

Forum: General Assembly Fourth Committee

Issue: The Question of Western Sahara

Student Officer: Anngu Chang

Position: Head Chair

Introduction

Western Sahara is a sparsely inhabited desert between Morocco and Mauritania. The land contains an abundance of phosphate, and its vast coastline makes it a geopolitically advantageous place for development and investment. The Question of Western Sahara concerns the territorial dispute between Morocco and the Sahrawi people, whom have demanded autonomy and self rule since Spain withdrew its colonial control in 1975.

While Morocco has laid down countless historical claims in the region, the Sahrawi people believed that they are entitled for full autonomy as a result of decades of Spanish colonization. A war broke out between Morocco and the Polisario Front (a representative organization of the Sahrawi people who seek for full autonomy) in 1975, and lasted until 1991, and despite the United Nations' involvement in the peace process, little to no significant outcome has been decided. After almost half a century of neglect, unexecuted proposals, and failed negotiation talks, the region in Western Sahara remains heavily contested between Morocco and the Polisario Front. The refugees initially displaced in the war are still stuck in refugee camps, and numerous human rights abuse accusations have stemmed from said camps.

With an issue as dynamic yet prolonged as the one in Western Sahara, a more creative and adaptive approach must be taken to ensure that all parties and interests are equally represented. At the very core of this issue lies a simple question: how important is the notion of self-determination in the 21st century?

Definition of Key Terms

Autonomy

Autonomy refers to the freedom for a country or organization to govern itself independently without foreign coercion or intervention. In Western Sahara, autonomy is linked with the idea that the Polisario Front and the Sahrawi people who seeks independence should have the right of self-governance.

Decolonization

Decolonization is the process of undoing colonialism. After Spain signed the Madrid Accords in 1975, they relinquished their rule over Western Sahara. However, the contents of the accord means that disputed territory was split between Mauritania and Morocco, which rendered the Polisario Front (formally recognized as the Sahrawi Arab Democratic Republic) calls for independence fruitless.

Referendum

A referendum is a general vote extended to all citizens on a specific political question [usually of magnitude]. While a referendum only refers to the poll/vote itself, other provisions can also be implemented to ensure the impartiality and representativeness of the referendum itself.

Self-determination

Self-determination is the idea that people have control over their own lives, and can, collectively, make decisions about the future of their supposed group, such as the formation into a legitimate country. The principle of self-determination is enshrined in Chapter I of the UN Charter. In 1975, a landmark ruling by the International Court of Justice rejected Morocco's claim in Western Sahara and stated that the Sahrawis were entitled to self-determination.

National Sovereignty

National sovereignty is the right of an independent country to do everything it deems necessary in its self-governance. Countries have a right to an organized government that are self-contained and autonomous, which means that other countries have no right to interfere with internal affairs and process of another state. This notion is protected under Article 2 in Chapter I of the UN Charter.

Background Information

Decolonization (1884-1975)

Traditionally a Spanish Colony, the Western Sahara conflict erupted after Spanish withdrawal from Western Sahara. Spain had colonized Western Sahara in 1884, and after almost a decade of rule, succumbed to UN calls for the decolonisation of the region. Morocco, who had previously attempted a military overtake of Western Sahara in 1957, once again reinstated their claims over the region. While Spain wanted to host a referendum to see who will run the vacant territory, the Moroccan King defies the Hague ruling favoring Saharawi rights to self-determination and issued the Green March in late 1975, a demonstration of over 350,000 Moroccans and 20,000 Moroccan troops. Subsequent to the demonstration, the signing of the Madrid Accords marked Spain's official withdrawal from Western

Sahara and outlined how the territory between Morocco and Mauritania. This drew large opposition from Algeria and the Polisario Front (established in 1973), who saw this agreement as a direct effort supplementing colonialism. A day after Spain's departure in February of 1976, the Polisario Front proclaimed the SADR as the official government-in-exile, armed and backed by Algeria. Spain's departure would mean the start of a long, drawn-out war between existing parties in Western Sahara, and exacerbate regional instability and tensions.

The Western Sahara War (1975-1991)

Sporadic fighting and guerilla warfare between the Polisario Front, Morocco, and Mauritania started after 1975, of which the Polisario Front was supported and backed by Algeria. In 1976, the Polisario Front declared its official government to be the Saharan Arab Democratic Republic (SADR), a government recognized by over 70 countries. Morocco has since then been stuck in a costly and deadly struggle with the Polisario Front. Mauritania reached and signed a peace agreement and with the Polisario Front in 1979, officially exiting from the Western Sahara War. However, in response, Morocco annexed the previously contested territory controlled by Mauritania, further enlarging its claim in the region.

Disputes are not confined to the battlefield, however, as the physical war spilled over onto the field of international recognition and support; Morocco has lobbied to gain international acceptance of the territory they acclaimed while the Polisario Front fought for international recognition for the SADR. In 1984, Morocco left the African Union (AU) after the Union recognized and admitted the Sahrawi Arab Democratic Republic (SADR) as one of its members. Amidst the conflict, the international community has called for repeated peace talks and emphasized the need for dialogue. Through the mid-1980s, the war reached a stalemate as Morocco effectively stopped all Polisario advance through the construction of the Moroccan Wall. As the conflict dragged on, Morocco faced increasing costs for the ongoing construction and military maintenance of the Moroccan Wall. Although temporary funding from Saudi Arabia, the United States, and France offered temporary relief for Morocco, it became increasingly evident that the war will soon become unsustainable for all sides involved.

As the death tolls from both sides gradually built up, the United Nations issued a peace proposal in 1988— a whole 13 years after the initial conflict erupted— as an attempt to dissuade fighting in the region. The proposal included calls for a referendum to be held for the Sahrawis to decide whether they will want independence and sovereignty over Western Sahara under the leadership of the Polisario Front or officially merge the territory with Morocco. The referendum was supposed to take place in 1988. Nevertheless, both sides were creating supposedly obstacles that blocked the process of identifying potential voters, thus eliminating the possibility for an impartial census. However, as a result of this

peace proposal, both Morocco and the Polisario Front had agreed to a ceasefire on September 6th, 1991.

Peace process (1991-Present)

The ceasefire was established under the 1991 Settlement Plan, and was based on the premise that it would facilitate time and necessary peace in order to conduct referendum voting. The Settlement Plan also created the United Nations Mission for the Referendum in Western Sahara (MINURSO), which was mandated to monitor the ongoing ceasefire and take steps towards conducting a successful referendum. Furthermore, MINURSO was tasked with initiating compromises to lessen existing human right abuses and ensure the release of political detainees and prisoners of war from both sides. As the ceasefire dragged on, however, it became apparent that the chances of a proper census occurring is virtually nonexistent due to continuous disagreements on voting rights and process.

Continuous quarrels and disputes between the two parties has repeatedly brought the peace process to a halt. In 1997, the Houston Agreement was proposed as an effort to revive referendum voting, but likewise had little to no success. The United Nations conducted special envoys in an attempt to pinpoint possible voters and by 1999, had identified over 85,000 Sahrawi voters dispersed throughout Western Sahara, Tindouf refugee camps, Mauritania, and other locations. While the Polisario Front reaffirmed the voter list proposed by the United Nations (it has agreed to previous voter lists presented by the United Nations), Morocco refused to accept it on the grounds that not every voter identified was scrutinized individually. It was in a similar manner that the Baker Plan, formulated in 2001, also failed in yielding any significant progress.

Talks of a referendum went quiet for several years, but the prolonged ceasefire remained solidly intact. In 2006, Morocco proposed the Western Sahara Autonomy Proposal, which supposedly modeled the Spanish approach in decolonization. The plan stated that the Sahrawi people of Western Sahara would be granted autonomy, and would freely run their government under Moroccan sovereignty. The plan also implied that Morocco would be in charge of national defense and foreign affairs. While the proposal was endorsed by the United States and France, the Polisario Front almost immediately rejected the plan. To date, all negotiations and peace talks have failed to make any substantial progress to resolve the dispute. As the current environment (one plagued with human rights violations and instability) continues to see lack of actions and improvements, the likelihood of Sahrawi self-determination seems to be rapidly slipping away. In 2017, after 33 years of departure, Morocco was allowed back into the African Union despite stiff resistance from some African member states. While many view this as a crucial step in fostering dialogue and acceptance, Morocco's growing economic ties with other African countries and the international community only furthers it's support on its claims in Western Sahara. The actions and

decisions we make today would answer one simple, yet gravitating question: is the concept of self-determination still valued in the status quo?

Key Issues

Self-determination

The right of national self-determination- or the belief that people have the fundamental right to select their own form of government and choose a sovereignty under which they will reside- lies at the core of this issue. Much like the issues of Palestine and Xinjiang, the question of Western Sahara is yet another case that demonstrates just how divided the world is in support of self-determination. Many believe that self-determination illuminates a direct pathway out of the current diplomatic stalemate as it injects a sense a legitimacy and revitalizes relevance on this topic. However, from a legal and remedial perspective, self-determination does not, in the status quo, serve as a viable solution, let alone a helpful guideline or direction for the concurrent territorial disputes and overlapping claims. Before any talks about the establishment of an independent or autonomous state in Western Sahara, many other issues need to be addressed:

“The Forgotten Refugees”

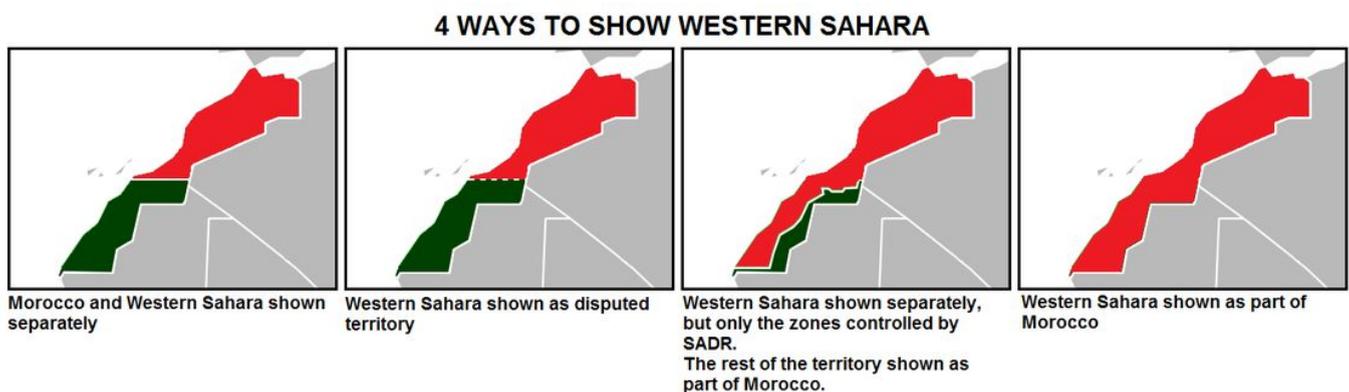
Sahrawi refugees have remained stateless since the start of the Western Sahara War. The refugees who fled from the Moroccan forces during the Western Sahara war now mainly reside in the Sahrawi refugee camps located in the Tindouf Province while other refugees fled to Mauritania. The Tindouf Province in Algeria houses five refugee camps, and Awserd, one of the five camps, is estimated to have roughly 50,000 refugees. With uncertainty looming over the future in Western Sahara, many of these Sahrawi refugees are deterred from returning home. Although it has been almost half a century after the initial conflict first ignited, many of these Sahrawi refugees are still living in the camps, with the situation exacerbating into one of the most elongated refugee problems worldwide.

In December 2018, the World Food Programme estimates that roughly eighty percent of food in the refugee camps comes from international donations. Inside these refugee camps, jobs are virtually nonexistent, with troubles such as the lack of sustainability, increasing crime, and possible radicalization brewing amongst the young and disenfranchised. Additionally, there have been accusations of forced disappearances and human rights abuses in the camps. Within the Moroccan controlled territory in Western Sahara, Amnesty International have also reported unfair trials and arbitrary detentions. Morocco, for the most part, has launched counter accusations claiming that the Polisario Front have been forcefully restraining refugees inside the camps against their will. In conjunction with the lack of

genuine progress from both sides, the depth of the grievances and the age of this issue necessitates actions to be taken.

Disputed Territories and Political Status

The main territorial dispute lies in overlapping claims between the Polisario Front and Morocco, in which the former claims sovereignty over the entire territory of Western Sahara while the latter believes its claims are justified due to historic evidence. Currently, the Polisario only controls roughly thirty percent of the land in Western Sahara under the title of the Sahrawi Arab Democratic Republic. The area controlled by the Polisario is referred to as the “Free Zone” or “Liberated Territory,” while the rest of the disputed land is controlled by Morocco and dubbed its “Southern Provinces.” The Moroccan Western Sahara Berm (or wall) separates the controlled territories from both sides and extends several kilometers into Mauritania. There are over 120,000 Moroccan forces stationed and over 1,500-mile tract of land mines laid along the hard border.



The United Nations has enlisted Western Sahara as a Non-self Governing Territory since 1963 and does not recognize Morocco's claims in the region. Despite the UN's official view on this issue, countries have forged their views and recognition for Western Sahara: some view the status quo as a denial of the right to self-determination for Western Sahara's people while others believe that Morocco's autonomy over the region is crucial for growth and long term stability. The disagreement regarding political status has effectively deadlocked any concurrent attempts at resolving this issue and dissuades future progress. To resolve this issue, countries must come up with a concrete status that could be agreed upon to foster long term initiatives that can resolve existing territorial disputes.

Human Rights

Since the Western Sahara War first erupted, there have been continuous claims of human rights violations from both Morocco and the Polisario Front, which largely went unaddressed. According to Amnesty International and the Human Rights Watch, the arrest of political opponents is widespread, and

pro-independence movements are quashed in the Moroccan-controlled territory. Furthermore, the US State Department report in 2005 noted the "imprisonment of over 700 independence advocates," and other human rights organizations cited the random "disappearance" of up to 1500 Sahrawi civilians. Of the hundreds of Sahrawis arrested, virtually none were afforded proper due process of law and the repeated disappearance of any political opposition has fostered and perpetuated an atmosphere drenched in fear, denial, and silence. Accusations and evidence of human rights violations are not just from one side, however, as Amnesty International reported of alleged torture and abuse from Polisario police. French human rights groups have also criticized the Polisario for their treatment of Moroccan prisoners-of-war, and the European Strategic Intelligence and Security Center has denounced Polisario's behavior in the Sahrawi refugee camps. Since the 1990s, the Polisario Front has openly acknowledged past instances of human rights violations and abuses, and has stated that all victims subjected to such abuse are granted recognition and reparation. Despite promises from the Polisario Front assuring that steps are being taken to prevent future violations from recurring, the steps taken against individuals human right abusers has remained unclear.

Failure of Existing Protocols and Lack of Transparency

Current initiatives such as the United Nations Mission for the Referendum in Western Sahara (MINURSO) have been heavily criticized for its lack of enforcement and incomprehensive human rights provisions. Amnesty International has echoed concerns about MINURSO's mandate not being respected, calling it a "silent observer" amidst rampant human rights violations. Records of journalist arrest and detention has created an environment devoid of information. With the stagnated flow of information and knowledge, it is becoming increasingly difficult for the international community to design substantial initiatives in all fronts, paralyzing all attempts to resolve existing problems.

Major Parties Involved and Their Views

African Union (AU)

Historically, the African Union has a defined stance on this issue, granting recognition and membership to the Sahrawi Arab Democratic Republic in 1984 and supports the idea of self-determination of the Sahrawi people. The African Union has asserted its role in resolving the conflict since the dispute first ignited, yet recent actions seem to indicate a lessening role the Union is playing in the region. Morocco's return back to the African Union and its subsequent election into the Peace and Security Council (PSC), a principal organ in the African Union mandated with enforcing union decisions, might indicate a change in the Union's approach to the situation in Western Sahara. In what many consider a "dangerous" move, the African Union decided to reverse a previous agreement that calls for

“joint AU and UN-facilitated talks for a free and fair referendum for the people of Western Sahara,” and reports to the PSC would only take place twice a year. As the African Union institute policies that indicate a prolongment in resolving this issue, the situation only benefits Morocco as they obtain more political and economic influence around the world.

Algeria

The support for Sahrawi self-determination has been a core principle in Algerian foreign policy. Algeria has backed Polisario Front and the pro-independence movement of the Sahrawi people since the conflict erupted in 1975. Algeria has consistently provided both military and political support for the Polisario Front, and has firmly stated that the only solution is to guarantee an inclusive and transparent referendum for the Sahrawi people. Without the fervent backing from Algeria, the Polisario Front would cease to exist. However, Algerian support for the Polisario Front has also garnered a large amount of critics for the country, with many stating that their insistence on a free SADR state is unfeasible and only exacerbates existing conflicts in the region. Large numbers of Sahrawi refugees initially displaced by the Western Sahara War have resided in refugee camps near Tindouf, a southwestern city in Algeria, and the country has been offering aid to uphold living conditions in the region.

France

France’s position on the Western Sahara conflict has remained ambiguous. Although France claims to have a neutral position and supports the self-determination of the Sahrawis, their policy and action in Western Sahara has stated otherwise. For instance, France has supported the Morocco Autonomy Plan which fundamentally opposes the UN definition of “non-self-governing territory” as that necessitates the objection of regionalism without the consent of the people. The indirect support for Morocco derives from the cultural and economic connectivity between the two countries; French investment in Morocco has undoubtedly increased in recent times, and a direct parallel can be drawn between investment and political support. France has remained silent and docile when it comes to alleged Moroccan abuse of rights in the region and has opposed the expansion of MINURSO in the question of expanding human rights monitorization.

Morocco

Morocco views Western Sahara as an integral part of its country. In 1957, when Western Sahara was still under Spanish colonization, Morocco had already presented historical claims in the region. Morocco has fiercely contested Western Sahara thenceforth. Although Morocco is against the complete autonomy of the Sahrawi people, they are willing to grant Sahrawis self-governance so long as it is under Moroccan sovereignty: this was proposed in the 2006 Western Sahara Autonomy Plan. Morocco withdrew from the African Union in 1984, and has pursued an “empty chair” policy (characterized by the

lack of action and political persuasion/expansion) in their absence. In the status quo, Morocco has been fighting a long war of attrition in Western Sahara, with an increased focus on diplomacy and gathering further support for proposal of their autonomy plan. With Morocco's return into the African Union and the rejuvenated support they have gained in the process, Morocco is in a better position than ever to establish and further existing political and economic relations with other countries.

Spain

Spain has remained a relevant actor in Western Sahara even after its official withdrawal in 1975. Spain has provided consistent foreign aid and support in Western Sahara, and has announced its commitment towards maintaining security and stability in the region. Spain's determination in the betterment of political and economic stability in Western Sahara stems from its two of its major trading partners (Morocco and Mauritania). Spain has, on numerous occasions, expressed its willingness to better existing ties between Morocco and the European Union. Although Spain is supportive of self-determination of the Sahrawi people, it is opposed to the creation of a new state in Western Sahara. Spain has stated on multiple occasions that it views Western Sahara as a region Morocco-Mauritania border (thus implying that a new state is not probable or justifiable), and has backed the Morocco-Autonomy Plan.

Sahrawi Arab Democratic Republic (SADR)

The Sahrawi Arab Democratic Republic is a state created by the Polisario Front intended as the sovereign over the disputed territory in Western Sahara. The principle of self-determination back the SADR meant that it has garnered widespread support since its creation, with endorsements from the African Union and many other African member states. However, support for the Sahrawi Arab Democratic Republic has been dwindling in recent years. Since 2017, 46 countries have already withdrawn their recognition out of the 80 that had previously recognized the SADR. This withdrawal can be largely attributed to the growing economic ties established by Morocco. Even Algeria, a fervent supporter for SADR independence, has much to gain from bilateral relations with Morocco. As the conflict continues to get prolonged, one can only assume that the notion of a free, self-governing SADR is rapidly dissipating.

United States

Historically, the alliance between the United States and Morocco can be dated back to the cold war. The United States has offered military, but not political support for Morocco; this position acclaimed by the United States is called "positive neutrality," whereby the US provided arms to Morocco but refused to defend Moroccan interest on the international stage. While the United States does not recognize the SADR, it also does not recognize Morocco's claims in the region, and has urged negotiations as the

primary way to resolve this issue. The United States has openly supported the Baker Plan in 2003 (the plan can be viewed as less favorable in Morocco's view), yet subsequent to the plan's failure, the United States projected its support for the Moroccan Autonomy Plan. This degree of flexibility and maneuverability in US foreign policy can be seen as a direct effort in balancing US interests in both Morocco and Algeria. Whereas the former has retained an alliance dating back to the cold war, the latter is viewed as an emerging economic alliance. In the status quo, the United States plays a crucial role in balancing the interests of both parties and has been urging both sides to negotiate.

Timeline of Relevant Resolutions, Treaties and Events

| Date | Description of Event |
|--------------|--|
| 1884 | Spain successfully colonized Western Sahara, an area previously inhabited by the Berber tribes. |
| 1957 | A newly independent Morocco laid historical claims to Western Sahara, but their attempt to annex the region was dissuaded by Spanish forces. |
| 1973 | The Polisario Front was formed and established its claims of land and sovereignty over the region. |
| 1975 | Morocco defies the ICJ ruling and issued the "Green March" intend on establishing Moroccan presence in the region. Subsequently, Spain officially withdraws from Western Sahara |
| 1975-1991 | The Polisario Front engaged in a 16 year-long war against Morocco. In 1979 Mauritania exited itself from the conflict. The war continued until a UN peace deal proposal in 1991 |
| 1991-2001 | Numerous proposals such as the Settlement Plan of 1991, the Houston Agreement of 1997, and the Baker Plan of 2001 were issued, yet they all had little to no impact in regards to achieving long-term peace. |
| 2001-present | Organizations such as Amnesty International and relevant country reports have pointed towards human rights violations in Western Sahara. |
| 2006 | Morocco issues the Western Sahara Autonomy Plan, which was promptly rejected by the Polisario Front soon after the proposal was issued. |
| 2016 | France reaffirms their support for the Western Sahara Autonomy Plan, stating that it is the only way to foster long term peace and security within the region. |

| | |
|------|-----------------------------------|
| 2017 | Morocco rejoins the African Union |
|------|-----------------------------------|

Relevant UN Treaties and Events

- The Charter of the United Nations, 26 June 1945
- Declaration on the granting of independence to colonial countries and peoples, 14 December 1960 (**A/RES/1514**)
- The Question of Western Sahara, 11 November 1980 (**A/RES/35/19**)
- Resolution 379, 6th November 1975 (**S/RES/380**)
- Situation Concerning Western Sahara, 29 April 1991 (**S/RES/690**)
- Resolution 1495, 31 July 2003 (**S/RES/1495**)
- Declaration on the Critical Economic Situation in Africa, 3 December 1984 (**A/RES/39/29**)

Evaluation of Previous Attempts to Resolve the Issue

Settlement Plan 1991 and MINURSO

The Settlement Plan was an agreement between Morocco and the Polisario Front, which vouched for either full autonomy of the Sahrawi people or integration with Morocco. This plan established a ceasefire that still stands strong today. The plan also included guidelines for MINURSO, a peacekeeping mission that has monitored human rights, promoted peace, and sent assisting personnel for both parties in the region. MINURSO's mission statement/mandate was primarily to monitor the ceasefire and oversee both sides of the conflict, with the ultimate goal of establishing a referendum for the Sahrawi people. MINURSO has been extended in numerous Security Council resolutions pertaining to this issue.

While the Settlement Plan can be viewed as an enormous success due to the lasting peace it has promoted and the longevity of the MINURSO peacekeeping effort, these are also perhaps the only things in the plan that went into fruition. To start, the promised referendum was never conducted due to disagreement on the voter list, and many experts argued that grounding the plan on the basis of self-determination has effectively excluded other solutions to the issue. The plan blatantly ignores Morocco's historical claims and interests in the region and has no regulatory process, which allowed both Morocco and the Polisario Front to derail the referendum process. MINURSO also possess innate flaws. MINURSO is the only concurrent peacekeeping operation in Western Sahara, yet this initiative has little to no capability in enforcing human rights standards; they have laid dormant in response to abuse and violations from both the Polisario Front and Morocco.

Baker Plan I & II

The first Baker Plan was merely a framework agreement established by UN envoy James Baker and was never formally presented to the Security Council for implementation. This first draft of the plan offered the Sahrawi people autonomy within the Moroccan state, but Morocco will control foreign affairs and the military. This first plan was met by immediate disagreement from both the Polisario Front and Algeria. The second Baker Plan sought for an independent, self-governing Western Sahara for five years, with a formal referendum for independence established after. The referendum was to include all civilians in Western Sahara (even those who have migrated to Morocco).

Since 2005, the UN Secretary has not referenced the Baker Plan in any of their reports, and with no replacement plans in place, the Baker Plan can be viewed as yet another failed attempt in resolving the issue. While the Polisario Front hesitantly agreed to the second Baker Plan (they were initially against the voter list for the referendum), they ultimately believed that the plan would create a reasonable basis for negotiations. On the other hand, Morocco has issued its complete opposition to the plan and any plans that include an independence referendum as a solution.

Morocco Autonomy Plan

Following the failure of both proposals of the Baker Plan, Morocco launched its initiative, dubbed the Morocco Autonomy Plan, in 2006. The plan was founded on the basis of improving stability in Western Sahara and decrease radicalization among the population in the region. As such, the plan sought to provide Western Sahara self-governance under Moroccan sovereignty, and additionally, Morocco will control the military and foreign affairs in the region (this plan is in many ways similar to the first Baker Plan proposal).

The Security Council has officially endorsed the Morocco Autonomy Plan on multiple occasions, calling it a viable and feasible solution. The plan was met with immediate backlash from Algeria and the Polisario Front, which refused to accept the basis of rule under a Moroccan sovereign. Although the plan has yet to be executed, Morocco has furthered international support for its plan through political and trade talks.

Possible Solutions

Presently, countries are constantly concerned with the status of Western Sahara and self-determination of the Sahrawi, little to no progress has been made due to the continuing political stalemate. While the prospect of a unanimously agreed upon referendum and independence plan remains largely unattainable, there are all too real issues in the status quo plaguing Western Sahara.

Four decades of neglect have exacerbated human rights violations that were always present in the region. In response, countries must update and improve the existing human rights initiative, MINURSO, to allow for a more comprehensive understanding of the human rights situation in the region. Along with more transparency and smoother flow of information, MINURSO should also include a mandate on human rights (currently, this is the only UN initiative that does not have a human rights mandate due to France's veto in the Security Council). Despite present reports suggesting egregious violations of human rights and living standards in Sahrawi refugee camps, little has been done to either stop or assist them. Furthermore, issues regarding sustainability in refugee camps must be addressed.

Numerous plans proposed to the Security Council has not been executed due to disagreements from either Morocco or the Polisario Front. Abrupt actions and changes in a time of strain and polarization only serves to worsen relations, and countries should seek to push for smaller steps to resolve this conflict. In addition, talks and negotiations must also continually be held to ensure equal representation of interests from both sides.

Bibliography

- Cordall, Simon Speakman. "The Sahrawi refugee crisis is one of the longest running humanitarian issues – so why do so few know about it?." *Independent*, The Independent, 16 Dec. 2018, <https://www.independent.co.uk/voices/sahrawi-refugee-humanitarian-crisis-polisario-front-morocco-unhcr-a8685791.html>.
- Flotat-Talon, Hugo. "The forgotten refugees of Western Sahara" Deutsche Welle, DW, 30 Mar. 2019, <https://www.dw.com/en/the-forgotten-refugees-of-western-sahara/a-48023892>.
- "Human Rights Violations in Western Sahara" Refworld, Amnesty International, 18 Apr, 1996 <https://www.refworld.org/docid/3ae6a99313.html>
- "Moroccan appeal court increases journalist's jail sentence to 15 years." *Reports Without Borders: For Freedom of Information*, Reporters Without Borders, 28 Oct. 2019, <https://rsf.org/en/news/moroccan-appeal-court-increases-journalists-jail-sentence-15-years>
- "Morocco rejoins the African Union after 33 years." *Al Jazeera*, Al Jazeera Media Network, 31 Jan. 2017, <https://www.aljazeera.com/news/2017/01/morocco-rejoins-african-union-33-years-170131084926023.html>.

Louw-Vaudran, Liesl. "The meaning of Morocco's return to the African Union." Institute for Security Studies, ISS, Jan. 2018, <https://issafrica.s3.amazonaws.com/site/uploads/nar-1.pdf>.

"Representation of the Frente POLISARIO at the United Nations." *Key Issues*, Western Sahara-UN, n.d., <https://www.westernsahara-un.com/key-issues/>.

"Western Sahara." *Security Council Report*, Security Council Report, 27 Dec. 2018, <https://www.securitycouncilreport.org/monthly-forecast/2019-01/western-sahara.php>.

Williams, Ian, and Stephen Zunes. "Self-Determination Struggle in the Western Sahara." *Global Policy Forum*, GPF Reports, Sep. 2003, <https://www.globalpolicy.org/component/content/article/208/39893.html>.