



## PRESS STATEMENT

### THE SECURITY COUNCIL FAILURE TO ENSURE FULL IMPLEMENTATION OF MINURSO MANDATE IS THE CAUSE OF THE COLLAPSE OF THE CEASEFIRE AND RETURN OF WAR IN WESTERN SAHARA

[New York, 6 September 2021] Thirty years have elapsed since the coming into effect of the ceasefire between the two parties to the conflict in Western Sahara, the Frente POLISARIO and Morocco, on 6 September 1991, as an integral part of the UN-OAU joint Settlement Proposals that were accepted by both parties on 30 August 1988.

The ceasefire paved the way for the deployment of the United Nations Mission for the Referendum in Western Sahara (MINURSO) with a view to holding a fair and impartial referendum, without military or administrative constraints, in which the people of Western Sahara would exercise their right to self-determination and independence.

For almost three decades, the Frente POLISARIO remained fully committed, in good faith, to the UN peace process in Western Sahara and made tremendous concessions so that MINURSO could fully implement its mandate and achieve its ultimate objective, namely the holding of a free and fair referendum on self-determination for the people of Western Sahara.

Nonetheless, the inaction of the Security Council has allowed the occupying state of Morocco not only to sabotage the full implementation of MINURSO mandate but also to prevent the Mission from functioning in accordance with the general principles applicable to UN peacekeeping operations. The restrictions imposed by the occupying state on MINURSO, which continue to date, have seriously undermined the already eroded credibility, impartiality, and independence of the Mission.

Today, the best example of the inaction of the Security Council, which bears the primary responsibility for the maintenance of international peace and security, is its failure to act robustly in the face of Morocco's serious breach of the 1991 ceasefire and its new act of aggression on the Liberated Territory of Western Sahara on 13 November 2020.

The Moroccan new act of aggression, which continues to date with complete impunity, has led to the collapse of almost thirty years of ceasefire and the outbreak of war again in Western Sahara, which could lead to the most serious consequences for peace, security, and stability in the entire region as armed confrontations between the Sahrawi Army and Moroccan occupying forces continue and intensify with each day that passes.

Moreover, although the Security Council has been including human rights components in the mandates of peace operations since 1991, MINURSO remains an anomaly in respect of its lack of any mandate in relation to human rights. Now, after thirty years of its deployment in the Territory, MINURSO is still completely unable to protect the human rights of the Sahrawi civilians and human rights activists in the territories under Morocco's illegal occupation who are subjected daily to unspeakable cruelty and barbaric and inhuman practices before the eyes of the Mission.

