

Murder of Young Boy Sparks Frustration, Division in Tindouf Camps

In addition to the dire conditions marked by malnutrition, Sahrawis stranded in the camps in Tindouf, Algeria are also facing the scourge of gang crimes.

Safaa Kasraoui May 09, 2024 3:25 p.m.



Tindouf camps

Rabat - The Tindouf camps in Algeria have recently witnessed division with the reports of murder of a child by a group of gang members.

Life in the camps, which are controlled by the Algerian regime and run by the separatist group the Polisario Front, is already dire for Sahrawis, and the recent crime has only exacerbated the situation.

The Tindouf-based Autonomy Support Forum (FORSATIN) **said** on Wednesday that the camps were trampled by the new crime following the murder of a young boy, who was “slaughtered” in cool blood.

“Fingers of accusation point to armed gangs that have been invading the camps for some time, fighting among themselves, with live ammunition,” the report said.

FORSATIN suspects that the gangs hire young children in their suspicious operations like drug trafficking and spying.

“Crimes in the camps have reached an unbearable level, as after the theft of the residents’ property and the robbery of their tents, and the employment of young people in international smuggling, it was the turn of **children** to be new victims of the failure of the Polisario Front to secure the camps,” the news forum said.

Several reports, including some from the United Nations, have frequently highlighted the challenges that the Sahrawis face in the Algeria-controlled **Tindouf** camps.

Last year in October, the UN Secretary General Antonio Guterres’ annual report on the Western Sahara situation warned about the “further deterioration of the humanitarian situation” in the camps.

Guterres said that Sahrawis in the camps are facing several challenges, including water scarcity, food shortages, malnutrition, extreme weather, in addition to environmental degradation and lack of adequate housing.

In addition to malnutrition, the children's militarization in the camps continue to spark concerns from international organizations.

Several reports have linked the Polisario Front and Algeria to humanitarian violations against Sahawri children. One of the scores of challenges facing youngsters in the camps is the militarization of children.

“Despite all this international legal framework and calls for action, the children of the Tindouf camps continue to be forced to take part in military trainings, [and are] subjugated to all forms of exploitation and abuse by the “Polisario” militia, under the indifferent eyes of the host country, Algeria, and in total defiance to the international Community,” Morocco’s Permanent Ambassador to the UN Omar Hilal has said.

The killing of the young boy in Tindouf came following additional reports, saying that the Algerian army killed three Sahrawis in April, opening fire on them following a car chase by Algerian patrol.

“Hundreds of other Sahrawi youth...they suffer from poverty, need, and lack of opportunities, resorting to various means to support their families and communities in the camps despite the risks and difficulties they face,” FORSATIN reported in April.

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