Sahara, AOAV (Action On Armed Violence, a UN-contracted NGO), in collaboration with the Geographical Information System (GIS) unit of the Mission, conducted an assessment of 11 areas of concern in the Team Site Bir-Lahlou AOR covering 1,208,451 sq km. between late May and early June 2011. Personnel began clearing the area in January 2012. A data management system is also to be established on landmine/ERWs-related accidents, victims and survivors. The current year has witnessed an increase in MINURSO's capabilities regarding mine clearance operations with the introduction of Mine Wolf 300, a de-mining system that has enhanced the speed of de-mining activities East of Berm.