PRESS RELEASE

THE UN PEACE PROCESS IN WESTERN SAHARA IS AT A CRITICAL JUNCTURE AND THE FRENTE POLISARIO IS LEFT WITH NO OPTION BUT TO RECONSIDER ITS ENGAGEMENT IN THE PROCESS

[BIR LEHLOU, LIBERATED TERRITORIES OF WESTERN SAHARA– 30 OCTOBER 2019]:

The adoption of Security Council resolution 2494 (2019), without any concrete actions to advance the UN peace process, is a deeply regrettable and unacceptable return to ‘business as usual’ on Western Sahara and deals a serious blow to the political momentum that the Security Council built and maintained over the past 18 months. By failing to follow through on its commitment to end the status quo and demand that Morocco terminate its illegal occupation of Western Sahara, the Security Council has missed another opportunity to prevent the UN peace process from collapsing. In the face of the UN Secretariat and the Security Council’s repeated failure to prevent Morocco from dictating the terms of the peace process and the UN’s role in Western Sahara, the Frente POLISARIO is left with no option but to reconsider its engagement in the peace process as a whole.

Despite Morocco’s intransigence, obstructionism and blackmail, the Frente POLISARIO has consistently exercised restraint. Over the years, we have made tremendous concessions so the UN peace process could advance and succeed. But the Security Council’s failure to act robustly to end Morocco’s blatant attempts to transform MINURSO into a tool to normalise its illegal occupation of parts of our national Territory has undermined the integrity and credibility of the UN peace process in the eyes of our people.

The primary mandate of MINURSO, as established in Security Council resolution 690 (1991) and subsequent resolutions, is to hold a free and fair referendum on self-determination for the people of Western Sahara. The Frente POLISARIO, whose raison d’être lies in defending the inalienable rights and legitimate national aspirations of the Sahrawi people, will never accept any approach that deviates from the mutually accepted UN Settlement Plan or that would override the UN recognised legal nature of the question of Western Sahara as a decolonisation case. The right of our people to self-determination and independence is inalienable and non-negotiable, and we will pursue all legitimate means to defend it.

The Frente POLISARIO cannot accept the UN Secretariat’s leniency towards the scandalous subjection of MINURSO to Morocco’s rules and dictates and its continued violations of the ceasefire and Military Agreement no. 1, including the illegal breach in Guerguerat. We reserve our legitimate right to act in response to all destabilising actions by Morocco, the occupying power in Western Sahara. It is imperative that all members of the Security Council understand the gravity of the current situation, and the urgency with which a lasting solution to the conflict in Western Sahara must be found.

The UN peace process in Western Sahara is at a critical juncture. The only way forward to achieve a peaceful and durable solution to this decades-long conflict is to implement the UN Settlement Plan, which remains the only solution plan accepted by both parties and approved by the Security Council. Any approach that does not fully respect the parameters of the solution prescribed in the UN Settlement Plan risks the collapse of the ceasefire and the entire UN peace process.