



Brussels, 6 April 2018

EuroMed Rights letter to the Member States of the United Nations Security Council: Human rights at the heart of the extension of the MINURSO's mandate

Dear Madam, dear Sir,

On 27 April 2018, the Member States of the United Nations Security Council will have to decide on the renewal of the mandate of the United Nations Mission for the Referendum in Western Sahara (MINURSO). On this occasion, EuroMed Rights, a network of over 80 human rights organisations located on both shores of the Mediterranean, calls on you to ensure that human rights are put to the centre of these discussions.

The international community must call for the achievement of a fair and sustainable solution, one that is grounded in international law, consistent with the principles enounced in the Charter of the United Nations and aligned to the Security Council's previous resolutions. EuroMed Rights notes that in Western Sahara human rights violations remain numerous, notably on the matters of freedom of expression, association and assembly as well as restrictions to the activities of local and foreign human rights organisations.

Furthermore, we note that, even if we received the formal agreement from the Polisario Front's authorities, we were unable to visit the refugee camp under their responsibility to assess the human rights situation. The visas, granted by the Algerian authorities, were withdrawn by Algerian authorities themselves, at the very last moment and without any explanation.

In light of this situation, EuroMed Rights calls on you to mandate your Ambassadors to the United Nations to:

- Renew the MINURSO's mandate and ensure that it is fully operational, so that it may carry out its mission unimpeded;
- Extend the MINURSO's mission to assessing the human rights situation, or establish permanent international mechanisms for vigilance and monitoring observance of human rights. The mandate should be able to be carried out in the refugees camps hosted in Algeria and under the control of the Polisario Front.

We remain at your disposal for any further information you may require.

Yours faithfully,

Michel TUBIANA

Michel Tubiana
EuroMed Rights President

Contact person: *Elise Poumay, Advocacy Officer, epo@euromedrights.net, +32 2 503 05 48*