



PRESS RELEASE

SAHARAWI REPUBLIC WELCOMES GREATER AFRICAN UNION ROLE IN UN-LED PEACE PROCESS, URGES MOROCCO TO ACT IN GOOD FAITH

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

NEW YORK, 14 February 2017 – Today, United Nations Representative of the Frente POLISARIO, Mr. Ahmed Boukhari, spoke to members of the United Nations Correspondents Association and answered questions on Morocco's recent membership of the African Union and the implications for the United Nations political process on Western Sahara.

On Morocco's membership to the African Union Mr. Boukhari said:

"The international community and African Union members indeed must hold Morocco accountable by ensuring that it abides by the UN Charter and the African Union Constitutive Act that it has signed up to, and that Morocco follows through on those commitments as it relates to the independence and territorial integrity of Western Sahara." He added that "If Morocco is not playing games, and it has adhered with honesty to the African Union, then the conflict of Western Sahara could be resolved since its causes have been Morocco's violation of the principle of intangibility of the borders, which is now contained in article 4 of the AU Charter. If Morocco has no intention to abide by the AU Charter it has signed and ratified, then it is up to the African Heads of State to meet the challenge."

"It is incumbent on Morocco to adhere to the African Union stand for self-determination and the completion of Africa's decolonization process. Acting otherwise would mean that Morocco has misled the African Union members. African Union members and the international community must thus vigilantly ensure that the independence of Western Sahara is not swept under the carpet of political expediency and deception."

On the United Nations political process and United Nations Mission for the Referendum on Western Sahara (MINURSO), Mr. Boukhari said:

"We are not just concentrated on MINURSO returning to its full functionality. That is one element in a bigger picture. The entire peace process has been blocked since 2012. [Personal Envoy of the Secretary-General] Mr. [Christopher] Ross was not able to go to the area because Morocco is not ready to receive him." He added that "the peace process has been really undermined, and MINURSO has been one of the victims."

"I hope that still if Morocco is ready, and they are not playing games with a hidden agenda after their move to the African Union, that can help the peace process to be reinvigorated at the United Nations. The Security Council will be able to engage more in a more effective way."

For additional comment contact:

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