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11 June 2009

The human rights situation in Western Sahara

Motion for a resolution

tabled by Mr Jean-Paul LECOQ and other members of the Assembly

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

Thirty-three years have gone by since Western Sahara was annexed by Morocco following the Madrid Accords under which Spain transferred its occupied territories to Morocco. This annexation weighs heavily on the Sahrawi people, depriving them of their right to self-determination, which is a fundamental principle of international law.

A lawless zone has since emerged on the map, where large-scale human rights violations are to be deplored. It is a zone of permanent tension between the Moroccan authorities and the Sahrawis, who claim the right to choose their future democratically. A generation of young people have grown up in refugee camps and are now tired of having lived since birth under these conditions. Some of them have even been imprisoned for demanding freedom of expression and have started a hunger strike to alert international opinion to the situation of oppression in Western Sahara.

The Assembly considers that the international community cannot remain deaf to the plight of the Sahrawi people, who must be guaranteed their right to self-determination, in due observance of fundamental rights, through MINURSO (United Nations Mission for the Referendum in Western Sahara).

Having regard to the Resolutions of the UN Security Council and General Assembly on Western Sahara; the reports of the High Commissioner for Human Rights (May/June 2006 report on Western Sahara), Amnesty International and Human Rights Watch and the statements by the World Organisation against Torture and Front Line on human rights in Western Sahara; and the report produced following the visit by a European Parliament delegation to Western Sahara on 26-27 January 2009;

Considering the stalemate in the peace process in the territories occupied by Morocco;

Considering that the decision by the UN Security Council on 30 April has not resulted in extension of the UN contingent's mandate to human rights monitoring in Western Sahara;

Considering the special status enjoyed by Morocco with the European Union,

The undersigned members propose that these considerations be taken into account in the drawing up of a report on this important issue for debate in the Assembly.

Signed (see overleaf)



Signed¹:

LECOQ Jean-Paul, France, UEL
ELZINGA Tuur, Netherlands, UEL
FRAHM Pernille, Denmark, UEL
GROSS Andreas, Switzerland, SOC
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SOBKO Sergey, Russian Federation

1. SOC: Socialist Group
UEL: Group of the Unified European Left