



Saharawi Arab Democratic Republic



10 July 2015

His Excellency Kaj Leo Holm Johannesen
Prime Minister of the Faroe Islands
Løgmannsskrivstovan
Prime Minister's Office
Tinganes, Posting Office 64
110 Tórshavn FAROE ISLANDS

Mr. Alex Vilhelm
Managing Director
P/f Ocean Group Faroes Ltd.
Bryggjan 5
Hosvik
420 Færøerne FAROE ISLANDS

Dear Prime Minister Johannesen and Mr. Joensen:

Illegal fishing in the waters of occupied Western Sahara

I have the honour to convey to you the compliments of the Saharawi people, who express their desire for friendly relations with the people of the Faroe Islands.

I write in my capacity as a senior elected member of the government of the Saharawi Arab Democratic Republic and the Saharawi national liberation movement, the Frente POLISARIO.

My government wishes to convey to you its concern over fishing by the Faroese motor vessel *Asbjørn Senior* (IMO number 9191735) in the southern coastal waters of Western Sahara during the first week of July. The vessel was observed over a period of several days some 10 to 20 nautical miles west of the southern part of the Cap Blanc peninsula fishing on reciprocal tracks, before entering the Mauritanian port of Nouadhibou last weekend.

The Saharawi government asks that the *Asbjørn Senior* not return to fishing in the waters of coastal Western Sahara. Such waters may be defined, for simplicity, as that area between a line extending directly west into the Atlantic Ocean from a point 12 nautical miles directly south of the Cap Blanc peninsula, to a distance of 200 NM offshore and, in the north, a line extending 200 NM west into the Atlantic Ocean from the mainland coast along the parallel of latitude 27 degrees 40 minutes North. This area is the SADR exclusive economic zone, created by national legislation in 2009.

Some background may be useful to convey my government's concern more fully.

I anticipate you are familiar with the history of Western Sahara, including after the successful decolonization cases of recent decades such as the self-determination and independence of the peoples of East Timor (Timor-Leste) and Namibia

For some 50 years, the people of Western Sahara – the Saharawi people – have been identified as having the right of self-determination in a colonial setting. No one disputes the principal United Nations resolutions to accord non-self-governing peoples the right of self-determination (UN General Assembly Resolutions 1514 (XV) and 1541 (XV)) and the



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attendant customary international law, decisions of the International Court of Justice and the consensus of the organized international community apply in the case of our people.

Spanish Sahara, as it then was, was invaded by Mauritania and Morocco in October 1975. The event came immediately after the International Court of Justice's advisory opinion for the UN General Assembly, and the publishing of the report of the UN mission that had visited the territory earlier the same year. The UN report noted in unequivocal terms the overwhelming desire of the Saharawi people (the sole linguistic-ethnic-political group to inhabit the territory) for independence. The ICJ concluded that neither Morocco nor Mauritania had any territorial claim or right to Western Sahara. The Court also confirmed the right of the Saharawi people to self-determination.

Two events occurred in 1979 that remain relevant. The UN General Assembly – which has a particular competence in decolonization matters – declared Western Sahara to be *occupied*. The other was the departure of Mauritania, which admitted in a peace treaty with our government that its basis for a claim (identical to that of Morocco) and occupation of Western Sahara had been wrong.

Despite the clear wish of the organized international community that self-determination for the Saharawi people come about – something emphasized as recently as last month by African Union heads of state meeting in South Africa – natural resources from occupied Western Sahara continue to be plundered. This is acutely the case with our coastal fishery.

Apart from considerations of the sustainability of the coastal fishery, and of the loss of revenue to the Saharawi people from unauthorized fishing, there is a moral dimension to consider. Fully half the Saharawi people live in the refugee camps at Tindouf. Their food security continues to be under pressure. As their sovereign resource, the Atlantic fishery, is plundered by an occupying state, the Saharawi in refugee exile live with insufficient food. It is a starkly compelling reality. And it need not be so.

I will be pleased to provide such additional information as you may require. And I hope to hear from you in reply.

Please let me conclude by offering my appreciation for your consideration of the Saharawi people's interests in this crucial matter.

Yours sincerely,

Emhamed Khadad

Minister-Counsellor and Advisor to the SADR President

cc: His Excellency Ambassador Christopher Ross
Personal Representative of the Secretary-General of the United Nations for Western Sahara

Her Excellency Ambassador Kim Bolduc
Special Representative of the Secretary-General of the United Nations for Western Sahara