

Polisario Front: a new military leader to lead the land offensive against Morocco – Afrique Media

WORLD Nicole World 11 days ago **REPORT**



Polisario Front: a new military leader to lead the land offensive against Morocco – Afrique Media

“The Moroccan occupation army will once again taste the bitterness of the defeat it suffered during the 16 years of war against the Sahrawi People’s Liberation Army”. The sentence is from Brahim Ghali, the secretary general of the Polisario Front. He said it on Saturday November 6 on the occasion of the installation of Mohamed Wali Akeik, the new chief of staff of the Sahrawi army. At 71, he left the costume of Minister of the Occupied Territories and of the Sahrawi Communities established abroad to put on the military fatigues. Behind his good-natured demeanor of a wise grandfather hides a formidable desert fighter. Mohamed Wali Akeik bears on his face and body the traces of many years of war.

War context

For many observers of the Western Sahara issue, the arrival of Mohamed Wali Akeik at the head of the Saharawi army constitutes a turning point in this conflict. This is particularly the case of Bachir Mohamed Lahsen, professor in communication sciences, specialist in African issues at the University of Seville, who believes that his appointment is an indication of “what the Saharawi military strategy could be in the months to come. future”.

“The Polisario Front had expressed its disillusionment when the Security Council adopted resolution 2602 and reacted by announcing its intention to increase the intensity of the armed conflict that opposes it to Morocco. threat on the ground, it was necessary to make changes in the command of the Sahrawi army. In reality, this change was expected, because the government led by Mohamed Wali Akeik had been installed in 2019, well before the resumption armed struggle. It was therefore necessary to place the command in the context of war “,

According to Bachir Mohamed Lahsen, we must expect an increase in the rhythm of the operations of the Saharawi units. *“The Polisario Front should move from shelling Moroccan positions, which it has been carrying out daily since the ceasefire was broken on November 13, 2020, to ground operations. This mission has been entrusted to military leaders who have proven their worth in combat during the first war against Morocco (1973-1991)”*, notes the professor at the University of Seville.

“This first stage of harassment which was characterized by the shelling of the separation wall is only a warm-up stage for the Sahrawi army which did not fight for thirty years. The units The combatants had a year to warm up and put in place the procedures, particularly in terms of logistics. The rise of the Polisario’s military offensive is inevitable. The military command is the only one to know the timetable and the sites of ground offensive. We must therefore expect lightning operations against Moroccan units and also prisoners”, specifies Bachir Mohamed Lahsen.

The objective will therefore be to launch offensives against the separation wall built since the 1980s by the Moroccan army, 2,720 kilometers long and made up of several defense and surveillance systems (mines, ditches, barbed wire, radars), it is constantly monitored by nearly 100,000 soldiers. Thursday, November 4, 2021, the Moroccan channel 2M TV broadcast an exclusive documentary on the separation wall.

Bachir Mohamed Lahsen tells Sputnik that the Polisario Front is counting on the experience of the fighters of the first war against Morocco to break through the separation wall. *“Mohamed Wali Akeik as well as Brahim Ghali are part of this generation which inflicted losses on the army of Hassan II. Their knowledge of the tactical schemes for carrying out lightning raids against Moroccan units”.*

“The choice of Mohamed Wali Akeik is no accident. He fought Spanish and then Moroccan units from his teenage years. He was imprisoned by Franco’s army for having participated in secret actions. After his release, he was imprisoned, joined the Saharawi army to fight Morocco. At the age of 27, he was already commander of a military region. He is part of the elite of the senior officers of the Polisario Front since he even commanded the service of Saharawi intelligence “, adds Bachir Mohamed Lahsen.

New air threat

To counter the Polisario Front’s guerrilla operations in the vast desert areas, the Moroccan armed forces have acquired latest generation military equipment. This is particularly the case of the drones which were used for the first time in April 2021 during the attack on a military convoy of the Polisario Front. Dah El Bendir, the commander of the Sahrawi gendarmerie, had lost his life during this raid. The track of the drone also seems to be confirmed in the attack of November 1 which caused the death of three Algerian truckers near the town of Bir Lahlou and attributed to Morocco by the Algerian authorities. How will the Sahrawi army deal with drones, a modern weapon that did not exist during the first war?

“For the Polisario Front, the air threat has always arisen acutely since Morocco has always had fighter planes. But as early as 1981, the Saharawis began to use SAM 6 anti-aircraft missile systems (2K12 Kub) made in the Soviet Union which inflicted losses on the air force. It is true that the use of drones gives an advantage to an army, but it is not with this equipment that one wins a war. Conflicts in Afghanistan or Yemen are concrete examples. The most powerful and richest armies on the planet use these high-tech devices, but that did not allow it to win wars “, notes Bachir Mohamed Lahsen.

For the professor at the University of Seville, the Polisario Front can also buy weapons *“in order to counter this threat”.* *“The Polisario Front’s use of anti-drone equipment is to be expected. The Sahrawi Arab Democratic Republic (SADR), which is a member state of the African Union, also has the possibility of acquiring ‘armament with its African allies “,* he says. Bachir Mohamed Lahsen notably cites the South African armaments companies, including the African National Congress (ANC), the party in power, is one of the allies of the Polisario Front.

Source: Sputnik