



## Security Council

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### **Letter dated 29 April 2019 from the Permanent Representative of Namibia to the United Nations addressed to the President of the Security Council**

On behalf of the members of the Southern African Development Community (SADC), it is my honour to convey our united support for the United Nations-led process on Western Sahara and the need for a just, lasting and mutually acceptable political solution, which provides for the self-determination of the people of Western Sahara.

Alongside the Security Council, Africa has an important role to play in supporting the United Nations-led process on Western Sahara and delivering for the Sahrawi people a genuine process of decolonization and self-determination. That is why, on 25 and 26 March 2019, South Africa and Namibia took the historic step of co-hosting the SADC solidarity conference with Western Sahara. The Heads of State and Ministers for Foreign Affairs of 24 countries inside and outside Africa, as well as the leaders of liberation movements, political parties and civil society groups, were in attendance. The objective of the conference was to reaffirm our unwavering support for the self-determination of the people of Western Sahara and to determine how we can best support the United Nations-led process and the efforts of the Personal Envoy of the Secretary-General for Western Sahara. Together, we agreed to contribute to a positive, peaceful and permanent solution that meets the legitimate aspirations and will of the people of Western Sahara.

As countries that have experienced directly the immense harms of colonization, we speak from a position of familiarity with the suffering and injustice endured by the Sahrawi people. Western Sahara is the last colony in Africa, and our continent will be truly free only when we have secured the freedom of the people of Western Sahara. Such freedom, however, can only come through a genuine process of self-determination that provides the people of Western Sahara with the opportunity to determine their future freely, voluntarily and democratically.

As SADC members, we assert our full support for the people of Western Sahara and urge the Security Council to work immediately to:

(a) Uphold international law, including by securing the immediate implementation of General Assembly and Security Council resolutions, as well as African Union decisions on Western Sahara, with the aim of holding a free and fair referendum for the people of Western Sahara;

(b) Condemn in clear terms ongoing violations of the ceasefire in Western Sahara, including Morocco's recent operation of a new militarized sand wall parallel



to the so-called “berm”, as well as the ongoing violations of the human rights of the people of occupied Western Sahara;

(c) Expand the mandate of the United Nations Mission for the Referendum in Western Sahara to include monitoring of the human rights situation in Western Sahara;

(d) End the illegal exploitation of the natural resources of the people of Western Sahara, taking into account the African Union legal opinion of 2015 and the United Nations Legal Counsel’s opinion of February 2002 that such activity violated international law unless there was expressed consent by the Sahrawi people;

(e) Support the delivery of humanitarian assistance to Sahrawi refugees in the camps in Algeria and the territories of Western Sahara;

(f) Demand direct negotiations between Morocco and the Frente POLISARIO.

The situation in Western Sahara is unsustainable. The people of Western Sahara deserve to be free. The Security Council has before it a rare opportunity to end this decades-long injustice and uphold the principles that have guided the pursuit of freedom and independence throughout Africa and beyond. On behalf of SADC, we hope to work with the Security Council and other interested parties to seize this historic opportunity for peace and create the conditions whereby the people of Western Sahara can, at long last, escape the tyranny of colonialism and determine their own future.

I should be most grateful if you would bring the present letter to the attention of the members of the Security Council.

(Signed) Neville **Gertze**  
Ambassador  
Permanent Representative

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