



Security Council

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Letter dated 8 January 2019 from the Permanent Representative of Namibia to the United Nations addressed to the President of the Security Council

I should be grateful to have the present letter and its annex issued as a document of the Security Council:

- Letter from Sidi Omar, Representative of the Frente POLISARIO at the United Nations

(Signed) Neville **Gertze**
Ambassador
Permanent Representative



Annex to the letter dated 8 January 2019 from the Permanent Representative of Namibia to the United Nations addressed to the President of the Security Council

I would like to express the Frente POLISARIO's sincere congratulations on your assuming your non-permanent seat on the Security Council and the presidency of the Council for the month of January 2019.

On 6 December 2018, we concluded the first round table on Western Sahara under the auspices of the Personal Envoy of the Secretary-General for Western Sahara, Horst Köhler. We thank the Personal Envoy for his sincere efforts, welcome the progress made and look forward to moving rapidly towards direct, face-to-face political negotiations between the two parties.

We engaged in the round table without preconditions and in good faith. We made substantive contributions to each of the three agenda items: stocktaking, regional opportunities and challenges and next steps in the political process. Our engagement was constructive and serious. Our intention was, and remains, to make meaningful progress on the political track and to deliver what the people of Western Sahara have long been promised: a just, lasting and mutually acceptable political solution, which will provide for the self-determination of the people of Western Sahara.

While in Geneva, we presented concrete confidence-building measures, including access by international human rights monitors to the occupied territories of Western Sahara, the release of Sahrawi political prisoners, demining activities and family visits, among other things. It is regrettable that our efforts to launch a substantive discussion on key topics were not seized by the other party. However, we continue to stand ready to engage in these discussions seriously, and we hope that Morocco will do the same.

The situation in the Sahrawi territories under Morocco's illegal occupation remains of great concern to us, particularly with respect to the human rights situation. Away from the scrutiny of the outside world, the Moroccan authorities continue to deny Sahrawi citizens their basic human rights, which are violated on a daily basis and with complete impunity. Sahrawi human rights activists in particular are targeted, harassed and persecuted because of their peaceful activism and their defence of our people's right to self-determination. We are extremely concerned by the appalling situation of Sahrawi political prisoners, particularly members of the Gdeim Izik group, who are held incommunicado in prisons throughout Morocco, far from the residences of their families.

The situation on the ground is also of great concern to us, particularly in Guerguerat, in southern Western Sahara, where tensions have been mounting due to irregular activities in the area. Recent reports indicate that elements of the Moroccan military have carried out stealthy incursions into the buffer strip. We have already communicated our concern about the situation to both the Special Representative for Western Sahara and Head of the United Nations Mission for the Referendum in Western Sahara, Colin Stewart, and the Department of Peace Operations. In particular, we warned against any future deployment of Moroccan military forces in the area located within the buffer strip in Guerguerat, which would represent a clear violation of Military Agreement No. 1.

In this regard, I would like to inform you that, as a sign of good faith, the Frente POLISARIO recently completed the destruction of our entire landmine stockpile, in line with the deed of commitment signed with Geneva Call in November 2005. The more than 7 million landmines buried along the Moroccan military wall have taken a heavy toll on Sahrawi civilians on both sides of the wall and have wreaked havoc on

their livelihoods. We remain hopeful that the international community will exert the necessary pressure on Morocco to adhere to the Ottawa Treaty banning the use and stockpiling of landmines and the Convention on Cluster Munitions.

We will do our part to support a credible political process, and so, too, must Member States. We urge Security Council members to move rapidly to support the Personal Envoy and to provide him with the resources and concerted political backing necessary for his success. All tools at members' disposal should be deployed strategically to incentivize concrete progress. In particular, we expressed to the Personal Envoy our profound concern that the current trajectory of the European Union's trade policy pre-empts the outcome of negotiations and presents a negative drag on the political process. We urge European Governments to use this rare window of opportunity to fully support the United Nations peace process and to use trade constructively as a positive incentive for peace. We have reiterated the views we expressed on this both at the round table and in writing to the Special Envoy.

The status quo is not an option. The security and stability of the region require a lasting solution to this long-standing conflict. We must all do our utmost to capitalize on the momentum created at the round table and to advance the political process towards direct, substantive negotiations between the two parties. The Frente POLISARIO stands ready to engage in direct negotiations with Morocco with a view to achieving a peaceful, just and lasting solution, which will provide for the self-determination of the people of Western Sahara and restore regional peace and security.

I should be most grateful if you would bring the present letter to the attention of the members of the Security Council.

(Signed) Sidi M. **Omar**
Representative of the Frente POLISARIO
at the United Nations
