

**Security Council**

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Letter dated 8 September 2026 from the Permanent Representative of South Africa to the United Nations addressed to the President of the Security Council

I would like to transmit a letter sent from Brahim Ghali, the President of the Sahrawi Arab Democratic Republic and Secretary-General of the Frente Popular para la Liberación de Saguía el-Hamra y de Río de Oro (Frente POLISARIO), addressed to the Secretary-General of the United Nations, concerning the latest developments related to Western Sahara (see annex).

I should be grateful if you would have the present letter and its annex issued as a document of the Security Council.

(Signed) Mxolisi Nkosi

Ambassador

Permanent Representative of the Republic of South Africa to
the United Nations



Annex to the letter dated 8 September 2026 from the Permanent Representative of South Africa to the United Nations addressed to the President of the Security Council

Letter from the President of the Sahrawi Republic and Secretary-General of the Frente Popular para la Liberación de Saguía el-Hamra y de Río de Oro (Frente POLISARIO), addressed to the Secretary-General of the United Nations

Bir Lehlou, 7 September 2026

This year marks more than half a century since Morocco, the occupying State, militarily invaded Western Sahara on 31 October 1975, an action that stands in contravention of the Charter of the United Nations and its relevant resolutions. The ongoing Moroccan illegal occupation of Western Sahara – which remains inscribed on the United Nations decolonization list – continues to constitute a fundamental impediment to the exercise by the Sahrawi people of their inalienable right to self-determination, independence and all associated fundamental rights.

The inability of the United Nations and its relevant organs to deal robustly with Morocco's deliberate obstructionism and refusal to honour its commitments under the 1991 United Nations-Organization of African Unity settlement plan – which was mutually accepted by both parties and approved unanimously by the Security Council – has emboldened the occupying State to be entrenched in its intransigence and defiance of international law and international humanitarian law.

It is imperative that the United Nations and the international community recognize that the absence of a resolute response to the Moroccan illegal occupation of Western Sahara risks perpetuating a volatile situation, with profound implications for regional and international peace and security. Consequently, we urgently call upon the United Nations and the international community to employ all available diplomatic means to rectify the enduring injustice inflicted upon the Sahrawi people and expedite the long-awaited decolonization of Western Sahara, the last colony in Africa.

Notwithstanding the positions observed in October 2025 that diverged from the established framework under which the Security Council has addressed the question of Western Sahara in conformity with the Charter of the United Nations, the Frente Popular para la Liberación de Saguía el-Hamra y de Río de Oro (Frente POLISARIO) reaffirms its commitment to cooperate with your efforts and those of your Personal Envoy within the context of the United Nations-led peace process.

Prompted by its willingness to achieve a just, lasting and definitive peace, the Frente POLISARIO participated actively in the three informal ministerial meetings co-chaired by the United Nations and the United States of America in January and February 2026. The Frente POLISARIO engaged in the discussions in good faith based on relevant principles of international law and United Nations resolutions.

In accordance with the letter and spirit of resolution [2797 \(2025\)](#), in which the Security Council “encourages the parties to submit ideas to support a final mutually-acceptable solution”, the Frente POLISARIO submitted its ideas and proposals, including those contained in its proposal presented to the Secretary-General on 10 April 2007, which was taken note of by the Security Council in resolution [1754 \(2007\)](#) and subsequent resolutions, as well as its expanded proposal presented to the Secretary-General on 20 October 2025.

In the same vein, the Frente POLISARIO reiterates its sincere desire to ensure the success of the efforts deployed by the United Nations with a view to achieving a just, lasting and final solution to the decolonization of Western Sahara. In this regard, the Frente POLISARIO underscores that the solution must be grounded in clear and essential foundations: namely, ensuring the Sahrawi people's inalienable, non-negotiable and non-delegable right to self-determination and independence through a free, transparent and democratic process in accordance with relevant General Assembly resolutions.

Furthermore, the Frente POLISARIO reaffirms the Sahrawi people's categorical rejection of any pseudo-solutions aimed at legitimizing Morocco's occupation or thwarting their legitimate national aspirations for freedom, independence and full sovereignty over their entire national territory.

The human rights situation in the Sahrawi Territories under Moroccan occupation remains a matter of serious concern owing to the systematic colonial practices pursued by the occupying State, in contravention of the international status of the Territory and the applicable norms of international law and international humanitarian law. These aggressive practices are aimed at imposing a *fait accompli* in the Occupied Sahrawi Territories while seeking to subjugate the Sahrawis by force through a multifaceted policy of terrorization, impoverishment, deprivation and collective punishment.

These practices have been extensively documented by a broad array of international and regional bodies, including key United Nations human rights mechanisms such as the Working Group on Arbitrary Detention, the special procedures of the Human Rights Council and the Committee against Torture, among others. Documented reports demonstrate that Morocco, the occupying State, continues to commit gross human rights violations against Sahrawis in Occupied Western Sahara, who are subjected to systemic measures of collective punishment and severe physical and psychological violence in response to their peaceful advocacy for the right of their people to self-determination and independence.

In particular, Sahrawi human rights activists and defenders, journalists and media activists continue to face documented patterns of physical violence, intimidation, close surveillance, arbitrary arrests and detention. Additionally, the Moroccan occupying authorities continue to subject human rights activists to punitive measures, including employment termination, salary withholding and restrictions on the freedom of movement and residence within the Territory.

The Sahrawi political prisoners, including the Gdeim Izik group, remain incarcerated under severe conditions in the prisons of the occupying State hundreds of kilometres away from their families in Occupied Western Sahara. They continue to face consistent systemic restrictions, notably the restriction of access to adequate medical services, prolonged isolation and the curtailment of family and external communications. These conditions have compelled detainees to resort to hunger strikes as a measure to protest the non-fulfilment of their fundamental rights and protections under international standards.

We reiterate our appeal to you to exercise your good offices and take all requisite actions to ensure the prompt and unconditional release of all Sahrawi political prisoners, facilitating their return to their homeland and reunification with their families.

To prevent independent scrutiny of the human rights situation in Occupied Western Sahara, the Moroccan occupying authorities continue to deny access to United Nations bodies and rapporteurs, non-governmental organizations,

international media and observers. Furthermore, several independent observers, legal experts and journalists have faced expulsion from the Territory.

Notably, the Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights has been denied access to Occupied Western Sahara since 2015 (see [S/2025/612](#)). It is utterly unacceptable that Morocco, the occupying State, is allowed to prohibit access by United Nations bodies to a Territory on the decolonization list of the United Nations and under its direct responsibility.

The Moroccan occupying authorities persist in executing a policy of demographic modification in the Territory, involving the forced eviction of the Sahrawis from their ancestral lands, which are subsequently reallocated to Moroccan settlers and foreign commercial entities. This practice constitutes a direct contravention of international law and fundamental principles of international humanitarian law.

As emphasized in our prior correspondence, Moroccan forces continue to deploy a wide range of military weaponry, including uncrewed aerial vehicles, in their war against the Sahrawi people. These attacks have resulted in casualties among Sahrawi civilians, as well as citizens of neighbouring countries transiting through the Liberated Sahrawi Territories. Morocco, the occupying State, must be held accountable under international humanitarian law for its crimes and unlawful use of sophisticated lethal weapons against Sahrawi civilians.

Concurrently with its policies of impoverishment and marginalization in Occupied Western Sahara, the Moroccan occupying authorities continue the exploitation of Sahrawi natural resources. These activities, carried out in complicity with foreign actors, directly contravene international law and the recognized right of the Sahrawi people to permanent sovereignty over their natural resources.

In accordance with General Assembly resolution [80/86](#) of 5 December 2025, we renew our appeal to you to deploy all available mechanisms to apprise the international community and the relevant organs of the United Nations regarding the economic and other unlawful activities conducted by Morocco, the occupying State, in Occupied Western Sahara. These activities have a profound impact on the natural resources of the Territory and on the realization of the right of the Sahrawi people to self-determination and independence in accordance with relevant United Nations resolutions.

We recall that the United Nations and its relevant organs bear a distinct responsibility towards the people of Western Sahara, a Territory awaiting decolonization, as consistently reaffirmed by successive General Assembly resolutions. We once again call upon the Secretary-General and the United Nations to fully assume and operationalize their responsibilities towards the Sahrawi people, particularly civilians in the Occupied Sahrawi Territories, until such time as the people of Western Sahara can freely exercise their inalienable right to self-determination and independence.

Over 50 years of conflict have demonstrated clearly that no solution can be imposed by any means. Therefore, the Frente POLISARIO firmly believes that a peaceful, just and lasting solution based on the relevant principles of international law is possible if there is genuine political will to move away from fait accompli-based and unilaterally imposed solutions that have triggered devastating repercussions for the broader peace and security of the region.

In this regard, the Frente POLISARIO reiterates its sincere readiness to enter into direct and good-faith negotiations with the Kingdom of Morocco, under United Nations auspices, with a view to achieving a just, peaceful, lasting and final solution,

which will provide for the self-determination of the Sahrawi people and restore regional peace and security.

I would be grateful if you could ensure that the elements conveyed in this communication are reflected in your forthcoming report to the Security Council on the situation concerning Western Sahara.

(Signed) **Brahim Ghali**
President of the Sahrawi Arab Democratic Republic
Secretary-General of the Frente POLISARIO
