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Human rights in Western Sahara and the impact on Europe

Motion for a resolution

tabled by Mr Renato FARINA and other members of the Assembly

This motion has not been discussed in the Assembly and commits only those who have signed it

Recent reports by the Office of the UN High Commissioner for Human Rights, Amnesty International and Human Rights Watch denounce serious human rights abuses by Morocco in Western Sahara, such as the arrest of seven human rights activists returning from a visit to the Saharawi refugee camps, the growing repression and degrading treatment of Saharawi militants and the detention of 41 Saharawi political prisoners.

The Moroccan authorities' expulsion from El Aaiún airport (Western Sahara) of the Saharawis' human rights defender, Mrs Aminatou Haidar, a former Sakharov prize candidate who was awarded the Robert Kennedy Human Rights Award in 2008, and her forced transfer to Spain, where she remained on hunger strike for 32 days at Lanzarote airport (Canaries), is a flagrant breach of the UN International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights. Mrs Haidar was the victim of a cruel measure violating international law and conventions on freedom of movement and of expression.

This latest event shows how the human rights situation in Western Sahara can have serious consequences in Council of Europe member states, particularly if it is borne in mind that the Canary Islands are a preferred destination and transit point for migrants and people fleeing persecution.

The Parliamentary Assembly should address this issue, referring to the United Nations resolutions on the crisis in Western Sahara, which can still be settled only through the Saharawi people's exercise of the right to self-determination. Adoption of a stance and other "moral suasion" initiatives by the Assembly would increase the pressure on the Moroccan government and the leaders of the Polisario Front to seek a lasting political solution.

Signed (see overleaf)



Signed¹:

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1. EDG: European Democrat Group
EPP/CD: Group of the European People's Party
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