

CONASADH: ICRC bares full responsibility in the protection of Sahrawi civilians in the territories of Western Sahara

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Bir Lehlou (Saharawi Republic) 10 November 2021 (SPS)- The President of the Saharawi National Commission for Human Rights (CONASADH- in Spanish Abbreviation) sent a letter to the President of the International Commission for the Red Cross, Peter Maurer, calling on the ICRC and the UN to assume their full responsibility in the protection of Saharawi civilians, including Saharawi human rights defender Ms. Sultana Sidi Brahim Jaya, under Moroccan police assaults and illegal house arrest for one year so far.

The letter drew the attention of the ICRC President "to the increasingly alarming situation in the occupied territories of Western Sahara due to the terrorist and retaliatory crimes committed by the occupying State of Morocco against defenseless Sahrawi civilians, human rights activists, journalists and bloggers who are exposed to daily atrocities and shameful barbaric and inhumane practices."

It considered that "the responsibility of your humanitarian body (ICRC) is at stake due to its failure to fulfill its international obligations towards the Sahrawi civilians under Moroccan occupation," calling on Mr. Maurer "to urgently play your role within the framework of international humanitarian law and other relevant requirements of the Geneva Conventions, and to move quickly before it is too late, to stop this aggression against the family of Sidi Brahim Jaya" CONASADH also called on the President of the ICRC "to urgently visit the occupied territories of Western Sahara to see first hand the situation of Sahrawi civilians within an occupied territory where the decolonization process has not been completed yet.

Following is the full text of the letter submitted to destination Today:

Mr. Peter Maurer

President of the International Committee of the Red Cross (ICRC)

Avenue de la Paix 19

1202 Geneva

Dear Mr. President

I would like to address you very urgently through this letter to draw your attention to the increasingly alarming situation in the occupied territories of Western Sahara due to the terrorist and retaliatory crimes committed by the occupying State of Morocco against defenseless Sahrawi civilians, human rights activists, journalists and bloggers who are exposed to daily atrocities and shameful barbaric and inhumane practices.

In the occupied city of Bojador, the family of Sidi Brahim Jaya has been put under a tight siege since November 19, 2020, while the human rights activist, Ms. Sultana Sidi Brahim Jaya and her family continue to protest peacefully against the Moroccan occupation by symbolically raising the national flag of the Sahrawi Republic on their house.

As documented by widely disseminated photos, videos and reports by international human rights organizations such as Amnesty International (MDE 29/4404/2021), Sultana Sidi Brahim Jaya, her sister, El Waara Sidi Brahim Jaya, and other members of her family continue to be subjected to daily abuse, physical assault, sexual harassment and other

forms of barbaric and degrading treatments committed by Moroccan security agents and thugs to the sold of the occupying authorities.

The most recent barbaric act of the Moroccan security forces against Sultana took place early on November 8, 2021, when the Moroccan forces of repression attacked the house of Jaya family in the occupied city of Bojador cowardly ransacking or stealing everything. Sultana, her sister El Waara and their 80 years old mother were beaten, dragged, stripped off their clothes and verbally insulted and intimidated. This time, instead of exposing Sultana to infection with Covid as it was done before, the Moroccan assaulters injected her with an unknown substance, they further poured a smelling liquid all over the house, an act that proves that the authorities of the Moroccan state of occupation are determined to intensify their terrorist and hideous attacks against Sahrawi civilians and human rights activists in the occupied territories of the Non-Self-Governing territory of Western Sahara, which is currently a war zone.

The situation of the Sahrawi political detainees, including the Gdeim Izik group, is still alarming as a result of the miserable conditions they suffer inside the prisons of the Moroccan state of occupation and the humiliating and retaliatory practices practiced against them by Moroccan prisons' administration.

To protest against the continuation of their illegal imprisonment and the degrading treatment they are subjected to, some of the detainees of the Gdeim Izik group in the prisons of the Moroccan state of occupation led consecutive hunger strikes protesting against the ignorance of their plight. The case of Yahya Mohamed El Hafed Iazza, the Sahrawi political prisoner, who spent so far the longest imprisonment period in Moroccan jails, is of particular concern as he has launched several hunger strikes to protest his unjust detention and denial of his basic rights to family visits and health care. Of similar concern is also the deteriorating condition of the political detainee, Mr. Mohamed Lamine Haddi, on hunger strike for over a month so far.

We call upon you once again to urgently intervene to end the suffering of all Sahrawi political prisoners and their families and to ensure their immediate and unconditional release, so that they can return to their homeland and be reunited with their families.

Mr. president,

The responsibility of your humanitarian body is at stake due to its failure to fulfill its international obligations towards the Sahrawi civilians under Moroccan occupation.

Accordingly, we call on you to urgently play your role within the framework of international humanitarian law and other relevant requirements of the Geneva Conventions, and to move quickly before it is too late, to stop this aggression against the family of Sidi Brahim Jaya. We also call on you to urgently visit the occupied territories of Western Sahara to see first hand the situation of Sahrawi civilians within an occupied territory where the decolonization process has not been completed yet.

We also consider that any delay in your intervention to protect Sahrawi civilians under occupation, would be a wrong signal given to the Moroccan occupying state that will embolden it to continue disregarding the rules of the Geneva Conventions and persisting in its systematic repressive practices in the occupied territories of Western Sahara, which are living an unprecedented situation characterized by an aggressive and retaliatory war waged by Morocco on defenseless Sahrawi civilians under the nose of the United Nations and its Mission supposedly in charge of the organization of a referendum in Western Sahara.

Please accept, Mr. President, the assurances of my highest consideration.

Mr. Abba ElHaissan

President of CONASADH." (SPS)

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