
Africa

1. The situation concerning Western Sahara

Overview

During the period under review, the Security Council held two meetings and adopted two resolutions relating to the situation concerning Western Sahara. The Council considered the mandate of the United Nations Mission for the Referendum in Western Sahara (MINURSO) and the question of human rights in the region. The mandate of MINURSO was extended twice by the Council, for a period of one year each time.²

30 April 2010 and 27 April 2011: extension of the mandate of MINURSO

On 30 April 2010, the Council met to consider a draft resolution by which it would extend the mandate of MINURSO.³ While expressing support for the draft resolution prior to its adoption, the representative of Uganda also expressed concern over the allegations of violations of human rights in the territory of Western Sahara and the absence of a mechanism for human rights monitoring on the ground.⁴ The representative of Nigeria noted an apparent reluctance of the Council to be coherent, consistent and forthcoming on the important question of human rights and an attempt to downplay the seriousness of their abuse.⁵

By resolution 1920 (2010), the Council, inter alia, extended the mandate of MINURSO until 30 April 2011. The Council called on the parties to adhere fully to the military agreements reached with MINURSO with regard to the ceasefire. Recognizing that the consolidation of the status quo was not acceptable in the long term, the Council called upon the parties to continue to show political will and work in an atmosphere propitious for dialogue.

Following the adoption of the resolution, the representatives of France and the United Kingdom welcomed confidence-building measures, including the expansion of the family visits programme as a way to

improve the human rights situation.⁶ The representative of the United States called on the parties to work collaboratively with the Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees to facilitate the implementation of their agreement regarding family visits, including the establishment of family visits by land.⁷ The representatives of Austria and the United Kingdom also called on the parties to engage with the Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights to ensure respect of the human rights of the people of Western Sahara in the territory and the refugee camps.⁸ In order to ensure that MINURSO was making a positive contribution to the resolution of the conflict in Western Sahara instead of mandating a mission that entrenched the status quo, the representative of United Kingdom requested the Secretariat to develop suitable benchmarks against which the progress of MINURSO in achieving its mandate could be measured and asked for an assessment of such progress to be included in the next report with a view to its future configuration.⁹

On 27 April 2011, the Council adopted resolution 1979 (2011), by which it, inter alia, welcomed the establishment of the National Council on Human Rights in Morocco and the proposed component regarding Western Sahara, and the commitment of Morocco to ensure unqualified and unimpeded access to all special procedures of the United Nations Human Rights Council. The Council decided to extend the mandate of MINURSO until 30 April 2012.

Before the adoption of a draft resolution, the representative of South Africa remarked that the mandate of MINURSO was one of the few United Nations mandates, and the only one in Africa, that did not have human rights components. He maintained that MINURSO should have a human rights monitoring mandate, especially in the light of the recent reports of human rights incidents in Western Sahara, including events in Laayoune in 2010.¹⁰ The representative of

² Resolutions 1920 (2010) and 1979 (2011). For more information on MINURSO, see part X, sect. I, "Peacekeeping operations".

³ S/2010/216.

⁴ S/PV.6305, pp. 2-3.

⁵ Ibid., p. 3.

⁶ Ibid., p. 5 (France); and p. 6 (United Kingdom).

⁷ Ibid., p. 4.

⁸ Ibid., p. 6.

⁹ Ibid., p. 6.

¹⁰ S/PV.6523, pp. 2-3.

Nigeria was concerned about the lack of a reference to resolution 690 (1991) in the draft resolution and called for involvement of the African Union countries in the efforts to find an international solution to the conflict.¹¹ Other speakers referred to the question of

human rights in the territory of Western Sahara, and noted the efforts made and measures taken by Morocco to consolidate and strengthen the promotion and protection of human rights.¹²

¹¹ Ibid., p. 3.

¹² Ibid., p. 4 (United Kingdom, France); and p. 5 (Gabon).

Meetings: the situation concerning Western Sahara

<i>Meeting and date</i>	<i>Sub-item</i>	<i>Other documents</i>	<i>Rule 37 invitations</i>	<i>Speakers</i>	<i>Decision and vote (for-against-abstaining)</i>
6305 30 April 2010	Report of the Secretary-General on the situation concerning Western Sahara (S/2010/175)	Draft resolution submitted by France, Russian Federation, Spain, United Kingdom, United States (S/2010/216)	Spain	8 Council members (Austria, France, Mexico, Nigeria, Russian Federation, Uganda, United Kingdom, United States)	Resolution 1920 (2010) 15-0-0
6523 27 April 2011	Report of the Secretary-General on the situation concerning Western Sahara (S/2011/249)	Draft resolution submitted by France, Russian Federation, Spain, United Kingdom, United States (S/2011/268)	Spain	5 Council members (France, Gabon, Nigeria, South Africa, United Kingdom)	Resolution 1979 (2011) 15-0-0

2. The situation in Liberia

Overview

During the period under review, the Security Council held 10 meetings on the situation in Liberia, including two closed meetings with troop-contributing countries,¹³ and adopted five resolutions under Chapter VII of the Charter. The Council heard briefings by the Special Representative of the Secretary-General for Liberia and Head of the United Nations Mission in Liberia (UNMIL) and the Chair of the Liberia configuration of the Peacebuilding Commission.

During the meetings, the Council considered the mandate of UNMIL, which was extended twice, for a period of one year each time.¹⁴ It also considered the preparations for the presidential and legislative elections held in October 2011, and the political and security challenges facing the country.

The Council renewed the sanctions measures and extended the mandate of the Panel of Experts twice. On 17 December 2010, by resolution 1961 (2010), the Council renewed the travel ban and arms embargo for 12 months. The mandate of the Panel of Experts was also extended for 12 months, until 16 December 2011. On 14 December 2011, by resolution 2025 (2011), the Council again renewed the travel ban and arms embargo for 12 months. The mandate of the Panel of Experts was also extended for 12 months.¹⁵

¹³ See S/PV.6376 and S/PV.6608.

¹⁴ Resolutions 1938 (2010) and 2008 (2011).

¹⁵ For more information on the sanctions measures, see part VII, sect. III, with regard to measures adopted in accordance with Article 41 of the Charter. For information on the Committee established pursuant to resolution 1521 (2003) concerning Liberia, and the Panel of Experts, see part IX, sect. I. B.1, with regard to the Security Council committees overseeing specific sanctions measures.